Heights High reopens on Aug. 21

Scott Wortman

“Af ter years of planning, designing, moving and renovating, it is finally time to open the new Heights High,” said CH-UH Superintendent Talisa Dixon. “We are looking forward to welcoming the community to tour the building at our grand opening in September. Heights High will be a showpiece for the community and provide our students with a building that is designed for 21st-century education.”

Cleveland Heights High School will reopen its doors to students on Aug. 21 for the start of the 2017–18 school year. The building, originally constructed in 1926, has undergone an extensive transformation over the past two years. The most dramatic change is the removal of the 1960s-era science wing, returning the look of the front courtyard to that of a collegiate quadrangle, with restoration of the north elevation and south elevation.

The Heights community is invited to celebrate the reopening of Heights High on Sunday, Sept. 10, 1–4 p.m. The community open house will include tours of the building, a dedication ceremony, commemorative merchandise and other offerings in conjunction with the Heights Schools Foundation.

Residents share ideas for Coventry site

Connor O’Brien

On July 27, the city of Cleveland Heights held a public meeting on the potential sale and development of the Coventry School site, which includes Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Park and Playground. The forum brought together members of Cleveland Heights City Council, the city manager and the city’s economic development director, as well as residents who voiced their opinions about, and hopes for, the Coventry site.

Attendees wanted to discuss what types of development might occur, how development would impact quality of life, how much influence a developer would have, whom would benefit from the development, and consideration of any similar projects that nearby cities might have undertaken.

Tanisha Briley, city manager, assured residents that any developer with whom the city may partner will not be able to tell the city what to do with the Coventry site. Briley said that “the train has not left the station,” meaning that no official decisions on the site have been made, and noted that when they are, residents will be informed. She stated that the goal of the RFQ/RFP process was “to stimulate creativity from the development community,” and that the city had set no minimum economic impact to be generated by development.

The fate of Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Park was a topic that came up repeatedly. Many residents praised the park, describing it as “a gateway to the community” and “more than just a park.”

Several residents who recently moved to Cleveland Heights claimed that the community “and ‘more than just a park.’

The committee planned the forum as an outcome of a listening campaign about the concerns of Cleveland Heights residents, in which housing issues were identified as a top priority in the city. Specific issues include housing values that fell during the recession and have only recently begun to rebound, and the impact on neighborhoods of vacant, blighted and tax-delinquent houses.

While the GCC Cleveland Heights Housing Committee has developed relationships with city and county officials to support change, the municipal court plays an important role in housing issues.

At the forum, candidates James Costello, Nadeen Hayden and DeAngelo Little will respond to specific questions developed by the committee that focus on the court’s impact on housing issues.

Forum topics will include how to effectively enforce housing standards, how to implement timely follow-up and enforcement of violation corrections, and how to collaborate with other city divisions and outside agencies to support the community’s role in addressing housing issues.

The committee plans to address how to implement, monitor and enforce new ID rules, and to address the impact that court cases have on housing issues.
Heights Observer candidate policy

With the November election approach-
ing, the Heights Observer is publish-
ing its policy for contributions by can-
didates for local office.

As a community newspaper com-
mitt ed to equal access for everyone, the Observer is unique among publica-
tions in providing opportunity for any member of the Cleveland Heights and University Heights communities to raise and discuss issues of local interest.

At election time, however, this commitment creates a challenge in managing the finite space that is available for community members who are running for public office.

The policy, approved by the FutureHeights Board of Directors, is designed to address that challenge.

It states the following:

• The August–November issues of the printed publication will not carry any editorial contributions from known candidates for office.

• During this pre-election period, Observer contributors who are not running for office will produce any coverage of election issues.

• During this pre-election period, all candidate contributions of news or opinion will continue to be accepted for publication online at www.futureheights.org.

• Candidates seeking to place information in the August–November printed editions of the Observer may do so through advertising space purchased from the Observer.

The Heights Observer and its parent organization, FutureHeights, do not endorse candidates.

Thanks to all the supporters of Coventry School tenants

To the Editor:

I am the board president of ART-FUL, the newest tenant of Coventry School.

When ARTFUL chose the space we now occupy at Coventry School, we were excited by the fact that we were going to be surrounded by such wonderful and experienced organizations. As a start-up nonprofit, we felt our proximity to these other tenants would be a huge benefit as we grew. But we could never have imagined how truly significant this would be.

In a few short months we built our walls, leased our studios to many wonderful artists, and formed partnerships with several of these extraordinary groups. The brain-power housed under this roof is an invaluable resource, not only to us, but to the entire Cleveland Heights community, and beyond.

While our future is in question, we are determined to move forward with our programming, and continue to develop these blossoming relationships with our fellow tenants and the merchants up and down Coventry Road.

We are honored to be in such good company and thrilled to be part of such an important part of the community. The outsourcing of support from residents has been truly inspiring, and we hope that there are good things in store for everyone. We will continue to provide our services to our artists, grow our programming, launch our classes, and cultivate new relationships that bring value to our organization, the local economy, and to the lives of our ARTFUL artists.

On behalf of our executive direc-
tor, Shannon Morris, and the entire ARTFUL board, we thank you.

Brady Dindia
ARTFUL board president
University Heights

About the Observer

The Heights Observer is not an or-
dinary newspaper. It is a nonprofit publica-
tion 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 publi-
cation. Anyone in University Heights or Cleveland Heights is welcome to contribute regularly, occasionally or even just once.

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

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

To make a submission of any kind, go to www.futureheights.org and click on “Member Center” at the left.

• For information about writing style, article length, etc., click on “Become an Observer” at the left. For questions that aren’t answered there, call the FutureHeights office at 216-570-1423 or e-mail info@futureheights.org.

Articles to be considered for the September issue must be submitted by Aug. 14. We publish some articles on our website, so if you have a piece ready for publication, please submit it online.

Greater Cleveland Congrega-
tions is a non-partisan congrega-
tion of faith communities and partner orga-
nizations in Cuyahoga County, work-
ing together for social justice and as a catalyst for systematic change. Nine faith communities and partner orga-
nizations from Cleveland Heights are members of GCC.

Jean Syalik is a Cleveland Heights resident and a member of the Cleveland Heights Housing Committee of Greater Cleveland Congregations, which is sponsoring this event.
Coventry P.E.A.C.E. park is an essential community asset

Erick Kauffman

The Coventry P.E.A.C.E. playground was created 23 years ago by a group of passionate and engaged citizens, in collaboration with the school board and city of Cleveland Heights.

Since that time, Coventry P.E.A.C.E., a nonprofit organization, has endured. Its volunteer members are stewards of the park, caring for the grounds, gardens and play equipment through biannual park work days.

Coventry park is really a campus, as it encompasses the multi-use Coventry School building, the park itself, the ball field, the P.E.A.C.E. arch, the Coventry Village Library and the south entrance to Coventry Village.

The park serves at times as a soccer and Frisbee field, a summer movie theater, an amphitheater for Shakespeare plays, a great sledding hill for little kids, a gathering place for a drum circle, a concert venue, a place for outdoor yoga classes, a reading garden for library patrons, a place to meet neighbors, a place to make friends and a place where one can just “be.” Per square foot it is the most-used ground in Cleveland Heights.

Coventry park is a stunning green space. Green space is vital to our well-being as individuals and as a community. Once we lose it, we don’t get green space back, ever.

Coventry park is a vital asset to Cleveland Heights. It is one of those things that makes Cleveland Heights—“Cleveland Heights.” Loss of the park would harm the soul of our community.

The members of Coventry P.E.A.C.E. are committed to the preservation of the park and green space. We look forward to working with the school board, the city and other citizens to find a way to make the park and green space an enduring asset of our community.

The future of this great space will depend on the involvement of engaged community members. I hope that you will be one of them.

Erick Kauffman, a Cleveland Heights resident, is president of Coventry P.E.A.C.E., parent of Heights High graduates, a family physician and community health center medical director.
Experiences are key to learning

Ari Klein

This summer, my wife and I are taking our first vacation without kids in 23 years. We have been fortunate to have taken our daughters all around the world. They have experienced cities, mountains, oceans, museums, and more. Travel enables people to see the world in new and different ways, and provides background for new learning.

We also exposed them to whatever enriching things we could in the Cleveland area, visiting parks, museums, zoos, going to concerts and plays, music lessons, camps, and much more. Our daughters had every possible advantage and incorporated their varied experiences into their learning in and out of school.

I recently visited one of our union-sponsored classes, put on by teachers for teachers, where there was a discussion about early-age reading. What would a first-grader be able to understand? What contextual clues would help one to comprehend the text?

The examples were easy for an adult to decipher and understand, but only because our experience helps us to do so, even when we don’t realize it. The class participants picked apart various sentences and discussed what knowledge the reader would need in order to understand the text. One example referenced an art gallery. If a child sounding out that word had never seen an art exhibit, the child would probably not understand it.

One of the teachers mentioned that he has had students in Cleveland Heights, visited a museum, or seen Lake Erie, and other colleagues concurred. When we talk about poverty affecting children’s poor scores on standardized tests, this lack of access to enrichment opportunities for many of our children is one of the root causes.

Our students are as smart as any, but many do not have the same opportunities for enrichment that my own kids had. Their parents or guardians want all that is best for their children, but may not have the means or backgrounds to be able to give it to them.

For many of our students, school is tough because they do not have the reference of experience [to understand] basic contextual clues that are inherent in even the simplest of texts.

