CH City Council initiates new agreement for Top of the Hill

Connor O’Brien

At its May 15 meeting, Cleveland Heights City Council voted to authorize City Manager Tanisha Briley to negotiate a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Indianapolis-based developer Flaherty & Collins Properties to move forward with the “Top of the Hill” project.

The Top of the Hill project refers to the approximately four acres of city-owned property at the corner of Cedar Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard at the top of Cedar Hill. As a highly visible property at the gateway between the Heights and University Circle, developing this property has been a longtime goal of the city.

Last fall, the city of Cleveland Heights selected Fairmount Properties to be the developer of the Top of the Hill project, and had been negotiating an MOU. On May 11, however, the city announced it was parting ways with Fairmount due to an inability to “come to agreement on key terms.”

On May 12, the city announced that it had selected Flaherty & Collins, which had been the runner-up in last fall’s selection process. CH City Council voted to approve the legislation at its May 15 meeting.

Also at the May 12 meeting, Cleveland Heights residents Matt Moss and Paul Volpe voiced their concerns regarding the Top of the Hill project. Volpe stated that the new developments for the project must include for-sale houses, rather than solely rentals. Moss stated that he felt that the city was back to square one by choosing a new developer, and that the process of the project needed to move quickly.

David Flaherty, CEO of Flaherty & Collins, also addressing council at the meeting. He expressed his agreement with Moss in terms of wanting the project to move quickly. Flaherty also expressed his excitement at being the new developer selected for the project.

In a memorandum to city council, Briley provided an update on Flaherty & Collins’ plans for Top of the Hill. The update included the estimated

CH-UH district puts Coventry building up for sale

Connor O’Brien

The Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District announced on May 10 that it will pursue sales of the approximately four acres of city-owned property at the corner of Cedar Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard at the top of Cedar Hill. As a highly visible property at the gateway between the Heights and University Circle, developing this property has been a longtime goal of the city.

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Heights Observer

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LETTERS/OPINION

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. If the stories are in University Heights or Cleveland Heights is welcome to contribute regularly, occasionally or even just once.

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 are unanswered there, call the FutureHeights office at 216-320-1423 or e-mail info@futureheights.org.

Articles to be considered for the July issue must be submitted by June 12. With some articles they become as they come in—and still consider them for the next print issue. We also publish an e-newsletter each Tuesday.

Heights Arts urges support for Future-Heights as CH’s CDC

To the Editor:

Just after the turn of the millennium, two grassroots organizations formed in Cleveland Heights, each with a mission to help the Heights area thrive by making the most of the unique attributes of our area. One of these groups was Heights Arts (of which I am the second executive director), the other FutureHeights.

While Heights Arts set about leveraging the community’s unusually rich resources in the arts to enhance the quality of life here, FutureHeights concerned itself with promoting a vibrant and sustainable future for Cleveland Heights and University Heights through innovative ideas and civic engagement, with special attention to commercial and residential districts and community planning.

Our two organizations have often worked closely together on projects ranging from public art, to neighborhood music offerings, to streetscape design, even a pop-up holiday store featuring local artists—an idea which would evolve into the current Heights Arts Gallery.

Like the leaders of Future-Heights, we at Heights Arts are passionately committed to the things that make our community great, and we are also aware that we all face challenges common to many older inner ring places. Our challenges require both creative solutions to specific problems and broadly coordinated strategies—a combination of thinking and expertise that FutureHeights has come to embody over the years. When FutureHeights declared its intent to take on the role of Community Development Corporation (CDC) for Cleveland Heights, the board of directors of Heights Arts quickly affirmed the concept by approving a resolution supporting the idea.

An active and innovative CDC can play a major role in building the commercial and social strength of a neighborhood, and we at Heights Arts think the casting of Future-Heights as the CDC for our town is perfect. We urge our neighbors in the Heights area to support Future-Heights as our new CDC.

Rachel Bernstein
Executive Director of Heights Arts

Correction to May article about Edwin’s

The article “St. Paul’s lends support to Edwn’s program for former prisoners,” published in the May issue of the Heights Observer, incorrectly referred to Brandon Chrostowski as “owner” of Edwn’s. Both Edwn’s restaurateur and interior design firm are nonprofit, so have no owner. We thank Matt Fieldman, a member of the Edwn’s Board of Directors, for pointing out this error.

It is time for Future-Heights to be the CDC for Cleveland Heights

To the Editor:

As an architect, and an involved and concerned resident of Cleveland Heights, I fully support the efforts of FutureHeights to serve as the city’s Community Development Corporation (CDC). The creation of a CDC for Cleveland Heights is long overdue.

In the work of my firm, City Architecture, the involvement of a CDC is paramount. We have worked with Cleveland Heights on projects like Detroit Shoreway, Ohio City, Downtown, Glenville, MidTown, St. Clair Superior, etc., the inner-ring suburbs of Lakewood, and Cincinnati’s Over the Rhine neighborhood. In each case, a strong CDC has aided the city or neighborhood in realizing impactful economic development projects.

Clearly, the role of Cleveland Heights needs that boost to push some of the lingering redevelopment initiatives from planning and discussion to reality. The endorsement of FutureHeights as a CDC is not a criticism of the city but emphasizes the importance of assembling potential partners where an active CDC and city administration can collaborate.

I’ve seen other communities apply for CDC development grants in this manner, ultimately leading to an increased capacity and success. It must be mutual—benefiting Cleveland Heights’ residents, business owners and visitors alike.

I believe a CDC can offer support, resources and apply for grants the city cannot, and will add value— whatever the city needs to lift its game. In my tenure on the city’s Planning Commission, we often talked about repositioning land and maximizing value.

It’s time to stop talking and start building. Actually, it was years ago. Let’s do this.

Alex Pestra
Principal, City Architecture

For a long time and saw a promising opportunity in the Coventry building, as the rent was reasonable and situated them alongside other local nonprofits. Morris and Dindia converted the empty second floor of the building into an 18-room art studio over a year ago. Since then, they have been offering studio space at an affordable price to local artists. Morris said simply, “Our blood, sweat and tears are in there.”

Artful’s owners were surprised by the news. “It came as a shock,” Dindia said, adding that Artful had planned to host classes in September. They feel now that those and other future plans are uncertain.

Similarly, Celeste Cosentino, Ensemble Theatre’s executive artistic director, said that the change to a month-to-month lease came as a surprise. Ensemble Theatre, which converted the school building’s gymnasium into a 99-seat theater, operated on a year-to-year lease with a theater that is dedicated to providing non-traditional casting and to offering a platform for contemporary issues, Ensemble was the first tenant to move into the Coventry building, in 2011.

“We are lucky to have an active board and the support of the community and look to a tenable agreement that would bring the best possible results for all organizations involved. We have served the Cleveland Heights community for the past four decades and look forward to many more to come,” Cosentino said.

In a statement, CH-UH City School District Superintendent Talisa Dixon summed up the district’s aims: “We wanted to be proactive with our tenants as many of which are valued district partners, and give them advance notice of our intentions. At the end of the day, we will ensure that the site transitions into uses that are beneficial to the surrounding neighborhood and the Cleveland Heights community.”

Connor O’Brian is a senior majoring in communication and minoring in English at John Carroll University. He is currently an intern for the Heights Observer.

COVENTRYcontinued from page

Heights Observer June 1, 2017

www.heightsobserver.org

List of tenants in the Coventry building

$300,000; and additional improvements, including plumbing and HVAC updates and new windows.

The Coventry School site is not included in the district’s permanent improvement budget. “We would need to take money earmarked for our current school buildings and invest those dollars in a building that does not directly impact our students,” said Scott Wurtman, the district’s supervisor of communications, adding, “The district has been leasing space in the Coventry building since it closed as a public school building in 2006. By law, the district is only allowed to do this either temporarily or until it decides to reopen a school at the site.”

On May 9, district officials met with tenants of the Coventry building to notify them of the impending sale. During that meeting the district also indicated that, beginning July 1, tenants’ leases would change from annual to month-to-month.

Artful Cleveland, whose owners signed a one-year lease last July, is the most recent tenant to move into the building. Directors Shannon Morris and Brady Dindia searched for a space in which to open an art studio
Consider city charter in historical context

Carla Rautenberg and Deborah Van Kleef

Many of us first learned about America’s Progressive Era in history classes. Lasting from the 1860s to the 1920s, it was drawing to a close when Cleveland Heights voters first approved a city charter in August 1921.

According to Marian J. Morton, in her book Cleveland Heights: The Making of an Urban Suburb: “Reflecting contemporary efforts to reform local government, the charter provided for nonpartisan elections of the city council and a city manager, who would be chosen by council for his [sic] professional expertise. The seven members of Cleveland Heights Council chose the mayor from their own ranks.”

Some of the “reform” efforts to which Morton alluded originated in the South, following Reconstruction in the late 19th century, as white elites sought to limit the power of former slaves and poor whites at the ballot box and in civic life. In the industrial North, the (also white) business and professional elite wanted to exert more control over city affairs while also blunting the electoral influence of immigrants and factory workers. They advocated for what they considered more “professional” methods of local governance.

