Happy New Year!

Sustainable Heights Network seeks to promote community gardening

Jeff Coryell

The Sustainable Heights Network—an informal group created to connect people and ideas to help build a more sustainable future for the community—has launched an initiative to facilitate community gardening. Goals include locating sites that could be used for community gardens, providing a mechanism for people interested in community gardening to connect with one another, and accessing resources that support new community gardens.

“The community gardening program would be a central area for information for, and participation by, residents,” said Sarah Wean, Sustainable Heights Network Steering Committee member. “We want to be of assistance in providing the networking opportunities that can support a grassroots community program.”

An informational meeting about the Sustainable Heights Network’s community gardening initiative is planned for 7 p.m., Jan. 24, at the Lee Road Library. Everyone interested in seeing community gardening thrive in the Heights is encouraged to attend.

Community gardens are a tremendous asset to the community. They provide an opportunity for those who either cannot garden at home or desire additional or better garden space, and they promote sustainable practices, such as food waste recycling and local food production. In addition, community gardens improve local food security by enabling residents to grow their own food or to donate what they have grown for hunger relief. They provide an engaging and educational activity for youths, and they enhance the appeal of the neighborhoods in which they are situated. Gardens also promote social benefits by bringing residents together and encouraging healthy recreation.

At Cleveland Heights’s Canterbury School Garden, individual plots measure 10 feet by 50 feet, and a $20 annual fee covers the cost of water. One plot is reserved for growing produce for the Cleveland Foodbank and other hunger relief programs.

Interest in community gardening runs high in the Heights, and existing community gardens in the area all have waiting lists. These established gardens include the Canterbury and Oxford school gardens (both started as Victory Gardens during World War II), Hampshire Road Garden, and Fairfax School Garden. This past year, University Heights launched the Taylor Road Learning Gardens near the Delisle Center on South Taylor Road.

Potential locations for new community gardens might include schools, churches and synagogues, and vacant...
Around the blog Highlights from blogs.heightsobserver.org

Wanted: Transparency

Transparency was a frequent topic of discussion with voters during my campaign to win a seat on city council in Cleveland Heights. If you had attended this month’s special Municipal Services meeting on the Taylor Road resurfacing project, you got to witness a problem that resulted from lack of: transparency.

It has been about ten years since Cleveland Heights began efforts to re-design and resurface Taylor Road, from Euclid Heights Boulevard, (the southwest entrance to Severance Town Center) to our north border with East Cleveland. Many people complain it is the worst road in our city. The throughs defy description, and I met many Taylor Road residents while campaigning who shared their stories of expensive car repairs suffered from driving on it. I also listened to their concerns about safety (only 52 inches separate pedestrians on the west sidewalk between Euclid Heights Boulevard and Mayfield Road), and the snowplows that push three lanes of heavy snow and ice onto residents’ yards. I have seen the winter walkers here in the roadway because our city has left it up to these homeowners to try and clear this heavy ice and snow from the sidewalk on this major thoroughfare. Not a good situation, from any perspective.

—Mike Gaynier

The police are using Twitter—and look who’s got something good to say

On Saturday of Thanksgiving weekend, a 16-year-old boy named Artron沃尔 was shot and killed at the intersection of Lee and Superior roads in Cleveland Heights.

Within 24 hours, the police had posted news of the shooting on their Twitter feed—which had been set up a couple months ago to provide people with exactly this kind of information.

After the shooting, the CHPD kept the community informed via Twitter. Two days later they used Twitter to tell us that four suspects had been arrested. And the next day, they even gave us mug shots of three (the fourth is juvenile, so his identity is protected by law). I guess the police thought we would want to put faces to the names of the accused.

Based on my own reaction, they were right. I was eager to see the mug shots.

Only about 115 people follow the police on Twitter right now, but their feed provided the first information that anybody in the community had about the shooting—including the news media. At the first opportunity, I posted the information at the FutureHeights/Observer Facebook page.

I’m pretty sure Twitter is going to prove itself the wrong tool for the job the police are trying to do—which is to inform and engage residents about their own public safety. Too many people don’t follow Twitter and would hate it if they tried. Twitter’s signal-to-noise ratio is so low that you have to manage it proactively if you expect it to deliver good information.

The city will figure that out over time, but right now what’s important is that the police department is trying to be proactive in giving us information we want and need, and I want to thank them for it.

—Bob Rosenbaum

We need some new ideas

A couple of weeks ago, the Cleveland Heights 6 p.m. curfew for teenagers under 18 years of age in the Coventry and Cedar Lee business districts was suspended for the Severance Business District. Council Member Bonnie Caplan cast the lone dissenting vote.

It isn’t easy to break from the crowd and dissent on such an important issue. Antiscial and criminal behavior by juveniles is a red hot issue in our community, and there have been some serious incidents at Severance Town Center, and Thanksgiving weekend, 16-year-old resident Artron沃尔 was murdered near the intersection of Lee and Superior roads, in a another senseless act of violence. I hope Caplan doesn’t change her mind following this tragedy, which our curfew couldn’t prevent. I think it took guts for her to take an unpopular position and say, “We need to have another solution.”

—Mike Gaynier

‘Stars and Stripes Forever’—or at least for a really, really long time

At the Cleveland Heights High School Instrumental Music Department fall concert on Nov. 13, current students were joined on stage by alumni who had gathered for a reunion of musicians from the John Farinacci era (music director, 1949-62).

The grand finale was John Phillip Sousa’s “Stars and Stripes Forever,” performed by the Farinacci era did it. About 150 musicians—with an age range of more than 65 years—played together.

(See the video online.)

—Bob Rosenbaum

Coffee for the common woman, part 2

I’m on a quest to find the best tasting “cuppa” coffee at the best price on Cedar Hill. From where I sit this morning, I can walk a minute in each direction and find several cups of coffee. Here we go . . . a cuppa coffee for the common man, woman, person, friend, mom, dad, boyfriend, girlfriend, Bella dog . . . no Bella dog, not for you.


Normally $2.65 but free today, paid for by Key Bank. How nice of them. I wonder how much the CEO makes at Key Bank. I have to find out about this free coffee. Nice way to start the investigation.

—Tiffany Lauper

Sponges and rocks

True story.

My grandmother was a sharecrop- per. For a span of years, she and my grandfather picked cotton on a parcel of land owned by Mr. Charles in Natchitoches, Louisiana. I remember the day my grandmother showed me a cotton boll and demonstrated how to separate the stems from the cotton from the seeds.

My grandmother and grandfather both worked the land and raised their family as they worked through a debt that had been accumulated in the hopes of dying better. When they realized Mr. Charles was continuously inquiring without ever being satisfied with any amount of payment, they began to discuss the possibility of running away. They considered it for some time because, after all, they were the ones who had agreed to the initial contract in the first place.

—Andrea Davis

Snow, driving and kids

Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow!

Though it was a delayed start with

continued on page 3
We can overturn the rezoning of Oakwood

Garry Kanter

It’s come to this. Finally, I’m begging, I’m begging for a pro bono lawyer, or for someone(s) with deep pockets. Because, I Don’t. Want. To. Lose. We can’t lose. It’s way too important.

Until we get it reversed in a court, the ill-advised and unconstitutional rezoning of the Oakwood golf course in South Euclid will, too late, be recognized as the turning point upon which the Near East Side suburbs began their rapid descent.

“Unconstitutional? What the heck is he talking about,” you may well ask.

OK, that’s fair enough. You’re familiar with Shemo, right? Shemo was the bogeyman court case that the developer and his pals kept threatening the South Euclid voters with all the time. Nothing anybody said or did would matter, because of Shemo. Shemo was all-powerful. Shemo was great. Shemo was the developer’s ace-in-the-hole, no matter what. Sooo, being as we’re certain to have Oakwood. Round II in Cleveland Heights one of these days, I decided I’d better know what Shemo is all about. That’s one of my tricks, by the way. I gather facts. Then I reason. You’re familiar with Shemo really says.

