Serious crime in Cleveland Heights down by 22.4 percent

Bob Rosenbaum

Year-end crime statistics from the Cleveland Heights Police Department indicate that, despite a few high-profile cases, serious crime was down 22.4 percent in the city in 2014. Serious crimes consist of violent crimes against people and major crimes against property. Less serious incidents, such as trespassing and OVI, are not included in these figures.

Violent crime was down nearly 27.8 percent, led by a 42 percent drop in robberies—from 95 in 2013 to 55 last year. Aggravated assaults decreased to percent, to 37 last year.

“I’m proud of those results,” said Police Chief Jeffrey Robertson. “We can always do better, but the data shows we’re moving in the right direction. We’re only a month-and-a-half into 2015, but so far we’re trending lower still for this year.”

Cleveland Heights City Council appointed Kahlil Seren to the unexpired term of Janine Boyd, newly elected Ohio State Representative, at its Feb. 17 meeting.

Kahlil Seren is a research and policy analyst for the CAPA Group. He had previously worked as a communications coordinator for the nonprofit Policy Matters. A five-year resident of Cleveland Heights, he grew up in East Cleveland and Beachwood, and currently resides in the Cedar Fairmount neighborhood. Seren has served on the city’s Citizens Advisory Council (CAC), which advises council on the spending of Community Development Block Grants from the federal government.

Seren has a bachelor’s degree from Cleveland State University and a Master of Science in urban studies, which is important to understanding how government operates. He has served on the CAC, which means he understands the inner workings of the city. I liked his enthusiasm, intelligence and understanding of the issues facing the city,” said Mayor Dennis Wilcox. “I was impressed by his educational background, especially his master’s in urban studies, which is important to understanding how government operates. He has served on the CAC, which means he understands the inner workings of the city. I liked his enthusiasm, intelligence and understanding of the issues facing the city,” said Mayor Dennis Wilcox.

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Serious property crime was down significantly last year as well—dropping 21.8 percent. Leading that was a 27 percent decrease in burglaries, from 255 in 2013 to 186 last year.

Refugees find welcome at the Noble library

Sheryl Banks

On a cold, snowy evening in February, the Noble Neighborhood Library’s teen room was filled with Bhutanese refugees eager to learn conversational English. Kathleen Scully, an English Language Learner (ELL) instructor with the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District and a volunteer with the Refugee Services Collaborative of Greater Cleveland, led the informal workshop. Asmita Samal, a student at Heights High and a member of the Bhutanese community, served as an unofficial interpreter for Scully.

The workshop was one of many activities that take place at the Welcome Hub at the Noble library. The hub, which operates on Tuesday evenings, 6–8 p.m., was established in the fall of 2014 as a place where refugees can feel welcome and find information to help them resettle and acclimate to their new home. Volunteers staff a table with literature from partner agencies and other agencies of interest to the refugee population, and offer direct services like English lessons.

“Having a regularly available center for distribution of information and help accessing available public services to those new in the community is a must for helping new residents adapt positively and take advantage of all the resources this city has to offer,” said Scully.

The library’s involvement in the Welcome Hub began when Simeon Ogonda, a State Department fellow working with the resettlement agency US Together, contacted Heights Libraries. The Welcome Hub is
How to contribute to the Observer—or at least have a beer

OPENING THE OBSERVER

Bob Rosbaum

We’re having a party. Please join us.

On April 22, 6-8 p.m., the Heights Observer is hosting an informal get-together at the Bottlehouse Brewery, 2299 Lee Road. You can talk with many of the people who are involved with the Observer on a day-to-day basis—the editor, publisher, volunteers, members of the Observer Advisory Committee and anyone else who walks in the door.

The purpose is to have a beer and talk about our favorite subject: our community. Please join us to understand the Observer better, ask questions, float ideas or just chew the fat. No reservations are required and it’s free (but you’ll want to bring money for the bar).

As I mention regularly, the Heights Observer is written and edited entirely by volunteer members of the community. The only requirement is a desire to participate.

In the past month or so, more people than usual have reached out to ask how they can submit articles to the Heights Observer.

It’s a simple do-it-yourself process and no advance permission is required. If you’ve ever placed an ad with Amazon.com, it’s no more difficult than that. Here’s what you do:


2. Enter the “Member Center.” This is where all contributions begin. It’s in the left-hand column. You’ll need to register and log in.

3. Click “Submit new story!” Once registered and logged in to the Member Center, look in the left-hand column again for “Submit new story!” (It’s nested under the “Writer” category).

4. Write your headline: Fill in the box labeled “Story Title” with a headline and click “continue.” If you’re unsure about your headline, it’s OK; you can change it later.

5. Paste your article: On the next page, there are a few self-explanatory boxes to fill in. The text of your article goes in the box that is very cleverly labeled “Article.” (I recommend writing your article in advance on your own software and then cut-pasting it into the article box.) Be sure to add a brief writer bio, as well, in the box marked “Author Bio.” We require a byline and bio for each article we publish.

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 write, occasionally or even just once.

If there is 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.

About the Observer

The Heights Observer is a citizen-based news source published monthly by FutureHeights, a nonprofit, 501(c)3 organization dedicated to civic engagement and quality of life. 2299 Lee Road, #105, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118 216-320-1423

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There were 10 applicants for the position, and CH City Council selected three of those to interview. The Cleveland Heights Democrats Club had recommended another candidate, Carol Roe, for the position at its Jan. 8 meeting. Roe, a 35-year resident of Cleveland Heights, a registered nurse and licensed attorney, resides in the Noble neighborhood. The position of city council member is a nonpartisan position, and all members serve at large.

Seren said that council appointed the other two candidates who it interviewed to the CAC at its Feb. 17 meeting. They are Carol Roe and Cory Farmer.

Seren will chair the Administrative Services Committee of Council, serve as vice president of the Community Relations and Recreation Committee, and be a member of the Municipal Services Committee. Wilcox said that he had changed the committee assignments of other council members. For an updated list, see www.clevelandheights.com/index.aspx?page=302.

Also, during the council meeting, Wilcox presented his 2015 State of the City address.

Seren will serve the remainder of Boyd’s term, which expires Dec. 31, 2015. He said that he plans to run for election on Nov. 3 for a new four-year term. “I’m approaching campaigning with a very open mind,” he said. “I want to talk to as many people as I can, and I want to represent the interests of the city as whole.”

Seren will run for election for one of three open council seats in November. The terms of Council Member Mary Dunbar and Mayor Dennis Wilcox also expire on Dec. 31, 2015, and those seats will be up for election as well.

How to deal with the foreclosure crisis

Stewart Robinson
When Maureen O’Neil became chief code official and neighborhood improvement coordinator in Youngstown a few years ago, she noticed many homes were blighted and in desperate need of repair. She and her staff found that, in many cases, the former owners were behind in their mortgage payments and were evicted by the lenders, who failed to complete the necessary foreclosure forms. These were referred to as “zombie foreclosures.” Thus, the city assumed the vacant parcels were still the property of the former owners. The city had to perform basic maintenance, such as lawn mowing, snow shoveling and minor structural repairs, which on a citywide basis totaled about $100,000 per year, and assume the cost.

As a solution, the city enacted legislation that required lenders, at the moment the house became vacant, or if it was already vacant, to purchase a $10,000 bond. If the lender maintained the property until it was once again inhabited, the city would return the funds. And if the city incurred expenses in maintaining the property until it was re-occupied, the costs would be deducted from the return.

The success of this law encouraged other cities, including Warren and Canton, as well as Poughkeepsie, N.Y., to enact similar laws. It is necessary for citizens of Cleveland Heights to encourage our City Council to enact a similar law. Not only will it cut expenses for the city, but will also encourage lenders to lower their predatory mortgage rates.

Stewart Robinson is a retired math professor who taught at Cleveland State University and Case Western Reserve University.
OPINION

### Keep our community strong by protecting Heights schools

Krisy Dietrich Gallagher

Most people who live in the Heights will agree that this is a special place. Our communities, with their focus on the arts and culture, and their commitment to diversity and integration, are unique among American suburbs.

One of our great strengths is a population that values education and that invests in the education of all of its young people. Our community’s commitment to our schools has been clearly demonstrated in recent years by the strong support shown for critically important levies and issues that fund the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.

“Citizens for Our Heights Schools is a volunteer-led community organization that works to pass those levies and issues, and we do this because we know that our schools and teachers strive to provide a world-class education to every student who walks through their doors. Moreover, we strongly believe that this community’s strength depends on protecting our schools and our student body.

As parents, we see firsthand the quality educational experience our children receive, and we also know that the CH-UH school district has done an exemplary job of managing taxpayer money. Thanks to exceptional administrators like Chief Financial Officer Scott Gainer—who last year was named the best CFO of any public school district, governmental agency or nonprofit organization in Northeast Ohio by Crain’s Cleveland—the district managed to stretch the dollars from the 2011 operating levy to last an extra year.

Like school districts across Ohio, though, our district is forced to seek voter approval for a new levy this year in order to simply maintain the current level of services and programming.

