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Heights Observer
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FREE TAKE ONE

CH-UH School Facilities Committee begins public-input phase of process

Deanna Brenner Fisher

Since September 2010, the Cleveland Heights-University Heights School Facilities Committee has been analyzing the district’s buildings and other facilities, assessing the district’s needs, and developing options for the school board to consider. The committee’s first step was to validate a previous report from the state, which concluded the district had excess capacity and that its buildings were in “borderline” condition.

Although the committee’s work will most likely result in a series of recommendations involving renovation, demolition and replacement, or closing of school buildings, few members of the public have participated in the process thus far. That is about to change.

On May 12, the district will host a meeting to hear comments and answer questions about the process from the general public. This session will be held at 7 p.m. in the Heights High social room. The only item on the agenda is for community members to comment on the subcommittee reports and share their questions and concerns with the committee, school board members and district administrators.

At the school facilities committee’s last meeting, on April 27, the architecture/design firm Fielding Nair International, which was retained by the district administration to provide advice to the subcommittee, presented several principles that define 21st-century learning.

Randy Fielding, principal of the firm, contrasted 20th-century learning, which was developed during the mass production industrial age, with what is needed now in a new age of globalization and creativity. While 20th-century learning was teacher-focused, 21st-century learning will be student-focused.

Joy Henderson

Senior soloist Catherine Holt was in eighth grade when she heard a senior flute soloist with the Heights High Symphony: “It was so fantastic, I never imagined that I could do that!” she recalled. But after the concert, her father assured her, “You could be up there.” She planted the seed that will bear fruit at the Heights High Symphony concert on May 6 at 7 p.m., when she will play “Fantasie Brillante” from Bizet’s opera “Carmen.”

“I love the piece because it is very passionate, with lots of life,” said the soloist. One of the things that draws her to music is the emotion and feeling that can be expressed by the musician. She credits music director Daniel Heim with helping her learn to interpret music with full emotion. “He tells us great background information about each piece and talks about the feel of the music,” said Holt. She also appreciates the level of play that is expected in the Heights Symphony:

Senior Catherine Holt is Heights flute soloist on May 6

Joy Henderson

Catherine Holt

“Catherine is a focused and quick learner,” Heim said. “She is always interested in feedback and ways to improve.”

Holt will attend college in the fall but is undecided about where she will attend or what she will study. She has a 4.37 GPA and likes several subjects, but will probably not major in music. “I expect that I will always play music for fun,” she said. She is also a member of the cross country and swim teams, and enjoys playing music with her family.

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

Public leadership in sustainability featured at SHN networking event

Sarah Wean

Sustainable Heights Network (SHN) will present an evening of community networking on Tuesday, May 10, from 6 to 8 p.m., at Rockefeller’s restaurant. The event will highlight the sustainability efforts and policies of the City of Cleveland Heights, Mayor Susan Infeld, the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District with Superintendent Douglas Houser, and the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library with Director Nancy Levin.

Robert Brown, director of the Cleveland City Planning Commission, will present “Insights from Sustainable Cleveland.” Topping off the evening will be industry networking opportunities for community leaders, concerned citizens, elected officials, business professionals, and anyone who wants to become involved in making Cleveland Heights and University Heights thriving, sustainable communities. Heights residents with an interest in sustainability are encouraged to attend.

The event is free and open to the public. Rockefeller’s is near public transportation and on-site parking is available. There will be free appetizers and a cash bar. The event is sponsored by SHN.

South Euclid sets public meeting dates on Oakwood

Kristin Hopkins

After hosting a number of public meetings on the topic, the South Euclid Planning Commission unanimously approved a recommendation to the South Euclid City Council to change the zoning on 40 acres of the former Oakwood property from R-75, One-Family Residential District, to C-2, General Commercial District.

At that same meeting on April 14, the planning commission voted for approval of two additional items: an 11-page development agreement for the rezoned property, which outlines development standards and a development plan approval process for the property; and updates to the comprehensive plan to articulate the city’s desire to encourage residential, office and commercial mixed use on the site.

City council has scheduled two public hearings: Wednesday, May 18, at 6 p.m., regardless of the comprehensive plan update recommendations from the planning commission; and Wednesday, May 25, at 6 p.m., regardless of recommendations from the planning commission on the proposed rezoning.

South Euclid City Council will consider actions on each item after the close of the public hearings. According to the public notice, city council has declared these items to be emergency measures, which allows the items to be passed with one reading instead of the otherwise standard requirement for three separate readings.

Kristin Hopkins, AICP, is a land use planner with the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission and a member of the FutureHeights Board of Directors.

Catherine Holt

Rainbow Fish First grade students in Mrs. Eisenberg’s art class at Noble Elementary School create three-dimensional fish, after reading the book Rainbow Fish.

FutureHeights Collaboration Mayor Ed Kelley, the City of University Heights with Mayor Susan Infeld, the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District with Superintendent Douglas Houser, and the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library with Director Nancy Levin.

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On The Blog: Excerpts from Blogs.HightsObserver.org

The Rehobilitation of Invasive Foliage: Public Enemy No. 1

The plant doesn’t bother me, but my wife is apparently not alone in her concern. I Googled “garlic mustard” and the first return was the official website of King County, Washington, which defines garlic mustard as a Class A noxious weed. I don’t know if that’s a technical term. Still, I consider it an indication of the irredeemable nature of this plant that it rates specific mention on a government website.

But the other day, while in the car together, my wife and I heard a piece on NPR by Nancy Shute about urban foraging—literally finding food in the cracks of the sidewalk. Late in the story, a nutritional consultant mentioned garlic mustard. He said it’s a great leafy green, tastes good, and, to the best of my knowledge, it’s “the most nutritious leafy green ever tested.”

—Bob Rosenbaum

Cleveland—We’re Geologically Stable!

In the five years that I have lived in Cleveland Heights, I have complained incessantly about the weather. Summer is squeezed into two months instead of three so that winter can take liberties with the months of October, April and May. This year’s winter and spring season have felt the worst. It’s been cold. Or rainy. Or cold and rainy. No umbrella in the world is match for the breezes coming off Lake Erie. Did I mention it’s cold?

—Andrea Davis

Toe Dance: The Case of B’nai Torah on South Green Road

From the resident’s perspective, very little has been done to engender trust with the congregation and city government. Few are persuaded by the congregation and the city’s assurance that resident concerns will be addressed through the process of approvals. This sentiment is not frivolous, idealistic nor apportionimal. The property values, peace of mind and wellbeing of University Heights residents are in play. The fact is, this project is intrusive and an aggressive use of private property for a new purpose that will clearly impact the nearby existing property owners. Zoning issues aside, little opposition or challenge has been offered by our “at large” council people regarding the worthiness of the project.

—Sue Mandel

‘O Fortuna,’ Shining Brightly on Our Kids

I’ve been attending music concerts in the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District for longer than my memory allows—at least 45 years.

It was performed by the Heights High Symphony and the A Cappella Choir and Singers at Reaching Musical Heights—a once-every-four-years showcase of the school district’s musical talents. The performance took place at Severance Hall. It is, big and glorious and it makes you proud of the kids, the schools and the community that supports them.

I could go on, but if you really want to hear more, you should buy the DVD that will soon be available at Reaching Heights, the nonprofit organization that exists to mobilize support for public schools, and the organizer of Reaching Musical Heights.

—Bob Rosenbaum

Trash and Malls

One of the main reasons my wife and I moved to Cleveland Heights was to enjoy living in a walkable city. So, when the new Severance Mall yesterday from our Coventry neighborhood home in the bright spring sunshine. We thoroughly enjoyed our stroll until we got to the intersection of South Taylor Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard, an entrance to Severance I pass by often in my car. I admit I am sensitive to and disgusted by litter. But I was really shocked by the amount of litter that welcomed us to Severance, trash we easily ignored as we pass by in our cars. I slowed down and check it out next time you drive by. I stood there and thought about the old television commercial of the crry American Indian viewing what we’ve done to our environment. Nice welcome to the mall, I thought.

—Mike Gaynier

An ad that may raise some eyebrows

Heights Observer May 3, 2011

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**Heights Community Congress: as relevant as ever**

Judith Eugene

Volunteers are busily organizing the Heights Community Congress’s 34th annual Heights Heritage Home and Garden Tour. Thousands of people explore the area’s rich architectural heritage on the tour each September, but how is a tour of beautiful homes relevant to an organization founded as a way to kick off housing practices? In operation since 1972, the non-profit HCC is still a champion for equal treatment in the housing market, and it has become a major facilitator of diversity education. So, in addition to all the home tours being an interesting afternoon outing, it provides an opportunity for residents to learn more about another one’s interests, experiences and traditions. Bringing community members together to engage in dialogue, so that they realize there are more similarities than differences, has become one of the organization’s most important objectives, reports Kasey Greer, executive director.

With a full-time staff of just two, HCC continues to help community members think and act more open-mindedly by getting to know one another. Its annual multicultural festival, scheduled for May 14 at the Lee Road Library, is a good example of this work. In addition to making political accommodation to a small group of orthodox families at the expense of existing homeowners for the sake of “stabilization.” Site preparation, construction, and operation of a dual and egress for over 200 congregants adjacent to my house is a nightmare scenario. I firmly believe that few people outside this congregation would want to live next to a temple, and this project will negatively affect the market value of my home.

There are a number of issues here that we would all do well to keep straight. One is the matter of putting a big building on a plot for which it is not suited or zoned. A second is that a case must be made openly and persuasively for a special-use permit. A third is that permit politics make at large council reps accountable only to those who contribute funds to them. A fourth is the conduct of a deliberative body where no one explains their vote despite the vigorous opposition of residents. Stuart Mendl

University Heights.

**Revisiting the census: a policy suggestion to preserve and increase Cleveland Heights population**

An open letter to Mayor Edward J. Kelley, Vice Mayor Phyllis L. Evans, and Council Members Cheryl L. Caplan, Mark A. Tamou, Dennis R. Willows, Bonnie C. W. Chapman and Kenneth Montleck

Honorable Mayor, Vice Mayor and Council Members,

The purpose of this letter is to open a public discussion about how to encourage temporary rental occupants to stay as permanent, homeowners in Cleveland Heights.

In reviewing the data and information provided in “Fewer Residents, more diversity in Heights cities,” as published in the April issue of the Heights Observer, I noticed that an important factor in preserving and growing the city’s population may not be sufficiently addressed by the city administration. I refer to the impact of the city’s policies concerning housing preservation enforcement as it relates to landlord-tenant relations.

My impression is that there is reluctance to enforce ordinary housing standards in single-home rental units.

Normal safety standards, such as windows that can be secured, are overlooked, leaving tenants vulnerable to monetary loss, physical risk, and landlord abuse. This, in turn, may result in short-term tenants moving on and leaving the area instead of purchasing homes and settling down.

To open the conversation, please take a look at a first floor window in a rental house in Cleveland Heights. My observations include a lack of storm window on the first floor, peeling paint and rotting wood, and an unstable frame.

To keep out the wind, the occupant stuffed plastic between the screen and window. This ground-floor window cannot be secured to discourage, let alone keep out, burglars. A large pipe right below the window makes unauthorized entry even easier.

Here’s a question to the mayor and council members: When a Cleveland Heights building inspector makes the periodic visit to this property, and sees this window, what steps would you expect him or her to take?

I hope that you—Mayor Kelley, Vice Mayor Evans, and council members—will respond, and that the Heights Observer will publish your responses.

Thank you.

Elisheva Rubin

Benderson Road, Cleveland Heights

**Letter to the Editor**

The April 28 issue of the Sun Press newspaper features more than two full pages of “Support Your Local Business” advertising. By recently taking an editorial stand in favor of developing more national chain stores and grocery offerings as Oakwood Commons in South Euclid and Cleveland Heights, publishing these ads is the height of hypocrisy.