And here’s what Shemo really says.

This is from the Supreme Court of Ohio.

“Since there was competent, credible evidence supporting the trial court’s conclusio-

sion that the U-2A zoning classification does not substantially advance a legitimate health, safety, and welfare concern of Mayfield Heights, we reverse the judgment of the court of appeals and reinstate the trial court’s judgment declaring the zoning ordinance unconstitutional.”

Pretty simple, isn’t it?

No way will that huge, crappy development going up where it doesn’t belong “substantially advance a legitimate health, safety, and welfare concern of South Euclid. Everyone knows this. They know this. Heck, they even had a consultant write up a report that advises them to change the 2010 Updated Comprehensive Plan since the rezoning is such a stark contradiction of it.

I’ve asked lawyers to look this idea over. It’s valid. There’s no guarantee of winning. Not by a long shot. But I will guarantee that if the Super Walmart and the fast food drive-thru are built, we lose.

I’ve asked everybody and anybody for help. I’ve got a couple of logs on the fire, but nothing nearly enough. Please, someone who cares, contact me.

We can overturn the South Euclid Oakwood rezoning. But I need your help.

Garry Kanter attended the CH-UH schools from K-12, graduating in 1975. He lives in Cleveland Heights in a home that he’s fixing up. He also owns a house in South Euclid.

SUSTAINABLE HEIGHTS continued from page 1

Thank you for remembering sacrifices of WWI

Editor,

Thank you so much for the article “Veteran honors the fallen” in your December issue. I was very curious about the handmade WWI Memorial sign when it appeared on North Park, and I have been curious for years about the bronze plaques at the base of trees around Horseshoe Lake. Now I have the answer for both! What a wonderful way to honor the dead of WWI.

I bet many people don’t know the meaning of the plaques, which is a sad. Thank you to Al Oberst for working to restore them and to plant more trees, and to Maxwell Embrescia for writing the article.

Susan Murray
Cleveland Heights

The program provides educational and technical assistance to new community gardens, including soil testing, site visits and one-on-one advice, print and Internet resources, and networking and event opportunities. It also provides a community gardener training program and makes mini-grants for start-up materials and services, available through a competitive bidding process. More information is available online at http://cuyahoga.osu.edu.

Jeff Coryell is a visual artist, writer and former attorney. He was a candidate for City Council in 2011 and a former president of the Cleveland Heights Democrats.

Coffee for the common woman part 2

One of the earliest credible descriptions of the experience of drinking coffee comes from German physician and botanist, Leonard Rauwolf in the 1500s. He described coffee as “almost as black as ink and very good in illness…” Leonard was a people watcher. Just like myself, sitting here in Lana Bakery—too am keen to sit and people watch people—and their coffee.

Tiffany Lauffer

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15000 Woodworth Rd near East 152nd and Noble
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SUSTAINABLE HEIGHTS continued from page 2

You can imagine my complete confusion and alarm upon reading the inspection complaint, and, even more so, the accompanying notice of the warrant for my arrest on said violation. But here’s the thing: the mail was forwarded by the postal service to my current address, where I reside, on Meadowbrook in University Heights. I have not owned or occupied the Princeton Road, Cleveland Heights, property in question since August of 2004. Why is my name on the listing? Is this a harmless administrative error, to me it is frustrating on many levels. I strongly feel that, at the community level, residents of Cleveland Heights deserve competent services from their city, including properly managing records and enforcing laws. The added and indeed we are free to suspect that ALL of the necessary property ownership information needed to avoid mistakes like the one I contrived is available to everyone, free of charge, at the Cuyahoga County Fiscal Officer’s website. This parcel search service is free to everyone, including City of Cleveland Heights employees. As such, I would strongly suggest the City of Cleveland Heights do a little fact-checking of these types of issues BEFORE sending out erroneous, unwarranted and costly court summonses.

The cost of this one mistake isn’t outrageous, but I imagine that this isn’t an isolated incident. Better recordkeeping is essential if there is any hope of running a financially efficient operation. The time and process of the waste of certified mail that I received (violations inspection sheet, court documents, etc.) is certainly not what I would consider sound fiscal management. Given that the City of Cleveland Heights is already an extremely tax-heavy city that is burdensome to the majority of its residents, I think it’s fair to say doing some home-work first could certainly save residents a few hard-earned dollars.

Marcie Lambrix
University Heights

SUSTAINABLE HEIGHTS continued from page 2

Sure, being as we’re certain to have Oakwood. Round II in Cleveland Heights one of these days, I decided I’d better know what Shemo is all about. That’s one of my tricks, by the way. I gather facts. Then I reason. You’re familiar with Shemo really says.

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Copy of growing
FutureHeights launches dinner series to support local economy

Deanna Bremer Fisher

FutureHeights will launch a new dinner series in 2012 to raise funds for its community engagement programs and support its mission of creating a vibrant, sustainable future for the Heights by supporting the local economy.

FutureHeights plans to launch the series with a “Meet, Greet and Eat” dinner at Rockefeller’s Restaurant on Wednesday, Jan. 25. “We’re excited to launch this new effort,” said Richard Stewart, vice president of the FutureHeights Board of Directors and chair of the marketing committee. “Community members are invited to show their support by having dinner at Rockefeller’s anytime that evening. FutureHeights staff and board members will show up at various times to meet and greet all who attend.”

Patrons must bring the promotional flyer (available on page 7 of this issue of the Heights Observer and online). Rockefeller’s will then donate 15 percent of the food proceeds of each dinner check to FutureHeights. Rockefeller’s is also offering 10 percent off any bottle of wine. “We are thrilled to do this in support of FutureHeights,” said Michael Adams, Rockefeller’s owner and longtime Cleveland Heights resident. Since 2002, FutureHeights has worked to build community in the Heights by providing information, education and advocacy on issues that matter to Heights residents. In 2008, FutureHeights launched the Heights Observer community news project. “All citizens can contribute energy, ideas and action to strengthening their quality of life and place,” said Lloyd Bell, president of the FutureHeights Board of Directors. “Patronizing our locally-owned businesses is but one way to strengthen our local economy and build a strong, resilient community.”

“Housed in the former banking hall of the historic Heights Rockefeller Building, the restaurant is one of the coolest spaces for dining in the Heights. If you haven’t visited yet, and tasted the world-class cuisine of executive chef Jill Velda, now is your chance,” added Stewart.

For more information, call the FutureHeights office at 216-320-1423.

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

Jazzercise students raise funds for Cleveland Foodbank

Heights Observer Contributor

Since 2003, the Jazzercise students of instructor Mary Beth McCann have spent the holiday season raising money for worthy causes. In past years, the students raised money for needy families through the MetroHealth Foundation and Malachi House.

This year, McCann asked her students to nominate their favorite charities and vote to determine which would be the recipient of this year’s drive. The clear winner was the Cleveland FoodBank.

McCann uses several tactics to engage her students in raising money. A $20 donation enables a student to request a favorite routine for that week’s class. For $25, a student can request that her least favorite routine be dropped from the week. For $30, students can purchase a raffle ticket for a chance to win three months of Jazzercise classes, and McCann stages a “Bag-A-Buck” day when one student volunteers to wear reindeer ears, and other students drop $5 into the holiday bag he holds during class.

This year, McCann addressed the Foodbank’s need for peanut butter by giving students extra credit on their class attendance cards towards a free T-shirt when they brought in a jar of peanut butter.

McCann is proud of the generosity of her students. The donations provided 75 jars of peanut butter and $2,690 for the Cleveland FoodBank.

University Heights known as a wonderful place to live

Kazarian chose not to attend the ceremony. In an e-mail to Mayor Infeld, Kazarian declined the honor, saying, “I appreciate your consideration of me. However, I believe there are others who would be more appropriate recipients than I.”