This is not an excuse, but a reality [indicative] of the hard work our teachers must do every day to fill in these [experiential] gaps as much as possible. This is why teaching reading and writing is not a simple task, but one [that requires] enormous attention to detail.

Picking apart a basic sentence and being able to help students [gain whatever] hidden knowledge is [needed to understand it] so important. Teachers must challenge every preconceived notion of a child’s experience. Imagine teaching children with identified special needs, some of whom are new to this country and to English, and children like mine, all in the same class.

My wife and I are proud of our children, and know that we have been fortunate in being able to offer them a wide variety of enriching experiences. Our children grew up in a home [full] of books, with parents who have master’s degrees and time to spend with them. We do not love our children more than parents in our community who have not been able to provide their children [with similar experiences].

Our students are hungry to learn and excel, but grow frustrated at times. This is our biggest challenge—one that requires flexibility and resources in a time where less support is offered by the state and federal governments.

We don’t need the next “new educational thing” that will fix us. We need more people in our community to understand the impact of poverty, and to volunteer in our schools.

We also need to continue our work in the school district developing partnerships with community agencies that offer school-based services to broaden opportunities for our students. Poverty does not have to mean there is no hope, but it does mean that our students need more resources and time.

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

Carla Rautenberg and Deborah Van Kleef

Every human language is constantly changing, as people grapple with explaining, describing and understanding our world. This is a good thing; languages that never change die. The words we choose to label ideas, objects and people evolve, and our usage changes the words themselves.

Of course, as we are all aware, this is not strictly an organic process. Powerful players go to great lengths (with great means at their disposal) to change the meanings of words in ways both subtle and not.

For instance, we now have the “sharing economy.” This moniker is used to describe relatively new arrangements whereby people rent out space (in their homes, in the arrangements whereby people rent out space) or charge for services (providing taxi service in their homes, in the Lyft). If this co-optation of “sharing” to denote commercial relationships sticks, it will be interesting to see how we eventually describe buying and selling. It’s unlikely most of us see ourselves as engaging in commerce when we borrow a book or research a subject—or when we vote “Yes” on a levy to fund library operations. Do we regard library-using citizens as supporter and funder, “patron” are supporter and funder, or as sales associates? Heights and library-using citizens are both “library patrons.” This is despite the fact that primary meanings of “customer” denotes a commercial relationship of buying and selling. It is unlikely most of us see ourselves as engaging in commerce when we borrow a book or research a subject—or when we vote “Yes” on a levy to fund library operations. Do we regard library-using citizens as supporter and funder, “patron” are supporter and funder, or as sales associates? Heights and library-using citizens are both “library patrons.”

Examples move in the other direction, too, when commercial language is adopted to designate personal, philosophical or civic concepts: charities solicit “investments” in their good works; we speak without irony of “the marketplace of ideas,” and we are no longer “patients” but health care consumers.

Is questioning the way words are chosen and used just engaging in semantics? Maybe, but semantics really matter. Try to envision someone undergoing heart surgery as a health care consumer. A patient on the operating table deserves our sympathy and care. Does a consumer?

At many public libraries, including ours in Cleveland Heights and University Heights, we are now designated “customers” rather than “library patrons.” This is despite the fact that primary meanings of “patron” are supporter and funder, and library-using citizens are both of these. The word “customer” denotes a commercial relationship of buying and selling. It is unlikely most of us see ourselves as engaging in commerce when we borrow a book or research a subject—or when we vote “Yes” on a levy to fund library operations. Do we regard library-using citizens as supporter and funder, “patron” are supporter and funder, or as sales associates? Heights and library-using citizens are both “library patrons.”

Let’s be thoughtful about the words we choose to describe human relationships and public institutions. Not everything can be bought and sold. Let’s try to use language that makes that clear.

Updates to past columns:

“The Coventry School site: In whose interest?” (July 2017): On June 26, we attended a joint meeting of the CH-UH Board of Education and CH City Council, at which City Manager Tanisha Britley announced that the city’s RFQ for development of the Coventry School property now includes a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) stating that current tenants of the building will be permitted occupancy until at least June 30, 2018. This alleviates the immediate threat to those organizations’ announced programming and operations for the 2017–18 season. A public forum to discuss possible plans for Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Park and the Coventry School building was held on July 27. According to city council, it will not issue the RFQ/RFP before it meets on Sept. 11.

“Take back the CH Building Department” (July 2016): At the July 3 CH Council Committee of the Whole meeting, Cleveland Heights Council Member Kahil Seren mentioned that he has been discussing with a member of the South Euclid City Council the possible establishment of a regional building commission to satisfy the building inspection requirements of several area municipalities. Seren said he will have more to report on the subject soon. Last year, CH Mayor Cheryl Stephens and Council Member Carol Roe had expressed interest in this idea as well. Now that the city has contracted out its building operations to SAFEBuilt, a Colorado-based corporation, for a full year, council’s public health and safety committee plans to evaluate SAFEBuilt’s performance.

Our column is archived here: www.heightsobserver.org/read/opinion/blog/columns/heights-of-democracy/

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.

YOUR VOTE COUNTS: Tuesday, November 7

RE-ELECT Melissa Yasinow

RETAINT Mike Ungar

YASINOW - UNGAR
Cleveland Heights City Council: WORKING FOR YOU!

Paid for by Yasinow For Council, Treasurer Jennifer Jaketic, 2964 Washington Blvd., Cleveland Hts., Ohio 44118
Cleveland Heights High School graduated 355 students in May. The Class of 2017 received awards from colleges and universities in addition to local community organizations and families. The new graduates will be attending the following colleges and universities.

- Allegheny College
- Baruch College
- Bard College
- Bowling Green State University
- Brown/Applied Technical Institute
- Case Western Reserve University
- Central State University
- Cleveland State University
- College of Creative Studies
- College of Wooster
- Connecticut Community College
- DePaul University
- Duke University
- Eastern Michigan University
- Hampshire College
- Hocking Community College
- Hiram College
- Howard University
- John Carroll University
- Kent State University
- Kennesaw State University
- Lake Erie College
- Loyola University Chicago
- Miami University
- North Carolina Central University
- Notre Dame College
- Oberlin College
- Ohio University
- Ohio Wesleyan University
- Owens Community College
- Prairie View A&M University
- Queens University
- Smith College
- The Evergreen State College
- The Ohio State University
- Trinity College
- United States Army
- United States Marines
- University of Akron
- University of Cincinnati
- University of Massachusetts Boston
- University of Michigan
- University of Notre Dame
- University of Pittsburgh
- University of Toledo
- Western Michigan University
- Wisconsin University
- Wright State University
- Xavier University
- Yeshiva University

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University Heights City Council Meeting highlights
JUNE 19, 2017
Present were Mayor Susan Infeld, Vice Mayor Susan Pardes, and council members Pamela Cameron, Philip Erel, John Rasch, Michale Weiss, and Mark building commissioner. Stevens Sims arrived after roll call, and Erel left during public comments. Also present were Law Director Luke McCormick, Finance Director William Sheehan, and Clerk of Council Kelly Thomas. The meeting was held from 7 p.m. to approximately 11:15 p.m.

Public comments
Shooting on Silsby Road: Multiple residents addressed council regarding a shooting, which occurred at 3750 Silsby Road at about 1:30 a.m. [on a] Sunday morning. This was the third shooting in University Heights in six months. Nobody was injured, but bullets penetrated a neighboring house and a car. Police Chief Steve Hammert reported that the main target of the shooting was a renter who moved out the next day. Tony Connolly of State Farm asked if there are any rules for landlords of rental units. Hammert said that the criminal nuisance abatement laws take effect with two or more prosecutable cited violations in one year.

Firefighters: A Cedarbrook Road resident called the vote of no confidence by the firefighters against Chief Douglas Zook a low mark in the city’s history. She advocated that he be removed immediately and that training and services be restored. Mayor Infeld and Councilman Sims asked for copies of documents that were being distributed in the community by the firefighters. Law Director McCormick reminded council that, as the firefighters are about to begin negotiating their contract, this might be an effort to engage in public negotiations.

Win Weaver of Jackson Boulevard read a prepared statement discussing finances and safety. On behalf of the taxpayers she asked for answers regarding the high number of runs to East Cleveland, the lack of equipment upgrades, staffing shortages, and the delays of paperwork for the 2013 FEMA grant which could result in penalties. She questioned why the city’s staffing levels are so far below the maximum levels per the Ohio Revised Code. She also asked that the mayor’s role be separated from the safety director role and for minimum staffing levels to be written into the ordinances—not just the maximum, as it is currently. At this point council approved a motion by Councilman Wasmann that an item be added to the agenda to discuss these allegations.

Keith Gannen, president of the firefighters’ union and a 30-year veteran of the force, addressed council, saying that the force has always been held in high regard by neighborhood departments, but that Zook has declined to participate with neighboring city’s issues when other communities have stepped forward. He also said that Zook declined to apply for the FEMA grant for training, and has no plan to replace aging equipment, including the city’s ladder truck.

Building commissioner sworn in James McMullen was sworn in as the new building commissioner. He has been the acting commissioner, and previously served as building commissioner in other communities.

Swensons restaurant Swensons’ representatives gave a presentation of their building design and expectations. The project took steps to reduce noise and lighting spread beyond the property. They also expanded the parking spaces for Jack’s Deli, and took care to design a logical traffic pattern to reduce backups and confusion. The primary concern from council regarding cars making a right turn on Fernway and increasing traffic into the residential streets. Police Chief Hammert reported that he had spent a few hours counting cars in the lot and found that very few turned right.

