Insider

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UH’s Rothschild reflects on a lifetime of service

Kelli Fontenot

After Dec. 31, Beryl Rothschild’s last day as mayor of University Heights, she’s going to begin working on her first book.

“I haven’t started it, but I have many things to convey to readers,” she says. Rothschild’s 42-year legacy of public service to University Heights—10 years on City Council and 32 as mayor (making her Cuyahoga County’s longest-serving female mayor)—will undoubtedly take reams of paper to record. One idea she wants to discuss is her admiration for the thousands of local governments across the United States that manage thriving small towns and cities. “We’re the engine that makes everything successful, because if we ever stopped giving the services, the whole country could collapse,” she says. “I think that in this country we are more successful as a whole on a local level than they are in Congress. I think that they are often so detached, even though they go back to their states and everything. How often can you get together with your Congressman?”

Among her highlights as mayor, Rothschild points to the development of Purvis Park and its pool, the Series of Discoveries diversity program, the City Beautiful Commission and the Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) program. She is particularly proud of the diversity program, which aimed to help the multicultural populations of University Heights understand one another and work together cohesively.

“There were 39 different cultures here and 11 languages spoken in the homes,” Rothschild explains. The program lasted for 10 years and helped the community come together. Shopping districts on South Taylor, South Green and Cedar roads, and Fairmount Circle were in need of revitalization. Rothschild says they got the attention they deserved and are in better shape today than when her tenure began.

But Rothschild concedes it hasn’t all been good news. She calls the foreclosure crisis—and the bonuses bankers gave themselves with taxpayer dollars—“outrageous.”

“My heart goes out to all the people who don’t have to lose their home if the money had been forthcoming immediately; if the middle class that everybody is trying to save had been serviced immediately,” Rothschild says.

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Shaquille O’Neal works out in the Heights

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2009 Holiday gift guide

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Pancake breakfast for art

Give the gift of community news!
A subscription to the Heights Observer makes a great holiday gift for a new neighbor or someone who has moved away and misses the Heights. Call 216-320-1423.

Vice Mayor Adele Zucker retires

Kelli Fontenot

After nine years as Vice Mayor for University Heights, Adele Zucker will leave office this month. Her contributions include keeping a close eye on neighborhood services, and never having to cut staff, something she attributes to frugal management. “Cleveland Heights, like most cities, is staffed and equipped to handle their average daily emergency load,” assured Fire Chief Kevin Mohr. “If something really had happens, we have ready access to backup from neighboring cities. But a large-scale emergency may create the need to employ additional resources. That is where a properly trained CERT team is of great value.”

CERT volunteers can provide first aid and other assistance—anything to help bring order to a chaotic situation. Even simple tasks, such as taking names of people as they are evacuated from a disaster scene, can free up professional responders for other jobs.

The Cleveland Heights CERT is part of a nationwide network of volunteers trained to assist in emergencies. More than 1,100 communities have CERTs, including about 30 in the Cleveland area. Part of the program’s mission is to teach volunteers to help their neighbors without putting themselves at risk.

“Safety of our volunteers is the highest priority,” said Chief Mohr. “If someone rushes into a disaster area and is injured, then we have just added another victim needing treatment.”

Vice Mayor Adele Zucker worked hard to keep it going, and this money certainly helps our bottom line.”

FutureHeights, founded in 2003, promotes civic engagement in Cleveland Heights and University Heights. To reach the organization, or to make a donation, call 216-320-1423 or visit www.futureheights.org.

Sarah Wean is a community volunteer.

FutureHeights online auction raises $13,000

Sarah Wean

FutureHeights, the nonprofit publisher of the Heights Observer, raised over $13,000 during its recent online auction.

“Auction revenues were about 20 percent lower than last year, but that was to be expected, given how tough times are now,” said Board President Gina Cheverine. “We’re grateful for the generosity of the community and the way they’ve embraced the work of
Let the UH city administrator R.I.P.

Why is it that politicians just cannot deal with rejection of their agenda? On Nov. 3, residents of University Heights rejected a city administrator. The vote was not even close on that issue, yet an article reported last week that Councilman Bullock feels that residents were not educated enough to understand, and Councilman Murphy questioned whether residents still want an administrator just not through a charter amendment.

So now this council, or perhaps the new council (with Sue Pardee, a former city administrator and a member of the charter review commission that voted for that position of an administrator), may seek to install the additional management structure through ordinance. At least that appears to be the hope of some on our city council and the ex-charter commission chair, Harry Morrison, who mentioned many names in an earlier article.

As residents we need to monitor this council closely. When changes are made through ordinance, we the residents don’t get to decide if we want those changes. The addition of an administrator will NOT enhance the balance of power in our city. A city administrator WILL provide the council greater power and influence and at the same time significantly reduce their responsibilities for the job they campaigned they were qualified to do. Our council will have more power and less responsibility and accountability. I would expect that if the council passes an ordinance to introduce an administrator, the ordinance would include the elimination of council salaries to help offset the cost of the administrator. After all, if the administrator is needed to run the city because the council doesn’t feel they are qualified, why should we pay a council and an administrator?

To UH City Council:
Stop worrying about the administrator and start thinking of ways to help our city.
Maybe, hire a grant writer to bring tax dollars back to University Heights. Or, hire a marketing professional to increase our profile and bring residents and small businesses here. If efficiency is what you want, hire out services as needed.

The job is not about you and your level of power, it is about ensuring our city’s safety, services, and affordability endures even through difficult times.

Rick Adams runs for University Heights city council in the 2009 election.

Innovators for sustainability

John Lentz

I was privileged to be part of the Cleveland CERT program as a group organizer and past August. Our goal was no less than to get to the heart of the CERTs and regions and individually to show the way. Working parties created prototypes emphasizing local foods, land use, water, solar, and wind energy.

As the urban center of our region, the city of Cleveland should be invested in such a vision. This experience got me thinking about how Cleveland Heights, Shaker Heights, East Cleveland, University Heights and Lyndhurst/South Euclid could begin to leverage its collective assets towards a sustainable vision for our communities. How can we be part of the larger work? What can we do to hire new and individuals to show the way.
I think people can learn from us. I would include the elimination of council responsibilities for the job they campaigned they were qualified to do. Our council will have more power and less responsibility and accountability. I would expect that if the council passes an ordinance to introduce an administrator, the ordinance would include the elimination of council salaries to help offset the cost of the administrator. After all, if the administrator is needed to run the city because the council doesn’t feel they are qualified, why should we pay a council and an administrator?

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Rick Adams runs for University Heights city council in the 2009 election.
CH police ask residents to call if they see something suspicious

Deanna Bremer Fisher

What would you do if you noticed something strange going on in your neighborhood? Would you call the police or let your neighbors know? A handful of neighbors were asked these questions by Memphis Cotton, who was speaking about terrorism prevention last Thursday at the Cleveland Heights Public Library.

Memphis Cotton began her talk by saying that some people doubt that terrorism is a real threat in America.

"Many Americans have a penchant for self-deluding themselves," she said. "[The same is true of] some people who want to believe that there is no threat from terrorism."

Memphis Cotton spoke about a number of specific examples that demonstrate the danger to the United States of terrorism.

Memphis Cotton said that people should take the time to think about the potential effects of terrorism in their neighborhoods.

Memphis Cotton also discussed the importance of being aware of one's surroundings and being vigilant in situations that could potentially be dangerous.

Memphis Cotton ended her talk by encouraging people to take action to protect themselves and their communities from the threat of terrorism. She urged people to report any suspicious activity to law enforcement immediately.

Memphis Cotton's talk was well-received by the audience, who appreciated her clear and concise approach to the serious topic of terrorism prevention.

Memphis Cotton's talk was sponsored by the Cleveland Heights Public Library and the Cleveland Heights Women's Club. The event was open to the public and was free of charge.

Memphis Cotton's talk was recorded and will be available online shortly.

Memphis Cotton is a terrorism expert and the author of several books on the subject. She is a frequent speaker on the topic of terrorism and has appeared on numerous news programs and in the media.

Memphis Cotton's talk was held in the Cleveland Heights Public Library's auditorium, which was filled to capacity with an audience of over 100 people.

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University Heights City Council Meeting highlights

OCT. 19, 2009
All council members present.

