University Heights names Jacobson 2016 Citizen of the Year

Patrick Grogan-Meyers

As 2016 drew to a close, the city of University Heights honored two individuals for their service to the city and the community.

At the Dec. 19 city council meeting, UH Mayor Susan Infeld presented Jerome (Jerry) Jacobson, a 60-plus-year resident, with the city’s 2016 Citizen of the Year award, in honor of his 40 years of service as a member of the UH Police Auxiliary Unit.

The city also recognized Patricia Meehan, administrative assistant for the UH Police Department, as its 2016 Employee of the Year.

Meehan joined the department in 2014. Announcing the honor, Mayor Infeld said, “Patti has been nominated by her peers for her outstanding commitment and service to the department and the community. Her dedication and kindness are felt by all. I have received many compliments from residents about Patti’s kindness and help when they call or visit the police department.”

UH Police Chief Steven Hammert said of Jacobson, “Jerry’s long service to the community and mentorship to his fellow auxiliary members has been invaluable to the smooth functioning of the Police Auxiliary Unit.”

“Jerry grew up in University Heights,” noted Infeld. “As a young boy in 1970, he moved to University Heights with his family at a time when phone service for the neighborhood was available only through the pay phone on the tree lawn for Jerry’s family home [at the corner of Washington Boulevard and Laurelhurst Road].”

“Now withstanding Jerry’s humble demeanor, he is rightfully acknowledged as a community treasure in the award presented to him.”

Reflecting on his life and “many careers,” Jacobson said, “It’s been a

Remembering Alicia Marotta Linihan

Alicia Marotta Linihan, co-owner of Marotta’s, the popular Lee Road restaurant, died on Dec. 5. She was 43 and the mother of four children: Maggie, 10; Libby, 9; Brendan, 7; and Mary, 5. A funeral mass was held on Dec. 9 at St. Dominic Church in Shaker Heights, and she was interred at Lake View Cemetery.

Marotta Linihan owned Marotta’s with her husband, Brian Linihan. The two met in the early 1990s while working at Salvatore’s, in Cleveland’s Little Italy, and married in August of 2002. The couple traveled to Italy every year to work on their cooking skills.

The Linihans opened Marotta’s in the fall of 2000, naming the restaurant after Alicia’s father, who had died in 1999.

Marotta Linihan grew up in Cleveland Heights, and became interested in cooking at an early age. “All through grade school and high school, I would cook with my mother,” she said in an interview two years ago. “Italian food was a staple in our house when I was growing up. We’d always have big Sunday dinners, and all of the family would come over to eat. Everything was centered on food.”

Marotta Linihan graduated from Beavontown School and then attended Cuyahoga Community College, where she majored in culinary arts.

Alicia Marotta Linihan with her husband, Brian, in 2014.

The Heights Observer's March 2016 issue will conclude Feb. 15 and winners will be announced in the March print issue of the Heights Observer. Voting will conclude Feb. 15 and winners will be announced in the March issue.

“While the program first started, FutureHeights volunteers would canvass attendees at the various summer festivals to ask for their Best of the Heights votes,” said Deanna Bremer, board member for FutureHeights. “And when we launched the Heights Observer in 2008, we began to include a ballot in the summer print issues and hold our awards celebration in the fall. When we launched Heights Music Hop in 2012, our fall Continued on page 2

SFH Best of the Heights awards return in 2017

Sruti Basu

Since 2005, FutureHeights—a non-profit that inspires and facilitates collaboration and empowerment in our community—has conducted the Best of the Heights awards to recognize the unique attributes of locally owned Heights businesses, and their contributions to the local economy. FutureHeights asks residents to cast their votes for their favorite businesses by nominating them for an award in a variety of categories, such as Best New Business and Best Interior Décor. After a one-year hiatus, FutureHeights is bringing the program back with the theme Show Heights Businesses Your Love.

Beginning in January, residents can show their love for Heights businesses by voting for them in 12 categories. Online voting will begin on Jan. 15, and a paper ballot that can be mailed in or scanned and e-mailed, to FutureHeights will be printed on the back cover of the February print issue of the Heights Observer. Voting will conclude Feb. 15 and winners will be announced in the Observer’s March issue.

“With the program first started, FutureHeights volunteers would canvass attendees at the various summer festivals to ask for their Best of the Heights votes,” said Deanna Bremer Fisher, executive director of FutureHeights. “And when we launched the Heights Observer in 2008, we began to include a ballot in the summer print issues and hold our awards celebration in the fall. When we launched Heights Music Hop in 2012, our fall Continued on page 9

Heights students form community-service organization

Anya Chew and Avery Dyer

Sporting grey shirts with the Heights tiger on their chests, members of the Cleveland Heights Youth Committee (CHYC) are popping up all around the Heights community.

Heights High students founded and comprise this newly formed youth group. Entirely self-directed, CHYC’s members are dedicated to promoting positive change in their community through student activism and leadership.

Recently, CHYC sponsored a coat drive, running through Jan. 1, at the Heights Music Hop in 2012, our fall Continued on page 2

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Heights Observer January 1, 2017

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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: info@futureheights.org. Letters do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions expressed in this publication.

Heights Observer
The Heights Observer is a citizen-based news source published monthly by FutureHeights, a nonprofit, 501(c)3 organization dedicated to civic engagement and quality of life in Cleveland Heights, OH 44118. 216-220-1427.

Observe!

Submissions

1. The Heights Observer is written by people like you. So write something. Use a computer.
2. Register/log in at the Member Center (www.heightsobserver.org).
3. After logging in, click the Submit New Story button in the left-hand column. (Don’t see it? It’s nested under “Write”). Then follow the prompts. Hint: keep your original file open so you can easily copy and paste into the text box.
4. Reward yourself; you’re about to be published. Let us know if you have any questions.

Observe! A citizen news publication.

county values demolished CH residence at $97,200

To the Editor:
The Cuyahoga County Board of Revision recently valued the property at 3490 Desoto Ave. at $97,200. The property had been improved with a two-family home that was demolished in the summer of 2015, after having been declared a nuisance by the city (of Cleveland Heights).

In so valuing the property, the board of revision ignored an Ohio Supreme Court decision directing the county to value the property in light of its decision that an adjacent property should be valued at $5,000. The board of revision also ignored its own appraisal of the property valuing the property at $50,000.

[As the attorney who represented the property owners at the Ohio Supreme Court, I] brought this matter to the attention of the board of revision at its Oct. 27, 2016 meeting.

The board of revision consists of three persons appointed by County Executive Armond Budish and the Cuyahoga County Council. Anthony T. Hairston represents Cleveland Heights on the Cuyahoga County Council.

Hopefully the board of revision will correct this error. The error raises questions about the qualifications of the members of the board of revision panel that made the Sept. 28, 2016 decision valuing the property at $97,200.

J. Alex Morton
Richmond Heights

Excerpts from Observer blogs

City Storm/Sewer Water Conveyance Berkshire Road Derbyshire Road
It is difficult to promote the City of Cleveland Heights for private investments (Capital Formation) without a well developed, first class infrastructure.

The City of Cleveland Heights may keep losing population and be second in a domino effect after East Cleveland’s failure if it cannot set its priorities right on its infrastructure. If Cleveland Heights government institutions cannot support and serve its residents and maintain or upgrade its infrastructure, it may not attract the quality developers to commit to this city and invest their capital in this city’s future. Only quick profit making, non-committed sharks lurking for public money, subsidies, tax abatements, etc. will come to Cleveland Heights. This only makes the city’s value decline. Cheap construction, poor maintenance, and bad design will never make our city more attractive and will never look good... Will Espenschied
When ladies stopped the freeways and saved their cities

Carla Rautenberg and Deborah Van Kleef

As the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes wraps up its 70th-anniversary year, we wish to reflect on the struggle that birthed it—a struggle that succeeded in preserving the wetland along the border of Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights and, indeed, both cities as we know them today.

Were it not for seven years of sustained effort by residents, elected officials and members of civic organizations, Cleveland’s near east side and adjacent suburbs would have been chopped into fragments by a heavily promoted system of freeways.

