University Heights considers Cedar Taylor gateway

Eli Auerbach

On March 7, a dozen University Heights residents joined Mayor Susan Infeld at University Heights City Hall as she introduced the city's first Public Art Listening Session. The purpose of the community meeting was to present grant-eligible projects aimed at improving and beautifying various public spaces around the city. Infeld said she felt it was critical to the city's process to engage with the community in order to explore creative uses for the city's public spaces.

The city recently applied for an Art Start grant, offered through the Ohio Arts Council. The grant awards recipients up to $5,000 with a one-to-one match. This meeting focused on the intersection of Cedar and Taylor roads, and the adjoining business district. Specifically, the mayor and her staff are looking to improve the intersection's northeast corner, the site of a building that was once home to a long-defunct Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant.

The Cedar-Taylor intersection straddles a border with Cleveland Heights and serves as the first impression visitors have of University Heights when traveling east from Cleveland.

The mayor stated that "the space has wonderful potential," and came armed with several ideas to help jump-start the community dialogue. The mayor presented several creative uses for the space, such as a monument welcoming visitors adorned with the University Heights name, decorative lighting, benches and art displays. The city would look to work with local entities, such as the Heights Art Council, to acquire potential art.

Another issue of concern is the intersection's sidewalks, which have deteriorated and need repaving and leveling. After an unsuccessful application to the county seeking funds, UH City Council approved the use of city funds to improve sidewalks, curbs and gutters on the intersection's northeast corner, the site of a building that was once home to a long-defunct Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant.

High school renovation on schedule as middle school plans take shape

Deanna Bremer Fisher

As the renovation of Cleveland Heights High School nears completion, the district will enter the final part of its Phase I comprehensive school facilities renovation project and begin renovation of its two middle schools. The high school is on schedule to reopen to students in August. When school begins this fall, all district middle schools will attend the temporary campus at Wiley, 218 Miramar Blvd., while construction begins at the Roxboro and Monticello buildings.

Construction on the two middle schools will take an estimated two years, with students returning to the renovated buildings at the start of the 2019-20 school year.

At its Jan. 3 meeting, the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education (BOE) approved the design schematic for the middle schools, created by the city's process to engage with the community in order to explore creative uses for the city's public spaces.

Board of Education (BOE) approved the design schematic for the middle schools, created by

Heights Observer begins its 10th year of publication

Deanna Bremer Fisher

This April, the Heights Observer, a citizen-journalism publication written by and for Heights residents, begins its tenth year of publication—Volume 10, Issue 4.

As the Observer reaches this milestone, FutureHeights is taking a look back at the project's goals and asks readers to give feedback through an online survey.

Readers can access the survey on the homepage of the FutureHeights website at www.futureheights.org.

The Heights Observer has its origins in a quarterly newsletter that FutureHeights began publishing in 2002. FutureHeights was founded as a nonprofit with a mission to preserve and strengthen neighborhoods and commercial districts in Cleveland Heights, and volunteers published the newsletter for its members, focusing on city planning, design quality and historic preservation. A strategic planning process in 2007 led to the creation of the Observer.

"As part of this strategic plan, one idea rose to the surface: that a big part of our work would be to engage the public in conversation about the city's future," said Daniela Infeld, President of the FutureHeights Board of Directors.

Heights senior soloists to take the stage

Audrey Wynne

Heights High's Instrumental Music (IMD) presents its Spring Concert Series on the Wiley campus. Part I, on Wednesday, April 26, 7:30 p.m., will feature the Concert Band, Symphonic Band and the Concert Orchestra. Part II, on Friday, April 28, 7:30 p.m., will feature the Symphonic Winds and the Heights High Symphony, with senior soloists Andrew Bell on percussion and William van den Bogert on piano. Both concerts are preceded by Chamber Ensembles at 6:30 p.m.

Andrew Bell began his musical endeavors as a third-grader at Fairfax Elementary School, and since studied with Chris Vandall and Thomas Haywood at the Fairmount School of Music, and with Fairfax school music teacher Bob Adamson. Since entering high school, Bell has been the principal percussionist in the Symphonic Winds, and head percussionist for the school's marching band drumline since sophomore year.

He has participated in the pit orchestra for three Heights High musicals and has been playing with the school's jazz department since his sophomore year.

"Andy has developed into a complete percussionist throughout his time at Heights High," said Heights IMD Director Brett Baker. "He has committed to becoming proficient on timpani, rudimental snare drum, drum set and, as you will see in his senior solo, the mallet instruments including the marimba."

Bell has both attended and counseled at the Reaching Heights Treatment Center for youth who struggle with substance abuse.
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, 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 FutureHeights ofﬁce at 216-357-1432 or e-mail info@futureheights.org.

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

Letter writer was ‘nau-seated and surprised’

To the Editor:

No thanks for the letter you printed titled “Democracy Day was entertaining, and informative” [March 2017 issue]. It was mean-spirited from the start. The writer began by slamming mud on the good intentions of good people. He stated that they were there [at the annual Democracy Day hearing] to restrict the first amendment. Untrue.

He follows this with two bad analogies. One about the inner workings of the minds of the judges. At the same time insulting the intelligence of anyone there by doubting that any of them had read the decision. Maybe he read it maybe not.

Next, one had to wonder what was meant when there was a reference to lyrics of a song from “The Music Man.” Was he saying that everyone knows that there is too much money in politics, or that there is not? Not sure. My guess, he was mockingly saying “duh, everybody knows that.”

I started to feel sick when he described some [of] the speakers as cracks and crackpots. I had to walk away when he called people losers and wrote like this: “(you who know who are).” I am surprised to see that words as insulting, degrading and mean-spirited would appear in the Heights Observer. Could it be that bullying has become acceptable argument in the eyes of the editor?

Rick Adorjan
Cleveland Heights

[Editor’s note: The Heights Observer publishes letters and opinions representing diverse viewpoints. The Heights Observer (www.heightsobserver.org/read/policies) asks that submissions be civil, and reminds contributors that they “own [their] posts and words.” While the tone of the Democracy Day letter gave us pause, as it was not directed at any named individual(s), we opted to publish rather than censor the letter.]

Teachers deserve to be well-paid

To the Editor:

I attended the school board meeting March 7 to clarify some information I had read. I asked for conﬁrmation of the contracts offered to Superintendent Dixon and Treasurer Gainer. These contracts total $2.5 million for the next 5 years. No one could or would answer my question. [Board of Education President] Register replied that he did not have the ﬁgures in front of him, and asked for me to contact him further. I did the next day. He responded with a phone call requesting me to put my request in writing and submit it to Mr. Gainer. Said this was a request for a letter for Mr. Gainer on Monday, March 13. No response as of yet. [Editor’s note: This letter was submitted on March 14 as of March 23, the letter writer said he had not received a response. On March 23, Scott Gainer said in an e-mail that a response was sent "to her home address by mail earlier this week."]

I [also] asked if it was true that the teachers have been offered zero percent raise for this year, with added cost of beneﬁts, and raises of 1 percent for the next two years after that. Mr. Register responded that negotiations are ongoing and no comment could be given. I understand that.

Teachers in the district have been given this information, and a vote will soon be taken.

Supt. Dixon recently suggested in a letter on the [district’s] website that teachers make about $15,000 with benefits. Most teachers make about half that. Correct me if I am wrong.

This misinformation seems to be intentionally misleading, especially in the middle of contract negotiations.

I sincerely wish the school board would be as eager to reward the teachers as they seem to be agreeable to reward two individuals for this district. How will this district keep our fine teachers, or attract new ones, when this is the appreciation shown? Correct me if I am wrong. I am anxious awaiting the opening of the beautiful new high school. I hope it will be ﬁlled with well-paid teachers as well.

Mary Sickbert [a retired CH-UH district teacher]
Cleveland Heights

Join us for Easter Worship at St. Paul’s

Thursday, April 13: Maundy Thursday
5:30 p.m. Family-Friendly Service of Foot Washing - Supper - Holy Eucharist
7:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist - Stripping of the Altar - Tenebrae

Friday, April 14: Good Friday
12 to 3 p.m. Community Ecumenical Service: The Seven Last Words of Christ
5:30 p.m. Family-Friendly Interactive Way of the Cross
7:30 p.m. The Good Friday Liturgy

Saturday, April 15: Easter Vigil
7:30 p.m. The Great Vigil and First Eucharist of Easter

Sunday, April 16: Easter Day
7:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist
9:00 a.m. Festival Eucharist with choirs, trumpet & organ (ASL interpreted)
11:15 a.m. Festival Eucharist with choir, trumpet & organ
Rebuilding the infrastructure of democracy

Greg Coleridge

From the local to the global, the ability of people to govern ourselves has been under assault for many decades. We can expect this to intensify for multiple reasons, including:

- Business corporations seeking huge profits by converting what was once “public” to “private” (called privatization, though a more descriptive term would be “corporatization”), including traditional public assets such as water and sewer systems, roads, police and fire protection, airports, hospitals and schools.

- Individuals looking to increase their power, status and/or privileges by concentrating decision-making from many (“We the People”) and government to a few (their own) hands.

- Continual legal and constitutional definitions that further restrict and redefine “public” arenas as other “p” words: private, property, proprietary, privileged—and thus place them beyond the reach of public planning, shaping and evaluation.

- A national government that uses the excuse of “terrorism” to stifle dissent, intimidate dissenters and interrupt efforts of self-determination, even at the local level.

- A culture that tells us public policies are too complicated for ordinary people to understand (thus restricting policymaking to “experts”), distacts public attention from self-determination, toward the trivial and inane; worships “the market” as the sole route to financial and economic salvation; defines economic arenas as outside the scope of public input; erases the memory of historical examples of citizen control and self-governance; denigrates anything that is “public” as inefficient, wasteful, outdated and dangerous; celebrates anything “private” as efficient, modern and safe; and encourages social isolation, keeping us from learning from each other and organizing to (re)assert meaningful changes.

There is another side to this—an existing democratic/self-determining culture or “infrastructure” that perhaps many of us seldom think about. Alternatives to corporations, corporate governance and elite control exist right now in our communities and states.

Scores of documents, policies, institutions, structures and groups reflecting inclusiveness, accountability and responsibility are commonplace—and provide examples [of] where those who are affected by decisions and policies have a legitimate role in the making of those decisions—or could have if we made the effort. They are where “We the People” have a voice—or could if we merely flexed our self-determination muscles.

