It only took three rounds to eliminate 17 teams from the 21st annual Reaching Heights Adult Community Spelling Bee on March 28. The next three groups went in succession in the fourth round, leaving just one team—Phyllis's Phriends—and one word: elegiacal.

Kathy Solits,indy Burt and Tony Thayer, the three members of Phyllis's Phriends, were crowned champions after spelling it correctly. Their winning word was apt. Representing the Noble and Oxford elementary schools' PTAs, the team was named in memory of Phyllis Albert, a beloved long-time teacher at Noble Elementary who died on March 1.

The annual spelling bee, held in the auditorium of Cleveland Heights High School, has become a community tradition. It raised about $1,000,000 for Reaching Heights, according to its executive director, Patrick Mullend. The organization's mission is to mobilize community support for the Cleveland Heights University Heights public schools.

The spelling bee was emceed, as usual, by Steve Presser, a Heights High graduate and owner of Big Fun on Coventry. Words were pronounced by Nancy Levin, director of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library. Among the many participants and audience members, the most frequent observation was the difficulty of words in even the early rounds.

The first elimination came late in Round 1, when the team representing Boulevard Elementary School stumbled on feldspar—a non-M.D. medical practitioner in Eastern Europe. The large and spirited cheering section of youngsters from Boulevard was undaunted; they continued to cheer remaining competitors throughout the bee.

continued on page 2
Elaine Switzer—Cleveland Heights city officials are acting as though the Heights and members of the Heights InterFaith Council, believe that the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District in its abandonment of a community asset in the Severance Millikin School is doing a disservice to the greater Heights community.

While we understand that the school administration and board have been working for a number of years to resolve what to do with this property, allowing the building and grounds to become a nuisance and degrade the value of the immediate community is unacceptable in our view. Absent quick action we encourage the City of Cleveland Heights to move firmly to abate this nuisance.

We are aware of the bid on the property from the Orthodox Jewish community to purchase the building for its Mosdos Ohr Hatorah education for boys, K-8. We want to lift this up as a potential win/win action for both our school system and the community it serves.

We encourage the school administration and board to move forward in a prompt, open, and transparent manner to provide a solution that will maintain this community asset. We thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely Yours,
Heights InterFaith Council

Don King
Karen Graham
Avida Feinstein
Cynthia Johnston
Bob Jeffreys
Mark Marshall
John McNulty
Francis Miller
Jessica Shields
Christine Stouffer

Highlights from Observer blogs
Read the whole story at blogs.heightsobserver.org

The value in (a slightly) more expensive can of tuna

I was at Dave's the other day at Cedar and Fairmount. This is the store that might have become a giant Eagle a decade ago, if a small group of vocal citizens hadn't stood up to object. They succeeded in halting a proposal by the Pittsburgh-based supermarket chain to greatly increase the store's footprint by blocking off the foot of Grandview Road and building a multi-level parking/shopping experience. I've been to one of the Giant Eagles in Pittsburgh that must have fed this vision and hope to never go back; it was overcrowded, slow, confusing and unpleasant.

—Bob Rosenbaum

Supercongrats to First Interstate for Superwalmart!

It's official. Superwalmart is going to be built on Oakwood and Walmart is leaving Severance Center in Cleveland Heights.

Cleveland Heights city officials are fully and completely culpable for this lost economic opportunity. Their inability to understand that a Metropark is an economic driver has cost our region a great deal.

Oakwood was for sale for a YEAR prior to First Interstate's purchase of it. Cleveland Heights city government refused to work with Trust for Public Land or Metroparks during that year.

—Fran Match

Come as you are to the Film Festival This past weekend was another Film Festival winner, but not without its challenges. The French film “The Art of Love” arrive on time, alas without subtitles. Do the French really think that all Americans can understand … French? We are still working on English!

—Jim Simler

A Moment with . . . Mary Dunbar

In January, Mary Dunbar started a four-year term as a Cleveland Heights City Council Member. She is president of the Heights Bicycle Coalition and a resident of the Village since 1970.

What are your favorite aspects of living in the Heights? This is a beautiful place, full of wonderful people. Completing the requirements for listing the Shaker Farm Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places made me appreciate more than ever the quality of the homes and their architecture. What would you change anything about Cleveland Heights, what would it be? We’re still working through the aftermath of the foreclosure crisis. I’d like to fill all of our vacant homes with people and families who would own them and can afford to maintain and upgrade them—the love them as much as homeowners here already do. Many people are buying homes and investing in our community—Even more would be better.

—Tiffany Laufer
Opinion: Taking back the streets

Michael Knoblauch

This past January, following Edward Kelley's reappearance as mayor of Cleveland Heights, he made the statement that the city will "take back the streets." On Monday, March 21, at the FutureHeights annual meeting, he reiterated that statement when presenting a council proclamation to Deanna Bremer Fisher, executive director of FutureHeights, in recognition of the 10th anniversary of the organization.

Since Kelley's first statement, very little has been made of what the statement means and how the community, the city government and police department will accomplish this goal. At its heart, this is a matter of safety: the perception and reality of what safety means and how the community, "we"—and perception and reality of what safety means and how the community, "we"—and perception and reality of what safety means and how the community, "we"—and perception and reality of what safety means and how the community, "we"— and creating an environment where we feel and are safe—

The police department has a key role to play in this, and as we move about the city we observe the work of the police. At 10:30 p.m., Thursday, March 22, I was taking my son back to his apartment in University Circle. As we approached the intersection of Edgewall and Overlook roads, we saw four police cars parked on Overlook in front of the College Club, and one policeman in the bushes overlooking Edgewall at the top of the hill. We assumed that they were there as the result of a call out. It was only after I dropped my son off and came back up the hill that I realized that this was a radar trap, catching speeders coming up Edgewall from University Circle. It was apparently targeting speeders coming off the 2-11 shift, as they entered Cleveland Heights at the top of the hill. If you have ever driven on that section of Edgewall, you know it is like driving on the moon, definitely not conducive to speeding—and how many people speed uphill at 10:30 at night?

If posting a speed trap—using four police units at 10:30 on a Thursday night, at the border of University Circle and Cleveland Heights, at the top of a hill—is part of the plan to "take back the streets," I sincerely question the plan and the city's commitment to a successful outcome. I didn't feel any safer. I was just very angry, and my anger was not Zenlike. Mayor Kelley, is this what you mean by "taking back the streets?" And what would you tell someone who would like to take a walk in his or her neighborhood at this time of night, but doesn't feel safe doing so?

Try tying up four police units to catch speeders as they come home from work at 10:30 p.m. more important than patrolling our neighborhoods and creating an environment where we feel and are safe—

Michael Knoblauch is a member of the FutureHeights board, and a 34-year resident of Cleveland Heights.

Opinion: When it comes to being sustainable, it's all about priorities

Bill Cimino

Given that Cleveland Heights is a built-out suburb with few opportunities for cutting-edge planned developments, I question the relative emphasis given to such developments in the proposed changes to the city's zoning codes.

While doing something sustainable with the Oakwood property may seem like a good idea while the Severance into another Crocker Park could too, the changes ignore the fact that the city comprises mostly older homes that could be made more sustainable with the right investments.

Among other things, the proposed changes do little to address the fact that too many of the city's residential properties are energy-inefficient and that too many of its residential properties produce unacceptable amounts of run-off.

With that being said, let's consider how some different zoning priorities could make us much more sustainable and, as a direct result, make us much more accountable to the seven billion people with whom we now share the planet.

Here is an easy-to-understand example that will put my concerns into stark relief.

Let's say that we consider an all-too-common scenario in Cleveland Heights in which the owner of a tired-looking residential property needs to improve it. The owner's single-family home is more than 50 years old and it still has its original windows and insulation levels. Similarly, its HVAC units, water heater and major appliances are outmoded from an energy-efficiency point of view.

Beyond those issues, let's also say the home's water management is missing important elements as it lacks both rain barrels and a rain garden. Lastly, let's say that the owner has little money to spend on improvements.

Then, if there is nothing that would make the owner address the home's sustainable-living deficits before any of its other deficits. In fact, it's possible that the owner could consume most of his/her small renovation budget while resolving less critically important problems.

Therefore, the owner's compliance with proposed code would work against the city's stated desire to become more sustainable in two important ways: i) his/her compliance might not make the property more energy efficient; and ii) his/her compliance might not reduce the run-off from the property.

Under a more reasoned zoning code, however, the city could become more sustainable by enacting a code that reduces energy use and/or run-off.

Under such a code, a homeowner with a relatively small renovation budget still might be able to afford priority projects costing between $500 and $2,500.

Examples of these key sustainable-enhancing renovation projects include: 1) replacing a home's original windows with energy-efficient vinyl windows; 2) increasing the insulation levels in a home's attic; 3) replacing a home's HVAC unit and water heater with high-efficiency alternatives; and 4) adding both rain barrels and a rain garden to a home's water management system.

In the short term, this approach to zoning better responds to the risks of owner homelessness at a time when worker wages have stagnated and home values, according to Karl Case (of S&P's Case Shiller Housing Price Index) are expected not to reach a post-bubble bottom until sometime in 2014.

In the long term, this approach speaks to the kind of broad paradigm shift that must unfold as the world's population grows to nine billion by 2050, and the world's resource allocation problems become increasingly more acute.

In both the short and long term, it reflects the importance that Camiros Ltd. placed on rethinking public and private investments in the built environment.

Finally, the city could accelerate its progress along the sustainability curve by offering tax breaks to homeowners who make high priority updates now.

Doing so would benefit both the city's essential transformation faster than would otherwise occur if it relied solely on its point-of-sale inspection process to identify and then manage sustainability-related zoning code violations.

Bill Cimino is a management consultant and a concerned citizen of the world around us.

To the Editor:

I am sorry to see the anger surrounding the current debate over the future of the Millikin School property.

Closer than that, I do have some questions:

What has changed since last year, when the Board of Education (BOE) last solicited proposals for the Millikin property?

As nearly as I can ascertain, the only change has been the emergence of a possible (but by no means certain) interest in leasing the site for commercial use. Yet suddenly Mosdos (which declined even to submit a proposal last year) is in a hurry to buy the site for far less than the value of the land alone (if the zoning were changed back to residential.)

The BOE does have an obligation to the Mosdos students and their parents, as well as to the rest of the community. The students would be well-served by a school with open arms, as would I, those resident children who attend Ruffing, Hawken, University School, Beaumont, Communion of Saints, Hathaway Brown, Hebrew Academy, and that includes taking better care of both the Millikin School facility and the Severance stable.

But does it include a safe to Mosdos under its proposed terms?

Try this thought experiment: Suppose Hawken wanted to buy the Millikin site for a pre-K school and offered a reasonable price, how much would a possible buyer for the site be?

Meanwhile, neighborhood residents fret about increased traffic if paid commercial office staff drive to and from work at the beginning and end of each work shift, yet seem unconcerned about the increased traffic that would result from the comings and goings of paid teachers, paid staff, and families and children at any operating school. In my experience, such officer-based commuters soon settle into a driving routine that gets them to work just a few minutes ahead of schedule. My arrival on morning school trips, however, suggests that many families run chronically late. Which group has more accidents? I wonder.

Perhaps we should all take a deep breath, let the cold air in, see there isn't some more constructive way forward.