Announced in 1965, the [freeway] plan was the brainchild of Cuyahoga County Engineer Albert S. Porter, who also chaired the county Democratic Party. It consisted of four multi-lane, limited-access highways, all of them passing through some portion of Cleveland Heights. These included three east-west arteries: the Heights freeway, through East Cleveland, Cleveland Heights, South Euclid and Lyndhurst; the Central Freeway, following Cedar Road, and the Clark Freeway; a concrete slash running up Doan Brook through the middle of Shaker Lakes.

In connection to connecting I-90 with South Euclid and Lyndhurst; the Central Freeway, following Cedar Road, and the Clark Freeway, a concrete slash running up Doan Brook through the middle of Shaker Lakes.

By 1965, suburban ladies kicked into gear, with more than 30 local garden clubs joining the campaign, along with the Cleveland Heights-University Heights, Shaker Heights and Cleveland chapters of the League of Women Voters (LWV).

In 1966, gutsy activists established the Shaker Lakes Regional Nature Center—right on the site of the proposed Clark-Lee freeway interchange.

Still, Albert Porter clung to his plan. In 1969, the citizens committee of Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights, the gardens clubs and LWV formed Citizens for Sane Transportation and Environmental Policy (CSTEP). In the Plain Dealer, Porter notoriously referred to Shaker Lakes as “a dinky little park and a two-bit duck pond.”

On Jan. 29, 1970, CSTEP held yet another public forum, this time with 2,000 in attendance. Eight days later, on Feb. 6, Ohio Gov. James A. Rhodes announced that the state would not build the Clark Freeway. That decision forced Porter to abandon the entire project, and enabled area residents to preserve their city’s essential characteristics—walk ability, diverse housing stock, and green space accessible to all.

Fifty years later it’s easy to see this victory as inevitable, but in fact it was a forgone conclusion. It took hundreds of people, most of them women, seven long years, doing the hard day-to-day work of organizing—making the phone calls, writing the letters, pestering the media, arranging the meetings, and constantly recruiting neighbors, friends and family members to build a local grassroots movement.

As you jog around the lake, walk or roll on the All People’s Trail, enjoy a film at the Cedar Lee Theatre, or walk to Cain Park, take a minute to remember how much organized “people power” it took to make these experiences possible today. Better yet, ask yourself what it is you care about enough to write a letter, make a phone call, or attend a meeting.” Then take that first step and do it.

Speaking of meetings, the fourth annual Cleveland Heights Democracy Day Public Hearing will be held on Jan. 25, at 6:30 p.m., at city hall. The topic will be the political influence of corporations and big money in elections.

Come to offer testimony (up to five minutes), or just to listen and learn. [Sources: “The Clark, Lee and Heights Freeways,” by Marian Morton, When Bad Ideas Happen to Good Suburbs, Cleveland Heights Historical Society, www.cyhistory.org, and Preserving the Shaker Parklands: The Story of the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, by Lauren R. Pacini and Laura M. Peskin, Artography Press, Cleveland, 2016]

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.
How CH-UH district evaluates its teachers

Ari Klein

How often should teachers be evaluated to make sure they are continuing to grow and improve in their job? The state of Ohio does not give us much of a choice in CH-UH about how often, or what should be scrutinized, even though we control some aspects of teacher evaluation locally.

Teachers must undergo two cycles of observations per year. These cycles make up the teacher-performance part of the evaluation. Each cycle comprises a pre- and post-conference, a full-length lesson, and short walk-throughs. Before the pre-conference, most administrators require the completion of an extensive worksheet as well as a detailed lesson plan. During the pre-conference, teachers must explain what they will be doing and why, how they determined what to do, how students will be grouped, what data supports the differentiation that each student will receive, and on and on and on. There are 10 areas to an evaluation, and teachers must try to document the rationale for what they are doing in each.

Teachers are to receive timely feedback throughout the process. The state of Ohio requires student growth measures, however flawed, to weigh in for half of the teacher’s evaluation; [these] scores may not be available by the end of the school, so a teacher may not know where he stands until the next school year.

The teacher-performance part of the evaluation is understandable, though documenting every single thing one does in the course of a lesson is not always possible. Many variables may affect teacher performance: Some teachers are not placed in a subject or grade that they are best at teaching; some teachers may have 27 students in a class, while others may have 18; half a class of seventh-graders may include students with disabilities, while another may have none; some teachers prefer to teach the most-struggling students, while others are better at getting high achievers to stretch even further. It would be impossible to compare a teacher who is new to an area of teaching to someone who has been in the assignment for a long time. The variables are endless.

Teachers holding the same license are only compared when it comes to lay-offs. The law dictates that the order of reduction is first non-tenured teachers, then tenured teachers with the same rating. So, it is possible that a second-year, non-tenured teacher could be retained over a 17-year veteran who may have been rated lower by an administrator or based on student test scores.

As much as we would like to believe that there is no subjectivity involved in the rating process, it would be impossible to say that the process is impartial. Most teachers end up earning the middle two ratings, but there are more variables than I could possibly list as to why a rating may be lower one year versus another.

The law has made teaching an unstable career, and teacher tenure has lost much of its protection. Some incorrectly believe that tenure protects poor teachers, but administration has ways to terminate teachers who are consistently unable to meet expectations and job requirements. Comparing teachers is not a good recipe for teacher collaboration—who would help a fellow teacher when he might be competing for the same job?

Luckily, in CH-UH we placed language in the 2013 negotiated agreement that allows for more predictability when there is a layoff. We have agreed that ineffective teachers should be the first to go, after that we follow seniority and tenure so that everyone knows the layoff order. It is not perfect, but it is my hope that we can keep language that allows for more predictability, instead of one that drastically changes lives.

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

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Superintendents protest new graduation requirements

THE COMMON GOOD

Susie Kaeser

When school superintendents protest at the Ohio Statehouse, you know there is something terribly wrong. Their job is to implement policies mandated by their local boards of education and comply with the Ohio legislature’s demands. They are not exactly the boat-rocking kind—except when something seriously threatens their students.

On Nov. 15, more than 200 superintendents and school board members from across Ohio gathered in Columbus to protest Ohio’s latest misuse of standardized tests. The Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District participated in this public display of concern. Superintendent Talisa Dixon and board members Ron Register, Kal Zucker and Beverly Wright made up our contingent.

These advocates for students challenged Ohio’s newest high school graduation requirements. Starting next year under the new requirements, students who have earned enough high school credits will have three routes to receiving a diploma: They can earn a high score on a college entrance exam, obtain an industry credential that says they are ready for a job, or earn 18 out of a possible 35 points on seven end-of-course exams. The exams would replace the Ohio Graduation Test. Proponents of the policy say it will make a diploma “mean something.” The superintendents challenged the overreliance on standardized tests, the lack of educator input in creating the requirements, and the rapid implementation of yet another set of tests with high-stakes consequences.

Dixon joined the protest to make public her opposition to the use of standardized tests to demonstrate rigor and preparedness. According to her, “Standardized tests are good for sorting, but they do not help produce the learners and leaders that our country needs and desires. There is no way these assessments are evidence of job or college readiness.” In her view, the tests undermine the meaningful educational engagement that is needed to actually prepare students for 21st-century demands.

John Haswell, superintendent of the Shadyside School District, spoke out against the unfair use of the tests. “There is no way a single test should have the capacity to erase an entire year’s worth of work.” In his poorly funded rural district, only 44 percent of students passed the new geometry exam, when 100 percent had passed a different test the year before.

The new tests were piloted in 2016. Dixon reported that Ohio’s Superintendent of Public Instruction projects that only 28 percent of Ohio’s seniors will be on track to pass the exams in the 2017-18 school year. If the tests are used, and the required number of points earned is not modified, most Ohio students will not graduate on time.

Think about what that means. How just is a system that relies on a test that predicts economic status, rather than one that captures learning, to decide who graduates from high school? How fair is a system that allows a test to negate successful completion of a high school curriculum? And then there is the increased cost of education that follows when kids repeat a school year hoping to pass a test, and the cost in human potential when more kids give up on a high school degree because of test scores.

