Heights honors 10 alumni

Scott Worman

The Heights Schools Foundation and the CH-UH City School District inducted 10 new members into the Cleveland Heights High School Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame on May 4 in the high school’s newly renovated auditorium.

The 2018 inductees are Gail Rose Kane ’76, Tracy Schermer ’77, Lori Hermelin Bush ’74, Torah Klein ’82, Milton “Chip” Morris ’88, Sean Sullivan ’88, Christopher Young ’90, Jacques Evans ’93, and brothers Jason Kele ’06, and Travis Kele ’08. Nine of the 10 inductees were present for the ceremony; Young sent his remarks via video from San Francisco.

The ceremony proved emotional for the inductees, as well as the audience that listened to these successful alumni talk about what Heights has meant to them.

“Because of how special Heights is to me . . . it builds something in me that everything I do is for this city,” said a tear-filled Travis Kele, current NFL star and the youngest of the 10 inductees. “It sounds cliché, but I promise you every single thing that I do out there—when you see me dancing in the end zone, that’s Cleveland Heights right there.”

Nine of ten honored alumni were present for the ceremony (from left): Milton “Chip” Morris ’88, Lori Hermelin Bush ’74, Torah Klein ’82, Tracy Schermer ’77, Sean Sullivan ’88, Travis Kele ’08, Jason Kele ’06, Jacques Evans ’93, and Gail Rose Kane ’76.

Current Gearty Professional Development (elementary) School teacher and longtime Heights soccer coach Sean Sullivan inspired the audience with his story of perseverance in overcoming a cancer diagnosis.

“...the doctor who diagnosed me...”

V & E Hann gives furnace to CH resident

Joanne Burney

Verne & Ellsworth Hann Inc. selected Cleveland Heights resident Ardyce Daugherty to receive a free furnace and installation in the company’s second annual Helping Hann contest.

Earlier this year, the family-owned company solicited nominations from across the Greater Heights area for deserving people in need of a new furnace. The nominations were narrowed down to a list of five finalists, from which the winner was randomly selected.

Daugherty has been a Cleveland Heights resident since 1979. A single mother of four, and grandmother to seven, she is retired but recently took a part-time job to help her get it working intermittently. Her 50-year-old furnace stopped working during one of the worst storms of the past winter.

While a neighbor was able to help her get it working intermittently, Ardyce Daugherty with Chris Hann, co-owner of Verne & Ellsworth Hann.

Developers and city officials address

CH Charter Review Commission

Robert Brown

How does Cleveland Heights compare to other local communities in attracting development? How effective is the council-manager form of government in Cleveland Heights compared to governments led by a popularly elected mayor?

These were the two principal questions addressed by speakers at the city’s Charter Review Commission (CRC) meetings on May 3 and 17.

Developer Peter Rubin and architect Paul Volpe spoke at the May 3 meeting.

Rubin said that he considers Cleveland Heights to be a “post-maturity” city that now faces two choices. “One would be to manage decline,” he said, “and the other would be to create and execute a new vision, one that puts the community on a positive trajectory.”

Rubin cited the lack of swift action by the city in addressing the collapse of Severance Town Center as an example of the lack of vision and leadership in the current government.

Volpe agreed, saying that for a community like Cleveland Heights to prosper, it needs a vision and it needs collaboration in implementing that vision. In Cleveland Heights today, said Volpe, “We can’t seem to do that.”

With respect to a vision for the future of Cleveland Heights, Volpe said, “We should be looking inward...”

FutureHeights’ 2018 annual meeting is June 20

Emily Banson

On June 20, FutureHeights will present its 16th annual meeting in the common space in the Coventry building, 2843 Washington Blvd., where it has its offices.

FutureHeights, a nonprofit community development corporation, strives to engage people in their communities and to create a bright future for Cleveland Heights and University Heights residents.

This year’s meeting will discuss the current status of housing and development in Cleveland Heights, including its issues, challenges, and assets.

Then, the solution and the vision that FutureHeights has for the city and its residents will be presented, with help from keynote speaker Sally Martin.

Martin is a longtime resident of South Euclid, where she has lived with her family since 2001. She has served as housing director for the city of South Euclid since 2009. Her main duties are managing the post-maturity city that now faces two choices. 

“...overcoming a cancer diagnosis. ...”
10 Junes: Looking back on a decade of the Heights Observer

OPENING THE OBSERVER

Bob Rosenbaum

In June 2008, the nation was in the worst economic downturn since 1929, and the lead story in the third issue of the Heights Observer was a story about a group of residents who had responded to deep budget cuts by taking on the cost and labor to maintain hanging baskets and planters that decorated the Cedar-Fairmount gateway each summer. They weren’t alone in considering first impressions: A letter to the editor suggested using the long-vacant “Top of the Hill” parcel at Cedar Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard as a public gathering space, anchored by a well-lit all-weather fountain.

The same issue carried a report headlined “Coventry committee to board of education: Rent or raze.” Coventry Elementary School had been shuttered a year earlier, and the CH-UH school board was trying to decide what to do with it. Exactly three years later—June 2011—under the headline “New signs to the future for Coventry School,” the school district reported that nonprofit Ensemble Theatre and Family Connections had leased space in the building—where both remain today.

In June 2009, Melt Bar & Grilled announced it would open its second location (now one of six) at the intersection of Lee Road and Monetticello Boulevard to serve the “coolest, hippest, most addicted to all things delicious” in University Heights.