Plans for Gesu church
An architect from Milan Bender & Associates presented preliminary plans for renovations and additions for the Gesu parish center and church. The initial proposal was approved.

Purvis Park tennis courts
An ordinance was approved to file an application for community development block grant (CDBG) funds to pay for part of the rehabilitation of the Purvis Park tennis courts. The full cost includes $325,000 for the courts and $175,000 to rehab the parking lot and driveway.

Resurfacing Bushnell Road
A contract with Kenyak Paving Co. was authorized to resurface Bushnell Road. The $155,650 cost will be covered in part by last year’s CDBG funding of $100,000. Resurfacing will occur either this fall or next spring depending on the weather. Waterline work is still being completed.

Platform lift
An agreement with Marshall Samuel Accessibility LLC was authorized to modernize the platform lift at City Hall, for a cost not to exceed $25,775. The lift was rusted and no longer functional.

Honoring Mayor Rothschild
Council unanimously approved renaming Purvis Park on Cedar Road to Rothschild Plaza, and renaming Purvis Park Pool to the Beryl E. Rothschild Municipal Pool.

Honoring Vice Mayor Zucker
With Vice Mayor Adele Zucker abstaining, council approved naming the pavilion at Purvis Park the Adele H. Zucker Pavilion.

Public health services
Council unanimously approved the 2010 contract for public health services provided by the Cuyahoga County Board of Health. The cost of $52,340 was included in the 2010 budget.

Ashford Road house
City Engineer Joseph Civini announced that demolition of the vacant house on Ashurst Road had begun, with completion scheduled by Oct. 30.

Completed projects
Civini also stated that University Parkway had been completed except for a few final checklist items, and that all water projects had been completed except for Bushnell Road, which will be done in two weeks. Money has been held back on water projects until two-level re-seeding is completed in the spring.

LWY observer: Wendy Deuring

NOV. 2, 2009
All council members present.

Objection to Mayor Rothschild’s postcard
Harvey Morrison of White Road stated his objection to a postcard sent out by Mayor Beryl Rothschild supporting one candidate for mayor and disapproving another candidate.

Update on Ashurst Road property
Sheila Hubman of Ashurst Road asked for an update on the Ashurst Road house the city is razing. She asked if the land would become a park, and if so, how it would be used. Law Director Kenneth Fisher said no decision had been made about the future use of the property.

Available flu shots
Mayor Rothschild reported that flu shots would be administered at Milly Middle School on Sunday, Nov. 15, from 2 to 4 p.m.

Solid waste collection report
The report from the Solid Waste Collection Analysis Committee was distributed and adopted.

LWY observer: Carol Gibson.

University Heights CERT organizes flu shot program

Anita Kazarian
The University Heights Emergency Response Team (CERT) once again organized the influenza immunization program for University Heights residents on Nov. 15 at Wiley Middle School.

CERT uses this opportunity to reinforce training procedures for its resident volunteers in basic response skills to possible disasters. The flu vaccination clinic used the national CERT protocol as a drill to ensure its team is prepared. University Heights Emergency Response Organization, under Fire Chief John Pitchler, performed flawlessly.

Chief Pitchler encourages University Heights residents to apply to CERT as volunteers to CERT Meetings. Are every other month. Participants meet new people, learn about surviving disasters, work in programs, such as the flu shot program, and eat pizza and home-baked cookies. No previous skills needed.

For more information on becoming a member of CERT, write to AnitaKazarian@gmail.com

Anita Kazarian is a freelance writer and University Heights resident.

Hugging trees at Arbor Day celebration

Children from Wiley Middle and Gesu Elementary help plant trees.

Anita Kazarian
University Heights celebrated Arbor Day on Nov. 6 by having a community tree planting on Vernon Road. The celebration included a speech by Mayor Beryl Rothschild, who had given the very first Arbor Day speech when the city first began observing the day.

At this year’s celebration, children from Wiley Middle and Gesu Elementary schools read poetry, helped plant the trees and later joined in a group tree hug.

Walter Stinson, the city’s community coordinator, led the group of officials, members of City Beautiful and neighborhood residents in singing “America the Beautiful.”

University Heights and Cleveland Heights share the honor of being among the oldest cities in Cuyahoga County to observe Arbor Day. This year’s event marked University Heights’s 31st Arbor Day celebration. The city received a designation of Bee City USA in 1978.

Following a day of poetry, song and tree planting, participants and attendees were treated to hot chocolate and cookies at Whole Foods Market. Mastrapa Ceesay, the manager on duty, believes the city’s success in building community with events like this is what makes University Heights special. He noted that Whole Foods supports the event and looks forward to participating next year.

Although the November Arbor Day celebration has become a tradition here, in 2010 it will be celebrated on the last Friday in April, according to Chris Vild, city service manager for University Heights. To learn more about participating in Arbor Day celebrations, contact Vild at 216-932-7800, ext. 215 or visit the Arbor Day Foundation at www.arborday.org.

Anita Kazarian is a freelance writer and University Heights resident.
Heights Observer December 1, 2009

**CH-UH Public Library Board Meeting highlights**

**OCTOBER 19, 2009**

Audrey Cole absent.

**State support reduced**

Public Library Fund revenue (state support for Ohio libraries) is 17.3 percent lower year-to-date than in 2008. Board Member Glenn Billington asked whether the library should aim for a decrease in expenditures of 20 percent rather than 16-17 percent. Director Levin replied that expenditures have already been reduced by a significant amount.

**Mold abatement at Noble**

The cost estimate for mold abatement at the Noble Library is $11,100. Cleanup after the Labor Day storm sewer backup exposed existing mold in the drywall of two meeting rooms and the two emergency exits. Mold abatement must be done in compliance with EPA standards and will not be covered by insurance. The board allocated $13,000 to cover cost plus contingencies.

**Cora Hampton retires**

Inter-library Loan Assistant Cora Hampton retired in November after 33 years of service. The board passed a resolution honoring Hampton and taking note of her ability to work independently and make appropriate decisions. The library fills the greatest number of requests in the CLEVNET system.

**Meeting room policy**

Current meeting room policy allows residents to reserve rooms for social uses. Last year the Heights Libraries hosted 1,458 public meetings and will exceed that by a significant number this year. Due to the increased staff time for setup and cleanup plus increased maintenance costs, the board approved an updated fees and charges schedule for use of the meeting rooms.

The Music Settlement at Coventry School The Music Settlement’s plan to build on the Coventry School site will affect traffic and parking in the area. The library will be part of the planning process for the project which will result in a large early childhood center.

**Friends of the Library activities**

**Wise Up! A Library-Filled Night by the Friends of**

Nighttown on Oct. 4 was a great success, resulting in over $7,000 raised for the library. For Dec. 5, Friends plan a night out of Dobama. Members will be offered a discounted group rate to “Gutenbergh! The Musical.” The Book Sale ended the day prior to this meeting to finalize proceeds were not known at press time.

**Library material circulation**

Space restrictions sometimes require cancellation of some recordings. For more complete summaries view online postings at www.heightslib.org.

See disclaimer on page 3.

**Art and computers collide at Lee Road Library**

Tonya Gibson

Art and computers will come together in the Lee Road Library space that formerly housed Heights Arts. The Library is moving about 20 public computers into that unique, spacious gallery area and will then decorate the walls with works by local artists.

Which local artists? Artists just like you.

Cleveland Heights and University Heights residents will be invited to “book a show” in this Computer Gallery and share their visual artistic talents with the community. Additionally, the former Community Office (on the second floor of the west library building), will become a dedicated classroom for computer training and will also be reserve-able for public training.

Watch for more details to come.

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

Heights Libraries earn 5-Stars again

Nancy Levin

The Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library has once again received a 5-star rating from Library Journal (LJ), based on 2007 usage statistics. The LJ Index offers an overall indication of how a library’s performance stacks up to peer libraries and provides guidance on how all public libraries can better assess and improve what they provide to their users. Star libraries come from across the United States, but New York leads the state by state lineup with 37 star libraries. Ohio is close behind boasting 33 star libraries.

Media attention in recent months has focused on the key role libraries are playing during the current economic crisis. The top libraries in each category, organized by ranges of operating expenditures, are assigned five, four, or three Michelin guide-like stars. Visit www.libraryjournal.com to learn about the program.

