Cedar Lee merchants optimistic despite vacancies

James Henke

The Cedar Lee Business District has been going through some challenging times over the past couple of years. More than a dozen stores and restaurants have closed. Despite that, most of the area’s merchants are optimistic about the future.

“I don’t think that the closing of the retail spaces is a sign that our neighborhood is unhealthy,” said Sue Wolpert, owner of Brennan’s Colony restaurant, who asked to remain anonymous, said he and president of Cedar Lee Special Improvement District (CLSD), concurred, saying, “This area is the strongest I have ever seen [in terms] of consumers who support independent businesses.”

One Cedar Lee merchant, who asked to remain anonymous, said he thought that the murder of Jim Brennan, owner of Brennan’s Colony restaurant, in June 2014, and the October 2014 arson fire at the Katz Club Diner had for a new occupant for that space.

John Zagara, president of Zagara’s Marketplace at 1940 Lee Road and president of Cedar Lee Special Improvement District (CLSD), concurred, saying, “This area is the strongest I have ever seen [in terms] of consumers who support independent businesses.”

A stretch of empty storefronts along Lee Road, a monthly paper that they publish, has its offices in the building, and Serendipity Space, which they also owned, was on the street level of the building. However, Serendipity has closed, and Wolpert and Lesser are currently looking

Monticello student is ‘kid reporter’ for division of Time

Cynthia Barnes

On Aug. 18, Maple Buescher, a Monticello Middle School seventh grader, got the news that Time For Kids had selected her as one of the weekly classroom news magazine’s 10 kid reporters for the 2015-16 school year. As a kid reporter, Buescher will conduct interviews and write articles that may appear in the print edition or website of Time For Kids (www.timeforkids.com), a division of Time magazine.

She’ll hold the position from September 2015 through August 2016. Buescher completed an application process that included writing two original news stories that were judged by a panel of journalists.

Maple Buescher, Monticello Middle School student, and Time for Kids reporter.

Her first story was about the Little Free Library movement, which places miniature libraries in communities and neighborhoods to enable readers to share books.

After being named one of 24 finalists, Buescher then had to submit a second article, along with a video of herself explaining why she wanted the job. She wrote about the Republican National Convention coming to Cleveland in 2016, and interviewed

Group hopes Oct. 6 candidate forum will spotlight Noble neighborhood issues

Brenda H. May

On Tuesday, Oct. 6, the Noble Neighbors community organization is hosting a Meet The Candidates forum at 7 p.m., at Noble Road Presbyterian Church, 2780 Noble Road. Candidates for both Cleveland Heights City Council and CH-UH Board of Education have been invited to participate. While the forum will focus on issues that impact Cleveland Heights’s Noble neighborhood, residents from all neighborhoods are welcome at the forum.

All questions posed to candidates will concern issues that pertain specifically to the Noble neighborhood. Audience members and residents were invited to submit questions in advance, by Sept. 17.

The questions presented to the candidates will be drawn from the common themes those advance questions raised, and will likely ask candidates to consider the neighborhood’s economic development, housing value support, and the plan to close Noble Elementary School.

“Although we are focusing on Noble area issues, it is our contention that all of Cleveland Heights is suffering from the lack of economic development and housing value support that the city has neglected to give us,” said Jeannette Carr, a 22-year resident of the Noble neighborhood.

Cedar Taylor installs first phase of streetscape improvements

Andrea C. Turner

The Cedar Taylor Business District has a fresh new look, thanks to the Cedar Taylor Development Association (CTDA), the vision of a handful of local creative professionals, and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding from the City of Cleveland Heights.

Colorful new street banners, modern benches, and eclectic bike racks now grace the intersection of Cedar and Taylor roads and the adjacent blocks on the western side of South Taylor Road. CTDA began planning for streetscape improvements in 2013. “Over the past two years, we’ve been awarded $11,000 from Cleveland Heights CDBG funds, and separately we’re raised $6,000, for a total of $17,000 spent to this point,” said Kevin Smith, president of CTDA’s board of directors. “We’ve applied for next year’s allotment of CDBG funds and continue to raise money from other sources.”

The group engaged urban designer and project manager Michelle Bandy-Zalatoris to develop the initial streetscape study. Bandy-Zalatoris, a Cleveland Heights resident who lives near the business district, presented a set of preliminary concepts to neighborhood stakeholders in March 2015. Her plan explored a range of topics, including traffic pattern changes, parking and the new streetscape improvements.

“We have been focusing on things that will have an immediate and visible impact. We want to create a place that is unique and identifiable, while celebrating and supporting the wonderful local businesses that are here,” said Bandy-Zalatoris. “The hope is to continue to layer on neighborhood improvements of all sorts in a way that allows the district to evolve.”

The first phase of implementing

continued on page 2

continued on page 4

continued on page 11

continued on page 2

continued on page 17
Heights Observer 2015 local elections candidates policy

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

As a community newspaper, the Observer publishes work 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 making sure that there is 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, 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.

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 can submit stories that they want to write, then submit them for publication. Anyone in University Heights or Cleveland Heights is welcome to contribute regularly or occasionally.

Is there something you think should be covered in the Heights Observer? If so, please write it out 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 a Represented at the left.” For questions that aren’t answered there, call the FutureHeights office at 216-301-7435 or e-mail info@futureheights.org.

Articles to be considered for the November election issue must be submitted by Oct. 12.

We publish articles online as they come in—and still consider them for the next print issue. We also publish an e-newsletter each Tuesday.

Excerpts from Observers blogs

Read the whole story at blogs.heightsobserver.org

Ohio Supreme Court Rules Private Charter School Management Firm Owns Public Assets

Yesterday Ohio’s elected, Republican-dominated Supreme Court ruled that a privately held, for-profit charter management company, White Hat Management, owns the equipment and assets of several White Hat Hope Academies and Life Skills Academies that had sought to sever ties with White Hat and hire a new management company to run the schools.

The closing of Noble School will des- truct our area. We need the rest of Cleveland Heights to understand this and join in creative problem solving.”

The school, White Hat is owned by Akron entrepreneur and Republican mega-donor David Brennan. The boards of ten Hope and Life Skills Academies had filed a lawsuit to recover assets purchased with public dollars that White Hat said its contract awarded to the manage- ment company.

CH council member’s comment to taxpayers was out of line

To the Editor:

As most Cleveland Heights residents know, there were Whistlestop meetings being held at The Wine Spot on Lee Road to discuss the issues that affect Cleveland Heights residents. I have watched the video from Whistlestop #3 and #4 times and, at least specifi- cally, the remarks made by Cleveland Heights Council Member Kabili continued on page 3
Serens comment on taxpayers offends

To the Editor:

I am concerned about comments made by a candidate for Cleveland Heights City Council. At a recent candidates night presentation known as the Whistlestop, Kahlil Seren stated that he is not entirely sure that he wants people opposed to high taxes to move into this community and that “we don’t need them.” I find Mr. Seren’s comments shocking and inflammatory! As a 41-year taxpaying homeowner in Cleveland Heights, I feel that I have paid more than my fair share of taxes and greatly resent Mr. Seren’s statement!

Kahlil Seren was appointed to his current position on city council by our council members and now is seeking an elected full term, making important decisions about our city. We must ask ourselves do we as a community want to elect someone with such obvious disregard and dislike for the taxpayers to an additional term? I do not. One may disagree about the need for additional taxes in one of the already highest taxed cities in Ohio, but for Mr. Seren to state that he doesn’t want or need anyone disagreeing with him to live here is offensive and contemptable.

Cleveland Heights prides itself on “diversity” yet a person hoping to become an elected official here would deny and insult diversity of opinion? The video of this event and these comments is available online and can be easily accessed.

Bonnie Dolezal
Cleveland Heights

Seren’s comments intentionally taken out of context

Council Member Seren’s comments taking out of context

To the Editor:

To those residents who are “shocked and inflamed” by CH Council Member Kahlil Seren’s comment at The Wine Spot’s candidate forum, you are entitled to your opinion, but don’t distort what he actually said.

When asked how he would attract non-residents who choose not to live in Cleveland Heights because of our current tax levels, he replied that he isn’t sure that it is worth it to him to attract people who don’t think our city’s assets and quality services are worth contributing to. Blindly offering tax incentives to business doesn’t help a city remain strong; offering whatever it would take to attract people who choose their home based on tax levels is also unsustainable for our city.

If you actually look at minute 42:00 of the video (https://youtu.be/wFNTJIbR-4w), the question had nothing to do with the proposed income tax increase, and wasn’t related to current residents either. At no point did he tell anyone to leave the city if they don’t want to vote for the income tax increase. In fact, at that same forum, he said that he personally feels and completely understands the financial difficulty involved (the was the only council member to propose a sunset on the tax increase). He has been very willing to have real conversations about his position; feel free to talk to him yourself.

Julian Rogers
Cleveland Heights
Redlining is taking aim at public schools

Nancy Dietrich

Real estate websites like Zillow.com are popular places to check out homes for sale. With every home listing, Zillow.com even provides a color-coded rating of nearby schools. Sounds helpful, doesn’t it?

Heights Community Congress (HCC) took a deeper look into this practice and found that the ratings are provided to Zillow by a website called GreatSchools.com. The ratings are based on [school] test scores, which research consistently has shown correlate highly with students’ socioeconomic status rather than reliably measuring school “quality.”

[The ratings] give a quick comparison of schools with a single, simple metric: labeling schools with an emotionally laden color—red, green, or yellow.

Zillow.com fails to reveal how the ratings are derived, or warn of their limitations. The rating method virtually guarantees that schools in moderate-income communities will rank below those in more affluent communities. HCC is concerned that the GreatSchools/Zillow.com partnership is unfairly discouraging homebuying in moderate-income communities like Cleveland Heights and University Heights.

GreatSchools might look like a public interest organization, but in fact it is a subsidiary of NewSchools, a California venture capital firm that invests in charter and online schools, and markets educational technology. GreatSchools licenses its ratings to Zillow and earns revenue each time a viewer links to Zillow.com. The financial ties between GreatSchools and Zillow are not disclosed on Zillow.com’s listings.

HCC contacted the president and the director of data of GreatSchools by registered, certified letter, asking about their metrics and requesting a response to our questions. We first received an automated response and, after a second query, answers that were incomplete or did not directly answer our questions.

Mortgage redlining has been illegal in the United States since the passage of the Fair Housing Act in 1968. Educational redlining recycles the pernicious idea by aiming it at schools, thus encouraging disinvestment in moderate-income communities by steering homebuyers away.