A year later, McDonald’s made news with plans to build a new restaurant on the Covington Farms Road/Cuyahoga Boulevard property in University Heights—ending a contentious effort by a different developer to use the site for a drive-through car wash.

After 66 years on Lee Road, Seitz-Agin Hardware closed in June 2011; the space was recouped six months later by the Wine Spot. At the same time, the CH-UH school board kicked off its massive overhaul of district school buildings with a “listening session” that only drew 16 members of the community. Getting more attention was the board’s decision to reject a bid by Mosdos Ohr Hatorah, an orthodox Jewish day school, to use the empty Millikin Elementary School.

By the following spring, Gentry Professional Development (elementary) School was on the chopping block as part of the CH-UH school board’s emerging facility overhaul, but the June 2012 issue reported on an effort by University Heights residents that ultimately saved it. Meanwhile, Mosdos Ohr Hatorah was still hoping to buy or lease Millikin Elementary School in a back-and-forth process that never came to fruition.

The lead story in June 2013 was an update that 18 CH households had been granted licenses to keep second chickens under a law approved in 2012. Meanwhile, the CH-UH school board was preparing to place a $534.8 million bond issue on the November ballot. Its passage cleared the way to rebuild Heights High.

A column in the June 2014 issue reported that more than 500 residents of Cleveland Heights’ North End squeezed into the Cleveland Heights Police Academy (the old fire station at North Park and Monticello Boulevard) to air grievances over the city’s “beleaguered” North End. And the CH-UH Hillside Metro System had arranged a series of LGBTQ-themed programs to celebrate Cleveland’s hosting of the International Gay Games.

The June 2015 issue reported on breaking on the two-year reconstruction of Heights High. Motorcars Honda was named Green Energy Ohio’s Business of the Year for its six million kilowatt solar canopy.

The June 2016 issue carried a story about the final interment ceremony at Lake View Cemetery for legendary disc jockey Alan Freed. The same issue noted the 100th anniversary of the CH-UH Public Library System, and Cleveland Heights’ request for proposals to develop the four-acre Top of the Hill site.

A year later, the June 2017 issue reported the city’s signing of a development agreement for that site with an Indianapolis firm, after efforts with a different developer had failed. And the former Coventry Elementary School was still making news. With the building fully occupied by non-profit community organizations (including Observer publisher FutureHeights), the school board decided it was the right moment to sell it. Ten months later, the 101-year-old CH-UH library took ownership of the property; now formally named Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Campus.

Cleveland Heights resident Bob Rosenbaum, a former member of the FutureHeights Board of Directors, is chair of the Heights Observer Advisory Committee, and is responsible for its advertising sales and market development. Contact him at brosenbaum@heightsobserver.org.

The Heights Observer is an ordinary newspaper, it is a nonprofit publica-
tion for residents of Cleveland Heights and University Heights.

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

If you wish to contribute to the publica-

tion, please write it on your own, or with friends, neighbors or colleagues. Our volunteer editors will make sure it’s ready to publish and contact you with any questions.

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

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

• For information about writing style, article length, etc., click on “Become an Observer” at the left. For questions that aren’t answered there, call the Heights Observer office at 216-521-4425 or e-mail editor@heightsobserver.org.

Articles to be considered for the July issue must be submitted by June 30.

We publish articles online as they come in—and still consider them for the next print issue. We also publish an e-newsletter each Tuesday.

Pothole frustration
To the Editor:

In January we accidentally drove our car through a pothole in Severance Circle. Two tires were damaged. I called two council members to make them aware of the need for repair. The second council member acted swiftly; the hole was patched.

The community safety issue ad- dress in June 2018; I submitted a petition to the city seeking repairs for the pothole. Two months later I received a claim for my pothole replacement. On March 29, I received a letter from the assistant law director that stated that “there investigation was complete, and they are not liable for the damages.” First, I said Cleveland Heights was not responsible for damages because of jurisdiction (that it was Cleveland Water’s respon-sibility); then he said it was because Ohio Code 754.24 states that “the city is not aware of a pothole, they are not responsible for any damages incurred.”

When I researched the code di-rec-tly, I found that Ohio Code 754.22 Section 3 states “Public subdivisions are liable for injury, death, or loss to persons on the real property of others, regardless of negligence in failure to keep public roads in repair and other negligent failure to remove obstructions from public roads, except that it is a full defense to that liability when a bridge within a municipal corporation is involved.”

When I called the law director to discuss this, he told me he did not have time for my call and had “more important things to do.”

I subsequently called the city manager, who repeated the juris-diction explanation, directing me to Cleveland Water even though both entities have clarified that this location is not their jurisdiction; Cleveland Water even provided evidence. When I reached out to the city council member, there was no response.

Potholes and car damage is an issue that I’m sure many residents are facing as we drive the streets of Cleveland Heights. I believe, I suspect that many residents also face a disappointing rate of confusion and frustration in dealing with our municipal government.

Danielle Costanzo
Cleveland Heights

Medusa Building is not part of Forest Hill
To the Editor:

I’m writing in response to Mike Real’s opinion piece in the May issue of the Heights Observer (“Forest Hill can be the next Tremont”).

The Medusa Building has nothing to do with the Family Home Owners (FHHO) association.