He and the representatives of Swensons preferred that no restrictions be made at this time, noting that signs could be added later if there was an issue. It was noted that people who want to exit onto Green Road will usually go through the shopping center to the traffic signal onto Green instead of taking Fernway. The people using Fernway Road are the residents of the neighborhood. The design was approved as presented. [The LWV observer left the meeting at this point. A break was called at 9:45 p.m. The observer reviewed the remaining agenda items with the clerk of council. The Sun Press published an extensive article on June 22 regarding the added agenda item to discuss concerns of the firefighters.]

3886 Silsby Road Council declared the home at 3886 Silsby Road to be a public nuisance due to its severely deteriorated condition. This enables the city to move forward with having the house torn down.

Next meeting
The next council meeting will take place on Tuesday, Sept. 5, 7 p.m., unless a special meeting is scheduled.

LWV Observer: Wendy S. Deuring.
Workshop considers Triangle district’s future

Brenda H. May

More than 50 people gathered at Disciples Christian Church on July 9 to describe, in words and sketches, how the Triangle district could be redeveloped. The business district, sometimes referred to as Center Mayfield, comprises a triangular area around the meeting points of Mayfield, Noble and Warrensville Center roads, and is characterized by light industry, restaurants, insurance agencies, personal grooming and home furnishings stores, repair and specialty shops, and apartments.

Instructure includes Noble Elementary School and Noble Neighborhood Library, anchor the district, and city of Cleveland Heights-owned properties cover significant acreage. Among the city’s holdings in the district are an impound lot, the sewer department’s offices and service yard, CH Police Precinct number 4, a carpenter shop, a salt shed, a former business—storage yard and a small office building.

The large vacant parcels in the Triangle have recently inspired some to wonder how the entire district could be reimagined. There are three vacant lots of more than an acre apiece—a city-owned lot at Glenwood and Noble roads, a large parcel to the rear of the storage yard at South Noble Road, and the recently cleared site of the building that housed the Center Mayfield Theatre. The two privately owned lots are for sale.

The “Envision a New Triangle District” workshop was opened by a leader of Noble Neighbors, the nonprofit community group. Roger Bliss, the FutureHeights (FH) Civic Engagement Committee’s co-chair, discussed urban design principles, particularly pedestrian-scale features and practices. Tim Boland, the city’s economic development director, described the financial tools the city uses to foster development, and Suzanne Meltzer, of RDL Architects, set out the framework for workshop activities.

Under a string of triangular pen- nant banners, participants formed four working groups which were led by Meltzer and Bliss, along with Gregory Solits of RDL Architects, City Architectural’s Alex Pesta, and FH Civic Engagement Committee member Lisa Hong.

The association for office, retail and light industry, parking considerations and the place of placemaking showed up in the small groups’ presentations. Participants also considered how the district might provide opportunities for various populations, such as the aging, refugees, teens and children, artists, workers in skilled trades, and employees of the district’s existing businesses.

Workshop participants wanted to see the neighborhood beautified, with gardens, storefront renova- tions, gathering spaces, and mural or sculpture installations. One group suggested triangle-shaped arches over the streets, to designate the Triangle as a gateway to the city. Every group expressed concern about the city’s owned buildings and properties.

The disrepair of the building that fronts Warrensville Center Road, and the visibility of the materials piled behind it, were unanimously considered deterrents to develop- ment.

In addition to Boland, other city of Cleveland Heights officials who attended were Richmond Heights planning director, and City Council members Carol Roe, Michael Unger and Mayor Cheryl Stephens. They joined in discussions about how city services could be restructured to better support new development in the district.

Workshop participants said that they felt energized by the intensity and imagination they expected in their work groups. Triangle-shaped cook- ies, chips and cut fruit prepared by Jeanette Carr contributed to the sense of whimsy, creativity and hopefulness, and lively discussions continued during the after-workshop party at Christopher’s Pub, a Triangle business.

Brenda H. May is one of the leaders of Noble Neighbors (www.nobleneighbors.com), and opened the Triangle district workshop.

Resident Nofelle Celeste delivered a petition containing 892 signatures in support of keeping the park a part of the community. She stated that the groups housed in the Coventry building are “not tenants, but partners,” and called what they have created in the community “unique” and “organic.”

Other residents said they like the Coventry site the way it is, and suggested that the city look into ways to support the groups. They questioned whether redeveloping it into something new would be beneficial. Evie Rosen-Borris, a longtime CH resident and champion of the “community needs an arts center.” She described the building as a gathering place, “the soul of our community” and implored the city to “please leave this space.”

The city held a public forum in the wake of the CH-UH City School District’s May 10 announcement that it would pursue the sale of the Coventry School site, once home to Coventry Elementary School. The district closed the school in 2007, and it has since become a hub for various community organizations, all but one of which are nonprofit. Current tenants are Ensemble Theatre, Family Connections, Artful Cleveland, Reaching Heights, FutureHeights, Lake Erie Ink, Urban Oak School and Coventry Children’s Center.

On June 5, CH City Council authorized the execution of a non-binding letter of intent with the school district, according to which the dis- trict will sell the property to the city for $1 once a developer is selected.

The school district has estimated that $1 million dollars in repairs for the Coventry site will be needed in the near future, including a new roof, new wooden play structure for the park, plumbing and HVAC updates, and new windows.

In the wake of its decision to sell the site, the district opted to convert its Coventry building ten- ants to month-to-month leases at the beginning of July, rather than renew their yearly leases. This cre- ated uncertain futures for tenants and, along with other members of the community, they began to speak out during Cleveland Heights City Council meetings in June. Council requested that the city enter into an agreement with the tenants that would guarantee their ability to stay in the building through June 30, 2018.

The city intends to do so through a Memorandum of Understanding which tenants are waiting to receive.

The tenants are working with their boards of directors, and other community volunteers with expertise in city planning, architecture and marketing, to research the viability of developing the Coventry site as an arts, culture and education center.

The group, which also is working with Coventry P.E.A.C.E. (the volunteer group that built and maintains the playground), Heights Libraries and the Coventry Village Special Im- provement District, has branded itself Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Campus.

The city has invited Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Campus to present its ideas to CH City Council on Sept. 11. At the July 17 city council meet- ing, Jack Valancy, a member of the Ensemble Theatre Board of Direc- tors and spokesperson for the group, addressed council members. He thanked council for giving Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Campus “the time to evaluate our needs and develop our vision for a redeveloped Covent- ry P.E.A.C.E. Campus that would include an art center, Coventry P.E.A.C.E. playground and park, and medium-density housing compatible with the Coventry neighborhood.”

Valancy stated that his group has collected 242 surveys from Coventry neighbors to gather data on use of the playground, parking considerations and building organizations’ programs.

An online survey is here: http://coventrypacecampus.org/sign-up/take-our-survey/.

Three girls, Sophia Ahmadadeen, 11, Jana Gustin, 11, and Chloe Gustin, 8, also addressed council on July 17. They expressed their sadness at learning that the site would be sold, and said that they had collected 122 signatures from neighbors who want to keep the play- ground and park “an active community space.”

An online version of the petition is here: http://coventrypacecampus.org/sign-up/sign-the-petition-to-save-c-e- c-park-playground/.

Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Campus has created a new website for the Coventry school building, and a Facebook page.

Video of the public forum will air on the city’s cable channel, Channel 20, at 7 p.m., beginning July 31, and is posted on the city’s YouTube channel at https://www.youtube.com/Cleve- landHeightsOH.

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

Kim Sergio Inglis

The city of Cleveland Heights announced in a July 17 press release that Mary Trupo has been hired as its director of communications and community engagement.

Trupo comes to the city from Washington, D.C., where she most recently was senior advisor and director in the Office of Public Affairs for the International Trade Administration (ITA) in the U.S. Department of Commerce. She has previously worked in communications for the National Association of Realtors and the American Public Transportation Association.

The press release states that Trupo is skilled in the development of effective marketing, outreach and communication strategies. In her last position she oversaw the production, marketing and distribution of newsletters, Web content, talking points and speeches.

New Spirit Revival Center

Ken Goldberg

For most of its life, the building at 3170 Mayfield Road was Temple on the Heights (aka Temple B’nai Jeshurun), a Conservative Jewish congregation, and one of the two earliest synagogues to be situated in a Cleveland suburb.

Indeed, B’nai Jeshurun marked the first stage of Jewish community migration away from the city. Recognized for its 12-sided central dome, the building features a multi-faceted red tile roof and two- and a half story arcade entry loggia, beautifully accenting the eclectic building which shows both Byzantine and Romanesque influences.

With its later, matching chapel wing, here is a sprawling extravaganza which, due to pressure from the Rockefeller family, was nearly constructed at a site in East Cleveland, at Coventry and Superior roads. Charles R. Greco designed the original section of the building, completed in 1928. Braverman & Halperin designed the 1956 wing. The building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and was designated a Cleveland Heights Landmark in 1987.

In the 1980s, after the Jewish congregation moved to Pepper Pike, Paran Management redeveloped the property into The Civic. It housed offices for arts-related organizations, a live theater, space for entertainment venues, and space where several Christian congregations held services. Eventually, New Spirit Revival, one of those congregations, purchased and took over the building.