In A Nation without Borders: The United States and Its World in an Age of Civil Wars, 1830–1920, Pulitzer Prize-winner Steven Hahn wrote: “None of the states or municipalities outside the Deep South enacted the full package of measures that ended the participation of black voters there along with a large portion of poor whites whose political dispositions were thought objectionable. But many, especially in the industrial belt stretching from the Northeast out through the Midwest, considered or enacted pieces of the package … In large urban areas, especially where immigrants were able to elect their candidates to the municipal council or the mayor’s office, reformers pressed for redistricting and at-large elections in order to weaken political machines and empower officials who could represent the ‘entire’ city instead of smaller wards within it. Some reformers went further in the direction of ‘city managers’ who would be appointed rather than elected (replacing mayors) and presumably would not be dependent on any one political party!” [Emphasis is ours.]

In a journal article, historian Samuel Hays expanded on the importance of wards to democracy and self-governance: “Ward representation on city councils was an integral part of grass-roots influence, for it enabled diverse urban communities … to express their views more clearly through councilmen [sic] peculiarly receptive to their causes.”

Why now, after almost 100 years, are some Cleveland Heights citizens advocating that we consider changing our charter? They envision a government with greater accountability to and better representation of all city residents.

Council members elected by ward represent a smaller geographic area, where residents have more common concerns than those in the entire city. Residents often complain that they “don’t know who to call” at City Hall. A ward councilperson would give them someone to call. In addition, the opportunity to campaign in a smaller area could make running for office possible for more potential candidates.

An elected mayor is directly accountable to the people of the city. As an appointed executive, a city manager can wield power and influence for many years without ever having to face the voters. Our current city manager’s predecessor held the job for 28 years. Council has responded to these concerns by passing legislation to create a Charter Review Commission of 15 citizens, with at least one member to be appointed from each of the city’s five wards.

The legislation includes this charge to the commission:

“In the event that the Commission considers significant changes to Cleveland Heights’ form of government, then it will also consider the following, amongst any other that they wish to consider:

• What is the problem we are trying to solve by considering a change to Cleveland Heights’ form of government?

• How will a changed form of government affect the balance we seek on issues of representation, policy leadership and administrative efficiency?

• What are the consequences of changing the governance of Cleveland Heights?”

Applications for the Charter Review Commission are due at 5 p.m. on June 21.

To download an application, and the legislation, go to www.clevelandheights.com and click the home page link: Charter Review Commission Application.

Carla Rautenberg is an activist and a lifelong Cleveland Heights resident. Deborah Van Kleef is a musician and writer, who has lived in Cleveland Heights for most of her life. Contact them at heightsdemocracy@gmail.com.
Enforcing the housing code in CH

James Costello

Springtime in Cleveland Heights. We can finally get out of our homes and see the early blooms of the daffodils and tulips. Taking a closer look, we may note that it is time to get that porch painted, or maybe the chimney needs tuckpointing. That may, in turn, lead us to wonder if our neighbor down the street is going to be getting their driveway redone. Or maybe it is not a neighbor down the street, but instead some unknown entity that owns the home, and already the grass needs cut, the broken window replaced, and the fallen gutter repaired.

It is hard enough as a homeowner to want to do some of our non-glamorous projects around the house, like tuckpointing and driveway repair, but it is especially hard to rationalize when there is an eyesore property nearby. Our city and our municipal court can, and do, play an important role in dealing with eyesore properties, but each has a distinct role.

In Lakewood v. Krebs, 150 Ohio Misc. 2d 1, 2008-Ohio-7083, that court outlined and clarified the distinct roles of both a city and a court in dealing with building and housing code violations. It noted that the city is responsible for ensuring that building and housing codes are being followed. It is the city that inspects properties, issues notices of violations, and decides when to bring criminal charges when violations have not been corrected in a timely manner.

Until those charges are brought, the court, specifically the judge, is no different than an ordinary citizen. However, once a case is filed, the case shifts from the city to the court. The court controls the pace of the case, and if the defendant is found guilty of a violation of the housing code, it is the judge’s responsibility to determine the appropriate sentence.

In most criminal cases, including housing code violation cases before our Municipal Court, the maximum sentence is up to six months in jail and a $1,000 fine. However, for housing code violation cases, each day a violation occurs or continues constitutes a separate offense, meaning that there is at least the potential that the sentence could be much more.

The overriding purposes of sentencing in criminal cases are to protect the public from future crime by the offender and others, and to punish the offender. Ohio courts have held that the overriding purposes in housing code cases are often different because the focus should be on bringing the property into compliance rather than dealing with past misconduct.

The city of Cleveland Heights and the court have recently taken steps to improve each of their abilities to deal with housing code violations. For example, the city has recently amended Chapter 1347 of its ordinances so that no certificate of occupancy will issue for residential rental property unless the property taxes or nuisance abatement fees are paid.

The city is also in the process of hiring a building property investigator who will be responsible for maintaining an inventory of vacant, foreclosed, bank-owned, and nuisance properties; inspecting and providing updates on those properties; and pursuing the responsible parties in order to obtain compliance of code violations.

Finally, the city and court together are implementing a new filing system that should significantly decrease the amount of time that it takes from the case being first filed to it receiving a court date. Such improvements, and others like them, will decrease the likelihood that each of us will walk out our front door only to see a problem property across the street. However, for some of those properties, it may still require a sentence like the one issued in Lakewood v. Krebs in order to get the owner to bring the property into compliance. In that case, Krebs ended up with five years of probation and $2,500 in fines, on top of being ordered to spend 30 days living in one of his dilapidated apartment buildings. James Costello is a local attorney, acting judge, and candidate for Cleveland Heights Municipal Court Judge.
District should prioritize connections and stability in staffing decisions

Ari Klein

In April, without any public discussion, the CH-UH Board of Education (BOE) decided to privatize the before- and after-school programs. The primary reason was economic.

Before- and after-school care is not seen as the school district’s main mission. One could make the case that as long as families have access to before- and after-school care for their children, the district should not have to shoulder the burden of organizing, supervising, staffing and recruiting for the programs at each of our elementary schools.

I believe that discussion with the public prior to the board taking action could have helped determine if there could have been a better solution or confirm that the proposal was best.

Important considerations would include how this decision impacts our staff, our community and our students. Many of these points came up in the public comments part of the May 2 BOE meeting.

The staff members who work at our schools before and after the school day have odd schedules. Many start as early as 6:30 a.m. greeting children, and work until the school day starts. At dismissal, many of the same people work until 5:30 or 6 p.m. These district employees are also often hired to work during lunch as aids or in other part-time positions, giving them enough hours to access healthcare benefits.

The company that will now run our before- and after-school programs does not offer benefits. Our staff members currently earn, but there is no guaranteed hourly rate than our staff members benefit from. All of its employees will be run our before- and after-school programs does not offer benefits.

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W orking for two or three hours per week, many current staff members need these jobs. Low-paying part-time jobs, no healthcare coverage, and oddball hours will probably not attract many candidates who will provide stability and connections to the community and to families—aspects of the job we should be prioritizing over savings.

Some of the affected staff have worked in the same position for years. They know our families and our students, and many live in the community. Destabilizing these people hurts students and staff members in ways we can only guess.

School security, in contrast, is an area that the BOE is not prioritizing, but may end up laying off staff. This move could leave three elementary school buildings with no security monitor, and the middle schools and high school short on security staff.

It may not be in the job description, but security monitors serve as positive models for students and help provide consistency and routine. Security staff listens and creates relationships, sometimes with kids who do not connect with teachers. Often our security staff is aware of problems bubbling up from over the weekend or from a game the night before. They know which kids to watch out for, and they pay attention to changes in attitude and behavior, often counseling on an informal level or referring students to someone who can help before an issue escalates into a crisis.

In mid-May, district leadership decided how many security positions to cut. Cutting five of 24 security positions is a drastic change, but district leadership feels differently. I am certain that those in charge do not fully understand how much security staff play in heading off problems and helping students.

The collective bargaining agreement for security monitors, who are represented by the teachers union, does not allow subcontracting without negotiations. The district cannot just fire all the monitors and hire a company to come in and take over security, although it can cut up to 40 percent per year.

Unfortunately, before- and after-school workers do not have the same subcontracting protection in their contract.

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

marginalized communities throughout the Midwest and Southern United States. He specializes in non-profit management, budget setting, community planning and organizing, and strategic planning.

Connor O’Brien is a senior majoring in communication and minoring in English at John Carroll University. He is currently an intern for the Heights Observer.
Leaders motivate teachers through trust

It’s June. Another school year is in the books. Summer brings a much-needed opportunity for teachers to regroup and recharge after months of getting up early, building relationships and advancing student learning, juggling family obligations and late nights, and falling into bed so they can make the next day a successful one.

Teaching requires organization and planning, patience, empathy, communication, and being able to think on your feet. The pressure of testing, with its heartless and narrow emphasis on judgment, doesn’t make it any easier, joyful or rewarding. Teaching is hard work, important work. It can be stressful and exhausting.