University Heights also presented certificates of recognition to the Gesu Boys Baseball Team for winning the CYO City Championship and to Beachmont School’s Varsity Volleyball Team for advancing to the state semifinals.

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

County prosecutor candidates coming to Cleveland Heights

Anastasia Pantoicos

One of the most watched races in Cuyahoga County next year will be the one for county prosecutor. It is one of only two countywide offices authorized by the new charter, which was voted in place in 2005. It carries considerable power because it sets priorities for the types of crimes that are prosecuted more vigorously. When sitting prosecutor Bill Mason announced last year that he would not be seeking re-election, it left a wide-open field that has attracted six candidates so far, all Democrats.

Those candidates will be participating in a forum at the Cleveland Heights Community Center at 7 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 11. The forum is sponsored by the Cleveland Heights Democratic Club, and everyone is invited—Democrats, Republicans, Independents and undecided. Admission is free and open to all.

With no announced Republican challenger, it is likely that the winner of the Democratic primary—date to be decided—will be the next prosecutor. The Cuyahoga County Democratic Party executive committee did not issue an endorsement in the race, so the field is wide open. The candidates include Sobahd Chandra, former Cleveland law director and candidate for state attorney general; Stephanie Hall, former police woman and current Cuyahoga assistant prosecutor; Kevin Kelley, Cleveland City Councilmember; James McDonald, former North Royalton prosecutor; Judge Tim McGinty, who stepped down from the common pleas court to run; and Robert Trosino, former judge and former Cleveland law director.

Anastasia Pantoicos is a trustee of the Cleveland Heights Democratic Club

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Deanna Bremer Fisher is executive director of FutureHeights and publisher of the Heights Observer.
Be a good neighbor to a senior in need

Judy Eugene

The beginning of the New Year is a time when many of us resolve to make positive changes in our lives. This year, consider resolving to be a good neighbor to a senior adult in need.

Is there a senior in your neighborhood who lives alone, or a senior couple who have trouble getting around? It is common for older people to feel isolated and depressed, especially during the winter months when it is difficult for them to leave home.

There are many things we can do to reach out to our older neighbors. One of the most appreciated gifts is simply to spend time talking with them. Helping people feel special and cared about is one of the greatest gifts we can give.

Here are some ways to help our local seniors:

• Buy a Groupon and take a senior to dinner. (They will love that you didn’t pay full price.)
• Take someone to a class at the Cleveland Heights Senior Activity Center.
• Pick up groceries, or take someone to the store.
• Make an extra serving of dinner once a week to deliver to a senior.
• Help a senior cook a meal from a favorite family recipe—yours or theirs.
• Take a senior to the library to check out a book or movie, or to attend a class or discussion.
• Teach a senior to use the Internet or Skype.
• Stop by for tea once a week; bring a new tea flavor each time.
• Videotape a senior telling his or her life story and make copies for the family.
• Help a senior label family photos with names, dates and places.
• Ask for a list of their favorite songs, then download them onto a CD.
• Take a senior to a museum. (Call ahead for a wheelchair, if necessary)
• Take your child, grandchild, or pet to visit an older adult.
• Take a senior to a movie, or rent one for home viewing, with popcorn.
• Take someone to Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Park for Music and Movies night during the summer.
• Picnic with a senior at Shaker Lakes or Lakeview Cemetery.
• Take a senior on a nostalgic drive past the houses where he or she lived when they were younger.
• Call a senior before bedtime to ensure that he or she is OK.
• Best wishes to all of our readers for a wonderful New Year!

Judith Eugene, a native of Cleveland Heights, provides enrichment classes and activities for senior adults and those with physical and mental challenges. She can be reached at 216-428-9157 or Judy@ LovingLandsGroup.com.

John Carroll alumnus pledges $16 million to fund scholarships

Tonya Strong-Charles

John Carroll University alumnus Frank Schilling and his wife, Helen, have pledged a total of $16 million to endow scholarships for undergraduate students at the university. The Schillings had previously agreed to give $10 million to create the Schilling Endowed Scholars Program in 2004, but they now have increased their gift to $16 million. Rev. Robert L. Niehoff, president of John Carroll University, made the announcement at the university’s 125th Anniversary Gala, held Dec. 2. The gala capped a year-long celebration of John Carroll’s history and Jesuit educational tradition (see www.jcu.edu/125).

“The Schillings are among our most generous benefactors and the additional funding will be transformational for John Carroll University,” said Father Niehoff. “Their generosity has given—and will continue to give—the best students the opportunity to earn a John Carroll degree and make a positive difference in the world.” Currently, there are three Schilling scholars enrolled at John Carroll. The Schillings’ endowment will eventually fund more than 20 scholarships each year, which are renewable with continued academic achievement.

Schilling, a native of Newark, Ohio, is a member of John Carroll’s Class of 1951. He served in the Korean War and had a successful career at General Electric.

The Schillings reflected on the impact of their commitment to the university: “This is an investment in an institution we strongly believe in, and it will help the university recruit the very best students. We expect the scholar- ship recipients to understand that they, too, have an obligation to continue the tradition of giving in support of education.” All scholarship recipients will be asked to contribute to the fund after their graduation, to the best of their ability, so that the program continues to grow.

John Carroll University, founded in 1886 as Saint Ignatius College, is located in University Heights. The university was renamed in 1923 to honor America’s first Catholic bishop, John Carroll of Maryland. Its Jesuit Catholic mission inspires individuals to excel in learning, leadership, and service in the region and the world. John Carroll University is recognized nationally for an exceptional four-year graduation rate, teaching excellence, and a commitment to living a faith that does justice to its mission. John Carroll is one of 28 Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States.

Tonya Strong-Charles is the director of media relations and communications at John Carroll University.

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Support FutureHeights as you enjoy an elegant evening of food and drinks

Wednesday, January 25th starting at 4:00 pm

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Present this Flyer to your Bartender or Server and 15% of food proceeds will go to benefit FutureHeights

www.futureheights.org
HRRC’s repair workshops now open to all

Rebecca Stager

Residents of all communities can now attend the Home Repair Resource Center’s (HRRC) home repair workshops. Previously, workshop participation had been limited to Cleveland Heights residents.

“Upcoming classes include HRRC’s popular electrical and plumbing series,” said Kathryn Lad, HRRC director. “Reservations are required, and I would encourage early registration—especially for these classes—as they can fill quickly.”

“HRRC has kept workshop fees modest,” she continued. “Classes are $30 for Cleveland Heights residents and $55 for nonresidents, with scholarships available to low-income Cleveland Heights residents.”

Professional tradespeople serve as instructors, and most classes are held at HRRC’s teaching center, 3250 Noble Road, from 7-9 p.m., on Monday evenings.

For additional information, including a schedule of upcoming workshops, visit www.hrrc.org, or call 216-371-6000, Ext. 16.

Bucky Stager is the home repair education coordinator at the Home Repair Resource Center.

Heights organizations receive CAC grants

Deanna Bremer Fisher

At its Dec. 12 meeting, the Cuyahoga Arts & Culture’s (CAC) Board of Trustees approved 66 general operating grants, totaling $3,086,660, to arts and cultural organizations in Cuyahoga County in 2012.

Height-based organizations received a total of $55,076 in general operating support. Apollo’s Fire received $97,094; the Contemporary Youth Orchestra, $27,696; Dobama Theatre, $35,683; Heights Arts, $22,909; Heights Youth Theatre, $19,144; the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, $60,711; and Roots of American Music, $41,148.

“General Operating Support (GOS) grants strengthen our community by providing critical support to Cuyahoga County’s arts and cultural organizations,” said Karen Gahl-Mills, executive director of CAC. “These investments play a key role in keeping Cuyahoga County’s great cultural institutions available and accessible to all in our community.”