If you haven’t stopped by your “Star Library” lately, drop in soon to check out the amazing customer service and programming at Coventry Village, Noble Neighborhood, Lee Road or the University Heights library soon.

Nancy Levin is the director of the Heights Libraries.

Library changes Sunday hours

Heights Library Staff

Faced with reductions in staffing levels and income, the Heights Library Board of Trustees voted unanimously to operate throughout 2010 on a “summer hours” schedule, which means only the Lee Road Library will be open Sundays from 1 to 5 p.m. This change will cut costs and reallocate resources, while keeping open all library operating hours at the same level of 27.5 hours per week.

“We are grateful to have such understanding customers. Please know that this was not an easy decision,” said Director Nancy Levin. “We realize that many people use our buildings on Sundays and that they often do not have transportation to other locations. We have already trimmed the budget in so many places that we were left with few options.”

“Library material circulation is up 12 percent in 2009, but our 2010 revenue will be $1 million less than in 2008. We have cut staff, salaries, benefits, supplies, services and programming,” Levin said while stressing that the library is adding as many features as it can to help the community through these difficult times.

One of these services will be the new Computer Gallery (in the former Heights Arts space), which will open on Martin Luther King Day and offer an expanded PC and MAC lab, as well as a showcase for local artists. The Lee Road Library will also open a new dedicated classroom available during library hours and will feature Smart Board technology and conference space. Both will be housed in the west building of the Lee Road Library. “Ultimately we will still be open for business 72.5 hours a week in 2010,” Levin said. “We will now be able to stop cutting programming, hopefully expand our computer class selections and be better able to handle the increased circulation and reference calls.”

**New library hours**

**After January 1, 2010**

Lee Road Library (unchanged)

9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday-Friday

9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Saturday

1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday

Coventry Village Library, University Heights Library and Noble Neighborhood Library

1 p.m. to 9 p.m. Monday, Tuesday and Thursday

9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Friday and Saturday

The Lake View Cemetery “Cleveland’s Outdoor Museum” Mayfield and Kenilworth Roads

**SCHWAN GRAVESITE TREE-TRIMMING**

Saturday, December 5, 2009

10:00 a.m.

Join Hope Lutheran Church in decorating a tree at the gravesite of Rev. H.C. Schwan, of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

**HOLIDAY PROGRAM OF MUSIC & LIGHTS**

Saturday, December 5, 2009

1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Program of merry music, bright candles, and the spectacular surroundings of the Wade Chapel

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FutureHeights annual fund provides support for community news in the Heights Observer

Happy Holidays! We’ve accomplished a lot in 2009 and we couldn’t have done it without you. Community support helped us achieve amazing growth. A year-end gift to the annual fund of any amount will be a tremendous help—allowing us to stay the course in 2010.

Here are a couple of great illustrations of just how your investment in FutureHeights empowers the community to tell its stories, get active and stay involved.

University Heights resident Phil Robinson picked up a copy of the Heights Observer, read about the city charter issue... and got involved.

“A few months ago, I moved to University Heights, it was important to my wife, Elizabeth, and I that we stay informed about our city government. I first found out that our city council was considering forming a charter review commission after reading an edition of FutureHeights’ Heights Observer. I was so fascinated by this article, that I later attended a city council meeting. If it weren’t for reading the Heights Observer, I probably would not have eventually considered running for city council to help move University Heights forward. The Heights Observer is exactly what residents need in order to ensure the stories of communities are told, by those who understand them the best.”

Heights business owners Dawn and Alex Quintana have found the Heights community spirit and FutureHeights shop local programs support their independent business in a tough economy.

“When we relocated our business to Cleveland Heights we learned about FutureHeights and its fierce focus on supporting local merchants and educating the public on “buying local.” We believe the reason we are sustaining our business in a down economy is due to being part of a community that values us as a local business. FutureHeights programs, such as the Heights Observer, online auction and the Best of the Heights Awards, help build awareness and keep our business strong.”

“We depend on FutureHeights to communicate important Library news, along with records of our board meetings, to our citizens in both print and online versions of the Heights Observer. We have also cosponsored public discussions on important issues of the day. An informed citizenry is a keystone of democracy, this is a shared mission the Library and FutureHeights.”

“FutureHeights is a small organization that does big things for the betterment of this community. Its programs are creative, successful and rigorous. Its staff and volunteers are wholly committed to its mission and are the epitome of civic engagement. As a small business owner, I am grateful for their tireless advocacy for local, independent businesses, particularly during these tough economic times. We should all take the time to acknowledge their hard work and dedication, whether through a donation, a word of encouragement or as a volunteer.”

The Heights Observer, with over 9,000 issues published every month and an active online presence, has become a vital community resource. It gets the word out about the cities of Cleveland Heights and University Heights, the CH-UH schools, the CH-UH Public Library, the Home Repair Resource Center, John Carroll University, the Heights Youth Center, Heights Arts, the League of Women Voters, neighborhood groups, citizen efforts, and a host of others who have become our partners in strengthening community.

But that’s not all we do. In 2009 FutureHeights co-hosted a forum on intergovernmental cooperation, a candidates night, and Cleveland Heights Mayor’s State of the City address; conducted newspaper writing workshops for over 100 residents; hosted the 7th Annual Best of the Heights Awards; organized the first annual Shop Around the Heights event; sponsored neighborhood tours; and oversaw the work of nearly 400 community volunteers.

- Support of the local economy.
- Access to information.
- Community partnerships.
- Citizen participation.

This is what FutureHeights is all about.

You have been instrumental in creating our success. And, as our success grows, our need for community support grows. We hope you’ll consider a tax-deductible, end-of-the-year gift to help us continue our good work.

Donate now by mailing in the coupon below. Donate online by clicking the Donate Now button at www.futureheights.org or www.heightsobserver.org. Or call 216-202-1453 with your credit card today. Thank you!

On behalf of the FutureHeights board of directors, staff, and volunteers, we wish you a happy and healthy holiday season.

Deanna Bremer Fisher
Executive Director
Gina Cheverine
President
CH-UH Board of Education Meeting highlights

OCT. 20, 2009 - Work Session
All board members present.

Study of school facilities
Superintendent Douglas Heuer said he would seek approval for an agreement with the Ohio School Facilities Commission Early Local Partnership Program at the November meeting. The agreement is a commitment to a study of school facilities, which would include the physical state of buildings, building capacities and student enrollment forecasts. When asked which buildings would be included in this study he said he would check, but thought it would encompass only buildings currently in use.

Current board policies
The board hopes to conclude an update of current board policies by yearend for the 5000 Series governing students. Legal counsel John Briton updated the board on recent changes in state law and discussed areas of concern. Reconciliation of the 5000 Series with current policy will be on the November board meeting agenda.

Making policies consistent
Joe Micheller, director of education services, stated that written policy and implementation guidelines must be coordinated. When evaluating changes the board must consider its vision, support for academic achievement, empowerment of building administrators, limitation of paperwork, and the contribution to long-term institutional goals.

Policies required by new technologies
Board members agreed that expanding technologies for wireless communication devices, such as the new laptops for ninth graders, required new wording in policies. Filters on school-issued laptops would support new policies and guidelines. Beyond these safeguards, the board discussed the district’s responsibility for use of laptops away from school and the liability involved. Graduating seniors would be able to buy their school laptops for one dollar. The increased use of cell phones also poses concerns regarding the responsibilities and rights of the administration, teachers, students and parents.

Five-year plan budget
A $2.4 million reduction, resulting from declining enrollment, staff cuts and other measures, presented a bitter financial picture that was projected in May. Director of Business Services Stephen Shergals said he was cautiously optimistic that it wouldn’t be necessary to hold a levy until 2011, rather than 2010 as was previously projected. He plans to hold a meeting with the Lay Finance Committee before the November board meeting to get its perspective on the plan. The board unanimously approved the plan.

Infinite Campus portal
Eric Silverman
The Cleveland Heights High School Alumni Foundation will host its annual Holiday Cocktail Party and Winter Gala on Saturday, Dec. 12, from 7 to 10 p.m. at the Heights Rockefeller Building at the corner of Mayfield and Lee Roads.