Sam Bell
Cleveland Heights

Take a breath on Millikin discussion

When it comes to being sustainable, it's all about priorities.
A plea to save Severance Woods

To the Editor:

Think of a favorite book you read with your parents as a young child, an actual book you could hold and share, something you will read with your own children. Someday your children may read that same book to their children, and when they do, they will think of you and the world you made for them. What kind of world will that be?

Will your children walk to a neighborhood school in the morning, and play with their friends on the way home? Or will they join the rat race at age four and ride a bus to a huge commuter school? Will they make new friends as young families move into your quiet, walkable neighborhood? Or will they watch friends leave as families move away from an empty building that was once a neighborhood school? Will they enjoy trees and flowers and wildlife, or will they shrink away from yet another sea of blacktop baking in the sun?

When I moved to Cleveland Heights many years ago, the last thing I thought I would have to do is to make the case for preserving nature. After decades of environmental awareness, Earth Day, concern for the rain forest, and worry over global warming, I am astounded to hear plans—however tentative—to break through the Severance Woods, destroying one of the last vestiges of nature in our community, in order to turn a school building into a commercial building. Setting aside the controversy over Millikin School, the attitude that nature is of no importance, and can be casually paved over, shows a complete disregard for our community values. I think some soul searching is in order.

The Severance Woods is the key to maintaining the peace and quiet of a huge section of Cleveland Heights. When Severance Mall was built, the community was led to believe that a wooded buffer would be maintained, to protect the peace and quiet of the neighborhood from the noise and traffic of the mall. Over the years, there have been many encroachments, each one a breach of faith with our community. Some years ago, the new post office broke all the way through, so now we have the noise of trucks in the wee hours of the morning. (People who live near the new Oakwood Commons are about to experience this for themselves.) A road from Severance Circle to Millikin would cut through the thickest part of the woods, effectively destroying any claim left to respecting nature and the peace of the community.

If and when Millikin School is sold, the schools will want to sell the Severance Woods at the same time. I propose that the woods be designated as a nature preserve, with the advice of an organization such as the Nature Conservancy, to be held in perpetuity for the good of all. Unlike Oakwood, the Severance Woods are already public land, no money would be needed to purchase it, no tax revenues would be lost. Let there be no more encroachments—now or in the future—from the mall side or from the school side.

Think about the land surrounding your local school. Once the school is closed or converted, how will the grounds be treated? Play area? Woods? Community garden? Or an expanded parking lot for office workers?

Much has been made of the costs connected to the school facilities plan. But this misses the biggest cost to our community. The concern is not about the school budget, not about $40 million to repair versus $100 million to replace. If we give up neighborhood schools, the cost is our way of life. If we pave over every last bit of nature, the cost is to our souls.

Please attend the school board meetings and the facilities planning meetings, the city council and planning commission meetings, as well. Speak up for your values. What happens with the school properties will change our community forever. When you go home and your children ask “What did you do tonight,” what will you tell them?

Michael Morse
Cleveland Heights

Millikin: It’s time to do the right thing

To the Editor:

As a current eighth grade student in Mosdos Ohr Hatorah girls school, I strongly urge the CH-UH school board to sell Millikin to Mosdos Ohr HaTorah.

There are many reasons why I think this will be beneficial to the student body of the school as well as for all the residents living in our community.

Millikin has been a desolate and barren place since 2006. It’s disheartening to drive by and see such a beautiful school so deserted and neglected.

As for the residents living in our community, it will increase property values. They will have a great school that their children can walk to. This will enhance the community and make Cleveland Heights a desirable place for many families to to move to from around the country.

Besides the Mosdos boys division being in great need of a larger school, the Mosdos girls division, on South Taylor Road, recently had to rent the former liquor store in Severance Plaza to rehearse for their school play due to a lack of space at their school.

This is totally unacceptable with Millikin sitting empty just a few blocks away!

The school board should do the best possible thing and sell Millikin to this renowned private school so that once again the whole neighborhood can hear the sounds of children laughing, playing and learning.

This is an obvious win-win situation for the school district, the residents of the community and, most importantly, the students.

Devorah Y. Cohen
Cleveland Heights

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Cleveland Heights City Council
Meeting highlights
FEBRUARY 21, 2012
All board members were present.
Orthodox interest in Millikin School
Approximately 200 members of the Orthodox Jewish community, including almost 50 children, were in attendance to hear seven women and men address their frustration dealing with the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education regarding an offer by Mosdos Ohr HaTorah School, a Jewish private school, to buy the closed Millikin School building near Severance Town Center. Although they knew that city council is not in charge of selling the building, the speakers— all parents of Mosdos Ohr HaTorah School students—asked council members to communicate with the board in support of the sale. They have offered $550,000 for the building, and intend to invest at least $1 million and open a community playground and ball field to the public during nonschool hours.

All council members responded positively to the group’s concerns. Mayor Edward Kelley summarized the discussion, saying that this is more than just an Orthodox Jewish issue, but that the community must work on this with the school board and superintendent. He said council will write a letter to the board asking that they meet with council or with the Mosdos parent group. He said the council is willing to join with the group but must be careful and would not want to deal with the school board.

Green zoning
Council heard a first reading of an ordinance to incorporate sustainable practices into the zoning code. This is the final phase of the green zoning process. Meetings held prior to the second reading on April 18, will be held March 14 and April 11 in council chambers with the planning commission and March 26 at the community center with city council. Mayor Edward Kelley commented that this has been a nearly two-year project, which has not been easy and will be revisited annually.

Cedarwood property a nuisance
Council declared the property at 1799 Cedarwood Ave. to be a nuisance and abatement authorized. During the public comment portion of the meeting, Laura Marks, who lives across the street from the house, requested that it be deconstructed during demolition and that the lot become a pocket park. Mayor Kelley responded that salvage is done first and that the council will try to get the lot deeded to the city.

Thomas Malone
Mayor Edward Kelley presented a certificate of appreciation to Thomas K. Malone upon his retirement after 32 years of public service, 14 of them as Cleveland Heights finance director. This was Malone’s last meeting prior to his retirement. Council members expressed their appreciation of Malone’s dedication, integrity and skills in serving the city. The mayor commented that he had known the finance director since he (Kelley) was a teenager. Malone also said he was honored that the second remain in Cleveland Heights, and wished him and his wife health, happiness, and enjoyment of his retirement.

Community input needed for transportation improvements
Mary Dunbar
Connecting the Heights and University Circle by alternative modes of transportation (i.e., bicycling, walking or taking the bus or rapid transit) is an important initiative for both Cleveland Heights and University Circle. The advantages an adequate system of transportation in Cleveland Heights is its proximity to University Circle’s cultural attractions, its booming construction and job growth, and multiple transportation corridors to downtown. But University Circle continues to build, less space will be available for parked cars.

Partners in the Circle and the Heights are committed to finding ways to move more people between here and there by bicycle, mass transit or on foot. The Circle Heights Bicycle Network and Missing Links initiatives began in 2010 with a request from the Heights Bicycle Coalition (HBC) for improved connections between Cleveland Heights and University Circle. The idea was quickly embraced by Ed Kelley, mayor of Cleveland Heights, and Chris Ronayne, president of University Circle Incorporated (UCI), and has been moving forward ever since.

Supported by funding from the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, Cleveland Heights and UCI, and with the participation of the Heights Bicycle Coalition and the City of Cleveland, a steering committee was formed. This committee, hired Baker Corporation, Parthenon Brinkhoff and City Architecture to develop plans for alternative modes of transportation between the Heights and University Circle, and in surrounding areas.

At this stage of the planning, the steering committee is asking for community input. Two public meetings will be held to review plans for the Circle Heights Missing Links initiative. The first meeting will be on Tuesday, April 17, at 7 p.m. at the Cleveland Heights Community Center. The second meeting will be held on April 18, beginning at 5 p.m. at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History in University Circle.

Mary Dunbar is a member of the Cleveland Heights City Council and president of the Heights Bicycle Coalition.
FEBRUARY 21, 2012
All council members were present.

Urban forestry management plan
Council approved, on emergency, an agreement with Thomas M. Morgan for the development of the 2012 Urban Forestry Management Plan for University Heights. The service director was looking for a contractor with a flexible schedule, reasonable rates, and a warranty of usefulness. The State Department of Forestry referred him to Morgan, who has worked with Cleveland Heights and is a certified arborist. His task will be to review the city’s trees and determine which need to be trimmed, treated for disease or re- moved. Council authorized a six-month, $5,000 contract, with an option to extend it for another six months. During the public comment portion of the meeting, Sheila Hubman, of Saybrook Road, asked why the contract for the Urban Forestry Management Plan was presented “on emergency,” and what the process had been for selecting this contractor. Council responded that they want to begin assessing the trees now because they can hire tree services more cheaply during the winter, and to get a jump on trimming and treating trees.

Catch basins
Council approved a motion to advertise for bids to clean the catch basins for 2012. This annual program is needed to meet EPA requirements. The process includes vacuuming out and jetting the basins, storm sewers and sanitary sewers. Approximately one-third of the basins and sewers are cleaned each year. The county might begin offering sewer cleaning, so his bid is for one year with an option to renew.

DVW observer: Wendy Deuring

FEBRUARY 28, 2012
Executive session
The major portion of this meeting was held in executive session for the purpose of discussing the acquisition of real estate. Council likewise had adjourned into executive session for both the Feb. 21 and Feb. 6 meetings.

The observer was not present for the meeting this evening. It was obtained from Nancy English, clerk of council.

MARCH 5, 2012
All council members were present.

Proposed park on Saybrook Road
Citing property values, stability of the neighbor- hood, and availability of green space, several residents spoke in support of the proposed park on Saybrook Road on the former Fuchs Mizrachi School property, which is for sale. They distributed flyers regarding a town hall meeting sponsored by Mayor Susan Infeld on Monday, March 12 at 7 p.m. On the flyer, the mayor expressed her sup- port, and that of council, for the proposed park, but maintained that she would not spend the tax dollars without affirmative citizen input.

Senior services
Responding to an invitation from Councilwoman Susan Pardee, chair of the Civic Information Com- mittee, resident Dr. Sarah Wilder addressed senior adult services and distributed copies of her remarks. Her suggestions included 1) provide office space, and telephone, and specific office hours in city hall for the coordinator of senior services; 2) appoint a committee to help identify and seek a location for a senior adult center; 3) consider locating the center in a ground floor, currently vacant space, and request that space be donated; 4) consult with the county and the Western Reserve Area Offices on Aging regarding activities and services and the possibility of funding for new center; and 5) schedule an open forum in the next few months to seek input from residents about a new center and what programs and services should be offered.

Mayor Infeld noted that, in addition to weekly programs for seniors at the University Heights Library, Senior Coordinator Walter Strain is “actively supporting” the idea. Staff arranges phone messages and arranges for confidential space for him to meet with residents.

Yard nuisance abatement bids
Council accepted the bid from Creekside Landscape for yard nuisance abatement. (Councilwoman Sima, who has a business relationship with the landscaping company, abstained from the vote.)

Support for Saybrook Park expressed at UH town hall meeting

Jeff Coryell

At a March 12 town hall meeting hosted by Mayor Susan Infeld at Wiley Middle School, an audience of 47 University Heights residents expressed strong support for the city’s proposal to purchase the former Fuchs Mizrachi school to create new Saybrook Park. Fuchs Mizrachi, a Jewish day school, moved to Beachwood in 2010, closing its University Heights school.