Teachers make the magic,” Shelley Pulling recently observed. Pulling is the principal of Boulevard Elementary School, my neighborhood school and weekly tutoring stop. Her role is to set expectations and put the structures in place, but she recognizes it is the teachers who do the work that helps children with academic achievement and social development.

So much rides on teachers. What keeps them going so they not only show up but make magic every day for 180 school days?

When I asked Boulevard fourth-grade teacher Julie Walker what keeps her going, her response was immediate: “We have an awesome principal.”

Pulling has been a principal for 18 years and the last four have been at Boulevard. “At first, I did not understand that, as principal, I would have an impact on teacher morale,” said Pulling. “Now I know that if the principal triangle the whole school catches a cold.”

As a college student, Pulling was a business major and managed a movie theater. She discovered that she hated being a boss but really liked teaching people how to do their jobs. She switched to education and became a teacher. Judging by her approach to the principal job, you can see she still resists the idea of being a boss but truly embraces being a leader. She loves being a principal, helping people, and learning new things every day as she and her staff solve problems and move their enterprise forward. Her emphasis on leadership inspires her team.

Through her optimism, gratitude and emphasis on relationships and collaboration, she creates an environment where people want to come to work. Every staff person I spoke with commented on how frequently she thanks them and how great it is to be part of the Boulevard family.

Walker describes the school’s climate as a “we situation.” Everyone is in it together. “It’s easy for me to come to school,” said Walker, “because I have a principal who is on our side as teachers. I can trust her and go to her if I need anything. She is flexible, understanding, helpful and caring.”

The feeling of respect is mutual. Pulling raves about her great team. She clearly demonstrates respect for her staff by including them in solving problems. It is time-consuming but something Pulling does as a matter of course, it generates better solutions, makes her job less lonely and gives everyone ownership. For Walker, being included is at the heart of her satisfaction: “We are empowered to problem solve.” Everyone wins.

This is Walker’s fifth year teaching at Boulevard and 15th in the classroom. She is a 1996 graduate of Heights High and attended Oxford Elementary and Monticello Middle schools. She loves teaching in the school district where she grew up and where her children are being educated. She thinks of teachers as the “the steady force in the storm.” They are the constant in a whirlwind of changing laws, leaders, standards, tests, curriculum, emotions and families. Her ability to be that steady force is affected by the school climate that makes her part of a team that is in it together—for each other and for the students.

State-mandated testing is a source of pressure and can be debilitating to both teachers and students. The use of unreliable measures of learning and teaching is a reality and it is hard on teacher morale. Walker resists this negative pull. “We can’t let scores dictate how we feel as teachers. Our kids are way more than a score, and they need loving teachers.”

Because Pulling values her teachers, knows them, builds relationships with them, fosters a community of trust, and respects and depends on their professionalism, she doesn’t let the scores define her teachers. They, too, are more than a score. If teachers provide students the magic for learning, Pulling provides her teachers the magic for teaching.

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

Meeting highlights

APRIL 19, 2017

Present were Mayor Susan Infeld and council members Susan Pardee (vice mayor), Philip Eriel, John Rach, Steven Sims, Michele Weiss and Mark Wisman. Councilwoman Pamela Cameron was absent. Also present were Luke McCollum, low director; William Sheehan, finance director, and Kelly Thomas, clerk of council.

Geraci’s receives award
Mayor Infeld reported that Cleveland Maga- zine has named Geraci’s Restaurant one of its 2017 Best of the East.

Cedar-Taylor gateway project
Mayor Infeld reported that preliminary draw- ings of the Cedar-Taylor gateway project can be found at www.universityheights.com/ cedartaylor. She encourages community members to submit their feedback using the website’s online form.

New finance director
Mayor Infeld administered the oath of office to new Finance Director William Sheehan. Sheehan comes to University Heights from the Cuyahoga County Office of Budget & Management, where he served as senior fi- nancial reporting administrator. The Westlake resident attended St. Ignatius High School and Pancration University, and earned an MBA from Harvard University.

RITA tax rate
Councilwoman Weiss made a motion to discuss decreasing the Regional Income Tax Agency (RITA) rate for University Heights residents, which is 2.5 percent. She noted that University Heights residents pay some of the highest taxes in the area, which may discourage people from buying homes in the community. Vice Mayor Pardee and Coun- cilman Sims applauds Weiss for trying to find ways to ensure that University Heights remains a sustainable community, but said that reducing the tax rate could be dangerous at a time when federal and state budgets may be cut. The mayor echoed their concerns, saying that any changes in the tax rate would reduce the city’s income, which could affect vital city services. Council agreed to table the motion, and Pardee agreed to discuss the tax rate at the next financial advisory committee meeting in May.

Road repairs
Councilman Sims reported that the Services and Utility Committee met in May to discuss much-needed road improvements not included in the 2017 road repair program. DWW Observer: Sibhann Leftwich

MAY 1, 2017

Present were Mayor Susan Infeld and council members Susan Pardee (vice mayor), Pamela Cameron, John Rach, Michele Weiss and Mark Wisman. Councilman Philip Eriel and Steven Sims were absent. Also present were Luke McCollum, law director; William Sheehan, finance director; and Kelly Thomas, clerk of council.

Geraci’s gives back
Mayor Infeld reported that Geraci’s will donate a percentage of its receipts to Meals on Wheels every Monday in May. Meals on Wheels serves homebound residents, seniors, and people recovering from surgery.

Ceda support housing
Mayor Infeld reported that the Cleveland Cavaliers is donating all admission proceeds from playoff watch parties to Habitat for Humanity.

Annual reports
Mayor Infeld advised that residents can stop by the lobby of University Heights City Hall to pick up annual reports from the Cleveland Indians, the Cleveland Metropolitan Hous- ing Authority, and the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority.

JCU president honored
Council passed a resolution honoring the retirement of the Rev. Dr. Robert Niehoff, S.J., president of John Carroll University (JCU). Mayor Infeld praised his service to the university, which includes a successful fundraising campaign that raised more than $100 million for scholarships, professorships and campus improvements. Niehoff, the uni- versity’s longserving president, hasn’t set a retirement date. JCU is University Heights’ largest employer and single largest contribu- tor of income taxes.

Proposed HUD cuts
Council heard, on first reading, a resolution opposing the proposed elimination and re- duction of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development programs. Mayor Infeld expressed concern that President Trump’s proposed budget will affect vulnerable members of the community, and programs such as the Community Development Block Grant program, which provides funds used to repave Cedarbrook Road. She noted that these types of grant funds have allowed the city to spend taxpayer dollars using federal government funds rather than general fund dollars.

Medical marijuana
Citing the opportunity for tax revenue, Coun- cilwoman Weiss proposed that University Heights become a medical marijuana dispen- sary. Law Director McCollum advised that dispensaries must be in stand-alone buildings 500 feet from schools, churches and public parks, and must adhere to strict zoning regu- lations. Vice Mayor Pardee voiced support for the business growth potential, but said she needed more information before weighing in. The mayor will invite attorney Kevin Patrick Murphy, an expert on the subject, to an up- coming meeting to discuss the pros and cons.

DWW Observer: Sibhann Leftwich

See disclaimer on page 14.
Cleveland Heights City Council Meeting highlights

APRIL 17, 2017

Only four council members were present: Mayor Cheryl L. Stephens, Carol Roe, Khalil Seren and Melissa Yasinow.

Decision regarding votes on legislation

Five members of council must be present for financial legislation to take effect immediately. As only four were present, anything passed would not take effect for 30 days. Therefore, it was determined to read most legislation for a second time and schedule a special council meeting for Monday, April 24.

Certificates of occupancy

On second reading, council approved an ordinance that would incentivize responsible rental property ownership by amending Chapter 1347 of the city ordinances with a new subsection, 1347.02(e). The new law would prohibit the building commissioner from issuing a certificate of occupancy for any structure used for residential occupancy on a parcel that has a delinquent property tax balance or an unpaid balance for nuisance abatement costs incurred by the city. This law exempts a property owner, agent, or person in charge of the dwelling structure who can provide documentation that shows they have a delinquent property tax payment plan in good standing. The measure also includes a provision for notifying tenants when a certificate of occupancy has been rejected or will not be renewed.

Issuance and sale of bonds

Council heard second readings of seven ordinances pertaining to the issuance and sale of bonds for the city’s 2017 capital improvement program in the following maximum principal amounts:

• $355,000 for the costs of acquiring motor vehicles and related equipment for the police department.
• $225,000 for the costs of improving streets and roads in the city by reconstructing, grading, drainage, paving, and making other improvements as designated in the plans approved, or to be approved, by council.
• $360,000 for the costs of acquiring motor vehicles and equipment for the public works department.
• $150,000 for the costs of acquiring equipment for the police department.
• $65,000 for the costs of installing and improving sidewalks at the city hall complex.
• $75,000 for the costs of replacing fire hoses and nozzles at the city’s fire station facilities.
• $355,000 for the costs of acquiring motor vehicles and related equipment for the fire department (for) providing emergency medical services.

