The Heights Observer December 1, 2014 www.heightsobserver.org

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CH council member Janine Boyd wins bid to replace her mother as Ohio state representative

Deanna Bremer Fisher

On Nov. 4, Cleveland Heights City Council member Janine R. Boyd overwhelming won her bid to become the next state representative for Ohio House District 9. Boyd defeated Republican Charles T. Hopson, garnering 84.7 percent of the 33,882 votes cast. She replaces her mother, Rep. Barbara Boyd, who did not seek re-election due to term limits.

Ohio House District 9 comprises Cleveland Heights, University Heights, Shaker Heights, and two wards on Cleveland’s East Side.

“It is, undoubtedly, one of the great and most humbling experiences, to have the support of my family, volunteers, friends, mentors and neighbors,” said Boyd. “It’s also an honor to look at the path my mother forged, including over 25 years of public service, building relationships on both sides of the aisle and crafting effective policy, and have the opportunity to continue that work, as well as my own, as an advocate for our district and the most vulnerable of our citizens. I’m sincerely grateful.”

Boyd was appointed to CH City Council on Oct. 3, 2012, to fill the seat vacated by the late Phyllis Evans, who resigned in June 2012. When Barbara Boyd resigned from CH City Council in 1993 to become a state representative, it was Evans who was appointed by council to fill Barbara Boyd’s council seat.

In 2013, Janine Boyd subsequently ran unopposed for the unexpired two-year term on city council, and was sworn in on Jan. 6, 2014. Boyd’s council term expires on Dec. 31, 2015. Cleveland Heights City Council is required by charter to appoint someone to fill her vacated seat. Council has not yet announced how it will select a replacement.

CH offers free-parking weekends in December

Deanna Bremer Fisher

Starting Nov. 29, parking at meters in all Cleveland Heights parking lots, garages and on the street will be free on the weekends—Friday, Saturday and Sunday—from Thanksgiving weekend to the last weekend in December.

“Business owners and residents have been very supportive of this idea. It reinforces the city’s commitment to our commercial districts and also has been an incentive to bringing more people to our excellent restaurants and one-of-a-kind stores throughout the city,” said Mayor Dennis Wilcox.

The city announced on Oct. 21 that it would offer free parking at meters on Nov. 29, for Small Business Saturday. The city later expanded the free-parking days to the entire post-Thanksgiving weekend, and all weekends in the month of December.

Signs will be posted on the city’s parking garages and throughout the city to remind visitors and residents they may park at no charge on those weekends.

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

Thrive wants to make people happy

James Henke

Thrive, a relatively new Cleveland organization, has one goal: to make people happier. Called a happiness incubator, Thrive was formed in January of 2012 by Jen Margolis, a Cleveland Heights resident, and Scott Simon, who lives in Pepper Pike.

“We wanted to design experiences, habits and spaces that increase happiness, both at work and at home,” said Margolis, who is 37 and lives on Wilton Road.

Thrive came about after Simon spent time with what’s called a “positive psychologist.” “Psychology as a whole looked at what’s wrong,” Margolis said. “Then Martin Seligman, a psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania, flipped that. He thought it made more sense to see what’s working well and build from there.”

Another noted psychologist, Tal Ben-Shahar, also focused on happiness. While a professor at Harvard, Ben-Shahar taught classes about positive psychology and the psychology of leadership. Those two classes are among the most popular courses ever at the university. He went on to form the Wholebeing Institute. Wholebeing is a synthesis of two words: whole person and well-being. The institute believes

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About the Observer

The Heights Observer is not an ordinary newspaper; it is a nonprofit publication for residents of Cleveland Heights and University Heights. The Observer has no writing staff; it is written by you—the readers.

Individuals throughout the community decide what stories they want to write, then submit them for publication. Anyone in University Heights or Cleveland Heights is welcome to contribute regularly, occasionally or even just once.

Is there something you think should be covered in the Heights Observer? If so, please write it on your own or with friends, neighbors or colleagues. Our volunteer editors will make sure it’s ready to publish and contact you with any questions.

If you’re writing a news article, it should be clear and factual. If you want to express an opinion, submit it as a letter to the editor or an opinion piece. Either way, make sure it’s about something specific to our two cities.

• To make a submission of any kind, go to www.heightsobserver.org and click on “Member Center” at the left.
• For information about writing style, article length, etc., click on “Become an Observer” at the left. For questions that aren’t answered there, contact the FutureHeights office at 216-320-1423 or e-mail info@futureheights.org.

Articles to be considered for the January issue must be submitted by Dec. 12. But don’t wait that long; we publish articles online as they come in—and still consider them for the next print issue. We also publish an e-newsletter each Tuesday.

Heights Observer December 1, 2014
Excerpts from Observer blogs
Read the whole story at blogs.heightsobserver.org

I'm in a bit of a snit at the moment
Greetings from my little corner of the universe, at Simply Charming gift boutique in Cleveland Heights, Ohio. A corner which is receiving some undue and unpleasant media attention.

Now we all know that everyone has an opinion, and everyone is entitled to that opinion. But in my mind, a reporter ought to be reporting facts, getting information and comparisons from other areas, and not adding a spin on situations for the sake of dramatization and 'clicks' on their articles which in turn makes their companies revenue.

Now I am certainly not a political person, nor an activist. But for the past several months, the media reports on the Cedar-Lee District in Cleveland Heights have been negative, dramatic and apt to promote fear, and I am fed up. Our district sounds like an unsafe, untidy place — Jan Resseger

Yes, there have been two very sad incidents in recent months, but what gets overlooked is that they were perpetrated by current or past employees of those establishments, not random acts of murder and arson. And what about the amazing outpouring of support, both financial and emotional, for the employees and family rendered stunned and grief stricken? Not so much reporting on that either.

—Elisabeth Gershel

The money was there all along
Election day is over, and many of us are worried about the state of our state. I find myself increasingly concerned with the state of my city. Still. Even more so than while writing my prior posts in [what I thought was] a 5 part series.

If you haven't been following the UW/Wiley swing space story, pour a glass of something, and take a scroll through the first 5 posts above. You, too, will likely be motivated to attend the next UH Planning Commission meeting on 11/18. I'm going to jump in right about...here! . . . . . .

—Patti Carlyle

To the Editor:
The shops in the Fairmount/Taylor area are a welcome treat. Cleveland Heights is fortunate to have these establishments within our city.

Unfortunately, parking is troublesome at the corner of Queenston Road and Fairmount Boulevard, which is the most impacted area. I witnessed a motor vehicle come to a hairline from causing severe injury to a child, who was attempting to cross the street to attend his music lesson. Likewise, I saw a bicyclist come close to suffering severely bodily harm.

I shared my concerns with Cleveland Heights Councilman Jeff Coryell and [C] Police Sgt. Ben Osowski. They agreed safety is of utmost importance.

Unfortunately, since changes were made—adding a handicapped space, a delivery zone, and establishing a lower speed limit—I have witnessed many cars parked in the delivery zone. This means the delivery trucks have nowhere to park and are forced to block Queenston Road.

What's more troubling is that cars that have no disability placard are parked in the handicapped space. I don't understand the mindset of an able person taking the space of a person with disabling ambulation issues.

I am a registered nurse. I've taken care of patients in the intensive care unit who sustained severe injuries from motor vehicle accidents. Images of those patients are vivid and unforgettable. I hope that no one living on Queenston Road or in this community suffers such a fate.

The police told me to let them know whenever I see cars parked illegally. I have seen so many illegally parked cars that I need speed dialing for 321-1234. Certainly the priority of our police force is to keep us safe from crime and I don't believe it's fair to their time and skills ticketing people.

I believe that most of the infractions are from people who live outside our community. I hope the owners of the bakery and restaurant give this food for thought: Obey the signs. Walk an additional 100 feet. Kindly respect the Queenston/Fairmount families and treat our neighborhood as if it's your own.

Laurel Hopwood Cleveland Heights [Hopwood is a 32-year resident of Queenston Road]

Structural Racism: A Bleak Educational Future for Poor Children in America's Metropolitan Areas
In one of the essays in Twenty-First Century Color Lines (2009), Andrew Grant-Thomas and John A. Powell argue that the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at the Ohio State University, confront the idea that our greatest social challenges are the result of the attitudes and behaviors of individuals. Grant-Thomas and Powell write instead about structural racism—the way the primary institutions of our society privilege some groups of people and constrain opportunity for others. . . .

We should wonder . . . how history, from the point of view of racial justice, will judge today’s school “reform.” . . .

—Jan Resseger

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Laurel Hopwood Cleveland Heights [Hopwood is a 32-year resident of Queenston Road]
OPINION

Shop local to invest in our community

Anna Caputo

Recently, I attended a meeting hosted by the Heights-Hilcrest Regional Chamber of Commerce, facilitated by Peter Benkendorf, Dick Clough and Jack Ricchuito of The Cleveland Collaboratory, regarding the importance of championing local business and buying local. It was with a great deal of enthusiasm that business, private sector and community leaders came together to brainstorm implementing a local/regional campaign. Do you bank locally? Do you eat at a locally owned restaurant? Do you think local before Big Box? The way you spend your dollars affects the economy locally and regionally, which is directly related to job retention and creation, along with building a healthy, vibrant community.

It is calculated that if every person in Cuyahoga County would shift $100 of his or her spending to a locally owned business, it would add $126 million to the local economy. It is interesting to note that the economic impact of $100 spent locally is approximately 80 percent greater than if the $100 is spent at a chain.