The school district is living within its means. It has cut more than $3 million in spending since 2010, including reducing staff at all levels. Teachers, administrators and all staff members have agreed to only a minimal cost-of-living increase for the next two years. Furthermore, the district administration is committed to an additional $500,000 in cuts, even if this levy passes.

But Ohio’s school funding system means that the school district hasn’t seen a penny more in annual operating funds than it received in 2011—all while costs have risen, just as they have for all of us. Not only has funding flattened, but schools have also had to deal with state funding cuts of more than $2 million, decreased property tax collections, and the diversion of money away from our public schools to often sub-par charter schools.

Our schools have much to be proud of, including a rising graduation rate, world-renowned instrumental and vocal music programs, small class sizes so teachers can meet individual student needs, foreign language instruction that begins as early as kindergarten, gifted programming in every building, and strong extracurricular activities to engage the whole student.

This is why it is imperative that we yet again vote FOR public education by approving the May 5 levy, which, at 5.9 mills, is the smallest request the district has made in more than a decade. As the cornerstone of our democracy, a strong system of public schools is crucial to the health and wealth of our communities and all their residents. Whether or not people have children in the public schools, the successes or failures of the district impact every one of us.

Let’s protect what matters most to us. Let’s keep the Heights strong.

To volunteer or learn more, please visit the Citizens for Our Heights Schools website at www.chughs.com.

Krisy Dietrich Gallagher is a Cleveland Heights resident and the parent of two sons who attend Fairfax Elementary School. As a graduate of the Heights schools and a former Coventry Elementary School teacher, she is proud to serve as one of three co-chairs for this spring’s levy.

She is joined by community volunteers Patti Carlyle of University Heights, a former Coventry Elementary School parent, and Alvin Saafir of South Euclid, whose three grown daughters attended CH-UH schools.

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University Heights City Council
Meeting highlights

JANUARY 20, 2015
All council members were present.

Citizen committees
All citizen committees are still open for (new) members. Anyone interested should contact city hall.

The mayor’s state of the city address
University Heights is now financially solvent with a surplus of $21.1 million from 2014.

Grant funding has supplemented the city’s tax revenue. This includes:
- A Community Development Block Grant to help pay for development of a new master plan for the city. The master plan was last updated in 2003.
- Grant funding in 2014 for bulletproof vests, fire safety equipment, and motorized cots for the ambulances.
- A grant received this year from Ohio to rebuild some of the tennis courts.

A strong relationship exists between the city and John Carroll University. The summer band concerts were held on the grounds of the university this past summer—a popular new location.

Continuing work includes new development along Cedar Road, work to make Warrensville Center and Cedar roads more pedestrian- and bike-friendly, and the development of the new city park on Farmwood Road with no increase in cost to the residents.

There were two areas of concern. University Hospitals had a police presence when the Korbel wine was auctioned in 2013, and the new owners have neither paid taxes nor acted on numerous suggestions of possible new tenants. Wilby Middle School will transition into a temporary high school for two years, with an increase from 400 middle school students to more than 2,000 high school students and staff.

Cuyahoga County sheriffs, along with an increased presence from University Heights police, will be providing additional security to maintain the safety of all.

City jail medical director
An agreement with Dr. Arnold Falcon to continue as medical director of the city jail was tabled because council members felt the contract lacked specifics. The contract presented only a monthly rate, which was $300. As the current medical director, Falcon was to be paid $400 per month. According to Police Chief Steven Hammett, many prisoners complain of medical problems in an effort to speed up their release, but if the prisoners were taken to the emergency room many tests would be conducted at the city’s cost. Falcon is available 24/7 and has been very helpful. Councilman Mark Wieman asked whether Falcon was required to show proof of insurance and what would be the city’s liability if a prisoner died while in custody.

Community engagement committee
Council approved a one-year special council committee for the purposes of community engagement.

Senior transportation
Pending further research, council tabled a contract with the Senior Transportation Connection to provide rides for senior citizens in University Heights. The service is being used for only 12 rides per month on average, but the city is paying for 80. The new contract offers 20 individuals and 10 group uses per month at a cost of $25, with the passenger paying an additional $3 per ride, or $24 with the passenger paying an additional $4.

Demolition project
Council approved the demolition permit requested by Larry Walter for the four properties on Cedar Road just east of Warrensville Center Road. Building Commissioner Eric Tock-Macelio had inspected the four homes and reported that they had no electricity, some flooded basements, and some had been stripped of copper. The walls were intact but there was much debris left behind by former tenants. He considered the homes to be a public nuisance. Police Chief Hammett said (the police) are periodically called to the properties to secure them.

LWV Observer: Wendy Deuring

FEBRUARY 2, 2015
NOTE: There is no LWV report for the Feb. 2 University Heights City Council meeting.

Weather complications prevented the attendance of a League observer.

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Refugees continued from page 1
Ogonda’s brainchild, and its mission is to connect immigrants and refugees to resources in the community and to make them feel welcome. It is an effort of US Together, Global Cleveland, the City of Cleveland Heights, the CH-UH City School District, and Heights Libraries, which together form the Welcoming Heights Initiative.

“We see many Nepalese families who are refugees from Bhutan,” said Constance Dickerson, branch manager at the Noble Neighborhood Library. “They were deported when the Bhutanese government began efforts to retain Bhutanese cultural identity. Many in our neighborhood lived in refugee camps in Nepal before immigrating to the United States.

Global Cleveland and US Together chose the Noble Neighborhood Library as the location for its Welcome Hub due to its proximity to the neighborhood’s Bhutanese immigrant population and its established reputation as a place where all are welcome and resources are free and plentiful.

“Information is our business, so we are a natural go-to resource,” said Dickerson. “Hosting the Welcome Hub has helped immigrants and refugees see our role in the community. Through the hub and other efforts by library staff, this particular population now sees the library as their place, a community place.”

Sheryl Banks is the marketing and community relations manager for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library.
Don’t fret—it will soon be time to get back in the pool! Indeed, whether in the midst of a deep winter freeze or merely waiting for the end of rest period, as the children are in this photograph from around 1930, Cumberland Pool has beckoned city residents ever since it first opened in 1927.

This photo was selected by the Cleveland Heights Historical Society, a nonprofit organization dedicated to discovering, preserving and promoting the heritage of Cleveland Heights, Ohio. For more information, and to view additional historical images, visit www.chhistory.org or www.facebook.com/clevelandheightshistorical.

Heights historical photo of the month

Cleveland Heights City Council Meeting highlights

JANUARY 20, 2015
All council members were present

Public comment
Drug court programs: Resident Darrell Jackson spoke on behalf of the Cleveland Municipal Court’s drug court and encouraged the City of Cleveland Heights to participate in the programs available through the court for cases involving drugs or alcohol. A major federal grant has enabled the court to serve suburban communities as well as the City of Cleveland.

Liquor license denied
Council rejected an application for a liquor license for Nicks Bar and Grill at 1940 S. Taylor Road. Previous violence and disruption at that location made the application unacceptable.

Property demolition
Council declared five properties to be blighted and health and safety hazards, warranting abatement in the form of demolition:

• 2776 Clevland Road
• 13074 Cedar Road
• 3249 DeSoto Ave
• 3366 Henderson Road
• 1030 Rambell Road

Council Member Jeff Coyrell explained that council received a complete review of the legal history of the properties, and photos that provide evidence of the level of dilapidation that justifies action. A county program funds the demolition.

Fire rescue
Council Member Jason Stein acknowledged the heroic efforts of Firefighter Hayworth, who rescued a wheelchair-bound man from his burning home.

Planning commission appointments
Council approved three new appointments to the planning commission:

• Adam Howe, for a term ending Dec. 31, 2020
• Jessica Cohen, for a term ending Dec. 31, 2020
• Anthony Mattos Jr., for a partial term ending Dec. 31, 2016

Council expressed gratitude to departing commission members Diana Woodbridge, James Kaul and Cassandra Johnson.

Policeman saves a woman’s life
Council Member Melissa Yasmeen expressed gratitude to Police Officer Penhollow for a heroic gesture that saved the life of a woman who lost consciousness while driving.

Bridge and culvert inspection
Council authorized the city’s eminent domain in an Ohio Department of Transportation-funded program to inspect bridges and culverts to ensure they meet Ohio standards.

DDV Observer: Susie Kresser
FEBRUARY 2, 2015
All council members were present.

Storefront renovation program
Council adopted revised guidelines for the city’s storefront renovation program and repealed previous amendments to the program’s guidelines concerning which businesses may receive rebates and loans under the program, and how much equity they must contribute to receive the aid. According to Council Member Jason Stein, the revised guidelines will eliminate geographic restrictions and should result in more and larger projects throughout the city. Funds for storefront renovation come from Community Development Block Grants.

Nuisance properties
Council declared three residential properties in the city to be nuisances and authorized abatement:

• 3702 Atherstone Road, owned by Benito L. Martinez
• 3649 Atherstone Road, owned by Willie and Janise Payton
• 1014 Greyton Road, owned by Upscale Properties, LLC

All three had been cited for numerous housing code violations over the past five years, with no progress toward correction. The latter two properties are currently vacant.