Voting on these ordinances will take place at the special meeting on April 24.

Mayor’s State of the City report

Mayor Stephens highlighted the Master Planning Initiative that took place last year with Cuyahoga County support, and the Economic Advisory Commission currently under development. She mentioned that the police department (has) updated body cameras and computers in all police cars, and that all firefighters are emergency medical technicians. University Hospitals has recognized the fire department for its quick response time. She praised the cooperation among the safety forces in the aftermath of the tragic murder of Sunny Patel.

Mayor Stephens toasted the city’s partnership with the school system and with many volunteer groups. She noted concern about proposals for cuts in the federal budget, but said that the city budget is strong and the city manager is managing funds well.

CH announces pilot program to permit food trucks in city

Kim Sergio Inglis

In a May 10 news release, the city of Cleveland Heights announced that it was launching a food truck pilot program in which the use of food trucks is now allowed on private property as part of an outdoor dining conditional use permit. Approval for the operation of a food truck at a business with an outdoor dining permit must be approved through the city’s planning department. At the end of November, the city plans to evaluate the pilot program and then determine next steps.

“As the popularity of food trucks has grown, the city lacked the ability to permit and license their use,” said City Manager Tanisha Briley. “We’re excited to be able to move forward with this pilot program and be able to offer this additional opportunity for our residents, businesses and commercial districts.”

Food trucks operating under a conditional use permit are also required to apply for and obtain a license from the city.

The BottleHouse Brewery, at 2100 Lee Road, is the first business to get an approved outdoor dining conditional use permit that includes the use of food trucks.

“The ability to bring in food trucks really enhances our Cleveland Heights location,” BottleHouse Brewery owner Brian Benchek said. “This allows us to focus on our specialty, which is making great craft beer, while still allowing us to offer our guests a variety of exciting food options.”

Kim Sergio Inglis is editor-in-chief of the Heights Observer. She lives in the Shaker Farm Historic District in Cleveland Heights.
Zac Ponsky with his wife, Taryn, and two sons.

Tonya Passarelli

Zac Ponsky, a Cleveland Heights native, was sharing a beer with fellow volunteers after a day of service with a medical brigade in Honduras. His brother, Lee Ponsky, had started Medwish, a nonprofit that repurposes discarded medical supplies and equipment to provide humanitarian aid in developing countries. Despite the positive results of the day, Ponsky found himself wondering why “this type of medical charity was happening halfway across the world but not in my own backyard.”

From this idea, Medworks was born. Medworks, founded in 2009, is a local nonprofit that offers 100-per-center free medical, dental and vision clinics to the medically underserved in Northeast Ohio.

The launch of Medworks was not without its bumps in the road. One of Medworks’ first mass health clinics, projected to serve more than 5,000 patients at the Berea Fairgrounds, was canceled because it was planned during the height of the H1N1 (swine flu) outbreak.

Since then, Medworks has hosted 48 medical clinics, serving more than 13,000 patients in locations throughout Greater Cleveland. All services are free, which is made possible by Medworks’ team of more than 3,000 medical and support volunteers.

On June 23 and 24, Medworks will host a large-scale dental clinic to provide free dental care to more than 1,500 patients at the Cleveland Convention Center. Dental care is the number one unmet health need for children and low-income adults in Ohio.

“The lack of access to affordable dental care has reached crisis levels and something had to be done,” said Ponsky.

This clinic is the first event of its kind in Northeast Ohio, and will offer dental exams, cleanings, extractions, temporary partials for adults, and sealants for children. All services are free, and no advance registration or proof of eligibility is required. Patients will be seen on a first-come, first-served basis, and are advised to arrive early. Doors open at 7 a.m.

Zac Ponsky lives in Cleveland Heights with his wife, Taryn, and their two sons. Ponsky works for his family development firm, Midwest Development Partners.

While not a doctor himself, Ponsky comes from a family of doctors. His brother, Lee, is chief of the Division of Urologic Oncology at University Hospitals; his brother, Todd is a pediatric surgeon at Akron Children’s Hospital; and his father, Jeffrey Ponsky, is a general surgeon at the Cleveland Clinic.

The family has attended every Medworks clinic since the organization formed. Taryn Ponsky volunteers as a social worker, and their two young sons are mainstays at the clinic. Ponsky’s parents and his siblings are actively involved with the clinics and the organization.

For more information about Medworks or to attend, volunteer or support the Medworks Dental Clinic, visit www.medworksusa.org, e-mail info@medworksusa.org, or call 216-231-5350.

Tonya Passarelli is a Cleveland Heights resident and a consultant and volunteer for Medworks.
Church of the Saviour Co-op Nursery School has closed

Connor O’Brien

On March 6, the Church of the Saviour Co-operative Nursery School posted a statement on its Facebook page announcing that it would be closing in May. [The Church of the Saviour Early Learning Center, a separate preschool at the church, will remain open.]

The church notified the co-op preschool that it wanted to use the space for other programs. The preschool’s Facebook post stated that the preschool board did not have enough time to find a new location before the critical registration period for the 2017-18 school year.

When contacted, neither church nor co-op preschool representatives were willing to comment.

The Church of the Saviour Co-operative Nursery School, founded in 1957, had been operating in the Heights community for more than six decades, and served 3-5 year olds. It graduated its final class on May 18.

As a co-operative, a volunteer board comprising the parents of students ran the preschool. With new students and their parents coming and going every few years for the last 62 years, the preschool impacted multiple generations and countless numbers of Heights residents.

A Church of the Saviour representative, citing its “primary concern” to protect the privacy of the families involved with the nursery school, said the church was not willing to comment on the specific reason it decided to close the school.

Colleen Walsh, president of Church of the Saviour Co-operative Nursery School, emphasized that there is “no bad blood” between the church and the nursery school. Walsh added that her experience with the co-op model that the nursery school used was “beautiful and amazing.”

Rev. Andy Call of Church of the Saviour described the parents that have been involved with the co-op preschool over the years as “delightful.”

The March 6 Facebook post by the co-op preschool read in part: “We are grateful to have been a part of the Cleveland Heights community for over 60 years. To all parents in our area, we wish you the very best luck in finding a preschool that is good for you and your children.”

Connor O’Brien is a senior majoring in communication and minoring in English at John Carroll University. He is currently an intern for the Heights Observer.

Euclid Golf Historic District

Ken Goldberg

The Euclid Golf Historic District—on the National Register of Historic Places—is one of Cleveland Heights’ older suburban developments. It was created on land owned by John D. Rockefeller and leased to the Euclid Club. The majestic Tudor Revival clubhouse, which stood for only about a decade, was situated approximately where Cedar Road meets Norfolk Road today. The historic district, centered on Fairmount Boulevard between Cedar and Coventry roads, includes the Fairmount Boulevard Historic District.

Barton R. Deming began developing the Euclid Golf district in 1914. His own house is the picturesque European-looking structure set in the hillside at the beginning of Fairmount Boulevard at Cedar Road.

The styles of the residences seen in Euclid Golf—which is primarily residential with the exception of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church and the commercial building along Fairmount Boulevard within the Cedar Fairmount district—are mainly of Tudor Revival, Georgian Revival, English Colonial and French Norman design.

The streets of Fairmount contain less expensive, yet stylish homes. Most of the more-impressive residences are along Fairmount Boulevard. Streets here are winding and sport British names. Homes on streets off of Fairmount Boulevard are closer to the street than in some Greater Cleveland neighborhoods with comparable homes—creating a more-intimate setting for each.

Hugh Fisher, co-nominator of Euclid Golf as a National Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places, stated that he feels living in the district is special because it is recognized as historically significant, and this encourages residents to take better care of their properties and be particularly sensitive to maintaining the historic fabric. He added that Euclid Golf “is unusual in that it was a well-planned development that was nationally known [when first developed] and it was essentially completely realized prior to the Depression, so there are few properties that came later. Today it is mostly completely intact and unaltered.”

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

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Panel discusses prospects for East Side

Vincent Reddy

A panel of five East Siders, including three Cleveland Heights residents, discussed the East Side Redevelopment Prospects for Reinvestment,” at the Lee Road Library on May 9.

Terry Schwartz, of Kent State University’s Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative, moderated the panel. Joining her were Mansfield Frazier, who operates the winemaking operation Chateau Hough; Wayne Mortensen of Cleveland Neighborhood Progress; Rick Semersky of VIP Restoration; and Joyce Braverman, development director for the city of Shaker Heights.

More than 60 people attended the event, which was sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland, Case Western Reserve University’s Siegal Lifelong Learning Program, and the Plain Dealer.

Though a theme of the panel was the prevailing view that the West Side is booming while the East is lagging in terms of new development and vitality, Schwartz pointed out that it was “not an east-versus-west debate.”

She used a few maps, some of which can be viewed at https://cleveland.makeloveland.com, to show concentrated economic stress on the East Side, particularly in a swath she referred to as the “Cleveland crescent.”