Football team
The Heights football team reported on the steps the district took with the Ohio High School Athletic Association to reverse its ruling that the Heights football team must forfeit three games due to a violation of a procedure regarding transfers. The efforts were unsuccessful. Board Member Michael Cincin added information and said the board would not pursue the matter further.

Field trips
The board approved field trips for Willey Middle School and Heights High School Glee Club Choir.

Grant approval
The board approved submission of the grant from Weaver Professional Development School to the Martha Hold Jennings Foundation for $15,200.

Assistant superintendent
The board accepted the resignation of Christine Fowler-Mack as assistant superintendent, and appointed Joseph Micheller as interim assistant superintendent. Board President Kal Zucker thanked Christine Fowler-Mack for her service to the district and wished her well in her new job with the Cleveland Municipal School District.

State assessment of buildings
The board approved a resolution to participate in the School Building Assistance Expanded Local Partnership, which would allow the assessment of all buildings by the state.

Donated violin
The board accepted the donation of a violin to Ravenna Middle School.

Ohio schools board conference
Board President Kal Zucker and Board Member Nancy Peplar will attend the Ohio schools board conference this month.

Infinite Campus is a district-wide tool that serves the goal of providing a first-class education with the resources students need to be prepared for the future. It is currently being used internally as the official grade book for grades 6-12. The portal encourages active parent participation in students’ progress while simplifying the distribution of external communications.

The parent portal for grades 7-12 will open at the start of the 2010 school year. “We are about to introduce to parents an electronic gradebook where student grades, attendance and assignments will be available in real time,” said Superintendent Douglas Heuer. “This will ensure better accountability of each student’s success.”

Parents will have an easy way to check if homework is due or late for individual students. Teachers will have the ability to post notices and announcements, eliminating “back-pack” messages that sometimes don’t make it home. Information will be password-protected, and parents will only be able to track their own child’s progress.

The Infinite Campus system is intended to make communications more efficient, and provide more reliable and accessible student data for staff, students and parents, allowing them to more effectively monitor student performance. This is another critical component of the district’s plan to redesign the teaching and learning environment to ensure students are college ready and prepared for 21st century life.

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

Alumni gala to benefit CH-UH student scholarships
Eric Silverman
Eric Silverman is president of the Cleveland Heights High School Alumni Foundation.
**Heights Observer December 1, 2009**

**Garity teacher is ‘Teacher of the Year’ finalist**

Angela Shaker

Accolades continue to roll in for teachers and staff at the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District. Natalie Wester, a third grade teacher at Garity Professional Development School, was selected as one of five finalists for the 2010 Ohio Teacher of the Year.

The honor came as no surprise to Garity Principal Sherry Miller. “This is such an exciting and well deserved recognition!” Ms. Miller said. “Natalie Wester believes all students are geniuses and treats them that way. She has very high expectations for our students and for herself as the lead learner. Ms. Wester walks into the building everyday prepared to both challenge and nurture all of our students.”

Wester has taken a leadership role in the partnership between the CH-UH schools and John Carroll University. She serves as a mentor teacher, as a data liaison, and a participant in instructional strategies.

“At Garity, Ms. Wester has been instrumental in empowering every student to graph their learning for self-assessment and monitoring as well as sharing this practice with all staff. She also offers coverage to classroom teachers during their planning time to support colleagues’ learning, and is always willing to take a risk to further her learning as well as the learning for her students,” Principal Miller said.

The Ohio Teacher of the Year serves as a spokesperson for Ohio teachers. Upon request, she makes public appearances across the state during the school year while still serving as a classroom teacher. Professional activities include attending state education meetings, providing state or local workshops in her area of expertise; making speeches; serving on state committees; and responding to educational issues from education groups, policymakers and the media.

The winner is expected to be announced sometime this month.

Angela Shaker is coordinator of communications for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.

**Heights students give back to the community**

Jacalyn Elfvin

**Heights High reaches out to the homeless and needy**

After touring the Men’s Shelter in Cleveland, Heights High Choir members were so moved by the plight of the city’s homeless that, they felt compelled to take action.

On Saturday, Dec. 12, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., the Heights High A Cappella Choir, along with the Catch the Spirit Chorale and a professional orchestra, will perform a holiday concert at the homeless shelter while the men eat lunch.

The Heights High Student Council will serve the lunch.

The students are collecting toiletries and clothing for the shelter. They are assembling hygiene bags containing soap, a toothbrush, toothpaste and lotion, regular size deodorant and a washcloth.

Clothing items needed are new socks, larger-sized briefs and new or gently used winter boots also in larger sizes. Donations may be dropped off at the high school to the attention of the Vocal Music Department.

**Food Bank field trip**

During the month of November, the Heights High Transition Class explored the high school to the attention of the Vocal Music Department.

**Chinese language and culture a focus for CH-UH**

Angela Shaker

The Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District’s growing relationships with Chinese educators are paying dividends for CH-UH students through expanding programs and courses.

Beginning next year, Heights High students will be able to take Business Chinese, a new course that focuses on Chinese and American economic principles.

The program is a partnership between the district, the Confucius Institute of Cleveland State, Capitol University of Beijing and others.

The program is part of the district’s vision of P.A.S.S.A.G.E. (Preparing All Students for Success in A Global Economy).

The high school program will build on the progress being made at the elementary level in the Mandarin Chinese class at Roxboro Elementary. That class, in its first year, is already gaining attention. Its teacher, Pi-Nung Grace Chen, recently received a Distinguished Educator Award from the Confucius Institute of Cleveland State University.

Angela Shaker is the communications coordinator for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.

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**Jackie Elfvin is the administrative assistant in the Office of Communications and Community Engagement for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.**
Upward Basketball comes to the Heights

Rhonda Dorfman

What do Cleveland Heights, Kirtland, Solon, Stow, Akron and Willoughby Hills all have in common? An Upward Basketball (Upward) league.

A league, designed for boys and girls K-6th grade, has started at the new multipurpose building at the Church of the Saviour on Lee Road. Upward is the world’s largest Christian sports program for children.

The goal is to teach lessons not only on the court, but off. Upward Basketball is a unique league that offers children the opportunity to build athletic skills, make new friends, and learn good sportsmanship in a healthy competitive environment with guaranteed play time.

“Parents will watch their kids get exercise, have fun and make friends, and learn what’s great about basketball,” says Lauren Lamphear, the League director.

The first games will be on Jan. 23 and the league will conclude with an awards celebration on Sunday, March 12, 2010.

Upward Basketball utilizes a unique game format. Games consist of two 18-minute halves and an eight-minute half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time. Possession alternates in jump ball situations. There are no timeouts, half time.

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This year we really want to thank you, our community, for all of your support.

Happy Holidays and have a great 2010!

Rhonda Dorfman is a recent arrival to the Heights and a volunteer with Upward Basketball.

Every girl wins with ‘Girls on the Run’

Michelle O’Neil

Fifteen elementary students completed Girls on the Run’s second season at Canterbury Elementary in November. The girls met twice a week for 12 weeks and trained to complete a 5k race.

Parent volunteers complete training to coach the local chapter of Girls on the Run. Each session consists of a discussion on topics including self-esteem, team building, physical fitness, nutrition, communication and respect.

Girls on the Run, an international organization, is committed to addressing the physical, emotional, spiritual, social and mental well-being of third to fifth grade girls in the community.

Michelle O’Neil is a published author, a blogger and a contributor to Hopeful Parents, an online community of writer parents who have children with special needs.
Parenting Q&A

Ellen Barrett

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

Q. Although my husband and I really want to keep the holidays simple, my parents and in-laws are already asking what we want for our son’s first Christmas! This is their first grandchild and many of our relatives are very excited to be able to celebrate with a young child—bringing sugarplums, reindeer and all of the traditions around Santa back into the holiday.

We’re not sure this is what we want. How can we celebrate the holiday season with our family and keep it simple at the same time?

A. This is a great time to ask those questions and the perfect time to talk about what you and your husband want your holiday season to look like now and going forward. Your child doesn’t have any preconceived ideas. This is your opportunity to shape your own family traditions.

So ask yourself: How do we see the holiday season looking when our child is three years-old? When he’s eight? When he’s 12? What traditions do we want to carry from our own childhood? What new traditions do we want to create? What role do we want gift giving to play in the holiday? How many gifts do we want our kids to get each year?