If Mike Real wants a spotlight on himself, and free publicity for his contracting business, let him take ads in the Observer rather than smear the very neighborhood he lives in. There are only a small number of residents who have drunk his venomous Kool-Aid. The rest are living peacefully as they have for years.

*continued on page 3*
Libraries are the true ‘third place’

Sheryl Banks

By now, most people have heard about the dismaying incident at a Philadelphia Starbucks, where two African-American men were arrested after the store manager called 911. Their offense? In a nutshell, waiting for a few minutes in the store for someone without buying anything. And asking to use the restroom.

Much of the media coverage contrasted the men’s treatment with the company’s stated desire to be a “third place”—somewhere other than home, work, or school where people feel welcome to spend time. Indeed, Starbucks’ website asserts that the stores are “A place for conversation and a sense of community. A third place between work and home.”

As an employee of a public library, I was struck by this assertion that a for-profit business could be that third place. You may be welcome to linger in a coffee shop, but you can’t linger for long without being expected to buy something. (And as this recent incident demonstrates, in some cases—depending on who you are—you’re not welcome to linger at all.) Its primary goal is profit, and there’s absolutely nothing wrong with that. That’s how a coffee shop stays in business. And for the record, we love our local coffee shops!

The timing of this conversation about public spaces and who is welcome in them has made the timing of the launch of our new library slogan—“Here for you, wherever you’re at in your life, and whenever you are”—much more meaningful to me. When we first wrote it, it did not seem as urgent as it does now. We know the slogan communicates something much more rare: a space that requires very little from people other than their needs.

Yes, members of our community pay taxes that in turn pay for our libraries. But when people walk through our doors, we don’t know who is a taxpayer and who isn’t. We don’t check at the door.

And yes, you need a library card to take materials out of the building, but not to use a computer, access Wi-Fi, read a paper or book, use the bathroom, get a drink of water, rest in a chair, or get out of the rain, the cold, the heat, or a stressful home environment.

Public libraries are the true “third place,” one of the few public spaces left where no one expects you to spend money. As one of our board members puts it, “Leave your wallet at home; just bring your library card.”

Heights Libraries is here for you, wherever you’re at in your life, and whoever you are.

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

If the Forest Hill Home Owners Inc. is a “volunteer-based social club,” as Reilly described it, so be it.

The association was founded on the premise that residents would—through cooperation, not coercion—maintain properties with care and discretion.

Mr. Reilly now owns 12 properties in Forest Hill, a number which itself devalues other properties, since there are transient occupants. There have been complaints that his properties are rented for limited periods of time, and his website states that five days is the minimum rental. Mr. Reilly makes no financial contributions to the association, while homeowner-residents typically contribute, voluntarily, at least $5 a year.

Mr. Reilly has disrupted FHHO business meetings, and made it impossible to advance, threatening officers and the association itself with lawsuits. At a recent meeting to which Reilly’s “reform caucus” was invited to state its views, two of its members called at the vice president for 90 minutes (violating the “non-harassment” policy, which was approved in 2016, defeating any progress for the meeting.

The Medusa Building is not within the confines of Forest Hill. If Reilly wants to purchase that property from Motorcars and develop it, it might make positive changes for the area, but just [talking about it], as he has for several years, will not make that happen; it is an issue entirely separate from the governance of Forest Hill properties.

Jan Milic
Cleveland Heights
when no one else could and saved my life was a Cleveland Heights High graduate," said Sullivan. "Heights High students and alumni are actively changing the community, the state, the nation, and even the world. And we all share a common bond. We have all walked the halls of this amazing school, with this amazing staff and an amazing community."

Each of the inductees was paired with a current Heights High student, who got to know the alumni and introduced them at the ceremony.

"It was a pleasure to talk with Mr. Young," said senior Jaylin Coleman. "His humility, his accomplishments, and his success are an inspiration to me and I'm sure an inspiration to all students at Cleveland Heights High School."

Teacher, attorney, judge and lifelong volunteer, Kane has argued before the Ohio Supreme Court and was appointed by Gov. George Voinovich to the Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court.

An officer in Vietnam, a teacher, a physician, and director of the Health and Counseling Center at Kenyon College, Klein has dedicated his career to giving back to his community.

Director of the internationally acclaimed Barnard College Center for Toddler Development, and associate professor of psychology, Klein has been dubbed the "Toddler Whisperer" for her insight and accomplishments in the subject of early childhood development.

CEO and president of NeuSpera Medical, a company at the forefront of bioelectric medicine, Morris is an inventor with 30 patents in the area of implantable medical devices.

Science and engineering specialist in the CH-UH district, founder of Heights United Soccer Academy and championship soccer coach, Sullivan has dedicated his career to giving back to his community. Sullivan's impact on the soccer community, and the Cleveland Heights High School football program are legendary. Sullivan was named Most Valuable Player at the NFL Pro Bowl in 2017.

In its 38th year in 2018, the Cleveland Heights High School Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame honors individuals for their outstanding accomplishments and service to their community. Since 1981, a total of 391 Heights High graduates have been inducted into the Hall of Fame.

The induction ceremony was followed by a private dinner in the Heights High cafeteria and then a public gathering at The Wine Spot.

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

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CH can do better with its garbage

Tom Diamond

As a new resident of Cleveland Heights but a real estate broker who has worked in areas from Sandusky to Solon, I get a pretty good idea of how each city differs from its neighbor.

