Third annual Coventry Kids Day is March 11
Shari Nacson

It’s that time of year. Arctic temperatures, Black ice. Snow days. Vortex days. The trifecta of snow, ice and mud. Households get a little squirrely after a few too many wintry weeks indoors. Coventry Village Special Improvement District (CVSID), as part of its mission to make Coventry Village a wonderful place in which to live, work and play, has a plan to combat the stir-crazy nature of winter in Greater Cleveland. And it’s all free of charge.

On Sunday, March 11, noon to 4 p.m., the third annual Coventry Kids Day will create a party atmosphere throughout the district. “It’s a way to celebrate the community,” said Angie Hertick, executive director of CVSID. “We wanted to create a free day of fun to celebrate the families in the Heights.”

There will be balloons for kids throughout the district. Scheduled activities include a bubble party at Picadilly Artisan Creamery, Moana (yes, Disney’s Moana) giving hula lessons and hosting a dance party at The Grog Shop; caricatures at Panini’s Bar & Grill; crafts at In the 216 and Mac’s Backs-Books on Coventry; face painting at Cleveland Candle Company; and yoga for kids at Confluience. (Registration is required for the yoga activity. To register, go to www.coventryvillage.org).

Coventry Kids Day is one of many community-building strategies hosted by CVSID. “This is that.” The brothers are looking forward to the spring when they can complete the rear patio. “It may look like there is a lot more still to do, but we are all ready to go. We just need to finish up the fence and get the tables and chairs out there.”

Just up the road, at 2163 Lee Road, is the place Heights Observer reader dubbed Best Place to Hang Out in a Snowstorm, the landmark Cedar Lee Theatre, which edged out neighbors Phoenix Coffee and Stone Oven for the honor. Jonathan Forman was surprised but pleased.

Forman has owned the theater since the late 1970s. Originally from Europe, he missed Big Fun, Steve and his staff,” said Suzanne DeGaetano, owner of Mac’s Backs-Books on Coventry. “Big Fun is unique and irreplaceable, and it created important family memories for a whole generation. Its closing is part of the business cycle we will have to adjust to.” This sentiment rings from merchant to merchant and it created important family memories.

“Big Fun is unique and irreplaceable, and it created important family memories for a whole generation. Its closing is part of the business cycle we will have to adjust to.” This sentiment rings from merchant to merchant and it created important family memories.

The Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education (BOE) and the CH-UH Public Library System (Heights Libraries) have reached an agreement on the future of the former Coventry school property. On Feb. 5, the library board voted to accept from the school district the six-acre property, including the school building, playground and greenspace; on Feb. 20 the school board voted to transfer the property to Heights Libraries for $1. The transaction will close on March 31.

In 2017, upon learning of the school district’s desire to sell the property, current tenants of the building formed Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Campus and presented a unified vision for an arts and educational center. The library’s Coventry branch abuts the property at the corner of Coventry Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard, and provides the only free parking for the branch.

Ohio Revised Code allows school districts to transfer property to libraries in their communities. While the library is exploring the use of some of the space in the former school building for its own programs, it is also interested in maintaining the public status of the land, which Grant Deming had donated in 1917 for “public, educational use.”

At a special meeting on Feb. 5, James Rosoa, library board member, introduced a resolution authorizing the library to execute an agreement to purchase the property and negotiate and sign leases with the tenants. The motion passed unanimously.

Current tenants of the Coventry building have signed Letters of Interest (LOI) to negotiate leases with the library.

Jason and Josh Sweet, owners of Boss Dog Brewing Company, which was voted Best New Business in the FutureHeights 2018 Best of the Heights Awards, are looking for a new location.

2843 Washington Blvd. #105
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

Heights Observer March 1, 2018  1 www.heightsobserver.org
February letter containing misguided views about Citizens United

To the Editor:

Just when I thought my level of bewilderment had peaked in regard to the political beliefs of fellow citizens, I read Robert Schwab’s attempt at “educating” readers on his interpretation of Citizens United v. FEC. I’m not sure where his political or business interests lie, but to believe that this 2010 Supreme Court decision benefited democracy in our country for rank and file citizens! My amazement has reached a new level.

To be clear, I am not interested in fending with his chosen political party. We all know that never works. I am concerned about misrepresentation regarding this topic to our community members and voters. The notion that giving corporations the same right to free speech as individuals is good for our democracy is a dangerous one. To allow corporations and other entities the ability to use unlimited money streams ANONYMOUSLY to fund corporate lobbying interests is a blatant attack on the residue of our democracy.

If one believes that large U.S. corporations that pay no business taxes should be given the same rights to free speech as a real person, then we have reached a new dimension of cynicism. Using the example of shrinking unions, which now only make up 7 percent of the private sector workplace, further proves how desperately weak their point is.

Dave DiBiase
Cleveland Heights

CH should join in national discussion on gun violence

To the Editor:

In 1994 Congress passed, and President Clinton signed, a ban on the manufacture for civilian use of certain semi-automatic firearms defined as assault weapons and certain ammunition magazines. In 2004 the ban expired and was not renewed. In Ohio, some municipalities were able to withstand pressure from the NRA and the state of Ohio that was undermining local governments’ authority to continue the assault weapon ban until 2010, when the Supreme Court of Ohio and the attorney general were able to preempt and invalidate the local assault weapons ban.

(The facts above are from Dennis Kucinich’s website dealing with this issue.)

We do not need to enumerate the number of mass shooting incidents across the United States since

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

An ode to Big Fun

To the Editor:

I wrote this poem in response to the Heights Observer article about Big Fun’s closing.

BIG FUN

I heard that BIG FUN is done
So where will I get another potato
Don’t tell me that fun is over and done
Just tell me the good guys have won
And tell me the good guys have won
BIG FUN’s not ready for heaven
Come Steve, it’s time for another 27:
Don’t close up the store we’ll miss you a ton
Just tell me that BIG FUN’s not done

Steve is Coventry’s Adam
Debbie is Coventry’s Eve
Let’s keep BIG FUN open a little bit more
Don’t just pick up and leave
Don’t tell me that BIG FUN is done
Don’t make me go shop at Amazon
We can go to Tommy’s for a burger on a bun
Let’s open the blinds and let in the sun
When it comes to fun BIG is the sine qua non
Oh tell me the good guys have won

Barry Zucker
University Heights

About the Observer

The Heights Observer is not an ordinary newspaper; it is a nonprofit publication for residents of Cleveland Heights and University Heights.

The Observer has no writing staff; it is written by you—the readers.

Individuals throughout the community decide what stories they want to write. As a volunteer, submit your article or opinion, submit it as a letter to the editor or an opinion piece. Either way, make sure it’s about something specific to our two cities.

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

• For information about writing style, article length, etc., click on “Become an Observer” at the left. For questions, then submit them for publication.

Letters Policy

The Heights Observer welcomes letters to the editor. They must be submitted electronically, along with the writer’s name, phone number and e-mail address, to: www.heightsobserver.org/letters

Letters may be edited for space and clarity.

Letters to the editor are limited to 300 words. We reserve the right to publish those that are most significant and relevant.

The Observer reserves the right to publish letters anonymously when requested.

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

In the days after people learned the store would close, the crowds inside Big Fun have been larger than usual.

Bob Rosenbaum

Big Fun is about childhood—revisiting our own, enriching our children’s, and then watching our children discover nostalgia for themselves.

Big Fun is about commerce. It’s a tourist attraction in an unlikely place, and an anchor for Coventry Village and Cleveland Heights—reliably drawing more than its fair share of traffic. Its presence has probably enriched other businesses more than it’s enriched the owner, Steve Presser.

Big Fun is about community. Steve is everybody’s close friend, whether he knows you or not. I’m not sure he’s ever turned down a reasonable request to support a local cause.

Mostly, though, Big Fun is about fun. Where else in the world has had an annual pie fight? Even if you have no desire to own your own dog poop or a Hillary Clinton nutcracker, a circuit through Big Fun is always worth whatever time and money you end up spending.

When I’ve talked with Steve over the years, one of his recurring frustrations has been how online merchants were cutting into business. And more, the lengths to which people would go rub it in. They’d find merchandise in his store and then search on their smart phones to see if it was available for less online. Sometimes, they’d order it while standing right there.

We’ve been hearing stories like this for a decade now. But Big Fun’s demise makes it real.

I don’t mean to overstate the case here; there are a variety of factors that contributed to Steve’s decision to close the store, and this is just one of them.

But if you’re looking for a lesson in Big Fun closing, consider this: At a time when so many people question whether their voice matters, the money you spend is, in fact, the most effective vote you have.

It’s a vote for whether you prefer the dehumanizing environment of giant retailers or the experience of shopping in any of our many unique, locally owned shops. It’s a vote for the very character of this community: for supporting local, family-owned, small businesses. I don’t presume to tell anybody where to shop. I’m just urging people to be mindful that where they spend their money has an impact.

I could make the case for how much more pleasant it is to shop in small boutiques. How, if you pay attention to unit cost, the prices often compare well with the big box.

I could cite research demonstrating how a dollar spent with an independent merchant does far more for the local economy than a dollar spent at a national outlet. I could point out that many of our local shop owners are also our neighbors.

But it’s simpler than that. If you want our wealth of unique, independent, locally owned stores like Big Fun to stay in business, you have the power to help. Try to spend your money with them before spending it elsewhere.

We vote with our wallets. Vote wisely.

Cleveland Heights resident Bob Rosenbaum is co-chair of the Heights Observer Advisory Committee and is responsible for its advertising sales and market development.

Thinking about Big Fun’s going-out-of-business sale

Bob Rosenbaum

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(As the facts above are from Dennis Kucinich’s website dealing with this issue.)

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I drafted a statement of my opinion and submitted it to the CH Charter Review Commission (CRC). I would encourage everyone write in and let your voice be heard.

I have attended two CRC meetings. At one, a resident stood up and said that he didn’t care who the elected council members wanted as mayor; he cared who he, as a voter, wanted as mayor. I thought this simple statement got to the heart of the debate between having a mayor directly elected by the voters as opposed to a “mayor” selected by four of the seven CH council members.

If we are focused on American values and the accountability of our government officials, the mayor elected directly by the people wins. It comes right out of the democratic ethos and is the dominant form of government for municipalities in Northeast Ohio.

A directly elected mayor sets the tone, or the vision, for the municipality in ways that a city manager cannot. The manager reports to seven people—each of whom may have his or her own vision—and must give equal weight to each. The skills of a CEO, such as management, public speaking, motivating, selling ideas, and a variety of other skills, are needed or at least preferred for a mayor. And we, the voters, would directly evaluate the skills of the [mayoral] candidates without having our judgment filtered [through] council.

The council-elected mayor needs to be a “presider” over a small group, not CEO. That leader needs to keep four people satisfied with his or her performance. The council is electing a presiding officer over its own deliberations. These skills of a presiding officer are important, but they are not really what we need a mayor to be doing.

An elected official, like a mayor, needs to be the CEO that residents can hold accountable. The city manager should act as the COO reporting to the mayor, as CEO.

There are those who argue that “it ain’t broke, so don’t fix it.” We have a good city manager and an active council and are well served by both. But to get a policy idea, like the Community Development Corporation, adopted took years too long. It would have been available to mitigate the damage caused by the downturn and the foreclosure crisis if it had been implemented earlier.

Our city charter was last revised in 1986, 32 years ago, when our population was 11,000 souls higher. I believe that we are losing population because of the slower reactions of a city government that cannot respond quickly, especially to economic development opportunities. In 1986, technology was very different than it is today, and speed was not a virtue. Acting more quickly is a necessity at times. Today, the actions of the state, federal and county governments can affect us locally swiftly. An elected mayor with a vision for this city would serve us better, in my judgment, than our present, slower-to-make-decisions system.

I have worked in places where I had more than one boss. What happens if I do something that one of my bosses likes, and the other does not? I don’t do it, that’s what. With seven bosses this dynamic of “inaction is safer than action” is magnified. I am unabashedly and wholeheartedly for changing to a directly elected mayor with CEO authority.