HCC realizes that the best defense against misinformation is an educated public. In this spirit, HCC has partnered with the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District and held a public forum, as well as a meeting with interested real estate brokers to explain the GreatSchools ratings, their origin, and misuse on Zillow.com. More meetings are planned as part of HCC’s continuing mission to maintain Cleveland Heights and University Heights as successfully integrated communities. For more information, visit www.heightscongress.org.

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[Image]

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Nancy Dietrich is a 40-year resident of Cleveland Heights, and a long-time supporter of the CH-UH school, which her four young children attended and which her four grandchildren now attend. She was a 12-year member of CH-Council, and is currently active in the League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland and Heights Community Congress.

Our Grandfathers’ boiler is nothing like OURS today!

Cedar MYOR continued from page 1

the plan began in late June with the installation of district signage to help strengthen the area’s identity. The new banners—and the logo type used in them as well as the bike racks—were designed by Cleveland Heights resident Michelle Moehler, owner of Michelle Moehler Design, a graphic design firm.

“This is our brand identifier and helps to convey the energy and flavor of the neighborhood,” explained Moehler.

By branding the commercial district, much like the Cedar Lee, Coventry Village, and Cedar Fairmount business districts have done, businesses can be more easily located. Each banner is unique and features an action word that represents a service provided in the district—shop, eat, style, play, live, grow, care, fix, create. Each was strategically placed to promote a different business. The banners, printed by Carroll Graphics, a Cleveland firm, help to communicate the diverse range of services provided in the area. Planners believe that improving the visual appeal of the district will support existing merchants and help attract new ones.

In August, composite wood and metal benches and custom-made bike racks were installed. The orange bike racks, an amalgamated shape of the words “Cedar” and “Taylor,” were constructed by Rust Belt Welding—a business that fabricates unique bike racks, including one outside the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum. The intention is to encourage bike traffic to the commercial district, as limited parking has been identified as a challenge.

An initial study conducted by CTDA surveyed the neighborhood’s business owners. Of the 17 businesses that responded, the majority have been in the district for 10 or more years, and anticipate staying for the foreseeable future. These businesses report that approximately 7,000 customers frequent their establishments on a weekly basis.

The goal for next year, said CTDA representatives, is to add more plants, bike racks and holiday lighting, as well as to incorporate public art.

Designs were originally developed for both sides of the street. “We’d very much like to extend the improvements to the University Heights side of our business district. Unfortunately, at this time, the City of University Heights has declined to allow any installations in their city,” said Smith. “We are hoping they will reconsider so that we can incorporate some of these fantastic elements in that city at a future point,” he added.

Because of its population size, the City of University Heights is not designated as a CDBG entitlement community. As such, it is only eligible for CDBG funds from the county, not directly from the federal government, which Cleveland Heights is eligible to receive.

For more information visit www.facebook.com/cedartaylordevelopmentassociation. CTDA’s next meeting will be held at Melt Bar & Grilled, 13463 Cedar Road, on Oct. 5, at 9 a.m. Neighborhood merchants are invited to attend, as is the public.

Andrea C. Turner is the Heights Observer news editor.
Public schools suffer when students leave

THE COMMON GOOD

Susie Kasser

I like writing this column. The discipline of exploring complex ideas in 750 words or less helps me think and, I hope, gives the reader access to those thoughts in an engaging and informative way. The Heights Observer for providing me with a deadline and platform for sorting through issues that I find significant to my passion for democracy and the crucial role of the common good in a humane society.

Readers have been wonderful. They give me positive feedback at the grocery store or supermarket or when I’m walking my dog. Last winter, a complete stranger stopped to talk to me after whisking past on her skis. Feedback from teachers is often the most moving. They thank me for describing how the damage caused by testing has motivated several of them to leave their beloved profession.

Last month I received the first feedback I have ever received over the phone. The caller disagreed with me. I am grateful that she was friendly and respectful as she shared her views about vouchers. It was a valuable reminder that we don’t all see the same reality the same way, and that’s the way it is supposed to be.

Two of her comments stood out because her position was so different from mine. She did not think it was harmful to public schools when families opt out of them, and it would be hard for the public schools, she thought, if a large number of students were to return to them.

I do not question a parent’s right to opt out of public education, but as a public-education advocate, I think it is a real loss when they do. What bothers me is that more students are leaving public schools because Ohio law supports them in attending charter schools or using publicly funded vouchers for private or parochial schools. It harms public education, and it is expensive.

Public schools exist because education is the cornerstone of our democracy. It is in the public’s interest for everyone to be educated. As the social divide grows, there are few places where we all are guaranteed access, and welcomed. The public school is one such space. As schools develop children and future citizens, they also educate parents and the individuals who work in them. Public schools are there for the whole community. Each loss makes it less inclusive, less representative, and weaker.

Losing students is expensive. When students leave using a voucher or to attend a charter school, they are financed out of the per-student state funding allocation to the school district they are leaving. That leaves less money for students who remain in the district and shifts more of the funding burden to local levies. Reduced enrollment凳unds undercuts efficiency. The needs for a superintendent, treasurer, personnel process, academic planning and leadership, communications, transportation and building maintenance don’t go away when enrollment declines. Efficient use of facilities and teachers depend on operating at capacity.

Fewer kids can be expensive, and more kids do not necessarily increase the need for local funds! If 1,000 kids came back into our schools today from all grade levels and all parts of the community, they could be absorbed into the system with only limited new costs. Each would generate about $2,500 in state funds. If they are returning from a charter school or used a voucher, they would bring at least $4,500 in state funds. Because most kids would be absorbed into existing classrooms, they would increase overall efficiency and generate only slightly increased costs due to special needs, additional buses or the hiring of a few more teachers.

It would also mean 1,000 more people with a direct interest in the success of schools, 1,000 more threads in the web of community, 1,000 more perspectives and people to value and learn from, and 1,000 more reasons to operate neighborhood schools.

In public schools, every participant adds value. Every loss is real. That’s why Ohio needs to stop spending precious public funds to underwrite an exodus from a prized community institution.

Susie Kasser 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.

CORRECTION:

Susie Kasser notified the Observer that an editing change made to last month’s column, “Cutting funds will not improve schools,” resulted in an error. “They replaced my statement, ‘There are now five EdChoice schools’ with ‘Five area private schools are now receiving EdChoice funds.’ That is not true. An EdChoice school is a public school that receives this nonpublic money because children who reside in that attendance zone can use EdChoice vouchers. It is exactly the opposite meaning of the editor’s interpretation of the designation. To view the corrected article visit www.heightsobserver.org and search for “Susie Kasser EdChoice” or use the QR code.

Let’s work together to make Cleveland Heights even better

WHAT PEOPLE WHO KNOW SAY:

“Mary is smart, energetic, and a pleasure to get along with. She knows how to work on a team to get things done, which I as a former member of CH City Council, think is all-important.”

— Nancy Dietrich, former City Council member

“Mary Dunbar cares about our young people’s health and readiness to learn. She has promoted Walk or Bike to School Days, spring and fall, since 2010, and was instrumental in winning more than $370,000 in Safe Routes to School grants for Cleveland Heights.”

— Ronald Register, Vice President, Board of Education, Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District

“Mary Dunbar is all about keeping our city attractive and vital. She is smart, willing to take on complex challenges and works with others to find solutions. We need to keep her on City Council.”

— Thomas Nobbe, Forest Hill resident

“Mary Dunbar listens, becomes well-informed, shares what she knows and helps residents to solve problems as much as possible. She welcomes ideas for improvement and supports those that will champion them.”

— Joan Spoerl, engaged citizen

“Mary Dunbar led successful applications to have the Shaker Farm Historic District listed on the National Register of Historic Places and to have Cleveland Heights recognized as a Bicycle Friendly Community. Council needs her energy and commitment to continue to build on our strengths.”

— Lee Chicote, former City Council member

WHAT MARY DUNBAR SAYS:

It’s been an honor to work for you as a Council member since 2012, with these major accomplishments:

■ Achieved measurable improvements in safety and roads
■ Supported re-investment totaling millions of dollars in residential and commercial buildings
■ Adopted leading-edge green zoning
■ Increased transparency using electronic media

We have amazing assets in our homes, business districts, schools, parks, cultural and recreational opportunities — strengths we must build on to keep our city attractive and vital. But our residents are our greatest asset, and I will work for expanded governmental collaboration and citizen engagement to make Cleveland Heights an even more desirable community that attracts new homeowners and businesses while retaining those already here. I am passionate about keeping Cleveland Heights the place to be for diverse families and residents who love living here as much as I do.

Let’s work together to make Cleveland Heights even better.

Learn more and get involved at www.marydunbar.com

Advertise in the Heights Observer
Teacher shortages are predictable

Ari Klein

I have a difficult time encouraging young people to enter the teaching profession these days. This was not always the case. I am proud to be a teacher, enjoy my students, feel invigorated by always trying to figure out our ways of reaching young minds, and feel satisfied when I can offer counsel to students. Over the years, things have changed. It is not at all the same profession as when I started, close to 30 years ago.

There was an unwritten social contract when I started teaching. I knew, even though I was a math major in college, that I would not start out making as much as my engineer and actuarial counterparts. My starting salary was $20,000 per year—which seemed like a great deal at the time, even though beginning engineers were making $40,000. Our health coverage was top notch. I paid 9 percent of my salary into retirement and expected that, after 30 years, I would be able to retire and continue to have health care. Summers would be a time for recuperating, preparing, and earning a master’s degree. There was a certain security that, after a few years, my job would be protected. Teachers were respected members of society, honored for the work that people think they want to do, but realize is difficult.

Coming into the profession today, many things are vastly different. Starting salary in the CH-UH school district is now around $42,000 (an average increase of around 27 percent annually with compounding), although, as of next year, we will pay 14 percent of their salary into retirement, as opposed to 6.25 percent for those social security that, after a few years, my job would be protected. Teachers were respected members of society, honored for the work that people think they want to do, but realize is difficult.

The social contract that was withering. For most people, the promise of a career in teaching. A true teaching today is like being in a pressure cooker. There is little relief. Society now blames teachers for everything from the incarceration rate to poverty. We are the scapegoats that the rich and powerful in society have always wanted. Public schools are being destabilized, families and teachers are being blamed for “low test scores,” and the solution must be to professionalize teaching. I predict that, if things don’t change, it will become increasingly hard to find teachers to hire—especially in higher poverty districts where state sanctions and punishments are greatest. Why would someone choose to teach in a district where demographics point to a high chance that scores on tests will be low? Low scores translate to lower ratings on evaluations, which will lead to fewer teachers keeping their jobs. This is not because they are bad teachers, but because the odds are stacked against them.