The city of Cleveland Heights has a trash collection policy that is incredibly baffling to me. We throw our garbage bags on the tree lawn (do they still call it that?) and the animals pick at it for dinner leaving gaping holes in the bags which then are influenced by mother nature and—suddenly!—garbage everywhere!

In this day and age even Cleveland Heights knows it is best to use garbage cans. The use of modern garbage trucks is much less labor intensive, saving the city hundreds of thousands of dollars each year in payroll. Now I know towns like Cleveland Heights love to dole out jobs to the locals kids and saving jobs is taboo in high tax cities like this, but do we really need to have our garbage collected in such an arcane manner?

Using modern garbage lift trucks doesn’t just make things move along more quickly, it looks more community friendly when there are matching garbage cans on the lawns on garbage day. It keeps the animals out and the garbage in, and it discourages raccoon life. Now very few people love animals more than I, but feeding them just seems like a bad idea to me.

Let’s talk about identity theft. If the right kind of my personal material was left in a garbage bag and someone walking by sees an opportunity, they may get some credit card information or more out of my exposed garbage.

It is much less likely someone would go through cans to find personal information, and if they did it would be very obvious to the neighbors.

Let’s consider my back. Those little vertebrae that run up and down my spine would really appreciate me walking out a garbage can on wheels instead of carrying heavy garbage bags down the driveway to be dumped in view of everyone driving by.

I know the politicians need jobs for their nephews and nieces of a different name, and they want to keep as many garbage men on the job as possible, but can we please try to catch up with proactive cities like Cleveland and start using modern garbage cans and trucks?

Tom Diamond is a real estate broker and firefighter from Cleveland, and father of two.

Advertise in the Observer
What is a local issue?

Heights Observer June 1, 2018

Heights Council Member, Cheryl Stevens (who was absent on April 23) has what we will call the “Mary Dunbar Rule.”

Council Member Kabibil Seren, argued that spending on this issue would not be a productive use of council’s time. Jason Stein argued that spending on net neutrality, Council Member Dunbar initiated a discussion about recent discussions by the Cleveland Heights City Council got us thinking about this question.

Cleveland Heights City Council, like others, is often asked to take a stand on a state or national issue by passing a resolution. At the Committee of the Whole meeting on April 23, Council President Carol Roe initiated a discussion about requests for council to introduce resolutions on several such issues, including net neutrality and gun safety.

Leading off the discussion on net neutrality, Council Member Jason Stein argued that spending time on this issue would not be a productive use of council’s time. To justify his position, he invoked what we will call the “Mary Dunbar Rule.”

Council Member Dunbar (who was absent on April 23) has expressed strong feelings about what is and is not the purview of a city council. She has periodically declined to support certain resolutions, stating, “I feel I was elected to work on local issues, which are things like sewers, roads, parks and recreation.” In a recent phone call, she further explained her position to us, saying, “I believe I shouldn’t take a stand on national matters because I’m not well informed on those issues and don’t have time to be, because there’s so much to do at the local level. I feel Cleveland Heights citizens should take their concerns about state and national issues to those we have elected at those levels, who can do something about them.

In the case of net neutrality, Council Member Cheryl Stephens countered Stein by pointing out that it’s loss would harm Cleveland Heights’ many lower income residents. Council, she implied, has a duty to represent the interests of its constituents when a change in national policy will profoundly affect their lives.

Council Member Kabibil Seren added that maintaining net neutrality could be an important justification for Cleveland Heights to pursue the option of municipal broadband in the future.

In the end, with no consensus in favor of action, that subject was dropped. The discussion on gun safety ended differently. The CH-UH Board of Education had requested passage of this resolution. (The net neutrality resolution request had come from residents.) This could have been a factor. Council Member Michael Ungar stated fervently that the United States is experiencing a crisis with respect to gun violence, which directly affects Cleveland Heights residents. Although Ungar said he generally would like to bow to the Mary Dunbar Rule, he felt matters were serious enough to warrant council advocacy on gun safety.

Whether moved by Ungar’s persuasive powers or by their own feelings about the prevalence and danger of guns, council members agreed to move ahead. The result was “RESOLUTION NO. 41-2018 (SMS). A Resolution urging state and federal governments to enact common sense gun laws and mental health legislation to help reduce gun violence,” introduced at the May 7 council meeting. It passed unanimously on first reading. With Dunbar breaking her own “rule” to join her colleagues in voting for it.

We agree with Dunbar that citizens have a responsibility to contact their state and federal representatives on issues of importance to them; we can also appreciate the fact that our council members have plenty to keep them busy. But the results of many state and federal policies play out at the local level, affecting the residents those council members are supposed to represent and serve.

It is through resolutions like those discussed above that municipal governments—the governmental bodies closest to the grassroots—can represent their constituents in the great domestic policy debates of our time.

Ultimately no single rule or principle will suffice in every circumstance. We expect—and hope—that council will continue to review requests for resolutions case by case.

Carla Rautenberg is an activist and a lifelong Cleveland Heights resident. Deborah Van Klief is a musician and writer, who has lived in Cleveland Heights for most of her life. Contact them at heightsdemocracy@gmail.com.
Analyzing median teacher salaries

Art Klein

In late April, Patrick O’Donnell, education writer for the Plain Dealer, wrote an article comparing median teacher salaries around the state. He noted the disparity in average and median salary among districts statewide, as well as the large discrepancies among districts in our region.