Examples of a democratic infrastructure abound right here in the Heights, including:

- A legacy of active citizen engagement over many decades, on many issues, through block or street groups and communitywide campaigns.
- Municipal charters (our local constitutions) defining the cities’ overarching governing rules, including provisions for charter amendments.
- Council elections, open and televised meetings, public records, and multiple boards and commissions composed of citizens who advise and assist our city councils.
- Public fire, police, water and other basic municipal services.
- Municipal courts and citizen juries.
- A public library system.
- Public schools with an elected school board, active engagement of parents and even a student union.
- Labor unions of city workers, teachers and others.
- This publication, the Heights Observer, a volunteer, not-for-profit hyper-local news source.
- P.E.A.C.E. Park and other public spaces where events that build community occur.
- Vibrant groups of residents, such as Noble Neighbors and the Cain Park Neighborhood Association, who have formed to fight foreclosures and revitalize their neighborhoods.
- Community gardens and the CityFresh community supported agricultural (CSA) program.
- Classes where teachers and others.
- Municipal public assets such as water and fire protection, airports, hospitals and schools.
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- Vibrant groups of residents, such as Noble Neighbors and the Cain Park Neighborhood Association, who have formed to fight foreclosures and revitalize their neighborhoods.
- Community gardens and the City Fresh community supported agricultural (CSA) program.
- Nearby community credit unions, which, unlike banks, are members-owned and governed.
- Active social action or change organizations, including Sustainable Heights Network, Heights Community Congress, the Heights Coalition for Public Education, Reaching Heights and Future Heights.

It’s all too easy to take the above examples for granted, even if some are not perfectly democratic expressions. When we fail to utilize or be involved in them, they will wither and die or will be manipulated, eliminated, replaced or co-opted by corporations, top-down government and/or the powerful few.

To really make the Heights the “Heights of Democracy” will require us all to be actively engaged in strengthening our democratic infrastructure.

Guest columnist Greg Coleridge, a Cleveland Heights resident, is coordinator of the Move to Amend Ohio Campaign and writer of the blog Create Real Democracy (https://createaltdemocracy.wordpress.com). He can be reached at gcoleridge@gmail.com.
Teachers union draws on parent input in contract negotiations

Ari Klein

Last school year the Cleveland Heights Teachers Union conducted a listening project with various parent groups throughout our community. Our purpose was to find out what parents like about their child’s school as well as what they believe needs to be changed. In March 2016, I reported out some of our findings in the Heights Observer.

In preparing for contract negotiations last spring, the concerns we heard from parents were fresh in our minds. The first union issue brought to the negotiating table was “How can we ensure the success of our partnerships with parents and the community?”

We advocated for a wrap-around services commission dedicated to coordinating supports that outside agencies offer in our schools. From our own knowledge and discussions with parents, we know that there are great things happening in all of our schools. However, sometimes a need exists that is not filled. We promoted limits on the testing of our students. We wanted to discuss the best time of day to hold parent conferences. Currently, conference nights are 3–9 p.m., twice a year, which restricts access for some of our parents.

We brought up the need for: more after-school tutoring, securing a late bus for each school for students who need to stay, providing universal after-school care for families who need to drop off students early; creating the possibility for teachers to work different overlapping shifts to serve some students longer during the day, and defining when it would be too hot in a building to provide instruction.

We had excellent conversations with the [school] board team regarding these issues, and have five tentative agreements that will be listed as “consensus statements” in our contract, when ratified. These statements are non-binding, but provide a clear picture of what both our teachers and the board could agree on for the students in our district.

The first consensus statement recognizes that we need to do a better job communicating with our parents the value of their attendance at school events, and that some parents need an orientation to better navigate their child’s school. The second statement also involves communication, specifically helping parents understand why their student is sometimes a need exists that is not filled.

The fourth commits the district to finding solutions that will alleviate lost instructional time due to student testing mandates. The fifth is also centered on testing. We reached consensus that when using standardized tests that are not state mandated, their purpose should be clearly explained to teachers and parents. The results from these tests should be used to inform instruction and should be kept to an absolute minimum.

Teacher voice will be used in determining whether non-mandatory tests are useful to instruction, timely, and if the tool should be used in the future.

Our teachers have always advocated for their students. A fundamental goal of the Cleveland Heights Teachers Union is to promote the welfare of children and ensure that they receive a quality public education. We take this seriously enough to have made it the first of the four major topics of the current contract negotiations. We will be conducting a listening project this spring and hope to learn even more.

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

Summer Music Camp—an experience he feels has taught him how to be a better musician and teacher. He has competed at multiple Ohio Music Educators Association Solo and Ensemble competitions, performing both snare and mallet solos. As a member of Tri-M Music Honor Society, Bell has fundraised and played at community events. He often plays the timpani during services at his church.

When not playing music, Bell works as an auto mechanic at Bryan’s Marathon in Cleveland Heights. He enjoys spending time with his friends on the weekends and playing golf. Next year, he plans to pursue a degree in finance while continuing his love of music.

William van den Bogert first encountered the piano when he visited his sister’s lesson at age 5. A year later, he began studying piano at Cleveland Institute of Music with Rozetta Kim, his teacher of 11 years. In third grade, he chose the trumpet as his primary instrument and began studying at age 8 with teacher Eric Hasselquist. He would later study with Stephen Chapdelaine as well. He studied music theory and composition with Alissa Shuster and jazz trumpet with Joe Miller at Cleveland State University.

Van den Bogert is the principal trumpet player of the Symphonic Winds. He is a sergeant in the marching band, and performs with the Heights High Symphony and Heights Chamber Ensembles. He has been a member of the Tri-M Music Honor Society for two years, and serves as its vice president of finance. He is a member of the National Honor Society, and taking a particular standardized test and what the test results tell us.

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Ari Klein is a lifelong community member, math teacher at Cleveland Heights High School, and president of the Cleveland Heights Teachers Union.
School vouchers do not support public education

Susie Kaeser

Senator Rob Portman voted to confirm Betsy DeVos as secretary of education, despite a fervent outcry from his constituents—including me—about both his confirmation and her qualifications. In a recent interview with the Heights Coalition for Public Education, he defended his decision, saying DeVos had expressed her commitment to “strongly support public education.” And he liked her embrace of local control.

Shortly after taking office, DeVos and her boss announced their commitment to making vouchers the centerpiece of their education plan. Rather than advancing civil rights by investing in our public schools, for them the road to equality is giving more poor children the same opportunity as the wealthy to reject public schools. School vouchers are anti-public education. Vouchers use public funds to pay for private education, most of which is religious. According to education researcher Gary Orfield, four-fifths of private schools are religious. The Cleveland Heights experience with vouchers shows that public funds are most frequently used for religious education. It doesn’t help public education, and it blurs the division of church and state.

It looks like tax breaks using tuition tax credits will be the implementation method. Tax breaks reduce resources for the common good and destroys the capacity of our public schools, and its use for religious education. It doesn’t help public education, and it blurs the division of church and state.

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It looks like tax breaks using tuition tax credits will be the implementation method. Tax breaks reduce resources for the common good and destroys the capacity of our public schools, and its use for religious education. It doesn’t help public education, and it blurs the division of church and state.

Individual choice ignores the common good and destroys the capacity of our public schools. We achieve that with a professional system of free public education for all.

Participation by all is what makes the system strong. Choice discourages participation and transforms the common good into a consumer item. Individual choice ignores the common good and destroys the capacity to serve it. Please, Senator Portman, if you support public education and local control, stop the DeVos agenda.

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.
OPINION

University Heights taxes are among the highest in Ohio. We pay these taxes because we expect excellent city services from our elected officials in return.

I believe the most critical services for our densely populated city are our safety forces: fire, police and EMS. Mayor Susan Infeld wears a second hat as safety director for University Heights. In that role, she ensures that our fire department has current equipment and trucks.

Our fire department has an aging ladder truck, and I believe our high taxes warrant the purchase of a Rolls Royce-style truck. While our city may not need such a high-end version, for our tax money the least UH residents should expect is a new, fully equipped truck with all the bells and whistles our firefighters request.

In fact, UH residents paid so much in taxes that the fire department had $800,000 left over from its 2016 budget that went back into the city’s coffers. A new ladder truck does not even come close to costing that much. We have the funds.

In 2011, our city saved $275,000 that much. We have the funds. Does this mean that cities whose residents pay less in taxes can afford a new truck, and University Heights can only afford a “hand-me-down?”

The most troubling rumor is that we [will] not replace our ladder truck. Again, this is just a rumor, but I hear the safety director is considering an alternative to a new ladder truck. I look forward to council support of our firefighters with the proper equipment and trucks they need to perform their job.

I hope council will continue to provide this highly taxed city with such purchases, especially a fully equipped new ladder truck. Does this mean that cities whose residents pay less in taxes can afford a new truck, and University Heights can only afford a “hand-me-down?”

These rumors are hard to believe, but where there is smoke . . .

Robert Perko led the department’s firefighters in researching and writing a grant application to try “to help the city in difficult economic times.” They did this on their own time and initiative, and won a grant of $275,000 for University Heights’ new engine truck.

In 2014, Perko obtained another grant for the UHF3, this time for $206,000. Why am I writing about this? I have heard, unsubstantiated, talk that our elected officials are considering alternatives to a new ladder truck for our fire department. These rumors are hard to believe, but where there is smoke . . .

A few of the rumors regard a plan to patch up the old truck; another regards buying a used truck. Does this mean that cities whose residents pay less in taxes can afford a new truck, and University Heights can only afford a “hand-me-down?”

Mayor Infeld cited city council’s purchases of equipment for our fire department. “ crafted a ballot to tax ourselves for 15 years for a little neighborhood park, but are officials now actually thinking that they do not have to maintain our only fully equipped fire station?”

In her State of the City address, Mayor Infeld cited city council’s “purchases of equipment for our safety forces . . .”. I hope council will continue to provide this highly taxed city with such purchases, especially a fully equipped new ladder truck.

The most troubling rumor is thinking that they do not have to maintain our only fully equipped fire station?

I look forward to council supporting our firefighters with the proper equipment and trucks they need to perform their job.

Anita Kazarian, a 31-year resident of University Heights, has been active in many of the city’s volunteer organizations. She wants to hear your thoughts; write to anitakazarian@gmail.com.
In November 2013, the Heights community passed Issue 81 to finance a bond in the amount of $1.5 million for the school district’s building renovation project. The Ohio Schools Facilities Commission (OSFC) was to provide an 11 percent reimbursement of eligible costs, which would be used to help fund the district in financing the renovation of its elementary school buildings, for which the community would also have to pass an additional bond issue.

Phase I of the district’s facilities renovation project comprises four sub-phases: renovation of the high school athletic field and stadium, preparation of the library building, renovation of the original 1926 building, and new construction; and renovation of the two middle schools: Al Rode and辖区内. These projects have exceeded budget forecasts, leaving approximately $30 million for the middle schools.

