Heights Observer October 1, 2014

Brennan’s wins Best CH Business in 2014 Best of the Heights Awards

Daniel Budin

Following a summer marked by both tragedy and resilience, Brennan’s Colony received the title of Best Cleveland Heights Business in the 10th annual Best of the Heights Awards, held Sept. 25. Voters also honored the Lee Road restaurant and bar in naming it the Heights’s Best Bar, Pub or Tavern.

“It’s an overwhelming testament to the amount of support the community has provided us, but most importantly it’s a testament to what Jim Brennan was able to do in his lifetime and in his years of service at the corner of Lee and Silsby, and I would be remiss to think that this award wasn’t directly for him,” said Aran Keenan, Brennan’s Colony manager.

The Best of the Heights Awards is an annual recognition of outstanding Cleveland Heights and University Heights businesses.

Each year, FutureHeights—a nonprofit dedicated to promoting civic engagement in the Heights through information, education, and advocacy—and the publisher of the Heights Observer community news—conducts the Best of the Heights survey to recognize the unique attributes of locally owned businesses here in the Heights, and their contributions to the local economy.

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Lee Road will be hopping Oct. 11

James Henke

The second annual Heights Music Hop will take place on Saturday, Oct. 11. The free event will once again be held along Lee Road, between Silsby and Yorkshire roads. This year’s hop will feature about 30 artists and bands, up from 20 that participated last year, and 16 Lee Road businesses will serve as music venues, also representing an increase in participation over last year.

“We are very excited by the growth of this event,” said Greg Bonanno, chair of the FutureHeights Music Hop Committee, which is organizing the festival.

“There has been a tremendous amount of interest and support from merchants, sponsors and the community.”

Last year’s inaugural Music Hop drew more than 1,000 people to the Cedar Lee neighborhood, and retailers said it had a huge impact on their businesses. This year, the following businesses will open their doors to musicians and audiences: Atma Center, the BistroHouse Brewery, Brennan’s Colony, Cedar Lee Pub and Grill, Dewey’s Pizza, Pizzaiolo, Pizzarii, Pizzitella, Pizzeria Uno, Tavern Company, The Wine Spot and Zagara’s Marketplace.

FutureHeights is again collaborating with Cleveland Beer Week (Oct. 10-18). Attendees interested in sampling beers during the Music Hop can purchase a tasting passport on Cleveland Beer Week’s website, www.clevelandbeerweek.org, and then sample special collaboration brews continued on page 8

Marotta’s expands offerings and space with new patio

James Henke

Marotta’s, the Italian restaurant located on Lee Road between Silsby Road and Meadowbrook Boulevard, opened a new patio in late August. Located behind the restaurant, the patio seats about 30 people. It has a beige roof and zip-out windows, and the patio seats about 30 people. The restaurant’s seating capacity, the patio is also enabling Marotta’s to expand its offerings. The restaurant is now presenting live music and hosting wine tastings on the patio. Singer-songwriter and pianist Harry Bacharach and violinist Ariela Clayton both performed there in September. Owners Alicia Marotta Lanihan and Brian Lanihan are also making the patio available for private events and parties.

The Heights marching band formed its famous “H” formation for the opening ceremony. The band also performed at halftime, with dancing.

The Heights High dedicates new stadium

Joy Henderson

A sellout crowd filled the new and expanded stands for Heights High’s first home football game of the season, on Sept. 13. The game, against Glenville, marked the official opening of the new Heights High athletic stadium, featuring all-weather turf.

The enthusiastic crowd saw the Tigers fall to Glenville, 12-19. Standouts among the Heights team members were offensive running back Jevon Avery, with 83 yards and a touchdown, James Crowder, who had 50 receiving yards, and running back Marquise Watkins, who added 59 yards rushing and a touchdown.

Before the game, students, families, alumni, neighbors and youth athletes attended the district’s tailgate celebration, opening ceremony and ribbon cutting.

Kristin Hughes, athletic director, began the ceremony with a big thank-you to Cleveland Heights and University Heights citizens, for making the new facility a reality. Ron Register, Board of Education (BOE) president, recognized the citizen working groups that are supporting the facilities project, and welcomed the stadium as the first piece of the Heights High athletic complex.

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Deliver to addressee or current resident

FREE TAKE ONE

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Marotto’s, the slender Italian restaurant located on Lee Road between Silsby Road and Meadowbrook Boulevard, opened a new patio in late August. Located behind the restaurant, the patio seats about 30 people. It has a beige roof and zip-out windows, and also features a natural brick retaining wall, LED lighting and Brazilian hardwood wood fencing. The covering makes the patio usable most of the year, with the exception of the snow-filled winter months.

In addition to increasing the restaurant’s seating capacity, the patio is also enabling Marotto’s to expand its offerings. The restaurant is now presenting live music and hosting wine tastings on the patio. Singer-songwriter and pianist Harry Bacharach and violinist Ariela Clayton both performed there in September. Owners Alicia Marotta Lanihan and Brian Lanihan are also making the patio available for private events and parties.

The Linhans opened Marotto’s in the fall of 2000, and named the restaurant after Alicia’s father, who lived in 1990, “I always wanted a very intimate Italian restaurant,” she said, “one that reflected my family’s history.”

Alicia, 41, was born and raised in Cleveland Heights and has lived here her entire life. Her grandparents all immigrated to the United States from Italy, making her parents’ first-generation Americans. “Italian food was a staple in our house when I was growing up,” she said. “We’d always have big Sunday dinners, and all of the heights survey to recognize the unique attributes of locally owned businesses here in the Heights, and their contributions to the local economy.

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The biggest part of the Heights Observer's mission is to enable discussion of important community topics. Who decides what’s important? You do, by choosing to contribute. There are some boundaries. Topics must be relevant specifically in Cleveland Heights and/or University Heights. So you can discuss the merits of city council candidates, but we don’t make room for opinions on what would be presidents or governors. There are plenty of other outlets for those conversations. There’s more than one way to contribute too, and this sometimes causes confusion. If you have something to say, here are your options: • Write an article. This is fact-based reporting—what, who, when, where and why—citing information from people other than the author. An article about a local issue may outline the pros and cons of the possible outcomes, but it won’t seek to persuade readers which side to take. • Write an opinion piece for the Heights Observer. This needs to be factual too; you can’t assert something that’s untrue. But if you hope to persuade others to take a particular position, this is the place to try. • Write a letter to the editor. Most people exercise this option when they want to respond directly to something else they’ve read in the paper. But it’s open to any local topic, and is shorter and less formal than an opinion piece. • Write a blog post. We have a separate blog site (blogs.heightsobserver.org) where you can post your thoughts in a more free-form style—though we still enforce our standard for highly local content. Posts from the blog site are sometimes excerpted in the printed Observer. Anyone can comment on any blog post at this site, but blog posts need to be given a higher level of access in order to publish. If you’re interested, contact me at brosenbaum@heightsobserver.org. Space in the printed Heights Observer is limited. Items that don’t fit into the printed edition will still be published on our website at www.heightsobserver.org. The website and blog site have prominent links so you can easily find one from the other. Periodically, the factuality of something we publish gets questioned. People sometimes ask, “Don’t you check the facts before you publish something?” Typically, yes. Our standards are at least as high as the Plain Dealer and certainly higher than Cleveland.com, where reporters routinely publish stories that an editor hasn’t reviewed. We’re pretty good at catching big errors, but we aren’t perfect; keep in mind that our editors, as well as or writers, are volunteers. If you find a substantive error, let us know; we’ll look into it and take appropriate action. There are some boundaries. Items there are not reviewed in advance. If you see something that’s incorrect there, the best action is to set the record straight by writing your own comment at the end of the blog post. If you believe an error was an intentional attempt to mislead, please let us know: We’ll look into it and take action as needed. More details about how information gets posted and reviewed is available online. Visit www.heightsobserver.org and click on the “Rules” link on the left-hand menu. On the blog site, visit blogs.heightsobserver.org and click the Rules/RAT link on the main menu. Cleveland Heights resident Bob Rosenbaum, a former member of the FutureHeights Board of Directors, is co-chairman of the Heights Observer, and is responsible for its advertising sales and market development. Contact him at brosenbaum@heightsobserver.org.
A collaborative approach gives community building the best chance for success

Deanna Bremer Fisher

Since its inception, FutureHeights has provided tools for citizens to become more engaged in their community, bring innovative ideas forward to confront our challenges and have a greater voice in civic life. Cleveland Heights is a city of neighborhoods, and it is only with strong, vibrant neighborhoods that our city will be able to sustain itself and remain a desirable place to live and work. This year, FutureHeights has applied for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding through the City of Cleveland Heights to help support the addition of a staff member who can oversee a community-building program. Through this program, FutureHeights would support existing neighborhood groups and assist new ones in forming. We would train neighborhood residents in neighborhood asset mapping, data analysis and resident engagement, to enable them to create priorities for their own neighborhoods.

The city is also increasing its emphasis on neighborhoods, and its planning staff has proposed using CDBG funds for a Neighborhood Wellness Program that will examine census data and create a wellness assessment for each neighborhood. The city’s process would be modeled after one undertaken by Champaign, Ill., that rates each neighborhood on certain criteria and crafts plans to address areas in which a neighborhood underperforms. FutureHeights would anticipate complementing the city’s data-driven process with our resident engagement process as an ideal effort to create a more comprehensive neighborhood plan for a particular neighborhood.

Our approach is strength-based and resident-driven. Our community-building philosophy is based on an approach known as ABCD, Assets-Based Community Development, which asks neighborhood residents to identify the strengths they have and devise strategies that build upon them. For example, rather than defining the Cedar Fairmount neighborhood as an area that lacks easy highway access, the neighborhood should focus on the fact that it is in close proximity to University Circle. Likewise, the Noble neighborhood has an abundance of affordable housing and good transit connections. Our approach recognizes the uniqueness of our neighborhoods, and encourages residents to craft solutions to neighborhood challenges by building on existing assets, allowing for the greatest chance of success.

We believe community engagement needs to be part of the process from the beginning. Only when engaged residents are driving the process will we be able to create neighborhood plans that will be successful. Residents will feel ownership of the plan and its objectives because they actively participated in creating it. They will ensure that the focus remains on priorities that are important to them. They will not allow a plan to sit on a shelf.

Our challenges are great in Cleveland Heights, and our resources are limited. We are hopeful that FutureHeights can be an active partner with the city and can help our residents work cooperatively with the city to create the best possible future for all of us. At the FutureHeights annual meeting, held Aug. 20, City Manager Tanisha Briley stated, “We need a collaborative approach to make a difference in our most challenged areas.” We couldn’t agree more.

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

Excerpts from Observer blogs

Read the whole story at blogs.heightsobserver.org

There’s something happening here

Last spring in a profound commentary the editors of Rethinking Schools magazine argued that school accountability based on high-stakes standardized tests merely disguises class and race privilege as merit. When individual children of all economic and racial groups are likely to score all over the spectrum on standardized tests, in the aggregate scores are likely to be higher among privileged children. And if schools in our racially and economically segregated society are judged by the students’ test scores, the schools serving wealthier children will appear to be doing a better job. . . . Ohio, like other states, ignores this reality by attaching its rating system to score all over the spectrum on standardized tests. We are likely to be doing a better job. . . .

Ohio, like other states, ignores this reality by attaching its rating system to score all over the spectrum on standardized tests. We are likely to be doing a better job.

—Bob Rosenbaum

Cleveland Heights City Hall is now a bank

I was very pleased to hear that Millikin School was sold to Mosdos. But, I am confused as to why the sale is contingent on the City of Cleveland Heights financing the purchase.

What is the justification of CH City Council offering to finance this sale?

… I don’t understand why Mosdos is getting financing from the City of Cleveland Heights instead of a bank. Do you?

—Fran Mentch

Citizens Police Academy – Part III: Narcotics

… Day of the Cleveland Heights Citizens Police Academy was all about narcotics investigations. The visual aids included not only multiple grades of marijuana in clear plastic, but also cocaine, . . . crack, heroin, some drug paraphernalia, and a Tec 9 automatic handgun. Unfortunately, none of it was unfamiliar, thanks to the images we see every day on TV and the Internet. But up close and in person it spoke of dark obsession and horror that was surprising to a bleeding heart lefty from the suburbs. . . .

“We go into neighborhoods where nobody knows anyone else who has a job,” Cmdr. L said. “What’s needed is education and the opportunity for people to use it. If we want to solve the drug problem, we need to break the cycle of poverty and hopelessness. You’re not going to arrest your way out of this.” . . .

—Bob Rosenbaum

Click on the QR codes or go to blogs.heightsobserver.org to read these blogs in their entirety.
the family would come over to eat. Everything was centered on food."