“Shop Local” should not be used as a marketing ploy to ensure advertising revenue. The shop local message is a very real philosophy, embraced by those who understand that building a more sustainable future for our children depends not on the Walmart grocery stores or IHOPs of the world, but on the small independent enterprises and institutions that are firmly rooted in the fabric of the community.

With businesses offering choice and diversity, feed more dollars into the local economy, are the base of support for local charitable causes, and are an integral partner in building community self-reliance in these uncertain times.

Far from being a local champion, the chain-owned Sun Press has revealed its bias and thumbed its nose at the Heights-based independent business community and their advertisers. Hard-earned advertising dollars are better spent with locally owned and produced not-for-profit newspapers, such as the Heights Observer, whose mission is to strengthen, not erode, our quality of life.

Sarah Wain

Cleveland Heights
Oakwood is not a done deal

Fran Mentch

There is no demand here for more retail. So we ask how the developer [of the Oakwood property] can make money in a market with declining demand, declining population and declining income. New stores take business from the old stores. It’s been happening for years; it’s been studied and well documented.

The business model for big boxes is to build new, move in, and abandon their old buildings. We understand that this is the plan for Oakwood. The Severance Walmart will close and a supercenter will be built in Oakwood. Supercenters are one-half grocery store, which means that our local grocery stores—Zagaris’s and Dave’s and Heinen’s—will suffer.

The Walmart at Severance will remain empty because there is no demand, and little use, for abandoned big box space.

Online shopping has reduced the need for bricks-and-mortar stores. A story in the Wall Street Journal (“Malls Face Surge in Vacancies,” April 7, 2011) reported that online retailing increased during the holidays, and suggested that we may have hit a tipping point, where online shopping will become so mainstream that retailers will wonder what they need these big boxes for.

The stores proposed for Oakwood are value-oriented, meaning they sell low to medium price-range products. This is not upscale retail. The restaurants proposed for Oakwood will not fill a need for local places to dine because no such need exists. We already have many good restaurants and a wide range of cuisines from which to choose. But the eateries planned for Oakwood will take business from local restaurants.

Think of the local restaurant that you are willing to see close in order to bring in a value-oriented chain restaurant, such as Subway, Red Robin or IHOP.

South Euclid residents were told that if they do not support building big box on Oakwood, “then it will have houses built on it anyway.” We don’t know that. There is currently a large housing surplus in our area, which includes new, upscale, tax-abated housing suitable for seniors. There is currently no market for new housing.

Some say that Oakwood is private property; the owners can do whatever they want with it. We are all bound by zoning laws. The buyer of the Oakwood property knew that it was zoned for residential use only; but took the risk of buying it anyway, and then asking the city to rezone it.

Cities are under no obligation to rezone or to approve development plans. In 2009, under Mayor Koecevar, South Euclid refused a development plan by F&Y Properties and Young Israel. University Heights refused a permit for a car wash.

It is of the utmost importance for everyone to know that members of the Citizens for Oakwood steering committee approached Mayor Welo and Mayor Kelley over a year ago. They refused to meet with community members who were part of our steering committee to talk about Oakwood. They refused, over a year ago, to talk to representatives from Metroparks about Oakwood.

Because city officials in South Euclid and Cleveland Heights did nothing to help preserve Oakwood, they left our communities vulnerable to the destruction of this precious green space. They opened the door to the developer and his global investment group, Legacy Capital Partners, to come in and destroy a community amenity in order to make a short-term profit.

The developer and the investors behind him will move on, leaving the community to contend with abandoned retail buildings, lower property values, and watershed, social and financial problems. The largest green space in the inner ring suburbs will have been ripped up and paved over for the benefit of a handful of wealthy people who do not live here, and may never have visited our community.

Residents understand that developing Oakwood is a regional issue; our government officials do not. We did not change our form of county government in order to just talk about regionalism. We expected real problem solving and positive action.

Citizens ran a successful “Stop the Mart” campaign 10 years ago, and we can succeed this time, too. Oakwood is not a done deal. The most important thing that residents of South Euclid can do to stop the rezoning of Oakwood is to attend the public hearing on Wednesday, May 25 at 6 p.m. in South Euclid City Hall. Those who cannot attend the meeting can still express their opinions by writing or calling the mayor and city council members.

If the South Euclid City Council votes to rezone Oakwood, the city’s residents are prepared to place the issue on the ballot. They can, and will, make this important decision themselves. This is our community. We are the Citizens for Oakwood. Our supporters come from the entire region, including South Euclid, Cleveland Heights, Lyndhurst and University Heights.

Fran Mentch, president of Citizens for Oakwood, a project of South Euclid Neighborhood Organization. Visit www.heightsSNO.org for more information.

Submit your letters to the editor online at www.heightsobserver.org
University Heights City Council Meeting highlights

MARCH 21, 2011

Councilman Steven Sims was excused.

Sweepstakes Terminal Cafes

Council passed an ordinance extending the moratorium on Sweepstakes Terminal Cafes for two more months. The state is moving to legislate these cafes and the moratorium covers this delay. Councilman Kevin Patrick Murphy voted against the ordinance.

2011 budget

Council discussed and passed the 2011 budget with Councilman Frank CONSOLVO no se. He said he strongly opposed the budget because it didn’t represent the promises made by the new administration to reduce costs. He noted that, despite increases, the revenue from fees for street maintenance, street lighting, and sewer maintenance was insufficient to cover those costs, and that the budget requires funds to be transferred to cover those costs. He noted that he is not going to vote for the budget until he learns the “sewers on the backs of the residents” by raising taxes. He expects the administration to find new and creative ways of covering costs without asking the residents for more money.

Other council members expressed reservations about the budget, noting the need for more council involvement, regional collaborations, proactive solutions and economic development.

Refuse truck repairs

Council authorized repairs to a 1990 refuse packer truck, which was purchased five years ago. It has significant oil leaks, but the mechanic felt that the truck could run for another four to five years with repairs. The approved bid was $5,616.61. It will take two to three weeks for repairs. The city has a fleet of six trucks and all are in need of repairs. Councilman Murphy voted no, saying that it is wrong for the city to pay among the highest tax rates and yet have to purchase used equipment. Councilman Bullock voted yes but is concerned that there is no plan for the future, saying that they can’t keep going with the status quo. Councilman Ertel noted that recommendations for changes would be coming out of the “garbage study,” which was completed in 2009.

Garbage study

Councilman Phil Ertel announced that three public meetings were scheduled to look at the garbage study and determine what recommendations should be made to council. A survey has been distributed to residents asking them to rank various services offered by the city to determine which are of greatest value to the residents.

JWB observer: Wendy Deuring

APRIL 4, 2011

Councilman Steven Busskuck was excused.

Senior transportation

Councilman Kevin Patrick Murphy was excused.

Road waterline replacement project to Terrace Road

Council awarded Noce Enterprises, Inc. the work is not to exceed $919,584.86.

Dysart, Glendon, and Tremorey roads

Council awarded Noco Enterprises, Inc. the Dysart Road, Glendon Road and Tremorey Road waterline replacement project.

Reassigning bandwidths

Police Chief John Plichtler alerted council to the 2013 implementation of an FCC rule that would require reassigning bandwidths. Plichtler is working with five other cities to assemble a list of the various conversions this change would require.

Tree planting

Director Rob Lamers said his department was beginning the spring tree-planting program. He said new trees are periodically planted during the first year, while the trees are still under warranty.

JWB observer: Carol Gibson

Look for earlier, and often expanded, posts of meeting summaries online at www.heightsobserver.org

Look for SHN on Facebook at www.facebook.com/sustainableheights

Senior transportation

Finance

Federman presented for the facilities options subcommittee and recommended the creation of a district-wide plan for the construction of new/renovated schools. Their report reiterated previous findings that the district’s buildings are overcrowded and in need of renovation or replacement and that the current condition of the facilities is challenging the district’s ability to provide the kind of quality education that is desired and expected in the Heights community.

Based on the data provided by the Ohio Schools Facilities Commission and Fielding Nair Architects, the subcommittee reported it may be possible to reduce the district’s facilities from the current 1,500,000 square feet to approximately 800,000 square feet. The cost of doing so may range from $7 to $10 million. Annual operational cost savings resulting from reducing the district’s facilities could be as high as $4.6 million.

The minimum cost for required repairs and building system replacements alone is estimated at over $40 million. The cost of renovating all of the district’s current buildings, with no change in size and configuration, is estimated by the Ohio Schools Facilities Commission to be over $226 million.

Schubert reported that a comprehensive plan for new or renovated schools would enable the district to ensure that facilities meet the needs of the students’ instructional model and would generate operational cost savings. The subcommittee also recommended that the district work with Home and Garden in the Heights.

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UH Senior Gatherings for May 2011

Sherri Winiarski

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

**May 5, 2 p.m.** Stuart Mendel, dean, Cleveland State University Urban Studies, on Governmental Consortium for Regional Sustainability.

**May 12, 2 p.m.** Ramon Lugo III, director, NASA Glenn Research Center, on solar power, alternative fuels, space.

**May 19, 2 p.m.** Adrienne Yelsky, mentor for American Field Service, as Heights High welcomes international students.

**May 26, 2 p.m.** Rachael Stentz-Bauer, director of programming and development for events of the Greater Cleveland Sports Commission. For additional information, call 216-397-0336.

Sherri Winiarski is the administrative assistant to Mayor Susan Infield of the City of University Heights.

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Who doesn’t love a parade?

**Anita Kazarian**

Imagine you're in a time machine and Cecil B. DeMille is shooting a new epic film. It takes place in small-town America and it's the story of a Memorial Day Parade. Advance promotions are calling it an extravaganza in four parts: Parade, Veterans Honor Ceremony, S. Belvoir Street Fair and The Famous Hot Dog Stand.

You guessed it. University Heights is the small town. The parade is the 45th University Heights Memorial Day Parade. It has drama and lots of action. Pairs are heartbreaking and others are breathtaking. There is even some romance and heartbreak. Some folks would add "thrilling" to describe the time-honored tradition of politicians marching in Memorial Day parades.

All will occur live and on location, on Monday, May 30. Stars and cosstars of the marching units will be seen arriving early to their designated staging areas in the western part of town, near Jackson Boulevard.

DeMille recruited several directors for this undertaking. Win Weizer, director of Part 1: Parade, will call "Action" at 11 a.m., and marchers will take their first steps on Sibsky Road, near Ashurst, heading toward Warrensville Center Road and City Hall. Weizer leaked only a few of the big names appearing—Wiley Middle School Marching Band, Mame Daiko Japanese Drummers, a horse-mounted unit, the Rocket Car, Greater Cleveland Young Marines, Heights Independent Business Alliance. No amount of pressure moved Weizer to divulge the remaining names on her very long list.

True to this small town's history and a DeMille production, thousands of extras are expected to line the parade route—from Sibsky to S. Belvoir, where paraders will turn south. They'll march on S. Belvoir, turn onto Carroll Boulevard, and end at Administration Drive off Carroll.

Parade watchers will be seated on lawn chairs and on the curbs; and standing with their children, neighbors, visiting relatives and pets. Like any blockbuster worthy of its name, the story line keeps going after the parade.

DeMille's director for Part 2: Ceremony to Honor American Veterans of all branches of service, is Adele Zucker. She will direct the honors ceremony on S. Belvoir, on the steps of the DeCarlo Rocket Center. Zucker revealed that she signed up the Heights Symphonic Band for the soundtrack and acquired more flags than ever for the ceremony.

This reporter overheard Zucker saying, "Auxiliary Police Lt. Jerry Jacobson cast Patrolman Rick Adante for the ceremony." Adele will be firing the Mi Garand rifle salutes during the placement of the flags, which represent our nation's recent military conflicts. "Taps," honoring our fallen soldiers, will be played by the Heights Symphonic Band. "With the location change to S. Belvoir, more people than ever are expected to attend this moving veterans ceremony" said Adele Zucker.