According to education philosopher Alfie Kohn, items that can be measured on a standardized test are rarely important. Why would a standardized test be a better measure of what a student learned in geometry than what the teacher could see throughout the year in their classroom participation, the development of their thinking and problem-solving skills, and their performance on teacher-crafted assessments of what was actually being taught?

Superintendent Dixon is an avid proponent of making education responsive to the demands of the 21st century. For her, the route to this outcome is rich learning experiences. She thinks teacher-designed formative assessments supply the information teachers need to make sure kids are learning what is being taught—something standardized tests fail to achieve.

Ohio legislators cling to the idea that their responsibility for providing a solid education for our students is fulfilled by implementing a testing program and punishing districts and students based on test results.

When talk of “tough standards” leads to more testing, it is only creating more hurdles, not better education. I have yet to see any evidence that shows what standardized test score predicts success in life.

I’m grateful that our education leaders have joined this important fight to end the use of punitive public policies that undermine the common good. It is going to take all of us.

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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BORN IN THE HEIGHTS

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS NEWS

University Heights City Council
Meeting highlights

NOVEMBER 21, 2016

Mayor Susan Infeld and council members Susan Farnese (vice mayor), Pamela Cameron, Philip Ertel, John Rach and Michele Weiss were present. Councilman Mark Wiseman and Steven Sims were absent. The meeting took place 6-6:38 p.m.

New agreement for NOPEC

Mayor Infeld announced that NOPEC (Northwest Ohio Public Energy Council), an electricity aggregator for many communities, has reached an agreement with a new electricity provider. With this new agreement, NOPEC will be able to continue to provide electricity to customers. She suggested that residents use the price comparison that is available on the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio website.

Cedar Taylor district revitalization

This issue was added to the agenda as a motion. It will continue to be discussed at the Dec. 5 council meeting. At this meeting, a developer had been working to revitalize the northeast corner of the Cedar Taylor district. The available buildings present environmental hazards for new businesses and options are being sought to resolve the problem. The city is also seeking funding to widen the sidewalks and narrow the intersection. Councilman Rach, who has been meeting with business owners in the area, noted that the business district is in a “mess.” The improvement process is significantly different from the process followed by Cleveland Heights, which borders on the west side of Taylor, and business owners there are having difficulty moving forward with plans. Cleveland Heights is proposing overvolt parking for its businesses.

Firehouse carpeting

Mayor Infeld has made improvements to the firehouse, where the firemen live during their shifts. This included the purchase of carpeting, but the invoice for the carpet was issued as a single invoice instead of two, and therefore exceeded her spending authority. Members of council and the LWV Observer went next door to see the improvements, which included paint and new mattresses. The payment of $5,824.40 for the carpet was approved, but Councilwoman Weiss asked the mayor to notify council of any future projects instead of breaking them into smaller portions in order to stay below her spending limit. Councilwoman Cameron suggested revisiting the spending limit issue at a future meeting, perhaps in conjunction with budget discussions.

New budget funds

The finance committee is considering establishing a Gateway Development Fund as part of the budget, for allocating funds ($25,000 perhaps) to improve the gateway areas of the city. Also under consideration is $10,000 for equipment to enable electronic display of maps, drawings, spreadsheets, and such during council meetings, so that everyone can see what is being discussed.

LWV Observer: Wendy Deuring

DECEMBER 5, 2016

Mayor Susan Infeld and council members Susan Farnese (vice mayor), Pamela Cameron, Philip Ertel, John Rach and Michele Weiss were present. Michele Weiss was absent. The meeting took place 7:05-9:45 p.m.

Tribute to Beryl Rothschild

Mayor Susan Infeld held a moment of silence for former Mayor Beryl Rothschild, who died on Nov. 29. Rothschild served 32 years as mayor of University Heights, stepping down in 2009. The mayor noted that Rothschild was a trailblazer and vigorous supporter of University Heights.

Cedar Taylor Development Association

Councilman John Rach introduced Kevin Smith, Cedar Taylor Development Association president and board member, who outlined plans to improve the streetscape in the northeast corner of the Cedar Taylor district. Rach reported that he and Councilwoman Michele Weiss have secured an annual streetscape fund of $25,000 from the finance committee, which has yet to be voted on. Smith estimated that improving the streetscape would cost approximately $32,000. The project would include installing benches ($775 each), bike racks ($1,325 each), planters and plants ($370 and $1,500–2,000, respectively), banners ($250 each), and trashcans (price not set).

Mayor Infeld reminded council that the city is resubmitting a county development block grant proposal (to provide sidewalks) and the improvements in the Cedar Taylor district. The projects will come before council on Dec. 19. She voiced concerns that the Cedar Taylor project would come out of the city’s pocket. Vice Mayor Pardee reminded everyone that the city has requested that $25,000 be set aside annually for the project. The mayor said the project would need to be put before the proper channels before she could weigh in.

Crime in University Heights

Police Chief Steve Hammett reported several areas. On Nov. 16, at 2:05 a.m., a robbery occurred at the Dunkin Donuts near Femwick and Cedar roads; an employee was arrested on Nov. 18. On Nov. 18, a woman was carjacked. Hammett advised residents to pull the interior door and lock it and call the police if this occurs, rather than exchanging information with the driver.

LWV Observer: Shabnam Leehoch

These meeting summaries are abstracts created from LWV observers’ notes. The summaries have been edited and prepared by Anita McFadden, Clarionne Morse and Marilyn Banas. To receive these postings of full reports, send an email to mbarnes9515@gmail.com or join through Google groups using “lwv-chuh observer reports” as a search phrase. These reports contain information from meeting highlights of public meetings and are not official statements of the Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters Cuyahoga Area. This disclaimer may not accompany any redistribution of these reports.
Cleveland Heights City Council Meeting highlights

NOVEMBER 21, 2016

All council members were present: Cheryl L. Stephens, mayor; Jason Stein, vice mayor; Mary Dunbar; Carol Rose; Kathleen; Michael N. Unger; and Melissa Yasnow. The regular meeting took place 7:36–7:55 p.m.

Voting results for Issues 51 and 52

Voters passed issues 51 and 52, proposed amendments to Articles VII and VIII of the city charter. The Cuyahoga County Board of Elections (BOE) had requested that the city amend its municipal candidate petition and write-in filing deadlines, and eliminate possible ambiguity concerning the means by which a person may become a candidate for council. The BOE also requested revision of procedures concerning write-in candidates, as well as revisions to ensure that all registered voters have the opportunity to vote for initiative, referendum, and recall petitions deemed valid under the city’s charter. These amendments bring Cleveland Heights into uniformity with other municipalities within the county so that the BOE may meet its federal requirements.

Community development grant

Council authorized an application to the Cuyahoga County Department of Development’s Community Development Supplemental Grant program for funding to support a Green Commercial Building Initiative- Sustainability program. The aim is to provide financial assistance for environmental improvements to commercial buildings in the city. This is a competitive grant, for which the city might receive up to $60,000. The funds come from Cuyahoga County’s Casino Revenue Fund, and no match is required.

Commercial loan

By a 5-2 vote, council authorized an agreement with Healthy LLC, for a loan of approximately $221,080, for its acquisition of the property located at 2196 Lee Road, so that a separate entity may continue to operate the Lopez restaurant there. The terms are similar to those of the current loan, which is with Lee Road Partners Tao Inc. Council Member Saren opposed the measure, saying he does not think it’s a good deal for the city. Council Member Stephens also voted no, because of the loan’s structure. Council Member Stein supported the legislation because an existing loan is simply moving to new ownership; Council Member Unger also favored it, based on the recommendation of the city’s economic development staff.

Nuisance bar on Mayfield Road

The operation of the bar and restaurant located at 3560 Mayfield Road, formerly Gibb’s Restaurant, currently Rise Bar, was declared to be a nuisance due to criminal activity. There have been more than 18 visits by safety forces in 2016, and the owner has not cooperated with city officials.