County sewer services
Council authorized a contract with Cuyahoga County to help maintain the city’s sanitary and storm sewers and catch basins. The contract will cover the period ending Dec. 31, 2015, at a cost of $380,000. Council Member Mary Dunbar noted that the price is lower than that offered by private companies and that the city was satisfied with the results of the same county service in 2014. Mayor Wilcox observed that this regional approach to service delivery by the county was similar to the agreement Cleveland Heights has with the county health department.

Restaurant anniversaries
The Stone Oven will have its 20th anniversary, Nightown, its 50th.

Greg Zucco
Economic Development Director Greg Zucco resigned to take a new job running the Economic and Community Development Institute, a midwestern intermediary lender of the Small Business Administration.

DDV Observer: Blanche Valency
Please note: YouTube videos of Cleveland Heights City Council meetings may be accessed at youtube.com/clevelandheights.
A dogged crime-fighting team at the CHPD

Andrew Ori

At the end of a long, 12-hour shift, the youngest member of the Cleveland Heights Police Department is ready to go home. To make the point, he quietly nudges his partner. When that doesn’t do the trick, he begins to whistle.

His partner, Officer Tom Harris, describes it as a rookie behavior. But it’s understandable; the rookie is only 18 months old. His name is Jax and he’s a German Shepherd.

In November, when Jax joined the force, he became the fourth dog in CHPD’s K-9 unit. Like his counterparts Argos, Rocky and Vinn, Jax’s job is to track crime suspects, sniff out drugs and—after he’s fully grown—track Cleveland Heights residents at block parties and other public events.

Police dogs like Jax go through a rigorous training, first as puppies and then again upon being paired with their partners. Harris drove down to Wapakoneta, Ohio the day after his own son was born to meet Jax and begin training. Like others who have been through it, Harris said the dog selected him as a partner, and the sun-up-to-sun-down training regimen was more about breaking in the human than the dog.

Now that Jax and Harris are working together full time on the CHPD’s “C” Platoon, they still train together on the second and fourth Wednesday of every month, along with K-9 teams from other area police agencies. The training time totals at least 16 hours a month—compared to the minimum four hours per year of continuing professional training that Ohio regulations require of police officers.

Jax had his first successful track just a few weeks into his regular duty. On a call for breaking-and-entering, he zeroed in on a scent just outside the home, and tracked down the suspect within minutes.

Harris has always loved dogs. He had wanted to be a K-9 officer since he was 17. He joined the Air Force with the thought of becoming a K-9 handler there, but a change in protocols at about the time he joined derailed that idea. He joined the CHPD in 2006, and remains on active reserve with the Air Force.

When offered the chance to become the city’s fourth K-9 handler, he jumped at the chance.

Jax not only works with Harris; he lives with him at Harris’ Cleveland Heights home. Harris also has an older German Shepard at home named Jasper, who is strictly civilian. The two dogs get along well.

At home, Jax is like any other dog, Harris said. But he likes to work. “He gets excited when he sees me getting ready for duty,” Harris said.

Andrew Ori is a junior at John Carroll University, majoring in journalism with a minor in history.

Christ Our Redeemer A.M.E. Church

Mark Southar

In the summer of 1981, the choirs of St. John’s and St. James A.M.E. churches, two historic African-American congregations in Cleveland’s East Side, joined together in the octagonal sanctuary at the inaugural service of Christ Our Redeemer A.M.E. Church. Named after the African Methodist Episcopal motto, “God our Father, Christ our Redeemer, and Man our Brother,” this sacred landmark was originally dedicated as Cleveland Heights Methodist Episcopal Church on Sept. 18, 1904. The clapboard- and stuccoed French Gothic building on Lee Road (battlemented corner tower overlooking Superior and Hampshire roads, is the oldest standing house in the area’s stone quarry workers. Originally named Fairmount Methodist Episcopal Church because of its site near the town center of Fairmount, the congregation took the new name of Cleveland Heights Methodist Episcopal Church in 1910 when it received the dedication of its new building, a reflection of the founding of Cleveland Heights village earlier that year. A notable feature inside the church is a large stained-glass window dedicated in memory of parishioner James B. Haycox, a dairy farmer and bluestone quarry operator whose pipes’ hand-stenciled floral decorations retain their soft beauty.

Lee Road farm became part of Grant Deming’s Forest Hill allotment. Another feature given in memory of Haycox is the church’s pipe organ, assembled with wooden pegs and no nails. More than a century later, its pipes’ hand-stenciled floral decorations retain their soft beauty.

After quintupling its membership in just two decades, the church’s congregation departed to a massive new French Gothic building on Lee Road in 1927 and became the Church of the Saviour. Thereafter the old building housed the First Church of the Brethren for the next several decades. Just as the soaring suburban population of the Heights in the 1910s-20s made the little church too small to hold Sunday services, the growing African American presence in north-central Cleveland, Heights, drawn to better housing from Glenville and East Cleveland in the 1960s-70s, made the area a logical place for the African Methodist Episcopal Church to create its first suburban mission in Greater Cleveland (apart from the longstanding New Bethel A.M.E. in then-rural Oakwood Village).

Christ Our Redeemer A.M.E. emerged as a joint project of the ministers and laity of the North Ohio Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The mission lease its building from First Church of the Brethren and opened with a mere seven congregants in July 1981. Initially it held services at odd times to encourage members of other A.M.E. churches to assist in getting it firmly established, as well as to enable guest pastors from other A.M.E. churches to preach there.

Today, Christ Our Redeemer A.M.E. Church faces the daunting challenge of maintaining the oldest church building in Cleveland Heights. Sharing Superior Road with the Peyer House (the city’s oldest residence) and Superior Schoolhouse (the city’s oldest school building), Christ Our Redeemer is a critical marker of the community’s early history. As a pioneering suburban black church, it is also a significant landmark in the struggle to break down metropolitan racial barriers.

Mark Souther, a member of the Cleveland Heights Landmark Commission, wrote this article. This column is produced by members of the CH Landmark Commission, to highlight historically significant buildings in Cleveland Heights, and share its mission of preserving and protecting works of art and other objects of historical or architectural value to the community.

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Heights Observer March 1, 2015
Cleveland Heights resident Bob Rosenbaum is co-chairman of the Heights Observer Advisory Committee, and is responsible for its advertising sales and market development.

“Once we knew who they were we had them cold because we had security footage of them from the parking lots.”

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CHPD to deploy body cameras among officers

Bob Rosenbaum

Before the end of March, officers in the Traffic Safety Bureau of the Cleveland Heights Police Department (CHPD) will begin wearing body cameras to record their interactions with the public.

The CHPD has enough cameras to equip all officers on duty, but they will be put into use in two phases, according to Police Chief Jeffrey Robertson.

The department has approximately 105 officers, one-third of whom are on duty at any given time. The Traffic Safety Bureau represents about 40 percent of the force.

The cameras will be deployed first among officers in the Traffic Safety Bureau because they are in most-frequent contact with the public, Robertson said. That is expected to take place by mid-March. The second phase, which hasn’t yet been scheduled, will put the cameras on all remaining on-duty officers.

“Those are nice cameras; they’re simple and durable,” Robertson said. They’ll be particularly useful in documenting investigations, complaints against police officers, and use-of-force situations, he noted.

Each camera is smaller than a pack of cigarettes and clips onto the officer’s shirt or tie. Sliding the lens cover to one side turns the camera on.

Robertson said that the policies covering use of the cameras have already been written, and the officers are being trained. While the cameras themselves were delivered in December, the docking stations that charge them and automatically upload their contents at the end of each shift had not arrived as of mid-February.

So in the first phase, traffic safety officers will manually upload contents via USB port to the onboard computers in squad cars. When the docking stations arrive, the rest of the cameras will be put into action.

Cleveland Heights resident Bob Rosenbaum is co-chairman of the Heights Observer Advisory Committee, and is responsible for its advertising sales and market development.
Go bananas at LEI’s annual fundraiser

Michelle Simakis

Lake Erie Ink (LEI), a writing space for youth, is hosting its third annual fundraiser for people of all ages to showcase their quick, creative wordplay skills during a Giant Bananagrams Tournament. The event will take place on March 21, 2-7 p.m., in the Cleveland Heights High School Social Room, making it one of the community’s last opportunities to enjoy the space before construction on the historic school begins this summer.

Inspired by the fast-paced, Scrabble-like word game, teams of two to four players will compete on a 30-by-30-foot Bananagrams board with 1-foot-square tiles in front of a live audience, with plays and words announced by a guest MC.

In addition to the main event, families and other attendees can join the fun in the pay-to-play room, and win prizes at the cakewalk and join the fun in the pay-to-play room, with 1-foot-square tiles in front of a live audience, with plays and words announced by a guest MC.

“Id recommend Judson's Bruening Health Center to anyone who needs post-surgery rehabilitation!”

—Cleveland Heights resident Marilyn Cunin

When Marilyn Cunin needed surgery to replace her hip, she chose Judson’s Bruening Health Center for short-term rehabilitation. She appreciated the caring, attentive staff and thought the therapy program was very effective. “I wouldn’t expect any less from a nursing center with a five-star rating,” she explains.

A longtime resident of Cleveland Heights, Marilyn was never far from home. “I had a good experience and would recommend Bruening to anyone,” she says, “but I certainly was tickled to go home when my stay was over!”

