Motorcars expands into donut business

Robert Brown

In 2016, Motorcars’ owner Chuck Gile made Cleveland Heights home to the world’s first carbon-neutral car dealership.

This year, Motorcars has brought another first to Cleveland Heights—though not as environmentally significant as the installation of its 1,420 solar panels—opening the region’s first full-service donut and coffee shop to be located on the grounds of a car dealership.

Daylight Donuts & Coffee, located in the front of the former Pontiac building at 3777 Mayfield Road, just east of Motorcars Honda, held its grand opening on Jan. 26, with a soft opening the day before.

The donut shop offers inside sit-down space as well as a drive-up window. Plans call for it to be open from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., seven days a week, and the Gile family expects that Daylight Donuts will employ about 18 full- and part-time employees.

With about 1,000 stores across the country, Daylight Donuts has locations near Columbus and Cincinnati. This is the chain’s first franchise in Northeast Ohio.

Unlike some other Daylight Donuts shops, the Cleveland Heights franchise will also offer a variety of custom coffees, sourced from a local roaster, Six Shooter Coffee, as well as a selection of sandwiches.

Daylight Donuts is already partnering with another local business. CLE Urban Winery is offering ‘Donuts and Daylight’ pairs.

MetroHealth opens hospital here

Bob Rosenbaum

On Jan. 3, leaders from Cleveland Heights and MetroHealth cut the ribbon on a new 12-bed hospital at Severance Circle in Cleveland Heights.

The hospital is located on the second floor of the building where MetroHealth has operated a emergency department and medical clinic since 2016—shortly after Healthspan (formerly Kaiser Permanente) dissolved its medical practice and vacated the building.

MetroHealth spent about $12 million to build the hospital, and its total investment in Cleveland Heights now stands at about $35 million, according to Dr. Akram Boutros, president and CEO of The MetroHealth System.

Across the nation, hospitals are opening sophisticated satellite:

CH Charter Review Commission surveys city council and staff

Robert Brown

Following its second meeting, held on Jan. 4, the Cleveland Heights Charter Review Commission sent a list of four questions to city council members, the city manager, city department directors and chairpersons of its boards and commissions.

The 15-member citizen commission prepared the questions as a way to learn about needed changes to the city charter from the perspective of the city’s elected officials and top administrators.

The questions were:
1. What parts of the Charter should be considered by the Commission, without necessarily implying that you believe a change should or should not be made?
2. For each part identified in Question 1, explain briefly: (a) why the item should be considered and if you think a change may be warranted, then (b) what the change should be and why.
3. Identify any change or changes you have observed in the facts and circumstances of the city (other than personnel changes in the City Council or City Administration) in the five (5) years since the on-cycle review, and how any such changes relate to what you noted in Questions 1 and 2 above.
4. What parts of the current structure of the City government are:
   (a) serving the City well; (b) not serving the City well.
About the Observer

The Heights Observer is not an ordinary newspaper; it is a nonprofit publication for residents of Cleveland Heights and University Heights. We have no writing staff; it is written by you—the readers.

Individuals throughout the community decide what stories they want to write, then submit them for publication. According to respondents, Cleveland Heights is a neighborhood where people want to be part of the community to some current and future civic engagement and quality of life.

Dear Deanna Bremer Fisher,

On April 10, the Heights Observer will be 10 years old. When we launched the newspaper to 10 years ago, some thought we were crazy. Print was dead; everything should be online. We, don’t know about you, but I’ve seen a lot of things in my time. I believe in spending a fair amount of time in the digital world, I find the real one much more satisfying; and 10 years in, I enjoy seeing my neighbors holding the Heights Observer in their hands at the local coffee shop. It’s a fiscal affirmation that this community matters.

As we approached this 10-year milestone, we wanted to check in with our readers and find out how they were doing. We conducted an online readers’ survey over several months in 2017, received 75 responses, and wanted to share them with you.

The mission of the Heights Observer is to serve as a self-sustaining media outlet that strengthens the communities of Cleveland Heights and University Heights, and we have specific goals related to that mission, such as being a catalyst for public discourse and being a resource for our local businesses. You can find the entire list of goals on our website at: www.heightsobserver.org/about-us/mission-statement/.

Of the respondents, 78.8 percent said that we were meeting our goals, while 21.2 percent said goals were being met “only a little” or “not at all.” One comment on where we could do better was: “They seem to shy away from some of the more controversial discussion issues, and most of your columnists are defenders of the status quo.” There’s one solution to that, and that’s more contributions from the community on controversial issues. Here’s how to submit an article: to www.heightsobserver.org/about-us/mission-statement/. And, if you think you might like to take on the task of volunteering to write a monthly column, let’s talk.

Deanna Bremer Fisher.

10 reasons why I choose to live in Cleveland Heights

I’ll start out by saying that I recognize that there are many problems in Cleveland Heights, as there are in most communities. And I agree with others who post on Next Door that our relatively high tax rates and the performance of our schools are issues that reduce the desirability of our community to some current and prospective residents.

That being said, I choose to live in Cleveland Heights. I have the choice to live in many other communities, but I made the decision many years ago to live here and I re-make that decision every year. Here are ten reasons that I choose to make Cleveland Heights my home.

1. INTEGRATION. Cleveland Heights is racially integrated, and, more importantly, many of us live here not in spite of the integration, but because we prefer to live in an integrated community.

2. WELCOMING. Cleveland Heights is a place where people of different religions, ethnicities, incomes and sexual orientations can feel at home and are welcomed as neighbors.

3. NEIGHBORLINES. Cleveland Heights is a neighborly place, where the closely-spaced houses, front porches and sidewalks encourage residents to get to know one another.

—Robert Brown

Cleveland Heights Observer readers weigh in

You can reach us at info@heightsobserver.org.

Many survey respondents said they read at least half of the print issues of the Heights Observer each month (41.3 percent), while 25.3 percent said they read it “from cover to cover” because it is “well written and gives better local information than the other forms of media.” In addition, 69.3 percent of respondents said they “always” or “frequently” read the weekly e-news because it’s “good enough quick scan and convenient and timely.” While some found the e-news format “easy to navigate,” several found it “doesn’t show up well on a smart phone” and “could look more professional.”

We use a program called Constant Contact to create the e-newsletter from content on the Heights Observer website, which is powered by the technology that is from the Lakewood Observer, which developed it. We are evaluating the e-news format to determine desired changes to it. Some readers would like us to make the reader accessible after our stories on the website; however, this is not a feature that is available to us in the current Observer license.

The weakest part of the Heights Observer, according to respondents, is the photos that accompany stories. We agree, but, just as we don’t have a reporter on staff, we also don’t have a photographer. Luckily, with today’s smart phone technology, people carries a decent camera in their pockets. When you send us a story, please make sure that the photos you attach are in JPG format and at least 900 dpi.

If this terminology sounds foreign to you, we can help. Give us a call at the FutureHeights office, 216-320-1453.

We are typically in Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. That said, if you are a photographer who would like to volunteer to help Heights Observer contributors, please let us know so we can connect you.

Comments from the readers’ survey demonstrate the value some place on the paper: “The Observer is the closest thing we have to a neighborhood newspaper.”

Corporations should have free-speech rights

To the Editor:

I need to respond to the misguided or untruthful notions about the Citizens United case from Carl Rutenberg and Deborah Van Kleef in the March 10 issue of Cleveland Heights Democracy column.

Nothing is scarier to me for our democracy than left-wing ideologies trying to amend our Constitution to limit free speech. The Citizens United case involved a group that produced an anti-Hillary Clinton movie, and Democrat supporters sought to stop the film and/or punish the producers. The Supreme Court upheld the free speech rights of citizens, whether in a group organized for profit, not-for-profit, labors, news, politics or anti-politics to express their opinions.

When government uses its power to maintain useless or harmful speech, we have a right to oppose reforms, to expand bureaucratic excess, and to quash new products, medicines, innovation and services, I want our corporates, representing millions of people and shareholders (including 401k and pension participants) to have a vigorous right to speech. The majority on the Supreme Court could have decided to make it easy for Yahoo (say, Google, Yahoo, The New York Times, CBS or Koch Industries), for profit or non-profit, would have more free speech rights than another. But, I doubt your columnists have actually read the Supreme Court opinion. Unions and the Sierra Club are corporations, too.

Campaign finance laws have been ineffective, at best, or harmful to our democracy by driving money away from political parties and enhancing the role of individual billionaires.

Moreover, the last presidential election showed that money is not as powerful as the Left would have you believe, and certainly doesn’t control the message. The Clinton campaign and supporters spent almost twice the amount as Trump. We also saw the largest and most powerful social campaigns from corporations and celebrities—these campaigns line up on the Clinton side and come up short. Wall Street went heavily toward Clinton.

Now for the facts. Since the court decision in 2010, corporations have donated a comparatively small percentage of the money in political campaigns. Business corporate PAC donations in 2016 were under $1 million. Of the $8.1 billion raised by PAAC, only 15.4% went to federal political campaigns, only $85 million came from business.

Liberal billionaire and global warming alarmist Tom Steyer topped them all with his $89 million, $242 million came from labor unions. I would rather hear from Merck or JP Morgan.

Robert Shwab
Cleveland Heights
Let the sun shine in  

Carla Rautenberg and Deborah Van Kleef

When times are prosperous, neighborhoods are harmonious, and public services are delivered without interruption, we assume municipal government is working well. If roads are crumbling, storm sewers are backing up, and crime seems to be increasing, our local government must be at fault, right?

Of course, it’s never that simple. When state and federal governments cut off major streams of funding, municipalities must scramble to fill the gaps by cutting services or raising taxes and fees, or often by a combination of both. Other than looking to increasingly scarce sources of local news, and consulting the city’s website, how can residents know what their elected and appointed officials are up to?