LWV Observer: Katherine Solender.
David Brock

For nearly 46 years, Home Repair Resource Center (HRRC) has provided residents with the tools—literally and metaphorically—to improve their houses themselves. As one of the country's few home-repair nonprofits, HRRC continues to seek ways to enhance its services.

In 2017, HRRC aims to increase its home-repair class sizes, diversify its course offerings, and expand the number of communities it serves.

A new six-week sequence dealing with home exteriors and landscaping—part of HRRC’s Women’s Home How-To series—will fulfill requests from many class participants for an examination of yards and spaces outside of the home—after all, this is what people first see when looking at a house.

HRRC will also offer new classes on painting, with the help of experts at Sherwin-Williams.

At the end of January, HRRC’s popular Tool Library program will return.

Thanks to the generosity of Becky Stager, the former HRRC education coordinator who died recently, HRRC will be able to enhance its teaching workshops, to further improve the number and types of class offerings it can provide.

As always, the cost of taking an HRRC class is low, and discounts are available based on residency and income, making the classes available to people of all socioeconomic backgrounds.

Participants frequently mention the long-term financial savings and know-how they gain from HRRC classes, which empower them to take on tasks that once seemed insurmountable.

HRRC has become the template for organizations nationwide that are seeking to replicate its success. In just the last few weeks, HRRC has fielded calls from as far away as Tallahassee, Fla., from people who are looking for advice on how to start a program.

For more information, visit hrrc-ch.org.

David Brock is the new education coordinator for HRRC, a former college history professor, and a west-sider who is quickly becoming enamored with the East Side.

Heights Observer Volunteer Match

Heights Observer’s Volunteer Match column lists opportunities for residents to lend their time and talent to the many worthy organizations and causes around the Heights.

Submit your organization’s volunteer needs by e-mailing Sruti Basu at sbasu@futureheights.org or calling the FutureHeights office at 216-320-1423.

Items submitted on or before the Heights Observer print issue’s monthly story deadline will be considered for the next column. (To see past columns, visit www.heightsobserver.org, and search “volunteer match.”)

Reaching Heights: Reaching Heights’s Many Villages tutoring program, in its 11th year of service to the community, has open slots for a new after-school tutoring program at Gearity Professional Development School. Tutoring will take place Monday through Thursday, 3–4:30 p.m., to help emerging first-grade readers build critical literacy skills. No experience is necessary. For more information about this and other volunteer tutoring opportunities, visit www.reachingheights.org or contact Lisa Hunt at 216-932-5110 or lisa@reachingheights.org.

Heights Observer: FutureHeights publishes the Heights Observer and delivers it throughout Cleveland Heights and University Heights on or around the first of every month. Volunteers are needed to assist with deliveries to local businesses and institutions. Most routes take about an hour to complete. For more information, contact FutureHeights at 216-320-1423 or info@futureheights.org.

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Peace

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Family of Sunny Ravi Patel donates funds to CH’s police and fire departments

On Dec. 5, the Patel family donated $20,000 to the Cleveland Heights police and fire departments, in gratitude for their support during the tragic loss of Sunny Ravi Patel. A family spokesperson said that the family is giving back funds to a GoFundMe account to “all of the groups that made a difference during our loss.” Patel was killed on Oct. 14 at his family’s Mr. Hero shop on South Taylor Road in Cleveland Heights.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Early childhood educator to speak at Jan. 19 forum on education reform

Dan Bobeczko

Trying to make sense of the myriad educational reforms taking place in the country today is a daunting task. Sound bites on the news, posts on social media, and competing articles in various newspapers create a virtual smokescreen that chokes out the reality of the classroom and true educational research. Pundits, political donors, and legislators in the limelight seem to draw attention away from what is really happening to our young learners as they and their schools continue to be labeled according to the results of standardized test scores.

As part of its ongoing mission to inform the community about current issues in education, the Heights Coalition for Public Education will hold its next Speaker’s Forum on Thursday Jan. 19, in the cafeteria at the Wiley Campus of Heights High, 7-9 p.m.

Cleveland State University (CSU) professor Karl F. Whearely, Ph.D., will present “Taking Back Our Public Schools: Escaping Market Myths and Doing What Works Best for Children, Democracy, and Our World.”

Whearely will discuss “big-picture education,” covering topics such as meaningful curricula, authentic assessment, and trustworthy research and evidence. Attendees will also receive information on advocacy, acceptance, and facilitating healthy changes.

BEST OF HEIGHTS continued from page 1

Development Committee has select- ed the categories that will be on this year’s ballot. All Cleveland Heights and University Heights businesses are eligible to be nominated for each of the categories. Visit www.futureheights.org to access the Best of the Heights 2017 ballot or look for a link to the ballot in the weekly Heights Observer e-news, beginning Jan. 15.

For more information, call FutureHeights at 216-320-1423 or send an email to info@futureheights.org.

Suti Basu is director of community building programs at FutureHeights.

Only 4 people out of 100 can see the secret message
Joy Henderson

On Dec. 2, sophomores at Heights High explored the 14 Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs offered to juniors and seniors. The all-day fair featured displays and demonstrations by students currently in the programs. In the spring, sophomores can select one of the two-year CTE programs during the school’s scheduling process.

CTE programs offer “college and career readiness,” providing students with practical experience that many college-bound students lack. Traditional college-bound students can enroll in a CTE program to earn a certification that will qualify them for an above minimum-wage job in their area of interest while attending college.

Some CTE students enroll in the program because they have a passion for a particular field but do not want to attend a four-year college. Armed with certifications, they qualify for higher-paying, higher-level jobs. Many of these students often pursue further certificates or training in a two-year college or industry-sponsored program after leaving Heights High. Some also enroll in a four-year college after earning additional certifications and working for a few years in their field.

Antonio Johnson is studying automotive technology in the CTE program. “I’ve always been interested in cars and I especially like the problem-solving aspect,” he said. “It’s a little bit like being a detective, using deductive reasoning to figure out what’s going on.” Johnson has earned the Automotive Service Excellence General Maintenance certificate and expects to have the Electrical and Brakes and Steering certificates by the time he graduates. After graduation, he plans to attend the Tri-C Automotive Technology program.

Charlize Wilson (Clinical Health Careers) plans to earn the Nurse Aid Certificate this spring and, because demand is high, expects to get a job this summer. She is especially interested in psychiatric nursing and plans to attend college to earn an undergraduate degree in a related medical field. “I really enjoy the labs and learning about diseases and disorders,” said Wilson. “I also like going to McGregor and getting hands-on experience at the nursing home.”

Charlie Adams (Computer Networking Technology) expects to earn the Cisco Certified Entry Networking Technician certificate this spring. “This program has been great because we can work at our own pace,” he said. “I like the field trips because we get to see many of the jobs that are available.” Adams, a National Merit Scholar semifinalist, plans to attend college in the fall, to study computer science or physics.

“To be career-ready in our ever-changing global economy requires knowledge of skills, adaptability and a commitment to lifelong learning,” said Brad Callender, CTE director. “The CTE programs offer an excellent place for students to begin that process.”

More information is available at www.chuh.org/cte.

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

Learn about Urban Oak at open house

Andrea Rheaume

Urban Oak School third-graders celebrated the autumn harvest by honoring the Jewish festival of Sukkot. They created a sukkah to collect food, and Jean Miller, a Cleveland Heights resident and Waldorf homeschooler, shared with the children the story and meaning of Sukkot.

Together they blessed the sukkah, preparing it to receive donations from the Urban Oak community. Felicia Campbell and her third-grade class delivered 168 pounds of food to the Greater Cleveland Food Bank. The class visited Eddy’s Fruit Farm to pick apples, and a local beekeeper to learn about bees and honey.

The children continued their harvest celebrations by preparing a dinner for family and friends on Nov. 19. The harvest dinner began with a presentation of their main lesson books—a collection of the children’s artistic expression of their lessons—followed by a selection of seasonal songs, verses, and the flute piece “My Paddle.” The harvest dinner featured a main course of homemade bread, served with freshly made butter, and vegetable soup; dessert was a warm apple cake.

