Facilities committee needs more time to complete its work

Steve Shergalis, director of business services for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District, and the point person for the school facilities committee, announced new dates for the committee’s remaining public meetings. Two subcommittees—facilities options and financial assessment—are charged with creating options for the school board to consider and assessing options and financial assessment—are charged with creating options for the school board to consider and assessing.

Cleveland Heights is one of Walk Score’s top three most walkable cities in Ohio—tied with Athens for second, just behind Lake-wood. It ranks in the top 10 percent nationally.

Defending cockamamie spellers, Beth Woodside, Lisa Banyo and Kathleen Collins, who made up the team OOPSALA (Oracular Orthographers Publicly Support Annoyingly Lengthy Acronyms) came out on top again this year. They correctly spelled the word reussen at the seventh round of the Reaching Heights Adult Community Spelling Bee. They beat out the other defending cockamamies, Baratrous Orthographers, made up of Becky Bynum, Bonnie Bealer and John Lazzaretti, who misspelled the word iknipeau, and Monticell/ Noble/Oxford spellers, Jackie Kazarian, Kathy Sortis and Ranalle Huber, who missed the word prosalus; Twenty-five teams competed for the coveted Plastic Bee trophy in the aududrion of Cleveland Heights High School on Feb. 22. Earlier in the evening, Susie Keenan was recognized for her work on behalf of Heights public schools, Patrick Mullin, Reaching Heights executive director, presented her with the 2011 Friend of Public Education Award.

Cleveland Heights is tops in walkability

A new neighborhood-quality metric is commanding the attention of home buyers, according to such influential publications as The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, and—The Heights Observer.

The news is that home buyers are paying more attention than ever to walkability. Fewer and fewer people in the market for a house want large lots in remote places, where little is going on. Several factors make walkable neighborhoods more attractive, including a desire to avoid traffic congestion, an aversion to having to drive everywhere, and rising oil prices. Walkable neighborhoods also tend to have vibrant street life and a friendly character.

The most popular way to measure walkability is to consult Walk Score at www.walkscore.com. Type in a street address and receive a score comparing homes in your city and information on the most popular way to measure walkability.

to go and interesting neighborhoods to see, and walking is a convenient way to get there.

Unlike many suburbs, Cleveland Heights has sidewalks, stop signs at intersections, flashing school speed limit displays on major roads, and crossing guards so that kids can benefit from safe exercise by walking to school. Programs to encourage more kids to walk or bike to school are under way. In addition, all public sidewalks are wheelchair accessible, and our community center has treadmills and an indoor track so residents can keep trekking during the winter months.

With snow melting and spring starting on March 20, it’s time to put on your walking shoes and head for our Cleveland Heights is opposed to the Huron trauma center

Last October it was announced that Cleveland Clinic would be closing the Level II trauma center at Huron Hospital, and trauma cases would be moved to a new facility at Hillcrest Hospital in Mayfield Heights. This announcement came as a shock to many East Cleveland residents who view the trauma center as an important part of their community and its health and safety. The closing of the trauma center will have an effect on many other suburbs, including Cleveland Heights and University Heights.

At the time, the mayors of Cleveland and East Cleveland filed a lawsuit to keep the trauma center open. Cleveland Heights Mayor Ed Kelley stated, “Cleveland Heights is opposed to the closing of the trauma center and we were prepared to join in the lawsuit.” However, the suit was dropped before Cleveland Heights could officially lend its support. Congresswoman Marcia Fudge met with Cleveland Clinic CEO Toby Cosgrove and other stakeholders on Nov. 1. At that meeting, an agreement was reached to keep the trauma center open for 90 days, while the Clinic agreed to further examine the impact that closing the Huron Hospital trauma center would have on emergency first-responders and on MetroHealth Medical Center.

These 90 days have passed, and it is uncertain how long the trauma center will remain open.

Northeast Ohio Alliance for Hope (NOAH) and others have made efforts to organize the citizens in East Cleveland to fight to keep the Huron Hospital trauma center open, and has held a series of community meetings.

At the NOAH meeting on Feb. 7, East Cleveland City Councilwoman Mildred Brewer expressed concern that they had not organized enough people, especially those outside of East Cleveland, to conduct a successful protest. She mentioned Cleveland Heights in particular as a community that would be affected and needed to be included in the efforts to negotiate with the Cleveland Clinic.

Two major points were raised by East Cleveland residents during that meeting. One was that East Cleveland has a high rate of traumas compared to the rest of Northeast Ohio. The second is that moving Level II trauma cases to Hillcrest would lengthen ambulance response time throughout the area. Cleveland Clinic officials have commented that even without the trauma center, the Huron Hospital emergency room will remain open, and that there are 17 emergency departments in Greater Cleveland that can stabilize patients.

Around 60 people attended a Feb. 14 rally held by NOAH and Black on Black Crime Inc., including represen...
More ways than ever to use the Observer

Early blogs have ranged from commentary on hurlies, to ideas for dealing with the imbalance of students and facilities in the public schools, to insights about the proposed development of the former Oakwood Club. We’re actively looking for more voices. If you’re interested, contact me directly (see the end of this column).

Finally, to help bring all of this information together and make it easy to find, we have reformatted the Observer’s e-mail newsletter. The goals were to make it look better, to pack in more information, and to get it into people’s hands more often. So if you’re not in the habit of checking the Heights Observer website, you can get a digest every week of the most interesting and important articles from the website, the blogs, the forum and other sources.

Right now, about 3,500 people receive the newsletter weekly. If you’re not among them, sign up via the subscription link in the left-hand menu of the Observer home page.

All of this is part of a project to make the Observer a vital source of information, discussion and engagement around issues that are important to the Heights community.

Observer online exclusives

Only some of the information that the Observer collects makes it into the printed edition. If you haven’t been online lately, here’s some of what’s waiting for you:

From our new blogs: (blogs.futureheights.org)

South Euclid’s elected working crew
 Insights into revenue lost to CH-UH schools when South Euclid bought and razed the now-vacant Cedar Center North.

Diamonds in our midst
 A fresh view of John Carroll as a place where even non-students can find inspiration, or, as Richard Andrews puts it, “a Cain Park for the mind.”

Is closing CHUH buildings the only solution?
 Some alternatives to simply closing school buildings, from one member of the CHUH district’s Facilities Review Committee.

Groupon’s ad flasco is a lesson learned
 How Groupon’s Super Bowl advertising campaign shed light on the high cost of businesses that help drive local merchants to the bottom.

On the forum: (www.futureheights.org/deck)

What is regionalism really?
 Opinions on the need for a grander view of regionalism, beyond the obvious things, such as joint bidding for street paving.

Winter walkability
 Comments on sidewalks that don’t get shoveled when it snows.

There’s lots more exclusive content about your community online. Go explore at www.futureheights.org.

Correction: Heights Floral Shoppe

The street address and web address for the Heights Floral Shoppe were incorrect in the February issue. The street address is 3461 Fairmount Boulevard and the web address is: www.heightsfloralshoppe.com.

Innovations we’d like to see

Feeling lucky? Try your hand at Cleveland Heights’ new slot-machine parking meters. Guaranteed to make parking more fun.

Cleveland Heights resident, artist/writer Ralph Solowitsch, was born in 1947 in Munich, Germany, the son of Holocaust survivors. He began doodling very early on, first in German and then later in English. His father gave him motivational advice “Stop your doodling, you are wasting time and will amount to nothing.” Fast forward 55 years, thousands of dollars for therapy, and he still can’t stop doodling.

Bob Rosenbaum, chairman of the Observer’s editorial advisory committee and FutureHeights board member, writes this column to provide transparency and understanding about the Observer.
Myths about the Oakwood Club

Fran Meatch

We Recycle is undistinguished compared to the while some of the rooms have a faded maintenance costs necessary to make take on the extraordinary repair and Foster home shortly after it sold. As I had the opportunity to tour the in Ambler Heights, and pass it nearly ev I know the property because I lived in Ambler Heights.

Myth: It's too late to do anything, because South Euclid City Council will vote for the development, as proposed. If the city council votes to rezone, there would still be an opportunity to most the question to a referendum. There are some indications that South Euclid residents would not approve a zoning amendment for Oakwood.

Myth: Citizens for Oakwood wasted too long to do anything. Citizens for Oakwood started trying to buy the property when it went on the market a year ago. We held a public meet- ing in February 2010, formed a steering committee, and asked the Trust for Public Land to help us buy the property. The trust purchased a 90-day option on the property; but could not raise enough money to buy it within that time. The option lapsed in October, after which the citizens group launched a new effort to buy Oakwood and turn it into a park.

Myth: The prospective developer is generous to offer the City of South Euclid 21 acres of green space from the Oakwood property, for the price of one dollar. This is a ploy. If the land is rezoned as commercial, its value will increase. If the developer sells the land to South Euclid for a dollar, it can then write off the value of the land at its new, higher, value. The company will never pay taxes on the greenspace and will not have to pay to maintain it. This is comparable to donating your front yard to the city so you would no longer have to pay taxes on it or maintain it and then claiming your donation as a contribution to the city's greenspace. Additionally, the area designated for greenspace is unsuitable for development because of access limitations and other problems.

Myth: The retail stores and restaurants (for the proposed Walgreens) will provide 400 full-time equivalent jobs and an annualized overall payroll of $1 million. To generate this much money, those 400 jobs would have to pay an average annual salary of $30,000 a year. Most restaurant and retail jobs pay at a lower rate, but, even if these figures turned out to be accurate, the South Euclid would be likely to collect in added income taxes would be $240,000 per year. Keep in mind that a single new traffic signal can cost $250,000, and the cost of providing police and other city services to a 4-acre retail complex would be substantial.

South Euclid needs the money that a development like this could bring. Like most other municipalities, the city is experiencing difficult times financially, but while development may be needed, it should be the right kind in the right place. We will have a much better development at Oakwood, within a short distance of the cleared Cedar Center site, help clear the obstacles to Cedar Center's redevelopment? Permitting development in the largest green space left in the inner ring suburbs is not the financial solution for South Euclid.

Residents of South Euclid should ask their city government to insist on...
Cleveland Heights City Council

Meeting highlights

JANUARY 18, 2011

Council Member Bonita W. Caplan was absent.

Bicycle-friendly city

Resident Nicholas Mattner, representing the Cleveland Heights Bicycle Coalition, thanked the council for taking steps to make the city bicycle-friendly and spoke in support of a proposed grant application to be voted on later in the meeting. (See “Transportation studies” below.)

Street resurfacing bids

Council authorized the issuance of joint bid specifications with Shaker Heights, and possibly with University Heights, for street resurfacing. Mayor Kelley said he expects that this agreement will help deliver services better and save money.

Cleveland Heights Boulevard property

Council authorized the sale of city-owned property at 1163 Cleveland Heights Blvd., which was rehabilitated with Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) funds, and also authorized down-payment assistance funding for the purchaser. The proceeds from the sale will be returned to the NSP fund and used to renovate the next property in the program.

Transportation studies

In conjunction with the City of Cleveland and University Circle Inc., council approved the submittion of two grant applications to the Northeast Ohio Areaweide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) for transportation studies and program execution to be funded under the Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative Planning Grant Program. The first, which was also in conjunction with the Cleveland Heights Bicycle Coalition, will focus on improving bicycle travel between University Circle and Cleveland Heights. The second, which was in conjunction with the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, will focus on improving mass transit travel and pedestrian connections between University Circle and Cleveland Heights. Council Member Tumas commented that, from a financial standpoint, the connection with University Circle is part of the broad vision aimed at building an economic future for Cleveland Heights.

State of the City

Mayor Kelley spoke briefly about the state of the city, mentioning the availability of indoor swimming at Cleveland Heights High School, work on development of the strategic plan, green zoning, the contract with the Regional Income Tax Agency, the recreational soccer program and improvements to Denison Park, transportation studies, and the Kensington apartment building. He mentioned the Oakwood Country Club space improvements to Denison Park, transportation studies, and the Kensington apartment building. He mentioned the Oakwood Country Club space enhancements to Denison Park, transportation studies, and the Kensington apartment building. He mentioned the Oakwood Country Club space enhancement.