The social contract that was in place when I started in teaching is withering. For most people, the pressure makes it impossible to contemplate a career in teaching. A true teacher shortage is on its way. Who will teach our children then?

Ari Klein is a lifelong community member, math teacher at Cleveland Heights High School, and president of the Cleveland Heights Teachers Union.
UH Library manager to lead Painesville library

Julia Murphy

Aurora Martinez, University Heights Libraries manager, has been named director of Morley Library in Painesville.

Martinez joined the library’s youth services department in 2006 and has served as the library’s manager since 2008. She previously worked in youth services at the Euclid and Geauga County public libraries.

During her time at the University Heights Library, Martinez participated in many civic, business and school issues. She worked closely with Walter Strinosis, University Heights’s senior services manager, collaborated with the city government and school district, and forged a relationship with Whole Foods and other local merchants and nonprofits for outreach programs.

“She is a much-respected supervisor and colleague who always spoke up for customers young and old, disabled and able-bodied,” said Nancy Levin, Libraries Directors liaison.

“We will miss her very much, but know that the residents of Painesville are lucky to have such a wonderful library advocate in their midst,” Martinez said.

Martinez has been involved in state and national library associations, having served on the planning committee for the Ohio Library Council (OLC) and the Public Library Association’s annual conferences. She also helps with developing
Cleveland Heights City Council

Meeting highlights

AUGUST 17, 2015
All council members were present.

Public comments
Three residents spoke, including Beverly Wright, of Whittier Road, who intro-
duced herself to council and stated that she is running for the Cleveland Heights-
University Heights school board.

Recreation regulations for fall/winter
Council approved amendments to the use regulations, admission rates, and
other services for the Cleveland Heights Community and parks for the
2015–16 fall/winter season. There will be no rate increases this year, and
the ordinance includes an expanded personal training program at the com-
munity center.

New parks and recreation director
The city has hired a new parks and rec-
reation director, who will begin Sept. 28. Joe McRae will be coming to Cleveland
Heights from Evanston, Ill., where he has
served as both deputy city manager and director of parks, recreation
and community services. Council mem-
ber Jeff Coryell reminded residents that
his appointment does not increase the
city’s budget but reflects a reorganization
and a commitment to saving money.

North Park
City Manager Tanisha Briley
replied that the city still advocates for
development of ESG for services to fix, maintain and administer the city’s water system, with a
goal of an energy savings performance
contract to implement improvements to the city’s water utility.

New parking technology
Speaking on behalf of merchants of three special improve-
ment districts (SIDs), resident Bill Mitchell,
owner of Mitchell’s Fine Chocolates on Lee Road, encouraged adoption of “smart
parking” technology, already in use in many cities. He said that merchants lose
customers who leave to put more money
in parking meters. He claimed that the
merchants lost their advocate for this
technology when the economic development
director left. City Manager Tanisha Briley
replied that the city still advocates for
this technology but is hampered by staff
capacity, as the economic development
director position is one of 20 being held
open at this time. Meanwhile, the city is
working on changing all meter heads to
electric ones.

Cleveland Heights and University Heights
City Council and CH-UH BOE candidates

LWV Observer: Blanche Valancy.

Meeting will include the city’s police
fire chiefs as well as the director of public
works. They will address how the city has
been affected by declining state support
and describe proposed cuts in services.

Finance Director Tom Raguz. The second
resolved the water problem. One resolution would authorize
a partner for the city to resolve the water
problem. One resolution would authorize
negotiations with the City of Cleveland for
a direct service agreement. The second resolution would authorize
negotiations with Energy Systems Group
(ESG) concerning possible engagement of ESG for services to fix, maintain and administer the city’s water system, with a
goal of an energy savings performance
contract to implement improvements to the city’s water utility.

LWV Observer: Blanche Valancy.

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

These meeting summaries are abstract-
ated from LWV observers’ reports. The summaries have been edited and prepared
by Anne McFarland, Charlene Morse and Maryann Barnes. To receive email
notices of full reports, send an email to
members@lwv-chuh.org or join through
Google groups using “lwv-chuh observer
reports” as search phrase.

These reports contain member obser-
vation and selected highlights of public meet-
ings and are not official statements of the
Cleveland Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters Cuyahoga Area. This disclaimer
was added to posts by company employee redistribution of these reports.

Funny Times makes grown-ups feel like kids again.

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Cleveland Heights crime down in most categories for first seven months of 2015

Crime data from the Cleveland Heights Police Department for the first seven months of 2015 indicate a positive trend is continuing, as year-to-year crime rates declined in all but two categories.

The only categories that didn’t show a decrease in the number of crimes were murder and rape. Through July of this year, there has been one murder in the city—the same as last year during the same period. Four rapes were reported through July, compared with three in the previous year.

The information is compiled by the CHPD according to federal standards defined by the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reporting system, and is published in different format on the Cleveland Heights city website.

Bob Rosenbaum

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

All violent crimes and serious property crimes reported during the first seven months of each year, since 2011.

Property crimes committed in Cleveland Heights, Jan.–July

Violent crimes committed in Cleveland Heights, Jan.–July

It represents serious offenses defined as “Part I” crimes. It does not include “Part II” minor offenses, such as trespassing or DUI—which the FBI does not seek from local agencies because it would be too costly to report with the same level of detail.

For more information about how the CHPD collects and validates crime statistics, and why the Observer publishes them regularly, see the original article in this series by scanning the QR code or visiting http://tiny.cc/chcrimestats.

State Farm

Beaumont School

A Catholic school that educates women for life, leadership and service, Beaumont is the only all-girls International Baccalaureate Candidate School in Greater Cleveland.

Discover the Beaumont experience! Join us for our fall open houses:

Sunday, Oct. 11 from noon to 2 p.m.
Wednesday, Nov. 18 from 5:30 to 7 p.m.

Visit BeaumontSchool.org/Admissions for more information!
The Nutt House and Carriage House

Margaret Laan

The Joseph R. and Elizabeth Nutt House and Carriage House, which later became St. Ann Convent, was landmarked in 2003. This massive English manor, located at 2285 Coventry Road, was built in 1910 for Joseph R. Nutt, vice president and director of Citizens Savings and Trust Company, and a vice president of the Union Trust Company.

Local architect Harlan E. Shimmin designed the house. Shimmin was a prolific residential architect who designed many structures that have been landmarked throughout Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights.

This particular residence features massive blocks of sandstone with a red tile roof. The center of the home boasts a dramatic crenelated parapet and Gothic-arched windows. The entrance to the home is in proportion to the rest of the house, with an oversized ornate door and expansive stone porch. The house rightly earned its nickname, Cleveland Castle.

The Nutt family owned the home until 1948, when it became a convent for Ursuline nuns serving St. Ann Parish. The nuns cared for the home until 1983, when it was sold as a private residence. The home has remained a private residence since, intact and cared for by its owners over the years.

Margaret Laan is a member of the Cleveland Heights Landmark Commission, which preserves and protects buildings, works of art and other objects of historical or architectural value to the community. The seven members are appointed to three-year terms by City Council.

Forum on future of Severance is Oct. 21

Kathleen Tark

FutureHeights invites those interested in the future of Severance Town Center to attend a public forum on the topic on Wednesday, Oct. 21, 7 p.m., at the Cleveland Heights Community Center, 1 Monticello Blvd.

Attendees will hear about the history of the site, its current legal and ownership status, and the land use and zoning regulations affecting the property. Additionally, presenters will discuss examples of redeveloped properties on comparable sites in other cities, and provide a summary of thoughts gathered from local developers regarding the site’s potential. Participants will have the opportunity, both at the forum and afterward, to express their opinions on the future of this important community asset.

The purposes of the forum, titled Reimagining Severance, are to provide information and start what will most likely be an extended conversation on how this asset may be transformed. Participants should understand this is only the beginning of a discussion of the future of a property that is privately owned but also subject to the land-use regulations of the City of Cleveland Heights.

While the focus of the discussion will be on the future of the shopping center on the interior of Severance Circle, a city street, its relationship to properties outside the circle and in surrounding neighborhoods will also be considered.

Severance Town Center will be a key site to consider in the upcoming Cleveland Heights master-planning process. Cleveland Heights citizens and others who may be interested are invited to share their thoughts and be a part of working out the future of Severance.

Kathleen Tark is a member of the FutureHeights Board of Directors.

“You’re never too young to begin planning for your future.
Why wait for a crisis?”
— Bill Jones, Judson Smart Living at Home member since 2006

When a friend challenged Bill Jones to hike a portion of Spain’s Camino de Santiago last summer, he utilized his membership in Judson’s Smart Living at Home program to give him a leg up.

Bill and his wife, Susan, became members because they needed home care support for Susan. Eventually she moved to Judson’s Brunening Health Center, where Bill visits her every day with their dog, Oliver.

With Susan’s healthcare needs taken care of, Bill focused on nurturing his own wellness. With the help of Judson wellness staff he developed a fitness program that simulated the trail in Spain. Bill left in August and spent several weeks on the trail—about 165 miles overall.

“Judson inspired me to take charge of my own wellness, with a focus on prevention. I have a plan in place to get the care I need when I need it.”

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Visit www.judsonsmartliving.org and click Smart Living at Home
negative impact on the district. Three businesses—Sweetie Fry, Cedar Lee Pub & Grill and Unique Melodies boutique—closed their doors soon after the fire, and the neighborhood began getting negative press.

“Hurt us so much that the media continuously harping on the negatives in Cleveland Heights,” said Jeff Coryell, Cleveland Heights City Council member. “I would like to see a more effective marketing campaign for Cleveland Heights in general.”

Coryell is part of a group working to form the Heights Community Development Alliance, which would work to enhance the reputation of Cleveland Heights. Zagara is also a member of the group, as are the owners of several other Cedar Lee businesses. The alliance is still in development, and Coryell, Heights Arts, the City of Cleveland Heights, the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District and CLSID are all involved.

The alliance would create programs to build on some of the assets that Cedar Lee is facing, including vacant storefronts, fewer visitors, lower sales and negative publicity. Recognizing that other areas of the city face similar issues, the group wants to create programs that could be implemented citywide. Its overall goal is to leverage the city’s unique assets, attract and retain new residents, businesses and visitors, and create a more walkable, safe, vibrant and sustainable community that is among the most desirable in which to live, work, play and shop.

The alliance has much to accomplish. Many sections of the Cedar Lee neighborhood are filled with empty storefronts, particularly on the west side of the street. Those blocks include the street between Meadowbrook Boulevard and Kensington Road, between Cedar and East Derbyshire roads, and between CVS and Dewey’s Pizza. This section’s name comes from the intersection of Cedar and Lee roads, which has several vacancies. Abrash Gallerie, on the southwest corner, closed on Sept. 7, and Heights Soul Food and Grill, the most recent occupant of the northwest corner, has also closed. Heights Guitars, located just north of the intersection, closed in March 2014, and the Grab ‘n Go Pizza Express recently closed its doors.

