Four Coventry shops celebrate milestone anniversaries

Shari Nacson

On Sept. 29, four beloved Coventry merchants—Record Revolution, Passport to Peru, Mac’s Backs and Attenson’s Antiques—will, together, celebrate milestone anniversaries in the popular Cleveland Heights shopping district. The street will be abuzz from noon to 6 p.m. that Saturday, with musicians, face painting, balloon twisting, tarot card readings, origami book-making, in-store discounts, and more. All of the businesses will offer specials on that day, and some will offer ongoing sales or promotions.

Established by Peter Schlewin, Record Revolution is a Midwest hub of counter-cultural lifestyle. Celebrating 50 years of business, the shop is one of the nation’s oldest independent record stores. Originally filling three full storefronts, the shop’s footprint downsized in 2007. Current owner Rob Pryor noted that the business is known for its diverse and unique product base—ranging from collectible vinyl and posters to clothing, incense and alternative medicines. The shop continues to purchase records, welcoming selections in rock, jazz, R&B, punk, reggae, and hard salsas.

Record Revolution’s lineage includes legendary record releases and the basement launch of Alternative Press magazine. Pryor grew up in the Heights, and said he always knew he wanted to do something in music. The Rox El, Rox Middle and CHHS alum now lives two blocks from the shop. “I am invested in this community,” Pryor said.

Sept. 29 specials: 10 percent off all records on regular-priced items, in-store discounts and specials, including legendary record releases and the basement launch of Alternative Press magazine.

Celebrating Coventry milestones together, from left: Suzanne DeGaetano, James McSherry of Mac’s Backs; Stuart Attenson, Christina Attenson of Attenson’s Antiques; Robert Laird, Ann Oswald-Laird of Passport to Peru; and Rob Pryor of Record Revolution.

Robert Brown

“Total shock” was the reaction of Mac’s Backs’ co-owner and manager Suzanne DeGaetano upon learning that she had been awarded a 2018 Cleveland Arts Prize. “I don’t deserve it,” was her next thought. The Arts Prize trustees apparently disagreed, explaining in a statement their decision to award the 2018 Martha Joseph Prize to DeGaetano.

“Within the Cleveland arts community, she has established herself as a patron saint among emerging and seasoned poets, writers and artists. She knows most by name. Her generosity and commitment to Northeast Ohio’s literary community knows no bounds.”

“I think of the award as one that honors the local writers whose books we sell at Mac’s Backs,” said DeGaetano. The Cleveland Arts Prize, established in 1960 by the Women’s City League, was awarded to DeGaetano in recognition of her contributions to Cleveland’s literary arts, her community involvement and her commitment to emerging poets and artists.

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Drucker is new UH economic development director

Jessica Schantz

In a July 31 press release, Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan announced that Susan Drucker, former two-term mayor of Solon, had accepted the position of economic development director for the city of University Heights.

During her tenure in Solon, Drucker facilitated the redevelopment on the Solon Village Shopping Center—including bringing the first Market District Giant Eagle to Cuyahoga County—and the expansion of the Nestle Global Research and Development Center. Drucker, along with Solon’s city council, spearheaded the 2011 rezoning initiative that helped Nestle expand its research facility.

Drucker served on the Cuyahoga County Economic Development Commission and the Mayors and Managers Economic Development Committee. Since leaving office, she has worked as a business management consultant and served on the county’s Charter Review Commission.

According to the mayor’s office, Drucker’s experience includes working with developers who may have an interest in University Heights and its commercial districts and

Heights Libraries’ programs will explore refugee experience

Jay Rosen

This fall, Heights Libraries will explore the experiences of refugees around the world in On The Same Page, a communitywide initiative aimed at fostering conversations through a shared reading experience.

On The Same Page will feature a series of community events, book and film discussions, and related programs aimed at raising awareness of the global refugee crisis and celebrating the cultures and contributions of Northeast Ohio’s refugee population.

