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

Local couple will continue Mitchell's Chocolates tradition

Deanna Bremer Fisher

Newlyweds Jason Hallaman and Emily Bean are seeking to carry on the Mitchell's tradition for the next generation of chocolate lovers. Bill Mitchell, whose family founded Mitchell's Fine Chocolates in 1939, announced his desire to retire from the business last year. Without children or other family members to succeed him, he sought a buyer he could trust to carry on the brand and maintain the family recipes.

Late this spring, he found two. Hallaman and Bean said they were out shopping on the Eastside when they saw a display of Mitchell's chocolates and exclaimed how much they liked them. The store clerk overheard and casually asked if they had heard the news that the business was for sale.

"We go to the same church [Saints Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Cleveland Heights], but we hadn't heard he was selling the business," said Hallaman. "We dropped everything and ran over to the store on Lee Road to talk to Bill."

They soon came to an agreement



Jason Hallaman and Emily Bean are introduced at the 2016 FutureHeights Annual Meeting.

on purchase price, and Mitchell penned a letter announcing the couple's intent on May 11 that he posted on his website and sent to friends and customers. Mitchell will continue to own the building and plans to be available to mentor the couple for at least 12 months.

Since then, Hallaman and Bean worked to raise the capital to purchase the business. They launched a Kickstarter campaign on May 4 to fund some of the working capital needed to purchase inventory and pay employees through the lean summer months as the couple works to learn the business and

gear up for the busier fall and holiday seasons. By May 30, the couple raised \$62,893 from 201 supporters. The majority of backers are from Greater Cleveland, but also from as far as Los Angeles, Chicago and Atlanta. The store currently has 10 part-time employees that the couple hopes to retain.

"Our main goal is to continue delivering candies, truffles and caramels in the Mitchell's tradition that the community has come to love," the couple says on their Kickstarter page. "In addition to increasing marketing and social media presence, we plan

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Cedar Fairmount Business District plans free summer concert series and 15th annual festival



Riding the Euclid Beach Rocket Car at the 2015 Cedar Fairmount Summer Festival.

James Henke

The Cedar Fairmount Special Improvement District (CFSID) has announced special programs planned for this summer. They include two free concerts, and the annual Summer Festival.

Both concerts take place on the green west of Nighttown, 7-9 p.m. The first was held June 16, and the second is set for Thursday, July 21.

Cedar Fairmount restaurants will offer takeout food that attendees can eat on the green while watching the show. In case of inclement weather, the concert will move inside to Nighttown.

The July 21 concert will feature Cleveland-based singer-songwriter Morgan Mecaskey. A former member of the local indie/folk band Tinamou, Mecaskey made her solo debut in 2012, when she released the EP *Righteous Kind*. Her most recent recording is *Lover Less Wild*. Mecaskey has been compared to singer-songwriter Jeff Buckley. Her

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Community development experts speak at FutureHeights Annual Meeting

Deanna Bremer Fisher

On June 1, FutureHeights hosted an interactive panel discussion, Rediscovering Our Neighborhood Business Districts, at its annual meeting. Richey Piiparinen, director of the Center for Population Dynamics at the Levin College of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State University, facilitated the panel and cited census data to set the context. Cleveland Heights residents are highly educated, he said, and the Heights is among a handful of communities in Cuyahoga County with large numbers of highly educated young professionals.

More than 51 percent of Heights residents have a college degree, and more than 27 percent have advanced degrees, he said. This is much higher than average for the county (30 percent and 12.4 percent) and the state (29 percent and 11 percent). The numbers are even higher for young adults (65 percent for 25-34 year olds and 55 percent for 35-44 year olds). This is a trend that the city could leverage for growth, he said.

The issue, added Piiparinen, is that "Cleveland Heights is a classic tale of two cities." While the city has a lot of wealth, it also has its share of poverty. More than 15 percent of Heights residents earn less than \$25,000 annually.

Panelists Adam Rosen, economic development director of Detroit Shoreway Community Development

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Music Hop expands and returns this September

James Henke

Heights Music Hop returns for its fourth consecutive year this September. And this year, the Hop is expanding. It will take place over two days, Sept. 23 and 24, instead of just one, and, in addition to the Cedar Lee neighborhood where the Hop has happened the last three years, it will also expand into the Cedar Fairmount neighborhood.

"We're excited to be able to grow this festival each year," said Dan Budin, chair of the FutureHeights

Music Hop Committee. "Our goal always has been to showcase the Heights as an arts and entertainment destination, while simultaneously supporting our business districts. The addition of Cedar Fairmount this year helps us to do just that. We have an incredible partnership with Cedar Lee, and its businesses have been great venues and sponsors, so we look forward to the continued high energy of a



festival in Cedar Lee and to the inclusion of Cedar Fairmount and the new experiences its businesses have to offer."

In its first year, 2013, the Hop drew about 1,000 people to the Cedar Lee neighborhood. Numerous musical artists, ranging from up-and-coming groups to well-known bands from throughout Northeast Ohio, performed in eight stores and restaurants along Lee Road and outside on the street. In 2014, attendance doubled, with people coming

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Letters Policy

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

HEIGHTS OBSERVER

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About the Observer

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

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

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

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

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

- To make a submission of any kind, go to www.heightsobserver.org and click on "Member Center" at the left.

- For information about writing style, article length, etc., click on "Become an Observer" at the left. For questions that aren't answered there, call the FutureHeights office at 216-320-1423 or e-mail info@futureheights.org.

Articles to be considered for the August issue must be submitted by July 11. We publish some articles online as they come in—and still consider them for the next print issue. We also publish an e-newsletter each Tuesday.

Support Cedar Lee businesses during construction

Alex Pesta

I hope Cleveland Heights residents will join me in supporting our Cedar Lee businesses over the next few months. While the new streetscape construction is exciting, and will create a more attractive, safe and inviting district, construction activities will certainly disrupt "business as usual." It will be dusty and traffic may be inconvenienced. However, I am confident the result will be worth it for our city.

Let's work together to ensure the businesses that have continually invested in one of our best mixed-use districts are healthy when the ribbon is cut on the new street. Make sure to visit the Cedar Lee website (www.cedarlee.org) to see where parking is available, and consider using back streets into the district to minimize frustration and traffic. Please be patient.

I believe "shopping local" is a luxury, and we should rally around our local enterprises. This is especially true during a massive undertaking like the streetscape. Don't forget to

financially support the restaurants, shops, theaters, grocery store, mechanics, bars, brewery, drugstore, art galleries (what a list!) and all the other amazing amenities that are here.

I have heard and read comments asking "Is it worth it?" or stating "This is for the businesses."

First, I submit [that] it is absolutely worth it to invest in our city's infrastructure and that public investments often yield economic returns. Don't believe me? Check out the Euclid Corridor Healthline. Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority's substantial investment of \$200 million has resulted in over \$4.3 billion in development activity. That is a more than 2,000-percent return on investment! The Cedar Lee streetscape's budget is approximately \$3 million. Can you imagine the same return? It would be over \$60 million. That is impressive, and, let's be honest, needed for our community.

Second, the notion that "this is for the businesses" is true, sort of. Yes, it will improve the quality of the district, optimistically bringing

in new people to spend time and money. However, last I checked, the street and sidewalks don't close during off-hours. The public right-of-way is exactly that—public. I am hopeful the new design will elevate the physical spaces to be more reflective of the people who frequent the district and the services that are available here.

We must invest in our community to remain competitive in our region. Investments like the Cedar Lee streetscape not only improve our spaces and places, but also demonstrate that the city is investing in its future. Please join me in supporting that commitment by ensuring all the businesses are here when the streetscape is complete. Like us, they deserve to celebrate and enjoy a healthy district that is uniquely Cleveland Heights. See you in Cedar Lee.

Alex Pesta and his wife chose to raise their three children in Cleveland Heights, and love the choices that places like Cedar Lee offer. Pesta is an architect and city planner who focuses his work on the revitalization of our urban areas.

CEDAR FAIRMOUNT continued from page 1

forceful presence, deliberate arrangements and confident handling of the guitar creates a memorable musical experience.

The Cedar Fairmount Summer Festival was first held in 2001, making this the 15th consecutive year for the event. "We wanted to do something to encompass the neighborhood and to give back to the community," said Kaye Lowe, executive director of CFSID. "We also wanted to do something that promoted Cleveland Heights."

This year's festival will take place on Sunday, Aug. 7, from noon to 5 p.m. As always, it will include a variety of entertainment for people of all ages. The Euclid Beach Rocket Car will be back, and there will also be a bounce house—a big castle inside of which children can bounce up and down—and a mini monster house. Both houses will be in the parking lot of the Fifth Third Bank. In addition, four famous movie characters—Cinderella, Elsa, Batman and the white soldier from *Star Wars*—will meet and greet festival attendees.

The Akron Zoo will bring its mobile zoo, featuring live animals, and Cleveland Metroparks will bring its mobile NatureTracks program to the event. The Cleveland Museum of Natural History Museum will also take part, and the Animal Protective League will hold an adoption event, featuring both cats and dogs.

Once again, the festival will feature live music. Musical Mark will perform a show for kids, and three popular Greater Cleveland bands—Old Boy, the Get Back Duo and Eclectic Vision—will play at the event, as will Mark Goldstein, another local musician.

Local artists will display and sell their artwork in the arts and crafts



Morgan Mecaskey

area, and the Roxboro Elementary School PTA will sponsor an art exhibit featuring work by some of its students.

In addition, merchants will offer special sales throughout the day, and restaurants will also offer discounts.

"We are very excited about this year's festival," Lowe said. "And we are very proud that this has grown and that the community embraces it."

Cuyahoga Arts & Culture gave the neighborhood a \$3,500 matching grant to help fund the event, and seven other organizations—the Cedar Grandview Building, Dave's Markets, the Heights Center Building, the Heights Medical Building, Fifth Third Bank, New Vista Enterprises and CFSID—are Elite Sponsors, having donated at least \$500 toward the cost of the event.

For more information about the Cedar Fairmount's summer concerts and festival, visit www.cedarfairmount.org or call 216-791-3172.

James Henke, a Cleveland Heights resident, was a writer and editor at Rolling Stone magazine for 15 years. He is also the author of several books, including biographies of Jim Morrison, John Lennon and Bob Marley. He is on the board of FutureHeights, and is co-chair of the Heights Observer Advisory Committee.

MITCHELL'S continued from page 1

to stay open later on Fridays and Saturdays, host wine pairings with local businesses, streamline the website and online store, and continue to develop and expand our product line."

At a May 22 meet-and-greet event organized by FutureHeights volunteer Micah Kirman, the couple said that while they don't plan to change the recipes, they do have plans to take a fresh approach to marketing and the customer experience.

"People don't realize that the Lee Road store is the production facility," said Bean. "Mitchell's is a true chocolatier. All the candies are made on site." She said they would like to enable customers to view the chocolates being made by installing glass walls. They will also consider putting the existing 1950s-era freezer and the popcorn machine from 1935 to use again.

The couple said they liked the idea that the Kickstarter campaign helped community members feel invested in a business.

According to the Kickstarter page, Hallaman is now working at the store fulltime and learning all the tricks of the trade from Bill. Bean was entrusted with a book published in 1954 titled, *Choice Confections: Manufacturing and Methods*, with Mrs. Mitchell's handwriting in the margins. "Jason and I are tackling day-to-day operations in a very slow and methodical way, but Bill will be guiding us the entire way," said Bean.

Hallaman said he has 25 years of experience in the food service industry. Bean, who works for University Hospitals, recently received her M.B.A. in pharmaceutical management. She said she plans to continue working fulltime so that they won't have to draw a salary from the business right away.

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

Take back the CH Building Department



HEIGHTS OF DEMOCRACY

Carla Rautenberg and Deborah Van Kleef

On a warm May evening last year, about 230 Cleveland Heights residents packed a meeting room at the Community Center to oppose the city's move to lease its water system to a private, for-profit corporation. When more than 200 people show up at a meeting on short notice, you can assume each of them represents many more who were unable to be there.

City council members listened to their constituents and went back to the drawing board. As a result, in January 2017, Cleveland Heights will join more than 70 Northeast Ohio communities that get their water directly from the Cleveland Water Department, resulting in substantial savings for residents and businesses.

Flash forward a year or so. Beginning this month, the city will contract out its building department operations to Colorado-based SAFEbuilt, a private, for-profit corporation.

The building department ensures that renovations, demolitions and new construction are carried out according to code, and with the approval of the Architectural Board of Review. Its work consists primarily of issuing permits and conducting inspections. (Residential inspections, both periodic and point-of-sale, are done by the housing department.) It plays a vital role in maintaining the safety and quality of city buildings.

Leasing, outsourcing, contracting out, "public-private partnerships"—these are all forms of privatization. Privatization occurs when a public sector service or utility is transferred to the private sector, to be operated not for the public good, but for private gain.

Why, after facing strong opposition to privatizing our water, has Cleveland Heights City Council voted to privatize another vital service?