Schwarz discussed historical occurrences, such as redlining—the practice of using a red marker to indicate neighborhoods that banks and other lenders would not provide financing to—that contributed to the disinvestment leading to today’s conditions in troubled parts of the East Side.

The areas marked not worthy of lending on a redlining map from the 1930s were strikingly similar to those shown on more recent maps.

Frazier spoke about the Chateau Hough winemaking operation, which he established in Hough so that people would take note of the neighborhood. He said no one would think twice of such an operation in a prosperous community, but it has caused a reaction in Hough.

Frazier noted that the country had been built on slavery and credit, and that, while one of the two was gone, credit—or, specifically, a lack of access to credit—was still a problem.

He talked about a phenomenon of investment that began with the construction of a large home in Hough in 1989—a project that was followed by the construction of several more homes by African Americans experiencing a “pen-up demand for their own community.”

He said development in Hough came to a halt during the foreclosure crisis, and lenders have not returned. A lack of credit, rather than lack of demand, has stalled the neighborhood.

Frazier also blamed limited philanthropic participation for the struggles of the well-situated neighbors of the East Side.

He made the point that he is an “integrated” African American who is aware that integration can only happen when there is a desire for integration in both of the groups to be integrated.

As the lone private developer on the panel, Semersky talked about his work reviving the neighborhood around the intersection of East 55th Street and St. Clair Avenue, which includes his revival of the 62-year-old St. Clair Country Club.

He talked about the uphill battle of rebuilding the East Side, but also expressed hope based on his observation that other investors are joining him and neighborhood stalwarts, such as St. Martin de Porres Family Center, in “starting to notice” the area.

Mortensen talked about the ongoing redevelopment of the old St. Luke’s Hospital campus under the leadership of Cleveland Neighborhood Progress, and pointed to some positive trends emerging on the East Side.

Most neighborhoods that were hit by the foreclosure crisis have begun to stabilize, he said, with some of them showing signs of rebounding.

Mortensen made the only notable reference to Cleveland Heights when he described the walkable and accessible nature of Cedar Fairmount, where he and his family reside.

Braverman focused on the redevelopment of the Van Aken District in Shaker Heights and the planning and negotiation that preceded the project. Though construction has only begun, advance leasing of office space and commitments from retailers and restaurants seem to indicate that success lies ahead.

She went on to briefly describe several other development projects that are underway in the city of Shaker Heights.

The entire panel discussion can be viewed at https://livegoveready.cleveland. org/public-policy-forums, and Steven Lett’s take on the event can be viewed at www.cleveland.com/architecture.

Vincent Reddy is a FutureHeights board member and a 20-year resident of Cleveland Heights.

The preliminary site plan for Top of the Hill from Flaherty & Collin, cost for the project: approximately $70 million in construction costs. It also noted that Flaherty & Collins has indicated that its current concept for the project "would require tax increment financing, or other public financing sources, to fill a cost gap;" however, the company did not plan to request property tax exemption for the for-sale housing units.

Flaherty & Collins’ project plan includes 250 luxury apartments, 25 townhomes/condominiums, 10,000 square feet of restaurant and retail space, 750 structured parking spaces, and a 110-room hotel. Flaherty & Collins estimates that the project will be completed within 18 to 24 months of groundbreaking.

Connor O’Brien is an upcoming senior at John Carroll University, majoring in communication and minoring in English. He is currently an intern for the Heights Observer.

Team sponsors included the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Cleveland Heights Jazzercisers, CLE Iphone Repair, New Heights Grill, and many individuals from Cleveland Heights and University Heights, including Nancy Dietrich, who celebrated her 25th year as a speller in the Reaching Heights Bee.

Board of Education members; Cleveland Heights City Council members and staff; Friends of the Heights Libraries; Square Patton Boggs LLC; St. Paul’s Episcopal Church; Forest Hill Church; and the Heights High, Noble Middle, Fairfax Elementary, and Roxboro Elementary and Middle school PTAs all generously sponsored teams.

Reaching Heights expressed gratitude to the school district for use of space in Heights High and for the services provided by the stage crew and custodial staff, and to the local businesses that provided food, paper products, and baskets as winners’ prizes, including: Stone Oven, Zagarak’s Marketplace, Heiner’s Fine Foods, Mitchell’s Ice Cream, the Cleveland Orchestra, Dewey’s Pizza, Grog Shop Pub, The Funny Times, Starbucks, and Atma Center.

All proceeds from the bee benefit Reaching Heights, a nonprofit organization that works to mobilize community resources to foster highly valued public schools that provide all Cleveland Heights–University Heights students with a successful education.

Consider forming a team to represent your block or your business and spell in next year’s bee. For more information about Reaching Heights or to become a sponsor or to compete in next year’s Reaching Heights Community Spelling Bee, visit www. reachingheights.org or call 216-932-3130.

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June offers abundant, fun bicycle rides

Heights Bicycle Coalition

One of the best ways to enjoy a host of summer activities and places in Northeast Ohio is to get there by bicycle. Heights Bicycle Coalition (HBC) has compiled a list of attractive rides offered by other organizations throughout the region. The bicycle advocacy organization also sponsors rides of its own, and is building a collection of “Better by Bike” online routes so people can safely and conveniently pedal to places and events on their own.

Other rides that may appeal to Heights bicyclists will be listed on HBC’s website, www.bikesintheheights.org. Examples include the Cleveland Touring Club’s Sunday in June, a ride through the rolling hills of Amish country on June 11; or Velosano, July 21–23, which supports cancer research at the Cleveland Clinic.

HBC’s own rides, led by various members, are planned through September. On June 4, there will be a group ride from the F.E.A.C.E. Arch at the intersection of Coventry Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard, to the Hessler Street Festival. This ride is downhill, but bicyclists can return to the Heights via RTA. (Each RTA bus is equipped to hold three bicycles in racks on the front of the bus. Bicyclists can practice loading bicycles onto these racks on the preceding day, Saturday, June 3, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the free Bike Tune-Up Day at Coventry Court-yard at Coventry Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard, in front of the Grog Shop and Inn on Coventry.) On June 24, there will be a family ride around Shaker Lakes, including a stop at the play area at Horseshoe Lake.

Finally, HBC is recording online a selection of routes it identifies as “Better by Bike,” featuring tried-and-true ways to pedal to common destinations—for example, to University Circle events and attractions such as Wade Oval Wednesdays, Parade the Circle, museums and educational institutions. Also available will be directions to libraries, grocery stores, Larchmere PorchFest, the Cultural Gardens, the West Side Market and much more. These routes will use Strava, a mobile app and website used by runners and cyclists to record their routes and performance. Get a free version of the app at www.strava.com (premium option available for a fee). HBC members hope that bicycling in June will boost participants’ enthusiasm for more rides coming in July. Check www.bikesintheheights.org for details on all events, or sign up through that website to receive timely updates via the coalition’s e-newsletter.

Heights Bicycle Coalition is a 501(c)3 nonprofit dedicated to educating and encouraging Heights community members to use bicycles as a sustainable and healthy form of transportation and recreation. This article was crafted by Debra Franke and members of the coalition’s encouragement committee.

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HYC member earns Indians scholarship

Donald King

In one of their last acts at Hope Lutheran Church’s current site, 2222 North Taylor Road, church members will offer to the community the 117th annual Christian Day Camp, June 26–30. The camp is free of charge and open to all children in grades 1–6. The camp runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. each day.

On-site registration begins at 8:15 a.m. on Monday, June 26. Residents who live near Hope Lutheran Church will receive a flyer and registration form delivered to their homes during the month of June. Anyone can request a registration form by calling 216-371-5252, and the church also welcomes advance registrations.

Activities offered at this annual free camp, which adheres to the guidelines set by the American Camping Association, include singing, storytelling, Bible stories, athletics, crafts, and one-on-one Christian mentoring. The church provides snacks and drinks. Each child should bring his or her own lunch, as well as a clean, white T-shirt for a tie-dye project.

On Tuesday, June 27, at 7:30 p.m., the church will host an all-community Hillcrest Band Concert and Ice Cream Social on its front lawn, on Taylor Road. On Thursday, June 29, at 6 p.m., all campers’ families are invited to a cookout dinner and program, so parents can see their children and the counselors “in action.”

This will be the last day camp that Hope Lutheran Church will offer at its current location. In coming months, the members of Hope will join the members of Bethlehem Lutheran Church to form a new congregation, Peace Lutheran Church, at 3740 Mayfield Road. Families are asked to look out for information about Day Camp #18 at the new site in late June of 2018. For more information, visit www.hopelutheran-ch.com.

Donald King is pastor of Hope Lutheran Church on North Taylor Road, and an active participant in the Heights Inter-Faith Community. He has served at Hope since 1999 and lived in Cleveland Heights since 1985.
Dallas Schubert

Imagine this: Your father was killed by rebels in front of your eyes, and you fled war with your mother and seven siblings. You have lived in a refugee camp in a foreign country since you were a toddler. Your mother could not afford to send you to school, and each day you prayed that your family would have enough food to eat. Finally, at age 20, you—along with your now elderly mother and 18-year-old sister—are resettled in Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

This is the reality of one young refugee who is making a home in our community.

