The recently released results of Census 2010 revealed population losses over the preceding 10 years in both Cleveland Heights and University Heights, as well as in every bordering community. Cleveland Heights’ population dropped 7 percent to 46,121. University Heights’ was down 4.3 percent to 13,539.

Both communities remain diverse by Greater Cleveland standards, and for the first time, no racial group is in a majority in the city of Cleveland Heights. The city’s African-American population dropped for the first time on record—6.2 percent drop to 10,975, or 24.5 percent of the total population. The white population fell 12.4 percent to 22,984, or 49.8 percent.

Gains were registered among Asian, who numbered 9,000 at the time of the census, a 48.4 percent increase, and among Hispanics, who grew in number from 793 to 903.

In University Heights, the black population mark dropped 5.1 percent to 3,331, or 7.5 percent increase, and the white population dropped below 10,000 for the first time in decades, an 8.9 percent drop to 9,726.

The city’s Asian population jumped by a third to 326, and its Hispanic population grew by nearly 70 percent to 374.

Population losses were much more significant in neighboring communities, with Cleveland losing more than 80,000 residents and East Cleveland’s population dropping by more than a third. Cleveland registered a significant gain in its Asian population, though, and its Hispanic population reached nearly 40,000. East Cleveland didn’t register population gains in any ethnic group and, of the 12,523 housing units in the city, 4,237, or 33.8 percent, were vacant.

Not surprisingly, a dramatic increase in the number of vacant houses was part of nearly every municipality, with even relatively stable Beachwood showing a 12 percent increase in the number of vacant units. In Cleveland Heights, the number of housing units increased overall, from 21,798 in 2000 to 22,465 in 2010, but the number of vacant units nearly tripled, from 885 to 2,508. In University Heights, the total number of units dropped by about 100.

Changes in Population, 2000 to 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>2000 Population</th>
<th>2010 Population</th>
<th>Change (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland Heights</td>
<td>46,121</td>
<td>43,375</td>
<td>-5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Heights</td>
<td>13,539</td>
<td>12,700</td>
<td>-6.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Population losses were much more significant in neighboring communities, with Cleveland losing more than 80,000 residents and East Cleveland’s population dropping by more than a third. Cleveland registered a significant gain in its Asian population, though, and its Hispanic population reached nearly 40,000. East Cleveland didn’t register population gains in any ethnic group and, of the 12,523 housing units in the city, 4,237, or 33.8 percent, were vacant.

Not surprisingly, a dramatic increase in the number of vacant houses was part of nearly every municipality, with even relatively stable Beachwood showing a 12 percent increase in the number of vacant units. In Cleveland Heights, the number of housing units increased overall, from 21,798 in 2000 to 22,465 in 2010, but the number of vacant units nearly tripled, from 885 to 2,508. In University Heights, the total number of units dropped by about 100.

FutureHeights to discuss land use and Oakwood

FutureHeights will host an educational forum at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 7 at Forest Hill Church, 3031 Monticello Blvd. in Cleveland Heights, to explore the issues and long-term implications of redevelopment projects, such as the one proposed for the former Oakwood Club property.

The event will focus on current and future land use and development needs and priorities for Cleveland Heights, University Heights and South Euclid within the context of Greater Cleveland.

Three panelists are expected to participate. They are Terry Schwartz, director of Kent State University’s Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative; Ed Jerse, director of regional collaboration for Cuyahoga County; and Hunter Morrison, director of the newly formed Northeast Ohio Sustainable Communities Consortium.

Forum speakers will address topics of particular interest to residents of the Heights and South Euclid, including:

- Retail needs and opportunities in Cleveland’s eastern suburbs
- Housing trends, needs, and opportunities in older suburbs
- Long-term and regional perspectives on how to balance the need for green space, maintaining high quality of life, and sustainable revenue streams for local governments.

FutureHeights is committed to promoting opportunities for the community to be educated on the issues and participate in the public process. This forum will emphasize that, regardless of the outcome, process is important and citizens should be involved in the decisions that affect them and their neighborhoods. Decisions about land use and development should take into consideration long-term implications, short-term benefits, and the impacts on surrounding communities. Residents of South Euclid, Cleveland Heights and University Heights, and any other interested citizens are encouraged to attend.

Tumeo resigns from Cleveland Heights City Council

Deanna Bremer Fischer

Council Member Mark Tumeo announced his resignation from Cleveland Heights City Council at the March 21 council meeting. Tumeo is vacating his seat for a job that will take him out of state. He has accepted the position of Dean of the College of Computing, Engineering and Construction for the University of North Florida, in Jacksonville. His resignation is effective May 17.

Mark Tumeo was the first openly gay member to serve on the city council. In the 2005 municipal election, he defeated incumbent Jimmie Hicks Jr., who had opposed the city’s domestic partner registry. Tumeo was a co-founder of Heights Families for Equality, the organization that pushed for the registry. He was reelected for a second term in 2009.

Tumeo was known for the innovative ideas he brought to council. As chair of the council’s Administrative Services Committee in 2005, he caused an uproar among University Heights residents and then-Mayor Beryl Rothschild when he suggested that the city consider merging with Cleveland Heights to create a single, larger city that could make more efficient use of scarce resources.

Jazz in Spring benefit concert set for Nighttown

Andrea Davis

What do you call the 6th, 7th and 8th grade students that make up Wiley Middle School’s Challenge Choir of University Heights, Ohio? Returning champions. But before this champion ship choir can defend its ranking, it must raise the funds needed to cover travel expenses.

Wiley Challenge Choir is asking the community’s assistance in raising $10,000 by purchasing tickets to its Jazz in Spring benefit concert. The event will take place at 2 p.m. on Sunday, April 17, at Nighttown, 12752 Cedar Road in Cleveland Heights. Tickets are $20 in advance and $25 the day of show. For tickets and information call 216-407-7248 or e-mail wilemsmc@gmail.com.

The Wiley Challenge Choir’s 2011 Concert Tour, May 11-15, will take the students to Birmingham, Alabama, and Atlanta, Georgia, and include visits to the 106th Street Baptist Church, The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, The Edmund Pettus Bridge (site of Bloody Sunday) and the Martin Luther King Jr. Visitor’s Center. The tour concludes with Cleveland Heights to create a single, larger city that could make more efficient use of scarce resources.
This month, the Heights Observer begins its fourth year of publication. It’s an underfunded, seat-of-the-pants community news organization managed essentially by one staff person, compiled by a dozen regular volunteers, and written by contributors numbering in the hundreds.

Considering all that, I’m not only impressed by the impact it seems to have, I’m also amazed that it comes out month after month. The Heights Observer is clearly getting stronger.

Our website has grown too. In the past 30 days, about 2,600 individuals visited HeightsObserver.org. That’s up 80 percent from just six months ago. Print editions made a total of 4,700 visits, up 101 percent in the same time period; and viewed more than 15,000 pages, a 99 percent increase. Our new blog site (blog.heightsobserver.org), launched Feb. 2, already draws more than 3,000 visits a month.

The Heights Observer is self-funded. Launched with the help of a few grants, it has run for the past two years on the revenue generated from advertising. But it doesn’t yet generate a surplus.

Deanna Bremer Fisher wears two hats: She is publisher of the newspaper and executive director of FutureHeights (www.futureheights.org), which pays a larger share of her salary than it should, considering the amount of time that the Observer requires.

The Observer has grown too. It now has self-sustaining. It continues to need support—indirectly from individuals via their FutureHeights membership; and directly from businesses, whose advertising purchases go right back into the very community they serve.

Not everything we’ve done has succeeded. Our online forum, conceived as a place for Heights wondroers about life and issues in the Heights, has never really taken off. A few volunteers are starting work to revitalize that part of the Observer portfolio and would welcome help with that.

On the whole, however, I’m pleased with where we stand. I want to thank and congratulate our tiny staff, our contributors, our regular volunteers, our advertisers and all of our readers for playing a role in creating an informed and engaged community.

To express your opinion privately, e-mail Bob Rosenbaum at bob@observerweb.com. To express your opinion as a letter to the editor, register at the Observer Member Center (www.futureheights.org) and click on “Submit New Story” to contribute your letter.

Bob Rosenbaum, chairman of the Observer’s editorial advisory committee and an editorial writer, said this column to provide transparency and understanding about the Observer.

#Celebrating our 4th anniversary

Bob Rosenbaum
Plan discourages Oakwood rezoning

Editor:
First Interstate Properties’ request before the South Euclid Planning Commission to rezone the Oakwood Club property from residential to commercial use directly conflicts with the South Euclid Comprehensive Plan 2000 and Update 2010.

The South Euclid Comprehensive Plan specifically states that if Oakwood were to become available for redevelopment it should not be rezoned to accommodate commercial development. Citing a “plurality of retail choices outside the City to meet the needs of residents” and specifically discouraging commercial expansion along the Warrensville Road corridor, the plan was written when the city knew the land was for sale. Despite this, planners in 2010 reconfirmed the policy of having Oakwood remain zoned for residential use.

Now South Euclid City Council, as it works to move this legislation through quickly, is requesting the Planning Commission review the wording of the plan to rescind the Oakwood residential zoning recommendations that were made in 2000 and 2010.

Fast tracking a major commercial development on the Warrensville Road corridor whose economic and quality-of-life impacts are largely unknown, due to a lack of independent study and citizen participation—flies in the face of the Comprehensive Plan recommendations.

According to Institute for Self Reliance, “City officials are under no obligation to change established zoning policies to accommodate a developer. Indeed, doing so may be considered arbitrary ‘spot zoning’—the rezoning of a single parcel to benefit a property owner rather than carry out an objective of the comprehensive plan—which courts have deemed illegal.”

First Interstate Properties completed its purchase of the property in late 2010, taking a gamble on being able to sell a big-box development, an archaic retail model in the 21st century, to South Euclid. The Oakwood Commons project is not consistent with the stated development plans and objectives of the City of South Euclid. Is this spot zoning in action?

Sarah Wein
Cleveland Heights

Oakwood postcard response is deceptive

Editor:
In the Observer article “South Euclid to hold public meeting on Oakwood rezoning,” one paragraph, apparently extracted from the McKenna report, caught my attention:

“McKenna Associates stated that the public opinion is important when considering rezoning and that the public appears to support the project, based on response to a mailing conducted by the developer. First Interstate sent 13,000 mailers to South Euclid and Cleveland Heights residents adjacent to the project site, asking them to mail in a postcard if they supported the project. 186 people responded positively, while only 19 people mailed in the postcard stated that they did not support the rezoning.”

My back yard overlooks the Oakwood property. My wife and I received the brochure from First Interstate several weeks ago. We remember the postcard well. It said something to the effect “mail this in if you are in favor of the Oakwood Commons development.” There was no place on the card to indicate that you WERE NOT in favor of the project. My wife and I are strong opponents of the project, and we considered putting a big red X over the card and sending it. But then we thought that every postcard received may be counted in favor, so we elected to just discard the brochure and postcard.

The implication of the paragraph you quoted is that there was a fair comparison of “yeas” and “nays,” and that the ratio 169 to 19 is indicative of the level of support for Oakwood Commons.

Clearly, this is deliberate deception. The wording of the questions was carefully crafted, indicating that the writers were well aware of the deception.

There should also be pointed out that the postcards were addressed to South Euclid City Hall, not to First Interstate. Hence, there appears to be complicity in the deception by Mayor Weis’s administration.

The only conclusion one can draw from the postcard experiment is that only 169 out of 13,000 households support Oakwood Commons strongly enough to bother to return a pre-paid postcard, while 19 households are so strongly opposed that they went to the trouble of modifying their postcards.

Rob Sonn
Cleveland Heights

Yes! to green space

Ralph Solonitz (artist and writer) was born in 1947 in Munich, Germany, the son of Holocaust survivors. He began doodling very early, first in German and a few years 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 in therapy and be still can’t stop doodling.

Ralph Solonitz (artist and writer) was born in 1947 in Munich, Germany, the son of Holocaust survivors. He began doodling very early, first in German and a few years 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 in therapy and be still can’t stop doodling.

Slow down Oakwood for regional perspective

Editor:
We share many concerns with opponents of the proposed Oakwood development plan. We also appreciate the need for local tax revenue that the proposed development may provide, and the opportunity to increase recreational parkland in both Cleveland Heights and South Euclid. The decisions we make to develop this unique property will have long-term consequences in both communities and our East Side region.

Therefore, we believe development of the former Oakwood Country Club property is an opportunity for regional cooperation and gain, rather than just what is best for Cleveland Heights or South Euclid.

Proponents of the big-box retail development proposed for Oakwood claim more competing retail will somehow fill the languishing Cedar Center North development with large numbers of new retailers and residents. No reasonable assessment of our retail health, at this time, supports this argument. If Walmart, a similar national recommender, sets its anchor store in the current Oakwood development plans, our population will continue to decline; and property values will fall as commercial vacancies grow from local merchants unable to survive competition with another big-box retailer. This is not sound regional planning.

Supporters claim that First Interstate’s Oakwood development proposal is the best we can do under the circumstances of this private property sale; that we need to support First Interstate because they will develop the property with appropriate diligence to environmental issues and traffic congestion; and that Cleveland Heights and South Euclid have the right to do whatever they determine is in the best interest of their cities.

We simply suggest slowing down the process to generate and explore options that may better serve the long-term needs of both communities and this region. We should explore partnerships involving all interested East Side communities and organizations, and not rush to build Oakwood until a regional plan and partnerships are created to guide the process. What kind of commercial or residential development is best for all? How much green space should we preserve? What other options should we consider?

A regional plan would give our cities more bargaining power with developers, unite our communities, and most likely result in a plan for Oakwood development that would truly stimulate growth and enhance the marketability and vitality of our region. Contrast this potential outcome with what we have now, which is narrowly focused with substantial opposition in both cities where the debate is centered.

Regional opportunities can no longer afford to be insular. We need to think broadly and ask what kind of communities we want. What mix of businesses do we need? Can multiple communities collaborate and pool resources to find the best outcome to this difficult development question?

If we take the time to ask these questions, we are confident we will find answers to maximize positive outcomes with the Oakwood opportunity, with widespread support, that will enhance and help sustain our region for many years to come.

Lisa P. Gaynier & Michael J. Gaynier
Cleveland Heights

LETTERS/opinion
Cleveland Heights: a hyper-vigilant parking meter enforcement zone

Ralph Solonitz is an artist and writer and longtime resident of University Heights.

Coventry feels the madness of March

Editor,

March Madness… From office pools to the President’s bracket, we Americans seem obsessed by this tournament. This past weekend, people crowded into Panini’s, McNulty’s and The Winking Lizard to eat, drink and cheer on their favorite school(s). It was great to see the street packed with people from noon to late at night.