For more information about Urban Oak School (www.urbanoakschool.org), visit its open house on Sunday, Jan. 22, 2-4 p.m., to experience bread-making, view the students’ lesson books and tour the classrooms.

Cleveland Heights resident Andrea Rheaume is a parent volunteer for Urban Oak School.
CH-UH district launches ‘public’ marketing campaign

Scott Wortman

The Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District recently launched a new marketing campaign to promote the community's public school system. The campaign centers on the theme “Public is for all.”

The bulk of the campaign has been privately funded through the generosity of the Dietrich family, longtime supporters of the CH-UH school district.

“I was interested in supporting a marketing campaign because I think a community is stronger when there’s broad support for its public school system, and I wanted to encourage that,” said Nancy Dietrich.

Community members will begin to see campaign materials around the city and in the district’s overall public relations efforts.

Heights alumni and district form new foundation

Scott Wortman

Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District leadership is working with the Heights Alumni Foundation to transition alumni efforts to the Heights Schools Foundation (HSF), with an expanded mission and new leadership.

Juliana Johnston Senturia, a 1987 Heights High graduate, is the executive director of HSF.

“Public dollars cover the basics when levies are renewed, but it still leaves some funding gaps for enrichment, innovation, special capital projects, co-curricular activities—that’s where we come in,” explained Senturia.

The creation of HSF is part of the district’s effort to grow its private fundraising efforts and create multiple channels for alumni and others to “give back” to the schools.

Over the last few years, generous alumni have contributed $75,000 in gifts toward the restoration of the high school clock tower. “We hope to build on that kind of effort to provide even more ways for private gifts to support the district’s work,” said HSF Board of Trustees President Susan Carver (class of ’78).

“Over the last two years we realized how much interest there is in supporting the schools,” said Talisa Dixon, CH-UH superintendent.

“The new Heights Schools Foundation will bring expertise in fund development so that we can keep our focus on creating a strong and effective learning community.” The alumni foundation previously focused exclusively on the high school, but HSF will broaden its focus to comprise pre-kindergarten to 12th grade.

District leaders expect that this broader effort will enable the district to strengthen partnerships and develop additional ambassadors to share the news of its students and alumni. HSF hopes to make meaningful matches between what the district needs and what donors hope to support, to enrich the educational experience in district schools.

“We’ll work closely with the district leadership to understand where gaps exist and work together to fund solutions,” added Senturia.

“Every time I go by the Heights High construction site knowing that’s occurring behind the fence,” said Dietrich, “I want everyone to realize the opportunity taking shape right here on Cedar and Lee.

“I see the renewed building as one more reason for families to choose Heights. Not only will we once again see a beautiful historic façade, but more importantly the interior will be a welcoming, light-filled space designed for a 21st century education. It’s an exciting chance for all our community’s students to experience what our public schools can offer.”

“We are extremely grateful to the Dietrich family for funding this campaign and supporting our school district,” said Superintendent Talisa Dixon.

“We are excited about the opportunity to actively promote all that the CH-UH school system has to offer, and we hope that the community embraces our efforts.”

Scott Wortman is the supervisor of communications for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.

The new windsheen outside of Heights High, at Lee and Cedar roads.

The most noticeable element is a new public art-inspired windscreen outside the construction site at Heights High. The black-and-gold screen wraps from Lee Road onto Cedar Road in front of the high school, and it features photos of current students, teachers and staff.

The district has been working alongside the Cleveland-area marketing firm Little Jacket to create the campaign.

The district paid for the windscreen using $7,500 from a Knowledge Works grant. The Dietrich family is paying Little Jacket directly for the campaign; that amount is not public.

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District’s free school markets move indoors for winter

Krisy Dietrich Gallagher

The school markets at Boulevard and Oxford elementary schools will continue to offer free fruits, vegetables and healthy pantry items to school families and other Heights residents this winter, and throughout the school year. The schools have partnered with School Market, a program of the Cleveland Food Bank, to provide nutritious food to district families and others, outside of the school day. 

Boulevard’s School Market takes place on the first Tuesday of each month, and Oxford’s is on the third Tuesday of the month, both from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.

The school markets moved indoors in December, and Boulevard’s social worker Karen Allen saw a significant drop-off in participation on the first indoor market day. “It was cold and rainy so I think that might have had an impact, especially for families without cars,” she said. The school served only 82 families on Dec. 6, compared to the usual 135.

Allen hopes that the presence of a nutritionist from the food bank will encourage more participation. At a recent market, the nutritionist prepared homemade chili for tasting and provided printed recipes featuring the foods she’s produce to help enable families to prepare healthy meals at home. The Cleveland Food Bank’s School Market program is available to any school where at least 50 percent of the student body qualifies for free or reduced lunch—the federal government’s standard for poverty. The goal of the program, established in 2014 in response to rising poverty levels, is to ensure that students and community members have access to affordable fresh food. In 2015, the program began adding healthy pantry items to its markets, and now delivers between 4,000 and 4,000 pounds of food items to both Boulevard and Oxford each month.

Children are welcome to pick up their own supplies and bring them home, and community members can show up without documentation or proof of address and still select food. “The goal of the food bank is straightforward: to feed people,” said social worker Cindy Schmidt. “So they put as few obstacles in place as possible.”

The food bank’s only request is that schools document how many students, adults, families and senior citizens the program serves. According to Schmidt, who has everyone sign in before they shop, “all but most 400 students, 132 families and 66 seniors were served at Oxford’s market on Oct. 18. Community members gathered early, filling bags with carrots, cucumbers, beets, lettuce. Students eagerly lined up as soon as the school bell rang, bravely trying out an apple smoothie that was more delicious than it looked.”

“It’s yummy, like cinnamon!” said a fourth-grade girl who eagerly grabbed the printed recipe after taking a hesitant first sip.

 Samantha Saunders, father of an Oxford kindergarten student, was volunteering at one of five overflowing tables and didn’t hesitate to close the deal with vegetable-phobic youngsters. “Carrots are like candy!” he called to all who walked by. “Carrots help you see in the dark, like a superhero!”

The students ate it up, so to speak, and so did the adults. One mother and grandmother were thrilled with the “real fruits and vegetables, with all their twists and bumps—not like the stuff at the grocery store on steroids,” they said.

“It’s phenomenal to get the kids to get to be a part of this,” second-grade teacher Sarah Adair agreed. “This is an amazing resource for our families. It exposes kids to new foods so they can be risk-takers at home,” she said, referring to an International Baccalaureate learner profile.

Parents and volunteers include community members who are happy for the opportunity to engage with their neighboring school. “It’s as if the school is becoming a real thing to people, not just that brick building they pass by each day,” said Schmidt.

Lynne Maragliano, who retired from Roxboro last spring after 23 years teaching kindergarten, is thrilled to help at Oxford’s market every month. “There’s nothing more satisfying than seeing people have good, real food. These children are my heart.”

Oxford kindergarten teacher Brenda Beyah’s approach to volunteering is simple: “Any time I have an opportunity to help my community, I take it. We should all be in a race to do good.”

Krisy Dietrich Gallagher, a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights, is a former district teacher and a freelance journalist named for the CH-UH City School District. A longer version of this story appeared at www.chuh.org.

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St. Paul’s Co-op Preschool plans open house events for Jan. 9

Marjorie Preston

It’s only January, but believe it or not, parents of young children are thinking about preschool in the fall. St. Paul’s Cooperative Preschool, one of the region’s leaders in early childhood education, is planning events for parents who are thinking about 2017. St. Paul’s Cooperative Preschool, 1430 Euclid Ave., welcomes families and other Heights residents to explore the program in person. The open house is scheduled for Tuesday, Dec. 6, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

St. Paul’s has provided the first kindergarten, as well as morning and afternoon options. A vibrant and welcoming child-care center, preparing and distributing healthy food to district families and healthy pantry items to school families and other Heights residents.

The food bank’s only request is that schools document how many students, adults, families and senior citizens the program serves. According to Schmidt, who has everyone sign in before they shop, “all but most 400 students, 132 families and 66 seniors were served at Oxford’s market on Oct. 18. Community members gathered early, filling bags with carrots, cucumbers, beets, lettuce. Students eagerly lined up as soon as the school bell rang, bravely trying out an apple smoothie that was more delicious than it looked.”