Although Internet retail sales have harmed sales at brick-and-mortar stores everywhere, Cedar Lee has also lost several restaurants. In addition to those mentioned earlier, Lemon Grass Thai Cuisine closed, and Parnell’s Pub vacated one of the two adjacent storefronts it had occupied.

Zagara said she thought the development of other retail centers in the area has hurt Cedar Lee, including the enhancement of the Eton Collection on Chagrin Boulevard in Woodmere, and the renovation of the Galleria at University Heights. “Now we are competing not only for customers,” Zagara said, “but also for employees.”

CLSID is working with the city to try improving parking in the area. “We want to create a better parking system,” Zagara said. “We want more convenient parking.”

Future plans, the nonprofit organization that publishes the Heights Observer, is piloting a program with Heights Arts and ARTFUL, another local organization, to install pop-up artists at some of the vacant spaces during special events, such as the Heights Music Hop. Deana Bremer Fisher, executive director of FutureHeights, said that pop-up shops and artists would add “life” to the street until permanent tenants could be found.

“Reasons for the closures vary,” said Bremer Fisher. “In some cases, longtime owners decided to retire. Others may not have had a sustainable business plan from the beginning, and still others may have lost their lease or moved to another location. We have some fantastic restaurants in the Heights, and competition is tough.”

Coryell thinks that the renovation of Heights High, on the northeast side of the Cedar Lee intersection, will have a positive effect on the neighborhood. In particular, he thinks that a new entrance to the high school’s stadium at the corner of Cedar and Lee roads will draw more people into the area.

“When I talk to residents, the overwhelming majority say they love Cleveland Heights,” Coryell said. “And I am bullish about Cedar Lee. I believe it will bounce back.”

James Hone, 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 on Morrison, John Lennon and Bob Marley.

Nighttown hosts Oct. 4 friend- and fund-raiser for Syrian refugees

Jan Kious

Do you watch in despair as thousands of men, women and children flee from the violence in Syria, hoping to find a place where they are safe from the deadly regime and ISIS? Have you been moved to tears by the goodness of 12,000 people in Iceland willing to open their homes to refugees in response to their government’s suggestion that they leave the country or, the sight of Germans driving in their cars to pick up weary families?

Nighttown is hosting a fundraiser on Oct. 4, 2 p.m. to 2 p.m., organized in response to the current Syrian refugee crisis, and donations will be used to help this group specifically. Representatives of the three refugee resettlement agencies in Cleveland will be present to describe the process of resettlement, from how the government decides how many refugees to accept, to what the agencies do once an individual or family arrives in Cleveland. Refugees from Iraq and Afghanistan, who have made Cleveland home, will talk about their experiences.

You are invited to stop by Nighttown, have something to eat and drink, and make a tax-deductible donation. You can earmark your donation for a specific purpose, such as purchasing bicycles to enable people to ride to work. There will be an opportunity to sign up to volunteer for anything from mentoring at the country club to cooking for a refugee to dinner, and to donate furniture, baby supplies or clothes.

This fundraiser is generously supported by Brenda King, owner of Nighttown. Julia Zabell Obid Hebrim Ali Alani created the marketing materials, and Melissa Lynch, the events manager of Nighttown, is working closely with the organizers. Danielle Drake of U.S. Tent Co., and Gina Wishner of the International Services Center will provide programming.

Jan Kious, a South African citizen, knows what it is like to suddenly be uprooted as her husband, Gus, was deported from South Africa 20 days after their wedding. Kious, a Cleveland Heights resident since 1974, knows the impact of strangers has had in her life as an immigrant, and organized this event for refugees from Syria.

Brian Backe, director of domestic programs at Catholic Relief Services (CRS). He will speak on the topic “Why Should Corporations Care about Cleveland and Why Should Fair Trade Care about Corporations.”

Founded in 1943, CRS is the international relief and development agency of the Catholic community in the United States.

Following the keynote address, morning workshops will be held 11–11:45 a.m. Amy Sokolowski and Frances Barbee will conduct a workshop on Ethical Entrepreneurship. Other workshops include Fair Trade Pricing with Linda Edwards and The Faces of Fair Trade by Holy Land Handicrafts, a group based in Palestine that makes hand-crafted items from olive wood. [The workshops will be at Ten Thousand Villages in Shaker Heights on Friday, Oct. 9, 6-8 p.m., for those who want to learn more about their work. Members of the group can be reached by e-mail at info@htvices.org.]

A second round of workshops begins at 1 p.m. These include Fair Trade Essentials, Economics of Fair Trade Fashion with Laura Potter-Sadowski, and Behind the Brands with Emily Tusick. A panel discussion at 4 p.m. will follow the afternoon workshops, to answer questions and discuss fair trade initiatives.

The goal of the expo is to educate the community on how supporting fair trade through small, everyday actions can have an enormous effect on the global economy and the environment, and on the lives of each and every artisan. For more information, visit www.ohiofairtrade.com.

Laura Potter-Sadowski is executive director of Ten Thousand Villages in Cleveland Heights and is a member of The Ohio Fair Trade Expo Committee and a Fairmount SID Marketing Committee.

JCU hosts Oct. 10 Ohio Fair Trade Expo

Laura Potter-Sadowski

Celebrate Fair Trade Month at the Ohio Fair Trade On Tour In and Expo on Saturday, Oct. 10, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., at John Carroll University (JCU). The expo is free and open to the public. Since 2005, the Ohio Fair Trade Expo has showcased socially and environmentally conscious consumerism with artisan demonstrations, speakers, workshops, family activities and a fair trade marketplace. Hosted by JCU, this year’s expo marks the school’s recent designation as the fifth Jesuit university to earn Fair Trade University status from Fair Trade Campaigns, a grassroots movement mobilizing consumers and advocates across the United States to increase the availability of fair trade products.

“As a Jesuit University committed to human dignity, environmental sustainability, and economic justice, the decision to become a Fair Trade University is a natural expression of our mission,” said Robert L. Niehoff, president of John Carroll University.

The event will be held in JCU’s Dolan Center for Science and Technology, and registration for the event will open at 9:30 a.m. With the support of sponsors, such as Ben & Jerry’s Ice Cream and Fair Trade University Network, JCU has made this event free to the public. The first 200 attendees will receive a gift bag filled with treats.

Once inside, guests are welcome to explore the marketplace, comprising more than 30 vendors selling clothing, artisan crafts, food and drinks before the program begins. They can also attend a workshop, and earn a badge in the Girl Scout program that will be part of the expo. The marketplace will remain open until 3:30 p.m.

This year’s keynote speaker is Jan Kious, a South African citizen, knows what it is like to suddenly be uprooted as her husband, Gus, was deported from South Africa 20 days after their wedding. Kious, a Cleveland Heights resident since 1974, knows the impact of strangers has had in her life as an immigrant, and organized this event for refugees from Syria.
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Coming to America 1969

Jan Kious

If you drive down Lee Road past Fairfax Elementary School in the summer, you are likely to see Sarojini Rao busy working in the community garden at the school, where she is the leader. Rao was born in a small town in South India called Udipi. Her father left service in the Indian army after World War II and was given an amount of money that he used to purchase four acres of land in Bangalore in Karnataka State.

An engineer by profession, he loved to garden and spent much of his spare time growing things. Rao attributes her love of gardening to her father’s influence.

When Rao was 21, her mother “sent out feelers” to find a husband for her. Eventually, her parents arranged for her to marry the son of a couple who were part of their community. Sridhar Rao was a post-doc in the physics department at Case Western Reserve University. They married in 1969 and the couple moved to an apartment in Cleveland’s Little Italy.

Rao describes feeling very excited at the idea of moving to America, and her mother, she said, “Strutted around town telling people that her daughter was going to America.”

Even though she spoke English well, having gone to a parochial school run by Irish Catholic nuns, Rao was intimidated by the American accent and was “scared to pick up the phone because [she] couldn’t understand the person on the other side.”

Despite having a B.S. in home economics and a master’s degree in education, Rao had a difficult time finding a job as a teacher. She attended Kent State University and earned a certificate working with special-needs children. She also received a master’s degree in education from CWRU, specializing in working with children with mental retardation and disability.

Rao finally found employment in a school in Cleveland and later in Maple Heights. In 1984, a friend suggested she interview with Progressive Insurance and apply for training in its information technology department, even though, as she said, she “did not know the front end to the back end of a computer and knew even less about insurance.” Rao was chosen for the training, and worked for Progressive for 30 years, retiring this past May.

Working outside the home has always been important to Rao, even as a young girl in India. She has been a longtime member of Zonta, an organization created initially for professional women who could not join all-male professional societies.

Rao said she values “family which is very, very important to me; nature; and the ability to think freely and do what I want to do without restrictions.”

Rao and her husband moved to Cleveland Heights in 1972, to an apartment on Parkway Drive, and later bought a house on Bradford Road. Their daughter, Anjali, was born in 1970 and son, Nikhil, was born in 1975. They were both educated in the Heights school system and, after going away to college and to work, both returned to the area to raise their own children.

Rao said that living in Cleveland Heights for the past 43 years has made her life in America a rich and rewarding one. Her involvement in Cleveland’s Indian community is limited to providing traditional Indian food for the annual Tyagaraja Music festival held at Cleveland State University. “This is the way I contribute to the Indian community,” she said.

“Because I live in Cleveland Heights, I get all the diversity I want and don’t need to be closely identified with the Indian community. I have assimilated myself so well, and I think that’s a good thing.”

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.”

Clinical Research Study at The Cleveland Clinic

Gut Flora Metabolite Reduction After Dietary Intervention (GRADY)

We are screening volunteers to find people with an elevated level of a gut flora produced substance called TMAO, which has been linked to cardiovascular diseases.

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If you qualify for further participation in this diet modification study, you will be asked to come to four additional study visits over 12 weeks at the Cleveland Clinic main campus. During these visits we will collect blood and urine and you will meet with a registered dietitian. This is at no cost to you.

For further information, contact Jen or Tim:
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OUT OF THE BOX

Jan Kious

Halloween Fall Festival!
the Cedar Fairmount
Create your own haunting Halloween!
Cupcake decorating for
Cleveland’s #1 choice for interior and exterior painting
Cupcake decorating for

Heights Observer October 1, 2015 12 www.heightsobserver.org
Sruti Basu joins FutureHeights staff

Deanna Bremer Fisher

On Aug. 31, FutureHeights welcomed Sruti Basu as director of community-building programs, a new staff position at FutureHeights. Basu will provide one-on-one mentoring to support neighborhood community builders, nurture new neighborhood organizations, meet with community stakeholders to assist local government in addressing problem areas, and organize and attend community meetings.