Patricia Baskin, director of Part 3: Street Fair, is producing and directing the first ever University Heights Street Fair. Baskin has arranged to close S. Belvoir between Washington and Carroll boulevards. The fair is expected to draw all the parade watchers along the route because Baskin instructed the last marching unit to say "Follow me to the Fair!"

The street fair will feature food concessions, including kosher hot dogs, arts and crafts for sale, free rides on roller car, free pony rides, a giant inflatable for children, a petting zoo, balloon twisters and a few treats Baskin is keeping under wraps.

Baskin is still accepting applications from anyone interested in being a vendor. And get this—the table and the space are FREE! Residents who create art, crafts, or have interesting hobbies will have a showcase. UH merchants are signing up, saying they are excited about this opportunity to promote local businesses.

Baskin is taking applications from individuals and groups to perform on the entertainment stage. Amplification is provided. Got talent? Get an application and "break a leg."

Ready for Part 4: The Famous Hot Dog Stand? Kristin Hughes, athletic director of Heights High, will direct this spectacular finale. Heights High students will run the stand, using it as a fundraiser. Hughes expects their delicious hot dogs and specialty foods to draw large crowds.

For parade information, applications to march, become a vendor at the street fair, or perform on the UH stage, telephone City Hall at 216-932-7800 or e-mail anitakazarian@gmail.com. This will be the blockbuster event of 2011, guaranteed!

Anita Kazarian is a marketing professional, founder of Noah's Landing LLC, and a longtime resident of University Heights. Contact her at anitakazarian@gmail.com.
Deanna Bremer Fisher

Since the closing of Coventry School in 2007, residents have noticed an increase in inappropriate activity on the school grounds, especially excessive noise and trash. Susan Eagan, a Coventry neighborhood resident, addressed a recent meeting of the Coventry Village Special Improvement District. “The property is deteriorating,” she said. “Trash receptacles are overflowing. Last week, there was broken glass all over the median.”

Steve Presser, marketing director for Coventry Village SID, said that the SID’s maintenance crew has been picking up trash at the property even though it is not technically the SID’s responsibility. “The biggest nights,” he said, “are Thursday, Friday and Saturday when the bars close.”

Bob Downey, Cleveland Heights city manager, said that police make regular rounds of the property, but that existing lighting was not sufficient for officers to see into the property. He mentioned that, while the school district already has cameras at the rear of the building, the city would work with the district to see if it was feasible to install cameras at the school’s parking lot. The city would also work toward installing more lighting to illuminate the parking area and entryways.

Steve Seregals, director of business services for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District, said that “if problems exist, people should bring it to our attention. We are eager to work with residents and the city on any issues that arise.”

Seregals said that trash becomes more noticeable in the spring and that school maintenance crews begin making more frequent rounds when the weather warms up. The lighting on the property is the same as had existed when the building was occupied and that, as far as he knew, all of the lights were functioning. “If there are lighting issues,” he said, “we’ll be happy to work to address them.”

Presser said that the Coventry Village SID would continue to work with the school board, library and community to improve the school grounds.

Preservation Month celebrates treasures of Cleveland Heights

Kara Hamley O’Donnell

Within our nation’s communities there are significant sites that have contributed to the American experience. May has been designated National Preservation Month, and this year’s theme is “Celebrating America’s Treasures.” This May, small towns and large cities will hold events that include architectural and historic tours, award ceremonies, fundraisers, educational programs and heritage travel opportunities.

Cleveland Heights is no exception, but one month just isn’t enough time to celebrate all of Cleveland Heights’ treasures. This year, Preservation Month will start early—in late April—and continue into June.

May 1 marked the official release date of the Cleveland Historical mobile app developed by the Center for Public History and Digital Humanities at Cleveland State University, which features sites in Cleveland Heights. App sites highlight the history of some of the features sites in Cleveland Heights. App users can download the app at http://mobilehistory. cleveland.org.

Preservation Month in Cleveland Heights will also be observed through several events. These are cosponsored by the Cleveland Heights Landmark Commission, FutureHeights and the Cleveland Heights Historical Society. Space for these events is limited and reservations are required. For reservations, call 216-320-1433 or e-mail info@futureheights.org.

Saturday, May 21, 10 a.m. to noon Walking Tour of Euclid Heights Allotment
Dr. Marian J. Morton, history professor at John Carroll University and Cleveland Heights historian, will tour through one of Cleveland Heights’ earliest neighborhoods. Rain or shine, dress appropriately. FREE. Meet at St. Alban Episcopal Church, 2355 Euclid Heights Boulevard.

Saturday, May 28, 10 a.m. to noon Walking tour of Shaker Farm Neighborhood
Mary Dunbar, resident and advocate for the nomination of the Shaker Farm neighborhood to the National Register of Historic Places, will lead a tour of the neighborhood’s history, followed by a tour of the neighborhood to learn about its architectural significance. FREE. Meet at First Church Christ Scientists, 3181 Fairmount Boulevard.

Thursday, June 23, 7 p.m. History of Grant Deming’s Forest Hill
Kobi Roberts, independent historian, and Dr. J. Mark Souther, associate professor of history at Cleveland State University, will learn about the property’s early history and Deming’s development of the area into the residential neighborhood it is today. FREE. Lecture at Superior Schoolhouse, 1439 Superior Road.

Saturday, June 25, 10 a.m. to noon Walking Tour of Lakeview Cemetery highlighting famous Cleveland Heights residents
Deanna Bremer Fisher, local history buff and executive director of FutureHeights, will enjoy a stroll through the cemetery to learn about some of the famous people who once resided in Cleveland Heights and now make their final home at Lakeview. Visit the monuments of Dr. George Crile, John L. Severance, Adella Prentiss Hughes, Elliot Ness and others. Cost is $5 per person. Meet at the Garfield Monument in Lakeview Cemetery. Call 216-441-2665 to register.

Kara Hamley O’Donnell is the historic preservation planner for the City of Cleveland Heights.

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Howard Thompson, the new economic development director for the City of Cleveland Heights, discussed his efforts to strengthen commerce and entrepreneurial activity in the city to a capacity crowd at the Tavern Company on Lee Road on April 26. Thompson spoke as part of the FutureHeights Speaker Series, which is hosted by the organization’s young professionals group, FutureNow. The series seeks to foster a dialogue between the city, business owners and residents to discuss the challenges and issues facing the Heights community. For more information on the series or FutureNow, e-mail committee chair Kevin Smith at smithkp@gmail.com.

Council Member Ken Montlack announced that Tumeo would be available April 18. The mayor announced that information about the properties at 3230 Shiloh Road and Permanent Porcelain 687-08-078, 687-08-079 and 687-08-112. The ordinance also authorizes entering into an agreement with the county and taking all other actions necessary to implement the grant award.

Traffic code alignment with state law
Council Member Ken Montlack offered, on first reading, an ordinance that would amend specific sections of Part Three of the Traffic Code and Part Five of the General Offenses Code to make the city’s ordinances consistent with current state law. Council authorized a resolution declaring the property of 3997 Bluestone Road/110 Hillstone Road (a corner duplex) to be a nuisance and authorizing abatement of the nuisance. Council granted the city manager authority to reject the bids received for catch basin cleaning and readvertise.

Ezekiel Burrows
Mayor Edward Kelley began the meeting by reading a proclamation honoring Ezekiel Burrows, a long-time resident of Cleveland Heights and 12-year member of the planning commission. Burrows died this past December. His wife Gloria and his son Grady accepted the proclamation. Gloria Burrows thanked the council and said that Zeke loved Cleveland Heights and enjoyed working for and being a part of the Cleveland Heights community. Each council member expressed gratitude for the work that Zeke had done and noted how nice it always was to be in his presence—the presence of a true gentleman.

Catch basin cleaning
Council granted the city manager authority to reject the bids received for catch basin cleaning and readvertise.

Environmental assessment for city-owned properties
Council Member Bonnie Caplan announced that the proposed Ohio state budget reduces support to local governments by 25 percent. This means an approximate $750,000 decrease in the city’s budget. Council Member Mark Tumeo stated that if this reduction occurs the city would still be okay.

Parking behind Cedar Lee Theatre
Seeking friendly energetic people with exceptional customer service skills. The position is fast paced and are expanding locally and nationally. Come dine with us after the show!!
Establish a payment schedule before work begins

Rebecca Stager

Here at Home Repair Resource Center, we frequently hear tales of woe about contracted repairs. One of the most common problems occurs at the end of a project, when—before most of the work has been completed and paid for—there are a few small details that the contractor has promised to fix “in the next few days.” Weeks later, they are still unfinished, and the contractor has not responded to your calls. Mild irritation turns to total dissatisfaction with the contractor, destroying all your pleasure in the work that has been done.

What can you do to prevent this? In most cases, the answer lies in establishing and managing a payment schedule so that the contractor has a financial incentive to finish the detail work.

Talking over expectations—both yours and the contractor’s—and negotiating the payment schedule before work starts can help prevent a myriad of problems. In developing the payment plan, Home Repair Resource Center suggests that you do not agree to a large down payment, but instead seek reasonable alternatives based on the principle of “money paid for value received.” For most small jobs, no payment should be necessary until work is completed. On larger projects, you might offer to write a check to the store for materials that must be specially ordered, offer to pay for materials delivered to your home, or offer to make progress payments as agreed upon portions of the work are completed.

If you and your contractor come to agreement on a series of progress payments (a common arrangement is 1/3 at the start, 1/3 at an agreed progress point, and 1/3 after all work is done), it’s best to tie those payments to completion of readily identifiable stages of the work, which have been defined in advance. For example, on a contract for a new garage, you might agree to pay a certain amount when the concrete foundation has been installed, another amount when the rough framing has been completed, and the final payment when the whole job is done.

Once you agree to a plan, stick to your guns. Remember, retaining funds until all work is done is the best way to make sure that those nagging details at the end get finished. Whether it’s the last progress payment on a big repair or “payment in full” for a small job, don’t give up that final check until you are fully and completely satisfied with the work. Note: if yours was a big job where subcontractors were used, don’t make the final payment without proof from the contractor that all subcontractors have been paid.

A final tip: before you make any payment—even a progress payment—on jobs for which a permit is required, make sure that the work has been approved by your city’s building department.

Rebecca Stager has been the Home Repair Resource Center’s education coordinator since 1989. Visit www.home-repair-resource-center.org or call 216-931-6050 for more information on programs and services.

Volunteer at the Heights Libraries

If you are interested in volunteering at the library, contact Heather Howiler, training and staff development/volunteer coordinator, at 216-931-6100 ext. 287 or lhowiler@heightslibrary.org.

Noble Neighborhood Library’s Grand Reopening Party, Sunday, May 15, 2-4 p.m.

Volunteers are needed to staff the refreshment tables, help with the Friends of the Heights Library book sale, and supervise the Early Literacy Playroom.

Noble’s Early Literacy Playroom

The Noble Neighborhood Library is looking for volunteers experienced in preschool development and literacy to interact with caregivers in carrying out literacy-based activities in the newly created Literacy Playroom.

Lee Road Summer Lunch Program

The Lee Road Library needs volunteers to help serve free cold lunches from the Cleveland Foodbank to anyone under the age of 18 from 12-3 p.m., Monday through Friday, starring June 13.

Gardening Volunteers

The library will need volunteers to help weed, plant and maintain the flower beds at each building this spring and summer.

Harvey and Friends Bookshop opens

Kirsten Radryovyitch

The Harvey and Friends Bookshop, located on the second floor of the Lee Road Library, opened for business in February.

It is named in honor of longtime Cleveland Heights resident Harvey Pekar, who died last summer. Pekar was a well-known cartoonist, the author of American Splendor, and the subject of the movie with the same title. He was also a prominent supporter and friend of the Heights Library.