Gary Benjamin is an attorney in private practice in Cleveland Heights who has been active in local governance since 2009.

Tony Cuda

Cleveland Heights needs to elect a full-time mayor. Currently, our part-time city council elects a part-time mayor who has no executive power. The city manager (a full-time position) is hired by city council and runs the day-to-day operations of the city.

Our city has decent city services and a school system that is moving in the right direction. But the problems we have require a full-time elected mayor with the vision, the time, and the skills to move our city forward. The problems are:

• Almost no economic development compared to our neighboring cities (look at South Euclid and University Circle). Cleveland Heights is clearly being passed over.
• 450 vacant lots, hundreds of vacant and foreclosed homes; a slower rebound in our previously declining home values; and a very, very slow response to these problems.
• A shrinking population creating a shrinking tax base, which puts more of a financial burden on the rest of us.

Here is my argument:

A city manager is not charged with laying out a vision for the city. Only the city council can hire and fire the city manager, but that is not oversight. Our city council members work full-time jobs, just like the city employees. There is no day-to-day oversight by an elected official.

Cleveland Heights is a huge enterprise with all the problems that go with inner-ring suburbs. The idea that a part-time city council can lay out and execute a vision for a city this large and complicated is not realistic. Ask any of the council members if they could do their day jobs if they could only devote one-third of the time they currently do to take care of their responsibilities. I couldn’t. And no matter what they do for a living, it is less complicated and less demanding than running a large, inner-ring suburb.

City government should be the closest form of government to the people, not the farthest removed. Our country is based on the concept of federalism; that means three levels of government—federal, state and local. Currently, if you have a problem with your city, you tell an unelected, part-time mayor with no executive authority to go to our unelected city manager to resolve the issue.

I have heard people say they are worried that someone would be elected that would not be good for the city. I say that is my responsibility! I don’t care for the current president, but I still want to have a democratically elected government. We have plenty of talent in Cleveland Heights. Don’t let anyone tell you that we cannot govern ourselves democratically.

Cleveland Heights has not elected a full-time mayor in more than 100 years. Our city charter has not been reviewed for more than 30 years. The Charter Review Commission needs to hear from you! It meets every first and third Thursday at CH City Hall at 7 p.m. Make your voices heard!

Tony Cuda is a Cleveland Heights resident.
A few more thoughts on Democracy Day

Carla Rautenberg and Deborah Van Kleef

In our January column, we wrote about the history of Democracy Day in Cleveland Heights. Since we were writing for the Heights Observer, we kept our focus local. However, Robert Shwab’s letter to the editor in response to that column, published in the February issue, takes a national view. That letter contained some misconceptions, which several readers have asked us to address.

Cleveland Heights Move to Amend is part of a national non-partisan movement calling for a constitutional amendment stating “that only human beings, not corporations, are legal persons with Constitutional rights, and that money is not the equivalent of speech.”

The legal concept of “corporate personhood” dates back to the 19th century; but it gained national momentum after the 2010 Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission ruling by the Supreme Court.

Shortly before the 2008 presidential primary, the Federal Election Commission (FEC) prevented the nonprofit organization Citizens United from airing a film critical of candidate Hillary Clinton. Mr. Shwab stated that Clinton’s supporters sought to “stop the film and/or punish the producers.” In fact, the FEC’s action was solely in response to the timing of the film's airing. The McCain-Feingold Act of 2002 (also known as the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act or BCRA) barred corporations (for-profit and non-profit) and unions from broadcasting election-related communication within 30 days of a primary or 60 days of a general election. Citizens United was simply too late. However, it sued the federal government and, in 2009, the case reached the Supreme Court.

On Jan. 21, 2010, the Court ruled 5-4 in favor of Citizens United. The majority held that it was unconstitutional to prohibit a corporation from paying for “electioneering communication” under the provisions of the BCRA, and further defined campaign contributions as a form of speech. To prohibit a corporation from contributing to or airing a campaign film therefore violated its freedom of speech under the First Amendment. Justice John Paul Stevens’s dissent was vigorous: “Corporations have no conscience, no beliefs, no feelings, no thoughts, no desires. Corporations help structure and facilitate the activities of human beings... But they are not in themselves members of We the People by whom and for whom our Constitution was established.”

Critics of the decision are by no means all “left-wing ideologues.” Pike Robertson, a founder of the Tea Party, stated, “Corporations are not like people. Corporations exist forever, people don’t. Our founding fathers never wanted them, these behemoths organizations that never die... It puts the people at a tremendous disadvantage.” And Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) described the ruling as “the most misguided, naïve, uninformed, egregious decision of the United States Supreme Court in the 21st century.”

Abolishing corporate personhood would not abolish freedom of speech on behalf of corporations. Greg Coleridge of Move to Amend points out, “There is nothing in the We the People Amendment that prevents any individual connected to a corporation or union from using their individual constitutional rights to oppose threats against corporate property or interests. But it’s individuals who have the rights, not corporations.”

We agree with Mr. Shwab that “campaign finance laws have been ineffective, and have actually driven money away from political parties and toward billionaires.” Why? Existing laws before and since Citizens United have never challenged the money equals free speech constitutional doctrine that dates to the 1976 Buckley v. Valeo decision.

The website www.opensecrets.org demonstrates the results of that folly with these figures from the 2016 election:
- Average winner spent: $1,495,633
- Average loser spent: $354,116

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Corporations and billionaires hire entire legal teams to defend their positions in our political system, we hardly think they need Robert Shwab to champion their claims as well. Our democracy, however, needs all of us to fight for real constitutional rights for individuals, and for the ability to regulate spending on elections.

On Jan. 25, Cleveland Heights City Council hosted Democracy Day 2018, which about 70 people attended. Testimony offered by 20 individuals addressed the widely ranging ways in which corporate constitutional rights and big money in politics negatively impact our democracy and the daily lives of Cleveland Heights citizens. For all of the details, go to the city’s website, www.clevelandheights.com, click on the City Hall tab, then Government, then Agendas and Minutes, and scroll down to Public Hearings 2018.

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.
Silence is the enemy of change

THE COMMON GOOD

Susie Kaeser

Five years ago, I was among 160 people making their way through snow and cold on three consecutive Wednesdays to discuss Reins of Error: The Hoax of the Privatization Movement and the Danger to America’s Public Schools, by public school advocate Diane Ravitch.

The book documents how wealthy ideologues captured education policymaking to promote privatization and accountability at the expense of the common good. Ill-conceived state policies that use tests to grade schools districts and punish students, and which allow public funds to be extracted for unregulated charter schools and private-school vouchers, are widespread.

Choice and accountability, while sounding benign, are anything but that! They have damaged public schools, punished the most vulnerable, and violated basic principles of our democracy—specifically, separation of church and state and public oversight of public resources.

This community reading activity inspired about 40 participants to form the Heights Coalition for Public Education, to challenge what we understood to be a war on public education. This all-volunteer effort unites community stakeholders to focus on education policy in a unique voice in Ohio.

The policies we oppose are still in place, but so are we, more determined, and our ranks are growing. More than 1,100 people have endorsed our position statement! This is a political process and it takes focus, clarity, anger, creativity, time and perseverance to challenge policy and, if necessary, replace the policymakers.

At times it seems impossible. The legislature is dominated by adherents to the policies that are damaging the public system. It’s slow going, and it’s hard to feel that our efforts have changed anything, but we have empowered more people to speak up and encouraged public-school stakeholders to use their voices. It is this collective voice that will cause change.

Our influence comes from the squeaky-wheel strategy: People with shared concerns work together to demand change. Breaking the silence is the essential first step. It makes it possible to stake out an issue, draw others to it and empower people, who may have been silenced by the policy, to begin to use their influence. As with every issue, it takes someone to challenge the status quo before others will say, “Me too.”

Silence is the enemy of change. Our group started by crafting a position statement that affirmed our commitment to public education. We invited others to express their support by endorsing our position. Those names are real people who vote and who care about this issue. They are people who come to our events, guide our work and ask others to get involved. They make it real. They are ready to do more. Go to www.chub.net/coalition.

As our knowledge and confidence have grown, so has the sense of urgency. We have stayed the course but with growing impatience. How do we make a difference?

Our key strategy is building an informed constituency that feels connected to others who share our concern, and is willing to advocate for change. This winter we sponsored three more public events to keep the conversation going, in formation flowing, and understanding and commitment growing.

Despite the weather, about 100 people came to the January forum that featured three superintendents who are fighting back. Different stakeholders are joining our chorus. This time it is superintendents’!

Public-school bashers have silenced educational professionals from challenging awful policies by both blaming them and calling them apologists. Silencing the most knowledgeable and expert voices is a common tool for those whose intentions are not in the public’s interest. It has worked for a while, but superintendents, after all, are education experts. Much of their work is defined by state laws. It is their job to know how policies affect their students. They are well positioned to inform policymakers if laws are meeting stated goals. Of course, challenging public policy can be risky. For these superintendents—Jim Lloyd, Walter Davis and Talisa Dixon—a supportive school board was essential to giving them the freedom to truly advocate for their students.

Dixon, CH-UH superintendent, credited the coalition for pushing her and the board to actively resist damaging policies. Our voices helped them use theirs! Advocacy is now an expected board activity, and an energetic team seems ready for it.

I was encouraged by our guests who shared their experiences with legislators. They were also clear that, even though districts are different from one another, all are threatened. Superintendents should unite.

Their final message was not really a surprise: The public holds the power to make change. That’s us, and ours is a work in progress.

Susie Kaeser is a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights and former director of Community Reading Activations. She serves on the national board of Parents for Public Schools.

OPINION

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Cleveland Heights and Former Director of Community Reading Activations. She serves on the national board of Parents for Public Schools.

Disciples Christian Church
Palm Sunday
Parade of Palms
March 25th at 10am

Easter Sunday
April 1st at 10am
A joyful celebration of the Resurrection ending with Handel’s Messiah Chorus.

Maundy Thursday
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March 29th
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Heights Observer March 1, 2018

Learning and teaching in scouting

Ari Klein

When I was a Cub Scout at Taylor Elementary School there was an enormous uproar because a woman wanted (was willing) to become the leader of our pack. This was new and different for the early 1970s. Once registered and trained, she did a great job, as we all expected. I stayed in scouting through high school and volunteered with a troop when I was in college.

A month after I started teaching in CH-UH, I was asked to become the scoutmaster for the troop in which I was an assistant. I accepted even though I had no sons of my own (and still don’t!). Over the next 25 years as a scoutmaster, I believe that I did as much teaching in scouts as I did in school. I dedicate this column to my experience in this alternative education setting.

Boy Scouts of America (BSA) recently announced that girls will be permitted to join Cub Scouts in 2019, and Scout troops in 2020. People who have known of my involvement in the organization have asked my opinion on co-ed scouting. To me, this was inevitable, although I was surprised at how quickly it happened. Groups need to evolve over time to become better, stronger, and more relevant, yet the announcement gave me hope that BSA will broaden its ability to teach the important attributes of civic responsibility and leadership.

In my first year as scoutmaster I confronted a different type of quandary. One of the boys qualifying for Eagle Scout, the highest rank, told me that he was concerned about being asked if he believed in God. At the review board determining if the high rank would be conferred, his answer could have been a barrier.

BSA requires belief in a higher power, even though the founder of BSA requires belief in a higher power, could have been a barrier. His answer would be conferred, his answer could have been a barrier.