She holds a Master of Public Administration from the Bernard Baruch College at City University of New York, and a Master of Social Sciences at Case Western Reserve University. She has worked for the Greater Houston Community Foundation, the Cleveland Foundation, Neighborhood Connections and Slavic Village Community Development Corporation.

"Through my interactions, it became apparent that Cleveland Heights is a place that truly values community, and I am grateful to be in a place that promotes and supports what makes it great and unique," said Basu. "I’m looking forward to continuing to meet people, and contribute to neighborhood groups, city projects and programs, and help build community."

For more information about FutureHeights’s community-building programs, visit www.futureheights.org or contact Sruti Basu at 216-320-1423 or sbasu@futureheights.org.

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

FutureHeights auction kicks off Nov. 6

James Henke

The 11th annual FutureHeights Online Auction will take place in November. The auction will feature hundreds of items, ranging from one-of-a-kind experiences to gift cards from many area merchants.

“Our local merchants have unique items that you won’t find anywhere else,” said Deanna Bremer Fisher, executive director of FutureHeights. Residents can preview auction items beginning Oct. 7, and bidding runs Nov. 6–22 at www.biddingforgood/futureheights.

“The auction is a lot of fun,” said Rebecca Price, co-chair of the FutureHeights Online Auction Committee. “Bidders can get some amazing bargains on gift certificates to local restaurants and shops, handmade jewelry, tickets to sporting events, and unique getaways. Local business donors receive terrific online presence throughout the auction’s run, and a tax deduction.”

This year’s auction will include a private tour of the permanent collection at the Cleveland Museum of Art for a group of four people. It will also feature a behind-the-scenes tour of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum. That tour enables a group of six people to go into the Hall of Fame’s vault and see artifacts that the general public does not have access to. It also includes a guided tour of the museum and free VIP parking.

Another highlight of the 2015 auction is a free house concert by Sugar Pie; Irwin Weinberger, who wants to donate items to the auction. Anyone who has questions or wants to donate items to the auction can call FutureHeights at 216-320-1423.

Sponsors of the FutureHeights online auction are Simply Charm and a private individual. Motorcars, realtor Susan Delaney of Howard Hanna, and Keller National. Auction proceeds benefit the work of FutureHeights—a non-profit organization that publishes the Heights Observer and works to ensure a vibrant and sustainable future for the Heights. FutureHeights usually raises $15,000 to $18,000 from the auction. This year’s goal is $18,500.

Anyone who has questions or wants to donate items to the auction can call FutureHeights at 216-320-1423.
Senior Citizen Happenings

Senior Citizen Happenings, sponsored by the City of University Heights, are open to all senior citizens. Events take place on Thursdays at 2 p.m. at the University Heights Library. To receive the monthly schedule by e-mail, call 216-932-7800, ext. 205, or send an e-mail to info@universityheights.com.

Oct. 8: Philip Metz, poet, essayist and professor of English at John Carroll University, will talk. He is the inaugural recipient of the George W. Hunt, SJ Prize for Excellence in Journalism, Arts & Letters.

Oct. 15: Charles Scillia, retired professors of English are instructors. Instructors are Ann Dobyns and L.P. Coladangelo, reference associates for Heights Libraries, will discuss the role of "the Outlier," with a presentation on a culture where ordinary people at times achieve heroic (or anti-heroic) status and become the stuff of legends, with excerpts from some of their 14 comic operas, parodying the cultural obsessions of Victorian England—just as hilarious today as then.

Oct. 22: Julie Johnson, the new executive director at the Cleveland Heights Senior Activity Center, will discuss the role of planning, the elderly and driving, caring for the elderly, including legal information, call 216-691-7377.

Senior Citizen Happenings are published in the community newspaper each Friday, at the community center, and online at www.clevelandheights.com. Helpful information for people in the community is available at CH City Hall, local libraries, www.aginghandsgroup.com. She can be reached at 216-408-5578 or judith@aginghandsgroup.com.

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.aginghandsgroup.com. She can be reached at 216-691-7377 or by e-mail at ajenkins@clvhts.com. www.aginghandsgroup.com.

Changing your Medicare coverage during open enrollment

Medicare insurance is health insurance that is provided by the federal government for people who are age 65 or older, certain younger people with disabilities, and people with end-stage renal disease.

Medicare plans are divided into four parts. Part A covers hospital insurance, Part B covers medical insurance. Part C is a subset of Parts A and B and allows private companies to provide subscribers with Medicare insurance. Part D covers prescription drug insurance. Parts A and B are called "Basic" or "Original" Medicare, and Part C is called "Medicare Advantage." There are also Medicare Supplement Insurance plans available, called "Medigap," that help pay healthcare costs that Parts A and B don't cover.

It is important to apply for Medicare coverage whenever you become eligible, regardless of the time of year. Once you are covered, you have the option of making changes to your plan once each year during a period called "open enrollment." Open enrollment runs Oct. 15 through Dec. 7 each year, and takes effect on Jan. 1 of the following year. Open enrollment is the only time you can make changes to your plan. You can change any or all parts of your plan (parts A-D). You can also add a plan or switch from one plan to another.

It is important to review your Medicare plan annually. "Every year, Medicare insurance companies make changes to premiums, co-pays and coverages that go into effect the next year," said Cleveland Heights native Kathleen Carvin, an insurance broker with HealthMarkets Insurance Company. "It's important to review the available options every year during open enrollment to make sure you have the coverage next year that you want, need and can afford." Although your current insurance company will send you a letter explaining the changes it is making to the plans it provides, it will not tell you about the changes that other providers are making. It's best to review all the policy options with an expert, to make sure you have the best and most affordable coverage available.

"Choosing the right Medicare supplement plan requires matching your personal healthcare needs to the range of options available to you," said Carvin. Reputable insurance agents will talk to you at length about your wants and needs before recommending a plan. Said Carvin, "I find out if the client has a preferred doctor and hospital. I explain the pros and cons of Basic Medicare and Medicare Advantage. I ask what they like and don't like about their current plan. Then I help them find a plan that covers their needs, at the lowest cost possible.

When contacting an agent for advice it is important to understand the difference between insurance brokers and "captive agents." Captive agents represent only one insurance company, and sell policies only for that company. That insurance company may or may not have the best available policy for you. Insurance brokers represent many different insurance companies and sell a wider variety of policies.

The Cleveland Heights Senior Activity Center is offering a free Medicare Open Enrollment Day on Tuesday, Nov. 17, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Counselors from the Ohio Senior Health Insurance Information Program (OSHIIP) will meet one-on-one to answer questions. OSHIIP volunteers are also available at the SAC every Wednesday morning. Call 216-691-7377 for an appointment.

You can contact Kathleen Carvin at 216-375-5902 or kcarvin@healthmarkets.com. Helpful information on Medicare is available through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Service at www.medicare.gov, or by calling 1-800-633-4227 or 1-800-633-4227. 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.aginghandsgroup.com. She can be reached at 216-691-7377 or by e-mail at ajenkins@clvhts.com. www.aginghandsgroup.com.
Heights High opens on Wiley campus

The temporary Heights High in University Heights opened for the first day of school on Aug. 31. The building, the former Wiley Middle School on Miramar Boulevard, will house Heights High students for two years while Cleveland Heights High School, at the corner of Cedar and Lee roads, is partially demolished and rebuilt.

A tremendous amount of work went into preparing the Wiley building to meet the needs of high school students, including adding modular classrooms, plus a music wing and a gymnasium, that are all connected to the school. After students were dismissed for the year on June 12, truckloads of classroom and office furniture and equipment, library books, computers, auditorium stage props, cafeteria equipment and other materials were moved for temporary Heights High. After several weeks of school in this temporary location, the staff and students are finding their way around the building, adjusting to the new space and a different academic model. The school has adopted a comprehensive high school structure and has discontinued the small school model. All students have access to a rigorous, engaging curriculum that prepares students for college or a career.

“Teachers have done an amazing job of unpacking and setting up classrooms to welcome students and begin teaching,” said Administrative Principal Zoraba Ross. “Even with a major move, the teachers have remained focused on teaching and helping each other.”

There have been challenges to overcome—traffic on the first day was one. But, as parent Malia Lewis noted at the Sept. 1 board of education meeting, “Traffic on the first day was a snarl mess, but by the second day, the traffic flow was smooth as butter.”

Some features of the temporary building have been a welcome change. Many students and families have been pleased to see the 74 student parking spots. Both staff and students have appreciated the air conditioning in the modular classrooms.

For school staff and students, it is easy to lose sight of the long-term goal of their temporary home—their energy is rightly placed on teaching and learning. However, the facilities team has its eyes on the prize of a beautifully updated, 21st-century building at the corner of Cedar and Lee roads.

CH-UH BOE opposes state takeover law

Susie Kaeser

Democratically elected boards of education are a hallmark of the American tradition of public education. At its Sept. 1 meeting, the CH-UH Board of Education (BOE) went on record affirming the importance of local governance of public schools, and criticized the Ohio legislature’s takeover plan for the Youngstown City School District that gave control of this urban district to an appointed CEO.

The Ohio Legislature approved HB 70 in June, without public input. It lays the groundwork for state control of the Youngstown City School District (YCSD) that gave control of this urban district to an appointed CEO.

The Ohio Schools Boards Association (OSBA) opposes the law and invited local boards of education to endorse a resolution calling for the legislature, governor, and superintendent of public instruction to restore local board responsibility. Nancy Peppler, CH-UH BOE president, introduced the OSBA’s resolution criticizing HB 70. The board endorsed the resolution on a 5-0 vote.

Prior to the meeting, Heights Coalition for Public Education, an informal group of parents, educators and community members, urged the board to vote its opposition to HB 70.

The Youngstown City School District is a high-poverty district. Ohio Department of Education enrollment data for the 2014-15 school year indicated that 90.7 percent of Youngstown’s 5,313 students were identified as economically disadvantaged.

Jan Resseger, Cleveland Heights Heights education writer and coalition member, stated, “Plans like these that have been imposed by other states most often seize school districts where many children are poor, but they neither address the economic challenges faced by families nor make classes smaller nor add counselors and social workers to support the teachers. Local control through elected school boards is most likely to respond to the needs of each community. Kudos to the CH-UH school board for opposing the new Youngstown state takeover.”