Due in large part to war, climate change, and other conflicts, the world is currently experiencing the highest level of displacement on record. Cleveland alone receives approximately 500–700 refugees each year, primarily from Bhutan, Burma, Somalia and Iraq. According to the Refugee Services Collaborative of Greater Cleveland, these individuals face a number of barriers upon arriving in America, including “unfamiliar language, customs, systems, technology, food, climate,” and other obstacles.

With this in mind, Heights Libraries’ On The Same Page initiative will spark discussions on the plight of refugees and offer a space for local refugees to share their experiences and aspects of their native cultures. Programs will begin in early September and run through the end of November.
Letters Policy  
The Heights Observer welcomes letters to the editor. They must be submitted electronically, citing with the sender’s name, phone number and e-mail address, to: www.heightsobserver.org/members.

Information about the Heights Observer

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

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

Individuals throughout the community decide what stories they want to write, then submit them for publication in the Heights Observer. Cleveland Heights or University Heights is welcome to contribute regularly, occasionally or even once.

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

If you’re writing a news article, it should be clear and factual. If you want to express an opinion, submit it as a letter to the editor or an opinion piece. Either way, make sure it’s 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 216-401-9342 or e-mail info@heightsobserver.org.

Was the CRC process democratic one?

To the Editor:

The Cleveland Heights Charter Review Commission (CRC) had a meeting on June 21. I believe it was at that meeting that the decision was made to keep our city’s manager form of government.

It was published in the Heights Observer that, at a meeting in April, 35% of the people who attended indicated that they were in favor of changing to an elected mayor, while 35% favored staying with our current city manager form of government.

In an online survey, the CRC found that 95% people favored changing to an elected mayor form of government, while 16% favored our current system.

It appears that the majority does not rule, as the CRC elected to keep the current form of government. What, then, was the point of having a CRC and asking the public for opinions?

Richard A. Hollis
Cleveland Heights

Reduce, reuse and recycle CH trash

To the Editor:

Residents have submitted different opinions on trash collection to the Observer recently. I agree with Tom Diamond that we can do better.

As a dog walker, I am up close and personal with trash. It’s not a pretty site. Trash bags are ripped open every single day by cats, possums, skunks, raccoons and rats. Our hard-working trash collectors do not take up the mess, and to make matters worse, neither do some residents.

continued on page 3
A well-defined brand can enhance a city’s image

Mary Trupo

Each of us is passionate about our community and committed to sharing the story of what makes Cleveland Heights such a wonderful place (in which) to live, work, eat, shop and play. Developing clear messaging and engaging graphics will help shape our conversation and enhance our ability to clearly communicate who Cleveland Heights is and what it offers.

The city made the strategic decision to invest in discovering and defining the brand of Cleveland Heights and establishing new tools and resources to help effectively promote the city brand to others.

A brand is much more than a logo or tag line. It is the DNA of the city and speaks to what Cleveland Heights stands for and what it offers visitors, business owners and residents alike. By discovering and defining the brand, the foundation for tools and resources will be developed to help us effectively promote this unique community to prospective residents and businesses, current residents and visitors.

Having a unified brand voice for our community is essential to its long-term growth and success. It promotes overall economic vitality, community pride, and can attract more visitors to our unique shops and restaurants. In order to successfully define or refresh the city’s brand outreach to our community, seeking [its] input and opinions is essential. As such, the city has hired an experienced branding company to conduct focus groups, one-on-one meetings, on-the-street interviews and a citywide survey.

The city launched this initiative on July 31 with a brand steering committee meeting. The steering committee comprises business and community leaders, residents and city staff, and will help guide the branding initiative from start to completion. The research component of the initiative is expected to take around six weeks, with the entire effort expected to last up to six or seven months.