To find out how Judson can help you or a loved one quickly transition from hospital to home, please call Michelle Stomieroski at (216) 791-2245 today.

Social innovator Ruth DeGolia brings her story home to the Heights on March 11

Molly Burns

You may wonder what the label Mercado Global is in a garment you have bought from Anthropologie, J. Crew or Urban Outfitter’s.

On March 11 you can find out about this ethical fashion brand and social enterprise at a fundraiser called, Fashioning Change: Harnessing the Power of Markets for Women in Guatemala. It will be held from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at The Wine Spot, 2271 Lee Road. Proceeds will support Mercado Global’s educational and market access programs.

Cleveland Heights native Ruth DeGolia, Mercado Global’s founder and executive director, will be on hand to share stories from this innovative nonprofit that connects indigenous women artisans in Guatemala to major international retailers. She was featured on the cover of Newsweek as one of “15 People Who Make America Great.”

DeGolia visited Guatemala as a Yale University student. She witnessed firsthand the poverty that women in Guatemala face. She also saw their talent and potential, and realized that connecting them to an international market could give them unprecedented economic opportunities.

Mercado Global founded Mercado Global in 2004. Her pioneering approach connects poor, rural women in Guatemala to international markets with the goal of providing sustainable livelihoods for their families. Working with artisans as business partners and providing market access and business development support, each Mercado Global piece is instilled with the brand’s core values of craftsmanship and partnership.

Today, Mercado Global works with a network of more than 300 women weavers and sewers living in more than 30 communities throughout the highlands of Guatemala. Retail partners also include international lifestyle brands such as Compagnie des Cotonniers and Free People.

The event will feature the brand’s latest Spring/Summer 2015 collection that will be in J. Crew stores nationwide this spring. With this visit, DeGolia hopes to bring to Northeast Ohio stories of empowerment and hope from these women artisans. “Together with the artisans,” DeGolia said, “we have made incredible progress both in our reach as an ethical fashion brand and in bringing opportunities to communities in the highlands. Whether it is partnering with new retailers like J. Crew, expanding our community-based health and leadership programs, or providing vital training to more artisans, I’m thrilled to celebrate these achievements with the Cleveland community, some of Mercado Global’s earliest supporters.”

Mercado Global’s model has been recognized by National Public Radio, Bloomberg Businessweek, The Huffington Post and the United Nations. DeGolia has been selected as an “Architect of the Future” by Austria’s Waldzell Institute, has received the Do Something Foundation’s BRICK Award for “Young People Who Change the World,” and was named among the “World’s Best Emerging Social Entrepreneurs” by Echoing Green.

Tickets are $35 and include wine, appetizers and words from DeGolia. The evening also will feature local physicians, Dr. Mori Morikawa and Dr. Aaron Lear, who have played key roles in the organization’s community health initiatives, and Cleveland Heights resident Melody Hart, who is a Mercado Global board member and co-chair of the host committee.

Tickets can be purchased online at www.mercadoglobal.org/fashioning-change or by e-mailing community@mercadoglobal.org.

Molly Burns is the community outreach coordinator at Mercado Global.
IPM sponsors life-changing trips to Colombia and Wyoming

Raluca Besliu

IPM also organizes immersion-experiential programs—short-term travel opportunities to the countries where it works. Participants, many from Northeast Ohio, learn about the history and culture of these countries, and walk in solidarity with the locals whose work IPM supports.

This year, IPM is organizing two immersions to El Salvador and to Nicaragua, mostly for college students. Several other immersions are open for anyone to join.

One group will head to Colombia April 8–16, and another will go to the Wind River Indian Reservation in Wyoming, July 7 to Aug. 6.

The Colombia Immersion will start in the capital, Bogotá, where participants will visit historic sites. Then they will travel to Buga, the music capital, where they will visit three IPM project partners.

One of those partners, Niños Trabajadores, which means Working Children, provides education and outreach to children who work in the marketplace to support their families. IPM supported the development of a reading and writing composition workshop where children learn fundamental skills. However, the project’s influence extends beyond striving to improve the children’s academics. It also regularly hosts movie nights, as many of the children do not have access to, or the financial means for, this type of entertainment. The movies are chosen to promote values of love, solidarity, respect, friendship and listening. Currently, Niños Trabajadores serves 25 children and 60 people indirectly, including parents.

Another project in Buga is Ser Mujer (Being a Woman). It provides opportunities for women to earn a sustainable income. The women participate in workshops and training in food-processing techniques and handicrafts. This training expands their skills and diversifies the products they create and sell at the market. In 2014, 25 women were served while 100 more, especially family members, were assisted.

In Wyoming, IPM supports a Native American Project, Sacajawea Treasures. The project works with Eastern Shoshone tribal members to develop sustainable economic opportunities and promote the native culture. The individuals make traditional beadwork, which they sell. This both provides income and educates the larger community on Shoshone traditions. The project also provides a senior citizens’ program. IPM encourages Heights residents to join its immersion trips. If you are interested in learning more about them, contact Raluca Besliu at rbesliu@ipmconnect.org.

Noble churches serve neighbors

Brenda H. May

The Noble neighborhood of Cleveland Heights is home to several long-established congregations.

Situated next to Denison Park, Church of the Master, 2490 Monticello Blvd., traces its history to a merger of congregations, one of which included John D. Rockefeller. Rockefeller’s legacy continues in this newer congregation through the Cleveland Baptist Association. Rev. Rena Baker has pastored this church for 13 years and leads the services on Sundays at 10:45 a.m. Rev. Joyce Butler leads a Bible study and prayer service on Sundays at 6:30 p.m., and Rev. Julia Moses ministers to many of the boys and young men who play basketball in the park. Contact the church at 216-381-1001.

Noble Road Presbyterian Church, 2780 Noble Road, is a dynamic, progressive community of faith, working to meet the needs of neighbors at home and across the globe through its partnerships with other communities of peace, justice and inclusion. NRPC hosts a monthly community meal, helps Noble Elementary School children and their families, reaches out to Noble area neighbors, and builds support for Noble Monticello. Pastor Brenda H. May has pastored this church for 30 years. She founded a prayer walk four times each year, which included John D. Rockefeller. NRPC meets in the smaller building behind the church, which included John D. Rockefeller. NRPC hosts a monthly community meal, helps Noble Elementary School children and their families, reaches out to Noble area neighbors, and builds support for Noble Monticello. Pastor Brenda H. May has pastored this church for 30 years. She founded a prayer walk four times each year, which included John D. Rockefeller.

The Noble neighborhood of Cleveland Heights, 2285 Noble Road, is led by Pastor Harry Cain Jr. This congregation actively reaches out to the community with a fruit and vegetable pantry on the first Saturday of each month, March through November, in partnership with the Greater Cleveland Food Bank. CBCB hosts several community-based events, including a block party and vacation Bible school. On April 26, CBCB invites the public to commemorate its 25th anniversary as it celebrates on the day of the Noble Community-Wide Home and Yard Sale. Sunday services are at 8 and 11 a.m. Contact CBCB at 216-291-4406, or find the church on Facebook.

StartRight Church, 977 Cadillac Road, is renovating its historic 1925 building to better serve its neighbors. Pastor Jimmie Hicks Jr. provides a food pantry on the fourth Saturday of each month, hosts a vacation Bible school each summer that also feeds children for seven weeks, and works with the City of Cleveland Heights on neighborhood beautification efforts. He provides jobs and trains young people to run their own businesses through a project set up to move vacant lots in the area. Everyone is welcome at the 10:30 a.m. Sunday service. Call 216-458-8838 or visit www.startrightministries.com.

Mount Olive Lutheran Church, 2392 Noble Road, is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2015 with special events from April through November. Rev. Ryan Beffy brought new life to this congregation with his arrival in 2012. Look for Mount Olive’s open house, rummage sale and vacation Bible school events this summer. Its Divine Service liturgy takes place Sundays at 10:30 a.m. (10 a.m. in the summer) and at 10 a.m. on Wednesdays. Contact Mount Olive at 216-381-2875 or www.mountolivelcwns.com.

Central Bible Baptist Church, 2285 Noble Road, is led by Pastor Harry Cain Jr. This congregation actively reaches out to the community with a fruit and vegetable pantry on the first Saturday of each month, March through November, in partnership with the Greater Cleveland Food Bank. CBCB hosts several community-based events, including a block party and vacation Bible school. On April 26, CBCB invites the public to commemorate its 25th anniversary as it celebrates on the day of the Noble Community-Wide Home and Yard Sale. Sunday services are at 8 and 11 a.m. Contact CBCB at 216-291-4406, or find the church on Facebook.

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Straightway Bible Fellowship meets in the smaller building behind Mount Olive Lutheran Church. SFB’s free community assistance program offers legal, financial, counseling and help resources. Pastor Elijah Span co-leads Noble Monticello Pastors and Churches (NOMO), which hosts a prayer walk four times each year to pray for the neighborhood. SFB’s services are at 11 a.m. on Sundays, and its prayer service and Bible study is at 7 p.m. on Wednesdays. Call 216-381-4563.

Submit an article to the Heights Observer is a piece of cake!