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Meeting highlights

McDonald’s traffic study
Mayor Infeld stated that although the data has been collected for the McDonald’s traffic study, the study has not been completed because the information has not yet been presented to the council or to McDonald’s. Council passed a motion to hire URS to complete the study, including the analysis of the data from the two stations with the city. McDonald’s will deposit approximately $23,000 into the escrow account to pay for the study.

Wiley School parking area
Council approved the school district’s proposal for changes in the driveway and parking area behind Wiley Westlake School. The district plans to add a third lane and a net gain of six parking spaces to reduce congestion. Also, the plans would screen off the service area with evergreens, create a new kitchen delivery area, and relocate bike racks. These changes would enhance the entryway.

Kolbel proposal
Fred Balatin of Kolbel Yod Chaim Mordches, 220 South Green Road, presented a proposal to connect the two houses to gather for more space. They are requesting a special use permit to use the second house for programming. Lee Friedman and David Leavitt of Friedman Leavitt Accounting Firm, which is in the commercial strip adjacent to Kolbel, oppose the project. They noted that although Kolbel has arranged for parking spaces at Heinens and also at the former Temple Emanuel, people attending Kolbel would still have to park in the strip. The plans do include additional parking spaces behind the second house. The planning commission has approved the project.

Road asphalt
Council approved a joint bid with Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights for road asphalt. Shaker Heights will lead contract negotiations. Also, five streets will be paved in conjunction with the Cleveland Water Department when the city’s water system is repaired. Upcoming projects include logging road pavement and sidewalks in the city.

Senior transportation
Council authorized Mayor Infeld to request a six-month contract with Senior Transportation Connection, limited to 80 rides per month with unlimited destinations, and limited individual riders to two rides per week. The contract currently costs $10 per ride for each year served by only 26-27 residents on a regular basis.

Increase in revenues
Don Leavitt, commission representative, reported a revenue gain of $43,000 over that of 2009, primarily due to increases in home remodeling and contractor registrations.

Death by Delay

POINT OF VIEW

Anita Kazarian

It is a puzzle. It appears that a new slogan may be added to the legislative lexicon when it comes to describing the decision-making process of the University Heights City Council: Death by Delay. You might ask, “What’s new?”

Most issues that come before this legislative body are routine, but some are not. The old adage—“Salesmanship begins when the customer says no”—is also true for legislation. Their availability, inclination and stmtainmanship are revealed when issues have voters supporting opposite outcomes.

Complex issues council in 2008 are still with us in 2011. One of the most pressing is the need to update zoning ordinances. In 2008, then-Mayor Rolly Rotschild urged council to approve a proposal of remodeling and development consultants, D. B. Hartt Inc., to perform a zoning code update. This first appeared on council’s agenda on January 20, 2009.

A lack of comprehensive zoning updates hinders economic development and pits neighbor against neighbor. When zoning issues are unclear, appliants file for variances. Recent conflicts include the Waterway Car Wash on Warrensville Center Road; a McDonald’s application for the same space; an application to operate a pizza shop in a house of worship; the conversion of a residential housing stock into houses of worship on less than the legal minimum of three acres; and an application by John Carroll University for an ROTC ofﬁce and. E. Carder ﬁeld.

While an immediate yes-or-no vote by council is not always possible, applicants and neighbors deserve a timely resolution. Delays foment divisiveness among neighbors, and are costly to local businesses. Delaying simple votes makes decision making process of the University Heights City Council a puzzle. To clarify, it poses a new slogan: “Salesmanship begins when the customer says no.”

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University Heights City Council

Meeting highlights

JANUARY 18, 2011

Heights Observer was present.

State of the City address
In her State of the City address, Mayor Infeld stated that although there are still financial setbacks, the city ended 2010 with an $180,000 surplus, $500,000 more than was budgeted, due to higher tax collections from the T.I.A.F. (Regional Income Tax Agency) and the avoidance of a large estate. Also, the mayor had reduced personnel, increased efficiencies, reduced costs for supplies and printing, and eliminated erroneous billing from the Illuminating Company.

Mayor Infeld said she is meeting with mayors of neighboring communities to identify ways to share resources and lower costs.

New service director
Resident Sheila Sloban praised the assistant service director for handling the job of interim service director seamlessly. Rob Jamieson was appointed as the new service director.

Senior services manager
Wayne Strasser was reappointed as senior services manager. Councilman Phil Perald praised Strasser for the quality and range of programs he organized at the University Heights Library.

There were suggestions to promote programs through the phone notification system and to have them videotaped by Heights High students and posted on the city’s website.

TIF repayment plan
Virginia Benjamin of Calfee, Halter & Griswold reported on the negotiation for payment of monies owed from TIF (Tax Increment Financi- ing) for University Square. One-fourth of the two million dollars has been repaid thus far. Rollback payments have not been made and monies are owed to the school district. The initial amounts owed are offset by reduced property taxes, primarily at University Square Center. The mayor’s budget will include $60,000 per year for the next seven years to pay off the rollback funds.

Board of Zoning Appeals case
Robert Keizman appeared before council with his attorney and contractor to seek approval to add a third lane and a net gain of six parking spaces behind the city. The plans would screen off the service area with evergreens, create a new kitchen delivery area, and relocate bike racks. These changes would enhance the entryway.

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LOOK FOR EARLIER AND OCTOBER POSTINGS OF MEETING SUMMARIES ONLINE AT WWW.HIGHTSOBSERVER.ORG. SEE DISCLAIMER ON PAGE 4.

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Heights Observer March 1, 2011

www.heightsobserver.org
French government honors local man

Jewel Moulthrop

If John Ewing’s smile seems a little broader these days, it is probably because he’s been knighted by the French government. He is Sir John now. In a ceremony on Feb. 3 at the Cleveland Institute of Art (CIA), Ewing officially became a Chevalier in the Order of Arts and Letters of the Republic of France, an honor he shares with T.S. Eliot, Rudolf Nureyev, Robert Redford and David Bowie, among others.

As director of the Cinematheque and associate director of film at the Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA), Ewing has brought more than 8,500 films—many of them from France— to local Cleveland audiences for more than two decades.

In accepting the honor, Ewing said that this recognition is especially meaningful because France has been at the forefront of filmmaking for more than a century. “France is where movies were first exhibited publicly in 1895.”

He received a letter from the French cultural attaché in Cleveland, stepped in to present the medal and, later that evening, was introduced as Ewing approached the stage to introduce that evening’s movie at the Cinematheque, the audience erupted in applause. With characteristic modesty, Ewing held up his hand, saying, “No, no, that was Thursday night.”

The evening ended with a screening of a French film, titled “Le ciel est a vous” (The Sky is Yours). Made in 1944, during the Nazi occupation of France, the film celebrates the strength and courage of ordinary French citizens.

On the following Saturday night, as Ewing approached the stage to introduce that evening’s movie at the Cinematheque, the audience erupted in spontaneous applause. With characteristic modesty, Ewing held up his hand, saying, “No, no, that was Thursday night.” It’s clear that the Heights considers him a local treasure.

For information about the film schedule at the Cinematheque, go to www.clevelandart.org; for the film program at the Cleveland Museum of Art, go to www.clevelandart.org; go to “calendar” and click on “films.”

Jewel Moulthrop is a resident of Cleveland Heights, cinephile, and an occasional contributor to the Heights Observer.

Heights League of Women Voters chapter meets with new county representatives

Maryann Barnes and Carol Gibson

Braving a nasty winter storm on Feb. 2, members and guests of the Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters, Cuyahoga Area, gathered to chat with the new Cuyahoga County Council members representing Cleveland Heights and University Heights: Julian Rogers (District 10, Cleveland Heights) and Sunny Simon (District 11, University Heights). The evening’s format contained no speeches—only questions and answers. Some of the issues covered included:

New council

The new county council comprises 11 hardworking and focused members. Council seats are part-time positions with salaries of $34,500. However, facing the task of forming a new government from scratch, current council members are averaging 40-hour weeks. Some are juggling other jobs, but most are working full time as county representatives.

Both Simon and Rogers expressed positive feelings about their fellow council members, describing a group that is bonding well as they tackle the enormous task of building a new governmental structure. The charter, a mere 25 pages, provides only a basic skeleton for county governance.

Challenges

Simon remarked that she discovered, and is studying, a book describing more than 50 countywide agencies and commissions. Grappling with these bodies will be a major challenge for the new council.

The new charter prominently features the importance of economic development. The council has formed a council committee for economic development, but the charter also requires formation of a nine-member off-council economic development commission and specifies selection of its membership. One member, which council must select, is to represent nonprofits and educational institutions involved in economic development. Both Simon and Rogers noted that defining this latter position is a complex task for the council. It may ultimately fall to the charter review committee to provide an improved definition.

Issues for charter review

One looming issue for charter review is the overlap of some of the council representatives’ terms and the redrawing of district lines, which will take place as a result of the 2010 census. For example, Simon was elected to a four-year term for District 11, but the lines will be redrawn in the middle of her term. The change could separate her from the communities and voters she was elected to represent.

Accomplishments

The council is taking steps to handle a backlog of three to five thousand pending real estate property appraisal cases. It effectively countered pressure from both the county executive and the media to fire, regardless of qualifications, all those who had been previously seated on the Board of Revisions. While the Board of Revisions clearly has had problems, the council decided that such an approach would not be fair to those on the prior board who were, in fact, qualified.

Future for municipalities

Both representatives expressed optimism about how the new government was developing and its promises for the region. Citing an example of improved communication between municipalities and county government, Rogers noted that in monitoring his district, he became aware of the sustainability study commissioned by the Cleveland Heights City Council. The study impressed him and he believes that other municipalities and the county, as a whole, could and should take this approach. The previous county government, he felt, did not have the infrastructure to facilitate this level of awareness between the county and the cities. Both he and Simon believe that the new governance structure will foster regional solutions and cooperative efforts among the municipalities.

Maryann Barnes and Carol Gibson are co-chairs of the Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters, Cuyahoga Area.
Heritage Home Program offers low-interest loans for home improvement

Jamie Bertron

The Heritage Home Program is a joint initiative of the City of Cleveland Heights and the Cleveland Restoration Society (CRS), offering low-interest home repair and renovation loans for homeowners of properties built before 1961. CRS found the CRS tech staff easy to work with, commenting that CRS "took a very personal approach to the process." Another word of advice from the Cones following their home renovation project: check out the local Habitat for Humanity. ReStore. You can find great salvaged materials that are inexpensive and keep with the historic styling of many local homes.

CRS’s Heritage Home Program currently has a fixed interest rate of 3.5 percent or lower for 5–10 years, and is financed through KeyBank. Homeowners can use this program to fund a variety of home maintenance and improvement projects including: interior remodels, weatherization, exterior maintenance, mechanical systems, new roofs and much more. Since this is a preservation-based program, the house should retain the majority of its original exterior materials.

CRS also offers free technical assistance to residents throughout the City of Cleveland Heights. Heritage staff provides in-depth assistance to homeowners in the form of site visits, historic color consultations and information resources.

There are no out-of-pocket costs for the loan, no closing costs, no points, and no income restrictions, and interest from the loan is tax-deductible. For more information about the Heritage Home Program, or to see if your house qualifies, contact CRS at 216-416-1000 or www.clevelandrestoration.org.

Jamie Bertron is a historic preservation specialist with the Cleveland Restoration Society.

Heights-area students take the lead in musical theater production

Laura Dorr

Three Cleveland Heights youths will star in "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat," produced by the St. Paul’s Episcopal Church Drama Dreamers theater program. Heights High seniors Gwen Donley and Zena Levon and Hathaway Brown senior Lydia Simon landed lead roles in the musical.

Drama Dreamers is a unique theater program that is entirely student run. Youths in grades 6–12 make up the cast, band and tech crew, and serve as director, set designer, stage manager and choreographer. It is a special opportunity for students to get experience in all aspects of theater, while exploring productions that encourage them to develop personally and spiritually through religious dramatic material. Although the program is run through St. Paul’s, it is open to young people of all backgrounds.

“I love that Drama Dreamers is very friendly and accepting,” said Donley. “It provides the lead role of Joseph, and grew up in the St. Paul’s parish. “This is my seventh year in the program, and I love that you don’t have to worry about intense competition or other stress you get with a typical youth theater program, because this one is all-inclusive.”