According to a study conducted in Maine [Going Local: Quantifying the Economic Impacts of Buying from Locally Owned Businesses in Portland, Maine, by Garrett Martin and Amar Patel, Maine Center for Economic Policy, December 2011], on a dollar-for-dollar basis, the local economic impact of independently owned businesses is significantly greater than that of national chains. Analyzing data collected from 28 locally owned retail businesses in Portland, Maine, it would add $126 million to the local economy. By comparison, $100 spent at a chain store in Portland yields just $34 in local economic impact.

The study concluded that, if residents of the region were to shift 10 percent of their spending from chains to locally owned businesses, it would generate $57 million in additional local economic activity and 874 new jobs.

There have been numerous other studies done that reflect the same basic conclusion.

The holiday season is traditionally a time when businesses spend down their budgets and, personally, we all know the importance of sales the Friday after Thanksgiving and the amount of time and money spent looking for the perfect gift. I would like to challenge you to shop at the locally owned hardware store and grocery store; eat at the locally owned restaurant/diner; give gift cards from a locally owned eatery, spa, grocery store; consider a membership to a Cleveland museum or the Cleveland Zoo, tickets to the Cleveland Orchestra or a Cleveland performance venue; purchase a hostess gift from a local winery, brewery, candy shop or bakery. There are many local Cleveland artists where a one-of-a-kind gift can be found. I think you know what I am writing about. Let’s begin now to invest in our community and region!

Anna Caputo, a Heights-Hilcrest resident, is owner of F.J.C. Business Communications Inc.

BOYD continued from page 1

Boyd, 44, grew up in Cleveland Heights and attended Beaumont School. After graduating, she obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree from Hillsdale College and her Master of Arts degree from Michigan State University. She is the director of government affairs and public policy for Guide- stone Ohio, a nonprofit that provides therapeutic services to children and families.

Boyd said, “I will work hard and do my best. My priorities, are ours, across the district: quality early care and education; affordable higher education; workforce development opportunities for the under- and unemployed, raising the minimum wage; voter protection; environment protection; women making their own healthcare choices; restoring the Local Government Fund; and marriage equality. My first step, however, will be meeting my new colleagues on the other side of the aisle, and learning about what’s important to them too. That’s how relationships begin.”

Deanna Dresner Fisher is executive director of FutureHeights and publisher of the Heights Observer.
Shop local this holiday season, and every day

Steve Presser

I was driving from downtown the other day and noticed a billboard for a new company called Presto Fresh. It is a full-service grocery delivery company working with Zagara’s Marketplace—for more than 75 years a locally owned and operated neighborhood grocery store. The owner, John Zagara, is a businessman whom I respect and appreciate for what he gives back to the community. John has always tried to stay one step ahead of the ever more difficult game of being successful in business.

What struck me is that this new business of home delivery of groceries is not just for shut-ins, but also for people who don’t have the time to shop. We’re all busy. Somehow we have lost our time-management skills. Some don’t take time to even sit down and have dinner with their family. To me, this started the degradation of the family unit. No more time to talk about school, art, politics or sports because we are too busy.

The bigger picture is that we can now do everything from our computers or smart phones and never have to leave the “comforts” of our homes. Socialization is even talking to someone has been replaced by texting. One can easily get swallowed up by it.

This piece is not about grocery stores per se, it is about operating an independent business in an increasingly difficult market. I have talked to many retail store owners in Cleveland Heights and in other cities around the country. Most, if not all, are crying the blues. All are seasoned souls who have been in business for more than 20 years. We have watched hard costs such as rent, insurance, and the cost of goods soar, while revenues have decreased. You don’t have to have a Ph.D. in economics to see that this is dangerous territory.

Further, we have had to weather a “down economy” for five-plus years. Compound these negative factors with competition from Big Box stores and we have a recipe for failure. In the words of the late night Ronco commercial—“But wait, there’s more.” The “more” is the Internet, which has become the elephant in the room that many of us don’t have to have a Ph.D. in economics to see that this is dangerous territory.

We all need to be more flexible. I wish with traditional in-store customers. We pay taxes and we improve the quality of life in our community. Mom-and-pops are the backbone of our neighborhoods. We employ professional services such as accountants, insurance brokers and lawyers. When a brick-and-mortar store closes, it affects everyone. Mom and pops are the ones that give items or gift certificates to countless charities and local organizations. We pay taxes and we improve the quality of life in our community.

Recently, there has been grumbling among store owners over the proliferation of pop-up stores and venues. I personally like the creativity and vibe of these. Many of the vendors are local artisans whom I support. Sadly, national chains of Halloween pop-up stores killed independently owned costume shops here in town. However, along with traditional holiday gift shows, they adversely affect stores that remain open all year. The competition for the almighty dollar has never been tougher.

Cleveland Heights businesses have felt the pain over postings by “trolls” on several media sites. The bad-mouthing only fuels the fire. Perceived or real, the buying public outside of our wonderful community of Cleveland Heights is just not visiting us like they used to. Ask any business owner about the lack of traffic in our districts and they will tell you that numbers are down.

So, what can we do? I do know that it would help if you talked to your kids, your relatives, and your neighbors about the importance of SHOPPING LOCAL. Every little bit helps. It is about educating the public. The next time you go on Amazon to buy a book, give Mac’s Backs a call or any other local independent bookstore. Try on clothes or jewelry at City Buddha or Blush instead of buying out of a catalog. The list goes on and on.

Retail stores should be busy, not just on Record Store Day and Small Business Saturday. Many of us have had to change our original business models to include a website, e-commerce and social media. We all need to be more flexible. I wish that our businesses could be sustainable with traditional in-store customers. Shop Local. Happy Healthy Holidays.

Steve Presser is the owner of Big Fun, and a resident of Cleveland Heights.
Teachers choose their profession to change lives. They pour their minds, hearts and bodies—yes, it is physically demanding work—into the profound responsibility we have given them. Depending on where they teach, they pursue this work with access to different amounts of support, materials and affirmation. We expect them to sustain commitment and do their best every day.

This is a profession that takes time to master. Most teachers are always in the process of becoming better. Even the best can have bad days or a bad year. A few have given their best and are worn out. All are undermined by a policy environment focused on blaming them. To do their best, they need to hold on to the idealism that made them enter this life-changing profession. Whatever their particular situation, they go to the classroom to make the world better by helping our children to grow. We should be grateful to them for embracing this valuable work.

Principals and administrators are also deeply committed to education. Their job is to create a culture of high expectations and success for all students. They must communicate these goals to their staffs, parents and the public, and they must provide the resources, curriculum, direction and professional support that will create classrooms where children flourish. They are the backstop for real accountability. They need to inspire the best in teachers.

Children are the work, and children come with unique personalities, skills, families, experiences, grit, aspirations, assets, security and limits. Some are easy to like, some a challenge. Some engage easily, while others need substantial encouragement to grab the moment. Some are impacted deeply by one or more teachers and how to address them.

During my eight years of tutoring kindergartners, I have seen how difficult it is to engage every child. At times I lose patience, yet their teachers embrace the challenge of pulling them all forward regardless of their place on the starting line. They soldier onward with skill, energy and determination.

What troubles me is that our educators’ belief in education and their sense of responsibility for student success is used against them! If they acknowledge that children face difficulties they are criticized for making excuses, having low expectations or not valuing every child. For years this worked to silence educators who know that a focus on test scores is not the same as a focus on learning. Their job is to build on each child’s strengths, not sharpen testing skills. The form success takes is unique to each child. Testing-based accountability undermines authentic learning and is hard on children.

By bullying educators into silence, policymakers have made it possible to undermine public confidence in public education, siphon public funds away from public schools and ignore the myriad challenges, including poverty, that face our children. Current policy promises success for all without investing in the tools needed for success. It ignores economic inequality and allows it to worsen. It requires that all children succeed by placing full responsibility for creating equality on the shoulders of teachers—a goal teachers embrace but cannot deliver by themselves!

We all have different roles in the fight to make sure public schools serve all children well and to maintain respect for public education in this era of privatization, blame and shame. Educators have to focus on delivering education in the best ways they know. They have to believe in their own power, and education leaders have to demand that everyone does their best, but we need to let our educators tell the truth about the challenges they face and how to address them.

We all need to questions laws that expect more than is feasible and that blame teachers for not fulfilling impossible requirements. The public needs to challenge laws that declare failure if children who start from behind don’t arrive at the finish line at an arbitrary moment chosen by politicians.

We need to invest in the people who make up our school community, and we need to emphasize practices that keep teachers motivated and open to professional growth, retain our best practitioners, attract the next generation of committed educators, foster engaging teaching practices and focus on assets, not weaknesses.

If we want all children to succeed, we need to demand policies that create a just society and an even playing field of opportunity.

Susie Kaeser is a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights, former director of Reaching Heights, and serves on the national board of Parents for Public Schools.
Cleveland Heights City Council

Meeting highlights

OCTOBER 20, 2014
Council Member Melissa Yasunobu was absent.

Preventive road maintenance
Council authorized an agreement with Cuyahoga County for preventive maintenance of county roads in Cleveland Heights. The roads include Euclid Heights Boulevard and Taylor, Cedar and Noble roads. The county department of public works will bid the contract which will serve several communities, and will bill Cleveland Heights for the labor costs.

Mayfield Road traffic signal upgrades
Council approved hiring the firm of Glaus, Pyle, Schomer, Burns and Deffehian Inc. to develop the engineering plans for Mayfield Road traffic signal upgrades. Federal safety funds will cover 90 percent of the cost of the plan, which cannot exceed $275,850.