“We’ve been receiving Cuyahoga County tax dollars since the voters passed Issue 11 in 2006,” said Peggy Spath, director of Heights Arts. “We are very lucky to live where people recognize that public sector funding is essential to the sustainability of arts and culture. We return every tax dollar invested by the public many times over in the services that we provide to our community.”

The GOS grant program is designed to provide unrestricted core support for established, fiscally sound arts or cultural organizations in Cuyahoga County that consistently offer high-quality services to a broad audience. The GOS grants are offered every two years through a highly competitive application process. The grants announced on Dec. 12 represent funding for the second year of the cycle.

Since 2007, CAC has invested more than $80 million in 282 local arts and cultural organizations. In 2009, CAC grants generated nearly $80 million in local economic activity and supported 3,000 local jobs. For more information, visit www.cacgrants.org or call 216-371-8939.

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

Cleveland Peace Action to reveal military/wars funding

Nina McAllan

On Jan. 17, at 7 p.m. at the Lee Road Library, Cleveland Peace Action will present “Our Tax Dollars Off To War,” led by longtime Cleveland Heights resident Francis Chiappa, Cleveland Peace Action copresident. The program is free and open to the public, and will be followed by discussion.

Chiappa’s presentation will show how the military/war budget has grown and how the Pentagon uses tax dollars (the United States accounts for about 47 percent of the world’s total military spending). He will contrast America’s military spending to its spending on domestic needs.

“Cleveland Peace Action believes that if we can know the amount of military spending, and where it goes, useful public discussion can occur regarding trade-offs between domestic and military spending, to decide which expenditures make us more or less secure,” said Chiappa.

“By now the public knows that the congressional ‘Super Committee,’ assigned to cut $1.2 trillion from the national budget, failed its assigned mission,” he said, “thus triggering mandated cuts of about $1 trillion from domestic and military budgets to commence in 2013.”

“While we don’t yet know where and how these cuts will happen,” Chiappa continued, “we do know that Ohio communities will be severely impacted. Vital funding for social programs, schools, hospitals, Great Lakes cleanup, the Cuyahoga National Park, and domestic safety net programs are on the chopping block. Meanwhile, military proponents are trying to shield the Pentagon budget from cuts, claiming any funding reduction jeopardizes U.S. security.”

Chiappa said that Cleveland Heights taxpayers will pay $77.4 million for proposed Department of Defense spending for 2013, and paid $22.5 million more for the Afghanistan war in 2010. “That’s a total of almost $100 million,” he said. “Cleveland Peace Action believes that, as responsible citizens, we must learn the vital facts then act upon them.”

Chiappa’s activism goes back to 1984 when he was a leader of the Cleveland Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign. Then, joined by other Heights area residents, he raised public awareness about the dangers of nuclear weapons and organized opposition to nuclear testing, along with a call for nuclear weapons abolition. He was involved in numerous anti-nuclear demonstrations in downtown Cleveland, at the Nevada test site, and in the Great Peace March that came through Cleveland in 1986.

The national anti-nuclear movement evolved with a broadened agenda in 1993 to become Peace Action Today. Today, it is the largest grassroots peace group in the United States, with affiliate chapters in 27 states and national office near Washington, D.C.

Following the Jan. 17 presentation, Cleveland Peace Action will ask area city councils to pass a “New Priorities” resolution, similar to those passed in other cities around the country. The resolution will ask Congress to end the wars, cut military spending and prioritize spending on community needs.

To learn more about Cleveland Peace Action, visit www.peacelincleveland.org.

Nina McAllan is copresident of Cleveland Peace Action.

UH senior citizen happenings

Sherry Wronski

Jan. 12, 2 p.m.
Lisa Cellura, outreach educator for Cleveland Sight Center, will present the award-winning video, “Hope & Cope: Living with Macula Degeneration.”

Jan. 19, 2 p.m.
John Habat, facing challenges as the new executive director of Great Cleveland Habitat for Humanity,

Jan. 26, 2 p.m.
Caitlin Lynch, concert violinist in the doctoral program at the Cleveland Institute of Music, and scholarship student in Judson Manor’s Intergenerational Initiative, will perform a medley of classical and popular compositions.

Sherry Wronski is the administrative assistant to Mayor Susan Infeld of the City of University Heights.

Cleveland Heights Observer January 4, 2012
Cleveland Heights City Council

Meeting highlights

NOVEMBER 21, 2011
All council members were present.

Transportation study
Council authorized an agreement with Michael Baker Jr. Inc. for a Missing Links Transportation Planning Study to identify improvements needed to facilitate alternate means of transportation from Cleveland Heights to the Greater University Circle area. The city, RTA, and University Circle Inc. were awarded a grant for this study by the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency. The amount of the contract is $93,750; $75,000 will be covered by the grant and $18,750 will be paid by the city.

Curbef changes
In a six-to-one vote, council approved amendments to the minors’ curbfe order in accordance to:

- Extend certain curbfe provisions to the Severance Business District.
- Clarify language, as well as clarify and expand the exceptions to the curbfe order.

Curbfe had previously established the 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. curbfe for juveniles, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian, in the Coventry Village and Cedar Lee business districts. That ordinance also allowed for the establishment of temporary special curbfe areas. Since its enactment, improvements in the affected areas seem to indicate that the curbfe, and its subsequent amendments, have been effective. Given verified reports of problems in the Severance Business District, council is sitting to build in exceptions for a national approach to the problem. Council Member Ken Montlack

noted the useful input from the community and acknowledged that the curbfe is not a “silver bullet,” but is one of a group of actions. Earlier in the meeting several residents expressed concern about the curbfe limiting the freedoms of children who are not causing problems and stating that problems continue to exist outside the curbfe area. Montlack maintained that safety and security are the most critical obligations of city government. Council Member Dennis R. Wilcox voted no on the measure saying it is too controlling and too punishing of those who are law-abiding. She said she understands the need for safety and security, but wants young people to feel they are growing up in a free society. She would like to see the city explore other alternatives. Mayor Kelley stated that he will support the ordinance because of the responsibility to maintain safety in the city.

Nuisance properties
Council declared two neglected properties on Brunswick Road (house numbers 954 and 956) to be nuisances and authorized abatement. The properties likely will be razed if repairs are not satisfactorily made.

Taylor Road resurfacing
The Taylor Road resurfacing project is scheduled to begin in April 2012 and will include not repair and resurfacing of the road from Euclid Heights Boulevard to Bayview Road, but also a reduction in speed limits from 45 to 30 miles per time.

LWV observer: Katherine Solender.

DECEMBER 5, 2011
Council member Dennis R. Wilcox was absent.

Overnight street parking
Council approved the suspension of enforcement of parking violations on selected streets in high-density housing areas (Kennington, Hillcrest, Bella
glen, Maymont and Eddington roads) from Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, 2012, in order to provide for on-street overnight permit parking. Permits will be available for sale at a cost of $100 per quarter.

City expenditures
Two ordinances relating to city expenditures, one making adjustments to eight fund categories for the fiscal year ending Dec. 31, 2011 and a second making adjustments for expenditures in the 2012 fiscal year, were presented on first reading.

Clarification of special funds
Council passed legislation to clarify the purpose of special revenue funds (the Local Programming Fund and the Ring Road Restoration Fund) and to clarify the legal authority to make transfers or temporary advances from the city’s funds in keeping with the city’s appropriation ordinances. With this legislation council declares that the two funds are not restricted, but are “assigned balance funds” intended to be used for local programming and reconstruction of the Ring Road. Money in these funds may be transferred and used for any public purpose determined by the city council or the city manager.

Municipal court construction work
In order to provide for additional construction work needed in connection with the Cleveland Heights Municipal Court technology and security upgrade project, council amended an agreement with Royal Cabinet Design Company Inc. The amount to be paid is $10,497.

