

INSIDE



9
City honors
Jim Brennan
with ball field
dedication



11
Venues set for
2015 Heights
Music Hop



23
Jamey
Christoph
wins illustra-
tion award



28
Last chance
to vote for
Best of the
Heights

FutureHeights
2843 Washington Blvd. #105
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

Harvey Pekar honored with Coventry park

James Henke

More than 100 people attended the dedication of Pekar Park on Saturday, July 25. The newly named park—previously the Coventry Outdoor Courtyard—is at the intersection of Coventry Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard, near the Grog Shop and the Inn on Coventry.

Harvey Pekar, well-known author, music critic and media personality, lived in Cleveland Heights for many years, until his death in 2010. He frequently hung out on Coventry, and loved the neighborhood.

Pekar is probably best known for his graphic novels, including the autobiographical *American Splendor*, which was released as a film in 2003; it starred Paul Giamatti as Pekar and Hope Davis as his wife, Joyce Brabner.

Brabner worked with the City of Cleveland Heights and the Coventry



Joyce Brabner, Steve Presser and Suzanne DeGaetano in front of the new Pekar Park sign.

Village Special Improvement District (CVSID) to get the park re-named. “My purpose was to bring this corner back to the kids,” she said. “I saw an opportunity to return the corner to a youth- and arts-friendly state.”

Harvey Pekar banners, commissioned by Brabner, and illustrated by Joseph Remnant, now hang on lampposts in front of the park, and a sign engraved with Pekar’s name is

continued on page 6

CH’s Ewing at the helm as Cinematheque moves to new space

James Henke

The Cleveland Institute of Art Cinematheque, which *The New York Times* called “one of the country’s best repertory movie theaters,” has moved to a new location. On July 30, the Cinematheque screened its final film, “The Last Picture Show,” at the Cleveland Institute of Art’s (CIA) Aitken Auditorium, its home since 1986. As of Aug. 1, the Cinematheque’s new home is CIA’s Peter B. Lewis Theater, at 11610 Euclid Ave. John Ewing, a Cleveland Heights resident, was one of the founders of the Cinematheque in 1984, and still serves as its director.

The new theater is a state-of-the-art venue, featuring a 15-by-36-foot screen, and equipped with both a digital cinema projector and an HD projector. It offers a much-improved sound system and better acoustics. The new theater also features cushioned seats, which the old theater did not have.

Ewing said the programming will not be much different from what the



Cleveland Heights resident John Ewing, director of CIA’s Cinematheque.

Cinematheque currently offers. “We will show new films that otherwise wouldn’t come to this city, and we’ll show classic films,” he said. “In addition, we will continue to show second-run films that didn’t get a fair shake at the box office, and we’ll also show different film series that are touring around the country.” The one new addition will be digital restorations of old classic films. The Cinematheque will continue to bring filmmakers, directors, producers and

continued on page 5

Forum to address potential future of Severance Center

Vince Reddy

FutureHeights will host a forum on the future of Severance Town Center—Reimagining Severance—on Oct. 21. The focus of the meeting will be on the future of the shopping center located within Severance Circle, but its relationship with surrounding properties and neighborhoods will also be considered. The forum will take place at 7 p.m. at the Cleveland Heights Community Center, 1 Monticello Blvd.

At the event, presentations on the history of Severance and the current status of the foreclosure proceedings on the retail center will provide context for the discussion, and information regarding how other communities have rethought and, in some cases, redeveloped or partially redeveloped troubled properties like Severance will be provided.

At the June 15 meeting of the Cleveland Heights City Council, Mayor Dennis Wilcox noted that the city has been working closely with the court-appointed receiver for the center toward maintaining the value of Severance and finding solutions for its problems. “One of the things that we discovered is that the note and mortgage on the center have restrictions on the type of business that can go in there—very structured restrictions on the type of retail business that can go in there,” said Wilcox. “So, through the foreclosure process, which is going on now, that note and mortgage will be sold, and it will allow a new buyer to maybe try and do

continued on page 7

Cleveland Heights residents monitor city’s search for water solutions

Deborah Van Kleef

Approximately 40 Cleveland Heights residents crowded into city council chambers on July 13, as City Manager Tanisha Briley presented a detailed update on the city’s troubled water department. Most in the audience sported stickers reading, “Public water? Yes!” created by writer and activist Joyce Brabner, and distributed by Cleveland Heights Citizens for Safe, Affordable Water.

Present at the Committee of the Whole meeting were Mayor Dennis

Wilcox, Vice Mayor Cheryl Stephens, and council members Jeff Coryell, Kahlil Seren and Melissa Yasinow. Council members Mary Dunbar and Jason Stein were out of town. Flanking Briley were Utilities Commissioner Colette Clinkscale and other city staff members.

In a presentation that lasted more than one-and-a-half hours, Briley reported on both short-term measures to curb financial losses, and the city’s efforts to find long-term solutions to the water department’s looming deficit and decaying infra-

structure.

The city is attempting to trim costs and raise income by auditing its billing system, reviewing delinquent accounts, conducting its annual leak survey and making repairs, reducing overtime and seeking ways to save on purchasing and inventory. The department also may begin to repair and resell older water meters, which would reduce purchasing costs while enabling homeowners to save money.

Briley indicated, however, that there was no way to stop the

continued on page 8

Letters Policy

The *Heights Observer* welcomes letters to the editor. They must be submitted electronically, along with the writer's name, phone number and e-mail address, to: www.heightsobserver.org/members or e-mail: info@futureheights.org

HEIGHTS OBSERVER

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About the Observer

The *Heights Observer* is not an ordinary newspaper; it is a nonprofit publication for residents of Cleveland Heights and University Heights.

The *Observer* has no writing staff; it is written by you—the readers.

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

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

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

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

Articles to be considered for the September issue must be submitted by Aug. 13. We publish some articles online as they come in—and still consider them for the next print issue. We also publish an e-newsletter each Tuesday.

Nominate your neighborhood's businesses for Best of the Heights



OPENING THE OBSERVER

Deanna Bremer Fisher

As I read through this issue of the *Heights Observer*, I'm excited by how many residents are working to build community in their neighborhoods. On page 5, Susie Kaeser writes about the July 4 parade that she and her neighbors on Compton Road organized. On page 6, Brenda May writes about an impromptu public arts project that appeared in her neighborhood just prior to the Noble Neighbors Community-Wide Open House last spring. On page 7, Art Roby writes about an initiative to support senior residents aging in place by bringing a Village in the Heights to University Heights.

These are just a few of the initiatives that residents are working on to strengthen their neighborhoods. On social media, I see neighborhoods organizing garage sales and block parties. Having just concluded the inaugural series of FutureHeights Community-Building Workshops, with 14 participants, and having launched a Neighborhood Mini-Grants Program to seed fund neighborhood-based projects (applications due Sept. 15), I am encouraged by the ingenuity and resourcefulness of Heights residents.

At our last Community-Building Workshop, several participants from adjoining neighborhoods discussed

ways to strengthen the commercial districts that lay between them. While other communities may have places where one can walk, our pedestrian-scale, neighborhood-serving business districts—with restaurants, grocery stores, coffee shops, bookstores, hardware stores, barber shops and salons—is one of the things that makes living in the Heights so enjoyable.

One way to support these districts is to recognize the businesses that are located in them and the contribution they make to our local economy. To that end, I would like to remind Heights residents to nominate their favorite neighborhood businesses for the Best of the Heights.

From now until Aug. 31, residents can cast their votes for businesses in various categories—so you are sure to find a category that is appropriate for each of your favorites. When a business receives a "vote," the business owner receives one free ticket to the Best of the Heights awards celebration on Oct. 7. The celebration, hosted by FutureHeights, is a lively party. Tickets include delicious nibbles, wine and beer, and music. Sure, we'll announce the winners—those who receive the most votes—but all nominees will enjoy a chance to network with other business owners and be recognized by a grateful community.

Voting for Best of the Heights is easy. The ballot is printed on the last page of this edition of the *Heights Observer*. Residents can help make local businesses aware of the contest by bringing a copy of the *Observer* to business owners and asking them

to promote it to their customers. Businesses can make copies of the ballot to display at their stores.

The ballot can also be accessed online at www.futureheights.org by clicking the Best of the Heights icon on the right-hand side. FutureHeights can also send businesses a link to use in electronic media (it is important that we send the business the correct link because there are safeguards that prevent residents from voting more than once). Contact us at 216-320-1423 or info@futureheights.org.

Business owners can purchase additional tickets for \$20 in advance, or \$25 at the door, and residents can purchase tickets to join in the fun, too. This year's party will be held on Wednesday, Oct. 7, 6:30–9 p.m. at Tucker Hall, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 2747 Fairmount Blvd.

Our local independently owned businesses are what give the Heights its unique character. They give us special places to walk to and enjoy. They provide goods and services that we need. When we spend our money at these businesses, instead of at a large chain store, we know that more of our money will stay in our community, contributing to a stronger local economy. I hope to see you on Oct. 7 to celebrate our local entrepreneurs, and their hard work and dedication to our community.

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

Excerpts from Observer blogs

Read the whole story at blogs.heightsobserver.org

Cleveland Heights Citizens Police Academy filling 2015 class

In August 2014, the Cleveland Heights Police Department inaugurated the Citizens Police Academy and accepted the first cohort of students. The Academy was part of Chief Jeffrey Robertson's desire to deepen mutual understanding and regard between the department and the Cleveland Heights community. He considered the Citizens Police Academy as an opportunity for citizens to learn about police training and police work, and for the Department to hear citizens' perceptions about policing in Cleveland Heights.

In 12 classes conducted over six weeks, students covered nearly the same material as the full-time cadets in the daytime Police Academy. . . .

—Bill Braun

Ohio Regulator favors politically con-



nected charter school sponsors, resigns when exposed

Things unraveled pretty quickly last week for David Hansen, the director of school choice at the Ohio Department of Education. On Tuesday, the State Board of Education, dominated by appointees of Republican Governor John Kasich, met and discussed why, as Ohio began to evaluate the sponsor-authorizers of Ohio's charter schools, the test scores of students at online charters were quietly omitted—a violation of state law as Republican chair of the state senate's education committee, Peggy Lehner, and Republican state auditor, Dave Yost, have both confirmed. . . .

—Jan Resseger

Update on CH water system from City Council Member Jason Stein

The water system in Cleveland Heights is in need of significant repair, estimated at \$20 million. It



also owes more than \$3 million to the Cleveland Water Department, which supplies water to Cleveland Heights through a "master meter" (i.e., Cleveland Heights pays for all the water it uses, and then distributes the water to residents for a fee that it collects).

With such large immediate expenses the city is looking for ways to reduce the short-term burden on residents. CH City Council Member Jason Stein has kept residents aware of proceedings through his blog.

Here's the latest update, on a proposal by the Cleveland Water Department to take over management of the Cleveland Heights water system:

Cleveland Water has submitted a proposed framework to begin direct service with Cleveland Heights. This is a positive first step. But, there are still important questions that will hopefully be answered sooner than later. . . .

—Bob Rosenbaum [reposting a blog from Jason Stein, originally posted at councilmanstein.blogspot.com]

East Cleveland's challenges provide opportunities for a regional approach

Vince Reddy

The daunting financial problems of the City of East Cleveland are well known. Mayor Gary Norton states that the city has an annual budget shortfall of \$7 million, and State Auditor David Yost sees the city's financial situation as the worst among Ohio's 251 cities. According to Yost, the city's only options are bankruptcy, cutting deals with its creditors, or merging with another city.

Because it borders only two other municipalities, Cleveland and Cleveland Heights, those cities would be its only possible merger partners, and, while East Cleveland City Council President Barbara Thomas is on record as favoring bankruptcy, prevailing opinion—though not necessarily in East Cleveland itself—seems to be that annexation to the City of Cleveland is the most viable way to address East Cleveland's problems. In April, Norton began to lay the groundwork for annexation, a process that he said could take up to two years—and considerable political effort—to complete.

Perhaps there are other possible solutions to consider, some of which have not yet been widely discussed, including having the responsibility for providing municipal services to East Cleveland taken over by Cuyahoga County—an approach that could be more beneficial to East Cleveland, less burdensome to Cleveland, and could provide an opportunity to examine and improve, from a regional perspective, our overall approach to local government.

The county taking responsibility for providing a wider array of services to local communities is one of the possibilities that accompanied county voters' decision to adopt a charter government in 2009. Cuyahoga County was only the second of Ohio's 88 counties to adopt a charter government; the first was neighboring Summit County—home to Akron—in 1979.

Charter counties are different from the state's other counties in that they have home rule powers, much like a city, while non-charter counties are limited to the activities specifically set out for them in the Ohio Constitution. Though Cuyahoga County's charter precludes it from imposing its municipal powers on unwilling municipalities or townships, it explicitly notes that Cuyahoga County government has the power to exercise "any powers

vested in municipalities by the Ohio Constitution or by general law."

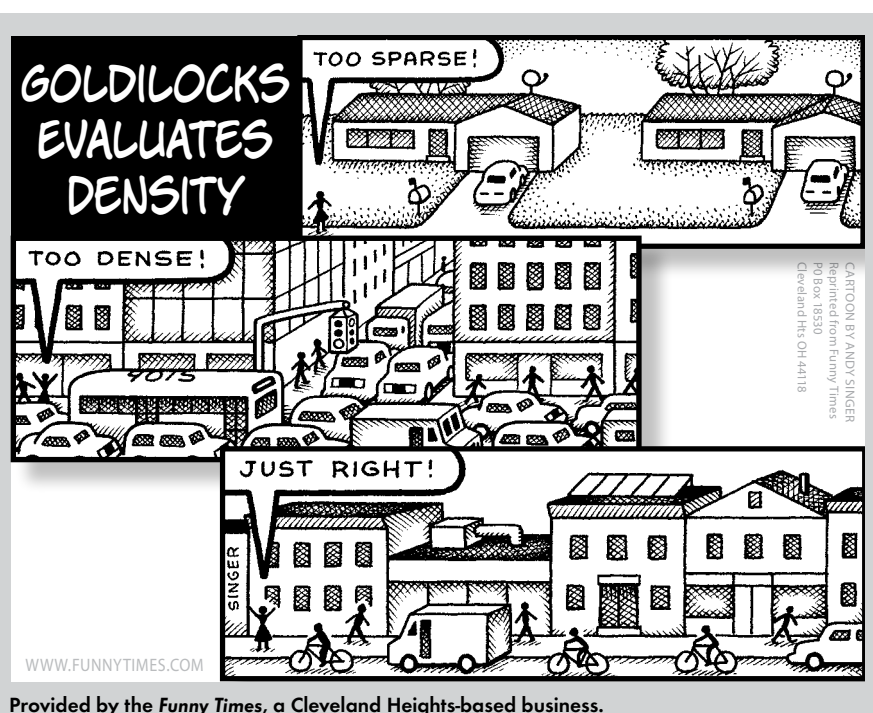
Of course, Cuyahoga County is not set up to provide many of the services—such as fire protection or garbage pickup—that are typically assigned to municipalities, but it could contract for those services to be provided by other municipalities or private entities, and there are some services, such as law enforcement, that the county could perhaps provide directly.