Alicia became interested in cooking when she was very young, and recalled, "All through grade school and high school, I would cook with my mother." After graduating from Beaumont School, she enrolled in Cuyahoga Community College and majored in culinary arts, business management and food science. After graduating from Tri-C, she went to Italy and studied cooking in Florence for a year.

Her husband, 42, grew up on Long Island in New York. Brian also had a strong interest in cooking, and earned his culinary arts degree from Johnson and Wales University in Providence, R.I. He moved to Cleveland in 1995. "It was time for a change," he said. "I needed a change from the atmosphere in New York, and I wanted to try something new."

He got a job at Salvatore’s restauranteur in Little Italy, and that’s where he and Alicia met. They got married in August 2002, and are now the parents of four children: Margaret, 8, Elizabeth, 7, Brendan, 5, and Mary Katherine, 3. The family lives in the Fairmount Taylor neighborhood, and they love Cleveland Heights. "When Brian and I got married, I told him I was never moving from Cleveland Heights," Alicia said. "I love all of the culture here and the proximity to downtown. It’s also a great place to raise children."

"Everything is at your fingertips here," Brian said. "There’s gorgeous architecture, a great cross section of people, and you’re close to University Circle, where there are some of the world’s best museums and the best orchestra."

As for their restaurant, the Linihans said the menu is based on creative dishes, many of which Brian conceives, as well as Italian-American staples. Virtually all of the food is locally grown and raised. They get organic, grass-fed cattle from a farm near Youngstown, and they buy virtually all of their fruit and vegetables at local farmers markets. "Being a small restaurant, we can be more experimental," Brian said. "We can try different things. For example, we make our own ice cream. In addition, we do our best to make people feel at home here."

The Linihans are delighted by the new patio. "It’s been a long time coming," Alicia said. "We had been thinking about it for a few years, and we just needed the timing to be right."

James Henke, a Cleveland Heights resident, was a writer and editor at Rolling Stone magazine for 15 years. He is also the author of several books, including biographies of Jim Morrison, John Lennon and Bob Marley.

October is the 11th annual National Fair Trade Month. Fair trade products are "food or crafts that are produced under standards designed to end and prevent the poverty, sweatshop labor conditions, environmental degradation, etc. that are endemic to the free trade ‘race to the bottom’ that puts profits above people and the planet," according to the Global Exchange human rights organization.

Fair trade products can be found throughout Cleveland Heights, in grocery stores, local boutiques and major chains.

As the holiday shopping season begins, this month’s special designation offers a chance to reflect a little bit more on purchases. If you’re buying a gift, is it as unique as its ultimate recipient? Do you know who made it, where it came from and the impact of your purchase? Was it produced under safe conditions and for fair wages?

Fair trade shopping provides answers to these questions while stretching your money farther than you may have imagined. It enables fair labor standards, and provides financial security and emotional independence to artisans—often women—who would otherwise have nothing. It enables children to go to school and not work in the fields, factories or on the streets. It allows the disabled and less privileged to find self-confidence and skills. It helps communities to flourish both economically and emotionally. Fair trade is more than a label; it’s a way of life.

Ten Thousand Villages, with a store located in the Cedar Fairmount Business District, is a nonprofit charitable organization that offers fair trade products from more than 100 artisan groups in 36 developing countries.

It was voted “Best Place to Buy a Gift” and “Best Cleveland Heights Business” in the 2013 Best of the Heights awards, presented by Future-Heights and the Heights Observer.

Whether you shop at Ten Thousand Villages or any other local business that offers fair trade products, National Fair Trade Month is a good time to consider the true cost and value of the things you buy.

Laura Potter is store manager for Ten Thousand Villages in Cleveland Heights. She is active on the Ohio Fair Trade Expo Committee and the Cedar Fairmount SIDS Marketing Committee.

Heights libraries are vital to our community

Louisa Oliver and Abby Botnick

The immense value of our local Heights libraries cannot be taken for granted. The services they provide can sometimes seem routine: lending books, connecting residents to the Web, running programs for children, providing resources for job seekers, and more. But these services are fundamental to all of us. Our libraries are part of the bedrock of our community and must not be overlooked.

Since the library first opened its doors in the Heights in 1921, it has helped to shape the community’s success. The libraries have anchored our local neighborhoods, educated and empowered our citizens, and provided top-notch, free services to every resident. And it is not only Heights residents who think we have a wonderful library system. Library Journal has awarded our library 7 stars— its top grade—for the fifth year in a row! Heights Libraries is ranked seventh in the country for libraries of its size.

Now we find ourselves having to protect this amazing community resource. Fortunately, we have an opportunity this fall to keep our libraries strong by passing Issue 5. In recent years the state of Ohio has aggressively cut funding to local communities, and our library’s state funding is at its lowest point since 1996.

State funding provides one-third of the library’s budget, with property tax, which is also bringing in less, providing the other two-thirds. As funding has decreased, the demand for services has increased. In 2013 alone, Heights Libraries had more than one million visitors, loaned 1.8 million items, and provided more than 300,000 individual computer visits. In 1996, the library had no public-use computers, and circulation was $500,000 less.

In the face of declining budgets, our Heights libraries have made smart fiscal decisions. More than $1 million has been cut from the Heights Libraries’ budget, with minimal service impact. The State of Ohio Auditor’s Office awarded our library the Auditor Award with Distinction.

We need to protect the solid financial foundation Heights Libraries has built by approving Issue 5, a 2.2 mill operating levy, on the November ballot. The impact on homeowners amounts to only $6.13 per month per $100,000 valuation.

Passing Issue 5 will do more than protect current services and programs. The library board has prioritized restoring Sunday hours to Coventry Village and Noble Neighborhood libraries, providing enhancements to library facilities, to keep up with technology and new uses; improving parking and handicapped access; and establishing energy saving and sustainability upgrades.

We can’t take our Heights Libraries for granted! Vote FOR Issue 5 to protect our Heights Libraries this November.

Supporting our libraries strengthens our community. Visit the levy website at www.protectheightslibrary.org for additional information, to sign up for a yard sign, to volunteer for the campaign, or to donate to get our message out.

Louisa Oliver and Abby Botnick are co-chairs of the Library Levy Campaign to support the Heights Libraries. Botnick is a member of the library board and Oliver is the president of the Friends of the Heights Libraries.
Stop Mass Incarceration movement plans October month of mass resistance

Carol Steiner

Last April, three older white women here in the Heights sent out a letter to friends and sympathetic acquaintances calling on them to take up the call of author Michelle Alexander, to help build a social movement against the new Jim Crow. We read Alexander’s book, The New Jim Crow, and were horrified to learn that the war on drugs has caused an astounding rise in the incarceration of people of color for minor drug offenses over the last 40 years. Alexander’s exposure of the blatant injustice at every level of the criminal “justice” system had a profound effect on us. We felt compelled to do something.

We were also deeply troubled by the acquittal of George Zimmerman, and inspired by the “Stop and Frisk” movement in NYC. Our movement, Puncture the Silence-Stop Mass Incarceration, was formed in a living room in Cleveland Heights, where eight older women unanimously endorsed the Stop Mass Incarceration Network’s (SMIN) call for an October “Month of Resistance to Mass Incarceration, Police Terror and the Criminalization of Generations,” initiated by Carl Dix and Cornel West.

We quickly planned a showing of the film “Broken on All Sides,” about the movement in Philadelphia at the time, and inspired by the “Stop and Frisk” movement in NYC. Our movement needs to get even stronger and more active, with a focus on resistance. The night ended with a determination and spirit to use the kickoff as a springboard to become a bigger and more active, with a focus on resistance. The night ended with a determination and spirit to use the kickoff as a springboard to become a bigger part of the national movement to Stop Mass Incarceration. People took stacks of the 5,000 palm cards, ready to go.

Stadium continued from page 1

for its leadership, and thanked city officials for their support. Zoraba Ross, Heights High administrative principal, recognized the athletes and the important role that athletics plays in the life of students and the school. Student athletes from each of Heights High’s teams participated in the ceremonial ribbon cutting that preceded the football game.

Volunteers from the Sustainability Working Group, a citizen group supporting the district’s move to more environmentally friendly facilities, stood by all of the stadium’s recycling and trash containers, to encourage fans to recycle as much as possible.

Hughes is “thrilled” with the mud-free field, and said, “This all-winter field will be used by many teams. Besides our football team, youth and middle school football, soccer, field hockey, lacrosse, marching band, baseball and physical education classes will use this field.”

Hughes noted that the district is still using the Dennison field. While the field surface and stands are complete, the district is working on a fundraising plan to enable it to add a Tiger Welcome Center that would include a concession stand and restrooms. The district’s goal is to have that in place by next fall.

Joy Henderson is the parent/community liaison for Heights High.
A park, yes—but not a $3 million park

Anita Kazarian

Mayor Infeld’s proposed new tax bond issue for $1.8 million for a neighborhood park is on November’s ballot. Add to it the $866,677 already spent, and this park will cost close to $3 million.

How did it grow from the simple “green space” Infeld said was her preference to a project that now needs a massive tax to fund it?

According to the University Heights City Council meeting minutes of Feb. 6, 2012, Brett Teacher, chair of Citizens for Saybrook Park, requested that the city purchase the former Fuchs Mizrachi private property and “convert it into a city park.”

At the April 2, 2012 council meeting, an Ashurst Road resident said that the “residents did not know the purchase price” and that there are “many unanswered questions,” including “whether the building would be demolished or maintained, security measures, lights, and hours.”

The resident also questioned the availability of funds for demolition and maintenance, noting that the City cannot afford to maintain the tennis courts at Purvis Park. She cited the Ashurst Road pocket park experience in sharing her concern that “what the residents are told and what they get do not always match.” She said she is “in favor of more information being provided.”

The minutes do not show answers to the questions.

The minutes indicate that the mayor said at the April 2, 2012 meeting that if a community center is desired (in lieu of a green space), “it could be put before the voters as a bond issue,” and add that “Mayor Infeld emphasized that there is not enough money to operate a community center using General Fund revenues.”

The mayor again discussed the potential uses of the Fuchs Mizrachi property at the April 16, 2012 meeting, where she said that, if the city acquired the property, she would “appoint a committee of residents to study how the property will be used.”

She referred to the possibility of a community center: “…if the community desires to have a community center, it could go before the voters as a bond issue…”

According to the “Reports and Communications from the Mayor” section of the Dec. 3, 2012 minutes, the mayor announced that “Mr. Brett Teacher (head of Citizens for Saybrook Park) will be the Chairperson for the Committee to study the use of the former Fuchs Mizrachi School property.”

Given Mr. Teacher’s role as head of a group of citizens seeking to use the land as a park, may this appointment be considered biased against exploring other possible uses for the property, such as a community or senior center?

Fast forward to the Jan. 21, 2014 minutes which cite the report of the recreation committee, stating that “priority” will be given to the interests of the neighbors of this park—as it should, for a neighborhood park.

When taxpayers were presented with the purchase of the land, the mayor’s vision was green space.

Until the June 3, 2014 minutes, nothing shows the change of concept from green space into an almost $3 million neighborhood park.

On June 2, Mayor Infeld’s Resolution No. 2014-12, for $1.8 million of bonds, to be paid off with an increase in our property taxes, was placed before council to be passed as an emergency measure.

Councilman Mark Wiseman said “to his knowledge this was the first time the city has asked people to pay for the cost of the park and how the city will pay for it.” He continued, stating, “none of the park meetings discussed bond, how much the bond would be, nor how much it would cost residents.”

According to the minutes, “Councilman Wiseman felt the people need/deserve some type of public meeting where they would have the chance to say yes or no. This seems sudden…”

Yes, quite sudden.

Mayor Infeld is already defending herself to citizens for spending well above her authorized $3,000 limit without council’s approval. Shouldn’t we address the conflicting interpretations on spending our tax dollars before we add an additional $1.8 million in new taxes?

On July 18, the mayor told the community, “Due to the recent criminal activity in our area, the city is hosting a Community Forum on Safety.”

Shall we connect our police, fire and EMS staffing to where it was prior to our mayor taking office?

A “NO” vote in November still keeps the green space park for everyone to use. It can be adapted, over time, as Councilman Wiseman suggests. It just won’t be an almost $3 million park to be paid for with new taxes on homeowners.

Anita Kazarian, a 31-year resident of University Heights, has been active in many of the city’s volunteer organizations. She wants to hear your thoughts; write to her at anitakazarian@gmail.com
Who should define our community?

**THE COMMON GOOD**

Sue Kasser

Fifty years ago, the idea of housing integration was akin to a four-letter word. It was, as housing activist Kermit Lind explained to me, “a state of pathological transition.”

Segregation was the reality for nearly everyone living in Cuyahoga County. Single-race neighborhoods and a lack of choice for African Americans were the cumulative outcome of federal law, lending and real estate practices, and cultural norms. It appeared to be a locked system, with no options for change. Cleveland Heights was nearly all white. Only 251 African Americans were counted among 6,876 residents in the 1960 census. Then, everything changed.