In the past few years as scoutmaster, I worked with several other scout and church leaders to figure out how to make changes to the national policy from within the organization. We were all stunned when the change happened and the Boy Scouts finally became open to girls into the program, and I am excited to see how it works out. Every other nation in the world that has scouting programs welcomes girls as members, so I am pretty sure things will be fine. As a scoutmaster, my daughters were not welcome as members, so I am pretty sure things will be fine. As a scoutmaster, my daughters were not welcome as members, so I am pretty sure things will be fine. As a scoutmaster, my daughters were not welcome as members, so I am pretty sure things will be fine. As a scoutmaster, my daughters were not welcome as members, so I am pretty sure things will be fine. As a scoutmaster, my daughters were not welcome as members, so I am pretty sure things will be fine. As a scoutmaster, my daughters were not welcome as members, so I am pretty sure things will be fine. As a scoutmaster, my daughters were not welcome as members, so I am pretty sure things will be fine. As a scoutmaster, my daughters were not welcome as members, so I am pretty sure things will be fine.
The owner of the theater over time. He Forman had no money, he worked out were too close together. Although independent films. The owner of the land to attend Case West Frank had no money, he worked out were too close together. Although independent films. The owner of the land to attend Case Western Reserve University to reestablish college-community relations. Sheehan, and Clerk of Council Kelly Thomas. Luke McConville, Finance Director William was absent. Also present were Law Director and recordings of city council meetings, on IT improvements to solicit bids so that the city would qualify to house a testing lab. The city is creating a strategy for the city of University Heights. Guide Studio, which has worked previously with South Euclid, North Olmsted and Lake-wood, will work with officials and residents to help determine “who” the city is, what it is about, what are its distinct advantages, and what is its core purpose. [Guide Studio] will take six-week waves for the development process, and then several months to help with implementation. Medical marijuana applications moratorium Council lifted the moratorium on applications for building permits, zoning approvals, or certificates of suitability that would enable the creation of medical marijuana testing laboratories or testing facilities (Ordinance 2018-11). The city’s legal affairs committee determined that $12,500 was a reasonable fee to charge for establishing this type of facility, and that one location in the city that would qualify to house a testing lab. IT and phone systems upgrades Council authorized the mayor to seek bids for upgrades or modifications to the city’s IT and phone systems, and possible audiovisual capabilities for council chambers. There are more phone lines, morerishness options, and no caller ID. Various departments are using different computer operating systems. Council would like to have presentations projected on screens so that the audience can see what is being presented to council. Video recordings of meetings Council authorized the mayor to spend up to $10,000 more this year to continue to have meetings videotaped. He had arranged to record the first three meetings of the year as an experiment, but is quickly approaching the $5,000 limit for mayoral expenditures without council approval. The cost for the inaugural meeting was approximately $3,600, excluding the cost of the other two meetings due to the size and complexity of the audience. [The recordings of the first three meetings can be found on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/dslyvideo] Silly Road resurfacing Council authorized the administration to seek bids for the 2018 resurfacing of Silly Road from Edgerton to Wanamaker Center roads, to accept $36,000 from the Cuyahoga County Department of Public Works 2018 maintenance program, which will pay for the asphalt. The City will pay for labor costs, and likely also for some street improvements. Guide Studio rebranding proposal Council authorized a contract with Guide Studio for $30,000 to develop a rebranding later purchased the entire building and expanded it. A founder of the Cleveland International Film Festival, Forman’s Cleveland Cinemas is now one the region’s largest independent theater chains, with seven locations. Also in the Cedar Lee district, is Best Place to Take Out-of-Towner, Best Interior Décor and Best Cleveland Heights Business. Coventry Vibe is very much on the Heights as an area that the Heights calls its own. At the center of it are two big winners in this year’s Best of the Heights: Tommy Fello, owner of Tommy’s Brewing Co., at 184 Coventry Road, and Steve Presser, owner of Big Fun, at 184 Coventry Road. Tommy’s was the winner in three categories in 2018. Best Heights Vibe, Best Place to Take an Out-of-Towner (an award it shares this year with Nighttown) and Best Place to Take the Kids, as well as a finalist in Best Bang for Your Buck, a category which it won last year. Big Fun was very much on Heights Observer readers’ minds, as Presser recently announced that he would be closing the beloved toy store this summer, after 27 years in business. Big Fun won Best Place to Find Unique Gifts. The observer can you find fake vomit and vomit- ease cushions—or Best Exterior Appearance, a category it also won last year. Presser has always worked with local artists on his exterior signage, and with his “creatively inclined” employees to create the window displays, which have included Dr. Who and Star Wars themes. For the second year in a row, Gig’s on Fairmount (4577 Fairmount Blvd. in the Fairmont Taylor Business District) has been recognized for Best Interior Décor. Observer readers love the chic, intimate feeling of the bar and restaurant with its large mirrors, fresh flowers and gorgeous chandeliers. Heights newcomer Baraco (4566 Fairmount Blvd. in the Cedar Fairmount Business District), a purveyor of custom tacos, tequila and whiskey, has given Heights residents a new destination for cheap eats. Now with five locations in the region, the Heights location has been a big draw since it opened in early 2017. Voted Best Bang for Your Buck in 2018, it was also a finalist for Best New Business. Also, in the Cedar Fairmount District, is Nighttown (2328 Cedar Road), a Cleveland Heights landmark and favorite institution for more than 30 years. The internationally known Irish pub and jazz club shares, with Tommy’s, this year’s honor for Best Place to Take an Out-of-Towner. Owner Brendan Ring has said that the establishment continues to reinvent itself, and with a reputation that has attracted impromptu parties and random celebrities, such as the likes of Wynton Marsalis and Stevie Wonder, one never knows who one might run into there. To wind out this year’s catego- ries, the awards for Best Cleveland Heights Business and Best University Heights Business went to Zagara’s Marketplace and Whole Food Market, respectively. Zagara’s Marketplace (940 Lee Road), Cleveland Heights’ neighbor- hood grocery store, is owned and managed by John Zagara. A grandson of the store’s founder, Zagara’s roots in Cleveland Heights run deep, and he said he “deeply honored” to be recognized in this year’s Future Heights Awards. Since 2005, Future Heights—a nonprofit that inspires and facilitates collaboration and empowerment in our community—has conducted the Best of the Heights awards to recog- nize the unique attributes of locally owned Heights businesses, and their contributions to the local economy. A complete list of 2018 Best of the Heights winners and finalists, as well as a list of businesses that voted they would like to see in the Heights, is online at www.futureheights.org. Donna Bremer Fisher is executive direc- tor of Future Heights and publisher of the Heights Observer. Winners and Finalists in the Future Heights 2018 Best of the Heights Awards contest are: Best New Business Winners: Baraco, Gig’s on Fairmount, The Mission. Finalists: Big Fun, Cody’s Bar and Grill, Frio’s Mexican Cantina, The Bottle House Brewery. Best Place to Work Winners: Marazzo’s, Whole Foods Market. Finalists: CLE Urban Winery, Marazzo’s, Nighttown. Best Place to Take the Kids Winners: Radio Days, Big Fun. Finalists: Luna Bakery Cafe, The Bottle House Brewery. Best Heights Vibe Winners: Heights Libraries, Phoenix Coffee. Best Heights Libraries Winners: Heights Libraries, Phoenix Coffee. Best Heights Business Winners: Heights Libraries, Phoenix Coffee. Best Heights Business Winners: Heights Libraries, Phoenix Coffee. Winners: Baraco, Gig’s on Fairmount, The Mission. Finalists: Big Fun, Cody’s Bar and Grill, Frio’s Mexican Cantina, The Bottle House Brewery. Best Place to Work Winners: Marazzo’s, Whole Foods Market. Finalists: CLE Urban Winery, Marazzo’s, Nighttown. Best Place to Take the Kids Winners: Radio Days, Big Fun. Finalists: Luna Bakery Cafe, The Bottle House Brewery. Best Heights Vibe Winners: Heights Libraries, Phoenix Coffee. Best Heights Libraries Winners: Heights Libraries, Phoenix Coffee. Best Heights Business Winners: Heights Libraries, Phoenix Coffee.
Cleveland Heights City Council

Meeting highlights

JANUARY 16, 2018

Council members present were Mayor Carol Roe, Vice Mayor Melissa Yasinow, Mary Dunbar, Kahil Seren and Jason Stein. Cheryl L. Stephens and WNJ note that, with a CRC meeting in the city hall, they have not returned. The meeting lasted from 7:32 to 8:13 p.m.

Public comments

New Kowani chapter: Mark Harris announced that a Kowani chapter has now been established to serve Cleveland Heights and University Heights.

Water: sewer bills: Jim Coafheit expressed concern that his water and sewer bills are now much higher. In response, City Manager Mary Dunbar noted that, with the city’s change to Cleveland Water, the transition rate at which water rates were being adjusted is not still reflected in the homeowner’s discover for which he is eligible. The city has been working on this, and residents who have this concern and qualify for the discount should soon see a decrease in their bills and receive a credit as well. The same is true for sewer rates, for which discounts are also available.

Project bids

Council authorized the city solicitor to solicit bids for the following projects:
• North Park Boulevard bike path bump striping
• 2018 refuse disposal
• 2018 street surfacing program
• surface treatment program

Before the vote, Seren noted that while Noble Road is still in need of bump out striping, funding is not currently available (the North Park striping is granted). Yasinow stated that funding for Noble Road is being sought.

Amendments to zoning code

On third reading, council approved a measure amending sections of the city’s zoning code, including the legal definition of ‘Family.’ Dunbar observed that these modifications are part of an ongoing effort called for in the Cleveland Heights Master Plan to continuously update and improve the zoning code to reflect the social and legal advances that support sustainability.

Charter Review Commission

The next meeting of the city’s Charter Review Commission will be Thursday, 18, at 7 p.m. Public input is welcome. The agenda and archived videos are on the city website.

Mayor’s report

Roe noted that a review of progress on some of council’s 2017 priorities shows that the city is making progress in local sustainability efforts, with successful efforts to build reserves across most of the city’s seven major operating funds. The Top of the Hill is approaching critical mass, and once the city is taken out of play, development is on schedule to be a top priority for the city this year.

Citizen appointments

Ungar read the names of new and returning committee appointees, which council approved. There were two openings on the Citizens Advisory Committee and two openings on the Parks and Recreation Committee.

Cleveland Heights City Council

Council members see no need to change CH’s form of government

Robert Brown

Is Cleveland Heights best served by its current form of government, in which seven part-time council members are elected at-large and appoint a full-time professional city manager? Or would the city be governed better by a government led by a popularly elected full-time mayor or by a council that includes some members elected by ward or district? These are the key questions debated at recent Cleveland Heights City Council meetings of the Charter Review Commission (CRC).

At the commission’s meetings on Jan. 18, Feb. 1 and Feb. 15, four current Cleveland Heights City Council members, Mary Dunbar, Carol Roe, Mike Ungar and Melissa Yasinow, as well as former council member Dennis Wilcox, each told the CRC that the current council-manager form of government is working well in Cleveland Heights and that there is no need to change the charter to allow for a popularly elected mayor or council members elected by ward.

(As of the Feb. 15 meeting, current council members Carol Roe, Vice Mayor Melissa Yasinow, Mary Dunbar, Kahil Seren and Jason Stein had not returned a CRC questionnaire distributed to all council members on Jan. 8, therefore, they had not yet been invited to speak at the commission’s meetings.)

Local residents who have spoken at CRC meetings have asked the commission to consider recommendations from the CRC to the charter that would change the form of government in Cleveland Heights. Many of them said that they need more information before coming to any final decisions on any key governance issues.

At the commission’s Feb. 15 meeting, its fifth, 12 residents and business owners spoke at the end of the nearly three-hour evening meeting.

Kerrin Lind, an attorney and professor, told the commission that the challenges facing inner-city suburbs like Cleveland Heights have changed dramatically in the past 40 years. “Local governments now need to be more nimble, creative, collaborative and wary of external factors that cause instability and deterioration in the physical environment,” Lind said. He also stated that Cleveland Heights’ government is not as effective as it once was.

Bill Mitchell, former owner of Mitchell’s Fine Chocolates, said he believes that “the council-manager form of government is inherently undemocratic” because citizens do not elect the city’s mayor and that “there is a dichotomy between authority and responsibility.”

Jim Miller, a former city employee, spoke in favor of changing a council to include members elected by ward or district, as opposed to the current structure in which all members are elected citywide. He suggested that many potential candidates lack the time or money to run for council on a city-wide basis in a city as large as Cleveland Heights.