The city firmly believes this initiative is a smart, cost-effective investment from which a significant return is anticipated:

• Enhancing the image of the community as a more desirable location in which to live, work, visit and play;
• Increasing resident pride and engagement around a consistent brand identity;
• Improving community image to increase demand for housing and increase property values;
• Enhancing destination attractiveness to visitors to drive spending in our restaurants, pubs, retail stores, etc.;
• Enhancing destination attractiveness to businesses to drive economic development.

The citywide survey will be available in the coming weeks, and the link to the survey will be shared on the city’s website, www.clevelandheights.com, as well as on Facebook, Twitter and NextDoor, and on a newly created branding website—www.clevelandheightsbrand.com. You can visit right now to learn more about this initiative and to sign up to receive the survey.

Mary Trupo is the director of communications and public engagement for the city of Cleveland Heights.

Garbage sits on tree lawns indefinitely. Plastics find their way to the sewers and into the lakes. Garbage finds its way into the sewers. Plastics find their way to the sewers and into the lakes. Garbage finds its way into the sewers. I blame residents who put out trash the night before; I blame the cats, possums, skunks, raccoons and rats who take advantage of the free buffet; I blame the trash collectors and residents who do not clean up the trash; or I can do better.

I urge our city officials to find a better way. I implore my fellow residents to manage their trash better, and to reduce, reuse, and recycle. We are a smart, progressive city. We can figure this out.

Peggy Spaeth

CH is a city of choice

To the Editor:

I read that Cleveland Heights will start a branding campaign, and I think I have a good tagline: City of Choice. Starting with the fact that many residents and newcomers make an active choice to live here (regardless of the high taxes), others default to more generic choices. Entertainment and food choices. Housing choices. Religious home, both K-12 and college. Lifestyle choices—private, public, parochial and etc.; School and education choices. As such, the research component of the initiative is expected to take around six months, with the entire effort expected to last up to six or seven months.

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Mary Trupo is the director of communications and public engagement for the city of Cleveland Heights.
Some things take time

Carlo Raustenberg and Deborah Van Kleef

On the evening of July 9, Loly the Trolley threaded its way through Cleveland Heights’ Noble neighborhood, stopping every few minutes in front of a vacant and dilapidated house. The trolley’s passengers were not tourists. They were Cleveland Heights City Council members and staff, hosted by Greater Cleveland Congregations (GCC), an ecumenical social justice organization.

GCC determined in 2016 that “ongoing decay of many Cleveland Heights houses and buildings” was one of the “most pressing issues” facing our city. Now the organization was highlighting 19 problem properties in the north end of town. GCC members wanted officials to see the peeling paint, sagging steps, missing shingles, listing garages, piles of trash, uncut grass and overgrown shrubbery—unmistakable signs of blight.

Next, they wanted the city to act. While GCC suggested some 30 possible measures, high on the list was legislation mandating that when a bank forecloses it must deposit a bond with the city to ensure the upkeep of the vacant property.

Initiated in Springfield, Mass., in 2001, foreclosure bond legislation reached Ohio in 2013, beginning in Youngstown. Canton followed in 2015, to be joined later by Massillon, Warren and Lorain. As Youngstown was implementing its legislation, a group of Cleveland Heights residents were researching the same remedy. In October 2013, 10 residents, joined by Council Member Cheryl Stephens and Fran Mentch, met to discuss similar legislation for Cleveland Heights. Encouraged by Stephens and Coryell, the group set its sights on passage within three to six months.

Unfortunately, then-Housing Director Allan Ungar and then-Mayor Dennis Wilcox dismissed the foreclosure bond concept out-of-hand. They assumed it would cause banks to refuse loans to prospective Cleveland Heights homebuyers. It seemed the idea was dead, but in 2015 Council Member Kahlil Seren asked the law department to draft a foreclosure bond ordinance. In March 2018, tired of waiting, he decided to write the legislation himself. Mayor Carol Roe assigned the issue to the Housing and Transportation Committee, chaired by Council Member Mary Dunbar.