In Cleveland Heights, citizens can attend regular meetings of city council at 7:30 p.m. on the first and third Mondays of each month, or often by a combination of both. For those unable to attend in person, the proceedings are videotaped and can be viewed on the city’s YouTube channel. Written minutes and links to these videos are also posted on the city’s website. In addition, the League of Women Voters publishes notes from the meetings in the Heights Observer each month.

City council meetings can be quite informative. You can keep up to date on legislation, hear reports from various committees of council, and listen to public comments from fellow residents. What you will not hear are the deliberations behind the legislation. Those take place during council work sessions, called Committee of the Whole (CoW) meetings, at 6:15 p.m. every Monday. These meetings are open to the public in accordance with the Ohio Open Meetings Act, and your humble correspondents have attended many of them over the past several years.

The CoW meets in an executive conference room at city hall, where the city manager and the mayor (who is also council president) sit at opposite ends of a long table, with council members filling the places in between. Chairs for staff and the public line the two long walls of the room. There are no microphones and many council members are soft-spoken; it is often difficult for those not sitting at the table to hear everything that is said.

Each week, council members receive a “packet” containing reports from all the department heads and the city manager. A few years ago, some concerned citizens began making weekly public record requests (in accordance with the Ohio Public Records Act) to the law department for electronic copies of the packet. After many months, in the interest of transparency (and perhaps also to save staff time), the city decided to simply post the packet on its website every Monday afternoon. Now that information is available to everyone.

The proceedings of the CoW, however, are not. Though the Ohio Open Meetings Act, aka the Sunshine Law, requires that government meetings be open to the public, and that minutes be taken and made available to the public, the Cleveland Heights Law Department maintains that the city’s home rule rights take precedence over state law in this instance. It relies on section 107.04(a) of the Cleveland Heights code: “Minutes of Council committee meetings may be recorded in writing.” (Our emphasis.)

CH council takes the position that its CoW meetings (which require a quorum) are not “regular” council meetings, but committee meetings, and therefore minutes “may” be taken but are not required. The upshot? No minutes are kept and the meetings are not videotaped. The city has been sued over this matter and prevailed.

We would like to see this changed. In the spirit of the Sunshine Law, citizens should be privy to the discussions and debates that precede legislative decisions. Council Member Kahlil Seren agrees. He has consistently advocated video-taping CoW meetings and, as chair of the Public Safety and Health Committee, he has made it a point to have his committee meetings videotaped. (It is our understanding that video- and audio-taping can legally substitute for written minutes.)

There are practical considerations: at city hall, only council chambers is set up for videotaping of meetings; the executive conference room can accommodate audio- but not video-taping. Seren has easily resolved this by holding his committee meetings in council chambers.

What do you think? If you would like to see greater transparency on the part of our city government, we urge you to call, write or e-mail the mayor and members of council.

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.
A couple of years ago, the Gile family went to Cleveland Heights City Hall seeking approval of plans for a $250,000 renovation of the then-vacant former Pontiac building, to turn it into Motorcars’ collision center, which is open and will continue to operate in the back of the building.

According to Matt Gile, son of Chuck Gile, the city’s planning department reviewed the renovation plans and asked if the front of the building could be activated with a retail use. The family responded with the proposal for Daylight Donuts, which it will own under a separate company than Motorcars.

Does Motorcars expect to hear customers saying, “I’ll have a Honda Accord with my glazed donut and latte?” Not quite. But Matt Gile did say that the donut shop may make some people more familiar with the car dealership.

Robert Brown is a city planner with 40 years of experience, including nine years as Cleveland’s city planning director. A resident of Cleveland Heights for more than 40 years, Brown is a member of the FutureHeights Board of Directors.

In 1988, I was hired by Principal Pat Ackerman to teach math at Taylor Academy, an alternative high school that CH-UH had opened the previous year. Taylor was “a small school,” serving students who were not quite ready for the high school, or ninth-graders who were lagging behind.

There were 19 staff members, who worked to advance students academically, and help with their social-emotional issues. Taylor provided a close-knit, intimate environment where we knew one another. It was an experimental school that I believe helped many students who would have been lost in the large high school. Taylor Academy continued for several years, until Small Schools, another experiment, emerged as the new model.

Throughout its history CH-UH has established innovative programs similar to Taylor. When I was a student at Heights, we had New School, a program that enabled a small group of students and teachers to work together in creative ways. This was the original Community of Learners. Then came COL III, and School Within a School, to mention just a couple. Even now, CH-UH has Options, which is a smaller high school environment where students can work through their requirements off-site at their own pace with teachers supporting their efforts.

Some current educational pundits would have us believe that creativity in teaching students is reserved for charter schools, where the law frees the administration from restrictions that bind traditional public schools. Many charter schools can avoid transparency and accountability with regard to funding or governance.

Many charters advertise as being innovative, but the reality is very different. Often these schools struggle to retain staff, the teaching is completely prescriptive, and the rules for students are overly harsh and dehumanizing. Other charter schools claim to be innovative by having students work on a computer at home instead of in a classroom. Is this innovation or merely less expensive for the school’s profit margins?

In our school district, we consistently try to adapt to meet the needs of our students. We are a traditional, community-based school system, where we are required to educate all students. Our teachers are highly trained for their jobs. I know there are some people who have had bad experiences in our system. That is inevitable. But for the most part teachers go out of their way to ensure that kids are respected and that learning is a high priority.

I strongly believe that we could do our jobs even better if there were fewer state-mandated tests, which, on a regular basis, disrupt the flow of education. If teachers were given more time to teach, and students were not under pressure to take so many high-stakes tests, school would be a more positive experience for all.

Although excessive and unnecessary testing stifles innovation, teaching and learning, CH-UH has continued a tradition of experimental programs that try to meet the needs of all students. Charter schools do not have the lock on innovation. In fact, although wrapped in a bright package, for the most part, they reveal quite the opposite.
Diversity is essential to greatness

Susie Kaeber

To gather energy for a new year, I read John Lewis’s 2017 book, *Across That Bridge: A Vision for Change and the Future of America*. Civil rights icon Lewis is committed to democracy and human equality. For him, “Freedom is not a state; it is an act.” A more just society depends on continuous action by every generation. The work of democracy is never done. It is for all of us to do.

In describing our most recent national election, Lewis observes, “The intolerance of difference got even worse. It became a rallying cry in code words, ‘Make America Great Again,’ as though diversity had damaged, not uplifted, our civilization.”

I despair that this tagline validates and animates policy and behavior that encourage division, hate, greed and white supremacy. Lewis reminds me that how we approach difference does not have to be defined by a political slogan. What we do and what we expect of our local institutions can keep alive an inclusive agenda. It is up to us!

I cherish Cleveland Heights because of its tradition of citizen activism and institutional practices that support diversity. While we may fall short of achieving a community where equality, respect and inclusion are fully realized, these are aspirations that motivate much of our civic, institutional and personal lives. We have embraced diversity, and, mostly, we have benefited from it. It makes this a special and vibrant and challenging and wonderful place to live and raise children.

Starting in the mid-1960s, local activists focused on transforming all-white Cleveland Heights into an integrated community. Cleveland Heights residents formed Heights Citizens for Human Rights to challenge a resistant real estate industry and increase African-American access to suburban living. It worked. Black families found ways to buy homes and were welcomed by openhearted activists.

Integration required institutions to change their practices to include a diverse community, not just the white majority. The new black residents played a major role in advocating for their interests. They came for a better life and pushed city government and the public schools to include them. In 1974, African-American students at Heights High took action to make their school more responsive to the reality that they were part of the student body. The school staff, discipline and counseling practices and curriculum made them feel like second-class citizens. After the students followed the traditional channels to push for changes, including a Martin Luther King holiday, the black parent group, the Committee to Improve Community Relations, stepped in to help. Unsatisfactory negotiations with the CH-UH Board of Education led them to file a discrimination complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice, and they won.

The lack of minority teachers was a vital concern. It was both a fair-employment issue and an essential ingredient to an educational environment that valued people of all races. The 1975 consent decree set the goal that by 1980 at least 15 percent of the credentialed staff would be minority members. At the time they accounted for 5 percent. The district did not meet the goal, but a revised decree set a new goal of 20 percent by 1985, and that was achieved.

This early activism put the district on a path toward building a diverse and responsive educational team. This commitment to diversity has stuck. It is an essential part of hiring practices, both because it is fair and because it makes a more vibrant and interesting culture within our schools.

Diversity is, as John Lewis reminds us, “uplifting.”

In 1974, the school district had 664 professional staff members. Today there are 249. While the number of employees has decreased, minority numbers have grown from 34 to 137. This year, 25 percent of teachers and administrators are minority members. The national average is 17 percent.

Our diverse workforce makes our schools better. We are tapping the full wealth of humanity—not just the thin slice of white privilege. Our school communities have the benefit of learning with and from people with distinct identities and realities, experiences and perspectives. They enrich learning and thinking. Without the constraint of a single-race staff, our students can find role models everywhere. Stereotypes are challenged. The content of a person’s character can be the basis for judgment.

Each year minority teachers retire. We need to continue to replace them and grow a diverse staff. This is one powerful way we can fight the national narrative of division.

Diversity is uplifting. It is up to us to create a more just community and society. We cannot let greatness mean diminishing our humanity and our democracy.

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

DECEMBER 18, 2017

Present were Vice Mayor Susan Parmelee, Pamela Cameron, Phillip Ertel, John Rach, Michelle Weiss and Erica Weiss. Councilman Steven Sims arrived after roll call. Mayor Susan Infeld and Councilman Mark Wiseman were absent.