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.
Ribbon-cutting celebrates remodeled Turtle Park

Connor O’Brien

On July 2, a ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrated the remodeling of Turtle Park.

Also known as the Euclid Tot Lot, Turtle Park sits on the corner of Euclid Heights Boulevard, Hampshire Road and Overlook Road. The park is designed primarily for children ages 2–5, and is known for its signature turtle structure, which sits in the middle of the park.

In March 2017, Cleveland Heights City Council approved a contract of just over $66,000 to remodel the park. The Cleveland Heights Parks and Recreation Department funded the work, which included installing new seating, playground equipment and shading, while maintaining the park’s original layout.

Cleveland Heights residents, members of the city’s Parks and Recreation Department, and other city staff attended the July 2 ceremony that introduced the newly remodeled Turtle Park to the public.

CH Council members Melissa Yasinow and Michael Ungar both noted that the remodeled park will have a positive impact on the community as a whole, and especially on the surrounding neighborhood, with its younger demographic.

Joe McRae, director of CH parks and recreation, thanked the city and the community for their support of the remodeling.

McRae pointed out a few new features of Turtle Park, including the shade canopy, which received a positive reaction at the ribbon-cutting ceremony and was a direct request from the community.

He also noted that the sandbox now has artifacts in it for children to find, and that the there is a new turtle, which kids in the community are rumored to be calling “Shelly.”

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.
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Library Renovation continued from page 1

With much of the outside work finished, Heights Libraries’ contractor, Regency Construction, has turned its efforts to the interior of the building: drywall installation in the upper and lower levels, and installation of the elevator and air handling units, ceramic tile on the walls of the lower level restrooms, and the ceiling grid.

The sprinkler line has also been installed, and the work has passed the mandated pressure test and city inspection.

Final site work, including concrete sidewalks, curbs, asphalt, installation of fencing and final grading, should be completed in August.

For updates on the University Heights Library renovation, visit www.heightslibrary.org.

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

A new covered back entrance will make the library easily accessible from the parking lot.

The University Heights branch of Heights Libraries renovation includes new small study rooms and an office for the branch manager.

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tectural aspects of the building, such as the iconic clock tower, brick facade and ornate auditorium, have been retained through the school’s transformation into a contemporary learning space.

Completely modernized from the ground up, classrooms and labs are now state-of-the-art, while musical, performing and visual arts all have brand new, dedicated spaces. Student athletes and physical education classes will have access to the latest athletic facilities and equipment, including a community-accessible swimming pool. (The school district and the city of Cleveland Heights are still working out the details on community access to the pool.)

With the high school project complete, the school district is now renovating Monticello and Roxboro middle schools, to complete the first part of Phase 1 of its Master Facilities Plan. The renovations will ensure that the middle school buildings operate more efficiently, with planned updates to the HVAC, electrical systems and technology. Each classroom will receive new air conditioning, flooring, ceilings and paint in order to enhance the learning environment for students.

During construction, middle school students will be consolidated into one Heights Middle School on the Wiley Campus until Monticello and Roxboro schools reopen in August 2019.

“I know there has been much discussion about the upcoming renovations to our middle schools,” said Dixon. “We have looked at all of our options and determined that the best path forward is to continue with the modest renovations planned for Monticello and Roxboro. The work may not be to the extent of what was envisioned several years ago, but I believe the renovations will make a difference in improving the educational space we provide for our students.”

“Even in the midst of all the attention afforded the building projects, our staff remains focused on providing an excellent education for each and every student. This month, our high schoolers will be in a newly renovated and modernized building, our middle schoolers will come together on one IB-authorized [International Baccalaureate] campus, and our youngest students will be starting their journey as members of Tiger Nation.”

Scott Wirtman is the supervisor of communications for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.
The four-story atrium at the west entrance faces the football field and enables large amounts of natural light to filter into the building.

A side view of the building showcases the sports field and the new additions to the rear of the building.

The historic clock tower has been restored. The detailed painting in the high school’s historic auditorium has been cleaned, and the flat sections painted. The walls have been painted with complementary neutral colors.

Each classroom features new furniture, a state-of-the-art sound system for voice amplification, and a dedicated heating and cooling system for energy efficiency.

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HRRC is always looking for new instructors

David Brock

As fall approaches, the Home Repair Resource Center (HRRC) is planning a large selection of home improvement classes for inside and outside the house. HRRC's classes help homeowners plan for insulation and the house. HRRC's classes help contractors to meet prospective clients, as approximately 1,000 people enroll in HRRC's home repair classes over the course of a year. Word-of-mouth can be a valuable tool for any contractor.

Retirees often make the best instructors. So, if you've done this type of work in the past, HRRC would love to have you. It can be a terrific chance to give back to the community and pass along some of your knowledge.

In the end, it's a win-win-win opportunity for area residents, HRRC, and the volunteer teachers themselves.

If you or someone you know would be a good fit for this volunteer opportunity, contact HRRC at 216-381-6100, ext. 16, or e-mail dbrock@hrrc-ch.org.

David Brock is education coordinator for the Home Repair Resource Center.
I have devoted my career as an attorney to gaining the experience and knowledge to be an effective and qualified judge. I am a compassionate and dedicated citizen of Cleveland Heights. I ask for your support and to remember HAYDEN FOR HEIGHTS this November! Learn more at WWW.NADEENHAYDEN.COM
BETHS offers programs in advance of High Holy Days

Joe Buchwald Gelles

The Jewish High Holy Days are around the corner, and Beth El-The Heights Synagogue (BETHS) invites the community to a series of three events in preparation for them.

First up is a Kabbalat Shabbat (welcoming the sabbath) service and dinner on Friday, Aug. 18. Miriam Giardina will speak on “A Convert Looks at Tishah-b’Av.” (T’Shuvah means return or repentance, among other things.)

The service will start at 6:30 p.m., with teaching starting at 7 p.m., followed by candle-lighting, dinner, and more teaching. The dinner is primarily vegetarian, usually with one fish dish, and the cost is $10. Those who want to attend should register at the synagogue website, www.bethelheights.org.

On the weekend of Sept. 8-9, Beth El will present two programs. Both will look at the machsor—the rich but often bewildering prayer book for the High Holy Days—and both will feature singing.

Kabbalat Shabbat on Friday night, Sept. 8, will feature teaching by Barry Starr, on “Not Perfect, But Awakened: The Liturgy of Rosh HaShanah.” (Same times and format as the Aug. 18 event, featuring another tasty vegetarian-friendly dinner. Register at www.bethelheights.org.)

The next day, Saturday, Sept. 9, Beth El will host a Lunch-and-Learn. Lunch will start at about 1 p.m., following the service. The teaching, starting at about 1:30 p.m., will again feature Barry Starr as teacher, on the topic “Not Perfect but Forgiven: The Liturgy of Yom Kippur.”

This program is free and there is no need to register, but non-members are asked to call the shul to make luncheon reservations.

Both will again offer free High Holy Day tickets, for the 20th year in a row. The shul is an independent minyan, both traditional and egalitarian. (That sounds contradictory, but we manage to work it out.)

For more information, call the synagogue voicemail at 216-320-9667, or send an e-mail to info@bethelheights.org.

Joe Buchwald Gelles is a book publisher and graphic designer, and a 26-year Beth El member. He and his wife, Mia Buchwald Gelles, have three children: Ruth, 31, Noam, 19, and Shani, 18.

Grant funds improve cycling safety for Heights students

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Volunteers organize to care for Cedar Lee mini park

Greg Donley

Over the years, the pedestrian space between the parking area behind the Cedar Lee Theatre and Lee Road has at times felt like a gracious park, and at others like little more than an alley through which one can take a shortcut because there happens to be a gap between the buildings. Businesses at this end of Lee Road estimate that every year well over 200,000 people come to see a movie, visit the gallery, enjoy a meal, or have a drink in a bar, and many of those people walk through the Cedar Lee mini park—without necessarily even knowing it's a park.

Landscape designer Ann Cicarella is not the first activist to want to do more with the park, but she has some new ideas and specific expertise that could help sustain long-term improvements. "I am just one person in a long line of people who have tried for many years to improve the site," Cicarella said.

The city of Cleveland Heights has not had consistent funding to maintain the park, and the Cedar Lee Special Improvement District (SID) focuses on other priorities, so it has often fallen to informal arrangements among private citizens or individual businesses to look after the space.

For some years, for example, local Heights residents Gary and Julie Lucie spent countless volunteer hours maintaining the plantings, with some help from Heights Arts. Scout troops arranged clean-up days, and the city provided truckloads of free mulch. But the lack of clarity about who "owns" the responsibility has sometimes led to unfortunate circumstances, such as the time a city crew came by and pulled out plantings—that, unbeknownst to them had recently been put in by volunteers—and re-mulched the beds.

The recent Lee Road streetscaping project—overseen by yet another authority—discouraged any further work on the mini park until such time as it seemed a safe bet that the efforts would not be undone.

In the interest of coordinating efforts and ensuring that all the entities involved in the Cedar Lee district have a shared understanding of the park's use and maintenance, Cicarella is establishing a more formal approach. "I am trying to develop a constituency to gain more traction," she explained. "Micah Kirman, Sruti Basu and Roger Bliss are part of the core group, and they are from FutureHeights. Chris Han-son and Todd Rogers are involved, from Growing Heights. Three other people, Jaclyn Mace, Katie Leavy and Rebecca Norton, have joined the official group." Cicarella is a board member of Heights Arts, and that organization, whose gallery is immediately adjacent to the park, is eager to collaborate on program-ming for the space.