At a committee hearing a few weeks later, Housing Director Allan Butler, like his predecessor, opposed the legislation out of concern for how banks might react.

In response, Stephens pulled out her phone and gave Butler three contacts at local banks. Ultimately, he reported, the bankers all said foreclosure bonds would not affect their institutions’ loan underwriting practices.

Meanwhile, GCC had been advocating foreclosure bonds since 2015. It organized the trolley tour, and coordinated a conference call with Canton City Prosecutor Jason Reese, who wrote that city’s foreclosure bond legislation. Call participants included Butler, council members Dunbar and Michael Ungar, and two GCC members.

On a recording of the call, Reese admitted that he was initially skeptical about the measure, but once it went into effect he was astonished at how well it worked:

• Canton holds $3.5 million in foreclosure bonds, and has collected $267,000 in service charges with which to maintain vacant houses. Blighted properties have been cleaned up, and the program brings in more than it costs.

• Banks have demanded better performance from contractors they pay to maintain foreclosed properties.

• Foreclosures have plummeted, from an average of 100 per year in 2015 through 2017, to 16 in the first half of 2018. (Cleveland Heights had 180 foreclosures in 2017.)

• Efforts have been most noticeable in the lowest-income parts of Canton. Said Reese, “Just like blight spreads, so does pride.”

At Ungar’s request, a GCC member created a spreadsheet showing how seven foreclosed houses on the tour could have been repaired and maintained, had Cleveland Heights had foreclosure bonds in place.

As we write, CH City Council is on vacation, but we are optimistic it will pass this legislation. It will position Cleveland Heights to curb blight caused by bank foreclosures today, and be ready for future financial downturns.

Carlo Raustenberg is a writer, activist and lifelong Cleveland Heights resident. Deborah Van Kleef is a musician and writer, and has lived in Cleveland Heights for most of her life. Contact them at heightsdemocracy@gmail.com.
Summer should end with Labor Day

A TEACHER’S VOICE

Ari Klein

When I was growing up, the official end to summer in Cleveland Heights and University Heights was Labor Day. We had a pretty regular school calendar that started after Labor Day and ended in mid-June. This was the same for almost all school districts.

In some states, this calendar is still the norm. As of the 2016–17 school year, CH-UH started back to school two weeks before Labor Day. Cleveland Schools start even earlier. South Euclid starts three weeks before Labor Day. Why do nearly all school districts in Ohio start school earlier and earlier in August?

No one will admit the real reason, but the only explanation is that beginning the school year earlier in the summer gives more instructional time before state testing. This is a shift started after testing became more common and more intrusive in our lives. The only way to get more instructional time was to start earlier. There can be no other explanation. If some districts have three more weeks of instruction than other districts, it stands to reason that students in those districts may be better prepared for state tests and they might score higher. This in turn gives the impression that more learning is taking place in those “early-start” schools and districts.

If the state was so worried about comparing districts, schools and students, I have often wondered why it did not dictate the amount of instruction students could receive before taking the tests—after all, these are supposedly standardized tests. Interestingly, the state sets the windows for most testing to take place in the spring—even the “end of course” exams given at the high school level. Those exams are given as early as the beginning of April, which could be six or more weeks before the actual end of the course. It is unclear to me why they are not actually given at the end of the course. Perhaps the decision-makers in Columbus believe school should start in early July, making April the perfect time to have these exams. As it is, we do not get the scores from the April tests before school is out anyway.

School districts with climate control have a much better chance of actually being able to have students learn something in the hottest months. Five of our seven elementary schools, and most areas of Heights Middle School, do not have central air conditioning, so when it is too hot, not much learning takes place. Imagine trying to pay attention or write anything when it is 90-plus degrees in your classroom. Starting after Labor Day is no guarantee that these hot days will not occur, but it seems more likely that classrooms will have more uncomfortable days the earlier in August we start school.