This was a special year for us Clevelanders as our city hosted the first round of the Men’s Division 1 at Quicken Loans Arena. The tournament and the people attending the games have had a huge financial impact on Cleveland, especially the Rock Hall, the Warehouse District and East 4th Street.

Well, us folks in Coventry Village and the Coventry neighborhood. These towniers who elected to explore our city also felt a bump in business from out-of-towners as our city hosted the first round of the Men’s Division 1 at Quicken Loans Arena. The tournament and the people attending the games have had a huge financial impact on Cleveland, especially the Rock Hall, the Warehouse District and East 4th Street.

We, the folks from Syracuse wearing orange, Xavier supporters wore team jerseys and sweatshirts, etc. It made it a point to schmooze with these special tourists. Each and every one of them could not stop talking about what a wonderful neighborhood Coventry is.

They loved the mix of stores and restaurants. They were surprised that we had independent book, record and toy stores. An indie coffee shop was a relief to those who saw Starbucks all over their home turf. They raved about the variety and ethnicity of restaurants on the street. They were impressed by the number of cool clothing and jewelry stores, too. Most of all, they loved the way the street looked.

They all want to come back and said that they are going to tell their family and friends about our beloved neighbor hood. Coventry Village … take a bow.

Steve Presser
Marketing director, Coventry Village Special Improvement District

Taylor Road rehab plan quietly ignores residents’ need for wider tree lawns

Douglas Whipple

The plan to narrow South Taylor Road between Euclid Heights Blvd. and Mayfield Road, from seven lanes to five, is an improvement that is long overdue.

This brilliant idea is tarnished, however, because the Cleveland Heights administration is allocating all of the liberated land to the commercial zoning east of South Taylor, and offering nothing to the residents on west side of the heavily traveled roadway.

This misallocation of land was never presented to city residents but instead was conjured up behind closed doors.

The residents of the homes on the west side of South Taylor Road have a keen interest in the redesign of the road. Whenever the city is pummeled with a heavy snow, convoys of snowplows throw three lanes worth of ice and snow across the thin tree lawn that currently exists. This creates an ongoing hazard to South Taylor residents and others who need to use the sidewalk—particularly children, the elderly and the disabled.

When passable, the sidewalk is used by many to access school buses, RTA shelters and shopping, and to walk their pets.

The plowing after the March 11 snowstorm generated a barrier of snow in driveway aprons that was—literally—knee deep. The residential sidewalk was peppered with ice boulders weighing up to 15 pounds. There was a time when a city Bobcat cleared the sidewalks on South Taylor Road, but that service ceased abruptly after the voters rejected a tax levy.

The city’s position—that it elicited public input on the South Taylor rehabilitation project—is only partially true. This so-called public input was in March 2002, nine years ago. More significantly, the current design is substantially different from what was presented at that public meeting.

In 2002, the residents were presented with cross-section and aerial diagrams of the existing conditions, and several alternative conceptual designs. The consensus at the time was that Concept C was the superior alternative. Among the features was a substantially wider tree lawn and sidewalk on the west side of the road, adorned with shade trees. The recommendation in 2002 was that the tree lawns should have a minimum width of 10 feet, with 12 feet being considered ideal.

Records show that city officials later modified Concept C to eliminate this desirable feature, but took no steps to inform the public—including residents of South Taylor Road—of the change. The evidence suggests that the current, modified design has never been presented to the public. A NOACA review team recommended a 15-foot tree lawn and sidewalk on the west side of the road, but the city rejected the suggestion.

The city acknowledged in an August 2009 document that it was responsible for conducting a public hearing on the
HOME REMODELING FAIR

2011 COMMUNITY HOME REMODELING FAIR
Saturday, April 9th at Cleveland Heights City Hall
Sponsored by Home Repair Resource Center

9:30 Registration
9:30–1:30 “Ask an Expert”
Professionals specializing in the following areas:
- Asphalt
- Basement Waterproofing
- Carpentry
- Concrete
- Doors & Windows (9:30–12:15)
- Electrical
- Exterior Painting
- Heating & Cooling
- Insulation
- Masonry
- Plumbing
- Roofing

Plus general advice from:
- HRRC Repair Instructor
- CH Housing Preservation Office
- Talk with a Lender about Financing Your Project
- Ask about Energy Audits
- Ask about Historic Preservation/Exterior Paint Color Choices (10–noon)
- Ask about Lead-Safe Remodeling/get a paint Chip analyzed for Lead

10:00–1:30 “Ask an Architect”
Call 216-381-6100 to schedule a free individual 45-minute consultation with an architect to help you prepare for a home remodeling project.

10:00 – 11:00 Workshop: Kitchen remodeling
11:15 – 12:15 Workshop: Bathroom remodeling
12:30 – 1:30 Workshop: Choosing new Windows & Doors

All day: HRRC’s contractor evaluation books

Give your yard and garden a makeover this spring!
We’ve renovated and rejuvenated Heights-area yards and gardens for 30 years.
- Old lawn renovations and new lawn installations
- Patios, walks and retaining walls
- Drainage and irrigation systems
- Lighting systems
- Bed installations and plantings
- Fences and wood structures
- Water features
- Landscape design services

SPECIAL OFFER:
One FREE HOUR of landscape design/consultation services – A $75.00 value.
Offer good through June 30, 2011.
Code: HOB411

www.lawnlad.com | (216) 371-1935

FEWER RESIDENTS continued from page 1

and the number of vacant units more than doubled, to 438.

Looking at Cuyahoga County in its entirety, population losses continued, in keeping with a decades-long pattern. Overall, the county’s population dropped by more than 100,000 to 1,280,122, with a 13.3 percent drop in the white population as the main reason.

The county’s African-American population remained almost unchanged, at 380,198, and both the Asian and Hispanic populations showed gains of more than 30 percent. A small increase in the number of housing units in the county was offset by the 68.8 percent increase in the number of vacant units—76,707 out of 621,763—in April 2010.

Vince Reddy, a 14-year resident of Cleveland Heights, is a FutureHeights board member.

Tommy’s T-Shirt Design Contest
Call out to all designers - professional or amateur! We want you to design our mascot Flash a new t-shirt!

Requirements on t-shirt
- Use the new Flash image
- Include our name, address, phone number and website
- Include the name “Coventry Village”

$250 prize for best design!

Deadline for entries is May 1st!
For contest rules and to submit entries contact scott.tommys@gmail.com
Entries to be submitted in either JPEG, TIF or PNG format.

MASTER HANDYMAN, LLC
Carpentry • Plumbing • Roof Repairs • Electrical
We Specialize in Garage Repairs

CALL DAN AT (216) 324-1369
Since 1991 • Licenses • Bonded • Insured

“Tuck-Point” Turner
Restorative Cosmetic Masonry Specialist
Specialists in restoring “Heirloom” Homes built before 1950

The Only Lime-Registered Mason in Ohio
(Source – Cleveland Restoration Society)
Top-shelf products & methods to restore your Antique Brickwork!
20 (Yes, Twenty!) YEAR mortar guarantee
In Masonry Since 1974
- Insured • References Available Upon Your Request • A “Green” Business

Artisans, NOT Bricklayers
Find samples of my work on FACEBOOK!

Could you need restoration & repairs?
Call me, today!
440-716-0919
TuckPointTurner@aol.com
Senior Gatherings at UH library

Sherri Winiarski

Senior Gatherings continue on Thursdays at the University Heights Library. The following topics have been announced for April:

April 7, 2 p.m. Dr. Stacey Gorniak, Cleveland Clinic, on Manual Dexterity and Aging. Sherry Gavandtiti, media specialist at Menorah Park, on Free Cleveland Clinic, on Manual Dexterity April 7, 2 p.m.

April 14, 2 p.m. Kathleen Crowther, president of the Cleveland Restoration Society, on the History, Mission and Impact of Historic Preservation in the Community

April 21, 2 p.m. To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Peace Corps, Cleveland volunteers John and Kathy Baker will share their experiences in Romania; Michael Lonsdale will talk about his time in Zambia.

April 28, 2 p.m. Virginia Marti Veith, president of the Virginia Marti College of Art and Design, with husband Herb, will discuss Mission to the Fatherless in Kenya.

For additional information, call 216-397-3336.

Sherri Winiarski is administrative assistant to UH Mayor Susan Infeld.

Support Home Repair Resource Center when you shop and learn at

BREMEC on the Heights Garden Center

April 17 - May 1, 2011

A percentage of each purchase benefits HRRC.

Join us for free workshops at Bremech on the Heights Garden Center:

Saturday, April 23
11 am Pruning Trees
2 pm Basic Gardens

Sunday, April 24
11 am Harvesting the Rain
2 pm Cottage Gardens

Saturday, April 30
11 am Pruning Shrubs
2 pm Basic Gardens

Sunday, May 1
11 am Harvesting the Rain
2 pm Cottage Gardens

Call (216) 932-0039 for workshop reservations.

Gift cards are available, so you can make your purchase later and still help HRRC.

*Excludes contractor & commercial sales and service charges (such as delivery charges or tree planting fees.)

Visit www.hrrc-ch.org for more details.

Bremer on the Heights is located at 13410 Cedar Rd. just west of Taylor.

Advertise in the Heights Observer www.heightsobserver.org

Committee agendas in wonderland

POINT OF VIEW

Anita Kazarian

Being lost is not always a bad thing. My mother was an intrepid global traveler. To her, getting lost meant adventures along the way. Along comes GPS. The only problem with a GPS system is you need a destination. Without one, it may as well be a ham sandwich.

Remember Alice in Wonderland? Alice asks the Cat, “Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?” The Cat says, “That depends a good deal on where you want to get to.” Alice did not “much care where,” to which the Cat said, “Then it doesn’t matter which way you go.”

Being lost and not knowing where you “want to get to” are opposites. Last means you have a destination. Individuals, businesses and governments operate under the same principle: you need a destination or nothing happens.

In contrast, University Heights City Council committees seem to be more like Alice. Public records show that since 2008, committee meetings rarely take place and the same agendas are still with us.

Council committee meetings are the nuts and bolts of the legislative process. Voters have the opportunity to be part of the process in these public meetings. Committees present recommendations to council. When council votes yes, the mayor begins work to make it so.

At the no council meetings held each year, the mayor requests reports from committee chairs. Public records show that for 64 of these meetings, since 2008, most said, "No report, Mayor." Since Jan. 2008, five current council members have served on these committees.

Building Committee, Vice-Mayor Frankie Goldberg, chair. Six meetings recorded since January 2008. The agenda item “Review Section 8 housing, vacant properties/foreclosures” appears 60 times. The question arises: If not discussed in committee, is it ever discussed? If yes, where and what are the results? “No report, Mayor.”

Civic Information, Frank Consolo, chair. Three meetings recorded since January 2008. The following agenda items “Review citizen advisory committee,” “Website, e-mail, cable TV, Internet, publications,” and “Advertisements in city publications” appear 60 times. Added in 2010 is “Joining a senior network in another community.” What are the results? “No report, Mayor.”

Finance, Steven Sims, chair. Council allocated $2,000 to a March 15, 2011 special council retreat. Vice-Mayor Goldberg said, at the retreat, “I would love a full-time grant writer” with the other four councilmembers appearing to agree. “Part-time grant writer” has been on the Finance Committee’s agenda since January 2008, until it mysteriously dropped off in 2010. Why allocate $2,000 for a special retreat to discuss this and not address it in committee? Where is the committee report?

Debt policy has been on the agenda since January 2008. Cities have capital budgets and use debt to buy the big things. We borrowed $80,000 to pave University Parkway in 2009.

Why borrow $800,000 for one project, but not others—an ambulance/squad vehicle at $50,000; computerize the building department at $10,000; refurbish a truck for $1,000? These are on hold because debt policy sat in Finance Committee from October 2007 until it mysteriously disappeared from the agenda in 2010. Why?

Today’s finance vision for our future is contemplating a “Contract with Neopost for the new postage machine.” Again, “No report, Mayor.”

Governmental Affairs, Kevin Murphy, chair 2008–09. There is no record of meetings in 2008 or 2009.


University Affairs and Resolutions, Frank Consolo, chair. This 2008 committee appears to have met four times. JCU was diligent in providing its 5-year plan as a basis for resolving city/University issues. Lack of follow-up meetings by this committee to work on issues may have contributed to frustrations leading to the lawsuit that JCU filed against city council.

Planning and Development, Kevin Murphy, chair. Formed in 2008. No record of any meeting.

University Heights is a vibrant city and, with solid legislation, will continue to be so. Let’s get to work, hold regular committee meetings and resolve the listed agenda items. This work needs to get done. Unlike Alice, most of us in UH do care which way we go.
University Heights City Council
Meeting highlights

FEBRUARY 22, 2011
Councilman Phil Erkel and Vice Mayor Frankie Goldberg were excused.

Closing of trauma center
Resident Anita Kazarian spoke on behalf of the First Suburbs Consortium concerning the closing of the trauma center at Huron hospital. Erkel is asking its neighbors for help to solve the problems caused by the closing. Kazarian urged council members to attend the February 28 meeting at the New Covenant Church.

Merchants association
The Cedar/Taylor area formed a merchants association to deal with issues that increase the area’s appeal to shoppers.

Black History celebration
In celebration of Black History Month, Councilman Consolo introduced Wiley Middle School Choral Director Glen Brackens. Thirteen choir members sang three songs each representing a specific period. They were “Rock Me My Soul,” “My Girl,” and “Lift Every Voice and Sing.”

State sidewalk cleaning
Service Director Bob Jamieson reported his department is going street by street to clean up after the ice storm. The city does not clean the sidewalk within the city’s 6 to 7 inches of snow build-up. With no overtime pay, sidewalks of the most heavily used streets will be cleaned first.

Sun Press article
Former council members Adelle Zucker and Ste- van Bennett stated that the Sun Press incorrectly reported the history of city council taking their own minutes.

Recognition of service
Council recognized Lieutenant Damon Pasternak and Lieutenant David Novine for thirty years of service to the city. Each man will receive a plaque and $1,000 was the consultant’s fee. Councilman Murphy voted no.

Uh fire station offers free smoke detectors
As part of a new policy, the University Heights Fire Department is giving away fire-free state-of-the-art smoke detectors at the firehouse 24 hours a day, seven days a week. All University Heights residents can pick up detectors at the station, which is next to City Hall, on Sibby Road at Warrensville Center Road. Some people have been reluctant to have fire department personnel come into their homes to install the devices. The new policy, however, is designed to make sure there are no reasons left to avoid getting a smoke detector. Mayor Susan Infeld, Fire Chief John Pitchler and Fire Prevention Captain Steve Ine- man want every house and apartment to have these life-saving detectors.