In the spring of 1964, as a matter of conscience, Cleveland Heights activists organized Heights Citizens for Human Rights to end the “whites only” real estate norm. Inspired by the civil rights movement, galvanized by the tragic death of Reverend Bruce Klunder at a demonstration challenging the construction of new schools to keep poor black children segregated in Glenville, Heights residents came together to face discrimination in their community.

These volunteers were creative, relentless and bold. They circumvented the system by finding homeowners willing to sell on the open market. They developed a script to address every reason given to justify segregation and used it to persuade white homeowners to welcome black neighbors. In 1967 they sponsored more than 40 living room conversations about race, fear and integration. They confronted their neighbors and realtors. They lobbied city council and rallied the community when violence was used to discourage black homeownership. These committed volunteers were not going to let someone else define their community and perpetuate a humiliating violation of human rights. It was citizen activism at its best.

This remarkable work continued for many years. By the 1970 census, there was a six-fold increase in the number of African-American residents—about 1,500. Once the community opened, additional community groups formed to support black access and challenge practices designed to destabilize the integrating community.

Heights Citizens for Human Rights, the St. Anns Audit of Real Estate Practices, the Forest Hill Church Housing Corporation, the Committee to Improve Community Relations, the Heights Interfaith Council, and the Heights Community Congress all came into being between 1964 and 1976. These citizen-led organizations made living in Cleveland Heights a real option for African Americans. They changed the fate and identity of the community.

They fought for what was right. In 1976, the City of Cleveland Heights adopted a nine-point plan to support integration as a community value. In this short time integration changed from a pathology to the city’s greatest asset.

After studying this remarkable grassroots effort, I am inspired and awed by how effectively citizens challenged a systemic problem. Organized, determined citizens changed cultural norms, real estate practices and the law. By speaking up, they challenged injustice and opened what had been a closed system.

Injustice has returned. Today it is the test of seats to judge and label school districts as winners and losers. The standardized tests are not a valid tool for judging education quality. Judgment is not an effective policy for guaranteeing student learning. This system advances homogenous affluent communities and punishes communities like ours that embrace diversity. It encourages discrimination and segregation.

School district report cards issued by the state of Ohio are not legitimate. They do not tell what happens in schools or do they measure what a community values. Starting 10 years ago, Cleveland Heights residents rejected segregation. Now state and federal education policies—poorly conceived and lacking legitimacy—are threatening what Heights makes us special.

In keeping with our tradition of grassroots activism, it is time to say no to the state’s obsession with judgment. Until policymakers focus on meaningful support for public education, we should define for ourselves the attributes of a good education and label as invalid the faceless mathematical construct based on multiple-choice tests.

Local action has begun and is being led by the Heights Coalition for Public Education, a coalition of residents, parents, education advocates and teachers who participated in last winter’s community reading of Diane Ravitch’s Reign of Error. The coalition will sponsor events to raise awareness of the damage inflicted by bad policy on teaching, children, schools and communities. I’ve added my voice to this work. I hope you will too. To find out more and add your name to the coalition’s principles, visit www.cuhn.net/coalition.

Sue Kasser is a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights, former director of Reaching Heights, and serves on the national board of Parents for Public Schools.

From May through August, Heights residents voted for their favorite Heights businesses in 21 categories, and the winners were announced on Sept. 13. This year’s Best of the Heights Awards program provided a change from past ceremonies and featured more of a celebration and party-like atmosphere. Instead of a stage and acceptance speeches, finalists and guests enjoyed food, drinks, conversation and music, and the winners were announced with a flourish as banners were unfurled from a balcony.

The Best University Heights Business award went to Whole Foods Market. Gigi’s on Fairmount took home the title of Best New Business, edging out fellow newcomers Four and Twenty Mercantile, Sweet Melissa and Yoga Roots.

Quintana’s Barber and Dream Spa won the award for Best Customer Experience, and Theo Challouf bested shop-mate and Quintana’s owner Alex Quintana for the title of Best Barber.

A new category this year, Best Enduring Business—which recognized longevity in the Heights business community—featured finalists Nighttown, Brennan’s Colony and Tommy’s Restaurant, which won the award. Mama Joyce’s Soul Food Café won the award for Best African-American-Owned Business, and the prize for Best Home-Based Business went to Loving Hands Yoga and Reiki. Judith Eugene, founder of the Loving Hands Group, was grateful for the support she has found in the Heights community. “I grew up here and went through the school system, so just to know that I’m giving back something that people find valuable and helpful really fills up my heart,” said Eugene.

“Being able to connect with people and to find what it is that people need and what they find valuable, and to hopefully be able to fill that need, is tremendously rewarding to me.”

This year’s Best of the Heights Awards had even more of a special meaning, as it was the 10th annual presentation of a program in which FutureHeights finds great importance.

“Recognizing and celebrating our local businesses through the Best of the Heights Awards is one way that FutureHeights acts to support and promote a vibrant local economy. These businesses are, for many of us, like home. We know the proprietors and they know their customers. It’s this connection to the community that we all value and that keeps us rooted here in the Heights,” said Clare Taft, president of the FutureHeights Board of Directors.

The following is a complete list of winners and finalists in the 2014 Best of the Heights Awards:

**Best New Business WINNER:** Gigi’s on Fairmount

**FINALISTS:** Four and Twenty Mercantile, Sweet Melissa, Yoga Roots

**Best Place for Sweet Treats WINNER:** Sweetie Fry

**FINALISTS:** Luna Bakery Café, Mitchell’s Fine Chocolates

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Heights Observer October 1, 2014

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7
Heights historical photo of the month

In 1941, the Heights Theater on Euclid Heights Boulevard, in the Coventry neighborhood, advertised Humphrey Bogart’s movie “The Wagon at Night” on its marquee. The theater opened in 1919 and showed films up until the 2000s.

This photo was selected by the Cleveland Heights Historical Society, a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and promoting the diverse character and traditions of all those who call Cleveland Heights home. For more information, and to view additional historical images, visit www.chhisory.org or www.facebook.com/clevelandheightshistorical.

Cleveland Heights City Council

Meeting highlights

AUGUST 18, 2014 Council Member Mark Delbar was absent.

Public comments
Library levy: Nancy Levin, director of Heights Libraries, summarized this year’s annual financial report and discussed the 2.2% increase in operating levy that will be on the Nov. 4 ballot. An independent library system created before 1947, Heights Libraries has raised about two-thirds of its $2.8 million annual budget through property taxes. She noted the numerous services the system’s four libraries provide to about one million visitors each year.

Bitcoin comment: Niki Chand, founder of Bitcoin consulting firm, and Adam Fleischer, owner of The Wine Spot, discussed the growing use of digital currency and the Bitcoin system. She said Bitcoin, which has drawn national and international media attention.

Pension definition in city code
Council voted to clarify and define the term “pension” as used in the city’s tax code in order to ensure that taxes outlined in the code are actually collected. The new section will read as follows: “For purposes of this Chapter, a ‘Pension’ means any amount paid to any employee or former employee that is reported to the recipient on an IRS Form 1099-R, or successor form. Pension does not include deferred compensation, or amounts attributable to nonqualified deferred compensation plans, reported as FICA/Medicare wages on an IRS Form W-2, Wage and Tax Statement, or successor form.”

Benefits Regionalization Program
Council approved a partnership with Cuyahoga County’s Benefits Regionalization Program, which will enable the city to obtain better group rates for health care benefits [major medical and prescription coverage] for its employees and their dependents. The agreement will be effective from Sept. 1, 2014 through Dec. 31, 2016. Prior to the vote, Mayor Dennis Willis commented on the cost savings this measure would achieve and noted that Cleveland Heights is the first city in its size to participate in the program.

JW Observer: Katherine Sokolnik
SEPTEMBER 2, 2014 All council members were present.

Public comments
Traffic commissioner Laura Marks, who recently attended the Ohio Department of Public Resources Tree Commission Academy, recommended the establishment of a tree commission in the city, in addition to the office of the Forester. Marks also presented a petition her former neighbors thanking the city for the new park at Cadwall and Hamp- shire roads and requesting that the missing sidewalk around the park be replaced soon.

Low director residency: Resident Diane Hallum referred to the appointment of Jim Julian as a part-time sitting low director, to replace the full-time low director who recently resigned, and stated that the “city” charter requires the low director to be a city resident. Mayor Dennis Willis said this was incorrect.

Word proposal: Hallum also maintained that council members ignore her and the group she represents on many serious issues in the city. She accused council members of picking whom they will hear and with what bias. She is circulating a petition to create wards in Cleveland Heights and feels that wards would improve communication between council members and citizens. She hopes to get the proposal on the ballot for the May 2015 primary election.

Payout loan business
Council repealed, with reluctance, an ordinance that had imposed a $250,000 loan cap on the operation of any new business that proposed to issue “payout” loans without being licensed under the short-term loan law. The moratorium was to last until the Ohio Supreme Court issued a ruling in Ohio Neighborhood Finance, Inc. v. State. The repeal was necessary to bring city law into compliance with the court’s June 11, 2014 decision. Council Member Jason Stein expressed council’s disappointment with the court decision, which, he claims, fails to protect Ohio citizens.

In response, council passed a resolution requesting that the Ohio General Assembly enact legislation subjecting payday lenders to all of the Ohio’s consumer protection laws. In addition, the Ohio Revised Code, in order to regulate the issuance of payday loans and prevent borrowers from excess interest rates. This would prohibit payday lenders from registering under the Mortgage Loan Act.

Outstanding Citizen of the Month
Council Member Stein’s September Outstanding Citizen of the Month Award has gone to Susan and Steve Paulin, who removed snow last winter for neighbors who could not do it for themselves. He urges citizens to nominate their neighbors for future awards.

Appointments
Carl Connell Jr. and Susan Ford were reappointed to the Recruitment Advisory Board, and Margaret Lam was appointed to the Landmark Commission to fill the unexpired term of Chuck Miller.

Cedar Road paving
Council renewed an application to the state of Ohio for Ohio Public Works Commission funds for the Cedar Road Pavement Rehabilitation Project, which includes the removal of the sidewalk and in the immediate vicinity of the Cedar Lee district. The 2014 Heights Music Hop will take place on Oct. 11, free parking will be available at metered (not permit-parking) spots on the street, and in city-owned lots, in the immediate vicinity of the Cedar Lee district. Parking will also be available at the Lee Road parking lot, after it closes at 5:30 p.m., and at Zagara’s Marketplace, after its 9 p.m. closing time.

Cellar Door Cleveland, a local company that promotes artists and runs a record label, and the Cedar Lee Special Improvement District are partnering with FutureHights on the Music Hop. The 2014 Heights Music Hop is made possible through a $25,000 matching grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture and by these event sponsors: Simply Charming, Motorcars, DVU, Kuhl National, retailer Susan Delaney of Howard Hanna, North-east Ohio Regional Sewer District and The Wine Spot.

For more information about the Heights Music Hop, follow the event on Twitter@heightsmusichop or like HeightsMusicHop continued from page 1
Welcome Heights is a new initiative aimed at creating a “city of neighbors” in Cleveland Heights through activities and services that promote a welcoming environment for immigrants who have made the city their home. The initiative is based in the beliefs that all humanity is connected and that people discover their humanity by sharing their unique experiences with others.

The initiative is part of an effort to assist members of the immigrant and refugee community to integrate into life in Cleveland Heights and Greater Cleveland, and to enrich the entire community through activities in which all residents are welcome to participate. On Sept. 9, in the first of a series of meetings regarding the project, participants endorsed the ideas of establishing a “welcoming hub” in a Cleveland Heights library and possibly setting up a Welcome Wagon for new immigrants and refugees living in the community.

The welcoming hub would enable refugees to get information on various subjects and referrals to available services. The hub would also provide a place for refugees and longtime residents of Cleveland Heights to find out more about one another, through the telling of personal stories and other informal interactions or organized activities. Speaking through an interpreter, refugee Mazar Abdulhusin noted that, “There are some refugees who come to the U.S. with skills that could help the community. For example, some of us know how to fix houses, so if we had the opportunity to get an old, cheap house we could fix it and live in it.”

Organizations represented at the meeting included Us Together (UST), which convened and hosted the meeting, Heights Libraries, the CH-UH City School District, Global Cleveland, Reaching Heights and FutureHeights. Interested community members were also present. A committee is convening and hosted the meeting, Heights Observer e-news editor. Andrea C. Turner owns ACT One Communications, LLC, a marketing and communications consulting firm. She is the Heights Observer e-news editor.

Andrea C. Turner

On the afternoon of Tuesday, Aug. 26, the Rev. John McNulty, Communion of Saints Church pastor, was working in his office when he heard a loud “bang.” The source of the noise was a two-car accident at the corner of Cedar and Coventry roads, which resulted in the destruction of the church’s stone sign at that intersection.