State law in Michigan and other places dictates that school will not start before Labor Day. I am aware that this is probably due to a very influential recreation lobby: Amusement parks, beaches and camps, among other seasonal employers, need to have high school workers for the summer. Whatever the reason, I am all in favor of starting school at a more normal, child-friendly time. Summer, especially August, is no time for formal classroom learning. To me, it should be the time for kids to enjoy riding bicycles, exploring, swimming, eating ice cream, and working—if they are old enough. Ignoring climate and making decisions about children’s education based on when it is convenient to test them is just wrong. Perhaps one day Ohio’s political and educational leadership will be enlightened and mandate Labor Day as the official end to summer and beginning of the school year.

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

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Sewage Runoff and Drinking Water: What’s the Connection?

Is drinking water safe? What is the status of the recent action taken by the EPA in their settlement with the NWO Sewer District? Goal: reduce raw sewage discharge into Lake Erie by 98%. Over 1.3 million people are served by the Cleveland Water Department. How can we protect ourselves from toxic pollutants?

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What's the Connection?

Ari Klein, math teacher at Cleveland Heights High School, and president of the Cleveland Heights Teachers Union.
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Accountability should be built on trust

Susie Kaeser

It’s back-to-school time, with all the excitement that comes with new beginnings. Sadly, test dread is waiting in the wings.

In the name of accountability and to force educational improvement, state-mandated testing is used to shame and punish children, teachers and whole school districts. The system assumes the worst about teachers, and it misuses tests to make judgments and high stakes decisions. It dampens the natural love of learning. Punishment and fear creep into classrooms that should be comfortable, safe places. Each summer for the last 15, I have directed the Reaching Heights Summer Music Camp, a one-week instrumental music camp that serves about 85 musicians between the ages of 10 and 15.

Camp gives me an authentic connection to key questions in education: what is learning, who are our students, what do they need, how do you engage diverse learners, what is success? I think our camp’s approach to accountability exemplifies an effective alternative to the dreadful state report card and high-stakes tests.

Camp is a blast. It’s demanding and exhausting. We rely on 20 high school students and 20 music professionals to build personal connections with our kids—connections that unlock the kids’ motivation to try new things and push them to discover what they can do.

By the end of a week of camp, our campers are more confident, more willing to take risks, more cooperative and more secure. They smile and skip and move more, and their sound improves. Over time, our campers keep playing their instruments.

For us, accountability focuses on making sure we accomplish those goals, and expecting the best from our camp community.

In contrast to Ohio’s test-and-punish accountability system, we start with trust and respect for our musical team. We commit to releasing the best in our staff and our campers. We trust that every member of our team is invested in giving children a good experience, and we respect their capacity and desire to deliver what kids need. We depend on them to design and deliver meaningful learning experiences. The need for improvement is assumed and it is achieved through a shared desire to fully use the talents of each member of our camp community.

I’ve learned that when you ask people to do their best and give them responsibility for bringing about improvement, it leads people to do their best! Shame and punishment only undermine trust and kill investment in improvement.

Ohio’s report card is up for review. I’ve learned from music camp that setting broad goals that encourage a love of learning, asking the right questions about meeting those goals, and expecting the best of all participants can lead to an environment that engages its students and staff in learning. That’s what I think accountability should do.

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.

OPINION
Tiger Nation wants you

Krista Hawthorne

The Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District is a tiger as the district mascot and is known as Tiger Nation. Current and past students and school staff are fondly known as Heights Tigers. Are you a Heights Tiger too?

If you live within the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District, your property taxes fund the public schools. You are a Heights Tiger, too. If you do business within the CH-UH school district, your business taxes support our public schools. You are a Heights Tiger, too.

If you are a taxpayer, or school volunteer, you are invested in the Heights schools. No matter where you send or sent your children to school, or if you have no children, you are invited to learn more about the CH-UH public schools. Attend CH-UH Board of Education meetings, enjoy school sports competitions and musical productions and concerts.