1. The Heights Observer is written by people like you. So write something. Use a computer.

2. Register/log in at the Member Center [www.heightsobserver.org].

3. After logging in, click the Submit New Story button in the left-hand column (Don’t see it? It’s nested under “Writer”). Then follow the prompts: Hint: keep your original file open so you can easily copy and paste into the text box.

4. Reward yourself; you’re about to be published. We’ll review and edit your article, and let you know if we have any questions.

Heights Observer March 1, 2015 11 www.heightsobserver.org
Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District’s fourth-year resident educators all recently passed the Resident Educator Summative Assessment (RESA)—a rigorous performance assessment that asks resident educators to showcase their teaching progress and demonstrate its impact on student achievement. All 14 of the district’s resident educators passed all five tests for a district passage rate of 100 percent.

“I am so proud of the district’s resident educators and their facilitators,” said Talisa L. Dixon, CH-UH superintendent. “A district passage rate of 100 percent is truly an accomplishment to celebrate. Not only did all of the residents register as RESA candidates, compared to only 66 percent statewide; they all passed, completing their year four of the program is designed to provide leadership opportunities to those who pass all five assessments, and to allow subsequent pathways for those who need to redo any of their submissions. The CH-UH resident educators had been waiting since May for the tests to be graded, and to find out what’s next for each of them. As they all passed, each resident educator will be granted a leadership opportunity.

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

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\[\text{CH-UH resident educators all pass performance assessment} \]

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\[\text{comprised of the families and team- mates of the student athletes.} \]

\[\text{The following students signed intent with college programs.} \]

\[\text{At Heights High’s National Signing Day event on Feb. 4, senior student athletes officially announced the names of the colleges they will attend next year. National Signing Day is the first day that Class of 2015 high school recruits can sign binding letters of intent with college programs. In all, 10 Heights High seniors signed letters of intent. Their coaches introduced the students, each of whom then spoke about their high school careers and the many adults at the school who supported them. The students also thanked their families, who joined them on the stage. Kristin Hughes, CHHS athletic director, welcomed the audience,} \]

\[\text{The Ohio Residency Program seeks to provide Ohio schools with outstanding educators for years to come. The program grants recent college graduates a four-year resident license. Once hired by a district, they enter their first year of residency and are given a mentor who guides them through a challenging set of protocols. Their second year is similar but more analytic, exploring the complexities of learning and teaching. In year three, they become eligible to take the RESA. Their district determines if they are ready to take the RESA or if they need another year of one-on-one mentoring. If they take the RESA, they are videotaped teaching and the video and its analysis are submitted and scored by trained assessors. Two videos and three other subset assessments are given for a total of five submissions. Year four of the program is designed to provide leadership opportunities to those who pass all five assessments, and to allow subsequent pathways for those who need to redo any of their submissions. The CH-UH resident educators had been waiting since May for the tests to be graded, and to find out what’s next for each of them. As they all passed, each resident educator will be granted a leadership opportunity. Angee Shaker is director of communication for Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.} \]

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\[\text{CHHS senior athletes commit to colleges} \]

\[\text{Cathan Bricker} \]

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\[\text{• Jon Bonner, football, Urbana University (Ohio)} \]

\[\text{• Jaybold Butler, football and track, University of Charleston (W.Va.)} \]

\[\text{• Gerron Fryer, football, University of Charleston (W.Va.)} \]

\[\text{• Chase Jackson, football, West Liberty University (W.Va.)} \]

\[\text{• Jonathan Jackson, football, Grand Valley State University (Mich.)} \]

\[\text{• Sean Kergan, football, West Liberty University (W.Va.)} \]

\[\text{• Mario Patron, football, University of Massachusetts} \]

\[\text{• Zander Perelman, soccer, Bucknell University (Pa.)} \]

\[\text{• Merrin Scott, football, Notre Dame College (Ohio)} \]

\[\text{• Simone Sollisch, softball, Indiana University of Pennsylvania} \]

\[\text{Cathan Bricker is the communications administrative assistant for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.} \]

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\[\text{216.932.3003} \]
Two Heights High singers perform with OMEA All-State Choir

Cathan Bricker

Heights High students Arianna Murray and Johnna Marotta represented the CH-UH City School District at the Ohio Music Educators Association (OMEA) on Feb. 6. Murray and Marotta performed at the Cleveland Convention Center with the OMEA All-State Choir. More than 1,000 students from across Ohio auditioned for the choir, but only 81 students were selected for this honor.

Murray and Marotta had competed in the OMEA Solo and Ensemble Competition on Jan. 24, and both students received the highest possible score of Superior in the soloist competition. Two other students, Michael Carder and Ian Tienissen, were also selected for the choir, but could not attend the performance because of other vocal music obligations.

“I am so very proud of all four of the musicians,” said Craig McGeough, Heights High vocal music director. “Performing with a group of this caliber is a great experience for students. Arianna and Johnna came back to school full of energy and enthusiasm for performing.”

Murray is a junior in the school’s Mosaic division and an Honor Roll student. She has received a score of Superior in the past two years’ OMEA Solo and Ensemble competitions. Marotta, who is a senior in Mosaic and on the Merit Roll, has also received Superior scores for the past two years’ OMEA Solo and Ensemble competitions.

The choir performed seven pieces, including William Byrd’s Ave Verum Corpus, Sir Edward Elgar’s The Dream, and A.R. Rahman’s Balleilakka, arranged by Erhan Sperry, director of choral activities at Portland State University, who conducted the concert.

Both students consider their performance with the All-State Choir an honor. “Being a member of All-State Choir, and working with so many gifted vocalists was wonderful because not only is everyone so talented, they’re very committed to singing,” Murray said. “Although the music was challenging, it barely felt like we were working at all.”

“I think that being a member of All-State is such a privilege,” Marotta remarked, “because I get to make beautiful music with such passionate teenagers like me. I get to sing with the best high school performers in Ohio who are the most humble performers I have ever met.”

Cathan Bricker is the communications administrative assistant for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.
Community conversation on public education continues March 24

Susie Kaeser

The Heights Coalition for Public Education will hold its third community conversation, The Myth of Failing Students, on March 24 at 7 p.m. in the Social Room at Heights High. The event will explore the failure of state and federal testing and accountability policy to improve student achievement and to address many of the issues that are part of the education equation.

The public is invited to participate in this free community event. Local public education advocates and educators will report on the complex issues that affect students and schools.

Co-sponsors of the public event include the Cleveland Heights Teachers Union AFT Local 79g, CU-UFT, Coventry High and Heights High.

Heights Coalition for Public Education was formed a year ago following the community reading of Diane Ravitch’s book, Reign of Error, which describes federal policies that encourage privatization of public education, and the invalid use of test scores to make high-stakes decisions.

More than 350 educators and community members participated in three guided discussions of the book.

Heights parents, community members and teachers who participated in the reading formed the coalition to continue to educate the community about the dangers of policies that attack public education rather than strengthen this critical democratic institution. The group takes the position that the accountability system is not legitimate, and that testing is not an accurate or meaningful measurement of school quality or what the community values.

Visit the Heights Coalition for Public Education website, www.chuh.net/coalition, to learn more about the group and its position statement.

Susie Kaeser is on the steering committee of the Heights Coalition for Public Education.

Cleveland Heights-University Heights
Board of Education Meeting highlights

JANUARY 20, 2015
Ron Roniger, vice president, was absent

Levy resolution

The board approved a 5.9 mill levy to be placed on the May 5, 2015 ballot for operating expenses. An initially recommended 6.1 mills was reduced to 5.9 by reducing overtime, supplemental contracts for teachers described, and identifying budget cuts in all departments. Jayne Genera, Lay Finance Committee chair, and Scott Gunter, district treasurer, explained the rationale for the levy.

The state is putting more of the financial burden on local taxpayers even though the Ohio schools funding system is unconstitutional.

The state will stop paying 12.5 percent on new levy.

Property taxes have declined 2 percent.

The district is seeking 2 mills to charter schools.

Interest income is down.

Teachers have agreed to a 12-month pay scale to save on mandated testing.

Staff costs continue to rise.

Moving the high school to Wiley during the facilities renovation is likely to increase costs in transportation and security.

Facilities update

Redevelopment designs for the Delisle Option Center building are occurring in preparation for winning the Career Tech Education (CTE) program there. The parking variance for the auto shop was discussed, and construction is to start this spring to be ready by the 2015 school year.

The “gateways” stadium renovation project at the corner of Cedar and Cedar roads will be completed in time for the fall 2015 football games. The area will include restrooms and concessions.

Materials and building colors to complement the 1926 structure are being studied. Schematics were shown to the gymnastics, natatorium and student commons. Board Member Eric Silverman expressed concern that the metal and masonry facades were not compatible with the 1926 architecture.

For window design, emphasis was on using as much natural light as possible.

Three community members urged the architecture committee to consider sustainable, maintenance and repair aspects. They also expressed concern about housing the CTE program at Delisle because of traffic delay. Auto and cosmetology have Reber Material blocks so students can walk to Delisle, but other CTE programs do not and therefore should not be considered for the Heights High campus.

Other concerns involved whether Delisle is the district’s vision for the future of the CTE program.