According to City Manager Tanisha Briley, Ohio's new certification requirements for building inspectors have made it difficult to find qualified replacements as staff has shrunk due to attrition. Cleveland.com reported that the department is down from 16 employees in 2006 to one part-time inspector and one part-time secretary. The city already uses SAFEbuilt inspectors on a part-time, supplementary basis.

The building department office is generally open only three hours a day—a serious inconvenience to developers, contractors and homeowners needing to pull permits. SAFEbuilt proposes to staff the counter eight hours daily, and provide its own equipment and mobile reporting.

SAFEbuilt recently began operating the building departments in North Olmsted and Bay Village. It is

a corporate sponsor of (i.e., a donor to) the Ohio City/County Management Association (OCMA), the professional organization for city managers and other local administrators, and its parent organization, the International City/County Managers Association (ICMA).

We have reason to be concerned about the step the city has taken:

- A well-informed, vocal constituency of residents opposes privatization.
- Money that could be put to good use will leave the community. Under city control, income from utilities, permits, user fees, etc., can fund infrastructure, amenities and services. A private company, however, must by definition maximize profits. Once its costs are met, the rest of its earnings are siphoned out of the community, into executive salaries and shareholder dividends.
- Contracting out creates problems with accountability. With the entire department staffed by SAFEbuilt employees, how will the city maintain oversight? As anyone who has delegated responsibilities knows, someone has to make sure people do what they said they would.
- Because corporations have a profit imperative, their objectives may fail to align with the public good in the long term. Nationally and globally, many cities have chosen to "remunicipalize" or "insource" basic services, particularly water, after negative and sometimes disastrous experiences with privatization.

Cleveland Heights has signed a three-year contract with SAFEbuilt, with terms that allow the city to opt out after one year.

According to the *Sun Press*, "[Mayor Cheryl] Stephens and some other council members, including Carol Roe, continue to look at the possibilities of partnering with other cities through a regional collaboration." Briley told the *Plain Dealer*, "Everyone at this point is supplementing their building inspection, [so] we think this idea has real potential."

There is a precedent for shared services among suburbs. Cleveland Heights, University Heights, Shaker Heights and South Euclid have created the Heights-Hillcrest Council of Governments to operate a joint dispatch service for fire, police and EMS calls. While we would like to know more about how this arrangement guarantees accountability, we can say for certain that it keeps public funds in the public sector.

We urge the mayor and council to aggressively seek alternatives to leaving essential building department functions in private hands.

Carla Rautenberg is an activist and a lifelong Cleveland Heights resident. Deborah Van Kleef is a musician and writer who grew up in Cleveland Heights, and has lived here as an adult for more than 30 years. Contact them at heightsdemocracy@gmail.com.



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Understanding school funding: House Bill 920

Krissy Dietrich Gallagher

No matter where you live in Ohio, regardless of whether or not you have children or whether or not they attend public schools, you will be asked to vote periodically on a local school levy. You might as well understand why.

House Bill 920, the Ohio law that outlines how public schools are funded, is complex and confusing. But it has a huge impact on all of us.

H.B. 920 was passed in 1976, during a period of unprecedented inflation. Home values were soaring every year, sometimes by double-digit percentages, and property taxes were growing at the same

alarming rate. The state legislature attempted to lessen the burden on homeowners by freezing the dollar amount paid to school districts and libraries at the 1976 level; not at the rate or percentage, but at the actual dollar amount.

To better understand the ramifications, let's break this down with numbers:

Imagine you own a \$100,000 house and pay 5 percent to your local and county government, and an additional 5 percent to your public schools, in taxes each year. After three years, the value of your house is reevaluated and determined to be \$120,000. The money that goes to city and county government automatically rises to \$6,000 from the original \$5,000, because the rate stays the same.

However, money that goes to your public schools stays at \$5,000 because the county auditor comes in and readjusts your effective tax rate from 5 percent down to 4.2 percent, as prescribed by H.B. 920.

Imagine that this goes on for 10 or 20 years. After a while, your house has increased in value up to \$250,000, and your local government now receives \$12,500 in taxes annually. Because your rate stays the same, cities and counties are able to go years, decades even, without asking for a tax increase.

But your school taxes have

stayed at \$5,000; now just 2 percent of the value of your home.

School costs—from teacher salaries to textbooks to gas for school buses—have gone up over that 20-year period, but schools are not receiving a single dollar more in tax revenue. No matter how conservative or efficient districts are with taxpayer money, they simply cannot keep up with those day-to-day cost increases without asking for additional revenue from a levy.

Jayne Geneva, a longtime Cleveland Heights resident who is also a lawyer specializing in small business and real estate law, and a school-funding activist, said, “We, as a school district, cannot raise any more money if we don’t add more millage to our tax burden. The dollar amount will always remain the same. Period.” She reiterated that repeat school levies are not a sign of inefficiency, waste or lax oversight on the part of districts. They are a direct result of state law.

Krissy Dietrich Gallagher is a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights, a graduate of the Heights schools and a former Coventry School teacher. She is a freelance journalist under contract with the CH-UH City School District, and was asked to write this article by the district's communications department, as part of its Strategic Plan, Goal #3, re: communicating with the public.

ANNUAL MEETING continued from page 1

Organization, and Michael Fleming, executive director of St. Clair Superior Community Development Corporation, shared strategies they have used to reinvigorate their commercial districts. Rosen said that many people believe that Detroit Shoreway and Gordon Square Arts District are the same. “We are two separate organizations,” he said, our success lies in “our partnership and what we’ve been able to do to leverage that partnership to create a vibrant neighborhood.”

Fleming said that St. Clair Superior is about 10 to 15 years behind Detroit Shoreway. He described programs designed to engage the community in creating a sense of place and draw diverse groups of residents together, such as an urban grazing program at Quay 55 and pop-up shops in vacant St. Clair storefronts.

Success requires perseverance, said Fleming. “In our neighborhood, there are zero comps for real estate so it’s important to get the cost put into a house as low as possible.” Despite those efforts, the group is still having trouble selling houses. “We have buyers lined up, we have banks who want to give mortgages, but we can’t get an appraiser to appraise,” he said.

Dione Alexander, president of Village Capital, emphasized that the voice of residents is essential to the development process and that many groups must work together to redevelop a property. “It doesn’t make a difference who gets the credit,” she said. “You’ve got to get the work done credibly. And that means you have to partner—even with people you don’t like, or with people who look different from you or who have different politics.”

Bob Brown, former director of the Cleveland Planning Commission, said that planning was important, and that cities and community development corporations needed to cooperate to make projects happen.

Cleveland Heights Mayor Cheryl Stephens commented following the presentation, saying that city council had created a new seven-member Economic Development Advisory Committee. “More details will be available soon,” she said.

To view a video of the presentations, visit www.futureheights.org.

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

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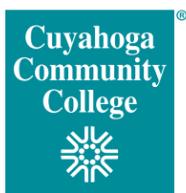
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MINUTES FROM UNIVERSITY CIRCLE

How my family views education in the Heights

Ari Klein

The next school year will be the first in 16 years that my wife and I will have no children in the CH-UH public school system. Our two daughters attended our schools from kindergarten through graduation from Heights High, just like both of their parents, and their paternal grandparents (my mother is an alum, but moved here in 10th grade). Our experience was similar to that of many other Heights families—our girls thrived and excelled in our schools. Certainly, there were moments when we were concerned about one issue or another, or that teacher or something else, but they both received a good education.

There are other lessons that our kids learned beyond academics by attending CH-UH schools. They navigated challenges that one doesn't learn in a classroom, but does still learn at school, mostly about how to get along with others—how to play together on the playground, get along with others during lunch, and how to work on academic teams.

These are some of the reasons why, except for a very few students, I do not believe that homeschooling or online learning represents a complete education. In the classroom, our girls got a chance to hear from other students with different opinions, were exposed to a variety of methods for working out a problem, and tried to understand others' points of view. I don't understand how these important experiences can take place online, if one learns in isolation, or even if one attends school in a homogeneous setting. Learning how to play and work with others has to be challenging when one is alone or with family members only.

When we decided to raise a family, my wife and I knew that our kids would attend Heights public schools, and we only looked at houses in the CH-UH district. We knew that our children would be in the minority, both in race and religion. I am certain this status affected them in some ways, but they always had friends and did well in school.

I believe the transiency of our school population was harder for them. For our younger daughter, it seemed there was always a friend

moving away during her elementary school years. It was difficult to keep starting over with friendships, but both of our girls also have friends that they have gone to school with since kindergarten or first grade.

Another type of challenge came early in one of our daughter's classrooms. It took a while to get used to the teacher's way of doing things, but we got through it. Programmatic changes in school also made it difficult for our daughters to adjust from year to year—something was always changing. We all lived through it and did the best we could.

We had teachers who went out of their way to make classes interesting and provide individualized lessons and learning opportunities for our girls. Although I am an employee and my wife was an active volunteer in the schools, we never felt we needed to use those positions to benefit our children.

Everyone warned us about middle school: "Just close your eyes for three years" was the advice we got. When we bought our house we did not realize we were in the Wiley attendance zone. We forged ahead and felt like our girls were at no disadvantage compared to the families of kids in the other two middle schools. Wiley ended up being fine for both our girls—even with open eyes.

Our girls' experiences ran the gamut from sports to music (lots of music), clubs and AP classes, and even classes at John Carroll University for part of the day this year. Not every experience was pleasant or wonderful, but it is hard to imagine that utopia exists anywhere. I believe that our decision to work, live and send our "precious cargo" to the CH-UH schools has all been worthwhile.

If I had it to do over again, I would not change a thing. These decisions made our daughters the people they are today, and prepared them well for the next chapters in their lives. We are so proud of them and glad they had a chance to be part of Tiger Nation.

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

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Challenging the narrative about education funding



THE COMMON GOOD

Susie Kaeser

Children say the darnedest things.

One of the many ways Zagara's Marketplace supports our community is by hosting local groups raising funds for youth activities. I'm an easy target for those earnest young volunteers selling candy bars, raffle tickets, popcorn or Girl Scout cookies.

A recent sales encounter really set me back. An enthusiastic sports team member asked me to buy a raffle ticket. After handing over my money, I asked the young salesgirl where she attended school. Much to my disappointment, she named a charter school and then offered quite innocently, "You know private schools are better."

I was devastated. In one sentence a young student rejected public education, the historic guarantor of access and opportunity for all. She assumed that her charter school was private and that that made it better. It appears that the narrative of failure that justified breaking into the public purse to

offer choice and competition as the guardians of quality education has affected our youth.

Has the for-profit education industry won the nearly 30-year-long war on public education? Despite the reality that charters have a dismal record, the proponents of competition and unregulated use of public funds seem to have infected the public discourse.

As I tried to process my sadness, I wondered what made her think her school was private and that this label made it better. What did she know about public schools? What did she know about the dismal record of charter schools both for abuse of funds and failure to educate? Did she have any idea that her rogue institution was more likely to put profit ahead of her needs, and less likely to be stable or inclusive or protect her rights?

I am fairly certain that no one has explained the idea of the common good to this innocent. Nor has anyone explained to her the harm that is done to other students by a punitive state education funding system that promises each charter student more funds than it actually supplies and then demands that the local school districts where they live pony up the difference. She has no idea that her friends in public schools are paying for her "private education."

It troubles me that our Ameri-

can education tradition that binds us together in mutual self-interest has been disfigured and replaced by education as a consumer commodity. Every man for himself.

The common good is not a quaint or outdated idea, but charters, testing and vouchers are driving Ohio's education policy. Competition and profit are overshadowing the common good. This is damaging communities and restricting the power of public education to further the wellbeing of our democracy.

The cost to local school districts is significant. During the last school year, all but two of Ohio's 612 school districts lost funds to charter schools. Last year, 21 of 31 districts in Cuyahoga County lost more than 10 percent of their state funds to charters; some lost as much as 60 percent.

Since 2000, the year Ohio lawmakers started to divert state funding for public schools to charter schools, the Cleveland Heights-University Heights school district has lost more than \$22.5 million. Bill Phillis of the Coalition for Equity and Adequacy estimates that, during that time, charters have extracted more than \$9 billion from local districts in Ohio.

Resistance is difficult. Reversing this damaging system is going to take time. It will take leadership and visible opposition.

At the June 7 meeting of the

CH-UH Board of Education, Ron Register introduced a resolution to invoice the state of Ohio for the \$22.5 million in funding that has been lost to charters since the state created this damaging dual system. Board members spoke with passion about the need for change and the need for political action to protect the interests of students and the taxpayers who invest in them.

They passed the resolution and joined 60 other districts from communities of all sizes across Ohio in protesting this misuse of public funds at the expense of high-quality public education.

The invoice resolution is one way to voice commitment to the common good. Boards of education are charged with ensuring that the children in local schools are well served. Because of the current attack on public schools, they cannot sit by and watch bad policy destroy a wonderful community asset.