According to Jim Posch, BOE members, who will be part of the district’s facilities accountability committee, will evaluate the state’s 11 percent reimbursement, and the board has not officially talked about the elementary school phase. “At the start of the project, December 2014, OSFC told us that we should receive the reimbursement in five years, but now they are saying it could be five years from now,” Posch said. He confirmed that this could hold up the start of the elementary school phase.

In 2014, the BOE appointed the Facilities Accountability Committee (FAC) to oversee the 11 committee members, to monitor the project and regularly report to the board on “the project’s status, progress and expenditure of funds.”

The FAC called a meeting on March 21 and municipalities across the state. He expects that litigation will be filed prior to April 21 and municipalities across the state. The legislation has passed and is set to become effective March 21. McCord said the measure is damaging because cities have their own set of ordinances that require an applicant to locate small cell towers on existing poles or prove its technology won’t work on an existing structure. He expects that litigation will be filed prior to March 21 and municipalities across the state. The legislation has passed and is set to become effective March 21.

FAC member Mark Wiseman stated that because the middle school projects will not have all of the components they should and there might be a feeling from the community that the overall project is not a success. “We need to get people interested in the elementary school,” he said.

FAC President Ron Register stated that, despite cost overruns, the total project will still not exceed the $167 million budget.

FAC member John Rach, stated that, in the beginning, he was concerned about how the community would accept the project. “I was surprised at how the community would really accept the project,” he said.

The FAC gave the “competition pool with community access” objective a “yellow” rating because there was “no concrete agreement between the city and school board yet on how the community would access the pool.” The Board of Education held a joint meeting with city officials and CHU Board on March 6 and worked out an agreement for community access to the pool.

The FAC gave two items a “red” rating: the budget and communication and community engagement.

Shabazz concurred. “We want to change the narrative. Our schools are not viewed as places that the who are in the schools—as as great as they are. When the project is completed, we will have a first-class facility. We hope that won’t be lost on the middle schools. We are a community that may took a few steps back, but we are back and better than ever. The Cleveland Heights and University Heights community where folks want should come and raise their families.”

University Heights City Council Meeting highlights

**FEBRUARY 21, 2017**

Present were Mayor Susan Infeld and Vice Mayor Susan Pardee, and council members Paul Cameron, Linda Santos, Lorrie Sier and Mark Wiseman. Also present were Director Luke McCord and Clerk of Council Kelly Thomas.

Public comments

End of item and police. Sheila Hudson thanked members of the emergency medical service and police for their kind and professional assistance during her recent medical emergences. She asked council to consider installing an elevator in city hall, moving meetings to a nearby empty store, (Topgal), or avoiding a stationery camera in the back of council chambers. Mayor Infield reported that they had been looking at elevator options, but because of particular circumstances in the building, the cost would be close to $1 million dollars.

CUA健，“to avoid a stationary camera once the project is bid this summer what we can do with those [$50 million] dollars.” He explained, “We are told by our consultants and our experts that we can do a lot in the middle schools with what we have. Pretty much stuff that you don’t see gets fixed, which is the expensive stuff, you get HVAC in the building fixtures, mostly new paint in pretty much all common areas, some re-cons of things to make the building more efficient, and get new entrances, which is sort of sad. But we can't overstep with what we promised the community that we would spend.”

Board Member Eric Silverman stated that because the middle school projects are not as invasive nor as comprehensive as the high school project, he did not believe there would be the same unforeseen conditions that were at the high school.

Although communication and community engagement was not on the original list of 11 commitments, FAC members believed that there had not been enough communication or opportunities for the public in the middle school project. Chanelle Truitt, community engagement sub-committee chair, said that communication and engagement was the purpose of the FAC. She attended at FAC meeting and said there were ongoing discussions about the frustrations and concerns they were hearing from the community. She said that the district “started out strong with big meetings and working groups” but efforts petered out and engagement in the latter part of the project was “nonexistent.” She emphasized the importance of engagement in getting parents and community members involved so that they could be proud of the result.

In his concluding remarks, Shabazz concurred. “We want to change the narrative. Our schools are not viewed as places that the who are in the schools—as as great as they are. When the project is completed, we will have a first-class facility. We hope that won’t be lost on the middle schools. We are a community that may took a few steps back, but we are back and better than ever. The Cleveland Heights and University Heights community where folks want should come and raise their families.”

View a copy of the FAC report, and the BOE’s comments here: http://www.chub.org/protected/ArticleView.aspx?id=152138dasdfasdasf

Video sessions of CHU BOE meetings are available at www.chub.org/2017MeetingVideos.aspx.

Deanna Brewer Fisher is executive director of Futures Heights and publisher of the Heights Observer.
The first issue—Volume 1, Issue 1—featured an article explaining the phenomenon of citizen journalism where average people, rather than trained professionals, offer content and disseminate the news—news that is important to them on the local level and news that they may know more about and care more about than a paid professional because they are involved in it.

"Some readers are still unaware that we are a citizen-journalism publication, or are unclear what that means," said Kim Sergio Inglis, editor-in-chief of the Heights Observer.

“We have no staff writers—we need community members who think there are stories the Observer should be covering to understand that we invite them to write those stories themselves.

"Because the author of any given story may have a particular point of view about a news item, because of his or her commitment to it, we ask that writers disclose any affiliation—personal or professional—that they may have with the topic they are writing about," explained Sergio Inglis. "We ask that they include this information in the brief bio that appears at the end of each article. This is not something that Lakewood does, but we feel this is essential.

The first issue included 16 pages of written articles by community members, including several FutureHeights board members.

There were articles about community issues, such as the uncertain future of the then recently closed Coventry Elementary School building (FutureHeights is now one of several community service and cultural organizations that are housed in the building), schools, arts organizations and local businesses.

You can view a PDF copy of each issue of the Observer at heightsobserver.org/download-issues/. Deanna Bremer Brunner is executive director of FutureHeights and publisher of the Heights Observer.

The mission of the Heights Observer is to serve as a self-sustaining media outlet that strengthens the communities of Cleveland Heights and University Heights.

Its goals are to be a community advocate; to be a catalyst for public discourse; to keep residents informed; to promote citizen involvement; to reflect diversity and improve the overall quality of life for residents; and to be a resource for the local, independent businesses that are unique to the community and its vibrant character.

It does this with small, part-time staff—a publisher, editor-in-chief, e-news manager and advertising manager—and submissions from volunteer writers across the community.

Paid advertisements from local businesses finance the design and printing of both the monthly print issue and weekly e-news, and cover a portion of the staffing costs. Volunteers also help deliver the print issue each month to more than 300 locations throughout the Heights.

FutureHeights launched the Heights Observer on April 10, 2008, at its annual meeting. Clementine, a local band, performed at the event, and a forum for citizens to voice their opinions and stand for their values was held in cooperation with the Heights Observer and the Cleveland Heights Board of Directors.

FutureHeights found a model in the Lakewood Observer, a community-based website and print newspaper that began publishing in 2006.

The organization found Lakewood’s mix of civic pride, hyper-local focus and community participation to be a winning combination, worth replicating in the Heights, and entered into an agreement to license its software and create a similar product, the Heights Observer.

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Cedar Fairmount streetscape project to begin in April

Deanna Bremer Fisher

After a year’s delay, the Cedar Fairmount Streetscape and Cedar Road Resurfacing project is set to begin in April. The city awarded a $5.95 million contract to Perk Company Inc. in January.

According to Joseph Kickel, assistant to the director of public works for Cleveland Heights, the project was designed as two separate projects with multiple funding sources for each, but was combined into one in order to reduce costs and construction time. Of the total project cost, the resurfacing portion will be $3.95 million and the streetscape $1.04 million.

The streetscape project, designed by Osborne Engineering and City Architecture, will add several amenities to the Cedar Fairmount Business District, including new trees, sidewalks and sidewalk features such as widened sidewalks, brick pavers and custom benches—from Fairmount Boulevard to Euclid Heights Boulevard. This portion of the project also includes a multi-use pedestrian and bicycle path that will be constructed along Cedar Glen Parkway to connect the area to University Circle.

“We are excited to start the long-anticipated Cedar Fairmount Streetscape Project that will add new breath to this vital, historic district of Cleveland Heights,” said Kaye Low, executive director of Cedar Fairmount Special Improvement District (CFSID).

Planning for the streetscape project began in 2009 with a Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative study. Then, in 2013, the city awarded a contract to Osborne Engineering and City Architecture for engineering, bidding support, and post-bidding design services for the project. The project is expected to be completed in October.

Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) delayed the resurfacing project—repaing Cedar Road from the top of Cedar Hill to the city’s border with University Heights at Taylor Road—until 2017, and that work needs to be completed before work on the streetscape project can begin. The resurfacing project will include new ADA-compliant curb ramps from South Taylor Road to Euclid Heights Boulevard.

Dominion East Ohio, which has been working on a multi-year gas line replacement project in the city, began replacing gas lines under the sidewalks beginning at Euclid Heights Boulevard and Cedar Road to Surrey Road in March. The company has cut down several trees where it is working. Those trees will be replaced and the landscaping enhanced at the completion of the streetscape.

According to Kickel, the project is scheduled to receive $5.48 million in federal funds, $443,000 in Ohio Public Works Commission funds, and $69,000 in Ohio Department of Natural Resource funds. CFSID has already contributed $100,000 to the project and will be paying separately for add-on amenities, such as signage.

The city has placed a button on its home page that connects users directly to information and updates on the project: www.clevelandheights.org/index.aspx?page=1959. CFSID has already contributed $100,000 to the project and will be paying separately for add-on amenities, such as signage.

Natural Resource funds. CFSID has already contributed $100,000 to the project and will be paying separately for add-on amenities, such as signage.

CFSID, in conjunction with FutureHeights, a Construction Survival Workshop for business and property owners, is planning several special events. The first is a Hard Hat Happy Hour on Friday, April 28, 5-8 p.m. Merchants will offer specials to all who purchase a Hard Hat Happy Hour hat and wear it during the event. There will be children’s activities, music, hard hat decorating, a raffle, cupcake decorating, and fun for all.

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

Noble Road resurfacing project gets underway

Deanna Bremer Fisher

Noble Road will be resurfaced from where it begins at Mayfield Road to Cleveland Heights’ northern border with East Cleveland. Cuyahoga County is overseeing the $5.047 project, which is completely funded by the county, including engineering, administration and construction costs. C. A. Agresta Construction Co. won the contract, and will begin work in April. Construction is expected to be completed by October.