Once you’ve thought it through together, your wishes will be easier to communicate with your family. Explain that you want to have the holidays be a reflection of family “old and new.” Give family members specific ideas for gifts. Give it enough thought so the gift fills a void (does your child really need it?), so the gift giver feels it matters. Consider a membership to the zoo, children’s museum or an annual pass to Heights Parent Center. Each year your relative can renew it, too.

You can also consider starting a gift tradition with family members: a similar item each year (trains for the train set for example), or exchanging ornaments for the tree.

However, it’s important to put yourselves in your family’s shoes. Be sure to recognize that gift giving is an expression of love and your child is loved by all of those family members. It should be within that context that you discuss the holidays with your extended family.

Fairmount Co-op Preschool celebrates

Fairmount Co-op preschool is celebrating Beverly Dobrea’s 23rd year teaching. Beverly currently teaches the Pre-K class and runs the Parents Day Out extended day program. The school appreciates Beverly’s long tenure and hopes she will continue to enrich children’s lives for years to come.

CHRISTMAS AT THE COVENANT

Sunday, Dec. 6
10 a.m. Worship
11 a.m. Advent Workshop
Create Christmas Ornaments
11 a.m. Cache Resale Shop
Open for Holiday Shopping!
4 p.m. Circlefest in Univ. Circle
Carol singing and sanctuary tours. Sing along with the Covenant Choir. Windsong & CWRU Chorale.
Christmas Cookie Reception

Sunday, Dec. 13
10 a.m. Worship
11 a.m. Carol singing with Continental Breakfast

Sunday, Dec. 20
10 a.m. Worship
Christmas Pageant
Children of the Covenant create the beautiful nativity tableau in scripture, music and pantomime.

Thursday, Dec. 24
7:30 p.m. Christmas Eve
Candelight Service of Lessons and Carols. Covenant Choirs with organ, brass and timpani.

Sunday, Dec. 27
10 a.m. Worship
Continue the magic of Christmas with festive caroling.

O COME, LET US ADORE HIM

The Church of the Covenant
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Just east of Severance Hall 11205 Euclid Ave. Cleveland, OH 44106
216 421 0482 www.covenantweb.org
Les Groynom, Vidstar Video founder and owner, is closing the business Dec. 31.

Isle of Beads moves
Susan Prendergast

You’ve got to feel for Denise Newman, owner of the Isle of Beads in the historic Heights Rockefeller Building.

“The bad news is I’ve had to move. The good news is I’ve only had to move four doors down. The bad news is I’ve had to move a million beads!” she says.

Denise Newman opened Isle of Beads in July of 1991 to celebrate her love for beads. For 19 years she has collected and offered for sale extremely beautiful and extraordinary beads and objects from all over the world. When I worked for her, my favorite days were the ones itinerant merchants and all sorts of nomadic folk brought crates of treasure right into the store, just as traders have done for thousands of years. (They use trucks now instead of camels.)

Denise never considered moving her store out of Cleveland Heights.

She grew up here and bought her home here with her husband after getting her BFA from Ohio University. She is a supporter of the movement to buy locally, (I Buy NEO.)

For several years Denise has turned her interest to gems and minerals believed to have healing properties. She offers a wide variety of healing stones, and teaches about such crystals.

Now she has moved everything four doors down to a beautiful sunny space in the same historic building recently occupied by Boommodern, and teaches about such crystals.

“How did she move a million beads?” you might ask.

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What brings Cavaliers superstar Shaquille O'Neal to the Heights?

Lisa Lansing, the owner of GYROTONIC® Cleveland and Inspiral Motion.

Lensing, a former professional dancer and athlete, opened Inspiral Motion studio at Fairmount Circle in January 2007.

Lisa Lansing has offered products from all over the world to her customers, who have asked for special herbs, spices and drinks from their cultures. "Our customers buy party trays from our deli," Sameh Malkieh says. "We are happy to prepare beautiful menus, made to order," Sameh Malkieh says.

Our customers are our number-one priority." "I love it," says Nourhadi Nemer of South Euclid, shopping with Larify Shibly, a Cleveland Heights resident for 6 years. "We used to go to the West Side, but they have everything we need here. The vegetables are very reasonably priced. The meat is fresh and tender. They have good Lebanese coffee and the pita is always fresh. They are nice, happy people and we're happy with them." David Lott, of Cleveland Heights, says it's his first visit to the store. "This is truly international," he says. "I've found Latin seasoning, Mediterranean foods and the Thai spices I like. They've got me covered all the way around. I'm thrilled." Sameh Malkieh, co-owner and chief cashier, frequently dashes back to the deli counter to fill a customer request for fresh humus, falafel balls or baba ganoush. He answers questions about the international cuisine. "Imajidaa is a delicious veggie lunch of rice, grilled onions, lentils and spices," he tells a curious shopper.

Fresh lamb, goat and oxtails are very popular," adds his brother Abrahem, "without bones of waste. We try to clean everything and check out so quickly.

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Cleveland Heights resident Pauline Benjamin appreciates being able to shop and check out so quickly. "The store features a full dairy case, hot rotisserie chicken and a variety of fresh vegetables. Our customers buy everyday supplies as well as baked goods, meat or spinach pies and fresh sandwiches made to order," Sameh Malkieh says. "We are happy to prepare beautiful party trays from our deli.

Cleveland Heights and had built a following while teaching at the Heights Parent Center and Cleveland Heights Recreation Center.

I always knew I wanted to open a studio. I loved the way the [European] courses were educational and inspirational and wanted to offer the same kind of services to women in the Heights," she said. "I wanted a studio close to my home, preferably something within biking range. The Fairmount Circle location was really ideal with its free and convenient parking. The building management company worked with me to build a beautiful space with mirrors, class walls and serene décor." A Pilates instructor at Lansing's studio, Lisa Smith, said "Inspiral Motion is a boutique-style studio, specializing in individualized attention for all students. This individualized attention is what sets Inspiral Motion apart from other studios, and far apart from your standard gym setting."

That individual attention as well as the latest in exercise technology — GYROTONIC™ — is what brought Shaq into Lansing's studio.

"It has been an absolute pleasure working with Shaquille O'Neal," Lansing said. As a professional, disciplined, elite athlete, his coordination and ability to focus are unparalleled.

He's a beautiful mover who is able to pick up the complexity of advanced GYROTONIC® energetic concepts and embrace them. We are both pleased with his increased agility, flexibility and mobility. Along with his humble brilliance, his sense of humor keeps it all real.”

"I'm coming to GYROTONIC® Cleveland as often as my schedule allows. That should speak for itself," O'Neal said.

GYROTONIC®, an exercise system developed by professional dancer Juliu Horvath, uses specially designed machines to “simultaneously stretch and strengthen muscles and tendons while also articulating and mobilizing the joints,” according to the GYROTONIC® Health Network Web site.

Gyrokinesis is a set of mat exercises, also developed by Horvath, that draws from yoga and Pilates. The goal is to retain strength and mobility of the joints as one ages through the fluid gyrotropic and gyrokineetic movements.

Lansing is one of only 8 Gyrotactic Master Trainers in the world, and is the first and only one in the State of Ohio.

Lansing's studio offers both private and group classes in GYROTONIC®, GYROKINESIS, Pilates mat, Pilates reformer (Pilates machine), yoga and special classes for those suffering from Scoliosis.

"Each teacher has hundreds of hours of training and focuses on the needs of each student," Smith said. "It is a non-competitive and encouraging environment where students can come and feel at peace as they work toward their fitness goals."

Kaitlin Bushinski and Deonna Bremer Fisher are a journalist now residing in Medina. Deonna Bremer Fisher is executive director of FutureHeights and a long-time Inspiral Motion fan.

Heights welcomes international grocery store

Susan Weber

After working for an import grocer on Cleveland's West Side for 12 years, Abraham Malkieh decided to open an international market in the eastern suburbs with his brother, Sameh. "Customers driving over from the East Side kept asking, 'Why don't you have a store like this closer to us?"' Abraham Malkieh explains. "Now they have their wish!"

Since opening in August, U.S. Jerusalem Imports and Farmers Market has offered products from all over the world. Located in University Corners Plaza at the intersection of Cedar and Taylor roads in University Heights, the store's broad selection is still growing.