We have to challenge the policy and we have to challenge the narrative. This is a great first step. More is needed to awaken concern and mobilize opposition.

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



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Businesses should bear some education costs

Eric Klieber

In his May opinion piece, "An argument against standardization in education," Ari Klein makes an excellent point that not all students need to take Algebra II. I would like to put his ideas into a larger context.

Let me start by relating my personal experience. I recently retired from a 43-year career as an actuary. Actuaries have a well-deserved reputation as the geeks of the business world. In STEM fields, geekiness is more the norm, but in business we actuaries stand out, or, more accurately, disappear into the woodwork. I studied math in college, and when I applied for my first job, my math degree was a necessary qualification. I also had to pass three-hour exams in both calculus and statistics, and in other subjects more directly related to actuarial work—to in all in my time—to obtain my professional credentials.

You might think I spent more than 40 years solving equations and calculating probabilities. Nothing could be further from the truth. I used almost nothing I learned in college (in the classroom, that is) during those years. This doesn't mean there aren't some actuaries who use higher math in their jobs, but most don't. In a word, I was overqualified for my job, at least in terms of education, and I suspect the same is true of other kinds of work. So why are actuaries required to have math degrees and take those horrible exams?

Education serves three main purposes: personal growth and fulfillment, employment and civic engagement (not necessarily in that order). As such, there are three beneficiaries: individuals, employers and society at large. Only two of these beneficiaries pay most of the cost of education: individuals, and their families, through the local school taxes and tuition they pay; and society, through state and federal support for education. I am aware that [government] support ultimately comes from taxes, but there is a difference between local support for specific schools and state and federal support, which is more widely dispersed geographically and among social sectors.

From the employer's perspective, the education of employees is largely a freebie. Employers do pay taxes, some of which goes to support education. Some pay trade school and college tuition for their employees, and some support trade school and college programs related to their work. But this is small potatoes compared to other funding sources.

We constantly hear employers complaining about the lack of necessary skills in the workforce. This is nonsense. As noted above, it is more likely that most of the workforce is overqualified. So why are employers complaining? Simple: when something is free, or almost free, demand always exceeds supply. As long as employers aren't paying for it, their demand for education for their employees will be insatiable.

One solution is for employers to directly support education at the primary and secondary level, but this is easier said than done. This won't work at the local level. Employers cannot be expected to support schools whose students could go on to work anywhere. What is needed is some kind of national or statewide education tax on employers, [but] this would be a steep hill to climb, whether in D.C. or Columbus.

If employers had to pay part of the cost of primary and secondary education, they would justifiably want some say in how these programs are run. This is not to say I think schools should be run like a business. Rather, school policies will improve when goalsetting, like funding, is balanced among all the beneficiaries of education. I'm sure that if employers were paying part of the cost, they would agree 100 percent with Mr. Klein that not all students need to take Algebra II. Maybe they would also agree that not all actuaries need to have college degrees in math and sit for those exams.

These ideas don't point to any practical policies that we can pursue here in the Heights. But they should provide some food for thought when we consider what education policies to support on the federal and state levels.

Eric Klieber is a Cleveland Heights resident.

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COURTESY CITY OF UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS

Lost State of Franklin performed in June as part of the 2016 University Heights Summer Concert Series, hosted on the Hamlin Quad at John Carroll University.

UH concert series continues in July

Patrick Grogan

University Heights continues its free summer concert series on Thursday evenings on the Hamlin Quad at John Carroll University (between Dolan Science Center and the Grasselli Clock Tower).

The month of July features the Stratophonics (rock, soul, big band, and today's music) on July 7; WIXY 1260 Band (music of the 1960s and

'70s) and an ice cream social on July 14; Sloppy Joe's (classic rock, blues, R&B hits) on July 21; and the University Heights Symphonic Band and another ice cream social on July 28.

Patrick Grogan is the community development coordinator for the City of University Heights, and works with residents and businesses to promote University Heights as a great place to live, work, shop and play.

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University Heights City Council Meeting highlights



MAY 16, 2016

All council members were present.

Water service transition costs

Presented on second reading was an ordinance authorizing the mayor to expend \$319,699 from the sewer fund to underwrite 30 percent of the transition costs for University Heights residents who are customers of the Cleveland Heights water department as Cleveland Heights changes to the City of Cleveland water system. Councilwoman Michele Weiss was concerned about this significant sum and that the budget committee was not aware that these were "extra" funds. She criticized [the idea of] using taxes paid by some taxpayers to subsidize the costs of other taxpayers, and that any "extra" funds would be better spent making improvements to the appearance and amenities of the northwest quadrant of the city. The 800 residents in question will now have access to other cost-saving measures such as the Homestead Act and the summer sprinkler program, which were not available through Cleveland Heights so they will automatically receive other forms of relief. Councilman Mark Wiseman agreed, expressing concerns about what kind of deal had been made and that this sets a risky precedent for the city.

Vice Mayor Susan Pardee and Councilman Steven Sims agreed that the length of the payback should be examined, and asked the cost of extending it to 10 years instead of five.

The sewer district meets next week before adjourning for the summer. Before then, the city must inform them of the billing rate, which will be based on costs as determined by the water department and council's decision on transition costs. According to Councilman John Rach's quick calculation, the transition cost over five years would be \$1,291 or \$21.52 per month. Spread over 10 years, the cost would be \$1,417 or \$11.81 per month.

Council voted to change the transition rate to a 10-year payback. But the vote to suspend the rules and vote for passage was not approved with Councilman Mark Wiseman, Councilwoman Pamela Cameron, and Councilwoman Michele Weiss voting no. Council scheduled a special meeting for May 23 to vote on this ordinance.

Neighborhood park

Council approved submission of a grant to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources for funding to develop a neighborhood park on an empty, city-owned lot on Silsby Road, near the western entrance to the city. The plan and costs are still being developed but will mainly comprise landscaping as the lot is 40 x 130 feet and bordered by homes.

LWV Observer: Wendy Deuring.

May 23, 2016

All council members were present.

Special meeting to address water service transitions costs

The meeting's purpose was to address a proposed expenditure of \$319,699 from the sewer fund to underwrite part of the transition costs for the University Heights residents who are currently customers of

the Cleveland Heights Water Department, as the Cleveland Heights system transfers to the City of Cleveland water system. University Heights would pay 30 percent of a 10-year transition fee.

A total of 747 University Heights homes are being transitioned. All things being equal, the bills for all 747 homes will be lower even with the transition cost added in. Cleveland has switched to a newer radio reading system that is much more accurate than the original system, which was installed 30 years ago.

Public comments

Phillip Lushek of Washington Boulevard claimed that the majority of the households affected seem to be on low or fixed income and shouldn't be burdened with these costs. Lushek said that a change in gas or electric provider does not entail transition costs, and that Cleveland Water should pay the expense.

University Heights resident Justin Gould noted that University Heights is the only community in which only a portion of the residents are impacted. Gould feels that the costs are related to public works and that it was not appropriate to bill citizens.

Response

Mayor Susan Infeld noted that the northwest quadrant of University Heights was originally part of Cleveland Heights. When the Silsby brothers decided to separate from Cleveland Heights and form a new community, they moved the development toward the south and east.

Vice Mayor Susan Pardee commented that she was initially in favor of the proposal, but then became concerned that this constituted a payment of tax revenues to individual homeowners. Now that she has seen the breakdown of all of the costs, she sees more clearly that this is truly a public works project that appropriately would be shared by the city's sewer fund.

Result

Council approved the payment of \$319,699, and a 10-year plan for residents to pay the remaining transition costs. The vote was four in favor, with Councilman Wiseman and Councilwoman Weiss voting no and Councilwoman Cameron abstaining due to a conflict of interest.

LWV Observer: Wendy Deuring.

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

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

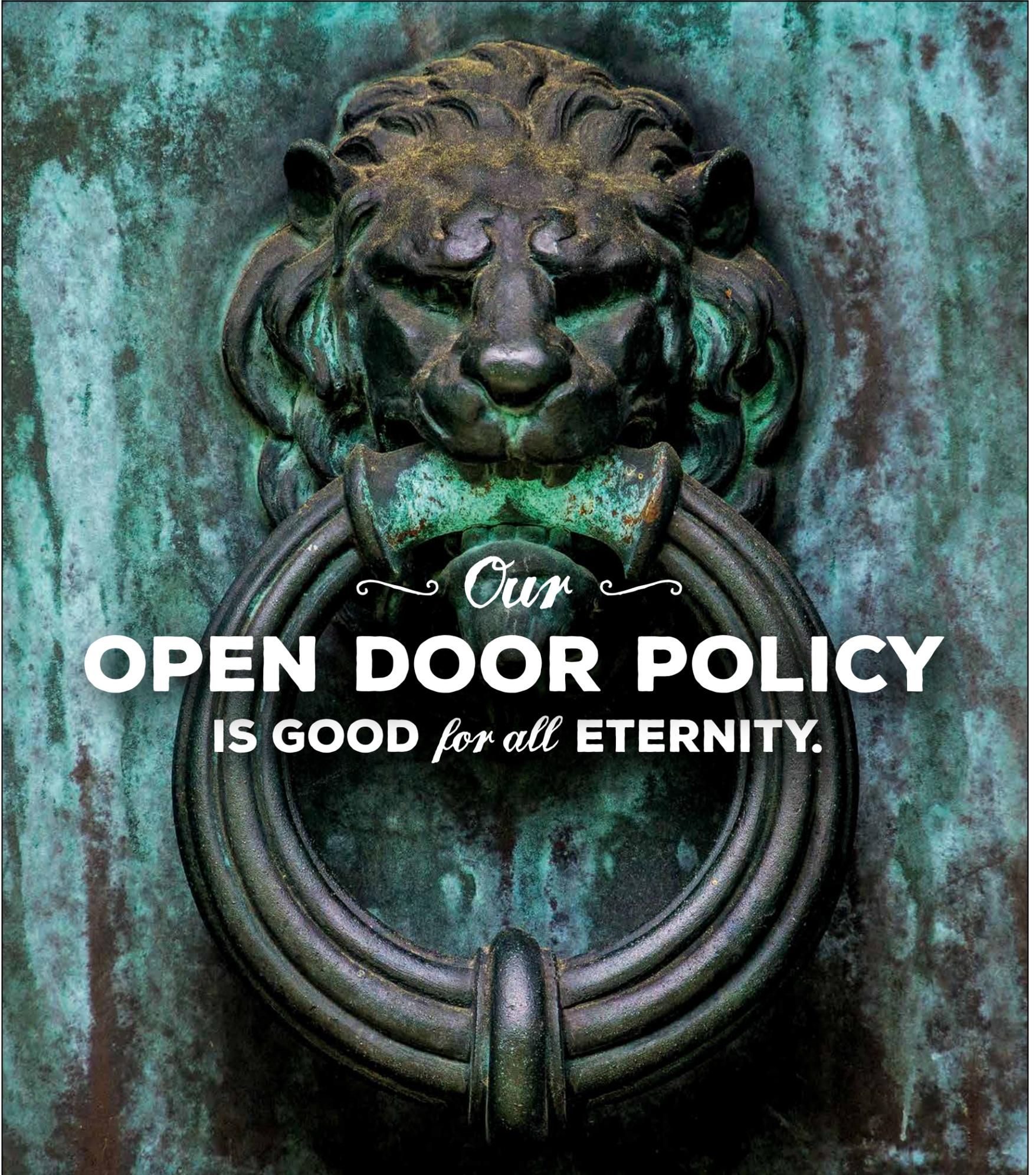
These reports contain member observation and selected highlights of public meetings and are not official statements of the Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters Cuyahoga Area. This disclaimer must accompany any redistribution of these reports.

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MUSIC HOP continued from page 1

from all over Northeast Ohio. And last year, the festival grew again, with 40 musical acts performing at 18 venues and attracting more than 2,500 people.

Because the Hop attracts so many people to the area, several other business districts have wanted to be included in the music festival. This year, the Hop committee decided to expand and have music in the Cedar Fairmount Business District. That portion of the Hop will take place on Friday, Sept. 23. In addition to the stores and other businesses where bands will play in that area, FutureHeights will host a Hop after-party/fund-raiser at Nighttown that night.

Heights Music Hop will return to the Cedar Lee Business District

on Saturday, Sept. 24, and planning is currently underway for expanded programming and activities throughout the district.

Heights Music Hop is a program of FutureHeights. There are many ways to get involved with this popular festival, including as a volunteer, performer or sponsor. For more information, visit www.heightsmusichop.com.

James Henke, a Cleveland Heights resident, was a writer and editor at Rolling Stone magazine for 15 years. He is also the author of several books, including biographies of Jim Morrison, John Lennon and Bob Marley. He is on the board of Future Heights, and he is the co-chair of the Heights Observer Advisory Committee. He is also on the Music Hop committee.

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SCAN TO DONATE

Cleveland Heights City Council Meeting highlights

MAY 16, 2016
All council members were present.