According to the police report, a female driver was driving west on Cedar Road, in the direction of downtown Cleveland, at approximately 1 p.m. She initiated a left turn onto Coventry Road, and simultaneously struck a pickup truck. That truck was driven by a man who was heading south on Coventry Road and making a left turn onto Cedar Road. The pickup truck driver, who had a green turn signal at the time of the incident, proceeded to turn left through the green light. The woman, reportedly, neglected to stop, causing the male driver to swerve his car in an attempt to avoid hitting her. His truck, however, did strike her car, then traveled approximately 25 yards and plowed into the church’s concrete sign. The female driver has been charged with “disobeying traffic.”

“There were no question—Judson was it,” says Don. “We knew the place and always loved to do. We’re practically in the same Cleveland Heights neighborhood, so we decided to move.”

With no children, they felt it essential to have a plan in place as they grew older. “We wanted to make decisions under our own power,” says Don. Deciding where they’d spend their later years was easy. “The rest is history—we've been together ever since,” says Dottie.

The couple, now residents of Judson Park, met in 1974 at The Cleveland Circle played a pivotal role in Don and Dottie Kuhn’s lives together. The couple, now residents of Judson Park, met in 1974 at The Cleveland Museum of Natural History.

“Don and Dottie Kuhn, Judson Park residents since 2012

“Without children, they felt it essential to have a plan in place as they grew older. “We wanted to make decisions under our own power,” says Don. Deciding where they’d spend their later years was easy.

“There was no question—Judson was it,” says Don. “We knew the place and always loved to do. We’re practically in the same Cleveland Heights neighborhood where we lived before.”

“The transition was seamless,” continues Don. “Judson was home from day one!”

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Potter Village holds sixth annual block party

David Hansen

More than 200 residents attended the sixth annual Potter Village Block Party, held on Aug. 23, on Castleton Road in Cleveland Heights.

According to the leaders of the Potter Village Good Neighbor Association, an organization of residents, it is the largest citizen-run block party in Cleveland Heights.

The 2014 block party featured DJ Freddie James; a potluck dinner; a visit by a Cleveland Heights fire truck and members of the CH Fire and Police departments; a water balloon toss and Hula-Hoop contest; face painting and bicycle decorating; an old-fashioned cake walk; line dancing; and a raffle, with prizes donated by more than a dozen local merchants.

This year’s event organizer, Alicia Burke, said, “It was so great to see everything come together and everyone enjoying themselves. We all worked really hard to put it together and we couldn’t have done it without the support of the entire neighborhood.”

Potter Village, located between Monticello Boulevard and Taylor and Yellowstone roads, comprises seven connected streets—Castleton, Woodridge, St. Albans, Boynton, Radcliffe, Haselton and Edison.

It is named after the Potter family, who ran a large dairy farm on the property in the early 1900s. Horace and Florence Potter, both 1898 graduates of the Cleveland Institute of Art, were jewelers who began making jewelry in their chicken coop.

In 1921 they employed jeweler Louis Mellen, and incorporated the Potter Studio in 1924. In 1928, the Potters opened a store at 10405 Carnegie Ave., which continued to operate in that location until 2004. Mellen, who managed the store, became a partner in Potter & Mellen, which was well-known throughout Cleveland for fine jewelry, silverware, artwork, china and glassware.

After the Potters sold their farm in 1923, the property was developed into a residential neighborhood.

David Hansen is a member of Potter Village Good Neighbor Association.

CH law director will revert to part-time position

Kim Sargis Inglis

At the Sept. 2 Cleveland Heights City Council meeting, City Manager Tanisha Briley announced that Anthony Farris had “resigned his position as law director last Tuesday [Aug. 26],” and that Jim Juliano, who had served as acting law director for the first four months of 2014, “has agreed and we welcome him back to the executive team as acting law director.” Briley also stated that she planned “at a future date to ask council to confirm him as the permanent law director for the City of Cleveland Heights.”

The city released no official statement regarding the circumstances of Farris’ resignation. Asked to comment, Briley said, “Mr. Farris resigned his position and we supported his decision to do so.” She confirmed that Farris’ last day in the office was Aug. 26, and that he would continue to receive his regular salary ($100,000 annually) through Oct. 1.

Briley appointed Anthony Farris as the city’s first full-time law director on April 23, and the appointment was confirmed by a unanimous vote of council members.

According to the Cleveland Heights City Charter, the office of law director may be either a full-time or part-time office. The law director is appointed by the city manager, and the appointment must be approved by a majority of council members. The city manager may remove the law director without the approval of council.

On Dec. 31, 2013, John Gibbon retired after 28 years as CH’s part-time law director. Two weeks prior to Gibbon’s recommendation, council had appointed Jim Juliano, who had overseen the city’s civil litigation and legal matters since 1997, interim law director.

The search for a permanent replacement for Gibbon began on Nov. 1, 2013, when the city began accepting law director applications.

On April 11, 2014, the city announced that Farris, former law director for the City of Youngstown, had been selected as the final candidate for the law director position, and that it would be a full-time position. “The decision was made to hire a full-time law director to maximize accessibility, efficiency and consistency for the city,” stated Briley in the announcement.

If city council confirms Briley’s appointment of Juliano as the city’s next permanent law director, the position will revert to being a part-time one. Briley said, “While my preference was for a full-time law director it is more important to have competent and capable leadership in the role. Municipal law is a specialized area with a very limited pool of qualified candidates. Mr. Juliano has served the city well for 17 years as assistant law director, including four months as interim law director earlier this year. He has shown tremendous leadership and he will continue to be a great asset to us.”
Local author Lois Jeavons grew up in Shaker Heights during an era one often thinks about while driving down the tree-lined roads of our local communities. Having lived much of her life in Northeast Ohio, she has insight into a period of history in which this region experienced some of its lowest lows and highest highs.

A graduate of Hawthorne Brown, Jeavons left the Heights for Smith College, where she studied English and creative writing under Mary Ellen Chase, a well-known New England author. Thereafter, her life took a more traditional path of doting mother and supportive wife. But her love of writing never waned, and, in later years, she attended the Iowa Writers’ Workshop, where she reconnected with the novel she had started years before and began to flesh it out.

Celebrating the novel’s completion and her 90th year, Jeavons introduced her book, *Manners, Morals and Myths*, to family and friends. In this historical novel, readers meet the people who populated the ballrooms and exclusive clubs of early 20th century Cleveland—those who founded and supported the city’s rich and vibrant cultural life.

Some of them were not as upstanding as they pretended to be. Nonetheless, they provided Cleveland with museums, hospitals, universities and a world-class orchestra. Set in one of America’s most beautiful suburbs, the novel takes the reader into a gracious, white-gloved bygone time. For many, it will revive old romantic memories. Others will catch a glimpse of a world they will never know.

Jeavons took 25 years to complete her book, delayed by personal challenges over the years. After the death of her husband, she found writing to be a solace and a welcome distraction and she persevered until she finished her novel. In response to requests from many of her readers, Jeavons is currently working on a sequel.

Everyone has fascinating stories to tell, and Jeavons recommends writing as a way to activate brain cells and remain alert as we age. Recalling these stories and organizing them into readable form can be energizing for aging minds. She urges seniors to hone their writing skills in creative writing workshops whenever possible.

Jeavons currently lives with her grandchildren in University Heights for half the year, and with her daughter in California for the remainder of the year. Paperback and digital copies of *Manners, Morals and Myths* can be purchased through her website, www.loisjeavons.com, through online retailers, and by request from Mac’s Rocks on Coventry Road.

Brady Dindia, a nine-year resident of University Heights, is Jeavons’ granddaughter, and the layout and cover designer of Jeavons’ novel.
Ben Faller is new HRRC director

Becky Stager

After an extensive search, the Board of Directors of the Home Repair Resource Center (HRRC) has selected Benjamin D. “Ben” Faller as the new executive director of the Cleveland Heights-based nonprofit organization. A resident of Cleveland and a native of Northeast Ohio, Faller has served as staff attorney and chief housing specialist for the Cleveland Housing Court since 2009, working to expand the court’s problem-solving programs and engaging in outreach and policy work on housing and property issues.

“Home Repair Resource Center is an organization that I have admired for some time, and I am very excited to be coming on board,” Faller said. “I look forward to the opportunity to work with the staff, board, and supporters of HRRC to serve and empower the community and to grow the organization.”

According to Shouresh Amir-Tahmasseb, HRRC board president, “HRRC is pleased to have found a director with Mr. Faller’s experience and credentials. He is very familiar with the housing climate here in Greater Cleveland and the problems that our clients face. At the same time, he knows the nonprofit sector and embraces the challenge of growing community support for HRRC.”

Faller previously worked for the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland on housing issues and operated his own small business as a general contractor, specializing in residential remodeling. Faller is currently an adjunct professor of law at Case Western Reserve University, where he teaches courses in community development and mediation. Faller also serves as the board chairperson for Larchmere Porchfest.

Faller was introduced to the community at HRRC’s clam bake fundraiser in September. For information on HRRC, visit www.hrrc-ch.org or call 216-381-6100.

Becky Stager has been HRRC’s home repair education coordinator since 1989. Visit www.hrrc-ch.org or call 216-381-6100 for more information on programs and services.

Best Customer Experience
WINNER: Quintana’s Barber & Dream Spa
FINALISTS: Simply Charming Phoenix Coffee

Best Pizza
WINNER: Dewey’s Pizza
FINALISTS: Marottà’s Geraci’s Restaurant

Best Bar, Pub or Tavern
WINNER: Brennan’s Colony
FINALISTS: The Bottle House Brewery, The Tavern Company

Best Healthy Eats
WINNER: Tommy’s Restaurant
FINALISTS: Aladdin’s Eatery, Stone Oven

Best Automotive Business
WINNER: Washington & Lee Service
FINALISTS: Bryan’s Marathon, Motorcars, Simon’s Automotive

Best Home-Based Business
WINNER: Loving Hands Yoga & Reiki
FINALISTS: Simple Hands Studio

Best Carryout Only
WINNER: Pizza Bogo
FINALISTS: On the Rise Artisan Breads, Mama Joyce’s Soul Food Café, Richie Chan’s Chinese Restaurant

Best Hairstylist
WINNER: Shawn Paul Gustafson, Shawn Paul Salon
FINALISTS: Ryan Simmons, Abstraction - A Hair Salon, Chanelle Triutt, Studio Taylor

Best Barber
WINNER: Theo Challoul, Quintana’s Barber & Dream Spa
FINALISTS: Alex Quintana, Quintana’s Barber & Dream Spa, Adam DiDomenico, Adam’s Barber Shop

Best Family-Friendly Business
WINNER: Tommy’s Restaurant
FINALISTS: Brennan’s Colony, Dewey’s Pizza

Best Curb Appeal
WINNER: Anatolia Cafe

Best of the Heights continued from page 7

WINNER: Nighttown
FINALISTS: Cain Park, The Grog Shop

The Yoga Roots team. Yoga Roots was a finalist in the Best New Business category.

FINALISTS: Breame’s Garden Center, Gig’s on Fairmount, Loving Hands Yoga & Reiki

Best Clothing-Related Business
WINNER: Revive
FINALISTS: Avalon Exchange, Blush Boutique

Best African-American-Owned Business
WINNER: Mama Joyce’s Soul Food Café
FINALISTS: Angi’s Soul Café, Digizoom Media, S.O.E.E. Whole Foods Grill

Best Pet-Related Business
WINNER: Coventry Cats
FINALISTS: Dogtopia, Mandel Veterinary Hospital, Rainbow Veterinary Clinic

Best Enduring CH or UH Business
WINNER: Tommy’s Restaurant
FINALISTS: Brennan’s Colony, Nighttown

Best Food
WINNER: Anatolia Cafe
FINALISTS: Pacific East Japanese Restaurant, Simply Charming

Best University Heights Business
WINNER: Whole Foods Market
FINALISTS: Bialy’s Bagels, Geraci’s Restaurant, Pizzazz On the Circle

Best Cleveland Heights Business
WINNER: Brennan’s Colony
FINALISTS: Loving Hands Yoga & Reiki, The Wine Spot, Tommy’s Restaurant

Daniel Budin is a lifelong Cleveland Heights resident and member of the FutureHeights Board of Directors.

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Visit your favorite Lee Road merchants for safe Trick-or-Treating.
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PACIFIC East CANTY CRAWL

WINNER:

Best of the Heights continued from page 7

WINNER:

Best Customer Experience
WINNER:

Best Pizza
WINNER:

Best Bar, Pub or Tavern
WINNER:

Best Healthy Eats
WINNER:

Best Automotive Business
WINNER:

Best Home-Based Business
WINNER:

Best Carryout Only
WINNER:

Best Hairstylist
WINNER:

Best Barber
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Best Family-Friendly Business
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Best Curb Appeal
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The fourth annual Cedar Lee Kid’s Candy Crawl will be held on Friday, Oct. 24, 5–8 p.m.