The main advantage is that the bat- teries last for 10 years, so the devices do not require frequent battery replace- ment.

Furthermore, the detector takes care of three kinds of danger: smoldering matter that has yet to burst into flames, flash flame that starts without smoke, and a dead battery in the device.

More than 8 percent of all people who died in fires in Ohio since 2000 did not have functioning smoke detectors. During the first 38 days of 2011 alone, 10 people died in seven house fires—houses that did not have functioning smoke detectors.

University Heights has been giving away smoke detectors to its residents since early 2009. City code requires smoke detectors at Point-of-Sale inspection.

According to Steve Ineman, free fire inspections are available to UH residents.
"If a resident wants a free home fire safety inspection, just telephone me at 216-321-8732 to schedule an appoint- ment," he said.

Residents can call 216-321-1939 to schedule free installation of the detec- tors in their homes or they can go to the fire station, pick them up and install the devices themselves.

This free program is available to all UH residents in houses and apartments, regardless of income.

Anita Kazarian is a marketing professional, founder of Noah’s Landing, LLC and a 29- year-old resident of UH. Contact her at anitaka- zararian@gmail.com.

UH fire station offers free smoke detectors

Anita Kazarian

As part of a new policy, the University Heights Fire Department is giving away fire-free state-of-the-art smoke detectors at the firehouse 24 hours a day, seven days a week. All University Heights residents can pick up detectors at the station, which is next to City Hall, on Sibby Road at Warrensville Center Road. Some people have been reluctant to have fire department personnel come into their homes to install the devices. The new policy, however, is designed to make sure there are no reasons left to avoid getting a smoke detector. Mayor Susan Infeld, Fire Chief John Pitchler and Fire Prevention Captain Steve Ineman want every house and apartment to have these life-saving detectors.

The main advantage is that the battery lasts for 10 years, so the devices do not require frequent battery replacement.

Furthermore, the detector takes care of three kinds of danger: smoldering matter that has yet to burst into flames, flash flame that starts without smoke, and a dead battery in the device.

More than 8 percent of all people who died in fires in Ohio since 2000 did not have functioning smoke detectors. During the first 38 days of 2011 alone, 10 people died in seven house fires—houses that did not have functioning smoke detectors.

University Heights has been giving away smoke detectors to its residents since early 2009. City code requires smoke detectors at Point-of-Sale inspection.

According to Steve Ineman, free fire inspections are available to UH residents.
If a resident wants a free home fire safety inspection, just telephone me at 216-321-8732 to schedule an appointment,” he said.

Residents can call 216-321-1939 to schedule free installation of the detectors in their homes or they can go to the fire station, pick them up and install the devices themselves.

This free program is available to all UH residents in houses and apartments, regardless of income.

Anita Kazarian is a marketing professional, founder of Noah’s Landing, LLC and a 29-year-old resident of UH. Contact her at anitakazararian@gmail.com.
Five police departments form partnership for mutual aid during emergencies

Kristy Naper

In light of the financial hardships gripping many communities, five suburban police departments formalized an alliance last month to share resources in the event of serious emergencies.

Beachwood, Euclid, South Euclid, Shaker Heights and University Heights have created the EDGE partnership—Eastside Departments Group Enforcement Teams. Under the agreement, each city will provide equipment, personnel and other services as needed in case of an unusual emergency in any of the cities.

A brief and quiet signing ceremony took place at Shaker Heights City Hall on March 15, during which the five police chiefs signed the memorandum of understanding, making the EDGE initiative official. The agreement was also signed by the mayor of each city.

“This is a wonderful example of regional cooperation,” said Earl M. Leiken, mayor of Shaker Heights, at the start of the meeting.

EDGE aims to maintain, or even exceed, expected service levels in each community, despite the possibility that each city may face budget cuts. The partnership provides mutual aid and exchange of specialized police units such as SWAT, narcotics and crime scene investigation.

“The sharing of police services and resources is not only more efficient and cost effective, it also raises the level of service that we’re able to provide to our residents on a daily basis,” said Scott Lee, Shaker Heights police chief.

According to Gary Stehlik, University Heights police chief, the idea of combining such resources has been around for some time. “The chiefs have been talking about this for two years now,” he said. “We wanted to do a lot of things to save money.”

The primary goal is to create a unified SWAT team that can be shared, Stehlik said. In this way, each city can rely on one cost-effective SWAT team instead of struggling to maintain its own.

Cleveland Heights is not participating. Police Chief Jeffrey Robertson, who was promoted after the retirement of long-time CH police chief Martin Lentz, said the opportunity wasn’t there for Cleveland Heights to join immediately. He added that the door is open for the city to join in the future.

Robertson said he has been invited to attend future meetings. “I have been in contact with the other chiefs,” he said. “And right now, we’re looking at resources to see how Cleveland Heights can fit into the program. We have a bomb squad, and that’s a resource we could possibly offer.”

Communities joining EDGE will pay a $5,000 annual fee, to be used for equipment maintenance, training, tuition reimbursements and other services.

For more information on the EDGE Team, contact Shaker Heights Police Chief Scott Lee at 216-491-1240.

Kristy Naper is a freelance writer and photographer who has lived in Cleveland Heights her entire life.

New group launches book drive in April and May for elementary students

Lisa Monsari

After planning, talking and listening to school leaders, parents and concerned community members, a new group formed in Cleveland Heights is ready to act.

“Go Public! Great Schools is Everybody’s Business” will hit the ground running this month with a book and magazine drive for grades K-5, held from April 15-May 15 throughout the community.

“We thought a book and magazine drive would be a perfect vehicle to involve the community in helping our schools,” said Joan Spoerl, who has brought many people together with the goal of greater community involvement in our public schools.

For the past several months, Spoerl has gained support and momentum from the community using the book that inspired her, How to Walk to School: Blueprint for a Neighborhood School Renaissance, by Jacqueline Edelberg and Susan Kurland. This model provides an outline for thinking big and doing better, for more effectively mobilizing and organizing our community to support our schools and the students who attend them,” said Spoerl.

Go Public! will work with teachers, reading specialists, PTA and families at every elementary school to collect and distribute books and magazines to students who will benefit most. Just in time for spring cleaning, gently used books and magazines will be collected in marked boxes placed in CH-UH schools, local coffee houses, grocery stores, and the Lee Road Library.

If your business, church or temple would like to host a collection bin, contact the number below:

A book recommendation list from the school district is posted on the Reaching Heights website.

If you don’t have gently used books to donate, but would still like to participate, you can donate books through an Usborne Books & More online book fair at www.usborne.com/BFg5675. All proceeds will go to the school district to promote summer reading. Whether buying books for yourself, as gifts, or for the district, all purchases will contribute towards additional free books for the district.

To send fair donations to the district, use the following mailing address when ordering: CH-UH City School District, Attn: Kelly Stukus, 2155 Miramar Boulevard, University Heights, OH 44118-3397.

“They are just the first steps on our journey to involve the community in supporting and improving our schools,” said Spoerl. Go Public! will focus on five different areas of support: improving physical environments; curriculum; outreach and communications; family support; and building bridges between school and community.

Volunteers are needed for the book drive. If you are interested in helping or want to find out other ways you can get involved, call 216-371-3753 or e-mail joanspoerl@sbcglobal.net

Lisa Monsari has lived in Cleveland Heights since June 2006. A strong advocate of public schools, she has a 6th grader at Bearden Middle School and a 9th grader at Heights High School and a 9th grader at Heights High School.

For Passover

For Easter

For Mother’s Day

Every Day

Mitchell’s FINE CHOCOLATES

Since 1939

2285 Lee Road • 216.932.3200
www.mitchellfinechocolates.com

Nothing Tastes Better Than Mitchell’s Chocolates
Thursday, April 7
“Portal to the Universe.”
You are invited to hear Evelyn Gates, Ph.D., executive director and CEO of The Cleveland Museum of Natural History, at the League of Women Voters’ public meeting. There is no admission charge, and parking is free behind the cathedral off Prospect Avenue. For more information, visit www.LWVcuyahoga.org or call 216-781-0555.
7 p.m.-9 p.m. Trinity Commons at Trinity Cathedral, 2230 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland.

Thursday, April 14
Jim Rakokis at the Cleveland Heights Democratic Club
The Cleveland Heights Democratic Club will host former Cuyahoga County treasurer, Jim Rakokis. The meeting is free and open to all. Rakokis became county treasurer in 1997, and stepped down in January due to the elimination of his tenure, he worked actively to strengthen HRRC programs that help keep the houses of Cleveland Heights in good repair. A series of free landscaping workshops will be offered during the sale, a new feature of this two-year-old partnership. More details are available at www.hrrc-ch.org. Call 216-932-0039 to reserve a space.
7 p.m. at the Cleveland Heights Community Center at 1 Monticello Boulevard.

Sunday, April 17
Forest Hill Park Nature Walk
April is the time to see spring flowers in Forest Hill Park. Take a walk in the park and learn to identify native wildflowers like spring beauties and toothwort, and invasive species, such as garlic mustard. Pull a few garlic mustard plants while you are at it. For more information e-mail Elsa Johnson at vicnelsa@earthlink.net.
Meet at Forest Hill Park, 3 p.m.
April 17-May 1
Garden for Good
Gardens are invited to support the work of Home Repair Resource Center (HRRC) by doing their spring shopping at Bremec on the Heights Garden Center. A portion of any noncommercial sale, made between April 17 and May 1, will be donated to HRRC programs that help keep the houses of Cleveland Heights in good repair. A series of free landscaping workshops will be offered during the sale, a new feature of this two-year-old partnership. More details are available at www.hrrc-ch.org. Call 216-932-0039 to reserve a space.
7 p.m. at the Cleveland Heights Community Center at 1 Monticello Boulevard.

Thursday, April 21
Cleveland Heights Bike Coalition Quarterly Meeting
Doug Bahniuk, voted one of Cleveland’s Most Interesting People by Cleveland Magazine (Jan. 2011), will discuss long distance bike touring and his work to raise funds for Parkinson’s research. CHBC board members will also talk about progress in local bicycle advocacy. Enjoy dinner, drinks and conversation beginning at 6:30 p.m. The presentation will start at 7 p.m. For more information contact Joy Henderson at 216-321-8081.

Tuesday, April 26
“Conquering Clutter”
The public is invited to take a look inside, as The Alcazar hosts “Conquering Clutter,” a talk by professional organizers Jo-Ellen Saltik and Muffy Kasberg, owners of Organizing 4 U. Saltik and Kasberg will share tips on how to declutter and organize, and conquer clutter for good. Last year, the pair attracted more than 125 guests to their talk, which will be held again in the fifth-floor ballroom, and is free and open to all.
Alcazar Hotel, 2450 Derbyshire Road at 7 p.m.

Thursday, April 28
“100 Years and Counting: Picturing the Past and Future of Cleveland Heights Schools”
Eric Silverman, CH-UH Alumni Foundation president, will lead a visual tour of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights school buildings. For reservations call 216-321-9141 or e-mail heightshistory@gmail.com.
7 p.m. at Cleveland Heights Community Center, 1 Monticello Blvd.

Saturday, April 30
The Karen Foundation for MS 11th Annual NFL Draft Day Party
The Karen Foundation raises money to provide respite care for families in North-east Ohio with a loved one at home who is suffering from the debilitating effects of multiple sclerosis.
11 a.m.-6 p.m. at the Barley House Cleveland, 1265 W. 6th St., Cleveland.

HOLY WEEK WORSHIP
FAIRMOUNT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Sunday, April 17
Passion/Palm Sunday
Children’s Palm Processional (11am)
The Passion According to Luke
One Great Hour of Sharing offering received
Thursday, April 21
Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service 7:30 pm
Saturday, April 23
Easter Egg Hunt and brown bag picnic on the side lawn 4:00 pm
Easter Vigil 5:00 pm - 6:30 pm
Easter Sunday, April 24
9 and 11 am EASTER Worship
FAIRMOUNT Presbyterian Church
2757 Fairmount Blvd.
Corner of Coventry and Scarborough
216.321.5800 | fairmountchurch.org

Volunteers needed for Heights-area projects
Gardening at Fairfax Elementary
Kim Bichof, the science coach at Fairfax Elementary, would like help with gardening projects at the school. If interested, call the school at 216-371-7480 or e-mail k_bichof@chuh.org.

Tutors at Fairfax Elementary
Fairfax Elementary needs two tutors per day from 3:30-4 p.m. to help students with homework in the after school program. Contact Mrs. Stringer at 216-371-7480 or l_stringer@chuh.org.

Volunteers for book drive
If you are interested in volunteering for a book drive to benefit CH-UH schools, or want to find out ways you can get in-involved in Go Public! Great Schools are Everybody’s Business, call 216-371-3753 or e-mail janapoerson@abcglobal.net. [See related story on page 10.]

Coventry Elementary School
Garden and Playground Cleanup Day
Help clean up one of our area’s best assets on Saturday, April 16, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., rain or shine. All volun-
teers are welcome. Garden tools are provided. A continental breakfast to get you started and lunch to keep you going will be served to the volunteers. No experience is necessary, just enthusiasm for playing in the dirt and having fun with others from our community.

Sunday, April 17
Passion/Palm Sunday
Children’s Palm Processional (11am)
The Passion According to Luke
One Great Hour of Sharing offering received
Thursday, April 21
Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service 7:30 pm
Saturday, April 23
Easter Egg Hunt and brown bag picnic on the side lawn 4:00 pm
Easter Vigil 5:00 pm - 6:30 pm
Easter Sunday, April 24
9 and 11 am EASTER Worship

Support the HRRC Fundraiser
April 18th - May 1st
13410 Cedar Rd., Cleveland Heights OH 44118
216-932-0039 • www.bremec.com
April Hours: Mon - Sat 9-6 • Sun 9-5

Become a Fan of Bremec On The Heights Garden Center

News letter

Support the HRRC Fundraiser
April 18th - May 1st
13410 Cedar Rd., Cleveland Heights OH 44118
216-932-0039 • www.bremec.com
April Hours: Mon - Sat 9-6 • Sun 9-5

Become a Fan of Bremec On The Heights Garden Center
Although Tumeo said modestly that everything the council does is the result of working together as a team, he was institutional in changing the way the city budgeted and planned its finances. Under his leadership as chair of the Finance Committee, the city maintained a balanced budget as well as its bond rating. “We had to make hard decisions,” he said, “and ask hard questions. We worked with council and staff to ensure that every program and city function was evaluated for efficiency.”