Public comments

Swensons restaurant Three Beachwood residents raised concerns regarding the new Swensons restaurant on Cedar Road near Green Road. Leslie Kushner read a letter on behalf of the Beachwood City Council expressing its dismay over the lack of communication with Beachwood regarding Swensons, which “[will] have a negative impact on the residents of Beachwood, especially with the late hours of operation. Tony Kushner asked for tonight’s vote to be delayed until LHC City Council has been able to meet with the city council, addressing concerns of crime and noise.

Hadleigh Road request for demolition

Michael Murphy, who owns the properties at 4176 and 4168 Hadleigh Road, is asking to demolish the house at 4176 Hadleigh in order to provide a larger yard for his home at 4168. Councilman Rach noted that this is a “gem of a house,” valued at $385,000, and tearing it down would reduce the taxable value of the property. Councilwoman Weiss noted that the tax revenue is a small percentage of the city’s revenue, and [she] would hate to lose the family as residents. Vice Mayor Parmelee noted that the planning commission approved the proposal. The request was approved, with Rach voting no, and Councilman Sims present.

Customer parking at Swensons

Vice Mayor Parmelee explained that the proposed ordinance was being amended to eliminate the portion regarding serving of food to vehicles between midnight and 6 a.m., and revising the portion regarding parking cars within 75 feet of residential structures between the hours of 1 a.m. and 6 a.m. (instead of midnight and 6 a.m.).

The ordinance was presented on emergency in order to go into effect immediately. Councilman Pasch and residents of Beachwood have spoken for a lower and more studied process, voted no, and effectively kept the ordinance on first reading. It will be reconsidered at a future meeting.

Resolution honoring Mayor Infeld

Vice Mayor Parmelee read a resolution honoring Mayor Susan K. Infeld for her 20 years of dedicated service to the community. Infeld was elected to council on her first bid, and exhibited great devotion to the city. She managed the bond campaign for the swimming pool and playground before being elected to office. She has promoted the city and helped to form multiple regional collaborations. The council expressed deep gratitude for her service.

LWV Observer: Wendy S. Deuring.

JANUARY 2, 2018

Present were Mayor Michael Brennan, and council members Susan Parmelee (vice mayor), Pamela Cameron, Phillip Ertel, John Rach, Michelle Weiss and Marc Wiseman. Councilman Steven Sims was absent.

Installation of officials

All oaths of office included a pledge to uphold the Constitution and laws of the state of Ohio, and the charter and ordinances of the city of University Heights. Judge Kathleen Ann Sutula, for whom Michael Brennan served as staff attorney, administered the oath of office to Mayor Brennan. Susan Parmelee was reelected by council to serve as vice mayor, and Mayor Brennan was designated safety director. Robert Pirkko III was sworn in as interim fire chief, replacing the former chief, Douglas Zook.

Mayoral address

Mayor Brennan thanked former mayor Susan Infeld for her 20-plus years of service. He also thanked his family, and all seven members of council, and the residents of University Heights who chose him to be their mayor. He commented that all who were seated at the front table have a vision for the city—to make it more open and inclusive, safer, and with more civic engagement and citizen involvement. He also said that all people need to be more respectful, even when they disagree—especially when they disagree. Brennan said he intends to create positions for economic development and community engagement. He believes it will take time to effect change, but the work has begun.

Maintenance of parking places and surroundings ordinance

Council approved revisions to Ordinance 2017-54, amending the city rules entitled “Maintenance of customer parking places and surroundings.” This ordinance removes the text about serving food outdoors, and revises the portion regarding parking cars within 75 feet of residential structures between the hours of 1:30 a.m. and 6 a.m. (instead of midnight and 6 a.m.).

Brennan explained that the law is being changed on behalf of one specific business. Mayor Brennan noted that commitments have been made to Swensons, but the city also needs to be [a] good neighbor to Beachwood. He confirmed his commitment to work with [Beachwood] Councilman Pasch and residents of Beachwood to ameliorate the situation.

LWV Observer: Wendy S. Deuring.

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

These meeting summaries are abstracted from LWV observers’ written reports. The summaries have been compiled and edited by Anne McFarland, Charlene Morse and Maryann Barnes. To receive email notices of full reports, write an e-mail to mbarnes9515@gmail.com or join through Google groups using “lwv-chuh observer reports” as a search phrase.

These reports contain member observation and selected highlights of public meetings and are not official statements of the Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters Cuyahoga Area. This disclaimer must accompany any redistribution of these reports.
UH names two as 2017 Citizen of the Year

Bonnye Klein (l) and Sarah Staples were honored for their work on behalf of the city of University Heights’ City Beautiful Commission.

Patrick Grogan-Myers

At the Dec. 4 University Heights City Council meeting, the commission was honored by Mayor Susan Infeld, who presented plaques to Bonnye Klein and Sarah Staples, co-chairs of the City Beautiful Commission and its Beautiful Home Awards, Citizen of the Year.

Each year, the mayor of University Heights chooses a resident to honor as the city’s Citizen of the Year for his or her outstanding accomplishments and contributions to civic pride. As co-chairs of the City Beautiful Commission, Klein and Staples are charged with promoting civic pride and improving the appearance of the city and its homes. To help accomplish this, each year the commission recognizes residents’ home beautification efforts with awards in six categories: Carh Appeal, Best Front Door, Sit a Spell, Best Kept Secret, 2 in a Row, and 3 in a Row.

Klein and her husband, Jerry, have been residents of University Heights for 46 years, raising two children, Rochelle and Joel. As a licensed and certified geriatric occupational therapy assistant who focuses on aging in place, Klein owns a company that places private duty nurses. She is also a published author and developer of a multi-sensory centered diagnostic tool to test the five senses, and is an accomplished artist, with charcoal work on display at the Guggenheim Museum in New York.

Staples and her husband, Nathaniel, have been residents of University Heights for 10 years, raising two sons, Alex and Charlie. Staples developed her interest in historic homes while she lived in England, and the brick and stone homes of University Heights remind her of the English homes she saw while she lived abroad. Growing up, Staples visited the homes of presidents, such as President Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello, and enjoyed seeing beautiful, lovingly maintained homes on the Tour of Homes, which her mother, a realtor, organized.

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

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

The commission’s review continued from page 1

After reviewing responses, the commission will continue to seek input from citizens as well as from representatives of other local suburban governments.

Commission members agreed that the most critical elements of the charter for their review are those that identify the way the mayor and council members are elected and the role of the city manager or other chief administrator.

Currently, Cleveland Heights is one of only two municipalities in Cuyahoga County that does not elect its mayor by a vote of the public. With respect to the city council in Cleveland Heights, all of its members are elected citywide (“at-large”), whereas many other suburbs elect some of their council members by district or ward.

Commission members disagreed on the appropriate timing of their work and the frequency of their meetings. After Mike Ungar, CH City Council member, explained that council has given the commission discretion on these matters, some members said that the commission should take whatever time it needs to give all matters thorough consideration.

Commission member Carla Rothenberg stated that the commission has a responsibility to the citizens of Cleveland Heights to complete its work in time for city council to place recommended charter amendments on the November 2018 ballot. This would allow citizens to elect a mayor and/or council members by district in November 2019, if the charter is amended to permit this.

If city charter amendments are not prepared in time for the November 2018 ballot, the first elections under that charter would not be possible until November 2021.

At the end of the Jan. 4 meeting, five citizens gave comments to the commission. All thanked the members for their thorough consideration of the issues. Most urged the members to act promptly and to give serious consideration to giving citizens the right to elect the city’s mayor.

The next meeting of the Charter Review Commission is scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 1, 7 p.m., at Cleveland Heights City Hall.

All meetings are open to the public and each will include time for public comment.

The commission’s meetings and agendas will be posted on the city’s website, www.clevelandheights.com. All meetings will be recorded and broadcast on the city’s cable channel, Channel 20, and on the city’s YouTube channel, www.youtube.com/user/clevelandheights.

Robert Brown is a city planner with 40 years of experience, including nine years as Cleveland’s city planning director. A resident of Cleveland Heights for more than 40 years, Brown is a member of the Future Heights Board of Directors.
Cleveland Heights City Council
Meeting highlights
JANUARY 2, 2018
Council members present were Mary Dunbar, Carol Roe, Kahlil Seren, Jason Stein, Cheryl L. Stephens, Michael N. Ungar and Melissa Yasinow.

New council terms
Council members Stein, Stephens, Ungar and Yasinow were elected to new terms in the November 2017 general election; the oath of office was administered to each.

New mayor and vice mayor
Council elected Carol Roe to be mayor (council president) and Melissa Yasinow, vice mayor (council vice president). Each was elected by a vote of 6-1, with Kahlil Seren voting no. After Roe and Yasinow took the oaths of office, Mayor Roe assumed the functions of chairing the meeting from outgoing Mayor Stephens.

Michael Ungar had nominated both. In nominating Roe, Ungar stated this was neither change for its own sake nor musical chairs. He cited Roe’s able chairing of the Administrative Services Committee, her quiet efficiency and effectiveness, and her ability to marshal the diverse talents of all members and welcome disagreement and debate. He said she is a good listener and that it is important that she lives in the Noble neighborhood. He stated that the nomination was no criticism of the current mayor or vice mayor. In nominating Yasinow, Ungar pointed out that she was the top vote-getter in the election, with 7,000 votes, that she is part of the millennial generation, and would be the youngest vice mayor in Cleveland Heights history.

Cheryl Stephens said that it has been an honor to serve the community that she loves and diplomacy of the transfer of power in a peaceful manner.

Heights history.

Seren shared his thoughts that led him to vote against both candidates, including a lack of knowledge about the other candidates and a desire for change.

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Council members present were Mary Dunbar, Carol Roe, Kahlil Seren, Jason Stein, Cheryl L. Stephens, Michael N. Ungar and Melissa Yasinow.