According to Mike Tezoppylo, area construction manager for Cuyahoga County, the road resurfacing will include repairing the underlying structure and replacing curb ramps so that they are ADA compliant. Any broken curbs will be repaired. Although there was some initial discussion about adding bike lanes to Noble Road, this is not part of the project. The road will be re-striped to match what is currently there.

Traffic will be maintained in two directions on all parts of the road, except for the first block at Mayfield Road, where traffic will be redirected to Warrensville Center Road. Access to businesses will be maintained because the sidewalks will not be affected. The county will publish and distribute a flyer to businesses and residents a week or so before construction starts.

The city of Cleveland Heights will place a button on its home page to directly connect users to information and updates on the Noble Road project. Contact the city’s Department of Public Works at 216-691-7300 for more information.

Deanna Bremer Fisher is executive director of FutureHeights and publisher of the Heights Observer.
Cleveland Heights crime rates stable in most categories for 2016

Bob Rosenbaum

While the number of property crimes in Cleveland Heights continued a four-year downward trend in 2016, the overall number of violent crimes increased last year for the first time since 2012.

Three murders were committed in the city last year, the same as in 2015. Nine rapes were reported, compared to eight the previous year. But there were 83 robberies, up from 53 in 2015; and 37 aggravated assaults, compared to 33 the year before.

Police Chief Annette Mecklenburg said citizens shouldn’t be alarmed by the increase. “We’d love the rates to keep going down until we’re at zero crime, but it doesn’t work that way,” she said, emphasizing that it doesn’t mean the city’s streets are less safe.

Often, several crimes are solved with a single arrest. For example, one person apprehended after allegedly shooting at cars in the Noble Road area was charged with eight of last year’s assaults, Mecklenburg said. And Rose Nightclub & Restaurant, in the lower level at Severance Center (within sight of the police station), was closed following city action in response to several violent incidents.

Further, the chief said, most of the assaults reported over the course of a year are domestic disputes—in many cases at homes where police have answered repeated calls.

Mecklenburg highlighted three important areas of concern:

1. Thefts of freestanding ATM machines at convenience stores and the like. These have taken place in other communities as well, including Beachwood, South Euclid, Willoughby and Cleveland. They often involve two stolen cars; one is used to crash into the store and ram the ATM from the bolts that secure it, then the machine is loaded into the other car for the getaway.

2. Aggressive car robberies—also not limited to Cleveland Heights—in which a driver is hit from behind, and, when approached to exchange insurance information, is pulled from the car. There were three in the city last year. “We feel like they’re connected, but we haven’t been able to [solve it] yet,” she said.

3. Opioid drug overdoses. Police responded to least nine overdoses in the city last year—six of them fatal. “In southern Ohio, departments our size are getting four, five, six calls a day. We don’t have anything like that,” Mecklenburg said.

In 2016, all Cleveland Heights police officers began carrying Naloxone, which can reverse an opioid overdose. It saved three lives last year, Mecklenburg said. The Cleveland Heights Fire Department also deals with such cases, which are counted separately.

The crime data are compiled by the CHPD according to definitions from the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting system, and published on the Cleveland Heights city website. The reports include serious “Part I” offenses. They do not include “Part II” minor offenses, such as trespassing or DUI—which the FBI does not seek from local agencies due to cost.

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

Cleveland Heights saw one such theft in 2015, six in 2016 and three already this year.

Mecklenburg said the department is participating in an informal task force with agencies across the region. She also has asked city council to pass a law requiring stores to install protective bollards around freestanding ATMs. If it passes, it will take effect in June. It was awaiting a second reading before city council as of mid-March.

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For more information, visit www.judsonsmartliving.org

 Heights Observer April 1, 2017 10 www.heightsobserver.org
Number of violent crimes, by category, reported in 2011-2016

Clearance rates measure how many crimes are solved; the higher the rate, the better. A crime is considered cleared when at least one person has been arrested, charged and turned over for prosecution.

Number of property crimes, by category, reported in 2011-2016

Clearance rates measure how many crimes are solved; the higher the rate, the better. A crime is considered cleared when at least one person has been arrested, charged and turned over for prosecution.

Overall crime trend in Cleveland Heights, 2011-2016

Percentage of violent crimes solved, 2011-2016

Percentage of property crimes solved, 2011-2016

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CH advised to create a CDC

Joy Roller

A special Economic Development Advisory Committee appointed by Cleveland Heights City Council delivered its recommendations to the council’s Committee of the Whole on Feb. 13.

Its top recommendation is the creation of a Community Development Corporation (CDC) in Cleveland Heights that will partner with the city and other organizations to promote the city’s economic development.

The CDC would focus on revitalizing mixed-use business districts, coordinating Special Improvement Districts (SID), and work with the city and civic organizations to create visions and plans for neighborhoods and business districts throughout the city.

The CDC would also focus on enhancing the identity of the city and its unique neighborhoods and business districts, and marketing the city throughout the region.

CDCs are private, nonprofit corporations that drive economic development and strive to improve the quality of residents’ lives. Shaker Heights, Lakewood, South Euclid and other local communities work with CDCs in attracting, maintaining and developing business activity.

The committee recommended to council that FutureHeights, a not-for-profit organization serving the residents of Cleveland Heights and University Heights, fill the CDC role.

Over the past 15 years, FutureHeights has developed the Heights Observer, Heights Music Hop, Neighborhood Mini-Grants and the Neighborhood Leadership Workshop Series—all designed to market the city and get residents involved in improving their community.

According to FutureHeights Executive Director Deanna Bremer Fisher, “FutureHeights is now poised, with a fantastic group of volunteers who have both the energy and the experience, to create a comprehensive CDC that will partner with the city to strengthen our neighborhoods and commercial districts through planning, development and creative place-making.”

The Economic Development Advisory Committee also recommended that the city’s new economic development staff, assisted by the CDC, develop targeted business district strategies; that the city improve its image by investing in the community and marketing its assets; and that city government continue and increase its support for the arts, which are a catalyst for economic development.

The committee comprises seven residents with expertise in economic development, city planning, banking, organizational development and community engagement.

It received presentations from the Cuyahoga County Planning Department, Mark Chupp of Case Western Reserve University’s Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, and various economic development experts from Greater Cleveland. Each expert who presented to the committee supported the establishment of a CDC for Cleveland Heights.

In response to the committee’s recommendation to create a CDC, Mayor Cheryl Stephens stated, “It creates a new opportunity for Cleveland Heights to work with a nonprofit to create more investment in its neighborhoods and business districts.”

Michael Ungar, a member of Cleveland Heights City Council and chair of its finance committee, said he is “100 percent in favor of creating a CDC in Cleveland Heights.”

Expressing his thanks to the committee members and Bremer Fisher for their leadership on this initiative, he said, “There are a number of exciting opportunities—and challenges as well—that we, as a city, are primed to capture and capitalize on, and I believe that a CDC, working arm-in-arm with the city’s outstanding economic development team, represents the right vehicle with which to do so.”

According to Ungar, CH City Council will consider recommendations of the city’s Master Plan Steering Committee, as well as the recommendations of the Economic Development Advisory Committee, in making a decision on the role of a CDC in Cleveland Heights.

Joy Roller served on the Economic Development Advisory Committee. She is a new member of the FutureHeights Board of Directors, the founder of Archer Consult, former president of Global Cleveland, and former executive director of Gordon Square Arts District.

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Cleveland Heights adopts Master Plan

Robert Brown

Cleveland Heights City Council voted unanimously on March 20 to adopt a new Master Plan as a long-term guide for the community's development and revitalization.

The 250-page plan was prepared by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission during a 16-month period that included three community meetings attended by about 230 people. At its March 20 meeting, CH City Council committed to begin implementing the plan immediately.

Among the plan's more noteworthy recommendations are the following:

- **Mayfield Corridor Innovation District.** As part of a strategy to increase jobs and tax revenues, the plan proposes targeting the Mayfield Road corridor as an "innovation district," building off of its connection to University Circle and re-using some on the corridor's currently underutilized buildings.

- **Severance Town Center Redevelopment.** The plan supports citizen recommendations to redevelop Severance Town Center as a mixed-use and walkable area consistent with the character of Cleveland Heights.

- **Hub for Arts.** The plan advocates use of the city's arts venues and organizations as catalysts for neighborhood revitalization.

- **Contracting Families.** As part of a strategy to make Cleveland Heights a more family-friendly place, the plan suggests holding more events oriented to families with children.

- **Preservation.** The plan recommends amending the city's zoning regulations to require review and approval of proposed demolitions of architecturally significant buildings.

- **Community Development Corporation.** The plan encourages the city to partner with a nonprofit community development organization to help spearhead the plan's implementation. Future Heights has offered to fill that role in Cleveland Heights.

- **Other suggestions from residents focused on continuity between the northeast and southeast corners (University Circle) and recommendations to the city at large.**

The complete Master Plan can be found in the Cleveland Heights website, under the Planning & Development Department, at http://www.clevelandheights.com/index.aspx?page=1267.

Robert Brown is a city planner with 40 years experience. He has been a resident of Cleveland Heights for more than 40 years and recently joined the Future-Heights Board of Directors.

Cedar Taylor continued from page 1

- **Northeast and southeast corners (University Circle).** Ideas ranged from an arch that could extend across the street. Some suggestions may not be feasible due to the southeast corner being privately owned property, but the mayor expressed interest in exploring all suggestions.

- **Community discussions and recommendations to the city at large.**

Overall, the proposed project was well received by those in attendance. Infeld said she would hold additional public discussions and continue a dialogue for this and other proposed projects throughout the city.

The city invites feedback from all residents. They can send thoughts and recommendations to the city at info@universityheights.com or call 216-932-7800, ext. 203.

Eli Auerbach is a 50-year University Heights resident and a board member of both FutureHeights and the Heights-Hillcrest Regional Chamber of Commerce.

- **About the Master Plan: Jeanne Diamond, Ken Dowell, Mike Gagnier, Kristin Hopkins, Howard Maier, Allison McCallum, Chuck Miller, William C. Mitchell, Yovan Radovoyevitch, Eric Silverman, Saroya Queen Tabor and Julia Kious Zabel.

- **The plan supposes holding more events oriented to families with children.**

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- **Attendees provided feedback.** Several stated that lighting should be an essential component of the project, as it would provide increased safety, enhance walkability and aesthetic appeal, and help to define the district.

- **Other suggestions from residents focused on continuity between the north and southeast corners (University Square).** Ideas ranged from creating a "mirror image" reflected by a monument, benches and greenery, to an arch that could extend across the street. Some suggestions may not be feasible due to the southeast corner being privately owned property, but the mayor expressed interest in exploring all suggestions.