Overall, school districts in Northeast Ohio pay higher salaries than much of the rest of the state.

O’Donnell pointed out several other trends, as well. Among them are differences between urban and suburban districts, career/tech and traditional schools, and between public and charter schools.

O’Donnell noted that CH-UH ranks 5th in the state for median teacher salary, around $84,538. There are several things to note about this statistic. The teacher salary schedule for our district has a base pay of $43,011, for a teacher in his or her first year who holds a bachelor’s degree.

Salary increases are based on number of years teaching plus additional education. For example, a teacher with four years experience and a master’s degree earns $50,452. A teacher at the top of the CH-UH salary schedule—14 years experience and a doctorate—earns $92,818.

Salary schedules across Cuyahoga County have many similarities. A recent analysis shows that the CH-UH starting salary is $2,000 higher than the average starting salary among 31 districts in Cuyahoga County, with 17 of those districts having starting salaries between $40K and $45K.

At a random point, say 11 years experience and a master’s degree, CH-UH still lands in the upper middle range, at $76,904, in which 16 districts pay their teachers between $70K and $80K.

This tells me that our salary schedule is competitive, but not the highest.

CH-UH teachers reach the median salary when they have 12 years experience and 30 hours of graduate credit after a master’s degree (or 13 years experience with 10 hours of graduate credit). Although I was somewhat astounded by our district’s median salary figure, Scott Gainer, the district’s chief financial officer, confirmed it.

When I looked at the longevity of our faculty, I realized that more than half of our teachers have been working in the profession at least 13 years. In other words, a high median salary shows more about the experience of our teachers than it does about the salary schedule.

I do not know what prompted O’Donnell to write an article comparing median teacher salaries in the state, but without analyzing longevity, additional education credits, and a host of other factors, it doesn’t tell us much more than the salary of a teacher in the middle of the seniority and education pack.

Last fall, I published two demographics of our entire membership. One showed that out of 254 members, 15 are in their 20s, and 56 are at least 60.

The other showed that 204 members have less than 10 years experience in the district, 222 have 10–19 years, 90 have 20–29 years, and eight had at least 30 years.

To me, this kind of information makes it both more useful and informative when analyzing salary trends.

Art Klein is a lifelong community member, math teacher at Cleveland Heights High School, and president of the Cleveland Heights Teachers Union.
City and school leaders work together toward school ranking reform

On April 16, Cleveland Heights City Council passed a resolution calling for the Ohio General Assembly to stop ranking schools based on state test results. The resolution calls for a report card that “more accurately measures how public schools are fulfilling their primary role of developing productive citizens.”

The current system combines aggregated standardized test results, complicated growth measures and graduation rates to create an A-to-F grade for school districts and individual schools. This quick and dirty system defines winners and losers but provides no real insight into the quality of opportunity or learning.

The preoccupation with tests takes the life out of learning. The emphasis on judgment contributes to the failed-education narrative and does not translate into citizenship skills.

The worst thing about this system is that it discriminates. It ignores the reality that, as Daniel Koretz noted in The Testing Charade: Pretending to Make Schools Better, “Test scores don’t measure the quality of schools but rather reflect the aggregate economic level of a school system’s families.”

The state report card advantages white middle-class communities. They get an A grade much more frequently than racially diverse communities or those with concentrations of children living in poverty. The current system imposes a lockstep expectation that all children have the same opportunity and should thus earn the same arbitrarily set test score.

I was happy to witness the council vote on the resolution. It passed without fireworks or even comment. It was an important public statement of opposition to destructive policy, and a moment of unity for the elected officials representing our schools and our city government. Council members understand, as Mayor Carol Roe explained, “The city and the schools are interdependent. The schools are an important community asset. We are aware that public schools are under attack. It’s devastating. We need to speak up.”

The resolution notes that ranking school districts is “harmful to communities, particularly racially and economically diverse communities.” The grade has a negative impact on perceptions of the quality of a neighborhood. The grade “greatly influence neighborhood choices for families and businesses, and most of all send a negative message to education profession- als, families and students about the perceived value of their educational experience.” They nailed it!

Starting in 1964, when housing discrimination was still legal, determined white residents of Cleveland Heights fought realtors who had the power to discriminate and control who could live in their community. Because of their efforts and courageous African Americans who were willing to risk moving to a white community, Cleveland Heights became racially diverse. Integration has endured despite the reality that America is more segregated today than it was when activists first took up the cause of fair housing.

Our diversity is both a powerful asset and a source of vulnerability. Enduring racism means too many public policies favor all-white and middle-class communities. Ohio’s school accountability system is a heartbreaking case in point.

We are vulnerable. Today, the state legislature, like realtors in the past, can destroy integrated communities. This profound power demands a change in policy for the benefit of stable communities.

Education is complicated and quality is a much richer idea than can ever be measured by a standardized test. This deeply flawed system has consequences.

The fact that CH City Council felt compelled to take a position reflects a growing appreciation, beyond the education community, of the harm caused by current education policy: The Cleveland Heights resolution is modeled after one passed last year in Lyndhurst.

I take some hope in the fact that a state board of education committee is reviewing the report card. Additionally, Rep. Mike Duffey (R-Worthington) has introduced H.B. 390, which calls for a new approach that would rely less on test scores. Increased vigilance by all voices will be necessary for this new interest in correction to succeed.