“Our short-term goal is to improve the aesthetics of the park, since so many people move through it," Cicarella said. "Our secondary mission is to educate park visitors and passersby using native plants to create habitat and forage for pollina-tors. The mini park can serve as a guide for changing our stewardship of our green spaces, including our own backyards. We can provide an intimate connection to the beauty and wonder of pollinators by establishing flower-rich foraging patches and nesting sites. The use of native plants also effectively contributes to stormwater management." Cicarella created a new Facebook group, Friends of the Cedar Lee Mini-Park, which anyone interested in the park is invited to join.

The group held its first planting date on July 23, and future dates will be announced. Friends are welcome to come and go for any length of time. The hope is that an independent entity, organized around the mission of supporting the park, will be able to thrive independent of fluctuations in city finances or priorities of the SID, perhaps attracting a modest amount of funding dedicated specifically to sustaining the Cedar Lee mini park.

"Key to the success of this initia-tive," Cicarella said, "will be estab-lishing a maintenance schedule and volunteer commitment to see that effort through. Anyone who would like to help can contact me at ann.cicarella@gmail.com or through the Facebook account."

Greg Donley is a former president of Heights Arts, a founding member of FutureHeights, and a member of the Heights Observer editorial board.

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New Heights-based organization forms to benefit community heroes

Cleveland Heights community members J. Shorey, Nancy Landreth and Chip Ramsey have launched a new foundation to serve the heroes in our community—firefighters, police officers, teachers, military personnel and others whose unique gifts and talents make the Heights community stronger and better. Heights Heroes, a 501(c)3, nonprofit organization, seeks to identify and support those individuals, especially when they or their families need a little extra help due to injury or illness.

Heights Heroes is funded through donations of cars, motorcycles, boats—anything of value that can be rehabilitated and sold. Washington & Lee Service, will repair the vehicles that have value; the organization will then sell them and put the profits back into the foundation. Items that cannot be repaired will be scrapped and the proceeds likewise put into the foundation.

Washington & Lee Service will repair donated vehicles. Cleveland Heights Police Department members are among the beneficiaries of the new foundation.

For more information or to initiate a donation, send a note to info@heightsheroes.org or visit www.heightsheroes.org. To nominate a Heights Hero, visit www.heightsheroes.org, click on the Nominate a Hero tab, and answer a few easy questions.

“Often people can’t decide what to do with an old car or they don’t want to deal with the hassle of trying to sell it before they replace it,” said Ramsey. “Donating it to Heights Heroes makes it easy. The donor gets a tax deduction and has the pleasure of knowing that she has helped someone else.”

If someone donates an item of a special nature, like a musical instrument,” said Ramsey, “we will work with members of our board and the community to either place that instrument with a musical student or an organization serving those in need of an instrument. Regardless of the item, we will find an appropriate home for it! We call it ‘helping to turn your treasure into someone’s dreams.’

The organization seeks to support local heroes in the Cleveland Heights, University Heights and Shaker Heights communities. “Heights Heroes serves to promote and recognize those individuals whose lives make our community better, safer, stronger and special, whether it is someone serving in the defense of our country, the safety of our community, a teacher or student, or a citizen who champions that one special ideal or value which makes us stronger,” said Ramsey.

Ramsey said the group’s board of directors will reflect the diversity of the Heights community and will include representatives from the city governments, fire and police departments, public schools, and other civic-minded people. The board will meet several times a year to consider nominations, and seeks to keep the grant nomination process as simple as possible.

The group will seek nominations from individuals or small groups. According to Ramsey, the ideal candidate could be a first-responder who displays exemplary service, a teacher who rises above and beyond the call of duty, a student or group of students who need an extra hand to achieve something remarkable, a community organizer who needs seed money to launch a program to help his or her community be better, or a civilian who displays exemplary leadership.

“These qualities represent the kinds of individuals we want to support and recognize,” he said. “To nominate a Heights Hero, visit www.heightsheroes.org, click on the Nominate a Hero tab, and answer a few easy questions.”

For more information or to initiate a donation, send a note to info@heightsheroes.org or visit www.heightsheroes.org.

J. Shorey is a long-time Cleveland Heights resident and co-founder of Heights Heroes Foundation.
Monticello Middle School achieves IB World School certification

Monticello Middle School has been named an authorized International Baccalaureate (IB) World School, Middle Years Programme, becoming—along with Roxboro Middle School—part of a diverse, global community of schools offering the program. Monticello and Roxboro are two of just six middle schools in the state of Ohio to offer the IB Middle Years Programme.

"This is such an important accomplishment for Monticello as we move our two middle schools to the Wiley campus this fall," said CH-UH Superintendent Talisa Dixon. "With both schools being authorized and also being in the same building, it ensures that our academic offerings will be equitable. Every middle school student in CH-UH will now have the Middle Years Programme experience.

I commend the students, teachers, and staff at Monticello for this incredible achievement. IB Coordinator Leslie Garrett has done an amazing job leading the efforts for Monticello to gain authorization this year. The leadership of Ms. Garrett and Principal Patrick McNichols has been key in moving Monticello through this rigorous, yet rewarding, process."

"I could not be more proud of the staff and the students at Monticello for achieving authorization," said McNichols. "It was important that both Monticello and Roxboro be authorized as we move to Wiley in August. This allows us the opportunity for teachers from both schools to plan innovative and relevant units of study. Our educators will teach students the 10 approaches to learning skills to help them in becoming independent learners."

The IB World School program seeks to educate students so they become thoughtful, caring, and prepared citizens of the world upon graduation. The goal is to enable IB students to navigate their own futures, while actively contributing to strengthening the world’s social, economic and cultural environments.

"The IB program provides our schools with a comprehensive framework for a rigorous academic experience that benefits every student," said Dixon. "Increasing these opportunities for our students is a critical part of our strategic plan for the district. It is our goal to have five authorized IB schools by 2020."

The CH-UH City School District now has four authorized IB schools: Canterbury Elementary, Roxboro Elementary, Monticello Middle and Roxboro Middle. Canterbury and Roxboro elementary schools are two of the 19 schools in the state of Ohio to offer the Primary Years Programme. Fairfax Elementary School is in the IB School candidacy phase, with the goal of gaining authorization by 2019. Cleveland Heights High School will begin the exploration phase in fall 2018.

Scott Wortman is the supervisor of communications for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.
Dayvione Briggs earns track and field scholarship

Scott Wortman

Heights High graduate Dayvione Briggs, a standout track and cross-country athlete, has signed a National Letter of Intent (NLI) to compete in track and field at Wheeling Jesuit University starting this fall.

Briggs graduated from Heights High in May, and had a decorated four-year career in cross-country and track. Now, she has received a scholarship to continue her athletic career on the collegiate level at Wheeling Jesuit.

Briggs expects to compete in the 100-meter hurdles, 400-meter hurdles, and heptathlon events for the Wheeling Jesuit Cardinals. A three-time Lake Erie League cross-country champion, Briggs took home the individual titles in 2013, 2014 and 2016. She helped the Tigers to the LEL team championship as a senior in 2016.

Briggs was just as effective on the track for Heights High. This past spring, she was the first Heights High female to qualify for the state meet in three years. She placed fourth in the 100-meter hurdles at the regional meet to qualify for state competition.

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

Roxboro Middle School’s Jordan-Shaw honored with Distinguished Educator Award

On June 8, Tiffany Jordan-Shaw, a Roxboro Middle School math teacher, was one of 33 Ohio teachers to receive a 2017 Celebrate Teaching Distinguished Educator Award. Battelle for Kids, a nonprofit organization committed to collaborating with school districts and communities, recognized Jordan-Shaw as a distinguished educator for her impact on her students, colleagues and community. The organization made the awards, to celebrate, support and inspire great teaching, at its Educators Connect for Success Conference.

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Roxboro Middle School’s Jordan-Shaw honored with Distinguished Educator Award

On June 8, Tiffany Jordan-Shaw, a Roxboro Middle School math teacher, was one of 33 Ohio teachers to receive a 2017 Celebrate Teaching Distinguished Educator Award. Battelle for Kids, a nonprofit organization committed to collaborating with school districts and communities, recognized Jordan-Shaw as a distinguished educator for her impact on her students, colleagues and community. The organization made the awards, to celebrate, support and inspire great teaching, at its Educators Connect for Success Conference.

Scott Wortman

Heights High graduate Dayvione Briggs, a standout track and cross-country athlete, has signed a National Letter of Intent (NLI) to compete in track and field at Wheeling Jesuit University starting this fall.

Briggs graduated from Heights High in May, and had a decorated four-year career in cross-country and track. Now, she has received a scholarship to continue her athletic career on the collegiate level at Wheeling Jesuit.

Briggs expects to compete in the 100-meter hurdles, 400-meter hurdles, and heptathlon events for the Wheeling Jesuit Cardinals. A three-time Lake Erie League cross-country champion, Briggs took home the individual titles in 2013, 2014 and 2016. She helped the Tigers to the LEL team championship as a senior in 2016.

Briggs was just as effective on the track for Heights High. This past spring, she was the first Heights High female to qualify for the state meet in three years. She placed fourth in the 100-meter hurdles at the regional meet to qualify for state competition.