WVY Observer: Jillian Houser

FEBRUARY 3, 2015
All board members were present

Public comments

Public forums on education. Teacher Art Kline spoke on behalf of the Heights Coalition for Public Education, which recently held the second in a series of three public forums. More than 150 attendees were asked to describe a high-quality education, and no one listed testing as the position of the coalition which appears on its website (http://chuh.net/coalition/).

The third forum, The Myth of the Failing Student, will be held March 24. Loring the meeting, Board President Nancy Pepple, who attended the forum, commented that it was “heartbreaking” to hear the stories that teachers described, and identified budget cuts in all departments. Jayne Genera, Lay Finance Committee chair, and Scott Gunther, district treasurer, explained the rationale for the levy.

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New programs bring education philosophy to the library

Julie Murphy
Are you a Heights parent with a budding engineer or mathematician in the family? If so, the library has programs that may pique your child’s interest. Saturday, March 21 at 2:30 p.m. is STEAM Saturday at the Noble Neighborhood Library, and Tuesday, March 24 at 6:30 p.m., is Kid Engineering at the University Heights Library.

STEAM Saturday is based on the new philosophy in many schools of focusing on Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math. The theory is based on the idea that encouraging American students to focus on these core areas will foster innovation and make them more competitive and successful as adults, which will in turn continue to keep America competitive on a global scale.

STEAM was originally STEM (with no A for art), but art and design were added with the idea that they can help support engagement and creativity, and enhance a student’s understanding.

“It makes sense that more and more libraries are offering this type of programming. As an informal place of learning, it’s important that libraries are paying attention to trends in education and sharing that with the community,” said Mary Looby, youth services librarian at the Noble Neighborhood Library.

“STEAM Saturday is a bit more of a laid-back exploration of topics as a supplement to what kids may have encountered at school. And for libraries, using art is an easy entry point to exploring new topics because we already do a lot of craft- and art-based activities.”

Pam Spangler at the University Heights Library leads Kid Engineering. “I want kids to realize that engineering is fun. You don’t need to know all the math to try it out. When I was a kid everyone had Tinker Toys, Lincoln Logs, and I don’t know if kids really have those any more. I also wanted to show parents that they can have fun with their kids without spending a lot of money,” she said.

Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library Board Meeting highlights

Linda Lopez
Between March 1 and April 1, Friends of the Heights Libraries will accept library education scholarship applications from residents of Cleveland Heights and University Heights, as well as non-resident employees of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library.

The $750 scholarship is designed to encourage careers in librarianship by providing financial assistance toward the pursuit of a graduate degree in library science from an ALA-accredited library school.

Anyone living in Cleveland Heights or University Heights for at least one year prior to application, or anyone who has been an employee of the CH-UH Public Library for at least one year prior to application, is eligible to apply. Scholarship applications are accepted three times a year. Applications for the 2015 summer semester must be received by April 1.

A committee comprising representatives from the Friends, Heights Libraries Director Nancy Levin, and a retired member of the faculty of the Kent State University School of Library and Information Science will evaluate the applications. Recipients will be announced on April 15.

Applications can be downloaded from the Friends’ website at www.friendsheightslibrary.mandriflex.com/scholarship.

Linda Lopez has lived in Cleveland Heights for 50 years. She is a Friends of Heights Libraries board member.

Happy Hour!
Mon thru Sat 4-9 p.m.
Welcome Executive Chef Edward West
New Menu

With this ad: Buy 1 / Get 1 Free
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Expires March 31, 2015. Alcohol excluded. No cash with happy hour discounts or other offers/discounts.
Is a reverse mortgage right for you?

Judith Eugene

A reverse mortgage is a home loan that you do not need to pay back until you move from your home, no matter how far in the future that may be. You may use the proceeds from the loan for anything you choose, such as daily living expenses, home improvements, paying off debts or traveling. The amount you can borrow from a reverse mortgage depends on several factors, including the value of your home, the equity you have in it, the type of reverse mortgage you choose and the interest rate.

To be eligible for a reverse mortgage you must be at least 62 years old, own the home, and the home must be your primary residence. You can get a reverse mortgage through most regular mortgage companies, and you can choose to receive the loan payment in a lump sum, as monthly payments or as a line of credit. You or your estate must repay the loan, accumulated interest, closing costs and service fees in full when you move from your home, leave your home for 12 consecutive months due to illness, sell your home or pass away.

While reverse mortgages may be a convenient way to ease financial pressure and provide some financial freedom, they are not suitable for everyone and the details must be considered carefully.

Keesha Allen, homeownership counselor with the Home Repair Resource Center in Cleveland Heights since 1989, provides counseling to help with financial problems the homeowner may be facing.

Potential drawbacks to reverse mortgages can include fees and closing costs, mortgage insurance payments, tax consequences and a large lump sum to repay when the loan comes due. It may also affect accumulated interest, closing costs, mortgage insurance payments due. It may also affect homeownership, state and federal grant programs, how they may benefit your situation, and guide you through the decision-making process.

Judith Eugene is a native of Cleveland Heights who provides life-enrichment classes and activities for senior adults and those with physical and mental challenges through www.lovinghandsgroup.com. She can be reached at 216-408-5778 or judith@lovinghandsgroup.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 216-932-7800, ext. 205, or send an e-mail to info@universityheights.com.

March 5: In their previous visit to Senior Citizen Happenings, students at the Cleveland Institute of Music (CIM) performed beautiful arias from the beloved operas of Giuseppe Verdi. Today’s performance will feature the work of another esteemed composer as the students celebrate the 90th anniversary of the founding of CIM, acclaimed for its superior music programs for both undergraduate and graduate students.

March 12: Thomas Spier is celebrating his 23rd year as principal bass with the Cleveland Orchestra. This native of Buffalo, N.Y., and graduate of the Eastman School of Music, will talk about his career, which began when he played with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and later the Rochester Philharmonic. He’ll also discuss the Cleveland Orchestra’s current season of performances.

March 19: Marc Ursick will discuss his work as consulting manager in the Cleveland office of Ernst & Young—a global, Fortune 500 financial services firm. Ursick recently worked in Bogota, Colombia, for two months, on a pro bono basis, as a participant in the company’s philanthropic vantage program. Designed to enable top employees to grow professionally, the program also helps them gain a perspective on the world while serving as cultural ambassadors sharing modern business acumen and experience with budding Latin American companies.

March 26: Shaving heads to conquer kids’ cancer is what drives the nonprofit St. Baldrick’s Foundation. Using proceeds from its many events nationally, the foundation funds promising research, seeks cures for childhood cancer, and helps give survivors long, healthy lives. Since 2005, the foundation has shaved 1,414,122 heads all across America and granted $154,552,703 for children’s oncology research. Parents resident Krissey Dietrich Gallagher will discuss her work as volunteer event coordinator with the foundation, and organizer of the fourth annual Cleveland Heights St. Baldrick’s head-shaving event, scheduled for March 15 at the CH Community Center.

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Rick Szekelyi invites you to play

There’s something very special happening Sunday evenings at Stone Oven Bakery on Lee Road. Musicians from near and far come together for an open mic presented by Rick Szekelyi. Each plays three pieces for an audience of faithful listeners, other musicians, and those who just stop in for the daily soup or a sweet afternoon treat.

Szekelyi, a twinkle-eyed 60-something, is an operational and financial management consultant for companies experiencing difficulties. His father, an accountant like himself, was a professional musician who performed in public at an open mic. Herschel Winters, a student of electronics who serves at Anatolia Cafe across the street, has played classical violin accompanied by an orchestral background track on a CD. One performer sang a Russian folk song with no big-screen sports events on the wall. One day eating at the Stone Oven, he asked owner John Emerman, whom he had never before met, if he would host an open mic. “Who knew that Emerman is a closet musician, who has played sax, flute and classical guitar? You won’t see him perform, as he suffers from stage fright, but he was happy to host others.

There are some regulars at the open mic, driving in from Mentor, North Ridgeville, Bay Village, and college, and played in bands throughout, but while raising a family played only occasionally together for an open mic presented by Rick Szekelyi. Each plays three pieces for an audience of faithful listeners, other musicians, and those who just stop in for the daily soup or a sweet afternoon treat.

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There are some regulars at the open mic, driving in from Mentor, North Ridgeville, Bay Village, Concord, North Olmsted, or from Heights neighborhoods. Most are singer-songwriters who play guitar, but other genres are welcome and include poetry, jazz and classical music. Herschel Winters, a student who serves at Anatolia Cafe across the street, has played classical violin accompanied by an orchestral background track on a CD. One performer sang a Russian folk song a cappella.

“People who come here tend to be really good listeners who like the diversity,” said Szekelyi. “A number of artists have commented on it.” And there are often people who are playing in public for the very first time who, like Szekelyi, didn’t die from it. (Perhaps someday John Emerman will be one of them?) Szekelyi himself writes one or two songs a month. He recently wrote “That Old House,” after walking past a house being demolished, and thinking of all the families that had lived there.

Many of the singer-songwriters have day jobs and also regularly play solo or in bands, for pay. Why do they play for free at an open mic? “They really want to share what they write,” explained Szekelyi. “As someone said: a song’s not finished until you play it for someone. And it’s nice there’s places you can go where there’s community.” He believes that what is important for most isn’t applause, but “what’s happening while you’re playing the song.”