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Council elected Carol Roe to be mayor (council president) and Melissa Yasinow, vice mayor (council vice president). Each was elected by a vote of 6-1, with Kahlil Seren voting no. After Roe and Yasinow took the oaths of office, Mayor Roe assumed the functions of chairing the meeting from outgoing Mayor Stephens.

Michael Ungar had nominated both. In nominating Roe, Ungar stated this was neither change for its own sake nor musical chairs. He cited Roe’s able chairing of the Administrative Services Committee, her quiet efficiency and effectiveness, and her ability to marshal the diverse talents of all members and welcome disagreement and debate. He said she is a good listener and that it is important that she lives in the Noble neighborhood. He stated that the nomination was no criticism of the current mayor or vice mayor. In nominating Yasinow, Ungar pointed out that she was the top vote-getter in the election, with 7,000 votes, that she is part of the millennial generation, and would be the youngest vice mayor in Cleveland Heights history.

Cheryl Stephens said that it has been an honor to serve the community that she loves and diplomacy of the transfer of power in a peaceful manner.

Heights history.

Seren shared his thoughts that led him to vote against both candidates, including a lack of knowledge about the other candidates and a desire for change.

New council terms
Council members present were Mary Dunbar, Carol Roe, Kahlil Seren, Jason Stein, Cheryl L. Stephens, Michael N. Ungar and Melissa Yasinow.

New council terms
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Noble Neighbors celebrates its first four years

Brenda H. May

Noble Neighbors marked its fourth anniversary with a party at the Victorian Condominiums on Jan. 2. Attendees recounted the year’s activities and accomplishments over a potluck community meal.

The Triangle District, the business district bounded by Warrensville Center, Mayfield and Noble roads, was a focus of attention in 2017. A group of Noble Neighbors joined with FutureHeights to gather data about every business in the area. They surveyed and interviewed every shop owner and gleaned their perspectives on the district. Nearby vacancies were included in the inventory. This data is being recorded into a database that will serve future planning.

Noble Neighbors and FutureHeights partnered for two events regarding the Triangle District—a charrette and a workshop. The charrette explored potential development on the large city-owned parcels and the vacant lot at the former site of the Center Mayfield building through a presentation by FutureHeights Civic Engagement Committee. The “Envision a New Triangle District” workshop, held later, engaged more than 50 residents and stakeholders to sketch and describe their ideas for the area.

“We Are Noble” was the new name for the neighborhoodwide celebration event in May. Noble Elementary School’s “Noble Fest” and Oxford Elementary School’s carnival were held during the weekend. Noble Neighborhood Library, area businesses and churches, the Home Repair Resource Center and the Martin G. Lenz Police Academy showcased their services, and residents hosted more than 50 garage sales to help attract people to the area. A promotional video was filmed during the weekend with the help of a grant from the FutureHeights mini-grant program. The video is viewable at www.nobleneighbors.com.

Noble Neighbors members sought to participate as an organization in a variety of events in the Cleveland Heights-University Heights community. They gathered a team to compete in the Reaching Heights Spelling Bee and joined a parade on Lee Road celebrating the students in the school district.

Ongoing efforts include being present at Cleveland Heights City Council meetings, expanding public perennial gardens, and “Light Up Noble,” which encourages businesses to showcase their locations when viewers of Nela Park’s annual holiday lighting display drive through the neighborhood. A one-time event in the fall whimsically celebrated the repaving of Noble Road.

Noble Neighbors’ candidate forums, held at Noble Road Presbyterian Church, brought candidates for the school board, the municipal court judgeship, and Cleveland Heights City Council to speak on issues relevant to the Noble neighborhoods. Attention to neighborhood needs became a significant campaign issue.

Looking forward to participating in planning and development of its business districts and residential neighborhoods, Noble Neighbors has launched an effort to further educate its members about the latest thinking and movements in community building. Participants prepared for the Triangle District activities by viewing TED talk videos, reading articles and studying maps. Members have formed several book groups to study community social structures and patterns, which they will then be able to apply to future projects.

Noble Neighbors looks forward to its growing partnerships with the city of Cleveland Heights, the school district, Heights Libraries and FutureHeights, as it continues its efforts to help the northeastern quadrant of the city thrive.

Brenda H. May is one of the leaders of Noble Neighbors.
Library board to hold special meeting about Coventry property

Sheryl Banks

The Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library Board will hold a special meeting on Monday, Feb. 5, at 7:30 p.m. at the Lee Road branch to consider an agreement with the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education to acquire the Coventry School property, including the school building and surrounding six acres of land.

Public comments will be welcomed at the meeting.

Negotiations with current tenants, who have organized as the Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Campus, have begun. Currently the library plans to maintain the park and work with the community to rebuild the playground.

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

CH City Council identifies priorities for 2018

Deanna Bramer Fisher

At its Jan. 22 meeting, Cleveland Heights City Council discussed priorities for the 2018 year. Although the members of council did not change as a result of the 2017 election, council did elect a new mayor and vice mayor at its first meeting of the year on Jan. 2, perhaps signaling a change in direction.

Cleveland Heights has a council-manager form of government, which means that the mayor and vice mayor are the president and vice president of city council, and are elected every two years by their peers on council, rather than by the public. A professional manager, who serves at the will of city council and is not elected by the public, operates the city.

Carol Roe, the city’s new mayor, is a registered nurse and licensed attorney who lives in the Noble neighborhood. She was elected to council in 2015, and is chair of council’s Administrative Services Committee.

Melissa Yasinow, the new vice mayor, is, at 33, the youngest the city has ever had. An attorney with Kohrman Jackson & Krantz, she is a member of city council since 2014, and chairs council’s Municipal Services Committee.

In the past, council rotated members and chairs among its council committees when it elected a new mayor and vice mayor; this year, the committees will remain the same—at least for now. Restructuring the committees to better align with the city’s needs is one of the 2018 priorities that council members identified. “Some of the committees only meet a few times during the year,” said Roe.

At the Jan. 22 meeting, Council Member Michael Ungar asked each of his colleagues to state up to 10 priorities he or she had for the city in 2018. Each member was given five minutes, uninterrupted, in which to do so. (Mayor Roe said she would reach out to Council Member Jason Stein, who was absent because of illness, to ask him to send council a list of his priorities.)

The next step was to compile the priorities for further discussion at a future meeting. Council Member Mary Dunbar suggested that the city agree on no more than five items to prioritize in 2018.

Several themes emerged from the various priorities that council members listed. Among them were addressing the vacant/abandoned properties in the city, particularly housing; implementing the goals stated in the city’s Master Plan; making progress on economic development projects, particularly Top of the Hill; and finalizing the community development corporation agreement.

In addition, several council members wanted to focus on particular neighborhoods, such as Noble and the Tudor/Taylor area, and move forward in enacting policies, such as a foreclosure bond, complete streets policy, or demolition ordinance. Another theme seemed to be the improvement of internal city processes, and council’s need for more data and more reporting on progress toward goals from city staff.

A couple of board members commented on the new CH-UH Board of Education members and new leadership in the city of University Heights, saying that it presented a new opportunity to work toward common goals.

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

Best French Fries in NE Ohio
Best Milk Shake East of Mississippi
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Best Vegetarian & Family Friendly Restaurant

Cleveland Heights News
Start Right Church

Cleveland Heights Landmarks

Ken Goldberg

Originally Church of the Cross, a United Methodist congregation, this lovely church in the Caledonia neighborhood was completed in 1926 and became a Cleveland Heights landmark in 2007.

In the 1990s, it was renamed Community of Living Hope, and in 2009, the Start Right congregation took root around what looked like no other in Cleveland Heights.

It is a typical 1920s Tudor Revival edifice, with edifices brick and stucco along with half timbers, but Gothic Revival vocabulary is also seen.

The church’s interior has changed little over the years, and the sanctuary features exposed wooden beams, a choir loft, leaded glass, a pipe organ, and original lighting fixtures.

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.

His seven members are appointed to three-year terms by CH City Council.

Beth El to celebrate Purim at Ohio City Mitchell’s

Jew Buchwald Gelles

Beth El – The Heights Synagogue will hold its Purim evening service and Megillah (Book of Esther) reading at Mitchell’s ice cream factory, 2567 West 25th Street in Ohio City, on Wednesday, Feb 28. The service will begin at 7 p.m.

Why at Mitchell’s? For several reasons: (1) Historically, Jews seem to travel for many holidays, so why not? (2) More fun! It’s amazing to see “behind the scenes” at an ice cream factory, and Mitchell’s has glass walls so visitors can view the whole process. (3) Ice cream! Part of the deal here is that everyone gets a free scoop of Mitchell’s ice cream, in addition to Beth El’s own hamantaschen (traditional triangular pastries with tasty fillings). (4) Outreach. This is a long-shot, for course, but there are unaffiliated Jews living on Cleveland’s West Side, and Beth El wants to meet them.

Allow at least 35 minutes to get there—about 25 minutes to drive from the shul, plus a few minutes to park your car and walk to Mitchell’s.

Free parking is available at the West Side Market parking lot and on neighborhood streets.

As usual, the “whole Megillah” will be read. Costumes are welcome, but not required.

This event is free and open to the public. For more information about this special Purim service, call Beth El at 216-331-9667.

Too Buchwald Gelles is a founding member of Beth El and the organizer of this event. He is also the owner of the Cleveland-Heights-based business, Baggadah-Us, http://www.baggadahus.com/.

Forest Hill observes Black History Month

Peg Weisbrod

As part of its ongoing efforts to promote better interracial relationships, Forest Hill Presbyterian Church is again offering an active, entertaining and educational series of programs in honor of Black History Month in February.