Cuyahoga County’s school superintendents and city councils have networks that meet to share common concerns. I hope our local leaders will take the next step and encourage their peers to demand change. It’s time for it!

Here at home, we can be glad that the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education and the Cleveland Heights City Council have three dates on their calendars to continue working together. One agenda item, according to board president Jim Poich, is to define together just what kind of information can illuminate our community’s understanding of the quality of education in our district.

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

APRIL 16, 2018

Present were Mayor Michael D. Brennan, Vice Mayor Susan Pardee, and council members Pamela Cameron, John Roch, Steve Sims, Michele Weiss and Mark Wiseman. Councilman Phillip Ertl was absent. Also present were Luke McConnell, law director; Michael Frederick, interim finance director; and Kelly Thomas, clerk of council. The meeting was held from 7 p.m. to 8:50 p.m., at which time council moved to executive session.

Interim finance director

Mayor Brennan explained that the city’s finances are maintained on a cash accounting basis during the year and are then converted to GAAP format for the annual outside audit. Due to accounting problems, the data was not ready to be converted. The faulty process had begun prior to William Sheehan’s arrival as finance director, but he continued it. He has now stepped down and Michael Frederick, the only other person in the city’s finance department, has been promoted to interim finance director and is working quickly to get the city’s finances into proper order for both the audit and the accounting of all subsequent revenues and expenditures.

Rental properties regulation

Council approved a new regulation on one- and two-family rental properties, requiring the city to be convinced that property taxes in order to obtain or keep rental permits. This will not impact the tenants.

New emergency rescue equipment

Once again, University Hospitals has donated a new lifeguard defibrillator and a Lucas device for providing CPR. The EMS monitors and defibrillators were from the early 2000s and needed to be replaced. Chief Perko noted that someone loses a heart attack every 40 seconds in the U.S., and a strong partnership between hospitals, emergency transport and community members. This new equipment will help to make the entire Heights area “heart safe.”

Tree-pruning seminar

Service Director Pokorny reported that the tree-pruning seminar video will be posted online shortly.

Rental permits

Councilman Wiseman reported on behalf of the Building Committee that there are 850 rental permits in the city but a final recommendation should be made for new construction on existing homes. The committee feels it would be good for the city, but a final recommendation should be ready within the next six months.

City hall elevators and chair lifts

City hall elevators and chair lifts are in need of replacement. Chief Perko noted that defibrillators were from the early 2000s and needed to be replaced. Chief Perko reported that someone has a heart attack every 40 seconds in the U.S., and a strong partnership between hospitals, emergency transport and community members. This new equipment will help to make the entire Heights area “heart safe.”

Pay as you go

Rental permits

Council approved a one-year extension on a solid-waste service contract with BF of Ohio. The city currently spends $120,000 to $130,000 per year on solid-waste disposal.

Water line replacement

Council authorized a $1,294,434 contract for the 2018 Groveland and Washington water line replacement project. Project costs will be fully funded back through the City of Cleveland Water Department.

Community policing

Interim Police Chief Dzinut Rogers reported that the police department has begun formalizing the office of community policing.

Leaf and brush pickup

Service Director Pokorny said that curbside debris in leaf bags and tie and bundle brush. Going forward, residents must place lawn debris in leaf bags and tie and bundle brush.

City audit extension

Due to accounting problems, the data was not ready to be converted. The faulty process had begun prior to William Sheehan’s arrival as finance director, but he continued it. He has now stepped down and Michael Frederick, the only other person in the city’s finance department, has been promoted to interim finance director and is working quickly to get the city’s finances into proper order for both the audit and the accounting of all subsequent revenues and expenditures.

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Cleveland Heights City Council
Meeting highlights
APRIL 16, 2018

Council members present were Mayor Carol Roe, Vice Mayor Melissa Yasenir, Cheryl L. Stephens, Mary Dunbar, Jason Stein, and Kahil Sein. Michael N. Ungar was absent. The meeting was called to order at 7:32 p.m. and adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Public comments
Post laureate Rachel Bernstein, executive director of Heights Arts, and Christine Howey, who just completed her two-year term as post laureate of Cleveland Heights, introduced the new post laureate, Donna McClendon. McClendon read a poem.

Complete and Green Street Policy
Howard Maier, Mark Lefkowitz and Sam Bell, members of the Transportation Advisory Committee, spoke in favor of the city’s proposed Complete and Green Street Policy, citing its benefits to the environment (and business) by creating a safer and equitable approach for all modes of transportation. They thanked city staff and Council Member Dunbar for (their) involvement and assistance in drafting the policy, which will elevate Cleveland Heights as a model of green infrastructure. Later in the meeting, Council had the first reading of the policy, and will take action at the next meeting.

City’s strategic plan
City Manager Tanisha Briley updated council on progress on the city’s strategic plan. The city is using Envisio software to track the vast number of action steps tied to the plan’s 10 visions and their subgoals. A dashboard that summarizes progress in a visual format will be available by the next reporting period. She focused on accomplishments related to a few goals within each of the 10 vision areas.

School rankings
Council approved a resolution urging the state and the Ohio Department of Education to revise the existing system for ranking schools. The position was crafted in cooperation with the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education.