The bookshop has thousands of books from which to choose, all donated to the Friends or removed from the library’s circulating collection. Bookshop shelves are arranged by subject, available genres range from preschool books to adult fiction and mysteries, and a wide variety of nonfiction subjects. Adult books cost $1.25, children’s titles are 75 cents each, or 50 cents if two or more are purchased. Friends members receive a 25-percent discount on adult titles.

Some bookshop highlights include a child’s play space, book-related gift items, and vending machines stocked with office supplies and healthy snacks. Freshly-brewed Phoenix Coffee and baked goods are available with discounts for Friends. Free-standing racks of ongoing book sale items can still be found on the first floor of the Lee Road Library, as well as at each of the other Heights Libraries. Friends volunteers will continue to sort and shevel donated books on Tuesday evenings, and will be on site to assist customers during most library hours.

All bookshop proceeds will be used to maintain, improve and add to resources, facilities and services. Money will also be used to support programs for children and adults.

Shop managers Joni London and David Robbins are working closely with the library staff to develop a showcase of Pekar’s graphic works that will debut this summer in a grand opening celebration. The project will emphasize Pekar’s contribution to the underground comic book industry.

The bookshop is also available for community events.

For more information about volunteer opportunities, call 216-931-6100, ext. 299, or visit www.friendsofheightslibrary.org.

Kirsten Radryovyitch has lived in Cleveland Heights off and on for many years. She is currently the Friends of the Heights Libraries event and programs chair.
Local farms deliver
Community supported agriculture gains in popularity as Geauga Family Farms brings locally grown food to the Heights area

Michelle Bandy-Zalatoris

The Cleveland area is experiencing a local food revolution. More and more opportunities are cropping up for residents to purchase healthy foods grown by local farmers and producers, and consumers are learning more about the bounty of this region.

Geauga Family Farms, a local cooperative of 10 certified-organic family farms, has experienced tremendous growth in its Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. In its first two seasons of business, the group went from just under 300 members in 2009 to more than 800 last year, and the farms are anticipating an expansion to 1,000 for 2011.

Community supported agriculture is an approach that enables members of the general public to purchase a share of the harvest at the beginning of the growing season. This early investment provides financial support to the farmers when they are purchasing seeds and supplies for the coming year—literally lending money. In return for this investment, members receive a weekly delivery of freshly harvested produce throughout the growing season. Geauga Family Farms offers single shares (several servings a week for two to three people) and family shares (the same for four to five people). For the 20-week summer season, single shares cost $450 and family shares cost $660—a great value for the range and quality of produce included.

The farmers of Geauga Family Farms appreciate the CSA model because it provides a more direct relationship with consumers through farm visits, a weekly newsletter, member surveys, and volunteer opportunities. Feedback from members helps farmers make decisions about what to plant and where pickup sites are needed. The greater financial security provided by the CSA business model has drawn younger farmers and a new energy back to the agricultural way of life.

Geauga Family Farms has been lucky to have active partners in the businesses and institutions that serve as pickup sites. In the Heights area, Ruffing Montessori School hosts a Thursday evening pickup this season, and St. Paul’s Episcopal Church and First Unitarian Church host Saturday morning pick-ups. Tuesday pick-ups are at Whole Foods in Woodmere Village and Kol Chadash Temple in Solon. Additional pickup sites are located in Chardon, Middlefield, Lakewood, Painesville, Mentor, Bainbridge and Willoughby Hills. Both Ruffing Montessori School and St. Paul’s Episcopal Church donate leftover shares to the Heights Emergency Food Center, providing fresh and healthy produce to residents in need.

The coordination among multiple farms enables them to grow a wide variety of produce in volume. Planting has already started on more than 50 varieties of vegetables. Members love the way the program has introduced them to new vegetables as well as new varieties of old favorites. Some members shared stories of children cheering at the appearance of kohlrabi or kale. The cooperative’s weekly newsletter, “The Harvest,” provides recipes and storage tips matched to the produce provided each week.

Last fall, Geauga Family Farms tested a Winter CSA plan, and the 175 available shares for the program sold out in two weeks. Members reported enjoying the combination of root vegetables, lettuce, greens, eggs, and baked goods. The farm plan expanded winter offerings this year.

The farmers host monthly farm visits and field nights for CSA members throughout the growing season. Last year’s visits were a great way to gain insight into the life of our Amish neighbors (eight of the 10 farms are Amish), while learning about the work involved in running a family farm.

This method of direct support for local farms appeals to you, Northeast Ohio offers many opportunities for participation. Early sign-up is recommend ed, as many CSAs fill up quickly. These programs are not for everyone, and not all CSAs are the same. But if you are an adventurous cook looking to add more healthy vegetables to your diet, a CSA membership may be just the thing for you. The Geauga Family Farms website at www.geaugafamilyfarms.org provides additional background and information about the program and its farmers.

Michelle Bandy-Zalatoris is a Cleveland Heights resident, a city planner and a local food advocate.

Local resources for families affected by Alzheimer’s disease

Judith Eugene

An estimated 120,000 Ohioans are living with Alzheimer’s disease (AD), and that number is unfortunately rising. As our senior adult population grows, so does the number of families affected by this disease. Statistics are only statistics, though, when they apply to someone else. What happens when one of our Heights-area families becomes one of those statistics? Where can we turn for local, reliable, caring help?

The Cleveland Chapter of The Alzheimer’s Association (AA), located in Beachwood, offers many helpful services to families living with Alzheimer’s, including family education, caregiver coaching, and referral services. The AA holds family support groups in Beachwood and Lyndhurst on the second Thursday of every month.

The Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging (WRAAAA), located downtown, has a Family Caregiver Support Program that provides support groups and referrals. The University Memory and Aging Center at University Hospitals (UH) offers services through the Elder Health Clinic in Cleveland and the Foley ElderHealth Center in Beachwood. AD patients are assessed and monitored by experienced neurologists and geriatric physicians. They also offer referrals and caregiver support groups.

When round-the-clock care becomes necessary, there are local companies that can help. HomeWatch CareGivers located in Beachwood, trains caregivers in the special care required by those with AD, and offers this training to family members. HomeWatch CareGivers offers a “Pathways to Memory” program in which a specially-trained caregiver guides your loved one through memory activities that help support cognitive abilities and independence for as long as possible. “This is a wonderful memory-enhancing program that enables our clients to gain confidence and maintain their independence,” said Jodi Spiegel of HomeWatch.

Adult day care centers are another option for care. St. Anthony Adult Day Center in Euclid and Jennings Center for Elder Adults in Garfield Heights provide life-enriching services for those with AD. If home care and day care are not viable options, there are several group residences that offer AD care. Home-Residence in Cleveland Heights and Richmond Heights, The Woodlands in Shaker Heights, Governor’s Village in Mayfield Village, and Montefiore and Park East Care in Beachwood are local residences offering specialized care.

If you have a loved one who has been diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease, reach out for help, not only for them, but also for yourself. Ashley Hill of HomeWatch CareGivers said, “Alzheimer’s disease affects the entire family, not just the person suffering from it.” You can reach the resources listed above at the following numbers: WRAAAA (216-621-8010), AA (216-727-8457), AA (247 hotline) (800-272-3900), UH (216-844-6400), HomeWatch CareGivers (216-599-0120).

Judith Eugene is a native of Cleveland Heights who provides services to senior adults and those with memory issues through HomeWatchCareGivers.com. She can be reached at 216-408-9578 or Judith@LovingHandsGroup.com.

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Fourth annual Peace Party is true to original purpose of Mother’s Day

Walter Nicholas

“The first Mother’s Day, proclaimed in 1870 by Julia Ward Howe, was a passionate demand for disarmament and peace,” said Kathy Baker, spokesperson for the 4th annual Mother’s Day Peace Party. The event will be held on Sunday, May 14, from 2 to 4 p.m. at the India Cultural Garden in Cleveland’s Rockefeller Park. “Unfortunately, Mother’s Day, has become significantly divorced from this objective, and is today an overly commercialized celebration, usually featuring gifts of candy and flowers and taking mom out to dinner,” Baker said.

But Howe’s proclamation, which she read publicly in 1870, stated in part: “Let [mothers] solemnly take counsel with each other as to the means whereby the great human family can live in peace, each bearing after their own time the sacred impress, not of Caesar, but of God.”

Special guest speaker this year is Peggy Zone Fisher, president and CEO of the Diversity Center of Northeast Ohio, a human relations organization dedicated to eliminating bias, bigotry and racism. Founded in 1977 as the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the Diversity Center is a member of the National Federation for Just Communities, a network of 20 like-minded organizations across the country. Zone Fisher is married to Life Fisher, former lieutenant governor of Ohio.

Event honoree is Joan Sourgate, founder of Restore Cleveland Hope, a grassroots organization that organized to save the Cozad-Bates House, the last remaining pre-Civil War structure in University Circle, which was part of the Underground Railroad.

Following the format of previous Peace Parties, the event is free and open to the public. Families are invited to participate in a peaceful afternoon among friends. Free light refreshments, entertainment, family photos at the Gandhi statue, an art table for children to make Mother’s Day cards, and folding peace cranes highlight the event.

The fourth annual Peace Party is sponsored by Cleveland Peace Action, Federation of India Community Associates, Women Speak Out For Peace and Justice, and Asian Services in Action, Inc. For more information, contact Kathy Baker at 216-383-1684.

Walter Nicholas is a longtime resident of the Heights.

Heights Observer May 3, 2011 11
www.heightsobserver.org
Pam Daroux

The College Club of Cleveland is situated in a gracious historic home located at the top of Murray Hill, on Overlook Road in Cleveland Heights. The home was built in 1905 for the W. D. B. Alexander family. The architects were Abram Garfield, son of President James Garfield, and Franklin Mead. The Alexanders sold the house in 1916 to D. Edward and Effie Danger. The house was occupied until 1958, when Effie Danger died. It lay vacant and fell into disrepair. It was around that time that the needs of the College Club and the home converged.

The College Club of Cleveland was formed in the late 19th century by a group of college-educated women. While the main focus was on the socialization of this special group of women, they also established a fund to provide scholarships for deserving young women to attend college.

Over time, as membership increased, the club needed to move to larger quarters. In 1951, members purchased the Dangler house and refurbished it, keeping the warm wood paneling in both main rooms on the first floor and the fireplaces—throughout the house. The rooms on the second floor were turned into comfortable sitting rooms suitable for small meetings and social gatherings.

People are sometimes surprised to learn that the College Club of Cleveland is not part of Case Western Reserve University or any other institution. It is a completely independent entity. Membership is open to both women and men, and members enjoy a host of diverse activities, from book groups to bridge to exercise classes. Meetings are held each Monday and consist of lunch (dinner once a month) and a program on interest on many topics. Membership is open to both women and men.

The club house is available for rentals, accommodating from 8 to 150 people. The house lends itself to events, such as bridal rehearsals, dinners, weddings, and bat mitzvahs. It is a popular venue for holding holiday events and special parties. Smaller meetings, seminars, recitals, and showers are just as much at home as the larger events.

Fees charged are reasonable and reflect the amount of space needed, length of time, time of day, and size and type of event. There is free parking at the door for 84 cars. The facility is handicapped-accessible.

One advantage to renting the College Club is that only one event takes place in the house at a time; thus, there is no competition for space.

Visitors and potential renters are welcome to tour the facility. To schedule a tour or to obtain membership information, call 216-231-1683 or e-mail clubmanager@thecollegeclub.org.

Pam Daroux is the house director for the College Club of Cleveland.
Summer sports camp offers fun, while teaching healthy habits

Heights Observer Staff

Kids can learn healthier habits this summer, while playing sports and engaging in other fun activities. Heights Summer Sports Camp—a new camp for children ages 5-14—will offer opportunities to swim, play basketball and football, and enjoy the outdoors, while also providing kids with an opportunity to cook nutritious meals and learn other healthy habits.