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

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Scott Wortman is the supervisor of communications for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.
Williams named interim Heights High principal

Scott Wortman

Brian Williams, longtime school district administrator and current coordinator of alternative programming at the Options Center, has been named the interim high school principal for the 2017–18 school year. The CH-UH City School District recently completed the interview process for its open position designate for the city instead of a ‘sanctuary city.’ There are more complications to being a sanctuary city.

LWV Observer: Lilian Houser.

JUNE 27, 2017

BOE President Ron Register, Vice President Kal Zucker, Jim Posch, Eric Silverman and Beverly Wright were present, as were Superintendent Talisa Dixon, Assistant Superintendent Felisha Gold, and Treasurer Scott Gainer. The public meeting began at 7 p.m. and ended at 9 p.m.

Public comments

Coventry building: Ten people spoke in support of the tenants at the former Coventry School building, [asking that they be] allowed more time before being required to leave the property.

Union agreement

The board adopted an agreement with Ohio Association of Public School Employees Local 102.

Middle school facilities update

The superintendent pointed out that no decisions [regarding the middle schools] have been made outside of what voters approved in 2013. In this time, the board is considering whether to “continue on the current path for renovating the middle schools or pursue an alternative path.” Felisha Gold and Bob Swaggard, director of curriculum, presented the current educational values and how they relate to the middle schools.

Dr. Brian Williams

“I have the utmost confidence in Dr. Williams and his ability to connect with students, staff, and the entire school community.”

[Editor’s note: Zoraba Ross, former Cleveland Heights High School administrative principal, resigned from that position effective June 30, according to a message from Ross posted on the district’s website, www.chuh.org. Ross’s resignation corresponded with the end of his three-year contract with the district.] Scott Wortman is the supervisor of communications for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.

Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education Meeting highlights

JUNE 26, 2017 - Joint meeting with Cleveland Heights City Council.

School board members present were Vice President Kal Zucker, Jim Posch, Eric Silverman and Beverly Wright. Board President Ron Register was absent. Also present were Superintendent Talisa Dixon and Treasurer Scott Gainer. Cleveland Heights City Council members present were Mayor Cheryl Stephens, Vice Mayor Jason Stein, Mary Dubar, Carol Rice, Kahlil Seren, Melissa Yasinow and Michael Unger. City Manager Tanisha Briley was also present.

Board of Education topics

High school opening: The high school will open on time on Aug. 1. A convocation will be held on Aug. 18, and the community open house will be on Sept. 10. The middle school facilities update will be given at the June 27 board meeting of education.

Board action

A new principal is at Monticello Middle School, and the middle schools are now classified as International Baccalaureate (IB) schools, with a rigorous program. This designation ensures a smooth transition to the IB program at the high school.

United Way: The community and the school task force have partnered with United Way.

Superintendent’s update

No school will be closed at this time. The board is considering a grade 7–6 and grade 7–8 middle school configuration. This will be discussed at the June 27 board meeting.

Cleveland Heights City Council topics

The city master plan: City Manager Briley said the city master plan has strategies in place and is moving forward on housing issues. A report will be available soon. The projects include the Top of the Hill property, which has a new development partner. The city wants effective use of the land and housing, and discussed the Center-Mayfield project in regard to this issue. The Coventry land and former school building were also discussed, with the board and city agreeing to a memorandum of understanding with the tenants of the building that will guarantee them a five-year lease. The school board has no use for [the Coventry site] and does not want to be a landlord. The city and board must work public to public in the plan for the school building and land. [Many in the audience were concerned community members wanting to know about the fate of the Coventry site.]

Streetscape update: The update included the repaving of the Cedar Farmount Business District using federal monies, and the Cedar home test.

Safe routes to school update: Lighting has been improved at the intersection of Cedar and Lee roads to make it a safer route to the high school. Solar flashing speed panels were installed at the schools. Crosswalk signage and traffic signals have been improved. Council Member Dunbar spoke about the bicycle program in which bikes will be used in physical education classes.

Welcome the new building in August,” added Scott Wortman.

Observing the new building in August,” added Scott Wortman.

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2. Register/log in at the Member Center [www.heightsobserver.org].

3. After logging in, click the Submit New Story button in the left-hand column [Don’t see it? It’s nested under “Writer”]. Then follow the prompts. Hint: keep your original file open so you can easily copy and paste into the text box.

4. Reward yourself; you’re about to be published. We’ll review your edit and article, and let you know if we have any questions.
Name change reflects department’s expanded mission

Seryl Banks

When Heather Howiler decided to change the name of her Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System department from “training” to “continuing education,” she felt the change was overdue.

The department has been expanding steadily over the past few years. In addition to its long-running computer and software classes, it offers new classes that teach website creation using online tools such as WordPress, and coding basics for all ages. A mobile computer lab visits the Cleveland Heights Community Center and local retirement communities, offering classes to seniors in social media, computer basics, and more sophisticated topics such as photo editing. The mobile lab also visits two of the system’s branches (currently Coventry Village and Noble Neighborhood, and University Heights in the fall) to bring computer classes and tech assistance to people in those neighborhoods as well.

“It’s more than just a name change,” said Howiler, manager of continuing education at Heights Libraries. “When you factor in job search courses and online genealogy classes, it becomes clear that what we’re really offering our community are free educational and enrichment opportunities, not just simple trainings.”

The department also offers what could be called “self-service” technological and educational opportunities. A media lab at the Lee Road Library provides cardholders with free access to audio and video recording equipment and editing software that they can use for up to two hours at a time. Portable Internet Wi-Fi hotspots are available to check out, for use anywhere a customer can find Wi-Fi service. The library’s website offers free access to online educational services, such as Lynda.com, and links to other educational sites, such as GFCLearnFree.org and DigitalLearn.org, which offer tutorials on subjects as diverse as how to buy an airline ticket online to advanced mathematics.

Unlike a community college or other formal educational institution, the library can’t provide customers with degrees or certifications; what it can provide, however, are free, curated options for meaningful self-improvement.

“We’ve broadened and increased our offerings to provide opportunities for genuine skill building and lifelong learning opportunities,” said Howiler. “A great example of that is the customer who told us she’s using our hotspots at home to access and complete online coursework to finally get her bachelor’s degree. She doesn’t have the Internet at home, so the hotspot has made a huge difference for her.”

Howiler and her department staff have also taken steps to ensure that the people who need tech support can get it by switching to an approach that lets customers make appointments with library technology trainers. “We found people were saying they wanted tech help, but they weren’t showing up at our prescheduled tech help sessions,” said Technology Librarian Jackie Mayse. “So we created Reserve a Tech Expert, which allows people to make appointments with tech staff, like they would with a doctor or other professional. We’ve had great success with that model.”

Mayse has created another new educational opportunity for custom- ers. Called the Learning Circle, it’s a six-week study group for people who want the support of other learners who are interested in the same topic. Library staff will provide guidance and structure, but group members will learn primarily from one another in a supportive environment. The first session, New Rules of Work, begins in September, and is intended to help job seekers prepare for the modern workplace.

“We encounter people at all stages of life,” said Mayse. “Our goal is to meet people where they are, and find a way to improve their lives.”

Seryl Banks is the marketing and community relations manager for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System.
Cleveland Heights-University Heights Library Board Meeting highlights

JUNE 19, 2017
Present were Board President Ron Halland, Secretary Chris Mantruk, James Roosa, Susan Moskovitz and Max Gerbost. Vice President Abby Botnick and Susan Beatty were absent.

Wendy Gernsheimer retires
Human Resources Coordinator Laurie Moths gave a heartfelt farewell to Wendy Gernsheimer, who was hired in 1995 as a library page. In 1997, she was promoted to library monitor, first working with second-floor customers and periodicals, then providing technical assistance with the library’s first computer. Managers also provided support to teens with the Teen Spot afternoon program. Eventually the job title was changed to technology assistant to better reflect the position’s current duties. Gernsheimer served for many years on the Staff Development Committee, and served on the Executive Council of the Staff Association. She will retire on June 30.

University Heights Library adds staff
Hannah Van Jura and Greg Coburn will be full-time staff when the branch opens after renovations. Van Jura, who will be the youth services librarian, has been with the library system since October 2013. She has a Bachelor of Music degree from The Ohio State University, and is finishing her work for a Master of Library and Information Science. She has been able to apply her creativity to programming.

Coburn is the adult services librarian, and has been employed by the Cuyahoga County Public Library System. He has worked as a graphic designer and has a Bachelor of Science in biology from Lake Superior State University, an Associate of Applied Business in visual communication and design from Cuyahoga Community College, and a Master of Library and Information Science from Kent State University.

What’s going on at your library?
Coventry Village Library
1925 Coventry Road, 216-322-3400
Wednesday, Aug. 16, 3 p.m.
Fairytale STEM. This STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) program is for ages 3–6. Join us for a lively afternoon storytime of fairy tales and adventure, followed by a simple science-themed activity that relates to the story.

Lee Road Library
2134 Lee Road, 216-932-3600
Tuesday, Aug. 8, 11 a.m.
Internet Safety and Security. Worried about Internet safety and security issues? Wonder what are the best practices for the Web? This class will consider “beyond the basics” strategies for staying safe online, and protecting privacy on a computer or mobile device. Register at heightslib.org

Noble Neighborhood Library
2800 Noble Road, 216-301-6266
Monday, Aug. 14, 4 p.m.
Wide Jamz. “A change gon’ come, oh yes it will,” but “still I see no changes can’t a brother get a little peace.” Experience the social consciousness of Sam Cooke, 2Pac, and many more. Teens can listen to a playlist and view lyrics and other media on the projector. For teens ages 12–18.