Sunday, Feb 4 - Visit a Black-Owned Restaurant Weekend:

We encourage everyone to eat at a Black-owned restaurant or use a Black-owned caterer or deli for their Super Bowl parties, as an expression of supporting our Black brothers and sisters.

Sunday, Feb 11, 12:30 p.m.

-Lunch with the Honorable Janine Boyd, State Representative, Ohio District 9, will speak at Forest Hill Presbyterian Church on Sunday, Feb. 11.

The Honorable Janine Boyd, State Representative, Ohio District 9, will speak at Forest Hill Presbyterian Church on Sunday, Feb. 11.

Peg Weisbrod is a freelance writer and publicity coordinator for Forest Hill Church in Cleveland Heights.

IMD Cleveland Heights High School INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Proudly presents its MIDWINTER CONCERT I

At the Heights High School auditorium Wednesday, February 14th at 7:30 PM Featuring Concert Orchestras, Concert & Symphonic Bands, and The Percussion Ensemble

MIDWINTER CONCERT I

Friday, February 16th at 7:30 PM Featuring Symphonic Winds, the Heights High Symphony with senior soloist, Corinne Nicol, and HHS Jazz Ensembles

*Both nights - chamber ensembles play for enjoyment @6:30 PM in the mini auditorium.

Visit us at www.heightsmid.org

Original photo by peg weisbrod

Ken Goldberg

HEIGHTS Observer February 1, 2018
www.heightsobserver.org
Jackalyn Fehrenbach is named director of Heights Youth Club

Ken Wood

Jackalyn Fehrenbach, a Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland (BGCC) staff member for eight years, has been named the new director of Heights Youth Club (HYC) in Cleveland Heights—the organization where her career began.

HYC is currently the only BGCC affiliate, of 15 clubs, located outside the city of Cleveland.

Fehrenbach, a 2004 graduate of the University of Toledo who is currently working on her master’s degree at Malone University, started her BGCC career at HYC, then moved on to Saint Luke’s Club in Cleveland when that organization at HYC, then moved on to Saint Luke’s Club in Cleveland when that career at HYC, then moved on to Saint Luke’s Club in Cleveland when that position opened in 2013. Most recently, she served as director there.

Fehrenbach replaces Beverly Burgess, who left the organization for another position.

The change comes as the funding model for the Cleveland Heights club is changing. Under the new model, parents will pay rates between $55 and $60 per week, based on a sliding income scale, for afterschool programming. This includes supervision by professional youth development staff, daily meals, transportation from some schools, homework help, arts and music opportunities, and athletics.

“When I was asked to come back to Heights Youth Club I was extremely excited and could not wait to hit the pavement,” Fehrenbach said. “I know that I will be the best fit to implement this new model. With this position comes a lot of great responsibility to the kids and families of Cleveland Heights and I am ready to continue to provide the great level of service we have always strived for, as well as bringing in new ideas and programs that will truly affect our members.”

HYC is currently accepting a limited number of new youth members. For more information, contact Fehrenbach at 216-331-2581 or jfehrenbach@clevekids.org.

HYC, located in a former church across from Heights High, has been a hub of activity for Heights kids since it opened in 2007. Its members range in age from 6 to 18. In addition to activities and programming, HYC served approximately 20,000 free meals to members last year.

Ken Wood is a former Sun News writer and Suburban Journalist of the Year for the U.S. and Canada. He is communications director for Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland.

International scholar to address modern Jewish issues at three-day Heights seminar

Jew Buchwald Gelles

Shulamit Magnus will present a scholarly residence program at Beth El - The Heights Synagogue (136 Desota Ave.), Feb. 2, 3 and 4. In three sessions, she will address “Who Was a Jew? Views from History on Jewish Boundaries, Boundary Drawing, and Identity.”

Magnus, professor emerita of Jewish studies and history at Oberlin College, and now teaching at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, will explore the question of Jewish identity in different periods and places in Jewish history from antiquity to the present. She will look at why, how, and by whom lines of belonging and exclusion have been drawn, and long periods in Jewish history when no such lines were drawn and the question that is so controversial now was, literally, not a question.

She will also discuss: when and why a formal process of conversion came into Jewish practice; how the Jewish world responded to some very complicated cases of belonging and identity, such as conversos (“Marranos” or secret Jews during the Spanish Inquisition); and people like Benjamin Disraeli (English prime minister who was baptized as a child yet loudly proclaimed Jewishness—of a sort), Sigmund Freud, and a group of “total converts” in Tsarist Russia, whom Magnus describes as “good-bad Jews,” who used their position as converts to help Jews accused of blood libel; and how conversion and boundary line issues are playing out today in Israel. As Magnus says, “Think it’s messy now? It was always was!”

Shulamit Magnus

Magnus helped establish the Jewish Studies Program at Oberlin and was chair. She is a historian who specializes in questions of identity and cultural change in European Jewish societies, the history of Jewish women, and the workings of gender in Jewish societies. She is the winner of a National Jewish Book Award and a Hadasah-Brandeis Institute Award for her critical edition of Pauline Wengroff’s Memoirs of a Grandmother. She is a plaintiff in a case now before the Supreme Court of Israel to enforce the right of Jewish women to read Torah at the Western Wall (Kotel).

Magnus will present three sessions over the weekend: Friday night, Saturday afternoon, and Sunday morning. The cost for the entire weekend, which includes two full meals and a light brunch on Sunday, is $45. Individual sessions are $20. You must register in advance, at www.bethelheights.org or by calling 216-511-2761.

Publisher and graphic designer Joe Buchwald Gelles, a member of Beth El - The Heights Synagogue, has been a Heights resident for 28 years. He is married to Mia Buchwald Gelles, and they have three children: Ruth, 13; Noam, 22; and Shani, 20.
Reaching Heights presents its annual awards

In December, Reaching Heights held its annual meeting in the Platinum Lounge of Motorcars Honda in Cleveland Heights. Each year at this event, Reaching Heights welcomes members and the community to review the year’s highlights, to thank outgoing board members and welcome new board members, and to recognize caring community members and local businesses for their contributions in embracing a shared responsibility for the successful education of all students attending CH-UH public schools.

Reaching Heights members, board and staff thanked Darrin Gamble for serving for three years as board treasurer and overall “financial guru” for the nonprofit.

The Reaching Heights Board of Directors voted to accept Ditte Wolin, Tiera Briggs, Lance Godard and Kim Skillern-Samuels as new board members.

Geizel Canady-Ashford received a Friend of Public Education award for her many contributions, including serving as a tutor to many students, as a PTA member at Noble Elementary and Monticello Middle schools, and as PTA vice president at Heights High. She has also been an active volunteer and tour chaperone with the Band and Orchestra Parents Organization (BOPO) and the Vocal Arts Parents Organization (VAPO). Last year, the Heights High Lady Tigers tennis team named Canady-Ashford “Team Mom.” For the past four years, she attended every practice and all home and away matches, armed with snacks, blankets and encouraging words.

Reaching Heights also named Chuck Lamb a Friend of Public Education. He served as an unpaid assistant varsity basketball coach for the Heights High men’s basketball team for 38 years, from 1979 to 2017. He also supported CH-UH schools’ operating levies by assisting the Heights basketball players in canvassing neighborhoods with levy literature. His employer, Motorcars Honda, provided vans to transport the athletes, and Lamb helped the young men figure out what to say to homeowners to promote Heights schools. Coach Lamb was proud to say that both levies he and his players supported were successful.

Chuck Gile, owner of the Motorcars Group, accepted the award for Reaching Heights Outstanding Community Partner. Reaching Heights recognized Motorcars for employing Heights students and graduates, and for allowing employees to volunteer time and resources to support Heights sports teams and levy campaigns. The Motorcars Group made a large donation to rebuilding the Lady Tigers Softball Field in 2013, and regularly donates to many student groups, placing sponsorship ads in event programs and providing raffle prizes for fund-raisers.

The nonprofit Reaching Heights connects the community to the Heights public schools by providing information, programs and events that enrich students and support teachers. Connect, support, or volunteer by contacting Reaching Heights at its website, www.reachingheights.org; by phone at 216-932-5110; by e-mailing krista@reachingheights.org; or by traditional mail (2843 Washington Blvd., Cleveland Heights, OH 44118).

Krista Hawthorne is executive director of Reaching Heights.

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Meeting highlights

DECEMBER 19, 2017

President Ron Register, Vice President Kal Zucker, Jim Posch, Eric Silverman and Beverly Wright were present, as were Superintendents Talisa Dixon and Treasurer Scott Gainer. The meeting began at 7 p.m. and ended at 9:05 p.m. Prior to the meeting, a reception was held to honor outgoing board members.

Public comments

IB program content: A seventh-grade student requested to meet with the superintendent and board about the International Baccalaureate program. He said he feels that the program focuses on liberal arts and needs to offer more STEM courses. Ron Register said he would meet with the superintendent schedules a meeting.

Coventry building transfer: A community member asked that the Coventry School building be transferred to the library board and that an arts center be maintained at the building. The board is working on this suggestion.

Recognition of master teachers

The superintendent recognized the following high school master teachers: Sarah Parker (marketing), Joyce Buhac (math), Nancy Eisenberg (art), and Bridget Lombart (English). Elementary and middle school master teachers were recognized in November.

Tiger Team members of the month

Each month the district recognizes employees who go above and beyond to create a culture of excellence in the district. This month, 12 Tiger Team members were honored.

Board approvals

The board approved policy 7250, which gives procedures for naming school facilities.

High school field trips were approved for the Barbeshoppers, the Robotics Club, the Symphony Winds, and the A Cappella Choir.

Donations were accepted ranging from $10 to Boulevard Elementary School to $10,000 to the Delilah Options Achievement Scholarship.