The program is run by Tenora Edwards, a 1986 Heights High graduate, who operates Excell Early Learning Center, a day care center based at Forest Hill Presbyterian Church.

“We have a strong passion for changing the lives of children and families,” said Edwards. “We currently have a licensed social worker, certified physical trainers and a host of other trained instructors available to provide our children with all the education and tools needed to become healthier individuals.”

The camp will run from June 13 through Aug. 19 at Lutheran East High School, 3561 Mayfield Road. Scholarships are available.

Call 216-906-1495 for more information.

Ruffing Montessori offers new Spanish language camp this summer

Heights Observer Staff

This summer, in addition to its traditional camp program, Summer Ruffing It, Ruffing Montessori will offer a one-week Spanish immersion camp for students in grades 3-5 and 6-8. These sessions will be taught in Spanish, and students are required to have studied the language for at least one year prior to enrollment.

During the week, students will be immersed in Spanish language and culture. Campers will create piñatas, prepare Mexican food, and play games using their Spanish vocabulary. Activities on the athletic field at Beaumont School and Ruffing’s gymnasium and playground will provide students with practical and entertaining ways to improve their Spanish fluency.

The program will run Monday, Aug. 1, through Friday, August 5, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Students should bring lunch and a drink each day, except for the last day, when they will prepare and enjoy a Mexican meal.

The cost per child is $25, and registration closes on May 31.

For more information, visit www.ruffingmontessori.net/ or click on the link to download the camp information form or call the camp office at 216-932-8866.

HYP members bound for Nicaragua

Deanna Bremer Fisher

Seven members of the Heights Youth Club have been awarded International Partners in Mission scholarships and will travel to Managua, Nicaragua, to participate in a cultural immersion experience program from June 11-18. Cleveland Heights High School students Alysa Taylor, James Williams, Jalal Wilson, and Mario Braxton; Shaker Heights High School student Olivia Morgan; Cleveland Central Catholic High School student Anastasia Williams; and Wiley Middle School student Jeremy Tennyson were selected to participate.

All are members of the organization’s Keystone Leadership Club, which emphasizes volunteerism, commitment and a desire to serve others.

Immersion experience programs build cross-cultural partnerships so that participants can gain a greater understanding of the global realities of poverty and injustice.

Two adult chaperones will travel with the students. Roscoe Morgan, director of the Heights Y Club, will be a chaperone. During the trip, participants will visit organizations that promote women’s and children’s health and income-building projects for the impoverished, such as a women’s sewing cooperative.

HYP members are fundraising to earn money for passports and medical expenses. For more information, or to make a donation, contact Roscoe Morgan, at 216-321-Club.

The Heights Youth Club provides a positive and safe environment for young people to learn and develop skills related to education, interpersonal growth and community involvement. It is affiliated with the Boys and Girls Club of America. The club is located at 2065 Lee Road in Cleveland Heights. Learn more at www.heightsyouthclub.org. Learn more about the International Partners in Mission program at www.ipmconnect.org.

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

Canterbury violinist played world premiere piece

Angeline Jackson, a 5th grader and the student council president at Canterbury Elementary School, performed “Flirting,” composed by Debra White, at the Cleveland Composers Guild Annual Junior Concert on Sunday, May 1 at the Music Settlement in University Circle.

This is Jackson’s second year of participation in the Junior Concert, which featured works written especially for and premiered by Cleve-
dland composers.

In addition to solo violin, Jackson studies jazz violin, orchestrated and chamber music at the Music Settlement. She is currently in the Canter-
bury Orchestra and Honors Choir, and performs with several other groups.

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bury Orchestra and Honors Choir, and performs with several other groups.
Setting the Record Straight About Oakwood Commons

Sustainable development

Opponents claim a retail development cannot be "sustainable." We disagree and have pledged to bring retailers to Oakwood Commons with a commitment to sustainable design and LEED-certified green-building techniques, in a manner that’s never been done before in Northeast Ohio.

An opponent’s website trumpets, “Let’s come up with a way to permanently preserve greenspace in our cities!” We agree, and contrary to the rhetoric, this project does not take away available greenspace. For more than 100 years, the Oakwood property has been closed to the public. We have made a commitment to permanently preserve 21 acres of the parcel in South Euclid as dedicated green space for public use; reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions; demonstrate an owner’s commitment to environmental stewardship and social responsibility.”

Green space preservation

An opponent’s website trumpets, “Let’s come up with a way to permanently preserve greenspace in our cities!” We agree, and contrary to the rhetoric, this project does not take away available greenspace. For more than 100 years, the Oakwood property has been closed to the public. We have made a commitment to permanently preserve 21 acres of the parcel in South Euclid as dedicated green space for public use (contingent upon City approval). Under our proposal, this land will never be developed. South Euclid currently has only 36 acres of parkland, so preserving an additional 21 acres will help the City achieve one of the primary objectives spelled out in its comprehensive plan: to preserve open space for active and passive recreation. We have not yet presented a plan for the Cleveland Heights parcel. The City of Cleveland Heights already has over 135 acres of parkland, but we expect to provide additional public green space on that parcel as well.

Economic development and job creation

Another primary objective in South Euclid’s comprehensive community plan is to “remain competitive in the regional market.” This means increasing tax revenues. Opponents have derisively questioned whether “low paying” retail jobs will increase the tax base. Doing their own math, they concluded the cost to the city and county will exceed tax revenues. That conclusion is absurd. At our request, The Greater Cleveland Partnership asked Team NEO to prepare an independent study of the economic impact of 325,000 square feet of retail. Team NEO used a model developed by Regional Economic Models, Inc. (www.remi.com). Based on conservative estimates, Team NEO projected about $469,000 each year in new local income tax revenues for the City of South Euclid – in addition to $1.7 million in new property tax revenues benefiting the public schools, library, city and county each year. The full study is available in the “Resource Center” section of the Oakwood Commons website, www.oakwoodcommons.net.

Land use

Essentially, arguments on both sides come down to whether our proposal is an appropriate use of the Oakwood property. Already, opponents are lining up to criticize our plan for the Cleveland Heights parcel EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE NOT YET SUBMITTED ANY PLANS. We simply ask that residents keep an open mind. We are in the process of looking at alternatives for this parcel. We can’t yet tell you what it will be, but we can tell you what we won’t do. We will not build a retail development on the entire parcel in both South Euclid and Cleveland Heights. We also will not preserve the entire parcel as a park. We look forward to sharing our plans for the Cleveland Heights parcel later this year when we have completed our studies.

An Open Letter to the Local Community

Since my company, First Interstate Properties, announced plans for the former Oakwood Country Club property, we have tried to keep the community informed about the project. However, there has been a great deal of misinformation distributed in an attempt to stop this development. Certainly, everyone is entitled to an opinion; people are not, however, entitled to their own facts. It’s time to set the record straight.

First and foremost, our objective for this project is to build a sustainable development that balances economic development and job creation with green space preservation. Many people have suggested the entire parcel should be preserved as a park. That is simply not feasible. No one – not South Euclid or Cleveland Heights, the Metroparks, or any citizen group -- had enough money to purchase the property and maintain it as green space in perpetuity. First Interstate has already purchased the land, so the only question on the table is this: What type of development should take place on this property? We have presented a plan that balances the community’s desire for open, preserved green space with the clear need for more jobs and increased tax revenues. Let’s break that down.

Opponents also claim to know what retail stores will be on the site even though we do not yet have signed agreements with any retailers. In fact, we are mystified by some of the “plans” showing up on websites purporting to show what this development will look like and what stores will be there. If you want accurate information, please come to the public hearings or visit our website (www.oakwoodcommons.net) and look at the actual plans. We think you’ll like what you see.

Mitchell Schneider, President | First Interstate Properties, Ltd.
FICTION: This is spot zoning.

FACT: The rezoning we are requesting is in keeping with South Euclid’s zoning laws. Adjacent property along Warrensville Center Road is currently zoned C-1 (Limited Commercial) for nonresidential use. We are requesting similar zoning for this property, so it is not spot zoning.

FICTION: There is already too much retail in the area.

FACT: Even back in 1999, the South Euclid comprehensive plan acknowledged many of the available retail spaces in South Euclid “do not meet contemporary retail standards for store size, location of parking spaces or number of parking spaces.” Modern retailers want modern spaces and this kind of new development will bring new retail options and increased tax revenues to the community. In fact, a retail market analysis recently conducted by Esri Business Analyst shows a significant gap between local supply and demand for retail goods. The study reveals that $539 million in demand cannot be met within a five-mile radius of the Oakwood property. This study clearly demonstrates that local residents currently travel more than five miles to shop for many goods and services.

FICTION: New retail only displaces small and beloved merchants.

FACT: Nothing stays the same, especially in retail. Successful shopping districts require regular reinvestment by landlords and merchants who periodically reinvent themselves or go out of business, only to be replaced by another retailer who better serves the changing needs of customers. This is true for regional shopping districts (e.g. Golden Gate, Eastgate, Severance Town Center, Beachwood Place and even First Interstate-owned Legacy Village) This is also true in every neighborhood shopping district where leases expire and merchants come and go. It’s easy to simply assume that national retailers always push smaller retailers out, but that is usually not the case. In fact, based on what often occurs in other markets, we expect the Oakwood development to have a positive impact on other commercial properties in the area by attracting more shoppers to stores located on Cedar, Warrensville and Mayfield Roads.

FICTION: Cedar Center should never have been knocked down. The city should focus on Cedar Center before developing new retail.

FACT: It is indisputable the South Euclid side of Cedar Center suffered from serious neglect for decades and no longer served community needs. It had to be reinvented. The reason it took so long was because the property was contaminated and needed remediation. Construction for Gordon Foods, which is expected to hire 35 people to work at its new store, began in April. Developer Peter Rubin has expressed support for Oakwood Commons because he knows there will be positive synergy between the two projects.

FICTION: First Interstate will seek subsidies and tax abatements.

FACT: First Interstate has made a public commitment to pay for any and all improvements needed for this project, including sidewalks along Warrensville Center Road, designated areas for bicycles and a “pull off” area for RTA buses to move off the main street for a bus stop. We promise to seek no subsidies or tax abatements.

FICTION: First Interstate won’t keep its promises.

FACT: No development will happen without careful review by the cities involved. Part of that approval process will be a detailed, legally binding Development Agreement. We invite you to visit other First Interstate developments (Legacy Village, Avon Commons, Steelyard Commons, Mentor Commons and Willoughby Commons) and to visit our website to learn about our company (www.first-interstate.com). We do keep our promises.
MARCH 15, 2011

All board members were present.

This special meeting focused on implementation of the “K-12 Thematic Strands and Organization.”

Changes at the High School

Changes at Heights High for the 2011–2012 school year will include a shift from five small schools to four, with the elimination of F.I.R.E.D., and the institution of Freshman Experience, in which all freshmen will participate for half of each day. During this time core subjects will be taught, flexible scheduling will allow teachers to adjust time slots to teaching needs, and students will be grouped in their small schools, all within one area of the building. James Reed, small school principal, will be responsible for Freshman Experience and all-school decisions; Nicholas Fatty, Mosaic principal, will become Renaissance principal; and Joseph Nohra, F.I.R.E.D. principal, will become Mosaic principal.

By the 2012–13 school year: Legacy will focus on health and engineering. Career prep offerings will be in business management and marketing management.

Further goals for Heights High include alignment of courses to allow for small school thematic expansion, creation of pathways that encourage relevant experiences, implementation of a flexible block schedule, and creation of an Option Complex to address student mobility and students at risk.

Middle school changes

Changes at the middle schools will be made according to the following timeline:

Spring 2011, define middle school priorities.

2011–12, develop thematic strands, with stakeholder input, for Wiley and Monticello.

Spring 2011, define middle school priorities.

2011–12, develop thematic strands, with stakeholder input, for Wiley and Monticello.

2011–13, implement thematic strands on a staggered basis.

2013–14, fully implement thematic strands.