Kent Road waterline replacement
Council authorized a contract with Mackey Engineering and Surveying Company for engineering and surveying services in connection with replacing a waterline in Kent Road. The cost will be $19,900.

Sewer work on Delamere and Glenwood roads
Council approved an agreement with Northeast Ohio Trenching Service for emergency sewer repairs and partial storm sewer replacements at Delamere Road and Glenwood Road. The cost will be $56,726.

Unsalted side streets
Mayor Edward Kelley reminded residents to drive carefully this winter, especially on side streets, which the city does not salt.

LWV Observer: Katherine Solender.

Look for clearer, and often expanded, postings of meeting summaries online at www.heightsobserver.org.

These meeting summaries are abstracted from LWV observer’s written reports. The summaries have been added and prepared by Ann McFarland, Charlene Morse and Maryann Barnes. To receive e-mail postings of full reports, send an e-mail to mbarnes9515@gmail.com to join a Google group using “LWV Cleveland Heights observer reports” as a search phrase.

The summary is based on the observer’s observation and selected highlights of public meetings and are not official statements of the Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters Cuyahoga Area. This disclaimer must accompany any redistribution of these reports.

Cleveland Heights honors sports teams

Cleveland Heights High School Women’s Soccer team.

On Dec. 15, the City of Cleveland Heights honored Heights High School Girls’ Soccer team with a Special Recognition Night at the Community Center. A spokes person for the city said, “The city was honoring our young people, and their coaches and families, for their dedication, discipline and teamwork.”

The sports teams honored were: Community of Saints Football team, Roxbury School Varsity Volleyball team, Beaumont School Varsity Cross Country team, Beaumont School Tennis team, Heights High School Men’s Soccer team.

Cleveland Heights High School Men’s Soccer team.

On Dec. 15, the City of Cleveland Heights honored Heights High School Men’s Soccer team, Heights High School Cheerleaders, and Heights High School Varsity Football team.

Pictured are the members of the Heights High School Women’s Soccer team, their coaches, and are members of Cleveland Heights City Council.

“It was special to be in a packed room, full of our Cleveland Heights youth that are accomplish- ing great things,” said Council Member Jason Stein.

These young people represent our future, and our future looks bright!”

Cleveland Heights is a great place to live, work, and raise our families.”

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University Heights City Council
Meeting highlights

NOVEMBER 21, 2011
Mayor Susan Infeld was absent.

Police and fire personnel
Council passed ordinances requiring that mem-
bers of the police and fire departments live in ei-
er in the Coventry or an adjacent county.

Mutual Aid Agreement with JCU
A Mutual Aid Agreement with John Carroll Uni-
versity (JCU) for the provision of police services
was presented on first reading. Police Chief
Hammett explained that the agreement would
provide additional resources within a Mutual Aid
Agreement area outside the University’s bound-
aries, particularly on Friday and Saturday nights.
Councilman Steven Bullock stated that the safety
committee met with the mayor and police chief
to review the agreement and recommends its
passage. UHPD would remain the primary law
enforcement agency responsible for investigating
felony and misdemeanor offenses within Univer-
sity Heights, including the agreement area. JCU
police would provide assistance upon request.
JCU police have authority to handle minor
misdemeanors, but not felonies. Councilman
Steven Sims asked for more information about
what constitutes the Mutual Aid Agreement area.
It applies to the campus, Geis Parich and proper-
ties, the “zone,” which includes specific houses on
surrounding streets. The law director will also
look at clarifying the area boundaries.

Assistant clerk of council
With the dissenting vote council approved estab-
lishing the part-time position of assistant clerk of
council with compensation up to $15 per hour,
depending on qualifications. The assistant clerk of
council shall have the same rights as perma-
nent part-time employees of the city. Councilman
Karen Patrick Murphy voted no, but there was no
discussion.

Emergency services billings
Councilman Bullock, safety committee chair,
reported new guidelines for emergency services
billings and collections. The Lifeforce agency will
send letters to residents who have no insurance
and high deductible with a hope of collecting, but
no further action. Names of nonresidents who fail
to respond to the letters will be sent to a collection
agency. Indigents who can prove hardship
will have their cases dropped. Jennifer Esrey, finance
director, looked into collection agencies and recom-
manded First Federal Credit Control, which has a
high success rate, although the 35 percent fee is 10
percent higher than others. First Federal will handle
only those cases sent to them by Lifeforce, and will
bill on to the clients collected. No vote was required as
this is an administrative function.

Patrolman Kyle Nietert
Council passed a resolution honoring Patrolman
Kyle Nietert as Public Servant of the Year. Patrol-
man Nietert was the first responder to the fire on
Milton Road in July 2011, and rescued the family
from the burning home.

Is UH council at risk of becoming a rubber stamp?

Anita Kazarian

In the past four years, University Heights City Council has kept a watchful eye on the city adminis-
tration, exercising the checks and balances of government, as they
should. This will change with the 2012 council.

Many on the new council, along with the mayor, have close ties to one another and to Jeffrey H. Friedman, an attorney. Most members are supported and/or endorsed by both the mayor and Friedman.

This change is important to un-
derstand. Why? With a cozy relation-
ship among our elected officials, legis-
lation and administrative action may be
expedited—expedited with the strict scrutiny that protects taxpayer
interest, and expedited without full disclosure and public discussion.

Jeffrey Friedman is active in city politics, raising money to support favored candidates. Although he main-
tains a house in University Heights,

Friedman is actually a homestead resident of Marco Island, Florida, and is registered to vote there, not in Uni-
versity Heights.

The 2012 council members are Pam Cameron, Tom Cozzens, Phil Ertel, Franklin Goldberg, Susan Pardee, Steve Sims and Adele Zucker.

The newly-elected members—
Zucker, Cozzens and Cameron—are Friedman’s hand-picked candidates and come with the active support of Mayor Susan Infeld and former Mayor Beryl Rothchild.

These ties also extend to Pardee and Ertel. In 2008, then Council-
woman Zucker had one appointment to make to the charter review com-
mission and she appointed Pardee, Friedman’s hand-picked candidates and
with the active support of Mayor Susan Infeld and former Mayor Beryl Rothchild.

With this much alignment before people are even elected, it raises the concern of expensive consequences for the taxpayer.

For example, in June 2011 the mayor presented council with an ordi-
nance to create a new city job—human resources manager. Council members refused to create the costly new staff
position, citing that our city is small, departments are cutting back employ-
ees, and other, less expensive options, are available to taxpayers.

In November 2011, the growing election of the Friedman slate, Infeld said she will reintroduce the ordinance to the new council with the expecta-
tion that the motion will pass.

Meanwhile, the city is running without a full-time finance director at a time when it faces major budget challenges and cuts. Sims, a former
certified public accountant, heads the finance committee.

Sims will need the cooperation of the mayor and the new council members if he is to successfully help navigate our city through responsible
budget cuts.

Jeffrey Friedman enters the picture again. In his Oct. 6 letter to the San
Press, he made derogatory statements about Sims. Neither the mayor nor
the new council members distanced themselves from the Friedman state-
ments.

By not distancing themselves, they may attempt to marginalize the only person left at city hall with a strong background in finance. The only influ-
ence we expect of our elected officials is from UH residents.

We face questions about back-
yard garbage pickup, combining our fire department with another city, to
name just two. We look forward to real transparency from this administration and council. We hope council will not become simply a “rubber stamp.”

Anita Kazarian is a marketing profession-
al, founder of Noah’s Landing, and one of the
two council candidates who withdrew from the Friedman slate. She can be reached at anitakazarian@gmail.com.

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS’

December 5, 2011
Councilman Phil Ertel was absent.

Patrolman Kyle Nietert
Council passed a resolution honoring Patrolman
Kyle Nietert as Public Servant of the Year. Patrol-
man Nietert was the first responder to the fire on
Milton Road in July 2011, and rescued the family
from the burning home.

