CH declares four properties nuisances, prepares for demolition

Dana Finley

Council Member Kenneth Montlack introduced three resolutions at the May 16 city council meeting that declared properties on Coventry Road to be public nuisances. A fourth resolution declared a Northcliffe Road property to be a nuisance. All four resolutions, which passed unanimously, authorized abatement of the nuisance—likely to lead to demolition of the houses.

Photos of each property were displayed at the meeting to illustrate the severe structural issues. While three of the properties are located in close proximity on the same street, Rick Wagner, manager of housing programs for Cleveland Heights, declined to frame it as a neighborhood issue.

“It’s not so much a north Coventry issue as it is a local and even national issue,” he said, noting that the foreclosure crisis has played an integral role in the demise of these properties.

Montlack agreed, saying that the issue isn’t specific to the north Coventry neighborhood but rather to any neighborhood with a lot of two-family and rental properties.

"Most of the problem properties are on submarket streets or neighborhoods,” Montlack said in a later interview. “North Coventry has had up-and-down two-family houses. In general, streets and parts of streets with up- and-down two-family houses have weaker housing markets and are less desirable for people with choices.”

All four of the “nuisance” homes are unoccupied. While Cleveland Heights has rehabilitated some such homes for resale, both Wagner and Montlack believe these four are past the point of no return.

The two-family home at 1631 Coventry Road, owned by Caden Development LLC of South Bend, Indiana, has numerous broken windows and the plumbing has been removed. A memorandum from Wagner to Robert Downey, city manager, regarding the property stated: “The exterior is rapidly deteriorating due to needed roof repair/replacement. The property has been broken into and suffers from serious neglect. The cost of rehabilitation would far exceed the property value.” Foreclosure for the residence was filed in March 2009.

The three-family dwelling at 1657 Coventry Road is owned by Yolanda Callies, of Shaker Heights, but is currently unoccupied. The property has been previously posted by Cuyahoga County. It needs lead abatement, major foundation work and a new roof.

City of Cleveland Heights receives a high volume of applications for vacant council seat

Dana Finley

The City of Cleveland Heights has received applications from 18 people seeking appointment to fill the seat vacated by former Council Member Mark Tumero.

Tumero’s last council meeting was May 16. He left the area to serve as dean of engineering at the University of North Florida.

Cleveland Heights Mayor Ed Kelley said that he and the council are narrowing down the list of applicants to interview based on their written applications. He explained that because of the large number of applicants, it would be impossible to interview each one.

The application asks potential council members to discuss special skills they have that would be valuable in serving on city council, along with their educational and employment backgrounds, recent community professional, and charitable involvements; and their goals for the community.

The applicants are: Robert L. Brooks, Jr., Jill R. Cohn, Jeff Coyle, Christopher Cummings, Shalawnda...
One reason FutureHeights began publishing the Heights Observer was to provide an easy and affordable way for local businesses to reach potential customers.

Why? Local merchants are a big part of what gives the Heights its unique atmosphere. By helping those businesses to thrive, the thinking goes, FutureHeights serves the community.

Also, according to a series of well-known studies (www.civicconomics.com), money spent with independent local businesses does more good for the economy than money spent with national chains.

Their overhead expenses are located here, and earnings are more likely to be reinvested here, too, instead of, say, in a new opening of a out-of-town 1,500 miles away. Local merchants also tend to contribute a larger percentage of their revenue to local causes.

That’s why it’s so hard when a store like Seitz-Agin Hardware closes. Yes, the store stocked products that 100-year-old homes need and that Home Depot can’t be bothered to stock. But just as important, I’m not sure Seitz-Agin’s owner, Joel Borwick, ever said no to anyone who asked for financial support for some local cause.

When you spend money with a local merchant, it’s like having a rebate direct-deposited into your neighborhood’s checking account.

FutureHeights believes so strongly in this simple dynamic that we put the message on the front page of every edition—right below the name of the paper’s local charity. “We never fail. This is a long introduction to this year’s Best of the Heights awards, a program that recognizes our local merchants for the way they serve us.

This year, based on suggestions from residents and previousnominees, the business categories have been revised and the nomination form streamlined to make the process easier and more interesting.

Please take time to fill out the form on page 28. If you prefer, you can find it online at www.futureheights.org.

By participating in this celebration of local business, you help to honor the merchants who serve you best, and remind them why they chose the Heights as the place to do business.

To express your opinion privately, e-mail Bob Rosenbaum at bob@chesuenews.com. To express your opinion as a letter to the editor, register at the Observer Member Center (https://observerheights.org/member-center) and click on “Submit New Story” to contribute your letter.

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

Best of the Heights: Nominate your favorite businesses

Have you read our blog?

Excerpts from recent posts at blogs.heightsobserver.org

The Real Meaning of the Closing of Seitz-Agin Hardware

The last time I talked to Joel about the store’s health was shortly after I learned that the weekly deliveries had been curtailed. He told me that he felt he had survived the impact of Home Depot. But what he wasn’t sure he could survive is a change he observed in his customers: “They just weren’t making repairs anymore...”

Maybe Joel has misread it. Perhaps people are finding their experts through Angie’s List on the internet. Or using Home Depot’s growing installation and repair business. Maybe the big box really has done in Seitz-Agin.

Or maybe people really have changed... —Bob Rosenbaum

Books: An Excerpt from Les Roberts’ The Cleveland Club

“It’s kind of you to see me on such short notice, Mr. Jacovich,” she said. She’d phoned the Cleveland Club to see if I could get her in. I was working an extra shift that night, but I hadn’t made any reservations. I said, “Give me what you’ve got.”

We did a half-course dinner and a glass of wine, and then she called me. She was twenty-eight years old. Earl Dacey, was missing. He had left the house six days earlier and hadn’t been heard from since. Now his mother wanted to know what had become of him. “He never stayed all night in his life,” she moaned. “If he’s ever half an hour late getting home, he always calls. He’s a good boy.”

—Frank Lewis

Random Access Oakwood Questions

There is a weird, awkward-radar fact that the tax revenue going to the schools from this project goes not to the South Euclid-Lyndhurst School District, as many South Euclid High School basketball fans might believe, but to the Cleveland Heights-University Heights School District, even though two-thirds of the development’s footprints are in South Euclid. The developer’s own marketing materials, a brochure sent to South Euclid residents, says “$1.1 million to the local schools,” but they don’t say whose local schools. Are South Euclid residents aware of this?

—Sarah Wein

FirstEnergy: Not as Smart as They Want You to Think

So it seems that FirstEnergy’s business philosophy (in my neighborhood anyway) can be summarized like this: Change people as much as possible to consume as much electricity as they possibly can while providing the most insufficient and unsatisfactory service imaginable.

Clowns? Or an example of brilliant management? Let’s just agree that they have some really big shoes to fill... —Bob Rosenbaum

School Days

The boy who showed her was still giggling and headed back for a second go-round. The young lady didn’t look so happy. I pulled my vehicle to the far side of the street and headed over to the group. They were just playing around but I would’ve hated to see someone hurt as a result of silly kid stuff. So I asked the group to control their behavior and tone down the play. Several of the young men apologized and said they understood. They returned to their walk but not before someone in the crowd yelled, “Get your fat behind in your truck and go home.”

—Andrea Davis
Thank you for your gift! FutureHeights is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Visit us at www.futureheights.org. For financial information visit www guidestar.org.

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Two thousand and eleven years? What do the residents affected by the project think? The answer to the second question is all too apparent.

I wonder how allowing a McDonald’s on Warrenville will improve University Heights property values. Other than a shallow gain to our tax base, I can’t really see this as a good decision. Apparently neither does city council. And yet they approved the project anyway given the “narrowness” of the action they were requested to take. The explanations of city council are neither satisfying nor defensible. If the vice mayor thinks it is a poor use of the property, then so do I. The justification need go no further than the 10 neighbors who object to the project. What is their remediation? What is their recourse? Changing the traffic patterns does not address the smell, noise and commotion of a restaurant open 18 hours a day. If University Heights council thinks it needs a McDonald’s, put it somewhere in the University Square Complex. If they are restricted by the actions of the owner of the property, buy it from him and land bank it. It would be worth the debt incurred. Then build an office building or something else.

I had the chance to address a group of University Heights seniors a week or two ago about regional sustainability and collaboration. One of the participants mentioned that University Heights is too small to have a economic development staff person and had to take the opportunities with which it is presented. If this is the dynamic driving any decisions, then just what is University Heights going to look like in 50 years? I will tell you this: My house will be 125 years old, and I won’t be upgrading it, because I won’t be able to get my money back out of it. Thank you very much city council and Temple B’nai Torah.

There has to be a formal plan for the city. There is nowhere else to get it for us, tell us alternatives, or tell us not have what we needed, you could get it for us, tell us alternatives, or tell us where we could get what we needed.

We just wanted you to know—and we wish we were speaking for many—that your operation of Seitz-Agin Hardware was a true blessing. We wish that your operation of Seitz-Agin Hardware was also provided for us who have used your services these many years. If you did not have what we needed, you could get it for us, tell us alternatives, or tell us where we could get what we needed.

Dear Joel:

For me the issues of McDonalds on Warrenville and Cleveland Heights look like in 50 years? I will tell you this: the dynamic driving our decisions, then just what is University Heights going to look like in 50 years? What do the residents affected by these projects think, and why can’t the city make developer address their concerns as individuals?

No one can answer the first question because no one has thought about it in any meaningful way. The answer to the second question is all too apparent.

When University Heights looks like in 50 years? It can be as simple as turning off the TV, leaving the house and getting to know your neighbors. It can also mean volunteering at your local neighborhood school or library, attending a community forum or writing a letter to the editor of the local newspaper.

Help us Build the Future of the Heights. FutureHeights is an organization made up of people like you, Heights residents, who want to promote civic engagement through education, advocacy and information on issues that concern them.

Now is the best time to become a member of FutureHeights. Won’t you join us?

FutureHeights is committed to engaging citizens to build a healthy and sustainable future for Cleveland Heights and University Heights neighborhoods.

How do we do this?

• Promoting Civic Engagement

We hold public forums and host speakers.

• Publishing the Heights Observer

The Heights Observer enables the community to tell its own story. Each month, volunteers help write and edit stories, and anyone can participate.

• Supporting our Local Economy

FutureHeights brought American Independent Business Alliance co-founder, Jeff Milchen, to the Heights in 2010 to discuss the importance of independent businesses to the local economy, and we have helped form a Heights Independent Business Alliance.

• Creating a Vibrant and Sustainable Future for the Heights

FutureHeights is leading the Sustainable Heights Network initiative, which will catapult the Heights to become a local leader in sustainability.

• Building Community Partnerships

FutureHeights partners with many community organizations on projects that build upon the assets of our community. Learn more about how FutureHeights builds the Future of the Heights at our annual meeting, Tuesday, June 21 at 7 p.m., at the Cedar Lee Theatre. We will host a screening of “The New Metropolis,” by Andrea Torrice, a two-part documentary about the challenges facing America’s First Suburb, and a community discussion. RSVP at http://futureheightsannualmeeting.eventbrite.com. Learn more at www.futureheights.org or by calling 216-320-1423.

Your financial contribution will make a difference in your community.

FutureHeights engages citizens. Engaged citizens build strong communities. Help us build the future of the Heights! Please take a minute to fill out this form and mail it with your membership check to FutureHeights today.

You can also donate online at www.futureheights.org or www.heightsobserver.org. Or call 216 320-1423.