Joining onsite by Frankie Goldberg, a member of the city council members Pam Cameron, Tom Cozzens, and Adele Zucker, Mayor Infeld began the meeting with a few remarks about the proposal. She showed a chart showing that University Heights is one of only a small handful among the 57 municipalities in Cuyahoga County that currently lack a public park. She also cited state- mentary that open green space has the effect of raising sale prices of nearby residential properties.

Infeld explained that the purchase would be funded by using some of the $1.3 million surplus in revenues received by the city in 2011, and reported that the 85 residents who had contacted her by e-mail or phone were overwhelmingly supportive of the proposal.

Infeld declined to name the buyer’s asking price because the deal is cur- rently under negotiation. She indicated that the current school building would be razed because of its obsolete design and asbestos content, but the parking facilities and playgrounds would be preserved. She said that the sale price and cost of demolition could both be paid from the available funds. The city would use the same personnel and equipment that now provide services to cut the grass, at a small ad- ditional cost.

Most of the meeting was devoted to public comments and the response was strongly supportive. At one point, Mayor Infeld asked for a show of hands and only one attendee indicated op- position to the plan. Several residents pointed out that yards in University Heights tend to be small and that open green space for walking and recre- ation currently exists. Some residents suggested facilities they would like to see at the new park, including a com- munity garden, nature center, activity center, wood shop, art studio, sports fields and walking paths.

Margaret Conti, of nearby North- wood Road, pointed out that younger families with children would be drawn to live in the area with the addition of the park. Cindy Rose, of Saybrook Road, said she is 100 percent for it because she wants to have more green space, fresh air and flowers instead of more condos and apartments. A few residents questioned spending money on the park when the city faces future cuts in revenues from the state, and money is needed for streets and up- grading city hall. The mayor said she intended to make sure that the park is a low-cost operation, and promised that she would form a citizen committee to oversee the planning process for the park.

Residents asserted that acquisition of Saybrook Park “speaks to the kind of community this will be for years to come.” Many agreed that the city needs a place where the community can congregate, that the park has the potential to become a centerpiece of the community, and that UH can be a city with not just beautiful homes, but also a beautiful park.

Jeff Coryell is a visual artist, writer and community activist. He is a member of the boards of FutureHeights and Reaching Heights, and of the steering committee of the Sustainable Heights Network.

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Reversing disinvestment begins with changing residents’ perceptions

Deanna Bremer Fisher

About 10 years ago, Harvey Garrett purchased a house near the vibrant Elmwood commercial district in Buffalo, New York. But it was on the wrong side of Richmond Avenue. Prices of homes on one side of the street sold for upwards of $250,000, while on his side some homes sold for $2,000.

Garrett decided that he needed to do something. What he and his neighbors did was the subject of his talk, “Reversing Disinvestment in Our Community,” at the FutureHeights annual meeting on March 20. Garrett described how, in 10 years, the West Side Community Collaborative (WSCC), an unofficial coalition of individuals and organizations, tripled home sale prices and created the fastest-growing real estate market in Buffalo.

Vince Reddy, a member of the FutureHeights Board of Directors, set the stage for Garrett’s talk by sharing recent census data. Several statistics, including a 44.6 percent drop in the median home sale price from 2006 to 2011, an increase in poverty levels, and an increase in the percentage of homes occupied by renters, show that Cleveland Heights, in particular, has been hit hard by the current economic recession and shows signs of significant disinvestment.

Board member Judi Miles added a personal side to the story when she described three houses on her street that have been vacant for more than three years. Miles said that neighbors have tried to maintain the properties by mowing lawns and parking cars in the driveways, but the houses continue to sit vacant, deteriorate and plummet in value. “What more can we do?” she asked.

Garrett’s talk provided some of the answers. “What was really holding our neighborhood back?” asked Garrett. “We created a perception is everything. So we had to affect investment in properties, and ‘them.’ Crime and blight were adversely impacting our neighborhood back?” he asked. “It wasn’t the foreclosure crisis or some larger successes. Everyone wants to help,” said Garrett. “We learned to stop waiting for someone else to fix the problem. Blaming everyone else created immediate disempowerment to do anything. We started taking responsibility for everything—trees, sidewalks, vacant houses, corner stores, parks and schools.”

In order to change perceptions of the neighborhood—both inside and out—WSCC had to market the neighborhood, market the plan and market the progress it was making.

“You’ve got to show people, don’t just tell them,” said Garrett. “Show people that the kids won’t pull up the flowers, show people that it’s OK to remove graffiti or board up a vacant house.”

In ten years, WSCC created block clubs, started a diversity festival, created the Buffalo Immigrant and Refugee Empowerment Coalition, and fostered feelings of ownership, pride and optimism. The group repurposed more than 100 vacant properties (and influenced hundreds more), saved dozens of houses from imminent demolition and started the West Side Housing Partnership. WSCC launched the Urban Roots Garden Center and began redevelopment of a neighborhood commercial district.

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FutureHeights trains future leaders

Chris Hanson

A free neighborhood leadership-training event will be held on April 28 at Forest Hill Church, Presbyterian. FutureHeights will help participants learn how to identify community issues, recruit neighbors and take action at the neighborhood level. Chris McKee of the Mahoning Valley Organizing Collaborative (MVOC), and Trevelle Harp, of the Northeast Ohio Alliance for Hope (NOAH), will share their extensive knowledge about community organizing.

Most people, if not all, want a neighborhood that is inviting, desireable, and accommodating to everyone’s needs. In addition to help from the community, it takes vision to make this happen. Neighborhood leadership and creating that vision are at the core of making a noticeable difference. As a Japanese proverb suggests, “Vision without action is a daydream, and action without vision is a nightmare.”

McKee’s organization, MVOC, holds training events throughout Ohio. These sessions are designed to teach new leadership techniques; show how to weave one’s faith and values into practical action; examine the role of power and self-interest in community organizing; and find a way of working on systemic issues of social justice, all of which helps strengthen the local organization and the community. (See www.mvo-city.org/involved/training for more information.)

Harp’s organization, NOAH, typically focuses first on organizing as block clubs. Through intensive listening campaigns to identify issues that the community feels are most important, NOAH then helps residents organize to act on those issues. Successful community events have included roundtable discussions between residents and officials of East Cleveland, Fresh Foods for East Cleveland, and helping to organize people around the abandoned and vacant housing in that city.

Space is limited. RSVP by calling 216-320-1423 or visiting www.futureheights.org.

Support for this free program is provided by the Cyrus Eaton Foundation. All that is needed are leaders. Step forward now.

Chris Hanson is a senior in the Urban Studies designation. All that is needed are leaders. Step forward now.

Kim Sergio Inglis

On March 13, the Cleveland Heights board of education announced it is requesting a new appraisal of the Millkin school property, to be based on “the best use of the land under current zoning codes.” The district sought the potential sale of the property during a closed executive session on March 12.

David Walter, the appraiser who performed the original appraisal in 2005, recommended the district utilize the services of a company other than his to obtain the new appraisal. According to Stephen Shergalis, director of administrative services for the CH-UH City School District, “The district sought and obtained a proposal from Charles M. Ropaport, an attorney representing Mosdos Ohr Hatorah, the Orthodox Jewish school that is seeking to purchase the Millkin property. He called the announcement from the board “a very positive development.”

Mosdos Ohr Hatorah’s most recent offer of $550,000 for Millkin was made in mid-December. Shergalis stated, “Mosdos Ohr Hatorah’s interest in the Millkin property prompted the board of education to reassess the building’s value. Property values have declined in recent years, and the board wanted to assess whether Mosdos’ offer was a fair price for the facility.”

“Mosdos has commissioned its own, independent appraisal,” Ropaport said, “but I hope at some point to be able to negotiate a reasonable purchase price. It has to be fair, one that both parties agree to, and it must be perceived as fair by the public. We’d like it to be a win-win.”

The Millkin property consists of two parcels. In the 2005 appraisal, Parcel #1 is described as 2.67 mostly wooded acres that include a 4,500-sq.-ft. building (a former school). Parcel #2 comprises 8.27 acres and a 37,000-sq.-ft. school building. Together the two parcels make up the 10.93-acre Parcel #3.

The Millkin property is zoned (A) Single Family; and the school was designated (A) “conditioned to rezoning.” The 2005 appraisal envisioned rezoning the entire property to “medium density housing,” and stated of Parcel #1, “Based on discussions with Cleveland Heights City Planning officials, rezoning this parcel to medium density residential use, either SV or MF-3, is likely.” The widely cited $1.4 million valuation of the entire property was based in part on Parcel #1 being thus rezoned, with a sales comparison value of $45,700. The estimated sales comparison value of $1,872,650 for Parcel #2 was based on “continuing to use the school building until market demand warrants re-zoning and re-development.”

The 2005 appraisal also included a less-cited valuation of the property “as currently zoned,” i.e., (A) Single Family. Calculated using that zoning designation, in 2005 the value of Parcel #3 was estimated at $874,400, with Parcel #1 at $131,600 and Parcel #2 at $661,100.

According to Shergalis, Millkin was built in 1924, and opened as an elementary school that year. It closed in June 2006. Since then, it has been used as storage space for excess district furniture and equipment. It has never been leased.

Ropaport points out that “the 2005 appraisal doesn’t look at current conditions. The building has had seven more years to deteriorate.” With the new estimate, “the board is doing what we’re doing—trying to make sure the property sells at a price that makes sense today. The school board is acting prudently by getting a new appraisal.”

Shergalis said, “The district is required by law to put district property up for public auction before it can negotiate a sale privately.” He added, “If the school elects to sell the building, then the sale would be open to any entity that wished to purchase the building, including Mosdos.”

Kim Sergio Inglis is editor-in-chief of the Heights Observer. She lives in Cleveland Heights.

Cleveland Skating Club Summer Camps

2500 Kemper Rd. Shaker Heights (216) 791 - 2800

Multi Sport (Full & Half Day) June 11 - August 10 8:00am - 4:00pm Ages 5-12

Tennis Camp (Mid-Afternoon) June 11 - August 17 9:00am - 12:00pm Ages 6-14

Squash Camp June 4 - June 29 10:30am - 2:30pm Ages 7 - 14

Sketch Great Camp June 9 - August 3 10:00am - 3:00pm Ages 5 - 10

For Membership: Emily Goodyear, ext. 212 egood@clevelandskatingclub.org

CSC believes that sporting at a young age could lead to a lifetime of healthy living and smart lifestyle choices. Our camps work to introduce and strengthen sporting skills, in an entertaining and positive environment.
FutureHeights inducts 13 to Innovator’s Circle

Chris Hanson

At its annual meeting on March 20, FutureHeights inducted 13 new members to the Innovator’s Circle, an honorary group that recognizes the actions and dedication of individuals who give their vision and energy to make the Heights the best communities they can be.

“This year, FutureHeights chose to recognize leaders in the movement to ensure that Cleveland Heights remained a vibrant and integrated community,” said Deanna Bremer Fisher, executive director of FutureHeights. “When African Americans began moving into the Heights in the 1960s and 70s, there was a lot of fear that our community would become resegregated and that our housing stock would deteriorate. These individuals, and many others, organized to work against fear and prejudice. It is through their efforts that we have the wonderful and diverse community that we have today.”