Now in its 14th year, the program produces an annual spring musical as well as an Advent dessert theater, featuring short play monologues or student-written works. Donley, Levon and Simon have been core members of the group since middle school, participating in as many of the shows as their busy schedules allow.

Donley and Levon are involved in Model U.N. at Heights High, as well as other student organizations. They also participate in summer theater camps and have been spotlighted in various orchestral and musical groups. Simon and Donley both sing in the St. Paul’s choir, and Simon has starred in numerous productions at Hathaway Brown.

With such busy schedules, it is a true testament to the Drama Dreamers program that these students stay involved.

“I love the environment of the program,” explained Simon, who stars in the production as the Narrator. “We are able to produce great shows with great people.”

Levon, who plays Jacob/Potiphar, agrees with Simon. “My friends had been involved for a long time and they got me interested in the program. I love being a part of something where I can see my friends from different schools, and then have a fun, finished product to show for it.”

Based on a story from the book of Genesis, "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" tells the tale of Joseph, a favored son and prophetic dreamer. Jealous of the preferential treatment Joseph receives, his brothers sell him into slavery. The story promotes themes of forgiveness and reconciliation, as the brothers eventually end up groveling for forgiveness at the feet of Joseph, who has risen to a high post in Egypt. With an engaging Hodgodge of musical styles, from country-western and calypso to pop and rock ‘n’ roll, this Old Testament tale is an infectious, feel-good, comedic production.

Directed by Shaker Heights High School senior Emily Paetz, the show opens on Friday, March 11 at 7 p.m., with additional shows on Saturday, March 12 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, March 13 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

St. Paul’s Episcopal Church is located at 2757 Fairmount Blvd., on the corner of Fairmount Boulevard and Coventry Road, in Cleveland Heights. Free parking is available in the St. Paul’s parking lot, on the corner of North St. James Parkway and Fairmount Boulevard.

Tickets are $7; $5 for children 12 and under. Tickets are available at the door or by calling 216-932-8518. Proceeds are encouraged, as seats are limited. All ticket profits support the programs of the Youth Stewardship Outreach Board.

Laura Dorr is a journalist and artistic consultant for the Drama Dreamers theater program in Cleveland Heights.
Heights families host St. Baldrick’s Day to fight childhood cancer
Sarah Roath

This Saint Patrick’s day, hundreds of Clevelanders will lose their hair. At least that’s what two Heights families hope. For the ninth consecutive year, Cathy Richer, her husband Peter, and sister-in-law Cari Ross are spearheading the Cleveland version of St. Baldrick’s Day, the annual head-shaving fundraiser benefiting childhood cancer research.

This year’s St. Baldrick’s Foundation, founded in 2000, funds more childhood cancer research grants than any other private organization. In just one decade, the organization has shaved nearly 150,000 heads worldwide, earning in excess of $50.6 million. The Cleveland event is consistently in the foundation’s top ten percent of fundraisers.

Despite this success, childhood cancer research remains one of the least-supported areas of cancer research. This year’s St. Baldrick’s Day celebration (named for the combination of bald and St. Patrick) will be held on March 17 at A. J. Rocco’s in downtown Cleveland, beginning at 3 p.m. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to go bald. Participants shave their heads to demonstrate their support for childhood cancer patients who often lose their own hair during treatment.

“We have shaved men, women, children, spouses and families. The youngest participant to date was six and the oldest was well into his seventies,” said Richer. While a clean shave is certainly part of the fun, it’s not the only way to help, donations are always welcome.

The Richers and Ross held the first Cleveland St. Baldrick’s day in 2003. That year they shaved 25 heads and raised $47,000. Since then, they’ve shaved more than 700 heads and raised more than $1 million. This year, they’re planning to shave more than 150 heads and are hoping to raise $50,000. Both Rainbow Babies and Children’s Hospital and Case Western Reserve University have benefited from these efforts as recipients of multiple St. Baldrick’s grant monies.

The Richers have a personal connection to childhood cancer. Their son battled and beat a particularly rare brain cancer as a toddler. All of his treatment took place at Rainbow. After their own experience, the Richers felt a responsibility to help fund world-class research and treatment for other families and children fighting childhood cancer.

For more information about St. Baldrick’s Day, visit www.St.Baldrick’s.org and look for the Cleveland / A. J. Rocco’s link. Sarah Roath is a lifelong Cleveland Heights resident.

Disciples Christian Church participates in 2011 Homeless Stand Down

Ronald Werman

For the fourth straight year, Disciples Christian Church provided a lunch as part of the Homeless Stand Down at the Masonic Auditorium downtown. Organized by InterAct Cleveland, the Homeless Stand Down provides boots, coats, mini checkups, podiatry services, haircuts and professional quality portraits to the needy of Greater Cleveland over three days.

On Sunday, Jan. 30, around 53 members of Disciples Christian Church travelled to the Masonic Auditorium to prepare and serve lunch for those in attendance. Preparing for an estimated 700 people, members of the church donated chili and brownies, with other food—sandwiches and salad—provided by the Cleveland Foodbank. Bonnie Goldner, outreach cochair, organized the volunteers and food delivery for the event.

Because the event coincided with Sunday services, Reverend Kristine Eggert invited the congregants at the contemporary service, at 9 a.m., to participate in the Homeless Stand Down. Following the service, many people carpool downtown to help serve lunch. The traditional service, at 11 a.m. ran smoothly with the help of the elders.

Disciples Christian Church continues its long standing tradition of community service and ministries. For more information about Disciples Christian Church, call 216-382-5344 or visit the church’s website, www.discipleschristian.org. Ronald Werman is an elder at Disciples Christian Church.

Advertise in the Heights Observer www.heightsobserver.org
Heights Observer March 1, 2011

Noble Neighborhood Library manager Jo Ann Vicarel retired. Jo Ann Vicarel retired as of Dec. 31, 2010. At the December meeting the board issued a resolution in her honor, which included reference to her work with Library Journal as both a reviewer and the author of a monthly column, her book The Reader’s Guide to the Police Procedure, her blog on mysteries that is followed worldwide, and her establishment of the Noble Knitter’s Circle, which makes items for local charities.

Donations to the library

The board accepted gifts given to the library in the last quarter of 2010. A total of $3,000 was given anonymously to the Teen Writing Program with an additional $500 contributed by Reachin’ Heights. Chester Gordon donated $300 for books and materials for the Coventry Library.

Personnel changes

Steve Haynie, youth adult services coordinator, has accepted the position of South Euclid branch manager in the Cuyahoga County Public Library System.

Dean Schurr, marketing and public relations manager, resigned to take a position with Bowling Green State University.

Friends of the Library

Friends president Adaora Schmiedl spoke about the group’s annual meeting presentation with Jo Ann Vicarel and Richard Montanari. The ongoing book sale will move to the café area near the second floor walkway with the projection of monthly sales rising from $1,700 to $2,500.

E-book readers to circulate

Nooks and Kindles are now available for use outside the building, and an iPad is available in the computer gallery for two-hour periods. The library will offer a class, The Library@Home, to help readers use the new technology. The first class is scheduled for Feb. 22 at 7 p.m.

Drop in state funding

The Ohio Library Council has identified a number of areas in which Ohio’s biennium budget may affect libraries and believes that libraries should prepare for a 15 percent reduction in state funding in 2011.

Public service grants for 2011 include:

• “Art to Go” children’s programs in every branch
• Continuation of the Local Authors series
• ACT/SAT test preparation classes
• The grand reopening of the Noble Neighborhood Library
• Writing and reading clubs in the schools
• An anime festival
• A new, weekend story hour for working parents

LWV observer: Anne S. McFarland. See the complete list online at www.heightsobserver.org.

Spring Break Writers’ Camp to groom budding authors

Nancy Levin

Local writers and educators Amy Rosenbluth and Cynthia Larsen have a dream. They want to encourage young authors from the Heights to pursue creative writing excellence. Both have worked with the public schools, homeschoolers and the library in many capacities, but always progressing toward their goal.

This year they formed Lake Erie Ink, a nonprofit organization that encourages creative writing by young people. They hope to one day have a storefront creative writing center, but for now they are content to partner with the library. They founded two clubs for children and teen authors, which meet at various library branches. A Monticello Middle School group will start meeting on March 17 and will relocate to the Noble Neighborhood Library when it reopens in May.

“The kids write crazy stories, creative nonfiction and powerful poetry,” Rosenbluth said. They also create graphic novels, songs, and fiction.

Larsen added that each quarter the clubs publish collections of their work. “These clubs are for kids who have a lot to say and no place to say it all,” she said.

In addition to the regular clubs, Lake Erie Ink is hosting a one-day camp for 4th through 8th graders during spring break on Wednesday, March 30 from 10 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. The students will write poetry, fiction, combine words with art, and create a comic strip. Lunch will be provided. It is free and open to the first 20 students who register with the library by calling 216-932-3600. For more information, e-mail clarsen@lakeerieink.org.

Nancy Levin is the director of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library.

What’s going on at your library?

Coventry Village Library

1925 Coventry Road, 216-321-3400
Thursday, March 24, 7 p.m.
Author Series: Paul (P.J.) Gauz discusses his Amish mysteries

Wednesday, April 20, 7 p.m.
Author Series: Paula McClain discusses The Paris Wife

University Heights Library

1386 Cedar Road, 216-321-4700
Tuesdays in March, 6 p.m.
International Film Festival: Our Neighborhoods

Lee Road Library

2345 Lee Road, 216-932-3600
Wednesday, March 2, 6:30 p.m.
Resumes that Get Results. Registration required.

Wednesday, March 9, 5 p.m.
Coaching hours for Resume Results. Registration required.

Wednesday, March 16, 6:30 p.m.
Developing Your Job Search Plan. Registration required.

Wednesday, March 23, 5 p.m.
Coaching hours for Developing Your Job Search Plan. Registration required.

Sunday, March 27, 2 p.m.
4th Annual Lee Road Library Crossword Competition

Senior gatherings at the University Heights Public Library

Sherri Winiiski

March 24, 2 p.m.
Celebrate the 150th anniversary of John Carroll University with Dora Prince, director of community and government relations.

March 31, 2 p.m.
“Connect, Collaborate, Commit” Teaching Cleveland Institute with UH President Greg Dorgan of Beachwood High School.

For more information call 216-397-0336.

Sherri Winiiski is the administrative assistant to Mayor Susan Infield of the City of University Heights.
Programs and activities for area seniors

Judith Eugene

Cleveland Heights and University Heights are great places for senior citizens. Our local governments provide a variety of interesting classes and beneficial programs for people of retirement age. For example, the Senior Activity Center (SAC) in Cleveland Heights provides programs to roughly 1,900 seniors annually.

The center is located at the corner of Mayfield Road and Monticello Boulevard. With bright, open rooms and a helpful, knowledgeable staff, the center comprises a “great and friendly group of people,” said Amy Jenkins, social and recreation coordinator for the center, and director of the Cleveland Heights Office on Aging. Membership in SAC is free for residents of Cleveland Heights, ages 60 and older. The center offers many free classes, hobby groups, and clubs. Some classes require a small fee. The center offers free computer access to members, as well as helpful computer classes.

Senior members have access to the community center’s indoor track three days a week, as well as membership in a free walking club. Van transportation to and from the center is available for 50 cents each way.

An exciting new program at the center spotlights popular American singers. On March 23, the life and music of Nat King Cole will be discussed. The center also hosts local professionals speaking on subjects of particular interest to seniors, such as legal issues, tax preparation, and medication management.

The Cleveland Heights Office on Aging, located at SAC, employs two social workers. “We answer questions and keep track of the resources that are available, so that we can properly refer our seniors,” said social worker Cathy Katz. Help is available on a variety of subjects, such as housing, home health care, and family relations.

The office assists with legal and Medicare issues, and helps seniors apply for economic and health care assistance programs. The office operates a low-cost transportation service, and a meal delivery service through Meals on Wheels. The delivery service also serves as a safety check. If a senior does not answer the door for a scheduled delivery, said Jenkins, “We follow up to make sure he or she is alright.”

University Heights also offers several helpful programs for area seniors. The Senior Adult Network organizes a free weekly program, called Senior Citizen Gatherings, which meet on Thursdays at 2 p.m. at the University Heights Library, at the corner of Cedar and Fenwick roads. (See schedule on page 9.)