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**Community News**

**Benefit breakfast is April 8 at Coit market**

Joe Jerdonek

The Coit Road Farmers Market’s Annual French Toast Breakfast will be on Saturday, April 8, 10 a.m. to noon. Ten bucks gets you three slices of French toast and maple syrup, with a choice of bacon or chicken sausage, and coffee or apple cider. Plates will be provided for those who want to share with children under 10. As always, this meal is made using all locally produced ingredients. Located for 84 years at 1500 Woodworth Road, near East 152nd Street and Noble Road, the market is non-profit and community-based. Its mission is to provide residents of Cleveland's urban East Side and inner-ring suburbs with access to affordable, locally grown, farm-fresh products. Ohio Direction Card users get $20 worth of food for $50 charged to their card each day they shop at the market. The addition of a full kitchen in the market's rear utility building is expected this year—realizing a long-time goal. The addition is being helped by donations of roofing materials from Johns Manville Corp. and installation by Professional Roofing of Strongsville. The market is open on Saturdays year round, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday day hours, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., begin on May 31. Call 216-249-5455 during market hours or visit www.coitmarket.org for additional information.

Joe Jerdonek is a volunteer for the Coit Road Farmers Market.

**A preview of May Preservation Month events**

Kim Sergio Inglis

May is National Preservation Month and, for the 19th year, the Cleveland Heights Landmark Commission, Cleveland Heights Historical Society and Heights Libraries will be celebrating the rich history and architecture of the Heights through a series of lectures, workshops and tours. A complete listing of events will appear in the May issue of the Heights Observer. Highlighted below are two programs—one scheduled for early May, and a May 20 tour that requires advance registration, and is sure to fill up.

**Monday, May 1, 7 p.m., Cleveland Heights House History Workshop**

Using local research tools and online sites, this workshop will teach participants how to research their home’s history, including when it was built and by whom, past owners and historic photos. Learn how to use Plain Dealer indexes to find out what may have happened at a property—home sales, lost pets, society events and more. Participants who preregister and provide a mailing address will receive advance information to start a search on a property. Others can receive the information at a later date. [Lee Road Library, 2345 Lee Road. To preregister, call 216-291-4878, after April 1.]

**Saturday, May 20, 10 a.m., Cleveland Heights Rocks & Waters 2017: Compton Creek**

This guided walking tour will explore the geology, history and ecology of Compton Creek, the Dugway tributary that flows through the Park Synagogue site and reappears in Forest Hill Park, where it tumbles over bluestone to join Dugway Brook. [Reservations are required for this tour. To register, call 216-4878, after April 20.]

Kim Sergio Inglis is editor-in-chief of the Heights Observer. She lives in the Shaker Farm Historic District in Cleveland Heights.

**Plain Dealer indexes to find out**
Beverly Burgess's ambitions for Heights Youth Club (HYC) are straightforward. Reach more of the youth of Cleveland Heights, University Heights and South Euclid with the after-school programming she has been overseeing as the club’s director since November.

Burgess, who joined HYC as assistant director in February 2016, said that the club currently has about 200 members. The sign-up fee, posted on a recruitment sign on the club’s front door, is just $10.

Another sign on the door makes it clear that the first order of business when a young person arrives at the club on Monday through Friday afternoon is to do his or her homework for the day, and then move on to more fun activities.

On the last day of February, those activities included a poetry slam honoring Black History Month.

The independent nonprofit Heights Youth Club launched the club some years ago and still owns the building, a former church, at the corner of Washington Boulevard and Lee Road. All HYC programming, however, is now run by the Boys and Girls Clubs of Cleveland (BGCC). Volunteers help supplement the staff of three full-time and seven part-time employees. Asked what the general public could do to help, Burgess said that she was particularly interested in business owners coming in to talk about their success, to spread the message of entrepreneurship. Other areas of programming that volunteers could help with include any art, music or other skills that they would enjoy teaching.

Those interested in volunteering should e-mail Cindy Newton at the BGCC office, at cnewton@clevekids.org. Heights Youth Club (216-321-2582) is located at 2051 Lee Road. The BGCC website provides information about joining HYC: www.clevekids.org/find-a-club/join-a-club.

Beverly Burgess has lived near Coventry since 1999. His writing on local topics of poverty and homelessness has appeared in the Cleveland Street Chronicle.
Women out Walking (WOW), an initiative of the Cleveland Heights Parks and Recreation Department, is set to kick off its second year on Sunday, April 23, 2–4 pm., at the CH Community Center. WOW offers various activities to help women get healthy and fit, including yoga, tai chi and self-defense, while meeting new people and exploring Cleveland Heights parks. The free 12-week program is limited to 150 women, so sign up soon. The April 23 kick-off will feature group exercise, a T-shirt and swag bag giveaway, speakers and a celebration walk.

**New law makes bicycling safer**

Ohio motorists are now required by law to give 3 feet of clearance when passing bicyclists. House Bill 154 went into effect on March 21, after the legislature passed it and Gov. John Kasich signed the bill into law. The previous law required a safe passing distance for vehicles overtaking other vehicles, but did not specify what that distance would be and did not mention bicycles specifically.

The new law defines the “safe distance” by which Ohio motorists must pass bicyclists as at least 3 feet, and permits any Ohio vehicle to proceed through an intersection, after stopping and yielding right-of-way, when not detected by the device meant to move the signal from red to green.

Being passed too closely by a car or truck when bicycling is scary and can be dangerous, which is why 3-foot “safe passing” laws are becoming common nationally. Thanks to all motor vehicle drivers for observing this rule!

Having to wait for a signal that only changes when detectors buried in the roadway sense traffic can be very frustrating for bicyclists, because too often the detectors aren’t sensitive enough to trigger a light to change for a bicycle. Sometimes, the detectors don’t work for heavier vehicles either.

The new law lets all vehicles proceed with caution if they are stuck at a light that does not change.

Heights Bicycle Coalition is a 501(c)3 non-profit dedicated to educating and encouraging Heights community members to use bicycles as a sustainable and healthy form of transportation and recreation. Mary Dunbar, HBC member and CH council member, wrote this month’s column.
Annual Home Remodeling Fair returns in April

Pam Wetherill

Are you looking for home repair advice or home remodeling ideas? Are you tired of being “sold” expensive solutions for problems you might not have? The Home Repair Resource Center (HRRC) invites homeowners to attend this year’s Home Remodeling Fair, on Saturday, April 22, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

This free, informative annual event is presented by HRRC in cooperation with the city of Cleveland Heights.

The fair features “Ask an Expert” tables, where professionals from many repair specialties (plumbing, roofing, HVAC, lawn care and more) will answer questions and give free advice.

In addition, representatives from local banks, community organizations and the city of Cleveland Heights will be on hand to discuss how they can help homeowners with their concerns and projects. Attendees will have a chance to meet with representatives of SAFEdbuilt—the company now handling building inspections for the city.

Fairgoers will also have the opportunity to attend free home improvement workshops, win prizes, and talk with HRRC staff about its programs.

This year’s fair will take place at Cleveland Heights City Hall, 40 Severance Circle. Both the fair and parking are free—but the information available is priceless.

For more information, visit www.hrrc-ch.org, or call 216-381-6100.

Pam Wetherill, a resident of University Heights, is the former repair education coordinator at HRRC and a lifelong fan of pancakes! The 21st annual Community Pancake Breakfast will take place on April 9, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., at Heights High’s Wiley campus.

The Heights Schools Foundation (formerly the alumni foundation) invites attendees to enjoy an all-you-can-eat breakfast to benefit opportunity grants for every school in the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.

Guests will enjoy the grill stylings of master flipper Chris Cakes, and the morning will also feature raffles of Heights Gear spirit wear baskets. A short program at 11 a.m. will include the presentation of grants for needs across the district. A large selection of spirit wear will also be available for purchase.

Tickets, sold at the door only, are $7 for standard admission, $5 for seniors (60 and older) and kids (5–12), and $4 for younger will be admitted free of charge.

Cathan Cavanaugh is the communications administrative assistant for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.

Pancakes to benefit Heights schools on April 9

Cathan Cavanaugh

Calling all alumni, staff, families and supporters of Heights Schools—and fans of pancakes! The 21st annual Community Pancake Breakfast will take place on April 9, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., at Heights High’s Wiley campus.

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Bremec purchases to benefit HRRC April 28–30

Keesha Allen

Bremec, on the Heights Garden Center, 13410 Cedar Road, will host its annual fundraising event to benefit the Home Repair Resource Center (HRRC) April 28–30.

Spring is the perfect time to spruce up lawns and gardens, so why not help HRRC while shopping for plants and other outdoor supplies? During the three-day event, Bremec will donate a portion of all purchases to HRRC, the Cleveland Heights-based nonprofit that strives to empower homeowners with the tools and resources to garden decor and supplies, Bremec on the Heights is geared toward the needs of the urban homeowner. It also offers organic alternatives for sustainable gardening—organic fertilizer and pest control, rain barrels and compost bins, and more.

Gift cards are available, and purchases of those enable shoppers to decide what items to purchase later, while still benefitting HRRC.

Vouchers are available at HRRC’s office (at 2520 Noble Road), at the Bremec cash registers, and on this page (see ad at right).

Keesha Allen is the executive director of the Home Repair Resource Center.

Support Home Repair Resource Center – Shop at PACIFIC East

Japanese & Malaysian Cuisine

1673 Coventry Road, CH 216-320-2302

www.pacificeastcoventry.com

In addition, representatives of SAFEbuilt—the company now handling building inspections for the city—will answer questions and give free advice.

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From their selection of plants to garden decor and supplies, Bremec on the Heights is geared toward the needs of the urban homeowner. It also offers organic alternatives for sustainable gardening—organic fertilizer and pest control, rain barrels and compost bins, and more.

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Keesha Allen is the executive director of the Home Repair Resource Center.
Fairfax students explore the state capitol and zoo
Krisy Dietrich Gallagher

On March 2, Fairfax Elementary School’s fourth-graders arrived at school more than an hour before the first bell to board a charter bus bound for Columbus.

By late morning, 40 students from three classrooms, plus eight chaperones, arrived at the Ohio State House. The group went on a 90-minute tour of the capitol building, marveling at the height of the ceiling in the famed rotunda and admiring the 1875 painting “The Battle of Lake Erie.”

Students were officially recognized when they visited the senate chambers, an event entered into the state ledger, forever immortalizing their visit.

They had the opportunity to meet with Janine Boyd, their local representative, who claimed the meeting was the “highlight of her day.” She encouraged the children to work hard in school, ask questions, and pay attention to current events so that one day they, too, might serve in the Ohio legislature.