Thank you for your support!

Deanna Bremer Fisher
Executive Director

Lloyd Bell
President, Board of Directors
University Heights
City Council
Meeting highlights

APRIL 18, 2011

Councilman Phillip Ertel was excused.

Piggyback tax

The Regional Income Tax Agency (RITE) reformed the city to a suggestion was made during discussion of the state boroughal budget that the city should collect municipal income tax through a piggyback tax on the state’s income tax.

McDonald’s traffic study

URS engineers have completed the McDonald’s traffic study for the City of Cleveland Heights. Copies will be delivered to council members.

Vital statistics for the city

Previously, all the vital statistics provided the vital statistics function for the city. In the interest of regionalism, this function has been transferred to the City of Cleveland Heights, which will release the burden on the finance department. Councilman Bob Dickerson stated that there were none. Funeral directors need to be notified of this change since they often provide this service for the deceased for verification on their way to a funeral.

Business revolving loan program

Joep Jenkins of State Treasurer Mandell’s office indicated that the state is offering a revolving loan program for businesses called Grow Ohio that is similar to the home repair loan program. It can be found on the treasurer’s website.

Rain garden

The rain garden at 2603 Ashurst Road is functioning. Plants sowed last fall have survived and will bloom in the spring.

Resurfacing program

The first reading of an ordinance to award the 2011 street resurfacing program to Karvo Paving Company jointly with Shaker Heights and Cleveland Heights was presented. City Engineer Joseph Cuseo said that $420,000 in埴ment came in under budget at $75,600. The job was the lowest and best bid, and Karvo had previously successfully completed projects for the city.

Emergency operations plan

The first reading of the Cuyahoga County Emergency Operations Plan was presented.

Yard waste

Rob Jamieson, public service director, informed council members that yard waste must now be bagged or tied into manageable bundles for pickup.

Pool and slide

Mayor Infeld stated that due to the weather, the pool would not be painted until fall, but she hopes to have the water slide painted by the time school starts. This would be a capital improvement project.

Intersections narrowed

Councilman Steven Bullock reported that four bids were received and four were made for the intersection at Washington Street and Washington Avenue.

Traffic study

Several ordinances were either tabled or switched from "emergency" to "first reading" status due to the studies and presentations.

Financially

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Cleveland Heights homeowners receive historic preservation award

Deanna Bremer Fisher

The Cleveland Restoration Society (CRS) and the American Institute of Architects-Cleveland honored Salim and Addie Hayek, the owners of 2900 Fairmount Boulevard, for the restoration of their Tudor Revival home at the annual Celebration of Preservation awards ceremony on May 10. The Hayeks were recognized for their attention to detail and renovations that reflect the home’s history and architecture. They are the third owners of the house. The mansion, designed by Phillip Lindsay Small and built in 1935 for William Stoudt Thompson, was owned by the John Kennedy Lynch family from 1965 until 2009. Addie Hayek owns Creative Innovations, a design firm, and managed the entire renovation, which included the remodeling of eight bathrooms and a large kitchen. CRS staff provided technical assistance. Energy-efficient improvements include a geothermal heating and cooling system, new plumbing and electrical systems, and interior storm windows that preserve the architectural integrity of the facade. The Hayeks renovated the home’s massive slate roof, replacing missing tiles and copper flashing and repairing copper downspouts, and restored the stucco exterior walls. The couple also restored the landscaping to the original 1935 plan, which was designed by landscape architect A. D. Taylor.

The home was featured in last year’s Heritage Home Tour and will be the site of a CRS benefit this summer. For more information, visit www.clevelandrestora-

Deanna Bremer Fisher is executive director of FutureHeights and publisher of the Heights Observer.
CureSearch for Children’s Cancer Walk is June 4

Stephen Crowley

My wife, Cynthia Van Lenten, and I are walking in memory of our daughter, Olivia, who lost her struggle with cancer when she was ten years old. Krissy and Mark Gallagher are walking with their four-year-old son, Austin, who is a cancer survivor. Stacey Brown-Walker and Chris Walker are walking with Caleb, age six, who is also a survivor.

These and other Cleveland Heights residents will be walking on June 4 because they have learned that, while cancer is a horrible disease at any age, childhood cancer is particularly underfunded. Consider the following:

• Besides accidents, cancer is the leading cause of death in children, more than all other childhood diseases combined. Yet drug companies invest next to nothing on research into children’s cancer; they simply see no profit in it. As an article in The Plain Dealer recently reported, certain drugs needed to treat childhood leukemia are in short supply because drug companies don’t find them profitable.

• The National Cancer Institute (NCI) spends less than four percent of its budget on children’s cancer, and its budget is being cut by ten percent.

• Half of all chemotherapies for children are more than 25 years old.

• The incidence of pediatric cancer has increased by about 30 percent over the last several years, and no one knows why.

• The good news is that cure rates have increased dramatically, rising from 30 percent to 78 percent in the last three decades. Yet 74 percent of childhood cancer survivors suffer from chronic illnesses, and 40 percent from life-threatening illnesses.

The CureSearch Walk funds the research of the Children’s Oncology Group (COG), which is the world’s largest childhood cancer research collaborative, treating more than 90 percent of children with cancer at over 200 hospitals in the United States, including Rainbow Babies, the Cleveland Clinic, and Akron Children’s Hospital. Instead of focusing on one hospital, COG sets up the clinical trials and the standards of care used throughout the country. This collaborative work is the main reason that cure rates have increased so significantly. Yet, COG continues to struggle for funding.

The CureSearch Walk will take place on Saturday, June 4, from 9-11 a.m., at Wade Oval in University Circle. To register or contribute, go to www.curesearchwalk.org/neohio. Contributions are welcome even after June 4.

Stephen Crowley is a long-time Heights resident. He and his wife, are the co-chairs of Cleveland’s CureSearch for Children’s Cancer Walk.

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Sendin9 my daughter to study abroad

Carla Bailey

While most Heights High Students are anxiously awaiting the last day of school, my daughter Janine Walker will be packing her bags to begin 11th grade in Thailand. Three years ago, her older brother went to Japan for a summer exchange. She remembers how much he enjoyed it and how it broadened his view of the world.

Since then, she has had a goal of going abroad—and not just for a summer, but for the school year. As I contemplated the duration and cost of the program, I spoke with other Heights parents who had sent their kids abroad in high school. They all said it was a wonderful experience for their kids.

As we filled out forms and discussed the details, I was even more convinced that this wasn’t just a vacation to a foreign country, but a life-enriching experience that will help Janine get a better understanding of the world. This isn’t just a wonderful experience for their kids, it will also help Janine in her goal of exploring the wonders of the world through intercultural exchange. It will be the greatest gift that I can give her.

Carla Bailey is a parent volunteer at Heights High and with AFS, and Janine’s mom.

The cost of an AFS one-year study abroad program is about $12,000. Janine has raised nearly $8,000 and is working to raise the remaining $4,000. A Family & Friends Benefit Fundraiser for Janine’s Thailand Education will be held Saturday, June 18, 4:30-8:30 p.m., at the home of Vanessa Whiting, 2489 Coventry Road. For information, call 331-211-8774. Donations can also be made directly to Janine’s AFS account through her blog at Janine-in-Thailand.blogspot.com.

AFS is currently in its 2011-12 hosting season. For families interested in hosting a student, or sending a child abroad for a summer, semester, or year, contact Krista Hawthorne at 216-554-0520.
Volunteer opportunities at the Heights Libraries

Sheryl Banks

Summer is a great time to get involved in your community, and Heights Libraries offer a variety of fun volunteer opportunities all summer long. "Volunteering is an invaluable rewarding experience," said Heather Howiler, Heights Libraries volunteer coordinator. "It’s also a good way to build your resume if you are unemployed, or to fulfill high school volunteer work hours."

Noble’s early literacy playroom

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

Cleveland Heights resident attempts to shatter Guinness world record™ on June 17

Dana Finley

Cleveland Heights resident Keith Curry is attempting to set a Guinness World Record™ for the most people dressed up like video game characters in one place. "I found this one and I filled out the file, find an easy record to beat," Curry said. "I went to Guinness World Records™ website and tried to find an easy record to beat," Curry said. "I found this one and I filled out the required form. After about six weeks, I had completely forgotten that I had even done it when I got an e-mail from Guinness with a record breakers pack." The previous Guinness World Record™ for the most people dressed up like video game characters in one place is 177 people. Curry quickly enlisted local businesses to help him in his quest to break the record. "The first thing I did was contact Steve Presser from Big Fun to help us out of 612 districts on the priority list to receive funding from the program. The school facilities committee reported that little risk was found in the sample population of the cities of Cleveland Heights and an active member of UH’s school buildings have, and said that they have also explored the possibility of repurposing sites for future use.

Mac’s Marathon

Scott Berman

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Fun times at Noble Road Presbyterian Church

Marcelo Atanias

Noble Road Presbyterian Church continues its annual Strawberry Festival tradition on June 10, from 6-8 p.m. The Rummage Extravaganza will be back July 9. The church is seeking craft vendors to enhance the event. A $20 fee is requested. After Labor Day, the church will restart its pancake breakfasts and Saturday night dances. In addition, there is a monthly community meal every fourth Sunday.

Mi casa es su casa! Come on down to NRPC, 2780 Noble Road, for fun times. Call 216-932-6667 or e-mail nrpc@sbcglobal.net for more information.

Marcelo Atanias is a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights and an active member of Noble Road Presbyterian Church.
The Heights Observer June 1, 2011

Bicycle parking in Cleveland Heights

Nick Matthew
Take out that bicycle, fill up the tires, and save money this summer by using one of Cleveland Heights’s many bicycle parking racks. Bicycle parking is free, easy to use and located throughout Cleveland Heights. With the average American spending more than $8,000 a year on gasoline, insurance, and other costs related to automobile use, bicycle parking is a great way to save money and improve your fitness at the same time.

The Cleveland Heights Bicycle Coalition (CHBC) surveyed the community’s bicycle parking racks, and here’s what it found:

• Cleveland Heights has more than 50 bicycle parking racks.
• Lee Road was the most bicycle-friendly road, with 25 parking racks in just 1.4 miles of roadway. That’s an average of a parking rack every 500 feet.
• Severance Shopping Center has a total of eight bike racks.
• Coventry Village has three bike racks: outside Coventry Village Library, outside Chipotle Mexican Grill, and between the parking garage and Panini’s Bar and Grill.

CHBC has volunteers working to improve Cleveland Heights’s bicycle parking. Laura Marks, an advocate who successfully encouraged Cleveland State University to install the yellow racks on Euclid Avenue, is now collaborating with John Foreman, building manager for the CH-UH elementary schools. Ian Hoffmann, CHBC treasurer, is working with Coventry Village to find ways to improve the shopping area’s bicycle parking.

To see maps of available bicycle parking in Cleveland Heights, or to volunteer to make the city more bicycle friendly, visit www.bikesintheheights.org.

Nicholas Mattavetz is an officer and co-founder of the Cleveland Heights Bicycle Coalition.

Cleveland Heights City Council Meeting highlights

APRIL 20, 2011

Vice Mayor Phyllis L. Evans was excused.

Bluestone Mayfield development changes

Cleveland Heights City Council approved a new site plan for the Bluestone Mayfield development on the west side of Mayfield Road (site of the former Mayfield High School) with changes that include a new site plan for the school property. The City Council also authorized a loan agreement for the development.