Anita Kazarian

Mayor Infeld issued a proclamation naming Anita
Kazarian Citizen of the Year.

JCU Mutual Aid Agreement
Council authorized a Mutual Aid Agreement
with John Carroll University (JCU) for the provision of police services.

The agreement area includes the JCU campus, the Green-Rose Annex (old Temple
Emanc E), and a list of properties owned by the university. At the request of Geis Parich, the agree-
ment area also includes the parish properties.

City police will be the primary law enforce-
ment agency within the city, including all prop-
erty within established university boundaries. They
will respond to calls for service and investigate
felony and misdemeanors offenses. University
police will have authority to take enforcement
action within university boundaries, and outside
university boundaries, in accordance with the
terms of the agreement and when assistance is
requested by city police. They will investigate
and take corrective action for minor misde-
meanor violations that occur in their presence
within university boundaries. Both departments
will notify each other of felony and misdemeanor
offenses that occur within the agreement area.

Vice-Mayor Goldsberg and Friedman asked about appearances for
minor misdemeanors. Steve
Hammett, police chief, said normally that would be handled by the university, unless discussion of the case with the city indicates a need to take it to the Shaker Heights court.

LWV observer: Patricia C. Solomon.

WWW;heightsobserver.org

See disclaimer on page 7.
The Wine Spot opens on Lee Road

Deanna Bremer Fisher

The Wine Spot, a purveyor of wine and microbrew beers opened on Lee Road on Dec. 16. The opening, attended by an estimated 400 people, featured the inaugural exhibit of The Art Spot, a student-run gallery exhibiting the works of Cleveland Institute of Art (CIA) students.

Four of the student paintings were sold during the opening, and Wine Spot owner Adam Fleischer said he expects the exhibit to be the first of many quarterly shows of student work.

“The cooperative gallery venture is one of many partnerships that The Wine Spot hopes to cultivate with local artists and artisans,” said Fleischer.

Fleischer worked to preserve the history of the building, which had once been home to Bruder’s Dairy and, most recently, Seitz-Agin Hardware. One of the many surprises discovered during renovation of the 95-year-old building was the tile floor, bearing the Bruder’s Dairy name, which contractor Kevin Monroe found beneath three layers of linoleum. Fleischer decided to preserve the floor, which, though imperfect, adds to the store’s character.

“Monroe Constructs designed the store, counters, custom racks and cooler—all of the cool stuff in the store,” said Fleischer. “I think it captures the essence of the Heights area—reclaimed, organic, old, new and beautiful.”

Fleischer said that all of the tables were built from repurposed wood by A Piece of Cleveland. “The pine tables came from an apartment building on Eddy Road and the purple-heart tasting table is from the Lakewood High park bleachers,” he said. Attached to each piece is a certificate with information about its origins.

Custom-made racks line one wall and feature wines from throughout the world, including domestic wines. “We are building up our Ohio wine section slowly as we develop relationships with local vintners,” said Fleischer.

A large cooler of microbrews lines the opposite wall. “Our beers are from the United States, Scotland, Germany, Belgium, France, with many more coming in. Our focus is on small-batch craft beers and mead,” Fleischer said.

A large bar and comfortable furniture make the large space seem cozy and comfortable. There is a private tasting room for business presentations and social events. Fleischer plans to provide opportunities to educate customers on the unique qualities of the wines and beers he sells.

True to Fleischer’s goal of promoting partnerships with local businesses, The Wine Spot offers chocolates, provided by landlord Bill Mitchell, owner of Mitchell’s Fine Chocolates, to accompany the wines.

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

Irish and independent, Parnell’s Pub celebrates 15 years

Elizabeth Synnott

For more years than anyone can remember, 2167 Lee Road, next door to the Cedar Lee Theatre, has been a bar. For the last 15 years, it has been the Charles Stewart Parnell Pub, under the watchful eye and keep of Irish-born owner Declan Synnott. Better known in the neighborhood as simply Parnell’s Pub, it’s likely the old oak bar holds more stories and secrets than most high school students.

Arriving in Boston in 1994 from County Meath, Ireland, Synnott was enticed to move to Cleveland by the promise of opening a family-owned Irish restaurant—Flannery’s on East 4th Street. After opening and managing the place for a few years, he knew it was time for him to have his turn.

Enter Parnell’s on Lee Road, Feb. 1, 1997. After a time, Synnott bought out his partner, Sean Gormley, and Parnell’s became a one-man show. Last year, when Synnott tied the knot with a local lass, Parnell’s became a family-owned Irish pub.

(For signs of another family expansion early this year.)

Now settled in Cleveland Heights, Synnott is an active member of the Cedar Lee SID. In addition to running a bar and pouring pints all night, he somehow finds time to lobby Congress and attend neighborhood improvement meetings.

Synnott has created a friendly atmosphere for both 20-somethings and older patrons. No matter who you are, as you walk through the old oak door and sitle up to the bar, you are surrounded by friends and a special coziness found only in a true Irish pub.

On Friday, Jan. 27, Synnott and his staff invite guests to celebrate the 15th anniversary of this independent Heights business. Partnering with Thirsty Dog Brewing Company of Akron (which is celebrating its 10th anniversary in February) the hosts challenge you to “Drink us out of glassware” for the night. Buy a pint and keep the commemorative glass—when they’re gone, they’re gone for good. (Well, maybe they’ll bring them back for their next milestone anniversary.)

Although the price of a proper “imperial pint” may have risen over time, two things have stayed the same—the quality and the craic (loosely translated as “fun, entertainment, and enjoyable conversation”).

Elizabeth Synnott is the Cleveland Heights Heights Observer.

‘Lunites’ to gain more room soon

Hugh Fisher

Die-hard denizens of Luna Bakery and Cafe will no longer have to brave the cold and drizzle in order to enjoy their crepes and pots de creme au chocolate. The popular spot at Fairmount and Cedar is small, and close to one-half of its available seating is on its outdoor patio. With only about 25 seats inside, panini munchers and kids eating cupcakes could be found seated outside even on the worst of days.

But there is good news for those dedicated Lunites. The cafe and bakery is expanding its indoor dining area. This is being accomplished by expanding into the space next door, walling off a portion of one of the dining rooms occupied by The Mad Greek.

Lunites can expect at least 20 more seats. Construction is underway and the new space is expected to be completed in early January.

Hugh Fisher lives in the Cedar Fairmount neighborhood.

Hugh Fisher
The judges of the Heights Libraries fourth annual photography contest faced a challenge selecting ten finalists from more than 75 entries. “This year’s theme, Focus on the World, really inspired our contestants,” said Jennifer Greene, contest organizer and adult services librarian. “This year’s entries were fantastic—it was hard to choose!”

Staff from both the Heights Libraries and Cedar Center MotoPhoto, the contest sponsor, whittled the entries down to ten finalists. During November, the top ten photographs were displayed for one week at each library branch, where library visitors could view them and vote for their favorites. In total, 650 votes were cast, resulting in the following five winners:

First Place: Victoria Dumesh, “Blue Hydrangeas and Fruit.”

Second Place: Keith Lubbers, “At Least Someone EnJOyed All the Rain This Year.”

Third Place: Chela Crinnion, “Coca-Cola Sculpture in Costa Rica”

Fourth Place: Carl Jenks, “Petra Through Crack—Sinai Peninsula.”

Fifth Place: Nora Eagan, “The Boy in the Alley.”

Cedar Center MotoPhoto provided the contest prizes, which included a one-year membership to Club MOTO, archival reproductions of the winning photographs, and gift certificates. The winning photos are on display at the Lee Road Library and online at www.heightslibrary.org.

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

Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library Board Meeting highlights

NOVEMBER 21, 2011

All board members were present.

Sound system for meeting rooms

The board approved the purchase of a complete sound and projector system for the meeting rooms at the Lee Road Library in the amount of $11,521. The system will work for individual rooms or all three rooms when a large community meeting takes place.