It is realistic to approach East Cleveland's difficult situation as a regional rather than a local issue, not only out of fairness to East Cleveland citizens, whose municipal income and property tax rates are among the highest in the State of Ohio, but also because the problems stemming from one ailing municipality's inability to provide adequate levels of services to its citizens are likely to spread beyond that one municipality's borders.

Cleveland is in a far better position financially than East Cleveland, but it has many problems and beleaguered neighborhoods of its own to deal with, and, in most ways, it already does the region's heavy lifting. Cleveland Heights, East Cleveland's other neighboring city, provides a much higher level of services to its citizens but is facing financial challenges of its own. The possibility of having either of East Cleveland's neighbors provide it with certain municipal services is certainly worth study and consideration, but neither neighboring city would be well-positioned to pick up the tab for providing those services, nor should either be expected to.

Many of the public ventures that are successful in Greater Cleveland—Metroparks, RTA, CLEVELANDNET, for example—are regional in nature, and Cuyahoga County's still-nascent charter government provides us with another opportunity to work together as a region. The challenges facing East Cleveland, as well as numerous other communities in Cuyahoga County and elsewhere in Northeast Ohio, are often too immense for those communities to address on their own. Help from Columbus is not to be counted on, so a regional approach to addressing these challenges is likely to be the most effective and the most likely to benefit the entire region.

Vince Reddy is a FutureHeights board member and an 18-year resident of Cleveland Heights.



Provided by the Funny Times, a Cleveland Heights-based business.

Heights Observer 2015 local elections candidate policy

With the November election approaching, the *Heights Observer* is publishing its policy for contributions by candidates for local office.

As a community newspaper staffed by volunteers and committed to equal access for everyone, the *Observer* is unique among publications in providing opportunity for any member of the Cleveland Heights and University Heights communities to raise and discuss issues of local interest.

At election time, however, this commitment creates a challenge in managing the finite space that is available for community members who are running for public office.

The policy, approved by the FutureHeights Board of Directors, is designed to address that challenge. It states the following:

- The August-November issues of the printed publication will not carry any editorial contributions from known candidates for office.

- During this pre-election period, *Observer* contributors who are not running for office will produce any coverage of election issues.

- During this pre-election period, all candidate contributions of news or opinion will continue to be accepted for publication online at www.heightsobserver.org.

- Candidates seeking to place information in the August-November printed editions of the *Observer* may do so through advertising space purchased from the *Observer*.

The *Heights Observer* and its parent organization, FutureHeights, do not endorse candidates.

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Many tensions surround intradistrict school transfers

Sarah West

Every year, according to state law, parents may apply to their local school districts to secure their children a place at a building in the district other than the one to which they would normally be assigned.

Districts generally make an attempt to accommodate requests. Enrollment at the requested school is but one factor to consider; the Ohio Department of Education also requires, for example, that districts consider the racial imbalances that could result from large-scale movement into or out of a particular school.

Districts are not, however, required to address other considerations, such as socioeconomic status or gender. In Cleveland Heights-University Heights, the yearly intradistrict transfer game can create tension that negatively affects every school's climate.

In this district, as in others, the need to consolidate certain types of services in one building is administratively efficient.

But what about children who are typically developing—for whom there is no "special" educational reason to transfer; no differentiated learning needs? Should parents of these children feel socially obligated to remain in their home school? In doing so, they would appease a variety of stakeholders: other parents who feel betrayed by their peers for taking advantage of an "unfair" policy, buildings that can be dramatically impacted with a spike in free and reduced lunch rates, schools that have ballooning class sizes of struggling learners (or, conversely, small class sizes largely comprised of strong learners), and school report cards that fail to meet performance indices. For some parents, it can be difficult to decide where responsibility to their own child ends and their responsibility to the community begins.

To illustrate this, Fairfax Elementary School's economically disadvantaged percentage has risen from 57 percent in the 2008-09

school year to 70.4 percent in 2013-14. Roxboro Elementary School's, however, dropped from 51.8 percent to 44.7 percent in the same time period. Fairfax earned a D on last year's performance index while Roxboro earned a B.

Despite Fairfax having a lower rate of gifted-identified students than other schools in past years, the district is developing a self-contained highly-abled program at that site for 2015-16. Fairfax families with qualified students can now remain in their home school instead of requesting transfers to one of the other programs at Boulevard or Roxboro elementary schools. Whether Fairfax will see a positive return on that curricular investment won't be known for some time.

Ultimately, the root causes of why people seek intradistrict transfers must be frankly discussed. It cannot merely be that parents who request them are selfish or disinterested in their neighborhood school. There is a problematic perception—intentional or not, advanced formally or not—that privileges some schools over others. No one wins with this unspoken competition.

Perhaps a new marketing strategy that highlights the features of each school building—its history in the district, its unique school climate, its programming and its children—would be a worthy campaign before the start of the term.

Ultimately, some families may still opt to leave one school for another, no doubt a highly considered choice. They should not be shamed or feel guilty. Modeling social empathy is as valuable as modeling school loyalty. Children learn from both.

Sarah West is Ph.D. candidate in urban education policy at Cleveland State University; a curriculum developer, instructor and programming specialist in undergraduate studies at Cleveland State University; parent of three CH-UH students at Canterbury Elementary School, a member of the Citizens' Advisory Committee and 15-year resident of Noble neighborhood.

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A July 4 gathering of Compton Road paradegeers.

SUE HINKEMAN

Simple steps are significant



THE COMMON GOOD

Susie Kaeser

On the Fourth of July, my neighbors on Compton Road strengthened the connections that fuel commitment to the common good, and it was nearly effortless. It took just two phone calls, 15 minutes at the computer, a few text messages, two seventh-graders delivering flyers, two gallons of lemonade, and less than \$20 for our street to come together to celebrate.

At 9:30 a.m., car traffic ended when the barricades delivered by the city (one of the phone calls) made the street the domain of bikes, dog walkers and strolling neighbors. Young people from the street and their friends gathered in the Dooners' backyard (second phone call) to decorate bikes, strollers, wagons and dogs. At 10 a.m., parade grand marshal Pat Dooner led off on his 1948 fat-tire bicycle with Carole Dooner bringing up the rear, patriotic music blaring from her phone. Suddenly there was magic! Kids of all ages were parading down the street, streamers flying, as adults ambled behind with their dogs, and enthusiastic neighbors along the parade route stood at the curb to applaud them and make everyone feel special. After the parade, kids zoomed up and down the street while small groups gathered along the route to chat. By 11 a.m., car traffic had resumed and participants went on with their Saturdays.

A lot happened in less than two hours. New residents met their neighbors, elders like me got the thrill of seeing exuberant young people, and children enjoyed the bliss of owning the street. The parade created memories, communicated neighborhood interest in the lives of our children and added to the fabric of life on our street. It reinforced connections on our street that extend beyond those that exist within our separate houses.

Like it or not, we are interdependent. While it is easy to feel powerless, each individual made a big difference by coming together for our bike parade. It feels great to belong to a community, and it is comforting that neighbors can express their interest in others by joining a 15-minute parade!

Through shared experiences we discover our commonality. We are no longer anonymous.

Failure to grow these bonds makes it easy to appeal to fear of the "other," and to emphasize competition, privatization, getting what is mine, without worrying about the well-being of others. Simple activities that build appreciation for other people are the building blocks for making the common good a priority, but is it enough to reverse today's emphasis on private interest over the common good? Public policies in many realms, including education, now push privatization. Civil society is shunned in favor of profits. It is terrifying.

In a recent blog post, my friend Jan Resseger quoted political philosopher Benjamin Barber's critique of privatization: "It dissolves the bonds that tie us together. It puts us back in the state of nature where we possess a natural right to get whatever we can on our own, but at the same time lose any real ability to secure that to which we have a right. Private choices rest on individual power. Public choices rest on civic rights and common responsibilities and presume equal rights for all. With privatization, what we experience in the end is an environment in which the strong dominate the weak."

Democracy becomes a sham when the powerful are the only citizens with rights. A Fourth of July parade that brings together a neighborhood in common affection and support for its children is a simple affirmation of our common civic bond and a powerful antidote to the narrative of private rights. I am glad to see a renewed interest in neighborhood organizing, part of the Cleveland Heights tradition that engages citizens in owning their community and solving its problems. It uses citizen connections and power to rekindle commitment to one another, the common good and the rights of all.

We need vigilant citizen engagement, practiced every day, to reinvigorate service of the common good as the driving purpose of public policy. It can't end when the parade ends.

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

EWING continued from page 1

other movie experts into the theater to discuss their movies.

Ewing is also curator of film at the Cleveland Museum of Art. "There's no real difference between what I present at the art museum and at the Cinematheque," he said. "Sometimes at the museum the films are programmed to complement an exhibit there. Also, once I book the films at the museum, we are pretty set, while at the Cinematheque, if I see or hear of a new film, I can always schedule a showing."

Ewing, 64, grew up in Canton. At Denison University, he majored in English, and theater and film. In high school and college, he wrote movie reviews for the school papers. When he was a college senior, he spent the fall semester as an intern at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. "I would stay late and watch movies at the museum," he said.

When he returned to Denison, he became the programmer of the college's film series. "I decided I didn't want to be a movie critic," he said. "And it was great being able to show movies that I loved."

After graduating from Denison, Ewing took a job at the Stark County District Library in Canton, where he presented movies. He then moved to the Canton Film Society and began showing films at the Canton Cultural Center. He remained there through 1983.

The following year, he moved north to Cleveland Heights and took a job at the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System, presenting movies at its Lee Road branch.

Cleveland philanthropist George Gund came up with the idea for the Cinematheque. Ron Holloway, a writer for *Variety* magazine and an Eastern European film expert, soon joined his team, and then Ewing came on board as director. In December 1984,

the Cinematheque was incorporated as a nonprofit organization and, the following July, started showing films at Case Western Reserve University. "The Cinematheque became legitimate overnight," Ewing said.

In August 1986, the Cinematheque teamed up with CIA. "We saw the Russell B. Aitken Auditorium there, and it wasn't really being used," Ewing said. So the Cinematheque took over the space.

Initially, movies screened on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. That schedule has since expanded greatly, and the Cinematheque now presents about 250 movies annually, attracting about 18,000 audience members each year.

Ewing moved to Cleveland Heights in 1983. He currently lives on Elmwood Road, and is married to Kathy Ewing, who teaches part time at Cleveland State University and writes book reviews for the *Plain Dealer*. Their two children, Doug, 33, and Margaret, 29, both attended Heights High.

"I never considered moving to any other suburb," Ewing said. "I really appreciate Cleveland Heights's love of the arts and support of the arts. I also like all of the neighborhoods and the different shopping areas, like Coventry and the Cedar Lee district. And, in addition to all of that, it's convenient to University Circle."

Ewing is optimistic about the Cinematheque's future. "The bottom line is that we show really good movies," he said. "We're pretty selective about what we show, and we are more of a boutique operation."

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.

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PEKAR continued from page 1

mounted on one of the stone walls near the edge of the park. Three large planters were removed from the sidewalks, to open up the space. “I wanted to roll back this courtyard to a golden era when people hung out here and read books and played music,” Brabner said. “Harvey always hung out here and practiced his stories here.”

The ceremony featured comments from Brabner; Suzanne DeGaetano, owner of Mac’s Backs bookstore; Steve Presser, owner of Big Fun toy store; and others. Cleveland Heights Mayor Dennis Wilcox said, “This is a special and unique area, and it’s appropriate to honor a person who was special and unique. I’m proud that Harvey was part of our community.”

After the dedication ceremony, the Heights Jazz Group performed. Later, several people—including Cleveland-based cartoonist Derf; Carol Walencheck, a librarian at the Lee Road Library; and Cindy Barber, owner of the Beachland Ballroom—told stories about Pekar. The evening ended with a showing of “American Splendor” at the Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Park.

Most longtime Coventry merchants remember Pekar from his frequent visits. “Harvey always sold me his *American Splendor* comics,” DeGaetano said. “So when I needed some, I’d call him, and he’d bring them by and sign them. This was his commercial district, and it was one of the only bohemian neighborhoods in Cleveland at the time.”

Presser recalled, “He would frequent all of the places on Coventry, and he was quite the character. He was

like a Renaissance man. He supported the arts, and I really respected him.”

At one point in their relationship, Pekar told Presser he wanted to do a graphic novel about Big Fun and Dottie’s Diner, which Presser also owned. The diner, located on Lee Road in the space now occupied by the Katz Club, was about to go out of business, and Presser was trying to save it. “We had breakfast together many times at Tommy’s,” Presser said. “It was an incredible experience.” The book, called *Huntington, West Virginia: “On the Fly,”* came out in 2011. The section about Presser is called “Neighborhood Spark Plug.”

Tommy Fello, who owns Tommy’s restaurant, said Pekar was a regular: “He came into Tommy’s a lot. Sometimes he would argue with other customers about politics and other subjects. He would always order a plain falafel sandwich with a chocolate malt. And he was really into jazz and old records. If you gave him a good 78-rpm record, he’d be in heaven.”

Rob Pryor, the general manager of Record Revolution, said of Pekar, “He bought a lot of records here. He really liked jazz, and he found joy in the activity of looking at records and buying records.”

“It was an honor to dedicate this space to Harvey,” said Angela Hetrick, CVSID executive director. “We hope that future Harveys will find it to be a warm and comforting space.”

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.



COURTESY BRENDA H. MAY

Noble Neighbors: We are Home

Brenda H. May

In mid-April, an artistic message suddenly appeared woven into the chain-link fence opposite the Oxford Elementary School driveway: “You Are Noble.” Our Noble communitywide home and yard sale was coming up soon and it certainly seemed that this display anticipated our April 26 event, but no one from Noble Neighbors had considered including public art in our mass communications strategy. Who knew the artists and what was their intent?

Early the next day, I saw that the word Noble in the message had been torn to shreds and was littering the ground. I returned home to fetch a shovel and broom, and fielded phone calls from city personnel and residents complaining about the mess, assuming we were responsible for the artwork.

Remarkably, this simple public art installation quickly became a focal point for the neighbors, although it was not yet a focus of pride or joy.

When I was finally able to return to the damaged art, I found a young mother picking up pieces of braided T-shirt strips that she and her second-grade son, Reuben, had used to create the letters in the display. The family had moved here only a few years ago, and I asked the mom, “Are you aware of the rivalry between Noble and Oxford schools?” I explained that, for a long time, the city’s neighborhoods had been identified by their local elementary schools.

Not only was she unaware, but she and Reuben had also heard about the efforts of Noble Neighbors to showcase our area. They had wanted to celebrate the efforts of the people who live near Noble Road by using the term, with its multiple meanings of place, character and event. As an

author, Reuben’s mom appreciated the power of a single word and would use this disappointment to help her son learn a critical lesson about communication.

Reuben came home from school a few days later announcing that he had solved the mystery of the art vandals. They were fourth- and fifth-graders who also attended Oxford Elementary School and believed they were valiantly defending the Oxford neighborhood with their misguided actions.