CDGB application
Council heard a first reading of legislation authorizing submission of the city’s Community Development Block Grant (CDGB) application to the Department of Housing and Urban Development. For 41 years, the city has participated in this grant program, which provides important resources for the city. The application includes a five-year plan for meeting the housing needs of low- and moderate-income residents.

Anti-discrimination legislation amendments
There was a second reading of legislation amending the city’s Fair Practices laws to authorize the Fair Practices Board to hear complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in employment and education. The legislation also creates a Complaint Officer position to conduct preliminary investigations and increase the efficiency of the Fair Practices Board. State and federal laws do not include these protected classes. Before voting their votes, each council member expressed support for the process that led to the legislation and the quality and significance of the result.

Additionally, council approved a resolution, also after a third reading, calling for the Ohio General Assembly to approve pending legislation to protect Ohioans from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

CDGB program
Council approved submission of an application to the Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant (CDGB) program. This is the 41st year the city has participated in this grant program. The city is expected to receive about $1,482,995. The application includes a five-year plan for meeting the housing needs of low and moderate income residents. These non-profit organizations will receive CDGB funds for the first time: Lake Erie Ink, Future-Techs, and Geakir.

Nuisance properties
Council declared four properties to be nuisances and authorized abatement: two parcels at 3344 Beechwood Ave., and one each at 3413 Davis Ave. and 3400 Lowell Road. In each case the existing owner had failed to maintain the properties after multiple citations for violations. The properties were seriously deteriorated and a blight to the community.

Free parking weekends over the holidays
Mayor Dennis Wilcox urged residents to take advantage of free parking to be available on weekends from Thanksgiving to New Year’s, and to “shop local.”

Ebullet response meeting
The city participated in a countywide meeting convened by Cleveland Mayor Jackson to discuss a coordinated response to the Ebola virus, should any cases be identified, with the health department, CDC and hospitals. The focus is on creating a standardized procedure for safety forces and hospitals, and education and information activities. There are currently no cases in Cuyahoga County.

IWW Observer: Susie Kaiser

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University Heights City Council
Meeting highlights

Kim Sergio Inglis
Francine Goldberg, former University Heights city councilwoman and vice mayor, holds a slim lead over incumbent judge Janet Rath Colacola in the race for Cayuga County Domestic Relations Court Judge.

At press time, unofficial election results provided by the County Board of Elections showed that Goldberg, a Democrat, had received 116,409 votes (50.26 percent), compared with 115,212 votes (49.74 percent) for Republican candidate Colacola.

Absentee ballots can be received up to 30 days after Election Day if postmarked by Nov. 3. Results are expected to be finalized on Tuesday, Nov. 15, when certified by village council members. A recount, if requested, could be completed by Thursday, Nov. 24.

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

University Heights
City Council
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

OCTOBER 20, 2014
Vice Mayor Susan D. Par啵et was absent.

Public comments
Mike Bohan, a member of the city finance advisory committee, expressed concerns about the resolution on this evening’s agenda for council’s approval of written contracts. Although it represents the majority view of the members of both the joint finance committee and the finance advisory committee, Bohan expressed the following comments:

• He recommended obtaining input from the law director and mayor as to whether clarifying the ordinance to stipulate written contracts is sufficient to resolve their perceived need to ensure that the agreements are in writing (as before council).

• The only substantive change to the law is the clarification that it applies only to written contracts, of all the other details in the resolution should already be covered by the current $5,000 written contract provision.

• He also recommended that the entire approval methodology be reconfigured as council is highly detailed budget approval process already authorizes the mayor to enter into the new agreements and those expenditures pursuant to the approved budget.

Zoning changes
After lengthy debate and a divided vote, council approved the zoning changes along Cedar and South Green roads from two-family residential (U-2), to 7-story apartment buildings. Adding a parking garage (by-right approval), the proposal included a standards text amendment (U-3) to U-7. Larry Weiser, owner of these properties, hopes to put up a Waterway Gas & Wash there. Weiser stated that he was open to a variety of business opportunities for that section.

A traffic study had been completed and an additional traffic signal would be needed at Fenway Road, which would have to be synchroized with the signal at South Green Road. Councilman Philip Englert noted that Waterway was listed specifically but Law Director Anthony Cordone stated that, although it is standard to include a business in the request for clarity, a U-7 zoning allows a wide array of businesses.

With tie votes that were broken by a vote by the mayor, the council voted Councilman Mark Wiseman’s request to send the issue back to the general plan commission for further definition of park site, for inclusion in a bid package for contractors bidding on the park construction project. At the same time we will convene the citizens’ park committee for further definition of park features and selection of playground equipment, etc.

Discussions about a park on the Fuchs Mizrachi site have unfolded since 2012, when the City of University Heights purchased the property for $600,000. At a March 2012 town meeting, the majority of residents in attendance said they would support the construction and equipment of a public park area and related improvements.

A bond issue is a period of 15 years, and Mayor Infeld said it will cost homeowners $25 per $100,000 valuation—the same amount that UH residents have been paying to fund the park for the last seven years. That bond issue will be paid off in December.

Commenting on the bond issue’s passage, Infeld said, “I am very pleased that the community supported the establishment of a park at the former school site on Fenwick Road. A park will introduce a new community asset in University Heights and I look forward to seeing many happy people using the park in the future.

Our next step will be to issue a Request for Proposals, for detailed drawing in the park, and initial inclusion in a bid package for contractors bidding on the park construction project. At the same time we will convene the citizens’ park committee for further definition of park features and selection of playground equipment, etc.”

Voters on a Park bond issue

Voters in University Heights approved a $1.8 million bond issue to fund a new city park on the former site of the Fuchs Mizrachi School. By a vote of 1,688 (74.2 percent) to 525 (47.6 percent), residents approved the bond issue, over the objections of the “constructing and equipping of a public park area and related improvements.”

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

James Hines, 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.
Heights High students greet Uh voters

Deanna Bremer Fisher

Several Heights High students greeted voters in University Heights on Election Day, offering free hot chocolate and information—not about any issue on the ballot, but about themselves.

“We are explaining the current state of the [University Heights] Planning Commission and the issue of moving Heights High to Wiley,” explained Elijah Snow-Rackley, a junior at Heights High. He and several of his fellow students, representing the Student Union, a new student-initiated Heights High group, had stationed themselves inside the University Heights Library.

The CH-UH City School District had been seeking approval from the University Heights Planning Commission since February 2014, to move forward with its plan to use Wiley as a transitional school. “That’s more money than it is worth. We are going to school to learn, and we are real kids. It’s not all about statistics. It’s not just about the safety of the businesses or community security risks. We are going to school to learn, and we would really like to have a chance,” said Snow-Rackley.

The students said they were frustrated with what they viewed as the planning commission’s stalling on the issue. “It’s really disappointing. There should not be that much question behind how much security we need and this and that,” said Andrew Schellenberg, also a junior. “Heights does get a bad rap, but it’s not a bad neighborhood. A lot of it has to do with misinformation and a little bit of fear of what high school students are,” added Snow-Rackley. He said he had made a decision to participate in the Election Day meet and greet after speaking at a Planning Commission meeting.

“I was really appalled at what I saw,” he said. “There was an initiative to move the high school to Slavic Village in Cleveland and busing all the kids there. We are working hand-in-hand with our fellow classmates as Heights High students at Wiley School.”

The student union was founded this year by Snow-Rackley and Heights High student Emma Schubert, who was running another hot cocoa station at the John Carroll University polling location. The group seeks to address issues of concern to students and the community. “We want to take action on issues that we feel are affecting us and affecting people in the community and, more importantly, [that] we think are wrong and should change,” explained Snow-Rackley.

Heights senior Imani Frazier said that the group has about 21 members. “We are working hard-in-hand with student council to get ourselves known and to allow everybody to know what we are about,” she said.

Another issue the group seeks to address is that of Heights High spirit wear being produced by sweatshop labor. “We would really appreciate if all of our athletic gear that we are selling and [that] has our logo on it wasn’t made by someone my own age for no money,” said Snow-Rackley.

When this issue came up, the group felt that it was one they needed to tackle right away. “This issue affects nearly all of us for next year,” said Snow-Rackley.

Carol Hoykins, a University Heights voter who stopped to drink some cocoa and listen to the students, said, “I support what the students are doing and I am going to call Mayor Infeld. I will definitely follow up.”

Deanna Bremer Fisher is executive director of FutureHeights and publisher of the Heights Observer.
Unitarian Universalist Society elects new minister

The Rev. Joseph M. Cherry sometimes uses his high school marching band experience as a metaphor for his new role as minister of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Cleveland (UUSC). “We UUs don’t march lockstep to outside imposed authority—musical, religious or otherwise,” said Cherry. “We’re noted for personal autonomy and, within traditional association principles, we compose our own congregational objectives. The band metaphor portrays UUSC as a principled, socially active and diverse religious organization whose members play different roles with different abilities in collaboration with a trusted elected leader.”

Cherry was chosen to lead the UUSC congregation on May 4 and commenced his ministerial duties on Aug. 1. He succeeds the Rev. Dr. Douglas Wadkins, who completed a two-year interim ministry.

In 1977, Cherry’s parents encouraged him to watch the mini-series “Roots” with them. The series was based on Alex Haley’s novel about Kunta Kinte, an 18th-century African captured as an adolescent and sold into slavery in the United States. He found the story very troubling, because he saw there was much wrong in our system, and it helped lead him to study American history in college.

Cherry lives in Cleveland Heights in a home he and his partner, Rev. Denis Paul, developmental minister at the East Shore Unitarian Universalist Church in Kirkland, are remodeling. “We joke that we’re a mixed marriage because we went to rival UU seminaries. Denis attended Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley and I went to Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago. What we got was an amazing amalgam of the two pedagogies—two ways to teach, two ways to learn.