Middle school facilities approvals

Doug Myer from PMC gave a summary of the middle schools project. He presented the GMP (guaranteed maximum price) at $22,782,999. Turner Construction presented the schedule for beginning work in March 2018, and ending in July 2019. Depending on the finalization of documents and approval of the GMP, Alternates directions, decisions and timelines were presented also.

The board approved the GMP, with Eric Silverman voting no.

A policy for the authorization of change orders was presented. Per the policy, the board would have to approve every change above $50,000. Jim Posch wanted more clarity and a recommended tabling the motion. It was explained that under state law, this authorization is necessary. After much discussion, the board approved the change order motion, with Posch and Silverman voting no.

Outgoing board members comments

Outgoing president Ron Register reflected on his 16 years on the board, and said, “I never did enough. I am just starting.” Outgoing vice president Kal Zuck er thanked the board, teachers, and students, among others, saying, “Why we do this is for the kids.”

January 9, 2018

President James Posch, Vice President Jodi Soursini, Dan Heintz, Malia Lewis and Beverly Wright were present, as were Superintendents Talisa Dixon and Treasurer Scott Gainer. The meeting began at 7 p.m. and ended at 8:20 p.m. Prior to the meeting, an organizational meeting was held at which the new board members were sworn in and James Posch was elected president, Jodi Soursini, vice president, and Beverly Wright, treasurer pro tempore.

Public comments

Kiwano chapter: Mark Harris, representing the new Cleveland Heights-University Heights Kiwanos, said that the chapter would like to work with the schools.

Tiger Team members of the month

Each month, the district recognizes Tiger Team members—those employees who go above and beyond to create a culture of excellence in the district. This month, 12 team members were honored.

Board approvals

The board approved routine personnel issues as well as a resolution to suspend an employee without pay, varsity basketball team trips to Dayton and Wilmington, Ohio, and a varsity baseball team trip to Cocoa Beach, Fla.; and all financial reports. It also accepted donations totaling $1,650 for the Robotics Club. (Details for these approvals can be found on the Jan. 9 agenda under “Board Docs” on the school board’s webpage (www.chuh.org/boe/education.aspx).)

Five-year forecast and state voucher program

Scott Gainer explained the five-year forecast for the new board members. Dan Heintz said he would like to know more about the loss of $9 million to the state voucher program.

Coventry building transfer

James Posch said that the school board will move forward with the library board in transferring the Coventry School building to the library and maintaining an arts center there.

February meetings

February meetings include a work session on Tuesday, Feb. 6, and a regular board meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 20. All meetings are at 7 p.m. at the Board of Education building.

LWV Observers: Adele Cohn.

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4. Reward yourself; you’re about to be published. We’ll review and edit your article, and let you know if we have any questions.

Submit an article to the Heights Observer.
Swim Cadets demonstrate their ‘Girl Power’

This year’s Swim Cadets are excited to perform in Heights High’s brand new pool.

Kara Hamley O’Donnell and Mary Pat Jolivette

The Cleveland Heights High School Swim Cadets, a 16-member synchronized swimming team, have announced that their 2018 annual show is scheduled for Thursday through Saturday, Feb. 22, 23 and 24. The school’s oldest extracurricular club has chosen the theme “Swim Cadets Present: Girl Power,” and songs that highlight female empowerment.

Heights High’s Smith commits to OSU

Heights High senior Tyreke Smith.

Scott Wortman

Heights High senior standout Tyreke Smith committed to play football at The Ohio State University during the Under Armour All-American game on Jan. 4, in Orlando, Fla. One of the most highly recruited football players in the country, Smith chose the Ohio State Buckeyes over Penn State and a host of other top collegiate programs.

Smith, a 6-foot-4-inch, 260-pound defensive end—who only started playing football as a Heights High junior—finished his senior year with 11 sacks, 23 tackles for loss, 22 QB pressures, 6 passes batted down, and 22 solo tackles. Previously, Smith had only played basketball, which he continues to play as a member of the Heights varsity squad.

On the gridiron this past fall, Smith was named All-Ohio Division I Co-Defensive Player of the Year and was selected as the Cleveland.com Defensive Player of the Year for 2017.

Next year, Smith will join former Heights High teammate Jaylen Harris (77), who recently completed his freshman season with the Buckeyes. Smith is not the only Tiger senior to commit to play Division I football next fall. Last month, Kyleen McCracken signed with Ohio University, LeMarco Smith Jr. signed with the University of Buffalo, and Zaire Webb recently committed to play football at Georgetown University.

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

Amy Jenkins

In the age of technology and touch screens, old-fashioned board and card games are making a comeback. The benefits of this simple group activity are well documented and can include: increased memory formation and cognitive skills; decreased risk for disease; an improved immune system, and improved coordination and dexterity; and increased opportunities to socialize, laugh with others and have fun, which can lower blood pressure.

Starting on Monday, Feb. 5, at 11 a.m., SAC will add a new program, Chess with Leo. Chess is a great game, and this is a fine opportunity to learn the fundamentals of play or brush up on existing skills with the help of an experienced chess enthusiast. Chess with Leo will continue to meet weekly, so plan to drop in. If there is a game that you played before and want to add it to our schedule, Game nights are every Monday morning, contact SAC and we will try to accommodate you.

Senior Happenings, sponsored by the city of University Heights, are open to all seniors. Events take place on Thursdays at 2 p.m. at the University Heights Library. To receive the monthly schedule by e-mail, call 216-932-7800, ext. 205, or send an e-mail to info@universityheights.com.

Feb. 1: Jacklyn Chisholm, president and Douglas Bennett, vice president, will discuss the work of the Council for Economic Opportunity in Greater Cleveland. Among the services it offers is the largest Head Start program in Ohio, a home energy assistance program, family development workshops, job and career planning, and neighborhood opportunity centers.

Feb. 8: Amy Kim Kyremes-Parks, director of Fairmount Presbyterian Church, will present a 24-minute, award-winning documentary, “Locked in a Box” traces the lives of people who fled their homelands in search of safety and freedom, only to end up in U.S. prisons in a system run by Immigration Customs and Enforcement. The film strips away political rhetoric to show the human cost of detention.

Feb. 15: In December, Bonnie Klein and Sarah Staples were together named the 2017 University Heights Citizens of the Year. They will describe their work as co-chairs of the work of this nonprofit. Habitat is celebrating 30 years of building homes and empowering families through affordable housing, ultimately enabling the homeowner to pursue other dreams for his or her family.

Feb. 22: Blake Johnston, director of marketing and development for Habitat for Humanity, will discuss the work of this nonprofit. Habitat is celebrating 30 years of building homes and empowering families through safe and affordable housing, ultimately enabling the homeowner to pursue other dreams for his or her family.
Library adopts hedgehog mascot, “Quilliam”

Heights Observer February 1, 2018
www.heightsobserver.org

This past December, the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System acquired a mascot: an African pygmy hedgehog. The hedgehog, dubbed “Quilliam” by customer vote, lives in the teen room at the Lee Road branch, in a large habitat that includes an exercise wheel, blankets for burrowing and sleeping, and a small plastic shelter to hide in.

“He’s incredibly popular,” said his handler, Youth Services Librarian Sarah Rosenberger. “We have whole families coming in to see him, and when I take him out I am surrounded by people asking questions and eager to take a peek at him.”

Library staff has also provided a fact sheet about Quilliam for curious customers, and Rosenberger takes him out periodically to allow people to get a close look at him, and to ask questions.

“Hedgehogs are nocturnal, so we let him sleep most of the day,” explained Rosenberger. “He is usually awake and active around 9 a.m., once in the afternoon, and in the evening.”

To ensure Quilliam is visible to the public during his active nighttime hours, the library installed a camera in his habitat, dubbed “Quillcam,” that takes a photo of him once a minute and automatically uploads the photo to Quilliam’s webpage, www.heightslibrary.org/quilliam.

More facts about Quilliam:
- Hedgehogs are covered with quills, so only trained handlers should hold them. At Heights Libraries, Rosenberger is currently Quilliam’s only handler.
- When hedgehogs get nervous or grumpy, they roll into a ball and make a “huffing” noise while puffing out their quills. This is totally normal.
- In the wild, hedgehogs are insectivores that mainly eat bugs. Pet hedgehogs, however, eat cat food with occasional bug snacks.

To learn more about Quilliam, visit the Lee Road branch during regular library hours or visit www.heightslibrary.org/quilliam.

Sheryl Banks is the communications manager for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System.

Patrons invited to Explore Space

Heights Observer February 1, 2018
www.heightsobserver.org

Maggie Kinney, special projects manager at Heights Libraries, shows off the traveling exhibit.

Jay Rosen

Where did we come from, and are we alone? Through March 9, Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System invites the community to ponder these questions—and others—in Explore Space: A Cosmic Journey, a traveling museum-style exhibition and program series about the fascinating world of space and astronomy.

Funded by a 2015 STAR_Net grant, Explore Space kicked off on Jan. 25.

Programs will take place at all four of Heights Libraries’ branches.

“This is a really special opportunity for Heights Libraries and the communities of Cleveland Heights and University Heights,” said Maggie Kinney, special projects manager at Heights Libraries. “Our wonderful librarians have planned over 20 programs for the public, including space-themed storytimes, art and craft programs, book discussions, and after-school STEM programs for children in grades K-12.”