Reuben still wanted to encourage his classmates, so he and his mom considered a revised message. They reinstalled the perfect words: “We are Home.”

“We are Home” proclaims the sentiment we all share. This propels us to continue our efforts to improve this important Cleveland Heights neighborhood.

Public art has become one of the projects in the works. We hope to create focal points that declare our pride in our place and our joy in our journey through life together as neighbors. We’re considering murals and sculptures, permanent and temporary works, professional and student-led projects.

While Reuben’s installation is nearing the end of its natural material life, it is still proudly proclaiming a message worth rallying around. A second-grade boy and his desire to make his friends smile is inspiring us to continue toward a hope-filled future. Come and join this project of “place-making” in our neighborhood. It will be a truly Noble project.

Brenda H. May is one of the many Noble Neighbors—residents who are finding ways to uplift their neighborhood. Find them at www.nobleneighbors.com and join in our journey.



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Village in the Heights in development to serve local seniors

Art Raby

Aging in the year 2015 is very different from what it was a generation ago. Today, more people live well into their 90s, many seniors have some form of a weekly work schedule, and even those who retire to their third act—the last two or three decades of their lives—strive to live fully and vibrantly in their homes.

In Cleveland's eastern suburbs, a group of neighbors has been working to establish a "virtual senior village" in University Heights. The organization, to be known as Village in the Heights, is now in high gear with operational startup expected this fall. Membership for residents in University Heights is open to anyone 65 or older.

The concept of a virtual village is simple. Working with the idea of aging in place, villages are membership groups that help older adults remain in their homes, maintaining

a healthy and active lifestyle, for as long as they are able. Members have access to a wide variety of no-cost or low-cost services, transportation, home maintenance, health and wellness programs, information about numerous community services, as well as local social and cultural connections.

Villages are new to Northeast Ohio, but have been in existence for more than a decade. The first one, Beacon Hill Village, started in Boston in 2002. With the number of Villages growing nationally to 80 in just a few years, the Village-to-Village Network was formed in 2008, as a resource for Villages in development and those already in existence.

More than 150 Villages now operate in 42 states, with 120 currently in development. Ohio currently has three other Villages, two in Columbus and one in Athens.

Village in the Heights will serve its members as consolidator of local

services to seniors and by providing programming that its members want. The Village, as a grassroots, member-directed, nonprofit organization, will operate with extensive volunteer commitment.

Village in the Heights is currently vetting vendors and volunteers to build its membership support bundle. Numerous local businesses, community organizers and private foundations are in discussion with the Village's development board to help create what will become the newest and most comprehensive Village in the United States, right here in Northeast Ohio.

For membership information, to volunteer, or for other inquiries, e-mail villageintheheights@gmail.com, or call 216-906-6240.

Art Raby is a longtime resident of University Heights, a member of Gesu Parish, a retired engineer and volunteer with Village in the Heights.

SEVERANCE continued from page 1

some new things or some things that don't fit into Severance right now."

Wilcox went on to state that the city, in cooperation with the receiver, is working to expedite the process of getting new ownership for Severance, which would then allow for a viable plan for the center's future. A foreclosure sale of the note owed by Severance's current owner is expected in September or October. That sale would most likely be an interim step in the process of finding a long-term owner for the property.

Planning for the redevelopment of the 161-acre John L. Severance estate began in 1953, and Severance Mall, Ohio's first automobile-era enclosed shopping center, opened there in 1963. The center went through many changes and adjustments before being mostly replaced with the current outward-facing strip center in 2000.

In recent years, the center has lost several key tenants for various reasons, among them Borders, Walmart, Regal Cinemas and an IHOP restaurant, all of which had come to Severance at the time of its most recent reconfiguration or soon thereafter. Notably, many viable retailers remain, including a Home Depot, a Dave's Market, some long-term tenants and a few recently opened stores. Retail uses are not permitted in Severance outside of Severance Circle, a public street that surrounds the shopping center. This policy has provided protection against the blight that has often been seen to spread well beyond the boundaries of other troubled shopping centers.

Those attending the Reimagining Severance forum will have an opportunity to express their concerns and share their thoughts about how they would like to see the area improved. The purpose of the event will be to start a discussion. Decisions on the future of Severance, which will require deliberation and action on the part of private property owners, the City of Cleveland Heights and other interested parties, are most likely a few years off.

For updates on the forum, visit www.futureheights.org or the organization's Facebook page.

Vince Reddy is a FutureHeights board member and an 18-year resident of Cleveland Heights.

University Heights City Council Meeting highlights

JUNE 15, 2015

Councilman Phil Ertel was absent.

University Square

The majority bondholders of University Square are in town, inspecting the property and looking for ways to enhance it.

Electronic signage

The Board of Zoning Appeals asked council to review the city's code regarding commercial signage. Dunkin' Donuts had received permission to install a sign in the current size, shape and location but had changed the sign to an electronic graphical sign at installation. The city has required the business to change the sign to only display time and temperature until the store's appeal can be settled. Councilman Steven Sims will take this issue to the Building Committee of Council for a review of the code, which was written before the advent of electronic graphical image signs.

Issuance and sale of bonds

Council heard on first reading an ordinance for the issuance and sale of bonds in the principal amount of \$1.8 million for paying costs of improving the city's park and recreational facilities. The ordinance, written by the bond attorney at Squire Patton Boggs, is "on emergency" in order to preclude a referendum to try to recall the residents' vote. This is the final step in the process for issuing the bonds.

Resident permit parking

Council heard on first reading legislation to amend the city code to establish a resident permit-parking program on certain city streets in the neighborhood surrounding Wiley School, which is being converted to a temporary high school. Police Chief Hammett is requesting this change, which would provide four free permits to each household on those streets, and restrict parking to only those cars with the permits. This same process is in place for streets surrounding John Carroll University. Hammett would like to be proactive and put these rules in place before problems occur. Councilmen Steven Sims and Mark Wiseman questioned this, asking for evidence that a problem will occur. Vice Mayor Susan Pardee is in favor of taking proactive measures but is concerned that the proposal is not in line with the current ordinances as written. [As] this was presented on first reading, the law director and council will review the current ordinances and look at options before the next meeting.

LWV Observer: Wendy Deuring.

JULY 13, 2015

All council members were present. Council-

woman Pamela Cameron arrived after roll call so was officially listed as excused.

Kollel Yad Chai Mordechai

Council approved the planning commission's recommendation for the Kollel Yad Chai Mordechai project final site plans. The new facility, to be located at 2476-2492 South Green Road, will be 9,400 square feet on a 4,800 square footprint. A kollel is a school and sanctuary. This will be an institutional building but designed to fit into a residential neighborhood.

Public park

Council approved the planning commission's recommendation for the community public park final site plans. Rob Habel, from Braun & Steidl Architects, presented the drawings. They are ready to go out to bid shortly in order to begin work in the fall. The earthwork and structures will be completed this fall, with landscaping to be completed next spring. Fenwick Road will be torn up for utilities at some point, but the contractor will be responsible for managing the disruption.

Council also approved a motion to advertise for bids for the public park project. The advertising could take five to six weeks. Contractors will examine the project at a pre-bid meeting. Braun & Steidl is preparing bid drawings.

Bonds issued

Council approved the issuance and sale of bonds in the principal amount of \$1.8 million to pay the costs of constructing and equipping a public park area and related improvements. Squire Patton Boggs is the bond council, and Huntington Bank will most likely sell [the] bonds.

Permit parking near Wiley

An ordinance amending the city code to establish a resident permit-parking program for the streets surrounding Wiley School while it is being used as a temporary high school remained tabled. Mayor Susan Infeld reported that three council members sent her e-mails expressing their strong feeling that parking will not become an issue and that this measure is not required. Police Chief Hammett had requested the ordinance as a precautionary measure.

Paving change order

Major street paving has been substantially completed. Some streets required less work than budgeted for, leaving a remainder of \$75,000 in the contract with Chagrin Valley Paving Inc. Joseph Ciuni, the city's engineer, [had] asked council to release the additional \$23,217.75 in the budget prior to bidding, which would mean almost \$100,000 avail-

able to do additional large street patching. At least 20 streets need patches [measuring] at least one lane wide and 100 feet long. Chagrin Valley Paving will do as much patching as it can until funds run out. Council approved adding the additional funds to the contract.

LWV Observer: Wendy Deuring.

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

These meeting summaries are abstracted from LWV observers' written reports. The summaries have been edited and prepared by Anne McFarland, Charlene Morse and Maryann Barnes. To receive e-mail postings of full reports, send an e-mail to mbarnes9515@gmail.com or join through Google groups using "lwv-chuh observer reports" as a search phrase.

These reports contain member observation and selected highlights of public meetings and are not official statements of the Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters Cuyahoga Area. This disclaimer must accompany any redistribution of these reports.

Brennan's Colony

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WATER continued from page 1

\$200,000 monthly loss without a rate increase. The following week, at the July 20 city council meeting, she announced that, effective Aug. 1, rates would rise from \$70.04 per MCF (thousand cubic feet of water) to \$88.04 per MCF. Briley said that the average residential water bill will rise from \$53.79 to \$65.04, including the current \$10 monthly service fee, but not including landfill and local sewer charges.

Briley also proposed that the city begin charging a \$6 service fee to low-income and elderly residents, who have paid no such fixed fee to date. At the suggestion of Council Member Jeff Coryell, the other council members, and Briley, reduced that fee to \$3.

In searching for long-term solutions, the city is still considering the options laid out in a January report by the consulting firm Energy Systems Group (ESG): (1) To borrow funds for repairs and improvements, overseen by an outside firm such as ESG itself; (2) to transfer its water utility to the Cleveland Division of Water; or (3) to enter a public-private partnership.

Since tabling the proposed letter of intent with the private firm Aqua Ohio on May 27, the city has actively pursued information on the first two options. A proposal from ESG is, in Briley's words, "essentially ready," with the recommended amount to be borrowed whittled from the original \$20 million to \$10 million. This approach would require a four-year rate increase, the amount as yet undetermined, to cover costs beyond the \$10

million.

The city has also received an initial proposal, referred to as a "framework," from the Cleveland Water Department. The framework lays out a process by which Cleveland Heights would convert from a master meter community, buying water from Cleveland and distributing it to residents, to a direct service community, in which residents become customers of the Cleveland Division of Water and the Cleveland Heights Water Department ceases to exist as a separate entity.

The framework sets a target date of Jan. 1, 2017. Cleveland Heights's 15,000 water customers (including about 700 households in University Heights and a small number in East Cleveland and South Euclid) would pay a "transition rate" plus a "recovery fee" for five years, to enable Cleveland to recoup its costs. Briley stressed that the framework is a starting point for negotiations and that she expects to continue discussions with Cleveland.

Briley hopes to present city council with a "side-by-side comparison" of the three options within approximately one month.

Cleveland Heights Citizens for Safe, Affordable Water continues to gather and evaluate information, drawing on the expertise of local legal and engineering professionals. Volunteers have created a spreadsheet, accessible at bit.ly/itkooso, which enables Cleveland Heights residential water customers to see approximately how much they will

pay monthly beginning Aug. 1 (Option 3). The document also projects water bills under two other short-term scenarios considered by the city (Options 1 and 2). In addition, it includes projected bills during a five-year transitional period proposed by the Cleveland Division of Water, and after that period (based on Cleveland's current rates). As with Briley's projection, these numbers do not include landfill or local sewer

charges.

Cleveland Heights Citizens for Safe, Affordable Water can be reached through its Facebook page www.facebook.com/chsafeaffordablewater or by contacting Jim Miller at jkmiller@igc.org or 216-321-9983.

Deborah Van Kleef is a musician and writer. She grew up in Cleveland Heights, and has lived here as an adult for 30 years.

Cleveland Heights City Council



Meeting highlights

JUNE 15, 2015

Council Member Jeff Coryell was absent.

Public comments

Resident Diane Hallum expressed concerns about budget shortfalls, water department problems, failing schools, the sale of a loan to address a defaulted loan for a Taylor Road building, and the possibility of two tax issues being placed on the November ballot. She described council's solutions as "frantic" and felt that the issues she brought up had not been faced directly at the outset. She mentioned the city's recently lowered bond rating and announced a fundraising meeting of her organization, the Citizen's Leadership PAC, on June 24.

CDBG funding

Council approved the following agreements for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Year 41 funding for the period July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016:

- Start Right Community Development Corporation - \$5,000 for the payment of operating expenses for its food bank program.
- Heights Youth Club, Inc. - \$35,000 to provide funding for assistance with its Project Learn: The Educational Enhancement Program, which serves approximately 500 young clients.
- Lake Erie Ink - \$6,780 to provide funding for assistance with the organization's after-school writing program at Noble Elementary School.
- Heights Community Congress - \$3,500 for assistance with its educational programs on Diversity in our Community.
- Gesher - \$5,000 for operating expenses. Gesher's mission is to help eliminate cultural barriers to applying for benefits in the service area of Cleveland Heights, University Heights and South Euclid.
- Open Doors Academy - \$8,000 for assistance with the organization's year-round enrichment program for 80 young people living at risk.

Severance Town Center

Mayor Dennis Wilcox reported that the city is meeting with the court-appointed receiver for Severance Town Center. The note and mortgage of the center restricts the type of businesses that can occupy the center but new ownership may be able to expand the types that can be established.

Council members defend city efforts

Council members Cheryl Stephens, Melissa Yasinow and Mayor Wilcox commented about council and staff efforts to address the city's financial issues. They noted that there have been no raises for most city staff, small raises for safety forces, positions left empty, and equipment stretched beyond its expected life. Wilcox also pointed out the \$6.7 million loss of state funding over the last 10 years. He said many cities have sought income and property tax increases to fill the gaps, [and] there would have to be a decision between cutting city services and raising taxes.

LWV Observer: Blanche Valancy.

JULY 6, 2015

Council Member Mary Dunbar was absent.

Parks and recreation department

Council approved the establishment of a Parks and Recreation Department and the creation of a director position. In keeping with the findings of the city's 2014 strategic operations review, this initiative will enhance efficiency and effectiveness, and is made possible through the repurposing of existing parks and recreation funds, which are currently within the budget of the Community Services Department.

Master Planning Steering Committee appointments

Council approved the appointment of the following city residents to the Master Planning Steering Committee: Michael Ungar, chair of the Planning Commission; Howard Maier of the Transportation Advisory Committee; Jeanne Diamond of the Commission on Aging; Ken Dowell of the Recreation Board; Allison McCallum of the Citizens Advisory Committee; Bill Mitchell, representing city merchants; Saroya Queen-Tabor, representing the schools; Julia Kious Zabell of Future Heights; and Kristin Hopkins, Yovan "Lou" Radivovitch and Chuck Miller.

Bonds issued

Council provided for the issuance of bonds in an amount not to exceed \$1.925 million for the following purposes:

- Reconstructing, resurfacing, and otherwise improving city streets
- Rebuilding Monticello Boulevard and Taylor Road, including engineering and planning costs
- Acquiring motorized equipment
- Acquiring computer hardware and related equipment
- Improving the city's water system by constructing and installing water lines, together with the necessary related equipment

Municipal income tax proposal

Council heard a first reading of legislation to submit to the voters an income tax increase in the fall 2015 General Election. If approved, the clerk of council would file the resolution with the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections on Aug. 5. The proposal is to increase the municipal income tax rate from 2 percent to 2.25 percent, effective Jan. 1, 2016.