“Meadville tends to focus on ministry and academics. Starr King tends toward a more holistic approach to ministry, so what we have in our five years of being together is the best of both.”

Asked to define his ministerial mission, Cherry put it this way: “I’m a minister in a worldwide and lifesaving faith. Part of our mission is to say persons can be unsure. You can say you don’t believe in this or that God and that’s OK. It’s to say that, at this moment, you are OK as you are and don’t need saving or redemption. At the same time, we are all capable of growth.”

Does this give UUs license to lead selfish, irresponsible lives? “Not at all,” said Cherry. “The Unitarian Universalist Society of Cleveland declares three basic aspirations: We strive to be a sanctuary for all who enter, to reflect the diversity of our community, and to work toward a more just and sustainable future. When we live these three challenges simultaneously, we believe we’re living decent, redeemable lives.”

Often the priority mandate for a new minister is to increase membership. Asked if he had a plan for this, Cherry responded, “Well, yes and no. We don’t have to be a power. We can’t change people. We can only live our individual lives and live our congregational life collectively with integrity. We don’t recruit members or proselytize in the traditional sense. We have to let our lives speak that for us.

“Our faith exists as a tension between two concepts—on the one side, our aspirations and, on the other, who we really are. There are many persons, regardless of age or color, sexual orientation or gender identity, who are in the same place, living these same tensions, who want to find a church where the preacher or dogma doesn’t tell them who they are or what to believe. They seek a place absent of fear-imposed authority.

“As more people who feel as we do see us—agnostics, atheists, Buddhists, Christians, humanists and others worshipping together—they will find us, and we will continue to grow.”

The Unitarian Universalist Society of Cleveland is located at 2728 Lan-cashire Road, Cleveland Heights. Visit its website at www.uucleveland.org.

Walter Nicholes, retired, is a co-play year resident of Cleveland Heights now living in an apartment in Shaker. He thinks the Heights communities are remarkable in their successful diversity.

“We love having the Orchestra and the Art Museum in our back yard now!”

—Beth Bohn, Judson Park resident since 2006

Beth Bohn is part of a growing trend at Judson—she and her husband Earl moved to Judson Park from the west side of Cleveland.

“We love having the Cleveland Orchestra and the Art Museum in our back yard now!” says Beth. “Plus, it’s great being close to the world-class healthcare of Cleveland Clinic and University Hospitals.”

Judson Park’s distinct personality, which marries the best of Cleveland Heights with University Circle, appealed to Beth. “There’s a special mix of people here and it’s easy to make friends” she says. “I believe a good life includes strong bonds with friends.”

This is Smart Living™ defined at Judson Park. Interested in learning more? Call (216) 791-2004 to arrange for a tour today.

Visit www.judsonsmartliving.org and click Judson Park
Scott Gainer, chief financial officer and treasurer of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District, has been named a Crain’s Cleveland Business 2014 CFO of the Year. Gainer received the award in the government category at Crain’s award ceremony at the Cleveland Convention Center on Oct. 23.

Crain’s Cleveland CFO of the Year awards are dedicated to recognizing the contributions and accomplishments of CFOs in Northeast Ohio. The award is the only one of its kind in the region.

“Every day we witness Scott’s experience, vision and leadership,” said Talisa Dixon, CH-UH superintendent. “The continued validation of Scott’s effort and hard work by outside organizations is immensely rewarding to see. I am incredibly proud to have him as a member of our team. He is a true asset to this community.”

As reported on CrainsCleveland.com, Kal Zucker, who is nearing the end of his third term on the school district’s board, said he’s worked closely with Gainer “in some capacity for at least 15 years.” During that time, what has stood out most to Zucker is Gainer’s calming influence.

“As you might imagine, we have some challenges,” Zucker said. “Since we’ve worked together, we’ve faced a lawsuit, a levy cycle, budget cuts, and he has a way of talking you through those things, taking the facts and presenting them in a very clear way.”

In his more than 19 years with the district, Gainer’s sound fiscal stewardship has endeared him to the CH-UH community. His work has brought him numerous distinctions. The Ohio Association of School Business Officials named him its 2010 CFO and Treasurer of the Year for the State of Ohio. For each of the last 12 years, Gainer and his staff have been awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association—the highest form of recognition in the field of government accounting and financial reporting.

Angee Shaker is director of communications for Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.
Music Settlement early education receives five-star award

Bob Rosenbaum

The Music Settlement of University Circle, which offers programs that attract many Heights families, announced in a news release that its preschool, day school, and kindergarten programs have been awarded a five-star rating from the state of Ohio “for meeting the quality standard established by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and the Ohio Department of Education.” The “5-Star” rating is the highest possible.

The Music Settlement is the first program in Cleveland to receive a five-star award from the state’s “Step Up To Quality” rating and improvement system, and is one of five programs in Cuyahoga County to reach this level. “We have always known that our music-infused, process-based school programs are unique to Cleveland,” said Charles Lawrence, The Music Settlement’s president and CEO. “It’s wonderful to receive this highest-possible rating.”

Parents who are interested in the program can attend a free Early Childhood Open House event on Jan. 11, from 1–2:30 p.m., at 11125 Magnolia Dr., Cleveland. Cleveland Heights resident Bob Rosenbaum is co-chairman of the Heights Observer Advisory Committee, and is responsible for its advertising sales and market development.

Heights Observer December 1, 2014
Local holiday events for senior adults and their families

From 7-9 p.m. on Dec. 14, 16 and 17, Nighttown will host the ninth annual Musical Theater Project performance of “A Christmas Cabaret in Cleveland.” This sing-along show features live performances of classic Christmas songs from the 1900s through the 1960s. Call 216-243-8687 for tickets, which range from $20–$30. (12387 Cedar Road, Cleveland Heights)

The 115th annual Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count will be held at the Shaker Lakes Nature Center on either Dec. 20 or 27 at 8 a.m. (At press time, the date had not yet been determined). This is the longest-running citizen science survey in the world, and it provides critical data on bird population trends by locating and identifying resident winter birds. (2600 South Park Blvd., Shaker Heights, 216-321-3939)

The Cleveland Heights Senior Activity Center will hold its annual Rock for All Ages Chanukah concert with Noah Budin on Dec. 18 at 7:30 p.m. (27090 Cedar Road, Beachwood, 216-292-0070)

On Dec. 25, 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., the Matzoh Museum of Jewish Heritage will host its annual Chinese Food and a Movie Day, featuring movies and a kosher Chinese buffet. Admission for both lunch and the movies is $22 for ages 12 and up, $12 for ages 11 and free for children younger than 5. Registration is required by Dec. 18. Note: the museum will also offer membership only admission; call the museum for more information. (2929 Richmond Road, Beachwood, 216-933-0757)

The Cleveland Heights Senior Activity Center will hold its annual New Year’s party on Dec. 31, starting at noon. A hot lunch and musical entertainment will be provided. Admission is free, but advance registration is required. (5 Monticello Blvd., Cleveland Heights, 216-691-7777)

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 lovinghandgroup.com. She can be reached at 216-408-5578 or judith@lovinghandgroup.com.

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 216-397-0336 or info@universityheights.com. To receive the monthly schedule by e-mail, call 216-392-7000, ext. 205, or send an e-mail to info@universityheights.com.

Dec. 4: Mitchell Balk, president of Mt. Sinai Health Care Foundation, describes its philanthropic work to help improve the health and well-being of Cleveland’s Jewish and other communities. Its initiatives include Child Sight, which offers free vision screening and glasses for middle school students in Cleveland’s public schools, and Senior Transportation Connection, which facilitates travel to local destinations for senior citizens.

Dec. 11: Jil Selberg, associate director of outreach for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, will talk about the museum’s origin and history, and its work to broaden public understanding of the history of the Holocaust, and strengthen the world’s resolve for peace.

Dec. 18: Damir Janjigov, professor and director of cerebrovascular research at the Cleveland Clinic, studies how music affects the brain therapeutically. Son of the famous Italian cellist Antonio Janigjov, he’ll discuss how growing up in a family of musicians has informed and inspired his work to shed new light on how hospitals can use music to promote health and well-being.

Dec. 25 and Jan. 1: No talks scheduled for these holidays. Best wishes for a new year!
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CH-UH Board of Education
Meeting highlights

OCTOBER 28, 2014
[Joint meeting with CH City Council]
All board and council members were present.

School facilities renovation
The board has approved the schematic design phase and the accompanying budget for the high school renovation project. Budget reconciliation for the total project will be presented and approved in the next phase of the project, the development phase.

The lower level of the high school will house the pool, two gyms, locker rooms, public changing rooms, and the career tech area. The entry is from Washington Boulevard. The building will be closer to the street than it currently is, decreasing parking. Many parking options are being considered, including use of the city lot across Cedar Road. Traffic patterns are also still under consideration. City streetscape improvement plans will mesh with the project.

The second level will encompass a restored courtyard, clock tower, and original entry. The science wing will be torn down to expose the courtyard and entry to Cedar Road. New wings on either side of the courtyard will reflect the original architecture. This level will also include the administrative office complex, library, auditorium, mini-auditoriums, cafeterias, visual and performing arts, and special education. The building will be entirely handicapped-accessible and meet all ADA requirements.

The third level will have two classroom wings, a central locker and gathering area, teachers’ spaces, and two large project rooms. The smaller upper level will be the vocal music space.