The district communications department distributes more than 50 stories a month about successful alumni, sports teams’ championships, awards to singing vocal and instrumental musicians, and outstanding school staff and students. It also broadcasts announcements of upcoming forums, new teaching strategies, updated technology, and PTA events that welcome community engagement in every building. Visit the district website at www.chuh.org to read these articles and sign-up to receive the district’s e-mail newsletter.

The CH-UH Board of Education meets twice a month on the first and third Tuesday. Go to the website and click on Board of Education to confirm the dates, times, locations and meeting agendas.

The Heights Observer includes regular columns from Ari Klein, president of the teachers union, and from Susie Kaeset, former executive director of Reaching Heights and board member of Parents for Public Schools. Community members also write articles about the CH-UH public schools that are published in the printed and online newspapers and in the weekly e-letters. Visit www.heightslibrary.org and click on “Get the E-Newsletter” to sign up to receive this timely bulletin.

Reaching Heights, a nonprofit focused on connecting the community to the CH-UH public schools also publishes a monthly e-mail newsletter. Go to www.readinghearts.org and click on “Get Involved” and then on the green bar to “Sign Up for Email News.”

Public schools belong to all of us and they benefit all of us. An educated community is healthier, happier, more prosperous, and safer to live in. By accessing these sources of information, you help to support more than 5,200 of the district’s children.

Krista Hawthorne is executive director of Reaching Heights and a proud Heights Tiger.

CDC: what does it stand for?

Paul Volpe

I would expect that when most folks think of what “CDC” stands for, they would think of Centers for Disease Control. But, for many of us who have had the opportunity to enjoy life in an established urban neighborhood, our response might more likely be “community development corporation” (CDC). So, what is a CDC, and why do we care?

Well, as the name suggests, the word “community” indicates a gathering and engagement of people with a common agenda or purpose—in this case, improving a place by taking action to remove or prevent deterioration, blight and decline.

The term “development” is about taking action. Developing and implementing strategies to address both problems and opportunities in a community is therefore the mission.

Regarding the third word, a “corporation” is, according to Webster’s dictionary, “a company or group of people authorized to act as a single entity and recognized as such in law.” This formality is what enables and empowers a CDC to do its work, creating both public and private partnerships, and receiving and managing public funds.

CDCs are about people getting involved, having a voice and making a difference.

FutureHeights has been doing exactly this in Cleveland Heights for nearly two decades. More than two years ago, its board of directors and other supporters decided it was time to take the step of formalizing FutureHeights’ status as a CDC.

FutureHeights presented this to the city of Cleveland Heights as the natural progression in the organization’s evolution—to provide a much-needed contribution of resources as a CDC.

As of this past June, after many months of presenting proposals, along with reports, meetings, presentations, discussions and consulting studies, CH City Council still had not acted. It felt to many of us that CDC stood for “council doesn’t care.”

First, in July, CH City Council officially endorsed FutureHeights as the CDC for the city of Cleveland Heights.

With this legislation, will come funding to support planning and programs enabling the organization to address its mission of neighborhood preservation and growth.

I must express gratitude to Council Member Mike Ungar for his continuous support in FutureHeights’ quest to become the CDC for our city.

After all this, simply put, what I feel a CDC really stands for, both in terms of its initials and its mission and values, is creativity, delivery and collaboration. These are all things that Cleveland Heights needs in its pursuit of economic development, housing revitalization and neighborhood stabilization. City Hall cannot and should not have to address these critical issues alone.

FutureHeights, as our CDC, with all the residents and businesses it represents, is dedicated to partnering with the city to assure a vibrant future for our community.

Paul Volpe, an architect, urban designer and member of FutureHeights, believes that investment in our first-ring communities is vital to sustaining the core urban centers of our region.
I’m a proud member of the Forest Hill crank club

Michael Reilly

After 10 years of watching the alarming rise of vacant foreclosed houses in Forest Hill, I can no longer stomach our homeowners’ association’s (HOA) excuses for inaction.