Potential purchasers of these properties have the option to purchase the properties at a price that is higher than the amount paid to the City. The City has agreed to provide a down-payment assistance funding for the purchase of the properties.

Cleveland Heights City Council approved the sale of three rehabbed properties owned by the City. The money received goes back into the NSP to address other property issues in the community.

Cleveland Heights is still the only city in Cuyahoga County that has such restrictions.

Cuyahoga County Emergency Operations Plan

Cuyahoga County has implemented a new Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), which establishes official policies, strategies, and planning assumptions for disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. This plan replaces the Cuyahoga Emergency Incident Management System that was adopted by Cleveland Heights in 1988. The new plan is countywide in scope and includes coordination with all 59 municipalities. Highlights of the plan will be published in the June issue of Focus.

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Family Connections announces the 2011 Carolyn Grossman Award winner

Ellen Barrett

Annie Lopez, executive director of the Redstone Schoolhouse, was presented with the 2011 Carolyn Grossman Award by Family Connections of Northeast Ohio (formerly Heights Parent Center) at the organization’s Fiesta benefit on May 7 at Hiram House Camp.

Lopez holds a doctorate in developmental and educational psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University. Lopez has been actively involved in both research and applied settings, and her work has focused on breaking the cycle of poverty through education. She ties this focus in part to her personal experiences growing up in the South Bronx neighborhood of New York City, after emigrating from Cuba as a child. When she received the Carolyn Grossman Award, Lopez acknowledged that her strong family and their focus on education were the foundations on which she has built her career and life’s work.

“My family spoke only Spanish when we arrived from Cuba,” she said. “Isolated and alone, my parents relied on the resources around them to make sure we were able to access a good education. All families deserve this access.”

She delivers parenting and teacher training sessions, and has provided training to more than 300 early childhood teachers through the Greater Cleveland Literacy Cooperative. She also provides program development consultation to early childhood and family literacy providers throughout Northeast Ohio.

Lopez founded, and continues to supervise, the Redstone Schoolhouse in Ashatabula County. This child development center provides needed services in a low-income rural area, including specialized autism services. In addition to offering high-quality educational services to children up to 12 years of age, Lopez provides a parenting lending library and monthly family literacy events.

The Carolyn Grossman Award honors individuals who demonstrate an extraordinary commitment to strengthening families and preparing young children for success in school and in life. Recognizing that parents often need support in making the most of their children’s critical early years, Carolyn Grossman endowed the Heights Parent Center in 1982. Now known as Family Connections, the organization provides education, resources and support for families with children, from birth through elementary school. Grossman’s children established this award in her honor in April 2003.

Ellen Barrett is a family support specialist and parent educator at Family Connections and a lifelong resident of Cleveland Heights.

Fieldman leads MedWish International’s fundraising efforts, Band-Aid Bash

Mary Patton

Orlando native Matthew Fieldman is planting roots in Northeast Ohio—specifically in University Heights. With an undergraduate degree from University of Florida and an MBA from George Washington University, Fieldman began his fundraising career with the Jewish Federation of Cleveland. While looking to expand his work, a mentor suggested that he pursue an opportunity with the Jewish Federation of Cleveland.

He fell in love with the city.

Following several years at the Federation and various consulting projects, Fieldman discovered MedWish International and landed a position as director of development for the Cleveland-based nonprofit organization.

MedWish recovers surplus medical supplies designated for disposal by 78 hospitals throughout Northeast Ohio and redistributes them to developing nations where they can save lives and promote better health.

“In 2010, MedWish grew 47 percent and served 54 countries around the world,” Fieldman said. “With ten years experience in fundraising, I’ve been lucky to find a growing organization that offers an international flavor and has so much potential. With a sustainability-focused mission, we’re ready to take MedWish to the next level.”

One of Fieldman’s main responsibilities is to oversee Band-Aid Bash, the organization’s annual fundraising event, which was held on Saturday, May 21. MedWish transformed its industrial warehouse at 17252 Euclid Ave. in Cleveland into a trendy, New York City-style nightclub. Guests were surrounded by 40,000 square feet of medical surplus waiting to be shipped overseas. Expected to raise more than $200,000, to support its mission of “saving lives and saving the environment,” the event featured a live video conference with an international hospital. Space of Life, a catering company dedicated to using only local, sustainable foods, provided international foods. WKYC’s Mark Nolan served as the event emcee.

Fieldman and his wife Alyson, have settled in University Heights. They have two daughters—Eliana, a toddler, and Lia, an infant. “When we were looking to buy a home, we wanted a place where we could walk to restaurants and coffee shops, and we ended up at Fairmount Circle,” said Fieldman. “We enjoy taking our four daughters for walks around the neighborhood, eating dinner at Pizzazz, and playing at the local parks. University Heights offers a great quality of life.”

Fieldman welcomes financial support for MedWish, and also seeks individuals and groups to help sort medical supplies at the MedWish warehouse during the week and on most Saturdays. For more information on MedWish, visit www.medwish.org.

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

After 40 years, HRRC planning for sustainability

Kathryn Lad

This year marks the 40th anniversary of Home Repair Resource Center. From its inception, its mission has been to maintain and strengthen the houses of Cleveland Heights, to support the community’s rich diversity.

HRRC began when concerned members of Forest Hill Church gathered to assess the fair housing needs of Cleveland Heights, and discuss whether a church committed to opening homes and racial harmony could do anything to meet those needs. In a time of anger and fright—especially fear of deteriorating neighborhoods and declining housing values—the group wondered, whether, if the issue were defined as maintaining quality housing, and not racial integration, people of all persuasions and attitudes might become involved. These efforts led to the birth of HRRC (originally FHC Housing Corporation) in September 1971.

Over the years, HRRC expanded its programs, moved several times and changed its name to more accurately reflect its mission. The organization built a broad base of support and became the primary advocate for housing in Cleveland Heights. Many financial institutions, businesses and organizations, as well as hundreds of individuals partnered with HRRC to meet shared goals.

Grants from the Cleveland Foundation helped establish the Challenge Fund, and the George Gund Foundation provided funding for the Project Repair program and its tool loan. Community Development Block Grant funding through the City of Cleveland Heights enabled HRRC to offer financial assistance to help homeowners repair their homes.

Through these programs, more than $1.4 million has been invested in Cleveland Heights houses.

HRRC has seen the difference its assistance has made. Its financial programs, counseling, and educational opportunities emphasize self-help and enable families to maintain not only the physical structure of their homes, but also a positive living environment. Clients grow in self-esteem as they learn to manage the process of contracting for home repairs, as they pay back their loans, and as they gain experience working with tools and repair techniques.

In the larger community, HRRC’s efforts have instilled pride in neighborhoods and afforded volunteers and donors an opportunity to make a difference at the local level.

In recent months, HRRC’s board and staff have been planning the organization’s course for the future. With a strategic planning grant from the Cleveland Foundation, HRRC analyzed its services and the resources it takes to provide them. With fewer public funds available to support programs in the future, HRRC has developed a comprehensive fund development strategy to ensure the future of the organization.

The organization has also begun to envision new ways of carrying out its mission, and is exploring partnerships with other local organizations to expand its impact.

Everyone at HRRC is excited about these possibilities. HRRC invites community residents to mark its 40th anniversary at the annual meeting on Wednesday, June 8, at 7 p.m. at the Cleveland Heights Community Center.

The keynote speaker will be Chuck Miller of Doyt & Miller Architects, who will address “Housing Issues for the 21st Century: Looking Forward.” Celebrate HRRC’s role in “keeping Cleveland Heights in good repair.”

Kathryn Lad is the executive director of Home Repair Resource Center.

COMMUNITY NEWS

HRRC’s role in “keeping Cleveland Heights in good repair.”

Kathryn Lad is the executive director of Home Repair Resource Center.

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www.heightsobserver.org

Height Observer June 1, 2011

Local autism agency plans joint conference with OAR

Deena Nyer Mendlowitz

The Organization for Autism Research (OAR), a highly respected national agency focused on applied research, will hold its annual conference on June 21 in partnership with Cleveland’s Milestones Annual Autism/Asperger’s Conference: “Life: Long Strategies for Success.”

Through this new partnership, OAR will provide a special conference track to focus on cutting-edge research and to implement these research findings into practice. The track will feature speakers from OAR’s Scientific Council and its growing list of funded researchers. The conference will offer 30 workshops and 13 different tailored sessions, such as HRRC and Cleveland Restoration Society, to help make the repair more affordable.

Stop by HRRC to help take some of the stress off of your “honey-do” list. Then get ready to put your rose-colored glasses back on, grab a glass of lemonade and enjoy the summer.

Allison Urbanek is the communications associate at Milestones Autism Organization. Deena Nyer Mendlowitz is the communications assistant at Milestones Autism Organization.

This story was excerpted from its online version because of space constraint. To view the full story, visit www.theheightsobserver.org.

For more information about OAR, visit www.researchautism.org. For more information on Milestones and its annual conference, visit www.milestones.org.
SUSTAINABILITY

Grants boost small businesses

Kellie Fontenet

Small business owners who are interested in saving money, improving conditions about the environment, and understanding environmental impact can apply to receive one of 85 grants for energy assessments as part of the Ohio Small Business Energy Efficiency Green program from the Ohio Department of Development Enterprises (COSE). The deadline for applications is June 15.

According to Tim Kovach, COSE's energy coordinator, the grants will be given to 85 businesses in Ohio, primarily in Cuyahoga and Lake counties; the Cincinnati, Columbus, Dayton, and Toledo metro areas; and counties in Southeast Ohio.

The program, which was funded by a $100,000 grant from the Ohio Department of Development, aims to educate businesses with fewer than 100 employees about energy efficiency, Kovach said.

Through the program, business owners complete assessments that reveal how energy costs add up, what upgrades are possible, how much they cost, and what the long-term benefits are. Thirty-five businesses that qualify for the first grant can get an additional $350 each due to a private donation. Through the program, the Small Business Administration.

“Investing in energy efficiency is a great way to reduce costs, as well as to free up dollars to spend on other areas that will help businesses grow and increase the bottom line,” Kovach said, adding that $5,000 will go to 25 companies to help them carry out recommendations from the initial assessment, he said.

Presser qualify for the $5,000 grant through the Department of Development and said he plans to use it to pay for a more efficient air conditioning system, replacing the current unit at the Coventry Road location.

“It’s such a great opportunity,” he said. “You could be losing $100 a month in energy costs, and for a small business owner, those dollars add up.” Presser will use the grant to create a better environment for his customers, Kovach said.

As president of Coventry Village Merchants, Presser said his goal is to bring in his own store’s utilities up to date. Businesses in the area are working together to turn Coventry Village into a green neighborhood, he said.

Through a partnership with the Sustainability Plan Clinic at Baldwin-Wallace College, the Coventry Special Improvement District is promoting a neighborhood approach to sustainability, considering adding recycling in the restaurants and other initiatives to help Coventry become one of the leading districts in the city.

The City of Cleveland Heights offers corrugated cardboard and paper product recycling bins. In addition, Presser’s business uses spring water and recycles regularly. In fact, his wife, Debbie Apple Presser, is an artist who creates sculptures using recycled materials. Some of these are displayed in the store’s front window.

At another Coventry fixture, Tommy’s restaurant, cars can pull up behind the restaurant to fill their tanks with biodiesel, demonstrating one of the many steps the city has taken to become greener.