Public comments

Noble Neighborhood Community Home and Yard Sale: On behalf of Noble Neighbors, resident Susan Sanders thanked Mayor Cheryl Stephens, council members, and city staff for their support of, and participation in making the second annual event, from May 13-15, a success.

Campaign for Forest Hill: Resident Lindsey Reilly stated that the Forest Hill neighborhood has had a growing number of foreclosed and vacant homes, thus this campaign aims at enforcing housing standards to help rebrand the area as an "undiscovered gem."

Park bench: Mary Hobson of Berkshire Road requested that the city replace a park bench at the Superior and Goodnor roads entrance to Cain Park.

Bid awards

Council authorized acceptance of the lowest bids for 2016 road surface treatment (Specialized Construction, \$583,095.50) and 2016 road resurfacing (Ronyak Paving, \$1,488,655).

Salt for 2016-17 winter season

Council authorized participation in the Ohio Department of Transportation's Cooperative Purchasing Program for rock salt purchase for the 2016-17 winter season.

Access Cleveland Heights App

Council Member Melissa Yasinow encouraged residents to download the city's free smart phone app, Access Cleveland Heights. The app enables easy access to city officials and services; city news, announcements, and events; the city's Facebook and Twitter sites; and sign up for ReadyNotify, the city's emergency notification program. The app is free and available for download for iPhone and Android mobile devices by searching for "Access Cleveland Heights."

Council meetings

Council amended the city ordinances on regular council meetings to allow flexibility in the scheduling of council's regular meetings, especially for holidays that fall on a Monday. This measure simply codifies council's practice of holding its regular meetings the day following a Monday holiday. Council also approved cancelling its regular meeting scheduled for Aug. 15.

Citizen appointments

Council approved the following appointments:

- Economic Development Advisory Committee: Gary Benjamin (chair), Bob Brown, Douglas Dykes, Patty Ajdukiewicz, Brenda May, Eustacia Netzel-Hatcher, and Joy Roller for terms ending Dec. 31.
- Fair Practices Board: Thomas Nobbe for a term ending Dec. 31, 2018.

LWV Observer: Katherine Solender.

JUNE 6, 2016
All council members were present.

Buffered bike lanes

Council authorized acceptance of a grant of federal funds from the Northeast Ohio Area-wide Coordinating Agency to transform bike lanes on North Park Boulevard from Harcourt



Drive to Lee Road into buffered bike lanes, which provide greater protection to bicyclists. The funding is not to exceed \$30,000, which is likely the entire cost of the project.

Building services

Council authorized an agreement with SAFE-built Ohio, LLC, to maintain quality building services within the city's building department. Beginning in July, the city will turn over all building department duties to SAFEbuilt, including a return to full-time office staffing at city hall, which has been impossible, as the department staff has dwindled. Council will still set permit fees, which will be split between the company and the city. This arrangement will be reviewed in one year.

Police department purchases

Council authorized the purchase of three new 2017 Ford Utility Interceptors (Explorers) for the police department, from Statewide Ford Lincoln of Van Wert, Ohio, at a total cost not to exceed \$102,516. The purchase will be made through the Ohio Department of Administrative Services Cooperative Purchasing Program.

LGBT Pride Month

Council passed a resolution declaring June 2016 LGBT Pride Month. Council Member Michael Ungar commented that Cleveland Heights is a community that values and seeks diversity, and that this resolution reflects well on this city.

CDBG funding allocations

Council granted six allocations of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to local nonprofits. These include:

- \$10,000 to Cedar Taylor Development Association for assistance with streetscape enhancements for the business district
- \$7,000 to the Cleveland Tenants Organization for assistance with telephone information services that provide information about the Ohio Landlord-Tenant laws and Fair Housing laws to low- and moderate-income residents of the city
- \$30,000 to FutureHeights for assistance with personnel and operating costs of the Community Capacity Building Program, which includes programs for resident engagement, leadership development and ongoing community building in neighborhoods
- \$3,500 to Heights Community Congress for assistance in its educational programs on "Diversity in our Community"
- \$11,000 to Heights Emergency Food Center for assistance with operating expenses
- \$139,000 to the Home Repair Resource Center (HRRC) for home repair and home improvement programs and operating expenses, to be allocated as follows: \$95,000 for HRRC operating expenses; \$5,000 for Senior Home Stability grants; \$15,000 for Assist Incentive grants; \$7,500 for Deferred Loan Match; and \$16,500 for housing counseling

LWV Observer: Blanche B. Valancy.

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

See disclaimer on page 8.



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Ride a bicycle this summer



LIFE CYCLE

Heights Bicycle Coalition

For most people, summer is the most appealing time of year for bicycling. This summer, more people than ever are riding their bicycles around the Heights.

Many people ride for recreation, or maybe to run short errands around town. But summer is a great time to try going longer distances or commuting by bicycle.

For longer distances, you can go the whole way by bicycle, or combine public transit with bicycling. The best transit route may become much more convenient if you ride your bicycle to the nearest stop, load your bicycle onto the bike rack installed on all RTA buses, then unload and ride your bicycle from the stop nearest your ultimate destination.

You can also take your bike onto RTA rapid transit trains or the Healthline. Note, however, that tandems, recumbents, mopeds or tricycles are not allowed; most other bicycles fit the bike racks or are allowed on trains or the Healthline.

Folding bicycles, as shown in the photo[s], are popular with people who want a convenient and portable way to keep their bicycles with them, including taking them into upper-floor apartments or



A folding bicycle.



A folding bicycle.

workplaces. Folding bikes weigh approximately 20-30 pounds and can go on transit, too. Both Cain Park Bicycles and Cycle Sport in Cleveland Heights carry folding bicycles, for those who want to take a look.

RTA offers brochures with complete directions, or you can check Rack-n-Roll on the RTA website for directions for getting around with your bike and RTA: www.riderta.com/racknroll.

Watch for bicycling to become even more popular as options for using a bike become ever more convenient. Enjoy the ride!

Heights Bicycle Coalition is a 501(c)3 nonprofit dedicated to educating and encouraging Heights community members to use bicycles as a sustainable and healthy form of transportation and recreation.

COURTESY HEIGHTS BICYCLE COALITION

COURTESY HEIGHTS BICYCLE COALITION

Mobile food pantry distributes healthy produce this summer

Emma Barnett

Free produce, including fresh fruits and vegetables, are given out the first Friday of each month at Friends Fellowship Bible Church, 2490 Lee Blvd., Cleveland Heights, in the back parking lot of the Rockefeller Pointe Building. No proof of income, family size or residency is required. Interested individuals in need should bring a valid ID and bags or boxes to transport produce and groceries. The next distribution will be on Friday, July 1 from 5-7 p.m.

Sponsored by the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, this mobile

food pantry is a truck full of food that is brought to a central location where individuals can pick up items as they would from a regular food pantry. Mobile pantries distribute the healthiest and most nutritious foods available from the food bank.

Subsequent dates for distribution through 2016 are:

- Friday, Aug. 2, from 5-7 p.m.
- Friday, Sept. 2, from 5-7 p.m.
- Friday, Oct. 7, from 5-7 p.m.
- Friday, Nov. 4, from 4-6 p.m.

Emma Barnett is a member of the governing board of Friends Fellowship Bible Church.

Residents invited to Cleveland Heights Master Plan public meeting on July 14

Karen Knittel

A community meeting to discuss the Cleveland Heights Master Plan will be held on Thursday, July 14, at 7 p.m. in the Cleveland Heights Community Center, 1 Monticello Boulevard. The County Planning staff will review the planning process to date and discuss draft policies; the public will be asked to provide feedback and set priorities for poli-

cies and action steps.

Following the public meeting, County Planning will host an online survey that will mirror the information available at the public meeting.

Information on the master planning process is available at www.clevelandheights.com/master-plan.

Karen Knittel is the city planner for Cleveland Heights.

Heights residents organize to welcome Republican National Convention with love

Sarah Wilson Belzile

Three months ago, Cleveland Heights resident and recently appointed member of the city's Economic Development Committee, Joy Roller found herself in a conversation with Sister Rita Petruziello, of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Rocky River. Petruziello shared her idea to have Clevelanders "circle the city with love" and hold hands in silent meditation or prayer before the Republican National Convention this month. After speaking with Roller, a plan to have thousands stand in unity, love and intentional silence for peace and justice on Cleveland's downtown bridges began to develop.

Petruziello believes that the power of such a gathering can transform the vibration of the convention, and could even influence the entire world. She told Roller about scientific research that indicates that spaces can be "spiritually charged" by prayer and intention. As a consultant and professional organizer, Roller knew that she could help Petruziello make her vision

a reality, and so she has stepped forward to carry out the nun's vision.

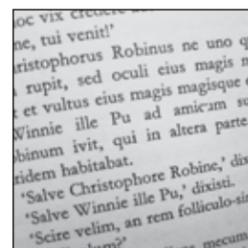
With the help of almost a dozen committed volunteers, the group has created a logistical plan, launched a website, formed a partnership with the AIDS Taskforce of Greater Cleveland, and has begun receiving registrations of participants and donations to pay for organizational costs.

Those interested in participating can register at www.circlethecitywithlove.com. Check the website for the "pledge" that all participants are asked to make and for updated details about where and when to gather. The event programming is scheduled to start at 1 p.m. on Sunday, July 17, at three different gathering locations, and the 30-minute silent meditation is scheduled to begin at 3 p.m. across the Lorain-Carnegie and the Detroit-Superior bridges.

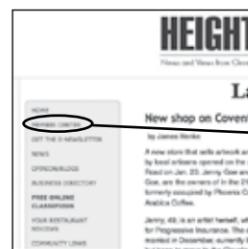
Sarah Wilson Belzile is the owner of Phoenix Coffee as well as an epiphany midwife and a professional cuddlist. She is passionate about creating playful sanctuaries of personal relationships.

Observe!

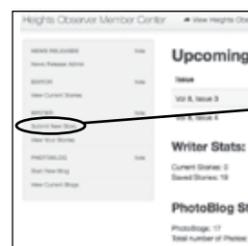
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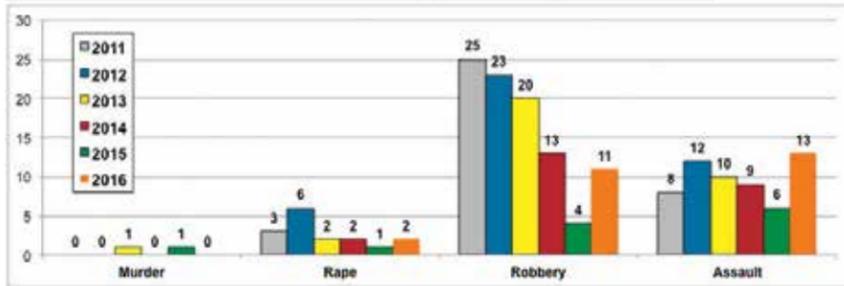
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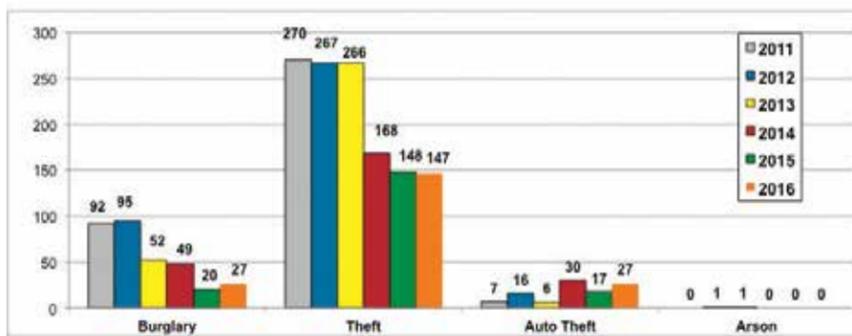
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Mild winter results in crime uptick in Cleveland Heights

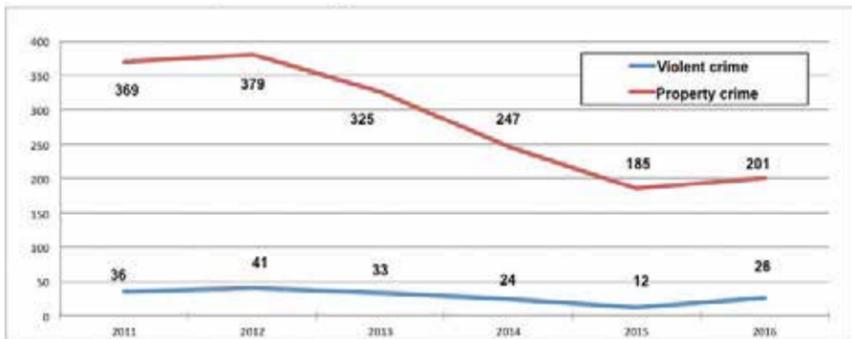
Violent crimes committed, January–March 2011–16



Property crimes committed, January–March 2011–16



Total crime, January–March 2011–16



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Bob Rosenbaum

Crimes in Cleveland Heights rose in the first three months of 2016 compared to the same period a year ago, most likely because of the mild winter, according to Police Chief Annette Mecklenburg.