The Stone Oven Bakery open mic is an accepting venue for experienced and novice performers of any age. As the day ends, the street through the windows behind the performers darkens, twinkling lights appear from Anatolia Cafe across the street, and the inside becomes even more intimate and warm. Szekelyi invites you to bring your music and poetry of any genre to share, promising you a warm welcome.

Open mics in the Heights area include:
- Sundays, 3–6 p.m., Stone Oven Bakery, 2267 Lee Road; Monday, 8 p.m. (sign up at 7:30 p.m.), Phoenix Coffee, 1793 Coventry Road, hosted by Charlie Mosbrook; Mondays, 10 p.m., The Social Club, 2261 Lee Road, hosted by Xel Lav; Tuesday (first and last of the month), 8 p.m., Barking Spider, 11310 Juniper Road, Cleveland, hosted by Gary Hall (first Tuesday) and Will Cheshire (last Tuesday).
- Tuesday, 8 p.m., The Bottel House, 2050 Lee Road; Thursday (of the month), 7–9 p.m., Folknet at Loganberry Books, 1305 Larchmere Blvd., hosted by Mallory SanMarco.

For information on other open mics throughout Northeast Ohio, check out www.neoopenmic.com, a website maintained by Charlie Mosbrook.

Peggy Spather writes about Heights residents and their impact locally, regionally and worldwide.
Multi-media art show explores impressions of nature at St. Paul’s

Mary Cushing

The Nicholson B. White Gallery at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 2747 Fairmount Blvd., announces its spring show, Nature’s Impressions. The show opens with an artists’ reception on Friday, March 6, 5-7 p.m., where participating artists will be in attendance to greet guests and discuss their creative processes. The show runs through May 29.

Featured artists are James Brindle (wood, alabaster), Lori Diemer (photography), Eileen Dorsey (oil landscape) and Leonard Trawick (prints).

Brindle’s woodturnings are both functional and non-functional. The simplicity of his turnings, combined with flowing gracefulness in design, are attempts to expose nature’s inherent beauty of wood, which is further enhanced through various finishing techniques. Brindle has won several ribbons at various finishing techniques. The show runs through

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Pianist Joe Hunter’s lifetime in music

James Henke

Joe Hunter is one of Cleveland's most highly regarded jazz pianists. A Cleveland Heights native, he began playing piano when he was eight years old, and now plays several shows every week around Northeast Ohio.

Hunter, who will be 55 this April, said there was always music around his house when he was growing up. "My parents were big music lovers," he said. "They hired piano players when they had parties, and they had a wonderful record collection that included music by Ray Charles, Bob Dylan, the Weavers, Miles Davis, Duke Ellington and many others."

His mother, Sara Hunter, was a municipal judge in Cleveland Heights for 18 years, and was the first female judge in the city. She also played ac- cordion. His father, also named Joe Hunter, was the regional director of the Ohio Civil Rights Commission, and he played washboard bass.

Hunter said his musical skills really broadened while he was attend- ing Heights High, where he was a member of the school's jazz ensemble and orchestra. He and his friends also formed a band called Zhandro while they were in high school.

In addition to playing piano, Hunter also played blues harmonica and bass while he was in school. Meanwhile, he began seeing concerts by many music legends. His parents took him to the Theatrical Grill, which used to be on what is now Boulevard and Superior Avenue, in downtown Cleveland. That club presented shows by many legendary artists as Judy Garland, Dean Martin and many others. Hunter and his friends would also hang out at the Boarding House, another jazz club, which was on Euclid Avenue near University Circle.

After high school, Hunter attend- ed Cleveland State University, where he studied classical music. "I had a lot of wonderful teachers," he said. "And I had a great classical music piano teacher." During his time at CSU, the university started an exchange program with a college in Brazil. In 1982, Hunter became the first CSU student to spend a semester at a col- lege in Rio de Janeiro. "It really got me interested in Brazilian music," he said.

During the 1980s, Hunter played piano in a rock band, Nacion of One. "I was hoping I could make a lot of money in rock, so I could support my jazz addiction," he said, laughing.

Hunter did not graduate from CSU. Instead, he started playing music full time. In 1987, he moved to Columbus, and five years later, he got a job teach- ing jazz piano at Capital University. He spent five years there, then, in 1997, re- turned to Cleveland Heights and started teaching piano in the jazz program at Cuyahoga Community College.

Hunter still teaches full time at Tri-C, and also performs as a solo art- ist and with various bands, including Red Light Roxy, a swing band, and Ernie Kivida’s Fat Tuesday Big Band. Hunter also takes part in Bill Rudman’s musical-theater project, The Song Is You. "It’s a multi-media show that ex- amines the great American composers and lyricists," Hunter explained.

Over the course of his career, Hunter has released three albums. His latest is called Sweet and Lovely, and it features Hunter on piano, Roy Davis on drums, Demetrious Steinmetz on bass, as well as a string section that includes violins, viola and cello.

Hunter regularly plays shows in and around Cleveland. Every Friday night, he plays at the Waterbury Coach House in Lakewood, and every Sunday he appears at Salmon Dave’s restaurant in Rocky River. He plays frequent shows at Nighttown in Cleveland Heights, the Music Box in the Flats, and Blu, a new club in Akron. On March 21, Hunter will take part at an event at the Ohio Theater in Playhouse Square called Swing’s the Thing.

“I have really gotten inspiration from Nat King Cole, Oscar Peterson and so many of the other great, straight ahead jazz piano players,” said Hunter. "And I am very, very fortunate to have been able to maintain a life in music.”

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.
Mamaí plans benefit performance

Jewel Moulthrop

On the heels of its critically acclaimed second season, Mamaí Theatre Company is presenting a special benefit performance of 

Rockaby, a rarely seen, one-act, one-woman play. As she rocks, she hears an expressionless voice—her own—recounting details from her life. Rockaby has been described as “a performance poem in the shape of a play.”

Dorothy Silver, the woman in the rocking chair, has acted in and directed many local productions. She most recently performed in Night, Mother and The Velocity of Autumn at the Beck Center for the Arts, and 4000 Miles at Dobama Theatre. She has also appeared in several feature films, including "The Shawshank Redemption.”

Tickets for this one-night-only special event are $75, of which $50 is tax deductible. Reservations can be made online at www.mamaitheatreco.org, by phone at 216-382-5146, or by sending a check to Mamaí Theatre Company, 1719 Wood Road, Cleveland Heights, 44121.

Jewel Moulthrop is a Cleveland Heights resident and member of the Heights Observer’s Advisory Committee.

Westminster Abbey organist in recital at St. Paul’s

Kim Fry

James O’Donnell, the organist and master of the choristers at Westminster Abbey in London, will perform a solo organ recital at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church (2747 Fairmount Blvd., Cleveland Heights) on Friday, March 6, at 7:30 p.m.

Formerly master of music at Westminster Cathedral, O’Donnell was appointed organist and master of the choristers at Westminster Abbey in 2000. In addition to a full schedule of daily choral services, his responsibilities have recently included directing the music for a service in the presence of Pope Benedict XVI in 2010, the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge in April 2011, and the recent service to mark the 60th anniversary of the Coronation. The Abbey Choir has toured the Far East, the United States, Australia, Denmark, Germany, Russia, Spain, Hungary and Rome, where, in 2012, it participated in a Papal Mass with the Sistine Chapel Choir at the invitation of the Pope.

O’Donnell has worked widely as a soloist and director with many of the country’s leading orchestras and ensembles. He is music director of St. James’s Baroque and visiting professor of organ and of choral conducting at the Royal Academy of Music. In November 2010 he was artist in residence at Yale University; and from 2011 to 2013 he was president of the Royal College of Organists.

The public is invited to this free recital. A freewill offering will be gathering to support St. Paul’s music fund. For more information, call 216-339-5853 or visit www.stpaulschurch.org.

Kim Fry is the director of communications at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church.

‘Home to the Arts’

 Songs and Stories

David Budin

Cleveland Heights calls itself “Home to the Arts.” All the reading I’ve done about the city shows that this has always been true for at least a century, possibly because of its proximity to Severance Hall, the home of the Cleveland Orchestra; the Cleveland Institute of Music and the Music School Settlement; the Cleveland Institute of Art and the Cleveland Museum of Art; the Cleveland Play House; and others of the city’s great arts institutions that began in the early 1900s—and the fact that many of those organizations’ participants lived in Cleveland Heights.

From the time I started kindergarten at Coventry Elementary School and all the way through Heights High, there were always children of Orchestra members, of CIA and CIM instructors, and of others in my classes. And most of my own training took place right here as well.