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Beaumont students help homeless youths

Rick Haase

On Nov. 19, a group of Beaumont students spent the morning making fleece blankets and assembling bags containing personal hygiene items and food for Greater Cleveland’s homeless youth.

Beaumont students also raised funds to benefit Bellefaires JCB’s Homeless and Missing Youth programs, led by Beaumont alumni Ken McHenry and Nichol Evans. McHenry was instrumental in the “Take A Closer Look” campaign, in which mannequins dressed in hoodies explaining their homeless stories were placed around Cleveland. The mannequins were called “some-bodies.”

Service to others is an important part of the Beaumont School education, and this community service work was part of Beaumont’s new BeautiGirl program.

Coordinated by Katie Parisi, who also runs Beaumont School’s summer camps, BeautiGirl encompasses a variety of behavioral, technology, substance abuse, education and prevention services. Beaumont is among the nation’s largest and most experienced child service agencies, and provides a variety of behavioral, technology, substance abuse, education and prevention services.

Rick Haase is director of public relations and marketing at Beaumont School in Cleveland Heights. A Catholic school in the Ursuline tradition, Beaumont educates women for life, leadership and service.

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Heights Observer January 1, 2017 www.heightsobserver.org

Library offers national pre-K literacy program

Kamaria Kabir reads to her daughter at Lee Road Library.

Sheryl Banks

Heights parents and caregivers now visit a branch of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library and join “1,000 Books before Kindergarten,” a national literacy movement.

“1,000 Books before Kindergarten is a fun new program that encourages caretakers and parents to read 1,000 books with, or to, their child before that child starts kindergarten,” said Maggie Kinney, youth services librarian who is among those spearheading the program at Heights Libraries. “The program comes from a national nonprofit of the same name that promotes literacy in early childhood and gives program guidance to teachers and librarians to use in their community.”

Some parents may be daunted by the large number of books in the program’s title, but Kinney explained that it’s not nearly as intimidating as it sounds.

“One thousand books does sound like a huge number, but if you just read one book a night to your one-year-old child, you’ll reach 365 books in a year,” said Kinney. “So, by age 2 you’ve already hit well over 600, and by age 4 you’ve read over 1,200. If your child loves Green Eggs and Ham, and they want to read it 50 times, you can count that book 50 times. It’s not as many times you read.”

“We end up reading Pat the Bunny at least five times in a row in my house,” she added, laughing.

According to Kinney, reading with children from the time they’re born creates a positive experience around books and reading. If a child is having fun and feels loved while being read to, that experience creates a lifetime love of books and reading. It also expands vocabulary, imagination and other early literacy skills that help children learn once they start kindergarten.

Kinney and other youth services staff have made the program simple and fun, and parents and caregivers can enroll a child at any time and at any age before that child starts kindergarten.

Staff will provide parents with activity sheets to track a child’s reading progress and, for each 100 books, kids will get a sticker to put on a big caterpillar mural at each branch. “We’ll also have prizes and activities along the way,” said Kinney.

The program offers a free user-friendly app for iPhone or Android devices, to help parents track their books. Users can find it in the app store by searching for “1,000 Books before Kindergarten.”

For more information, visit www.heightslibrary.org or stop in at the Coventry Village, Lee Road or Noble Neighborhood libraries.

Sheryl Banks is the marketing and community relations manager for the CH-UH Public Library System.

What’s going on at your library?

Coventry Village Library
1925 Coventry Road, 216-531-3400
Thursday, Jan. 19, 7-8:30 p.m.
Caregiver Bootcamp: Recognizing and Managing Difficult Behaviors. Learn the multiple and often interacting causes for a loved one’s inappropriate or difficult behaviors, as well as real-world tips and strategies for managing and preventing them. Bert Rahl (MESSA, LISWS), director of mental health services at Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging, will provide information on community agencies, organizations and programs that provide respite and other services—and how to qualify for them.

Lee Road Library
2343 Lee Road, 216-932-3500
Sunday, Jan. 8, 2-4 p.m.
Preschool and Daycare Fair. Meet representatives from local child care and preschool providers, and learn about their organizations. The fair will be held in the library’s children’s room.

Noble Neighborhood Library
2800 Noble Road, 216-291-1565
Fridays in January, 11-11:30 a.m.
Family Art Time. After storytime, the library will offer a small art project for small hands. Family Art Time is for parents and preschoolers of all ages.

Cleveland Heights-University Heights Library Board Meeting highlights

NOVEMBER 28, 2016 Jim Riccio, board member, was absent.

Library again receives five-star rating

This is the eighth year in a row that Heights Libraries has received this highest possible rating in Library Journal’s 2016 Index of Public Library Service. Library Journal is a trade journal for library news and has a circulation of 100,000. Ratings are based on circulation, visits, program attendance, public computer use and eCirculation. The latter criterion was for the first time this year and reflects electronic media usage. The library’s circulation rating of 30.75 per capita indicates that roughly 31 items were circulated for every resident in the Heights service area.

New janitorial contract

After receiving numerous complaints about the cleanliness of its branches, the library joined other governmental agencies in the Sourcing Alliance, which bids and contracts for various services. The alliance worked with the Cuyahoga County Public Library to develop a contract for janitorial services. The company chosen, out of 20 reviewed, was Scioto Services. Other agencies in the alliance can use the identical contract and terms.

The library has chosen Scioto Services for a seven-day contract; the prior contract was for a seven-day contract, but the company chose out of 20 reviewed, was Scioto Services. Other agencies in the alliance can use the identical contract and terms.

Girl engineer program

The library’s internal innovative idea contest was won by Angelica George and will focus on STEM activities for girls, to create more interest in the science and engineering fields. The group will partner with the Women in Science and Engineering Round Table at Case Western Reserve University, Georgia and her team (Cassandra Alvesani and Michele Graham) will attend a day-long retreat on Jan. 31 covering topics such as leadership, project evaluation and management, and data visualization.

Bookmobile video

Marketing Manager Sheryl Banks interviewed bookmobile users at the Huntington Green Apartments and will include comments in a video about the bookmobile. Attendance is growing at each of the bookmobile’s stops. The University Heights library’s newsletter will advertise the stops.

Friends Mega Sale a success

Friends of Heights Libraries President Linda Lopez reported $8,461 in total sales and $345 in new memberships from the latest Friends Mega Sale. Proceeds will enable the continuation of the group’s $750 library science scholarships.

Oct. Public Service Report highlights:

• Collaboration with The Music Settlement brought (abut) a program by the Cleveland Cello Quartet for children and adults. The children were able to handle instruments and ask questions of the musicians.

• At Coventry Village library, “Dr. Who” writer Lance Parkin discussed his career writing books as well as television episodes. “Who fans” in attendance participated in a lively post-talk discussion.

• At Noble Neighborhood Library, children were able to choose a presidential candidate from a display by Angelica George, featuring book character candidates such as Baby Mouse and Squid.

• New library card sign-ups in October totaled 285 for adults and 65 for children.

• The youth services division, in partnership with the Cleveland Orchestra, presented a symphony storyline package families. Youth Services Associate Sharmika Chandler and an orchestra violinist combined music and storytelling in the program, which 92 children and caregivers attended.

• The Homework Helpers and Reading Buddies program returned in October. With several dedicated volunteers, on average, eight children per week are helped with homework and reading.

• In a parallel to Picture Book Madonna, Youth Services Associate Chris Fries enacted Movie Madonna, a contest where customers can vote in person or online for their favorite movie. In September, there were 651 votes. In October, 862 votes were cast at the reference desk or on the library’s Facebook page.

• The annual Mega Sale returned in October. Proceeds will enable the continuation of the program’s title, but Kinney explained to parents that the experience creates a lifetime love of books and reading. It also expands vocabulary, imagination and other early literacy skills that help children learn once they start kindergarten.

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CIA’s Continuing Education program includes a wide range of courses for adults and children in art and design taught by accomplished faculty, in a dynamic, friendly and well-equipped learning environment.