Speakers from a wide range of professions and specialties present topics of current interest. Recent subjects have included climate change, regional development, and public radio and television.

University Heights also has a Meals on Wheels program for its seniors. Like the Cleveland Heights program, it provides two meals a day and serves as a safety check to ensure the recipient is safe and healthy.

Other senior programs provided by the City of University Heights include assistance with income tax filing, annual flu shots, help with Golden Buckeye and health insurance forms, and help applying for the federal Home Energy Assistance Program for home heating costs.

Transportation to all University Heights events for seniors is available through the Cuyahoga County Senior Transportation Connection at a very low cost.

Area seniors are encouraged to take advantage of these programs. For more information on the Cleveland Heights Senior Activity Center or the Office on Aging, contact Amy Jenkins at 216-691-7379. For more information on University Heights senior programs, contact the University Heights City Hall at 216-932-7800.

Judith Eugene is a Cleveland Heights native who provides services to senior adults and those with mobility challenges through www.LovingLandsGroup.com. She can be reached at 216-408-5578 or Judith@LovingLandsGroup.com.

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AVID Helps Clear Path to College

“AVID is a college prep class,” explains Heights High freshman Shalynn Strowder. “It helps me stay on track.” Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), an elective class for credit, gives support to students with mid-range GPAs (2.0 – 3.5) to improve their academic record and prepare for college. Students sign a contract, accepting responsibility for their learning by taking rigorous college prep courses, using a daily planner and maintaining a well-organized (AVID) binder.

Teachers Shawn Washington and Mark Sack work together to support their students. “Some students face daily challenges that distract them from their school work,” explained Ms. Washington. “One student is frequently absent due to a chronic illness. Others just need extra support to work to their potential.”

Classrooms are stocked with textbooks from most classes. On the blackboard are reminders of upcoming tests or project deadlines. Walk feature samples of student work and diagrams of interests, life goals, and plans for achieving them. “They have a lot to read each night, papers to write, and projects to do. If they get behind it’s easy to get discouraged. We help them figure out how to make it all work,” added Mr. Sack.

On Mondays and Wednesdays, AVID classes follow a curriculum of learning and study strategies, advanced reading and writing skills, higher level inquiry and thinking processes, collaboration, and time management skills. Tuesdays and Thursdays, AVID students work in small groups with tutors who are college graduates. On Fridays, students do service projects, listen to speakers, or tour college campuses.

College is continuously discussed. A student recently explained that her parents thought a college degree in fashion would not lead to a good job. Her tutor, who minored in fashion merchandising, discussed the realities of building a career in the fashion industry. “Don’t think you’ll graduate, jump into a job with a major designer and go to New York and Paris.” She cautioned. “It takes a lot of time drawing, sewing, and doing basic work before you get a good job.”

One hundred students are enrolled in AVID at the high school and grades 7 and 8 at Benbrook Middle. In its fourth year at Heights High, AVID will have its first 11 graduates in June 2011, and all are headed to college. AVID will expand next year to include more students from the high school and students at all of the three middle schools.

Engineering Students Visit Lab

Three Heights High seniors in the Engineering Technology course visited MAGNET, a business incubator and consulting firm. Alex Fiala, Morgan Clement and David Schellberg were paired with engineering professionals that work in their specific interest area.

Alex and David were in the software and mechanical engineering group writing software and experimenting with a computer program. This computer program generated a model which was then used to make a prototype plastic tool. “The engineers designed the prototype using computer data and the 3-D printer made the tool,” said Alex.

They also saw designs for machines that make cheese curd, chopsticks, chairs, and water slides, as well as machines that make protective plating for military tanks. “Engineers are problem solvers,” said David. “We got to see the process and the end result.”

Morgan is interested in industrial design. She talked to engineers who were designing a cardboard canoe race and are designing a new boat for this year’s competition. “It was interesting to see the creative side of engineering in industry.”

All three echoed a similar sentiment about the class. “Our class is hands on; we see theory in action,” said David. “In physics we learn about circuits but here we build circuits.”

Last year, the students placed second in a cardboard canoe race and are designing a new boat for this year’s competition. “We figure that if we can build a cardboard canoe that holds two people and nearly wins first place, we can do anything,” said David.

Next year these students will attend college – Alex and David have applied to several top engineering schools and Morgan will attend an art institute. Engineering Technology instructor Yvonne Schiffer worked for 20 years in Product Development and Powertrain Engineering at Ford Motor Company. “There are many aspects to engineering and in this class students get exposure to several areas and can focus on their interests.” she said. Students can also earn 12 college credits. Next year, Mrs. Schiffer will teach a new Intro to Engineering Tech class for 9th and 10th grade students.

What’s your major?

I am mapping in nursing with a minor in music.

What do you hope to do in the future?

I see myself working in the field of psychology as being a steady job, being a personal trainer, maintaining a great family and making time to play my violin for gigs here and there.

Do you have a favorite memory or two from elementary school?

My kindergarten class at Coventry school sat on the hill. I have a picture of me running, a picture of me sitting with my dog, and a picture of me with my dad.

What do you hope to do after college?

I would love to go into graduate school and become a counseling psychologist. I would love to be able to help children overcome obstacles that they may face in life.

Do you have any advice for current Heights High students?

Be thankful for all that you have. It is so easy to take things that we are given for granted.

What would you do if you could go back in time and could change anything?

I would change nothing. I believe that our mistakes help us learn and grow as people.

Do you have any advice for the next generation?

I think that it is important to work hard and continue to push yourself to improve in all areas of life.

What is your major? What did you enjoy most about your major at Heights High?

I am a biology major, and I enjoyed the laboratory classes. I liked the opportunity to work with new people and equipment.

What advice would you give current Heights High students?

I would advise them to get involved in extracurricular activities and to take advantage of the opportunities that are available to them.

What do you hope to do after college?

I hope to work in the field of psychology and to work with children who are struggling with mental health issues.

Do you have any advice for current Heights High students?

I would advise them to take advantage of the opportunities that are available to them.

What do you hope to do after college?

I hope to work in the field of psychology and to work with children who are struggling with mental health issues.

Do you have any advice for current Heights High students?

I would advise them to take advantage of the opportunities that are available to them.
Making sense of the world around them can be tough for kids, but a recent exercise in science helped fifth graders at Canterbury understand the scale of the universe.

Using an inquiry-based approach, fifth-grade science teacher Janice Kurtz elicited information that the students had learned in an introductory lesson. Students eagerly offered facts. The planets orbit the sun. The inner planets are closer to the sun. The asteroid belt is located between the inner and outer planets. The outer planets are much farther from the sun. Then Mrs. Kurtz asked the students to look at a beautiful, glossy poster of the solar system and tell her what was wrong with it. She helped the students articulate that the poster did not accurately depict the distances between planets and the sun.

The inexactness of the poster offered an opportunity to learn. Ms. Kurtz clearly stated the learning intention for the class: “We are going to make a diagram that shows the proportional distance between the planets.” Through a series of questions, she helped them to create accurate representations of the solar system on long narrow sheets of paper. With their rulers and a chart filled with information about planets, students drew a large sun at the left hand edge of their papers, and then began to measure and mark them. As they carefully drew the location of Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars, students noticed how close these planets were to one another—a mere centimeter separated the four inner planets. Drawing the furthest outer planet a full 30 centimeters from the sun helped the students understand the enormity of our solar system.

Fifth grade science teacher Janice Kurtz helps a fifth grader create a scale drawing of the sun and planets.

As fifth graders head for the cafeteria at Noble Elementary, several girls take a different route. They eat lunch at large tables in Nancy Eisenberg’s Art Room. The girls, members of the Young Ladies of Noble, have given up their lunch hour to rehearse a play that they’ll perform at the school’s celebration of Black History Month. After cleaning away crumbs and pushing tables aside, they remove scripts in brightly colored folders and get their pencils ready to make notations.

The catalyst for all this activity is David Hansen, father of Noble second grader Zelda Thyarer-Hansen. The playwright and theater educator has written “The Lady,” a 10-minute play that merges personal narrative with history. In telling the story of Michelle Obama’s family history, Mr. Hansen has transformed daily life into myth.

As Mr. Hansen runs through the play, the audience is drawn into a series of vignettes that present historic moments. The girls portray an enslaved woman and her young son at the moment of emancipation, a railroad porter who notes the differences that exist between the North and the South during the early decades of the 20th century, and a working couple from Chicago who marvel that their children are studying at Princeton University.

One lucky girl plays First Lady Michelle Obama.

“I wanted to write an educational play that celebrates the Black middle class,” said the playwright. “The progress of one African American family over the history of the United States provided an excellent blueprint for achievement.”

What did you learn at Heights High that prepared you for college?

Ashley Guy: Noble 03 Monticello ’04 Heights High ’08 Junior at The Ohio State University

What did you enjoy most at Heights?

I enjoyed the supportive and enthusiastic teachers at Heights. Heights High offers numerous classes and electives so I made sure to take advantage of classes like Symphony and advanced Spanish. I participated in and absolutely loved field hockey, lacrosse, AFS Club, and East Asian Club.

What advice would you give current Heights High students?

I advise every Heights High student to stay focused and take advantage of the tools Heights High has to prepare its students for their endeavors after graduation. It is up to each student to utilize these tools and have good relationships with teachers and other students. Enjoy your high school experience and continue being successful so you can have a good time in college and beyond.

Miles Walker: 31st Street ’02 Heights High ’09 Miles is a sophomore at The Ohio State University

What's your major or degree?

My major is electrical engineering.

What would be your dream job after graduation?

My dream job would be working for Google or NASA as a space engineer.

What advice would you give current Heights High students?

I advise you to make the most of your experience while at Heights High. It is important that you find a balance between your extracurricular activities and your academics so you can be successful. By making sure you are involved in different activities, you can use your free time to work on projects or just relax.

What did you learn at Heights High that prepared you for college?

I learned how to work efficiently with diverse groups of people. Heights High also prepared me academically for rigorous college courses.

What did you enjoy most at Heights?

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Want to Know How Engaged Students Are? Ask Them!

As the morning lesson ended, Oxford first graders anonymously placed pieces of laminated colored paper in a box. Students were rating their level of engagement in the morning's learning activities.

Many chose green chips representing "Authentic Engagement," indicating genuine enthusiasm for their work. Others chose "Ritual Engagement," which meant that while the work did not excite them, they understood the value of doing it well. Of the five choices, no one chose Rebellion — refusing to work because the task was too hard, too easy or of no interest. "Asking students to rate their level of engagement is a concrete way for us to ask students to take ownership of learning," said first grade teacher Betty Miller.

Student engagement is tied to student achievement," said Denise Leddy, Oxford's new principal. "As instructors, we want to be more aware of the degree of student engagement and how that relates to a lesson's design elements."

As a classroom teacher Mrs. Leddy, used a student engagement model developed by educational researcher Paul Schlechty. Now she helps Oxford teachers implement it. Teachers devote part of their Professional Learning Community (PLC) time to exploring student engagement in learning. Recently, she and the first grade team met and shared information about students, lessons, and how monitoring the class's engagement guides instruction.

Karen Rego said she's more conscious of incorporating choice into lessons as she noticed that students rate themselves with a higher level of engagement when lessons include choice.

On a typical day, students learn as a class, in small groups, and independently. Classroom routines and clear expectations for behavior support students in each context. Asking students to rate their level of engagement helps them become more aware and better at engaging themselves in learning.

"Increasing student engagement will have a tremendous impact on student achievement," said Linda Smith. 

Volunteer Enriches Learning at Fairfax Elementary School

The gym at Fairfax Elementary School buzzed with excitement on picture day. Mrs. Schmidt's third graders lined up and took their places on the risers. Last to step into the picture was octogenarian Sam Wolfe, the oldest member of the class, a volunteer for six years.

After retiring from 30 years of teaching at West Technical High School in Cleveland, he had time to use his ham radio, manage an electronics stockroom at Case Western Reserve University, and complete an eight-month walk across the United States to promote global disarmament. Fairfax physical education teacher Alice Stratton met Sam at the Ohio City Bicycle Co-op and recruited him as a volunteer.