Shaker Heights Mayor Earl Leiken attended the Feb. 15 meeting at the commission’s invitation. Leiken explained that Shaker Heights is governed by a full-time mayor, who appoints a chief administrative officer, and by seven part-time city council members who are all elected at-large.

In explaining his role as mayor, Leiken said, “I have responsibility for setting a strategic direction for our city and for making major decisions.”

Leiken stated that he works closely with the chief administrative officer, who is responsible for day-to-day operations of the city.

Leiken said that buy-in from council is important, as council approval is required for all expenditures exceeding $5,000, as well as for all proposed legislation.

A number of citizens told the commission that its meetings were not well publicized, and that the opportunities for citizen participation were insufficient. Among the suggestions to the commission on this subject were that there be an online citizen survey, a mid-process community meeting, and a more regular discussion of local business owners and developers.

The next two meetings of the Cleveland Heights Charter Review Commission, all of which are open to the public, will take place on Thursday, March 1, and Thursday, March 15, at 7 p.m., at Cleveland Heights City Hall. Citizens can e-mail comments to the CRC through its facilitator, Larry Keller, at lc@chvelines.com.

Robert Brown is a city planner with more than 40 years of experience, including nine years as Cleveland’s city planning director. A resident of Cleveland Heights for 40-plus years, Brown serves on the board of FutureHeights.

CH makes progress on economic development

Donna Broner Fisher

The city of Cleveland Heights is moving forward with its plans to redevelop two large vacant parcels within the city, the Top of the Hill site and the Lee/Meadowbrook site.

Tim Boland, the city’s economic development director, presented a draft RFQ/RFP for the 207-acre Lee/Meadowbrook site to CH City Council at its Feb. 12 Committee of the Whole meeting, and requested council’s authorization to move forward. In his report, Boland stated, “Based on the current economic conditions, recent significant investments by the city, school district and the private sector in and around the Cedar Lee Corridor, and the momentum for redevelopment these activities have generated, we have concluded that the timing is right to proceed with issuing an RFQ/ RFP for redevelopment.”

The goal of the economic development would be “to create a dense, vibrant, pedestrian-friendly and unique commercial, office, residential or potentially mixed-use development that leverages the place-making opportunities of the site.” In 2007, the city constructed a 372-space parking garage nearby, with 82 spaces designed with a separate entrance, to support a future project.

Council authorized Boland to issue the RFQ/RFP which he did on Feb. 26. April 16 is the application deadline.

On Feb. 20, CH City Council approved legislation to authorize the city manager to enter into a development agreement with Flaherty & Collins Properties (F&C) for the Top of the Hill Project, the four-acre-owned property at the top of Cedar Hill at Cedar Road and Euclid Heights Biv- levard. With passage of this legislation, the project can move into the design and construction planning stage.

A project of approximately $200 million is proposed to consist of market-rate luxury apartments, retail and restaurant space, a nationally branded or boutique hotel, structured parking, and the potential opportunity to include on-site homes and Class A office components.

The city and F&C are asking the school board for tax increment financing (TIF) of 100 percent for 30 years on the project and in valuation, and the board is considering the request.

Stephens runs for county council

Melody Hart

On May 8, Heights residents will vote in the primary election for the Ward 10 Cuyahoga County Council representative, which includes Cleveland Heights, University Heights, Bratenahl, East Cleveland and two wards in Cleveland’s University Circle neighborhood.

Former Cleveland Heights mayor and current CH City Council Member Cheryl L. Stephens is running for the seat against Michael J. Houser, who was chosen by Cuyahoga County Democratic precinct committee members to fill the seat vacated by member Anthony Hairston, following his election to Cleveland City Council last November. The Cuyahoga County Board of Elections website also lists Angela Bennett, a Republican, as a write-in candidate for the seat.

Stephens stated that she is running because she believes the district needs someone who has experience working on the issues. Several key issues she pointed out are economic and community development, LG-BTGQ rights, supporting MetroHealth System, and ensuring strong finances.

“One of my key goals is to help create policies for the county development department that will help to be more practical in programs that benefit inner-ring suburbs and the urban core,” she said.

She is currently CEO of East Akron Neighborhood Development Corporation. She has also served as director of acquisition, disposition and development for the Cuyahoga County Land Reutilization Corporation (commonly known as the County Land Bank) and as director of development for the city of Cleveland Heights and Cuyahoga County. She has a masters of public administration and speaks Spanish.

In addition to her service as Cleveland Heights mayor and a member of city council, Stephens has volunteered with Susan G. Komen for the Cure, and has served on the Cleveland Heights City Planning Commission.

One of the things she is proudest of is helping Cleveland Heights City Council pass legislation outlawing discrimination against LGBTQ people. Another is working with city council to put in place an ordinance that prohibits landlords from obtaining a certificate of occupancy if they have not paid their taxes.

“Tend to me, don’t just attend a meeting and pretend like I made things happen. I will have done something to help get the tasks on hand done. I am a worker/ doer.”

Melody Hart, a CPA and business financial consultant, is active in the community, and has lived in Cleveland Heights since 2005.

Fairhill Road Village Historic District

Margaret Lann

Designed to emulate an English hamlet, the Fairhill Road Village Historic District is a special grouping of 13 buildings that straddles the cities of Cleveland Heights and Cleveland. These residences along Fairhill Road sit in front of the Amber Park ravine.

The stucco and stone exteriors, slate roofs, leaded glass windows, large chimneys, and gables of multiple heights reflect the picturesque Tudor Revival style chosen for this development. The combination of architectural integrity and the uninterrupted natural setting that the property occupies made the residences eligible for National Register listing.

Built between 1929 and 1936 (with the exception of one unit, constructed in 1971), Fairhill Road Village was designed as residences for artists, writers, musicians, interior decorators and architects. While these homes ended up attracting a wide variety of owners in and out of the arts, early residents at the village did include one of the early architects, Harold O. Fullerton, and the landscape designer for the village, A. Donald Gray.

Gray had been affiliated with the Olmsted brothers prior to his career in Cleveland. The other subdivision landscapes that he designed are the Forest Hill Historic District and some of the Cleveland Cultural Gardens. Landmarked in 1990, the Fairhill Road Village Historic District retains its architectural integrity and park-like setting, reflecting the ideals of the architects and designer who first planned the subdivision.

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

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Landmarked in 1990, the Fairhill Road Village Historic District retains its architectural integrity and park-like setting, reflecting the ideals of the architects and designer who first planned the subdivision.
FutureHeights offers several tools to help Cleveland Heights residents leverage their neighborhoods’ assets through its Community Capacity-Building Program, including a series of workshops for neighborhood leaders and small grants for neighborhood projects.

Since 2015, FutureHeights has awarded approximately $13,000 in mini-grants toward 18 projects in the city. Residents can apply for up to $1,000 for citizen-led projects and events. In addition, 39 residents from neighborhoods across Cleveland Heights have completed the workshop series, which takes place each spring.

“Community organizing is a little like planting seeds and waiting to see what emerges. A little water, fertilizer and sunlight, and strengths emerge that a community may not even know it has,” said Tom Gibson of Oxford Community Garden. “The FutureHeights mini-grant to the Oxford Community Garden in 2016 has not only allowed us to purchase perennial food-forest plants—an ostensible purpose—but has brought in neighborhood volunteers not previously connected with the garden, and connected the garden with Oxford Elementary School. Those connections, in turn, have brought in almost $6,000 in additional funding, which supports gardeners instructing fourth-graders in gardening basics.”

“We have several principles that guide the program,” said Mark Chupp, an assistant professor at Case Western Reserve University’s Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, and former chair of the FutureHeights Civic Engagement Committee, which organized the sessions. “We believe that institutions lead best by stepping back and supporting residents and voluntary groups, and that everyday people have the power to do extraordinary things right where they live.”

The program takes an asset-based community development approach, building on neighborhood strengths. “For example,” said Chupp, “the Cain Park neighborhood has this tremendous asset—Cain Park—that it can leverage and build upon. The ‘dog project,’ which residents came together to urge the city to allow dog-walking in the park, is a good example of this. We also see residents of other neighborhoods, such as Noble, coming together to organize neighborhood cleanups and open houses. The small grants give us a means to better support neighbor-led activities like these.”

The 2018 Neighborhood Leadership Workshop Series will take place on six Sunday afternoons, between March 11 and May 20, 2-6 p.m. Topics for the sessions are neighborhood leadership, asset-based community development, policy and advocacy, the history of Cleveland Heights and its neighborhoods, leveraging community resources and building community capacity.

All Cleveland Heights residents are encouraged to apply to participate in the workshop series. Application for neighborhood mini-grants will be accepted twice this year, with deadlines on March 15 and Sept. 15. For more information and applications, visit www.futureheights.org/programs/community-building-programs, e-mail slasu@futureheights.org or call 216-320-1423.

Sruti Basu is director of community-building programs at FutureHeights.
HCC appoints Dillenbeck as
its new executive director
Pam Wetherill

The board of Heights Community Congress (HCC) has announced that Eric Dillenbeck is its new executive director. He assumes the role from Martha Goble, who is retiring. His first official day was Jan. 1.

Dillenbeck has been an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church USA for the past 15 years. He most recently served as associate pastor of Fairmount Presbyterian Church in Cleveland Heights. A veteran of the nonprofit world, Dillenbeck is currently the coordinator of community partnerships at Youth Opportunities Unlimited, where he works with nonprofits throughout the Cleveland area to provide workforce readiness training and jobs for youths and young adults.

As HCC’s executive director, Dillenbeck will oversee HCC’s Fair Housing Enforcement Audit program, and will be responsible for the agency’s diversity programming, its annual Heights Heritage Home and Garden Tour, and the volunteer management these activities entail. He will serve as HCC’s main public contact and liaison with other like-minded agencies.

“HCC has a demonstrated faithful- ness to building a stronger community, one that is committed and welcoming of all people, and one that helps each other see the value and gifts of our di- versity,” Dillenbeck explained. “These are values that grounded my work through the church and are central to my outlook on the world.”

Dillenbeck believes the value of HCC’s work is unquestionable, and noted, “Now more than ever, the Heights and the greater community need orga- nizations like HCC, organizations that are devoted to building stronger com- munities based on mutual respect.”

Looking ahead to the future, Dillenbeck is optimistic. His vision for HCC includes “engaging the com- munity in ways that help us hear more about the issues Heights residents face every day, and then building new coalitions of nonprofit organizations, faith communities, businesses, and local residents to address those concerns together.”

Dillenbeck is married, and has three children who attend the Shaker Heights schools. Heights Community Congress (HCC), founded in 1972 and incorpo- rated in 1973, is a non-partisan, broad- based citizen coalition of organizations and individuals which monitors and supports integration and diversity in Cleveland Heights.

Among its many accomplishments, HCC helped establish and maintain city-regulated fair housing and home inspection (1974), a hous- ing service for homeseekers (1974), and neighborhood associations. HCC sponsors programs which maintain and promote the city’s proud heritage of diversity, and it produces the annual Heights Heritage Home and Garden Tour.

Pam Wetherill is a volunteer with Heights Community Congress.

 Churches work together to host March Lenten Wednesdays
Don Wood

Four congregations in Cleveland Heights—Peace Lutheran, Noble Road Presbyterian, Disciples Chris-
tian, and Church of the Redeemer United Methodist—are working co- operatively to offer a creative form of fellowship and worship as Christians around the globe commemorate Lent. Beginning with Ash Wednesday, Lent marks an annual season to remember Jesus’ life and death.

The gatherings are open to not only members of the four congrega-
tions, but also to all in the area who would like to deepen their spirituality at this holy time.

The four churches are sharing in what they call “Simple Soup Suppers.” Attendees gather at 6 p.m., attend a program at 6:45 p.m., worship at 7:30 p.m., and are on their way by 8 p.m.

This year’s program theme is the varieties of spiritual practices. On March 7, Peace Lutheran, 3740 Mayfield Road, will host a program on healing and therapy through the use of art. March 14’s program, at Disciples Christian, 1665 Mayfield Road, will provide an opportunity to learn more about the discipline of yoga and spiritual- ity. On March 21, attendees will be back at Peace Lutheran for a look at icons, both traditional and contem- porary.