Fewer entrances and good interior views will enhance safety and security. Although fewer than in the current building, classrooms will be larger and better configured. Circulation will be simpler, to make it easier to move from class to class.

All competitive athletics will continue, although some will be relocated during renovation.

From now through January, the design development phase will make the spaces work for their function. There will be a meeting for residents living near the high school, and the project will be presented to the Cleveland Heights Planning Commission in December.

Wiley has been designated as the swing building for accessing certain portions of Coventry School building to Connections and Wingspan Care Group for use as student and family counseling space.

Possible tax initiatives
Due to the $2.5 million cut in state revenue to the city and the elimination of the inheritance tax, the city’s 2015 budget process will include council discussion for additional revenue needs. Voters could be asked for a property or income tax increase next November. The school district may also need an operating levy next year. Ron Register, board president, suggested that the city and the school district have an ongoing discussion on this.

Turkey Ridge
The proposed Turkey Ridge project on Edgewood Road will not proceed because developers found their costs to be higher than expected.

StreetScapes
A $1.5 million grant from the Northeast Ohio Area Coordination Agency (NOACA) will enable the city to start work in the spring on a new Lee Road streetscape, from Superior Road to the Lee Road Library, which will include new lighting, enhanced crosswalks, and other pedestrian improvements. A streetscape project at Cedar Farmington will feature a bike trail connecting to University Circle.

Safe Routes to School
Mary Quinonez, council member, reported that the city had received a small grant from a federal program that encourages safe walking and biking to school. The money will enable the city to map out routes and make infrastructure improvements, such as bike racks and crosswalks, in the neighborhoods around Roxboro, Oxford and Canterburry schools, Hebrew Academy, and Monticello Middle School. More money can be applied for to expand more schools.

Lease agreements
The board approved a lease renewal agreement with Urban Kids School and authorized a nonbinding proposal for lease of certain portions of Coventry School building to Connections and Wingspan Care Group for use as student and family counseling space.

Noble playground
The board approved a contract for Noble Elementary School playground improvements.

Facilities HVAC and parking
Steven Zarnoni, architect, presented three types of HVAC systems and the costs of each, and several parking options. There were many questions from board members. No decision was made.

LWV Observer: Adele Cohn.

Look for earlier and often expanded postings of meeting summaries online at heightsobserver.org.

See disclaimer on page 7.
Cleveland Heights High School seniors Shani Gelles, Ben Gillooly, Ann Zicari and David Pecoraro were named National Merit Commended Students. Approximately 34,000 commended students were recognized nationwide for their exceptional academic promise. Commended students are those who placed among the top five percent of more than 1.5 million students who took the 2013 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) but will not continue in the 2015 competition for National Merit Scholarship awards.

Gelles has appreciated the diversity and academic offerings at Heights High. She is currently taking AP biology, economics, statistics and literature as well as American Sign Language IV, government and political philosophy. She is on the volleyball and track teams, and last year was the MVP of the league track meet, where she won the one- and two-mile races and placed third in the pole vault. She is also the president of the Jewish Student Union and a leader in the Model U.N. club. She plans to attend college and will apply to several schools, including Brandeis University in Massachusetts, Barnard College in New York and the University of Pennsylvania.

State designates Canterbury a High Progress School

Angie Shaker

Based on its 2013–14 Ohio School Report Card score in math and reading, Canterbury Elementary School has been awarded the High Progress School of Honor designation by the Ohio Department of Education.

“Canterbury is a special community where teachers and staff have high expectations for our students,” said Erica Wigton, Canterbury principal. “And students give tremendous effort to meet those expectations. This award validates Canterbury’s hard work and effort. And, of course, this award goes beyond the building; the whole Canterbury community should celebrate this success. We are so fortunate to have dedicated parents who go above and beyond through volunteering, fundraising and creating meaningful events.”

The Schools of Honor Program recognizes schools with a high percent of students from an economically disadvantaged background that demonstrate sustained progress by all students in reading and math over a five-year time period. Last year, only 38 schools in Ohio earned this prestigious distinction.

“By showing consistent progress in raising math and reading skills for all student groups, you have proved that administrators, teachers and families, who have high expectations and provide continual support, can enable students from all backgrounds to achieve academically. Together, you are opening up a world of opportunities for your students and building a wonderful legacy for your community,” stated Richard A. Ross, state superintendent of public instruction. “It takes bold professional commitment to accomplish this. Thank you for the role you are playing.”

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

Gillooly has focused on music and French studies. He plays trumpet in the Marching Band and is a corporal for the trumpet section. He also plays trumpet in the Symphonic Winds, Jazz Ensemble and a chamber music group. He plays the French horn in the Concert Band and played in the pit orchestra for the school musical, “Guys and Dolls.” Gillooly is a member of Tri-M, the music students’ honor society. His favorite classes include political philosophy and AP French. Next year he plans to study linguistics and has applied to three schools in Boston: Northeastern University, Boston College and Boston University.

Pecoraro enjoys math and his favorite classes at Heights have been AP calculus and honors physics. This year he is taking calculus, chemistry and statistics at Cleveland State University as part of the Post-Secondary Enrollment Options program. He is the drum major in the Marching Band, plays the tuba in Symphonic Winds and was in the Jazz Ensemble. Pecoraro is also on the golf team, which finished the season with a 113 record. Later this year he expects to finish his Eagle Scout requirements. He plans to study medicine or biomedical engineering next year and his top choices for college are Johns Hopkins University, Case Western Reserve University or Washington University in St. Louis.

Zicari is an accomplished musician and sees the Instrumental Music Department as her “home” at school. She plays in the Marching Band and is the sergeant of the trumpet section. She is a member of the Heights Symphony, a jazz ensemble, a classical chamber group, the pit orchestra for “Guys and Dolls,” and is also a member of Tri-M. Her favorite classes include AP French, political philosophy and AP U.S. history. Next year she plans to study trumpet performance. Her top college choice is the Oberlin Conservatory of Music because it is both a conservatory and a liberal arts college.

Joy Henderson is the parent/community liaison for Heights High.
Choosing a school is every parent’s challenge. Whether public or private, parents want the environment that suits their child, conforms to their educational vision, and helps their child flourish.

One of the attractions of Cleveland Heights has been access to a variety of quality school choices. Now, there’s another option attracting families to the community, and connecting them to a fast-growing educational movement, one that has been around for almost a century.

Urban Oak School is Greater Cleveland’s first and only early childhood and elementary school based on the Waldorf philosophy of education, a humanistic approach to teaching based on the educational philosophy of Austrian philosopher Rudolf Steiner.

Waldorf pedagogy distinguishes three broad stages in child development. The early years education focuses on providing practical, hands-on activities and environments that encourage creative play. In the elementary grades, the emphasis is on developing children’s artistic expression and social capacities, developing both creativity and analysis.

Urban Oak, located in the former Coventry school building, offers programs from early childhood through grade three, with plans to grow every year to be able to offer eight grades. Already in its second year, Urban Oak has doubled its registration. Families of new and prospective students are encouraged to experience our daughter had [at Berkeley Rose School] … that we felt compelled to look for a similar situation as our family settled into Cleveland. We were thrilled to find that Urban Oak was poised to open in Cleveland Heights and hoped to find housing close by,” which they did.

Urban Oak teachers present the curriculum to their students through direct interaction. (Textbooks are used in the later grades.) Students engage with the curriculum in ways that speak to the many different ways a child can learn—through seeing, hearing, experiencing through movement, and creating.

Urban Oak provides space for children to explore and create in a nurturing environment. In addition to outdoor play on the meadow and on the P.E.A.C.E. Park playground, children engage regularly in handwork, singing, movement, storytelling, performance, watercolor, and bread baking, all woven into the daily curriculum.

According to Mary Bouch-Koslow, the early childhood teacher, “Bread baking in the early childhood (pre) program appeals to the senses, bringing warmth, nourishment, and community. We bake our bread together; we share our bread together.”

The Urban Oak School community is an engaging and stimulating environment that encourages children and their families to grow together. As a small school, families participate in building community through special seasonal celebrations, potlucks and community meetings.

To visit the classrooms and meet the teachers, plan to attend one of the upcoming open house events on Sunday afternoons, Dec. 16 and Jan. 11, 2:30–4 p.m. For more information, call 216-307-3870 or send an e-mail to contact@urbanoakschool.org.

Adele DiMarco-Kious moved to Cleveland Heights in 1995 and helped start the Urban Oak School. Noelle Celeste, Amy Marquit Renwald and Kristin Schmidt contributed to this article.

### Chemistry students compete in cook-off

#### Joy Henderson

Zach Tracy’s chemistry class is cookin’!

He teaches chemistry concepts through the lens of cooking. “It’s kitchen chemistry,” said Tracy. On Oct. 10, he hosted the first annual Chicken Breast Top Chef Challenge in his fifth and sixth-period chemistry classes.

Part of the assignment was to test the effectiveness of brining chicken, the practice of soaking meat in salt water. The students researched how to prepare brining solutions at known concentrations and how brining times affect water retention in the chicken.

Each team used its own combinations of brining time, rubs and sauces. Some teams mixed spices in the brining solutions while others used rubs after the brining.

Part of the scoring was based on the team’s knowledge of the chemistry behind the brining process. “The salt solution expands the muscle fibers, allowing the water to enter the cells and making the meat juicy,” said winning team member Dresean Borders.

The winners, based on chicken tenderness and flavor, and student knowledge of brining chemistry, were Shontare Manning, Kimberly Thomas and Daria Germany in fifth period, and Dresean Borders and Kortney Lynum in sixth period.

The judges included school administrators and teachers.