Mayor Wilcox outlined the city's position and explained the rationale for the tax proposal. The details of his comments can be found in the online version of this report.

In the coming weeks, council will be requesting feedback from residents. Council has directed the city manager to create an independent task force of residents with financial management expertise to review and analyze the city's budget projections. Residents will have many opportunities to understand the situation and be fully informed before voting in November.

LWV Observer: Katherine Solender.

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

See disclaimer on page 7.

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the summer just started?
you're panicked?
yeah, me too!

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maybe you're the one that's lame.
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CH City Council appoints Master Plan Steering Committee

Deanna Bremer Fisher

At its July 6 meeting, Cleveland Heights City Council announced the names of residents appointed to serve on an 11-member committee to oversee the development of a master plan for the city.

The members are Michael Ungar, chair of the city's Planning Commission; Howard Maier, co-chair of the city's Transportation Advisory Committee; Jeanne Diamond, a member of the city's Commission on Aging; Ken Dowell, a member of the city's Recreation Advisory Board; Allison McCallum, a member of the city's Citizens Advisory Committee; Bill Mitchell, owner of Mitchell's Fine Chocolates in the Cedar Lee Business District, representing city merchants; Saroya Queen-Tabor, a CH-UH City School District parent and chair of the district's Strategic Planning Committee, representing education stakeholders; Julia Kious Zabell, a member of the FutureHeights Board of Directors; and residents Kristin Hopkins, Yovan "Lou" Radivoyevitch and Chuck Miller. Hopkins is a principal planner with CT Consultants and lives on Bellfield Avenue. Radivoyevitch is vice president of sales for RAD Graphics Inc., a tactical marketing firm, and lives on Dartmoor Road. Chuck Miller is a principal with Doty & Miller Architects and lives on Mayfield Road.

A first-meeting date for the committee is not yet set. Committee members will serve for the duration of the process of drafting the master plan, which is expected to take 8-12 months. All of the members will serve as volunteers: they will receive no financial compensation.

Cleveland Heights is one of four cities the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission chose to work with this year to develop a city master plan. According to the commission, the goals of the county program are "to bring older plans up to date, encourage regional collaboration and focus on action plans that have a strong potential for implementation." University Heights, Parma Heights and Olmsted Falls were also chosen. County planners will lead the preparation of the master plans working with the staff and leadership in each city.

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

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City dedicates Forest Hill Park ball field in honor of Jim Brennan

Deanna Bremer Fisher

On Saturday, July 11, the City of Cleveland Heights dedicated Ball Field #5, the main field at Forest Hill Park, in honor of Jim Brennan, the former owner of Brennan's Colony on Lee Road who was murdered last year.

"Jim Brennan was an enthusiastic supporter of our recreation programs for over 20 years," said Mayor Dennis Wilcox. "He sponsored softball teams and held many an after-game celebration at The Colony. This dedication celebrates and honors the energy and commitment Jim brought to our Cleveland Heights community."

A dedication ceremony was held prior to the All-Star softball games, which are traditionally held the second weekend in July each year. The city also declared that, from now on, the weekend will be called the Brennan All-Star Weekend. In 1999, Brennan was inducted as a member of the Cleveland Heights Softball Hall of Fame, because of his sponsorship of many softball teams over the years.

Larry Shaw, former commissioner of parks and recreation for the city



Players warm up for a co-ed softball game after the Brennan Field dedication ceremony.

and a close friend of Jim Brennan, spoke about Brennan's support for Heights sports teams. He said that Brennan sponsored many softball teams—women's, men's and co-ed—and contributed to the Barden Benner Carter Memorial Youth Hockey Fund and the Raymond A. Robinson Memorial Youth Hockey Tournament.

"Jim made Forest Hill Park a destination for all who participated in Cleveland Heights sports in all capacities," Shaw said. "Jim made Brennan's Colony the place to be on Lee as many

a post-game celebration was held there, whether we won or lost."

Cathy Murphy, who was Brennan's fiancée, thanked everyone for coming to honor him. Noting that Brennan would have shrunk from the publicity, Murphy said, "He really did deserve it. All of us that played softball—we may have been foes on the field, but we would go back to The Colony, take a couple of beers back with us, and have a great old time, and everybody got along. It was a great community."

A sign above the scoreboard, designating Ball Field #5 Jim Brennan Field, will be installed later this summer. Funds for the sign were raised by the We Are a Colony committee, in partnership with the Cedar Lee Special Improvement District and the City of Cleveland Heights.

A video of the dedication ceremony can be viewed under the 2015 special events playlist on the city's YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/clevelandheightsob.

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



"I want to have a plan in place so my family doesn't have to scramble."

—Dr. Louise Keating, Judson Smart Living at Home member since 2013

Connecting with people is important to Dr. Louise Keating. The daughter of Italian immigrants and a retired physician, she lives with her daughter's family in Cleveland Heights, where she savors whipping up authentic Italian meals for her grandchildren.

"Living at home is important to me, but I want to have a plan in place so my family doesn't have to scramble," says Louise. "That's why I decided to sign up for Judson Smart Living at Home. When the time comes, Judson will take care of everything with one phone call. In the meantime, I can access services whenever I need them."

Indeed. When she's not in the kitchen, Louise is working out at Judson. As a Smart Living at Home member, she takes advantage of Judson's health and wellness classes which offer both physical and social benefits.

"Exercise keeps me nimble. I'm at Judson three times a week for yoga, strength training and water aerobics," says Louise, who has had both hips replaced. "Plus, I've made many close friends."

To learn more about how Judson can help you stay in your own home, please call (216) 791-3211.

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Cleveland Heights proposes income tax rate increase

Vince Reddy

Cleveland Heights City Council is proposing an increase in the city's income tax rate. If approved by voters in November, the quarter-percentage-point increase would take effect on Jan. 1, 2016. It would be the first rate increase since 1979.

In introducing the proposed increase on first reading at the city

council meeting on July 6, Vice Mayor Cheryl Stephens cited cuts in state funding as the cause of the city's budget woes. She explained that the rate increase from the present 2 percent of income to 2.25 percent would not apply to retirement income. The current half-percentage-point credit for income earned outside of Cleveland Heights would remain in effect.

After Stephens formally introduced the ordinance authorizing the tax hike, Mayor Dennis Wilcox explained why the increase is needed. He reiterated the effect of reductions in state funding of local governments, which have included significant cuts to the Local Government Fund and the elimination of the inheritance tax. Wilcox also acknowledged the financial problems caused by the Great Recession and the foreclosure crisis, neither of which Cleveland Heights has fully recovered from. He explained that about 80 percent of the city's budget goes toward personnel costs. Forty-four percent of the budget pays for safety forces, and 20 percent is put toward public works.

Wilcox went on to describe how

the city has actively worked to cut expenses in recent years, including cutting staff by 16 percent from its peak size—a reduction of about 100 full-time employees. Programs have been reduced or eliminated, employee health care has been restructured, and regional solutions have been sought where possible. Cleveland Heights joined the Regional Income Tax Agency a few years ago, participates in a regional dispatch system, and is now providing waste-hauling services to University Heights and Case Western Reserve University. Wilcox noted that the city has held off in seeking an income tax increase, while neighboring Shaker Heights and nearby Lyndhurst have recently increased their municipal income-tax rates.

"It is about more than just what will happen to services [if the rate increase is not passed]," the mayor stated. "It is about investing in our future, about understanding that maintaining our services is critical to attracting new residents and families and keeping Cleveland Heights one of the best places in our region to raise families."

Wilcox asserted that there would be a communitywide discussion and process around the proposed tax increase, which will include the appointment of an advisory panel made up of citizens experienced in finance and management. One of the panel's tasks will be to review the revenue projections on which the proposed rate increase is based. He made assurances that city taxpayers would have ample opportunities to have their questions answered and express their concerns.

A video of the July 6 meeting of the Cleveland Heights City Council is viewable in its entirety at www.youtube.com/clevelandheightsob.

Vince Reddy is a FutureHeights board member and an 18-year resident of Cleveland Heights.

CHPD seeking applicants for 2015 Citizens Police Academy

Bill Braun

The Cleveland Heights Police Department (CHPD) is accepting applications for the second class of the Cleveland Heights Citizens Police Academy.

Participation is free. The brief application process is open to anyone interested in learning more about how police are trained and how CHPD operates.

In 12 classes conducted on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings over six weeks beginning Aug. 11, students in the Citizens Police Academy will receive survey-level instruction on the same topics taught to full-time cadets who train there. Each topic is covered by an academy instructor who is knowledgeable, highly trained and active in the field.

The instructors speak from substantial, personal knowledge and experience, according to members of the 2014 Citizens Police Academy, and were open to dialogue while providing straightforward answers to questions.

CHPD introduced the program last year as part of Police Chief Jeffrey Robertson's effort to deepen mutual understanding and regard between the department and the community it serves. It's an opportunity for citizens to learn about police training and police work, and for the department to hear citizens' perceptions about policing in Cleveland Heights, Robertson said.

Topics covered include laws of arrest, use of deadly force, criminal investigation and crime scene techniques, drug investigations and search warrants, traffic enforcement, patrol techniques and other topics. Participants also get exposure to the SWAT, K-9 and other specialized units within the police force.

The curriculum includes a self-defense overview and hands-on weapons safety training, but it does not involve shooting or require a specific level of fitness.

If you are interested in applying, contact Captain Geoffrey Barnard at the Cleveland Heights Police Academy at 216-691-9751 or chacademy@msn.com. Applications are available at bit.ly/chcpa.

To read blog posts from a member of the the inaugural Citizens Police Academy, visit bit.ly/chcpa-blog.

Bill Braun is a 32-year Cleveland Heights resident and a graduate of the 2014 Cleveland Heights Citizens Police Academy.

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Heights Music Hop set for Sept. 19 on Lee Road

James Henke

The third annual Heights Music Hop will take place on Saturday, Sept. 19, in Cleveland Heights's Cedar Lee Business District. The event will feature numerous bands and musicians with a wide range of musical styles, performing in shops, restaurants and bars along Lee Road.

"It's one of the best events in the Cleveland region," said Shawn Paul Gustafson, owner of Shawn Paul Salon at 2265 Lee Road. "It brings a lot of people out and shows what the Cedar Lee area has to offer. It's really amazing!"

The music will start at 5 p.m. and continue until 11 p.m. There will also be an after-party at the BottleHouse Brewery, at 2050 Lee Road. The Hop is free, but tickets will be needed for the after-party.

The Cedar Lee Special Improvement District (SID) is once again a presenting sponsor of the event, which is a project of FutureHeights, the nonprofit community group that also publishes the *Heights Observer*. Heights Music Hop is supported in part by the residents of Cuyahoga



County through a public grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture. Other sponsors include Simply Charming, Motorcars, New Heights Grill, Dewey's Pizza, The Wine Spot, realtor Susan Delaney of Howard Hanna, and Keller National.

"The relationship between FutureHeights and the businesses in the area is key to this event's success, and we are excited to have the continued support of the Cedar Lee SID," said Dan Budin, head of FutureHeights's Music Hop Committee. "One of the many benefits of the Music Hop is that it draws people to the area and shows the great things the Heights has to offer."

At press time, 16 venues, in addition to the BottleHouse, were confirmed for this year's event: Anatolia Café, Brennan's Colony, the Lee Road Library, Dewey's Pizza, Heights Arts, the New Heights Grill, Marotta's, Mitchell's Fine Chocolates, Phoenix Coffee, the Wine Spot, the Tavern Company, the Stone Oven, the Social Room, Parnell's Pub, the Rib Cage and Lopez restaurant.

The first Music Hop, which took place in 2013, drew more than 1,000 people to the Cedar Lee neighborhood. Last fall's event drew more than 2,000.

Budin said the weather was one

reason for the Hop occurring a bit earlier than in the past two years, moving to September from October.

"It's really wonderful," said Bill Mitchell, owner of Mitchell's Fine Chocolates, "People come, and they bring their families. And it brings out people from this area and beyond. And I think the weather should be nicer this year. It's a nice coda to the summer."

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.

Heights business plans local events for visiting Tibetan monks



The monks visit Cleveland Heights, November 2014.

Bob Rosenbaum

Cleveland Heights-based Loving Hands Yoga and Reiki is planning events for the Cleveland leg of a national tour for a group of Tibetan Buddhist monks. The events will be held throughout the Cleveland area Sept. 21-26. Presentations are non-religious, and are suitable for people of all faiths and traditions.

Judith Eugene, a Cleveland Heights native and the founder of Loving Hands Yoga and Reiki, is seeking businesses, schools, churches and other organizations that are interested in holding events at their facilities. Eugene organized a similar tour last fall. The events were well attended, and most sold out.

Events include lectures, debates, healing rituals, and empowerment ceremonies. School programs for grades K-12 include discussions, chanting demonstrations and performance of traditional Tibetan instruments. The monks are also available to create beautiful works of art including sand

mandalas, butter sculptures and calligraphy. They also perform blessings of homes, businesses, and public buildings. There are suggested donations for each event, but no one is turned away for inability to pay. All donations are tax-deductible.

The monks are refugees from Tibet, living in a monastery in southern India. The monastery currently houses more than 4,500 monks of all ages, and the population increases daily. All money raised on the tour goes directly toward building an addition onto the overcrowded monastery, providing sanitary living and bathing accommodations, medical needs, and teachers' salaries.

To host an event, call Judith Eugene at 216-408-5578. For more information and a program schedule, visit www.sacredartsoftibettour.org or www.lovinghandsyoga.com.

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

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OUT OF THE BOX

Jan Kious

Deidre McPherson is finally back where she belongs—in Cleveland Heights, where she joins other young adults who have “boomeranged” back to the place where they grew up.

McPherson graduated from Cleveland Heights High School in 1995 and attended Miami University on a violin scholarship, initially majoring in zoology and violin performance. She soon realized she much preferred marketing to zoology and decided against becoming a doctor like her father.

After graduation she lived in Boston and then Washington, D.C., where she obtained a master’s degree in business administration with a focus in marketing from the University of Maryland. Life in both of those cities is very expensive, and McPherson soon realized that the cost of living in Cleveland is more affordable and that there were lots of new and exciting things happening here.

In 2009, McPherson signed on as the marketing manager for the Cleveland Orchestra, and later worked as a marketing manager at the Council of Smaller Enterprises (COSE). Three years later, McPherson founded the Cleveland chapter of Sistah Sinema, a national organization that brings people together around films by and about LGBTQ women of color, a community whose stories are rarely represented in mainstream media.

A moderated discussion follows each film to encourage dialogue on the topics raised by the film. McPherson has programmed more than 20 Sistah Sinema events at local venues, including Waterloo Arts, Negative Space Gallery, SPACES and MOCA Cleveland. Founding the Sistah Sinema Cleveland chapter helped McPherson meet people when she



Deidre McPherson

returned to her hometown. It also positioned her as a leader in the LGBTQ community and led to her current job at MOCA.