Tumeo is justly proud of his work in raising the level of community policing in Cleveland Heights. As chair of the Public Health and Safety Committee, he began a pilot project that promoted direct weekly communication between Oxford neighborhood residents and the police force. He is excited about the return of bicycle cops to the force and the new “safety initiative” that Police Chief Jeff Robinson has instituted.

“All of the things I have ever done, I am most honored that the people of Cleveland Heights elected me to represent them—once, twice—and I hope that they feel I have served them well and made them proud,” said Tumeo.

According to the city charter, Cleveland Heights City Council will appoint someone to serve in Tumeo’s place through Dec. 31, 2011. Because there will be a municipal election this fall, voters will have the opportunity then to elect someone to serve the remaining years of his term, from Jan. 1, 2012 to Dec. 31, 2013.

Mayor Ed Kelley said that in early April, the city will announce how residents can apply for the interim position. The goal is to have someone in place by the first council meeting in June.

Kelley stated that he would miss Mark Tumeo. “It’s been a pleasure to work with him. He’s brought energy, creativity and talent to the position. He’s a dedicated council member and good friend.”

The last time a council seat was vacated before the expiration of a term was in 1993, when Ohio Representative Barbara Boyd left for the statehouse. Three council terms will expire at the end of this year—those of council members Phyllis Evans, Dennis Wilcox and Kenneth Montlack. Voters will choose candidates to fill these seats, as well as the one vacated by Tumeo, in this fall’s municipal election.

Deanna Brenner Fisher is executive director of FutureHeights and publisher of the Heights Observer.
Parenting Q&A

Ellen Barrett

Ellen Barrett, a parent educator at Family Connections, fields questions from parents about the daily ups and downs of parenting. The same issues affect many parents. If you have questions for Barrett, e-mail her at ebarrett@heightsparentcenter.org.

Q. Our 4-year-old daughter has been telling some very tall tales lately. Some of them are stories about what she did at school that day, such as, “We went to the zoo where we saw the tallest giraffe in the world and got to ride on it.” Other times, she tattles about another child, saying, “Sam ate my snack so I didn’t get any today.” At home, she blames her sister for anything that goes wrong. Most of the time, we are pretty sure that she isn’t telling the truth, and we are worried that these stories will lead to outright lying. What should we do?

A. Although it may seem like your daughter’s behavior is malicious or conniving, it is a normal part of her development and, in fact, she is acting like many other 4-year-olds. Here are a few possible reasons why a preschooler may spin tall tales or deny the truth, and a few strategies for you as the parent:

• Your child has an active imagination. This is one of the most delightful reasons why your preschooler might be telling a “lie.” A sense of adventure and the ability to imagine things outside of everyday life are important skills that can be an entertaining outlet for your child. They can also help build skills for creative writing, storytelling or interactive play. As a parent, you can relax and enjoy this tale telling, and even join in by asking questions or encouraging descriptive detail.

• Your child is indulging in wishful thinking. Your child may feel bad about spilling her milk or drawing on the wall, and she may be scared of punishment. A natural way for her to deal with that fear is denial. Do not accuse your child of the misdeed; in stead, state the unacceptable behavior and suggest a solution, such as, “We should draw on paper, not the wall. Let’s clean it up.” This will help your child feel good about telling the truth, and will encourage her to be truthful in the future.

• Your child needs to feel good about an accomplishment. If your child says that she climbed to the top of the tallest tree in your yard, you know that didn’t happen, but saying it did made her feel strong and brave. Suggest a more reasonable feat for her to try, such as, “Let’s see how fast you can run to the top of the hill.” Praise her by saying, “Wow, you must be really strong—look how fast you did that!”

• Your child is forgetful. Preschoolers are very busy and often have short attention spans. It is possible that your child truly does not remember something. Helping her to recreate a series of events may trigger her memory and enable her to set the record straight.

• Your child wants attention. She may have learned that lying is an effective way to get your attention, even if your reaction is negative. Try to keep your reaction neutral as you sort out the details and get to the truth.

Although lying is typical for this age, it is still your job as a parent to help guide your child toward truthfulness. Praise honesty when you see it, help her to recognize her feelings, and offer a positive resolution, such as, “Thank you for telling me you spilled your milk. I can see you feel bad about it. You’ll feel better when we get it all cleaned up.” With guidance, that pattern of behavior will catch on as she develops and matures.

Recognize your own tendency to bend the truth. For example, don’t ask your child to say she liked grandma’s cookies if she really didn’t. A preschooler is unable to tell the difference between degrees of mistruth. Finally, be sure to reassure her that you love her no matter what—even when she writes on the wall.

Advertise in the Heights Observer
www.heightsobserver.org

Why does everyone make such a fuss about Easter? It’s a pretty big deal.

Tired of Worrying? Looking for Peace & Direction?

Discover:
• How God as infinite good brings trust in the power of good to help us overcome worrying and fear.
• How people from every walk of life have demonstrated this power of God to heal and bring solutions to challenges and worries of every sort.

Hear the talk
Spiritual Solutions for Desperate Situations
by Lorenzo Rodriguez, CSB

Sunday, May 1, 2011
2:30 p.m.
Cleveland Heights Public Library
2345 Lee Road, Cleveland Heights

Sponsored by
First Church of Christ, Scientist, Cleveland
3181 Fairmount Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44118 • 216-932-3020

Sponsored by
First Church of Christ, Scientist, Cleveland
3181 Fairmount Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44118 • 216-932-3020
Reaching Musical Heights to showcase CH-UH music education

Saroya Queen-Tabor

Reaching Heights, in cooperation with the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District, will present the third Reaching Musical Heights concert at Severance Hall on April 11.

The journey to the concert began last summer with the naming of concert directors Daniel Heim and Richard Waugh. Both Heights residents are well aware of the life-changing benefits of music education. Cleveland Orchestra member Waugh recalls that while in the 4th grade, he became mesmerized by the sound of the violin. When he learned that students who wanted to study the violin would be given free music lessons at school, “It was like winning the lottery.”

“These experiences weren’t just about music,” he said. “They were about self-motivation, self-discipline and learning a sense of responsibility. These were experiences that helped to shape my overall character.”

This viewpoint is shared by Heights High senior Joshua Toombs and recent graduate Matt Zucker. The 2011 Reaching Musical Heights Concert will en- able Toombs, who is president of the school’s a cappella choir, to return to the Severance Hall stage, where he performed in 2007 as a member of the Wiley Middle School Challenge Choir.

“At the time,” Toombs said, “I don’t think I understood the significance of being on that stage. To be able to return there as a senior, in a leadership position and with many of my friends from Wiley, is a real honor.”

Zucker, a 2010 Heights High graduate, said “Music has helped me build determination and time-management skills.” It has also helped me learn to interact with others and to work hard to achieve my goals.”

Zucker, now a student at the Cleveland Institute of Music, also participated in the 2007 Reaching Musical Heights concert as a member of the Heights High Symphony. “It was an amazing opportunity that in my case was a career-influencing experience,” he said.

This concert will showcase the depth, variety and quality of music education found in the school district. It will also raise funds to support Reaching Heights’s music education programs. For nearly 20 years, Reaching Heights has worked to enhance CH-UH music education through its summer music camp and private music lesson scholarships for middle school students.

Tickets can be purchased online at www.clevelandorchestra.com. The concert will begin at 7:30 p.m. A pre-concert benefit begins at 6 p.m. For more information about the benefit, call Reaching Heights at 216-932-5110.

Saroya Queen-Tabor is a member of the Reaching Heights board and a development director for Senior Outreach Services in the Heights.

Heights music camp returns for 7th season

Susie Kasser

Cleveland Heights High School’s orchestras and bands are full of students who solidified their commitment to music by participating in the Heights Summer Music Camp. Reaching Heights founded the camp in 2005 to provide an affordable way to energize and develop young musicians, and to increase and equalize access to music enrichment experiences for local youth.

Enrollment is now open for the weeklong camp, held in partnership with the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District, at Wiley Middle School from June 20–25. A con- cert on June 25 will showcase camper growth during the week.

The camp targets 7th-8th graders who live in the school district and have participated in their school instrumenta- nal music program for at least two years. Students in 4th grade may also apply if they have had at least a year of private lessons.

Space is limited to 85 musicians, and the deadline for applications is May 11. A placement audition for all campers is scheduled for May 21. Financial assistance is available to ensure that all motivated music students are able to participate.

Applications are available from CH-UH instrumental music teachers, or from Reaching Heights at www.reach- ingheights.org or 216-932-5110.

Susie Kasser is a resident of Cleveland Heights and former director of Reaching Heights.
High school faces major reconfiguration

By Sofija Conic

In 2004 and 2005, Cleveland Heights High School (CHHS) separated into five small schools in order to allow for student accommodation and attention to individual needs. The philosophy behind the concept was to create smaller, closely bound communities within the larger high school, which would allow students to become part of a shared experience. Each small school was founded on different learning principles, to foster a more accommodating learning environment. The intention is that students choose their small school based on specific fields. The intention is that one fourth of freshmen fail in their first year.

Beginning in the 2012-2013 school year, the four small schools are intended to resemble the colleges of a larger university, with each small school offering a concentration in specific fields. The intention is that students choose their small school the same way they would choose a major in university. R.E.A.L. will become the R.E.A.L. Early College High School, and its main focus will be encouraging students to go to college. The school will partner with the Cuyahoga Community College to offer an associate degree program, which will include career prep courses. According to Jeffrey Talbert, assistant superintendent, the students who enroll in the R.E.A.L. Early College High School will have the possibility of graduating with a degree, or with enough college credits to be a sophomore or junior. However, only 100 students will be a part of this school each year. This small school is designed mainly for first-generation college students, and others who might not continue their education beyond high school if not for the help.

Renaissance will be named the Renais-
sance School of International Studies and Liberal Arts. Its courses will be directed towards individuals interested in law, business, and marketing, and it will offer courses such as AP U.S. History, AP Psychology, AP Economics, and African American Studies. The Mosaic Experience will retain its name, and it will include classes dealing with art, music, and theater. It will be the home of TV production, computer networking, and a new journalism course. Legacy will become Legacy New Tech, and it will offer classes geared towards science and technology careers. The courses which are related to these careers, such as AP Biology, AP Physics, and AP Calculus will be transferred to Legacy New Tech.

CHHS Reorganization

The small school P.R.I.D.E. will be clos-
ing this year to make way for a “Fresh-
man Experience,” which will consist of a specialized curriculum and schedule for ninth graders. This action is due, in part, to the fact that one fourth of freshmen fail their first year.

Beginning in the 2012-2013 school year, the four small schools are intended to resemble the colleges of a larger university, with each small school offering a concentration in specific fields. The intention is that students choose their small schools the same way they would choose a major in university. R.E.A.L. will become the R.E.A.L. Early College High School, and its main focus will be encouraging students to go to college. The school will partner with the Cuyahoga Community College to offer an associate degree program, which will include career prep courses. According to Jeffrey Talbert, assistant superintendent, the students who enroll in the R.E.A.L. Early College High School will have the possibility of graduating with a degree, or with enough college credits to be a sophomore or junior. However, only 100 students will be a part of this school each year. This small school is designed mainly for first-generation college students, and others who might not continue their education beyond high school if not for the help.

Renaissance will be named the Renais-
sance School of International Studies and Liberal Arts. Its courses will be directed towards individuals interested in law, business, and marketing, and it will offer courses such as AP U.S. History, AP Psychology, AP Economics, and African American Studies. The Mosaic Experience will retain its name, and it will include classes dealing with art, music, and theater. It will be the home of TV production, computer networking, and a new journalism course. Legacy will become Legacy New Tech, and it will offer classes geared towards science and technology careers. The courses which are related to these careers, such as AP Biology, AP Physics, and AP Calculus will be transferred to Legacy New Tech.

CHUH moves forward with new technology

By Brandon Fernando

Earlier this school year, Cleveland Heights High School was introduced to the long awaited netbooks as part of the One to One Teaching and Learning with Technology Initiative. Approximately 2,000 laptops were ordered. The district’s website notes that “All Cleveland Heights-University Heights students and teachers in grades six through 12 are now learning with laptop computers.” But, Joseph Nohra, small school principle of P.R.I.D.E., realistically admits that “maybe 25-30 students in each small school haven’t picked up their laptops.” Still, he considers the project “largely successful.”

The program was initiated two school years ago at Monticello Middle School, where students received Apple MacBooks. Although the middle schools are still using the MacBooks, high school students are currently working with Dell netbooks.

According to Nohra, the high school administration was very influential and active in promoting the laptop initiative, which was ultimately a decision to be made by the Board of Education. At the staff and faculty level, Nohra says he would give back a lot of feedback he has received that they are “working hard to adapt” in what ultimately is a learning environment. For students, Nohra says the feedback he has received is “positive.”

Unfortunately, for seniors this year, they’re not going to get the full effect of it. It’s going to take some time for teachers to get comfortable with integrating the software with their lesson plans.

Mrs. Christina Bauer, a new program specialist, will help teachers integrate the laptops into lessons. Students received laptops in November, midway through the first semester. Since then, Nohra says that he has seen minimal issues with theft and malfunctions. “It happens,” explains Nohra. “It would happen in any school, but we’ll tell you that I am very, very pleased with the responsibility of the students here.”

Included on the laptops are a select number of school textbooks. The district’s long-term goal is to increase the number of imaged textbooks each year, says Nohra. One restriction placed on the laptops is a web filter that blocks content deemed inappropriate while in school. Unfortunately, the web filter will occasionally block internet sites that are both appropriate and helpful for students. The web filter also affects staff, including Nohra:

“There are a lot of things that are filtered out. Even sites that are good, that I want to get on to try to help kids are filtered out. It’s just a matter of what we can keep safe and secure.”

The web filter is only in effect while students are in school, but does not function when a student is connected to a wireless network that does not belong to the district.

The laptop initiative is a significant technological investment, as well as an economical one. The Black and Gold asked several school officials for the overall cost of the laptops, but was unable to find an answer.

The Plain Dealer and the Sun Press have reported that the laptops were financed with state funds.

According to Joseph Micheller, director of Educational Services, the laptops were “secured in stages.”

“The middle and high school laptops were secured with three to four year leases, where we would own the laptops at the end of the lease period.”

The laptops will inevitably need to be replaced at some point in the future, but as for now, this has not extended warranties on the laptops, and will refresh them every summer.

In the long term, the CHUH district hopes the netbooks will also save money in certain areas, such as paper and textbooks.

Three years ago, when the laptop initiative was piloted at Monticello Middle School, Micheller told The Plain Dealer: “We’ll still be buying some textbooks, but realistically in today’s world, many of them are outdated before they’re ever printed.”

“There are far better sources of information now, including some online textbooks that use interactive hyperlinks.”