The group then braved the wind and snow to walk to Ohio’s legislature. They learned about its architecture—understanding the work of each governmental branch—students participated in a mock trial taking on the roles of judge, jury, defendant, plaintiff, opposing attorneys and bailiff.

Students were particularly enthusiastic in their answer to a question about which branch is the most important: “None of them! They’re equally important!”

Teacher Eric Cohen had applied for and received a grant from the Thomas J. Moyer Ohio Judicial Education Center Foundation, which helped cover part of the transportation cost and admission to the legislature and court buildings. Students paid $10 for the extended-day field trip, and the PTA provided full scholarships, as needed.

Cohen wanted to make the most of their time in Columbus, because a return trip was unlikely, so he arranged for the students to visit the Columbus Zoo. Arriving in late afternoon, in a light snow shower, students found the zoo nearly abandoned, creating an almost magical experience.

Most groups headed for indoor spaces, visiting the aquarium where they observed seals and manatees. This was particularly exciting for those students who had studied manatees earlier in the year for a report on endangered animals.

Another group headed in the opposite direction where they saw wild animals, including bears, moose, cougars, elephants, rhinos and tigers. Sierra Green said this was the best part of the day: “I did a report on the red panda and then I got to see a real one. Plus you could see how endangered each animal was. The tiger was the most endangered. That made me sad.”

Yet, the overall mood of the trip was a positive one. Teacher Nancy MacDonald declared it the best trip she’d ever been on: “We saw so many things that we’d been studying in class—from the branches of government to the Revolutionary War to endangered species. It really connected our learning to the real world.”

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

Christy Salata has joined Beaumont School’s advancement department as associate director of alumnae relations.

“We are excited to have Christy join our staff in this very important position for the Beaumont advancement effort. Keeping our alumnae connected and engaged is critical for us. We tell our alumnae that they are part of Beaumont for four years, but they are part of the Beaumont family forever,” said Gerard P. Grim, Beaumont’s director of advancement.

Salata holds an undergraduate degree in psychology and sociology from the University of Notre Dame, and earned a master’s in community counseling from John Carroll University (JCU). She most recently worked at JCU.

“I’m very excited to start working at Beaumont,” Salata said. “I’ve admired the alumnae that I have met here, and I look forward to making a significant contribution to Beaumont’s advancement department through my work. I believe strongly in Beaumont’s mission as an International Baccalaureate World School to educate young women in the Ursuline tradition for life, leadership and service.”

Salata lives in University Heights with her husband, Chris, and their four children.

Rick Haase
director of public relations and marketing at Beaumont School in Cleveland Heights.
St. Paul’s preschool hosts April 17 open houses

Marjorie Preston

Saint Paul’s Cooperative Preschool is planning two open house sessions on Monday, April 17, at 9:30–10:30 a.m. and 6:30–7:30 p.m.

Families are invited to explore the preschool and learn about its programs, ranging from a separation class for children who will be 2 1/2 by Dec. 31 to a pre-K class for those nearly ready for kindergarten. St. Paul’s offers both morning and afternoon options.

St. Paul’s Cooperative Preschool offers children the chance to get outside and experience nature in its children’s playground space. In addition to full sized playground equipment, playhouses and toys, the area features trees and open green space to entice little explorers. The school makes unstructured outdoor play a part of every day, except when it’s raining or extremely cold.

The topic of children exploring nature has been hot for years, and there are even nature preschools opening up. Beyond the trend, it’s common sense and proven science that participating in physical activity and experiencing nature both play important roles in positively influencing the health and well-being of young bodies and minds.

The school’s mission is developing and encouraging social, emotional, intellectual and physical development in the children entrusted to its care. St. Paul’s Cooperative Preschool follows the Emergent Curriculum philosophy, which emphasizes the capabilities and creativity of the child and teacher. A typical day may include a child exploring learning centers set up in a room, plus healthy snack time, circle time and outside play. Literacy and numeracy development are interwoven with other activities. There is no homework, as the co-op believes that children this age learn best through meaningful play.

In addition to the scheduled open houses, St. Paul’s is open for tours any school day. For more information call 216-721-0002 or visit www.stpaulcoop-preschool.com. St. Paul’s preschool is located at 2159 Fairmount Blvd., at Coventry Road. Parking is available in the lot at the intersection of North St. James Parkway and Fairmount Boulevard.

Marjorie Preston is a South Euclid resident and parent of a child at St. Paul’s Preschool.
Update on middle schools facilities project
Doug Myers of Project Management Consultants and Ann Hartman and Jack Sanders, Moody Nolan Design representatives, were present to discuss the project and answer questions. They foresaw completing the project under the budgeted $30 million, which should allow for some items from the alternate list to be added. Air conditioning in the gym is guaranteed to be determined as a necessary alternate item.

Board members’ questions about the project
In answer to Eric Silverman’s questions, at both schools there will be fresh paint, new floor bases, and air conditioning in all classrooms, reception areas, corridors, music rooms, gymnasium and cafeteria, as well as new fixtures in bathrooms. Rosboro Middle School will receive exterior doors and air improvement in the auditorium. The stairwells will not be painted. At Monticello Middle School, the competition gym will not be renovated, and very little will be done in the second gym.

Silverman also asked if all state requirements will be met, thus qualifying the district for a possible 14 percent match from the state. Hartman explained that this would depend on approval of several necessary zoning variances by the city of Cleveland Heights.

In response to Jim Posch’s questions, the HVAC system to be installed at the middle schools will be all the same quality and warranty, from the same manufacturer, as that used in the high school renovation. New windows are on the list of alternatives, but may not be affordable.

Kal Zucker questioned the safety of not renovating the competition gym. Posch echoed the concern and stated that those who would research the issue. Zucker asked what factors could pose risks to meeting the budget. Sanders responded that the current $500,000 levy would probably allow for the addition of alternatives, but that it was too soon to act on this.

The board will receive another update in six weeks.

FAC discussion
Posch reminded the board that the Facilities Accountability Committee (FAC) submitted its final report in December, as assigned when its work began, and that the board must now decide whether to disband the committee, extend its operation until project completion, or make other changes.

He asked whether the committee has satisfied the community’s need for oversight regarding the use of the bond funds. The board agreed that the FAC’s role is important in terms of the project’s budget and timelines, but whether its charge includes evaluation of design and building use is less clear. Dison stressed that it is an accountability committee, not an advisory committee. Register summed up the discussion, and the board decided that the committee will continue to operate until project completion, and that the board will clarify its role, which includes reporting to the public on budgetary aspects of the project.

Funds diverted to charter schools
Posch initiated discussion of the vast amount of money that public school districts are losing as the state redirects education funds to charter schools. The CH-UH district is losing $7.6 million (this year), close to half of the funding that the state used to provide, with this loss increasing each year. Other East Side districts face the same situation. Ohio House Bill 102 has been introduced, which would fund all schools through a voucher-based system, which Posch stated would destroy public education in Ohio. He spoke of the need to join other districts and organizations in addressing the problem.

Silverman volunteered to create a spreadsheet, based on Ohio Department of Education information, identifying districts with which [CH-UH] could partner. Posch will also work on this and enlist the guidance of local expert Sue Kaiser.

IWV Observer: Nancy Dietrich
FEBRUARY 27, 2017
[A joint Cleveland Heights-University Heights school board and Cleveland Heights City Council meeting on February 27 was observed and reported online at www.heightsobserver.org]
New program will assist CH Senior Center News
senior homeowners

Bridget McQuaide

Last year, the Cleveland Heights Senior Activity Center collabo-
rated with the other senior service agencies—the Community
Partnership on Aging, the Maple Heights Senior Center and Solon
Senior Services—to develop a pro-
gram that will better assist older homeowners with the upkeep and
maintenance necessary to remain independent and safe within their
homes.

The initiative, funded in part by a senior center innovation grant
from the Cuyahoga County Division of Senior and Adult Services,
is in response to a call for collabora-
tion in senior centers as the aging
population changes due to the
large number of baby boomers now
entering older adulthood.

The result of this collabora-
tion, the CARE Program, is set to
launch in April and will be open to
seniors in the communities served
by the participating senior service
agencies, which include Cleveland
Heights, Highland Heights, Lynd-
hurst, Mayfield Heights, Mayfield
Village, Solon and South Euclid.

CARE will assist older home-
owners, some of whom may not
qualify for existing home repair
programs, with service tasks and
minor home repairs.

For many people, their home is one of their greatest assets—an
asset that requires a large amount of work to maintain. CARE
hopes to ease some of the stress that comes with taking
care of a home by coordinating and completing service tasks.
The program emphasizes person-centered care, which means that homeowners
will receive assistance tailored to their specific needs.

The new program will also
strengthen the relationships be-
tween the four participating senior service providers and improve
their ability to serve the seniors in their respective communities.
Homeowners 60 years of age or
ger, living in Cleveland Heights or
one of the six other participating
communities, are eligible. Those interested in learning more about the program or volunteering
should send a message to carege-
ight@gmail.com.

Bridget McQuaide is program coordi-
nator for the CARE Program.

CH Senior Center News

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, and
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.

Starting this April, SAC offers
new arts programming:

On Saturday April 15, 10:30-
a.m. to 3:30 p.m., a Screen Painting
Workshop will teach the century-
traditional Baltimore folk art,
which also enhances the privacy of
one’s home. Bring a window screen
(and a snack) to the workshop—one
you think passersby can see through
easily. After you’ve painted it, no one
will be able to see in, but you will
still see out. The workshop includes
a short video presentation about this
traditional art form, after which artist
Nikki Evans will guide attendees
through the screen painting process.
Even those who have never painted
before will take home a screen to be
proud of. Class size is limited; pre-
registration and a $5 fee is required.

Senior Songwriting Mondays
will begin on April 17, 1-2 p.m.

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 216-932-
7800, ext. 205, or send an e-mail to
info@universityheights.com.

April 6: Dee Perry, who
recently retired after 40 years on
Cleveland’s airwaves, has logged
more than 10,000 interviews on
the radio. She also served as program
host for “Sound of Appliance” on
WVIZ, which celebrates the visual
and performing arts and examines
current events through an artistic
lens. Perry will look back on
20 years of covering arts and culture in
Northeast Ohio, and her plans for
the future, which include painting,
photography, and writing songs and
plays.

April 13: Grover Gilmore,
dean of the Jack Joseph and Morton
Mandel School of Applied Social
Sciences at Case Western Reserve
University, will reflect on its 50th
anniversary and share some of
the noteworthy achievements of this
first university-affiliated professional
graduate school of social work in
America. U.S. News & World Report
ranked Mandel’s

master’s program ninth in the
country, and first in Ohio.