McPherson’s passion for the arts and creating community serve her well at MOCA. As curator of public programs, she develops exhibitions, performance-based experiences, and culturally relevant social activities that connect adult audiences to the museum in creative and compelling ways.

The current exhibition at MOCA, titled *How to Remain Human*, features the works of 14 artists from Cleveland and the extended region whose art explores the complexity and intensity of the human experience. A central figure in the show is d.a. levy, who lived on Hampshire Road, off Coventry Road, in the late 1960s.

Another featured artist in the show is Cleveland native Jae Jarrell, one of the founders of AfriCOBRA (African Commune of Bad Relevant Artists), an artist collective that began in Chicago during the Civil Rights Movement. The group formed in response to the lack of positive representation of African and African-American people in media and the arts. McPherson was deeply moved by the work of Jae Jarrell and the goal of AfriCOBRA—to produce art that conveyed the power, pride, history and energy of their communities. She curated a program called AfriCOBRA: Power, Politics + Pride, which included the screening of a documentary film about the collective, followed by a panel discussion that featured Jarrell and other artists from the collective, moderated by Dee Perry from ideastream®.

When asked about the values she admires, McPherson immediately said “kindness, hard work and beauty.” She appreciates people whose creativity inspires community. This is a common theme in her life and work—using creativity to celebrate our common humanity. “Getting people together to discuss and explore subjects is something that comes naturally to me,” said McPherson. “Together we can accomplish anything.”

Jan Kious has lived in Cleveland Heights since 1974, and, with her husband, raised four children here. She is interested in people in the Heights community who fit the description of living “out of the box.”

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Buddhist center to open on Lee Road



Barb Jenkins, Bibi Potts and Anne Perusek inside the new SGI-USA Buddhist Center on Lee Road

James Henke

The SGI-USA Buddhist Center is set to open at 2255 Lee Road on Aug. 9, in a portion of the space previously occupied by Petland, which vacated the space about six years ago.

SGI-USA is part of a worldwide Buddhist organization called Soka Gakkai International, which has more than 500 chapters and 100 centers throughout the United States, and more than 12 million members in 192 countries and territories around the world. SGI has about 650 members in northern Ohio, from Toledo to western Pennsylvania. Based on core Buddhist principles, such as respecting the dignity of human life and the interconnectedness of self and the environment, SGI focuses on various peace activities, including human-rights education, abolishing nuclear weapons and efforts to promote sustainable development.

"Buddhism became very popular in the 1960s and '70s," said Barb Jenkins, vice-national women's leader of SGI-USA. "It helps bring out the positive aspects and the strengths and power of your life, particularly in the midst of adversity." Jenkins, 61, lives in Chagrin Falls. She spent much of the 1970s and '80s in Cleveland Heights, and said, "It's still my stomping ground."

Jenkins said that the organization looked at more than 100 locations before selecting the Lee Road space. "We looked everywhere," she said. "And we are so excited about what we have here: the diversity of the community, all of the things on the street, including restaurants and shops. And the people are so wonderful."

The center is planning a community open house on Aug. 15 and 16. The center's many free programs and activities will be open to both SGI members and non-members.

On the first Sunday of every month, it will hold world-peace prayer sessions, starting at 10 a.m. Also once a month, on Thursdays, it will conduct introductory meetings, beginning at 7 p.m. It will also host discussions about various Buddhist topics, and present speakers. In addition, SGI plans to put together exhibits in the space, and host book-club meetings and youth activities. The center will have four chanting rooms, lobby areas in the front and the back of the space, and a bookstore, which will carry Buddhist-related books and materials.

Anne Perusek, SGI's women's division member-care advisor, said, "To become a member, a person commits to make a sincere effort at Buddhist practice—which includes learning to chant, studying Buddhism, setting up a Buddhist altar in one's home, and participating in monthly discussion meetings when possible. As a custom, new members offer \$50 when joining."

Perusek, 60, a longtime Cleveland Heights resident, described SGI as "significantly different from other Buddhist organizations." She said most of them have priests and temples, but SGI focuses on "individual daily practice." According to Perusek, "Consistent practice can bring a wellspring of hope. It brings out the hopeful aspects of life."

Bibi Potts, SGI's women's division chapter leader for the Heights, University Circle, East Cleveland and Mount Pleasant, said that SGI "offers the opportunity of diversity of thoughts and opinions to be considered before we make any decisions." Potts, 63, has lived in Cleveland Heights for the past 30 years.

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.

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Aug. 15 fashion event at Nighttown is dedicated to women's empowerment

Laura Potter

For a second year, Ten Thousand Villages in Cleveland Heights and Dress for Success Cleveland are partnering for a fun event that brings together fashion and fundraising. The event also combines a passion for fashion with the empowerment of women. It will be held on Aug. 15 at Nighttown, from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Dress for Success will showcase high-end fashions as the group members purge their closets. The clothing will be paired with accessories from Ten Thousand Villages.

From noon to 1 p.m., Traci McBride of TeeMcBee Image Consulting will host the fashion presentation. She will focus on how to dress for different body types using versatile pieces of clothing. McBride will explain the seven different body types and show how staple pieces in your closet can be worn in multiple ways. Guests are welcome to ask questions during the presentation and can purchase items afterward.

McBride said she is able to see in others what they don't see in themselves. "My purpose is to give confidence and influence to others," she said.

From 1-3 p.m., both organiza-

tions will sell merchandise in their pop-up shops. All items from Dress for Success have been donated but are not able to be used in its program to help women with appropriate clothing for job interviews. The pop-up shop will offer designer wear for beyond the office—fur coats, evening gowns and more—all at \$10 each.

Ten Thousand Villages works with more than 130 artisan groups; more than 70 percent are women working in the poorest of regions. The fair wages they earn support healthcare, food and supplies for their families and ensure that their children are educated and not victims of forced labor.

The event will open at 11:30 a.m. Tickets are \$10 each or four group tickets for \$35. A cash bar will be available for brunch cocktails, with coffee and tea provided by the two organizations. Nighttown is offering guests a 15 percent discount on their lunch with proof of ticket purchase.

Call Melony Butler at Dress for Success Cleveland at 216-881-6048 to purchase tickets in advance, as seating will be limited.

Laura Potter-Sadowski is executive director of Ten Thousand Villages in Cleveland Heights. She is active on the Ohio Fair Trade Expo Committee and the Cedar Fairmount SID Marketing Committee.

August bicycle rides feature gardens, ice cream and art



LIFE CYCLE

Heights Bicycle Coalition

Join the Heights Bicycle Coalition (HBC) and community members for fun and relaxing bike rides in August. Cycling is a great way to expand your world, meet new people and have fun. All ride participants are asked to sign waivers; helmets are mandatory and bike locks are encouraged. You'll need a bike light if you are pedaling in the dark.

Aug. 1, 10 a.m. to noon: Back to the Farm, Back to Nature.

This ride begins at the Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Arch, at the southeast corner of Coventry Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard, and will feature rain gardens, bioswales (rain collection areas), permaculture (sustainable growing practices), community gardens, "Food not Lawns," and an opportunity to meet a new generation of gardeners. [Rain date: Aug. 2, 1-3 p.m.]

Aug. 6, 6 p.m.: Family Fun, Ice Cream and "E.T."

At 6 p.m. a Cedar Lee Ice Cream Social, at Katz Club, 1975 Lee Road, will feature complementary ice cream, rides on the Euclid Beach Rocket Car, face painting, cupcake decorating and crafts. At 7:45 p.m.,

participants can join in a family bike ride to Coventry School for an outdoor screening of the movie "E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial," at 9 p.m.

At 8 p.m., the Natural History Museum will present a program, Is Anybody Out There, with telescopes and sky-watching. A playground is also on-site.

Ice cream social sponsors are Katz Club, *Edible Cleveland* and Cedar Lee Special Improvement District (SID). The movie and sky-watching program sponsors are Coventry Village SID and Cleveland Museum of Natural History. The ride leader is Greg Jolivet and family.

Aug. 20, 7 p.m./Aug. 22, 10 a.m. to noon: Public Art in Cleveland Heights – 2000 to the Present.

On Aug. 20, Peggy Spaeth, former director of Heights Arts, will give a talk on public art in Cleveland Heights in the Heights Arts Gallery, 2175 Lee Road.

The Aug. 22 bike ride will tour the art locations highlighted in Spaeth's talk. At some sites, the artists will discuss their work. [Rain date for the bike tour: Aug. 23, 1:30-3:30 p.m.]

Registration is required for the Aug. 20 talk, but not for the bike ride. To register, and for more information, visit www.heightsarts.org.

The Heights Bicycle Coalition was formed in the spring of 2010 and works to encourage citizens to ride their bicycles for fun, fitness and transportation. Joy Henderson wrote this month's column.



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Heights Green Machine wins Pony League title

Michael Adams

In thrilling but ultimately convincing fashion, Cleveland Heights beat the South Euclid Indians 26-8 on July 17 to capture the 2015 Quad-City Pony League championship for the 14U age group.

The win did not come easily, as South Euclid claimed an early lead. Down by two runs with two outs in the bottom of the third inning, Heights scored 12 runs to take a commanding lead and never looked back.

Taking over for starter Justin Rink, pitchers Owen Lang and Jake Rzepka—backed by solid defense—held South Euclid to zero runs the remainder of the game.

Coached by Jeff Rink, the team



The Heights team used a big inning to get ahead and stay ahead in the championship game.

finished the regular season with an 11-1 record and was seeded first in the post-season tournament. “I was really impressed with this squad, especially after they fell behind

early,” Rink said after the game. “A lot of these guys have been together for a long time, been competitive but have not won a championship until today. I am thrilled they ended

their pre-high school careers on such a high note.”

Rink was assisted by coaches Chris Thomas and Mike Iammarino.

Calling themselves the Green Machine, the team members are: Justin Rink, Owen Lang, Michael Iammarino, Tristen Truitt, Ned Trivisanno, Kinsly Trivisanno, Patrick Kelley, Andrew Pecoraro, Jake Rzepka, Peter Eyerman, Suki Truitt and Luke Karboski.

The Quad-City League provides a travel opportunity for the older age groups of the recreation baseball leagues in Cleveland Heights, South Euclid, Mayfield Heights, Lyndhurst and Beachwood.

Michael Adams is a Cleveland Heights resident.

Heights student attends congress of future scientists

Kate Gillooly

Alex Gillooly, a rising sophomore at Cleveland Heights High School, attended the Congress of Future Science and Technology Leaders, held in Boston, June 28-30.



Alex Gillooly

The congress is an honors-only program for high school students who are passionate about science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM). Its purpose is to honor, inspire, motivate and direct the top students in the country who aspire to be scientists and technologists, to stay true to their dream and, after the event, to provide resources to help them reach their goals.

Astronaut Buzz Aldrin, science director of the National Academy of Future Scientists and Technologists, nominated Gillooly to represent Cleveland Heights High School, based on Gillooly's academic achievement, leadership potential and passion for science and technology. Gillooly enjoyed Aldrin's Q&A with congress participants.

During the three-day congress, Gillooly joined students from across the country and heard Nobel laureates and National Medal of Science winners talk about leading scientific research. He was inspired by fellow teen science prodigies; and learned about cutting-edge advances and the future of science and technology.

“I enjoyed this inspirational experience—listening to people my own age speaking about their academic achievements,” Gillooly said.

“The speakers said, ‘Failure is inevitable. But with motivation, you can succeed.’ One speaker, Shree Bose, said, ‘If you are truly interested in the subject, failure won't matter and you'll keep going.’ As I have reflected on this advice, I realize how it will help narrow down the fields of science that I want to pursue.” Gillooly currently is considering a career in genetic engineering.

“This is a crucial time in America when we need more nimble-minded and creative scientists and technologists who are even better prepared for a future that is changing exponentially,” said Richard Rossi, executive director of the National Academy of Future Scientists and Technologists. “Focused, bright and determined students like Alex Gillooly are our future and he deserves all the mentoring and guidance we can give him.”

The academy offers free services and programs to students who have the desire to learn more about their future in science or technology. Its services and programs include online social networks through which these future scientists and technologists can communicate; opportunities for students to be guided and mentored by tech and science leaders; and communications for parents and students on college acceptance and finances, skills acquisition, internships and career guidance.

Kate Gillooly is a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights and mother to Alex and Benjamin, a 2015 Heights High graduate. She and her husband, Greg, both grew up, and met, in Cleveland Heights and are grateful to raise their family here.

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Felisha Gould named CH-UH district assistant superintendent

Angee Shaker

The Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District has named Felisha Gould as its new assistant superintendent. Her term will begin Aug. 1. Gould succeeds Andrea Celico, the new superintendent of the Bedford City School District, who came to the CH-UH district as assistant superintendent in July 2013.

Gould comes to the position with extensive experience and leadership skills. She began her career as a high school biology teacher in Akron Public Schools before being promoted to middle school principal and then high school principal.

Gould has received a number of awards, including Akron Urban



Felisha Gould

COURTESY CH-UH CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

League Educator of the Year, Akron Alliance of Black School Educators Outstanding Administrator, Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators Middle School Principal of the Year, and the Ohio Alliance of Black School Educators Principal and Student Appreciation awards. Gould earned her B.A. in biology from Talladega College, and holds her master's degrees in biology, secondary education and educational administration from the University of Akron.

"We are very lucky to have someone as talented and experienced as Mrs. Gould coming to our district," Superintendent Talisa Dixon stated, "I believe she'll make an invaluable addition to our Tiger Nation family and we are eager for her to get started."

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

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Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education Meeting highlights

JUNE 16, 2015
Board Member Eric Coble was absent.



Jesse Lange

Superintendent Talisa Dixon introduced Jesse Lange, newly hired vocal music teacher.

son, parent liaison at CHHS; and Cynthia Booker, public relations liaison.

Sustainability presentation

Laura Steinbrink of HLMS Solutions presented a sustainability report on the high school facilities renovation. The report included an overview of the project, decision-making criteria, 2014 eco-goals, and a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or green building design) update. Sustainability includes meeting the needs of the present without compromising future generations, and preserving resources.

The report discussed the following five goals based on the 2014 intensive brainstorming meeting on achieving sustainable design:

- Achieve a net-zero-ready building, reducing kBTU consumption. Computer use, freezers, coolers, the pool, outside wall exposure, solar panels, and carbon footprint studies all are considered in this goal.
- Build a 100 percent on-site stormwater management system where stormwater is reused.
- Achieve zero waste in construction and operations, and eliminate food [waste] and solid waste.
- Design and operate the building for human health, emphasizing clean indoor air.
- Design and operate the building to be a teaching tool for sustainability.

Public comment on the report

Six community members commented, expressing concerns about the lack of hard numbers showing that the sustainability plan will save energy. The board previously voted for a hybrid geothermal system and questions were asked concerning the potential savings. Roof water and rainwater were discussed, particularly how it will be saved and used because water rates will be increasing. One community member was disappointed with the report, and indicated [that] various partnerships should be explored to optimize opportunities. Using the school as a learning tool was encouraged, and it was suggested that an engineering teacher or other personnel be appointed to develop this program and supervise sustainability. Reducing food waste was also encouraged.