“We want to create a model that can be used in other neighborhoods—an example of several businesses implementing green practices in a way that’s economic and favorable,” Presser said, adding that this makes the area attractive both to shoppers and to potential residents, increasing the neighborhood’s value.

Kovach agrees that Cleveland Heights is already a leader in this area. By mid-May, four businesses had signed up to receive a grant, and several more expressed interest. As part of the effort to concentrate on specific neighborhoods and encourage businesses to

Dana Finley

At the May to networking forum held by Sustainable Heights Network at Rockefeller’s restaurant on Mayfield Road, the focus was on government. A group of public officials indicated that sustainability practices exist where you may not expect them.

“We believe that the greenest buildings are existing buildings,” said Nancy Levine, director of the CU-UH Public Library. By “recycling” the former YMCA building into a library branch, the library has provided space for additional activities and outside organizations—including Playworks and the Doraama Theater.

Levin pointed out that the concept of a public library is itself an example of environmentally-friendly sustainability. Through the sharing of media items and continuous recycling, it reduces the discarding of books, magazines and DVDs.

Levin said administrators are exploring alternative energy sources to power the library, including solar, wind, and geothermal power, but emphasized that the CU-UH library needs continued citizen support to make these changes.

Cleveland Heights Mayor Edward Keilty highlighted the city’s continued recycling efforts to reduce use of landfills. “Over 50 percent of the trash that would be headed to a landfill otherwise is recycled,” Kelley said. He also mentioned planned construction of a pair of solar-powered bus stations to be built on Mayfield and Coventry roads. According to Susan Niermann O’Neil, CH’s director of community services, projects like these are vital to the future of city neighborhoods. “We’re very progressive,” she explained. “Sustainability projects are absolutely what we’re about.”

For example, the city has proactively sought grants to undertake sustainability projects. These include $200,000 from the Department of Energy to retrofit lighting at the Cleveland Heights Community Center, and $18,000 from the Ohio EPA to improve the quality of rainwater runoff at the newly redesigned Cumberland Pool parking lot.

O’Neil said the city is reexamining zoning codes to allow eco-friendly elements, such as allowing for solar panels, rain barrels and rain gardens.

University Heights Mayor Susan Infeld also spoke at the forum. She said that University Heights has once again been awarded the Tree City USA award for the 33rd straight year. The award recognizes the comprehensive tree program that the city has.

Even the CH-UH school district is getting in on the movement. Douglas Hauser, district superintendent, told the forum that all buildings in the district recycle, though environmental regulations prohibit onsite composting.

As middle and high school students cleaned out their lockers at the end of the school year, sustainability practices reached them, too, with a specific program to encourage recycling of otherwise discarded items. Other notable practices include the use of local and organic foods in school lunches and the introduction of clean-burning low-sulfur buses, which Hauser acknowledged are 50 percent more expensive to operate.

Robert Brown, from the City of Cleveland Planning Commission, also provided insights at the forum. One of Cleveland’s biggest problems, he said, is the vast amount of land that has been abandoned by residents in recent years.

Cleveland is putting some of this land to use by encouraging urban agriculture in the city. The commission has revised zoning codes to permit urban agriculture, particularly chicken farming and beekeeping.

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Families return to Coventry School

Krissy Dietrich Gallagher

After quietly sitting empty since 2007, the Coventry School building will once again be filled with children's voices. On June 21, Family Connections, the family support organization formed from the merger of Heights Parent Center and Shaker Family Center, will move its Cleveland Heights office and core programming from Taylor School to Coventry. The move has been greeted with enthusiasm by staff, participants and area residents alike.

According to Ellen Barrett, long-time playground coordinator and family support specialist at Family Connections, "We've been fortunate over the past 15 years to be housed by the CH-UH City School District in both Millikin and Taylor schools, but we've never had the chance to be part of a wider community. Being at Coventry will give us an opportunity to work side by side with the P.E.A.C.E. Park and playground groups, Coventry merchants and Coventry Village Library, as well as the great group of folks moving into the building with us."

"We were thrilled to learn that Coventry School is going to be used in ways that enhance our neighborhood," said Mark Chupp, a 17-year resident of the Coventry area. "The two organizations [Family Connections and the Cleveland Sight Center] bring programs that can serve young families that have recently moved to this area. We commend the school board and the city for working together to make this possible."

Barrett believes that Family Connections will add to the sense of community that already exists in the Coventry neighborhood. "Family Connections is deeply committed to supporting parents as they make the often difficult journey through the early years of parenthood," she said.

Because of the move, the Family Connections drop-in programs at Taylor will be closed from June 13 through July 5. The Little Heights literacy programs at the Lee Road Library will remain open, as will the drop-in programs at the Shaker Family Center (located in the former Sussex School). Family Connections will honor Cleveland Heights passes at the Shaker location during the three-week move. Learn more at www.familyconnections.org.

Krissy Dietrich Gallagher is a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights, a graduate of Millikin and Taylor schools, and a former Coventry School teacher. She currently sits on the board of directors of Family Connections. She blogs at http://krissygallagher.wordpress.com.

The Yound 3s preschool class at Fairmount Church Co-op Preschool enjoys learning through play at Family Connections.

Fairmount Church Co-op Preschool

The Young 3s preschool class at Fairmount Church Co-op Preschool enjoys the playhouse on the school's playground. For information about the school call 216-321-5800 or visit www.fairmountcoop.org.

SMALL BUSINESS GRANTS continued from page 11

Kelli Fontenot is a journalist living in Cleveland Heights.
Early this year, while the ground was still covered with a thin blanket of snow, and most people were huddled away indoors avoiding the still lingering winter’s cold, one group of girls remained unaffected by the bitter climate and focused firmly on the coming spring.

Starting at the end of February, the Cleveland Heights High Girls Lacrosse Team began meeting in the gym every day after school for practices. Inside, the team used the time to work on game mechanics, and to get into shape.

In addition to these school practices, though, the team has gone above and beyond this year, says Coach Maura Neumeister. A number of girls have been organizing their own indoor practices since November. “They really hold each other to very high standards,” says Neumeister. “The team is very motivated, very supportive of each other, and very determined.”

But despite the girls’ rigorous practice schedule, the team members could not help but be nervous when leaving for their annual spring trip in March. Not only was the team traveling across the country to Palo Alto, California, but part of the trip also involved the team’s first outdoor play of the season.

With the odds against them, the girls waded into their first game and, much to their own surprise, won handily. “There were a lot of moments where I thought to myself ‘How do they do that?’” says Neumeister. “After the game, all I thought was, ‘Wow. The girls have really stepped it up this year.’”

After their first two wins in California, the girls went on to win 10 more games, losing only three over the course of the season. But because of a new league rule that restricts the use of a player who has been given two yellow cards in a previous game, the team was forced to forfeit three of their victories where they were in violation of this rule. “Basically, it was a lot of confusion, from a new rule” says Neumeister.

The forfeited games have not been the only hardships that the team has endured. The girls also had to cope with the poor weather that kept them from practicing outside, and the absence of one of their key starters, Kelly Jones, for a large part of the season, who was out because of a head injury.

“We have been through a rough season with all of the complications of new rules, but we have overcome them and are hoping to go far,” says 10th-grader Mackenzie Lash.

And despite the obstacles, the team has gone far. The girls now are ranked number one in the state, and number three in the entire Midwest. “As the season went on, the girls just kept winning, and they kept having fun with it,” says Neumeister. “They’ve really made themselves the team to beat this year in Ohio.”

According to Neumeister, the team is a really close-knit group. Aside from their trip to California, the girls also have regular pasta dinners, and always get along very well with each other.

“The hardest thing is everyone keeps asking, ‘Who’s really good; but it’s all of them. They work really well together as a team. It’s been a lot of fun coaching them.”

The team will play in the District finals on Tuesday, May 31, hoping to beat Medina and reach the state finals.
New policies, technology does not work

By Kelsey Ferguson

The newly enforced EOS period that was implemented at the beginning of this school year is not only a waste of time for students, but creates problems when help is needed in the class. This extra period, added to the day, disregards students’ needs for individual help. The Heights High School website states, “The Educational Options for Success (EOS) periods are intended to offer in-school academic support for students.” There is also after school support offered.” (www.chuh.org)

The EOS period was created for students who are struggling in their studies and for those who could use the extra period to obtain help from their teachers. Too often, though, students’ EOS periods do not align with their teachers, thus experiencing difficulty in mastering certain concepts. The EOS’s purpose is for students to receive help from their teachers, strengthening their grasp on the information: this cannot happen when students are forced to stay in their EOS with other students when they should be receiving help on information they don’t understand. The special help time after school was cut this year, because with the EOS addition to the schedule, “students would be provided” in-school academic support for students.” (CHUH) With few aligning periods, how are students expected to get the help they need?

Though many believe that the new laptop initiative, that placed a laptop in every student’s possession, provided attractive tools that helped students prepare themselves for a technologically based economy, the laptops did not enhance academic growth. They were frivolous, expensive and added nothing to our academic achievement. They were helpful in writing papers or surfing the web for some academic purposes, but how are these expensive gadgets really furthering the knowledge of our schools students? Though social network sites were blocked, the majority of students found ways of breaking the code to these locks, using these sites more often than those relevant to their schoolwork. For example, out of my five core classes, I used my laptop on only one occasion. I feel that instead of issuing laptops to every student, a better use of the money could have gone towards professional SAT or ACT tutors, increasing standardized test scores that could potentially increase the schools rating, the students’ academic future, and knowledge students will need to take college entrance exams. Laptops are not going to do any of these things. Technology is becoming a large part of mainstream society, but it is not essential for every school student when computer labs and libraries are readily available.

If our school wants to project a bounty of successful students into college, the workforce, or any other occupation, changes will need to be made in order for these goals to be met. The EOS period is a waste of time, the laptops are a waste of money, and better options must be available.

Teacher feature: Julie Raffay

By Brandon Fernando

Currently in her 7th year of teaching at Cleveland Heights High School, biology teacher Julie Raffay is a Cleveland native with a passion for understanding how living things work. This interest has translated into an enthusiastic approach to teaching that includes experiments such as dissections, brewing root beer, and inserting DNA into bacteria. Ms. Raffay grew up on the West Side of Cleveland, and in the past year she has moved to Lakewood from Cleveland Heights. Partial to her place of origin, Ms. Raffay confesses that she is “still a West Side girl. I love being able to walk wherever I want to go,” says Raffay, speaking of Lakewood. According to Ms. Raffay, biology appealed to her at a young age, partially due to her very “outdoorly” parents. Although committed to a biology major even before college, Ms. Raffay decided to focus on teaching only in her senior year. “If I really like this, I should get other people to like it too,” says Ms. Raffay, explaining her thought process.

Still looking to encourage interest amongst her students, Ms. Raffay includes numerous hands-on experiments in her lesson plans with varying subject matter. Both this year and last year, her AP Biology classes made root beer while studying fermentation. Ms. Raffay’s Nature Studies class has taken nature walks to Cuyahoga Valley, where they have searched for salamanders. For the second year in a row, her AP Biology classes will also dissect both frogs and sharks after taking the AP Biology test. In between all of the experimentation, her classes do cover plenty of material. In fact, AP Biology, arguably her most intensive class, covers 52 chapters before taking the AP exam.