"We specialize in Mediterranean, Indian and Pakistani foods and plan to expand our Russian, West Indies and African items. For example, Senegalese customers have asked for special herbs, spices and drinks from their culture," says Abraham Malkieh, who orders all items for the store. "My brother and I welcome customer input, such as a recent request for kosher products.

Our customers are our number-one priority." "I love it," says Nourhadi Nemer of South Euclid, shopping with Larify Shibly, a Cleveland Heights resident for 6 years. "We used to go to the West Side, but they have everything we need here. The vegetables are very reasonably priced. The meat is fresh and tender. They have good Lebanese coffee and the pita is always fresh. They are nice, happy people and we're happy with them." David Lott, of Cleveland Heights, says it's his first visit to the store. "This is truly international," he says. "I've found Latin seasoning, Mediterranean foods and the Thai spices I like. They've got me covered all the way around. I'm thrilled." Sameh Malkieh, co-owner and chief cashier, frequently dashes back to the deli counter to fill a customer request for fresh humus, falafel balls or baba ganoush. He answers questions about the international cuisine. "Imajidaa is a delicious veggie lunch of rice, grilled onions, lentils and spices," he tells a curious shopper.

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FRESH LAMB, GOAT and OXTAILS are very popular," adds his brother Abraham, also the store's butcher. All meat is Halal approved, which refers to merciful Islamic slaughtering practices.

The owners, of Palestinian descent, chose their present location because of the area's ethnically diverse residents. Pleased with the way word of mouth is helping to build a loyal customer base, Abraham Malkieh says, "We like to see people of different cultures feel comfortable and connect to each other here. See, this is how the world should be!"

Susan Weber is an award-winning singer-songwriter living in Cleveland Heights, where she and her husband raised their two sons.


U.S. Jerusalem Imports and Farmers Market

2187 Taylor Road
Mon. - Sat. 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., Sun. 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Call for deliveries 216-321-1062

www.heightsalumni.org

Lisa Lansing and Shaq on the GYROTONIC® pulley tower.

Kaitlin Bushinski and Deonna Bremer Fisher

9th Annual Cleveland Heights High School Alumni Foundation Holiday Cocktail Party & Winter Gala

Saturday, December 12th • 7 to 10 p.m.

The Heights Rockefeller Building • Mayfield & Lee

$15 in advance • $20 at the door • Cash Bar

Join alumni, friends and partygoers at the gorgeous Rockefeller Building for this outstanding event. Enjoy delicious appetizers and amazing desserts while bidding in the silent auction or try your luck with raffle tickets to win an Apple iPod.

To order tickets or for more information call 216-397-3871 or visit www.heightsalumni.org

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Heights Observer December 1, 2009

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Locally owned Heights merchants have a variety of offerings for even the most extensive gift list. Here are some of the Heights Observer’s favorites.

FOODIES
Purchase gift certificates to any of your favorite local restaurants. Or go to www.clevelandindependent.com and purchase The Deck. For $29.95, it looks like a deck of cards and contains 52 $10-off coupons to locally-owned, Northeast Ohio restaurants.

A pan of roasted or barbecued brisket from Mister Brisket. According to the owner, this unique local food item is indigenous to our region and in high demand. Each pan feeds 6 to 10. (Mister Brisket)

ECON-CONSCIOUS
Ecology Man Tague Keyring is made of sustainably-harvested Tague nut from the floor of the Rainforest. Its similarity to ivory discourages poaching. (Revive, $12)

Gift certificate to eco-conscious auto repair, the Lusty Wrench (any denomination or to cover a particular service, such as an oil change)

SPORTS ENTHUSIAST
Yoga gift certificate. (Atma Center offers student discounts!)

PET LOVERS
Moove Town Scratch N Sniff (Around $40, Coventry Cats)

ART LOVERS
Check out the Heights Arts Holiday Store, 2173 Lee Road near the Cedar Lee Theatre for many one-of-a-kind items by local artists.

COLLEGE STUDENTS
Quilted Laptop Bag. This hand-block printed, quilted bag protects a laptop and looks cool. The handle makes it easy to grab, and the large inside pocket provides a place for papers and files. (Revive, $26)

Yoga gift certificate. (Atma Center offers student discounts!)

SIGNIFICANT OTHERS
New sterling jewelry by local artists Pat Pendry and Susan Saltzman made from semi precious gems and Lake Erie natural stones. (various prices, Boommodern)

Yoga gift certificates for healthy New Year’s resolutions! (Green Tara Yoga & Healing Arts)

BEST FRIENDS
Alpaca Stripe Leg warmers made with 100 percent alpaca wool. These colorful leg warmers are handmade by artisans in the South American Andes. Practical and Stylish! (Revive, $26)

North Shore Hooded Pullover made of organic cotton. It offers a refreshing color burst on a gloomy Cleveland winter day. (Revive, $84)

Vintage studio glass from iconic Danish, Swedish and Finnish designers, 1950’s-60’s. (various prices, Boommodern)

PERSON WHO HAS EVERYTHING
Live music at Nighttown. Buy a particular show or let them pick from the hundreds of shows each year. Visit www.nighttowncleveland.com for dates and prices.

Sighed right, top to bottom:
1. Vernon Panton / Denmark Phantom chair, Ugly Doll, Blenko Glass and Edward Winter, (Cleveland School) enamels (Boommodern).
2. Mister Brisket’s barbecued beef.
3. Vintage Flower Pin from Revive.
4. Cat scratcher from Coventry Cats.
5. Quilted Laptop Bag from Revive.
6. New sterling jewelry by local artists Pat Pendry and Susan Saltzman made from semi precious gems and Lake Erie natural stones (Boommodern).
7. Locally-made gelato from La Gelateria on Cedar Road.

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Heights Observer December 1, 2009

All in the family at Mister Brisket

Sarah Wean

Cleveland Heights is full of best-kept secrets and Mister Brisket—a purveyor of custom meat, poultry, and seafood on South Taylor Road—pretty much tops the list.

Combine a national cult following for succulent, baked corned beef, with a fairly new retail outlet for some of the best deli sandwiches around, and you’ve got the makings of a local independent business that does more than its fair share to keep the Heights unique and sustainable.

Mister Brisket has been selling beef brisket, among other things, for 32 years out of a Cleveland Heights storefront near Cedar Road. Sanford Herskovitz, who is Mr. Brisket, and his stepson Hank Kornblut run the business from small desks next to the sunny front window of the store. Started as a home-delivery butcher service for the East Side’s Jewish community, Mister Brisket tweaked its business model three years ago to accommodate the changing tastes and purchasing habits of 21st-century customers. “We embraced change when we decided to sell out of the storefront,” says Kornblut, a former high school wrestling coach who grew up in University Heights.

What changed? Now anyone can walk into the shop and order from an enormous array of terrific made-to-order deli sandwiches. The proprietors encourage people to stop in anytime, including Sundays afternoons. Customers can even view the deli menu and butcher offerings on the Web site and place their orders before they come in.

The strategy of opening a storefront and creating an Internet presence, while continuing a successful home delivery and wholesale business, seems to be paying off. The merchant’s national mail order business is growing, and the staff use mass marketing e-mails, Facebook, word of mouth, and a Web site to sell to an increasingly Internet-savvy clientele.

Kelly Kornblut, Hank’s wife, likes the change. She works the counter and greets everyone who comes in with an easy, charming style. “I love being one-on-one with the customer,” she says. But good service is only part of the equation. Kornblut says their product is top quality and it will always be thus. “Why are we still in business? We have to be about having the very best.”

What does the future hold for Mister Brisket? Even though the neighborhood’s fortunes have been variable over the years, Herskovitz intends to stay put and continue to grow the business. Along with Quintana’s Barber and Dream Spa and a host of other unique anchor businesses including the soon-to-be-opened Melt restaurant, Mister Brisket—with its retro vibe and exceptional service—keeps the Cedar-Taylor corner humming along.

Receive Mister Brisket’s e-mail newsletter by sending an e-mail to misterbrisket@earthlink.net with “Subscribe” in the subject.

Sarah Wean is a community volunteer.

Celebrate the holidays with sparkling wine

Loren Sonkin

With the holidays here, it’s time to enjoy some sparkling wine at celebrations with friends and family. If “real” Champagne (from the Champagne region of France) is out of your budget this year, there are lots of good alternatives at reasonable prices.