Two retirements

Board president Audrey Cole read the retirement resolutions for Leslie Copers and Nancy R. Jamieson. Copers, circulation supervisor of the Coventry Village Library, is retiring after 31 years of outstanding service. The resolution praises her patience and welcoming attitude toward new staff. “She has survived the ideas and changes of all five managers who have moved the collection this way, that way and back again . . . . And she has accepted it all with bering good humor . . . .”

Jamieson, who began at the library as a page in 1989, was promoted to full-time children’s services clerk in 1995, and became technical services assistant in 2007, where she was known for her expertise in processing children’s materials and was awarded the title Queen of labels.

Heights Library’s Five-Star Library

Nancy Levin, library director, was pleased to announce that the library has again been designated as a Five-Star Library by Library Journal.

Celebration of Harvey Pekar

Approximately 90 people attended the celebration of the art and life of author Harvey Pekar on Oct. 25.

October public service report highlights

• The Science Fiction and Fantasy Book Club is the latest discussion group at the Lee Road Library and began with a discussion of The Sparrow by local author Mary Doria Russell.

• The fourth annual library photography contest, sponsored by the Cedar Center MotoPhoto had 82 submissions and ten finalists. Library patrons can vote for their favorites and winners will be announced on Dec. 5.

• Teen librarian Jessica Robinson organized a week of events for the annual Teen Read Week. About 40 teens attended each day.

• Librarians Sam Lupides and Amanda Roms were co-presenters of “The New Face of Reader’s Advocacy” at the Ohio Library Council conference.

• At Coventry Village Library, the October author series featured Emily Mitchell, who spoke about her novel The Last Summer of the World. More than 70 people attended.

• At Noble Neighborhood Library, Friday Reading Rumpus attracted 97 children and caregivers at four story times in October.

Look for earlier and often expanded presentations of meeting summaries online at www.heightslibrary.org.

See disclaimer on page 7.
Master facilities planning for CH-UH schools is underway

Angee Shaker

Approximately 100 residents participated in the first community meeting for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District facilities master plan on Nov. 30. The meeting was an opportunity for the district to share its educational vision and explain the planning process to the community. It also provided residents with a means to communicate their priorities and goals.

“This is our moment,” Superintendent Doug Heuer said. “Now is the time for our well-educated, vibrant, well-intentioned community to come together and reinvent itself for a successful future.”

During the meeting, Dave Tabor, a parent in the district and a member of the school facilities committee, explained the first phase of the work. He focused on how the committee, comprising parents, teachers and school administrators, validated a report by the Ohio School Facilities Commission last year that stated the district’s facilities were outdated, inefficient, and in need of an updated plan.

Following Tabor’s presentation, James Seaney, the project leader from Fielding Nair International Architects, one of the three architectural firms the district contracted to work on the project, presented his firm’s initial findings. Seaney’s firm has designed schools throughout the country and around the world.

“Our team has never received this much feedback from a community meeting,” he said. “This level of engagement and feedback will be enormously helpful.”

Following the discussions, attendees offered feedback and suggested their priorities. One list of priorities included aligning facilities to educational programs; balancing historic preservation with new construction; environmental sustainability; flexible learning spaces (but not open classrooms); globally-connected schools; spaces for community education; reasonable initial project cost; neighborhood-connected schools; manageable operating costs; safety and security; support for the arts; support for families and children; and support for healthy living.

Three additional community meetings are scheduled for 2012. They will be held from 6:30–8:30 p.m. on Jan. 11, Feb. 22, and March 21 in the social room at Heights High. Parents are encouraged to attend and to bring their children. Childcare, food, and thousands of Legos will be available.

The master facilities team will summarize community input from the first meeting, and participants will once again have an opportunity to discuss priorities during the Jan. 11 meeting.

Angee Shaker is director of communications for the CH-UH City School District.

Expanding music instruction

Joy Henderson

Dan Heim, Heights High orchestra teacher, teaches students to read and play orchestral music, but he also wants them to learn contemporary music. “We want to encourage students to create music spontaneously and creatively,” said Heim. To help teach students to improvise, Heim invited master jazz vibraphonist Christian Howes to lead three master classes that culminated in an informal concert on Nov. 30.

“To improvise, you use what you know,” told the students. “You will use your knowledge of scales, chords, harmony and rhythm.” With those building blocks, students can improvise and play with other musicians in less structured environments.

This emphasis on improvisation is part of the required course of music study in Ohio. When Heim met Howes at an Ohio Music Education Association conference, he knew that Howes’s approach would resonate with students.

Howes brought his electric violin and effects pedals and played jazz, classical, reggae and R&B. He helped students follow a basic line and then join in with a melody. He encouraged the drummer to improvise and create grooves for the group to follow.

At the concert, students practiced improvisation in many different forms. The students spoke enthusiastically about the work and trying something new. They were especially drawn to the electric violin.

Joy Henderson is the parent/community liaison at Heights High.
Third grade reading guarantee

Angela Shaker

During the 2010–11 school year, the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District reviewed its resources to ensure that all children experience a challenging curriculum. The district’s goal is to have every student reading at or above grade level by the end of third grade.

Meetings with elementary teachers were conducted on three occasions to gather feedback and suggestions regarding the strengths of the district and changes that would better support its students. The common themes presented by teachers were to eliminate interruptions during instructional time, increase instructional time in English Language Arts (ELA) and math, reduce the student-to-teacher ratio for struggling students, and provide an alternative for addressing the wide range of students’ abilities within each classroom. From these meetings, the district’s performance grouping structure was created and organized.

A Q&A with Kelly Stukus, coordinator of educational services, follows:

Q. What has been the reaction from teachers?
A. The teachers have enthusiastically embraced the structure for performance grouping of students. Their positive energy was observable during our first district ELA sessions held in October for teachers in grades one through four. During these sessions, teachers had the opportunity to share what they liked about the reorganized structure and to identify additional resources needed to support their students.

Q. What has been the reaction from students?
A. During our ongoing teacher feedback sessions, it has been noted that new student leaders are emerging. These new leaders are emerging because of the opportunity they have to more actively participate by speaking up and taking risks. A second grade teacher shared that he has seen a decrease in student behavior problems and an increase in student motivation.

Q. Any parental input yet?
A. We are putting a parental feedback structure into place. Three parents are being identified at every school. The parent group will work together to address topics including, but not limited to, the following:
- Educating parents about ELA assessments, flexibility, reading behaviors, and serving as an informational resource for other parents;
- Discussing the role of parents in student achievement;
- Acquiring strategies for supporting the achievement of all CH-UH children;
- Creating a plan for welcoming new members into the school community.

Q. What types of benchmarks are in place to determine how it is working? What were the results?
A. Currently we are using observational assessments to determine what is working and where additional support is needed. These observations are gleaned through weekly on-site school visits and continued feedback sessions with teachers. In grades one and two, students are being assessed on their reading level during the month of November. This is one current source of data to determine student growth, as well as day-to-day teacher observations of student performance.

Q. What are some of the downsides?
A. Some of the downsides include the need to increase the number of staff members for our ELA support team as a result of new students entering our district with below-grade-level reading levels. This unanticipated need has caused a re-examination of district resources. An additional downside is that even with the increased instructional time during the ELA block, teachers are reporting that there is still not enough time to provide quality instruction in all the components of the Literacy Framework. We continue to look for ways to be more efficient with the time we have.

Q. Overall, how would you say the performance grouping is going?
A. Performance grouping has enabled teachers to focus instruction on meeting students’ needs because the range is smaller. This enables the teacher to spend more time with students, meeting them where they are, so that all students grow to their potential. In previous years, students were instructed in home-room groupings for ELA instruction for shorter lengths of time. Student needs ranged from below-grade-level to above-grade-level readers within one classroom. Our new performance grouping structure provides the opportunity for more individualized student attention within a larger block of instructional time.