New to her teaching experience this year was the introduction of student laptops. Although the long awaited arrival of the student laptops received somewhat of a bittersweet reception from students and teachers alike, Ms. Raffay has found some methods of utilizing the new technology. In her Bio 1 class, Ms. Raffay has conducted virtual labs while in her AP Biology classes she uploaded her daily powerpoint notes to the web for student access. There has been some turbulence in her attempted implementation of student laptops, however, “the science wing doesn’t have great internet access, so we had to have backup plans just in case,” admits Raffay. The website for the AP Biology textbook was also blocked by the school web filter, for some reason.

Outside of teaching, Ms. Raffay enjoys traveling. Some of her most recent trips include excursions to London and Italy, and her summer plans include trips to Las Vegas and Florida. In addition to traveling, Ms. Raffay has also recently taken up running as a healthy way to express her competitive side, while staying in shape.

Over the summer, Ms. Raffay will be taking an AP preparation course so that she will be able to teach AP Environmental Science next year. In between the traveling and the preparation course, Ms. Raffay plans to read books by the pool and generally “soak up summer time” before returning not only to teach in the fall, but to grad school in pursuit of her second masters degree. Ms. Raffay currently has a masters degree in Educational Administration and will be taking an AP preparation course in Educational Administration, thus working towards a masters degree in Public Health starting this coming school year.
**Environmental Club is growing**

By Ilona Eke

Last December, Mr. Steven Warner and Ms. Jannet Korb, science teachers at Cleveland Heights High School, talked to their classes about water quality. Ms. Korb and Mr. Warner worked in collaboration to help the city of Cleveland Heights and the Cuyahoga Board of Health obtain a grant for a green parking lot at Cumberland Pool.

This past fall, Mr. Warner and his students presented their ideas and their hope for an environmental club at the high school to bigners at Cuyahoga Community College. In the months following, the Environmental Club was born.

The main focus of the club is to preserve the environment. The ideas presented in the club are included in the English and Science curriculum. Mr. Warner took students from the club and his science class on a field trip to one of their local gardens. They traveled to Fairfax Elementary, Canterbury Elementary, Montessori School in Little Italy, the Coventry area, and The Deborah S. Delisle Education Center, formerly called Taylor Academy, to learn about various community gardens.

The club is collaborating with the cities of Cleveland Heights and University Heights, and the public schools to help create more environmentally friendly actions. The club is assisting Future Heights, a community-based nonprofit organization, with green mapping the city for sustainable assets. The map is located at http://www.opengreenmap.org/greenscape/sustainable-heights-green-map.

Students at the high school will map Taylor and Lee Roads in the future. In addition, the high school hopes for future collaboration with Fairfax and other elementary schools.

Graduate students and staff at Case Western Reserve University are also involved with plans to install some rain gardens at The Deborah S. Delisle Education Center and CHHS. The students and faculty made three designs for rain gardens to be proposed for these areas. Students of CHHS will present the information to the CHUH Board of Education and, after approval, they will get started immediately.

The club's main project is the Learning Garden at The Deborah S. Delisle Education Center with the collaboration of Cleveland Heights and University Heights. Currently, there are 40 plots (8 ft x 10 ft.). The high school will use five of the plots, the rest are open to residents and businesses for sale at $20.00 each. If you would like to buy one or more, please call University Heights City Hall at (216) 932-7800.

Students from Mr. Warner's science classes have taken soil samples to help plan how to amend the soil for planting. By summer 2011, the club hopes to have plots at The Deborah S. Delisle Education Center full of plants.

Another Environmental Club project, scheduled during finals week, is helping the custodians clean out lockers at the high school. Students leave large quantities of belongings in their lockers, so the club is encouraging students to take them home. During the first week after school ends, club members will help sort out all the belongings left behind.

Students at CHHS also built bird boxes that have been erected at the Education Center. The bird boxes attract bluebirds which are becoming endangered.

At the start of the 2011-2012 school year, there will be a Service Learning Class offered at the high school. The class's goal is to teach students through service in the community. The class is open to a cross-section of 9-12th grade students in all small schools. The class is worth one credit with only 25 slots available. Interested students should contact their guidance counselor. This class is very important so please join as soon as possible, advises Mr. Warner.

For more information, contact Mr. Warner at: steven_warner@chuh.org.

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**Homecoming**

**Heights grad, playwright, returns for visit**

By Lily Gould

On May 20, Rajiv Joseph, a 1992 Cleveland Heights High School Alumnus, returned to his alma mater to talk to students about his journey to the big time as a nationally recognized playwright who was a 2010 Pulitzer Prize finalist. On returning to Heights High, he talked to several English classes and visited his roots by watching the Vocal Music Department's Singers during their eighth period class.

After receiving his degree in Creative Writing from Miami University in Ohio, Joseph joined the Peace Corps and was sent to the West African Republic of Senegal. There he kept journals and was quite fond of writing. “When I was young I always wanted to write novels. My heart was set on it but I was never able to. Later, I found out I was truly good at playwriting,” Joseph told the class.

After returning to the States, he wrote a number of plays, including his most recent, and Tony nominated, work Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo. A Broadway producer who saw the play in California was very impressed. Producers recruited Robin Williams to play the lead role of the Tiger, in hopes of making it on Broadway. The play opened in March at the Richard Rodgers Theatre with a limited run until early July. Closer to home, Joseph wrote Huck and Holden, currently playing at the Cleveland Play House.

While visiting the show choir, Joseph talked a little bit about his plays and his theater career, though he was more interested in seeing the students perform. After watching practiced pieces, Joseph joined in the singing of the choir's signature song, “Let It Be” a tradition started by Bill Thomas, founder of Singers and his choir director. In parting, Joseph advised the students that, although they may not be perfect at what they love, they should always follow their dreams.

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**Poetry Spotlight**

**Aerial Swift**

By Carlos Amerson

My trap is hidden behind the fence. Trying to realize there are ways to climb to a better you. No car I drive can drive out of this State of mind. Though only they can free themselves. In their diary, no limits are bound to The mind. Where emotions are put into play. Free minded people can overcome any wall of judgment. But all cold hearted people will never understand true love of the arts. Only trapped in the negative degrees. Causing them to freeze in ice. My only advice is that you must find an outlet for yourself - And mine is poetry. My words breeze the emotions of Others and my intentions Build up until they are as powerful as a hurricane.

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**Poetry**

*An outlet for yourself -*

*Where emotions are put into play. Free minded people can overcome any wall of judgement. But all cold hearted people will never understand true love of the arts. Only trapped in the negative degrees. Causing them to freeze in ice. My only advice is that you must find an outlet for yourself - And mine is poetry. My words breeze the emotions of Others and my intentions Build up until they are as powerful as a hurricane.*

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*Photo Courtesy of Environmental Club*
Senior Destinations 2011

Baldwin-Wallace University
Collin Simpson

Belmont University
Sheri Chambers

Bowling Green State University
Tamar Atwell
Brian Barron
Shawn Fields
Christopher Lanton
Aja Mason
Ashley Pope
Jordan Raines
Joshua Toombs

Canisius College
Jordan Oates

Case Western Reserve University
Chandrima Bhadra
Carlin Jackson

Cincinnati State Technical & Community College
Cody Martin

Cleveland State University
Devon Crenshaw
Samantha Hackman
Charles McCoy
Brianna Monroe
Maii Mull
Ezra Rabinsky
Andrew Royal
Treye Shaw
Jonathan Tarnay
Allison Walker
Timmyra Wimbly

College of Wooster
Diana Drushel

Cuyahoga Community College
Breana Laster

Cuyahoga County Airport Flight Academy
Parish Roston

Denison University
Ariana Gray Be’

DePaul University
Saralila Kalafat
Emma Lissemore

Eastern Michigan University
Deltreasa Lee

Elmhurst College
Imani Banks

Gannon University
Nobili Dunn

George Mason University
Ashley Anton

Hiram College
Anna Borhan
Katherine Starr

Johnson and Wales University
Gina Evangelista

Kent State University
Karolina Kucerova
Alexandra Pattillo
Serrena Prezioso

Maryland Institute College of Art
Lucia Mahler-Tatar

Meredith College
Adajah Morgan-Bennett

Miami University
Brandon Gordon

Muskingum University
Larissa Davis
Coro Dodson

North Central College
Niyah Banks

Oakland University
Kayla Kelly

Ohio Northern University
Jared Birks

Ohio State University
Haingo Andramasilalao
Jasmine Berry
Elana Berusch
Andrea Chan
Rachael Collyer
Gwendolyn Donley
Jesse Hammond
Nadiyah Harper
Shannon Jeffries
Christopher Jordan
Avtal Lugasy
Daniel Pease-Kerr
David Schellenberg
Natalie Sperl
Bennett Wildey
Taylor Wong

Ohio University
Richard Moses

Oral Roberts University
Eric Gray, Jr

Rochester Institute of Technology
Alexander Ritchey

Savannah College of Art & Design
Morgan Clement

Shawnee State University

The New School of Jazz and Contemporary Music
Jonathan Thomas

Thiel College
Michael Bryant
Sharrell Pointer

United States Air Force
DeMarcus Patrick

University of Akron
Cierra Avery-Starks
Marcel Dear
DaVonna Jackson
Cheray Lillard
Daelantae Marshall

University of Cincinnati
Lydia Resnik

University of Dayton
Christopher Patton

University of Michigan
Kelly Rosenbaum

University of Mt Union
Adam Ceasor

University of Pittsburgh
Nicole Rosenbaum

University of Rochester
Zena Levan

University of Toledo
LaTonya Bouldin
Mario Braxton
Sierra Huffman
Blanchard Jones
Rosalind Leonard
Demetria McIntyre
Ariana Saleem
Ryan Simpson
Syliva Taylor
Destinee Wagner

University of Wisconsin-Madison
Ryan Perlic

Ursuline College
Ayla Harris

Virginia Marti College of Art & Design
Candice Avery

Wittenberg University
Samuel Collins

Wright State University
Karmillie Harris

Xavier University of Louisiana
Taylor Lowry

This is a partial listing of schools as of May 24, 2011. A complete list will be available online at www.heightsobserver.org
Cleveland Heights-University Heights School Board
Meeting highlights

April 19, 2011

Board Member Ral Zucker was excused.

Contract agreements
The board approved two-year extensions of current contracts for Cleveland Heights Teachers and Monitors Union Local 793, Ohio Association of Public School Employees (OAPSE) Local 617, OAPSE Local 102, OAPSE Local 100, Educational Administrative and Professional Staff Council. President Cable thanked the bargaining units for agreeing to the two-year pay freezes.

Lease/purchase of office equipment
The board approved a resolution for the lease/purchase of office equipment along with a service agreement at a cost of $140,103.

Gearity roof
The board approved a March 31, 2011 bid for roofing at Gearity Professional Development School.

Race to the Top
The board accepted the Race to the Top grant agreement at a cost of $140,103.

Personnel policies and legal changes
Nylajean McDaniel, director of human resources, and Joseph Micheller, director of special programs and compliance, reported on changes in federal and state laws and legal precedents, which CH-UH policies must reflect.

Supplemental contracts
In the administrative union, while some members are to be called administrators, others, such as information technology staff, are to be called professional staff. Because of the change, hourly staff will no longer be able to take supplemental contracts for extracurricular work because of legal complications with the way their pay, including weighted overtime, would be calculated. This means that people will have to be brought in from outside the district to coach and advise extracurricular activities.

Employment medical exam
Board Member Nancy Popper questioned the district’s decision to receive a comprehensive report of an employee’s initial employment medical exam instead of receiving just a statement of the person’s ability to perform the job. Micheller explained that the more complete information could be helpful to personnel staff in some instances.