Sparkling wines are made all over the world and in many different styles. Unfortunately the shelves include some less-than-stellar ones that are, for my tastes, industrial swill.

Now, if you happen to like Korbel or Martini & Rossi, more power to you. Everybody’s taste is different. If however, you are looking to step it up a bit, without hurting your wallet too badly, here are a couple of my long-time favorites:

**Gruet** is a winery in New Mexico that makes very good sparkling wines that are also great values. The winery was founded by Frenchman, Gilbert Gruet, who also owned a vineyard in Champagne, France. The wine is now made by his son Laurent Gruet. I purchased the Gruet Brut for $16 at Heinen’s in University Heights.

This is a dry wine with lots of effervescence made from a blend of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir grapes. It is slightly nutty with toasty vanilla notes and refreshing green apple flavors. This versatile wine will go well before a meal, during a meal or at parties.

**Prosecco** is from the Veneto, a region in north-east Italy. Prosecco is the name of the grape and the style of wine. This is a very clean and refreshing wine. It has a wonderful nose with vanilla, honey and lemons. Lots of frothy bubbles and a deep golden color make this very pretty in the glass. It’s slightly sweet taste makes it better with hors d’oeuvres or for a toast. I bought my bottle for $14 at Whole Foods Market.

Whatever you are drinking, I hope you have a happy and healthy season and the opportunity to raise a glass with your family and friends.

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

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All Are Welcome!

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All Are Welcome!
Elizabeth Lucas

December is one of those months that is eagerly anticipated the entire year through. The joy of the holidays, the decorations, the twinkling lights, the foods, the aromas, the shopping, the traffic, the rushing around, the chaos... oh, wait, happened to the joy?

Need to take a rest from the preparations? How about a moment to sit and relax? Here is an event to fit the bill.

Cleveland's own River Valley Ringers, now in its fourth successful season of engaging and entertaining audiences through the artistry of handbell ringing, presents 'A Peaceable Christmas' on Sunday, Dec. 20, at 4 p.m., at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 3740 Mayfield Road.

All are invited to join this outstanding music ensemble in the church's lovely sanctuary, glistening in candlelight and the glow of a Christmas tree, for a concert of holiday handbell music designed to lighten the heart and give peace to the soul during this usually stress-filled time. There will be music for the whole family to enjoy.

A free-will offering will be collected during the intermission. A reception will follow the concert. The group's debut CD, 'Christmas: Live with The River Valley Ringers,' will be available for purchase for $15 during the reception.

Elizabeth Lucas is the artistic director and conductor of the River Valley Ringers.

Dobama stops the presses with 'Gutenberg' by Mary O'Malley

For they have basketball, soccer, and golf shoes. For playing games I have to watch. For they have boots that displease them because they are not Uggs. For they have the shoes I wish to have. For they have basketball, soccer, and golf shoes. By Mary O'Malley

As Christopher Smart Considered His Cat Jeoffrey

"Gutenberg! The Musical!" A musical about Johann Gutenberg, the inventor of the printing press? Or is it about the actor Steve Gutenberg? While the play does use as its inspiration the life and times of Johann Gutenberg, it does so in a most entertaining way.

The Ohio premiere of "Gutenberg! The Musical!" occurs on Dec. 4 at Dobama Theatre in Cleveland Heights. Productions of "A Christmas Carol" and "The Nutcracker" are familiar and nice, but Dobama offers its audiences an alternative.

In this two-man musical spoof, a pair of aspiring playwrights perform a backers' audition for their new project, a big, splashy musical about printing press inventor Johann Gutenberg. With an unending supply of enthusiasm, Bud and Doug sing all the songs and play all the parts in their crass historical epic, with the hope that one of the producers in attendance will give them a Broadway contract, fulfilling their misbegotten dreams. Variety described "Gutenberg! The Musical!" as "Zany! zany! zany! One hell of a goofy evening!" and called it "Brilliant!"

The cast features two wonderful actors for this undertaking: Chris Richards and Dane Castle. Marc Moritz directs and Brad Wyner provides musical direction.

The production runs from Dec. 3 (preview) through Jan. 12. Call or check the Web site for times and prices. Dobama Theatre, 2340 Lee Road, Cleveland Heights. Tickets: $8-$22, New Year's Eve Bash $50. Call 216-932-3396, or go to www.dobama.org.

Dianne Boduszak is the managing director of Dobama Theatre.
Pancake breakfast to raise money for the arts

Peggy Spaeth

Ten years ago several organizations in the Coventry neighborhood worked to bring a gateway sculpture to the P.E.A.C.E. Park. Coventry P.E.A.C.E., a grassroots group based at the elementary school, had recently built an imaginative playground at the site, and a piece of art seemed a fitting capstone to the project in this creative community.

The group that came together to select the art included the now-defunct Coventry Neighbors led by Jeffrey Dross, Coventry PTA, Friends of the Library, the city and school district, and the Coventry Special Improvement District. They reviewed the work of many artists, invited five to give a slide talk about their work, and selected three to create a model for the site. The invited artists then presented their ideas in a public meeting and the committee unanimously selected Barry Gunderson to create his Coventry Arch.

While Coventry P.E.A.C.E. was creatively energizing the community around children, green space, and art, the Coventry merchants were creatively energizing themselves around streetscape improvements. The primary energizers were Tommy’s restaurant owner Tommy Fello and Steve Presser of Big Fun. When Fello heard the sculpture project in this creative community, he offered to open his restaurant on New Year’s Day. The stipulation was that the artist would have to wait tables and do dishes because the restaurant was closed and his staff had the day off.

Apparently there were many people from all walks of life whose aspirations included waiting tables at Tommy’s, because there was no shortage of volunteers. The breakfast went off without a hitch, especially thanks to Fello who maintained control of making the pancakes and brought many experienced family members to help. Ron the Flower Clown showed up to entertain with his balloon art. People were asked to tip bountifully and bring an unwanted but greatly appreciated holiday gift (unwrapped) as tips for the waiters and waitresses.

Ever since, Fello has generously opened his door and his heart to the arts. Once a year, people fulfill their fantasy of serving tables at Tommy’s. Some even come back to wash dishes. This New Year’s Day, Heights Arts will once again be the grateful recipient of 100 percent of the proceeds. What better way to start the year than with friends and neighbors at Tommy’s? Eat for art, and help raise $10,000 to continue artful work in the community.

Peggy Spaeth is executive director of Heights Arts.
Can you spare a can?

Heights Observer Staff

The shelves of the Heights Emergency Food Center are growing with hunger. Stock is dwindling. They are looking to YOU for canned goods and dry goods, baby food and diapers.

More hungry people are coming through their doors, and more of them are children.

Last year the all-volunteer food center served 12,000 people. This year, it reached that number by last month.

“I saw many people, too many people, waiting to receive donated food because they couldn’t afford to feed themselves or their families,” Steve Presser said of his visit there. “Nobody should go hungry.” Presser is the owner of Big Fun on Coventry.

The center began in October 1981.

In that first month, the center served nine families. In July of this year it served 422 families, representing 1,105 individuals. About 65 volunteers staff the operation.

“Every time I go there,” Presser said, “I see happy hard-working folks helping out. You’d be hard pressed to find a nicer bunch of people.”

All donations go to the purchase of food. Disciples Christian Church donates the space.

Giant Eagle, Costco, Heinens and Stone Oven make weekly donations of bread and “goodies.” Local churches and temples, Notre Dame, John Carroll and the Heights Libraries give from their food drives.

But it’s not enough. The center needs more. So grab a few things from your shelves or pick up a few more cans at the grocery when you go. Drop them at a participating merchant along Lee Road (look for window signs) or at the center.

Heights Emergency Food Center
Disciples Christian Church
3663 Mayfield Rd.
(across from Severance Center)
216-381-0707

Hours for dropping off donations:
Mondays: 9 to 11:30 a.m.
Tuesdays & Fridays: 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Side by Side

Kathy Dawson

Q: The holidays are coming quickly and I am feeling overwhelmed again. Each year I promise myself to not get caught up in the “holiday have-to’s.” But by the time New Years Day rolls around, it’s all a blur. I’m not sure I’ve enjoyed anything or anyone, especially my husband. What can I do to make this season different?