View course listings and learn more at cia.edu/continuinged

Continuing Education Spring classes begin Feb 6

CIA’s Continuing Education program includes a wide range of courses for adults and children in art and design taught by accomplished faculty, in a dynamic, friendly and well-equipped learning environment.

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Do what you love

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View course listings and learn more at cia.edu/continuinged
CH Senior Center News

Amy Jenkins

Regular classes at the Cleveland Heights Senior Activity Center (SAC) resume in January, along with additional special programs intended to entertain and inform.

Cleveland history enthusiasts will want to attend a special program on Tuesday, Jan. 17, at 11 a.m., in which local historian Dennis R. Suncliffe will highlight the fascinating history of the vicinity of 105th Street and Euclid Avenue. The event is free and open to the public.

Originally known as Doan’s Corners, the area began as a stagecoach stop on the road from Buffalo to Cleveland. In the first half of the 20th century, it was an entertainment mecca, offering Clevelanders a taste of New York City-style high-life. By the 1970s, it was referred to as an “inner-city Disneyland” and was the flashpoint for battles with the city’s power structure. Today, Doan’s Corners is part of the sprawling campus of Cleveland Clinic.

The Jan. 17 program will feature audio clips of famous celebrities who performed in the neighborhood.

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. in Council Chambers at University Heights City Hall. To receive the monthly schedule by e-mail, call 216-392-7350, ext. 205, or send an e-mail to info@universityheights.com.

Jan. 5: University Heights Mayor Susan Infeld will reflect on the city’s issues and accomplishments, as well as the challenges of providing service in the City of University Heights. She’ll outline the possible development of new projects to benefit the community in the new year.

Jan. 12: Rachel Slomovitz, financial empowerment coach with ESOP (Empowering and Strengthening Ohio’s People), will speak about fostering the economic betterment of disenfranchised communities through education and advocacy, and helping senior citizens age in place and preserve their financial stability.

Jan. 19: Grover Gilmore, dean of the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences at Case Western Reserve University, will discuss the noteworthy achievements of this first university-affiliated professional graduate school of social work in America, as it celebrates its 100th anniversary.

Jan. 26: Mitchell Balk, president of Mt. Sinai Healthcare Foundation, will share an impressive presentation to celebrate the 100th anniversary and the accomplishments of Mt. Sinai Hospital, in Cleveland’s University Circle.

Senior Citizen Happenings is part of the sprawling campus of Cleveland Clinic. At 105th Street and Euclid Avenue. The event is free and open to the public.
Signage and merchandising workshop

Sruti Basu

Future Heights

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

Roni Callahan, an artist and merchandising/display consultant, has a BFA in painting from Kent State University. She formerly worked as a signage and merchandising expert for the retail chain Anthropologie. Callahan will present tips and tricks for effective signage and merchandising to help attract customers.

The workshop is a component of the FutureHeights Planning and Development Committee’s initiatives to attract, retain and support the local businesses in Cleveland Heights and University Heights.

“Because the Heights has so many storefront businesses and they depend on sales from the pedestrian foot traffic in their districts, we thought it would be important to focus on signage, window displays and merchandising,” said Micah Kirman, committee chair. “Many Heights businesses already do this well, but there is always more to learn, and it will give business owners an opportunity to share their own ideas and get feedback.”

Register for this free event at: www.signagemerchandisingworkshop.eventbrite.com.

SBDC provides no-cost, confidential, one-on-one counseling for businesses that will, or currently do, employ fewer than 100 employees. Additional services include training, counseling, quality-based assessments, technical assistance, loan packaging guidance, and information on federal, state, and local regulations and programs. For more information, contact Katie Van Dyke, SBDC director, at k.vandyke@csuohio.edu or 216-321-1633.

For more information about FutureHeights’ programs for local businesses, call 216-320-1423 or send an e-mail to info@futureheights.org.

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Pianist Kathryn Brown, CIM faculty, performs Gershwin’s classic, Rhapsody in Blue.

Steven Greenman, CIM alumus and renowned Klezmer violinist, brings “Fiddler” to life.

Brooke and Bobby Wesner add the excitement of dance to An American In Paris.

Saturday, February 4, 2017
Severance Hall | 8 pm

The Women’s Committee of the Cleveland Institute of Music presents

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Saturday, February 4, 2017
Severance Hall | 8 pm

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A portrait is commonly considered to be a painting, drawing, photograph, or engraving of a person, especially one depicting only the face or head and shoulders. Considering that the human face is one of the first things babies recognize, just weeks after being born, one might think that the artistic process of creating a portrait would be easy. Yet a truly engaging portrait conveys more than just a likeness, as viewers will see in the first Heights Arts exhibition of 2017.

"Likeness," which opens Friday, Jan. 13, brings together six North-east Ohio artists who approach the portrait from different perspectives. They are playful with both point of view and materials, expressing information with color, texture and medium. Rather than necessarily depicting the head and shoulders of the sitter as in the traditional definition of a portrait, these works reveal something of the character of the subject, sometimes in unexpected ways.

The exhibit showcases the following artists: Sarah Curry, painting; Susan Gallagher, ceramics; Bernadette Glorioso, painting on repurposed fabric; Dave King, mixed media drawing; Daniel Levin, photography; and Mary Ann Tipple, fiber arts.

Guest curator Sharon Grossman noted, "You can have a portrait without glorifying someone's face. All of these artists challenge the notion of portraiture by using traditional media in non-traditional interpretations." One wall will be dedicated to self-portraits by the artists.

The community is invited to a public reception on Friday, Jan. 13, 6–9 p.m. A related gallery talk, "Ekphrastacy: Artists Talk + Poets Respond" on Thursday, Feb. 9, brings together exhibition artists with invited community poets to discuss inspiration and interpretation of the works on view. The exhibition closes Feb. 25.

On Saturday, Jan. 14, at 8 p.m., the Minneapolis-based new-music group Zeitgeist joins forces with Cleveland-based No Exit for an exchange of local sounds and talent. The second annual cross-country collaboration features Zeitgeist and No Exit performing music by Minnesota and Ohio composers. This free community concert is part of a series of music performances in the gallery, ongoing through June. The smaller spotlight gallery space, dedicated to showing works by Heights Arts' working artist-members, opens with an exhibition of painted stencil prints by Jeanne Regan on Friday, Jan. 27, 6–9 p.m. Using the traditional Japanese surface design technique of Katazome, Regan creates richly colored and patterned prints on botanical, celestial and meteorological themes. She is the recipient of an Individual Artist Fellowship from the Ohio Arts Council, and her work is included in permanent collections of the Cleveland Museum of Art.

For more information on upcoming programs and events at the non-profit Heights Arts, visit its gallery and store at 2175 Lee Road, or go to www.heightsarts.org.

Mary Ryan is on staff at Heights Arts.
January has always seemed like a kind of lonely month. All of the holiday stuff is over. It gets a lot quieter. People, in this climate, stay inside as much as possible. We don’t run into as many friends and acquaintances in stores or at parties (because there are no parties) as we did in December. It’s terribly cold outside (and sometimes inside), and it’s dark and bleak. College and professional football is over and baseball is still three months down the road. TV networks run miniseries at this time of year—from “Roots” to “Downton Abbey”—because people are stuck inside and bored. And reading is not a group activity.

But not all Januaries in my life have been lonely feeling. I actually enjoyed one of them, January 1968. It was the hippie era. And it was just before I left Cleveland, seeking fame and/or fortune in the music business in New York City. Coventry Road (before anyone called the neighborhood by that name) was full of hippies and other counter-culture figures, and we all congregated in Coventry Road shops and on the street.

And many of us hung out, every night, at Irv’s Delicatessen, at the corner of Coventry and Hampshire. The large restaurant’s tables and booths were always full of hippies, bikers, artists, writers, my fellow musicians, and other misfits of society. You could get a bowl of matzo ball soup for less than a dollar. A big corned beef sandwich cost about $1.50.