It is still very early to assess the impact of the netbooks, but the true difference will only be apparent in the coming years. Regardless, Nohra remains confident. “My expectations have been met.”
A dog with Mr. McCartney
Math teacher shares his story over some exotic food

By Brandon Fernando

On the sixth of March, I met Cleveland Heights High School math teacher Ryan McCartney for lunch. Two other students came along, but this would not be Mr. McCartney’s first meal with high schoolers, as last year he took his Honors Pre-Calculus classes on a field trip to Chipotle as part of an original project he designed to help students understand permutation.

Although initially planning to go to Melt Bar and Grilled, the food enthusiast and proud local eatery connoisseur decided to introduce me to a restaurant and show venue called The Happy Dog, located on his home turf, the west side of Cleveland.

The Happy Dog has a menu consisting of a hot dog, vegan sausage, tater tots, French fries, and most importantly, over fifty different toppings.

The self-proclaimed math nerd has no problem going bold, as evidenced during his thorough explanation of the menu. Mr. McCartney’s usual hot dog concoction consists of chunky peanut butter, Oaxacan red chile and chocolate mole sauce, and bacon, which apparently is a fairly popular combination for regulars at The Happy Dog.

Today, however, he decided to branch out, ordering a hot dog with garbanzo bean chili, smoked gouda, dill pickle kraut, and a dill pickle spear. On the side he ordered tater tots with raspberry crunch mustard, chipotle hollandaise, and the aforementioned Oaxacan red chile and chocolate mole dipping sauces.

Between bites of his gargantuan hot dog, much too large to eat with two hands, Mr. McCartney, longtime fan of Ryan McCartney, a math teacher at Cleveland Heights High School, is an enthusiastic teacher, runner, and lover of hot dogs.

The Black & Gold is a student publication of Cleveland Heights High School, 3326 Cedar Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118. Our World Wide Web site is located at www.heightsobserver.org

The Black & Gold welcomes all opinions, but reserves the right to edit letters to the editor. All letters should be sent in care of Michelle Hubbard, m_hubbard@chuh.org.

The Black & GoldProduced camera-readyon Macintosh computers using the InDesign program.

The Black & Gold is affiliated with the following press organizations: Northeast Ohio Scholastic Press Association (NOSPA), Columbia Scholastic Press Association (CSPA), Journalism Education Association (JEA), The Great Lakes Inter-Scholastic Press Association (GLIPA), and Quill and Scroll. The Black & Gold has won the NSPA First Place Award, CSPA Medallist Award, CSPA First Place Awards, GLIPA Buckeye Awards and Quill and Scroll International Awards. For advertising rates and information, please email our advisor, Margaret Hull, at m_hull@chuh.org, or reach her by phone at (216) 320-4999 ext. 81321

The Black & Gold is made possible in part by a generous grant from the Cleveland Heights High School Alumni Foundation; the staff of the paper would like to extend its gratitude.

Opinions expressed are the consensus of The Black & Gold editorial board and do not represent the views of Cleveland Heights or the Cleveland Heights University Heights School District.

Editors-in-Chief ......................... Colin Higgs
Editors-in-Chief ......................... Jake Stern
Managing Editor ......................... Julia Gay
Art Director/Graphic Designer ............ Jake Stern
Reporters: Brandon Fernando, Sofia Coric, Monica Chan, Lillie Hall, Amber Jackson, Julie Zem, Lily Gould, Mikaela Thomas, Amanda Haldy, Jake Bohle and Trent Bailey
Advisor ................................. Margaret Hull
Photography ......................... Jake Stern

Anyone interested in how we students feel?

By Colin Higgs

People want the truth: That’s just the way it is. When you get down to it, no matter the situation, people will always want it — plain and simple. However, in my meager sixteen years of existence on this planet, if I have learned anything, it is that people are not always going to tell you the truth.

But despite this, there are still people I can always trust, and depend on to tell me nothing but the truth: Teachers. Teachers play, or have played, a large role in everyone’s lives: after all, our entire society is based on education. But the kids who come to school every day — not our parents, not the politicians - are the ones who really count on the teachers, not just to learn, but for support, and for guidance. These kids need their teachers. I need my teachers.

Recently, it would appear that the state of Ohio has decided that teachers really are not that important. Senate Bill 5 is intended to take necessary measures to help reduce the state deficit, and that seems like a bad thing. Times are economically tough, and everybody understands the need to cut back. But by targeting the teachers, not only our educators, but the students, as well, are going to feel the sting of Senate Bill 5.

Our teachers give so much to their students, and to the community. They act as not only as educators, but also as role models, leaders, and friends. Our teachers give and give, and now it they are being denied the rights they deserve. With the loss of collective bargaining, the teachers are losing their voice.

As a student watching this unfold, it is troubling. So many unfair and untruthful rumors are circulating about them, and it seems people have lost appreciation for the work that these men and women do. Our teachers mean so much to us, and it is hard to watch as they struggle for their rights, and are under-valued, and disrespected.

Teaching is about more than just reviewing facts. It is about building relationships with students, and giving us the support we need to thrive. Times are hard now, but we must remember that teachers are one of our most important resources. Do not make it any harder on them.
The AFS (American Field Service) club has been at Heights High for over four decades and has been under the steadfast advisement of Adrienne Yelsky for 18 years. Adrienne Yelsky has played host to students from a number of different countries over the years, including Turkey, Bolivia and Japan, as well as countless more. This year, Heights is hosting students from Argentina, Costa Rica, Malaysia, Italy, Germany, Kenya, Mozambique, and Philippines, and all the students have managed to fit comfortably into American society.

Each year, AFS holds two fundraisers. The fall candy sale supplements the club’s treasury in order to award scholarships to Heights High students travelling abroad. The February carnival sale, just in time for Valentine’s Day, is a 30 year tradition, according to Yelsky. “We usually sell between 1,200 and 1,600 each year. The only year it didn’t get exciting again, “Donley explained. “It’s so exciting, but then it also has little bits of pressure.”

Senior instrumental soloists shine on stage

By Julia Gay

Senior solos are a long tradition in the Heights High Instrumental Music Department, going as far back as the 1930s, said band director Brett Baker. With a senior solo, a student prepares a piece which is performed with either the Heights High Symphony (HHS) or Symphonic Winds (SW).

Dan Heim, orchestra director, explained that being awarded a senior solo is an honor within the department, and indicates that a student has not only shown dedication but has also become an accomplished musician.

Seniors Gwen Donley, Kellene Lowrie, and Catherine Holt are the soloists for the class of 2011.

Holt, a harpist, performed Edward Grieg’s Allegro Molto Moderato, a piano solo, with the HHS in the November concert. Lowrie, a harpist, performed Concerto de Artajues by Joaquin Rodrigo with the HHS in February.

On Friday, May 6, Rusty Holt will perform Fantasia Brillante on themes from Bizet’s Carmen by Francisco Borne with the HHS in February.

Senior soloists are chosen via an audition process each October.

Baker explained that there are three judges - the two directors plus an outside musician. A criteria system is used and then the judges collaborate to determine who will be awarded senior solos.

According to Baker, the night of the auditions is like a great, free concert. All the students, whether awarded a solo or not, are very well prepared.

He added that students often begin preparing for their solo auditions as much as a year in advance, and their preparation is obvious.

Soloists carefully select the piece that they will perform.

Holt said that she listened to many flute concerto before selecting hers, but when she heard the Fantasia Brillante she knew it was right for her. “I loved its passion and the beautiful melodies, so I decided to do it!”

Donley worked with her piano teacher, Candice Lee, to find her piece. They also listened to many recordings of piano concertos and Donley liked the Grieg piece the best.

“I’m so excited, but then it also has little interludes of pretty, melodic parts, and then it gets exciting again,” Donley explained.

Many months of preparation precede the performances.

Donley reports that she started preparing her solo in May of her sophomore year, and that she is sure that her family was happy she performed her solo in the first concert because they had grown weary of hearing the Grieg all hours of the day or night.

Lowrie said that she practiced tirelessly. “Any spare time I had went towards practicing. Even during rehearsals, if there was a time that I wasn’t playing with the group, I was silently fingering some passage of my solo.”

On the nights that senior soloists perform, the Heights High Dina Rees Evans Auditorium is filled with parents, family, friends, faculty, fellow students, community members, and even former senior soloists. All eyes are on the senior soloist as she comes on stage to perform her piece from memory with the Heights High Symphony.

Donley remembers just hoping that she would not pass out, as she had done during the dress rehearsal the evening before due to a virus she had that week.

Lowrie reports that while performing her solo with all the people she cared about in the audience, she realized it was almost over. “I was sad because I loved every minute of it, but I was also really excited that I had accomplished the whole thing.”

What is the best thing about doing a senior solo? According to Holt it is “probably the excitement of getting to really show what you can do on your instrument.”

“Even though you don’t really get to play to the limit of your abilities, so a senior solo is an awesome opportunity to get serious performance experience and also have fun playing with people that you’re close to.”

For Donley, “even though it was probably the most nerve-racking experience of my life, it was still very rewarding to be able to perform a piece that I put so much effort into, and to let everyone hear how epic it is.”

Even though the final 2011 solo has yet to come, members of the class of 2012 are already preparing for their senior solo auditions which will be held in October, 2011, Heim reported.

“There are many talented students at Heights every year it is exciting to listen to everyone play their different pieces.”
Students, staff share love of books

by Julia Gay

Early in the school year, the daily PA announcements started mentioning author Suzanne Collins’s Hunger Games trilogy of books, and that a student book club would be discussing them at their first meeting. What was this new club? Reading? Don’t students do enough of that in class? Indeed, there are students at Heights who enjoy participating in a book club. Media specialist Amy Bloomberg said, “It shouldn’t feel like an assignment - just reading and discussing for fun.” She has enjoyed talking with and getting to know the student bibliophiles, noting that there have been up to twenty students at the monthly meetings.

“Reading for pleasure is an important part of becoming a life-long reader. Book club helps encourage kids to do this.”

-Amy Bloomberg, Cleveland Heights High School Librarian

Bloomberg and fellow media specialist Michael Beckmann started the book group this past fall. “Reading for pleasure is an important part of becoming a life-long reader. Book club helps encourage kids to do this,” Bloomberg explained. She also added that she enjoys discussing the various selections with students. “I find that they tend to have many insights and I usually learn a lot.”

Bloomberg and Beckmann chose the first book of the year, after that, members have picked titles that everyone agreed on. In addition to the Hunger Games trilogy, the club has read Life as We Know It by Susan Beth Pfeffer, Hate List by Jennifer Brown and Gone by Michael Grant.

Bloomberg added that the club is hosting author Chris Crutcher on Monday, April 18th. For that meeting, instead of being assigned a specific title, members may select and read one of his many novels.

New members are always welcome and should feel free to contact Mr. Beckmann or Mrs. Bloomberg in the library in order to receive the upcoming book and be added to the email list.

Heights swim team raises money for medical research

By Monica Chan

For the past number of years, the Heights High swim team has given back to their community through leaf raking for the elderly and helping out at library book sales.

This season, coaches Jim Miller and Cassie Ritzmann pledged to donate to the Rea Robinson Foundation for each time a swimmer on the team swam a race in his or her best time.

The foundation, named after Heights alumna and former swim team captain Andrea “Rea” Robinson, is dedicated to finding a vaccine to prevent the strain of meningitis from which Robinson contracted and passed away from in February, 2010.

Most recently, the swim team hosted its Pink in the Pool meet against West Geauga High School.

The event, held on February 4th, served as the team’s Senior Night as well as a fundraiser to support the National Breast Cancer Foundation.

Both teams, showing their support for the foundation’s research by donning pink swim caps at the meet, raised money all season through a variety of ways including bake sales and raffles.

Freshman wins ‘Poetry Out Loud’ recital contest

By Ilone Eke

On Thursday, February 10, 2011, the annual Poetry Out Loud contest took place in the quiet room of 243 at Cleveland Heights High School. Poetry Out Loud is a national recitation contest, created by the National Endowment for the Arts and The Poetry Foundation, and is administered in partnership with the State Arts Agencies.

Freshman Brandi Gibson’s recitation of Wilford Owen’s famous anti-war poem “Dulce Et Decorum Est” and Carl Dennis’s “Progressive Health” earned her the winning award. The judges were impressed by Gibson’s pronunciation of words, her physical presence, voice and articulation, dramatic appropriateness, level of difficulty, evidence of understanding, and overall performance by judges Haethem Rasul, Renaissance School guidance counselor, Sheila Murray, retired Cleveland Heights High School media specialist and Kathleen Scully-Buxton, English teacher in the Renaissance School and contest advisor.

“All of the students did amazingly well. They were able to memorize challenging multi-page poems and demonstrated the content of the poems,” commented Scully-Buxton. Other contestants were Sophomore Sofia Conic, Freshman Sara Shore, Freshman Chidimma (Krista) Ubani and Sophomore Julia Zelis, who recited poems that varied from Edgar Allen Poe’s “Dream Within a Dream,” “Jabberwocky” by Lewis Carroll and “Famous” by Naomi Shihab Nye.

Heights gospel choir competes in finals of local competition

By Eric Gray

The Cleveland Heights High School Gospel Choir, under the direction of Mrs. Sandra Dixon and student director, Geoffrey Golden, was a first place finalist in the Fox/Ford Glee competition held February 27, 2011 at the Cleveland Auto Show at the IX Center.

Through March 31, the choir is competing against other finalists in the competition for the grand prize of $5,000, which the Heights’ gospel choir would use for new robes and general expenses. Voters may view all of the choirs’ performances and vote for their favorite at www.driveonohio.com.

The choir performed four songs: “Never Gave Up on Me,” “ Deliver Daniel,” “House of the Lord,” and “Worship the Lord.” “The choir is, obviously, excited about being a finalist in the contest,” commented Golden. “At the auto show, we gave it our all and the judges awarded us for that.”

Support: The Black & Gold Purchase a School Keepsake for only $15.00

Place an Order by Contacting: Mrs. (Peggy) Hull m_hull@chuh.org

Heights Observer April 5, 2011 16 www.heightsobserver.org
Criminal justice students help seniors with heating bills
Joy Henderson

The Heights High Career Tech Criminal Justice class donated $550 to help pay the utility bills for two Cleveland Heights senior citizens. Representatives from the Office on Aging were at the school on March 14 to accept the donation.

Social worker Linda Katz told the students about one of the adults who will benefit from their donation. “She is an 85-year-old former social worker who lives alone in an older home that she has struggled to keep up. She is saddled with very high utility and medical bills. She even received a notice from the gas company that that her gas would be shut off. When I told her about your generous offer to help her with her gas bill, she was extremely grateful. Your generosity made a huge impact on her life.”