The community is invited to each program; a free-will offering is taken for the dinners offered.

Ken Wood

Mercedes Klouda, a four-year member of Heights Youth Club (Hyc), is one of five finalists for Youth of the Year honors at Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland. The winner will be announced on March 9.

Beverly Burgess, former Heights Youth Club director, said of Klouda, “Her” work ethic, self-esteem and personal resilience traits are inspiring to the club staff and her peers. When faced with a challenge, she works tirelessly to achieve her goals and sets high expectations for herself.”

For the past nine years, Klouda has volunteered at the Ebenezer Food Pantry at Fairmount Pres- byterian Church, spending thou- sands of hours serving meals to com- munity members.

In 2016, she was part of a church group that traveled to the Dominican Republic and helped build a church in one of the most poverty-stricken regions of that country.

Ken Wood is communications director for Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland.

HYC member is Youth of the Year finalist

High School pool opens to public on March 5
Deanna Bremer Fisher

The Cleveland Heights High School indoor pool will reopen for commu- nity access on Monday, March 5. The 2018 spring swimming schedule runs through May 25.

The Heights High pool is avail- able to the public through the City of Cleveland Heights Parks and Recre- ation Department. All residents within the boundaries of the CH-UH School District may purchase swim passes, which are available at the Cleveland Heights Community Center.

Community members should use the entrance on Washington Boule- vard, adjacent to the football stadium, to access the pool and locker rooms. Access to the school building beyond the natatorium is restricted during these hours. The pool is closed dur- ing the CH-UH Spring Break, March 30-April 7.

For more information, visit the city’s website, www.clevelandheights.com.

Monday - Friday
Adult Lap Swim 6:30 a.m.
Monday - Thursday
Adult Lap Swim 5:30-8 p.m.
Friday
Adult Lap Swim & Family Swim 8-8 p.m.
Saturday
Adult Lap Swim 8-10 a.m.
Adult Lap Swim & Family Swim 12:30-7 p.m.

Deanna Bremer Fisher is executive direc- tor of FutureHeights and publisher of the Heights Observer.
University Heights Senior Happenings

Senior Happenings, sponsored by the city of University Heights, are open to all senior citizens. Events take place on Thursdays at 2 p.m. at the University Heights Library. To receive the monthly schedule by e-mail, call 216-320-1423, ext. 205, or send an e-mail to info@universityheights.com.

March 1: Terry Allan, health commissioner with the Cuyahoga Board of Health, will provide an overview of community and family services, environmental health and safety. He’ll cover three pressing issues: healthy eating and active living, the opioid epidemic, and infant mortality rates.

March 8: Romanita Vargas, executive director of the Spanish American Committee, will discuss its work in mobilizing help for the people of Puerto Rico who, displaced from their homes by Hurricane Maria, traveled to Northeast Ohio for either a temporary or permanent stay. The committee so far has helped nearly 600 people by providing for their basic needs, including winter clothing, food, medical care, jobs, education, and housing.

March 13: Jeffrey Patterson, chief executive officer of the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority, will share a powerpoint presentation identifying the authority’s core values and guiding principles: commitment, accountability, respect, excellence and safety.

March 22: Rachel Kribbs, director of the Cleveland Institute of Music’s community programming, will introduce a group of instrumentalists and vocalists from the school.

March 29: Lou Tansky, proprietor of Uncle Ben’s Pawn Shop, on St. Clair Avenue at East 26th Street, will reminisce about the business that he started with his father more than 50 years ago. A history buff, Tansky grew to like all the people who have ventured into his shop, which is stuffed with a variety of eclectic items—jewelry, musical instruments, art work—even a squirrel monkey which his father traded for a guitar.

He philosophizes that pawn is about relationships, so he treats his customers with courtesy and respect.

The CARE Program is a collaboration between four senior centers: Solon Senior Services, Cleveland Heights Senior Center, Maple Heights Senior Center and Community Partnership on Aging. It needs volunteers to assist local, older adult homeowners complete tasks (yardwork, changing batteries and lightbulbs, kitchen cleaning, first floor and interior window washing, etc.) in and around their homes in order to help them maintain safety and independence. Help make a difference in the lives of local senior citizens. For more information, call Eric McLellan at 216-970-0599 or send an e-mail to mcelellan@communitypartnershiponaging.org. (Position may include background check.)

Heights Observer Volunteer Match

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

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

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

The CARE Program

Shari Nacson, LISW-S, a freelance editor, child development expert, and search “volunteer match.”

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Heights Observer March 1, 2018 12 www.heightsobserver.org
Kiwanis returns to the Heights

Mark Harris

Kiwanis International has returned to the Cleveland Heights-Universi-
ty Heights community with a new club, Kiwanis of the Heights, that intends to continue the work that the old Cleveland Heights and Cedar Center clubs started years ago, providing service to the community’s children and adults with disabilities.

Spearheaded by the club president (the author), the new club achieved charter status last No-
vember. Yvonne Conner serves as treasurer, and Cassandra Swift serves as secretary. Dee Ann Long Marsky, Cindy Seaman and Eva Bekes serve as the club’s board.

Kiwanis of the Heights’ commit-
tment to service will begin by establishing Key and Builders Clubs in the local school system, and an Akton Club for disabled adults. These clubs should be fully active by fall 2018.

The school clubs are designed to teach high school and middle school students about leadership, community and service in a struc-
tured program of self-government, fundraising, and volunteering for community projects. Future near-term plans include K-clubs in the various public ele-
mentary schools, appropriate clubs in the community’s private primary and secondary schools, as well as Circle-K Clubs at John Carroll Uni-
versity and Notre Dame College.

Kiwanis of the Heights seeks to break away from antiquated, tradi-
tional social outreach with new and innovative ways to engage with the community. As an example, the sec-
ond club meeting of every month, usually the third Friday, takes place at a local dining establishment rather than a meeting hall.

The club already has held fundraisers in collaboration with several entertainment establish-
ments. As momentum takes hold, and weather cooperates, there are plans for outdoor, family-oriented events.

Kiwanis of the Heights is always looking for new members and corporate sponsors in the com-

munity to aid in the goal of serving Cleveland Heights and University Heights, and it welcomes your involvement. You are invited to attend any of the club’s upcoming social events, and its next official meeting on March 7 at the Cleve-
land Heights Community Center. For more information, visit www.
kiwanisoftheheights.org, Facebook @KiwanisoftheHeights, or send an e-mail to contact@kiwanisoftheheights.org.

Mark Harris is president of Kiwanis of the Heights.

HRRC offers women’s electrical repairs series

David Brock

In March, Home Repair Resource Center’s (HRRC) Home How-To Electrical Series is starting up again. Each Wednesday, March 7 through April 11, 7–9 p.m., attendees should get ready to be enlightened.

This series has been immensely popular in the past, and this time, HRRC is adding a little something different. Participants will learn how to wire a house, and thus gain a full understanding of how electricity and wiring works throughout the whole home. Switches, outlets, circuits and more will also be covered.

Register for the class, and find out how to safely tackle electrical repairs yourself. The series costs $150, and income-based discounts of 50 to 100 percent are available. For more information, and to see a complete listing of HRRC classes, visit www.
hrrc-ch.org.

David Brock is education and outreach coordinator for Home Repair Resource Center.
Heights High athletes commit to colleges

Scott Wortman

On Feb. 7, 12 Cleveland Heights High School student-athletes signed their official college letters of intent at a National Signing Day ceremony held in front of a large crowd inside Heights High's gymnasium.

The group comprised 11 football players and one girls lacrosse player who, combined, received more than $1.1 million in college scholarships.

The students were girls lacrosse standout Lauren Iott (Grand Valley State University), and football standouts Grayson Green (Central State University), Isaiah Higgins (Hocking College), Kylen McCracken (Ohio University), Mekhi Patterson (Thomas More College), Shamar Rhodes (West Liberty University), Peter Rouse (Erie Community College), Jared Wilson (Ohio Dominican University), Zaire Webb (Georgetown University) and Ahmad Webber (West Virginia Wesleyan College).

Feb. 7 was the day that high school senior football players could officially sign with college or university athletic programs.

Heights High regularly has many student-athletes who go on to play collegiately. The signing period for other interscholastic sports is in April.

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

March 19 fundraiser will benefit girls lacrosse

Heights Girls Lacrosse will host its annual fundraiser at Lopez restaurant in Cleveland Heights on Monday, March 19, 5–9 p.m. Delicious food and drinks will be served, with all tips—along with proceeds from live raffle items and a 50-50 raffle—going to support Heights Lacrosse programs. For more information, go to Facebook and search Heights Girls Lacrosse fundraiser.

Heights High re-dedicates Cappelletti Court

Scott Wortman

Cleveland Heights High School dedicated its new basketball court in honor of legendary former coach Jim Cappelletti during a pre-game ceremony on Feb. 9. The Heights High gymnasium now has a “Cappelletti Court” insignia on each of the baselines.

The Tigers' previous home court, replaced during the high school renovation, was also named in honor of Cappelletti, who spent 45 years in the CH-UH district, and won 539 games in his coaching career.

Cappelletti attended the ceremony, and a number of his former players came back to honor their Hall of Fame coach Jim Cappelletti with current Heights High basketball players.

A true Heights legend, Cappelletti led the Tigers to the State Final Four six times (1975, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1997, 2003). In 1975 and 1995, Cappelletti’s team finished as State Runner-Up. In 1997, his team won the Division I State Championship, and he was named Ohio Coach of the Year. Coach Cap's teams also won the Lake Erie League title 11 times.

Cappelletti was inducted into the Ohio High School Basketball Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2011.

Scott Wortman is the supervisor of communications for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.
Barbershoppers receive ‘outstanding’ rating

Joy Henderson

If you’ve heard them you already know: The Heights High Barbershoppers are outstanding. And now, it’s official. Both the Boys and Girls Barbershoppers received a rating of Outstanding at the Barbershop Harmony Society International Festival in Costa Mesa, Calif.

More than 600 students from 18 schools attended the event, Jan. 17 through 20. Barbershop music is unaccompanied (a capella) vocal music with four-part harmony.

This is the first year that the girls have attended the competition. The boys have attended for several years.

The possible ratings of Good, Excellent, Outstanding and Superior are awarded by a panel of international vocal experts.

The Heights students performed without their director, Jesse Lange. “Our students were one of the few groups performing without a director,” said Lange. “That requires the singers to be more self-reliant and to depend on each other.”

Besides performing for a panel of judges, the students also attended workshops and watched performances by other groups, including college, adult and senior citizen ensembles.


The Girls Barbershoppers are: Mikaiah Truitt, Roberto Pastorelli, Clare Peppler, Gerald Shazor, Lily Kerr-Jung and Grant Heineman. Not pictured: Kiarah Balfour.

The senior members of the Barbershoppers (from left): Ashara Robinson, Remi Goddard, Peyton Marshall, Evan Pits, Malana Lovett, Todd Byers, Mikiah Truitt, Roberto Pastorelli, Clare Peppler, Gerald Shazor, Lily Kerr-Jung and Grant Heineman. Not pictured: Kiarah Balfour.

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

Penguins invade Gesu School

Marjorie Gesser

At the end of January, Gesu School launched a new program, Gesu Reads Together. The school embarked on this project to promote family literacy and demonstrate connections between academic subjects across the curriculum.

During the months of January and February, students in kindergarten through fourth grade read the classic children’s book, Mr. Popper’s Penguins by Richard Atwater, and class work connected to the themes of the book, covering topics such as penguins, Polar regions, and the water cycle.

Each child received a copy of the book, and the Gesu School Parent Teacher Organization arranged many activities, including a kick-off assembly featuring Mr. Popper (an actor with Great Lakes Theater Company) reading the first two chapters of the book to the student body.