For the past six years, Carla Bailey, the district’s refugee school-community liaison, has helped refugees like this young man understand our educational system and figure out the quickest, most efficient way to learn English, complete high school, and move on to the next phase of education and life.

Some refugees have attended Noble Elementary School. A part of their success...

Carla Bailey helps refugee students find their way

Dallas Schubert

Imagine this: Your father was killed by rebels in front of your eyes, and you fled war with your mother and seven siblings. You have lived in a refugee camp in a foreign country since you were a toddler. Your mother could not afford to send you to school, and each day you prayed that your family would have enough food to eat. Finally, at age 20, you—along with your now elderly mother and 18-year-old sister—are resettled in Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

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Some refugees have attended Noble Elementary School. A part of their success...

Carla Bailey helps refugee students find their way through, transformational success. Bailey is extremely proud of this young man and the many other refugees who are working hard to thrive. “It’s an honor to be a part of their success.”

You can support refugee students and Bailey’s work at the Heights-High Refuge Support Fundraiser at CLE Urban Winery on Tuesday, June 6, at 7 p.m. CLE Urban Winery is located at 2180 Lee Road in Cleveland Heights. You can also donate at www.heightsobserver.org/HeightsStudentRefugeSupport.

Dallas Schubert, a lifelong resident of Cleveland Heights, is a community activist and volunteer.

Noble Elementary School receives $10,000 grant

Scott Wortman

Burlington Stores, through its partnership with DonorsChoose.org, donated $10,000 to Noble Elementary School in celebration of its new store in South Euclid.

Burlington store manager, Debbie Furlong, presented the check to Rachel Coleman, Noble Elementary School principal, during a schoolwide ceremony on April 25.

Coleman worked with Burlington and DonorsChoose.org to secure the grant for her school, which serves approximately 400 students from pre-K through fifth grade. Coleman plans to use the grant to purchase hands-on technology for her students, including the purchase of Chromebooks.

“Thank you to Burlington and DonorsChoose for such a tremendous gift to our school,” said Coleman. “These resources will allow us to purchase additional technology that can enrich our students and assist our staff in providing a 21st-century education. We teach our students the importance of giving back to their community, and Burlington is demonstrating just that by its support of Noble. We are truly appreciative of this donation and what it means for our school.”

Burlington, in partnership with DonorsChoose.org, coordinates new store openings by making a donation to a local school. The South Euclid Burlington store, located 1.5 miles from Noble Elementary School on Warrensville Center Road, opened on April 7.

Scott Wortman is the supervisor of communications for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.
Students win health career awards

Heights High Career and Technical Education (CTE) students Yidiayah Box and Sydney Williams placed first in regional competition and advanced to the international competition in June.

Joy Henderson

RTA bus operator Leslie Rivers was so impressed with the maturity of Cleveland Heights High School students that she called Administrative Principal Zoraba Ross, commending the students who ride bus route 41 on Tuesdays, the school’s early dismissal day.

In her message to Ross, Rivers said that the students are good representatives of the school and they do the right thing. She asked Ross to let the students know that they should keep up the good work. Over the 17 years that she has been an RTA bus operator, she said she has seen many groups of students.

Ross thanked the students during the morning announcements, commending them for their mature attitudes and for representing Heights High with pride.

“We appreciate that Ms. Rivers took the time to call and compliment Heights High students for being mature and responsible,” said Ross. “We see our students performing well every day in the classroom, in the arts, on the athletic field and as responsible citizens. We are very happy when others see it, too!”

Joy Henderson

RTA driver commends Heights students

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

tested nursing assistant (STNA) certification test. She also works at Papa John’s Pizza and volunteers with her church. In the fall, Williams will attend Ashland University where she plans to major in biology/pre-medicine.

“Sydney puts school work first, has great time management skills, is calm and focused and is a very good speller,” said her CTE teacher, Nancy Ballou, RN. “These are all skills needed for success in college. I know she has a bright future ahead of her.”

Ballou will accompany the students to the International HOSA competition in June.

Joy Henderson

RTA drivercommends Heights students
Canterbury student takes “Best in Show”

Krisy Dietrich Gallagher

“Best in Show” is a pretty big deal for an artist. It’s a huge deal if you’re a second-grader competing against students in kindergarten through eighth grade, from 10 counties.

That’s the award that Grant Gosa, a second-grade student at Canterbury Elementary School, received in March at the Youth Art Month exhibit sponsored by the Northeast Ohio division of the Ohio Art Education Association (OAEA) at Case Western Reserve University (CWRU). It was the fifth consecutive year that a Canterbury student took home that honor.

Grant is not the only talented artist in the building. The work of four other Canterbury students was displayed at either CWRU or the statewide Youth Art Month show in Columbus, sponsored by OAEA.

“I was really, really, really excited,” said fourth-grader Ryan Harris, whose drawing of a macaw was featured in the show at CWRU. “I was so impressed by the other students’ work.”

For McKenna, she’s just doing what she loves: “I have maybe one or two might actually teach themselves to read,” said Bergson. “But most will still need explicit instruction. That’s how I view art. Once the kids flip to the right side of their brain and really get it, they hardly even need me anymore.”

She’s been submitting her students’ work to juried regional and statewide shows for the past 16 years. “The competition can be intense,” she said. “But it’s worth it for these kids to see their work honored.”

Students throughout the district also saw their work displayed at the Lee Road Library, in a show which ended May 8, which featured more than 300 pieces from CH-UH students, from kindergarten through 12th grade.

Grant Gosa, winner of Best in Show at CWRU, also won first place for Canterbury at the district show, with McKenna Mack taking second place, and Ryan Harris winning third.

Bergson’s students rank art class as among their favorite school subjects and name “artist” or “art teacher” as possible career choices.

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.
Library tailors free coding classes to teens and kids

Kara Whaley
For many, summer is filled with swimming, reading and farmers markets. At the Lee Road Library, summer means opportunities for people of all ages to code with the new Summer of Code program.

Alyce Giannotti and Ann MacNamara, technology trainers at the Lee Road Library, have collaborated to bring Summer of Code to the community. The pair have been working together for the past year teaching Coding Basics, a four-part quarterly series, to adults. During that time, they noticed an increasing number of teens and children were taking the adult Coding Basics classes, and realized they needed to reach a new audience.

“There has definitely been a growing need and interest from teens and young kids,” said Giannotti. “Our Coding Basics series always has a wait list. We once had an 8-year-old come in with her grandmother and attend the course.”

“We also get young teens, about 12 and 13,” added MacNamara. “We see a huge diversity in our classes. It’s not uncommon to see a 12-year-old, a 17-year-old, and a 30-year-old working alongside each other learning the basics of HTML.”

The Summer of Code will offer three unique coding course series tailored to kids, teens and adults. This provides more opportunities for individuals interested in learning to code.

“By expanding the audience for these programs to teens and kids, we’re fulfilling an important part of our mission,” said Nancy Levin, Heights Libraries director. “We strive to offer equal access to services for all members of our community.”

To kick off the Summer of Code, Giannotti will teach Web Coding for Teens on Tuesdays in June at 2:30 p.m. This is a four-week series that will teach those in grades 6–12 the basics of HTML, CSS, JavaScript and PHP. No prior coding experience is required.

Registration began May 23 and the class is expected to fill.

In July, Giannotti will debut the new “Tech for Kids: code.org” course series. In this course, those in grades 1–4 are invited to bring their favorite adult and explore computer coding. The class will be in the Heights Knowledge & Innovation Center (HKIC) in the Lee Road Library. Using a state-of-the-art computer lab, kids will explore computer coding using code.org. Registration begins June 26 and this class is also expected to fill.

Also in July, Lee Road Library will continue its Coding Basics series. This four-part coding course for adults will be held on Thursdays at 7 p.m. Led by MacNamara, adults who take this course will leave with an understanding of basic HTML, CSS and JavaScript. Registration begins June 22, and this class, too, is expected to fill.

For more information about all the classes, visit www.heightslibrary.org or call 216-932-3600.

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

Library starts lending Internet access

Mobile hotspots come in a carrying case with a charger and USB cable.

Sheryl Banks
The Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System is now offering customers access to mobile Internet hotspots. A hotspot is a small, portable device that connects up to ten wireless enabled devices, such as a laptop, smartphone or tablet, to the Internet.

The devices can be checked out with a library card and work in any area covered by the Sprint 3G or 4G LTE network.

“These devices essentially allow people to check out the Internet,” said Nancy Levin, Heights Libraries director. “Let’s say you’re going camping and want to bring your laptop—a hotspot device will allow you to upload photos to Facebook or Instagram, surf the Web, and watch movies. Or maybe you can’t afford Internet access at home and really need it for something, like a job interview via Skype—you can borrow a hotspot for free and get that.”

Hotspot kits are available for checkout at the circulation desks at the Lee Road, Coventry Village and Noble Neighborhood libraries to library card holders ages 18 or older with a library card in good standing.