Every year since the inaugural event in 2011, the number of children participating has doubled from the previous year.

This year, organizers expect about 2,000 kids in costume to come trick-or-treating between the doors of the Cedar Lee Theatre and the Lee Road Library. Each of the participating businesses will display an orange “Official Candy Crawl Stop” poster in its window.

“I created this event as a way for myself and the other merchants to give out candy to the kids, and of course to every family who has taken their kids out, regardless of the weather, to celebrate this delightful holiday with us,” said Gustafson. “This year’s crawl is going to rock!”

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

10th Annual Online Auction supports FutureHeights

Daniel Budin

FutureHeights is accepting donations for its 10th Annual Online Auction, which serves as a major fundraiser for the nonprofit organization.

The auction supports the efforts of FutureHeights to create a stronger community in Cleveland Heights and University Heights. FutureHeights engages volunteers to help produce the Heights Observer community news; provides fiscal agency to various neighborhood-based groups; hosts numerous community-building events and activities, such as the Best of the Heights Awards and the Heights Music Hop; and presents community forums, tours and speakers. An online preview begins Oct. 17, and bidding begins Nov. 21 at www.biddingforgood.com/futureheights.

“The auction provides Heights residents and others a convenient way to purchase items from local merchants while supporting their local community,” said Clare Taft, president of the FutureHeights Board of Directors.

“Bidders will find products and services from well-known Heights merchants, as well as items from local artists and home-based businesses that they may not be as familiar with. They will also find unique items from cultural institutions, getaways and items from other cool places.”

“Donors to the auction not only help support the work of FutureHeights,” added Taft, “but also gain visibility for their businesses, which is especially important before the upcoming holiday shopping season.”

To donate an item, visit www.biddingforgood.com/futureheights, or contact the FutureHeights office at info@futureheights.org or 216-320-1423.

Daniel Budin is a lifelong Cleveland Heights resident, a member of FutureHeights Board of Directors, and chair of its auction committee.

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 Cedar Lee Kids’ Candy Crawl is Oct. 24

Deanna Bremer Fisher

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Deanna Bremer Fisher is executive director of FutureHeights and publisher of the Heights Observer.
The trip to El Salvador was one of IPM's immersion experiences—short-term travel opportunities in which participants visit Project Partners and experience their way of life.

Bovell said the experience made her feel that she has come full circle since her high school days. "It was a sign that I'm on the right path. I had more respect for Beaumont and its mission of educating women for life, leadership and service."

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Author of ‘Uppity Women’ to speak in Cleveland Heights

Lisa M. Wolfe, professor in the Endowed Chair of Hebrew Bible at Oklahoma City University, will be at Church of the Saviour, 2357 Lee Road in Cleveland Heights, from Oct. 15-19. A native of Stow, Ohio, Wolfe also teaches at Saint Paul School of Theology.

On Friday evening, Oct. 17, Wolfe will meet with junior and senior youth to explore the topic “Get Ready for Min-istry!” Her Saturday workshop, Oct. 18, from 10 a.m. to noon, will discuss “Judith and the General’s Sword: The Difference Between Self-Defense and Revenge.” The story of Judith is one of the lesser-known tales from the Apocrypha. Like Esther and several other biblical books, Judith raises the issue of violence. Is violence ever appropriate? How can the Bible be our conversation partner on this topic?

On Sunday, Oct. 19, Wolfe will preach at the 8:30, 9:30 and 11 a.m. worship services at Church of the Sav-ior. Her topic will be “Naomi and the Immigrant,” based on Ruth 1:1-22. The sermon will be broadcast on Sunday, Oct. 12, at 6:30 a.m. on WIOK Radio 101.1 FM, and at 10 a.m. on WHK W radio 1220 AM.

Wolfe received her Ph.D. from Garrett-Evangelical Theologi-cal Seminary and Northwestern University in 2003, and her M.Div. from United Theological Seminary in Dayton in 1996. She was ordained in the United Church of Christ in 2000.

In 2010, Living the Questions re-leased her Bible study DVD “Uppity Women of the Bible: Ruth, Song of Songs, Esther and Judith.”

Wolfe is currently working on a book project about Ecclesiastes. She and her husband, Fred Mischler, and their two children live in Oklahoma City.

The series of events, offered by Church of the Saviour, are free and open to the public. No advance registration is necessary.

Loretta Dahlstrom is an administrative as-sistant at Church of the Saviour.

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Heights Observer October 1, 2014
St. Alban’s Church labyrinth garden welcomes all

Anna Risch

The sign at the corner of Euclid Heights Boulevard and Edgehill Road reads: “Labyrinth. Garden. All Are Welcome.” It is a high-traffic area for runners and cyclists, elderly couples, moms with strollers, and students. Until April, it was an empty, grassy triangle in front of St. Alban’s Episcopal Church. That’s when Agape members Jessica Miller and John Handley attended a workshop on straw-bale gardening at a local plant store. They dreamed up a way to construct a straw bale garden in the form of a labyrinth that would incorporate food, beautification, sacred space and a community project. Agape is the young adult community at St. Alban’s. “We got pretty excited about the idea of a low-maintenance garden,” said Handley. “We thought that building a labyrinth out of the bales would make it something that we’d be more likely to spend time working on. And then we thought we could use it to become a more visible part of the neighborhood.”

Cedar Fairmount to hold Halloween festival Oct. 29

Kayes Lowe

Corn stalks, pumpkins, apples, the sound of crunching leaves—and ghosts, goblins and witches with brooms—are all signs that fall, and Halloween, is in the air. On Wednesday, Oct. 29, 5-7 p.m., the businesses of Cedar Fairmount will fill their stores with fall decorations and treats for young and old.

Children and adults are encouraged to come in costume, and there will be a costume contest for children at the India Community Center at 6 p.m. Prizes will be awarded for Most Original, Scariest and Funniest costumes.

Children (and goblins) will be able to play Halloween games, provided by members of the Cleveland Heights Church, at the India Community Center from 5-7 p.m.

Other activities taking place throughout the Cedar Fairmount district include appearances by a sketch artist and balloon clown Rita McCloskey, cupcake decorating at Luna Bakery Café, and a performance by The Wright-Reynolds Project—a group of Cleveland Heights musicians—at Buffalo Wild Wings. Trick-or-treaters will be welcome at all businesses that display pumpkin signs in their windows.

Restaurants will offer food specials beyond the 7 p.m. close of trick-or-treating, and the Freddy Cole Quartet will perform two shows at Nighttown, at 7 and 9 p.m.

The Cedar Fairmount Halloween/Fall Festival is sponsored by Cay Architecture Inc. and the Cedar Fairmount Special Improvement District.

Halloween will not be scary in the Cedar Fairmount district—it will be a fun time for all. For more information, call 216-971-3172 or visit www.cedarfairmount.org.

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

Literary event to benefit women’s educational nonprofit

Ellen Bartz

Maria Doris Russell, an award-winning novelist and scientist, will be the featured local author at the third annual “An Afternoon With . . .” literary event and dessert reception, on Saturday, Nov. 1. The event, hosted by the Cleveland Heights Chapter Q of P.E.O. International, a philanthropic organization, will take place at Forest Hill Presbyterian Church, 5311 Monticello Blvd., at 2 p.m.

Russell is the author of Doc, Dreamers of the Day, A Thread of Grace, Children of God, and The Sparrow. In addition to being a novelist, blogger and poet, she is also a wife, mother and dachshund lover, who holds degrees in cultural, social and biological anthropology. Russell was born in suburban Chicago and currently lives in Cleveland.

The event will feature a reading from her work, field questions, and sign books. A reception with light refreshments will follow the program. Russell’s books will be available for purchase through A Cultural Exchange, a local nonprofit organization that promotes multicultural educational programs.

Tickets to the event are $15 and benefit P.E.O. International’s scholarships, grants and awards for the educational advancement of women. For more information, visit www.poeinternational.org. To purchase tickets, contact Jan Hornack at 440-442-5921 or jhornack58@gmail.com.

Ellen Bartz is the vice president of P.E.O. Chapter Q and a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights. She works as an occupational therapist at the Monarch Center for Autism, a division of Bellevue FC, and enjoys reading books by local authors.

Anna Risch is a member of Agape, the (mostly) young adult community at St. Albn’s Episcopal Church. She received B.A. in English in 2012, and now works as administrative coordinator of Greater Cleveland Congregations. She’s been a resident of the Heights since March 2014 and plans to stay.

A Cleveland Heights family searches for the geocache log at the center of the labyrinth.

“Straw-bale gardening,” said Miller, an environmental educator at the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, “involves planting or seeding plants directly into conditioned bales where their root systems expand and thrive in the decomposing straw medium. We constructed our labyrinth garden to explore straw-bale gardening not only to produce an edible crop, but also to facilitate community, bring beauty and curiosity into our neighborhood, and to provide a peaceful and centering reflective space to walk, sense, and partake.”

The labyrinth caused a stir on the street with drivers calling out, “Why are you watering that hay?” or “How long have you been lost in that maze?” After planting the seeds, which were started inside under grow lights, it wasn’t long before the labyrinth looked less like a hay maze and more like a lush garden.

Neighbors are encouraged to reap the harvest as they walk by the bales are overflowing with vegetables, herbs and flowers—basil, strawberries, cucumbers, kale, okra, broccoli, a variety of squashes and peppers, and hundreds of grape tomatoes.

The space continues to grow. At the center of the labyrinth, a glass-topped box holds poetry, information and centering prayer, seeds and found objects. A notebook in the box holds messages from visitors who have reached the center, such as “It’s my first weekend in Cleveland and I feel SO welcomed! Thank you!”

Other stamps and signatures record those who have discovered this registered geocache site. Geocaching is an outdoor treasure hunt game using GPS devices. Participants navigate to a site, like this one, and then try to find the geocache container hidden there.

Children from nearby Roxboro Elementary School learned how vegetables are grown and helped plant and water at St. Alban’s back-to-school event in August.

The success and momentum of the labyrinth project inspired the Heights Community Garden Network to request a workshop on straw-bale gardening, which St. Alban’s hosted in early September.

Anna Risch
Senior Citizen Happenings

Senior Citizen Happenings, sponsored by the City of University Heights, are open to all senior citizens. Events take place on Thursdays at 2 p.m. at the University Heights Library.

For information, and to suggest program topics, contact the UH Office for Senior Services at 216-973-1036 or info@universityheights.com.

To receive the monthly schedule by e-mail, call 216-932-7800, ext. 205 or send an e-mail to info@universityheights.com.

Oct 2: Sarah Ryzer, director of Thriving Communities Institute for Western Reserve Land Conservancy, will discuss the institute’s work to preserve essential community assets, such as clean water, working farms, wildlife areas and parks, to ensure a quality of life that attracts and retains a great diversity of residents.

Oct 9: Robert “Bob” Brown recently retired as director of planning for the City of Cleveland. An advocate for the importance of streets, sidewalks, intersections, parks, and other types of shared urban space, he’ll share his prescription for improving the quality of life in Greater Cleveland and-a-half hour Holiday Lights tour in December includes a stop at the house that was featured in the movie “A Christmas Story.” For more information, call 216-771-4484 or visit www.lollytrolley.com.

Lakefront Lines operates one-day casino tours to Horseshoe Casino in downtown Cleveland. The closest departure location is the Walmart located at 6594 Mayfield Road in Mayfield Heights.

The company also offers day trips to casinos and racetracks in Pennsylvania, Michigan, West Virginia, New York and Canada. The closest departure location for these destinations is the Lakefront Lines Garage at 1335 Brookpark Road. Multi-day trips are also available. Call 216-267-880 for more information.

Please note that you do not need to be a resident of the above-mentioned cities to go on these trips. Registration deadlines can be as much as two months in advance of the trip date, so call early to reserve a spot.

The Cleveland Heights Senior Activity Center also offers bus trips during the year, although none are scheduled at this time. You can check back at a later date by calling 216-691-7377.

Judith Eugene is a native of Cleveland Heights who provides life-enrichment classes and activities for senior adults and those with physical and mental challenges through www.lovinghandsgroup.com. She can be reached at 216-408-5578 or judith@lovinghandsgroup.com.

Seek out fun and educational bus tours this fall

If your child is under 5 years old and lives in Cleveland Hts., Shaker Hts., or University Hts., visit heightsframe@sbcglobal.net or call 216-319-0336 for information.

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Senior Citizen Happenings

Oct 15: Jessica Ferrotta, Lake Erie Conservation Coordinator for the Ohio Sierra Club, will describe how she works to protect the earth’s wild places, promote the responsible use of its ecosystems and resources, and educate and enlist others to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environments.