Class president, Cory Dodson, speaking for the class, said, “We are really glad to help older people who need assistance with their heating bills.”

Brandon Watts, a student who was instrumental in organizing the project, also addressed the social workers. “Thank you for the opportunity to help senior citizens—and for all you do,” he said. “We know you give older people hope and help them to remain productive.”

Criminal Justice instructor Johnnie Lemons is proud of his students. “The classes worked hard to make the project happen,” he said. “They saw a need and stepped up to help.” He sees community service projects as a way to move students from a selfish attitude to a more generous and selfless outlook. He noted that some students who underachieve in his class were overachievers when working on this project.

Amy Jenkins, supervisor of the Cleveland Heights Office on Aging, and volunteers Erma Gordon and Lita Gonzalez, also attended.

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

Heights student receives computer certification
Joy Henderson

Heights High senior Carlin Jackson has a plan. When he received the CompTIA certification in December, he took another step toward his eventual goal of owning an IT services company. The certification gives him credentials for computer installation, preventative maintenance, networking, security, and troubleshooting.

When Jackson began preparing for the test last November, network teaching teacher Leonard Tabaj provided resource materials and guidance. “Mr. Tabaj was a huge help in my preparation,” Jackson said. “The textbook and support from him were really important.”

For about a month, Jackson spent two hours a day studying for the test and was thrilled to learn he had passed.

Jackson met recently with CH-UH Superintendent Douglas Heuer and IT director Donald Phillips to discuss a possible site license that would give students free access to Microsoft's professional-grade tools.

Jackson will attend Case Western Reserve University, and with the certification and his two-year Cisco Networking Academy class at Heights High, he will enter with enough credits to pursue a double major in computer science and computer engineering. After that, he is considering CWRU's joint MBA/JD program.

Jackson is a founding member of IT Club and a member of the National Honor Society. “The opportunities I had at Heights High have been a great start for me,” he said. “I think I will be well prepared for Case.” As for that bigger goal in IT entrepreneurship—we can't wait to hear more about that in the coming years.

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

Fifth graders at Fairfax ‘go Greek’
Heights Observer Staff

As a rule, the phrase “going Greek” is reserved for college students who join a sorority or fraternity, but it also applies to the students in Kathy Craig’s fifth-grade Advanced Curricular Thinking (gifted) class at Fairfax Elementary.

On Thursday, Feb. 24, family, friends and students were the invited guests of the god Poseidon (Nasir Carter) and his goddess wife, Demeter (Christiana Sanders). The occasion for the festivities was the birth of a new god, Jessidious.

Jesse Hodges had won the right to name the new Greek god in a drawing. Students portraying a centaur, Athena, Medusa, Artemis, Persephone, and other Olympians entertained and informed the audience in a play they titled “Birth of a Greek God.”

Why did the students assume the personas of these mythological figures from Greek history? They were meeting various fifth-grade curriculum goals, namely researching and documenting sources in proper MLA style (Modern Language Association), writing a research paper; public speaking; reading and synthesizing non-fiction text to gain information about a specific topic.

In addition to displaying their in-depth learning with this play, these ambitious fifth graders seized the opportunity to embark on a service-learning project by hosting a bake sale to raise funds necessary to adopt a naked mole rat from the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo. The students became interested in naked mole rats after listening to a class read-aloud titled, The Naked Mole Rat Letters by Mary Amato. Students raised approximately $58 to meet their goal. Kudos to the fifth grade A.C.T. students!
The District Dashboard gives quick view of school district direction

The District Dashboard features easy-to-read data. Attendance and school suspension charts describe school climate. Reading and math proficiency scores for the district over four years provide a measure of student achievement. Data on college enrollment rates, ACT test taking and college credits earned in high school help describe college readiness. This is a broader set of issues than is reported on the state’s Local Report Card for school districts, and the superintendent is hopeful that it paints a helpful picture of how the district is doing on its mission: to equip students to be college ready and life prepared.

Each graph shows local performance over several years because, according to Heuer, “the best way to assess progress is to look at the district numbers over time, not in comparison to other districts.” If things are flat or going in a negative direction, it means there is a problem. If there is improvement, it means district programs and strategies are working.

In addition to providing a quick overview of district progress, the dashboard should also stimulate interest in what the “red light” doesn’t explain: What is behind the numbers? Where are the problems? What is the plan to produce progress? In other words, what are we doing to make this car run smoothly? These are issues that the community and school leaders need to explore together.

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.

Wiley robotics team takes second place in tough competition

The Wiley Middle School robotics team, the Rawbots, survived a busy weekend of competition. Consisting of 7th and 8th graders—Abby Hermes, Aviva Klein, Arnaz Simpson, Ann Zicari, and Emma Zordan—and coached by Rick Gulick and Dianna Neal, the team placed 2nd out of 21 teams at the VEX Robotics Competition at Marion Technical College on March 4.

Wiley was the only middle school team in the competition, competing against 20 high school teams.

Teams competing in the VEX Robotics Competition must design, build and program a working robot. The 2010-11 competition was called Round Up, and required that robots be able to place rings on various posts in and around the playing field. Each match lasts for 2 minutes and 30 seconds. The first 20 seconds of the match are played in autonomous mode and the final 2 minutes are driver controlled. This allows the robot to score rings on posts or knock over the rings of their opponents. Then a member of the team uses a radio control for 2 minutes to place more rings on the 9 posts on the playing court.

Teams earn two points for each ring placed on a post, and five extra points for placing more rings on a post than their opponents. Wiley was one of the few teams that had a working program and gained points for that, as well.

Teams competed in pairs against other pairs in five qualifying rounds. The Wiley team was in first place at the end of the qualifying matches. Then, the top eight teams chose two other teams to create an alliance. Those alliances went on to compete in playoffs and teams that were not chosen were out of the running. To win the competition, teams had to win two of three matches. Wiley’s alliance easily sailed through the semifinals and went on to the final match. The team lost in the final round and placed 2nd in the competition.

On Saturday, March 5, the team was closer to home at Cleveland State University, for the Cleveland Area VEX Qualifier. This competition was more rigorous, and consisted of teams that had participated in and won other competitions. By the end of the qualifying matches, Wiley’s team had placed 10th out of 33 teams. The team was chosen by the 4th-place team to join their alliance. The alliance won the quarterfinals and advanced to the semifinals. The alliance made a valiant effort, but lost in the semifinals.

Kudos to Abby, Aviva, Arnaz, Ann, Emma and their coaches, Rick Gulick and Dianna Neal!

Ditte Wilin is the proud parent of a Rawbot.

Wiley Middle School student takes second in Plain Dealer spelling bee

Angie Shaker

Hannah Smith, a seventh grader at Wiley Middle School, took second place in the Plain Dealer Cuyahoga County Scrabbles Spelling Bee at the Cuyahoga Community College Metropolitan Campus on March 5.

After facing nearly 12 rounds with about 60 competitors, Smith missed the word dysphonia. Smith and her family are already gearing up for next year’s spelling bee, according to her mother, Laura Weber Smith.

“I’m so grateful that Wiley principal, Patricia Reid, made it possible for Hannah to have this opportunity. Without her push for Wiley to become a participating school in the Scrabbles Bee, this wouldn’t have happened,” said Weber Smith.

Principal Reid added, “We are so proud of Hannah Smith. Not only is she a terrific speller, but she is a 4.0 student who hasn’t missed a day of school this year. Her positive attitude and love of school makes her a great role model for the other students, too.”

Hannah was chosen by the Plain Dealer and a $20 Amazon.com gift card. She was inducted into the National Junior Honor Society on March 25.

Angie Shaker is the director of communications for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.
Grapevine closes after 23 years

Key Lowe

Cleveland Heights is losing an icon with the closing of the Grapevine Wine Store. Bob Fishman has decided to leave the retail wine business.

Fishman became interested in food at an early age. At 13, he started working in restaurants as a dish washer and worked his way up through the ranks. He graduated from college with a degree in restaurant/business administration. Fishman worked at Au Provence restaurant on Lee Road. Owner Tom Wykoff had a winery in the basement, and from that experience, Fishman became enamored of wines.

He and his wife and partner, Lisa, opened the Grapevine wine store in November 1987, after spending more than a year looking for the perfect location. They chose the Cedar-Fairmount business district because of its demographics and its proximity to hospitals, museums and downtown Cleveland. The Grapevine took a different approach to the wine business from the beginning, by specializing in wines from the United States—mainly California, Washington and Oregon. The couple was advised against being so specialized, but given Bob’s love and knowledge of domestic wines, they moved forward and never looked back.

When asked why they opened their store in the midst of his going-out-of-business sale, Fishman offers some advice to wine collectors. “Find your favorite wines and enjoy them, but don’t be afraid to try new things. For those who like cellars, it is better to drink your wines too early than too late.”

The Fishmans and their daughter, Courtney, plan to remain in the Cleveland area. Bob is considering many options for his future. He may stay in the wine industry, but he would really like to be involved in the health and wellness industry. Among the things he will not do is work for any competitors, work in retail or work six or seven days a week. The Cedar Fairmount Special Improvement District is continuing to look for a prospective new tenant for the space. Fishman says his customers were the best, and he thanks them for their loyalty over the past 23 years.

Our opening day is always a big hit!!

Spring has sprung, and the pool is just itchin’ to start the new season. You wanna play?

Now accepting new memberships for the 2011 season. For more information please visit...

www.foresthillswimclub.org

Join before April 30th and save $75.

FOREST HILL SWIM CLUB
2333 Lee Blvd., Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118

The Tavern Company

Mon. Burger Fries & Beer Night $9 Tues. Flatbread Pizza Beer & Wine Tues. Trivia starting at 10 pm Wed & Thurs: “5 for $30” 2 Dine for the $5 or $10 includes 2 small salads + 2 select dinners + a pitcher of House wine + OJS 3.20 M-F Happy Hour 5–7 pm Sunday Brunch 10:30 am–3 pm Sunday Karaoke 10 pm Kitchen Open 5–10 pm Mon.–Thurs. 5–11pm Fri. and Sat.

www.heightsobserver.org
Nancy Levin

What’s old and new, bigger and brighter and comes in the same-size box it did before?

The Noble Neighborhood Library Branch, that’s what! The brick building, originally designed by Walker and Weeks, closed for renovation on Oct. 1. Seven months later, on Monday, May 16, at 1 p.m., it will reopen.

“The spaces are bigger—the adult, teen and children’s departments all have more room,” said new branch manager Constance Dickerson. “We achieved this by reducing meeting room space and giving the library over to families.”

“The interior is the perfect blend of old and new,” she adds. “We returned the library to its 1936 design roots.”

Prior to the library opening for business, the Friends of the Heights Libraries will host a sneak-peek fundraiser on May 15. Proceeds from the party will pay for the full-sized tree sculpture that will adorn the children’s room.

The public is invited to a grand-reopening party on Sunday, May 15, with light refreshments and music. Partypo- ers can meet Eliot Ness and Eleanor Roosevelt, actors who will recreate the era of Noble’s original opening in 1936.

Postponed on account of success: McLain at Coventry Library April 27

Nancy Levin

Author Paula McLain was scheduled to speak at the Coventry Library on Wednesday, April 20, but that was before her latest book hit bookstore shelves in February.

“McLain had to reschedule her talk for April 24, because people can’t get enough of her,” said Pat Gray, Coventry Library branch manager. Her visit is part of a local author series sponsored by Appletree Books, Coventry Library and Mac’s Backs Bookstore.

McLain will discuss and sign her bestselling new novel, *The Paris Wife*. Set during the time of Hemingway’s *A Moveable Feast* and *The Sun Also Rises*, *The Paris Wife* captures the voice and heart of Hadley Hemingway, Ernest Hemingway’s first wife, in her role as a cocktail waitress before discovering delivery girl, an auto plant worker and nurser who will become the Lost Generation.

Paula McLain was born in Fresno, California in 1965. After being aban- doned by both parents, she and her two sisters became wards of the California court system, moving in and out of various foster homes for the next 14 years. When she aged out of the system, she supported herself by working as a nurse’s aide in a convalescent hospital, a pizza delivery girl, an auto plant worker and a cocktail waitress before discovering that she could (and very much wanted to) write. These experiences inform her memoir *Like Family: Growing Up in Other People’s Houses.*

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

WHAT’S GOING ON AT YOUR LIBRARY?

National Library Week 2011 is April 10–16.

Coventry Village Library

1925 Coventry Road, 216-321-3400

Saturday, April 16, 3 p.m.

Author John Stark Bellamy II

University Heights Library

13866 Cedar Road, 216-321-4700

Wednesday, April 13, 12:30 p.m.

Tech-Tutor for Seniors

Lee Road Library

2345 Lee Road, 216-932-3600

Monday, April 11, 7 p.m

Publishing your Website class

(Registration Required)

Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library Board Meeting highlights

FEBRUARY 21, 2011

Ester Moss, board vice president, was absent.

Donations to the library

The board accepted the following gifts given to the library in 2011:

• John F. Burke, Jr., $1,001.46 for program-

• Recovery, Inc., $50 for meeting rooms

• Sandra Stewart, $50 for Adult Services

• Cleveland Hearing and Speech Center, $6,000 for Coventry Deaf Services pro-

• Anonymous donor through Friends of the Li-

• $3,500 for the teen writing program

Personnel changes

Children’s Services librarian Susan Black will be interim children’s services coordinator.

The events coordinator position is open due to the resignation of Tonya Gibson. Job specifications and details for this position will be evaluated before the position is filled. The part-time circulation as-

sistant position will be filled immediately.

Sheryl Banks has been appointed marketing and communications manager. She has over ten years experience in the marketing, communications, and events fields.

Organization and compensation review

Realigning the library’s organizational structure and redesigning the compensation system will be a major effort in 2011. Especially in light of funding reductions, this process is necessary “to modernize our service delivery to contem-

• Family Lego Night was a big hit.

• Three staff members attended a training session for a proactive approach to working with teens and setting and enforcing behavior limits.

• Planning continues for the PLAYroom at Noble.

• The Top It Smart Board will enhance literacy-

• Electronic device lending began Jan. 24. The six

• A program at Coventry Library featured nurse and energy practitioner Ruth Thayer talking about and demonstrating Heating Touch.

• Senior Spot at University Heights library held a program on Flickr and other photo-sharing

• Dave Howell, a Coventry Young Adult Associ-

• Three staff members attended a training session for a proactive approach to working with teens and setting and enforcing behavior limits.

• Planning continues for the PLAYroom at Noble.

• The Top It Smart Board will enhance literacy-

• Electronic device lending began Jan. 24. The six

• A program at Coventry Library featured nurse and energy practitioner Ruth Thayer talking about and demonstrating Heating Touch.