Wolfe and the students celebrated with a harvest party. It is one of many spectacular gardens located on school property and is visible from Lee Road. On a recent fall morning, Mr. Wolfe took a few minutes to show the class a plant from his garden. As students watched intently, he crushed some berries and made a purple ink from the juice.

In addition to parents, the volunteers draw from the work of civic groups. Volunteers work individually with struggling readers. They read silently and jot down words they don't know. Then, to build fluency, they imitate Ms. Windham as she reads the story aloud. Finally, students work on main idea packets on their own and show them together.

Students are curious and enthusiastic. One student flips through a book and comments, "I can't wait for this story, it looks really good." As the lesson ends, another student asks, "Can we come back after lunch?"

Volunteer Sam Wolfe works with Fairfax science students.

Want to Know How Engaged Students Are? Ask Them!

Our teachers work with children who struggle to become prodigious readers and children who excel years beyond grade level.

The district's new literacy framework creates a structure to meet those varied needs. Elementary students spend two hours and 15 minutes on literacy daily, including about an hour on writing. This provides a balanced daily diet of skills — vocabulary, comprehension, reading and writing. "Literacy components are interconnected, but they don't all develop at the same rate," explained Kelly Stukus, the district's Literacy Coordinator. "Requiring practice of each skill daily encourages growth in all areas."

In Sue Miracle's fourth grade classroom at Roxboro, the English Language Arts lesson starts with a whole group lesson, so all students have a meaningful grade level experience. Then, some children work with partners reading novels and answering analytical questions while others read or work independently. A volunteer tutor records fluency, timing students reading aloud. Small groups are challenged with prepared activities at learning centers or the Smart Board. As groups work with Ms. Miracle, she keeps track of time and announces when to move to another learning center. Students focus on assigned activities, using every minute.

Meanwhile, amid a quiet hum of activity in Mary Windham's kindergarten classroom, she works with a small group of struggling readers. They read silently and jot down words they don't know. Then, to build fluency, they imitate Ms. Windham as she reads the story aloud. Finally, students work on main idea packets on their own and show them together.

Students are curious and enthusiastic. One student flips through a book and comments, "I can't wait for this story, it looks really good." As the lesson ends, another student asks, "Can we come back after lunch?"

Literacy Framework Engages Learning at All Levels

While at Heights I was extremely active so it's difficult to pick the one thing. I definitely enjoyed being a part of the volleyball team, the gospel choir, and the Minority Student Achievement Network.

What advice would you give current Heights High students?

Take advantage of all Heights has to offer. Having been involved in a wide variety of activities, I was able to explore my likes and dislikes as well as cultivate my leadership skills, shaping the types of organizations I'm involved in at Howard University as well as giving me the skills necessary to obtain leadership roles within these organizations. I would also advise students to take academics seriously; building good study habits in high school will help develop the discipline necessary to excel in college.
Outdoor Learning Thrives At Gearity

Thanks to collaboration among parents, teachers, college students and neighbors, pre-schoolers through fifth graders at Gearity Professional Development School are learning about the environment in tangible and exciting ways. When environmental educator and parent Josh Hunter brought his first child to Gearity, he recognized that the extensive grounds offered the potential for many outdoor learning experiences. Two years ago he helped to organize parents and neighborhood volunteers in creating several raised learning gardens where students sow, care for and harvest vegetables.

Two seasons later, the program has expanded dramatically, thanks in part to a $5,000 grant from Lowe’s Companies Inc. In the fall, Hiram College students joined forces with the Gearity community and neighbors to build additional raised gardens. A split rail fence and arch have defined the space that will include several dwarf fruit trees. A barn-like shed stores child-sized tools. On the other side of the school building, shrubs have been planted and bird and animal feeders are visible from second and third grade windows. In the spring, volunteers will build benches and a small building for observing wildlife.

Teachers also use Gearity’s extensive property for outdoor learning. In addition to incorporating the gardens into lessons, teachers use the instruments of an outdoor weather station. In the fall, students from Hiram College joined Gearity teachers and 50 fourth graders for a walk in the woods on the Gearity campus. Together, they identified tree and fungus species, observed deer and other wildlife, and practiced good stewardship by collecting trash.

Service Learning is Part of Life at Wiley

Wiley Middle School was recognized earlier this year by the Ohio Middle Level Association for its extensive service learning program. Service learning builds self-esteem and teaches the concept of good citizenship with active learning. “Students benefit tremendously from helping others,” explained Karen Dillillo, Health Teacher and Student Council Advisor.

The annual Leaf Raking, Thanksgiving Tree Drive, and the Angel Tree Project were responses to the Angel Tree Project. Each year, a Wiley staff member selects six “angels” with names of foster children from the Salvation Army’s holiday tree display at the Cleveland Playhouse.

Coaches strongly supports block scheduling. “It gives time for students to move through the inevitable ‘uncomfortable zone’ of learning a new math idea to get to a couple of ‘aha’ moments each day.”

In Lisa Radke’s eighth grade English/Language Arts class, block scheduling allows time for meaningful group work. Assistant Principal and one of the Mighty Males’ advisors. Strong academics are an essential prerequisite to attending events. New members are eligible to apply each quarter if they are earning A’s and B’s in all classes. “Once a Mighty Male, always a Mighty Male, but students whose grades drop below our minimum cannot take part in our next quarter’s activities,” Williams explained. “When grades come out we have students rushing up to us excited to say ‘I’m active again!’” said Mr. Nobles, health teacher and advisor of Mighty Males.

In December, Mr. Bead Sellers, retired NFL player who graduated from Warrensville Heights High and Ohio State University, spoke to the Mighty Males about the importance of their education and the respect that one receives when they give their best effort.

The Mighty Males will mentor fifth graders at Noble, Oxford and Boulevard Elementary schools for a month in February, March, April and May. This service project has a dual purpose: to boost achievement among the fifth graders, and to encourage them to join Mighty Males when they attend Monticello next year. "I enjoy being a Mighty Male because I am respected by my friends and teachers. I also understand that I am a leader and that much is expected of me," said Janumir Davis, Monticello eighth grader.

In every middle school student in our district now receives 84-minute blocks of language arts and math each day. “More time together means more learning,” Mr. Radko says.

Each class includes a mini-review to assess students’ readiness to learn the next math concept. Then he adjusts his lesson plan to make sure he is teaching what they are ready to learn. After he has fully explained the day’s new concepts, he has students complete a few practice problems together.

Pawaski strongly supports block scheduling. “It gives time for students to move through the inevitable ‘uncomfortable zone’ of learning a new math idea to get to a couple of ‘aha’ moments each day.”

Service Learning builds the respect that one receives when students rush up to us excited to say “I’m active again!” said Mr. Nobles, health teacher and advisor of Mighty Males.

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Class begins with a mini-lesson about a specific literary concept. Then the class reads a piece of writing aloud that gives a good example of that concept.

Every middle school student in our district now receives 84-minute blocks of language arts and math each day. As in a writer’s workshop, students break into groups to review their own writing with the new concept in mind and to edit classmates’ writing. Students work on specific skills in collaboration stations.

Lisa Radko, who flows from group to group or meets with individual students, appreciates the 84-minute block. “Students learn so much more by hearing from me and then working together and teaching each other. And I feel like I have time to meet with students one-on-one when they need that kind of support.”

Wiley Middle School students provided more than 40 holiday gifts to needy children.

Mighty Males Pursue Excellence

Mighty Males Jonathan Jackson and Miles Hawkins flank former NBA player Brad Sellers after Sellers offered the potential for many outdoor learning experiences. Two years ago he helped to organize parents and neighborhood volunteers in creating several raised learning gardens where students sow, care for and harvest vegetables. A barn-like shed stores child-sized tools. On the other side of the school building, shrubs have been planted and bird and animal feeders are visible from second and third grade windows. In the spring, volunteers will build benches and a small building for observing wildlife.

Residents of the school’s University Heights neighborhood benefitted from the leaf raking day on November 10, where students worked from 9:30 am until 2:30 pm. Neighbors called to express appreciation and one offered to buy pizza for the students. “We thanked her but refused the gift. We want students to learn to do service without expecting a reward,” explained Heather Highgam, Wiley Guidance Counselor. “We suggested she consider making a donation to our Turkey Drive.”

Dr. Octavia Reed, Wiley’s principal, was amazed by the school community’s response to the Angel Tree Project. Each year, a Wiley staff member selects six to eight “angels” with names of foster children from the Salvation Army’s holiday tree display at the Cleveland Playhouse.

Homeschool classes and staff are invited to select an angel and raise money to buy a fun gift and a practical gift for that child. This year the first eight “angels” were selected quickly. “I went down those three times to take more ‘angels’ from the interest as green gifts and the donations kept coming in,” said Dillillo. Dr. Reid was clearly moved by the generosity of her students and staff. “When I heard that we raised enough money to buy gifts for 40 ‘angels’ I was overwhelmed and so proud.

Some of our students don’t have much for themselves yet they were happy to give what they could to make someone else’s holiday happier.”

Be a Tutor: Change a Life

Many Villages is the in-school tutoring program from Reaching Heights, which provides cohesive support to teachers, one-on-one tutoring, and valuable volunteer feedback. We welcome the community to Shape in the work and success. It’s true! It really does take a village to raise a child, so please call 216.932.5110, talk to Liz, and become a part of ours!
Federal programs are not faraway abstractions; they affect people we know and places we care about, like Cleveland Heights. They empower people, alleviate problems, generate jobs and strengthen communities. These benefits could disappear away too soon as Congress, in the name of deficit reduction, prepares to decimate domestic spending.

If cost-savers have their way, one especially effective federal resource, the Community Development Block Grant program that gives local communities flexible resources to address their priority concerns, could face extinction. This is just the tip of the iceberg.

I’m fully aware that being antigovernment is in vogue. But it’s a bad idea. Save a buck, shred the fabric of a community. What is good about that?

Here is just one example of what is at stake:

I am on the board of the Home Repair Resource Center (HRRC), a 40-year-old Cleveland Heights nonprofit that works hand-in-hand with city government and homeowners to keep our wonderful old housing stock in good repair. Because housing quality and housing values define the stability of a community, it is in the best interest of the public and the homeowners are able to respond when the roof leaks or the furnace fails. That’s where HRRC comes into the picture.

Thanks to the local block grant funds that the city awards to HRRC, we have a staff that can help stressed homeowners who need to repair a major system that has failed in their house but for whom a $20,000 repair can be prohibitive. Failing to fix the roof or furnace is even more costly. Fortunately, a relatively small amount of financial assistance can solve the problem.

HRRC uses block grant funds to pay up to $5,000 of the repair cost, and then helps the owner secure a loan for the remainder by guaranteeing their loan with privately raised funds. This partnership keeps the homeowner responsible and in charge, helps them use their own resources, pay the house, and adds value to the whole street.

During the last 40 years, more than 1,000 households have been helped—nearly a tenth of the houses in our community. In nearly every case, creative problem solving and less than $2,000 have made the difference. The pattern and up-close approaches that are the hallmark of HRRC involvement really work.

There is no bailout solution if the federal funds are lost. Sadly, when we leave people out on a limb without support, we all lose. Why have our policymakers forgotten the national value—support for the common good?

Susie Kaiser is a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights. She is the former director of Reaching Heights and current board member of the Home Repair Resource Center.

CH-UH Schools receive Race to the Top money

Angie Shaker

Race to the Top, part of President Obama’s economic stimulus plan, retains states for making ambitious changes to improve schools. Ohio received $400 million dollars, half of which will be directly distributed to the 536 districts and charter schools who pledged their support. Cleveland Heights-University Heights is one of those districts. Over the next four years, the CH-UH School District is expected to receive $21 million—$505,000 in the first year, $620,000 in year two, $630,000 in year 3, and $830,000 in year 4.

“These resources will allow us to accelerate the implementation of the district’s vision of Preparing All Students for Success in a Global Economy (PAS- SAGE), while meeting the requirements of a new generation of academic standards,” Superintendent Douglas Heuer said. “We are truly grateful to have been selected, especially now that we have to anticipate 15-20 percent in state funding cuts.”

According to Dr. Joseph Micheller, director of special programs and compliance, by 2014 the district will have completed the foundational work that will provide generations of students with a world class, 21st-century education.