According to data compiled by the Cleveland Heights Police Department (CHPD), 26 violent crimes were committed in the city during the first quarter of the year, compared to 12 a year ago and 24 the year before that.

There were 201 property crimes in the January to March period—up from 185 in the same period last year, but well below 247 in the first quarter of 2014.

“When it is snowing and temperatures are colder, we do tend to experience a reduced number of calls for service overall, including less crime,” said Mecklenburg, who was sworn in as chief after the Feb. 1 retirement of Jeffrey Robertson. “When we have milder weather . . . our calls for service tend to increase.”

The data cited here and in the accompanying charts represents serious offenses defined by the federal government as “Part I” crimes. It does not include lesser “Part II” offenses, which would be too costly to track. (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/cbcrimestats>.)

Most of the increase in property crime involved car thefts. In at least 10 cases, the keys were left in the car—glove compartment, center console or even in the ignition, according to Mecklenburg.

“These tend to be crimes of opportunity and there is a good chance that the cars would not have been stolen if they were locked and the keys removed from the vehicle,” she said.

A number of auto thefts and robberies also seemed to be linked, and have since been attributed to widespread activity by members of the OTZ (Only The Zone) gang, based on Cleveland’s East Side. In May, 11 juveniles were charged in the crimes after a multi-agency investigation that included the CHPD, according to media reports.

Assaults, which also rose, are more circumstantial, Mecklenburg said: “. . . The victim and offender often know each other. Based on a review of [assaults], most began as a disturbance and then escalated.”

Mecklenburg said measures taken in response to the data include deployment of additional officers to specific areas in the city where crime had increased; and joint investigation and operations with other area police departments to identify and catch suspects.

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

Preparing for the RNC

In her first months as police chief, Annette Mecklenburg said contingencies for the upcoming Republican National Convention (July 18–21) have been a priority.

While the city isn’t anticipating any particular kind of activity, it is planning for an increase in visitors from among the delegates and protestors, and the chance that heightened political passions could result in police calls.

Most of the work is in reviewing and writing policies with the political convention in mind—for example, a mass-arrest policy.

There has also been communication and coordination with other

communities.

Cleveland Heights joined with the Eastside Departments Group Enforcement (EDGE) consortium (University Heights, South Euclid, Euclid, Shaker Heights and Beachwood) to train and equip a new “mobile field force”—essentially a shared riot squad comprising members from each department.

The Cleveland Heights Police Department will be at full staff during the convention, she said, with no vacations being approved and the possibility of last-minute schedule changes based on whatever intelligence may arise.



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KazStylios Secret Closet brings vintage fashion to Cedar Lee



Tranette Thomas, owner of KazStylios

Lori Goldberg

Tucked away near the corner of Lee and Silsby roads is KazStylios Secret Closet, a vintage boutique that offers boldly colored clothes.

Tranette Thomas, 33, owns KazStylios Secret Closet and said she runs it with one primary goal: to make unique fashion affordable. She buys all of the boutique's stock herself and also works as an in-store personal stylist. Almost all of the clothes in KazStylios are vibrantly colored. Offering colorful clothes year-round is part of Thomas' vision.

"I believe in color," Thomas explained. "Color brings happiness. It takes away from anyone being in a bad space. I think it brings good vibes because at the same time you're vibrant, you're going to get compliments. So everything that I have in my store, it has color to it. It has something unique about it. The most important thing to me is that my customers are happy. People don't have to buy something every time they come to my store, I just have to see them leave with a smile."

The name KazStylios Secret Closet combines various aspects of Thomas' life. "Kaz" refers to Thomas' daughter, Kazmere Harper, who she hopes will someday take over the business. "Stylios" refers to Thomas helping customers find a style they love. Kazmere's father, Keith Harper, came up with the combined name, and Thomas added the second part of the name, Secret Closet.

Fashion has always been an interest for Thomas. While a student at Shaker Heights High School, Thomas usually bought her clothes from thrift stores.

"It was kind of a secret," she recalled. "A lot of the young ladies at school used to ask me where I got my clothes from, and I used to always make up fibs and tell them my mom got them from New York

or something different. I didn't want to let them know my secret."

Thomas studied business administration for a time and pursued several different careers, but always came back to fashion. The idea of opening a boutique came while she was working at a credit card processing company. During that time, she did most of her clothes shopping at thrift stores because her salary was so low. But, she still managed to find stylish ensembles. She wanted to share this secret world of fashion.

The first version of KazStylios got its start in the back of Thomas' truck with support from her mother, Waverly Thomas. She said she would go to thrift stores with big suitcases and fill them up with anything that caught her eye, then move her finds onto a rack in the back of the truck. From there, she would drive to a spot to open up shop for the day. After eight months, she decided it was time to open a boutique.

Thomas had \$322 when she began looking for a space for her store. She scouted for an area that had a good atmosphere and would be safe for her customers. After researching Cleveland Heights, she determined that it was the perfect place for her boutique. Thomas found her current space while driving down Lee Road. She got the keys to the building at 3200 Silsby Road and was able to open in May 2015.

"I went off of faith, and it has been a blessing," said Thomas. "I've been here for a year and I have nothing bad to say. I love Cleveland Heights, I love the support system that Cleveland Heights has to offer, and everyone, they love the store. I think I picked a great location."

KazStylios Secret Closet, located at 3200 Silsby Road, is open Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Lori Goldberg is an intern at the Heights Observer. Though a senior at Shaker Heights High School, Cleveland Heights is like a second home to her. She hopes to continue writing, professionally or not, for the rest of her life.

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Cedar Lee finishes fourth in America's Main Streets contest

Andrea C. Turner

On June 3, Independent We Stand—an organization that supports independently owned and socially responsible businesses, and promotes the importance, and benefits, of “buying local”—announced that downtown Lynden, Wash., was the grand-prize winner of its America's Main Streets 2016 contest. According to Tara Mazzarella, a representative of Independent We Stand, the Cedar Lee Business District ranked an impressive fourth among the top 10 semifinalists in the national online voting competition that recognizes the important role that main street commercial districts play in the long-term success of communities.

In March, FutureHeights nominated Cedar Lee for the contest, and launched a campaign to encourage residents and others to vote online every 24 hours for the district—named one of 25 quarterfinalists from across the country—through April 24.

“This year provided a great opportunity to nominate Cedar Lee because of the \$3.5 million Lee Road streetscape improvements that broke ground in May,” said Deanna Bremer Fisher, executive director of FutureHeights. “Additional funding could have helped enhance the area further, which is now undergoing planned improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists, with new crosswalks, lighting and amenities, such as bicycle repair stations. During this construction phase, it's especially important that our community continue to patronize these local businesses.”

The business district received considerable media attention dur-



Cedar Lee Theatre, an independent movie theater, is a longtime anchor business in the Cedar Lee Business District.

ing the contest, including a live TV interview on WKYC Channel 3 News with Bremer Fisher and Adam Fleischer, co-owner of Cedar Lee's The Wine Spot. (Watch the interview at www.wkyc.com/news/cedar-lee-in-the-running-for-25k-grand-prize/216587913.)

Thanks to the many votes cast by residents, business owners and visitors, Cedar Lee became a top-10 semifinalist in the contest—the only one in Northeast Ohio, and one of only two in the state. Voting for semifinalists took place May 2–29.

Cedar Lee is home to more than 150 small, independently owned businesses and several anchor institutions, as well as several arts venues, including Cain Park, Cedar Lee Theatre, Heights Arts Gallery and Dobama Theatre.

Heights High, at the intersec-

tion of Cedar and Lee roads, is undergoing a \$95 million renovation that will be completed in the fall of 2017. The renovation will reveal the building's historic 1926 façade, make its auditorium and swimming pool more accessible for community

use, and move it into the top 5 percent of the EPA's ranked schools for energy efficiency.

Lee Road Library, at the south end of the business district, is the main branch and administrative headquarters of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System, and hosts a variety of programs, including the Heights Knowledge and Innovation Center, which supports the technological and workspace needs of local businesses, nonprofits and individuals.

The district is served by the Cedar Lee Special Improvement District (CLSID), formed in 2003. For more information, visit www.cedarlee.org.

Lynden, Wash., came out on top based on the number of votes cast, winning \$25,000 in cash and prizes to help revitalize its main street. Its downtown is making a comeback after a fire destroyed a large mixed-use building that anchored the district in 2008.

To learn more about Independent We Stand, visit www.independentwestand.org/learn-more/about/.

Andrea C. Turner is the Heights Observer's managing editor.

Cleveland leadership program seeks 2016 applicants

Sandra Kluk



Greg Bell

established a leadership training program for engaged neighborhood leaders. The Neighborhood Leadership Development Program (NLDP) is a free, 15-session, community-engagement training program for residents of Cleveland and its inner-ring suburbs, who are working on projects within the City of Cleveland and who are determined to make a positive impact on their communities.

NLDP chooses 20 committed individuals for each program year. Its participants and graduates have many interests and work on a wide variety of issues to improve life in their communities.

Greg Bell, a resident of Washington Boulevard and a recent NLDP graduate, is one such person. Bell has worked for many years on programs to strengthen youth in their communities. Primarily, he is coalition coordinator for East Cleveland Bridges of Hope for the Northern Ohio Recovery Association. His other projects revolve around sports.

An athlete himself, Bell played

professional basketball overseas and finished his sports career with the Harlem Globetrotters. People positively influenced his life when he was young, and he wanted to give back. He is athletic director for the EMS (Education Measures Success) Rams, a youth development corporation.

Bell is also in the process of starting the Bell Sports Foundation, to provide scholarship funds for community recreational programs; to revitalize or build areas for recreation, such as fields and playgrounds; and to issue scholarships to high school seniors.

Bell credits NLDP with providing him with many skills to help in his work with young people. “NLDP taught me to create balance in these programs and to see how they can all be interconnected to strengthen youth,” said Bell. “I learned how to work better with people to get things done. I also was able to learn how to network with other leaders in my group. I would recommend that people go to the website and look at what the program offers.”

The 15 sessions take place on Saturdays at Trinity Commons, at 2230 Euclid Ave., beginning Aug. 27. The deadline for applications is Aug. 1. For more information and an application, visit www.nldpcleveland.com or call 216-776-6172.

Sandra Kluk is a 30-year Heights resident and program administrator for NLDP.

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Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education Meeting highlights



MAY 10, 2016
All board members were present.

Middle school programming

The board heard a presentation on the master facilities education programming for middle school planning. Five goals of the strategic plan centered on the district mission statement: student outcomes; educational approaches; parents and community; valued professionals and a culture of excellence; and operational resources. School visits and conference calls were made to the Bedford, Fairview, Plain Local, Shaker Heights, Solon, South Euclid, Wadsworth and Westlake school districts, as the board is considering a fifth-six grade and seventh-eighth grade middle school structure for Monticello and Roxboro middle schools. The other districts have this structure, which the district can evaluate.

Areas analyzed included student population, educational programming, special education, technology, teacher collaboration, state testing, athletics, equity, teacher certification, leadership support, and a number of other curricular and operational functions. Currently, 1,209 students are enrolled at Monticello and Roxboro. For the year 2020, student projections are 708 for fifth and six grades and 762 for seventh and eighth grades.

The findings included a clear and shared focus; curriculum, instruction, and assessments aligned with state standards; effective leadership; frequent monitoring, learning and teaching; focused professional development; supportive learning environment; and high levels of parent and community involvement.

The board asked questions but made no decisions.

LWV Observer: Lillian Houser.

MAY 17, 2016
All board members were present.

School finances and tax levy

Jayne Geneva of the Lay Finance Advisory Committee presented a summary of Ohio public school funding. She pointed out several state actions that have created the need for Ohio school boards to continually request new levies. The elimination of tangible property tax; House Bill 920 [A statutory law later incorporated into the Ohio constitution], which doesn't allow the property tax to increase with the increased value of the property; unfunded mandates; and other actions have decreased state funding to local schools. Some of the mandates leading to lower revenues are tax abatements and tax increment financing.

Scott Gainer, the district's treasurer, explained the district's revenue sources and expenditures. Revenue comprises property taxes (72 percent), state funding (19 percent), federal funding (1 percent) and miscellaneous other funds (8 percent). Expenditures include salaries and benefits (76 percent), purchased services (18 percent), supplies and textbooks (3 percent), capital expenses (1 percent), and other miscellaneous expenses (2 percent).

The CH-UH City School District is 83 percent residential. The district property tax collection rate is 93.41 percent. Although residents have voted a total 139.2 mills of taxation, only 71.29 mills are collected after House Bill 920 rollbacks.

Total state funding of \$19 million is reduced by \$6.7 million in transfers for school choice programs.