Over the course of the two-month program, an ice sculptor carved a 4-foot-tall penguin on the front lawn of the school, and students traveled to Playhouse Square to see a production of “Mr. Popper’s Penguins.” Students watched videos from the Akron Zoo’s penguin exhibit, and the movie “Happy Feet,” and a DJ taught line dancing to all the students, in kindergarten through eighth grade. There were trivia contests each day, engineering challenges, and penguins decorated the entire school.

Marjorie Gesser is STREAM coordinator at Gesu School in University Heights.

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Heights Educators Swim with the Sharks

Scott Wortman

A group of 20 CH-UH educators “swam with the sharks” on Professional Development Day in order to qualify for opportunity grants courtesy of the Heights School Foundation (HSF).

In an event modeled after the reality TV show “Shark Tank,” HSF offered grants of up to $500 directly to teachers, who had to face a panel of sharks who determined if their proposals were investment-worthy.

Each teacher who submitted a proposal had two minutes to make the pitch, and then 60 seconds of back-and-forth with the panel. In the end, a shark had to make an offer to fund the proposal. HSF awarded more than $8,400 at the event, and educators from all CH-UH district schools participated. Proposals included grant requests for alternative student seating options (wobble chairs, bicycle desks); STEM items, such as Lego Mindstorms and programmable drones; special events and field trips; a science speaker series; and educational garden supplies.

Juliana Johnston Senturia, HSF’s executive director, hosted the event. The four sharks were Susan Carver, HSF president; Meghan McMahon, HSF treasurer and CH-UH 21st-Century Grant coordinator, Rosemary Rack-Pierce, RoxArts president; and the author of this article.

HSF plans to host another Shark Tank event during the 2018-19 school year.

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

Cleveland Heights University Heights Board of Education Meeting highlights

JANUARY 23, 2018
President James Fosch, Vice President Jodi Soumi, Dan Heintz, Malia Lewis and Beverly Wright were present. Superintendent Talis Coxson, Treasurer Scott Gainer, Cleveland Heights City Manager Tanisha Briley, and Cleveland Heights Director of Economic Development Tim Boland were also present.

Public Education Week
Heintz presented a resolution in recognition of Public Education Week, which the board approved.

Lease for storage
The board approved an agreement for a two-year lease space to store materials from Roxboro and Monticello middle schools.

Update on Top of the Hill project
Briley reviewed the history of the property at the top of Cedar Hill. The city owns the parking lots where Doctors Hospital was demolished in 1968. The city has entered into a public-private partnership with Flaherty & Collins to build 200 luxury apartments, 15,000 square feet of commercial retail space, a boutique hotel and 925 parking spaces. The city and contractors are asking for tax increment financing (TIF) to complete this project. Flaherty & Collins is investing $75 to $80 million. They are asking for 100 percent deferred taxes for 30 years on the new valuation. At present the schools get $21,218, which they will continue to receive. After 30 years, the schools will receive $421,000, based on the currently estimated valuation of the project, as well as 100 percent of any new leases. Gainer will work with David Seed, the Board of Education’s legal adviser, and Boland to develop an agreement.

FEBRUARY 6, 2018
Vice President Jodi Soumi, Dan Heintz, Malia Lewis and Beverly Wright were present. President James Fosch was absent. Superintendent Talis Coxson and Treasurer Scott Gainer were also present. Present for the master facilities plan update were Project Management Consultants LLC Senior Project Consultant Doug Myers, Board Accountability Commission Vice Chair Debbie Herrmann, and Director of Business Services George Petkac.

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. and was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Master facilities plan update
Herrmann reviewed the cost of installing a sprinkler system for the two middle schools. Because this would cost $1.8 million, it is not required in the code, and would not protect lives, the board decided not to add a sprinkler system. Myers gave some alternatives and their costs. They will be discussed at the next meeting. Petkac stated that each middle school will have six science rooms.

1. LWV Observer: Adele Cohn.

COURTESY CH-UH CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Spring library programs celebrate classic movies

Sheryl Banks

This spring, Heights Libraries will celebrate classic American films with film screenings, book talks, live music, and film talks by local experts John Ewing, Neal Hodges and Mark Dawidziak.

Original Voices Book Club: Hollywood Edition. [All programs in this series take place on Wednesdays, at 7:30 p.m., at the Lee Road branch.]

March 14: The Loved One: An Anglo-American Tragedy by Evelyn Waugh. Waugh’s fictionalized account of his time in Hollywood focuses on the strange and surreal practices of the mortuary industry. This biting commentary on American culture and the film community was called a “macabre frolic filled with laughter” and “fiendishly entertaining” by The New York Times.

April 11: West of Sunset by Stewart O’Nan. In this biographical novel, O’Nan’s novel is an intimate portrait of the writer’s last years painted alongside a vivid cast of characters.

May 9: The Maltese Falcon by Dashiel Hammett. Named one of the “100 Best Books” by The Guardian, this classic novel introduced Sam Spade to the world and gave shape and substance to the image of the hard-boiled detective and the whole genre of noir mysteries. Follow in Spade’s footsteps as he seeks out a priceless statuette.

Lee Road Movie Night. [Movies in this series are shown on Fridays, at 6:30 p.m., at the Lee Road branch.]

March 16: “It Happened One Night.” Frank Capra’s romantic comedy stars Claudette Colbert as a spoiled heiress running away from her family and Clark Gable as a reporter in need of a story. This early talkie won five Best Oscars: picture, actor, actress, director, and screenplay. (1934)

May 11: “The Maltese Falcon.” Based on a Dashiel Hammett novel, John Huston’s film follows Detective Sam Spade (Humphrey Bogart) as he gets tangled up with murder cases, eccentric criminals, a beautiful dame and the search for a priceless statuette. It also stars Mary Astor and Peter Lorre. (1941)

Racing (to) the Movies. Thursday, April 19, 7 p.m., at the Lee Road branch. Neal Hodges presents an excursion into films made for African Americans by African Americans during the Golden Age of Cinema (1930-50).

The Cinematic Glories of Silent Films. Tuesday, April 24, 7 p.m., at the Lee Road branch. John Ewing, director of the Cleveland Institute of Art Cinematheque and curator of film at the Cleveland Museum of Art, discusses one of his favorite eras in film history. His talk will be supplemented by memorable clips from some great silent movies.

Monsters Are Universal: Silver Screams in Hollywood’s Golden Age. Tuesday, May 15, 7 p.m., at the Lee Road branch. Largely Literary Theater Co. co-founders Sara Showman and Mark Dawidziak use lighthearted sketches, props and costume pieces to explore Hollywood’s Golden Age of horror, with a special emphasis on the Universal films starring Bela Lugosi and Boris Karloff, as well as the genre’s literary origins.

Music and the Movies. Wednesday, May 30, 7 p.m. Vocalist Eileen Burns and her three-piece jazz combo will present an entertaining and informative program featuring memorable songs and interesting stories from classic Hollywood films, such as “Casablanca.” “Swing Time,” “Breakfast at Tiffany’s,” “Brigadoon,” “Singing in the Rain” and more.

Classic Movie Night: “The Invisible Man.” Thursday, April 5, 7 p.m., at the Noble Neighborhood branch, 2800 Noble Road. “The Invisible Man” is considered a classic horror film. An adaptation of the famous H.G. Wells novel of the same name, it was an early example of the magic that could be done on a silver screen. Come see this classic before the Johnny Depp reboot comes out in theaters. (1931)

The Sounds of Hollywood’s Golden Age with Shari Hunter. Thursday, April 19, 7 p.m., at the Noble Neighborhood branch. Listen as Shari Hunter performs famous songs from classic movies from Hollywood’s Golden Era, and explains what makes these songs so famous. Songs to be performed include “I Get a Kick Out of You,” “Lucky be a Lady Tonight,” and “Raindrops Keep Fallin’ on My Head.”

H.G. Wells Film Series. [Movies in this series are shown on Tuesdays, at 6:30 p.m., at the University Heights branch, 1386 Cedar Road.]

March 27: “Island of Lost Souls” (1933); April 24: “War of the Worlds” (1953); May 29: “The Time Machine” (1960). Sheryl Banks is the communications manager for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System.
Library accepting applications for teen music program

Jay Rosen

Heights High students who are aspiring musicians can now apply for the second installment of Cleveland Heights University High Library’s Teen Music Makerspace program. The library will accept applications from Heights students between the ages of 13 and 18 through March 18 for the program, which runs April 9 through May 18.

Teen Music Makerspace is a 10-week course, covering everything from the history of electronic music to recording equipment, and using computer programs to create and manipulate sounds.

The course, open to 11 students, will take place in the Teen Digital Media Lab, located in the Teen Room of Heights Libraries’ Lee Road branch. The lab features a sound-isolating recording booth, professional recording equipment, and computers outfitted with advanced music software.

Assistant IT Manager Matt Mancini, who also facilitated the first session of the Makerspace course, looks forward to this spring’s session. “Last fall’s class was a great success,” Mancini said. “I was amazed by the creativity and talent each student brought to the table, and can’t wait to help more Heights teens begin, or continue, their personal musical journey.”

The Makerspace program features a weekly instructional session by Mancini on various elements of recording and producing music, including mixing, editing audio, recording, and navigating digital music software.

Mancini emphasized that prospective students need not have any prior musical or recording experience, and that all musical genres and styles are welcome in the class. “What matters most is that students are willing and eager to learn,” he said. “In terms of genre, during the previous session we had students interested in jazz, folk, hip-hop, rock music—they had pretty eclectic tastes. My hope is to create a course that is open to each student’s musical preferences and gives them the structure and skills they need to pursue what they’re most excited about.”

Applications for a student intern are also open through March 18. “What we’re basically looking for is someone with a bit of musical experience and a desire to help other students,” Mancini said. The chosen intern will receive a $500 stipend. For now, the Teen Digital Media Lab is open only to graduates of and current participants in the Makerspace course. Other library customers are encouraged to use the adult Media Lab located in the Lee Road branch’s HKIC (Heights Knowledge and Innovation Center), which features many of the same amenities as the teen lab.

To download an application for both student and intern positions, go to https://heightslibrary.org/teens/teen-media-lab/.

Jay Rosen is communications coordinator at Heights Libraries.
Cain Park Bicycle expands and looks to the future

For generations of Americans, the local bicycle shop was a fixture of the neighborhood, a place where a kid could gain freedom and self-sufficiency by getting a bike, and where adults could continue their own involvement in cycling through commuting, recreation and competition.

Some of those storied local shops in the Heights are gone now—think Pee Wee’s Bike Shop on Coventry or Al’s on Lee Road—but those that remain, thanks in part to the region’s increasing attention to cycling-friendly infrastructure, can be in a position to continue to contribute to the quality of life in our communities and enjoy healthy business in the process.

One such shop is Cain Park Bicycle at 1904 Lee Road, just south of Superior Road. Owner Gary Schumacher opened the shop in 2006 in the same location that had housed Hi-Tech Cycles (whose owner, Marvin Rosenberg, had earlier owned Pee Wee’s). “What led me into this business was kind of chance,” Schumacher said. “I’ve always been a cyclist and had thought about the possibility of a shop. Twelve years ago, I found out Marvin was interested in selling. At the time I was basically getting fed up with what I was doing—working in information technology with a huge commute over to the west side—and I looked at this and it just seemed like a better way to lead a life. It was important to me to stay in the Heights.”

This spring represents another milestone, as Cain Park Bicycle is expanding into the adjacent storefront, long occupied by Dominic’s Barber Shop. “Dominic retired last year and we’ve just been totally maxed-out space-wise,” Schumacher explained. “We will be able to add about 50 bikes to the sales floor, so we’ll be able to spend more time with the customer and less carrying bikes up and down to the basement.”

Local bike shops face competition from online sellers and big-box discounters. Mike Bednarz, head mechanic, explained, “When the Walmart customer comes in and asks why our prices are more, I explain the higher quality of our components, our warranty that backs it up, the professional assembly that backs it up. You weigh everything and pretty soon you say, OK, I can buy a $150 bike or a $450 bike, but the long-term maintenance cost of the $150 bike will quickly escalate and it won’t be as reliable or, most importantly, be as much fun to ride.”