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

#### Sat. Dec. 20 is Hts. Emergency Food Center Day; free class with a $5 donation

We don’t have an eggy name, a fancy studio, or an expensive membership. But we do have a program that continues to work year after year. Isn’t that all you need?

M/W/Th: 9:30 a.m.
South Euclid Methodist Church
M/T/W/Th: 6:30 p.m.
Cleveland Hts. Community Center
Sat. 8:45 a.m.
Sun. 9:30 a.m.
Contact Mary Beth for more information: (440) 655-5394
marybethmccnn@gmail.com

#### Jazzercise

www.facebook.com/JazzerciseClevelandHeightsSouthEuclid

### CELEBRATE. HONOR. REMEMBER.

This time of year, we often take time to celebrate life and make memories with loved ones. It’s also a time to honor and remember those who have died. Grief is a natural and necessary process, but it can be one of the most difficult experiences we face in life. Hospice of the Western Reserve can help. Our Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center is here for anyone who has experienced a loss through death—even if you haven’t directly received our hospice services. Attend a group, explore online grief discussions, download resources, reach out to us and choose the hospice of choice.

Learn more at hospicewr.org/grief-loss.
Four Beaumont students recognized by National Merit Scholarship program

Anna Beyerle
The National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) recognized four Beaumont School seniors for their academic success on Sept. 22. Ana Maria Vargas was named a National Merit semifinalist, and Catherine Aumiller, Christina Kerner and Julie Schiffer were all named commended students. Ana Maria Vargas and Catherine Aumiller are residents of Shaker Heights; Christina Kerner lives in neighboring University Heights, and Julie Schiffer is a resident of Aurora.

Officials of the NMSC announced the names of approximately 16,000 semifinalists—less than 1 percent of U.S. high school seniors—and 34,000 commended students in the 60th annual National Merit Scholarship Program. Semifinalists have an opportunity to continue in the competition for National Merit Scholarships worth $35 million that will be offered next spring.

Although commended students do not qualify for scholarship awards, these academically promising students placed among the top 5 percent of more than 1.5 million students who entered the 2013 competition by taking the 2013 Preliminary SAT.

Beaumont is a Catholic school in the Ursuline tradition that educates women for life, leadership and service. Located in Cleveland Heights, Beaumont was founded in 1850, and is the oldest school in the Cleveland Diocese and the oldest secondary school in Cleveland.

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

Heights students and staff tour urban farm

Cynthia Barnes
Some Heights students extended their school day on Oct. 28 with a field trip to an urban farm in Cleveland. Rid-All Green Partnership, nestled in the Kinsman neighborhood, is on the site of what was once a dumping ground, but now is full of life.

Joe Mendes, Gearing Professional Development School teacher, and Steve Warner, Heights High teacher and Environmental Club advisor, organized the trip, and were joined by elementary and high school students, district staff, principals, teachers, parents and members of the Sustainability Working Group, who are working in partnership with the district to include sustainable measures in the renovation of the high school.

Hunter Scott, a Heights High junior, helped the Rid-All staff conduct the tour. She worked at the site during the summer and gained valuable knowledge about the importance of respecting the environment, and green living. “This experience has made me interested in wanting to go into some form of environmental science when I graduate,” said Scott.

Trip attendees had an opportunity to see tilapia fish, tomato plants and other vegetation.
‘Guys and Dolls’ brought together more than 550 students from 10 schools

Joy Henderson

More than 550 students in two casts from all 10 schools in the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District took part in the 2014 all-district musical, “Guys and Dolls.” The students entertained near-capacity audiences in the Heights High auditorium in four performances, Nov. 6–9.

The show’s director, Craig McGaughey, was thrilled with the students’ performances. “I am so proud that all four performances were of such high caliber,” he said. “It is one thing to have a great show one night, but to maintain that excellence for all four nights—that is really exciting!”

McGaughey wanted to especially thank the “army of parents” who step up every year to serve as ushers, sell concessions, repair costumes and more, as well as “the students and adults in our stage crew, lighting and sound support and our amazingly talented pit orchestra—they all contributed to this show in many important ways.”

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

Heights High senior Daniel Carder (center) played the role of Sky Masterson on Nov. 7 and 9. Ian Teunissen performed the role on Nov. 6 and 8.

Four artists featured in winter exhibition at St. Paul’s

Mary Cushing

Beginning Dec. 12, four artists will display their perspectives through various media in the winter exhibition at the Nicholson B. White Gallery at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 2747 Fairmount Blvd., Cleveland Heights. The show runs through March 1.

Join the artists—Sarah Clague (ceramics, raku), Tricia Kaman (oil painting), Jean Koznarek (painting, mixed media) and James McNamara (woodblock prints)—at the opening reception Friday, Dec. 12, 5–7 p.m. This is an opportunity to not only view the art, but also discover the viewpoints of the artists, as each of them speaks to the assembled guests about their artistic goals and creative processes. Visitors can also chat with the artists individually during the opening reception.

The Nicholson B. White Gallery hosts three shows each year, bringing together local artists in a spacious exhibition space. The gallery is light and airy; large windows in one wing overlook a beautiful, central courtyard and garden featuring Emily Parkman’s bronze sculpture of a mother pelican and her young overlooking a pool. Another wing of the gallery offers views of the terraces of St. Paul’s herb garden and the church’s large front lawn, which provides a park-like setting for the corner of Coventry Road and Fairmount Boulevard. The church’s landmark tower is viewable through clerestory windows in the central rotunda of the gallery, which also features a soaring two-story window facing west.

The windows and the architecture of the gallery define a space that provides a beautiful, peaceful setting for the art on view.

St. Paul’s considers the gallery a gift to the community, for public use. The Nicholson B. White Gallery provides members of the parish and the wider community a venue where they can gather and celebrate visual creativity. The gallery is open on weekdays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and weekends, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The artists receive all proceeds from the sale of their work.

Mary Cushing is a Cleveland Heights resident and member of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church.
Hot Djang! The kings of gypsy jazz

James Henke

Hot Djang! made its first appearance at Nighttown in early November. The Cleveland band, which includes two musicians who live in Cleveland Heights, describes its music as “gypsy jazz,” a style developed by guitarist Django Reinhardt in Paris during the 1930s. The show, which was truly entertaining, also included some jazz and swing standards from the American songbook.

Brad Smedley, one of the group’s guitarists, came up with the idea for the band after attending a workshop about Reinhardt’s music at Smith College in Massachusetts a few years ago. “I was never more blown away in my life,” Smedley said. “All of the top gypsy-jazz guitarists were there, and I thought I could either work hard and try to learn to play like this, or I could just quit.”

Beachwood resident Smedley, who’s 58, has been playing music for most of his life. He began taking piano lessons when he was five years old, and when he was in junior high, he started playing saxophone. Then, after discovering Bob Dylan, he decided to take up the guitar and he focused on playing folk, bluegrass and country music. He attended the 1981 Kent State Folk Festival and heard the Balfa Brothers, a Cajun band. “It incorporates the blues and rhythm & blues into the Cajun style,” Smedley said. “It’s not hot dang, it’s hot Djang!”

Smedley’s next band was the Zydeco Dependents. “Zydeco is sort of a louder version of Cajun music,” Smedley said. “Then I said, ‘Wait, we could add a violin, and one of the people in the room said, ‘Hot dang! You are amazing!’”

Smedley said, “Then I said, ‘Wait, it’s not hot dang, it’s hot Djang!’”

The group recently added a clarinetist, Eric Seddon, to its lineup. At the Nighttown show, Smedley also works with Roots of American Music, joined the group on vocals, and Ray DeForest, who’s also a Cleveland Heights resident, played bass.

In addition to covering gypsy-jazz classics, Hot Djang! also plays a few original songs, including “Temptation Is Calling” and “Roamin’ the Blues,” both of which were written by Richards, and “King’s Highway,” by Seddon. The band hopes to release its first CD sometime next year.

Hot Djang! plays at Rockefeller’s on Mayfield Road in Cleveland Heights the third Friday of every month. In addition, they have a show booked at the Secret Cellar in Kent on Dec. 5, and they also have some appearances at the Barking Spider planned for early next year.

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.
City Music Cleveland offers works from old and new worlds

Although Ramirez’s musical influences were Argentinean, the genesis of the work itself was an encounter he had traveling in Europe in the 1950s. While staying in a convent in Germany where he was teaching music, Ramirez remarked to the nuns on the beauty of the countryside and of a nearby mansion set in the woods. The nuns told him, however, that the house had been part of a concentration camp during the war, and that during this period they had tried to alleviate the suffering of the thousands of prisoners it held by pushing food packages through a gap in the fence. Every day the packages were removed until, after eight months, the day came when the package was still there the following day and the next. At this point the nuns knew that the prisoners were being moved and that, as Ramirez himself reported, “The dreaded journey had begun once more.”

It was then that Ramirez vowed to compose a mass “that would involve people outside of one’s own beliefs, race, color, or origin” as a tribute to the compassion of the nuns. After many years, Ramirez fulfilled this promise: back in Argentina, he chose as his text the words of the Roman Catholic Mass newly translated into Spanish as a result of the Second Vatican Council (1962–65), and for the music he adapted the musical forms and rhythms of his native country. The Misa Criolla immediately became popular around the world, and has remained a modern “classic” to this day.