Although there were many individuals and groups involved in these efforts, and further research is needed, FutureHeights recognized the following individuals this year:

• Suzanne Nigro, Lana Cowell, Jeanne Martin Diamond, Nancy Coppellitti and Linda Johnston, who led the Saint Ann’s Social Action Housing Committee to conduct an audit of real estate practices in the Heights. The group’s grassroots study proved what many had suspected, that 10 real estate companies operating in the Heights were discriminating against African Americans and that seven of the 10 were steering African Americans to only certain Heights neighborhoods and whites away from all Heights neighborhoods. The results of the audit caught media attention, and focused more community efforts on integration and fair housing.

• Harry Fagan, who was a member of the Commission on Catholic Community Action, which supported the audit, and a member of the Carmelites Group, a group of religious leaders, dedicated to social justice, who met in the basement of the Carmelite Monastery at the corner of Lee Road and Fairmount Boulevard. The Carmelites Group was the forerunner of the Heights Community Congress. A group of African-American teens with a management plan, the Carmelites established an office in the basement of the Heights Community Congress, which later became the Home of Heights Community Congress. Fagan was the first director of the Heights Community Congress, a community group dedicated to fair housing.

• Bernice Lott, Betty Nelson and Doris Allen, who founded the Committee to Improve Community Relations, a group of African Americans that worked to educate the public, the city and the school district about African American youth. The committee was formed after an incident at the YMCA/YWCA on Lee Road, during which white youths assaulted a group of African-American teens with metal poles. The police responded and disrupted the assault, but returned the weapons to the perpetrators. Allen volunteered as a tester for the Saint Ann’s Audit. Lott became president of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education.

• The Reverend Ned Edwards, a former pastor of Forest Hill Church, Presbyte- rian, who was a founder of the Heights Interfaith Council, a supporter of the Forest Hill Church Housing Corporation, which later became the Home Repair Resource Center; and the second president of the board of directors of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Community Congress.

• Charles Ault, who was the first president of the board of the Forest Hill Church Housing Corporation, and brought his knowledge of financial institutions to bear on the efforts to create programs to keep Heights housing stock in good repair.

• John Boyle III, who was the mayor of Cleveland Heights when the city adopted its Nine-Point Plan, which institutionalized many of the recommendations of the Saint Ann’s Audit report. This included a preferred real estate program, a Heights housing service, and the enforcement of the fair housing law.

• Susanna Niernann O’Neil, who began her career as a staff member for the Heights Community Congress’s housing services. Niernann O’Neil said that, in 1976, Harry Fagan convinced her to join the staff at Cleveland Heights City Hall, where “she might do some good.” She continues to lead the city’s community relations department and is now assistant city manager.

“The Heights is a unique place, home to many dedicated and talented individuals. The challenges that our community faces now may be different from the challenges we faced in the 1970s,” said Bremer Fisher, “but those who came before us have shown us the way. I’m confident that we can overcome our difficulties and remain the wonderful and diverse community that we have today.”

“FutureHeights is an important organization that recognizes the actions and dedication of individuals who give their vision and energy to make the Heights the best communities they can be.”

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To learn more about this era in Heights history, visit www.chhistory.org/ FeatureStories.php?Story=StruggleForFairHousing. FutureHeights and the Cleveland Heights Historical Society are continu- ing to research this subject. If you have information or would like to be inter- viewed, please send an email to info@futureheights.org or call 216-320-1423.

Chris Hanson is a senior in the Urban Studies program at Cleveland State University, a consultant at The Urban Cash Cow, and an intern at FutureHeights.

On March 6, three Tiger Cub members of Pack 36 of Forest Hill Church visited the FutureHeights office to learn about the Heights Observer and how the newspaper is put together. They were satis- fied with the outcome.

FutureHeights realizes that the newspaper is put together. They were satis- fied with the outcome.
Local business and college faculty partner to raise cancer research funds

Kimberly Hill

For many families, nothing hits closer to home than a cancer diagnosis for a loved one. Breast cancer is the most frequently diagnosed of the cancers, and just about everyone can tell a story about a mother, sister, partner, daughter, wife or neighbor who has been touched by this disease. While it’s a very personal situation for each individual affected, efforts to discover better diagnosis, treatment—and eventually a cure—for breast cancer must be conducted on a large scale. This kind of research costs money; lots of it.

“With an eye toward the local and the global, a group of Cuyahoga Community College faculty has come together to raise money for large-scale breast cancer research studies. They will do this in partnership with a Cleveland Heights business. The We Pink We Can team is joining arms with Quintana’s Barber & Dream Spa to give customers a way to contribute to an important cause while enjoying the services of a salon that has won awards from FutureHeights and Cleveland’s Scene magazine.

“It’s a win-win for everyone involved,” said Dawn Monguelezi Quintana, the spa’s co-owner. “We’re glad to return 5 percent of every Think Pink service will be from April 24 through Saturday, April 28 to the team.” In return, Tri-C faculty members, including Stacey Souther, Ashlee Brand, Angela Mensah and Judy Ward, will add these donations to the money they are raising in preparation for the Susan G. Komen 3-Day Walk to be held in Cleveland this August.

“Each of us has her own reasons for training and fundraising,” said team co-captain Souther. “In my case, one of those reasons actually arose after I started working on the event.” Souther’s mother, in-law was diagnosed with breast cancer. “When I decided to participate, I had no idea how quickly it would become personal.”

Souther is a devoted Cleveland Heights resident. In fact, her husband, Mark Souther, a faculty member at Cleveland State University, was one of the driving forces behind the establishment of the Grant Deming’s Forest Hill neighborhood as a historic district. The value of community partnership runs deep in the family, as it does for all We Pink We Can team members and their supporters.

One supporter is Ann Donkin, a breast cancer survivor. As a member of the Patient and Family Advisory Council at University Hospital Seidman Cancer Center, Donkin reminds everyone that we are not only cancer patients who hear the brunt of the disease. “Caregivers—those family members, neighbors, friends, and healthcare workers who stand with those battling breast cancer—have important self-care needs, too.”

Quintana is also offering a “Care for the Caregivers” special. The spa will donate 5 percent of the value of gift certificates purchased for the featured Think Pink services will be from April 24–28. Those purchasing gift certificates can give them to friends, family members, and healthcare professionals who deserve their time and energy to caring for those undergoing breast cancer treatment.

To participate, call the spa at 216-321-7889 to book an appointment. “Make it a fun outing and book for yourself and a friend,” suggested Quintana. The We Pink We Can team will be supplying special snacks for spa patrons who have appointments during “Think Pink” week. Souther said, “We want people to have fun while taking care of themselves and helping to advance research that benefits us all.”

Kimberly Hill teaches English at Cuyahoga Community College and has lived in Cleveland Heights since 1984.

CH Mite A2 hockey team wins division

On Feb. 11, the Cleveland Heights Mite A2 team clinched the division championship with an undefeated record of 7-0-3 in the Cleveland Suburban Hockey League. For some of these seven and eight-year-olds, this season was their first time playing on a travel team. The Heights Mite A2s are coached by former Heights High hockey player Mike Bauman (’85), and Alex Kinkopf.

CH Mite A2 finished its schedule with a win over Lakeview on March 3rd to secure the title.

It’s true.
Good food tastes better!

Easter Vigil; Saturday, April 7, 8:30 p.m.
Grace hosts a variation of the Traditional Easter Vigil, beginning with a bonfire, sacred stories and s’mores. We end with a taste of resurrection. Trumpets and Organ will lead us with Easterly and Variations on Nofet Nisvote; as we sing the first Easter Hymn, Now the Green Blade Rises.

Resurrection Mass: Easter Sunday, April 8, 10:00 a.m.
As we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus the Christ, Grace members, and friends and family throughout the greater community are encouraged to sing and share God’s love freely gifted to us in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. Trumpets and Organ will again lead us as we sing and experience the classic music of the “Hallelujah Chorus” from the Messiah by Handel, the Old Hundredth by J. Vaughan Williams, and the Symphony V Te Deum by Charles-Marie Widor. Grace will then host a festive Easter reception.

Grace Lutheran Church
13001 Cedar Road
Cleveland Hts., OH 44118
www.graceheights.org

Advertise in the Heights Observer
www.heightsobserver.org
The Dark website as: “An impromptu won’t be released until the day of the event. While the April location is set, just a few.

Half, the event has involved chefs from the region, hosted at a restaurant—hasn’t been announced yet. Previous recipients have included Rockefeller’s, said that Catering in Cleveland Heights, said that for now he is taking a wait-and-see approach to determining what impact the new store will have on his business. “My inclination is to believe that the people who want to shop at big supermarkets are doing it already. I think many of my customers want a higher quality of food than supercenters can provide.” Zagara continued, “I believe any company has the right to open for business and compete in any market. With that said, Walmart is in a class by itself. As many articles and books written on the subject have shown, Walmart simply doesn’t care what damage is left in its wake. Asking developers to build a genuine retail space, to later abandon the property, while still paying rent, is reckless. Remodeling space instead, and helping to build a business community to serve a population is such a foreign thought to big box retailers like Walmart that it is only accomplished with a very big legal stick.”

Kim Sergio Inglis is editor-in-chief of the Heights Observer. She lives in Cleveland Heights.

Rockefeller’s to host ‘Dinner in the Dark’ charity meal

Bob Rosenbaum

Rockefeller’s Restaurant in Cleveland Heights has been selected to host the next “Dinner in the Dark” event, on Monday, April 16.

Dinner in the Dark raises funds for local causes by offering a monthly mystery meal created by six notable chefs from the region, hosted at a different location each time. The meal consists of six courses accompanied by a “carefully selected wine or artisan cocktail” according to promotional material.

Running for about a year-and-a-half, the event has involved chefs from such restaurants as Lola, Light Bistro, Bar Cento, Coop Bistro & Bar, Umami and The Greenhouse Tavern, to name just a few.

While the April location is set, the menu and identity of the chefs won’t be released until the day of the event—described on the Dinner in the Dark website as: “An impromptu input, the district began working on an Option C. According to the district, Option C is “a final plan design that supports the community’s educational needs and fiscal realities.”

Option C consists of the following:

- Cleveland Heights High School (grades 9-12) located on the existing site. The historic core of the building, which was built in 1925, the football stadium and the swimming pool would be preserved and renovated; post-1925 additions would be demolished, and new space added.
- Three intermediate schools (grades 4-8) located on the existing middle school sites: Wesley, Monticello and Roxboro. The historic cores of Roxboro and Monticello middle schools would be preserved, the many additions would be demolished, and new space added. Grades 4, 5 and 6 would be physically separated from grades 7 and 8. Wesley Middle School would be demolished and rebuilt.
- Four primary schools (grades K-3) would be located in the renovated Roxboro, Canterbury, Oxford and Boulevard buildings. Some of the interiors would be remodeled for flexible learning spaces.
- Noble Elementary, Geary Professional Development and Fairfax Elementary schools would close.

The evening’s beneficiary—The dinner meal—includes:“A carefully selected wine or artisan cocktail” according to promotional material.