Heights Libraries has partnered with the Cleveland Museum of Natural History on two of these programs. The first, Understanding the Natural History on two of these programs. The first, Understanding the Natural History on two of these programs. The first, Understanding the Natural History on two of these programs. The first, Understanding the Natural History on two of these programs. The first, Understanding the Natural History on two of these programs. The first, Understanding the Natural History on two of these programs. The first, Understanding the Natural History on two of these programs. The first, Understanding the Natural History on two of these programs. The first, Understanding the Natural History on two of these programs. The first, Understanding the Natural History on two of these programs. The first, Understanding the Natural History on two of these programs. The first, Understanding the Natural History on two of these programs. The first, Understanding the Natural History on two of these programs. The first, Understanding the Natural History on two of these programs. The first, Understanding the Natural History on two of these programs. The first, Understanding the Natural History on two of these programs. The first, Understanding the Natural History on two of these programs. The first, Understanding the Natural History on two of these programs. The first, Understanding the Natural History on two of these programs. The first, Understanding the Natural History on two of these programs. The first, Understanding the Natural History on two of these programs. The first, Understanding the Natural History on two of these programs. The first, Understanding the Natural History on two of these programs. The first, Understandings of our place in the universe and spark the curiosity of children and adults alike. Kinney explained that this intention reflects the library’s mission to open doors and minds for all members of its community.

“STEM learning holds a large interest in the Cleveland Heights and University Heights communities,” Kinney said. “With the STAR.Net grant, Heights Libraries is able to support innovative learning by providing opportunities for fun, free and high-quality STEM programs in the library. We think people of all ages and backgrounds will find that the exhibition explores the universe, and our place in it, in a way that is understandable, inspirational and relevant.”

Heights Libraries will also host an interactive, all-ages exhibit at the Lee Road branch art gallery. The exhibit is free and open to all members of the public during normal library hours.

For a full schedule of events, visit www.heightslibrary.org or call 216-932-3600. Note that some programs require advance registration.

Explore Space: A Cosmic Journey is part of the STAR Library Educational Network (STAR_NET) led by the National Center for Interactive Learning at the Space Science Institute. Exhibit partners include the American Library Association, the Lunar Planetary Institute, and Afterschool Alliance. Explore Space is supported through a grant from the National Science Foundation.

Jay Rosen is communications coordinator at Heights Libraries.
Library launches local history resource

Sheryl Banks

The Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System has launched a local history Web page, designed to provide members of the community with access to local history information and resources, both online and physical.

The Web page, www.heightslibrary.org/local-history, is the culmination of years of work that began in 2015, when the library created the local history librarian position to focus resources on preserving local history—especially the library’s, as it prepared for its 2016 centennial by digitizing its own organizational records, news articles and photographs.

“The library’s centennial gave us a logical place to start our local history collection work,” said Jessica Robinson, who took over the local history librarian position in 2015.

“We collected and inventoried the physical items like meeting notes, newspaper articles, architectural drawings and photos, and digitized them. We also began interviewing former library directors and staff members to capture their knowledge of the library.”

Once the library’s history had been sufficiently documented, Robinson began curating more generalized local history resources to share with the community.

The resources include websites for the Cuyahoga County auditor’s office; Cuyahoga County archives; the Cleveland Memory Project; the archives of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District, also known as the Alvin Gray Archives; and physical collections at the Lee Road Library, such as city directories and reference copies of View From the Overlook, the newsletter of the Cleveland Heights Historical Society.

“All these resources already existed, but we’ve made them more accessible by organizing them on one page on our website,” said Robinson. “Part of the library’s mission is to not only provide information but to make that information easy to find.”

In addition to its online and physical reference materials, the library is also helping preserve community history by supporting the efforts of the Cleveland Heights Historical Society, City of Cleveland Heights Landmark Commission, and Cleveland Heights Historical Center at Superior Schoolhouse by hosting and promoting local history programs.

The library’s local history page complements our mission of preserving and promoting the diverse character and traditions of Cleveland Heights,” said Ken Goldberg, president of the Cleveland Heights Historical Society. “We are also extremely grateful to library staff for setting up and maintaining a section of local history-related materials in an era when many libraries no longer feature even a general reference collection.”

Kara Hamley O’Donnell, historical preservation planner of the city of Cleveland Heights, agrees. “Since 2012, the City of Cleveland Heights Landmark Commission has valued our collaboration with the Cleveland Heights Historical Society and Heights Libraries,” she said.

“This partnership permits us to share local history and preservation techniques through our biannual tour and lecture series, held each May and in the fall. The library’s dedication to sharing local history and expanding access to our community’s archival resources is an exciting step in sharing Cleveland Heights’ rich 100-plus-year history.”

More information can be found at www.heightslibrary.org/local-history.

Sheryl Banks is the communications manager for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System.

Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library Board
Meeting highlights

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

DECEMBER 18, 2017

Present were President Ron Holland, Vice President Abby Botnick, Secretary Chris Menrek, Miss Gerboc, Suzann Moskowitz and James Roosa. Susan Beatty was absent.

Ron Holland Outgoing President Ron Holland shared reflections on his employment and service with Heights Libraries, from when he started as a page in 1991 through his term as board president in 2017. Holland left the current members of the board with a charge to continue to promote higher wages for the library field, to stay strong to the commitment that is shared for physical space, and to always believe that libraries and schools accomplish the same things.

Abby Botnick read a resolution of tribute for Ron Holland. The resolution highlighted his committee service and leadership over the course of seven years on the board, including key contributions to the successful passage of the 2014 levy for the libraries, his community involvement, and his ability to balance his family and career as a school administrator.

New library board members

New board members were sought to replace President Ron Holland, whose term expired, and Susan Beatty, who relocated. Donna Fuehman and Vikas Fungkio will join the 2018 Library Board of Trustees, which will also include Abby Botnick, president; Chris Menrek, vice president; James Roosa, secretary; Miss Gerboc and Suzann Moskowitz.

[The LWV Observer, Khaliah Fisher-Grace, was unable to attend this meeting, but was able to write up the report from the meeting audiotape provided on the Heights Libraries website: https://heightslibrary.org/board-and-polices/board-audio/]

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Look for earlier and often expanded postings of meeting summaries online at www.heightsobserver.org. See disclaimer on page 6.

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Mister Brisket adds dine-in space

Kim Sergio Inglis

Mister Brisket customers will soon have the option of dining in, as the business is poised to complete its first-ever physical expansion in its—so far—44 years of business at 2156 S. Taylor Road.

Since early December, construction has been underway to expand the butcher and sandwich shop’s space into an adjacent storefront, 2154 S. Taylor Road, last occupied by a precious-metal dealer. The new space, which has a target opening date of sometime in mid-February, will feature tables and seating for 25.

Hank Kornblut, who runs the business that his stepfather, principal owner Sanford Herskovitz, opened in 1974, said he had been weighing an expansion for years—“every time space on either side turned over.”

The addition will add 1,000 square feet, effectively doubling Mister Brisket’s space.

“We have built a brand new space—new floor, fresh paint, pendant lights, tables, chairs, an ADA-compliant bathroom, a wall separating front from back,” Kornblut said. “The back area includes ovens, sinks and a small prep area.”

The walls of the bright, high-ceilinged dining area, blank now, will soon be hung with original art—photos and cartoons that the business previously didn’t have room to display.

Kornblut envisions that the new space is one that will evolve. He plans to offer special tasting events a few nights, where customers can, for example, compare two different types of steak, and foresees making the space available for private events.

“The physical expansion will bring with it some new sandwich and wrap options, offering something for vegetarians, as well as soups. “It will take us a little time to determine what we can and can’t do well,” said Kornblut. “Key for us is to continue making sure anything we serve is very good.”

“Our first significant change was in July 2006, when we added a deli counter and began making sandwiches,” explained Kornblut. “From 1974 to 2006, Mister Brisket was strictly a butcher shop specializing in home delivery of premium quality meats. We were the first butcher shop in Northeast Ohio to sell USDA Prime beef, veal and lamb. Prior to Mister Brisket, it was almost unheard of to find this in restaurants and homes in Cleveland. My stepdad had an enormous influence on the dining and retail scene in Cleveland as a result.”

With the retail side of the business up, Kornblut decided that the time had come to offer customers an on-site place to enjoy the popular sandwiches.

A big growth area, said Kornblut, has been online orders, especially shipping meats to competitive barbeque aficionados. “It’s a big thing—like NASCAR,” Kornblut said. “I can provide exactly what they’re looking for, types and cuts of meat, unlike larger suppliers that don’t hand-select for customers.”

Kim Sergio Inglis is editor-in-chief of the Heights Observer, and a vegetarian.
Swensons opens in University Heights

Patrick Grogan-Myers

University Heights Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan declared Jan. 8, 2018, to be “Galley Boy Day” in University Heights, to celebrate the grand opening of Swensons. (The Galley Boy is a popular Swensons burger.) That morning, Swensons CEO Jeff Flowers, Swensons staff, Mayor Brennan, and Bill Aurelius — the grandson of former University Heights mayor Earl Aurelius — cut the ribbon at the grand opening of Swensons on Cedar Road.

The University Heights Swensons is the first location in eastern Cuyahoga County and the biggest yet of the Akron-based business’s eight locations.

Swensons hired more than 50 employees to staff its new location, including students from John Carroll University.

The Northeast Ohio chain has come a long way since its first store, which Wesley T. “Pop” Swenson opened in the Wallhaven neighborhood of Akron in 1934. Pop Swenson’s vision was to provide the best hamburgers possible by using fresh, in-house ground beef. Forbes magazine has recognized Swensons as offering “America’s Best Cheeseburger.”

The University Heights restaurant is at the northeast corner of the city, at the intersection of Cedar and Fenway roads. It is part of the Cedar-Green Business District, home to Jack’s Deli and Restaurant, Heinens’ grocery store, Tibor’s Kosher Meats, BarNone, and Los Arco.

Crystal Griffith, director of marketing for Swensons, said in an e-mail, “We feel very fortunate to have obtained the space in University Heights and we’re excited to be part of the University Heights community. The warm welcome we’ve received has been overwhelming.”

Brennan echoed these sentiments, saying, “University Heights is full of family-run businesses and Swensons is a great addition to our business community.”