Bond sale
Council approved selling bonds in the amount of $440,000 to pay for equipment needed for the city’s sewer division.

Mayor Roe’s report
Mayor Roe expressed address about the shooting on Noble Road and invited anyone who wanted more information to attend the weekly community meeting with the chief of police that is held on Thursdays at 6 p.m.

LWV Observer: Susie Koesser

May 7, 2018

Council members present were Mayor Carol Roe, Vice Mayor Melissa Yasenir, Mary Dunbar, Kahil Sein, Jason Stein, Cheryl L. Stephens and Michael N. Ungar. The meeting lasted from 7:33 p.m. to 8:25 p.m.

Sanitary sewer overflow control
Council approved a second amendment to the agreement with Wade Tim Inc. of Ohio for professional engineering services relating to the sanitary sewer overflow control project and the EPA Consent Decree, for an amount not to exceed 2,100,000. Council Member Ungar noted that council will explore creating a professional oversight project manager due to the expense.

Street resurfacing
In cooperation with Cuyahoga County, the city will improve Warrensville Center Road from Mayfield Road to Noble Road, and Cedar Glen Parkway from Euclid Heights Boulevard to the west corporation line. The county will contribute 50 percent of the cost, up to $250,000; the anticipated cost is $581,000.

Gun laws
Council passed a resolution urging state and federal governments to enact common-sense gun laws and mental health legislation to help reduce gun violence, including the following provisions:
• Ban the sale of assault-style firearms.
• Raise the minimum age to purchase firearms to 21.
• Ban high-capacity magazines and bump stocks.
• Require universal background checks that include relevant mental health information and previous interactions with the law.
• Ensure a complete universal database of those banned from purchasing firearms.
• Close the private sale and gun show loophole that waives the necessity of background checks.
• Provide funding for enhanced mental health services and substance abuse treatment so that all individuals have sufficient access to such services.

Several members commented in favor of this and pointed out that adoption was favored by the school district and citizens.

Complete and Green Street Policy
Council approved these policies, which address the livability and environmental needs of Cleveland Heights with multiple streets that better accommodate walkers, cyclists, and public transportation, while reducing the environmental impact of transportation infrastructure by incorporating green infrastructure strategies to reduce waste, stormwater runoff and energy consumption.

Caledonia Park playground
Council approved an agreement with Service Supply Ltd. Inc. to design and install a new playground at Caledonia Park for $100,000. Council Member Stephens explained that Barbara Boyd, former council member, had championed a park for the north end of the city and had aggregated land from East Cleveland and private owners to make the park. It will be upgraded and dedicated to Boyd.

Immigration Task Force
Three members will be chosen soon for the Immigration Task Force, from the 18 applications received. This group will consider how to implement Cleveland Heights as a welcoming city.

LWV Observer: Blanche Velancy

Look for earlier and often expanded postings of meeting summaries on www.heightsobserver.org. See disclaimer on page 8.

futureHeights continued from page 1

In addition, Martin helps manage the city’s marketing and communications initiatives, and serves on the region’s Vacant and Abandoned Property Action Council, where she chairs the diligent tax committee, and has co-authored papers and studies on housing policy issues. She currently serves as the chair of executive committee for the Greater Cleveland Reinvestment Coalition.

FutureHeights
Martin has a Bachelor of Science from the University of Florida College of Journalism and Communication.

The event is free and open to the public, but reservations are required. For more information and to RSVP, visit www.futureheights.org or call 216-320-1423.

Emily Benson is a summer intern at FutureHeights and an incoming sophomore at Loyola University in Chicago.

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HANN continued from page 1

ently, she was left without heat on many nights.

Daughterly said she is thank-ful to Verne & Ellsworth Hann for offering the furnace giveaway, and added that it couldn’t have come at a better time.

The furnace installation includes materials and labor, and is valued at approximately $1,000.

Verne & Ellsworth Hann, a fifth-generation family-owned company, created the Helping Hann contest to assist people in need. Owned and operated by broth-ers Bill and Chris Hann, the HVAC and plumbing company has served Cleveland Heights and the surrounding areas for more than 63 years.

“We want to share our good fortune by giving back to the com-munity that’s been good to our family all these years,” Chris Hann said. The Helping-Hann free fur-nace contest is the highlight of the company’s year. We are grateful to provide heat for someone in need and look forward to continuing the tradition.”

Verne & Ellsworth Hann is located in Cleveland Heights at 2026 Lee Road.

Joanne Burney is an employee of Verne & Ellsworth Hann.

Advertise in the Observer
Dewey’s Decimators again win RH Bee

The 27th annual Reaching Heights Adult Community Spelling Bee went eight rounds on April 18, on the Heights High auditorium stage. Dewey’s Decimators, representing the Cleveland Heights Observer June 1, 2018     www.heightsobserver.org

Heights, University Heights and South Euclid; A Mindful Approach; South African Journeys; Bluegrass sundays; and the Girl Scouts of North East Ohio competed this year. Steve Presser was the Bee’s master of ceremonies for the 23rd year. Cynthia Booker, Digital Video & Television Production instructor at Heights High, served as pronouncer, and Steve Titchenal projected the words for the audience, for the 25th year.

Nancy Levin, director of Heights Libraries, Alisa Lawson-McKinnie, 11th-grade principal at Heights High, and Robert Swaggard, director of curriculum and instruction for the CH-UH City School District, were judges.