Staff/student communication
Board Member Karen Jones questioned whether it was realistic for the district to prohibit staff/student communication via e-mail and text. Micheller explained that the prohibited communication is via social media like Facebook and that the distinction needs to be made cleaner.

Gifts
Regarding disallowing individual gifts from staff to students, Jones asked about small incentives given in the classroom. Micheller explained that these are not considered gifts.

Tutoring for credit
Jones also asked whether a teacher tutoring a student for credit in conjunction with the new flex credit system violated the policy against teachers tutoring students outside of school for pay. Micheller said he would check the ethics code to see if there are specific circumstances that might allow such tutoring.

Thanks to a teacher, support excellence
Susie Kaeser

Individuals can have a powerful effect on the quality of teaching in our public schools. We can’t give educators the skills they need to be effective, but we can help motivate them to be their best. When we pay attention to their work, and let them know how valuable they are, it makes a difference. When they do well, tell them! It’s as easy as that.

The Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District has an array of strategies to develop its teachers. But according to educational psychologist Christine Emmons, from the Yale University School of Medicine’s Child Student Center, they need us, too.

In the April 6 edition of Education Week, Emmons explains that teachers do not leave college knowing how to be great teachers. “Skill and competence are built through experience, effective mentoring and relevant professional development.” Clear and consistent goals, adequate resources and tools to achieve those goals matter, as does, “the respect of colleagues, policymakers, and the general public.”

Good teachers do a lot more than show up. This demanding profession cannot be done by rote or formula. Teachers must plan, create engaging lessons, listen effectively, think on their feet, connect, be organized, smile, use assessments to redirect their teaching, reflect, redesign and improve. Create all over again.

If we want good teachers, we can help create what Emmons calls the “psychosocial environment” that makes them want to pour their hearts and minds into their work on a daily basis. If teachers were made of steel, they could better withstand the ever-changing public policies, administrators, students and families, educational fads and expectations that affect their daily lives. Not to mention the attacks by people with their own agendas. Despite these pressures, teachers have to stay the course.

Don’t underestimate the harm inflicted on quality education by the teacher bashing that is part of a long-term effort to discredit public education. Little by little, it is eroding the confidence and will of the people who do this important human development work.

We must give educators the support that helps them rise to the level we want. Acknowledgement is powerful. Use it. Write a note, visit a school and observe, express your gratitude in person. Send a letter to the editor, or invite your elected representative to see the great work that teachers do. Let people know you are proud of our children and their teachers. Challenge the naysayers who make sweeping generalizations about educators and schools.

Start by visiting www.reachingheights.org and click “Thank A Teacher.”

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

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Boulevard Science Club wins first-place

The Science Club at Boulevard Elementary School took home two first-place medals at the Engineers and Technicians of the Future robotics competition. The students won for best presentation and best thinking robot. K-5 science specialist Justine Taylor (right) and 4th-grade teacher Sandy Anzer (left) lead the club.

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Bellefaire students nurture quails

Joy Henderson

Tucked away in a corner of Bellefaire School is a white quail hutchery that was designed and decorated by art students to make the young quails feel safe and happy. The chicks hatched in late March and are part of a project involving 5th and 6th graders in math, science, and art classes.

The process of hatching and caring for quails has been exciting for the students. Monitoring the egg health, preparing the hatchery, recording chick development, and researching the best location for the release in May has been a full educational experience.

“This project made us want to learn,” sophomore Jenna S. said. “Watching a new life come into the world was great.” She was part of the team that created graphs and charts tracking egg and chick growth.

Junior Taylor W. and her team were responsible for setting up a webcam. Once in place, the students could watch the birds and make sure their environment and development was good, without handling them.”I really got hooked on watching the birds, seeing if they were okay.”

Senior Aaron A. is part of the team researching quail habitat. The students will release the birds in late May at a farm in Sourthington, Ohio. “We will look for an area on the farm that has the best food, water, and shelter for the quails,” Aaron said.

“I am happy that we can release them to their natural habit,” Taylor said. “But we will all miss seeing them grow up.”

The teachers leading the Bellefaire quail project are Marc Baker (art), Diane Munro (math), and Judy Spainhower (science). The project was funded with a service learning grant.

Bellefaire School serves CH-UH students in grades 6-12 who are placed in an alternative environment. The structure, curriculum and small class size enables teachers to offer individual attention and emotional support.

Joy Henderson is the parent/community liaison for Heights High.
Heights Hall of Fame inducts ten distinguished alumni

Angee Shaker

The Cleveland Heights High School Alumni Foundation inducted ten distinguished alumni to its Hall of Fame on May 5, at Landerhaven in Mayfield Heights.

The Hall of Fame was created as a way for Heights High to honor the accomplishments of its alumni. It also gives current students solid examples of what they can accomplish in life, as they listen to adults who sat in the same seats and walked the same halls they do.

With more than 50,000 graduates to date, students have an impressive and diverse list of alumni from which to select potential inductees.

A student committee, known as the Imagemakers, selects from nominations made by the general public. Imagemakers do not know the names of the nominees, only their accomplishments.

This year’s inductees are:
- Mark Blumenthal, ’81; editor and political consultant.
- Thomas D. Burton, ’83; educator and administrator.
- Michael Deet, ’88; music producer and manager.
- Rabbi Jerome M. Epstein, ’61; activist and religious leader.
- Dr. Gary Glazer, ’68; physician and educator.
- Richard S. Gray, ’49; entrepreneur and business advisor.
- Dr. Gladys Haddad, ’48; educator and author.
- Jerome E. Jennings, ’99; musician and teacher.
- Dr. Rebecca Spyke Keiser, ’77; researcher and administrator.

Dr. A. David Rossin, ’49; nuclear engineer and scientist.

“It’s not until you hear the inductees speak and listen to their stories that you understand just why the students selected them for the Hall of Fame,” said Eric Silverman, president of the Cleveland Heights High School Alumni Foundation and a 1987 graduate of Heights High.

“What is great about this year’s inductees is not only their varied careers and lives, but also the uniqueness of their experiences at Heights High. Once again, the Imagemakers have done an excellent job identifying for us ten Heights High alumni of exceptional character and stellar credentials who make perfect additions to a phenomenal Hall of Fame.”

The evening’s program began with performances by the Heights Singers, followed by remarks from the inductees. The next morning, the new Hall of Famers visited Heights High, touring the building and speaking to classes.

The alumni foundation accepts nominations for the Hall of Fame throughout the year and application forms can be found at www.heightsalumni.org. Also posted on the foundation’s website is a complete listing of Hall of Fame inductees, as well as biographies of inductees from the past 17 years.

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

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It’s the best of both worlds! Enjoy a flexible lifestyle that includes an award-winning health and wellness program. Engage with young people through a well-regarded, curriculum-based intergenerational program. Declare your independence today from all the chores, taxes and expenses of your home. Visit Judson Park today! Call (216) 791-2004 or visit www.judsonsmartliving.org.
Night School increases Class of 2011

Joy Henderson

More than 100 Heights High students submitted Comments of Gratitude for faculty and staff members. The thank you notes tell a story about how adults inside the school make a big difference in the lives and learning experiences of students.

Here is a sample of the comments. Thank you for:

- Believing in me.
- Challenging me. You taught me how to bring ideas together and pick apart history to get a better understanding. I learned to open up and consider other points of view.
- Talking so highly of me when no one else would.
- Not giving up on me when I gave up.
- Opening my mind to thinking in a whole new way. Your class changed my outlook on life.
- Pointing me in the right direction when I am in shambles. Thank you for letting me cry and for telling me the things I need to hear.
- Helping me get ready for college, even through I’m only a sophomore.
- Teaching me geometry and for being patient when I’m foolish.
- Listening to me and helping me find my voice!
- Helping me cry and for telling me the things I need to hear.
- Teaching me about history. It makes me think before I act.
- Listening to me and helping me find my voice.
- Helping me cry and for telling me the things I need to hear.
- Teaching me how to be dedicated. I hope I can be as dedicated to my career as you are to yours.
- Encouraging me to finish on time, and ensuring that more students get off to a strong start by earning their high school diplomas.

The standard high school format does not fit every student. Heights is promoting greater student success by valuing and accommodating the diversity of learners in its classrooms. These options are keeping kids in school who might otherwise give up, helping more to finish on time, and ensuring that more students get off to a strong start by earning their high school diplomas.

Joy Henderson is the parent/community liaison for Heights High.
Cleveland Heights-University Library Board Meeting highlights

APRIL 25, 2011

Board Member Jason Stein was absent.

Gifts and grants

The board accepted $550 in donations in memory of Everett L. Desboll, Jr., a supporter of Dobama and a library user known for baking for the library. The board also accepted a grant awarded to Children’s Associate Shemekia Chandler for a program called “Cinderella Around the Globe.” In Chandler’s words, “Cinderella is one of the oldest and most beloved folktales in the world.” This program will allow local children to celebrate this fairly tale in a multicultural context.

Noble Neighborhood Library reopening

Architect James Dobler was present to answer questions about the Noble Library renovations. Board Member Jim Posch expressed concern about letting the community know that the interior renovation is only Phase 1. Phase 2 will be exterior repair that is obviously needed. It was agreed to have signage at the Noble Library reopening to indicate that.

Resignations and appointments

There have been four resignations this month. Deputy Director Catherine Hokus-Axpeker will become executive director of Northeast Ohio Regional Library System. Adult Services Coordinator Alice Iden will become project manager for two merged nonprofit agencies. Serena Okon, children’s services librarian, will work for the Tacoma (Washington) Public Library. Jeremiah Bryant, part-time adult services associate, has accepted a full-time position at Hyland Software.

March public service report highlights:

- Wi Wednesday gave kids the opportunity to burn off energy in bad weather.
- Moving this large print material to the first floor area formerly occupied by the ongoing book sale has increased first-quarter circulation by 20 percent.
- The Photoshop Elements class was well received, and a second part will be added.
- Local author Paul Gaus, who writes the Amish mystery series, talked at the Coventry Village Library. Jo Ann Vicarel introduced the author.
- Maggie Lindsey has tripled her volunteer participation at the Coventry Spot with more variety in daily programs.

Free lunch program is back this summer at the Lee Road Library

Sheryl Banks

With school out for the summer, children and teens in the Heights who rely on free school lunches face a potentially hungry summer. Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library is ready to help again this year, by hosting the free summer lunch program sponsored by the Cleveland Foodbank.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, hunger is one of the greatest barriers to learning, and lack of nutrition over the summer can lead to poor school performance once school starts again in the fall.

In addition to lunch, the library will be serving up reading-related activities and opportunities—kids can read books, play games, color, and sign up for the summer reading program while enjoying a healthy meal.

This program enables us to fill the crucial nutritional needs of local children, while also offering opportunities for early literacy programming and services,” noted Sam Lapides, the library’s interim young adult services coordinator and coordinator of the summer lunch program.

The library has the capacity to serve as many as 250 lunches, and invites all community children and youths up to age 18 to attend. Free lunch will be served between 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. each weekday, June 13 through Aug. 20. No registration is required.

“We are so excited about offering this program again this summer,” said Nancy Levin, Heights Libraries director. “We met many new families last summer, including a large group of new immigrants. It is a perfect partnership for our library.”

For more information about the program, contact Sam Lapides at 216-932-3600, ext. 290.

Sheryl Banks is the marketing and community relations manager for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library.

What’s going on at your library?