LWV Observer: Lillian Houser.

JULY 7, 2015
All board members were present.

Awards and recognitions

The board recognized the following:

- Alex Gillooly, who attended the Congress of Future Science and Technology Leaders this summer in Boston, representing Heights High.
- A \$2,500 grant presented to Gearity Garden by Chartwells, which promotes outdoor learning. High school students worked six weeks in this program.
- The CH-UH City School District's communication team, which received National School Public Relations Association and Ohio School Public Relations Association awards. Those recognized were: Angee Shaker, director of communications; Cathan Bricker, administrative assistant of communication; Joy Hender-

Public comments

Environment and sustainability: The board was thanked for working with the community and for the team effort in the project for sustainability. There was also a request to maintain the school garden at Gearity and to engage the community in sustainability projects. Another community member, an engineer, offered his knowledge of solar power to encourage its use at the high school. The board was asked to use outdoor environmental space responsibly.

Salaries: Although sympathetic to organized labor, a community member expressed an opinion that the salaries of the district's staff are much higher than those in the public sector, and [suggested that] these should be looked at when the levy is proposed.

Release of public records: the board was reprimanded for not releasing public records in a timely fashion. The board responded that the records in question were released, but [it] would discuss the issue further at another time.

New hires

The following new personnel were introduced:

- John Fullerman, assistant principal, CHHS
- Brigitte Pronty, Oxford Elementary School principal
- Dwight Hollins, CHHS supervisor of athletics
- Karen Battle, girls basketball coach
- Jeremy Holmes, boys basketball coach

Leadership for Change course proposal

The board heard a second reading of the new course proposal, Leadership for Change, for Heights High for the 2015-16 school year. This course would provide student leaders [with] the structure, opportunity, resources and curriculum for developing leadership skills. Students enrolled in this one-credit, elective course would work to implement schoolwide service projects, orientation and social events, and mentoring opportunities with underclassmen. This course would help build a positive, student-led culture and is needed to build the necessary skills in student leaders so they can help facilitate a positive transition to the high school's relocation to the Wiley campus.

Food service agreement

The board authorized a food service management agreement with AVI Foodsystems Inc. This is a local service that considers healthy eating a challenge and will work toward this goal.

Library budget

The board approved the financial reports and the alternative tax budget for the CH-UH Public Library System.

LWV Observer: Lillian Houser.

Look for earlier and often expanded postings of meeting summaries online at www.heightsobserver.org. See disclaimer on page 7.

Teachers union president offers back-to-school tips for parents

Ari Klein

As schools gear up for a new school year, CH Teachers Union President Ari Klein offers back-to-school tips for all parents:

The new school year always comes quicker than anyone anticipates. Before summer break slips by, there are small things that parents and guardians can do to help their children transition successfully back into a school routine.

For children entering a new school, as well as younger children, getting familiar with the school grounds and location can be very helpful in allaying some natural anxiety about going to school. If there is a playground on the school property, it might help younger children adjust to the school just by being on the grounds and taking some ownership through gaining a sense of familiarity.

Consider practicing the route to school with your children if they have to walk or take a bus. Don't

assume an older child will know how to get to school. Timing how long it takes to get to school will help you plan everything, from when to wake up in the morning and when to leave the house to get to school. Getting your child to school before the first bell will ensure that your child has time to get to a locker or classroom to prepare for the day. Most students need time to prepare mentally for learning.

Most schools make available a supply list and some prepare summer reading assignments. Find out if your school provides this kind of information, so you can be equipped early. Summer reading assignments for CH-UH public schools can be found at www.chuh.org/summerreadinglists.aspx. Students who come to school unprepared will have a tougher time catching up, and may make a poor first impression on a teacher. Even for students without a summer reading assignment, it is incredibly helpful to read over the summer. Students who do not read

over the summer slip backward in their education. Our Heights libraries and librarians can help guide families to great choices that are appropriate for children of all ages and abilities.

I wish summer math was assigned as well, but there are opportunities for kids to solve practical problems around the house to keep up their basic skills, such as following a recipe or woodworking projects. Don't discount video games that provide math practice and can be fun when it is raining outside.

At least one week before school starts, get out of the summer routines and re-establish school bedtime, waking and meal schedules. Setting alarms, eating breakfast, and starting the day will save a lot of trouble once school starts. Talk with your children about why it is important to be well-rested for learning and school work so they understand there is a reason and that it is not a punishment.

Look for information coming from your child's school and read it carefully. Usually there are health forms, bell schedules, and important calendar events to record. Pay attention to changes in rules, notes about proper attire, bus schedules, and a host of other details that parents need. Hopefully your school offers volunteer opportunities for parents—volunteering is a great way to see how things work at school and get to know the staff.

Raising children who are ready to be successful for school takes work and planning. Two good sources of information are the National Association of School Psychologists (www.nasponline.org/families/index.aspx) and the Amercian Federation of Teachers tips for parents (www.aft.org/education/publications/resources-parents).

Ari Klein is a lifelong community member, math teacher at Cleveland Heights High School, and president of the Cleveland Heights Teachers Union.

New vocal music teacher named for Heights High

Angee Shaker

The Cleveland Heights - University Heights City School District has hired Jesse Lange to be the new vocal music teacher at Cleveland Heights High School.



Jesse Lange

COURTESY CHUH CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Falls High School. In this role, he was tasked with facilitating the successful retention and recruitment of vocal music students to build a flourishing program. During his tenure with Cuyahoga Falls, Lange adapted the course of study to include four curricular choirs, three extracurricular choirs, a voice class and an opera and musical theater performance course. He directed six successful musical productions, filling the roles of drama director, vocal director and pit orchestra director.

Lange graduated magna cum laude from the University of Akron with a Bachelor of Music in music education. He received his master's degree in choral conducting, also from the University of Akron.

Craig McCaughey, the previous vocal music teacher, recently retired after 15 years with the district.

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

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Colorado State University
Cleveland State University
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DePaul University
Drexel University
Duquesne University

Eastern Michigan University
Georgia State University
Grace College
Hampton University
Howard University
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University of Wisconsin
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Washington Jefferson University
West Virginia University
Westminster
Wheeling Jesuit University
Wittenberg University
Wright State University
Xavier University
Xavier University of Louisiana
Youngstown State University

School social workers help students and parents

Carmen Kottha

For some students, life gets in the way of academic success. School social workers are charged with reducing or removing non-academic barriers to academic success. As families prepare for the start of a new school year, Reaching Heights—a nonprofit that supports student achievement and teacher recognition, and works to connect the community to our public schools—asked Carmen Kottha to describe the role of social workers like herself:

As a school social worker, I'm taken aback by all the services and activities we provide for the students and families of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District. There really is no typical day in social work. We constantly apply our skills and adapt our time to meet the needs of the various schools, students and families. We work with teachers, principals, psychologists, nurses and guidance counselors.

Every social worker in our district monitors attendance for excessive absences. When a student misses instruction, it's difficult to learn, and a student's lack of attendance often indicates other needs. Perhaps a student is missing school because of transportation problems, housing issues or the need for a winter coat. School social workers reach out to help families address any barriers that are impacting their children's attendance and overall success.



CH-UH school social workers (from left) Josephine Shelton-Townes, Carmen Kottha, Faith Gordon, Alison Craig.

As part of each school's student assistance team, we find ways to help students who struggle with behavior issues and discipline, and create classroom management problems for teachers. Social workers help plan and implement academic interventions and create manageable academic goals. We complete referrals for behavioral health services, make home visits and connect families with community resources.

All district social workers are credentialed with master's degrees and clinical mental health backgrounds. We are state-certified and licensed to practice. We know how to assess and support students in crisis.

School social workers help students and families who struggle with mental health, substance

abuse, or grief and loss. Children and adolescents may need help with family strife, risky behavior, anxiety, depression, self-harm, peer pressure and bullying. We help create emotionally safe schools, facilitate peer mediations, and sometimes join a parent at the hospital when a child is ill.

Heights school social workers may assist with the logistics of state testing, and play a role in the special education identification and re-evaluation processes.

We also support many extra-curricular programs, and helped establish Faiths Alive, an interfaith collaboration with local church and synagogue communities who adopt

our schools to provide strong supportive relationships. Social workers ensure that the content of these community partnerships remains secular while assisting students and families in need.

The school social work department aims to strengthen the district's working relationships with regional partners and connect with local mental health providers, children and family services, the Family to Family Collaborative and the Juvenile Court system. One of our school social workers is the Youth Mental Health First Aid Certified Instructor/Trainer for the school district. School social workers also created the Cleveland Heights threat assessment, and bullying policies and procedures.

Students and families should contact their school principal with any questions about receiving services from their school social worker. School phone numbers and principals' e-mail addresses can be found at www.chuh.org, or by calling 216-371-7171.

Carmen Kottha has been a social worker in the Heights schools for the past five years. She worked with the night school program and the Emotional Disturbance Unit Classroom at Heights High. She earned a B.S. in psychology from John Carroll University and an M.S.W. from Tulane University in New Orleans.

New Heights High assistant principal is former CHPD officer

Angee Shaker

The Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District has named John Fullerman as a new assistant principal of Cleveland Heights High School. Fellow assistant principals are Jane Simeri, Alisa Lawson-McKinnie, and Joseph Nicklos (former Oxford Elementary School principal), with Zoraba Ross as head principal.

Fullerman was previously the principal of Summit Academy Secondary School in Canton, where he was also head coach of the basketball team and director of student council. Prior to entering the education field, initially as a teacher, Fullerman served as a Cleveland Heights police officer, 2003-09.

He obtained his B.A. from Myers University, then secured his master's in education from John Carroll University. Fullerman also completed Cleveland State University's principal licensure program, and is in the process of finishing the advanced curriculum and instruction program from Wright State University.

"We're lucky to have John Fullerman coming to our district, as someone with so much unique experience in both education as well

as in protecting our community," said Superintendent Talisa L. Dixon. "His leadership skills and passion for Cleveland Heights will make him a great addition to our Tiger Nation family."

Under the high school's new academic structure for fall 2015, small schools will be eliminated in favor of a more comprehensive structure. In addition to the head principal, there will be four assistant principals, each of whom will be responsible for specific grade levels and content areas to focus on teaching and learning.

The counseling services department will work under a "house system" model in which counselors will work in teams with case managers and social workers. Their services will be provided to students from specific grade levels, and incoming freshman students will work with the same counselors through their senior year.

"I'm very excited to embark on this new path for our high school," said Zoraba Ross, administrative principal. "I believe, under this new model, students are able to obtain a more targeted and individualized education experience. I believe this change is very much a step in the right direction."

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



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Tips for avoiding scams



SENIOR SCENE

Judith Eugene

It's a good idea for people of all ages to be aware of potential scams and cons, but senior adults can be especially vulnerable. Because many seniors own their homes and have accumulated retirement savings, they are a popular target for con artists. Older adults also grew up in a time when people were more trusting, considerate and polite. Con artists, also known as "scammers," attempt to take advantage of these traits to scam seniors out of their money.

Scams are perpetrated by phone, mail, e-mail, text message, social media and door-to-door contact. Scammers are very good at making their targets feel guilty about saying no. They typically act very friendly, call you by your first name and pretend to care about your family and your health situation, while making you feel guilty for not trusting them.

Scammers also try to confuse you into accepting their offer. They will talk fast, avoid questions, give incomplete or confusing explanations and pressure you into accepting immediately. If you are not completely clear about and comfortable with what they are proposing, either say no or tell them you need time to think it over. Always consult with a trusted friend or family member before you decide.

According to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), common telephone scams include claiming that you have won a prize or a lottery, offering free or low-cost products or vacations, promoting business investments that have

low risk and high return, offering low-cost loans or credit cards, and asking for charitable donations.

When you receive one of these calls, the FTC recommends that you ask the person's name, company name and what they are selling. Also ask them to send you their offer in writing (including all documents they want you to sign), and tell them you will get back to them after you have time to review the information. This is not being rude. It is being practical.

The Housing Research and Advocacy Center (HRAC) warns of several popular housing scams, including fraudulent mortgages and reverse mortgages, home equity loans, foreclosure and debt assistance, and home repair offers that require large upfront payments. They recommend that you ask lots of questions, research all companies you plan to do business with, and get estimates or offers from several different companies.

Remember never to give your social security number, bank account number or credit card information to anyone who contacts you—even if they are asking you to "confirm" the information—no matter how legitimate or official the offer seems. You should initiate all financial transactions and make sure you are dealing with reputable individuals and companies.

Finally, remember this old saying: if something sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

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

Seniors invited to annual HRRC expo on Sept. 1

Becky Stager

Home Repair Resource Center (HRRC) invites seniors to attend its annual Senior Expo, to be held on Tuesday, Sept. 1, 10 am to 2:30 p.m., at the Cleveland Heights Senior Activity Center, 1 Monticello Blvd.

Workshops and exhibitors will help seniors plan ahead to protect their biggest investment—their home. Speakers will discuss such topics as understanding homeowner's insurance and how to use it, deciding which home improvements will have the biggest effect on a home's resale value, options for using home equity to pay for repairs and improvements, and avoiding scams by unscrupulous lenders and



contractors.

No reservations are required for the Senior Expo, which is free and open to residents of all communities. Light refreshments will be provided.

For additional information, call Wesley Walker at 216-381-6100, ext. 22.

Becky Stager has been on the staff of HRRC since 1989 and currently serves as marketing and development associate. Visit www.hrcc-ch.org or call 216-381-6100 for more information on programs and services.

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Library and HRRC offer programs for ‘heroic’ homeowners

Sheryl Banks

With roughly half of its housing built before 1939, Cleveland Heights is a city with an older-than-average housing stock. These old homes are a great source of pride for many homeowners and residents, with 11 neighborhoods and 10 residential buildings in the National Register of Historic Places. Keeping these homes in good shape does require effort, though, and some residents aren’t sure how to go about maintaining these older homes.

That’s why the Home Repair Resource Center (HRRC) decided to team up with the Cleveland

Heights-University Heights Public Library System on a series of home repair classes: Heroic Homeowning. The series will provide basic information to get homeowners started, and cover budgeting, working with contractors, and simple repairs that most owners can do themselves.

“The library’s summer reading theme is all about heroes,” said Benjamin Faller, HRRC executive director. “Taking care of an older home presents a unique set of challenges and joys. Learning how to take good care of your home—especially an older home—is truly a heroic undertaking. It keeps our community strong, and makes it a

desirable place to live for both new and current residents.”

The Heroic Homeowning series is free and open to all, and takes place on three Thursdays in August, at 7 p.m., at the Lee Road Library, 2345 Lee Road (216-932-3600):

- Aug. 6 – The Other Costs of Homeownership. This program looks at the costs of keeping your home in good shape and suggests strategies for budgeting, saving, and paying for upkeep and improvements. Learn how planning ahead can help.
- Aug. 13 – Working with Contractors. This session will cover the ins and outs of working with con-

tractors: how to find good ones, how to compare bids, and how to make sure you’re getting what you bargain for.