Elementary school changes

Elementary staff will also begin work on school themes this spring.

All CH-UH school employees agree to pay freeze

Angie Shaker

Responding collectively to challenges posed by the state budget crisis and the continuing economic climate, all Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District employees have agreed to a two-year extension of their contracts and a zero percent cost of living increase for each year of the extension.

All five unions have agreed to the measure, until 2013:

• Ohio Association of Public School Employees (OAPSE), Local 100, before/after school staff, early childhood preschool

• OAPSE, Local 102, secretaries, food service workers, cleaners, paraprofessionals, lunchroom non-paraprofessionals

• OAPSE, Local 67, custodians, maintenance, operations, grounds, trades, bus drivers, information technology

• The Cleveland Heights Teachers Union, Local 795, AFT, AFL-CIO, teachers and monitors

• Educational Administrative and Professional Staff Council (EAPSC), administrators

“We are extremely grateful to all of our employees for their collaborative spirit and for putting the needs of our students first,” said Eric Coble, president of the board of education. “Agreements like this are a key part of our district successfully riding the huge waves of the current state budget proposal. And with all the unanswered legal questions about Senate Bill 5, and the unknown status of the referendum on Senate Bill 5, this agreement is not only financially responsible, it gives us the stability to focus on what we should be focusing on: educating all our students.”

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

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Exchange programs promote peace and learning

Joy Henderson

Japan’s tsunami hit close to home for two Cleveland Heights families who are active with the AFS student exchange program.

“Okasan and Orosan live in the south, but I was still worried about them,” explained Miles Walker, a Heights High graduate who spent the summer after his junior year as an AFS exchange student in Japan. It took him a few days to hear that his former host parents were safe. “The experience in Japan gave me a strong bond to my host family, the country and the Japanese people,” said Walker, a sophomore at Ohio State.

Heights High parent and AFS leader Krista Hawthorne and her family were concerned about Kurumi, the Japanese exchange student who lived with them and attended Heights during the 2005-06 school year, and who remains part of their family. “We finally heard from her—she was fine,” said Hawthorne.

These are examples of the lasting connections that Heights High students and families forge through the AFS student exchange program, now in its 52nd year at the school. This year there are eight AFS students enrolled at Heights, and three Heights students living and studying abroad.

When Heights students travel to other countries for extended stays or internships, groups of exchange students enrolled at Heights, their knowledge of the world and concern for others expands. The exchanges foster understanding of common human values and unique culture-based differences—valuable knowledge for our shrinking world and global economy.

The AFS Club at Heights High welcomes and helps foreign students adapt to the American culture and connect with the school and its diverse opportunities. One American AFS Club member thinks Heights is an especially welcoming place for exchange students, saying, “We have so many groups here, it is not a big deal if people are different.” Adrienne Yelsky is the AFS Club advisor who guides activities that bring together the exchange students with local students. Club members and all exchange students are invited to a daily brown-bag lunch in Yelsky’s classroom, and monthly evening meetings. These activities help create a community that shares in the excitement and fun of the exchange experience.

“I imagine the impact of one student coming from a foreign country with pre-conceived ideas about the United States. He will go back home with a totally new view of America that will have a ripple effect, creating peace and understanding in the world,” explained Yelsky.

The AFS program is known for the support it provides to the students and host families. Local chapters of trained AFS volunteers prepare host families and exchange students for their experience. Each exchange student lives with a host family and is matched with an adult liaison from the community who helps the student and family adjust to the new family configuration.

AFS club members write letters and emails to their exchange students, to which their host families respond. AFS students want to expand their horizons. For more information about hosting a student or spending a summer, a semester or a year abroad, contact Adrienne Yelsky, 216-371-3733 or a_yelsky@chuh.org.

Joy Henderson is the parent/community liaison at Heights High and an AFS volunteer.
There’s a place near the top of Cleveland Heights High School, on the fourth floor in the vocal music department, that Broadway playwright Rajiv Joseph (Class of ‘92) remembers well. “There was a ledge you could sit on and look out on the courtyard and watch kids eating lunch way down there,” he recalled. “I always felt a rush of happiness when I was there.”

Perhaps there is something about observing people that helps mold an author of stories. For five summers during his college years, Joseph worked at Cain Park and watched plays every night. “I’d sit up on a platform near the lighting booth. I watched them over and over. I was studying them, and I didn’t even know I was,” he said in a recent interview for The Plain Dealer.

While these experiences have been important in shaping Joseph’s work, he also credits several Heights High teachers whose impact on his life—and his writing—was profound. Most significant among them, perhaps, is recently deceased vocal music teacher Bill Thomas.

“Bill used the Heights Singers as a tool to teach students about community, leadership, responsibility, and self-reliance,” Joseph said. “I think about him all the time, and I will miss him.” Thomas also hired him at Cain Park and was his supervisor there.

Three history teachers who served in the Peace Corps, and who regularly integrated their overseas experiences into their classrooms, also influenced Joseph. He speaks with admiration of former teacher and current librarian Mike Beckman, who served in Colombia; and retired teachers Joann Broadbooks and Rupert Emerson, both of whom served in Africa. “All of them had a huge impact on my decision to join the Peace Corps and to go to Africa.”

After his graduation from Miami University, where he majored in creative writing, Joseph spent three years in Senegal, West Africa. “Serving in the Peace Corps in Senegal was the best experience of my life,” he said.

At 36, Rajiv Joseph has accomplished much. His play “Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo” opened on Broadway in early April, and was a finalist for a Pulitzer Prize. The play is about two homesick American soldiers, a tormented Iraqi citizen, and a displaced tiger—played by Robin Williams—who collide on the streets of Baghdad.

Another play, “The North Pool,” which recently opened in California, is set in a high school. “While the play is not about Heights High, it takes place in a school that I modeled after Heights High,” Joseph explained. “The north pool doesn’t exist anymore, which adds to the story’s intrigue.” When the set designer asked him about the school colors, he didn’t have to think twice: “black and gold!”

Clevelanders can see Joseph’s coming-of-age story, “Huck and Holden,” when Ensemble Theatre brings it to Studio One at the Cleveland Play House this May. The play is about an Indian college student who dates an African-American woman and finds his preconceptions about the world changing.

Rajiv Joseph will be in Cleveland during May, and plans to visit Heights High and to talk with students while he’s in town. There is a good chance his visit will include stops at the now-closed north pool and his favorite lookout spot on the fourth floor. Without a doubt, this talented young playwright, who was shaped by his own Peace Corps high experience, will enlighten and inspire the gifted young people who travel the school’s corridors today.

Joy Henderson is the parent/community liaison for Heights High.
Leading Ladies make a difference

Sabrina Humphries

Cleveland Heights High School’s Leading Ladies gained media attention last month for a service project with Angel Hands Northeast Ohio International. While gathering supplies for gift baskets that would be presented to pregnant teens, the students sorted and organized clothing for distribution to the needy. Leading Ladies will return to Angel Hands in May to clean and sort eyeglasses that will be delivered to Ghana this summer as a part of the Angel Hands Eyeglasses to Africa initiative. The ladies also raised funds to pay for the cost of shipping the glasses to Africa. Leading Ladies emphasizes self-esteem, civility and service, and has completed several service projects this year. The ladies collaborated with the CH-UH Parent Teachers Association to bring to the community a Mind, Body & Soul Wellness Challenge that featured more than 30 health professionals from the Greater Cleveland Area. They volunteered with the Cleveland Heights High School Parent Connection Council at the New Parent Welcome and Soul Food Dinner, and have ongoing service projects with the Cleveland Food Bank and Oxford Elementary After-School program.

“Respect . . . Accept Nothing Less” was the theme of the group’s final community outreach program for the school year. A Blue Ribbon Violence Prevention Campaign aimed at combating violence in dating relationships was held from April 1–21. Leading Ladies created an informational brochure that was distributed, along with blue ribbons, to students and staff at Cleveland Heights High School. They also held a cell phone drive to benefit the Domestic Violence Center.

The campaign culminated with an interactive Violence Prevention Summit in which guest speaker Melissa McClain of Akron Children’s Hospital’s RESPECT PERIOD, clearly conveyed the message to Northeast Ohio teens that violence in relationships is never acceptable.

This school year, Leading Ladies has volunteered more than 600 hours of service in the community. The ladies exemplify Gandhi’s maxim that “change begins with one individual,” and have as their goal to make a difference, one hour at a time.

Leading Ladies Inc. is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization. The Cleveland Heights High School empowerment group is facilitated by founder Sabrina L. Humphries, Melissa Walls, Myra Cook and Kim Kravitz-Lash.

Sabrina Humphries is a 31-year veteran teacher, CH-UH PTA council copresident, and founder and executive director of Leading Ladies Inc.
Friends of the Heights Libraries offers scholarships

Friends of the Heights Libraries are continuing their tradition of offering Library Education Scholarships.

The scholarships provide funds to be used for tuition or books in any ALA-accredited graduate program in library science.

Applications will be accepted through June 15, and the winners will be announced by July 15. All completed submission packets are reviewed by a scholarship committee consisting of representatives from Kent State University, the CH-UH Library and the Friends.

Funding will be awarded by Aug. 1 for the fall academic semester.

Anyone who has lived in Cleveland Heights or University Heights for at least one year, as well as anyone currently employed by the Heights Libraries for at least a year, is eligible for the award. Submissions must include a scholarship application, a personal statement, a complete and official college transcript, and three letters of recommendation.

Applications and additional information can be downloaded from the library's website at https://heightslibrary.org or the Friends' website at friendsofheightslibrary.org.

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May is Foster Care Month; Bellefaire thanks its foster parents!
Coventry Village merchants have staying power

Steve Presser

In the early 1900s, Eastern European immigrants came to Coventry Village to live and work. Many set up unique shops on the street level, and lived above their businesses or around the corner in one of the neighborhood's many classic apartment buildings.

Flash forward nearly a century, and not much has changed. Although not every Coventry merchant lives in the neighborhood, some do; and Coventry Village remains as eclectic as it ever was. What began nearly a century ago continues today with many long-standing Mom and Pop stores.

The neighborhood is justly proud of these businesses for their longevity during tough economic times, for what each adds to the street, and what each gives back to the community.

Below are lists of the businesses that have celebrated more than 10 years in operation, most or much of that time on Coventry Road. Let’s begin with the grandaddy of them all—Heights Hardware. Owner Tom Gathy, his son Andy, and the rest of the friendly, knowledgeable crew will celebrate their 100th year this summer. That’s a century of providing their neighbors with hammers, nails, advice on repairs, and so much more.

If Heights Hardware is the granddad, then Diamond’s Flowers would have to be the grandma. On the street for 77 years, Roseann and Jim Bass have been the owners of the shop for the last 25. Let’s not forget the Coventry Library, which has been lending books to local residents for 85 years.

Coventry restaurants continue to win many “Best of” awards from local media. Some of the favorite local restaurants are Grams, 33 years; The Inn on Coventry, 30 years; Winking Lizard, 28 years; Hunan on Coventry, 27 years; Pananis, 25 years (6 on Coventry); Phoenix Coffee, 20 years (6 on Coventry); La Cave Du Vin, 16 years; The Grog Shop, 16 years; and BD’s Mongolian, 13 years. Next year, the mayor bears his name—Tommy’s.

On the service side, Coventry Village is proud to have Heights Cleaners, 57 years; Laura Lee, 36 years; Coventry Shoe Repair, 32 years; and Allied Integrated Marketing, 15 years.

The neighborhood’s longest-running retail stores include Record Revolution, 44 years; The Exchange, 36 years; Mac’s, 32 years; Avalon Exchange, 33 years (6 on Coventry); Mac’s Backs, 33 years; Passport to Peru, 32 years; Sunshine, 31 years; Revolution Books, 27 years; Attorneys, 24 years; Coventry Cars, 23 years, Big Fun, 20 years; and City Buddha, 14 years.