Parking for the new location has been an issue. Swensons has 70 parking spots, where Galley Boy lovers can be served curbside, but some employees have parked on Fenway Road, a street shared by the cities of Beachwood and University Heights. Worried about the light and sound coming from Swensons during its hours of operation, Beachwood residents have asked for these issues to be considered.

At the Jan. 2 University Heights City Council meeting, Mayor Brennan assured concerned residents and Beachwood Councilman James Pasch, who were present at the meeting, that he and council would continue to listen and engage in conversations regarding the site, and work with Beachwood officials to address the concerns of residents.

Patrick Grogan-Myers is the community development coordinator for the city of University Heights, and works with residents and businesses to promote the city.

FutureHeights Small Business Workshop Series kicks off with Social Media & Retail

Ranen Reichstein

Politicians like to say “small businesses are the future.” In the Heights, this isn’t just a tagline. Our community welcomes many local entrepreneurs who are brave enough to blaze their own trail and meet the needs of their community.

Retail today is a more difficult venture than it was in the past. Large companies with armies of employees and stockpiles of goods seem to be everywhere, and their gravity is strong, pulling in even the most locally conscious and loyal people. Online retail enables consumers to shop without leaving the comfort of their homes. How can small businesses adapt?

In association with the Ohio Small Business Development Center, FutureHeights is hosting a series of six free workshops in 2018, intended to help small business owners increase their knowledge of current trends and give them new skills to thrive in today’s environment.

The first of these workshops, Social Media & Retail, will be held on Friday, Feb. 16, 9:30-11:30 a.m, at the Small Business Development Center, 2340 Lee Road.

Speaker Chris Smith is a social entrepreneur, small business development consultant and graphic designer. His entrepreneurial experience began in college when he competed in several business plan competitions across the nation. He currently works for JumpStart Inc., working with technology companies throughout Northeast Ohio. Smith’s talk will focus on using social media to assess community needs, market to a wider audience, and create lasting relationships with customers and neighbors.

Whether or not you are well versed in the use of technology, this workshop will add critical information and provide new perspectives on social media’s use in the retail market. All are welcome, from well-established vendors to students and start-ups. For more information, and to RSVP, visit www.futureheights.org.

Ranen Reichstein is a FutureHeights intern and a student at the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences with a concentration in community practice.
Kaye Lowe

After opening Still Point in Little Italy’s Old Schoolhouse nine years ago, Kate and Geoff Baker have now relocated their gallery to Cedar Fairmount.

Over its first nine years, the gallery continually outgrew its space, and three times moved to larger suites in the schoolhouse. The owners attribute their decision to move Still Point to Cedar Fairmount as one that addressed more than just the physical requirements of their expanding business.

“The Cedar Fairmount Business District has been on our radar for several years,” said Kate, “and provides not only more gallery area and parking, but also gives us proximity to our existing customers and a larger market. We see it as a vibrant area that’s being invigorated with upscale shops, restaurants and arts venues.”

One of the Bakers’ goals has been to create a space that is its own work of art—one that generates interest and energy, contributes to an overall aesthetic, and reflects their commitment to the continued growth of Cleveland’s arts community.

Kate explained that they set out “to create an experience,” where patrons could escape and rejuvenate in a world of art, classical music and aromatic candles. “They’ve worked to create a gallery that presents an array of artists—painters, photographers, jewelers, sculptors, carvers, glassmakers and ceramicists—through original works.

The original inspiration for the gallery came from Kate’s determination to showcase Geoff’s fine-art landscape photography. His work has been featured in solo shows at the Butler Institute of Art in Youngstown, the Cleveland Botanical Garden, Trinity Commons and other arts venues including the Holden Arboretum, where he was the organization’s annual artist in 2014. He often photographs locally in Northeast Ohio but is also inspired by the landscapes of northwestern Michigan, another frequent subject.

Kate, whose career has been in retail and retail management, curates and manages all aspects of the gallery. In addition to Geoff’s work, the gallery shows the work of 40 to 50 local, national and international artists.

In 2017 they increased the lines of clothing they offer at the gallery, and this spring it will be among the select boutiques bringing the fashion of Lurdes Bergada (of Barcelona) to the states. Kate describes the line as having a unique European flair and an asymmetrical look at a reasonable price point.

Still Point is located at 12427 Cedar Road in the Heights Center Building. It is open 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday; and 11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., Thursday and Friday. For additional information, visit www.stillpoint-gallery.com or call 216-721-4992.

Kaye Lowe is the executive director of the Cedar Fairmount Special Improvement District.
One of the earliest plays by renowned playwright Charles Smith will get its regional premier at Ensemble Theatre this month, when "Jelly Belly" opens on Feb. 9.

In the play, Cleveland actor Lashawn Little plays Mike, who finds himself at a crossroads in his life after being passed over for a promotion at his construction job.

Frequent Ensemble collaborator Greg White ("Thurgood," "Death of a Salesman") plays Jelly Belly, just released from prison and looking to get the gang back together.

Originally produced by Chicago's Victory Gardens in 1990, the play comes from a real-life meeting Smith had with a Chicago gangster named Jelly Belly.

"What shocked me was not that Jelly Belly had very calmly and openly admitted to murdering several people on several occasions, many of whom had been his friends," wrote Smith in the opening to his play. "What shocked me was the fact that each time he had been convicted of murder, he had spent no more than six months in jail."

Taking place in one night on the front stoop of Mike and Barbara's (Mary Francis Miller) house, the play follows Mike's struggles with staying on the straight and narrow, all while being confronted by Jelly Belly, a man nearly everyone is afraid of for one reason or another.

"I think people will be surprised by the depth of this script," director Ian Wolfgang Hinz said of the play. "It really deals with the African-American experience in their neighborhoods, and in places where there are economic issues and issues with finding jobs. It's about kings and queens and territory and power, and how those components interact with each other. I think it's different than any other play you're going to see in Cleveland this season."

"Jelly Belly" is just one of many collaborations between the playwright and Ensemble Theatre over the years. Celeste Cosentino, Ensemble's executive artistic director, and Hinz are both former students of Smith, who is head of the Professional Playwriting Program at Ohio University.

Recent productions of Smith's plays at Ensemble include "Gospel According to James," "Knock Me a Kiss," and "A Free Man of Color." "Jelly Belly" runs Feb. 9–25, with performances on Friday and Saturday evenings at 8 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m., at Ensemble Theatre, 2843 Washington Blvd. For tickets and information, call 216-321-2930, e-mail info@ensemble-theatre.org or visit www.ensembletheatrecle.org.

Tyler Whidden is a playwright and associate artistic director at Ensemble Theatre. He also co-hosts "The Cleveland Stage Podcast."
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Deanna Bremer Fisher is executive director of FutureHeights and publisher of the Heights Observer.

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A taste of Coventry

I was a real “Coventry” kid: I was born and grew up on a street nearby, and my mother started taking me shopping on Coventry from the time I was born (well, maybe a few weeks later . . .). I walked up and down that street to and from Coventry Elementary School every day for seven years. Then I hung out on Coventry during my early teens, before the place was cool. And then, when it became a hippie haven, I was just the right age for that, so there I was.

Then I worked on the committee for those giant Coventry Street Fairs of the late ‘70s (I booked all the musical artists for a few years). I lived in seven or eight apartments on or around the corner from Coventry. And I worked at Rocco’s Market.

Rocco’s was situated in the courtyard of the former Coventry-Yard building, for a couple of years, starting in 1976, when it opened. Coventry-Yard, the building that now houses the Grog Shop and Inn on Coventry, was home to Tommy’s, the original Mad Greek restaurant and the popular taco restaurant Barrio.

The Mad Greek’s spot in Coventry-Yard was on the ground floor (the Coventry Road entrances were actually on the second floor, as they are today), in the back, looking out onto the building’s courtyard. Across that courtyard was a smaller structure that had formerly served as the building’s garage, when the Coventry-Yard building was originally constructed as an apartment house.

Rocco’s was a beautifully re-imagined space (you’d have never known it had once been a garage by looking at the inside), designed by its owner and operator, Eugene Rocco. Rocco’s—probably ahead of its time—sold a wide array of unusual and colorful fruits and vegetables, Amish cheeses, fresh fish, deli meats and sandwiches (served on bagels). Rocco was always quick to offer samples of the exotic fruits, whipping out his pocketknife as soon as a customer inquired about anything there.

Rocco’s food—the produce and prepared fare and everything else (even a peanut roasting machine)—was the best in the area. I worked at Rocco’s during the day and played in rock bands at night. Neither one paid a lot, but I ate really well during that time. I was one of the few starving musicians around who actually started gaining weight.

Rocco’s sandwiches were so good that the other area restaurant owners, managers, cooks and servers would come in at lunch, and throughout the day, to buy them. When the Mad Greek opened, Loki Chopra, the male half of the Indian and Greek couple who owned it—and the Indian half—started coming to eat at Rocco’s several times a week. After a couple of weeks, I said to him, “I figured out why you come in here so much. You heard there was a ‘new deli’ here.” (Okay, well he thought it was funny, even if I didn’t.)

You could get to Rocco’s from the Coventry-Yard building, or from Lancashire Road, behind the market, or from the alley off Coventry that ran next to Tout Le Monde (the French restaurant), which became Chester’s and then Turkey Ridge and then the Winking Lizard. Before that space housed Tout Le Monde, it had served as an Eastern European Jewish deli called Leo’s since the 1940s.

My uncle Harry Budin started Leo’s. In a way. Because Harry, my grandfather’s brother, owned another deli down Coventry a little, called Bud- in’s Delicatessen (which later moved to Shaker Heights). Leo worked at the Budin’s on Coventry. One day, when Harry had just come back from a vacation, a regular customer came in and ordered a corned beef sandwich and a tall, cool glass of spit.

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