The district has made \$5 million in reductions in fiscal year 2016 and \$3.25 million in staffing reductions for fiscal year 2017. The last levy was passed in 2011.

The lay finance committee recommended a 5.5 mill levy to be placed on the Nov. 2016 ballot. This provides no cushion for 2019; thought to be necessary in previous years.

The board voted unanimously to place the 5.5 mill levy on the fall ballot. Board Member Eric Silverman commented that this is the lowest millage levy in 25 to 30 years. Board Member James Posch stressed that if the levy fails, the board would have to make \$5.6 million in cuts.

LWV Observer: Adele Cohn.

JUNE 7, 2016
All board members were present.

Strategic Plan Goal 1

A presentation updating the strategic plan centered on increasing the graduation rate from 82 to 90 percent. The strategies adopted included a monthly development plan for school counselors; an eight-year career and tech plan for students; a student watch list; the option program; the 21st century program; restart courses; exploration of college readiness; summer programs for elementary, middle and high school students; and discussion of the mobility factor and tracking students.

Construction change orders

The board approved the following change orders for the high school construction:

- Change order No. 40 for electrical updates, structural items, and change of materials; total value \$396,482.
- Change order No. 41 for fire proofing materials; total value \$257,360.
- Change order No. 42 for auditorium lighting, curtain, and sprinkling system; total value \$466,082.

These change orders, which came from uncertainties in material costs and ordering time frames, caused much discussion.

Resolution to State Board of Education

The board approved a resolution brought forth by Ron Register, board vice president. The resolution, addressed to the state board of education, objected to the large subsidies, over \$22 million, going to charter schools and using the school district's tax money since 2000. Register noted that many charter schools open and close without proper oversight by the state. The board joins 60 other school districts in this resolution, which includes invoicing the state for the amount cited to protest the state's charter school policies.

LWV Observer: Lillian Houser.

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



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New RoxEl parent group builds community

Krissy Dietrich Gallagher

“We started with the strong foundation that is already the Roxboro Elementary community, and we’re building it upwards and outwards,” said parent Jennifer Holland of Building Rox, a new subcommittee of the RoxEl PTA.

When Coventry Elementary School shut its doors a decade ago, the building’s students were divided among Boulevard, Fairfax and Roxboro elementary (RoxEl) schools. Those attending RoxEl arrive primarily by bus and live far outside the bounds of this “neighborhood” school. Because many of the school’s parents are not present at drop-off or pick-up time, they may feel less

informed about school issues and less connected to the school community.

That’s where Building Rox comes in, as a PTA-supported organization run by committed parents whose mission is to facilitate a safe, inclusive, community-focused environment for all families through outreach and programming.

When Holland served as PTA president from 2012–14, she was acutely aware of the need to engage more families. “I wanted to include everyone: working parents, parents whose kids use Before and After-Care, parents whose kids ride the bus.” She made some changes, such as moving half of the general PTA meetings from morning to evening

so working parents could attend. “But the PTA president has too much on her plate,” said Holland. “This needed to be a separate initiative.”

In the spring of 2015, parents Lance Godard and India Meesig began working with Holland and Building Rox was born—with the enthusiastic support of Principal Michael Jenkins and the PTA.

The three started by generating ideas to make school events more accessible, such as moving the end-of-year picnic from lunchtime to evening so that more families could attend. Building Rox has since evolved to include a speaker series, and potluck dinners, which offer opportunities for families to share a meal and build relationships.

“Our goals are small but meaningful,” said Meesig.

Kindergarten parent Jessica Schantz, moved by the team’s efforts, joined Building Rox this year. The group meets monthly with school and PTA leaders, to identify issues and brainstorm solutions.

Last winter, the group launched the Roxboro Un-Shop, a store that provides free clothing and household goods to any student. Flyers with tear-off return slips were sent home, so parents could check off which items they needed and students could “shop” during the day.

“The kids love it! They come in happy, excited and unashamed,” said Meesig.

The Un-Shop, inspired by Noble Elementary School’s Clothing Pantry, has since inspired the Share-fax store at Fairfax Elementary School.

A highlight of this year was [obtaining] a grant from Circle Sampler Camp and St. Paul’s Episcopal Church to send fourth-graders Caleb Caldwell and Marquis Major, and fifth-graders Antonio Wimberly and Yasmin Madrigal, to University Circle’s week long camp this summer. Their teachers selected them based on their exceptional academic and interpersonal growth.

Building Rox works to share information, so parents feel informed about school and district initiatives, and community resources. The group’s speaker series has featured district administrators, representatives from Open Doors Academy,

and State Senator Sandra Williams.

Holland reported that feedback from the series has been overwhelmingly positive and that the group is considering monthly talks next year. After a roundtable with Superintendent Talisa Dixon, Holland said she could feel the dynamic changing: “We’re finally having a real conversation.”

Building Rox knows that engaging all school families requires a long-term commitment. Godard summed up the feelings of many in the group, saying, “Years from now, we can look back and say we’ve made this a true community school.”

Krissy Dietrich Gallagher is a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights, a graduate of the Heights schools and a former Coventry Elementary School teacher. She is a freelance journalist under contract with the CH-UH City School District Communications Department. A version of this story appeared at www.chub.org.

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Reaching Heights asks CH-UH district superintendent about end-of-year staff reductions

The end-of-year reduction in force (RIF) of CH-UH City School District teachers and administrators prompted questions and concerns from the community. Krista Hawthorne, executive director of Reaching Heights, interviewed Talisa Dixon, superintendent of CH-UH schools, to clarify the decision-making process and anticipated results of these personnel changes.

The article is too lengthy to publish here. Read the Q&A, published online at www.heightsobserver.org/read/2016/05/23/reaching-heights-asks-school-district-superintendent-about-recent-staff-reductions

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Retirement brings with it an increase in one of life's most precious commodities—spare time. If you enjoy art, and wonder whether you might have artistic ability, taking an art class can be a great way to spend your time. It can also be good for your health.

Researchers at the American Academy of Neurology reported last year that people who engaged in artistic activities such as painting, drawing and sculpting were 73 percent less likely to develop memory and thinking problems that lead to dementia.

The study also concluded that the social aspect of taking a class can also increase brain health. Socializing with others made participants 55 percent less likely to develop mild cognitive impairment.

The Cleveland Heights Senior Activity Center (SAC) offers several types of art classes that can help students explore their creative talents. Artist Susan Morse teaches ongoing classes in basic drawing, drawing and painting, and watercolor pencil. Artist Alice Seiffulah teaches an ongoing portrait painting class.

Morse notes that many of her students had an interest in art in their earlier years, but set it aside to pursue a career or raise a family. "Our students are able to focus and move forward on developing skills more quickly [than younger students]," she said, "because they don't have the time demands of a job or family."

If you enjoy the art of crafting, crafters Susan Roberts and Leonie

Lee lead a free semi-monthly arts and crafts class at SAC. Projects cover a variety of craft types, and are designed to be both beautiful and quick—they are completed in just two hours.

Roberts has noticed that many students are pleasantly surprised by their abilities. "A lot of people don't realize they have artistic talent," she said, "but anyone can do it in some form or another. It doesn't have to look just one certain way."

SAC also holds a free weekly open art group for artists who don't need instruction, but who would like to work on their projects in the company of others. Amy Jenkins, SAC supervisor, said, "Artists just bring whatever they're working on. It's a wonderful creative and social opportunity."

SAC art students regularly hold art shows at CH-UH libraries. Some have also participated in juried shows, and some even sell their artwork. Many of their pieces are also on display throughout the year at SAC, and community residents are welcome to tour the center and view the art.

Roberts has reassuring advice for those who may be afraid they don't have the talent or ability to create art: "Don't go on past perceptions of yourself or past discouragements. You don't know until you try."

SAC classes are open to Cleveland Heights residents age 60 and older. Call 216-691-7377 for more information and to register for classes.

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

UH 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.

July 7: Melanie Hogan, director of LEAP (Linking Employment, Abilities and Potential) will discuss her work helping people with disabilities to transition effectively to normal life in the community.

July 14: Henry Adams, Ph.D., professor of art history at Case Western Reserve University, will conduct a conversation with Peter van Dijk, a world-renowned architect who has played a major role in the historic renovation of Cleveland.

July 21: Kimberly Emmons, Ph.D., a Case Western Reserve University professor and director of its writing programs, will read the *Oxford English Dictionary*. She often does this just for fun—believe it or not—and probes the evolution of words for critical insights into our ever-changing world.

July 28: On the 400th anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare, Jean Feerick, Ph.D., professor of English at John Carroll University, will recount some of his achievements, such as writing 37 plays and 152 sonnets of enduring beauty and meaning, and introducing about 1,700 words into the English language.

[Note: As the University Heights Library begins its extensive renovation on Aug. 1, Senior Happenings will move to the Council Chambers at University Heights City Hall, 2300 Warrensville Center Road.]

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CH Senior Center News

Amy Jenkins

The Cleveland Heights Senior Activity Center (SAC), located in the CH Community Center at 1 Monticello Blvd., offers a wide variety of programming for Cleveland Heights residents 60 and older.

Do you need to check your e-mail, research plane fares, print a coupon, or write an article for the *Heights Observer*? If you need to use a computer, SAC has a computer room with 12 computers available for seniors' use, free of charge. All of the computers use Windows 7 and are equipped with Word, Excel and Internet access. If you need help using a computer, volunteer computer tutors are available to answer questions on Mondays, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Tuesdays, 11 a.m. to noon; Wednesdays, 11 a.m. to noon; and Thursdays, 2-3 p.m.

For those new to the computer, basic computer use classes are

offered several times a year, with new sessions starting in the fall. Monthly classes on special topics are taught in cooperation with the CH-UH Public Library System; July's topic is Excel. Class space is limited, so call to reserve a spot for classes. If you're an experienced computer user and would like to share your experience with others as a tutor, contact SAC.

SAC is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. A complete schedule of programs is published in the community center's newsletter, which is available at Cleveland Heights City Hall, local libraries, the community center and online at www.clevelandheights.com. For more information and to register for any program, call 216-691-7377.

Amy Jenkins is supervisor at the CH Office on Aging and the Senior Activity Center. She can be reached at 216-691-7379 or by e-mail at ajenkins@clvhts.com.

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Literacy grant gives boost to summer reading program

Julia Murphy

With the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System's summer reading program already in full swing, library staff learned in early June that the Dollar General Literacy Foundation had awarded the library a \$2,000 Summer Reading Grant to support early literacy.

So far, \$800 has been spent to buy books that will be given away when children sign up for summer reading. The grant will also support summer reading programming, including Books and Barks, where children can sign up to read with a certified therapy dog, Dr. Barkley, at the Noble Neighborhood Library on July 18 and Aug. 15.

"We are thrilled to have received

this funding for our summer reading program, as it will provide more incentives for children who are new and emerging readers," said Beth Hatch, special projects manager for Heights Libraries, who applied for the grant.

The summer reading program, 100 Years of Stories, runs through Aug. 7 for children and teens, and through Sept. 8 for adults. The children's program is designed to encourage children and families to practice reading and develop early literacy skills throughout the summer, to avoid summer learning loss and help prepare for the upcoming school year. Children will have nine weeks to complete their activity and reading goals. Afterward, they can enter a raffle



Children can read with Dr. Barkley, a certified therapy dog.

looking to improve their lives through literacy."

Sam Lapides, youth services manager at Heights Libraries, is excited about this gift. "We've had more than 600 people sign up for summer reading already, and it's only about halfway through."

Heights Libraries summer reading program is also participating in a project of the Public Library Association's Project Outcome.

"This is a survey that we'll send out at the end of summer reading, to parents of emerging readers," said Lapides. "The idea is to combine data from many libraries to compare your library nationally, and see what the library can do to help improve reading, and early literacy in particular. It'll also help us set a benchmark for having even stronger efforts next year."

Julia Murphy is the marketing and volunteer coordinator for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System.

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CIA

Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library Board Meeting highlights

MAY 16, 2016

Ron Holland, vice president, and Susan Beatty, board member, were absent.



Master Gardeners of Cuyahoga County awards grants

The Noble Neighborhood Library will receive \$400 to enable a staff member to work one hour per week with children on gardening and green space, and purchase gardening equipment. The branch will partner with Asia Services in Action to provide exercise and gardening activities for refugees.

The Coventry Village Library will receive \$375 to be used for a two-bin compost system, and will host at least four educational programs for the community on sustainable garden practices, healthy eating and nutrition, plus the benefits of home-grown foods.

Successful MegaSale

The May MegaSale brought in \$8,596.28 plus 30 new members, for a total of 421 active members. Remaining books were taken to Noble Neighborhood Library for a special branch sale.

Bookmobile for University Heights Library renovation

After it was apparent that property owners near the University Heights Library were not interested in offering a 14-month lease to the library, the library has acquired a bookmobile for use while the branch is closed for renovation. The bookmobile will travel throughout the library's entire service area and will be parked at the Lee Road Library when not in use. The name of the new bookmobile, which came from Pickaway County, will be the subject of a contest. The University Heights Library is projected to be closed Aug. 15 through Sept. 17.