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Holy Week and Easter Worship

Palm Sunday, April 1
Worship at 8:30, 9:30 & 11:00 a.m.
6:30 p.m. Catalyst

Holy Thursday, April 5
12:00 p.m. Chapel service with Holy Communion
7:00 p.m. Dramatic presentation of the Last Supper with Holy Communion

Good Friday, April 6
7:00 p.m. Combined service with Church of the Redeemer (2420 S. Taylor Rd., Cleveland Hts.)

Holy Saturday, April 7
7:00 p.m. The Easter Vigil keeps watch over the darkness.

Easter Sunday, April 8
Glorious Easter worship at 8:30, 9:30 and 11:00 a.m.
Dr. Charles D. Yoost, Senior Pastor, preaching: “A God-Sized Vision for You”
6:30 a.m. Sunrise Service at Lakeview Cemetery
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Church of the Saviour
United Methodist
2537 Lee Rd., Cleveland Heights
(One block north of Fairmount Blvd.)
(216) 321-8880 www.chsaviour.org

Advertise in the Heights Observer
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Calling for entries in ethnic culinary contest

Hyla Winston

An ethnic culinary contest will high-light the first-ever Heights Culinary Heritage Show on June 24, hosted by Council Gardens, 2501 North Taylor Road in Cleveland Heights. The free, festive gathering for adults in the community is supported by a grant from Coyahoga Arts & Culture.

The contest is open to those aged 62 or older in Cleveland Heights and surrounding communities. Contestants must submit a vegetable or fruit dish (to serve at least six) along with the recipe and an explanation of its cultural or ethnic significance. The deadline to register as a contestant is April 30. Council Gardens will accept the first 25 registrants, and all must be present at the event on June 24. The first-place winner will receive a cash prize of $500, and prizes will also be awarded to runners-up. A cookbook containing all of the contestants’ recipes and stories will be published after the event.

Judges, from local food and arts venues, include Michael Bloom, artistic director of the Cleveland Play House; Tom Fello of Tommy’s; Doug Katz of Fire Food & Drink; Mark and Ruth Levine of Bistro 185; Steven Katz of Pincus Bakery; Burt Saltzman of Dave’s Supermarkets; Ricardo Sandoval of Felice and Fat Cats; Alex Schneider of Restaurant Europa; Raj Singh of Taste; and Laura Taxel, journalist and author of Cleveland Ethnic Eats.

Council Gardens is a cluster of garden apartments built on seven acres. It was established in 1965 by the National Council of Jewish Women, Cleveland Section, to offer affordable independent housing for older residents, and for mobility-impaired adults of any age. It serves a diverse population and currently has a waiting list. Debbie Hoffmann, Council Gardens board chair, said, “Council Gardens is thriving. The buildings have been updated with green technology, the dedicated staff provides a warm, caring environment, and tenants are enjoying an array of life-enrichment opportunities.” Residents grow organic fruits and vegetables on the property. The summer culinary event on the Council Gardens grounds will be a celebration of summer’s bounty and a cultural exchange. Refreshments and multicultural entertainment will be provided.

Becky Chesler and Linda Friedman are co-chairs for the event. For more information and to register for the contest, call Jackie Feldman at 216-630-7740.

Hyla Winston is a freelance communications consultant and is on the board of trustees of Council Gardens.

Home safety remodeling for senior adults

Judith Eugene

For senior adults with mobility challenges, simple everyday activities like bathing, cooking, laundry and climbing stairs can become increasingly difficult. Unfortunately, most Heights-area homes are not designed to support the decline in physical ability that often occurs with age.

To enable seniors to continue living safely at home, several home improvements can be made. Some are simple and others are more complex, depending on the layout of the home and the needs of the individual. Following are just some of the options available.

In the bathroom, install grab bars near the toilet for stability, and in the bathing area to help prevent slipping. Installing a taller toilet makes it easier to sit down and get up. Add a walk-in door to the bathtub, or replace the tub with a step-in shower. A fold-down seat and a hand-held sprayer make bathing easier.

In the kitchen, convert the lower cabinets to pullout drawers for easy access to frequently used items. Install lighting under the upper cabinets to provide more illumination on the countertop. Faucets with lever handles and pullout sprayers make clean up easier. For those with difficulty climbing stairs, add exterior ramps at the front and side doors of the house. Install an electric chair lift on interior stairs. If space permits, install a full bathtub on the first floor, and convert a dining room or den into to a bedroom, for first-floor living. A stackable washer-dryer installed in a first-floor closet facilitates laundering.

For seniors confined to wheelchairs, widen the interior doorways of the home for easier passage. Replace the bathtub with a roll-in shower, and the vanity with a wall-mounted sink. Install a flip-up cover for the garbage can in the kitchen at wheelchair height.

The benefits of these remodeling projects are many. The cost is usually far less than that of nursing-home care, and some of the costs are tax deductible. It brings great peace of mind for families to know their loved one is safe at home. Most important, it enables the senior to retain the dignity of independent living for as long as possible.

It is best to plan ahead and get these remodeling projects done before an accident occurs, so that the family is not dealing with construction and a family crisis at the same time. Architects and construction companies experienced in safety remodeling can perform a home safety analysis to help plan the remodeling project.

Paul Blumberg has wrinkles.

That’s good for you.

Paul Blumberg

When are wrinkles distinguished? When they’re on Paul Blumberg’s face—not yours. Because Paul’s wrinkles ensure that your transaction will be entirely wrinkle-free. If you want an experienced, proactive advocate to flawlessly propel & complete your real estate transaction, then you want Paul Blumberg (wrinkles and all).

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PEBlumberg@aol.com http://PaulBlumberg.com

Loving Hands Group:

When you're ready to sell, call us at 216-630-7740 for more information and to register for our upcoming event.

Hyla Winston is a freelance communications consultant and is on the board of trustees of Council Gardens.
What’s going on at your library?

Visit www.heightslibrary.org for the complete calendar, and to register for classes.

Covington Village Library
1925 Coventry Road, 216-321-3400
Tuesday, April 10, 9 a.m.
Kaleidoscope: Afterschool Read Aloud. Kids can sit back after school and hear a thrilling tale, moving poetry, puzzling mysteries, winsome folktales and exotic adventures, all chosen and read aloud by professional librarians. Snacks are available, or feel free to bring your own.

Lee Road Library
2345 Lee Road, 216-932-9600
Tuesday, April 10, 7 p.m.
The Making of Titanic: A Personal Voyage. Come aboard with former Cleveland Heights resident Preston Hrisko as he presents a remembrance on the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic. Preston, a resident of Budapest, Hungary, was chosen to act in a new narrative miniseries to be broadcast on April 12–15. He will share his film and production experiences and bring you behind the scenes. Interested teens can contact Howiler at 216-932-3600, ext. 287, or参观者们有机会参观图书馆的内部，并有机会讨论图书馆的各个方面。图书馆正在为全国和社区服务的青少年提供实习机会，以获得宝贵的经验，为大学和工作做准备。

NOW ACCEPTING NEW MEMBERSHIPS FOR 2012!”

Heights Observer April 3, 2012  13 www.heightsobserver.org

Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library Board
Meeting highlights
FEBRUARY 20, 2012
All board members were present.

2012 budget
The 2012 proposed budget is being reviewed and will be presented to the board in March. January’s allotment from the Public Library Fund (PLF) was 5 percent less than that of January 2011. The worst expected since the state budget passed last June with a 5 percent decrease to the PLF.

Flashscan checkout system to be replaced
The current Flashscan self-checkout system at Lee Road will be replaced by a new system, CircIT. Its yearly maintenance cost is roughly half that of Flashscan. Additionally, 42 new Lenovo ThinkCentre Desktop PCs will be purchased to replace computers used by staff and the public that have reached the end of their useful life.

Levy planning begins
A levy presentation, by non-profit entity, NODIS, part of the Levin Center at CSU, is being considered to execute marketing studies for planning a new levy. Librarians have had experience working with libraries, including the Cincinnati Public Library (Orange) and the Cleveland Public Library (NODIS). Orange explained that free lunches to children this summer. Once again, the library will be serving free lunches to children this summer.

Applications are due by May 14.
Summer Lunch Program
Once again, the library will be serving free lunches to children this summer. If you enjoy interacting with children, and you are 15+, call on a professional environment. Interested teens can contact Sam Lapides at 216-932-3600, ext. 290, or e-mail slapides@heightslibrary.org. Applications are due by May 14.

Teen Summer Internship
The library is offering a three-week summer internship for teens in grades 9–12. Selected interns will assist with library programs and services, and gain experience working in a professional environment. Interested teens can contact Sam Lapides at 216-932-3600, ext. 290, or e-mail slapides@heightslibrary.org. Applications are due by May 31. (This opportunity is open to adults as well.)

Reading Buddies
The library is offering a four-week program this summer in which teens will share books with young readers. If you are between the ages of 13 and 17, and interested in helping a student learn to read, contact Susan Black at 216-932-3500, ext. 288, or e-mail slblack@heightslibrary.org. Applications are due by May 31.

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

FEBRUARY 21, 2012
All board members were present.

Open enrollment
Superintendent Heuer reported that Hanover Research found that 79 percent of Ohio school districts have open enrollment. Joseph Michelich, director of special programs, explained how the district could increase funds by opening the seats not filled by district students. Between the cost and revenues coming out of these funds, would be funds for professional development. The district would receive state funds for these students with little increase in expenses.

Vince Colaluca, superintendent of Austintown, who was present at this meeting, told how open enrollment has affected his district. The Cleveland Heights-University Heights school board is not ready for open enrollment for the 2012-13 school year, but would like to study it further.

Dress code
During the campaign last fall, 79 percent of the people surveyed favored a dress code. The present guidelines are ambiguous and hard to enforce.

Jeffrey Johnston, director of student services, will ask students how their dress affects their behavior, achievement, pride, and so forth.

Technology plan
Donald-Anthony Phillips, director of information technology, presented a plan for enabling education through technology. The plan will be done in two parts: 6 to 12 months and 12 to 36 months.

Board asked to make teachers to be accountable for using the technology.

High school restructing
A campus principal will oversee all school principals and answer parent questions. The same core curriculum and the pathways thematic education program will be in all small schools. Scheduling will be more flexible and will enable students to take courses in other small schools. Grant money will be more flexible and will enable students to take courses in other small schools.

Sheryl Banks

Library allocates more funding for eBooks and audiobooks

In response to growing customer requests, the Cleveland Heights University Heights Public Library is realocating $5,000 of its materials budget to buy additional copies of downloadable eBooks and audiobooks. Acquiring these additional copies, available only to customers whose cards were issued by Heights Libraries (listed on the front of the card), will reduce the wait time for many popular titles.

Previously, customers could access only titles owned by the CLEVNET consortium. This $5,000 commitment is specifically for Overdrive’s Advantage program. Overdrive, a Cleveland-based digital distributor of eBooks, carries more than 650,000 titles in more than 50 languages in its digital catalog.

“The popularity of eBooks is on the rise, to say the least,” said Nancy Levin, Heights Libraries director. “A little over a year ago, Amazon reported it was selling more eBooks than print, and we are seeing a similar trend—more and more customers are asking for eBooks and eReaders. We strive to provide great services for our customers, and Overdrive’s Advantage program really helps us provide that service.”