Oct 23: Carolyn Warner is, by her own account, “fortunate and privileged to be a dual instrumentalist [piano and violin] in the service of [the great] Cleveland Orchestra.” She’ll recap her so far 37-year career with the orchestra, including some memorable musical highlights, and also talk about her work teaching and coaching young musicians.

Oct 30: Marie Kittredge, retired executive director of Slavic Village Development Corp., is now project manager and civic liaison for Opportunity Corridor—the 3.2-mile link connecting Cleveland’s Fago to University Circle. She’ll talk about the project, which is intended as a catalyst for economic improvements, and how it will help create jobs in some of Cleveland’s poorest neighborhoods.

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This summer, six young choristers from the children's and youth choir of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Cleveland Heights traveled to England to sing in a medieval cathedral.

Maddie Gillooly, Sam Mitchell, Cecilia Payne, Erin Ptacek, Faith Shook and Anna Turner joined choir members of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, in Akron, to sing at Ely Cathedral in Cambridgeshire from July 28 to Aug. 3. Four of the choristers—Gillooly, Mitchell, Payne and Turner—are Cleveland Heights residents. Ptacek lives in Lakewood, and Shook resides in South Euclid.

Daniel Fortune, organist and choirmaster at St. Paul's, Akron, extended an invitation to Richard Nelson, organist and children's and youth choir director at St. Paul's, Cleveland Heights, asking Nelson to identify young singers to help fill in treble voices for Akron’s men’s and youth choir trip. The six who went were able to commit to the required rehearsal schedule, travel timeline and fundraising.

The choristers rehearsed with the Akron choirs for a full year in preparation for singing at Ely Cathedral for a week of Choral Evensongs and a Sunday Eucharist service—part of the cathedral's visiting choir program. One special performance took place in the Lady Chapel, the largest chapel attached to any British cathedral. Garrett Law, St. Paul’s (Akron) assistant organist and choirmaster, served as the tour’s accompanying organist. Law is also an undergraduate student at the Cleveland Institute of Music.

Four of the six choristers were accompanied by their parents for some or all of the trip, but the two older singers, Payne and Gillooly, traveled overseas with only chaperones.

“At first I had doubts on whether or not I would enjoy myself,” said Payne, a sophomore at Cleveland Heights High School, said. “Even though we had tons of rehearsals together, I felt as though I didn’t quite know the Akron choir kids. On the first day I sat next to one of them and struck up a conversation. Almost ironically, we became friends due to a shared music taste.”

In addition to rehearsing and performing in Ely daily, the choir traveled throughout southeastern England, including London and Cambridge, by coach, the London Underground (Tube), and on foot.

“We saw so many beautiful churches and interesting historical sites such as the Tower of London and Buckingham Palace, all while spending time together and being a family,” said Gillooly.

The Tower of London displayed a stunning art installation of ceramic red poppies pouring over the sides of the castle walls into its moat, commemorating the 100th anniversary of Britain's involvement in World War I. Each poppy represents a British military fatality from the war.

Other trip highlights included visits to Burghley House, touted as England’s greatest Elizabethan house; Hampton Court Palace, home of King Henry VIII and other royals; Warwick Castle, a 1,100-year-old medieval castle with live entertainment and demonstrations; Duxford Royal Air Force Museum, home to an original Concorde transatlantic jet; and the American Memorial Cemetery, an homage to the American Allied soldiers who fought in World War II.

The uniqueness of the trip was not lost on the younger travelers.

“It was such a great experience singing in Ely Cathedral at a young age,” said Anna Turner, a sixth-grader at Roxboro Middle School. “I loved sightseeing. Westminster Abbey was amazing!”

Sam Mitchell, a sixth-grader at Ruffing Montessori School, summed up his experience, saying, “We were exhausted by the time we got home, but we loved every second of the trip!”

Turner and Mitchell, Middleton Road neighbors, were accompanied by their younger siblings, Henry Turner, 9, and Luci Mitchell, 8, on many of the sightseeing outings.

The public is invited to hear the choristers sing together on Wednesday, Oct. 6, 6 p.m., at a Choral Evensong service at Trinity Cathedral, 2320 Euclid Ave., Cleveland. For more information, visit http://trinitycleveland.org/bord.evensong.

Andrea C. Turner owns ACT One Communications, LLC, a marketing and communications consulting firm, and in the Heights Observer’s newspaper. She and her husband, Mark Turner, traveled to England to accompany their children on the choir tour.
**Library News**

**Library commits to early literacy with grant for Coventry**

**Sheryl Banks**

The Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System has received a $4,000 grant from the Hershey Foundation to be used for the creation of an early literacy playroom at the Coventry Village Library. The development of the space, scheduled to be completed by the end of 2014, will mark the first time the Coventry branch has had an architecturally designated space for small children.

“Coventry has a long tradition of excellent and well-attended story times, but families often don’t stay as long as they could because the children’s area has always been in the middle of the adult quiet reading area,” said Pat Gray, Coventry library manager. “With a new, enclosed space for young children, families can relax, read a story and talk while their children engage in enriching play with puppets and other literacy-based toys. The literacy playroom will allow the library’s roughly $20,000 worth of improvements at the branch this year, which include new carpeting for the entire building, roof repair, remodeling of the new children’s room and new indoor and outdoor lighting.

Coventry’s literacy playroom will be similar to the literacy playroom in the Noble Neighborhood Library, with items like a puppet theater, a play kitchen, colorful and comfy reading chairs, alphabet-focused toys and kid-sized book displays, all designed to encourage young children to engage in the five fundamental activities that build early literacy and get kids ready for kindergarten: singing, reading, writing, talking and playing.

“Early literacy, which basically means getting kids ready to learn, is a crucial goal that Heights Libraries shares with parents, caregivers, schools, and other community organizations,” said Gray. “Our new playroom will give members of our community a fun and easy way to achieve it.”

“Young children learn by playing,” said Brian Hare, Heights Libraries youth services manager. “Books are important, but so is imaginative, hands-on, tactile play, and this new space at Coventry library will give children plenty of it. Boredom won’t be an option.”

In addition to toys and books, the new space will also have a design theme that will appeal to little ones and their caregivers, based partly on the artwork “From the Lord of the Rings” films by John Howe. Furniture, colors and other fixtures will create the feel and appearance of a cozy hobbit hole.

The Hershey Foundation, based in northeast Ohio, supports schools, museums, cultural institutions and other nonprofits that provide programs for children that improve quality of life, enhance learning and provide cultural experiences that expand understanding of the world.

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

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**What’s going on at your library?**

Heights Libraries is a proud supporter of Octavofest, the annual Northeast Ohio-based celebration of book-related arts. This month, the library offers hands-on classes, lectures, tours and more, to explore the glory of the written word and spoken word in its many manifestations. Find more at [www.heightslibrary.org](http://www.heightslibrary.org).

**Coventry Village Library**

1935 Coventry Road, 216-312-1400

Wednesday, Oct. 1, 7 p.m.

Cedar-Coventry Author Series: Emerg with Notable Author Kevin Keating. Kevin Keating’s debut novel, *The Natural Order of Things*, and the stor stories contained within have received much praise. Robert Olen Butler called it “a dark and utterly compelling work with an unerringly resonant vision of our present age. Excellent work by a fine young writer.” The book follows several students, teachers, employees and priests at a Jesuit boys’ school as their stories weave in and out of one another’s. Meet the author and hear him read from his riveting novel. Marian Morton, John Carroll University professor emeritus and local history writer, will join Keating for a conversation about the novel. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.

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**Library Heights Observer October 1, 2014**

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**Joe Bachman, Agent**

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**Library Heights Observer October 1, 2014**

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**Heights Observer October 1, 2014**
Library offers arts program for special needs children

Sharyl Banks
The Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library is starting a new arts and crafts program at the Lee Road Library, specially designed to accommodate children with special needs and their caregivers.

“We’ve noticed that we don’t see these children very often at the library,” said Koleta Bogdanowicz, the Heights Libraries youth services librarian who developed the program. “This could be due to the fact that until now we haven’t had programs for them, or it could be because they see the library as a place where you have to be quiet at all times and they don’t think they would fit in. We want to show that there’s a place for them here, regardless of their needs and abilities.”

Bogdanowicz said she realizes “special needs” is a broad term, and emphasizes that “anyone can come, whether their child has autism, a developmental delay, ADHD [attention deficit hyperactivity disorder], ADD [attention deficit disorder] or an emotional disorder.”

Bogdanowicz has designed the program to be more comfortable for special needs children than typical art and craft programs by limiting the number of child participants to 10, requiring the attendance of a caregiver, and setting up the room in a way that will create a comfortable space for the kids. This includes dimmer lighting, space for kids to go if they get overwhelmed, and plenty of room to move about, play with toys and do whatever they need to do to feel comfortable.

Therapists and family members are encouraged to attend with the children. In addition to providing a fun program, Bogdanowicz wants to provide a place for families of kids with special needs to get together, get to know each other and foster friendships and support. Participants are encouraged to socialize and play with toys after the program.

The program will be offered twice for different age groups. The Oct. 18, 10 a.m. program is for children ages 3–5, and the Nov. 17, 10 a.m. program is for children ages 5–12.

Registration is required, and opens two weeks before the programs. Visit heightslibrary.org or call 216-932-3600 for more information and to register. The Lee Road Library is located at 2345 Lee Road.

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

Mark your calendars for fall Friends events

Louisa Oliver

Heights residents are invited to join the Friends of Heights Libraries for two special October events, and for the Friends’ fall Mega Sale.

On Sunday, Oct. 5, in cooperation with FutureHeights and Reaching Heights, the Friends will co-host the semi-annual Welcome Home gathering for Heights residents, this time featuring a panel of Heights authors. Participants include poet George Bilger, youth author Tricia Springstubb, novelist Thrity Umrigar, and rock biographer James Henke. Cleveland Heights Poet Laureate Kathleen Cerveny will moderate. Join us at Nighttown from 2–4 p.m. to celebrate our community. Refreshments will be provided, and a cash bar will be available. Everyone is welcome, and new residents are especially encouraged to come, meet neighbors, and learn what makes living and working in the Heights so special.

The annual meeting of the Friends of the Heights Libraries will be held on Oct. 12 at 7 p.m. at the Lee Road Library. The meeting will be followed by the Indigenous People’s Read-In, co-sponsored by the library and the Friends, to celebrate the works and voices of indigenous peoples. Bring a short selection written by an indigenous person to read, or choose a reading from those that will be available. Or come simply to enjoy and learn from hearing the voices of Native Americans or other indigenous peoples. Refreshments will be available.

The read-in is one of several fall events that are part of On the Same Page, an “initiative designed to foster communitywide and personal connections through literature.” This fall, the entire community is invited to read The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie. For a full schedule of events, visit heightslibrary.org.

Looking ahead to Nov. 6–9, make note of the Friends Fall Mega Book Sale—bigger than ever, and just in time for holiday shopping. Preview night for Friends members will be Thursday, Nov. 6, 5–9 p.m. That evening, Friends members are admitted to the sale for free; all others pay $5, and become Friends members. The sale will continue Friday, Nov. 7 through Sunday, Nov. 9, and will take place in the Lee Road Library’s first-floor meeting rooms.

Louisa Oliver is president of the Friends of Heights Libraries. She was the director of Heights Parent Center before it became Family Connections, and is a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights.

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Louisa Oliver is president of the Friends of Heights Libraries. She was the director of Heights Parent Center before it became Family Connections, and is a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights.
Efforts underway to encourage walking and biking to school

Beaumont is IB candidate

Anna Beyerle

Beaumont School, an all-girls Catholic high school in Cleveland Heights, is now recognized as an International Baccalaureate Candidate school. Beaumont plans to institute the IB program during its 2017-18 school year, and will become the first all-girls school, and the second Catholic high school in Greater Cleveland to offer IB’s rigorous Diploma Programme (DP). IB education challenges students to excel in academics and in personal growth, and cultivates a quest for lifelong learning that goes beyond what students learn in the classroom. IB diploma program is widely perceived as one of the most challenging secondary curricula in the world. Students who earn the IB diploma are consistently twice as likely to be accepted to selective colleges and universities, earn more scholarship dollars and receive college credits.

“IB globally focused program emphasizes creative problem solving, hands-on projects and inquiry-based learning,” said Mary Whelan, Beaumont principal. “There is a large focus on community service and this rigorous, academically acclaimed program builds on the Ursuline mission of educating women for life, leadership and service. Beaumont believes that IB values align closely with the school’s philosophy of academic excellence, diversity and social justice.”

On Sept. 1, Beaumont embarked on a three-year authorization period, during which it will work with an IB consultant to plan specific courses and train teachers in the IB curriculum. “The IB program will complement our current program and provide opportunity for our young women to excel academically through a global perspective,” Whelan said.