Team sponsors included two groups of local Jazzercisers, and many individuals, including Reaching Heights Spelling Bee founder Donalene Poduska; former Cleveland Heights Council Member Nancy Dietrich, who celebrated her 26th year as a speller; and members of a Heights alumni team, The Comeback Kids. Additional sponsors included board of education members, mayors, city council members, Cleveland Heights city staff, Friends of the Heights Libraries, Squire Patton Boggs LLC, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Forest Hill Church, and the PTAs of Garey, Noble, Fairfax and Roxboro elementary schools, and Heights Middle School.

Reaching Heights is grateful to the school district for use of space in Heights High and for the services provided by the stage crew and custodial staff. It also thanks the local businesses that provided food, raffle items, sponsorship ads, and winners’ prizes, including Stone Oven, Zagaria’s Marketplace, Whole Foods, Cleveland Cinemas, The Fairmount, Buffalo Wild Wings, Tommy’s, For Goodness Cakes, Pizza BOGO, Atma Center, Family Connections, Ensemble Theatre, Zoma Ethiopian Restaurant, Cleveland iPhone Repair, Heights Dental Group, New Heights Grill, Lake Erie Ink, State Farm Agent Betty Warner, Cleveland Running Company, Verne & Ellsworth Hann, and Artful.

Reaching Heights is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to mobilize community resources to foster highly valued public schools that provide all Cleveland Heights-University Heights students a successful education. For more information, visit www.reachingheights.org or call 216-932-5110. Krista Hawthorne is the executive director of Reaching Heights.
Bhutanese refugees make a home in Cleveland Heights

W. Dennis Keating

Recently, Cleveland Heights City Council approved formation of an Immigration Task Force.

Some residents may be unaware that Cleveland Heights is home to refugees from Bhutan, who live primarily in the Noble Neighborhood Branch. Bhutanese refugees have also relocated to several other eastern suburbs, including Lyndhurst, Mayfield Heights, Richmond Heights and South Euclid.

Bhutan is a small country in the Himalayas, between India and China. In the 1990s, Bhutan stripped the minority Bhutanese (Nepali-speaking and largely Hindu in majority Buddhist Bhutan) of their citizenship, and more than 1 million were exiled to refugee camps run by the United Nations in neighboring Nepal.

Beginning in 2007, the U.N.’s refugee agency arranged for an international resettlement program assisted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The United States agreed to accept more than 60,000.

Some began arriving in Cleveland in 2008, and were assisted by several organizations, including Cleveland Catholic Charity’s Migration & Refugee Services, the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, and US Together (in Cleveland Heights).

Immigrants, and US Together (in Building Hope in the City, the Bhutanese Community of Greater Cleveland nonprofit organization, Sewa International USA (a Self-Sufficiency Department.

Sewa International USA (a Hindu charity) has started offering tutoring classes, and the Bhutanese community itself has established a Bhutanese Community of Greater Cleveland nonprofit organization. Its volunteers are teaching Nepali language classes. Mostly farmers in Bhutan, these refugees have found work in a variety of occupations.

W. Dennis Keating is professor emeritus at the Levin College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State University. He is a longtime Cleveland Heights resident. A member of the FutureHeights board, he serves on the Planning & Development Committee.

Cleveland Sight Center; cleaned up the woods around Dugway Brook; prepared care packages for students away at college; sang hymns with the residents of Judson Park; and learned about the repair process — adding pieces to the wall, as they would in their own home, including ceramic tile and grout, drywall, flooring and paint. Participants will also learn how to repair their old damaged screens, glass replacement, glazing and sash-cord repair. Hands-on experience with a circular saw, miter saw, cordless drill, spline tools, wet saw, tile cutter and many other tools will be the most exciting part of the experience.

David Brock is the education and outreach coordinator for the Home Repair Resource Center.

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CH’s Karen Jaffe receives Parkinson’s Visionary Award

Karen Hess

On April 16, Cleveland Heights resident Karen Jaffe received the 2018 InMotion Parkinson’s Visionary Award, presented biennially to an individual or family that has shown excellence in the Parkinson’s community by championing the fight against Parkinson’s disease through advocacy, research, volunteerism, or financial support. The award was presented at “More than Motion, a Visionary Event” on April 16, at Jones Day in Cleveland. The sold-out event attracted more than 250 attendees and raised more than $85,000 (net).

Karen Hess is an InMotion board member.

Disciples Christian Church hosts free monthly dinners for community

Pat Hartmann

Disciples Christian Church in Cleveland Heights is a diverse congregation that welcomes all. Once a month, its members host and serve a free community meal to all area residents and friends. Prepared by church members, the dinner is served restaurant-style, on tables decorated with cloths and centerpieces. Such community meals have been offered at the church for about 10 years. The dinner is served on the last Thursday of each month, from 5 to 6:30 p.m. The meals feature a homemade seasonal menu, including lemonade or coffee, and dessert.

The church has hosted holiday-themed dinners, as well as child-friendly options. The June dinner will be served on Thursday, June 28.

Disciples Christian Church is located at 3565 Mayfield Road, at the corner of Yellowstone Road, across from Severance Town Center.

For more information about the community meal or the church, call the church office at 216-382-5344.

Pat Hartmann is a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights who has lived in its Noble and Cedar Lee neighborhoods.

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