Anybody who lives in Forest Hill sees the vacant houses that sit and rot, impacting our quality of life and property values. If our HOA is “nurturing the historic serenity of this area” as it claims, why is it ignoring the eyesores at 1024 and 1315 Hereford Road, 15780 Clevenden Road, 15472 Brewster Road, 1400 Forest Hills Blvd., and 3045 Monticello Blvd.?

The most egregious example is 15922 Forest Hills Blvd. This horror of a house has been vacant for over a decade! For years, residents have begged Forest Hill Homeowners’ Inc. (FHHO) to take action. They have been ignored or told nothing can be done. When the home owner lives next door to this monstrosity complained publicly, he was fined by FHHO.

The same thing happened to the owner of an award-winning house at the corner of Forest Hills Boulevard and Hollister Road. He complained publicly and was fined.

The handful of people running FHHO for decades have been disconnected from their responsibilities as an HOA. After the housing crisis, people started asking, “What is FHHO doing to stem the rise of vacant houses? After all, FHHO says it’s an HOA. If it can’t take care of this problem, why donate?”

This year, that clamor is louder. Members of the board, like myself, are fed up with the inaction and hypocrisy. FHHO should represent all the residents of Forest Hill, especially those who have to live next to these wrecks. Instead, [it] attacks the messenger and preaches civility and neighborliness while ignoring the very people who deserve help.

This is not an unsolvable problem. With amended bylaws, the blighted vacant houses can be remedied quickly by:

• Working with the land bank;
• Lobbying the county and city for immediate action;
• Filing nuisance abatement suits.

The most important tool is to amend FHHO’s bylaws to comply with the Ohio Planned Community Act (OPCA), a law passed in 2010, which allows HOAs to clean up vacant homes, file liens, and include legal fees in the collection process.

FHHO Chairman Chris Hubbert, an attorney, never brought this legislation to the attention of residents as he should have, until I and other board members pressed him to hire a lawyer to review our options. Why did it take eight years for this to happen?

This pattern of obstruction continues with misinformation on OPCA. FHHO claims that residents would be subject to onerous fees and elderly folks would be kicked out of their homes. This is not true! With amended bylaws conforming to OPCA, residents (would) decide what the rules will be while having the authority to clean up the vacant homes.

What is confounding is that FHHO leaders have been blocking reform for years. Like changing deck chairs on the sinking Titanic, they pretend the problem doesn’t exist, while labeling those who seek reform as divisive and “un-neighbory.” This is cold comfort to those who are suffering from the blight of living next to a dilapidated, vacant house.

It is time for FHHO to stop blocking progress and clean up these homes. The problem is real. If it doesn’t want or know how to clean up the houses, then step aside. If it wants to be a “good neighbor,” then help those who need it.

Michael Reilly is a 35-year resident of Forest Hill and founder of ForestHillRegrets.com

regularly priced merchandise and 50 percent off all “basement vinyl.”

Specializing in the same location for 40 years, Passport to Peru was originally founded by brothers-in-law Ray Taylor and Tom Loesche, who opened shop when a globe-traveling friend arranged to have select South and Central American wares. With an emphasis on fair trade and responsibly made products, the shop carries goods from several countries. “We offer good products and good prices,” said owners Ann Oswald-Laird and Robert Laird, who purchased the shop in 2008.

Raised in the Heights, Oswald-Laird attended St. Ignatius, Roxboro Middle, and Heights High schools.

Asked about the shop’s ability to transcend time, Laird explained, “You only get here because people support you.” For key merchandise, such as Birkenstock shoes, the shop offers diversity, choices and “a true sit-and-fit experience.”

Says 29 special items: “50 percent off select shoes, 32 percent off sterling silver, and 10 percent off all in-store purchases.