The program is a rigorous, two-year academic program for juniors and seniors that offers a global perspective and a cross-disciplinary approach. DP students will take six two-year courses focused in the sciences, the arts, the English language, mathematics, social studies and foreign languages. Students must also complete an extended essay and score well on a final Theory of Knowledge exam to be awarded the IB diploma. Another requirement is Creativity, Action and Service (CAS) hours, which requires involvement in athletics, clubs and volunteerism.

For more information on the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, visit www.ibo.org. For more information on Beaumont School, visit www.beaumontschool.org.

Anna Beyerle is the public relations and marketing manager at the Beaumont School in Cleveland Heights.

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October 26 — The Rev. Percy Grant, Canon for Ministry, Diocese of Ohio: Translations in the Bible and in Life
November 2 — The Rev. Dr. Harold T. Lewis, Interim Rector, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church: Homiletics and the Bible
November 9 — Dr. Edward J. Peck, Vice President for University Mission and Identity, John Carroll University: Biblical Insights into Leadership

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Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education Meeting highlights

AUGUST 11, 2014
[Joint meeting with CH City Council] Council Member Mary Dunbar was absent.

Facilities update
The Heights High stadium project is on-time and on-budget, and will be completed at the end of the month.

The high school building schematics and designs are almost completed and all major relocation decisions have been made. Wiley [Middle School] will be vacated this year and then prepared to receive the high school students next year. Monticello and Roxboro [middle school] classrooms are being prepared to receive all middle school students this school year. New parking areas have been established at Roxboro. The Heights Youth Theatre has been moved from Wiley to Monticello Middle School.

Plans for disposition of the vacated schools were mentioned. It was too early in the renovation process, so discussions were limited and no decisions could be made.

Council assured the school board that parking across from the high school is ample and RTA is cooperative in providing students with transportation.

CH development, tax abatement
City council is considering an income tax levy. Tax abatement issues were discussed in regard to bringing new business into the city. The board will be kept informed. The $2.7 million expansion of Motorcars Honda city. The board will be kept informed. The $2.7 million expansion of Motorcars Honda

Discussion began regarding the potential of receiving tax abatement for the expansion of Motorcars Honda.

CTE development ideas and discussed a partner-$2.7 million expansion of Motorcars Honda city. The board will be kept informed. The in regard to bringing new business into the city. The council is considering an income tax

CH development, tax abatement
City council is considering an income tax levy. Tax abatement issues were discussed in regard to bringing new business into the city. The board will be kept informed. The $2.7 million expansion of Motorcars Honda city. The board will be kept informed. The $2.7 million expansion of Motorcars Honda

The board and council will meet again on August 19, 2014. All board members were present.

Facilities work session
Representatives from BSHM Architects presented an updated plan for the redesign of Heights High, reflecting changes made in response to suggestions and concerns expressed by the board, staff, and community members. The architects said they are getting closer to achieving the goals requested by various working groups. A representative from Ozaone construction said his firm will come up with a cost estimate for implementing the plan that fits the budget.

Heights High’s original façade will once again be visible from Cedar Road with the removal of the science wing, added in 1959. New wings will be constructed off the building’s east and west sides, which will complement the historic architecture. There will be four floors but five levels, with windows on every level. Ramps will be used only where necessary and some of the original stairwells will remain. There will be fewer classrooms than in the current structure, but more common spaces, circulation space, resource areas, a teachers’ area, and conference rooms. Music areas will be clustered together, and open performance space will be added as backup for when the auditorium is in use.

The existing auditorium and art space will remain as they are. They are larger than required by the Program of Requirements, and result in the plan having more square footage than can be supported by available funds. Therefore, square footage will have to be eliminated elsewhere. Designing some spaces to serve multiple purposes could achieve this goal.

The main student entrance will be on the east side of the building and accessible from both Cedar Road and Washington Boulevard. There will be a lower entrance” on the Cedar Road side. Security will have views of multiple entrances. Board suggestions included skylights, replacement floor tile similar to the original, a pleasing façade toward Washington Boulevard, and restoration of the original architectural grandeur.

September 2, 2014
All board members were present.

Career Tech Education (CTE)
CTE is offered in a consortium with Shaker Heights and Warrensville Heights high schools. The 13 programs offered include audio engineering, manufacturing tech, pharmacy tech, marketing, cosmetology, criminal justice, digital electronics, automotive tech, and more. Heights High usually has about 300 11th- and 12th-grade students enrolled in CTE—a low number compared to other districts. Staff is investigating areas of low enrollment and recommends cutting three engineering offerings and adding culinary arts/Hospitality.

Board President Ron Register questioned cutting engineering due to the current emphasis on STEM. Both engineering and culinary arts are high-cost programs. Other preliminary recommendations include marketing CTE to students more effectively, removing stigmas associated with career tech, surveying student interests, educating guidance counselors on the value of CTE to students, promoting CTE in middle schools, placing students appropriately, and making better use of available funding. The board discussed the need to decide on offerings in the near future, to design the appropriate facilities needed. A culinary arts program, for example, requires a large and specialized area. The newest iteration of the facilities design will be shown at the Sept. 16 board meeting. Stephen Shergalis, director of business services, advised a careful predesign of the space for the CTE space at that time.

Early College Program
The Early College Program, a partnership with John Carroll University [JCU], exposes to the college experience 14 Heights High 11th- and 12th-grade students who are enrolled in it. Students attend JCU in the morning and Heights High in the afternoon, and community service is required.

Visitors’ Center at Heights High stadium
Board Member Eric Silverman suggested using the $650,000 from the sale of Millikin School on a visitors’ center at the renovated Heights High stadium, which would include concessions, restrooms, and a guest locker room. He stated that it would use a capital asset for another capital asset, and could kick-start a fundraising drive for the entire high school facility. Board members praised the idea but expressed reservations about spending the entire proceeds on one non-academic project; budget issues have created other areas of need. Board Member Nancy Pepller noted that the idea would save the district $400,000 in temporary structures. At the suggestion of Stephen Shergalis, the board directed staff to develop a plan for a visitors’ center and its cost in the context of the entire project, and incorporating the Millikin proceeds into the decision-making process.

LWV Observer: Nancy Dietrich.

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Deanna Bremer Fisher

At the Heights High football season home opener on Sept. 13, volunteers were stationed near new recycling and trash bins, encouraging attendees to recycle and reduce the amount of litter around the field.

The initiative is one of two ideas promoted by the Sustainability Working Group (SWG), a group of sustainability-focused residents that was formed during the district’s school facilities planning process, which the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District is now implementing.

According to Athletic Director Kristin Hughes, the athletic department is partnering with SWG and the Heights High Environmental Club to educate fans and encourage recycling at all games and contests. Dubbed the Tiger Nation Game Day Recycling Challenge, the initiative includes placing recycling bins throughout the new stadium and inside the lobby of the South Gym, stationing volunteers near the bins to help fans dispose of waste and recyclables appropriately, and public address announcements at all sporting events.

“We never initiated a recycling program in the past at these events,” said Hughes. “So while I cannot give you a specific amount [that was recycled] I know it was more.”

Joan Spoel, a member of SWG and one of the organizers of the effort, said that the idea to promote recycling at athletic events came about after the district decided to install artificial turf on the new field. “The field is made out of a non-renewable resource, but this recycling effort helps mitigate some of the negative effects of this,” she said. “The field will break down over a period of 10 years, and the plastic from the field will go into our watershed as it breaks down, and end up in Lake Erie. If we can educate our community and contribute less plastic pollution in the future, this would help mitigate the effects of the field.”

Spoel said that she and other SWG members thought the results of the effort were mixed. “We feel like this is a good beginning,” she said, “but we still have lots to do.”

Laura Marks, also an SWG member, agreed. “We collected a lot of trash and recyclable material from spectators that otherwise would have been strewn on the ground,” she said. “We diverted a lot of recyclable material from the landfill. We also reduced the amount of time and effort grounds crew and custodians needed to spend cleaning up afterward. Most importantly, we made recycling and proper trash disposal visible.”

But, she sees the importance of changing the culture in the district. “Heights High is an educational facility, we need to teach responsible behavior, such as cleaning up after yourself.”

The district has three more home games during its regular season—Oct. 4, Oct. 25 and Oct. 30—and plans to have volunteers stationed at those games. Similar initiatives are planned for other district sporting events.

SWG has urged the school district to increase awareness of recycling in order to design for sustainability as the school buildings are remediated and rebuilt as part of the districtwide facilities process.

A solid waste audit for all of the district’s buildings will begin with the elementary schools. The audit will involve collecting, sorting and weighing a representative sample of each school building’s trash. On the date of the school’s trash sort, custodians will collect one-day’s worth of trash from the cafeteria and classrooms. Volunteers will open a sample of the bags and sort the trash into several categories: paper cartons (milk cartons and juice boxes), cardboard, mixed paper, metals and cans, plastics, glass, food waste, food waste packaging, and other. The sorted piles of waste will each be weighed, as will all of the bags of trash.

The data will show how much waste is created by each school, and how much of it can be recycled. Once the district has a benchmark for each building, the staff can work with members of SWG, PTAs and other community groups to implement strategies to encourage more recycling and less waste.

As part of the process, the district will conduct a follow-up audit to measure progress.

The district is looking for volunteers from the community to help with the waste audit and Game Day Recycling Challenge. The waste audit for elementary schools will take place on the following dates, 2:30-5:30 p.m., in the school’s gymnasium: Oct. 1 (Boulavard); Oct. 28 (Grantry); Oct. 29 (Noble); Oct. 30 (Oxford); Nov. 18 (Canterbury); Nov. 20 (Roxboro); Nov. 21 (Fairfax). To volunteer for either initiative, contact Angee Shaker in the district’s communications office at a_shaker@chuh.org or 216-371-7371.

“I am grateful for every small and large change for the better the district has incorporated into operations and the building design,” said Marks. “I have hopes we can do more because the Cleveland Heights and University Heights residents are amazing.”

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

Beaumont coach starts new tradition

Nicole Pellechia

In the world of high school girls’ tennis, the teams representing Beaumont School and Cleveland Heights High School have always had a bit of a rivalry. In the spirit of competition, Mike Pel- lechia, Beaumont tennis head coach, started a yearly tradition to make the rivalry a little more interesting.

The “Golden Racquet” now serves as a trophy for the winner of the yearly match between Beaumont and Heights High. The winner—and racquet recipient—keeps it for an entire year, and is required to bring it to the rivalry match the following year.

“I wanted to spark up a stronger rivalry between the two schools, and give my girls something to look for ward to and work for,” said Pellechia. “I made up the tradition, and I plan on talking about it and drilling it into the girls’ heads until they consider it to be important.”

The racquet—an actual, functioning tennis racquet painted gold—was introduced during the 2013 season and first went to the Beaumont team. This year, Heights High’s 3-2 victory over Beaumont on Sept. 12 meant they took home the racquet for the first time.

The racquet will stay with the Heights High team until the two schools meet again during the 2014 season.

“Hopefully, this tradition will carry on for many more years, even after I retire,” said Pellechia. “I think it’s a fun, new tradition that promotes friendly competition.”

Nicole Pellechia is Mike Pellechia’s daughter. She earned a B.A. from Ohio University’s E.W. Scripps School of Journalism.

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Heights Observer October 1, 2014 23 www.heightsobserver.org
Two things happened to me in school in October 1957 that altered the course of my life. They were different, unrelated things, until they came together several years later.

First, I should say that every teacher I had, all the way through Coventry Elementary School, had been born around the turn of that century, 1900, and most, probably, in the 1890s. You know Western movies and cowboy TV shows? That was the 1890s. Just for a reference point; and just for some background.

Here’s more background: 1957 was the peak of the first wave of rock music, with hit records by rock pioneers including Elvis Presley, the Everly Brothers, Little Richard, Buddy Holly, Jerry Lee Lewis, Chuck Berry, Eddie Cochran, Fats Domino, Ricky Nelson, the Coasters and others. In about three years, that era would end, with Presley in the Army, Holly and Cochran dead, Berry and Lewis ostracized due to scandals involving underage girls, and Little Richard finding religion (for a while). Rock wouldn’t be revived until the Beatles hit the scene in 1964 (in the U.S.).

The year 1957 was also the height of the Cold War, when we were all afraid of “the Russians”—whoever they were. That year, 1957, I entered, lip-synching school assembly that was a talent show. That year, 1957, I entered, lip-synching (which wasn’t a term yet, it was called pantomimng) an Elvis Presley record.

I already had a sport jacket that looked something like one that Elvis wore in some pictures I’d seen. And I already had a guitar. My mother helped me draw sideburns on my face. I got up in front of the whole school and did my Elvis impersonation. And it solidified the decision I’d made when I was three to become a performer when I grew up. From that point on, that’s all I ever worked on and worked toward. And that’s what I have done in my real life—performing. And writing.