Year 1 is primarily a preparation time, building the foundation for years 2, 3, and 4. The major activities for the first year are:

• Purchase and implement an assessment management system that will provide all classroom teachers with diagnostic information. State, district and classroom assessments will be integrated into one system.

• Design a training program, to be implemented in 2011-12, for teachers to be able to use the new assessment management system effectively.

• Curriculum teams will become familiar with the new state and national standards in English/language arts, mathematics, science and social studies; will analyze the curriculum to determine what must be changed to align instruction to the new standards; and will design professional development guidelines to assist teachers in understanding the new standards.

Angie Shaker is director of communications for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.

www.ruffingmontessori.net/sr/ 216-932-7866
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CH-UH Board of Education

Meeting highlights

All board members were present.

Background of small schools

The improved school performance has leveled off. Freshman performance has declined and 20 to 25 percent of students are not successfully completing freshman year: One-third of students take courses outside their small school.

Legacy School Principal Marc Engleberg credits four elements with improving student grades: Freshman seminars, orientation that, “link leaders,” mentor and master teachers, standard-based grading and recording where teachers rethink what students have not learned, and team teaching and looping.

Mosaic School Principal Nicholas Pethy reported that Mosaic’s curriculum highlights creative and performing arts, technology, links to the community, and distance learning. There is an effort for entry from one teacher to the next.

R.E.A.L. School Principal Marc Aiden reported that R.E.A.L. School has changed its business model to service learning and community involvement. R.E.A.L. School students can participate in the AVID program.

Renaissance School Principal James Read described Renaissance as providing a liberal arts education focusing on: Socio-cultural sciences, dialogues, and the sharing of ideas that replicates how adults work in the real world. There is a move to an international focus with emphasis on languages, economics, and comparative government.

Freshman experience

F.R.I.E.D. Principal Joseph Nohlak will lead the design for the high school’s new “freshman experience,” which will address the difficulties of transition. Freshman will spend half of each day in a freshman experience taking core subjects and the other half in their small schools taking electives. A more flexible schedule will facilitate mentoring and support among student/teacher relationships. Freshman teachers will teach only freshman and teams will have a common planning time. Freshman experience will be housed in one area of the high school.

Improvement of freshman performance

Allison Byrd, coordinator of secondary curriculum, described other plans to improve freshman performance, including more contact with the middle school, doubled instructional time in math and language arts, and changes in summer programming. Jeffrey Johnston, director of student services, noted that the extra support and eased transition would also help students with special needs.

School time

Two proposals are being considered to maximize the time gained by the new 3:34 dismissal: Two proposals are being considered to maximize the time gained by the new 3:34 dismissal:

• Two proposals are being considered to maximize the time gained by the new 3:34 dismissal:

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Laptops for learning

Joy Henderson

Classroom instruction is changing at Cleveland Heights High School. It is moving from a place where teachers deliver information to students, and then have students give it back at test time, to a model where students are more active participants in the work.

Dell Latitude Netbook laptop computers were distributed to all Heights High students last November to support this approach. “The laptops are another tool for students and teachers,” said PRIDE English teacher Jessica Tayse. “Students can use it to write more, access resources, collaborate on projects, and have meaningful discussion about ideas.”

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You can have a beautiful, healthy lawn.

Three CH-UH choirs make it to Fox 8 Glee competition

Laptops for learning

Joy Henderson

"We are all learning to use the laptops— and I mean both the students and the teachers," Tayse continued. Her students are often the best teachers because they were born into the digital age and have no history of doing things old school.

Many teachers at Heights High are using the laptops as an instructional tool. For example, last November, Jessica Tayse’s English 4 students participated in a writing event—National Novel Writing Month—on the NaNoWiMo website. Much of the writing was done on student laptops, in and out of class.

As part of her media literacy lesson, Tayse has students post current event articles on Moodle, an educational website, and respond to peer posts. "Some students respond more freely in writing than they do verbally in class," she said. This also helps her students learn to write short, concise pieces.

Students in Patrick Gleba's sign language course use the laptop webcam to create short videos of themselves signing words or phrases, creating individual sign language dictionaries. "Learning the signs is more efficient with the laptop webcam," said Gleba. During the course, students are expected to learn more than 600 signs. If students need help, they can refer to Gleba’s dictionary, a wiki he created as a resource for his students.

English teacher Lisa Lefstein-Berusch’s freshman honors students are part of an international network of classrooms that watched a documentary about Pulitzer Prize winner Nicholas Kristof’s work in Africa. Students in 23 classrooms around the world responded to questions about the movie and to one another. The students were brimming with opinions about the questions of ethics raised by the film. They wanted their voices to be heard, and were curious to hear the views of students in other places.

As both staff and students learn to use the laptops to engage, teach and learn, some challenges exist. While the tool may be new, the habits of humans are not. Students sometimes forget to bring the computers to class, forget to charge them, and sometimes, a wireless connection is not accessible.

With any human undertaking, flexibility is helpful. "When you work with kids, you have to be flexible, even before laptops," said Tayse.

The advantages of offering laptops to all students are significant. The computers enable students to access more resources in class, at the library and at home. When everyone has a laptop, integrating it into instruction becomes the norm.

Joy Henderson is the parent/community liaison for Heights High.

Heights Observer March 1, 2011

www.heightsobserver.org

Three CH-UH choirs make it to Fox 8 Glee competition

The singing and performance groups of Cleveland Heights High School have been bringing their talents to venues throughout the country. Their latest command performance was closer to home. The Cleveland Heights Gospel Choir, Heights High Barbershoppers, and Heights Singers appeared in the Fox 8 "Glee" competition during the Cleveland Auto Show at the IX Center on Feb. 26. The Barbershoppers recently returned from the Barbershop Harmony Society Midwinter Convention in Las Vegas, where they finished in the top ten. They competed in the youth division against other groups with members who were much older, they were the only group with all high school members.

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literary excellence.

In an essay of 1,000 words, students are asked to show their grasp of the fundamentals of language and writing, and to express their ideas skillfully and coherently. The essay is a focal point for the organization, development, and expression of ideas in the student’s portfolio. The student is expected to write an essay that is original, coherent, and well-organized. The essay is a requirement for all students, and is a component of the student’s portfolio.

The essay is the student’s opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the subject matter and to express their ideas in a clear and concise manner. The essay should be well-organized and easy to follow, with a clear introduction, body, and conclusion. It should be written in a logical and coherent manner, with transitions between ideas and sentences.

The essay should be well-written, with proper grammar and spelling. The student should be able to demonstrate their ability to use the language effectively and to express their ideas clearly. The essay should be free of errors, and should be well-written and well-organized.

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Smart boards accelerate technology use in the classroom

Susie Kaeser

“I’ve been a teacher for a long time, and I am comfortable with chalk. When I found the whiteboards in my room this fall, I wasn’t sure I was going to like it,” said Belinda Farrow, a kindergarten teacher at Boulevard Elementary School.

“Now I can’t imagine how I got along without it,” beamed the excited teacher.

This has been a learning year for the Boulevard staff as they’ve explored the ins and outs of using an interactive white board. The new technology is one more demand on scarce time, but one that Principal Larry Swoope thinks the staff has found valuable. As he put it, “Boulevard has embraced Smart Boards.” Peak into any classroom and you are likely to see them in use. His explanation: teacher-to-teacher support.

Smart Board is the brand name for equipment that links a large 6-foot wide by 5-foot tall white board with a computer and an LCD projector. The combination creates a portal—the entry point—by which a teacher can bring the information and educational activities found in cyberspace into the classroom for everyone to see on the big white “window.” This includes teacher-made materials and a wealth of Web-based resources that are making blackboards and movie projectors obsolete. The soft-coated surface is sensitive to touch and allows for interaction with the contents projected on the surface. This makes the board especially inviting to students who can manipulate information with the simple touch of a finger.

Farrow uses her Smart Board an average of 15–20 times a day to take attendance, introduce major concepts, model class work, reinforce ideas or skills and as a center for independent student work. She uses it to create her own games and instructional materials and to access a broad range of lessons and movie projectors obsolete. The soft-coated surface is sensitive to touch and allows for interaction with the contents projected on the surface. This makes the board especially inviting to students who can manipulate information with the simple touch of a finger.

Farrow uses her Smart Board an average of 15–20 times a day to take attendance, introduce major concepts, model class work, reinforce ideas or skills and as a center for independent student work. She uses it to create her own games and instructional materials and to access a broad range of lessons that teachers throughout the world are sharing on instructional websites. It’s good for every part of the curriculum and the interactive dimension is exciting.

Technology can be intimidating and its introduction can be a turn-off. With the easy to the expected teacher can learn new learners confused. For technology to become a useful instructional resource, teachers must know how it works, what it can do and how to incorporate it into their classroom routines. All this requires time and creativity. Without the right support, and evidence that it is worth their personal investment, it can be a nonstarter.

Teachers have been the key to Farrow’s conversion from resister to advocate. The turning point came in the fall when Lisa Evans, her counterpart at Gearity School, volunteered to help Boulevard’s kindergarten team. They left the session with a disk full of Evans’s favorite Smart Board resources. “This made me feel brave enough to start to find my own,” said Farrow.

Consistent guidance and interaction with her colleagues in the primary wing—Tina Reynolds, Christine Snowden and Lauren Eaton—has shortened Farrow’s learning curve and kept her motivated. The four teachers frequently collaborate, looking to each other for teaching strategies, advice, feedback and encouragement. Their proximity makes it easy to get quick solutions to a pressing detail, share excitement about a new resource or discuss effective strategies.

Time is critical. It takes a lot of it to sift through the vast possibilities that are just a click away—if you know where to look. It takes an even greater investment to transform this potential into a fluid and effective extension of a teacher’s routine. Like so much of teaching, effective use of technology to advance instructional goals will take shape over time. Farrow is over the first hurdle—she has discovered the Smart Board’s value and is starting to make it hers.

Joe Micheller, the district’s director of special programs and compliance, and a strong advocate and driving force for integrating technology into instruction, knows that technology is not a silver bullet. “It’s just a tool.” But it can be a very powerful tool in the hands of a thoughtful teacher, and is an appropriate support for 21st century learning.

Two years ago, Smart Boards were introduced into a handful of classrooms in each elementary school. This year they became standard operating equipment in every Boulevard classroom and in the three middle schools. By the end of the year all of the elementary buildings will be fully equipped and the learning curve will begin for hundreds of teachers.

As the CH-UH school district integrates up-to-date technology into the classroom, teachers will determine if the tool reaches its potential. If Boulevard’s experience holds up across the district, it will be teacher collaboration that will help teachers embrace the technology and make it an effective resource for their teaching. As Farrow sees it, “by working as teams and partners, we can overcome our reservations and achieve comfort and even confidence.”

Susie Kaeser is a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights. She is the former director of Reaching Heights and current board member of the Home Repair Resource Center.

Middle school students represent CH-UH at Jr. Model U.N.

Students from the Middle School Scholars Program (MOSP) at Montville, Ravenna, and Wiley were delegates at the Jr. Model U.N. Simulation at John Carroll University on Jan. 11 and 12. More than 200 students from eight area middle schools represented 39 countries. Delegates attended committee sessions, discussed real world issues, and ultimately developed resolutions that expressed their collected ideas, opinions and solutions to the problems confronting world leaders today. The Cleveland Council on World Affairs sponsored the event.

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Three new businesses to open in Cedar Fairmont district

Kaye Lowe

Luna Bakery & Café

John Emerman and Tatyana Rehn, of The Stone Oven Bakery & Café, have partnered with local pastry chef Bridget Cavanaugh Thibeault of Flour Girl to bring specialty bakery and café-style dining to the Cedar Fairmont district. Luna Bakery & Café will open this spring at 2482 Fairmount Blvd. in the Heights Medical Building. The shop will be in the former Cowynby Antiques space. The café is the result of the owners’ shared commitment to locally produced foods and locally owned businesses. All items in the bakery and café will be made fresh daily on the premises. Luna patrons will be able to buy and eat baked goods and light fare in a relaxed and cozy atmosphere. Staff will be available for weddings, catering and event consultations. The café will seat approximately 15, with additional patio seating in the summer. For more details, call Emerman at the Stone Oven, 216-932-3053, or visit cedarfairmont.org.