April 20: Instrumentalists
and vocalists from the Cleveland
Institute of Music will perform.

April 27: Miriam Pendleton
will talk about Cuyahoga Valley
National Park, an integral member
of the vast National Park Service,
which Congress created in 1916
to oversee national parks, monu-
ments, recreation areas, scenic
trails, seashores, historic sites,
parkways, reserves, and wild and
scenic rivers.

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

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

2. Register/log in at the Member Center (www.heightsobserver.org).

3. After logging in, click the Submit New Story button in the lefthand 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. We’ll review and edit your article, and let you know if we have any questions.

A screen painting.

Join two Roots of American Music
(ROAM) teaching artists as they
help you write your own songs. This
program is based on roots music
style: blues, folk and gospel, and is
also open to your ideas. The ROAM
artists will facilitate the songwriting
process and will provide back-up
instrumentation. There is no fee,
but registration is required.

Radio Hour, described in the
March issue of the Heights Observer,
is a new creative experience mixing
drama, storytelling, creative writing
and sound effects with the goal of
recreating a one-hour radio show.

The course begins on Wednesday,
April 12, 1:30-3 p.m.

Amy Jenkins is supervisor at the CH
Office on Aging and the Senior Activity
Center. She can be reached at 216-932-7579 or by e-mail at ajenkins@clvhts.com.

IMD Cleveland Heights High School
INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC
DEPARTMENT

Proudly presents its
FINALE CONCERTS
At Heights High School, Valley Campus
2181 Miramese Blvd, University Heights
Wednesday, April 26th at 7:30 PM
Featuring the Concert Band, Concert
Orchestra & Symphonic Band
*Chamber ensembles play for enjoyment
during the performance
Friday, April 28th at 7:30 PM
Featuring the Symphony Winds and the
Heights High Symphony
Senior Soloists Andrew Bell, Marim-
ba & William van den Bogert, Piano
*Chamber ensembles play for enjoyment
during the performance
Friday, April 28th at 7:30 PM
Jazz Night
Jazz Ensemble, Jazz Lab, Jazz Combo

Visit us at www.heightsimd.org
Heights Libraries designated a ‘Safe Place’ for kids in crisis

Sheryl Banks

The Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System is now a designated Safe Place for youths in crisis. Each library branch will display the yellow-and-black Safe Place sign, which signifies immediate help and safety for young people.

“Libraries are already great places for kids and teens, with programs and materials that cater to their interests and educational needs, and staff members trained to work them,” said librarian Sara Phillips, the library’s Safe Place point person. “That’s why Karen McHenry, manager of Bellefaire JCB’s Homeless and Missing Youth Program, thought the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library would be a perfect candidate to become an official Safe Place for youth.”

“There are already lots of kids here,” said McHenry. “The library is already a safe place for kids, so this Safe Space training and designation just makes it official.”

It is estimated that, nationally, more than one million youths run away from home each year due to abuse, neglect, family conflicts and other issues. The Safe Place program is an option for young people who feel they have nowhere to turn. The Safe Place initiative, operated by Bellefaire JCB in Shaker Heights, is part of a national network of Safe Place programs in 37 states and the District of Columbia. Nearly 20,000 community businesses and organizations nationwide display the Safe Place sign.

Young people can approach any Heights Libraries staff member and ask for help. Library staff will find a quiet, private spot for the teen or child, while a designated staff person contacts a Safe Place representative at Bellefaire who will come to the library to provide assistance. Library staff will not be expected to provide any social services.

Heights Libraries is the newest Safe Place location in Cuyahoga County. Additional Safe Place locations include RTA buses and trains, Cleveland Public Library branches, Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry and Bellefaire JCB.

“We are very proud to be an official partner of this crucial support service for our community’s kids,” said Nancy Levin, Heights Libraries director. “The Safe Place designation fits right in with our values that call on us to provide our customers with whatever assistance we can.”

In addition to Safe Place sites, children and teens can also access immediate help via TXT 4 HELP, a text-for-support service for youths in crisis. They can text the word “safe” and their current location (address, city, state) to 69866 and receive a message with the closest Safe Place location and the number for the local youth shelter. Users also have the option to text interactively with a mental health professional for more help.

For more information, visit Bellefaire’s website, www.bellefaire-jcb.org, or the National Safe Place Network website, www.nspnetwork.org.

Sheryl Banks is the marketing and community relations manager for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System.
Heights Libraries and HCC present April 28 fair housing program

Kara Whaley

On April 11, 1968, President Lyndon Johnson signed into law the Civil Rights Act of 1968. Popularly known as the Fair Housing Act, it prohibited discrimination concerning the sale, rental, and financing of housing based on race, religion, national origin, and gender.

On April 28, at 7 p.m., Heights Libraries is partnering with Heights Community Congress (HCC) to celebrate fair housing month with a program that will examine the current state of fair housing. The program will take place at the Lee Road Library, 2345 Lee Road.

The program is free and open to the public, but reservations are encouraged (call 216-512-6775). A panel of three local fair housing experts will present an interactive program designed to educate the community. The panelists are Henry Stroudemire Jr., a realtor with McMullen Realty; Michael Lissman, a financial empowerment coach with 20 years in workforce development; and Barbara Anderson, executive director of Another Chance of Ohio, who is also employed by the City of Cleveland Office of Fair Housing and Community Affairs. Tameka Taylor of Compass Consulting Services will facilitate the “World Café” format discussion.

Topics will include economic impacts of “defacto” segregation on democracy, couples trying to purchase a home when experiencing financing difficulties, and how changes at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in 2017 may affect our community.

Martha Goble, executive director of HCC, said, “With all the changes going on at HUD it is important for people in Cleveland Heights to pay attention to fair housing because of the effect on community life.”

Suzanne Nigro, who serves on the HCC Board of Trustees, said, “This is important to every resident of Cleveland Heights and Northeast Ohio.”

The Fair Housing Act of 1968 has had a significant impact on housing in Cleveland Heights for more than 40 years. HCC has used the tenants of this federal law to ensure that anyone seeking housing in Northeast Ohio has equal opportunity, and has sponsored fair housing programs during April for the past several years.

“Heights Libraries is grateful for partnerships like this that give important community partners like the HCC a venue in which to celebrate their long history in our community, and to provide our residents with enriching educational programs,” said Sheryl Banks, Heights Libraries communications manager.

Kara Whaley is the communications coordinator at the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System.

FEBRUARY 20, 2017
Present were President Ron Holland, Vice President Abby Botnick, Secretary Chris Mastnak and board member Suzanne Abokniza, Susan Beaty, Max Garbosc and Jim Roosa were absent.

Fiscal officer’s report
Deborah Herrmann, fiscal officer, reported on the finances of Heights Libraries for January 2017. Highlights from her report included an approximate decline of $3,500 from January 2016 to January 2017 in the Public Library Fund from the State of Ohio, a decrease of $110,000 in taxes, and the annual payments paid out by the library. The tax decrease is 11 percent by adopting plan changes and credits for participating in a wellness program. Also in July 2016, library staff received merit increases of 2 to 4 percent, which is consistent with 2015 merit increases. In addition to staffing, benefits and compensation changes, the year-end report highlighted some of the wellness initiatives taken on by library staff. Challenges such as taking the stairs, eating fruits and vegetables, electronic communication of health tips, and an annual flu shot clinic were components of the 2016 wellness program.

Mobile hot spots and safe place designation
Library Director Nancy Levin informed the board of initiatives that mobile hot spots will be available for library card holders beginning in May. Heights library staff has also been trained to be safe places for youth in crisis. This effort is in collaboration with Bellefaire JCB. If a youth is in trouble and asks a staff member for help, the staff will follow a protocol to access Bellefaire JCB staff and respond to the needs of the youth on site. This will promote safety in the area and in response to human trafficking.

Youth services outreach
In 2016, the youth services department’s outreach efforts increased significantly. The bookmobile has visited 92 places and served 2,185 customers from October to December 2016. In addition to staff visiting schools and preschools, they have visited other organizations in the community to share books and to provide our residents with enriching educational programs.

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In 2016, the youth services department’s outreach efforts increased significantly. The bookmobile has visited 92 places and served 2,185 customers from October to December 2016. In addition to staff visiting schools and preschools, they have visited other organizations in the community to share books and to provide our residents with enriching educational programs.

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Don’t stop believing

ARTS
SONGS AND STORIES
David Budin

The April of when my daughter was 5, in 1992, we walked into our neighborhood supermarket, the Cedar-Fairmount Russo’s—or maybe it was Giant Eagle already, but I don’t think it was Dave’s yet—and her eyes immediately locked onto a giant stuffed Easter bunny that was sitting on a table near the entrance. She asked me why it was there. I explained that the store was holding a kids coloring contest for which the prize was that very toy, and that if she wanted to enter the contest, we’d pick up the form—a coloring-book-type line drawing of an Easter bunny—on our way out. A couple of days later, we went back to the store and submitted her entry. I stopped at that store every two or three days back then, usually with my daughter. Starting the day we returned her entry, every time we arrived at the store and saw more and more of the contestants’ pictures on the walls, she became increasingly anxious and started telling me, every time, how much she hoped she’d win and how sad she would feel if she didn’t.

After the third or fourth time, I started telling her, every time, that she might not win. I expounded on all of the reasons she might not win, like: There are hundreds of entries, so that makes everyone’s chances smaller; and we don’t really know what the judges are looking for—maybe they don’t want an Easter bunny that’s all black . . . And things like that.

After the 21st or 22nd time, in my exasperation, I finally told her she needed to stop doing it. I said, “Look—with so many entries, there’s a pretty good chance that you’re not going to be the winner, so one day, when we come in here and the winner has been announced, if it’s not you, I don’t want to hear about how sad you are. I really don’t want you to keep telling me how sad you are about not winning. Okay?” She reluctantly said yes.

The next time we went into the store, the giant bunny was gone. The name of the girl who had won it was posted on a big sign. I told her the winner’s name. We while did our shopping she was uncharacteristically quiet.

We left the store and walked out into the parking lot. After a few steps, she stopped and said, “You know that little girl who won?” I said, “Yes?” tentatively. My daughter said, “I bet she’s really happy.” She could always find a way to get around the law, to break the rules without having to pay a price for it. She followed the letter of the law and still got to impart her message to me.