Competing with mail-order retailers for decades has helped local shops prepare for the Amazon age. “Competition from the Internet is a challenge,” Schumacher acknowledged. “We can’t really compete on price, so we compete on service and quality and convenience. One thing we did right from the get-go was fix people’s bikes, right in front of them, and try to educate them as to what a better ride you can get. It’s worked out—a lot of people have come back and got serious bikes. We even get a fair amount of business from people who bought their bike online and have us build it for them, and we’re fine with that.”

In all, Schumacher finds this to be a promising time to be expanding his business here. “The proximity to the universities and the hospitals is good for bike commuters, and Cleveland Heights itself is a pro-cycling community. We’re pretty close to the Shaker Lakes trail. We see a lot of people coming in who want to get out and do some exploring—a lot of wives dragging their slightly over-weight husbands in to get a decent bike and go out and have some fun. The university student market is good, kind of a continually refreshing customer base. We’ve seen much more interest in electric bikes.”

Greg Donley is a member of the Heights Observer Advisory Board and a longtime cyclist.

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Barbie Estrada
Lake Erie Ink (LEI) will host its sixth annual Kids’ Comic Con on Saturday, March 17, 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. At this all-day event, youths of all ages will have the chance to attend workshops with well-known comic creators.

Last year, this one-of-a-kind comic convention for young writers and artists drew nearly 150 kids and teens from across Northeast Ohio. Workshops will cover the two aspects of comic creation—drawing and writing—and include the ever-popular activity “create your own comic character in clay.”

Doors open at 9:30 a.m., and workshops begin at 10 a.m. Admission is $10 at the door, and scholarships are available. Register at www.lakeerieink.org/register or by calling 216-320-4757. Costumes are encouraged, and comics, graphic novels and T-shirts will be sold. Lunch will be sold on-site, or kids may bring their own. Adults are welcome if accompanied by a child, and teachers are welcome with a staff ID.

Lake Erie Ink: a writing space for youth is a not-for-profit that provides creative expression opportunities and academic support to young people in the Greater Cleveland community. The workshop is part of LEI’s Weekend Ink creative expression series, which introduces young people to professional artists and writers.

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

Julie Friedman
If love is a drug, can a drug make you fall in love? Lucy Prebble’s provocative new play, “The Effect,” directed by Laley Lippard and opening at Dobama Theatre on March 2, wowed U.K. critics and award panels with its fascinating questions about the mysteries of the mind and the true nature of love.

“The Effect” tells the story of Connie and Tristan, volunteers in a clinical drug trial, who begin a sudden and illicit romance. However, they must ask themselves: is theirs a palpable chemistry, or merely a side effect of the new antidepressant being tested? As their relationship forces the supervising doctors to face off over the ethical consequences of their work, the story begins to unwind in a script that plays like a thriller.

The New York Daily News said the play “asks provocative questions about the head and the heart. It also manages to appeal to both.” The cast of Dobama’s Midwest premiere of “The Effect” features Olivia Scicolone, Ananias J. Dixon, Derdriu Ring and Joel Hammer.

“The Effect” runs Thursdays through Sundays, March 2–25, at Dobama Theatre, 2340 Lee Road in Cleveland Heights. Ticket prices range from $29 to $32, with senior, student and military discounts available. Tickets to the preview performance on March 1, at 7:30 p.m., are $15. The pay-as-you-can performance is March 4 at 7:30 p.m. Call the box office (216-932-3396) for information, or to purchase tickets by phone. Tickets are also available at www.dobama.org.

Julie Friedman is the managing director of Dobama Theatre.
Ensemble prepares for 2018 Colombi New Plays Festival

Tyler Whidden

Ensemble Theatre will host its seventh annual Colombi New Plays Festival this month, showcasing new works by local playwrights. Among this year’s festival highlights is “Mama/Moon,” a new work by Cleveland Heights playwright Tom Frattare.

“Mama” and “Moon” in the title refer to Mama Cass Elliot of The Mamas & The Papas, an immensely popular folk rock group of the late 1960s, and Keith Moon, the innovative and wildly eccentric and erratic drummer of The Who. Both died at age 32.

Frattare said the impetus for his play was the rash of talented artists dying at a young age—Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, Jim Morrison, and others. “It’s a play about sex, drugs and rock and roll,” Frattare said. “But it’s also about the whirlwind of celebrity, and the all-too-often side effects of loneliness and addiction on the road to redemption.”

The Colombi New Plays Festival is named for Ensemble Theatre’s founder, Lucia Colombi, whose daughter, Celeste Cosentino, took over as executive artistic director of the theater when Colombi died in 2009.

Many plays in this year’s festival represent the culmination of a year’s worth of work for the many local writers who attend Ensemble’s StageWrights workshop. Curated by Ensemble’s associate artistic director, StageWrights is an open-door, free workshop held on Wednesdays in the Coventry School building at 2843 Washington Blvd., in Cleveland Heights.

“Theater is a great way for Ensemble to encourage and support the creation of new work in our community,” Cosentino said. “With all the members who have come and gone over the years, they’ve all really bonded and worked together to keep the tradition of new play development at Ensemble alive.”

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Concert honors retiring choral master Martin Kessler

Cleveland Heights-based Choral Arts Society of Cleveland continues its 43rd season with an examination of classical expressions of folk art. In a performance that director Martin Kessler calls “one chorus, two pianos, three percussion, and four hands,” Choral Arts will treat its audience to a performance that is rollicking, sassy, heartwarming, upbeat and moving, all in one entertainment package.

The concert, on Sunday, March 11, 7:30 p.m., at Disciples Christian Church in Cleveland Heights, will have added significance as Choral Arts singers honor Kessler before he retires from full-time, active directing at the end of this performance season.

Kessler, a lifelong Cleveland Heights resident, has spent the past 50 years as an educator and musician, honing and channeling the artistic abilities of students, instrumentalists and singers. During his 15 years with Choral Arts, Kessler has expanded artistic awareness and entertainment opportunities through creative and innovative programming. Under his directorship, singers and audiences alike have been treated to a number of premieres, including Jerusalem Troubadourem by Antony Pritz, and James Whitbourou’s Annelies, a choral setting of The Diary of Anne Frank.

Drew Clemens, chorus president and emeritus and a founding member of Choral Arts, noted, “Choral Arts was a maturing, 27-year-old community chorus when Martin Kessler became its fourth music director in 2002, making it a widely respected musical resource. Marty’s skilled leadership and creative programing attracted committed singers through his appeal to their desire to grow as choral musicians. He is a masterful teacher, conductor and scholar of fine music, with a sly sense of humor. We are profoundly grateful for his dedicated service to Choral Arts Cleveland and to the pursuit of musical excellence.”

This performance examines the enriching relationship between music and poetry. The evening’s repertoire includes Mack Wilberg’s arrangements of poems by Robert Burns, Ron Nelson’s musical interpretation of Alfred Lord Tennyson, and Liesblieder Waltzes from Brahms, who used as his verbal inspiration the folk songs and love poems in Georg Friedrich Daumer’s Polydora. The performance culminates by showcasing Carl Orff’s dramatization of the romantic longings in medieval lyrics as arranged in his classic Carmina Burana.

John Watson, local baritone soloist and Choral Arts assistant conductor, enjoys the way composers “find a poem or a play that inspires them to take those words off the page and heighten them with melody and harmony.” He added that performers and audience alike can “view words the same way the composer did and see how those words inspire us. We are given the opportunity to experience the poetry for what it is. Then when we hear the music the composer has set to it, it gives us a better perspective of how he may have made his choices in meter, tempo and the melodic line.”

Supported in part by a grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture, the concert is free and open to the public. The play opens on March 9 and runs through March 25.

For more information, a schedule of events, and tickets, go to www.ensembletheatrecle.org, e-mail info@ensemble-theatre.org, or call 216-321-2930.

Tyler Whidden is a playwright and associate artistic director at Ensemble Theatre. He also co-hosts the Cleveland Stage Podcast.

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www.heightsobserver.org
Spring show opens at St. Paul’s

With spring around the corner, it is time for a new show at the Nicholson B. White Gallery at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church. Visit the gallery between March 9 and early June to see *Mindful, Colorful, Artful*. This show pulls together the works of four talented local artists: a photographer, an oil painter, a printmaker and a glass bead maker. Meet the artists at a free public opening on Friday, March 9, 5 to 7 p.m.

Bill Berris carefully selected an eclectic set of photographic works that are crisp and vivid with color, with subjects ranging from people to wildlife to landscapes. Each image has a story behind it: a moment in time or a human emotion. Berris resides in Solon, where he runs a photography service company with his wife.

Working with oil paints on canvas is Debbie Vail, who paints primarily portraits. She has recently begun painting expressive and colorful abstracts as well. She strives to bring life and soul to her human subjects; the topic of immigration has found a place in her works. Her abstracts give her the chance to explore different colors and painting tools. Vail lives and works in Cleveland Heights.

Dale Goode shows embossed monoprints, some inspired by an interest in jazz music and improvisation. He has worked in a variety of media during his career as an artist. In the works he has selected to display here, Goode uses various tools, printing techniques, and materials to create interesting, colorful, and curious surfaces. These monoprints are one-of-a-kind original works.

Rounding out the group is Betsy J. Fallon, of Cleveland Heights, who carefully turns colored glass rods into beautifully designed beads. She melts the rods slowly, with a keen sense of design to create her unique jewelry, as well as functional objects such as serving pieces and desk accessories. The blending of color and the smoothness of the surfaces make the pieces uniquely stunning.

Robin Outcalt is co-director of the Nicholson B. White Gallery at St. Paul’s Church in Cleveland Heights.

WRC performs two masses in ‘Mass = WRC2’ concert

This concert title pun is based on Albert Einstein’s statement, “I get most joy out of music.” The Western Reserve Chorale (WRC) plans to bring joy in music to the Heights with a March 18 concert of two masses: Schubert’s *Mass in G* and John Rutter’s *Mass of the Children*.

The approximately 100-member WRC will be joined by soprano Marian Vogel, tenor JR Fralick, baritone Matthew Brennan, and the ladies of Voices of Harmony from Beaumont School, and accompanied by an orchestra. The concert will take place on Sunday, March 18, 3:30 p.m., at Church of the Gesu in University Heights. WRC, in its 26th year, is grateful to have been so welcomed into its new home at Gesu.

Anyone interested in joining WRC is invited to contact Joanne Poderis, executive director. More information about the ensemble, including contact information, is available at WRC’s website, www.westernreservchorale.org.

David Gilson is artistic director of the Western Reserve Chorale, director of music at Church of the Saviour, and associate dean for student affairs at CIM.
Heights Observer March 1, 2018

HYT celebrates home with 'The Wizard of Oz'

Follow the yellow brick road and join Heights Youth Theatre (HYT) for a performance of "The Wizard of Oz" at Heights Middle School (Wiley campus). The show opens on Friday, March 9, and runs through Sunday, March 18.

Treva Offutt directs the show, Stacy Bolton serves as music director, and Jack Ina is stage manager. One hundred Greater Cleveland students in grades 1 through 12, comprise the cast. The lead cast members are Spencer Skok (Wizard), Victoria Skok (Dorothy), Brian Tuohey (Scarecrow), Keegan Polatz (Tinman), James Berner (Lion), Trinity Offurt Decker (Glinda), Grace Wilkinson (Witch), Grace Hoy (Miss Gulch), Margaretta Milgram (Auntie Em), and Joshua Mink (Uncle Henry).

"The process of helping the cast bring the music of Oz to life has been joyful and fun. From Dorothy to the Munchkins to the apple-throwing trees, every member of this cast is committed to performing to his or her absolute best, and that is a real treat, especially with such a timeless classic as this. You're definitely in for a treat," said Bolton.

Offutt said HYT is thrilled to be returning to its theater space at Wiley. "The Wizard of Oz" reminds us to give thanks for the spaces and faces that we may take for granted, and that we each have the power for change," Offutt said. "At the same time, we have so many new faces and families that have added richness and diversity to our work. There truly is no place like home!"