What accounts for the longevity of Coventry businesses? Some say it’s the symbiotic relationship between business owners and residents—merchants contribute much to the community and the community responds with customer loyalty. So, come on over to Coventry Village and stay a while!

Steve Presser is the marketing director for the Coventry Village Special Improvement District.

Myxx to open at former Jillian’s space

Richard Stewart

Perhaps best remembered by locals for standing-room-only crowds on championship fight nights throughout the 1990s, Jillian’s is set to reopen as Myxx in May 2011.

Owner Kim Lisboa said Myxx will offer a club-style atmosphere, featuring great food and drinks, entertainment and an eclectic mix of people. The addition of live bands and DJ entertainment, plus more than enough space for a dance floor, could fill an entertainment void within the suburban bar scene and potentially attract large and diverse crowds. “There’s going to be 10 to 12 sofas, cocktail tables, just a very relaxed atmosphere,” Lisboa said. “We’re going to leave a spot at the east end for a dance floor so when we do have the DJ, or any type of entertainment, people will actually have a place to dance in the Heights.”

For years, Jillian’s was popular for its pool and ping-pong tables, arcade games and open atmosphere. But staff turnover and spotty service caused the club’s financial performance to falter, and the business became unsustainable, eventually closing its door for good in February.

With a lot of space to fill, fresh coats of paint, a remodeled kitchen, and new skylights and bathrooms, Lisboa vows that Myxx won’t resemble its immediate predecessor. “The customer service, the staff that we’re going to have . . . we’re going to treat all of our guests as if they’re part of a family. We’re going to expand the bar, so it’s going to be this real cool type of 'loungy' atmosphere where people can just eat and drink and have great conversations.”

Despite a wealth of established restaurants and bars throughout nearly every business district in the Heights area, Lisboa optimistically touts the advantages of being situated within the Cedar Fairmount Special Improvement District—where she owns the building that also contains Brugger’s Bagels and Aladdin’s Eatery—as a hangout for future success. “It’s location, location, location with any type of restaurant or bar.”

As the peak season for bars and restaurants approaches, local residents will have yet another food and entertainment venue to consider. “The great big idea is to change this into a great type of ‘Myxx,’ where you have great food, great entertainment and great drinks—and dagги, which means to ‘hang and relax.’”

Richard Stewart is the owner of Digizoom Media and a member of the FutureHeights Board of Directors.

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A new ice cream and french fry shop called Sweetie Fry is slated to open in Cleveland Heights this summer, and owner Keith Logan will give local high school students a firsthand look at what it’s like to start a business.

Logan will lead the Entrepreneurs Club, a group of students from Cleveland Heights, Shaker Heights and Beauxmont high schools, in twice monthly meetings until Sweetie Fry opens in mid-July. He plans to show club members how a retail business is established, from the business plan through the financing, construction, and product development stages. Students who are curious to learn about business will directly experience the creation of one.

Students in the club will see Logan’s business evolve from an empty building to a gourmet ice cream shop, complete with a kitchen where he will make menu items from scratch.

“It started with the idea of an artisanal ice cream shop. I’ve been told that people love to eat milk shakes with fries, so it seemed like a great combination for a business,” Logan said. “I thought it would be an opportunity to show kids what it’s like to start a company, and I love this town, so if there’s something I can do to enrich the community, I am happy to do it.”

His most important lesson for the Entrepreneurs Club will be drawn from the challenges he’s faced along the way. “Everybody told me my problem was going to be getting financing, but I got it right away from Key and Huntington banks. My crisis was different—it took months to find a suitable location.”

Logan plans to invite other local business owners to meet with the kids and share their ideas. He credits the support and guidance of the Heights business community with making his venture possible.

Logan, who has lived in Cleveland Heights for 46 years, says this is his first time working with children, though he raised three daughters, served as a camp counselor and spent some time at the nonprofit organization Junior Achievement. He started out as an entrepreneur and spent 10 years working for Nontson Corp. in global marketing and business development.

Although he will be providing an educational experience for the students, Logan also sees his venture as a learning experience for himself. “Making ice cream is something of a craft,” he said. “It’s something you can still be learning about 10 years later.”

Kelli Fontenot is a journalist living in Cleveland Heights.
Corrie Slawson is artist-in-residence at Boulevard Elementary School

Marij Edguer

Cleveland Heights painter and printmaker Corrie Slawson has volunteered to be Boulevard Elementary School’s artist-in-residence this year. She has worked closely with Boulevard’s art teacher, Kelley Wachhaus, to design and implement a unique opportunity for Boulevard students: an outdoor installation project reminiscent of the works created by the environmental artist Christo.

The project, “Boulevard Inside/Out,” gives students the opportunity to create a five-page book in the style of Buddhist prayer flags. Each student will create a unique book reflective of the student and his or her school experiences. The books will be block-printed, so that the pages can be reproduced several times.

Each grade will also make a collective flag containing all of the students’ prints, which will hang along the pathways and trees bordering Euclid Heights Boulevard and Lee Road. In the end, more than 3,000 individual flags will hang in the schoolyard from June 2 to June 9.

An opening reception will be held on Thursday, June 2, from 3:30–5:30 p.m. In addition to the outdoor installation, the first floor halls of Boulevard will be transformed into a gallery that showcases the collection of art that students have worked on throughout the year, under the guidance of Wachhaus. Families, friends, and neighbors are invited to attend. The outdoor installation will also be on view during the annual Boulevard Blast on Friday, June 3, from 5–8 p.m.

Boulevard Inside/Out

Each step of the process has been filled with opportunities for Wachhaus and Slawson to teach the students about the artistic process, as well as the history of outdoor contemporary art. The students have already printed their book covers using a silkscreen created by Slawson specifically for the Inside/Out project. She said that all of the students did a great job printing.

Inside/Out will enable the students to present themselves to their community. The hope is that each child will learn more about his or her ability to affect change in one’s own backyard, and create beautiful art objects. Community residents will see that Boulevard is a vibrant place for young people to create and learn.

Artist-in-residence

Corrie Slawson attended the Cleveland Heights-University Heights schools. In 1997, she received her Bachelor of Fine Arts from Parsons School of Design in New York City. She then returned to Cleveland to work as a studio artist, while cofounding HotelBruce.com, an online journal that re-energizes Cleveland neighborhoods. In 2006, Slawson completed her Master of Fine Arts at Kent State University. She has exhibited her work locally at Zygote Press, SPACES Gallery, Heights Arts Gallery, Cleveland Public Art, the Beck Center for the Arts and the Kent State University School of Art Downtown Gallery.

Slawson received a Nancie Martice Emerging Artist Award and Exhibit at the Dangert Gallery in Nashville, Tenn., in 2007. In 2011, she received an Individual Excellence Award from the Ohio Arts Council. For the past few years, her work has been influenced by the fallout of urban development patterns that have left some people and places behind. She is interested in how society creates arbitrary value-systems based on collective ideas of beauty and worth. She uses a variety of media that includes screen-printing, drawing, found objects, painting, cotton ribbon and vacant land.

Marij Edguer is a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights.

Vote for Best of the Heights beginning May 3

Deanna Bremer Fisher

Citizens can vote for their favorite Heights businesses in FutureHeights’s annual Best of the Heights awards program. The 2011 survey begins May 3 and runs through August 31.

“There are 22 award categories this year,” said Gina Cheverine, chair of the Future Heights Best of the Heights Committee. “Some are the same as previous years, such as the Best New Business, but others are new. We’ve also added a bonus question that we hope will give direction to our city planners, developers and entrepreneurs: What business would you like to see in the Heights?”

FutureHeights has modified the voting rules to enable a greater variety of businesses to win, said Cheverine. “In order for a ballot to be counted, we’re asking that participants give us their contact information and fill out at least half of the ballot categories.”

Ballots for the Best of the Heights awards are available on the back page of this issue of the Heights Observer, at one of the many Heights independent businesses and at www.futureheights.org. Since 2005, FutureHeights—a nonprofit dedicated to promoting civic engagement through information, education and advocacy—has conducted this public opinion survey to recognize the unique attributes of locally-owned businesses in Cleveland Heights and University Heights, and their contributions to the local economy.

“The program continues to grow,” said Lloyd Bell, board president. “We invite all Heights business owners to encourage their customers to vote for them. Heights residents recognize how lucky they are to have such an amazing diversity of independent businesses in our community and want to show their appreciation.”

FutureHeights will announce the winners at an awards ceremony in the fall, at a date and time to be determined. The name of one lucky survey respondent will be drawn at random at the awards ceremony, to receive a FutureHeights gift package. Participants need not be present to win.

For more information call FutureHeights at 216-320-1433 or visit www.futureheights.org.

Deanna Bremer Fisher is executive director of FutureHeights and publisher of the Heights Observer.
Ensemble Theatre opens on Coventry with youth camp offerings

Deanna Bremer Fisher

The Ensemble Theatre is back in the Heights and offering area youth an opportunity to learn acting and theater skills this summer.

After many years at the Cleveland Play House, the theater is opening in its new home in the former Coventry School with a summer and fall camp program.

Six classes are offered for students in grades 4 and higher. Programs range from 3-week to 12-week sessions starting in May, June, July, August and September.

Classes and workshops, held Monday through Saturday mornings, include acting, expressing thoughts and emotions through body movement, as well as costume history and design.

According to Martin Cosentino, managing director for the theater, the camp classes are designed to provide multiple hands-on experiences that provide students of all ages with opportunities for artistic expression.

To register, call 216-321-2930 or visit ensemble-theatre.org for more information.

Journey to Coventry School

The Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District is holding a community meeting on Thursday, May 5, at 6 p.m. to welcome the Ensemble Theatre to the school and showcase its new home to the community. The meeting will be held in the school’s former gymnasium, which seats 200 and will be used by the theater company for performances.

Ensemble Theatre will wrap up its season at the Cleveland Play House with a performance of Heights High graduate Rajiv Joseph’s “Huck and Holden.” Joseph will be in Cleveland May 19–22 to attend the local premiere of his work, and for a master class at the Coventry School location, and for post-performance lectures after the Friday, Saturday and Sunday shows.

The 2011 schedule at Coventry:
- “Anna Christie” by Eugene O’Neill, Sept. 17 through Oct. 9;
- “The Seafarer” by Conor McPherson, Nov. 18 through Dec. 11.

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

2011 Best of the Heights Awards

Vote for your favorite local business Now through Aug. 31

Ballot on back page, or vote online at www.futureheights.org


Trouble in Paradise

By Cavana Faithwalker

Cleveland Heights is suburban bliss. The couple across the street?

A concert pianist and her husband.

He gets mad about corporations stompin’ the little guy and drives off most mornings hunter gathering schedule to keep.

In the summer,

in the morning, in my sleep,

she serenades me.

The music pied pipers me into the concave space made by the giant Hydrangea.

If I sit just right, it hides me in its branches and giant flowers.

I have another neighbor some say is a “redneck.” He’s from the South where dirt is red so it makes perfect sense to me.

Redneck or not, in the winter he always shovels a path from my house to the garbage cans by the shed and from the garage to the street. He does this even though he doesn’t really like me.

He’s a good neighbor!

The kids who live on the corner run, cackle, and laugh when they see me.

Is it a game I don’t know?

I love seeing Jewish folk walking to synagogue like mine at the east end of Cain Park.

They moved here to be closer to music and trees.

The entire family has a thing for concession stand food.

Weird, huh?

There are things here not to like:

a strange coffee cult, right out in the open.

I understand theaters, libraries, galleries, restaurants, and bars (music when I walk by).

I saw a crabby young lady walk into the corner coffeehouse. A minute later out she came, smiling ear to ear talking about “rising from the ashes!”

I overheard one couple saying, “we feel so comfortable here.” “It’s better than Lakewood, reminds me of Cisco.”

There is a black and white family like mine at the east end of Cain Park.