Friends receives cookbook collection
Friends of Heights Libraries President Linda Lopez reported that through a contact of Board Member Max Gerbost, the Friends received 1,800 cookbooks. Three boxes were donated to Edwins Restaurant on Shaker Square, and the others will be available through the Harveys and FRIENDS Bookshop on the second floor of the library.

Cuyahoga County community read event
The Forest City String Band
May public service report highlights
• An ongoing English as a Second Language Conversation Club was established, which will meet the first Wednesday of each month.
• A mobile hotspot program was launched on May 22, allowing customers 18 years and older to “check out the Internet” by borrowing one of the kits. As of May 25, all had been checked out. Lee Road Library will have 10, Coventry Village and Noble Neighborhood Libraries will have five each.
• Also launched on May 22 is the Reserve a Tech Expert program, which replaces the Individual Computer Tutors. Tutors can now pick the location and time of day to meet with tech trainees, one-on-one, for 30 minutes.
• At Coventry Village library, local author Thrity Umrigar shared her experiences in creating her first children’s book, When I Carried You in My Belly. The illustrator is Zywa Chen.
• Noble Neighborhood Library participated in the We Are Noble weekend celebration sponsored by Noble Neighbors, librarian Christine Dickson took the book hikis to talk to families about summer reading and to give away books. Children painted mugs to decorate the library’s fence. The community potluck featured All-American and Nepali dishes.
• The summer reading program is “Dream, Build, Share.” The youth services staff built up support by visiting schools to talk about the program.
• Youth Services Associate Chris Moskowitz once again organized the annual Free Comic Book Day. The year, 115 parents and children came for a comic book and to participate in related activities. Youth Services Librarian Jessica Robinson also presented Free Comic Book Day for teens.

LVV Observer: Anna S. McFarland
Look for earlier and often expand- ed postings of meeting summaries online at www.heightsobserver.org. See disclaimer on page 6.
Heights Arts hosts Enticing benefit

On Saturday, July 15, Heights Arts welcomed more than 100 people to its first Enticing benefit.

Thanks to its many supporters, volunteers and attendees, the event was a smashing success, raising almost $20,000 in support of Heights Arts’ mission to celebrate the region’s literary, musical and visual artists, and share their work with the community.

Heights Arts held the event in a stunning penthouse and glass cube space, overlooking downtown Cleveland—a frequent venue for Heights Arts’ always sold-out Close Encounters chamber music series. Owned by Rick Maron and Judy Eigenfeld, the location was a fitting place in which to honor Steve Presser, founding Heights Arts board member and Big Fun owner, whose steady support of Heights Arts has helped the nonprofit grow. Heights Arts now produces more than 60 programs and events each year.

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“It’s very fitting to have had this as the place where we would honor Steve,” commented Josh Werling, Heights Arts board president, “as Judy Eigenfeld was Steve’s fifth-grade teacher.”

There is already a plan in the works for next year’s benefit, but no reason to wait until then to visit the Heights Arts gallery on Lee Road, and take part in the many programs planned for the coming year.

Rachel Bernstein is executive director of Heights Arts.

Enticing desserts were among the event’s attractions.

Honoree Steve Presser, with his family (from left): Brynne Presser Funderburg (daughter), Debbie Apple-Presser (wife), Merrick Presser (son), Steve Presser, Arleigh Presser (daughter), Alex Purtell (Arleigh’s boyfriend). Son-in-law Nick Funderburg was unable to attend.

Enticing attendees peruse the silent auction.

COURTESY HEIGHTS ARTS

Honoree Steve Presser, with his family (from left): Brynne Presser Funderburg (daughter), Debbie Apple-Presser (wife), Merrick Presser (son), Steve Presser, Arleigh Presser (daughter), Alex Purtell (Arleigh’s boyfriend). Son-in-law Nick Funderburg was unable to attend.

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COURTESY HEIGHTS ARTS
Heights residents to perform in Cain Park production

Heights residents are set to showcase

More than a dozen Cleveland music direction by Jordan Cooper.
rected by Joanna May Hunkins, with
tra (CYO). The production is di -
drived Contemporary Youth Orches-
to "The Music Man," in a concert version of
On Aug. 5 and 6, Cain Park’s Evans
hich includes Sumlins siblings, August and Easton, Jeffrey Bendix and Joan Bendix; Maple Baescher; Courtney Foerg; Gabriel Mallamad; Luca Mokotoff and Sienna Mokotoff; Julie Sabroff; Will Saaborn; Rosie Tilk; Cecilia Willers and Cordelia Willets; Grace Willmort; and Han-

Heights residents are set to showcase their talents on the Evans Amphitheater stage for "The Music Man in Concert," including leading female star Nicole Sumlín, who will por-

Heights Observer August 1, 2017     www.heightsobserver.org

Nicole Sumlín
Jessica Rosenblatt

On Aug. 5 and 6, Cain Park’s Evans Amphitheater will be filled with the music of Meredith Willson’s "The Music Man," in a concert version of the musical featuring the Cleveland-based Contemporary Youth Orches-

Performances will take place at 8 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 5, and at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Aug. 6. Also on Aug. 6, Bill Rudman of The Musical Theatre Project will provide a pre-show talk for ticket holders, at 1 p.m.

no lawn seating is available. Advance tickets for performances include: "Next To Normal," "The Light In the Piazza," "Violet," "Into the Woods" (Lakeland); "The Toxic Avenger," "Godspell," "The Frogs" (Cain Park); "The Little Foxes" (The Cleveland Play House); "A Civil War Christmas," "Peter and the Starcatcher" (Dobama).

Jordan Cooper, the production’s music director, is the artistic director for Shining Star CLE 2017 and has worked at Dobama Theatre, The Cleveland Play House, Playhouse Square, Lakeland Civic Theatre, Cain Park, The Florida Repertory Theatre Company, Near West The-

The production’s director Joanna May Hunkins has worked at Cain Park in various capacities over the past 20 years, most recently directing the critically acclaimed 2015 production of "Rock of Ages" and the 2017 production of "Godspell." She is also associate director of The Musical Theater Project. As a freelance di-

Award-winning musical comedy has been entertaining audiences since 1957, and is a family-friendly story to be shared with every generation.

"The Music Man" follows fast-
talking traveling salesman Harold Hill as he cons the people of River City, Iowa, into buying instruments and uniforms for a boys’ band he vows to organize—despite the fact he doesn’t know a trombone from a treble clef. His plans to skip town with the cash are foiled when he falls for Marian the librarian, who trans-

It felt like home from the start," says Nina of the ambiance. "I had a feeling this was where we belonged," says Jim of initially moving to Judson. "I knew the couple agreed it was time to move to Ambler Court - a beautifully renovated assisted living neighborhood that offers signature programming and care in an ideal environment for those in need of increased assistance.

"It felt like home from the start," says Nina of the couple’s suite, filled with a curated collection of the books, music and art they love. And they take comfort in the easy access to the onsite health and wellness programs they both need. "We love it here," says Nina.

Visit www.judsonsmartliving.org and click Judson Park

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Ain Park, one of the nation’s oldest landmark outdoor theaters, entered its 79th season in 2017.

For information about season events and to purchase tickets, visit CainPark.com or call (216) 371-3000. For group sales, call (216) 371-1515.

-Try a trade-in discount-

Yellow Cab

COURTESY CAIN PARK

"Judson is the perfect place for us!"
— Jim and Nina Gibans, Judson Park residents since 2016

Stalwarts of the Cleveland arts-and-culture scene, Nina and Jim Gibans had accumulated a lifetime’s worth of memories in their Shaker Heights home. But when health demands challenged their independent lifestyle,

They have long been involved in various organizations, including the Shaker Heights Public Library, Shaker Heights City Schools, Peace Community, the Fairmount Civic and Art Association, The Cleveland Orchestra, Square, Lakeland Civic Theatre, Cain Park, Florida Repertory Theatre Company, near West The-

Performances include: "Next To Normal," "The Light In the Piazza," "Violet," "Into the Woods" (Lakeland); "The Toxic Avenger," "Godspell," "The Frogs" (Cain Park); "The Little Foxes" (The Cleveland Play House); "A Civil War Christmas," "Peter and the Starcatcher" (Dobama).

Sponsors for Cain Park’s 2017 season include the Ohio Arts Coun-

Friends of Cain Park, Motorcars Honda/Toyota, Hyatt Place Legacy Village, and the Westin Cleveland Downtown. WCLV 104.9 is the me-
dia supporter for "The Music Man in Concert."

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Learn about Assisted Living at Judson Park. Call (216) 466-1845 to arrange for a tour today.

Visit www.judsonsmartliving.org and click Judson Park
Heights Music Hop announces lineup and venues

Grill, Phoenix Coffee, Rudy’s Pub, Lopez, Marotta’s, New Heights Youth Club, Lee Road Library, Arts, Heights Music Shop, Heights ban Winery, Dewey’s Pizza, Heights Sept. 9 are Anatolia Cafe, CLE Urban Winery, Keller National, Digizoom Media; Grog Shop, Map Creative; Rad Graphics; Family Connections; Larchmere PorchFest; Brite Winter Festival; WJCU Radio; and WRUW Radio.