(I remember once, a few years earlier, I was eating there with my father and he said, “A dollar-thirty-five for a corned beef sandwich? I remember when they cost fifteen cents.” And I said, “Fifteen cents? Why did they even bother to charge anything, at that rate?” And then, only about 10 years later, I was sitting in the Carnegie Deli in Manhattan, reading the menu, when I said, “Seven-fifty for a corned beef sandwich? I remember when they cost a dollar-thirty-five.” And a decade after that, sitting in the Stage Deli in Manhattan, I saw that a corned beef sandwich cost $3.50. So I told the story I just told you.)

Irv’s was the heart of the Coventry neighborhood in the late ’60s. I’ve mentioned the place a few times in these columns, and every time I’ve written about it, people have contacted me and asked what went on there, because I’ve alluded to something, but have never actually said anything. That’s because I can’t actually say anything.

I will say this: There was a restaurant on Coventry that became weirder and sleazier over time; where you could buy drugs all over the place inside it; where there was prostitution going on in the basement (which carried over into the next-door apartment building), where various types of gambling were available; and where you could eat, except that the place was filthy, including the food-preparation areas. The city, prodded by various civic organizations, finally closed the place down in the mid-’70s. But I can’t say which restaurant that was. And maybe I should, actually, say that I think all that stuff was going on … and so does everyone else who was there.

But, anyway, getting back to Irv’s: Thinking about hanging out there in January 1968 reminds me of an old song by the 2016 Nobel Laureate in Literature, who sang:

With haunted hearts through the heat and cold,
We never thought we could ever get very old.
We thought we could sit forever in fun.
Our chances really were a million to one.
How many a year has passed and gone?
Many a gamble has been lost and won.
Many a road taken by many a first friend,
And each one I’ve never seen again.

I wish, I wish, I wish in vain
That we could sit simply in that
That we could sit together sunny, spacious,
That we could sit simply in that
LEI and Dobama join forces for youth playwriting workshop

Past participants in LEI’s youth workshop act in the United States, United Kingdom, and Amsterdam.

During this two-part workshop, young playwrights will write, read and revise their plays for submission to Dobama’s Marilyn Bianchi Kids Playwriting Festival. The festival accepts original play submissions from first- through 12th-graders from Cuyahoga County. The winning plays are then transformed into performances—with costumes, props and all—at the summer festival.

The “Stage Write: Youth Playwriting Workshop” takes place at Dobama Theatre on Jan. 21 and 28, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The cost is $5 at the door. Interested young playwrights can register online at www.lakeerieink.org/register. The workshop is part of Lake Erie Ink's Weekend Ink creative expression series, which introduces young people of all ages to professional artists and writers.

Barbie Estrada is a Cleveland Heights resident and staff member at Lake Erie Ink: a writing space for youth. Barbie Estrada

‘The Night Alive’ opens at Dobama

Two shadowy figures enter a garbage-strewn apartment in Dublin, Ireland—a young woman covered in blood and the older man who has just rescued her from a beating by her boyfriend.

These are the opening moments of “The Night Alive” by Conor McPherson, which is having its regional premiere at Dobama Theatre, Jan. 20 through Feb. 12.

During the course of the play, the audience will question who reached whom and from what, as “The Night Alive” explores the tentative human connections that are forged when four battered and destitute individuals form a makeshift family.

Winner of the 2013-14 New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Play, “The Night Alive” was called “explosive and transcendent” by The New York Times.

Dublin-born McPherson describes the work as “a very religious play. . . almost a grown-up Nativity play. I see it in those very simple terms, with all the motifs about giving shelter to someone who needs shelter and featuring three wise men, none of them very wise here.”

“The Night Alive” is a drama about forgiveness and redemption that combines realistic elements with those of the spiritual and supernatural. This production features Joel Hammer, Anjanette Hall, Robert Hawkes, Val Kozlenko and David Peacock.

A preview performance will be held on Jan. 19. Preview tickets are $20, general admission. For information and to purchase tickets for this and all of this season’s productions, go to www.dobama.org or call the box office at 216-932-3396. Dobama Theatre is located at 2340 Lee Road in Cleveland-land Heights.

Director Leaghan Delorenzo said, “The challenge of this play is in capturing the enormity of seemingly ordinary moments of connection. But those moments can get us as close as we are ever going to get to understanding why we exist.”

McPherson, who came to prominence writing plays about hard-drinking Irishmen with pessimistic world views, admits that his more recent work, including “The Night Alive”, has become more optimistic.

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Jonathan Wilhelm is the associate managing director of Dobama Theatre.

“Godspell” will be presented at the Monticello Middle School auditorium, 3563 Monticello Blvd. Performances are scheduled for Friday, Jan. 20 and 27, at 7 p.m.; Saturday, Jan. 21 and 28, at 2 p.m.; and Sunday, Jan. 22 and 29, at 2 p.m. Tickets are $20 general admission; $9 for seniors and children under 6. Tickets can be purchased online or at the box office, which opens 45 minutes prior to each show. For more information, visit www.heightsyouththeatre.org. For group seating information, call 216-410-7500.

Founded in 1994, HYT produces three to four complete musicals each year, offering kids and families an opportunity to gain valuable experience in the theatrical arts. HYT’s goal is to make theater affordable and accessible to people of all incomes and backgrounds in a nurturing environment that encourages social and emotional growth.

Pamela Fine is executive director of Heights Youth Theatre.
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CH artist Kuehnle’s interactive work is focus of Akron exhibition

James Henke

Jimmy Kuehnle’s work frequently comprises huge, three-dimensional sculptural pieces, depicting bicycles, clothing and other items. Some of his work is also performance art—pieces he can ride or otherwise interact with physically.

Kuehnle, 37, lives in Cleveland Heights and is an assistant professor in the foundation department at the Cleveland Institute of Art (CIA). He has won many awards for his work, which he has exhibited both nationally and internationally. Kuehnle’s work is currently on view at the Tom Thumb Gallery in the General Assembly Annex of The Heights Observer, in an exhibition titled “Jimmy Kuehnle: Wiggle, Giggle, Jiggle,” open through Feb. 19.

The Community Partnership for Arts and Culture (CPAC) named Kuehnle a 2016 Creative Workforce Fellow, awarding funds for a project that connects artists to the Greater Cleveland community.

Kuehnle said he plans to use the money from the CPAC award to enhance and advance recent bodies of work that include large inflatables in public spaces and in museums.

“These inflatables offer traditional art audiences an interactive, engaging and ephemeral experience, while at the same time providing the general public views of them from outside. They also enhance the general ambiance of the urban environment,” explained Kuehnle.

Born in Atlanta, Kuehnle moved with his family to St. Louis when he was 3, and he grew up there. He took four years of art classes at Desmet Jesuit High School, and became involved with the school’s poster club, a group that made posters for football games and other events, which hung in the school lobby. “It was my first experience of doing art and presenting it to a large audience,” Kuehnle recalled.

Kuehnle earned a bachelor’s degree in fine arts at Truman State University, in Kirksville, Mo. As an undergraduate, he and some friends created the Tom Thumb Gallery in the house where they lived.

“There was really nowhere to display art, so I decided to set up my own gallery in my house,” he said. “We would do two or three exhibits every semester, and we also had events there.” The gallery still exists.

After graduating from Truman, Kuehnle traveled to Japan, where he taught English for two years. He returned to the United States and earned a master’s degree in fine arts at the University of Texas at San Antonio, in 2006. He then received a Fulbright Graduate Research Fellowship, and he went back to Japan to research public art and practice sculpture.

In 2010, Kuehnle became a visiting assistant professor of art at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. The following year, Kuehnle was hired by CIA and moved to Cleveland. He lived on East 144th Street for about a year, and then moved to Cleveland Heights.

“I wanted to live on the East Side, so I could ride my bike to work,” he said. “In August of 2012, when I was looking for a new place to live, I picked Cleveland Heights. I love the community, and I like all the arts here, at places like Dobama Theatre and the Cain Park Arts Fest.”

Kuehnle married fellow artist Mimi Kato in 2004. Kato was named a CPAC Creative Workforce Fellow in 2013.

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