But she also wanted to learn the rules, about something else, a few days later. It was the end of the day (for her) on Easter Sunday. She was getting ready for bed and sneaking a couple of jelly beans out of her Easter basket before I grabbed it to put it in another room. She got in bed and said, “You know . . . you’re going to have to tell me if the Easter Bunny—and Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy—are real.” She’d been hearing rumors in school. I asked her why. She said, “Well, you’re going to have to tell me before I grow up, so I’ll know what to tell my kids.”

I started to get choked up, realizing, again, how much there is to learn in life—a seemingly overwhelming amount—and knowing that she was just starting on this long, hard journey. But I knew it was also funny, so I made an effort to push my emotions in that direction. And, finally, I said, “Well . . . all I can tell you now is that when you stop believing, they stop coming.” That was 24 years ago. She never brought it up again. I’m assuming she’s figured it out by now. Or not. Either way is fine.

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.
Not-exactly-annual Haiku Death Match set for April 8

Meredith Holmes

Poetry, theater, talent show and pasting match rolled into one: Heights Arts presents its fifth Haiku Death Match on Saturday, April 8, at 7 p.m., at Dobama Theatre. Eight of the region’s best and bravest writers of the ancient Japanese 17-syllable form will battle one another in a fierce competition for audience approval.

Competing in pairs, two poets will each read an original haiku aloud, and the audience will vote for the poem they like best. Low-scoring contestants will be eliminated, and the last poet standing will be declared Haiku Death Match Master.

“This is a contest where your vote really counts,” said Cleveland Heights Poet Laureate Christine Howey, who will be on hand, though not competing. “The audience decides who deserves to be the 2017 Haiku Death Match Master, and believe me, every syllable matters!”

The last Haiku Death Match was held in October 2015. The event takes place in April this year, to celebrate National Poetry Month.

According to Rachel Bernstein, executive director of the nonprofit Heights Arts, “It makes perfect sense for Heights Arts to mark National Poetry Month by putting on the Haiku Death Match, since we were one of the first—if not the first—city in Ohio to have a poet laureate. Heights Arts has a full calendar of literary activities including the popular Ekphrasy series of poetry and artist talks. Proceeds from the Haiku Death Match support these programs and pay participating poets.”

Marc Zeale, the dark-horse winner of the 2015 Haiku Death Match, is not competing this year. Returning contestants include Dianne Borzenik, poet and founder of Night Ballet Press; Michael Ceralo, retired firefighter/paramedic and writer; Celeste McCarty, artist, writer and performer; Ray McNiece, actor, poet, and former Haiku Death Match champion, Mary Turzillo, poet, science fiction writer and fencing champion; and Geoffrey Landis, NASA physicist, poet and science fiction writer. Rookie contestants are Christine Donofrio and Cordelia Eddy.

In the competition’s first half, poets will read their contemporary haiku on five subjects: personal relationships, politics, animals in our life, the daily grind, and all things Cleveland. Poets with the highest scores advance to the second half, in which they will read only classical, nature-oriented haiku. The winner of the classical round will become the 2017 Haiku Death Match Master.

“The Haiku Death Match has always been a lot of fun,” said Bernstein, “for the poets, of course, but also for audience members who get to participate. They might not think of themselves as big poetry fans, but as the competition heats up, they get really involved.”

This year, with the help of Robert Conrad of radio station WCLV (104.9 FM), Heights Arts is reaching out to a broader audience. Conrad attended the 2015 Haiku Death Match and was so taken that he decided to feature it on his weekend radio show, an hour-long mix of music, humor, culture and unclassifiable oddments, that airs every Saturday night on WCLV.

Tickets ($5 for the general public; $10 for Heights Arts members) are available at Heights Arts, 2175 Lee Road, online at www.heightsarts.org, or at Dobama Theatre on the night of the match ($5 at the door). For more information, call 216-371-3457.

Meredith Holmes is a former poet laureate of Cleveland Heights.

Dobama ends season with ‘Hand to God’

Jonathan Wilhelm

When playwright Robert Askins was asked how he felt about having the most-produced play in U.S. regional theaters during 2016–17, he responded that he was "totally shocked [because] I think that the puppet play, especially the aggressive, religious, sexual puppet play, is just not a genre we have commercially the aggressive, religious, sexual puppet play, is just not a genre we have in the American theatre."

Dobama Theatre will conclude its 57th Main Stage season with Askins’ popular Tony-nominated and Obie Award-winning “Hand to God,” a play about a Christian-ministry in Cypress, Texas, where a possessed sock-puppet named Tyrone creates chaos. Opening on Friday, April 21, this thriller/hilarious puppet drama about the conflicting forces of repression and honesty will have audiences gasping in both shock and laughter.

“Hand to God” proved so popular when it first opened off-Broadway, in 2011, that it inspired two additional off-Broadway productions before moving to Broadway. Not for the kids, the play includes adult language, mild violence and the depiction of puppet sex. Described by Metro Magazine, the show is what would happen if “The Book of Mormon” and “Avenue Q” had a baby.

Dobama’s production is directed by Matthew Wright, and features Tricia Bestic, David Bugher, Austin Conser, Molly Israel and Luke Wehner.

A preview performance will be held on Thursday, April 20, at 7:30 p.m. Preview tickets are $10, general admission. A pay-as-you-can ($5 or more per ticket) performance is scheduled for Sunday, April 23, at 7:30 p.m. Patrons paying $5 or more per ticket for that performance may make advance reservations.

Regular performances of “Hand to God” will be on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings, and Sunday matinees, through May 21. For more information and to purchase tickets visit www.dobama.org or call the box office at 216-932-3596. Dobama Theatre is located at 2340 Lee Road in Cleveland Heights.

Dobama Theatre will announce its 2017–18 season on Saturday, April 8 at 11 a.m. This is a free event, but reservations are encouraged. Refreshments will be provided.

Jonathan Wilhelm is the associate managing director of Dobama Theatre.
CLE Urban Winery expands its operation

James Henke

CLE Urban Winery, located at 2180B Lee Road, has expanded into adjacent space. The expansion will not increase the size of the public tasting room, but will enable the winery to increase its on-site production and storage space.

“Everything is going very well for us, and I am ready to take the next step,” said Destiny Burns, owner of the winery.

She has a license that enables her to self-distribute wine in the state of Ohio. “We really want to expand our production and bring on more businesses who will sell our wine.”

Currently, Zagara’s Marketplace in Cleveland Heights carries some of Burns’ wines, as do the Wine Mill in Cuyahoga Falls and The Fix Bistro on Lee Road.

Soon, said Burns, “Our wines will start appearing in Whole Foods across the Cleveland area.”

In mid-March, Burns hosted an open house for representatives of restaurants, catering firms, museums and other event venues, to encourage them to tour the winery and taste the wines.

“A lot of people have pre-conceived notions about wines from Ohio, and they aren’t very good,” Burns said. “Most of our juices for the wines come from California, and I hope our wines can spread across the area.”

CLE Urban Winery won the Best New Business award in the 2017 Best of the Heights Awards, and Burns’ North Coast Syrah won a gold medal in the 2017 Great American International Wine Competition’s Shiraz/Syrah category.

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.

Revive on Lee Road to close in April

Kim Sergio Inglis

Lisa Dunn, owner of Revive, has announced that the independent fair-trade boutique will close sometime in April. Dunn opened the store, at 2248 Lee Road, in 2006.

In a press release, Dunn cited the 2016 street construction on Lee Road as a factor in the store’s closing, stating that several months of reduced traffic flow and sales volume left the business unable to recoup those losses.

“After 10 years doing business in our wonderful community of Cleveland Heights, this was not an easy decision to make,” said Dunn. “We are grateful, both to our customers for their decade of support, and to the artisans we work with for their meaningful partnerships. Our hope is that our patrons continue to support fair trade and social justice in any way they can.”

All of the items sold by Revive are fair trade—an alternative commerce structure that is committed to paying producers a living wage.

The store’s inventory and fixtures are for sale. “Customers will receive deep discounts on every item in both the storefront location and online at ReviveStore.com, along with free Revive swag with every purchase, while supplies last,” said Dunn.

Store hours are Monday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; and Sunday, noon to 4 p.m.

For more information and updates, visit www.facebook.com/revivestore, or call 216-371-2778.

Kim Sergio Inglis is editor-in-chief of the Heights Observer. She lives in the Shaker Farm Historic District in Cleveland Heights.
Barrio opens in Cedar Fairmount district

James Henke

Barrio, a new restaurant, opened on Feb. 28 in the Cedar Fairmount district, in the space formerly occupied by longtime tenant the Mad Greek. The new restaurant is the fifth Barrio in Greater Cleveland, and the first to open on the East Side.

"Barrio means neighborhood in Spanish," said Sean Fairbairn, co-owner of the chain, along with Tom Leneghan. "We thought this was a really nice neighborhood. There is good energy and good people. There is also parking in the back, behind the restaurant, and there are colleges nearby."

Jake Hawley, director of operations, noted that Barrio often draws a younger demographic, and having both Case Western Reserve University and John Carroll University nearby was a big factor in the location's selection. Fairbairn and his partner looked at about 100 locations before selecting Cedar Fairmount.

Fairbairn stressed that Barrio did not come into the Cedar Fairmount neighborhood with the idea of driving other restaurants out of business. "We want to be in little boxed rooms," Hawley added. "We really wanted to open the space up to give it more energy."

As in the other Barrio restaurants, the walls are covered with a variety of images created by artist Michael McNamara.

The bar, located in the center of the restaurant, seats about 27 people, and the whole restaurant can accommodate about 160. The back patio holds about 70, and sliding "garage doors" at the front of the restaurant can be opened when it is warm outside.

Barrio's bar menu includes 32 types of draft beers, high-end bourbons, tequila, whiskey, margaritas and other signature cocktails.

The food menu features build-your-own tacos, as well as tacos designed by the restaurant's chef, Pete Joyce. "You can make something different every day," Fairbairn said. "It's an interactive way of ordering, and it keeps people coming back."

Fairbairn grew up in North Olmsted and now lives in Westlake, while Hawley grew up in Avon and now lives in Fairview Park. Fairbairn has two daughters, Ava and Sophia, and both of them were there for the restaurant's opening.

The city of Cleveland Heights held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the restaurant on Feb. 28, with City Council Member Mary Dunbar, Business Development Director Brian Anderson and Assistant City Manager Susanna O’Neil all taking part.

The Cedar Fairmount Barrio is open until 2 a.m. every day. The restaurant opens at 4 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and at 11 a.m. on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. The restaurant serves brunch on Saturdays and Sundays, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The four other Barrios are located in Tremont, Lakewood, the Gateway District in downtown Cleveland and at Progressive Field. The Tremont restaurant, the chain's first, opened in 2012. The business also operates three food trucks.

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.