The Heights Music Hop is free and open to the public, although some venues or performances may limit underage attendees. The silent disco, on Sept. 9 in Cedar Lee, will require paid admission and is open to those ages 21 and older. Many family-friendly activities are planned for the festival, including age-appropriate performances and interactive events, as well as a kids’ area provided by Family Connections.

To view more festival information, including the performance schedule and full list of musicians and activities, visit www.heightsmusichop.com and the Heights Music Hop’s Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Daniel Budin is a lifelong Cleveland Heights resident. Member of Future-Heights Board of Directors.

The Heights Music Hop will return for its fifth-annual festival this September with a stellar lineup of artists and venues that will span three Cleveland Heights business districts. This year’s many acts include: The Whiskey Hollow, By Light We Loom, oldsky, Wildlife Soundz, Maura Rogors & the Bellows, New Thousands, Charley Mosbrook, Teddy Boys, Classical Revolution Cleveland, DJ Knycz, Diana Chittester, City Limits, Holden Laurenza, Jason Patrick Meyers, The Mason District, J. Lesbelle, Blacklister, Smoke Screen, Revolution Brass Band, and The Rainbow Emergency. A full schedule and list of performers will be available on the Heights Music Hop website and its social media accounts.

The 2017 Hop will begin in Coventry Village on Thursday, Sept. 7. It then moves to Cedar Fairmount on Friday, Sept. 8, and culminates in Cedar Lee on Saturday, Sept. 9.

Music venues for Sept. 7 in Coventry Village include Grig Shop, B-Side, Bodega, Mac’s Backs and La Cave du Vin. On Sept. 8, in the Cedar Fairmount Business District, venues include Appletree Books, Cleveland Heights Church, The Fairmount, Luna Bakery Café, and Pavilion Home & Floral.


Featuring free performances across the three nights, the Heights Music Hop showcases live music in a variety of genres, in restaurants, bars, shops and other Heights businesses. Since it began in 2013, with six venues in the Cedar Lee district, the Hop has grown each year, adding more venues and performers.

Last year, it expanded to a second night and a second district, with the addition of Cedar Fairmount, and an estimated 4,000 people attended the 2016 Heights Music Hop. This year’s addition of Coventry Village venues offers even more options for exciting programming in three iconic business districts, totaling almost 30 venues and more than 60 performances.

The 2017 Heights Music Hop also will feature a silent disco. Planned for the open space at Lee Road and Meadowbrook Boulevard, on Saturday evening, Sept. 9, the silent disco will offer a dance party in which participants will pay a small fee and receive a headset from which to choose their personal dance music from a selection of DJ’s performing live on site. Local beverages will be available for purchase at the silent disco, with beer served by The BottleHouse and wine poured by CLE Urban Winery. Silent disco tickets will be available for pre-sale via the Grig Shop’s website or at the silent disco entrance on Sept. 9.

Heights Music Hop is presented by FutureHeights and is supported by its silent disco entrance on Sept. 9.

For more information, visit www.heightsmusichop.com and the Heights Music Hop’s Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Daniel Budin is a lifelong Cleveland Heights resident. Member of Future-Heights Board of Directors.

Heights Music Hop presents live music in familiar and unusual venues. Here, a band performs inside Washington & Lee Service.

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Family Connections; Larchmere PorchFest; Brite Winter Festival; Digestzoon Media; Grog Brewery; CLE Urban Winery; Keller National; Digizoom Media; Grog Shop, Map Creative; Rad Graphics; Family Connections; Larchmere PorchFest; Brite Winter Festival; WJCU Radio; and WRUW Radio.

The Heights Music Hop is free and open to the public, although some venues or performances may limit underage attendees. The silent disco, on Sept. 9 in Cedar Lee, will require paid admission and is open to those ages 21 and older. Many family-friendly activities are planned for the festival, including age-appropriate performances and interactive events, as well as a kids’ area provided by Family Connections.

To view more festival information, including the performance schedule and full list of musicians and activities, visit www.heightsmusichop.com and the Heights Music Hop’s Facebook and Twitter accounts.

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The Heights Music Hop will return for its fifth-annual festival this September with a stellar lineup of artists and venues that will span three Cleveland Heights business districts. This year’s many acts include: The Whiskey Hollow, By Light We Loom, oldsky, Wildlife Soundz, Maura Rogors & the Bellows, New Thousands, Charley Mosbrook, Teddy Boys, Classical Revolution Cleveland, DJ Knycz, Diana Chittester, City Limits, Holden Laurenza, Jason Patrick Meyers, The Mason District, J. Lesbelle, Blacklister, Smoke Screen, Revolution Brass Band, and The Rainbow Emergency. A full schedule and list of performers will be available on the Heights Music Hop website and its social media accounts.

The 2017 Hop will begin in Coventry Village on Thursday, Sept. 7. It then moves to Cedar Fairmount on Friday, Sept. 8, and culminates in Cedar Lee on Saturday, Sept. 9.

Music venues for Sept. 7 in Coventry Village include Grig Shop, B-Side, Bodega, Mac’s Backs and La Cave du Vin. On Sept. 8, in the Cedar Fairmount Business District, venues include Appletree Books, Cleveland Heights Church, The Fairmount, Luna Bakery Café, and Pavilion Home & Floral.


Featuring free performances across the three nights, the Heights Music Hop showcases live music in a variety of genres, in restaurants, bars, shops and other Heights businesses. Since it began in 2013, with six venues in the Cedar Lee district, the Hop has grown each year, adding more venues and performers.

Last year, it expanded to a second night and a second district, with the addition of Cedar Fairmount, and an estimated 4,000 people attended the 2016 Heights Music Hop. This year’s addition of Coventry Village venues offers even more options for exciting programming in three iconic business districts, totaling almost 30 venues and more than 60 performances.

The 2017 Heights Music Hop also will feature a silent disco. Planned for the open space at Lee Road and Meadowbrook Boulevard, on Saturday evening, Sept. 9, the silent disco will offer a dance party in which participants will pay a small fee and receive a headset from which to choose their personal dance music from a selection of DJ’s performing live on site. Local beverages will be available for purchase at the silent disco, with beer served by The BottleHouse and wine poured by CLE Urban Winery. Silent disco tickets will be available for pre-sale via the Grig Shop’s website or at the silent disco entrance on Sept. 9.

Heights Music Hop is presented by FutureHeights and is supported by its silent disco entrance on Sept. 9.

For more information, visit www.heightsmusichop.com and the Heights Music Hop’s Facebook and Twitter accounts.

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David Budin
I don’t know if this is unusual or not these days, but when my class graduated from Heights High, there were at least 12 kids who had been there since we were in kindergarten. And that was just from my kindergarten class at Coventry School. The Cleveland Heights-University Heights system had 11 elementary schools at that time, so there may have been somewhere around 650 “lifers” in the senior class. And there were others, too, who moved into the system in first, second and third grade and then stayed for the whole ride.

So I don’t know if that would be out of the ordinary today. But what I do believe is unusual is that my parents both went through the Heights school system, and my kids did as well. Three generations is a lot, these days. And if plans don’t change, the fourth generation will attend Heights schools, too.

I’m thinking about this because my 50th high school reunion takes place this month. I didn’t go to my 50th high school reunion takes place this month. I didn’t go to my 50th high school reunion until I was asked to join the reunion committee. So I did. I thought I’d go to the 20th. (They found me then. I was then the editor of Cleveland Magazine. They no longer had a good excuse.) The 20th reunion experience was horrible. Every time you turned around, someone wearing a suit or dress that was much nicer and more expensive than yours, and with great hair, was talking, pretty loudly, about their work as a doctor, or lawyer, or banker. Most seemed a little desperate. It was sort of nightmarish. I said I’d never go to another reunion.

Then, about a year prior to the 30th—by which time I’d developed a reputation as someone who got involved in causes and events, like boards and benefits—I was asked to join the planning committee. So I did. I thought it might be interesting. It was. I got to go to meetings with a bunch of people I never knew in high school. They were nice. We got along fine. I tried to figure out why I had hated them, and they me, in school. I couldn’t. (Well, except for one guy.) The 30th reunion itself was way more enjoyable than the previous one. People were much more relaxed; not trying so hard to impress; talking more about their kids than their careers. Everyone was happy to see everyone else. (Except for that one guy.)

For the 40th, I was not invited to join the planning committee a second time. Maybe because during the meetings for the 30th they figured out why they had hated me in high school. But the reunion was great. We all just sat around and talked about life.

One thing that stands out about the reunion was talking to my old friend Steve. I was friends with him throughout high school. He’s a professional musician and comedian. His writing focuses on the arts and, especially, pop-music history. He’s the only one of the seven kids in the class who played music. And we both went to Heights-University Heights. He had been one of only two African-American kids, and the only male. Plus, he was the tallest kid in the class. He had played on the Heights basketball team. As we were standing and talking, a guy passed by and said, jokingly (I think), “Hey, Steve—you missed that shot in the Euclid game and we lost.”

Steve said to me, “You know, he said that before, but he must have confused someone else.” I looked up at him and said, “Steve—I don’t think so.”

I’m not sure what to expect of this upcoming reunion, but looking at the pattern that has formed, I’m expecting to enjoy it. When my mother attended her 60th Heights High reunion in 2009, I could hardly believe how old she was in (other words) 10 years older than I am now or that any of those people could actually remember high school. She said afterward that she enjoyed the reunion, and that they all remembered each other, but that the group was pretty small. She said, “I think the next one will be a conference call.”

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.