Teachers and parents: You never know how you may be influencing your kids. It may be opposite of the way you intend to. But that might be OK.
Steve Cagan: activist photographer

When Cleveland Heights photographer Steve Cagan says he is socially engaged, it doesn’t mean that he shoots weddings, nor does it mean that he is a documentary photographer. Cagan is an artist who is engaged in social issues—an activist photographer. He stands on the shoulders of sociologist Lewis Hine (1874-1940), who used photography to influence child labor laws, W. Eugene Smith (1918-1978), who turned an unfailing eye on war and disease, and the Worker Photography Movement of the 1920s and ‘30s.

Perhaps his current project with artist Mary Kelsey, “Gold Mining in El Chocó, Colombia,” explains best what it means to be a socially engaged photographer. In 2003, Cagan’s friend, activist Rev. Bob Begin, invited him to the first anniversary of a massacre in Colombia, promising that his spirits would soar in spite of the grim occasion. Cagan was uplifted by the resiliency of the survivors, who continued to work for the New University Conference, a left-wing faculty organization he describes as “an adult SDS.” At the time, he was on an academic track to teach English and history, but he began working as an organizer while always looking for a way to be an activist photographer.

He worked with people to resist the factory closings that eliminated thousands of jobs in the 1970s, and to protest the Vietnam War. More recently, he has shined a light on issues such as housing discrimination and refugee families from Nepal. His goal: “To make an artistic contribution to movements that are trying to change things for the better.”

Returning to Colombia most years since, Cagan became aware of the ruinous activity of mechanized gold mining in El Chocó. He asked the community how he could help and, recently, with Kelsey, began to create artistic materials useful to their effort. Funded by a Kickstarter campaign, they have traveled there twice together. Residents have told him he is the only one who comes back. It is vitally important to Cagan that his art practice is based on a relationship with a community and responsibility to that community. “It makes it important to get it right,” he said. “You’re talking about people’s lives.” A blog about the project can be found at http://elchocomining.tumblr.com/.

Cagan and his wife, Beth, native New Yorkers, came to Cleveland in 1970 to work for the New University Conference, a left-wing faculty organization he describes as “an adult SDS.” At the time, he was on an academic track to teach English and history, but he began working as an organizer while always looking for a way to be an activist photographer.

He worked with people to resist the factory closings that eliminated thousands of jobs in the 1970s, and to protest the Vietnam War. More recently, he has shined a light on issues such as housing discrimination and refugee families from Nepal. His goal: “To make an artistic contribution to movements that are trying to change things for the better.” He commuted to Rutgers University in New Jersey to teach photography for eight years, and taught the “difference between being part of social change as an artist versus using politics as grist for the mill of art.”

The roots of Cagan’s outlook on life lie with his left-leaning parents who “taught values, not political positions.” They taught him to be on the side of the poor, against racism, and for peace and democracy, and to express those values in what he did. Another value his father passed on was appreciation for the natural environment. Although Cagan was brought up in the Bronx and Brooklyn, his father grew up fishing and hiking in Glens Falls, N.Y. Steve and Beth Cagan, who had both lived in New York apartments, had always enjoyed camping and hiking, and, in the 1990s, became more serious about birding, wildflowers and trees. Today, Cagan is an expert birder, and their Cleveland Heights garden has evolved from vegetable garden to perennial garden to a completely native habitat. When Cagan first proposed going native, Beth asked, “But will it be pretty?” Cagan would love to give a series of talks on native plantings with that question as the title.

“Mechanized Gold Mining vs. Rainforest Cultures in El Chocó, Colombia” will open Oct. 9 in the Campbell Gallery at Cleveland State University’s Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs, at Euclid Avenue and East 18th Street. There will be an opening reception and illustrated talk by Cagan and Kelsey at 4 p.m. The exhibit will be on display through the end of the year.

“Bird Portraits” by Cagan will be on display at the Roger Tory Peterson Institute in Jamestown, N.Y., Nov. 14 through Jan. 4.

Peggy Spaeth was the founding director of Heights Arts. Currently she is imagining and exploring new projects.

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Heights Arts unveils ninth season of "Close Encounters" chamber music concerts

Mary Ryan

Heights Arts has announced the 2014-15 lineup for its "Close Encounters" chamber music series, held in a distinctive array of locations in Cleveland Heights, Midtown, and downtown Cleveland.

The four Sunday afternoon concerts present classical music performed by arguably the world’s most renowned local musicians—members of the Cleveland Orchestra.

Isabel Trautwin, a Cleveland Orchestra violinist and "Close Encounters" artistic director, engages her colleagues and other professional musicians to design their own programs, ranging this year from baroque to bluegrass.

Cleveland Heights Poet Laureate and Cleveland Arts Prize recipient Kathleen Cerveny will recite poems created in response to select musical offerings during the series.

In collaboration with The Music Settlement, area public schools and private teachers, Heights Arts also presents two master classes in its gallery at 2175 Lee Road on Feb. 8 and April 12, led by musicians from the "Close Encounters" music series. Master classes are free and open to the public and feature students of various levels who have been recommended by their teachers. Students and one parent are given complimentary tickets to the "Close Encounters" series, as well as single concert tickets, are available for purchase.

Subscriptions for the "Close Encounters" series, as well as single concert tickets, are available for purchase.

Close Encounters musicians (from left) Jeffrey Zahnut, Katharina Barman, Amy Lee, Tanya Ell, Isabel Trautwin, Yu Jin and Sanja Breiten Malloy.

CityMusic season includes two Heights concerts

Eugenia Strauss

CityMusic Cleveland, a Cleveland Heights-based chamber orchestra, launches its 2014-15 season this month.

It will feature performances of both classic orchestral and contemporary works, with soloists including saxophonist Timothy McAllister, whom the composer John Adams called "the best in the world," and violinist Adele Schonberg, and Dvořák's "G-major String Quintet," featuring the string bass.

Academy of Bluegrass in the Fields presents "Cleveland Orchestra Members in Disguise" for the finale to the "Close Encounters" series on Sunday, May 17. Five musicians of the Cleveland Orchestra, with extreme but little-known bluegrass talents, perform a program of light classical and traditional bluegrass favorites on fiddle, mandolin, guitar, banjo, bass, and cello—all on a downtown Cleveland rooftop with 360-degree views.

Subscriptions for the "Close Encounters" series, as well as single concert tickets, are available for purchase through Heights Arts or online beginning Monday, Sept. 22. Discounted student tickets are available, with proof of enrollment, in person at Heights Arts gallery.

Pre-season series subscriptions are $830, general public; $740, Heights Arts members. Individual concert tickets are $50, general public; $40, members. Advance ticket purchase is necessary, as seating is limited. All concert venues are wheelchair-accessible.

Heights Arts is funded through the AHS Foundation; Cuyahoga Arts & Culture; the Jean, Harry, and Brenda Fuchs Foundation; and the Ohio Arts Council. Funding for free and discounted tickets is provided by the Paul M. Angell Family Foundation.

Mary Ryan is a staff member of Heights Arts.

For more information, visit www.citymusiccleveland.org

Eugenia Strauss is executive director of CityMusic Cleveland.

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 Heights Observer October 1, 2014 26 www.heightsobserver.org
Cedar Lee Theatre premieres bitcoin film

Michael Kinsella and Adam Fleischer

On Friday, Oct. 3, Bitcoin Boulevard US businesses along Lee Road will host the worldwide release of the documentary “The Rise and Rise of Bitcoin” at the Cedar Lee Theatre. Distribution rights to the film were purchased by Los Angeles-based Gravitas Ventures, which recently opened an office in downtown Cleveland.

“The Rise and Rise of Bitcoin” follows the stories of digital currency entrepreneurs and startups that are helping shape this emerging technology. The film will open with a red carpet event, including a Q&A with the movie’s participants and production team. There will be pre- and post-parties hosted by Lee Road merchants, and incentives at the various Bitcoin Boulevard US participating retailers throughout a week of screenings.

Cleveland Heights resident Nikhil Chand, founder of CoinNEO, successfully led merchants in the Cedar Lee district in becoming Bitcoin Boulevard US, the nation’s first organized business community accepting bitcoins as a form of payment from customers. Bitcoin Boulevard US has drawn attention from local and national media, including Newsweek, NPR, Fusion TV, and the Plain Dealer.

Bitcoin Boulevard US continues to attract new visitors to Lee Road. Chand explained, “Gravitas had no prior relationship with Bitcoin Boulevard US when it decided to acquire this film. CoinNEO’s goal is to get more people to the Lee Road businesses and increase revenue. We have a lot of merchants who are new to bitcoin and are optimistic that more merchants adopt the technology.”

The Oct. 3 event begins at 4:30 p.m. with a pre-party and informational talk—“Bitcoin 101”—at The Wine Spot, then moves on to the Cedar Lee Theatre for a red carpet at 6 p.m. The film starts at 7:05, and is followed by a post-party at Parnell’s Pub at 9 p.m. The film will be screened throughout the week. Go to www.coinneo.com for details. Merchant incentives will also be offered between Oct. 3 and Oct. 9. Mention Bitcoin at the Katz Club Diner when you order a dinner and receive a complimentary house-made dessert or shake. Any payment method will be accepted.

Order French fries or ice cream at Sweetie Fry, and show your movie stub or paying in bitcoins to be entered in a raffle to win 25 free scoops. Show your ticket stub and purchase a beverage at The Wine Spot to receive 25 percent off a cheese plate. Show your ticket stub or mention Bitcoin at Parnell’s to receive $1 off beverages. Mention Bitcoin at Revive Bar to receive 10 percent off apparel and another 5 percent if you pay with bitcoins. Mitchell’s Fine Chocolates will give you a 5 percent discount for showing a ticket stub or paying in bitcoins.

To learn more about Bitcoin technology and Bitcoin Boulevard US, go to www.coinneo.com or www.bitcoinboulevard.us.

Michael Kinsella is a member of the Future Heights Board of Directors. Adam Fleischer is the owner of The Wine Spot.
Quintana’s set to expand on Taylor Road

Richard Stewart

Alex and Dawn Quintana, owners of Quintana’s Barber & Dream Spa, are embarking on the next step in their entrepreneurial journey, inspired by a desire to provide superior customer service in a more comfortable environment, while growing their business. They recently closed a deal to purchase the 2190 South Taylor Road building and are set to more than double the size of their spa, from 900 to 2,000 square feet.

“We wanted to expand our business because we have some great new and exciting services that we're going to offer. We were kind of getting to the point where we were using every inch of the space we have,” said Dawn Quintana. “We're excited for our staff because some of them have been with us for more than a decade.”

After completing 10,000 Small Businesses, an assistance initiative launched by Goldman Sachs, last year, the Quintanas launched a growth plan that included adding services and expanding capacity. After long considering expanding their current building, and looking at a few other potential locations in the area, they agreed to purchase the 2190 South Taylor Road building from owners Perry and Anita Wence, who operated AJ’s Beauty Salon for more than 20 years. To the Quintanas, it feels like they've come full circle because they considered buying the very same building prior to 2003, when they moved into their current location. The timing wasn't right then, as the couple was pregnant with one of their two children at the time. Their patience paid off as they now plan their expansion into the adjacent building.

“We can reach deeper into our passion for the beauty industry,” Quintana explained, as she reflectively sat in the front of new space, which is currently undergoing extensive renovations. “One of our goals is to excel in the customer service experience and that, I think, will be the biggest challenge for us.”

The company takes its commitment to service seriously, as evidenced by the fact that the business won Best Customer Experience in the Future Heights 2014 Best of the Heights Awards.

The expansion of Quintana’s follows recent efforts to improve the Cedar Taylor Business District. The district has faced challenges in recent years, but has become organized around the formation of the Cedar Taylor Development Association that is seeking federal Community Development Block Grant funds to make streetscape improvements and spur further development.

“It's exciting for Cedar Taylor,” said Kevin Smith, who owns a commercial building in the neighborhood and has been active in organizing the business district. “Dawn and Alex have consistently shown a commitment to the neighborhood and this is further evidence of that.”

After having informally surveyed a few regular customers, the Quintanas realized that what customers really wanted was an upscale, all-day luxury spa experience. As a result, they decided to convert a spa treatment room in the new building into a shower/locker room. They're also investing in custom-made, brown leather, heated chairs with massage capability based on feedback from customers and staff that the pedicure benches weren’t as comfortable as they could be.

“Sometimes getting customer criticism is a blessing,” said Quintana. Ample parking for the business has also been an issue, so major renovations to the rear parking lot are underway to create a spacious new lot with hard-capped parking space. They also plan to add a rear patio.

The Quintanas have strengthened their commitment to the Heights. They recently enrolled their two children in the Cleveland Heights-University Heights school district and say they’re in it for the long haul.

“We're trying to build a cornerstone in the community,” said Quintana. While no opening date has been announced, the Quintanas expect to open the expanded space this fall.

Richard Stewart is the owner of Digizoom Media and a vice president of the Future Heights Board of Directors.

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