- Aug. 20 – Doing It Yourself. Even if you’re new to working with tools, there are home repairs that you can handle. This program will provide instructions for some basic and common repairs, and discuss strategies for building your skills, planning your project, and completing it successfully.

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



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Library to host Digital Bookmobile Aug. 8

Julia Murphy

On Saturday, Aug. 8, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., the Lee Road Library will host the Digital Bookmobile, a full-sized, 18-wheel tractor trailer that is a high-tech update on the traditional bookmobile. The vehicle is equipped with Internet-connected PCs, high-definition monitors, premium sound systems, and a variety of portable media players, all of which will help visitors explore the library’s digital service. Interactive learning stations will give visitors an opportunity to search the library’s digital media collection; use supported mobile devices; and sample eBooks, audiobooks, and videos.

“The Digital Bookmobile’s visit gives us a fun way to promote our extensive digital collection,” said Jackie Mayse, technology trainer at the Lee Road Library. “A lot of our customers don’t realize that alongside the library’s physical collection of books, music and movies is a whole collection of digital media that can be accessed at any time by visiting the library’s website.”

“We sometimes think of our eMedia collection as our fifth branch,” continued Mayse. “It’s a great way for people who are traveling or aren’t physically able to get to one of our buildings to access our materials.”



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The eMedia collection is not just for adults, as it also includes children’s videos, chapter books, and even narrated picture books.

For those unable to drop in on

the Digital Bookmobile on Aug. 8, there are other options to learn about the library’s eMedia collection. The library’s tech trainers lead classes on how to use eMedia on phones, computers, or e-readers, and also offer tutorials to give one-on-one help with setting up eMedia accounts. Class schedules are available at www.heightslibrary.org or in the library’s *Check Us Out* program guide.

To learn more about the Digital Bookmobile’s visit, call 216-932-3600, and to explore the library’s eMedia collection, visit emedia.clevnet.org.

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

What’s going on at your library?

In August, Heights Libraries looks outside, with programs that explore seed saving, home repair, geocaching and permaculture.

Coventry Village Library
1925 Coventry Road, 216-321-3400

Saturday, Aug. 29, 2 p.m.
Hands-on Seed Saving. Saving seeds is beneficial for your wallet as well as your harvests. Staff and community members will work together to harvest seeds from Coventry’s Collaborative Garden, to save them for next year’s crop.

Lee Road Library
2345 Lee Road, 216-932-3600

Thursday, Aug. 20, 7 p.m.
Heroic Homeowning: Doing It Yourself. Even if you’re new to a hammer and wrenches, there are home repairs that you can handle. This program will explore a few basic and com-

mon repairs, and discuss strategies for building your skills, planning your project and completing it successfully.

Noble Neighborhood Library
2800 Noble Road, 216-291-5665

Saturday, Aug. 8, 2 p.m.
Geocaching Exploration. Learn about geocaching and go on a group geocaching hunt with the librarians.

University Heights Library
13866 Cedar Road, 216-321-4700

Tuesday, Aug. 11, 7 p.m.
Permaculture From the Ground Up: Summer Meet-Up. Sustainable garden expert Mari Keating hosts a midseason program for gardeners, especially those who are using the permaculture system of agriculture. Bring questions, comments and photos for discussion and idea-swapping. Registration begins July 28.

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Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library Board

Meeting highlights



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All board members were present.

Architect for University Heights Library renovation

CLBH Design Inc. has been chosen from eight presenters as the architect for the University Heights Library renovation. Principals in the practice, Marc Bittinger and Michael Liezert, have experience with library design for many Cuyahoga County library systems. Their next step is to prepare three design schemes with price points ranging from \$1 million to \$4.5 million. A timeline for the project will follow.

New circulation services manager

The board approved the appointment of Ty Emerson as circulation services manager at an annual salary of \$53,019. Emerson has a background in customer service and employee training. He's had academic library experience at Johns Hopkins University. Outside of work, he holds a leadership position with the Cleveland Composers Guild.

Aquos Board

The board approved the expense of \$8,554 from the technology fund to purchase an Aquos Board for classroom use. Technology Coordinator Matt Hoffman explained the interactive features of this 70-inch wall-mounted, touch-screen monitor.

Balanced Scorecard review

Carlton Sears introduced himself to the board and staff. A former library director and facilitator, he will lead the work for the Balanced Scorecard/Strategic Planning process for 2016-17.

Deputy Director Kim DeNero-Ackroyd presented highlights of the Balanced Scorecard Measures of Success for May 2015, focusing on:

- The acquisition of the New York Times Digital Database.
- Partnering with CWRU, YMCA, and the Sisters of Charity Foundation to prevent at-risk teens from becoming homeless. Library staffer Monica Wilson will assist in researching the number of such teens.

- Youth Services Department visits to schools to promote the summer reading program.
- Training of four new Book Bike volunteers.

Friends board seeks new members

President Louisa Oliver highlighted the success of the mega book sale in early May. She talked about the challenges involved in disposing of the books that don't sell, and called attention to the mural created by Heights High art students in the Harvey and Friends bookstore on the second floor of the library. The organization is looking for new board members.

May public service report highlights:

- With May as National Preservation Month, the library's partnerships with the CH Landmark Commission and the CH Historical Society resulted in two lectures: "The Several Lives of Severance Town Center" and "Landscaping by Design."
- The spring series of the Cedar-Coventry author series concluded with author

Mary Doria Russell speaking about her new book *Epitaph: a Novel of the O.K. Corral*.

- The mobile classroom took the basic computer class, on using the mouse, to Judson residents.
- The mobile computer lab took the intro to computers class to residents of Musicians Towers, and the MS Word Part 1 class to the Cleveland Heights Senior Center.
- At University Heights Library, The Kulas Foundation Steinway piano was tuned and is ready for use in programs as well as for practice by community members.
- Associate Chris Fries hosted the annual Free Comic Book Day for 105 participants who came to play games and receive comic books. Many dressed up as their favorite comic book characters.

LWV Observer: Anne S. McFarland.

Look for earlier and often expanded postings of meeting summaries online at www.heightsobserver.org. See disclaimer on page 7.

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The porches of August



SONGS AND STORIES

David Budin

I was sitting on my deck, at the back of my house, communicating on Facebook, when something I read reminded me of the front porches of old, and how, when I remember the one on the house where I grew up, it makes me think of August.

Why August? I'm not sure. Possibly because, after spending about 10 weeks out there, I became aware of the subtle hints of the impending change of seasons, rather than—during the rest of the year, when I stayed inside much more—the big, obvious ones. Being out there every day, I'd notice signs, like the slight thinning of the leaves on our big trees that in June and July had blocked much of the sun from our west-facing upstairs porch. Or maybe it was because I knew, every year from the age of 5 through 18, that the new school year was only weeks, and then days, away, and how I dreaded going back to school every one of those years.

Our house, on Belmar, near Mayfield Road, was not a big one, but the porch stretched across the entire width of the structure, making the porch relatively large. For



1958 comic book (left); 1959 Sport magazine.

most of the time I lived there, in the 1950s and '60s, the porch was furnished with dark-green-painted wicker pieces that had belonged to my grandmother, probably made in the '30s or '40s. Besides the couch, two big chairs, table and planter (which my mother had turned into a beverage holder, sometimes filling the galvanized-steel insert with ice and bottles of pop), there was also a "glider," a suspended couch that swung back and forth.

Until my teenage years, I kept to myself a lot, and I spent most of my summer vacation time on that porch—including sleeping out there almost every night. My mother had put up chicken wire, from the top of the porch's three-foot wall to the ceiling, convinced that a kid would fall off the porch. Because the chicken wire was always there, we never had the opportunity to find out if she was correct.

At different stages and ages, I spent my time out there reading comic books and Mad magazines

(which I bought at one of Coventry Road's three drugstores—Coventry Drugs, Uberstine's and Merit Drugs), sorting through that year's baseball cards, practicing guitar and listening to the radio. These devices started out as big wooden pieces of furniture and, over those years, became smaller plastic boxes and then hand-held transistor radios. There were always one or two stations in Cleveland that played rock 'n' roll, with great DJs like the Mad Daddy (Pete Meyers), Bill Randle, Johnny Holiday and Jerry G.

One of Coventry's drug stores, Merit, also sold records; a metal rack featured the top-40 singles of the day, which they sold at three for a dollar, meaning you got six songs for one dollar, and since most albums then contained 12 songs, that meant you could buy an album's worth for two dollars, which was about what albums cost at that time.

It was a great day, in mid-August 1957, when I was 8, and a visiting relative handed me a dollar. I walked up to Merit Drugs and bought "Searchin'" by the Coasters, "That'll Be the Day" by Buddy Holly and "Bye Bye, Love" by the Everly Brothers. I came home and played them, many times, on the little record player I had dragged out onto the porch.

When I was 18, the last year I lived with my family, we moved from upstairs in one house to downstairs in the house next door. There was a reason for that, but when people asked my father about it, he would usually say, "It's just the gypsy in

us." By then we had a better record player—stereo!—with portable speakers that I'd pull through the front window onto the new porch. Now I was playing albums, not singles, by the likes of Bob Dylan, Ian & Sylvia, the Byrds and the Beatles. Friends and bandmates would come over after band practices or gigs, and we'd sit out on the porch and talk all night until my father, a very early riser, left for work, which reminded us to go to sleep—on the porch.

But something happened. Sometime between playing Dylan records on the front porch, while dreading the new school year, and when I had kids of my own, we all moved to the back yard. We put decks on the backs of our houses. And we stopped hanging out in our front yards, where we used to see all of our neighbors. Now we see only the people we plan to see, and only at times we've determined in advance—except in our other neighborhood, Facebook. And we're missing those spontaneous chats with people, where we used to pick up news and gossip—though we now do that on Facebook, too.

I use Facebook—a lot—and there's much about it that I find useful and enjoyable. But it will just never be the front porch.

David Budin is a freelance writer for national and local publications, the former editor of Cleveland Magazine and Northern Ohio Live, an author, and a professional musician and comedian. His writing focuses on the arts and, especially, pop-music history.

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Public Art talk and bike tour planned for August

Mary Ryan

For a community of fewer than 50,000 people, Cleveland Heights is home to quite a few public art installations. The city refers to itself as “home to the arts,” so it seems fitting that public artworks can be found in parks, on street corners, at schools and libraries, and elsewhere around town.

When Heights Bicycle Coalition (HBC) president and Cleveland Heights City Council Member Mary Dunbar contacted former Heights Arts executive director Peggy Spaeth about leading a bicycle tour of public art, she consented enthusiastically. Instead of talking and riding at the same time, however, Dunbar and Spaeth will present a two-part event—an illustrated public art talk at Heights Arts’s newly renovated gallery on Thursday, Aug. 20, at 7 p.m., and an accompanying bicycle tour on Saturday, Aug. 22, from 10 a.m. to noon.

In the past 15 years, Heights Arts has helped facilitate the installation of



The Coventry Arch was installed in 2001.

11 permanent and four temporary public artworks—primarily in Cleveland Heights business districts—so there is plenty to see. “Part of Heights Arts’s mission is to make the creativity of our residents visible,” said Spaeth, who helped establish the nonprofit community arts organization in 2000. “We knew we had a lot of artists in the community and felt that the city itself should tangibly reflect the creativity of its residents. Public art was just one of the initiatives, along

with streetscapes, signage, and the gallery on Lee Road.” From 2000 to 2013, three permanent murals were created, along with a tile mosaic, six streetscapes consisting of artist-designed furniture and signage, and one site-specific sculpture.

“Our initial public art project was developed just as Heights Arts was starting,” Spaeth explained. “I was contacted by Coventry to help raise money for a soccer field, which wasn’t my area of expertise, so we started with the Coventry Arch. We had a statewide competition for the project, which was ultimately awarded to Barry Gunderson, a professor of sculpture at Kenyon College.” The aluminum arch, with its whimsical, abstract figures, was designed as “a symbol of greeting, accommodation, and celebration of differences,” in line with the Cleveland Heights community spirit. Most of the public art projects were funded through grants, gifts from individuals and businesses, and fundraisers. The arch, for example, benefited from the generous help of Tom Fello, owner of Tommy’s restaurant, which has been sponsoring an annual New Year’s Day pancake

breakfast to benefit community arts programming since 2001.

While the Aug. 22 bicycle tour will focus on permanent public art installations around Cleveland Heights—starting at the Cedar Lee mini-park next to Heights Arts and pedaling through the Coventry and Cedar Fairmount neighborhoods—the hour-long illustrated talk on Aug. 20 will also highlight four temporary art projects that are no longer on view. A public art street map, with information on all the works facilitated by Heights Arts from 2000 to 2015, is being published in conjunction with the talk and tour. Both events are free and open to the public. Because seating is limited in the gallery, please RSVP for the talk by calling 216-371-3457.

More information on HBC and other sponsored rides can be found in an article in this issue of the *Observer*. No registration is required for the Aug. 22 ride, but helmets are mandatory. For more information on public art in Cleveland Heights, visit www.heightsarts.org.

Mary Ryan is the marketing and communications coordinator at Heights Arts.

Heights artist wins illustration award



Christoph’s award-winning illustration is featured in a children’s book about Gordon Parks.

Bradley Eckert

Heights illustrator Jamey Christoph received an Award of Excellence from *Communication Arts* for his work on the children’s book *Gordon Parks: How the Photographer Captured Black and White America*. The publication’s 56th Illustration Annual features an illustration from the book, which depicts impoverished families living in the shadow of the U.S. Capitol.

The international competition reviewed more than 4,300 appli-

cants and awarded Christoph its top award for illustrations in published books.

Christoph, a resident of Cleveland Heights since 2002, currently resides in Grant Deming’s Forest Hill Neighborhood.

Information about his children’s books and illustrations are available at www.jameychristoph.com.

Bradley Eckert, partner of the artist, is a resident of Cleveland Heights, and a medical school student.

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Heights ensemble *Elégie* to perform at Cain Park

Peg Weissbrod

The male vocal quartet *Elégie*, four young men who met while they were students in Heights High's Vocal Music Department, will open the show for Black Violin at Cain Park on Friday, Aug. 14, at 7 p.m.

Elégie members Caleb Wright, Brian Barron, Mist'a Craig and Michael Hives began singing together four years ago. Each is classically trained and performs in numerous ensembles and chorales, including the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus.

All four young men sing both tenor and alto, with Barron and Hives providing baritone and Craig and Wright slipping easily into soprano. Despite their young age, they display a surprising range of vocal talent, especially when Wright leaves the upper registers to provide deeper bass harmonies than expected for a singer his age.



Elégie members Mist'a Craig, Caleb Wright, Michael Hives and Brian Barron.

Although *Elégie* has performed at churches, schools and clubs all over Northeast Ohio, its fan base grew significantly after the group appeared on the WJW-Fox 8 "Morning Jukebox News" program in 2013.

Their repertoire of barbershop, smooth jazz, gospel, rock and R & B should prepare the Cain Park audience for Black Violin's signature

blend of classical, hip-hop, rock and bluegrass.