City Music will delve back some two centuries for the first half of its concert, to explore music from the Old World. Composed in 1745, when he was just 18, Mozart’s inimitable Bassoon Concerto is another piece that has always proved popular with audiences. Laura Koeppke will serve as bassoon soloist. And the concert will begin with something of a rarity, Antonio Sarriér’s Overture in D. Although almost forgotten today, Sarriér was a timpani and trumpet player at the Spanish court from 1725, but he must also have been an important composer. Unfortunately, though, all his music is lost, apart from this Overture, which was probably written to accompany the water parties of King Fernando and Queen Barbara at Aranjuez. The music for Overture in D was taken across the Atlantic to the New World and only survives in an 18th-century manuscript preserved in a convent in Morelia, Mexico. The Spanish settlers clearly imported European classical music to the New World, and it is fitting that such a piece, spanning both continents, should raise the curtain on what will be a celebration of Latino culture in the Cleveland area.

The concerts, which take place Dec. 3–7, include one performance in Cleveland Heights, on Thursday, Dec. 4, at 7:30 p.m., at Communion of Saints Parish, 2175 Coventry Road. For details on other performances and more information, visit www.citymuscleveland.org.

Peter Bennett, the conductor of City Music Cleveland’s December concerts, is an associate professor of musicology in the Case Western Reserve University Department of Music.
Heights Library tax levy passes

Kim Sergue Inglis

Heights voters passed a library tax levy on Nov. 4, with 68 percent (11,293) voting in favor, and 32 percent (5,902) opposed, according to unofficial results reported by the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections.

The levy is for an additional 2.2 mills (2 cents for each $100 of property valuation), and will cost homeowners $77 per year for each $100,000 of home valuation. The library’s last levy passed in 2008.

In a press release, Nancy Levin, Heights Libraries director, stated, “We are so very grateful to our citizens for voting to support us. Passage of this levy ensures that Heights Libraries can continue its level of service to all of our citizens.”

The library levy is expected to generate $2.3 million a year, and the library plans to use the additional funds to restore services that were cut in 2009, when the Ohio Public Library fund was cut, including offering Sunday hours at all branches. Currently, only the University Heights and Lee Road libraries are open on Sundays, 1–5 p.m.; Coventry Village and Noble Neighborhood libraries are both closed on Sunday.

Coventry Village Library patrons saw its hours cut further in November 2013, when the library board voted to close that library on Fridays, for a trial period of one year, in order to add Sunday hours at its University Heights branch, without increasing the budget.

Sheryl Banks

The three authors who will be featured at Coventry Village Library’s Communi- cating with Animals event on Thursday, Dec. 4, 7 p.m., each have distinct writing styles, but their works all have one thing in common: they focus on relationships between animals and humans.

Jennifer Priester, author of several books, is also the owner of the publish- ing company A&M Moonlight Creations, and is an artist and book layout designer.

All of Priester’s books feature ani- mals. In her Mortal Realm Witch series, the animals known as familiars talk, and are the teachers and best friends of witches and warlocks.

The animals in some of Priester’s stories are based on real-life animals she has known, and animals have always been a big part of her life. Because of this, she is a dedicated supporter of ani- mal rescue, and recently contributed two stories to the Road for Animals Anthology #2, which donates all profits to animal shelters, sanctuaries and hospices.

As far back as she can remember, veterinarian Carol Osborne has always been an animal lover. The fact that she was allergic to them did not stop her from making her way in the equestrian world as a professional rider in top-ranked shows. Nor did it preclude her from becoming a veterinarian, and owner of the Chagrin Falls Veterinary Clinic.

Sheryl Banks is the marketing and com- munications manager for the CH-UH Public Library. Harriet Traher, a longtime Cleveland Heights resident, contributed to this article.
Library offers real-world experience to students and volunteers

Julia Murphy

Libraries serve many purposes, and one mission is to make people more knowledgeable. Using books, Internet resources and databases, one can learn about the world in just about any capacity, whether it is watching Korean music videos or digging into local history. The Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library takes that mission to another level as a place for library science students, young interns, and volunteers to gain job experience and learn new skills on the job.

Shannon Titas is a graduate student at Kent State University working on her Masters of Library and Information Science degree, the professional degree required to become a librarian. As part of her degree, she is doing her practicum at the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library. A practicum is an internship or course of study designed to give a student supervised practical experience working in his or her specific field of study.

“Titas has been working primarily with Amy Marshalek, an adult services librarian at the Lee Road Library, but has explored other departments including collection services and youth services. When asked what she found most interesting, Titas talked about the different talents of library staff members. “Everyone on staff comes from such diverse backgrounds. It’s awesome how many interesting skills and talents people have, and that they are put to use here at the library.”

Like current staff members, Titas also comes from a background with a unique academic focus. She was a dance major at Ohio University, and has worked the last 16 years as a performer, teacher and choreographer. Her interest in public librarianship actually began when she was teaching dance at Hiram College.

“When working with dance students, I ended up helping them through the research aspects of the college coursework and found that I enjoyed that part of the job a lot. Then, when I had my own children, I rediscovered the magic of public libraries as a place to have really meaningful experiences with my children.”

On the volunteer side, there is Callie Swaim-Fox, a sophomore at Cleveland Heights High School, who volunteers once a week in the administrative office at the Lee Road Library.

“I’ve always considered the library a second home, and it has been such an incredible experience,” said Swaim-Fox. “I’ve gotten to see all the work put into the library I’ve been using for years. The energy and spirit of all the people there is exciting and life-giving, and getting to volunteer has been a really unique and fun experience.”

To learn more about volunteering or the Library Experience Program, contact Heather Howiler at the Lee Road Library at 216-932-3600 or hhowiler@heightslibrary.org.

Julia Murphy is the marketing assistant for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library.

Peter and Peter meet again after 46 years

Julia Murphy

Two old friends were recently reunited in the children’s section of the Lee Road Library: Peter Benkendorf of Dayton, Ohio, and the children’s department mascot, Peter Potamus. When Benkendorf was back in his hometown of Cleveland Heights this October, he stopped by the library to see his old friend.

“In the summer after first grade, my family went on vacation to Lake Huron in Michigan,” said Benkendorf. “A man we met there called me ‘Peter Potamus’ for some reason, and later that autumn, my sister suggested I enter that name in the hippo-naming contest at the library.”

My only real memory is of the photo being taken for the Sun Press,” said Benkendorf. “While climbing off Peter Potamus, my foot got caught underneath. I fell off and I cried,”

Reminiscing about the sculpture with Nancy Levin, library director, Benkendorf asked about recreating the shot, but she decided he might be too big to sit on Peter Potamus now.

Library research reveals that there was a television show called “Peter Potamus,” featuring a cartoon hippo who explored the world in a time-traveling hot-air balloon. The show aired in 1964 and 1965, so the clues clearly line up.

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Cedar Fairmont hosts holiday affair Dec. 12

Laura Potter

The snow may be falling, the air has a bite, but the shops of Cedar Fairmont are warm and inviting! On Friday, Dec. 13, the public is invited to shop local small businesses in the Cedar Fairmont Business District. It promises to be a delicious evening of fun at the start of the busy holiday season.

From 5–7 p.m. Appletree Books, Four and Twenty Mercantile, Ten Thousand Villages and Vero Bistro are partnering to host an exciting evening for the community. Begin your tour at Appletree Books for tasty appetizers and a glass of Prosecco, jolly stories of the season, and browsing through books to suit every taste. Enjoy wine and cheese tastings at Four and Twenty Mercantile—a vintage

Dec. 13 holiday stroll planned for Cedar Fairmont district

Kaye Lowe

A stroll on the sidewalks of the Cedar Fairmont Business District will get you in the spirit of the holidays with twinkling lights, holiday greens, and decorated windows filled with lovely ideas for gift giving.

The merchants of Cedar Fairmont have stocked their stores with an abundance of gifts for the holidays, and all of the merchants are offering gift cards: consider a yoga or Pilates lesson; a manicure, pedicure or haircut; or a gift basket from Dave’s Market.

As you stroll Cedar Fairmont on Dec. 13, don’t miss Santa and his helper at Dave’s Market from 2–4 p.m. Cleveland Heights Church carolers will be singing on the sidewalks of Cedar Road and Fairmount Boulevard, and they invite everyone to join them.

Losing Bakery and Luna Bakery Café offer delicious pastries and cakes, and the Cedar Fairmont restaurants invite you to take a respite and enjoy a cup of coffee, lunch or dinner, and choose from the specials they will be offering.

Ten Thousand Villages, a fair-trade store, will be serving hot chocolate and coffee, as well as offering gift ideas from around the world. If you are looking for stocking stuffers, you’ll find great ideas here.

Don’t miss out on the unique items offered at Four and Twenty Mercantile, with its one-of-a-kind vintage pieces and fabulous fashion and accessories.

Appletree Books has a delightful collection of books for both children and adults, and also offers original prints and cards, along with other unusual items. If you are looking for a unique antique, ornament, Advent calendar, or unusual piece of estate jewelry, you will discover it at Cedar Hill Antiques.

During the holiday stroll, register for the free holiday drawing at participating Cedar Fairmont merchants, many of which will offer refreshments. Lou Armagno will perform “Sinatra Selects” at 8:30 p.m. at Nighttown. For information and to purchase tickets, visit www.nighttowncleveland.com.

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

CH merchants to sponsor free trolley rides Dec. 13

Three Cleveland Heights business districts have holiday events planned for Saturday, Dec. 13, and have arranged for transportation to carry visitors and residents from district to district that evening.

From 6–9 p.m. Lolly the Trolley will provide complimentary transportation between the Cedar Fairmont, Cedar Lee and Coventry Village business districts.