The kits comprise a case, a device, a USB cable, a wall charger and instructions. Borrowers will sign a brief agreement document the first time they borrow a hotspot, and are limited to one device at a time. The devices can be borrowed for up to two weeks on a first-come, first-served basis, and cannot be renewed. The devices shut down if they are not returned on time.

“These devices can bridge the digital divide for many of our customers,” said Levin. “With more and more companies, nonprofits and government agencies assuming everyone has Internet access, these kinds of services can be a real lifeline for people who just can’t afford that monthly Internet bill.”

For more information on borrowing a mobile hotspot, visit www.heightslibrary.org.

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

What’s going on at your library?

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

Wednesday, June 14, 3–4 p.m.
Fairytale STEM. Join us for a lively afternoon storyline of fairy tales and adventure, followed by a simple science-themed activity that relates to the story. (For ages 3–6.)

Lee Road Library
2344 Lee Road, 216-932-3600

Tuesday, June 6, 6:30–8 p.m.
Summer Reading Kickoff: The Flower Clown. We cannot think of a more magical way to kick off Heights Libraries’ 2017 Summer Reading Program, Dream Build Share, than by welcoming the Flower Clown for a very special performance. Be amazed, be awed, and be inspired at our free kickoff event.

Noble Neighborhood Library
2800 Noble Road, 216-291-6664

Wednesday, June 7–28, 3:30–4:30 p.m.
Green Thumb Gardening. This is a chance to explore and get dirty in the Noble Community Garden. We will be planting, weeding, watering, picking, and having loads of family fun! In case of bad weather an indoor activity will be provided.
June is Brain Awareness month and the Cleveland Heights Senior Activity Center (SAC) offers many activities to benefit brain health, including a variety of exercise opportunities. Exercise is key to overall health, promoting increased blood flow to all areas of the body, including the brain.

Seniors can increase their step counts by using the indoor track, playing pickleball or table tennis a try, or enrolling in a dance, tai chi or yoga class. However one chooses to exercise, the benefit is the same. Some classes are free, others charge a fee, but seniors can try any class one time for free and see what they like.

Learning a new activity and gaining skills also increases brain function. From Spanish to art, the senior center offers a variety of enrichment classes that will stimulate brain function while expanding one’s knowledge.

Finally, don’t downplay the positive effects that socialization has on brain health. There is a positive correlation between participation in social relationships and better overall health and happiness for seniors, and SAC is full of friendly, active, interesting people. Become a member and get to know some of them today. Membership is $5 for Cleveland Heights residents 60 and older. To sign up, bring a recent piece of mail (such as a bill) and a photo ID. University Heights residents who would like to join the SAC must first register with Patrick Grogan-Myers, University Heights community development coordinator, at 216-932-7800, ext. 203, or pgrogan@universityheights.com. Membership is $10 for University Heights seniors.

The Cleveland Heights SAC, located in the CH Community Center at 1 Monticello Blvd., offers a wide variety of programming for those 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.

Amy Jenkins is supervisor at the Cleveland Heights Office on Aging and the Senior Activity Center. She can be reached at 216-651-7509 or by e-mail at ajenkins@clvhts.com.
Eastwood Furniture opens loft to exhibiting artists

James Henke

The Eastwood Furniture store has expanded its space, taking over the second floor of the building at 2340 Lee Road, and creating a pop-up shop and gallery called the Loft at Eastwood.

Eastwood’s owners, Ron and Angie Nandor, first explored the concept last fall, when Madelaine Mavec, a Cleveland Heights artist, displayed and sold her paintings above the furniture store. Mavec, who calls herself an experimental painter, will return to the loft this fall.

“We want to use the space to showcase local artists,” said Ron Nandor. He added that the artists choose whether or not they want to sell any of their work while it is on display at Eastwood.

Nandor said he spent much of last summer cleaning up the space on the second floor, painting it and adding some lights. “It’s a really bright space now,” he said. Prior to opening the loft to local artisans, there had been nothing in that space.

In late May, the Nandors opened a new loft exhibit: Song of Steel. It features metal sculptures by Jerry Schmidt along with paintings by Matthew Merchant.

Nina Serrakian, another past exhibit, will also return to Eastwood’s loft later this year. “Her family brings in various items from the Middle East,” said Nandor. The items in her exhibit included clothes and pottery.

Business arrangements between Eastwood and the exhibiting artists and artisans vary, as does the duration of the various exhibits and shops. For more information, potential exhibitors can contact either of the owners at 216-903-9862.

Eastwood Furniture opened at the corner of Fairmount Boulevard and Taylor Road in February 2016. All of its furniture is made in Ohio by Amish craftsmen.

Business succession planning workshop to be held June 9

Connor O’Brien

The workshop aims to help local merchants, specifically ones who are ready to retire or leave their business and are concerned with what will happen with their business in the future,” said Micah Kirman, chair of the FutureHeights Planning & Development Committee, which is organizing the workshop. “Seku Shabazz will look to show business owners that there are possible options that they can take when they feel that they are ready to leave their business or retire. These options can consist of anything from handing the business over to a loyal employee or selling the business to a family member.”

Shabazz is a financial planner with Prudential Financial and a Cleveland Heights resident.

Connor O’Brien is a senior majoring in communication and minoring in English at John Carroll University. He is currently an intern for the Heights Observer.
New talent and encore appearances in Heights Arts exhibitions

Greg Donley

Two exhibitions at Heights Arts this spring and summer express the vitality of the region as a training ground for visual artists, with one show (closing June 4) celebrating new talents and the other (opening June 9) bringing back artists who previously exhibited at Heights Arts.

Emergent 2017 features 12 artists recommended by their former art professors as representing some of the best among recent graduates. The year’s version (Heights Arts presented its first Emergent show in 2015 and plans to bring it back approximately every two years) includes works by Meghan Calvert (ceramics), Amber Ford (photography), Jessica Howard (prints, drawings, cut paper), Erin Jesson (sculptural wall pieces), Jacob Koestler (wall installation), Samantha Konet (drawings), Mike Lombardy (drawings/collage), Nathan Prebonick (painting), Rachel Shelton (prints), Maia Stern (glass), Grace Summanen (painting, drawing), and Nikki Woods (painting).

The artists are graduates of the Cleveland Institute of Art, Kent State University, the University of Akron, and Baldwin-Wallace University. Emergent 2017 runs through Sunday, June 4.

On the heels of that exhibition—part two of what might be thought of as a before-and-after pairing—is Encore: A Heights Arts Invitational. For this show, the gallery committee went back through the 15-year history of the Heights Arts gallery, including the early years during which William Busta was gallery director, and asked a small selection of artists whose work had made a particular impression at the time to come back and participate in an invitational exhibition featuring current work. Intentionally covering a range of media, this exhibition includes, in alphabetical order, Christi Birchfield (sculptural drawing/printmaking), Grace Chin (jewelry and larger-scale work in metals), Dexter Davis (collage, multi-media—brand-new work created for this exhibition), Yumiko Goto (ceramics, often biomorphic in character), Doug Meyer (metal furniture), Mark Slankard (photography—“Curb Appeal” series), and Douglas Max Utter (landscape and portrait paintings).

If someone unfamiliar with the visual art scene in Northeast Ohio were to ask how one might get a quick idea of the high level of work being done in this region, this exhibition makes it clear. A free community opening reception is scheduled for Friday, June 9, 6–9 p.m. in the main exhibition gallery at 2175 Lee Road.

Greg Donley is chair of the Heights Arts Gallery Committee.

I love living in Cleveland Heights with my husband and stepson!

I have devoted my career as an attorney to helping others. My experience includes the representation of individuals, corporations, and the State of Ohio. I served as Judicial Staff Attorney to the Presiding Judge of Cuyahoga County. My practice currently includes civil and criminal cases at Synenberg, Coletta & Moran, LLC. I have the experience and temperament to be a compassionate, effective, and qualified judge.

I ask for your consideration and to remember “Hayden for Heights” this November!

Learn more at WWW.NADEENHAYDEN.COM

Free books mailed to your young child!

If your child is 4 years old or younger And lives in 44106, 44120, CH-UH, East Cle., Euclid or Shaker, visit heightsfamily.org for registration information
The Fairmount serves up art alongside cocktails

Jayne Sestak

Along with its selection of craft and draft beers, extensive wine list, cocktails and small plates menu, The Fairmount Cocktail Bar also offers an alternate venue in which emerging and established local artists display their work. Every few months, The Fairmount presents a new visual experience that makes use of its indoor and outdoor spaces. “It’s all about creative community building,” said co-owner Jake Orosz.

The current exhibit, the Factory Windows series by Megan Frankenfeld, runs through June 15, with an artist’s reception scheduled for Saturday June 3, 6–9 p.m. Frankenfeld’s series is inspired by the beauty of the Rust Belt, as nature reclaims old factory buildings and bridges throughout the region. Photographic images in intensely saturated tones hover gracefully behind layered windows and rusty framework—remnants of once-thriving industry. Her work has been exhibited in local galleries including the Screw Factory, and in a corporate installation at the Cleveland Hilton Convention Center Hotel.