In order to see the availability of Overdrive Advantage titles, customers should first log in to the Heights Librarian’s eMedia catalog at www.heightslibrary.org with their Heights Library card. Customers can browse by or search for items by title, author or keyword. Audiobook and eBook versions of a title will be displayed in separate records.

Customers who would like to look at the record to view the available formats and determine compatibility for their device. For example, the eBook record will indicate if the book is available in the Adobe format, compatible with Nooks, Sony Readers, and many other devices; or as a Kindle Book, compatible with Kindles. For more information, contact any of the four Heights Librar-

OPTIONS STUDENTS COMPETE IN SCENARIOS USA

Gia Parker

“What’s the real deal about gender, power, and relationships?” That’s the question Heights High Options and Facilitators in Options, the alternative school program, came together to discus last fall.

Issues of gender, and traditional and nontraditional roles of men and women in society, were the topic of Scenarios USA, a writing competition. Options, a high school environment for students who learn better in a nontraditional setting, used this competition to teach writing and help students find their voices.

The competition engaged students in discussion and writing about how gender and power play a role in their lives.

“I was excited about the Scenarios project because it gave me the chance to show what I’m capable of as a writer,” said Isaiah Flowers, a student in the Options program.

The teens watched video scenes, discussed the issues presented, and wrote journal entries and stories about the scenarios.

“The deepest conversations were about things that we are all dealing with,” said Kevin Brooks, future educator and community volunteer. Teachers and facilitators discussed their personal experiences, which built a relationship of trust that enabled the students to express themselves with candor.

“We saw our students observing and thinking. We saw the life experiences that needed to be tapped and guided for their work submissions as well as for their growth,” said Denise Thompson, Options teacher.

Students used their journal entries to produce a story, play, or script for submission to the annual contest. “The Scenarios project gave me the chance to hear different perspectives and to respect [those] positions,” said Alexus Tate, an Options student.

Gia Parker provides operations support for the communications and community engagement office of the CH-UH school district.

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New budget threatens progress

Susie Kearsler

Last year the Ohio Legislature adopted a budget that slashed public education funding and mandated an expensive, unfair and potentially damaging system for evaluating teachers. The legislature is not fulfilling its responsibility to ensure that all children achieve, yet it is ready to punish teachers if they don’t produce high test scores.

Currently, all untenured teachers are evaluated annually and tenured teachers are evaluated every three years. Each school district designs its own evaluation system. Starting in 2014, every teacher will be evaluated every year, and student achievement data will account for half of the teacher’s evaluation.

It is hard to understand how more frequent evaluations, based on measures over which teachers have only partial control, will produce a higher quality teacher corps.

The legislature’s policies will make evaluation more time-consuming, and less fair and meaningful. This blame-oriented approach has the potential to set back teacher quality in school districts like ours that use evaluation to grow teachers.

“Our kids deserve the best. That means the first thing we must pay attention to is teacher quality,” said Dr. Nilaigan McDaniel, director of human resources for the CH-UH City School District. She is in charge of hiring, mentoring and evaluating the district’s 600 teachers.

Tom Schmida, Cleveland Heights Teachers Union president, believes a reliable evaluation system is crucial to having great teachers. According to him, “Evaluation should help each person be the best he or she can be. It’s a chance to improve.”

While there is little argument that high-quality teaching is crucial, determining who is up to snuff is more problematic. What does an effective teacher do? What system for evaluating teachers is equipped to make fair judgments about a teacher’s effectiveness when the consequences of failure are so significant for both teacher and students?

McDaniel and Schmida are members of the Assessment Review Committee (ARC), a team of four teachers and four administrators created in 2004 to update the district’s evaluation system for new teachers. Since then, ARC has transformed the system from a checklist with minimal feedback and an emphasis on hiring and firing decisions, into a nuanced assessment used to guide the professional growth of all teachers.

In 2004, the district adopted a framework for defining quality teaching based on the work of Charlotte Danielson, author of Teacher Evaluation to Enhance Professional Practice. It captures the complexity of the work by breaking teaching into 23 specific behaviors that research indicates are most clearly tied to student learning. The behaviors are grouped into four domains: planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities.

Evaluators use a matrix that describes four different levels of teacher effectiveness, from unsatisfactory to advanced, for each skill. The framework, which may be seen on the district’s website, is the basis for all district initiatives to promote quality teaching.

“When people lose their jobs it is very upsetting,” said McDaniel. While her goal is to guarantee that teachers are served by quality teachers, she insists that the evaluation system must be fair, and believes the system is more objective because the framework means everyone knows what excellent looks like.

Each evaluation is based on evidence that the principal collects from the teacher through written submissions, classroom observation, and conferences that focus on the teacher’s unit of teacher practice: a lesson. This evidence-based approach, while time-consuming (about three hours per observation), contributes to greater objectivity.

It takes experience for teachers to become expert in all four domains. The detailed feedback contained in each evaluation report provides a personalized roadmap for growth. All teachers are expected to advance their skills based on the evaluation.

A negative evaluation, one that concludes that the teachers is “at risk” of nonrenewal, triggers an intervention plan and support from a coach. If this process fails to bring about adequate improvement, termination is the likely outcome.

The intervention process pays off. According to McDaniel, principals are more likely to be critical knowing help will follow, and intervention usually produces the desired result. Last year only one of the six teachers put on an intervention plan lost his job.

One of Schmida’s responsibilities as union president is to represent teachers who disagree with their evaluations. He investigates whether the evaluation process was followed, and helps teachers determine if they have a legitimate complaint.

“I spend a lot more time helping people depart with dignity than challenging the decision,” said Schmida. “In our, in his 20 years as president, no one has used the appeal process that is mandated by the contract. “We’ve got good tools. The system works,” said Schmida.

The system is fair, but change is coming. It will be a serious setback for students if our evaluation system focused on improvement is lost because the legislature needs someone to blame.

Susie Kaezer 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.
Eight exchange students at Heights High

Joy Henderson

Under the auspices of the AFS foreign exchange program, Heights High welcomed eight foreign students. Meet these students (last names omitted in accordance with AFS policy):

Siyael from Tanzania, hosted by the Bailey family: Favorite thing about Heights High: The friendly, helpful teachers, especially in science. AFS club is really fun. In Tanzania I attend a boarding school, so this is very different.
Comment: I love learning about the African-American culture. I have learned that American life is not the same as what we see on TV and in movies.

Aita from Senegal, hosted by the Bailey family: Favorite thing about Heights High: The teachers, the diversity, and the classes are only 50 minutes—not two hours like in my boarding school. The AFS advisor rocks!
Comment: In the United States, I see boys washing dishes and cooking. In Senegal, only women do that. In my country, I wash clothes by hand. I am very grateful for the opportunity to study here and also to meet people from all over the world.

Melinda from the Netherlands, hosted by the Hawthorne-Solisch family: Favorite thing about Heights High: Playing sports as a school activity, the variety of classes offered, and the AFS advisor. Comment: Americans are very open to new things and are easygoing. And, they go everywhere by car. At home I ride my bike everywhere; I miss that freedom.

Joy from Germany, hosted by the Ethridge and Humphries families. Favorite thing about Heights High: The school spirit and all the activities and events. Students are open and interested to learn about different countries. I love the AFS club, the advisor, and meeting people from so many countries.
Comment: I like that Americans are easy-going, spontaneous and so friendly. They say “hi” even if they don’t know you. I have learned that Americans take their country, I wash clothes by hand. I am very grateful for the opportunity to study here and also to meet people from all over the world.

Leo from Brazil, hosted by the Wise-Bailey-Rubicz family. Favorite thing about Heights High: The school’s commitment to athletic teams, and meeting new people.
Comment: Each season of the year is lived differently here, and I have learned that Americans are not lazy, as I thought before I arrived. I miss the warm weather and beaches in Brazil, but I love to travel and learn about the United States.

Martin from Chile, hosted by the Kaufman-Wisniewski family. Favorite thing about Heights High: That we get to change classes and have a locker. In Chile, the students stay in the classroom and the teacher moves around.
Comment: People here volunteer to help the community and everyone seems to know everyone else, like a big family. Adults here trust teenagers more. This has been the best year of my life!

Cris from Argentina, hosted by the Yelsky family. Favorite thing about Heights High: Playing tennis on the team, and double bass in the symphony and jazz band; the friendly teachers who are so willing to help me. The AFS club is the greatest. I have made some great friends here.
Comment: The schedule and whole school is so well organized. I did not know that it was so hard to get into college here and that good athletes can get scholarships for college.

Yuco from Turkey, hosted by the Henderson-Lammers family. Favorite thing about Heights High: Athletic opportunities as part of the school, meeting new and interesting people, the interactive media class and learning how to shoot, edit and produce videos.
Comment: Most Americans are not familiar with world geography, they are not sure where Turkey is located. People here are very friendly and are interested in other people.

AFS is a nonprofit international exchange organization for students and adults. The local chapter is run by volunteers, and has been active at Heights High for more than 52 years. Teacher Adrienne Yelksy is the school’s AFS advisor.

Heights High students also go abroad for exchanges. Janine Walker, a senior, is on an exchange in Thailand.

AFS needs new host families for students arriving in August. For information on hosting a student or volunteering, contact Adrienne Yelksy, a_yelksy@chab.org or 216-371-3713, Carla Bailey, seaball@aol.com; or visit www.afsusa.org.

Joy Henderson is the parent/community liaison at Heights High.
New speaker series to explore making older homes more sustainable

Suze Kacer

The Home Repair Resource Center (HRRC) is sponsoring a new monthly speaker series to help owners of older homes apply sustainability principles to home remodeling and maintenance projects.

“Practical Sustainability: New Thinking for Older Homes” will kick off on Wednesday, April 11, at 7 p.m. at the Lee Road Library. Cleveland Heights resident and former HRRC board member Fred Cortright, whose experience includes building energy efficient homes for Habitat for Humanity, designed the free workshop series.

The April 11 session, “Lights, Cabel-offs! Action! Sustainability and Kitchen Remodels,” will be led by Cortright and Michael Palacico of MVP Consulting. “Kitchen remodeling involves every home system so it is a perfect place to begin exploring sustainable decision making,” said Cortright. Call 216-381-6210, ext. 16 to reserve a space.

“People are embracing the goals of sustainability, but it is easy to get overwhelmed and confusing,” said Cortright. “The goal of these presentations is to give the information.”

Future presentations will cover such topics as developing a long-term sustainability plan for your home, sustainable lawn care and design, sustainability on a budget, and developing sustainable neighborhoods.

The Home Repair Resource Center is a Cleveland Heights-based nonprofit organization that is celebrating its 40th anniversary and the 35th year of the tour. This year’s tour is “Cleveland Heights Gems,” named in honor of HCC’s 40th anniversary and the 35th year of the tour. The preview party will be held on Saturday, Sept. 22, with the self-guided tour on Sunday, Sept. 23. Look for more information in the coming months regarding this much anticipated event.

Heights Heritage Home and Garden Tour planned for September

Heights Observer Contributor

Heights Community Congress (HCC) announces its 35th Heritage Home and Garden Tour. The tour brings together some of the finest homes and gardens of Cleveland Heights, and beyond, and will feature spectacular and unusual homes as well as gardens of every size and design. The theme for this year’s tour is “Cleveland Heights Gems,” named in honor of HCC’s 40th anniversary and the 35th year of the tour. The preview party will be held on Saturday, Sept. 22, with the self-guided tour on Sunday, Sept. 23. Look for more information in the coming months regarding this much anticipated event.