"The Wizard of Oz" will be performed in the Heights Middle School auditorium, 2181 Miramar Blvd., in University Heights, Friday, March 9 and 16, at 7 p.m.; Saturday, March 10 and 17, at 2 p.m.; and Sunday, March 11 and 18, at 2 p.m. Tickets are $10 general admission ($9 for seniors and children under 10). The box office opens 45 minutes prior to each show. For more information, visit www.heightsyouththeatre.org.

For group seating information, call 216-410-7500.

For more than 60 years, HYT has provided quality theater education and live theater performances to thousands of children and families in Greater Cleveland. Founded in 1954, HYT produces as many as four complete musicals per year, offering participants an opportunity to gain valuable experience in theater arts. HYT’s goal is to make theater affordable and accessible to people of all incomes and backgrounds in a nurturing environment that encourages social and emotional growth.

If you’re interested in supporting theatrical arts in the Heights, visit www.heightsyouththeatre.org for more information.

Pamela Fine is executive director of Heights Youth Theatre.

HYT and Cain Park will offer musical theater camp

Heights Youth Theatre (HYT) is thrilled to make a summer return to the place of its origin, Cain Park. In a new collaboration, HYT will partner with Cain Park to offer a summer camp for teens who are passionate about musical theater.

The camp, open to those in grades 6–12, will take place June 11–29 at Cain Park (14591 Superior Road). No audition is necessary.

From audition techniques, scene work, character development, choreography and music intensives to interaction with professional actors, directors, tech people and stage managers, HYT campers will build a musical review in the professional setting of Cain Park, culminating with a performance on the Alma stage on June 30.

For more information, call 216-410-7500 or visit www.heightsyouththeatre.org.

Pamela Fine is executive director of Heights Youth Theatre.

Visit www.heightsobserver.org
Drawn Together explores Buddhist concepts

Mary Ryan

Opening March 9 in the Heights Arts main gallery, Drawn Together: Emotional Intelligence and the Vernacular of the Heart explores the Buddhist concept of the brahma-viharas, also known as the four divine emotions, through drawings by Northeast Ohio artists John Carlson, Suzanne Head, Tony Ingrisano and Dana Oldfather. The community is invited to the opening reception on Friday, March 9, 6 to 9 p.m.

Drawn Together looks at the emotions of loving-kindness (metta), compassion (karuna), vicarious joy (mudita), and equanimity (upekkha), through the expression of visual line and imagery in a wide range of materials, including paint, charcoal, and glass. “Drawing is so effective and efficient in its ability to convey emotion that it seemed a most appropriate medium for this subject,” said Josh Wersling, exhibition curator. “Each mark is a statement of expression by the artist. It is also a perfect metaphor for social interaction and relationships between individuals and the collective.

Like all of us moving through the world, reacting to and relating with each other based upon our own individual stories and experiences: marks and lines, all part of a bigger picture.”

Each of the four artists has created three works based on the brahma-viharas: one representing the divine emotion and its corresponding near and far enemies. The far enemy represents the opposite emotion of the love and the near enemy is an emotion masquerading as the pure emotion.

On Thursday, April 5, Ekphrastacy: Artists Talk + Poets Respond offers an opportunity to hear the Drawn Together artists speak about their work and invited poets read original work inspired by select pieces in the exhibition.

The Same . . . Only Different, recent drawings by Jennifer Adams, will open in the Spotlight Gallery on Friday, March 3. Adams began working on the series, which is based on brick patterns in local architecture, in 2015. Since receiving an M.F.A. in fiber from Cranbrook Academy of Art, she has primarily focused on two-dimensional practices including drawing, print-making and photography, as well as such textile arts as quilting and knitting.

For more information on Heights Arts community programs and events, including house concerts, gallery performances and outreach, visit www.heightsarts.org.

Mary Ryan is a 50-year Shaker Heights resident, who recently retired from marketing and communications at Heights Arts.

New ceramics in the spotlight at Heights Arts

Mary Ryan

Currently on view in the Heights Arts Spotlight Gallery is a selection of new works by ceramist and found-member Sharon Grossman. While she is best known for her vessels, Grossman has created for this installation a suite of pieces that are all meant to be wall-hung.

Many of the works employ a technique known as pique asiette, that uses broken shards of dinnerware to create mosaics.

Previously in her creative life, Grossman was a woodworker and furniture maker, and that background informs her approach to ceramics.

“I have always loved carving,” Grossman said, “and a lot of my work includes carved or inlaid elements.” To me, this body of work really combines those interests that led me first to make furniture and then to take up ceramics.”

The solo exhibition will be on view at Heights Arts, 275 Lee Road, through Saturday, March 18.

Mary Ryan is a 50-year Shaker Heights resident, who recently retired from marketing and communications at Heights Arts.
Burning River Baroque to perform at three CH venues

Malina Rauschenfels

Early-music ensemble Burning River Baroque will return to Cleveland Heights with three performances of Suppressed Voices: Music of the Banished. The ensemble will perform on Wednesday, March 21, 7:30 p.m., at The Wine Spot (2271 Lee Road), and Saturday, March 24, 2 p.m., at St. Alban’s Episcopal Church (2555 Euclid Heights Blvd.). Both of these concerts are free; free-will donations will be accepted.

An additional performance will be offered on Saturday, April 24, at 7 p.m., at a private residence in Cleveland Heights. A fundraiser for the ensemble, tickets will be $50. For reservations, e-mail rsvp@burning-river-baroque.org (address of the venue will be provided upon receipt of RSVP).

Performers will include co-directors Malina Rauschenfels (soprano) and Paula Maust (harp-sichord), with guest artists Sarah Elizabeth Cranor (baroque violin), Reynaldo Patiño (baroque violin) and Jessica Kororokin (baroque cello). Burning River Baroque will be partnering with the Refugee Services Collaborative of Greater Cleveland for these concerts.

Praised by the Boston Musical Intelligencer as a group that "left an indelible imprint on my psyche," Burning River Baroque is an innovative artist-run ensemble founded in 2012 with the goal of bringing Baroque music to life for contemporary audiences.

Malina Rauschenfels is a vocalist, cellist and baroque violinist, as well as co-director of Burning River Baroque.

Apollon’s Fire presents free family concert on March 3

Melanie Emig

Cleveland Heights-based Apollo’s Fire Baroque Orchestra will present a free family concert at Heights High on Saturday, March 3, at 2 p.m. The performance is part of a family concert series titled Wing It, featuring local songstress Amanda Powell with Apollo’s Fire instrumentalists.

This interactive and light-hearted performance, which is open to the public, will explore the connection and similarities between jazz and Baroque music. Audience members will have an opportunity to try out the instruments, including the hammered dulcimer, percussion and guitar, during the post-concert “Instrument Petting Zoo.” The family concerts are part of the group’s new Community Access Initiative, which seeks to bring world-class music to diverse audiences throughout Northeast Ohio.

In addition to the family concerts, the initiative includes free “student rush” tickets, reduced-price “Presto Seats,” and “Family Nights” wherein parents and their children from selected public schools are invited to attend Apollo’s Fire subscription concert for free. Apollo’s Fire’s eventful month also includes a Carnegie Hall performance on March 22. The debut, which sold out seven months in advance, will mark a milestone for this world-class ensemble, which is celebrating its 26th year.

Melanie Emig is the patron services associate at Apollo’s Fire. She holds a bachelor’s degree in vocal performance and a master’s degree in opera theater from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, and teaches piano at The Music Settlement.
Some things that matter

I’m the administrator of a Facebook group called Growing Up in Cleveland Heights. I didn’t start the group. I joined the group. And my friend Jim and I used to complain, to each other, about things that people were posting. Then Jim started complaining to the founder and administrator of the group. After a while she asked him if he would take over as administrator. He did. Then he asked me to be co-administrator with him. I did. After several years, Jim died, unexpectedly. So now I’m the sole administrator. But I’ll be handing that off in the near future.

One thing that has been fascinating—and frustrating—is that the same topics keep coming up, over and over. Before people join, we ask them to look through past posts, to avoid bringing up topics that have been discussed a lot already. They don’t. Someone joins and immediately posts, “Does anyone remember Cumberland pool?”

Well, of course everyone remembers Cumberland pool. For one thing, it has never gone away. It’s right there, right where it always was, and every year, from the end of the school year till Labor Day, the pool is open every day and full of swimmers of all ages.

But even if you moved away long ago, and you’re not sure if the pool is still there, if you scroll through the group’s past posts, it will not take you very long to find another recent post about Cumberland, and its 150 comments, and then another, and another.

Cumberland pool is one of those topics that people can’t seem to get enough of. I see the same people commenting every time it comes up—“spent every day there,” and “I lived at Cumberland from morning to evening,” and 37 people who say, “remember they checked between your toes and you had to walk through a solution?” and several who say, “do they still have the high diving board? that was scary,” and there’s always a couple who say, “I climbed over the fence and swam naked at night!” and about 100 more comments like these.

Another topic that comes up repeatedly is Mawby’s Restaurant. Even though people don’t have a lot to say about it, other than about 150 variations of “best hamburgers ever,” it just keeps coming up (the topic, not the burger).

Equally popular is the subject of Clark’s Restaurant at the southeast corner of Cedar and Lee. Someone brings it up every couple of weeks and then a long discussion, including a few arguments, follows. One thing everyone remembers is Apple Pie—Johnny’s Toy Chest for members of the Clean Plate Club—if a kid ate everything on his or her plate, he or she could pick out a toy (a tiny, cheap trinket) from a large chest.

And then the thread shoots off into several tangential discussions, and arguments, about what occupied that space after Clark’s. If you’re a member of the Growing Up in Cleveland Heights group, I’ll tell you right now: When Clark’s closed, in the early ’60s, it was followed in that location by Inman’s, a similar restaurant, and then, in the early ’70s, by earth by earth, a good vegetarian restaurant. Eventually, that space (after serving as a carpet store) was taken over by the expansion of the Cedar Lee Theatre. There. Now we won’t have to talk about it any more, right? Highly unlikely.

Remember Meither’s? I’m not asking you; I’m just listing another topic that comes up often. Meither’s was an ice cream shop that created its ice cream in-house—many flavors, and all good. It stood at the corner of Lee and Redwood roads, a block south of Superior Road, now the site of Lotus Thai House. Everyone’s always asking everyone if they remember it, and everyone always does. And, soon thereafter, someone asks again. It’s sort of like the definition of insanity.

And then there’s “Does anyone remember sledding at Cain Park?” The answer is yes—the thousands of people who sledded there all this winter. And every winter for the past 80 years or so. Someone actually asked if the hill is still there. I considered holding a contest for creative answers to that question.

Speaking of Cain Park, another popular topic is some variation of “Who remembers seeing Bob Hope at Cain Park?” Everyone over a certain age answers yes. Apparently, tens of thousands of people filled the 2,000-seat amphitheater. It’s sort of like the Woodstock of Cleveland Heights residents born in the 1920s and ’30s.

So, one reason these same topics keep returning is that people, especially new members, don’t bother to check. But the other one is that these places really were meaningful to people who grew up here. And that’s the thing I have to keep reminding myself.

David Budin is a freelance writer for national and local publications, the former editor of Cleveland Magazine and Northern Ohio Live, an author, and a professional musician and comedian. His writing focuses on the arts and, especially, pop music history.
Montessori High School at University Circle empowers students to find their path to an engaged and meaningful life. We know each of our students has a unique passion and perspective.

At MHS, we believe that to be successful in college and beyond students need confidence in who they are and the opportunity to explore their interests. They need academics with breadth and depth. They need rigor and personal choice, and a community where their individuality is valued.

We pair the International Baccalaureate diploma programme with a student-centered Montessori approach that fosters independence in students and ownership of their education. At MHS, we see students as the individuals they are, and support them as they discover their path.

They found theirs. What will yours be?

Spring Open House
Tuesday, April 17th, 6:30 pm

Campus Chats
Tuesday, March 13th, 8:30 am & 10:00 am
Thursday, April 12th, 8:30 am & 10:00 am