Susie Kaeser is a member of the Heights Coalition for Public Education and spoke at the board meeting in support of district opposition to the takeover plan.
HEIGHTS SCHOOLS
AUGUST 24 (joint meeting with University Heights City Council) Council Members Nancy English and Steven Sims were absent. All school board members were present.

University Heights plans Mayor Susan Infeld presented the economic development and 10-year plans for the city. She noted the construction on Cedar Road, the new facing on Cedar Center South, the change of ownership of University Square, and several other changes happening in University Heights.

High school renovation Stephen Shergalis, director of business services for the school district, gave an update on the Heights High building construction. He indicated that additions to the original 1926 portion of the building are on track and within budget. Many of the materials will be recycled on site for foundation of the parking lot. The new ticket booth for the stadium will be at the corner of Cedar and Lee roads.

Wiley School (temporary home for the high school) Shergalis passed out a map of the Wiley campus that showed the traffic pattern and security. A dozen school security monitors will be stationed both inside and outside of the building, including areas at University Square, and Warrensville Center and Mirror roads. In addition, a police officer will monitor traffic, and RTA will look at increasing bus service.

Future meeting Another joint meeting will be planned for sometime in November.

SEPTEMBER 1, 2015

Awards and recognitions The board recognized seven Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District teachers who achieved master teacher status in the 2014–15 school year: Vickie Larkins-Forte, Heights High; Lorna Askew, Monticello Middle School; Yolanda Harris, Monticello Middle School; Katherine Lawrence, Heights High; Lisa Radka, Roxboro Middle School; Karlene Sa'ad, Boulevard Elementary School; and Melissa Strouth, Heights High.

Ohio HB 70 During the public comment session of the meeting, a community member asked the board to register its opposition to Ohio HB 70 by supporting a resolution of the state board of education. HB 70, which is specific to the Youngstown schools but could apply to other districts in the future, takes away local school board control when the school district fails to meet testing goals. Later in the meeting, the board approved a motion to oppose HB 70 and urged other school boards to express their opposition.

High school transition to Wiley School During public comments, a community member thanked the board for solving the traffic problems that occurred on the first day of school at Wiley. On the second day, traffic flow went smoothly. A parent stated that her son was experiencing many transitions with the move to Wiley and that, as captain of the baseball team, he has questions as to where the team will play. Later in the meeting, Nancy Peppler, board president, commented on the smooth transition to Wiley, saying that student and teacher comments were positive.

Field trip The board approved a field trip for middle and high school French and Chinese language students to Quebec and Montreal, May 2–5, 2016.

GMP The board approved the GMP (guaranteed maximum price) for the remaining work for the high school renovation, with a total value of $56,157,846. The design team explained that the construction is within the final budget of $92 million for the high school, and that costs for the elementary and middle school projects would remain within budget. The furniture will be bought later and remain within budget. The dollars for alternates [projects not budgeted], such as the orchestra pit and rainwater collection, would come from lower bids for other projects.

Upcoming meetings The board will meet again on Sept. 15 for a special board meeting, and the Facilities Accountability Committee will meet at the board of education building on Sept. 17.

LWV Observer: Lillian Houser.

Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education Meeting highlights
Reaching Heights brings groups together in support of elementary schools

Krisha Hawthorne

According to Lisa M. Hunt, assistant director of Reaching Heights, “Behind every great student is a great community!” Reaching Heights, a nonprofit support organization to Heights public schools, is launching a new project called Community Care Teams, to build collaboration among service providers to the Cleveland Heights-University Heights elementary schools.

Family Connections, PTAs, LINK Parent Ambassadors, Heights Libraries, and Reaching Heights programs—Many Villages Heights, Tutoring, Role Models, and ECAG (Exceptional Children’s Advocacy Group)—are among the many nonprofit organizations and community groups that provide enrichment services to each of the seven elementary schools in the CH-UH City School District. Reaching Heights is seeking to work with these organizations to increase the success of their efforts through better communication and mutual understanding.

“Our hope is to work smarter together and discover better ways to support each other. We want to remove any mystery about who we are, the work we do, and how the community can join us in our efforts to boost student achievement,” said Hunt.

Community Care Teams will begin to form, with representatives from each organization meeting for a networking brunch at each school during the months of September or October. They will have the opportunity to share contact information and gain a basic understanding of each organization’s work. In January, the plan is to meet again, to consider more specific ways to collaborate, and to create a community display board to post information about events, activities and programs.

The goal of these meetings is to align practices and begin thoughtful team-based planning, to provide the opportunity to hear and share district initiatives, cultivate cohesion, increase communication among organizations, reduce duplication of services and streamline efforts.

Krisha Hawthorne is the executive director of Reaching Heights.

Heights boys soccer captain leading team to strong season

Gabe Pewu

Joy Henderson

Heights High’s Senior Boys Soccer team captain Gabriel Pewu has emerged as one of the top scorers for Heights this year. At mid-season (Sept. 19) he had tallied 12 goals and five assists. Pewu is a four-year varsity starter, kicks for the football team, is a member of the National Honor Society and has a 3.5 GPA. As of mid-September, Pewu had helped his team to a 6-1-1 record, building on last year’s strong showing as a Sectional Finalist.

The team’s new head coach, Tshepo Motsamai, a native of South Africa, is also a coach with Eastside Kickers.

“The transition to a new coach has been smooth and we are looking forward to another very strong year,” Pewu said at the beginning of the season.

Pewu will apply to several colleges in Ohio as well as Temple University in Philadelphia. He plans to study pre-law or business, but has not decided if he will play soccer at the collegiate level.

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

Tiger Snack Pack to benefit Heights High

Jinida Doba

John Zagara, president of Zagara’s Marketplace, and Zoraba Ross, Cleveland Heights High School principal, have announced a partnership in support of Heights High.

Zagara’s, the long-standing, family-owned grocer in Cleveland Heights, is introducing the Tiger Snack Pack, a package filled with tasty, nutritious snacks to enjoy at Heights High football games this season. For every $4.99 snack pack purchased, Zagara’s will donate $3 to Heights High programs.

“Having been a part of Cleveland Heights since 1936, it makes perfect sense that Zagara’s would support such a fine and beloved institution as Heights High,” Zagara said. “Like the rest of the Cleveland Heights community, we care about our city and its youth, and always root for Tiger football.”

Ross said that, while the school has partnered with local businesses in the past, the Tiger Snack Pack is unique in that it is a product developed exclusively for the Tigers.

“We’re thankful to John and Zagara’s Marketplace for supporting Heights High and Tiger Nation in this unique way,” Ross said. “Not only can the community show their Tiger pride with the purchase of the Tiger Snack Pack, but they’ll be contributing to valuable Heights High programs that benefit our students and the greater Heights community. Plus, our fans and supporters will enjoy something delicious to munch on to go along with always-exciting Tiger football!”

The Tiger Snack Pack package, a clear cellophane bag, will be tied with a black and gold ribbon and filled with a hearty, game-ready snack. A twist tie will be included, for reselling the package.

Tiger Snack Packs can be found on tables in front of Zagara’s checkout aisles, and will be available in time for the Oct. 9 home game against Bedford. Visit www.chuh.org/football.aspx to see Heights High’s football game schedule.

Jinida Doba is an associate with Dorsey & Company, Strategic Consultants to Management, a Cleveland Heights competitive and marketing strategy firm. Zagara’s Marketplace is a client. Doba has called Cleveland Heights home since 2010.
Library expands online services with texting and eMedia card

Sheryl Banks

According to the Pew Research Center, 70 percent of Americans currently have broadband Internet connections at home, compared to roughly 20 percent in 2000, and nearly two-thirds of Americans now own smartphones. As more of its customers are turning to these online options, Heights Libraries is ready to reach them with two new services: text alerts for holds and an online-only eMedia card.

The text alerts are not, technically, new—they have been available since 2010. Recent technical changes behind the scenes have made it a much easier process. “So many of our customers have turned their phones into great organizational and informational tools—it is natural that they would prefer to be informed about their hold materials in this manner,” said Ty Emerson, Heights Libraries’ circulation services manager.

“Essentially, the customer can request that we adjust their profile to send text messages instead of calling or sending an e-mail when their hold items are available. This can be done at any time, and the text alerts can easily changed should the customer change their phone number.”

The text messages contain first name, number of items, library, and “pick-up-by” date. No author or title name, number of items, library, and can begin using it immediately for online resources. The eMedia card cannot, however, be used for physical items such as books, DVDs and CDs, nor to put holds on those items.

“While a traditional card offers access to a wider variety of materials, our eMedia card offers a crucial option for those customers who may be unable to get to our buildings for a variety of reasons, which may include mental health or mobility challenges,” said Nancy Levin, Heights Libraries director.

“This is just another way to ensure all residents have access to as many materials as possible.”

Customers who already have a standard library card do not need an eMedia card to access online materials.

To learn more about the eMedia card or Heights Libraries’ text messaging service, visit www.heightslibrary.org or call 216-932-3600.

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

Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library Board Meeting highlights

AUGUST 17, 2015

All board members were present.

University Heights Library parking lot expansion

The library has been able to purchase 400 [third house on Trumbull] from one owner of the library for sale. The lease price was $114,000, was the same for each of the two houses. This will enable the University Heights Library to enlarge its parking lot by three lots to meet community requests for more parking.

Balanced Scorecard highlights

Deputy Director Kim DeNardo-Ackroyd presented highlights of the Library’s Balanced Scorecard—Measures of Success for July 2015, focusing on a deposit collection at Brookside Home, formerly Homemaker; Q.I. (Quality/Innovativeness/Delivery) Science in the summer program with a STEM curriculum, a partnership with the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, with strong attendance; new desks and chairs added to the computer lab, and attendance by staff and managers in a drug-free training program about current laws and best practices for a drug-free workplace.

Staff development day

This annual program will be held on Sept. 18. The day of team-building and intensive study will feature a keynote speaker on professional ethics, classes from various community organizations, local or popular Zumba breakout. The library will be closed on that day.

Public Library Fund August distribution

The Ohio Department of Taxation has released the August distribution of the Public Library Fund, which is 8.1 percent greater than the distribution in August 2014. These distribution figures do not include the deductions from the Fund for OPUN (Ohio Public Library Information Network), and the library for the Blind and Physically Disabled, so the Ohio Library Council advises that these figures not be used for budgeting purposes.

July public service report highlights

• At University Heights Library, Associate Carol Wolflock presented a program on French Fashion to the Senior Happenings group.
• Members of the Cleveland Association of Black Storytellers presented A Celebration of African American Literature. Heights Libraries celebrates the 150th anniversary of this classic tale, with programs throughout the month of October. For more information, and to register, visit www.heightslibrary.org.