Isabella & Company, CPAs

Raymond Isabella announced that Isabella & Co., an accounting firm, is opening its third location, in the Heights Center Building on Cedar Road. With more than 30 years of experience in accounting, information technologies, and operational and business management, Raymond G. Isabella, CPA, MT, professional corporation, is the founder and principal of the firm. Other locations are in Avon and Oberlin.

Isabella & Co. offers individual and business tax planning and financial management services, with additional focus on growth management. The main goal, Isabella said, is to expand the capabilities of clients so that they may reach higher levels of achievement.

Isabella & Co. will offer local companies a free review of their accounting systems and previous tax returns, which also includes a creative consultation. To take advantage of this opportunity, call 440-934-3100 or e-mail ray.isabella@isabella-cpa.com.

North Star Acupuncture

North Star Acupuncture is opening an office in Suite 324 of the Heights Medical Building at 2460 Fairmount Boulevard. Professionals Ed Dee M.AC, L.A.C. and Joie Hill, M.AC., L.A.C. will be available by appointment. They also contract with the Cleveland Clinic and University Hospitals.

Kaye Lowe is the executive director of the Cedar Fairmont Special Improvement District.

Nationwide survey shows buy-local campaigns pay off

Megan Johnson

For the fourth consecutive year, a national survey has found that independent businesses in communities with active Buy Independent/Buy Local (BIBL) campaigns experienced markedly stronger sales growth compared to those without similar campaigns.

That information is relevant here. The Heights Independent Business Alliance (HIBA) was founded to initiate such a campaign in Cleveland Heights and University Heights. The survey, by the Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR), gathered data from 2,768 independent businesses, including retailers, service providers, restaurants and others. It found that those in places with a “buy local” initiative reported average revenue growth of 5.6 percent in 2010, compared to 2.1 percent for those without.

The benefit was greatest among retailers. Those in communities with alli-iances like HIBA reported an average 26 percent increase in holiday sales, while retailers without reported an average gain of just 0.8 percent.

Educational campaigns run by independent business alliances and local first groups are underway in about 140 cities nationwide. Nearly two-thirds of respondents said that public awareness of the benefits of supporting locally-owned businesses had increased in the last year.

Business owners in cities with active BIBL campaigns reported a wide range of positive effects on their business. Almost half said the campaign had brought in new customers, and 25 percent said it had increased customer loyalty. More than two-thirds said local media coverage of independent businesses had increased and 31 percent said local government officials were now more aware and supportive of the needs of independent businesses.


Similar surveys over the last three years found that independent businesses in cities with active BIBL campaigns reported stronger sales each year.

“This survey adds to the growing body of evidence that people are increasingly seeking out independent businesses and that shift is having a tangible impact on the bottom line,” said Stacy Mitchell, senior researcher with ILSR, a nonprofit research and educational organization working in partnership with national and local business organizations.

“This survey offers further proof that, with sustained efforts, communi-cies can indeed raise local consciousness and build a culture of support for local entrepreneurs,” said Jennifer Rockne, executive director of the American Independent Business Alliance, of which HIBA is a member. “Remarkably, most of the campaigns operated by independent business alliances are funded by businesses paying $20 or less per month in dues. They’re getting quite a return on their investment.”

HIBA was launched in October 2010 with the mission of building a vital local economy based on independent, locally-owned businesses and helping lo-cal entrepreneurs to thrive by uniting and educating the public about the benefits of keeping their money recycling in their own community. Currently, HIBA has about 40 members with annual dues of $100 per member.

“One of the things we seem to have lost in our modern, wired world is our sense of local community,” said Les Proctor, business owner, member and organizing board member of HIBA. “And that’s the main reason I’m so excited about the Heights Independent Business Alliance: because we, as independent business owners and Heights residents, have the power to build our community, improve our local economy, and increase the value of our homes. We have everything we need right here.”

Visit www.shophiba.org for more in-for-mation about buy-local initiatives in the community, to learn about volunteer opportunities, and to enroll as a local business, nonprofit or citizen member.

Megan Johnson is the interim executive director of the Heights Independent Business Alliance.
Parking struggles prompt merchants
at Cedar Taylor to begin organizing
Deanna Bremer Fisher

The intersection of Cedar and Taylor roads straddles the border of two cities, and the two sides of the street could not be more different. The west side of Taylor—in University Heights—features a retail plaza anchored by Sherwin Williams and Rite-Aid and with parking in the front, and a drive-through fast food establishment recently vacated by KFC.

The east side, in Cleveland Heights, contains early 20th-century storefronts that come up to the sidewalk. Built in an era when businesses served the immediate neighborhood and more people arrived on foot, what little parking there is exists behind the buildings, in side lots or in metered spaces on the street.

When Melt Bar & Grilled opened its doors last year, more people discovered the district, and its popularity has created traffic jams and parking hassles for customers and employees of other merchants.

Cedar Taylor merchants met with officials from both cities in January and again in February to discuss parking and other issues, such as crime and vacant storefronts. They also discussed opportunities, such as redevelopment of the former KFC, the community garden fostered by the City of University Heights near Taylor Road School, and creating a cohesive identity for the district.

The mayors of both cities attended the meetings and pledged their support for working with merchants. This spring Cleveland Heights will install 15-minute-free parking meters in front of Melt, for take-out customers. The city also will address lighting in the parking lot behind Melt, installing new bulbs and adding lights where needed. The Cleveland Heights Police Department agreed to look into putting a beat officer on the street, and pledged to work together with the University Heights police in the district.

Howard Thompson, economic development director for the City of Cleveland Heights, said that addressing the parking issue in its entirety would require long-term planning.

Merchants expressed their desire to spruce up the district with flowers, signage and art, much like the commercial districts at Coventry, Cedar Fairmount and Cedar Lee. This would likely require them to form a merchants association, create a plan and raise funds.

“There are a lot of improvements that we can tackle that can make a very visual impact here,” said Alex Quintana, co-owner of Quintana’s Barber & Dream Spa. “With a little help, engagement and volunteerism, we’ll create an identity for Cedar Taylor. It’s long overdue.”

The merchants plan to meet again in March. For more information, contact Howard Thompson at 216-291-4878 or hthompson@clvhts.com.

Deanna Bremer Fisher is executive director of FutureHeights and publisher of the Heights Observer.

Two new businesses
open in Coventry Village
Steve Presser

On Feb. 19, Big Dog Theater officially opened its doors in the historic Centrum Theater, located at 2786 Euclid Heights Boulevard. This new theatrical performance and training facility is the creation of Cleveland actor Don Mitri.

Each weekend Big Dog Theater will host different shows and various forms of comedy, including national stand-up acts, sketch groups and improv. The theater will house a training center, offering a challenging selection of classes and workshops. Taught by some of the best instructors in the area and nationally, classes will focus on the novice and the professional performer. All classes and workshops will be held in the Big Dog Studio on the first floor.

Don Mitri, Big Dog Theater founder, is a local actor with extensive performance experience. He was a member of Something Dada Improvisational Theater Co. and played Tony in Cleveland’s longest running show “Tony n’ Tina’s Wedding” at Playhouse Square. Mitri founded and operated the Cleveland Improv Institute and has taught improvisation for more than 10 years.

Go to the theater’s website, www.bigdogtheatre.com, for online reservations or call 216-472-3636.

Mint Café is back, reincarnated as High Thai’d. Around the first of the year, owner Matt Kanegkasikorn shut the doors of his popular Coventry Road Thai restaurant. His other restaurant, Peppermint Thai, was keeping him extremely busy.

On Jan. 19, Mint Café reopened under different management. The business had been sold to longtime employee Tony Chaichana, a Thai native who recently had earned an MBA from Baldwin-Wallace College. “Everything is pretty much the same,” Chaichana told me. “Same people, same cooks, same menu.”

What is new is Monday service—the restaurant is now open seven days a week. The name High Thai’d recalls Marcia Polevoi’s longtime shop High Tide (Rock Bottom), an integral part of Coventry Village for 32 years. High Thai’d is located at 1791 Coventry Road. Call 216-321-5000 for reservations.

The merchants and community welcome these two new businesses to the Coventry Village neighborhood.

Steve Presser is the marketing director for the Coventry Village Special Improvement District.
New restaurant on Lee offers something for the sober crowd

Audrey Wynne

Club Sober Juice Bar & Grille, 2214 Lee Road, is a new, alcohol-free and family-oriented restaurant. Owner Mike Waddy opened the Lee Road spot three months ago on the former site of Chuck’s Diner. “I’m glad for the opportunity to be located in Cleveland Heights,” said Waddy. “My favorite part of doing business here is the friendly people I get to meet every day.”

Waddy and members of his family developed Club Sober's diner-style menu. Along with breakfast, which is served all day, the reasonably priced menu features a variety of hearty items such as the “Waddy World” burger, Philly steak sandwiches and fried chicken. Several types of juices and real fruit “Waddy-Style Smoothies” also complement the menu.

While some may wonder why someone would open a new business in this difficult economy, Mike says the economy helped create the restaurant. “Being laid off from my full-time job gave me the opportunity to expand on my love of cooking and open the restaurant.”

Club Sober opens daily at 8 a.m., is open until 11 p.m. Monday through Thursday, until midnight on Friday and Saturday, and closes at 5 p.m. on Sundays.

Audrey Wynne is a public relations professional with the Fairmount Group and a member of the FutureHeights board of directors.

HIBA offers social media workshop for small businesses

Megan Johnson

Small-business owners who don’t know how or why to use online marketing—especially social media—have a chance to learn the basics in a fast, easy workshop hosted by the new Heights Independent Business Alliance (HIBA).

Small Business Seminar: Social Media 101 is designed to clarify and simplify how Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and other social media websites can become low-cost marketing partners in business.

The seminar will be led by Dawn Hanson and Julie D’Alonso of The Fairmount Group, an award-winning communications and marketing firm—and HIBA member—located in Cleveland Heights. Content includes a walk-through of the basics of Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn; case studies on how the use of social media has helped local small businesses increase their visibility and improve sales; help in setting up accounts; and sharing of online resources for additional guidance and tips.

The workshop will be held Monday, March 28 from 6 to 8 p.m. in Meeting Room A at the Lee Road Library, 2345 Lee Road. Registration is required.

The event is free to HIBA members and $35 for nonmembers. Online registration is available at www.shophiba.org. All proceeds support HIBA.

“HIBA The Heights Independent Business Alliance was launched in October 2010 with the mission of building a vital local economy, based on independent, locally-owned businesses and helping local entrepreneurs to thrive by uniting and educating the public about the benefits of keeping their money recycling within the community. Currently, HIBA boasts a membership of about 40 independent locally-owned businesses in Cleveland Heights and University Heights. The fee for business memberships is $100 annually. Seminars are available to members at no charge. For more information, visit www.shophiba.org.

Megan Johnson lives in University Heights. She is executive director of The Karen Foundation for MS and is the interim executive director of Heights Independent Business Alliance.

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Local art plus business equals community

By Megan Johnson and Philip Hewitt

Heights Arts, under the direction of Peggy Spaeth, has been the advocate for art, artists and community collaboration in our region for more than a decade. Recognizing that her longtime home is a region brimming with artistic and creative talent, Spaeth knew the importance of connecting these resources with the collective population, and with the unique businesses that make up the distinctive character of the Heights.

A visual artist in her own right, and a strong believer in the importance of art in education, Spaeth became a champion for bringing the arts into the classroom and the community.

Working with the PTA, she initiated both the inclusion of certified art teachers in the city’s schools and collaborations with artists to develop creative playgrounds for students. Later, weekly gatherings throughout the summers, known as Party in the Heights, became a precursor to widely attended events, such as the Coventry Street Arts Fair and the Music and Movie series.

It became evident to Spaeth and others that this city of “cultural omnivores” hungered for opportunities to interact with art on all levels, and Heights Arts was conceived with the mission to enrich the quality of life in the Heights through art.

Heights Arts, a nonprofit organization, is responsible for organizing the special touches around the Heights that draw interest and reinforce our community as a destination for visitors and shoppers. Through public art projects, including murals and outdoor sculpture, neighborhood gatherings, and its own storefront gallery, Heights Arts succeeds at infusing art into every aspect of life, creating a synergy between the arts and the business community.