Public Library Fund (PLF) distribution

The May distribution of the PLF was \$2.1 million below the estimate of the Ohio Department of Taxation. The state's receipt of personal income taxes due for April 2016 was \$109 million below projections.

Public service report highlights:

- Heights Community Congress presented, Are School Ratings Diminishing Housing Sales? as a Fair Housing Month program. Certain real estate websites provide school

ratings that may not be accurate and may impact local sales.

- The April program of the Cedar-Coventry Author Series featured illustrators Jamey Christoph and Lindsay Ward, who talked about creating imaginative worlds for children.
- In April, the Training Services Division added a new class, Internet Safety and Security, to inform the community on Internet scams and how to avoid being a target on the Web.
- Nancy Zelman and Ellen Paulini, adult services librarians, along with Shamekia Chandler, youth services associate, will engage in outreach services to Park Synagogue Ascentia. Ascentia is a day program providing social and recreational opportunities for adults with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities.
- Cassandra Anselmi, library associate, and staff of the University Heights Library helped students in the Gearity Makerspace Tech Club create stop/start animation movies, as the club finished its program year in April. It's hoped that this partnership with Gearity Professional Development School will continue in the next school year.
- Suzanne Wilkins, adult services associate, took the Seed Library to an Earth Day event at Disciples Christian Church.
- Kathy Franzinger, with youth services staff from the branches, concluded Picture Book Madness with 100 children and adults casting ballots for their favorite books. The winner at Lee Road Library was *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus* by Mo Willems.
- A special Welcome Hub program on safety was presented at Noble Neighborhood Library by a Cleveland Heights police officer with a translator. A large audience expressed concerns and asked questions.

LWV Observer: Anne S. McFarland.

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

New collection at Lee Road Library highlights zines



Adult Services Associate Kate Atherton with the new zine collection at the Lee Road Library

Sheryl Banks

On the second floor of the Lee Road Library, patrons can find a newly curated collection: zines.

The word *zine* is an abbreviation of “magazine” and “fanzine.” The item itself is usually a handmade, self-published booklet or similar publication. Zines are often small, and vary in content: hand-drawn comics, essays and poetry, or photography.

Kate Atherton, adult services associate, curated the library’s collection, which currently consists of 70 publications. “This past year I was lucky enough to have this first batch of zines donated to me by a patron who runs a zine review blog,” said Atherton. “He had a surplus of zines he had been given to review that he no longer needed, so he thought to share them with us and our community.”

“I felt this donation was a golden opportunity,” continued Atherton. “The Cleveland Heights-University Heights library system has had zines in the past, previously cared for by my colleague John Piche, and I wanted to bring them back. I became interested

in zines and the zine community last year when the Museum of Contemporary Art hosted a zine fair, and I thought perhaps that might ignite the interests of others in our community, too.”

Zines rose in popularity in the 1970s and were embraced in the ’80s and ’90s by the punk and alternative culture scenes, which promoted a do-it-yourself aesthetic. Originally, zines were a take on the pamphlets that religious and political groups hand out, but aimed at promoting the art and writing of anyone or any cause. One example is a small black and white comic book made of plain copier paper, titled “Whoa!” It is a feminist manifesto, telling a funny, powerful story about street harassment in a mere six pages.

“Nowadays, because it is so easy to print your own materials at home, zines are everywhere and many artists and illustrators I know make and sell them,” said Atherton.

According to Barnard College’s zine library website, there are only three other library zine collections in the state of Ohio: Cleveland Public

Library, Cuyahoga County Public Library, and Bowling Green State University’s library.

Atherton hopes to keep the Heights Libraries’ collection growing. “I am looking to get more zines either from zine distributors around the country or artists I know personally who either attended Rhode Island School of Design with me or are part of the zine community,” she said. “I look on sites, such as Etsy and

the websites of comic book artists, to see who is creating zines and who I might approach to donate to our collection.”

Zines are available for check-out from the Lee Road Library at 2345 Lee Road in Cleveland Heights.

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

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

Thursday, July 28, 7 p.m.
An evening with Poonam Bala. Medical historian and professor Poonam Bala will discuss her book *Diaspora, Culture and Identity*, which examines issues related to identity and sociocultural adjustments of Ohio’s Asian Indian community. No registration is required; book signing to follow the talk.

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

Monday, July 25, 7 p.m.
Talk-Talk-Talk: A Story/Dance from Africa. Kulture Kids will present a special performance of a folktale that reminds everyone that some-

times there is just too much talk, and a moment of quiet is necessary. For kids ages 3-9 and their families. Registration begins July 11.

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

Monday, July 11, 7 p.m.
Gameline by Michael W. Clune, an author discussion. In telling the story of his youth through the lens of seven video games, Clune, a Case Western Reserve University professor, captures a part of childhood one experiences alone. Clune previously wrote the celebrated *White Out*.

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

Tuesday, July 26, 7 p.m.
Jim Kleefeld’s Sports and Fitness Magic. Kleefeld will perform his Sports and Fitness Magic Show, which features soccer balls, jump ropes, Olympic events and more, and where audience members might get to join in the act.

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Paul Ferguson performs jazz and sacred music

James Henke

Paul Ferguson is one of the most respected jazz musicians in all of Greater Cleveland. He is the director of jazz studies at Case Western Reserve University (CWRU) and the artistic director of the Cleveland Jazz Orchestra. He also plays trombone, and in addition to the eight CDs he has released, he performs with many other artists around the area.

Ferguson, who lives on East Fairfax Road in Cleveland Heights, is 55 years old. He is the father of two daughters: 22-year-old Kelsey Ferguson, who plays violin, often with her father; and 18-year-old Tyler, a recent graduate from Heights High.

Ferguson was born in Sandusky, Ohio. When he was four years old,

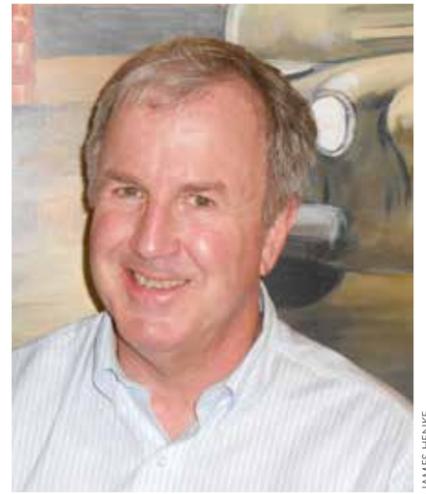
his family moved to New Jersey. After about two years, the family moved back to Ohio and took up residence in Massillon.

He said he got into music because he grew up in a “musical household.” His mother plays piano, and his father played clarinet. “My mom also had a great record collection,” he said. “She had a lot of classical music, some jazz and musical theater records.” In addition, his older brother worked in a record store and would frequently bring home records. And his older sister, Anne Wilson, played piano. “She was always practicing, and she also suggested that I should be doing the same thing. She was very serious about her music,” he said. Wilson is organist and director of music at Forest Hill Presbyterian Church.

When he was 15 years old, Ferguson started taking trombone lessons. After graduating from high school, he went to the University of Akron, where he received a bachelor’s degree in music. He then attended the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y. He graduated in 1986 with a master’s degree in music. While at Eastman, he focused on composition. In 1984, he started touring with Glenn Miller’s band, and, after graduating from Eastman, he continued to tour with Miller’s band and he also toured with Tommy Dorsey’s band.

In 1988, when Ferguson began teaching at CWRU, he moved to Cleveland Heights. “It’s a very interesting community,” he said. “It’s full of artistic people, and it’s a progressive community. And, in addition to all of that, it’s close to everything.”

Ferguson also leads a group of musicians in a program called Jazz Vespers, which is performed annually at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Cleveland Heights, of which Fer-



Paul Ferguson

guson is a member. The most recent performance at St. Paul’s was in May. The Jazz Vespers music focuses heavily on Christian music. “I am thankful that I can present something like the Jazz Vespers to address sacred music,” he said.

Ferguson’s most recent CD, *Encounter*, came out in 2014. It includes many Christian songs, such as “Psalms 23, 121,” “Christ, Mighty Savior,” “Magnificat” and “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence.”

He has also performed with many other Cleveland-area music groups, including the Cleveland Orchestra, Apollo’s Fire, the Cleveland Opera and the Cleveland Chamber Brass. “Over the years, I have been very fortunate to have been able to play with really talented musicians,” he said.

James Henke, a Cleveland Heights resident, was a writer and editor at Rolling Stone magazine for 15 years. He is also the author of several books, including biographies of Jim Morrison, John Lennon and Bob Marley. He is on the board of FutureHeights, and is co-chair of the Heights Observer Advisory Committee.

Heights Arts hosts concert on July 9

Mary Ryan

Classical guitarist Robert Gruca and flutist Linda White will present a diverse program of music based on folk styles from Eastern Europe and Japan on Saturday, July 9, at 7 p.m., in the Heights Arts gallery, 2175 Lee Road in Cleveland Heights, just south of the Cedar Lee Theater.

The musicians will perform works by Serbian composer Dusan Bogdanovic, Hungarian Bela Bartok, and Masamitsu Takahashi from Japan, as well as klezmer music written by American Carl Dimow. The family-friendly concert is open to the public, with free-will donations accepted to support Heights Arts’s public music programs. A reception with refreshments follows the performance.

The Gruca White Ensemble was formed in 2013 as part of The Music Settlement’s Centennial Celebration, and became an Ensemble in Residence for the vibrant Cleveland community music school the following year. It offers an unusual concert experience by alternating flute and guitar repertoire, their own arrangements of jazz and



Robert Gruca and Linda White are the Gruca White Ensemble.

rock tunes, and improvised jams in a variety of styles. “With each concert,” said Linda White, “a new experience unfolds, which will take your ears and your imagination on a unique ride.”

For more information on community arts programs, exhibitions, and the gallery, call Heights Arts at 216-371-3457 or visit www.heightsarts.org.

Mary Ryan is on staff at Heights Arts, a nonprofit community arts organization.

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Invincible. Or maybe not...



SONGS AND STORIES

David Budin

A friend of mine died recently. Jim was a few years older than I. When we met, in the late-1960s, he was a significant player in the local folk music scene here. At that time, I was starting out in the professional folk-singing world and he served as an unofficial mentor to me.

I soon left Cleveland for New York, where I recorded and toured and did all of the things that go with that business. A few years later, I returned to Cleveland to re-group, so to speak, and figure out how to proceed. While I was trying to determine what kind of musical project to start next, in that early-'70s July, Jim offered me a gig backing him up in a club that was filled every night with Mafia-related figures and Mafia wanna-be figures.

This upstairs restaurant/downstairs bar was a nice spot in a wealthy section of town. It was the kind of place where every man who came in wore a jacket and tie—and carried at least one weapon, which he had used before and would, no doubt, again.

I was young and brash and carried that youthful feeling of invincibility. I didn't like the clientele at this place and it was easy to see that they didn't like me. So I would just say whatever I wanted to the people in the club, some of whom thought I was funny and some of whom, decidedly, did not.

When we started there, the club owner told us that if people requested songs, we had to sing them. I asked, "What if we don't know the song?" He said, "You do it anyway." I asked, "What if we . . ." He said, "You're not hearing what I'm telling you. Do the song."

People were always coming up and requesting songs that we didn't know, even enough to fake, and if I was the one they were asking, I would say, "We don't know that song." And they'd say, "So?" And I'd say, "So . . . we can't sing it." And they'd say, "But it's a big hit record. You know it." And I'd say, "But we haven't learned it and we've never practiced it." And they'd say, "Just make it up." And I'd say, "If

I could make up a song that was a big hit record, I wouldn't be singing here." And they would do something, like letting me glimpse one of their weapons. And I'd say, "Okay. I'll do the song." But I'd add, "After we do this next song." Because, usually, they'd leave by then or forget they had even asked for it. They just didn't want to hear anyone say no to them.

One time, a guy came up and asked for a Neil Diamond song that was popular at that time, called "Play Me." The one with a chorus that goes:

"You are the sun. I am the moon. You are the words. I am the tune—play me."

I'd heard it on the radio, but I'd never really listened to it. So I said, "I don't know that song." He said, "So?" And we went through the whole routine, except this time the guy didn't leave. He said, "My girlfriend really wants to hear that song. And I know you can do it." I could tell he was serious, so I said, "Okay," and I looked at him and I sang: "You are the moon. I'm a buffoon. You're a baboon. I'm a bassoon—play me."

The guy glared at me. He casually pulled back his sport coat so I could see he had something tucked into his waistband. Back then, I had always felt totally invincible, but it occurred to me, right then, that this guy might actually be "Vince." Luckily his girlfriend came over and whispered something to him. I think what she must have said was, "Your wife just came in." Because they left immediately.