Ants

Barry Zucker

“Ants come and ants go.” That’s what my pest control mentor, Vinny Boonah, tells me every spring. So, if you find ants in your home at this time of year, do not panic. More often than not, they just leave. Some folks make them toxic materials, and they will come back. Chances are your ants are the small brown or reddish variety. They are seeking sweets, meat or greasy foods. Ants are fairly easy to discourage.

If you want to help them leave, here is what you can do.

Clean ferociously and store food in tight containers. Don’t leave dirty dishes around. Wipe down counters with vinegar and put some soapy water in a spray bottle and zap the ants. In addition to killing them instantly, the soap destroys the scent trail they lay down for other ants.

Try to find their point of entry and lay down a barrier of black pepper or powdered cleanser. Caulk points of entry or squirt dish soap in there. Try an organic ant bait—one that contains boric acid, such as Terro or Drane—not toxic ones.

If you still have some ants, don’t despair, and don’t call in the big guns. Just remember Vinny’s pearl of wisdom: ants come and ants go. For more information, read Tiny Game Hunting by Hilary Dole Klein, or go to www.beyondpesticides.org.

Barry Zucker is executive director of Beyond Pesticides Ohio.

This week’s tour is “Cleveland Heights Gems,” named in honor of HCC’s 40th anniversary and the 35th year of the tour. The preview party will be held on Saturday, Sept. 22, with the self-guided tour on Sunday, Sept. 23. Look for more information in the coming months regarding this much anticipated event.

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Caring for wood in older homes
Mary Ogle

One of the many character-defining features of older homes is the richness and warmth of finished wood. After 100 years, the luster of the natural wood can become dulled or discolored due to layers of dirt, old wax buildup, and failure of the original varnish or glaze.

Many owners may find the prospect of a careful cleaning and restoration of historic wood to be a daunting or impossible task, while others may mistakenly believe the only method of cleaning it is to strip it entirely and start over. The following tips from the Cleveland Restoration Society make it possible to clean and restore the look of historic, finished wood.

The gentlest means of cleaning should always be undertaken first. In this case, whipping one tablespoon of gentle soap, such as Ivory liquid dish soap, in a gallon of warm water will provide ample suds. Dip an old washcloth or un decisión into the suds—not the water—and scrub the area vigorously. Towel dry to remove any excess water, and examine the area. If the finish on the wood remains cloudy, discolored, or dull, the likely culprit is built-up waxy substances or old layers of finish, and additional cleaning is necessary.

Brush mineral spirits on a small test patch in an inconspicuous area. They result in fumes that are highly flammable, so always have adequate ventilation and dispose of soiled cleaning materials properly. Allow the liquid to soak in for a couple of minutes, then take a pad of very fine steel wool (#0000) and gently rub in the direction of the grain. If the finish is high gloss, use a Terry cloth instead, as steel wool will dull the shine.

Toothbrushes are useful for the tight spaces and carvings of turned spindles or decorative elements. Once the area is dry, apply a bit of lemon oil, which should make the dull finish sparkle again. A good product to use for this step is Milsék, which is a blend of different oils.

An alternative to cleaning with mineral spirits is a self-made cleaner made from linseed oil, white vinegar, and turpentine. Shakes the mixture until it looks like oily milk. Brush this on a test patch with a clean paint brush, and allow it to soak in for several minutes. Again, use a very fine steel wool (#0000) or a Terry washcloth to gently scrub the dirt off, making sure to always rub with the grain. Let this test patch dry for 24 hours, and repeat the process if the desired appearance has not been reached.

The patina of old wood is one of the unique features of an old home. While these methods can help to restore hester to older wood surfaces, they will not (and should not) leave them looking sparkling and brand new.

The Cleveland Restoration Society (CRS) is the region’s largest nonprofit preservation organization and is a Local Partner affiliate of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Founded in 1972, CRS is dedicated to the preservation of Greater Cleveland’s historic resources. CRS’s team of historic rehabilitation specialists have provided free technical assistance to more than 450 Cleveland Heights residents and facilitated more than 100 home repair loans. For more information call 216-416-3106.

Mary Ogle joined the CRS staff in June 2011, after completing her master’s degree in historic preservation at Urdinal College.

Home decorating on a budget
Judith Eugene

Spring is a great time to start tackling those home decorating projects on your to-do list, but getting started can be overwhelming. Often we just need some ideas and a little help to get us going. Here are some tips for giving your home a face-lift without breaking your budget.

Paint is the quickest and least expensive way to give a room a new look. If you’re having trouble choosing a color, tape several paint swatches up on the wall and glance at them at different times of day—and on different days—until you get an accurate idea of how the color will look.

If you’re still having trouble deciding, buy a pint and paint a test wall. Painted stripes, using a wall color and one or two accent colors, are a great way to create the look of wallpaper without the cost and installation challenge.

When it comes to furniture and accessories, try to use what you already have. Furniture can be stained, painted, and repurposed. Try moving things around to see how they look in other locations and group them with other items. Get your own good china, silver and crystal pieces and use them to display potpourri or artificial fruit on a bookshelf or fireplace mantel. A wine rack can be used as a magazine holder, an umbrella stand can be used as a planter, and a nice metal or ceramic vase can be used as a kitchen utensil holder.

The Heights has many inexpensive places to shop for home decorating items. Thrift stores and consignment shops are good options, and local antique stores carry some surprisingly affordable, unique items. Dollar stores sometimes have nice towels, linens, and shower curtains, and discount stores like Tuesday Morning, HomeGoods and Marshall’s have excellent closeout values. Macy’s stores have great houseware departments, though some locations have a bigger selection than others. CityBuddha carries beautiful imported items. Craigslist, eBay, and Freecycle are also good sources for local furniture and also good sources for local furniture and decorating bargains.

Don’t be afraid to shop at thrift stores or to pick up things left on tree lawns. You can also save a lot of money on labor by doing things yourself. You can refinish, recover, and repurpose things at a fraction of the cost of buying new. A trio of old louvered doors can be painted and hinged together to make a stylish room divider. A scratched wooden bookshelf or headboard can be stripped and refinished to look like new.

Practice painting with a brush and roller to learn how to apply paint yourself. Buy an inexpensive sewing machine and learn simple straight-stitch projects like curtains, wall hangings and tablecloths. Take do-it-yourself tile projects or fireplace mantel. A wine rack can be used as a magazine holder, an umbrella

Spring is here!
Class 1 Pavers & Remodelers

Robert Stockham

Could you have guessed that there are nearly 75,000 farms in the state of Ohio, or that less than one percent of your food supply is produced in Northeast Ohio? Seems incredible, doesn’t it?

That’s what Fresh Fork Market founder Trevor Clatterbuck thought in 2008. Fresh Fork Market specializes in connecting local families with local farmers via its farm buying club. Fresh Fork Market customers, or members, subscribe to a weekly farm-fresh grab bag from June 6 through Nov. 3. Each week during this 22-week season, members receive a mixed bag of produce, meat, cheeses and more, all coming from local farms.

Customers pick up their grab bags weekly at one of Fresh Fork Market’s 17 area pick-up locations. In 2011, Fresh Fork Market customers sampled nearly 350 different products from 92 farms in the region.

Last year we added Cleveland Heights due to demand from customers at other stops who asked for something closer to home,” explained Clatterbuck. The company intends to double its capacity to service Cleveland Heights this year at its pick-up location at Fairmount Presbyterian Church. Fresh Fork Market is finalizing the details, but the pick-up location is slated for Thursday nights from 6-9:30 p.m. The summer season will start on June 7.

To learn more, visit www.freshforkmarket.com. Packages range from $25 to $50 per week; vegetarian and vegan options are available. Sign up through early May. Membership spots are limited and sell out quickly each year.

Robert Stockham is the marketing and communications manager for Fresh Fork Market.
Going bald for a cause

Fifty brave souls went under the buzzers on Sunday, March 11 at the Cleveland Heights Community Center, shaving their heads to raise money for St. Baldrick’s and childhood cancer research. The event was organized by Cleveland Heights resident Krissy Dietrich Gallagher, whose son Austin is a two-time cancer survivor and one of five 2012 Ambassador Kids for the national St. Baldrick’s Foundation.

As an Ambassador, Austin represents the more than 160,000 children who are diagnosed with cancer worldwide each year. One in five children in the United States diagnosed with the disease will not survive.

Children as young as three years old shaved their heads, and participants included eight students from St. Paul’s Cooperative Preschool, where Austin attends preK, and eleven from Fairfax Elementary, where his brother Braedan is a second grader. Three students from Roxboro Elementary, four from Roxboro Middle and two from Heights High joined other kids and grown-ups from University Heights, Shaker Heights and surrounding communities at the event, which drew hundreds of supporters and raised more than $32,000.

“St. Baldrick’s Foundation focuses on finding cures for childhood cancers,” said Gallagher, whose family has participated in St. Baldrick’s events for the past five years. The foundation gives more money to pediatric cancer research than any organization except the United States government, and has raised $18 million so far this year.

“I hope my friends will join me,” said Andy Bell, a seventh grader at Roxboro Middle School, admitted he was nervous walking into school on Monday, but said, “Kids were talking about what a cool thing I did. Being bald gave me a chance to talk about cancer and raise funds. It’s something I hope to do again, and I hope my friends will join me.”

Highlights of the day included the shaving of Fairfax’s fourth-grade teacher, Kristi Glasier, a longtime friend of the Gallaghers, who raised more than $3,000. Four-year-old Leah Friess registered at the last minute, inspired by her three bald big brothers. A mother-daughter team from South Euclid closed out the event, with Austin wielding the electric buzzer, giving the stylists from Lee Road’s Cut Hair Studio a much-needed break.

Parents expressed how special it was for their children to have an opportunity to positively impact their world. After his shaving as part of Team Fairfax, eight-year-old Eamonn Connell asked his mother, “If we can help kids with cancer, can’t we help people who don’t have homes too?” His mother Karen was thankful that participating in this event had helped open up his heart and mind. “Empathy has emerged!” she declared.

Andy Bell, a seventh grader at Roxboro Middle School, admitted he was nervous walking into school on Monday, but said, “Kids were talking about what a cool thing I did. Being bald gave me a chance to talk about cancer and raise funds. It’s something I hope to do again, and I hope my friends will join me.”

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Mark Gallagher, a Cleveland Heights resident, shaved his head for the fifth time at A.J. Rocco’s on St. Patrick’s Day. This year, his sons Braedan (8) and Austin (5) wielded the buzzers. When he’s not helping his wife organize events, he’s a criminal defense attorney and the legal director at Towards Employment.

Mark Gallagher (5), Indiana Blackman (5) and Van Dietrich (4), all of Cleveland Heights, show off their new haircuts.

Mark Gallagher
Local restaurant owner chases success, manages transition

Richard Stewart

When Kim Lisboa, owner of Myxx Luxury Lounge and Restaurant in Cedar Fairmont, noticed fewer customers crossing the threshold of the former Jillian’s Billiard Club, she knew she had to make a bold move. After a near-complete demolition and rebuild, the spacious new restaurant and lounge are more reminiscent of a place you’d find in Soho than in Cleveland Heights.