Mid-June through mid-September, Cleveland native and internationally sought-after photographer Steve Vaccariello returns to The Fairmount after a three-year absence. He began his professional photographic career the 1980s, shooting pictures for Cleveland Scene magazine. He works primarily in New York now, and travels extensively, photographing ballet companies, couture fashion, jewelry, celebrities and exotic destinations. Vaccariello’s color and black-and-white images are crisp and precise, yet he perfects his compositions in the viewfinder and using bold minimal lighting before he ever clicks the shutter. His exhibit will feature a selection of dance, fashion and travel photography.

Orosz described the motivation behind the art exhibits as being “simply to provide the coolest possible experience to our customers, including an opportunity to add an original piece of art to their collections.” The artists receive 100 percent of the sales of their work.

Orosz added that there are “no worries” about parking during the Cedar Fairmount Streetscape construction. Parking is available in the lot behind the building, and there is optional valet service Wednesdays through Fridays, and free weekend on-street metered parking.

The Fairmount is located at 2448 Fairmount Blvd., and is open Monday through Friday, 4 p.m. to 2 a.m., and Saturday and Sunday, 5 p.m. to 2 a.m. For more information, call 216-239-9453 or visit www.thefairmount.net.

Jayne Sestak is co-owner with Jake Orosz of The Fairmount Cocktail Bar.

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‘Jewish Lady Gaga’ at Cain Park on June 25

Bert Stratton

Lipa Schmeltzer returns to Cain Park for the second year on June 25. Last summer he wowed an Evans Amphitheater audience with his Yiddish vocals, backed by local instrumental musicians, and his dance moves. The show’s sponsor, the Workmen’s Circle, liked the show so much, he’s back, which is a rarity: The much, he’s back, which is a rarity: The Cleveland Jewish News has said the Lady Gaga reference had “no worries” about parking during the Cedar Fairmount Streetscape construction. Parking is available in the lot behind the building, and there is optional valet service Wednesdays through Fridays, and free weekend on-street metered parking.

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Jayne Sestak is co-owner with Jake Orosz of The Fairmount Cocktail Bar.

The Fairmount's main bar, with a photo by Steve Vaccariello overhead.

Lipa Schmeltzer

Bert Stratton is a Cleveland Heights resident and the leader of the klezmer band Yiddishe Cup. He writes the Klezmer Guy blog at www.klezmerguy.com.

The Fairmount’s main bar, with a photo by Steve Vaccariello overhead.
New photo exhibit opens June 8 at Foothill Galleries

In Dad’s Chair, a new photography exhibit, will open on June 8 at Foothill Galleries. The photos, by Angelo Merendino, feature the photographer’s friends sitting in what was Merendino’s father’s favorite chair.

The public is invited to the open reception on June 8, 6-9 p.m. The show will be on display through Aug. 3.

Merendino, 43, grew up in the North Hill section of Akron and now lives in Old Brooklyn. After his father died in May 2014, and his mother died in December of that same year, Merendino inherited the chair, which his parents had bought, along with a matching couch, in the 1950s.

“I always wondered what my dad was feeling when he sat in this chair,” Merendino said. “But, in general, I think he was at peace when he was in the chair. Dad was certainly larger than life, with endless energy.”

After his parents died, said Merendino, he started thinking about how they had touched other people’s lives, and how those people stored memories of his parents in their minds. The chair became Merendino’s way to remember as much as he could about his parents. “The chair has a symbolic meaning now,” he said. “And there are many moments when I think my parents were thinking he was at peace when he was in the chair.

“Dad was certainly larger than life, with endless energy.”

Merendino said. “But, in general, I think he was at peace when he was in the chair. Dad was certainly larger than life, with endless energy.”

Before doing so, however, he makes an Internet video for users everywhere, instructing them on how to be “respectable,” because even he has grown weary of their behavior. Despite the subject matter, “Junkie” is both humorous and hopeful, and puts a human face on the issue of opioid addiction.

Greg Vovos is a member of the Playwrights’ GYM, Dobama Theatre’s professional playwriting unit. His most satisfying work has addressed such issues as racism, teen pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, obesity and the challenges of transition back to society after incarceration. Vovos explained, “For me, writing this play was about theater doing its ultimate job: serving the community.”

Director Nathan Motta believes Vovos explained, “For me, writing this play was about theater doing its ultimate job: serving the community.”

Dobama Theatre is located at 2340 Lee Road in Cleveland Heights.

Julie Friedman is the managing director of Dobama Theatre.

Julie Friedman

Dobama Theatre is adding a summer production this year: the World Premiere of Greg Vovos’s “How to Be a Respectable Junkie.”

The play is based on the true story of a recovering heroin addict from Northeast Ohio.

The plot concerns Brian, an addict, who decides to end his life. Before doing so, however, he makes an Internet video for users everywhere, instructing them on how to be “respectable,” because even he has grown weary of their behavior. Despite the subject matter, “Junkie” is both humorous and hopeful, and puts a human face on the issue of opioid addiction.

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Director Nathan Motta believes that the play addresses a vital social issue. “After hours and hours of interviews, Greg has written a moving, heartwarming, funny, and truthful play that tells both the realities of addiction and the hope of recovery. Given the opioid epidemic in this country, particularly in our region, this piece is timely and important,” Motta said.

Dobama’s production features Christopher Bohan, seen previously this season as Black Stache in “Peter and the Starcatcher” and Sam in “The Flick.”

A preview performance will be held on Wednesday, June 14, 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, June 18, at 7:30 p.m.; advance reservations for that performance can be made by agreeing to pay $5 or more per ticket.

“How to Be a Respectable Junkie” will be performed Thursdays through Sundays, June 14 through July 2.

The play contains the depiction of drug use, smoking and adult language. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.dobama.org or call the box office at 216-932-3396.

Dobama Theatre is located at 2340 Lee Road in Cleveland Heights.

Julie Friedman is the managing director of Dobama Theatre.
'It was 50 years ago today . . .'  

David Budin  
Two things happened on Friday, June 2, 1967, that made me really happy: The Beatles released their album Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band in America, and I quit high school.  
I had been planning to quit school on the first day I was legally allowed to—May 21, my 18th birthday—but there were still a few Heights Choir events, like our spring concert, our album recording, and our annual dinner and awards night. And since the choir was the one and only reason I ever went to high school, I stayed enrolled to finish all of the choir activities.  
I had been trying to quit school since the ninth grade. I often tried to reason with my parents, especially my father, that since I knew I was going to have a career in music, it would make more sense for me to get started on it, instead of wasting time in school.  
That day, my unit principal, John Farrinacci, called me into his office. I was no stranger to that office. I had been booked into the office staff, who showed it in to the office staff, who showed it to Mrs. Bica for verification, and she, naturally, disavowed it.  
The next day, my unit principal, John Farrinacci, called me into his office. I was no stranger to that office. I sat down and he said, “We’ve got you on a forgery rap.” I said, “I have never been watching 1940s crime movies?” He produced the note and flung it toward me, growling, “Whaddya have to say about this?”  
I said, “Oh. I didn’t write that.” Gallagher did.” He said, “No, you did it.” I said, “Well, I skipped the class and used this note, but, for the record, I didn’t write it.” He said, “No, you wrote it.” I said, “What’s the difference who wrote it? I already admitted that I used it and skipped the class.” He said, “You’re not leaving here till you admit that you wrote it.” I said, “Can I at least go home and pack a bag?”  
I sat in the outer office for three full school days, not going to any classes. That was the punishment for someone who didn’t want to go to any classes.  
That’s how I spent my high school years.  
One time, Mr. Farrinacci saw me in the front hall in between classes and yelled, “Hey, Budin. Can’t you afford a haircut?” Back then, a boy’s hair could not touch the back of his shirt collar or his ears. I shouted back, “No.” He yelled, “C’m’ere.” I went over to him and he handed me two dollars and said, “Don’t come back till you get a haircut.” I took the two dollars and went across the street to Wally’s Pool Hall, beneath the Cedar Lee Theatre, and spent the two dollars, brushed my hair so that it wasn’t touching my ears or collar and went back to school.  
Mr. Farrinacci did the same thing with my friend Gallagher—told him not to come back till he got his hair cut. That was 50 years ago and Gallagher hasn’t been back yet. I have a feeling he’s not coming back. His hair cut. That was 50 years ago and Gallagher hasn’t been back yet. I have a feeling he’s not coming back.  
So on Friday, June 2, I finally got out of there. I had been booked to perform at a folk club near Chautauqua, New York, for the first three weekends in June. I sang and played guitar, and my friend and Heights classmate Walton Mendelson accompanied me on flute and harmonica. The club, the Red Lyon, was owned by a Heights High English teacher named Tom Irish.  
That afternoon, I turned in my official quitting papers to the school office and the three of us piled into Mr. Irish’s sports car and drove to Chautauqua, listening to the just-released Sgt. Pepper’s album on the radio all the way there. Rock radio stations everywhere were just playing the whole album, over and over.  
That day was, up to that point, the greatest day of my life.

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

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