All Branches

Summer Reading is here. Ask a librarian about signing up for summer reading programs for children, teens and adults.

Coventry Village Library

1925 Coventry Road, 216-321-3400

Monday, June 6, 7 p.m.

Reading Comics

Wednesday, June 8–29, 4 p.m.

Possibilitarian Puppet Workshop

Lee Road Library

2345 Lee Road, 216-932-3600

Friday, June 7, 3 p.m.

Teen Summer Cooking Competition

Kick Off

Wednesday, June 15, 7 p.m.

Pet Show

Tuesday, June 21, 7 p.m.

Third Thursday Book Club: Await Your Reply by Dan Chaon

Noble Neighborhood Library

2800 Noble Road, 216-291-5665

Monday, June 13, 7 p.m.

Movie and Meet the Preschool Way

Friday in June, 10:30 a.m.

Reading Rumpus

University Heights Library

33866 Cedar Road, University Hts., 216-331-4700

Monday, June 20–Wednesday, June 22, 4 p.m.

Baby Singing Clinic

Tuesday, June 14, 6 p.m.

Film series: The Drummer (Hong Kong / Taiwan/Germany, 2008)

Tuesday, June 21, 6 p.m.

Film series: Troubled Water (Norway, 2008)

Library patrons cautioned

In the past six months a number of laptop thefts have occurred despite posted warnings regarding unattended possessions on tables and in meeting rooms.

Summer reading programs help prevent ‘summer learning loss’

Sheryl Banks

With one of the worst winters and wettest springs on record finally behind us, we’re all ready for the joys of summer. Swimming pools, parks, day camps, playgrounds, amusement parks, and even just the backyard are some of the favorite summer destinations for kids in our community who are ready to relax and have fun after the school year.

All that summer fun, however, can lead to “summer learning loss,” a phenomenon where kids sometimes lose the academic skills they gained during the school year.

“Kids who read or engage in other literacy-based activities over the summer will retain more of their skills than kids who don’t,” said Susan Black, children’s services librarian.

That’s why Heights Libraries are ready to combat that potential learning loss with fun-filled summer reading activities for children and teens that will make the library a summer destination, too.

Children who sign up for this year’s summer reading program, which has

the theme, “One World, Many Stories,” will be encouraged to read in a variety of ways. They will be able to track their reading over the summer months with a colorful mural in the children’s area, and participate in special events, such as a puppet workshop, a magic show, multicultural crafts, and a raffle with prizes.

“It’s not like doing a book report,” said Black. “We make reading fun for the kids, and tie it in to all kinds of activities that will spark young imaginations.”

 Teens will have their own summer reading program, “You Are Here,” which will also encourage summer reading with related activities. There will be a teen film festival to encourage them to explore the connection between literature and film.

Children and teens can sign up for summer reading programs at all four locations—Lee Road, University Heights, Coventry Village, and Noble Neighborhood. For more information, ask a children’s or teen librarian.

Sheryl Banks is the marketing and community relations manager for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library.
Seitz-Agin Hardware to close this month

Frank Tascone

Seitz-Agin Hardware, a mainstay in Cleveland Heights for 66 years, will close this month. Owner Joel Borwick cited the economic climate as the reason for closing.

“When the recession hit it just seemed to change everything,” Borwick explained. “Business really went down and the bottom line is we lost money for the last year or two. I can’t do that forever, and I don’t see how it’s going to come back.”

Borwick bought the store 38 years ago when he was looking to get into the retail business. “Somebody knew somebody who knew the people who owned this place, and they got us together, and lo and behold, I owned a hardware store.” The store, which is named after the previous owners, has enjoyed a loyal customer base in Cleveland Heights.

“The community is very loyal to those who are loyal to them and those who give back to the community,” Borwick said.

He also credits his employees and their ability to deliver good service. “Other places give you help and hand you something,” Borwick explained, “but I can’t think of too many where you come in and, let’s say a faucet stem, and they’ll walk in the back room, clean it out, put it in the washer on for you and come back and ask for fifty cents.”

Borwick is concerned about his employees. “The truth of the matter is, they’re not really employees—they’re friends. Their reason is I probably stayed as long as I have. But every one of them is bright and I’m sure every one of them will land on their feet. They all understand what’s going on.” All but one employee has been at Seitz-Agin for at least 30 years.

Borwick does not believe the big box stores are to blame for loss of business. “I’ve worked with them for 15 years almost, and to be frank they have not really been an issue. Maybe they kept me from growing, but we managed very well.” He holds that the economy hurt contractors, which in turn hurt retail sales. “I noted that some contractors are starting to find more work, but added that much of it seems to be on a smaller scale: “Instead of repairing a bathroom or a kitchen, they’re repairing a gutter outside.”

The main issue, according to Borwick, is that customer needs have changed. In the past, customers “just knew or for some reason were raised knowing how to fix things. Customers basically knew what they wanted. They still needed help, but they would do it themselves.” He’s observed a change among younger customers. “They’re so busy going to make a living—I’ve got a Sunday and that’s about all I have, and I was spent with my children.”

When asked about customer reaction, Seitz-Agin employee Ramone Smith said people have been shocked to see the inventory down. “I sent a couple ladies out a couple weeks ago in tears. It’s like you told them one of their loved ones just passed.”

Children may inquire what is it to become of Rocky, “the hardware dude.” Borwick said the big teddy bear, who greets customers near the entrance, “may be headed to my granddaughter or he may be headed to the highest bidder.”

Borwick said he has no plans to leave the area. He will continue as president of the Heights Youth Club. “I’ve always believed in giving back to the community, and I think I’ve done that over the years. I love the community, really, and that’s what it’s all about. So right now I have no plans to move.”

Frank Tascone teaches writing and literature at the University of Mount Union and is a Cleveland Heights resident.

Ten Thousand Villages opens at Cedar Fairmont

Kaye Lowe

Ten Thousand Villages of Cleveland (TTVC) has relocated from downtown Cleveland to the former Grapevine location in the Cedar Fairmont Business District. The relocation marks seven years in the Cleveland area.

The new store, which opened in May, is slightly larger and will offer the same one-of-a-kind, handcrafted products as the former downtown store.

Ten Thousand Villages is a local, national, and international business leader with a commitment to social and environmental responsibilities. This fair-trade retailer of artisan-crafted home décor, personal accessories and gift items from across the globe features products from more than 130 artisan groups in 35 countries.

The large selection of items includes hand-woven scarves from India, colorful earrings from Peru, hand carved statues and baskets from Africa, pottery from Mexico, and much more.

As one of the world’s oldest and largest fair-trade organizations, Ten Thousand Villages has spent more than 60 years cultivating trading relationships in which artisans receive a fair price for their work, while providing consumers access to distinctive handcrafted items. It is a founding member of the World Fair Trade Organization, a global network of more than 450 fair-trade organizations in 70 countries.

Gortinne Wallner, chair of TTVC’s board of directors, has been involved with the group for the past seven years. She said, “Ten Thousand Villages creates fair trade and a fair wage for artisans to help them improve their quality of life.” She spoke of a woman who was able to send her son and daughter to college with the income provided from TTVC.

“Artisans are paid half the cost, when the order is placed,” said Wallner, “and the remainder when the crafts are received by TTVC. Entire villages are often involved in producing crafts, providing a better quality of life.”

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

Ten Thousand Villages
Mon.–Fri. 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.; Sat. 10 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Sun. 11 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
12425 Cedar Road, Cleveland Heights
216-575-1058
Reunion aims to capture Coventry Village history

Kelli Fontenot

At a reunion this summer, merchants and local residents who were active in the Coventry Village Business District during the 1960s, ‘70s and ‘80s can swap stories with friends and help document community history.

Coventry residents Ellen Strong and Marcia Polevoi are organizing the event with Steve Presser, owner of Big Fun Toy Store and president of Coventry Merchants Association. Strong said that although the reunion is aimed at bringing back merchants who were present during that time period—as well as customers, residents, and former members of the now-defunct Coventry Neighbors—the reunion is open to all who would like to attend.

Participants are encouraged to share their recollections with Mark Souther, a Cleveland State University professor who will be taking histories. Strong indicated that video and audio recordings collected during the event might be included in a segment for the Cleveland Memory Project, a searchable collection of digital resources on Cleveland history.

“McGee’s Village needs a thread, a way to keep the story going,” said Strong, who has been involved in the Village for more than 40 years and was active in the Village Business District. “Somebody needs to keep the records and keep those who want to learn up to date.”

Strong said that a long history of residents is waiting to be heard. The Coventry village is a significant part of Cleveland history, and people have not been paying attention to that history.

Participants will be able to share their memories with a crowd of people who are interested in hearing those stories. The event is open to the public, and anyone interested in attending can contact Strong at 216-481-4718.

Kelli Fontenot is a journalist living in Cleveland Heights.

Fadi Kdayssi’s VideoDub handles diverse video formats for CIFF

Jewel Moulthrop

Remember purchasing your first VCR and having to choose between Beta and VHS formats? While VHS dominated the consumer market, Beta became the preferred format among video professionals worldwide.

But it didn’t end there. Both here and overseas, dozens of other formats developed, along with DVD technology; and the situation couldn’t be more confusing. There are source formats (what comes out of the camera), editing formats, sharing formats, and archiving formats.

Although some filmmakers still shoot film, an increasing number are turning to video. That’s where Fadi Kdayssi, president of VideoDub International, comes in. He’s the go-to guy for 25 years, comes in. He’s the go-to guy

Kdayssi started VideoDub in the mid-1980s with a small office in the Hanna Building, a couple of video converters from England, and a few other pieces of equipment. As his business expanded, Kdayssi moved his company to a larger space, and added an impressive array of professional equipment to handle the demands of his growing client base in television and video production, and in the corporate world.

“Kdayssi’s VideoDub has been essential to our industry for over two decades,” said Reggie Carter, a videographer and regular client. “We don’t know what we would do without him.”

With the new technologies, movie submissions to the festival began arriving in a variety of different and incompatible formats. That is when David Wittkowsky, volunteer and later executive director of the festival, turned to VideoDub to convert them. It was also the start of a successful and ongoing relationship between Kdayssi and the festival.

Currently, about 70 percent of the movie submissions CIFF receives are in digital formats. Kdayssi converts them to a single format that is compatible with CIFF’s equipment. Kdayssi’s VideoDub is the only company in Cleveland with the capability to convert these formats, thereby providing a fast turn-around for late submissions.

The walls of VideoDub Internationally are neatly lined with racks holding dozens of broadcast and professional video recorders, computers, and sophisticated video processing and testing equipment. In addition to converting materials from one format to another, Kdayssi is adept at enhancing them for optimum visual and auditory quality—an important skill when working with the output of new filmmakers.

Kdayssi said he is happy to be one of the sponsors of the film festival. “CIFF not only enhances Cleveland’s reputation,” he added, “but it also provides a great showcase for new filmmakers from around the world.”

Jewel Moulthrop is Cleveland Heights resident and a member of editorial advisory committee for the Heights Observer.
Mac’s Backs event to celebrate local comic book authors

Dana Finley

Though underground comic book writer Harvey Pekar died last July, his works continue to be released posthumously. His latest book, *Huntington, West Virginia* (Random House) was released April 26 and will be celebrated on June 2 at an event at Mac’s Backs on Coventry Road.

The book chronicles Pekar’s encounters with a variety of characters in his everyday life, including a chapter titled “Neighborhood Spark Plug,” devoted to Steve Presser, owner of Coventry’s Big Fun.