JWV Observer: Anne S. McFerland

Look for earlier and often expanded postings of meetings summaries online at www.heightsobserver.org. See page 8.

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The Library for the Blind and Physically Disabled

Three quarter-inch-wide digital video bus was in the Lee Road Library’s parking lot on Aug. 8. More than 150 people learned to download music, movies and books using the Overdrive app.

What’s going on at your library?

“We’re all mad here,” at the library—mad about Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland. Heights Libraries celebrates the 150th anniversary of this classic tale, with programs throughout the month of October. For more information, and to register, visit www.heightslibrary.org.

Coventry Village Library

1932 Coventry Road, 216-371-5340

Sunday, Oct. 5, 2 p.m.

Poet’s Journey in Wonderland. In honor of the 150th anniversary of Alice’s journey into Wonderland, this open reading invites all to share tales of journeys and poetry.

Lee Road Library

2354 Lee Road, 216-932-3600

Thursday, Oct. 8, 6–8 p.m.

Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland. Celebrate the book’s 150th anniversary by taking a fun-filled trip through Wonderland. Families can participate by registering for a 30-minute time slot. (Each slot can accommodate four to five participants in each family; please list each when registering.) Space is limited, so please register in advance.

Noble Neighborhood Library

2800 Noble Road, 216-291-5665

Thursday, Oct. 22, 7 p.m.

Bad Art Night: Alice in Wonderland. Join us for a night of Alice in Wonderland-themed “bad art” creating. There will be a contest for the best “bad art” in the bunch.

University Heights Library

3386 Cedar Road, 216-322-4710

Thursday, Oct. 29, 6 p.m.

Create Your Own Comic Book. Why let the people at Marvel and DC comics have all the fun? Kids in grades 3-5 are invited to enter the library’s secret, underground base, where they’ll find all the tools needed to create their own comic books—all while enjoying free pizza and refreshments. Registration begins Oct. 8.
‘Selling’ Cleveland Heights: a competitive strategy view

Michael E. Porter, Harvard Business School professor and well-known strategist, defined five forces that shape the attractiveness and sustainability of an industry: the threat of new entrants, the threat of substitutes, the bargaining power of customers, the bargaining power of suppliers, and direct competitive rivalry. When one applies this thinking to a place, such as Cleveland Heights, one can better understand the competitive situation and define some initial steps to overcome these forces to “sell” our city and yield an attractive “profit”—more visitors, more investment, more businesses and more residents.

It’s not surprising to find that the forces all deal with customers and prospects, and the competitors (direct, emerging, or unintentionally) trying to influence them. A solution will begin to overcome these competitive forces.

The first step is to define the basis, nature and hierarchy of the customers and prospects influenced by the five forces impacting Cleveland Heights.

In order to identify and act on these forces, one needs real market knowledge—not just focus groups, but facts. This eliminates hunches or “it seems like a good idea” from being part of the solution. The cost of guessing wrong is more than our community can afford.

Gathering the facts will take time, so concurrently, let’s take step 1A: Identify the primary target market—current Cleveland Heights visitors, investors, residents, businesses and institutions. The target, for now, is us! What does this mean in practice? A business should constantly communicate that it appreciates its customers, and tell them in person and through all communication channels. It should regularly learn who they are, where they’re from, what they like and dislike, and what alternatives they have.

Any business, large or small, can execute this step by delivering consistently and reliably what it knows it can deliver and what its customers appreciate. Stop there—going further means guessing. Make adjustments when you are certain you can deliver more of what your customer prefers.

This initial target, current customers, is the best first step. Any improvement must sustain these current customers first.

So, repair the holes, then fill the bucket. Begin by talking to the audience you already know, that can be targeted with available resources and channels of communication. If Cleveland Heights businesses and institutions do this, we might all be pleasantly surprised by the number of wins our city can rack up.

Jinida Doba is an associate with Cleveland Heights-based Doby & Company Strategic Consultants to Management. Doba has called Cleveland Heights home since 2010.

Celebrate Best of the Heights on Oct. 7

Deanna Bremer Fisher

Best of the Heights is back! It’s an annual party celebrating the best businesses the Heights has to offer, as voted upon by readers of the Heights Observer. From May through August, readers voted for their favorite Heights businesses. Find out who came out on top at the Best of the Heights awards party on Wednesday, Oct. 7, at Tucker Hall, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 2547 Fairmount Blvd. Tickets are $20 in advance and $25 at the door. Each business nominated for an award receives one free ticket. For more information and to purchase tickets, call 216-320-1423 or visit www.futureheights.org.

“We are fortunate to have so many independent businesses in our community that contribute to our quality of life,” said Richard Stewart, president of the FutureHeights Board of Directors, “The Best of the Heights is a fantastic opportunity to celebrate each of them and show our appreciation, and it’s always a lot of fun.”

Since 2005, FutureHeights—a nonprofit that works to inspire and facilitate collaboration and empowerment to ensure a vibrant and sustainable future for our community—has conducted this public opinion survey to recognize the unique attributes of locally owned Heights businesses, and their contributions to the local economy. The Best of the Heights is sponsored by Simply Charming, Motorcars, realtor Susan Delaney of Howard Hanna, and Keller National.

Deanna Bremer Fisher is executive director of FutureHeights and publisher of the Heights Observer.
Walsh returned to CH to perform and teach music

Amanda Walsh started playing piano when she was seven years old. Now, 32 years later, music has become the focus of her life. She still plays piano, as a solo artist and as a member of two bands, and she also plays violin. In addition, the Cleveland Heights resident teaches piano, both at her house and at Motter’s Music on Mayfield Road in Lyndhurst.

Walsh, whose maiden name was Aamies, grew up in Cleveland Heights. When she was six years old, she wanted to learn how to play violin, but her mother, who played piano, suggested that she learn piano first. She started taking lessons from Ruth Edwards, who was on the faculty of the Cleveland Institute of Music. When she was eight years old, she started to study violin.

She started taking lessons from Ruth Edwards, who was on the faculty of the Cleveland Institute of Music. When she was eight years old, she started to study violin. She attended Heights High and started to study violin. When she returned to Cleveland Heights in 2002, she started playing with other people. “That’s when I realized I could write a song,” she said. By that point, she was also playing more than just classical music. “I started doing more songs by singer-songwriters,” she said, adding that she was influenced by the music of Joni Mitchell, Ben Folds, Regina Spektor, Norah Case and Paul Simon.

In 2002, Walsh joined a band called the Golden Mean with guitarist Ian Zickler. Then, and her brother, G.B. Giesey, a drummer, formed a duo called Sparkle Motion. They still play shows around Cleveland. The Golden Mean broke up in 2008, when Zickler moved from the area. In her current band, City Limits, Walsh plays both piano and violin, and her brother plays drums. Other members include Rick Szekely and Rick Sockel on guitar and Matt Urminski on bass. City Limits performs at many Cleveland area clubs, including the Barking Spider in University Circle, the Blue Rock Café in Hudson, the Bevy in Lakewood’s Birdtown, and Euclid City Limits in Euclid.

This past August, Walsh took part in a show called Songwriters in the Round at Nighttown in Cleveland Heights. The show featured four Cleveland-area musicians, each of whom took turns playing their original songs. Walsh’s songs included “In the Shallows,” a song about the Shaker Lakes, and “Little Bird,” which she wrote when she was pregnant with her daughter, Rachel, who is now eight years old.

Walsh has also been a writer and editor at Rolling Stone magazine for 25 years. He is also the author of several books, including biographies of Jim Morrison, John Lennon and Bob Marley.

Though Walsh has not released any CDs, some of her music can be heard on www.youtube.com. Those songs include “Weatherman,” “Sun Shines” and “Closer to You.” She also has some upcoming performances, including a City Limits show at the Bevy in Birdtown on Sept. 30 and a Sparkle Motion show at the Barking Spider on Nov. 17. In addition, City Limits will be playing a free Halloween show on Oct. 16 at Wilbert’s Food & Music at 821 Huron Ave. in downtown Cleveland.

Walsh, who now lives on Scarborough Road in Cleveland Heights, loves her hometown. “I’ve always been proud of living in Cleveland Heights,” she said. “I love that I am only a five-minute run from the Shaker Lakes, and I love the Lee Road Library.” She added that she also loves the strong sense of community and the fact that people make a point of helping others. She also loves the diversity. “And I love the church bells I hear everywhere,” she said.

Anyone interested in taking lessons from Walsh can contact her via e-mail at amandarwalsh@aol.com.

James Hanke, a Cleveland Heights resident, was a writer and editor at Rolling Stone magazine for 25 years. He is also the author of several books, including biographies of Jim Morrison, John Lennon and Bob Marley.

Amanda Walsh

Heights Arts brings back poetic carnage with Oct. 10 Haiku Death Match

Mary Ryan

Past haiku masters, defending champions, and new contenders will be competing Saturday, Oct. 10, at Dobama Theatre, for glory, fame, and a not-so-cheesy trophy in Heights Arts’ occasionally annual Haiku Death Match.

The Death Match is a live haiku poetry competition where audience votes determine the Haiku Master. Contenders, who come prepared with an arsenal of haiku poems, compete in pairs for a given number of rounds. Audience members judge the poems by raising color paddles to indicate their votes, while volunteer counters tally the votes. The emcee announces the score and keeps the crowds calm. The last poet standing is the 2015 Haiku Death Match Master.

On-the-spot poetic competition can be traced back to the 1770s, when the Japanese poet Basho, who is also known as a master of the famous 17-syllable haiku form, composed his own haiku. The poems, which can be as short as three words, are meant to capture a moment in nature.

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Heights Arts invites the community to enjoy the poetic carnage, participate as the voting horde, and help support literary arts programming. Advance tickets are recommended for the 7 p.m. festivities and are available at the 2175 Lee Road gallery, by phone at 216-371-3457, online at www.heightsarts.org, or at the door. Tickets are $10 for Heights Arts members, and $15 for the general public.

Mary Ryan is on staff at Heights Arts, a nonprofit community arts organization.
Arthur Miller classic now onstage at Ensemble Theatre

Ian Hinz

Arthur Miller’s meditation on the American dream, “Death of A Salesman,” is now running on Ensemble Theatre’s Main Stage. The play explores the life and times of the iconic Lohman family, their tragic losses and unending quest for the next sale. In celebration of Arthur Miller’s centenary, Ensemble Theatre presents this American classic, directed by Celeste Cosentino and featuring Greg White as Willy Lohman.