"[Black Violin] saw a video of us performing on YouTube and requested *Elégie* for their opening act," Wright said. "I think our background, and our motto of 'Bach to Boyz II Men,' struck a chord with them."

Black Violin features classically trained viola and violin players Wil B

and Kev Marcus, who met while playing in their high school orchestra. The pair describes their music as a blend of highbrow and pop culture—everything from "Brandenburg" to breakdown.

Besides making uplifting music, Black Violin is committed to mentoring young fans. According to the duo's website, they appear regularly at schools, "where they constantly stress the importance of arts education."

Elégie will also perform on Saturday, Aug. 15, when it provides the music for Forest Hill Presbyterian Church's annual Outdoor Worship service, at 3031 Monticello Blvd. in Cleveland Heights. The service will begin at 5 p.m. and will be followed by a free community supper.

Peg Weissbrod is a Cleveland Heights High School Instrumental Music Department alumna and a staff member at Forest Hill Presbyterian Church in Cleveland Heights.

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Artful plans fundraisers

Brady Dindia

In last month's edition of the *Heights Observer*, James Henke introduced local artist Shannon Morris and Artful, a new, start-up Heights nonprofit.

Artful is a community effort, intent on creating an Artful space in the Heights. The founding committee consists of artists, educators, and local business owners, all with strong ties to the area. Artful (which, as ARTFUL LLC, is a registered nonprofit in the state of Ohio) has been approved by Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts to receive free legal assistance as committee members move ahead with the project. Another beneficial development has come in the form of an anonymous challenge grant of \$25,000. While this requires that the committee raise \$25,000, members are hopeful that, with community support, they will raise enough funds to receive the matching grant.

Artful's first fundraiser, called playFUL, will be a kickball tournament to be held on Aug. 9, 3:15-7 p.m., at Denison Park. According to Sarah Curry, Artful's artists and education advocate, the intention is to "encourage the community to come

together to be playful," while helping Artful secure the funds it needs to develop the project and make it a reality. Registrants will receive free tickets for planned raffles, and have a chance to win door prizes. There will be crafts for kids, food and beverages, and all ages are welcome. The deadline for online registration is Aug. 5.

Artful is also working on a potential art show to run in conjunction with the Heights Music Hop, and a formal fundraiser in October. The October event will draw its inspiration from the Kokoon Arts balls of the early 20th century, which were some of the biggest events in Cleveland during those years.

"Everyone on the Artful team is volunteering their time and expertise. Other skilled community members have volunteered their time in the areas of law, grant research and writing, construction, community development and real estate," said Eric Mundson, Artful's online brand manager. "With more than 600 followers on Facebook, 450-plus on Twitter, and more than 100 on Instagram, Artful looks forward to working with members of the community and making the Heights even more Artful."

For more information, visit www.artfulcleveland.org, or www.facebook.com/artfulcleveland.

Brady Dindia is a 10-year resident of University Heights and owner of a graphic design business, ABCD Creative. She is co-founder and development director for Artful.

Play transports kids to ancient Egypt

Sarah Pease-Kerr

At Lee Road's Kultivation Theater, ancient Egypt comes to life through magic, music and dance in a new play that encourages children and families to remember their manners. "Ma'at Is Missing: Deciphering Manners," written and directed by Kulture Kids' Robin Pease, invites audiences to journey with a bumbling archaeologist in search of Ma'at, an Egyptian symbol of civility, compassion and respect.

The play opens at Kultivation Theater, 2134 Lee Road in Cleveland Heights, on Aug. 21 at 7 p.m. Opening night audiences are invited to a family-friendly post-show reception in the lobby. Additional performances are Aug. 22, at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m., and Aug. 23, at 3 p.m. Tickets are available at www.kulturekids.org and include a pre-show family arts workshop.

Founded in 1999 in Cleveland Heights, Kulture Kids is a nonprofit dedicated to fostering arts-integrated learning and cultural awareness, bringing interactive educational experiences to theaters, schools and community organizations throughout Northeast Ohio and across the country.

Kulture Kids is funded by Cuyahoga Arts & Culture, The George Gund Foundation and The Ohio Arts Council.

Sarah Pease-Kerr is a writer, educator, and theater enthusiast from Cleveland Heights. She works as the dramaturge and literary manager at Kulture Kids.

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Heights resident Bachtell shines on Broadway



CREATIVE
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Peggy Spaeth

Cleveland Heights resident Barbara Bachtell began steering the venerable Broadway School of Music and the Arts (BSMA) 18 years ago, in the same Slavic Village neighborhood where her mother lived as a baby. Bachtell's mother, an artist and writer, was descended from Bohemian immigrants who settled there. One of her mother's first cousins was Cleveland mayor Ralph Perk. As Bachtell put it, "They didn't agree on politics but enjoyed lunching together occasionally." Perhaps it was this mixture of art and politics in the family lineage that resulted in one of Bachtell's brothers becoming *The New Yorker's* Talk of the Town cartoonist, another brother becoming chair of the U.S. Communist party, and Bachtell herself becoming an artist and community arts administrator.

Bachtell's diverse experiences in the arts prepared her for a multi-tasking career at BSMA. She majored in studio art and minored in creative writing at Wesleyan University in Connecticut; worked

in Boston as a freelance graphic artist; was a painting major at Cleveland Institute of Art; worked as a gallery assistant at SPACES, and as program assistant for Peoples and Cultures gallery; and had a studio in Little Italy.

She was the second director of the now-defunct New Organization for the Visual Arts' (NOVA) Cleveland Art Festivals (1981-84), precursors to today's Ingenuity festival that brings artists and organizations together in downtown Cleveland. She then became NOVA's first program coordinator when the organization became more focused on direct services to artists, rather than events. She facilitated projects such as slide registry exchanges with Chicago, Boston, and Washington, D.C.; artist open-studio tours; and art in special places programs, bringing artists into hospitals and community settings.

Bachtell is the third director of BSMA, founded in the 1980s as a branch of the Cleveland Music School Settlement. The organization became a nonprofit a few years after its founding, and has continually adapted to a loss of population and decline in the economy. Bachtell's continual challenge is "How do we sustain this organization when the people we serve don't have the resources to pay?" Like many small nonprofits, BSMA has a diverse revenue stream, but Bachtell especially credits Cuyahoga Arts & Culture

public funding as "our saving grace."

BSMA partners with neighborhood organizations, including Community Assessment and Treatment Services, a substance abuse rehabilitation center. Its program alternates weekly drum circle and dance classes. For seven years, BSMA has brought Suzuki violin classes to Villa Montessori school, which is closing after 20 years. A third program is after-school art and music classes at University Settlement, a neighborhood center that provides social services to residents of the Broadway-Slavic Village neighborhood. Bachtell said that BSMA also has a "wonderful relationship with the Cleveland Orchestra," which held its third neighborhood residency in Slavic Village with free kick-off concert. BSMA has always offered on-site music lessons, both instrumental and voice, and a youth drum corp.

Special projects, such as Rooms to Let: CLE, bring a sparkle to Bachtell's eyes. In the spring of 2014, she was one of three curators for this project, which brought site-specific installations into three vacant houses in Slavic Village. "It was a terrific experience," she said. "I ended up with 20 artists in the house I curated (which, alas, was later demolished, despite its 'good bones'), along with photos from the 1930s and '40s showing the house's



Barbara Bachtell, executive director of Broadway School of Music and the Arts in Slavic Village.

original residents in the very spaces the artists altered."

Bachtell is nourished by a leadership program of the National Guild for Community Arts Education. "You must nurture yourself as a person and learn what your values are to be an effective leader," advised Bachtell. "A leader is different from a manager—as a leader you bring people together." Today, Bachtell said, she is "trying to integrate my artist-self with my administrator-self," and trying to find the time to work on her studio art while bringing arts to the Slavic Village community. Truly, Bachtell is a shining star on Broadway.

Peggy Spaeth writes about Heights residents and their impact locally, regionally and worldwide.



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Bussey's Upholstery has been in CH since 1954

James Henke

Bussey's Upholstery Foam 'N' Fabric Inc., located at 2311 Lee Road, has been a Cleveland Heights institution since 1954, when it moved into one side of its current location. In 1975, Bussey's expanded, taking over the space next door, which had been occupied by the New York Kosher Butcher. It has filled both storefronts ever since.

The store is owned by Mark Bussey, 63, and his wife, Marlene. His father, Irving M. Bussey, founded the store back in 1930. It was originally located at 12305 St. Clair Ave., near East 123rd Street, in Cleveland. Bussey's sells fabric that can be used for upholstery, slipcovers and draperies, and it sells foam for virtually every size of mattress. Bussey's also sells various tools and other supplies for upholstery work. Bussey's will also do upholstery work for its customers, including refilling cushions.



Marlene and Mark Bussey

Almost all of the products it sells are made in the U.S.A.

Mark Bussey was born in East Cleveland, but spent most of his early life in Cleveland Heights. After graduating from Heights High in 1971, he started working at his father's store. "My father liked doing upholstery work, and I decided to join him because he was getting

older," said Bussey.

His father continued to work at the store until 1977 when, at age 81, he decided to retire. Mark then took over the store with his mother, Emilie Bussey. His father died in 1982, and his mother died in 1993.

After Bussey married Marlene in December 1984, his new wife started working at Bussey's. She still works at the store, where she handles most of the phone calls, as well as some of the sales. The Busseys have two children, Irene, 25, and Emilie, 15. They have lived in South Euclid since 1985.

The store's only other employee is James Amie, who has been at Bussey's since 1998 and is now the store's manager.

Bussey said that he really loves the store's location. "We get a lot of people walking by who decide to stop in and see what we sell," he said. "I also enjoy being only a block away from the Cleveland Heights-Uni-

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versity Heights Library. Whenever I need a break, I go over there."

He also said he enjoys patronizing the area's restaurants. "If I have time to get lunch," he said, "I'll go to one of the restaurants around here. But we don't always have the time, unfortunately."

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.

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Cedar Fairmount set for 14th annual festival



Local musicians entertain the crowd at a past Cedar Fairmount festival.

Kaye Lowe

Plans are complete for the 14th annual Cedar Fairmount Summer Festival to be held on Sunday, Aug. 9, from noon to 5 p.m. The festival committee has added more entertainment and venues for this year's event. The goal of the festival has always been to thank the community for its support of Cedar Fairmount businesses and to give residents an opportunity to enjoy the talents of local artists and musicians in a family-friendly environment.

The arts and crafts sale will be located on Lennox and Surrey streets, and in the Zoss bakery parking lot. This year there will be paintings, photography, glass art, jewelry, basketry, bath and body potions, purses, handmade bags, fiber art and clothing, pet products, and much more.

The Eclectic Vision, Get Back Duo, Wright Reynolds Project and Blue Spruce Cats will be returning to entertain. Musical Mark and Whipples the Clown will perform to the delight of young festival attendees. Cleveland Heights Church plans to convert the India Community Center into a playland for kids. Ten Thousand Villages and Open Doors will also have activities for children.

Thanks to Dave's Market, the popular Euclid Beach Rocket Car will offer rides during the festival. Fifth Third Bank is sponsoring a bounce

house. There will be pony rides, super-heroes, such as Spider-Man and a ninja turtle. Princess Elsa and Cinderella will also be at the festival. The Boys and Girls Club of America will set up a photo booth for fun picture taking.

For those looking to adopt a pet, the Cleveland Animal Protective League will have animals available for adoption. The American Red Cross will be collecting blood donations from noon to 5 p.m. Because the need for blood during the summer is high, the Red Cross will make it easy for festivalgoers to stop by and donate a pint of blood. Cedarwood Plaza will offer free blood pressure readings.

Members of the Cleveland Heights Police K-9 Unit will be there to talk about their work, and Cleveland Heights firemen will offer fire truck tours.

This Cedar Fairmount festival is made possible by donations from Cedar Fairmount businesses, neighbors, the Cedar Fairmount Special Improvement District and a grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture.

For more information, go to www.cedarfairmount.org or call 216-791-3172. Look for updates on Cedar Fairmount's Facebook page.

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

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Trapped! Escape room opens on Coventry

James Henke

Real-life escape rooms are booming all over the world. The rooms are based on video games, where the player is locked inside a room and must explore his or her surroundings in order to escape. Players must be observant and use critical-thinking skills to escape the room. The first real-life escape room opened in Japan in 2008. The rooms quickly spread across Asia, and then, a couple of years later, one opened in Budapest, Hungary, followed by many more in Europe. In 2012, the first North American escape room opened in San Francisco, and more soon opened, first in New York, then Toronto. Now, Greater Cleveland has its first real-life escape room.

Called Trapped!, the escape room opened on Coventry Road in Cleveland Heights on July 17. Its owners are Cleveland Heights resident Alan Applegate and his brother, Scott Applegate. Alan first discovered the concept in Toronto in March, when he and his two sons—12-year-old Robbie and 14-year-old Tyler—were attending a film festival. “We wanted to do something besides watch movies,” Applegate said. “So I went to TripAdvisor, the online travel website, to see what else was in Toronto. Three of the top 10 things listed were escape rooms.”

Applegate and his sons went to one of the Toronto escape rooms.



Alan and Scott Applegate, the owners of the Trapped!

“We had the best time ever,” he said. “I talked to the owner and found out more about it. Then I went to one in Pittsburgh, which opened in November of last year, and checked that one out. There’s also one in Cincinnati, which opened this past April.”

Applegate, 46, and his brother, 54, decided to open one in Cleveland. They both grew up in Shaker Heights and graduated from Shaker High. Alan then went to DePauw University in Indiana, where he majored in economics. He and his brother both moved to Cleveland Heights in 1992. Alan still lives in Cleveland Heights, on Essex Road, while Scott recently moved to Larchmere Boulevard in Cleveland.

The two brothers own Applegate Construction, and they have worked on many real-estate projects. When they found out that the space at 1796 Coventry, where the Next clothing store used to be located, was available, they immediately went for it. “Coventry is so unique and such a great walking neighborhood,” Applegate said. “And it’s close to Case, John Carroll and the Clinic, so we thought it was close to a lot of people who would like to come to our escape room.”

Trapped will eventually feature five different themed rooms. One is open now—called the Cell, it is essentially a prison from which people need to escape. Two other rooms—Apocalypse, which Applegate

described as “a zombie lab,” and Pirate Tavern, based on “Pirates of the Caribbean”—are slated for opening sometime in August. Chainsaw, which is “geared more toward horror fans,” according to Applegate, and a still-to-be-determined final room, are also planned, and the owners hope to open them by Halloween.

Up to eight people can play each game. They are given a backstory and a set of rules, then have 60 minutes to solve the mystery of the room. Each of the game rooms also features cameras and audio to give clues to the players.

“It’s something different to do with your family,” Applegate said. “And it’s also great for corporations who want to build relationships among their employees. And it’s not scary, it’s family-friendly, pure fun and very entertaining.”

Trapped is open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 1–10 p.m., and Thursday through Sunday, 1 p.m. to 1 a.m. It is closed on Mondays. The cost of taking part in one of the games is \$28 for adults, \$25 for students and \$22 for children ages 12–15. For information, visit www.facebook.com/trappedcle.

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.

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