Suzanne DeGaetano of Mac’s Backs explained that, along with celebrating the release of Pekar’s new book, the bookstore event will also host fellow Cleveland Heights native and comic book artist Seth Tobocman, who recently wrote his own graphic book *Understanding the Crash* with Eric Lauresen.

Tobocman also had a unique connection to Pekar as a teenager. He said that Pekar gave him his first exposure to the world of underground comic books.

“Who would be willing to have two teenagers over to his apartment and show us comics that we weren’t allowed to buy?” Tobocman asked with a chuckle. “He was quite an anomaly to us. He got us free sci-fi books out of the VA hospital.”

Tobocman’s early encounters with the underground comic book scene grew into a lifelong occupation. He has authored many comic books focusing on local and international politics, including *Three Cities Against the Wall, Disaster and Resistance*, and *War in the Neighborhood.*

For more information about the June 2 event, visit www.macbacks.com.

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Summer heats up on Coventry

Coventry Village, the street known for its eclectic mix of merchants and patrons, will host a number of fun-filled events this summer designed to celebrate the artist and free spirit in all of us. The Coventry Village Special Improvement District (SID) will sponsor two arts festivals, a music and movie series, and a pie fight.

This year’s Coventry Village Arts Fests will be bigger and better than ever. According to Steve Presser, marketing director for the Coventry Village SID, organizers are expecting a huge turnout. “We’ve moved the festivities from a weekday to a Sunday and expanded the hours,” he said, adding that “it’s still free, family oriented and open to the public.”

The two festivals will be held on Sunday, June 16, and Sunday, July 24, from noon to 6 p.m., and will feature dance, music and drum circles, said Presser. “The Cleveland Museum of Art and the Progressive Arts Alliance are just two of the organizations we are partnering with this year. We’ll have giant puppets, Flower Clown, jugglers, stilt walkers, a local farmers market, artists, arts and crafts, and a variety of musicians all along the street.”

Coventry merchants will hold sidewalk sales and host special events. Neighborhood restaurants will also offer specials.

A new feature of the festival is a main stage at the north end of Coventry that will host an exciting mix of bands. There will be two music sessions, from noon to 2 p.m. and from 4 to 6 p.m. During the break, from 2 to 4 p.m., Passport Project will present a dance performance.

There will be plenty of opportunities for festival attendees to support the activities. The Coventry Village SID is considering enabling residents to donate online, holding a 50/50 raffle, and placing a donation box at the festival. “As always, funding is tight,” said Presser, “but the festival will remain free, and we appreciate the goodwill of this community in helping us keep it that way.”

Thursday evenings, from June 23 through Aug. 4, the Coventry Village SID will host a music and movie series at Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Park. The evenings will start with music at 7:30 p.m., followed by a movie at 9 p.m.

“Not all of the movies are chosen yet,” said Presser, “but the series kicks off with *The Wizard of Oz* on June 23. On Thursday, June 30, we will show *Madagascar.*”

Join us for an exciting summer party to benefit the Cleveland Restoration Society.

**A Night In Rio**

Join us for an exciting summer party to benefit the Cleveland Restoration Society.

**SATURDAY, JULY 23, 2011**

7:00 P.M. TO 10:00 P.M.

Dinner, dancing, music and entertainment await you as you tour the award-winning restoration of one of Fairmount Boulevard’s most beautiful historic home and garden settings.

Ticket price: $175 per person

VIP Tickets: $250 per person

For more information or reservations, contact Felicia at 216-426-3110 or visit www.clevelandrestoration.org.
Heights photographers show rock music photos on Waterloo

Cleveland has been a hotbed of rock and roll for more than five decades. “Visual Music: Northeast Ohio Photographers Look at Rock and Roll” presents the work of a dozen photographers who lived and worked in Northeast Ohio since the 1960s. Among them are three photographers who live and work in Cleveland Heights: G.M. Donley, Aaron Mendelsohn, and Anastasia Pantsios, who is organizing and curating the show.

The show opens at the Zaller Building Gallery at 16606 Waterloo Road in the Collinwood neighborhood of Cleveland, a block from the Beachland Ballroom, on Saturday, June 11, with a reception from 7 to 11 p.m. It’s free and open to the public. It will run through Saturday, June 25, concluding with an all-day open house from noon–8 p.m., to coincide with the Waterloo Arts Festival.

Over the years, the talented photographers in this show have documented Cleveland’s vibrant music scene from the Beatles to Bruce Springsteen to the White Stripes. Longtime Coventry Village resident Anastasia Pantsios has been shooting for 40 years, since she came to town to attend college. She currently has a show at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum titled “Girls on Film: 40 Years of Women in Rock.”

G.M. Donley is head of creative services at the Cleveland Museum of Art and a member of the board of Heights Arts. He creates overlapping images to express the passage of time.

Aaron Mendelsohn has traveled around the country shooting festivals and special events as well as covering concerts close to home at the Grog Shop.

The show also features work by Ken Blaze, Jay Brown, Bob Ferrell, Joe Kleon, Bryson Miller, Karen Novak, Stephanie Saniga, George Shuba, and Linda Woods. All have created distinctive bodies of work. “Visual Music” will be largest survey of local music photography ever assembled, with almost 200 prints.

For more information, look for “Visual Music” on Facebook.

Heights residents win Cleveland Arts Prize

Stacy Goldberg

Cleveland Heights resident Marsha Dobrzensky was selected as a 2011 Cleveland Arts Prize recipient for her role as executive director of Young Audiences. Since 1994, her work has inspired young people in Northeast Ohio through arts and education.

Dobrzensky will receive the Martha Joseph Prize for Distinguished Service to the Arts at the 51st Cleveland Arts Prize Award event on Tuesday, June 28, at 6 p.m. When Dobrzensky assumed the leadership of Young Audiences, the organization was on the verge of bankruptcy. Through her tireless commitment to establishing a financially sound organization, with the capacity to serve many children, she turned things around.

Today, Young Audiences operates on a budget of nearly $2 million and serves more than 242,000 children each year. Her goal remains to introduce an increasing number of children to the joy and excitement of the arts.

The mission of Young Audiences is to enrich the lives of children and promote creative learning by uniting arts and education. Young Audiences offers programs in dance, theater, music and visual art.

With a legacy of service in offering quality hands-on experiential learning in the arts, Young Audiences has more than 110 experienced teaching artists who not only excel in their art form, but also love working with and inspiring children of all ages.

Stacy Goldberg, director of marketing for Young Audiences, is a resident of Cleveland Heights.

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Stacy Goldberg, director of marketing for Young Audiences, is a resident of Cleveland Heights.
Heights Arts expands on Lee Road

Peggy Spaeth

Heights Arts has been envisioning an arts center for more than 10 years. In the beginning, we imagined converting the former stables on the Severance property into such a facility, but realized that as a new organization we needed to build our own infrastructure rather than rebuild a physical structure. Then, the library offered us space in its newly acquired YMCA, which was slated to be developed into a community art space. As we waited several years for that construction to be approved and finished, we settled into a 900-square-foot storefront near the Cedar Lee Theatre—not exactly what one might envision as an arts center, but it became one as we developed programs that connected our community with its creative residents. When the library space finally became available, we kept our Lee Road gallery and added art classes and workshops at the library.

Next, we actively advocated turning the former Coventry Elementary School into an arts center, but again we were not positioned to take on a major project. Eventually, the library’s priorities changed and the one-time art space there became a computer lab. Our classes and workshops were temporarily homeless. But we always kept our eye on that prize of establishing a broad range of artistic endeavors. The space—previously a Starbucks and then a sushi restaurant—provides us with a total of 2,400 square feet that opens to the adjacent public minipark. We began fundraising a year ago with a lead grant from the George Gund Foundation, then signed a lease in October, and started construction in April. More than 350 individuals have made donations to make this renovation happen.

The new space will bring to street level our office (which has been on the second floor of the building) and a new level of expanded display and performance space. We’re planning movable walls so that the space is flexible, and we are especially excited that we’ll be able to seat 75 people for concerts and other events.

Recently, the Community Partnership for Arts and Culture published “Putting Artists on the Map,” a study of Greater Cleveland artists’ locations. We were not surprised that the county’s artist sector is concentrated in Cleveland Heights by a wide margin (57.9 percent of all respondents), because that is why Heights Arts was founded. A dozen years ago, we recognized this city as the epicenter of a rich cultural region.

The summary report further said, “Artist-based community development is more than opening an art gallery or having an artist move into a neighborhood.” Indeed, Heights Arts was founded on the premise that capitalizing on our community’s rich artistic resources would positively impact all aspects of community life: community-building, economic development, education and public spaces.

With our expansion, we are doing just that. This is possible because our community believes what we believe: that the arts simply make life better.

The gallery’s next show, “Building Below the Radar,” will open Friday, June 10, with a reception from 6 to 9 p.m. The show illustrates, through constructions and visual displays, three distinct approaches to architecture in Cleveland today by small, independent architecture firms doing high-quality work: Anthony Paskevich & Associates, Kordalski Architects, and Studio Techné. To learn about upcoming classes and workshops, shows, concerts, and public art projects, or to make a renovation donation, please visit www.heightsarts.org.

Peggy Spaeth is the executive director of Heights Arts.

‘Klezmer Guy’ at Nighttown

Bert Stratton, the leader of the klezmer band Yiddish Cup, performs “Klezmer Guy,” an original prose-and-music show at Nighttown on Tuesday, June 14, at 7:30 p.m.

Bert Stratton (L) and Alan Douglass.  

Bert Stratton reads comedic prose sketches and plays clarinet, accompanied by Alan Douglass on vocals and piano. This fuel-injected show has no brakes. It is a nudnik/beatnik show, with music ranging from “St. James Infirmary” to “The Berkowitz-Kumin Rag.” Stratton’s son, Jack, is on drums. Jack Stratton produced, recorded and played on the album “Starship,” which is currently #1 on Billboard’s “Top Cast Albums” chart.

Bert Stratton’s prose pieces have appeared most recently in The New York Times and The Forward. Tickets are $10. For more information, visit at www.nighttowncleveland.com or call 216-797-0550.

PARADE THE CIRCLE

Saturday, June 11
In University Circle
Circle Village 11 a.m.–4 p.m.
Parade at noon
Free

Heights Observer June 1, 2011 27
Heights Observer staff
Cast your ballot today for Best of the Heights!

Complete this ballot or go online to: www.futureheights.org
Deadline for ballot submission: August 31, 2011.

Please Note!
Voting is for Cleveland Heights and University Heights localities only.
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.

Mail your ballot to:
FutureHeights
2163 Lee Road #103
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

Questions? Call 216-320-1423

Name: __________________________________________
Address: ________________________________________
Phone: __________________________________________
Email: __________________________________________

Best New Business
Best Place for Kosher Options
Best Customer Service
Best Dining Ambiance
Best Realtor
Best Boutique or Specialty Shop
Best Auto Service
Best Place to Get Healthy
Best Looking Store Front
Best Place for Pets
Best Breakfast or Brunch
Best Live Entertainment
Best Casual Meal
Best Place to Take the Kids
Best Ethnic Eats
Best Salon or Spa
Best Place for Vegetarian Cuisine
Best Grocery Store
Best Place for Sweet Treats
Favorite University Heights Business
Best Carryout
Favorite Cleveland Heights Business

Bonus Question! Business you would like to see in the Heights

WIN A BRAND NEW 2011 HONDA OR TOYOTA

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 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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