Q. What changes will be made next year?
A. At this point, it is too early to say what changes will be made. Teachers will have more strategies and tools to draw from at the conclusion of the year because they will have experienced a full year of performance grouping with students. This experience will increase everyone’s understanding of the Literacy Framework and how to provide all students with individualized attention so that individual student needs are met.

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

Merengue in Spanish class

Heights High students in Olivia Fatika’s Spanish classes spend several days each year learning the traditional dances from Spanish-speaking countries. A dance instructor from Cleveland Irving and Salus recently taught students the merengue. “When students learn a culture’s dance traditions, they learn more about the people and history,” Fatika said. “The dances tell a story and express emotions between the dancers.”

The students in Fatika’s freshmen honors class were enthusiastic learners, taking direction from instructor Christina DaZoppo about foot, hip, shoulder, and hand movement. Then they advanced to more complicated turns and slides. DaZoppo began the instruction by demonstrating and talking to the students through the motions. The next step was to add music…, and that is when the fun started. The lively merengue music, coupled with the dance instruction, energized the room. The students caught on to the dance quickly and let the music and energy guide their movement.

Merengue dance and music is originally from the Dominican Republic but is popular in all areas of Latin America.

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

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Heights High senior to play in Army All-American football game

Angie Shaker

Some teachers say that they learn as much from their some of their students as their students learn from them. Kyle Dodson, senior at Cleveland Heights High School, is one of those students.

An offensive lineman for the Tigers, Dodson will play in the U. S. Army All-American Football Bowl game on Jan. 7, in the Alamodome, in San Antonio, Texas. He is one of 90 high school seniors who were chosen to play in this prestigious game.

It sometimes takes a lifetime to learn the skills Kyle Dodson possesses. “Kyle is a gift from God,” said Jeff Rotsky, head coach for the Heights Tigers football team. “He is a kid who has battled so much adversity and never gave up. He’s one of the finest young men I’ve ever had the privilege to coach. If he continues to progress, and I believe he will, we will be proud to watch him on Sundays.”

In 2005, Dodson’s mother was killed when a driver, high on crack cocaine and fleeing the police, slammed into her car as she drove home from a shopping trip with a friend. Kyle was 11 years old. Since that day, his memories of his mother, and the crash, have motivated him to do his best—on and off the field. Dodson has also experienced frustration from injuries that threatened to keep him from the sport he loves. At the beginning of his junior year, a back injury kept Dodson benched for seven games. His doctors told him he might never play football again.

Later in the season, however, the pain disappeared and Dodson received clearance to play. He came back more determined than ever, running extra drills with teammates and scaling the school stairs on Sundays.

Dodson’s determination and leadership skills helped the Tigers achieve an undefeated season and advance to the playoffs. To his teammates, he is an inspiration.

Dodson will be attending the University of Wisconsin in the fall, where he will play freshman football. Meanwhile, CH-UH will be watching on Jan. 7 and cheering for this local football star.

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

Harvard professor outlines changes needed in children’s education

Krista Hawthorne

It’s not just the economy that makes employers nervous about the future, said Ronald F. Ferguson, senior lecturer in education and public policy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. According to Ferguson, “Big employers are scared that we will not be able to replace the baby boomers when they retire” with young people equipped with the basic skills needed. As our population shifts racially, Ferguson added, our emerging workforce will be “disproportionally from our lowest achieving groups” unless all students make dramatic gains in achievement.

Ferguson spoke recently at Plymouth Church in Shaker Heights as part of the City Club of Cleveland’s Speaker Series. He has conducted more than 30 years of research on how to reduce economic and educational disparities in schools. He believes we need a movement toward excellence with equity. “We need a culture change, a lifestyle change on a national basis” in our approach to education, he said.

One important change he suggested is to bring adults who are satisfied with their lives into classrooms to talk about the pathways they followed. Employers and organizations could help schools arrange monthly visits from adults in a variety of professions, and range of incomes, to give students a “whole menu of possible selves.”

Adolescent peer culture plays a significant role in achievement. Ferguson emphasized the need to help students create a “creativity to succeed.” Studies show that they want to succeed but feel they have to “openly aspire to high achievement.” He suggested creating a parallel grading system that measures improvement or increased knowledge and skills. This would enable a larger group of students to receive recognition and feel successful.

Ferguson also cited recent studies that show that when students work in small groups, the high achieving students are not supportive of the lower achievers. “Intellectual bullying happens. We need to find ways to get kids to work together that lifts them up.”

Research shows that the quality of teaching improves when teachers have the time and training to collaborate on “improving their craft.” Teachers should also study their students’ work as a regular part of the teaching and assessing process. “[Teachers] will notice patterns from mistakes and infer from those mistakes why [students] don’t understand, and then make changes,” he said.

Ferguson believes that parents are willing to do more to be part of the education process, but don’t know what to do. Harvard recently presented a parenting summit and has many of the videotaped presentations available online at www.agi.harvard.edu. One of these presentations focuses on a recent study showing that using hand signals and gestures with young children will accelerate language development. Another examines the positive effects of playing board games, which “helps children learn about sequencing and ordinality—math skills.”

Ferguson emphasized the need to talk to children, even in utero. “Narrate your life to your children. Whatever you are doing, just talk,” he said. He wants parents to know that they can increase their three-year-old’s mental capabilities by just not reading to them, but also talking about the story and asking questions combining low and high levels of thinking. For example, is that a dog? (low level). What do you think the dog will do next? (High level).

Ferguson mentioned an analysis of parenting styles that concluded that children are more successful students if they have parents who provide a good balance of high expectations and emotional support. He mentioned that researchers thought the best parent style might differ among ethnic groups but found that a combination of “demandingness, structure and clear rules with responsiveness, warmth and expressions of love is the optimal parenting style for all children.”

Following the presentation, a young man from the audience asked why people aren’t doing these things already. Ferguson replied that many are taking some of these actions but that the slow pace of change is due to a lack of leadership. He believes our nation is in the early phases of a national social movement to improve educational outcomes for students from all racial, ethnic and social class backgrounds and that our political and business leaders need to make this reform process a priority.

Krista Hawthorne is assistant director of Reaching Heights, a nonprofit community organization in support of public education in the CH-UH school district.
“Bicycle Dreams,” the award-winning documentary about the Race Across America (RAAM), has its Cleveland premiere at the Coventry Big Dog Theater in Cleveland Heights on Thursday, Jan. 26, at 7 p.m.

The Race Across America is an epic, 3,000-mile bicycle race from the Pacific to the Atlantic. First held in 1982, RAAM is considered the most challenging sporting event in the world. Top riders finish in under ten days, riding more than 300 miles each day and sleeping only a few hours each night.

The film is “an up-close look at what RAAM riders go through,” said Stephen Auerbach, the director and producer of the documentary. “They deal with searing desert heat, agonizing mountain climbs, and endless stretches of open road. And they do it all while battling extreme exhaustion and sleep deprivation. It’s a great subject for a film,” Auerbach added.

Local RAAM rider Jim Karlovec will be on hand for a question-and-answer session about his RAAM experiences after the film.

The Big Dog Theater is located at 2786 Euclid Heights Blvd., on the corner of Euclid Heights Boulevard and Coventry Road, on the second floor of the historic Centrum Building. Tickets are $11 in advance and $15 at the door. To purchase advance tickets, order online at www.imathlete.com/events/bicycledreams.

The screening is a benefit for the Cleveland Heights Bicycle Coalition and Cleveland Bikes. The event is sponsored by HubBub Custom Bicycles of Chesterland.

For more information on the film, go to www.bicycledreammoviere.com or e-mail info@bikesintheheights.org.

Jewel Moulthrop, a resident of Cleveland Heights, is a member of the Observer’s editorial advisory committee.
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