They moved here to be closer to music and trees.

The entire family has a thing for concession stand food.

Weird, huh?

There are things here not to like:

a strange coffee cult, right out in the open and no one says a thing!

Coffee stores every fifty feet.

I understand theaters, libraries, galleries, restaurants, and bars (music when I walk by).

I saw a crabby young lady walk into the corner coffeehouse. A minute later out she came, smiling ear to ear talking about “rising from the ashes!”

There is prejudice here in blissville.

Why, just this morning

I was enjoying a serenade, nested under my favorite Hydrangea when my neighbor, Mary came out on the porch, looked at me and said, “Pew! Skunk!”

She left. I stayed.

But what a thing to say.

Cavana Faithwalker is the fifth poet laureate of Cleveland Heights. A resident of Cleveland Heights for eight years, he is founder of the NIA poetry coffeehouse and owner of Left Thumbprint Solutions, an arts networking consulting company.
Cleveland Heights is top city for Cuyahoga County artists

Marc Lefkowitz

Community Partnership for Arts and Culture (CPAC) mined the databases of large arts organizations, such as the Ohio Arts Council, to provide a snapshot of where Cleveland-area artists are living. CPAC’s “Putting Artists on the Map” study looks at the top artist districts by categories (musician, visual arts, literary), their educational attainment, and even alternative modes of transportation—how many artists bike or walk to work.

Not surprisingly, cities like Cleveland Heights—which have neighborhoods that promote walking and biking, have public spaces that encourage social interaction, have diverse populations, and inexpensive and larger housing (with room for studios)—tend to be Greater Cleveland’s creative havens. It’s also interesting that artists tend to walk and bike to work in higher percentages than the average Clevelander.

Coventry Village and Cedar-Lee ranked one and two in the region for high concentrations of artists per thousand residents (30.2 and 23.8 respectively). Overall, 19.4 percent of the region’s self-identified artists are a stabilizing force in the urban core and inner-ring suburbs. They are an important part of the social fabric, drawing the public to galleries, which serve as a third leg in the civic common.

In other words, the aforementioned neighborhoods that rank in Greater Cleveland’s top ten artist clusters. The ten are:

- Lakewood (292 artists)
- Cedar-Fairmount/Shaker Square/Larchmere (240)
- Coventry Village (217)
- Tremont (193)
- University Circle/Little Italy (150)
- Severance neighborhood in Cleveland Heights (122)
- Onaway/Lomond in Shaker Heights (111)
- Downtown Cleveland’s Superior Warehouse District (110)
- Chagrin Valley (92)
- Detroit-Shoreway (94 and rising)

If we add the top ten artist districts to the top ten artist clusters, we can see the ten clusters that account for the highest concentrations of artists ranked one and two in the region for each of these categories:

- Arts: Coventry Village and Cedar-Lee ranked high in diversity in and artists with advanced degrees (18.8%), but also had high concentrations of people “not in labor force.”
- Music: Sixty-six percent of the region’s artist districts are:
- Theater: 64.9%
- Literary: 62.6%
- Music: 62.6%
- Theater: 64.9%
- Literary: 62.6%
- In this passage from the report, CPAC hints at what it hopes to gain from mapping artists:

“Artist-based community development is more than opening an art gallery or having an artist move into a neighborhood. This type of development involves the creation of a more organic relationship between artists and their neighbors. This can mean a neighborhood takes steps to identify its hidden arts and culture assets by finding its gathering places and influential figures. Artists can be engaged by making beautiful and interesting public spaces and help unite residents in the process.”

In other words, the aforementioned cities, which account for a large percentage of the region’s artists, could benefit by building on their current artist base. They might make their economic development arms-driven; they could engage the community in a discussion and find out if it’s appropriate to create policies or provide incentives to start a home-based businesses or to direct CDBG funds to reconfigure single-family homes with studio spaces. At the very least, engaging influential figures from the arts community in economic development discussions could begin to shape the communities to become even more inviting for artists to live and work.

These efforts matter because self-identified artists are a stabilizing force in the urban core and inner-ring suburbs. They are an important part of the social fabric, drawing the public to galleries, which serve as a third leg in the civic common.

A version of this article originally appeared on the GreatCityBlueLake website, www.gcbl.org.

Marc Lefkowitz is Web editor for the GreatCityBlueLake Institute at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, a Cleveland Heights resident and an avid bicyclist.

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29th Annual Roxboro Art Festival is May 21

Diana Johannessen

Cleveland Heights Roxboro Elementary and Middle schools will host the 29th Annual Roxboro Art Festival on Saturday, May 21 from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. The event will feature local handmade arts and crafts, the world-recognized “LEGO” guy Arthur Guglick, the Euclid Beach Rocket Car and the popular steel drum band, 7 Mile Isle.

Mitchell’s Ice Cream, Guys Pizza Co., Hunan Coventry, Whole Foods and other downtown vendors who will be selling their wares at the event. Roxboro schools also will host their annual spring plant sale. Plants can be preordered or purchased the day of the event. The $5 admission fee for children covers all the kid’s crafts, entertainers and games. The event will be held rain or shine. Learn more at the Roxboro PTAs Facebook page (there’s a link at www.chuh.org), e-mail roxartpta@gmail.com or call 216-496-2051.

Diana Johannessen is a cochair for the 29th Annual Roxboro Art Festival.

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Margi Griebeling-Haigh

Soprano Nell Snaidas, a favorite with Cleveland audiences from her many appearances with Apollo’s Fire, will return in June to sing tunes from the British Isles in a program called “Plaine & Saucy.” Sharing the stage with her will be the Apollo’s Fire Countryside Players and Apollo’s Fire artistic director and conductor Jeannette Sorrell, along with guests from the Baltimore Consort. We recently chatted with Snaidas.

**Margi Griebeling-Haigh:** Cleveland audiences have often enjoyed your performances of Spanish and Italian music, but I think this will be your first time making yourself in Spanish folk repertoire? NS: Yes, the famous Baroque Music Barn in Hunting Valley. I’ve heard about it for years, and it sounds charming and perfect for this lighthearted repertoire. I can’t wait to see it.

**Margi Griebeling-Haigh:** How did you come to immerse yourself in Spanish folk repertoire?

NS: I have made a specialty of Mediterranean music and have sung it around the world. My father was from Uruguay and we grew up with a lot of Spanish culture in the home, from films to music, literature, and dance. Although my mother was fluent in Spanish, her entire family is of Irish descent. We also listened to a lot of traditional Irish music in our home.

**Margi Griebeling-Haigh:** I have heard the term “Black Irish” used to refer to an Irish person who has very dark hair and dark or light eyes. Can you provide us with a little lesson in anthropology?

NS: In fact, there is a natural connection between Ireland and the Iberian Peninsula. It is thought that these characteristics result from an Iberian/Irish mixture originating with survivors of the Spanish Armada.

**Margi Griebeling-Haigh:** Perhaps this accounts for your striking complexion, as well, and further explains the ease with which you make the musical hop from the Iberian Peninsula to the British Isles.

NS: I always retained a love for Irish folk music and even sang in Gaelic at my senior recital at conservatory: An element of this folk music remains in the pieces of Purcell and Ravenscroft, which we will sing at the “Plaine & Saucy” concerts.

**Margi Griebeling-Haigh:** What does “Plaine & Saucy” mean?

NS: This folk music from England, Scotland and, of course, Ireland is full of haunting melodies. The same tunes can be heartbreakingly beautiful when sung in a slow and lamenting fashion (“Plaine”) and then when sped up, they can feel like festive party tunes that make you want to dance (“Saucy”).

**Margi Griebeling-Haigh:** Share a bit of your history with Plaine & Saucy collaborators?

NS: I began working with Jeannette in 2005, although I had known about her and Apollo’s Fire for quite some time. It was a dream of mine to work together, and the experience was better than I could have imagined. I immediately felt a deep connection to Jeannette and found that we shared a similar sensibility in our approach to music making.

**Margi Griebeling-Haigh:** Who are some of your other Plaine & Saucy collaborators?

NS: Mark Cudek is the guest director for this program. He is a wonderful and inventive performer and has inspired many of the best young careers in Early Music. We will be joined by Ronn McFarlane, who is known as one of the greatest living lutenists, along with the magical and sparkling flute player Mindy Rosenfeld. They play regularly together in the Baltimore Consort, a group known for its spirited performances of popular renaissance music.

**Margi Griebeling-Haigh:** This sounds like an amazing partnership—Apollo’s Fire is equally known for its passion and pizzazz. It seems that local favorites Tina Bergmann, the alchemist of the hammered dulcimer, and Kathie Stewart, the sweetheart of the wooden flutes, will also be heard. What a treat.

NS: Yes, and I know that every time I come to sing here, whether I am in a solo program or in a larger group, it will be a magical experience.

Ticket to the concerts are $20-$45. To enjoy the Countryside Concerts up close, order in the premium section to ensure seating in the first few rows. Discounted student tickets are available for purchase in select seating sections. Student tickets are free at the Happy Days Lodge and Bath Church locations, made possible by the GAR Foundation. Tickets are available by phone at 800-314-2555, or online. Visit www.apollofire.org for a complete concert schedule.

**Margi Griebeling-Haigh** is the box office and marketing assistant for Apollo’s Fire, an active member of the Cleveland Composers Guild, a freelance oboist, composer and artist living in Cleveland Heights.

**Jazz night at Heights High is May 13**

Greg Donley

Every year, the Heights High Jazz Ensemble puts on a rousing spring concert, featuring about two hours of the music the group has perfected during the year. This year’s show is Friday, May 13, at 7 p.m. in the Cleveland Heights High School auditorium. Tickets are $5.

Grounded by the rhythm section of Bennett Wildey (bass), Arscola Hudson (drums), and Gwen Donley (piano), the group features Mike Anderson, Greg Fort, Eli Wildey, Brad Alcorn and Michael Heard (woodwinds); Jonathan Tarnay, Michael Houdek, Sheri Chambers, and Lillie Hall (trumpets); and Paul Stroud, Brittaney Byers, Aidan Hall, and Collin Bruhaker (trombones). The Jazz Ensemble’s performance will include music by Mingus, George Gershwin, Johnny Richards, Count Basie, Heidt, and contemporary musicians bathed in a swinging beat.

Realms Lodge and Bath Church locations, be a magical experience.

Margi Griebeling-Haigh is a member of FutureHeights.

**Ronn McFarlane** is the alchemist of the hammered dulcimer, and **Kathie Stewart** is the sweetheart of the wooden flutes.

A tradition of Jazz night: goofy costumes for the second half of the show.

**Greg Donley** is a parent of a current Heights High student and a founding member of FutureHeights.

Save up $5 and experience Jazz Night at Heights High.

**Genn Donley** is a parent of a current Heights High student and a founding member of FutureHeights.

Save up $5 and experience Jazz Night at Heights High.

**Greg Donley** is a parent of a current Heights High student and a founding member of FutureHeights.
Motorcars unveiled Straightforward Pricing at the 2011 Autoshow, and to help get the word out, we’re giving away a 2011 Honda or Toyota through an interactive information campaign. For the next 3 months, Motorcars will be posting informational videos online at StraightforwardPrice.com. Each video will contain a link to register another ticket for the drawing. Enter every week for the best chance to win. On July 14th, come to the Motorcars Toyota showroom and claim your tickets for the drawing.

More details online: StraightforwardPrice.com

Important Dates
Every Tuesday
A new video is posted to StraightforwardPrice.com. Watch the video for the codeword you can use to register another ticket in the car drawing.

July 14th - 6:30 p.m.
Live drawing in the Motorcars Toyota Showroom. Come into the dealership to collect the tickets you’ve registered by watching videos. Must be present to win.

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Please Note!
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One ballot per person.
In order for your ballot to be counted, you need to vote for at least half (11) of the ballot categories, and include your name and contact information. Ballots not meeting these requirements will be considered invalid.

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