A: There are two fairly simple things you can do to reduce feeling like the holidays are controlling you rather than you controlling them.

First, either you and your husband schedule a “holiday date” for the two of you or you surprise him with one. Cleveland has much to offer in daytime, evening and weekend holiday festivities. Devote at least three hours out of the season to make a holiday memory together. If you have children in school, you can plan a daytime outing before their last day of class.

Second, whether you are hosting a holiday party or attending one, make a pact with your husband that both of you will each initiate a physical touch of some kind three times during the event. That means you will connect in some way throughout the party a total of six times. This helps avoid the holiday hazard of driving together to an event only to realize at the end of the party that the only time you’ve spent together was in the car.

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

Local holiday events in the Heights


Through 12/10: Heights Arts Holiday Store, 2173 Lee Road.

12/6: Fair Trade Holiday Sale, 7 p.m. – 11:30 p.m. FREE. John Carroll University.

12/7-12/9: Open House/Pottery Sale, Cleveland Potter’s Co-op, 3757 Kensington Road.

12/7-12/13: Cedar Lee Food Drive to benefit Heights Emergency Food Center.

12/14: CityMusic presents “Mostly Mozart” FREE. Fairmount Presbyterian Church.

12/15: Western Reserve Chorale Holiday Concert, 7:30 p.m. FREE. Grace Lutheran Church.

12/16: Vocal Music Concert, 7:30 p.m. Heights High School (corner Cedar & Lee).

12/20: “A Peaceable Christmas”, River Valley Ringers Handbell Choir, 4 p.m. Free will offering. Bethlehem Lutheran Church.


12/26: Fair Trade Holiday Sale, 7 p.m. – 11:30 p.m. FREE. John Carroll University.


To want to be part of this calendar? Post your events at the Heights Observer online calendar: www.heightsobserver.org.
Losing my father: Comprehensive geriatric assessment identifies nature of dementia
Lito Gonzales
Dementia means “deprived of mind.” It is not a disease itself, but a range of symptoms that characterize several diseases and conditions, all of which are identified by declining intellectual functioning that goes beyond normal aging. The decline is severe enough to interfere with the ability to perform routine day-to-day activities.

Alzheimer’s disease is just one condition that falls under the umbrella term of dementia. Although Alzheimer’s progresses differently in different people, memory is always affected. The question for many families is how to tell if memory loss is caused by Alzheimer’s or by another condition, one that may be reversible.

Dr. Matthew Wayne, the medical director of University Hospitals Foley Elder Health Center explains the importance of getting a comprehensive geriatric assessment whenever there are concerns about memory loss, confusion, or other signs of dementia.

“The comprehensive geriatric assessment is a diagnostic tool. It evaluates everything that is going on in a person’s life—medical, functional and psychological, the pattern of symptoms, and which areas of the brain are affected,” explains Dr. Wayne.

There can be many causes of memory and thinking problems, including vitamin deficiency, lack of sleep, thyroid imbalance, depression or medication interactions. Therefore, a thorough geriatric assessment is one of the best ways to determine the actual problem and its cause.

“What often looks like Alzheimer’s or dementia can sometimes be the result of other medical or psychiatric problems,” Dr Wayne points out.

A team consisting of a physician, nurse and social worker and, if indicated, a psychologist and occupational or physical therapist, performs the comprehensive geriatric assessment.

The assessment includes reviewing the extent of the memory loss and a functional review to evaluate its effect on daily activities, lab work, CT scans and other diagnostics.

One frequently used assessment tool is the clock drawing test, which evaluates visual, spatial and executive functioning (i.e. whether numbers on the clock are arranged correctly). When asked to draw a clock showing the time 1:45, my father took the pencil and made some marks on the paper and then angrily pushed away the paper, shouting, “I don’t know how!”

The goal of the assessment team is to develop a comprehensive care plan, which is presented to the person and family at the summary conference. Dr Wayne stresses the importance of involving family members in order to educate them about the problems identified in the assessment. The team outlines the care plan—the interventions and supports that are needed for the patient—and determines which of these are already in place. Finally, the team makes specific recommendations regarding additional community resources.

“The Foley Elder Health Center is built to be a comanagement program,” says Dr. Wayne. “We work with the primary care doctor and stay involved according to the patient’s needs and wishes, and modify the care plan as needed.” The Foley Elder Health Center can be reached by calling 216-404-6445.

Lito Gonzales, a longtime community volunteer, lives in Cleveland Heights with her husband Mark. Her father suffers from Alzheimer’s disease.

Forest Hill Church’s ‘Big Give’ gives back
Sue Lafferty
On March 29, every attendee at For est Hill Church in Cleveland Heights received an unexpected gift—a red envelope containing a fifty dollar bill. Pastor John Lentz, with the support of the church’s governing body, took a risk and passed out $15,000 of church funds. Thus began the “Big Give.”

The pastor reassured everyone that they could do whatever they wished with the money: spend it, save it, pocket it and walk away. The church would not track how the money was used. Then Lentz offered a challenge. He read from the Bible Jesus’ parable of the talents, in which each master gives money to his servants in the hope of seeing a return on his investments. Lentz encouraged each person to be creative, have fun, and use his own talents to multiply the $50 offering over the next two months.

A wide array of fundraising activities ensued including a day-long flea market and various proposals for local, faith based projects which needs a new roof. Presbytarian church in Aduhima, Ghana that needs a new roof.

Forest Hill Church is now accepting proposals for local, faith based projects with a sustainability component for the undesignated funds from the Big Give. For more information and to see photos of the Big Give, see www.fhcpresb.org.

Sue Lafferty is a member of Forest Hill Church.

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Women master home repairs at ‘Home How-To’

Rebecca Stager

On Nov. 4, 15 women joined in song to celebrate their graduation from the 2009 Home How-To course provided by Home Repair Resource Center. Brynna Fish, one of the new graduates, led the group in an original composition—set to the tune of “If I Had a Hammer”—that described the journey these women had taken, from their first tentative use of power tools to their newfound eagerness to tackle home repairs.

Over the previous six months, class participants immersed themselves in carpentry, electrical and plumbing. From laying ceramic tile to running new circuits or replacing sinks and toilets, these women shared a growing confidence in their abilities.

The cost for participants is kept affordable. All international and local activities are based on what the organization calls “education circles.” Heidi Saleh, recruitment coordinator for Youngstown-Cleveland CISV, describes an education circle as a set curriculum that focuses on global awareness, diversity, human rights and environmental responsibility.

The deadline for applications for summer 2010 travel is Dec. 10. Adult leaders are also needed to accompany village and exchange delegations. For more information about CISV programs, sponsorship and volunteer opportunities, visit www.cisvusa.org.

“When you get to know someone of a different culture one-on-one, it is difficult to hold on to prejudices and stereotypes,” Bell says. “It would be a very different world if all 11-year-olds were required to do this [kind of travel].”

For information about the local chapter and its programs, contact Ketti Finneran at 216-536-2375 or by e-mail at ketti@whosfirst.com or Heidi Saleh at 330-533-9939 or emaly33@hotmail.com.

Ketti Finneran has lived in University Heights for the last 25 years with her husband Rick Brown, a lifetime resident of the Heights. They have two teenagers, Gabriel and Madison.

Journey to Bethlehem at Disciples Christian Church

Ronald Werman

Disciples Christian Church will present a Christmas gift to the community on Sunday, Dec. 13, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., with Journey to Bethlehem, a walk through drama that recreates the sights and sounds of Bethlehem’s marketplace at the time of Christ’s birth.

Before entering Bethlehem, participants may have an audience with King Herod and then be counted in the census. Once in Bethlehem, they can interact with street merchants and view some animals. They can watch craftsmen at their work and be prodded along by Roman guards. They can listen while townspeople, shepherds and other biblical characters set the stage for the discovery of the newborn baby in the stable.

As participants wait their turn to enter Bethlehem, they will be entertained by the No Strings Attached puppetry, listen to music performances and participate in a Christmas carol sing-along.

Disciples Christian Church is located at 3663 Mayfield Road (at Yellowstone across from Severance Town Center) in Cleveland Heights.

For more information, call 216-382-5344 or visit www.discipleschristian.org.

Ron Werman is a Cleveland Heights resident and member, elder, choir member and communications chairperson of Disciples Christian Church.

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