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Heights Observer March 1, 2015 20 www.heightsobserver.org
Heights Arts exhibition explores changing urban landscape

Mary Ryan

Over the last year, The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Travel + Leisure, Vodar and The Wall Street Journal are among the national publications that have sung the praises of the changes transforming Cleveland and its environs. In this spirit, Heights Arts’ new exhibition, Impermanence, explores the nature of change within the city’s environment of civic architecture, streets and residences. Organized by guest curator and photographer Daniel Levin, Impermanence celebrates place, use and time in the Heights, University Circle, Little Italy, Ohio City and downtown Cleveland through pairing photographs that show the same view of a site at different historical times. This “then-and-now” perspective enables the viewer to notice both dramatic and subtle changes that have occurred to some of our iconic community institutions and streetscapes, and to more commonplace subject matter, such as home interiors. The exhibition includes some unexpected images of the Cleveland Museum of Art, Arena District and Coventry neighborhoods, which are sure to trigger a flood of memories in longtime Cleveland residents, and delight newcomers. These black-and-white photographic diptychs began with research by the exhibition’s photographers to unearth dynamic, original images through private collections and numerous archives in Northeast Ohio, including the Cleveland Public Library’s Photograph Collection; the Cleveland Memory Project, accessible online through the Cleveland State University Library, and Western Reserve Historical Society’s photography collection. “The public can access any or all of these organizations for a glimpse into the visual history of Greater Cleveland,” said Levin. “At the Cleveland Public Library, participating photographers were given white gloves and boxes full of photographs to look through. It’s a wonderfully addictive experience.”

Using an academic approach known as “rephotographic survey,” each of the photographers reexamined these often-brittle photographic prints, first finding the original location and then determining details such as time of day, season, and position of the original photographer. “Where the camera is positioned, plus its angle of view and depth of focus, must exactly match the original composition,” explained Levin. “In some cases, it took real effort on the photographer’s end to get to the exact location where the original image was recorded. You may find you are now standing in the middle of a street, or an obstacle may now be in your way. In a few of the photographs, there is little to recognize from the old image. In others, there are surprisingly only slight changes in the scene, despite decades or up to a century of time passing. Either way, these photographs are magical.”

The 11 Cleveland photographers represented in the exhibition are Darlene Beiter, Andrew Cari, Beverly Conley, David Hagen, Mark Holz, Nathan Migal, Chuck Minzr, Karin McKenna, Emily Smith, Victoria Stanbridge and Brian Swaney. Impermanence opens on Friday, March 6, with a public reception 6–9 p.m. It is on view at Heights Arts, 2175 Lee Road, through Saturday, April 18, during normal gallery hours (Tuesday and Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Thursday and Friday, 10 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.; and Saturday 1:30-9:30 p.m.).

Mary Ryan is on staff at Heights Arts, a nonprofit community arts organization. Heights Arts is a member of the Western Reserve Library District’s Artview Network. The Artview Network is a nonprofit cultural organization which promotes the visual arts in Northeast Ohio by providing access to the collections of the Western Reserve; and Western Reserve Historical Society's Photograph Collection; the Cleveland State University Library, and Western Reserve Historical Society's photography collection. The Artview Network is a member of the Western Reserve Library District’s Artview Network. The Artview Network is a nonprofit cultural organization which promotes the visual arts in Northeast Ohio by providing access to the collections of the Western Reserve; and Western Reserve Historical Society's Photograph Collection; the Cleveland State University Library, and Western Reserve Historical Society's photography collection.
Serendipity is striving to make the world a better place

James Henke

Serendipity Space, located at 1714 Lee Road in Cleveland Heights, just south of Cedar Road, is truly unique. It was designed as a place where people can build connections, relationships and community and, in the process, change the world. Sue Wolpert had the idea for Serendipity a little more than a year ago. “I wanted to develop a place where people could discover ideas and create positive change through their ideas,” she said, “a place that will help us all have the life we want to have.”

After bringing up the concept, Wolpert organized a couple of events at Negative Space Gallery, which is located at East 38th Street and Superior Avenue. Then, one of her friends, Joan Greenwood, wanted to do a program called LovingKindness Week.

Because it was a weeklong event, Wolpert realized she would need her own space. Wolpert and her husband, Ray Lesser, have owned Funny Times—a monthly paper that deals with humor, politics and other subjects—for about 30 years, and their offices are located at 2176 Lee Road. They have owned the building for 20 years, including the storefront downstairs. The downstairs space had previously been occupied by Mirage Studio and, after that, by Hessler on the Heights. When that store closed, Wolpert and Lesser decided to use the space for Serendipity.

Serendipity opened last May, and LovingKindness Week took place June 1-7, 2014. According to Greenwood, “LovingKindness Week creates the opportunity to express and experience a deeper tenderness with each other. It’s a special time to break down the barriers that keep us separate, and to encourage us to stand up in love and unity.”

Since opening, Serendipity has presented dozens of different kinds of events. For example, twice a month, on Tuesday evenings, local musician Erwin Weinberger hosts Old Time Picking Sessions, where guitarists, fiddle players, mandolin players, banjo players and other musicians can get together and play a variety of old-time music.

Every Tuesday and Thursday morning at 8:30 a.m., Serendipity offers 30-minute meditation sessions, and every other Thursday evening, at 7 p.m., LovingKindness Circle takes place. At those sessions, participants learn how to make the world a more loving place and also make plans for the annual weeklong event in June. Wolpert and Lesser organize some of the programs at Serendipity, while others are put together by other people in the community. “This space is a launching pad for people who want to start to move,” Lesser said. “Stop thinking about it and start doing it.”

On March 7, Serendipity will host the Awakening the Dreamer symposium. It is being organized by Pachamama Alliance, an international organization that wants to create a more sustainable world. “They want to build an environmentally sustainable, socially just, spiritually fulfilling world,” Wolpert said.

And on March 22, Serendipity will hold a pop-up house event that will include a “helpful” conversations, discussion about non-violent communication, games and other programs. For more details on Serendipity’s programs and schedule, check out its website at www.serendipitycleveland.com.

Deanna Bremer Fisher

Greg Zucca, economic development director for the city of Cleveland Heights, has resigned. Zucca has accepted a position as vice president of lending and lending operations for the Economic and Community Development Institute (ECDI). He had been in his position with the city since June 2014.

“Economic development is a top priority for the city,” said City Manager Tanisha Hagg. “Greg Zucca provided the city with strong analytical and financial skill and a keen ability to build partnerships. We are disappointed to see him go, but wish him great success in his new role at ECDI. We look forward to working with him and ECDI to strengthen and support our thriving small business community.”

“I am grateful for the privilege of having served the City of Cleveland Heights, one of our region’s most dynamic cities, with its strong neighborhoods and vibrant commercial districts. It was an honor to work with the citizens and small businesses of this great community,” said Zucca. “In my new position at ECDI, I look forward to continuing to serve the small businesses and entrepreneurs in Cleveland Heights and throughout our region to ensure they have access to the resources they need.”

ECDI is one of the nation’s largest Small Business Administration micro-loan intermediary lenders, serving all 88 Ohio counties, with offices in Columbus, Cleveland, Akron and Toledo.

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

Pop-up dinner at Alcazar is March 12

FarmShare Ohio, Luna Bakery Café and On The Rise will team up on Thursday, March 12, 6:30-9:30 p.m. Drinks will be provided by The Wine Spot, La Cave du Vin, Parnell’s Pub and Phoenix Coffee. Entertainment will be provided by The Greg Shop, and table decorations by Four And Twenty Mercantile. Tickets are $75 per person and are available online at www.eventbrite.com or at Luna Bakery Café. Valet parking is included.

Bobby Vee, 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.
In the American culture, we are balances us mentally and emotionally. It is a physical practice that is holistic. It helps to balance the energy flow.

Developed in Tibet thousands of years ago, Reiki came to the U.S. in the 1920s. “When your energy is unbalanced or blocked or stagnant, it can manifest itself in physical symptoms or mental and emotional symptoms,” Eugene said. “Reiki provides an alternative to medicine or surgery for people who have aches or pains, recent injuries or chronic pains. There’s also a gamut of mental and emotional things that Reiki can help with. It can raise someone’s energy and help them get clearer thinking in their life.” Eugene did stress, however, that people should always talk to their doctors first if they are suffering physical pain.

Eugene limits the size of her classes to a maximum of four people. “I keep the classes small. That way I feel like I can give my students individual attention and help them progress along their yoga path.” She offers yoga classes on Monday and Wednesday nights and Saturday mornings. The cost is $15 per class, with a 10-percent discount for new students. Classes are one hour and run in 12-week sessions. Reiki training has three levels of classes, priced from $125 to $300. Reiki treatments cost $60 an hour. To sign up for classes or treatment, contact Eugene by phone at 216-408-5578 or check out her website at www.lovinghandsyoga.com.

Eugene also offers Reiki treatments for pets. She said she has seen five or six dogs over the years, as well as some cats.

Asked why she decided to open the yoga and Reiki studio in her home, Eugene said, “There was no overhead, and my yoga instructor taught at home. It brings a lot of positive energy to my house, and I think it makes the classes a lot friendlier.” Her house was on the Heights Heritage Home Tour in 2011. And last November, she had six Tibetan Buddhist monks spend four days at her house. “They come to the U.S. every year to raise money, and I learned so much from watching them. They taught me a lot about Buddhism, and they were truly kind, compassionate, caring and giving.” During their visit, the monks gave two talks in her living room, attracting around 30 people each night.

As for her Best of the Heights award, Eugene said “I was really honored. I love Cleveland Heights and this community, and I love providing a service that people find helpful.”

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.