“I took over in late 2010 and tried to operate it as a pool hall,” said Lisboa, “but it wasn’t making money. The crowds weren’t large enough to make it profitable, so I decided to do something completely different.”

Sporting a contemporary new decor that features granite bars, flowing white curtains, swanky lighting, and new bathroom furnishings and furniture, Myxx—all 9,600 square feet of it—opened in July 2011.

The menu features what Lisboa describes as “nouveau contemporary classic cuisine,” and includes a variety of small plates, steaks, salmon and pork chops. There is also a late night menu, and one just for kids.

Myxx also features music, and brings in DJs, bands and other live entertainment. “Cleveland Heights needed a new place to go, not only for fine dining, but also for live entertainment and dancing,” Lisboa said. “I took over the entire space with the concept of booking special events—birthday parties, bar mitzvahs and larger social gatherings.”

The space is large enough to accommodate more than one event simultaneously. “When people walk in they say, ‘This is such a change from before. You did a fantastic job.’ Others say, ‘It’s so big, what a perfect venue for large groups,’” Lisboa said.

So far, results have been . . . well, mixed. Opening a new restaurant is seldom without challenges. Lisboa, who is also president of Cleveland Granite & Marble, lost her first chef after only six months, forcing the restaurant to suspend food service for nearly two weeks. After hiring an interim chef for three months, she recently brought on Chef Jesse Mendoza and says she’s excited about Myxx’s prospects going forward.

“He’s bringing a new flair that Cleveland hasn’t seen. He excels at mixing unusual combinations of flavors. I think he should give people a real incentive to stop in and try us out,” said Lisboa.

Recently hired general manager Neil Fredricks has upgraded the sound system and added a stage, making the place even more music-friendly. He plans to diversify the slate of entertainment acts, and plans to make Myxx a more club-oriented destination once the dinner hour closes out.

“After ten, it’ll basically be a blend of good cuisine and fun. It’s basically the place Cleveland Heights residents have been waiting for . . . and it’s here,” said Fredricks.

Richard Stewart is president of Digizoom Media, a Cleveland Heights-based video production company, and a FutureHeights board member.

New practice offers homeopathic care in the Heights

Kari Elsila

Although the Law of Similars may sound like something mathematical, it’s actually the underlying philosophy of homeopathy, a type of wellness care that uses natural substances to stimulate the body’s immune system.

The idea behind the Law of Similars is that a material that causes certain symptoms in a healthy person can, in extremely small doses, cure those same symptoms in an ill person. In other words, the thing that’s making someone sick can also help make that person better.

Area residents interested in exploring homeopathy can now visit Heights Family Health, located in the Heights Medical Center Building in the Cedar Fairmont district. Established by University Heights resident Patty Carlyle in November 2011, the practice addresses a wide range of conditions.

Carlyle, a certified homeopath, is excited about bringing this type of healing to the Heights. “I believe low-tech, gentle homeopathic treatment has the potential to change the health of this community,” she said.

Heights Family Health offers an initial complimentary 15-minute consultation. The next step is a one- to two-hour appointment, which includes an in-depth health history review. “We’ll talk about your main complaint and what you want help with,” Carlyle explained, “and how it limits you.

After studying the information gathered during this session, Carlyle will then provide a homeopathic remedy that is designed to gently push the body further into symptoms so it can begin to heal itself. Remedies are made from thousands of different plant, mineral, and animal substances, including onion, salt, calcium, and a variety of other substances.

An extract of these substances is diluted in water and then “potentized” through a process of vigorous shaking, called success. Because of the minute dose, the remedies are completely safe.

The solution is then sprayed onto milk sugar pellets, which are dissolved under the tongue. The cost of most remedies is under $10.

Carlyle can recommend remedies to address a wide range of adult chronic and acute conditions including asthma, chronic fatigue, pain, depression, anxiety and sinus infections, to name a few.

For children, she can help with ear infections, teething, diaper rash and eczema, colds and flu, sunburns, bee stings, nightmares, and behavioral issues, such as hyperactivity.

Carlyle offers family packages for treatment of young children and their parent(s) together. She conducts community-based informational sessions about homeopathy, and can also create customized classes and workshops.

Although critics have branded homeopathy a pseudoscience, Carlyle firmly believes in its effectiveness. “The body has everything it needs to heal itself,” she said. “We mostly need to stay out of the way, and give it a gentle nudge when necessary.”

Carlyle appreciates the warm welcome she’s received as a new small-business owner in the Heights. “The Cedar Fairmont Special Improvement District has been very supportive, as has my landlord, Sal Russo,” she said.

Heights Family Health is located at 2460 Fairmount Blvd., Suite 203. For more information, call 216-370-1605, or go to www.heightsfamilyhealth.com for a complete list of services and fees.

Kari Elsila, a resident of Cleveland Heights, is a proposal writer for the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes.
Heights Observer  April 3, 2012
www.heightsobserver.org

Dobama closes its season with ‘God of Carnage’

Jewel Moulthrop
Dobama Theatre announces its fifth and final show of this season, the regional premiere production of “God of Carnage” by Yasmina Reza. Performances begin on April 20, and the show runs until May 13.

“God of Carnage” is the story of two seemingly courteous and civilized couples who meet after their sons have engaged in a fistfight in a neighborhood schoolyard. Michael and Veronica, whose son’s teeth were knocked out, invite Alan and Annette, whose son did the knocking, to their home to talk about the incident. Civility crumbles; the grownups behave badly as they argue about who influenced the bad behavior of their children. Carnage erupts with finger-pointing, name-calling, and general mayhem. “God of Carnage” received the Tony Award for Best New Play in 2009.

French playwright and novelist Yasmina Reza has received critical acclaim and numerous awards for her work, which has been produced worldwide and translated into 35 languages. In addition to “God of Carnage,” which was made into a movie starring Kate Winslet, Jodie Foster and John C. Reilly, Reza has written six other plays, including “Art,” which ran on Broadway for more than a year.

Joel Hammer, Dobama’s artistic director, is directing “God of Carnage.” He has worked as both an actor and director for Dobama Theatre for the past 25 years, and also directed “Middletown” this winter. Hammer’s work as an actor was seen earlier this season when he played Sharky in “The Seafarer.”

Performances are Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings, and Sunday afternoons. For a complete schedule, ticket prices, and reservations, call the Dobama Theatre box office at 216-932-3396. Ask about reduced prices for RUSH tickets, the preview performance on Thursday, April 19, and the pay-as-you-can performance on Sunday, April 22. There will be an Opening Night reception on Friday, April 20.

Jewel Moulthrop is a resident of Cleveland Heights and a member of this newspaper’s editorial advisory committee.

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Apollo’s Fire hosts Roaring ’20s gala

Margi Griebling-Haigh
Apollo’s Fire, Cleveland’s Baroque orchestra, will present Speakeasy Spectacular on Saturday, April 21 at 9:30 p.m. at the Shaker Heights Country Club.

If you remember the 1920s only from the stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald, here is an opportunity to become a flapper, sheik or varsity guy and dance to the lively music of the Jazz Age. The event is being held to support the orchestra’s education and outreach programs.

Tickets for Speakeasy Spectacular are $65 per person. The Shaker Heights Country Club is located at 3100 Courtland Blvd., in Shaker Heights. Leave your car with the valet, step into the back room, and learn the Charleston and fox trot as you enjoy an evening of music with a vintage flare. For more information, visit www.apollofire.org.

Margi Griebling-Haigh is the box office and marketing assistant for Apollo’s Fire. A Cleveland Heights resident, she is also a member of Cleveland Composers Guild, a freelance oboist, composer and artist.

Heights High jazz musicians at Nighttown

Thirty seven students played in two jazz ensembles and two combos at Nighttown on March 6. The groups drew a full house audience that enthusiastically showed its support for both jazz and the young musicians. It was inspiring for the students. “The place is so intimate, the energy is very different from playing in an auditorium,” said one musician. View a photo gallery on the school’s website: www.chuh.org/schools/chhs/photos.
Volunteer at Forest Hill Park

Elsa Johnson

The East Cleveland Parks Association (ECPA), the volunteer organization that cares for Forest Hill Park, wishes to thank Milan Wylie for his generous donation of $1,400, designated for the removal of several oak trees. These large oaks had fallen in the Great Meadow, leaving unsightly stumps and large debris, which has made the Great Meadow difficult to mow. Although birds may bemoan the loss of the stumps for bird habitat, they should be reminded that many other stumps remain in unmanaged natural areas of the park.

The trees in the Great Meadow—primarily oaks—are some of the oldest in the park. Many may be close to 200 years old and are approaching the end of their natural life spans. They appear healthy until strong winds blow off a limb, revealing that they are often hollow inside. ECPA is encouraging the growth of replacement trees from the seedlings sprouting around the original trees. Fortunately oaks grow quickly, and one can already see significant growth of the replacements.

This is also garlic mustard time. Garlic mustard is a spring flowering herb brought to this country from the Old World. Although it is edible, garlic mustard is considered an invasive noxious weed because it grows so densely, blocking light for other plants. More importantly, it changes soil chemistry where it grows, making it more conducive for its own survival and less conducive for native plants. This chemical soil change destroys beneficial fungi in the soil that many native plants, including trees, need to thrive.

For this reason, it is Garlic Mustard Pull Time in Forest Hill Park. The plant is best removed before it goes to seed. Garlic mustard seeds remain viable for several years. Each plant can produce several hundred seeds, resulting in huge colonies in only a couple years. To see what garlic mustard looks like, go to Google and type “picture of garlic mustard.” Learn more about it, and feel free to pull it when you see some in the park. Leave the remains to decompose. Look for garlic mustard along path edges in the Great Meadow and throughout the park. Or join an organized pull.

Meet at the pavilion north of the Cleveland Heights baseball field compound at 2 p.m. on any or all of the following dates: Sunday, April 1; Easter Sunday, April 8; and Sunday, April 15. After these dates, the plant will have gone to seed. Please bring gloves (there is poison ivy in some areas of the park) and water to drink.

For more information about volunteer opportunities in the park, either as an individual or as an organization, call 216-416-1333 or e-mail elsanVuic@gmail.com. Tax deductible donations are gratefully accepted. You may designate your gift for tree removal or the Fund a Friend campaign to purchase and restore native plants to Forest Hill Park.

Elsa Johnson is an environmental designer, artist and writer.

Shaker Farm Historic District is officially listed in National Register of Historic Places

Mary Dunbar

On Feb. 15, the Shaker Farm Historic District was formally listed in the National Register of Historic Places. This recognition was the culmination of a process involving many people at the local, state and national levels over more than two decades before houses were built on the adjacent land north of the park.

Between 1910 and 1919, wealthy people employed leading architects to build about 50 percent of the homes in the district. Most of the rest of the structures in the district were built to similarly high standards between 1920 and 1929. Shaker Farm was one of the earliest suburban developments of Cleveland. Establishing streetcar service ensured the success of the development. Wealthy families were lured by the promise of healthy, country living.

Development of the area set the stage and established a model for the development of Shaker Heights, which broke off from Cleveland Heights in 1912 and is celebrating its centennial this year. There are nine other Cleveland Heights historic districts in the National Register of Historic Places.

Mary Dunbar is a member of the Cleveland Heights City Council. She nominated the Shaker Farm Historic District for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

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