“Good public art and design can help create a sense of place,” said Spaeth. “That’s how you build community—you find a common vision and you work together to build relationships.”

Currently, Heights Arts is working with property owners to beautify and unify our business districts with window banners in empty storefronts. “These banners fill a void by creating an attractive, inviting environment, and will hopefully increase the value for potential merchants to establish their businesses in our community,” Spaeth added.

To learn more about Heights Arts and its programs, sign up for its e-mail newsletter at www.heightsarts.org and become involved.

Megan Johnson is the interim executive director of the Heights Independent Business Alliance. Phillip Hewitt is a student at John Carroll University and an intern with HIBA.

Heights Arts is a charter member of the Heights Independent Business Alliance. HIBA launched in October 2010 with the mission of building a vital local economy based on independent, locally-owned businesses and helping local entrepreneurs to thrive by educating the public about the benefits of keeping their money recycling within their own community. To learn more, go to www.shopheights.org.

CIFF to screen film at Cedar Lee Theatre

Debby Samples

For the sixth consecutive year, the Cleveland International Film Festival (CIFF) will hold a special screening at its original home, the Cedar Lee Theatre in Cleveland Heights. The film “With Love, From the Age of Reason” screens on Thursday, March 31 at 7:30 p.m. For the third year in a row, this special night is presented in memory Rick Whitbeck, one of the CIFF’s founders.

French director Yann Samuel’s film stars Sophie Marceau as Margaret, the hard-charging businesswoman, who on her 40th birthday, begins receiving bundles of letters she wrote to herself when she was seven. These messages from her 40th birthday, begin receiving bundles of letters she wrote to herself when she was seven years old in “With Love, From the Age of Reason.”

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CityMusic Cleveland to present Dylana Jenson

By Katherine Bulava

CityMusic Cleveland will present critically acclaimed but reclusive violinist Dylana Jenson in its March 16-20 concert series. The Cleveland Heights performance is Wednesday, March 16 at 7:30 p.m., at Fairmount Presbyterian Church, 2757 Fairmount Boulevard.

Joel Smirnoff will conduct Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky’s “Violin Concerto in D, Op. 35” and Georges Bizet’s “Symphony in C.”

Reservations are required for free childcare services. Call 216-345-10. Ticket prices for most films are $10 for CIFF members and $12 for nonmembers. Tickets are available online at www.clevelandfilm.org, by telephone (1-877-304-FILM), at the Ulmer Lobby of Tower City Cinemas, or by mail using the Program Guide order form.

Program Guides will be available throughout the Heights, courtesy of the Heights Observer, beginning March 1.

Debby Samples is the marketing and membership director for the Cleveland International Film Festival.

Katherine Bulava is the president of Hatha Communications.

By Megan Johnson and Philip Hewitt

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coff ee shops, parks, and other amenities. If you are looking for new sights, the history/architecture section of the City of Cleveland Heights website, www.clevelandheights.com/historyarch.jsp, includes a new walking tour of Grant Deming’s Forest Hill Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2010. If you need motivation, consider getting a dog and joining your neighborhood dog owners in trips around the block—just remember to keep your dog on a leash and pick up the poop. If you prefer human companionship, follow a time-honored tradition of walking your dog and bringing your Heights Home buyer.

The walkability of Cleveland Heights should pay off in the long term. Furthermore, a recent study shows that higher Walk Scores correlate with higher home values and lower foreclosure rates. In other words, it’s really using your head to use your feet!

Mary Dunbar is a cofounder of the Cleveland Heights Bicycle Coalition.

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Western Reserve Chorale to perform Michael Haydn’s Requiem

Joanne Poderis

The Western Reserve Chorale, under the leadership of artistic director J. D. Goddard, will perform Johann Michael Haydn’s “Requiem in C Minor” in its concert on Sunday, March 13, at 7 p.m., at Grace Lutheran Church, 13001 Cedar Road, Cleveland Heights.

Johann Michael Haydn (1737–1806) was the younger brother of the more famous composer, Franz Joseph Haydn. In 1766, the Prince Archishop of Salzburg, Count Sigismund Schrattenbach, appointed Michael Haydn court composer and concertmaster. Michael Haydn was a working musician and composer at the same time as Leopold Mozart and as the young Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was coming of age.

The period of 1771 to 1772 was a difficult one for Michael Haydn. First, his only child, Aloysia, died just before her first birthday and in December, Archbishop Sigismund passed away. The passion contained in the Requiem is most likely the result of these combined losses. All of the members of the court ensemble, including Wolfgang and Leopold Mozart, would have performed at the Requiem’s premiere in January 1773.

This piece must have had a profound effect on the younger Mozart, because Mozart scholar H. C. Robbins Louten states that this Requiem is “indispensably the direct model for Mozart’s own Requiem written 20 years later.”

The choir will also perform Handel’s “Zadok the Priest,” Mendelssohn’s “‘How lovely are the messengers” and Vaughan-Williams’s “Let All the World in Every Corner Sing.”

The Western Reserve Chorale Orchestra will join with the chorus, as will guest soloists soprano Amanda Joyce Abbott, alto Joanne Uniatowski, tenor Timothy Culver and baritone Brian Keith Johnson. Guest organist will be Daniel Hatheway.

The concert is free to the general public, and all attendees are invited to a reception following the concert. Parking is free and there is handicapped accessibility.

For more information, call 216-791-0061 or visit the WRC website at www.westernreservechorale.org.

Joanne Poderis is the executive director and the accompanist for the Western Reserve Chorale. She has lived in Cleveland Heights for more than 40 years.

Heights Youth Theatre presents ‘The Wiz’

Mary Patton

Winged monkeys, tornadoes, silver slippers, green sunglasses, witches, Winkies, Munchkins, little dogs, flower children, and a mice squad—OH MY! From the story of Dorothy and her friends to a set and costumes made of recycled materials, Heights Youth Theatre (HYT) presents “The Wiz,” directed by Treve Offutt.

Set in the present, Dorothy is forced outside of her comfort zone and into the land of Oz where she, the Tinman, Scarecrow, and Lion must look within to find their way back to themselves. With puppets, musical genres ranging from gospel and disco to R&B and rock, and dance styles from modern to hip-hop, African dance and beyond, this soulful musical promises to have you oiling up your joints, finding your courage, trusting your instincts, and feeling the love.

The cast features 15 local students in grades 1 through 12 and six professional musicians playing the energetic score. The leading players are Sydney Fieseler (Dorothy), Christina Ciofani (Addaplerle), Brycen Z. Hunt (Scarecrow), Kaleigh Wilkie-Smith (Tinman), Malcolm White (Lion), Kayla Hodge (Wiz), Lauryn Hobbs (Evilene), Victoria McGregor (Glinda), Abbey Fox (Aunt Em) and Gus Mahoney (Uncle Henry).

Show dates and times are Friday, March 4, 11, and 18, at 7 p.m.; Saturday, March 12 and 19, at 2 p.m.; and Sunday, March 6, at 2 p.m. All shows are at Wiley Auditorium, 2181 Miramar Blvd. Tickets are $20 for general admission, and $8 for seniors and students under 6.

For details, visit www.heightsyouththeatre.org.

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

Growing up Baroque

Veronika Skuplik, an early music expert and violinist from Germany, will guest conduct Apollo’s Fire in “Mysteries of Sacred and Profane: 17th Century German Chamber Music,” on March 4 and 5. The concerts are at 8 p.m. at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 2747 Fairmount Boulevard.

Conceived in 1992, Apollo’s Fire has grown under the creative and single-minded guidance of conductor Jeanette Sorrell. In every way, Sorrell is the mother of the Cleveland Baroque orchestra, Apollo’s Fire, which has grown from a small, but gifted, regional troupe to one whose recordings are broadcast throughout the world. Like any ambitious mother of talented offspring, Sorrell was eager to take her growing “child” on its first European tour, which she did last November.

Apollo’s Fire delighted audiences, received standing ovations in Spain and the Netherlands, and amazed a capacity crowd at London’s famed Wigmore Hall.

Of dozens of recent reviews, London’s Classical Music magazine opined, “Apollo’s Fire is one of the brightest lights of period-instrument playing in the United States. . . . arguably the most distinctive in sound, and memorable in style. Its trademark qualities: expressive subtlety, exuberance and passion.”

Now in its 19th year, so confident is Sorrell in the musical reliability of Apollo’s Fire that she is entrusting its next set of concerts to a foreign woman she met on the Internet. This is not as risky as it sounds: Sorrell and Veronika Skuplik met in person and worked well together last season.

Skuplik, who stole hearts in her performances here last season, will return on March 4 to lead the Mysteries program of intimate and soulful music with compelling guest baritone soloist, Jeffrey Strauss, and an ensemble of string quartet, theorbo (a long-necked lute), and organ.

Skuplik sees no difference between European and American audiences, characterizing both as “interested people I love to play for.” Calling the Apollo’s Fire musicians “open-minded,” she does not feel that she must repeat someone else’s musical interpretation, being free instead to find her own colors and expressions.

And what expressive music this is! The works of German and Austrian Baroque composers Biber, Tunder, Bruns, and Schmelzer are dripping with pathos, as are those of Johann Christoph Bach, whom Skuplik calls one of the most expressive composers to ever write in the Baroque style.

This repertoire gives the musicians freedom to express rhetoric and gestures, “like singers or actors.” The Mysteries program, aptly presented during the emotional season of Lent, supplies plenty of virtuosity in deeply passionate works, which include sighing laments, penitential confessions, and connections to life, hope, and salvation.

Tickets start at $21. Discounted student, senior, and young adult tickets are available for purchase in select seating sections. Call 800-314-2355 or purchase them online at www.apollosfire.org. Carina Fox, violinist, will present a preconcert talk one hour before each performance of Mysteries.

Mary Girolamich Haigh is a freelance composer, poet, music copyist, editor and artist residing in Cleveland Heights.

Become an observer. Submit your stories to www.heightsobserver.org
Mom & Dad,

The Music Settlement is offering some great camps this summer!

- Jazz Camp: 6/20 - 7/1
- Piano Camp I: 6/20 - 7/1
- Music Builders: 6/20 - 7/15
- Rainbow Camp: 6/27 - 8/4
- Chamber Music Camp I: 7/5 - 7/9
- Chamber Music Camp II: 7/11 - 7/15
- Brass & Wind Camp: 7/18 - 7/22
- Musical Theatre Camp: 7/18 - 7/29
- Piano Camp II: 7/18 - 7/29
- Suzuki Camp: 7/31 - 8/6

Can we check out their website to learn more? www.TheMusicSettlement.org

P.S. If we register before April 1, 2011, we’ll receive a 10% discount!

UPCOMING FREE EVENTS AT THE MUSIC SETTLEMENT

- March 6: Arts for Us: featuring Almeda Trio, 3 p.m.
- March 9: Flute Choir Recital, 7:30 p.m.
- March 13: Vocal Performance Class, 2 p.m.
- March 14: Bobby Jackson: The Jazz Mind, 7 p.m.
- March 17: Student Recital, 2 p.m.
- March 19: Suzuki Recital, 2 p.m.
- March 26: Student Recital, 2 p.m.
- March 27: Early Childhood Art Show, 1 p.m.
- April 9: Suzuki Recital, 2 p.m.
- April 10: Vocal Performance Class, 2 p.m.
- April 14: Student Recital, 7 p.m.
- April 17: Student/Teacher Festival, 7 p.m.
- April 25: Bobby Jackson: The Jazz Mind, 7 p.m.
- April 29: Suzuki Recital, 6 p.m.
- April 30: Student Recital, 2 p.m.

For more information, call 216-421-5806, ext. 100 or visit www.TheMusicSettlement.org

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Your Picture Here

SUMMER CAMPS AT THE MUSIC SETTLEMENT...

 THE ONLY THING MISSING IS YOU!

Financial Aid is Available

The Rainforest Car Wash, in Cleveland Heights, is now open. Located on the corner of Mayfield and Middlehurst (enter from Middlehurst), this state of the art car wash is open to the public. Featuring a rain forest theme both inside and out, The Rainforest Car Wash will be the best car wash you’ve ever had.