• Senior Spot at University Heights library held a program on Flickr and other photo-sharing

• Dave Howell, a Coventry Young Adult Associ-

• Three staff members attended a training session for a proactive approach to working with teens and setting and enforcing behavior limits.

• Planning continues for the PLAYroom at Noble.

• The Top It Smart Board will enhance literacy-

• Electronic device lending began Jan. 24. The six

• A program at Coventry Library featured nurse and energy practitioner Ruth Thayer talking about and demonstrating Heating Touch.

• Senior Spot at University Heights library held a program on Flickr and other photo-sharing

• Dave Howell, a Coventry Young Adult Associ-

• Three staff members attended a training session for a proactive approach to working with teens and setting and enforcing behavior limits.

• Planning continues for the PLAYroom at Noble.

• The Top It Smart Board will enhance literacy-

• Electronic device lending began Jan. 24. The six

• A program at Coventry Library featured nurse and energy practitioner Ruth Thayer talking about and demonstrating Heating Touch.

• Senior Spot at University Heights library held a program on Flickr and other photo-sharing

• Dave Howell, a Coventry Young Adult Associ-

• Three staff members attended a training session for a proactive approach to working with teens and setting and enforcing behavior limits.

• Planning continues for the PLAYroom at Noble.

• The Top It Smart Board will enhance literacy-

• Electronic device lending began Jan. 24. The six

• A program at Coventry Library featured nurse and energy practitioner Ruth Thayer talking about and demonstrating Heating Touch.

• Senior Spot at University Heights library held a program on Flickr and other photo-sharing

• Dave Howell, a Coventry Young Adult Associ-

• Three staff members attended a training session for a proactive approach to working with teens and setting and enforcing behavior limits.

• Planning continues for the PLAYroom at Noble.

• The Top It Smart Board will enhance literacy-

• Electronic device lending began Jan. 24. The six

• A program at Coventry Library featured nurse and energy practitioner Ruth Thayer talking about and demonstrating Heating Touch.

• Senior Spot at University Heights library held a program on Flickr and other photo-sharing

• Dave Howell, a Coventry Young Adult Associ-
A learning day for teachers
Joy Henderson

Students in the Cleveland Heights-University Heights schools did not spend a whole day to address specific areas. The adult learning day at Heights High included six sessions. Some were focused on each for small school, while other sessions focused on subject area. A sample of the work for the four core subject areas included:

Math Middle and high school teachers will be to check the best way to prepare students for Algebra I. The district math program specialist led the session in which 9th-grade teachers talked about teaching skills they teach to help middle school children understand the goals and methods used in high school. Middle school teachers talked about their experiences and challenges.

Science Teachers for grades 6–9 met to review pacing charts. These charts show what concepts are taught, and when to ensure that the concepts build on each other and that students receive solid background instruction for the complex ideas. Science teachers also learned about supporting the new science standards for teaching graph skills, and examined the new state standards for science.

Social Studies Middle and high school social studies teachers attended sessions about how to access original documents from the National Archives and how to "read like a historian," using primary source documents to spark inquiry. Teachers learned about an interactive website, Stratego, that demonstrates immigration patterns, environmental impact and explorations.

English Teachers focused on sharing best practices for specific teaching challenges, activities to prepare students for final exams, and conferences between 8th- and 9th-grade teachers. The middle school to-high school collaboration will continue this spring with two high school teachers working with middle school teachers.

When teachers share what they know and ask the important questions about how to improve student achievement, the culture of adult learning and constant improvement grows.

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

---

Health and Wellness Fair scheduled for April 16 at Wiley Middle School
Andrea Davis

April is Minority Health Month. In recognition of the event, Octavia Reid, Wiley Middle School principal, is emphasizing the opportunity to extend social sciences curriculum at Cleveland Heights-University Heights families by hosting the school’s first Health and Wellness Fair.

In partnership with Cleveland Clinic, the Health and Wellness Fair is scheduled for Saturday, April 16 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the campus of Wiley Middle School, 2181 Miramar Blvd, University Heights. Reflecting the age of the students served by Wiley Middle School, the Health and Wellness Fair features adolescent as well as adult topics.

Physicians, nurses and counselors will be available to address such medical concerns as diabetes care, healthy cooking and lifestyle choices and mental health. There will also be on-site heart screenings for glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol.

Reid said women’s health a primary focus of the fair. Teen awareness educator Johanna Orozco will speak about teen dating and domestic violence. Staff will also be available to discuss adolescent health concerns and HIV testing.

This event is free and open to the public. For further information, please contact Wiley Middle School at 216-371-7720.

Andrea Davis, a local freelance writer and blogger, is interested in promoting discussion and information in the CH-UH area on an array of topics for the betterment of the community.

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

---

African American history and soul food dinner at Heights High
Joy Henderson

Heights High PRIDE School student Prisca Ngolo was part of a Walk Through History at the Soul Food Dinner and African American History Event held at Heights High on Feb. 18. At the event, sponsored by the main and high school Minority Student Achievement Network, guests walked through a circuit of students and their posters to learn about African American history.

The evening also included musical performances from the Heights Boys and Girls Barbershop, Gospel Choir and guest blues artist Kevin Richardson. Parents and Austin introduced the musical groups and described the events of the era each performance represented. Carla Bailey and Kris Austin co-chairs the event. The Heights High Parent Connection Council sponsored it.

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

---

It’s true. Good food tastes better!

Fish Fry at the Burger Joint in Whole Foods Market through April 22!

WEDNESDAYS AND FRIDAYS

• Fried Fish Sandwich $6.99
• Crab Cake Sandwich $7.99
• Shrimp Po’ Boys $7.99

Made to order.

Grill fries and slaw to complete your meal!

Check our seafood counter for daily fish specials!
**Seeking Sponsors ($100) & Vendors ($50) for May 18 Job Fair.**

- Fully insured
- Free estimates
- Tel# 216.229.3002

---

**Upcoming April Networking Events**

- Attend screening of Harold Lloyd film 7PM Weds. April 6; 2PM Sat. April 9; CSU, Music & Communication Bldg.
- *Free 12 pt. Safety Inspection* • Up to 5 qts. oil • Oil Filter
- Call 216-321-7729 to find out how you can advertise your business for $22/month

---

**Ardmore Tree Service**

Complete Tree Service
Year-round

*We Sell and Plant Trees & Shrubs*

(216) 486-5551

- Pruning • Tree and Stump Removal • Felling
- Firewood • Brush Chipping • Snowplowing

Member National Arborist Association

Free Estimates • Fully Insured

---

**Simons Automotive Services, Inc.**

Complete Auto Repair & Maintenance
Import & Domestic

In Business Since 1972

www.simonsautomotive.com

**Simon Daher, Manager**

Specializing in Volkswagens, BMW, Trucks, Mercedes, Porsche, Audi, General Motors and Honda

(216) 371-2554

1830 Lee Road, CH

---

**Funky Happy on Lee**

**SHWEETI** VINTAGE

Guys’ shirts...

Tues. 10-7

2205 Lee Rd - 216.253.4074

(next to Stone Oven)

funkyhippy.com

216.408.5578

---

**CRAFTMASTERS**

`Slate & Tile Roof Restoration`

- Slate & tile replacement
- Flashings
- Copper work
- Gutter cleaning & repair

(440) 223-6955

craftmasterllc.com

Fully insured • Free Estimate & References.

---

**FINLEY LANDSCAPING**

Individualized services for your property

Spring Clean Up

Property Maintenance

Pruning • Prenatal and Bed Work

Fully insured • Free estimates

In the Heights since 1988

216-932-5689

finleylandscaping@sbcglobal.net

---

---

**The Renhill Group**

We hire the following substitutes for school systems:

- Food Service
- Lunchroom Aide
- Classroom Aide
- Security Monitors

We require clean background checks, TB test and experienced candidates.

If qualified and interested please apply online at www.renhillgroup.net

---

**Always Buying**

**Paying Cash**

- Gold
- MICA & ANTIQUES
- Checks
- Jewelry
- Swords
- Glassware
- Lamps
- Paintings
- Vases
- Pottery
- Porcelain
- Military Items
- Ceramic Wares
- Sterling Silver
- Oriental Rugs
- Bronze Figures
- Marble Figures

*INSTANT QUOTES*

- AUTO/MOTORCYCLE/BOAT
- HOME/RENTERS
- BUSINESS OWNERS
- LIFE/HEALTH INSURANCE

**WASHINGTON & CO. INSURANCE AGENCY INC.**

2565 Noble Road (216) 691-9227

www.ohioinsurancequote.net

---

**Search & Find**

- Lafaye's Antiques
- Other times available.

- 216-904-1786

---

**The Heights Hardware**

- 10% Discount for New Clients!
- Small, Friendly Yoga Classes
- Healing Reiki Therapy

**Loving Hands Yoga & Reiki**

Located in Coventry Village

- 216-408-5578

---

**Promark Asphalt Paving & Seal Coating**

216-249-4507

FREE ESTIMATES!

SEE US ON ANGIES LIST:

WWW.PROMARKASPHALTPAVING.COM

---

**Funky Happy on Lee**

**SHWEETI** VINTAGE

Guys’ shirts...

Tues. 10-7

2205 Lee Rd - 216.253.4074

(next to Stone Oven)

funkyhippy.com

216.408.5578

---

**Promark Asphalt Paving & Seal Coating**

216-249-4507

FREE ESTIMATES!

SEE US ON ANGIES LIST:

WWW.PROMARKASPHALTPAVING.COM

---

---

**The Heights Observer April 5, 2011**

---

**Loving Hands Yoga & Reiki**

- Small, Friendly Yoga Classes
- Healing Reiki Therapy

Located in Coventry Village

- 216-408-5578

---

**SHUMAKER’S HARDWOOD FLOORS LLC**

HIGH QUALITY HARDWOOD FLOOR SERVICES FEATURING DUST-FREE SANDING

Installation Repair & Refinishing
Family Operated & Operated
Fully Insured

PHONE: 216-659-7676

www.shumakers-hardwood-floors.com
Richie Chan’s Chinese food—honor your elders

Lizzy Caston

It started with the wonton soup—basic but soothing, with delicate, silky-stuffed wonton noodles floating in a subtle, clear broth, and just ahint of ginger. Simple fare from humble surroundings, but done with surprising quality and care. This sums up Richie Chan’s; classic Chinese-American comfort food done right. It’s the kind of food craved after a long work day, during an evening of staying in watching DVDs, or as a way to feed a last-minute crowd when cooking is out of the question.

With little more than simple neon window signs beckoning from Cedar Road near the intersection with Lee Road, Richie Chan’s is easy to overlook. But they must be doing something right. Open almost every day with an always steady clientele, Richie’s has been serving Cleveland Heights and beyond for close to 25 years. Although the surroundings and low prices might indicate otherwise, this isn’t your standard hole in the wall. Sure they serve the greatest hits of Chinese-American cuisine, including a retro 1950s cocktail party staple—cream cheese-filled Crab Rangoon—and crunchy, addictive shrimp chips. Scratch the surface, though, and more “authen-tic” dishes appear: oyster mushrooms and shrimp in a subtle light soy sauce; funky black bean sauce stir-fried green beans with pork; and Singapore noodles with curry seasoning.

Richie Chan and his wife, Ty, are the heart and soul of the restaurant and the only staff. It’s astounding the number of dishes and quantity of food the Chans prepare and serve on a daily basis, and how hard they work from morning until midnight.

Originally from Hong Kong, the Chans came to Cleveland in 1978 and opened Richie Chan’s in 1986. They are passionate about cooking. A window gives customers a direct view into the workings of the clean kitchen. Piles of fresh, colorful vegetables sit waiting to be chopped. A peek at a little religious shrine and TV in the back indicates that this is not just a restaurant kitchen, it’s a homey family kitchen as well.

Quality is king. Fried foods are often the bane of take-out joints—heavy, greasy, with a dirty, burnt taste. Not at Richie’s. Here, oil in the deep fryer is clean and changed often. Plump, tender eggrolls are crispy, not greasy. The seasoned chicken wings are juicy with a crispy fried coating.

 Portions are generous. A small pint of fried rice stuffed to the gills in the paper takeout container easily becomes two pints when put into a bowl. Although not all dishes will appeal to all tastes, and some are more textbook than others, part of the fun is finding what you love and what you can bypass on your next Richie Chan’s journey. In an extra touch of friendliness, Ty will always provide a fresh orange or two with each order along with standard fortune cookies.

Richie Chan’s is open for lunch Monday through Saturday, and dinner every day, until 10:30 p.m. on weekdays and 11 or 11:30 p.m. on weekends. Free parking is available in the lot next door, to the west of the building. Richie Chan’s is Chinese-American food for the soul.

Lizzy Caston is a marketing, public relations professional who resides in Cleveland Heights.

New name, old face on Coventry

Tongchan Boonyapataro

Coventry Village just welcomed a new Thai restaurant. Its name is a reminder of an earlier gift shop on the same road, and its food a reminder of a former occupant.

In late January, High Thai’d opened at the former location of the popular Mint Café. Tony Chaichana, a partner in the new restaurant, says the name plays on “high tide,” a Thai expression for an opportunity that one should seize. Similarity to the name of a Coventry Road gift shop that closed in 2005—High Tide Rock Bottom—is coincidental.

Chaichana is a native of Thailand. With a degree in civil engineering, he arrived in Cleveland three years ago to seek his MBA. He was thrilled to learn of an opportunity to invest in his first Thai restaurant in Cleveland Heights. “I love meeting and serving my customers, who are open-minded and adventurous. They enjoy being exposed to new cultures, and they are enthusiastic to try new dishes,” Chaichana said.

Chaichana employs three chefs from the Mint Café, plus a newcomer from Chicago. “What you used to eat at Mint Café, you can also find here,” Chaichana guaranteed. New dishes include Duck Choo Chee (sliced boneless duck with vegetables in choo chee curry sauce), and Cleveland Heights Treasure (a combination of seafood and vegetables, sautéed in a mild sauce).

In the next months, Chaichana plans to make his restaurant even more authentic by adding side dishes of sticky rice and rice noodle, in addition to the usual white and brown rice.

Tips for eating the Thai way
• Thais use spoons and forks as eating utensils. They rarely use chopsticks unless they are eating noodle soup.
• Thai soups are usually eaten together with rice and other dishes because they are spicy and full of flavor.

Tongchan Boonyapataro is a graduate student at John Carroll University and an intern at FutureHeights.