Ensemble opens this two-act drama on a set designed by Ron Newell. The play kicks off Ensemble’s 2015-16 season, the theme of which is A Rebirth of Wonder. According to Cosentino, the theme was borrowed from Lawrence Ferlinghetti’s poem “I Am Waiting.”

“As in Ferlinghetti’s poem, Willy is waiting for his own rebirth of wonder. Perpetually waiting to own a business, to not be on the road, to make enough to own his house. He is waiting for the American dream, and for his sons to make good on that same dream,” said Cosentino. “That waiting is tempered by moments of almost indomitable hope and belief and other moments of clear-eyed realistic understanding of a world that is not what he hoped it would be. As Willy says, ‘after all the highways, and the trains, and the appointments, and the years, you end up worth more dead than alive.’”

Miller’s tale echoes Greek tragedy. As elder son Biff’s idealism dies, it is reborn in his younger brother, Hap. Hap promises, “I’m gonna show you and everybody else that Willy Lohman . . . had a good dream. It’s the only dream you can have—to come out number-one man.” Can Hap redeem his father? Or is there something beautifully human in the effort of living itself?

Ensemble continues it’s commitment to color-blind casting with a talented cast of 13 Cleveland based-actors: Greg White, Mary Alice Beck, Keith E. Stevens, Johnathan L. Jackson, Stephen D. Hood, Joe Milan, James Rankin, August Scarpelli, Kayla Davis, Emily Gray, Kayla McDonald, Faith Whitacre and Whitt Lowell. Lighting design is by Steven Barton and Ian Hinz, with set construction by Stephen Vasse-Hansell.

“What a pleasure it has been working on this Pulitzer Prize winner and truly iconic American classic play,” said Cosentino. “The actors and the theater become a place for us to share the experience of the human condition and this play is definitely one of the most monumental of those types of plays. Miller would have been 100 years old this year. We celebrate his centennial with his masterpiece.”

The production runs through Oct. 11, with performances Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m. Tickets are available through Ensemble’s website, www.ensembletheatrecle.org, or by calling the box office (216-331-2930). Ensemble Theatre is located at 2843 Washington Blvd., in the former Coventry School building.

Ian Hinz is a Cleveland Heights resident, operations manager and artistic director of Cain Park, and operations manager for Cleveland State University’s music department.

The Heights was hopping at Heights Music Hop

Lee Road was hopping Sept. 19 at the third annual Heights Music Hop presented by Future-Heights. Participants enjoyed a variety of free music at 18 venues along Lee Road. Merchants offered food and drink specials, including a free pig roast at The Rib Cage. An after-party at the Butholz stopped off the evening with music by The Admiraiales. FutureHeights thanks its hardworking Music Hop Committee—Dan Budin, James Hanks, Greg Bonanno, Pati Carlyle, Jeff Caryll, Adam Fleischer, Jennifer Greene, Emily Hannock, Gillian Irwins, Mike Knell, Justin Markert, Susan Christopher Rothmiller, Kelley Robinson, Richard Stewart, Savoy Queen Tabor and Clare Taff—our volunteers and staff. And many thanks to our sponsors and partners: Guaynabo Arts & Culture; Cedar Lee Special Improvement District; Simply Charming; Motorsports; The Wine Spot; Dewey’s Pizza; New Heights Grill; Cellar Door Records; City of Cleveland Heights; Reaisher Susan Delaney, Howard Hannen; Keller National; Jakprints; Digizoom Media; Kembrle; Bite Writers; Larchmere Porchfest; Beachwood Ballroom; Greg Shop; WJCU; WRRU; Heights Arts; ARTFUL; and Greg Bonanno. See more photos at www.heightsobserver.org.
Heights Arts unveils 10th season of chamber music concerts

Mary Ryan

Chamber music has been described as a conversation between friends, a view that Heights Arts has embraced in its Close Encounters music series since 2005. Each season, Heights Arts presents four chamber music concerts performed by members of the Cleveland Orchestra and other high-level classical musicians, in an assortment of intimate settings throughout the Cleveland area. This unique combination offers a thrilling opportunity to experience the music as it was meant to be heard—in an intimate space by a small audience.

This season, Close Encounters artistic director Isabel Trautwein, also a Cleveland Orchestra violinist, has engaged some of her colleagues and their peers to curate their own programs, ranging from classical baroque and period instruments and composers to curate their own programs, ranging from classical baroque and period instruments and composers to curate their own programs, ranging from classical baroque and period instruments and composers.

“As artistic director, I feel very lucky that my many musician neighbors and colleagues continually inspire the growth of this series with creative ideas on programming,” Trautwein said, “and, also, that Heights Arts has even expanded upon the original ideas. Looking back upon these ten years and over 40 wonderful concerts, I can say without hesitation that we have all chosen a great community to love and call home.”

On Sunday, Nov. 22, Close Encounters presents “BA-Shostakovich CHI” in Midtown’s landmark Dunham Tavern Museum. Johann Sebastian Bach’s rarely heard Coffee Cantata will be performed by soprano Sandi Simon, Cleveland Orchestra principal oboist Frank Rosenwein, French Canadian harpsichordist Christopher Bagam, and a string ensemble led by Cleveland Orchestra and baroque violinist Mitho Hashizume. Shostakovich’s String Quartet No. 8, a portrait of war, destruction and suffering, will be followed by one of classical music’s greatest gems, J.S. Bach’s Ciaconna in D Minor for solo violin.

Works by Bach, Ravel, Beethoven and Brahms are the inspiration for “1-2-3-4-5 From Solo to Quintet,” to be performed by the Omni Quartet and guest artist Isabel Trautwein, on Sunday, Feb. 28. Cleveland Orchestra members Jun-Min Amy Lee, Alicia Koele, violins; Joanna Patterson, viola; Tanya Ell, cello; and Isabel Trautwein, violincello, will take listeners on a musical journey from the purity of a Bach solo voice to the richness of a Brahms string quartet. This program provides an opportunity to experience the layering of chamber music in the extraordinary setting of a private downtown penthouse with 360-degree city views.

A historic carriage house on Herrick Mews in Cleveland Heights will be the setting for “The Sung Path . . . a Tandem Journey of Music and Words” on Sunday, April 3. An ensemble of six Cleveland Orchestra members, led by principal second violinist Stephen Rose, takes listeners through the musical garden of the program, featuring “Soliloquy” by Jennifer Higdon and “Morning Star” by Edward Niedermayer, as well as the poetry of Robert Walters, principal English horn player and an accomplished writer. This concert also will feature a world premiere of Voyage by associate principal oboist Jeffrey Rathbun.

“A Gypsy Mixer” on Sunday, May 1, will be the final concert of the Close Encounters season. Gypsy music has been an enduring influence on many composers, including Joseph Haydn, George Enescu and MoritzMoszkowski. The virtuoso band of Cleveland Orchestra players Katherine Bormann, Isabel Trautwein, violins; and Tanya Ell, cello; with pianist Randy Fusco will present a program of musical abandon at the Bop Stop on Cleveland’s West Side.

Subscriptions for the Close Encounters series, as well as single concert tickets, are available at the Heights Arts gallery, 2153 Lee Road, via phone at 216-377-3447; and at www.heightsarts.org. Discounted ticket prices are offered until Nov. 1, with additional discounts for Heights Arts members and students. All concert venues are wheelchair accessible.

For information on Heights Arts events and programming, visit www.heightsarts.org.

Amy Rosenbluth, Lake Erie Ink’s executive director and co-founder (with Cynthia Larsen), is a longtime Heights resident.
Kids from other neighborhoods

One of the first Halloween costumes I can remember wearing was that of the Scarecrow from *The Wizard of Oz*. I was in the second grade at Coventry Elementary School. Every year, on Halloween, students were allowed to wear costumes after lunch, for the rest of the afternoon. My Scarecrow costume was pretty close to the one Ray Bolger wore in the Wizard of Oz movie. But I insisted on dressing as the Scarecrow before Dorothy took him off his pole, when he had a broomstick, or something, through his sleeves to make his arms stick straight out at his sides. So my mother used a broomstick, minus the broom, for my costume.

But, of course, then I had to walk back to Coventry School, from Belmar and Mayfield roads, with my arms sticking straight out at my sides— and of no use to me—and then sit in class, with my arms sticking straight out at my sides. I began to lose the feeling in both of my arms, and my back and neck started hurting.

But I refused to forfeit the authenticity of my creation. I was being crucified. I was suffering for the sake of my art. I actually continued that experiment failed completely. They ate a ton and wanted more, every day.

But the candy never lasted nearly as long as we hoped it would, mainly because we, the parents, ate some of it every day until the supply became depleted.

When our kids were little, our street and its surrounding neighborhood were full of little kids. We got into the habit of buying lots of candy to hand out to trick-or-treaters. Over the years since we’ve lived here, in the Cedar-Fairmount area—the neighborhood closest to Cleveland Heights’s western border, just a few streets away from the city of Cleveland—we’ve seen fewer kids from our neighborhood trick-or-treating (because there are fewer kids). And we’ve seen more kids from what I assume are neighborhoods in Cleveland across the imaginary border.

They come, with supervising adults, in cars and station wagons and minivans, with large bags, often piled low with candy and then they wouldn’t want it anymore. That experiment failed completely. They ate a ton and wanted more, every day.

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They come, with supervising adults, in cars and station wagons and minivans, with large bags, often piled low with candy, for their Halloween hauls. Sometimes the adults come to the door, too, with their own bags. (Why didn’t I think of that when my kids were little? At first, it was confusing—“I’ve never seen those kids before,” I’d say. And then it became annoying—“Why should we give our candy to kids from other neighborhoods?”) And then I started seeing it a little differently—“Why shouldn’t we give them candy? There aren’t very many kids in that neighborhood anymore; and we have plenty for the ones who do live around here, and for these other kids.”

And then I started seeing it even more clearly. We have a lot around here; they don’t. Maybe people where they live can’t afford to buy and give away candy. These kids deserve to have fun as much as any kids do. I can’t afford to give a lot of money, though I do give what I can; but I certainly can afford to buy bags of Halloween candy (and giant bags, too, from Costco). And after the dozen or so kids from my street come for theirs, what am I going to do with my leftover pieces of candy—eat it myself? Believe me, I’ve fantasized about doing that. But no, I’m not going to. Any kid (and the occasional adult) is welcome to it.

Finally, it became something I started looking forward to. The year that I stopped being mad and grudgingly handing over a mini-Butterfinger bar, I started talking to the kids who came to my door—about their costumes, or the weather, or whatever. I do that still. They almost always seem shocked that I want to talk to them. That’s heartbreakingly. And it’s certainly worth the $a year I spend for the candy.

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 consultant. His writing focuses on the arts and, especially, pop music history.