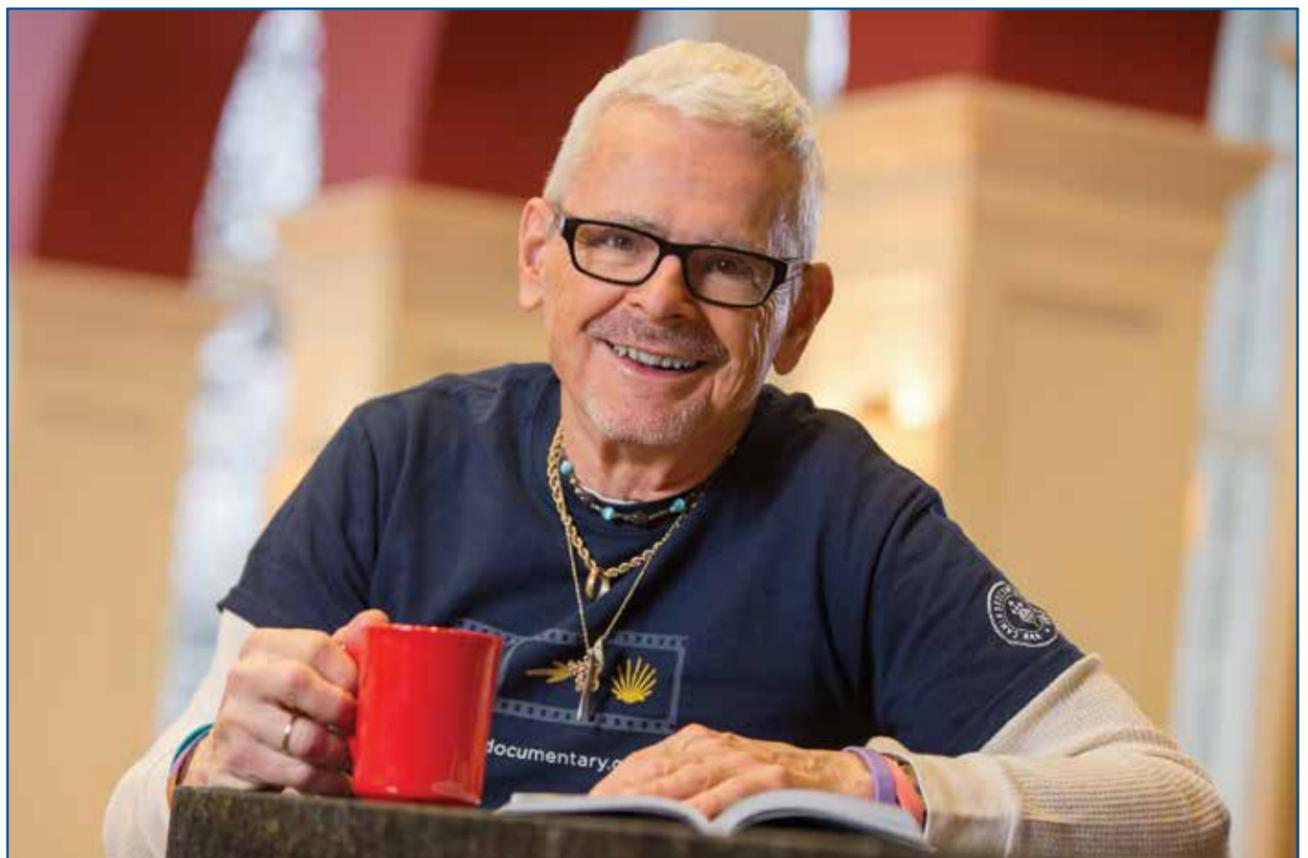
As soon as they disappeared, Jim stepped over to me and, off-mic, said, "One night you're really going to get in trouble and you'll be amazed by how much I'm NOT going to help you." And he added, pointing to the far corner of the room, "I'll be in that kitchen so fast, it will make your head spin."

I was shocked into reality. It was a true wake-up call. And it was a lesson that stayed with me, forever—that, among other things, maybe I'm not always right. And sometimes, when I'm not right—or even if I am—not everyone is always going to have my back and risk their own safety or reputation. There are a lot of people coming to Cleveland this month whom I hope have learned the same lesson. Though I get the feeling that some of them

haven't. Or at least one of them. He could have used someone like Jim. But I think it's too late now—certainly for Jim, and probably for him.

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

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Appletree Books event celebrates Greater Cleveland neighborhoods

James Henke

Appletree Books will host a special event on Friday, July 8, featuring four writers who have contributed to a new book about Greater Cleveland—*Cleveland Neighborhood Guidebook*. Belt Publishing, a Cleveland company that also publishes *Belt Magazine*, produced the book.

The four writers who will be taking part in the event are Brad Masi, Kathrine Morris, Greggor Mattson and Maryann De Julio.

Masi, who lives in Cleveland Heights, contributed a chapter called “Chasing the Ghosts of Coventry Village,” exploring the many changes that have taken place in the Coventry neighborhood over the years. He describes Dugway Brook

as a “historic stream that has disappeared underground, locked away in concrete culverts beneath the hapless footfalls of the denizens above.” He then goes on to write about Harvey Pekar and poet d.a. levy. “Many writers, poets, artists, publishers and graphic novelists find their home here, and many more were hatched here before their winged migration to other territories,” Masi writes.

The event’s three other featured writers focus on other Greater Cleveland neighborhoods. Morris writes about Glenville, Mattson focuses on Kinsman, and De Julio writes about Little Italy.

In addition to chapters about neighborhoods, the book also includes sections identifying Best Coffee Shops, Best Places for Live Music,

Best Galleries, Best Museums, Best Locally Owned Stores, Best Places to Find Locally Grown Food and other superlatives.

The Grog Shop on Coventry is included in the Best Places for Live Music section, and both Big Fun and Mac’s Backs Books on Coventry made the list of Best Locally Owned Stores. Parnell’s Pub on Lee Road is among the Best Dive Bars, and the Inn on Coventry is on the Best Breakfast list.

The book names Cleveland Heights as one of the “Best Places to Live,” and says of the city: “An inner-ring suburb on the east side popular with Case Western Reserve University students and staff, Cleveland Heights is stocked with century-old brick housing.”

Belt Publishing, founded in 2012,

publishes many books about the industrial Midwest, and previously had published two versions of *The Cleveland Anthology* before publishing the new book.

“There was a lot of interest in a new anthology,” said Anne Trubeck, a founder and director of Belt Publishing, who helped organize the event at Appletree Books. “We wanted to create a more wide-ranging collection of essays.”

James Henke, a Cleveland Heights resident, was a writer and editor at Rolling Stone magazine for 15 years. He is also the author of several books, including biographies of Jim Morrison, John Lennon and Bob Marley. He is on the board of FutureHeights, and is co-chair of the Heights Observer Advisory Committee.

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Inn on Coventry celebrates 35 years

James Henke

The Inn on Coventry is celebrating its 35th anniversary this summer, and its owners, Debra Duirk and Mary Haley, are planning some special events to celebrate.

The restaurant opened on July 27, 1981. This year, July 27 is “Throwback Wednesday” at the Inn; coffee will be free (with purchase of food), and buttermilk pancakes will be available for \$1 each. The Inn began giving out raffle tickets in June to diners; prizes include a mountain bike decorated with a Coca-Cola logo, and certificates good for free coffee for a year and free breakfast specials for a month. The restaurant also plans to offer 35th-anniversary Inn on Coventry T-shirts and sweatshirts as part of the raffle, and for purchase. The raffle drawing will be held on July 27.

“I really just want to thank everyone for supporting us over the last 35 years,” said Duirk. “We really just want to show our appreciation, and that’s why we are having the specials and the raffle.”

Duirk and Haley met shortly after graduating from college, and both had dreamed about opening a restaurant. They liked the artsy and eclectic feel of Coventry, and there had recently been a fire in the building at 2785 Euclid Heights Boulevard, so it was available for rent. They took over the space and have been there ever since.

Originally, Mary Haley’s mother, Amy Haley, was the Inn’s chef. She was 68 when the restaurant opened, and she worked as the Inn’s chief cook until her death in 2010, just a week before her 97th birthday.

The restaurant is open seven days a week, from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Monday through Friday, and from 8 a.m.



Mary Haley and Debra Duirk, owners of the Inn on Coventry.

to 2 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. As its hours indicate, the Inn serves only breakfast, brunch and lunch.

The restaurant’s breakfast menu features eggs benedict (and turkey benedict, and lox benedict), omelets, French toast and eight different types of pancakes. The lunch menu features a variety of hot and cold sandwiches, such as chicken sandwiches, reubens, tuna melts, sloppy joes and hamburgers.

“Everything is made from scratch,” Duirk said, “and there are no preservatives.”

Over the years, the Inn on Coventry has won many awards for its food, including Best Breakfast and Best Brunch awards from *Cleveland* magazine, *Northern Ohio Live* and Channel 8. It also won two Best of the Heights awards for Best Breakfast or Brunch, in 2010 and 2011.

Prior to the July 27 celebration, the Inn will close for two weeks. The week of July 11, the owners plan to take a vacation. Then, the following week, they’ll be renovating the restaurant. “We are putting in new carpeting and new tables and chairs,” Duirk said. “We will also be doing a lot of cleaning and making other repairs. We want it to look bright and spiffy for our celebration.”

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Expanded Shawn Paul Salon finds new home in Rockefeller Building

Sruti Basu

The Shawn Paul Salon has found a new home in the Mayfield Lee Business District's Heights Rockefeller Building and is ready to grow. The salon, currently located in the Cedar Lee Business District, is not only expanding its space, but also adding services, and using its new space to foster creativity, social engagement and connectivity opportunities.

The salon first opened its doors in the fall of 2011. Since its inaugural haircut, the salon has grown rapidly, and has been voted Best Cleveland Heights Salon and has received several Best Stylist awards.

The salon's team of master stylists has been crucial to its success. "I am the luckiest guy alive," said owner Shawn Paul Gustafson. "I get to work with the craziest humans ever (my team), laugh all day long, and know that at the end of the day we all had fun. We are not for everyone, and that's okay. We can get a bit too loud, openly share our political thoughts, and are obsessed with NPR. That being said, a lot of people seem to like our brand of crazy."

The original three-chair salon on Lee Road operated within a tiny space of just under 500 square feet. With its latest expansion into a new 3,000 square-foot space, in the



The team at Shawn Paul Salon.

former Barlé's Soup and Sandwich, the salon will feature six styling chairs, lounges and an outdoor garden, a full nail spa, and two body treatment rooms.

The salon currently offers a full range of cut and coloring services for the entire family. Starting in July, however, the salon will offer several unique spa and nail services as well, including manicures and

pedicures, massage and waxing.

Gustafson is working with several local, small-batch body-care producers to use their products in the service offerings. "Cleveland is rich in beautifully crafted goods, and we should all get to experience our region's luxuries," he said.

In addition to the new location and expansion of services, the salon will revamp the space with

vibrant colors, unique furniture, and guest lounge areas intended to create conversation. "Our salon was built to serve the community that sustains us, and with the new space we will be awarded many new opportunities to give back," said Gustafson.

Gustafson moved to Cleveland Heights in 2008 and has been an active and engaged resident and community stylist since. Supporting local causes, events, and programs, he and the salon have always been dedicated to civic engagement, public service, and supporting meaningful causes through their work and business. "Caring for the community around us is not optional, it's essential," he said.

The salon's last day of business on Lee Road is set for July 15, and the new location is expected to open shortly thereafter. To receive up-to-date information about the reopening, "like" Shawn Paul Salon on Facebook, or go to www.shawnpaulsalon.com.

Shawn Paul Salon is open Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Call 216-862-6029 for an appointment. The salon's new address is 2483 Lee Blvd., in Cleveland Heights.

Sruti Basu is the director of community building programs at FutureHeights.

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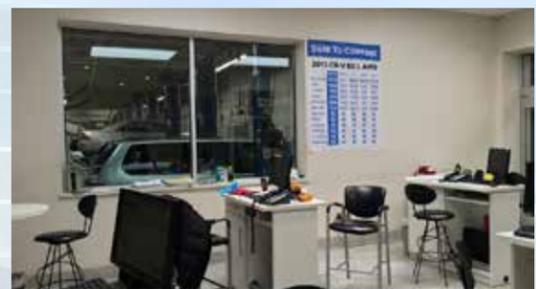
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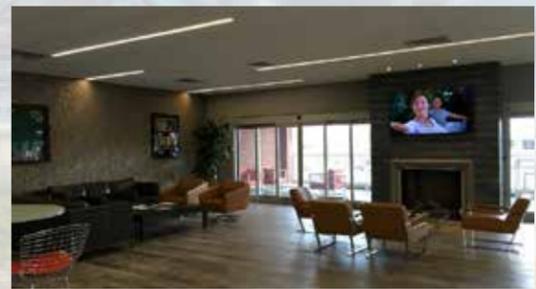
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