High Thai’d
Mint - Thurs. 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.; 5 p.m. - 10 p.m.
Fri. - Sat. 11:30 a.m. - 3 p.m., 4 - 10:30 p.m.
Sun. 4 - 9:30 p.m.
1701 Coventry Road, Cleveland Heights
216-331-5000

• Thai like to order many dishes and share them with their dining partners.

Chinese-American cuisine, including a retro 1950s cocktail party staple—cream cheese-filled Crab Rangoon—and crunchy, addictive shrimp chips. Scratch from Chicago. “What you used to eat at Mint Café, you can also find here,” Chaichana said.

Chaichana employs three chefs from the Mint Café, plus a newcomer from Chicago. “What you used to eat at Mint Café, you can also find here,” Chaichana guaranteed. New dishes include Duck Choo Chee (sliced boneless duck with vegetables in choo chee curry sauce), and Cleveland Heights Treasure (a combination of seafood and vegetables, sautéed in a mild sauce).

In the next months, Chaichana plans to make his restaurant even more authentic by adding side dishes of sticky rice and rice noodle, in addition to the usual white and brown rice.

Tips for eating the Thai way
• Thais use spoons and forks as eating utensils. They rarely use chopsticks unless they are eating noodle soup.
• Thai soups are usually eaten together with rice and other dishes because they are spicy and full of flavor.

Tongchan Boonyapataro is a graduate student at John Carroll University and an intern at FutureHeights.

High Thai’d
Mint - Thurs. 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.; 5 p.m. - 10 p.m.
Fri. - Sat. 11:30 a.m. - 3 p.m., 4 - 10:30 p.m.
Sun. 4 - 9:30 p.m.
1701 Coventry Road, Cleveland Heights
216-331-5000

• Thai like to order many dishes and share them with their dining partners.
All the taste without the guilt

A Phiner Bistro masters the art of healthy food and hospitality

Jennifer Holton

While a restaurant with a philosophy of instilling happiness in its customers may not seem like the ideal recipe for success, A Phiner Bistro has the perfect elements to give other small restaurant owners a run for their money.

Owner Phiner Dike, a native of Lagos, Nigeria, places just as much emphasis on her customers as she does on creating delicious cuisine. The bistro, located at 2199 Lee Road, opened in January 2011 hoping to draw people from the Cedar Lee Theatre and the surrounding area. It was established in 2006 in Avon, Ohio, where it developed a loyal customer base that travels the 40 minutes to the East Side for weekly visits. The atmosphere of the bistro is intimate setting brightened by sunshine yellow walls and snapshots of vibrant flowers on canvas. It’s a fitting environment for the menu designed by Dike, which she described as “eclectic, young and fresh.”

“It’s honest food,” Dike said. “We custom make everything using organic meat and produce, while avoiding the creation of anything breaded or deep fried.”

The menu offers a long list of unique options that range from authentic Nigerian dishes to other cuisines, such as Italian, French and Mediterranean. Food is not enhanced with preservatives or artificial flavors, and ocean-sourced salt is substituted for standard white salt. For an appetizer, try the hummus with grilled pita chips. It’s a delicious start and won’t leave you feeling too full to finish your main course. Another starter is the chicken garlic soup made from scratch—a light and flavorful choice for a cold afternoon.

Customers won’t find sides of French fries or onion rings; each entrée comes with rice, sautéed vegetables and salad. None of the salad dressings is cream-based; each is fruit-based, made with mangoes, strawberries or other fruits. Entrées, such as the boneless chicken breast, come with coconut rice and a peanut sauce certain to turn taste buds away from the fried and greasy side dishes they once loved. The menu accommodates vegetarians, and offers beans and gluten-free organic brown rice. To finish the meal, the restaurant offers a variety of luscious desserts, such as the “Pie-Tini” on vanilla ice cream wrapped in roasted pecans and melted caramel—that goes well with the freshly ground coffee and delicious almond cream.

A Phiner Bistro offers a few unique touches that set it apart from other local independent restaurants. One of the most distinctive elements is its fresh, organic, antioxidant-rich fruit and vegetable juices.

Dike first gained recognition with her book, “Juicing for Your Soul,” which focuses on a simple approach to healthy eating to achieve physical enrichment. She teaches juicing classes at the bistro, educating others on good fruit combinations. There is also a BYOB policy, which allows customers to bring their own alcohol for a $4 charge. A Phiner Bistro does not serve alcohol.

While what most likely keep people coming back is the menu’s flexibility, as it rotates on a weekly basis. Dike explained that if customers don’t see something they like on the menu, they can ask the chef to make it. It’s this type of service that makes each customer’s experience personal, and serves as a great incentive to return. The menu and the service are proven factors that show A Phiner Bistro masters the art of healthy food and hospitality.

“I’ve learned that people are happy when they’re healthy, and when the world is happy, it’s a better place,” Dike said.
Zagara’s Marketplace celebrates 75 years with improvements

Julie Conrad

The linchpin of a community is its grocery store. It’s not only where one finds apples and meats; it’s also where one finds his or her neighbors.

Pa Zagara (Charlie) opened his first grocery store in 1936 at 7001 Kinsman Ave. in Cleveland. His youngest son Frank, grabbed the reins in 1961 and today, Frank’s son, John, continues the proud tradition of offering specialized foods and service to shoppers. Zagara’s Marketplace, now located at the corner of Lee and Overlook, began serving the Cleveland Heights community in 1998.

The family-owned and operated business has weathered several economic ups and downs throughout its 75-year history. This recent recession was like no other John Zagara experienced. Customer shopping and spending habits changed, and the store’s selection was “out of balance” for value-conscious and recession-battered families. In response, changes were made to product selection and to the location of items throughout the store.

In hindsight, John realized the changes were not well received, despite his best intentions. Corrections have been underway for the past month, incorporating feedback from shoppers on what they want to see and experience when they shop at Zagara’s.

Today’s Zagara’s Marketplace shopper will find many specialty items back on the shelves and in plain sight. “If you’re looking for a specialty item, it will be featured on our rounded shelves throughout the aisles,” said John. “And if you can’t find an item you are looking for, please ask us. If we don’t have it, we will find it and stock it for you.”

In addition to the new items, Zagara’s is creating more ways for shoppers to receive information about store specials, community events and news on seasonal items. The store recently launched Facebook and Twitter pages. There also are multiple overhead screens throughout the store conveying messages. Cleveland Heights nonprofit organizations interested in posting their news on the screens should contact store manager Jerry Thompson at 216-327-4575. The screens also are available for business advertising.

On the horizon is a customer loyalty program for Zagara’s shoppers and a 75-year anniversary celebration this summer. “We’ve been listening to our customers and have a greater understanding of what they are looking for in their shopping experience,” said John. “As we roll out these new programs, we will continue to embrace our commitment to providing quality foods, easy shopping experience, exceptional service and products at a competitive price.”

Julie Conrad is head of grocery shopping for her family, and a public relations professional working with Zagara’s Marketplace.

PizzaBOGO claims the Best Gourmet Pizza in America award

Liz Hersh

PizzaBOGO franchisee Robert Kopis captured first place and the $10,000 top prize at the 2011 Pizza Pizzazz competition with his Tuscan Fiorentina pizza. The Cleveland Heights, Akron and Hudson pizzaBOGO operator beat 52 pizza makers, including members of the USA Pizza Team, in the contest’s gourmet category held during the North America Pizza & Ice Cream Show (NAPICS) at the Columbus Convention Center.

“Finally, we got some eyeballs and taste buds to appreciate our innovation,” said Kopis, whose pizza used a spicy garlic sauce base and fresh basil, roasted red peppers, onion, mushroom, cheese, sirloin steak, fresh scallions and stripes of balsamic glaze. “This win is a boost to our confidence. And it’s a new paradigm for the pizza industry to embrace other cultures’ flavors and taste experiences on a flatbread!”

Issam Halawi, franchisor of the three-unit, Akron, Ohio-based company, called the win a valuable addition to the brand. He credits the victory to the judges’ recognition of the creativity and innovation in pizzaBOGO’s diverse culinary style.

“With our pizzas, you can let your taste buds travel the world without a passport, to India, Thailand, the Mediterranean, you name it. We make a world of our pizzas, you can let your culinary style.

Robert Kopis of pizzaBOGO creates his Tuscan Fiorentina pizza at the North American Pizza and Ice Cream Show at the Columbus Convention Center.

The two-day Pizza Pizzazz contest judged pizzas in two categories, gourmet and traditional. A panel of 30 judges evaluated as many as 60 pizzas for taste, presentation, crust quality and marketability. Six finalists were chosen to bake a pair of pizzas for a second round of judging.

NAPICS annually attracts 4,500 pizza and ice cream business owners, managers and operators, and provides a forum for them to meet a variety of food and equipment vendors.

While making his two final pizzas, Kopis smiled when asked if the event was stressful. “This is a labor of love for me. I waited all year to showcase our culinary talents in flavor and innovation,” he said, grinning and gesturing toward tiny pieces of cheese he was arranging carefully with the tines of a fork.

“Excellence is shown through tasteful differentiation.”

PizzaBOGO is a growing franchise brand that has innovated FREE Unlimited Toppings and specializes in making high-quality world gourmet pizzas sold at a “Buy One, Get One Free” value price. To promote community generosity, every Friday the company encourages patrons to “Buy One, Give One” to others who may be hungry or just haven’t experienced the Pizza BOGO taste. The company is based in Akron, Ohio. It’s Cleveland Heights location is at 1344 Cedar Road in the Cedar Taylor district.

Liz Hersh is the owner of Herb Public Relations.
Artistic Heights

Nineteen years ago, only one public elementary school in the Cleveland Heights-University Heights district had an art teacher. This unfortunate situation occurred because when it became necessary to cut the district budget, the arts were considered expendable rather than essential.

Thanks to a Canterbury PTA initiative working with the administration and union, art teachers were hired for all of the elementary schools in 1994. Six years later, Heights Arts and the PTA presented the first Young Artists Exhibition at Cleveland Heights City Hall to celebrate the art created in the classrooms of the district’s certified art teachers. The 10th young artist exhibition, Artistic Heights, will be displayed at the Heights Library on Lee Road with a free public opening reception on Saturday, April 15, from 2 to 5 p.m.

The show—a collaboration between Heights Arts, the PTA, and the library—presents more than 300 works of art selected by the art teachers. The art will be displayed, grouped by school, throughout the library complex on both the east and west sides of Lee Road, and can be viewed through May 31 during library hours: Weekdays 9 a.m.-9 p.m., Saturdays 9 a.m.-5:30, and Sundays 1-5 p.m.

The visual art program in the Cleveland Heights-University Heights public schools, taught by certified art teachers, reflects that arts education is an essential component of an education that prepares children to learn, think, live, and express themselves creatively.

Peggy Spaeth is the executive director of Heights Arts.
Jane Lassar

John Stark Bellamy II, author of The Last Days of Cleveland, returns to Cleveland Heights on Saturday, April 16, for a special appearance at the Coventry Village branch of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library (915 Coventry Road). His talk, which takes place from 3 to 4 p.m., is free and open to the public.

Bellamy, a native and former resident of Cleveland Heights, will share stories about some of the sensational murders, scandalous trials, tragic mishaps, and other tales of mystery and mayhem from Cleveland’s past.

His talk, based on his newest books, will include stories about the suicide of two West Park girls, ages 10 and 11, who died after eating rat poison in their grandmother’s basement; a local cult group that predicted the end of the world in the early 1900s, and gathered on rooftops in Garfield Heights to wait for the end; and the murder of George Saxton, playboy brother of President William McKinley, whose sensational death and the subsequent murder trial of his discarded mistress riveted an entire nation.

The author of six story collections and two anthologies of Cleveland woe, and the former history specialist for the Cuyahoga County library system, Bellamy retired to Vermont in 2004, but returns to Cleveland periodically to speak about his work.


Jane Lassar is publicist for Gray & Company, a publisher specializing in books about Northeast Ohio.

Event showcases Heights High Alumni musical artists

Heights Observer Staff

Ten select Cleveland Heights High alumni will come together to create the “Once Again. Cleveland Heights Throwback Artist Showcase” at the Euclid Tavern (11625 Euclid Ave.) in University Circle, starting at 8 p.m. on April 22. The all-Heights lineup will offer a variety of musical genres from alternative hip-hop to jazz and hip-hop. Many of the musicians have recording contracts and are associated with award-winning musical artists.

Mai Moore is a 1995 graduate of Heights High, and the executive producer of the show. Her friend, Brian Williams, a fellow alumus, mentioned that it would be great to see Cleveland Heights High artists come together, and Moore said she could do that. Within two weeks, with an amazing team of Heights alumni, she had put together a full-blown concert. The reason Moore wanted to do this was to shout to the world and showcase the talent that Cleveland Heights has, and to bring together the Heights community. She believes there is no other place like Cleveland Heights in the world.

She also decided to create a documentary about growing up in Cleveland Heights, a portion of which will be filmed at the showcase.

The host of the show is Anthony Jones, class of ’96, will DJ. Featured artists include The Concept (Damon Taylor and Alvin Frazier), gospel; Darren Anthony, hip-hop; Gork aka Pig (Dwayne Pigre), hip-hop; Gwen Maul, soul and R&B; Harry Bacharach (aka Ari Friedman), jazz; The INR CRCL (LaToya Kent), alternative; Kounterclockwise (aka Deacon Burns and Doug Johnson), alternative hip-hop; Obie Won (aka Joe Grind and Hasan Adams), hip-hop, dancehall, roots, reggae; Rum Rozier (Jeff Rozier), house; and Wildlife Soundz (Jungl Droop Jumonji), hip-hop.

Tickets go on sale at Record Revolutions on Coventry Road and at the Euclid Tavern. Sponsors include Boost Mobile, Brain Ideas Heart, Brandon Spring, Everything by Face, Gitz, Kounterclockwise, Knowledgeable Marketing, Mr. Basketball, NappyHeadz Productions and Quintanais DreamSpa.

For more information, contact Mai Moore at 216-785-0010 or mai@knowledgeablemarketing.com.
Holy Week at the Covenant…

take a Journey of Faith

Palm Sunday • April 17, 10:00 am
Witness the majestic procession of palms led by children and youth as we celebrate Jesus’ entry into Holy Week.

Maundy Thursday • April 21, 7:30 pm
Communion and Service of Tenebrae. Experience Jesus’ journey from betrayal to crucifixion through the reading of scripture, music, the gradual extinguishing of candles, and the tolling of the great bell.

Easter Sunday • April 24, 10:00 am
Herald new life through Jesus’ resurrection, led by organ, brass, timpani, and choirs.

Easter breakfast at 8:30 am

11205 Euclid Avenue – East of Severance Hall • 216-421-0482 or CovenantWeb.org
Free Parking at the church and Ford Road Garage • Sunday School