Evening activities include shopping and eating, dining and strolling in all three neighborhoods on the same evening courtesy of the merchants. Note that children riding the trolley must be accompanied by an adult.
Coventry Village holiday festival Dec. 13

Angela Hetrick

The Coventry Village neighborhood encourages everyone to shop local and get in the holiday spirit with a full day of free holiday events.

The Coventry Village Holiday Festival will take place on Saturday, Dec. 13, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. All events are free and open to the public. Visitors can enjoy free parking at meters all weekend or take a complimentary ride on Lolly the Holiday Trolley, which will loop between Coventry, Cedar Lee and Cedar Fairmount districts, 6-9 p.m. that evening.

Coventry Village holiday festivities include:

• Classic holiday cartoons from the 1930s through the 1960s, in the Centrum Theater (daytime event)
• “National Lampoon’s Christmas Vacation” in the Centrum Theater (evening event)
• Holiday photo booth with Santa and his Merry Elves
• Coventry merchant holiday window contest—take a stroll down Coventry Road and vote for your favorite!
• Kids’ holiday crafts
• Winter storyline
• Holiday karaoke, community caroling (Join in the fun!) and poetry
• Holiday storytellers and poets roaming through the shops and on the streets
• Ugly-sweater bar crawl, led by Coventry Claus
• Complimentary gift wrapping and more!

In addition to the festival events, the Coventry Village merchants are joining in the fun and will host a variety of unique sales and special events in their stores.

For a full list of special events, times and other details, visit www.coventryvillage.org.

Angela Hetrick is executive director of the Coventry Village Special Improvement District.

Cedar Lee merchants invite you to share good cheer on Saturday, Dec. 13 at the Holiday Stroll on Lee.

Residents, customers and visitors can enjoy a vast array of festivities, shopping and merriment at 21 participating destinations along Lee Road. Experience a performance by violinist Ariel Clayton at Marotta’s, enjoy a champagne tasting at The Wine Spot, and discover handcrafted inspiration at the Heights Arts Holiday Store. Revive, Abrash and Simply Charming will all feature accessories, jewelry, scarves and other wares that are perfect for gift giving. Purchase gift cards, find selections perfect for holiday gatherings, and celebrate the season with your family on Lee Road.

From dining to cocktails, cookies and hot chocolate, celebrate the season with a fun night out. It’s the perfect opportunity to shop small with local independent businesses, and customer appreciation is a focus of the evening. Look for giveaways, door prizes, samples, entertainment and a guest appearance from Mr. Jingeling, who will add a touch of nostalgia to the occasion.

Prior to the evening’s activities, the Cedar Lee Theatre will screen the Cleveland film classic “A Christmas Story” at 11 a.m., paired with a food drive to benefit the Greater Cleveland Food Bank.

The fun doesn’t end at 9 p.m. The BottleHouse Brewery will host an Ugly Sweater Party, featuring music from Brent Kirby and His Luck. Find that well-worn, much-appreciated sweater, grab a friend, and enjoy seasonal ale and toe tappin’ tunes to close out the night.

Kelly Robinson is the executive director of the Cedar Lee Special Improvement District.
Simply Charming owner Elisabeth Gevelber (in back) with salesperson Bri Bryant and Clementine, the seven-year-old dachshund.

“I have vague feelings about whatever . . .”

Simply Charming also stocks soy candles that are made in Tennessee but are named for neighborhoods and organizations in Cleveland Heights. One candle is called the Cedar-Lee, another FutureHeights and another Heights Arts. The store also carries cute items for babies and young children.

One of Gevelber’s more recent additions to the store is a line of jewelry made by the company Alex and Ani. “They are sort of like charm bracelets,” she said. “But they tell something about you.”

Gevelber, who lives in University Heights, is a big supporter of area organizations. Her store was a sponsor of the recent Heights Music Hop. “I absolutely love supporting the community,” she said, “and the people who come in here are awesome.”

If you do visit the store, there’s a good chance you will see her dog, Clementine, a seven-year-old long-haired dachshund who likes to run around and say hello to the customers.

James Henke, a Cleveland Heights resident, is 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.
Heights Arts Holiday Store offers special limited editions

Mary Ryan

Heights Arts kicked off its annual Holiday Store on Nov. 7, with works from more than 80 Northeast Ohio artists and an energetic new vibe, thanks to colorful new displays and wall treatments created by Heights Arts volunteers, board members and staff.

“This is a very exciting time for Heights Arts,” said Rachel Bernstein, Heights Arts executive director. “Courtney Young, our new gallery manager, and CIA Intern Julie Rauschenbach worked tirelessly to make this our most spectacular holiday artist showcase yet. In addition, artists we have shown in the past have been particularly prolific in producing new works and styles never before seen in our store.”

More than a dozen Cleveland-area artists make their debut in the Holiday Store, including Gina DeSantis, ceramics; April Bleakney (Apemade), screen-printed wearables; Annette Poitau, abstract paintings; Denis Balog, watercolors; Matt Fiorilli, glass sculpture; and Sandra Carrey, jewelry.

A fresh look for Appletree Books

Mary Krogness

Alice Webster and Lynn Quintrell are the new co-owners of Appletree Books in the Cedar Fairmount neighborhood. Jane Kessler, now 93, founded the business and ran it for 25 years.

“It’s a destination,” a loyal customer said of the store.

Memorialabilia abounds, starting with the old bar newly repainted wooden doors. The store windows are a stage set for hot-off-the-press fiction, mystery, biography, science, poetry, children’s books and cookbooks.

An old Royal typewriter sits opposite the book, If You Give A Mouse An Ice Cream. A little, blue 1940s Amelia Earhart suitcase owned by Quintrell’s great-grandfather’s service dog is full of journals and oldies but goodies like The Three Little Kittens.

Quintrell’s great-grandfather’s tackle box holds gift cards. The collage behind the new counter and up-to-date computer system was created from the pages of an old hand-me-down book, Games Children Play, the frontispiece inscribed for an aunt; Christmas, 1902.

The pièce de résistance is the newly crafted staircase leading to the reading loft. On the risers, Cleveland Heights artist Lari Jacobson has painted the book spines of some of Quintrell’s favorites. Lying on her side for hours, Jacobson said Quintrell, an energetic bookseller and voracious reader. She stocks a well-rounded collection, timely and known-how, Webster and Quintrell have transformed this landmark into an even more enticing hangout for book lovers of all ages.

“It’s quirky, vintage and homey,” said Quintrell.

Appletree Books

1219 Cedar Road
Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sunday, noon to 5 p.m.
www.appletree-books.com
Mister Brisket continues to thrive

James Henke

Several decades ago, butcher shops were quite common. Most people went to the butcher to get their meat products. But that has all changed. During the 1970s, big grocery-store chains, such as A&P and Kroger’s, started carrying more meat products and, as a result, most butcher shops closed. There is, however, an exception to that trend: Mister Brisket. A butcher shop and deli, Mister Brisket, located on Taylor Road just south of Cedar Road, has been around since 1973 and it is still thriving.

Sanford Herskovitz, 75, founder and owner of Mister Brisket, grew up in University Heights and still lives there. He attended Heights High and earned his bachelor’s degree from The Ohio State University, a master’s degree from Kent State University, and a Ph.D. in psychology from Case Western Reserve University. His parents owned Carl’s Poultry Market, a butcher shop located at East 86th Street and Cedar Road. In 1972, his father died and his mother remarried and moved to Toronto, and Herskovitz, who was still in grad school, took over the business. He changed the store’s name to Mister Brisket and relocated to Cleveland’s West Side. Then, in 1978, he moved to his current location.

Despite having worked as a stockbroker and a teacher, he was inspired to get into the meat business after he and his wife threw a dinner party. “She told me to go get some steaks for the party,” Herskovitz said. “So I went over to Earl C. Gibb’s slaughter house on the West Side and got about a dozen steaks. Our attorney was at the party, and his wife loved the meat and wanted to get more. So that really had an impact on me.”

Mister Brisket carries USDA prime beef, veal, lamb, pork, poultry and seafood. In addition to purchasing meat and seafood, Mister Brisket’s customers can also pick up corned beef and pastrami sandwiches and other items, including potato salad, cole slaw, cookies, brownies and beverages. Herskovitz also offers boxes of lunches and party platters.

With its many holidays including Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas and New Year’s, the end of the year is a very busy time for Mister Brisket. Herskovitz said the store carries special products like roasted turkey and roasted chicken for people to purchase for the holidays.

Herskovitz is very well-known and respected in the meat business. He has appeared on numerous television shows, including Joan Nathan’s “Jewish Cooking in America,” ABC’s “Home Show” and CNBC’s “Tom Snyder Show,” and he is a frequent guest on WEWS’s “Morning Exchange.”

Mister Brisket also started a program called Salamis to the Troops. Herskovitz’s stepson, Hank Kornblut, who now runs the store with him, came up with the idea for the program a few years ago after a customer, Max Chandler, came in one day and asked if the shop could send something to his son. When Kornblut asked where his son lived, Chandler told him he was serving in the armed forces in Iraq. After looking into it, Kornblut realized Mister Brisket could send salami overseas and it would stay fresh. In addition, people in the military have an Army Post Office address which enables packages and other mail to get to them rather quickly. “We shipped the salami out to Chandler’s son on a Monday and he got it by Friday,” Kornblut said. The store charges $20 for a shipment of salami to the troops, and it can be sent virtually anywhere, even to aircraft carriers and other ships.

In addition to starting the Salamis to the Troops program, the 75-year-old Kornblut has suggested the store begin carrying vegetarian items. That program may start sometime next year. He added that Mister Brisket is getting many more orders from outside the Cleveland area and the store may start selling products online soon.

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.