Ongoing: An environmental awareness campaign of “basing out” paper and plastic shopping bags. Customers can buy a $2 cloth tote that comes with a discount of 5 percent off all purchases when carrying the Passport to Peru tote.

Founded in 1978 by Jim McSherry, Mac’s Backs operated in Kent, then Chagrin Falls, prior to landing in Coventry in 1982, with the help of business partner Suzanne DeGaetano. The shop originally was located above Dobama Theatre (then at 1785 Coventry), and has been in its current location since 1993.

In discussing the store’s longevity, St. Ann's and Beaumont school alumni DeGaetano pointed to customers and community. While the shop began as a book exchange, customers’ requests led to an expansion of offerings. Customers have also been key to the shop’s signature events—the community cherishes its poetry readings, author appearances, and book clubs. Mac’s also collaborates with other Cleveland Heights venues for off-site events.

More than anything, DeGaetano credits the staff for shaping the essence of Mac’s Backs. “Our staff is fantastic,” said DeGaetano. “They help us be the best kind of indie bookstore we can be.”

Sept. specials: 20 percent off all special merchandise and giveaway items; costumed children’s book characters; and a book signing with artists featured in HeART of Cleveland.

Opening: An anniversary window display, a memory-lane zine, and origami art that commemorates Mac’s Backs founding year (1978) and current operations over time. Mitchell was an early partner in the Noble Road location and helped bring the shop to Coventry. Cristina joined the business in 1992, followed by her brother Ben in 2000. All are proud CHHS alums.

The shop endures through its mix of merchandise and the way the business operates. “We feel a joy in buying and a joy in selling,” said Cristina. For those who ask, there is an opportunity to bargain. While generational shifts affect business, customer inquiries guide purchasing, and there has been a rising interest in cassette tapes and recorders, vinyl, and vintage clothing. “They’ve taught us,” explained Rebecca. “If people ask for something, we will find it.”

Attenstor’s also offers estate liquidation and moving sale services. Sept. specials: Light refreshments and a 20 percent discount off all merchandise in the store. Ongoing: 30 days to celebrate 30 years, with 20 percent off all merchandise through Oct. 31, along with some special markdows.

Mostly a mom, Shari Nason, LISW, is a freelance editor, child development specialist, and nonprofit consultant who makes her home in Cleveland Heights. More than anything, Nason is inspired by kids and adults who build connection through kindness.

OPINION

COVERERY continued from page 1

Michael Reilly is a 35-year resident of Forest Hill and founder of ForestHillRegrets.com

projects, and in outreach with existing businesses. Asked about her particular goals in the position, Drucker stated, “I want the business community to see University Heights as a friend. Attracting new businesses is important, but it’s also about retaining businesses that are already here and helping them continue to succeed.”

Brennan reported that he and Drucker have discussed at length the current challenges facing the city and approaches to creating opportunities out of those challenges. They took a tour together, visiting University Heights’ business districts (Cedar-Taylor, Cedar Center, University Square, Cedar-Green, Firemount Circle), as well as the grounds of Heights Middle School, Bellefaire, and John Carroll University.

Drucker noted that the mayor’s vision for the city was one of the main reasons she decided to accept the position, and that she’s excited to help him harness the city’s strengths, citing in particular its well-established business community, population density and walkability.

Drucker formally began working for the city on Aug. 27. Said Brennan of the hire, “The process to find our economic development director took longer than I anticipated, but I cannot be more pleased with the outcome.”

Jessica Schantz is the e-news manager at the Heights Observer, a former lecturer at Cleveland State University, and a long-time resident of Cleveland Heights.
Cook takes on new communications role for the city of University Heights

Mike Cook (at left) with University Heights Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan.

Kim Sergio Inglis

In an Aug. 14 news release, University Heights Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan announced that Mike Cook had been hired to be the city’s first communications and civic engagement coordinator. In that role, Cook will be responsible for the city’s media, outreach, and constituent services, and promoting the city’s quality of life.

Brennan stated in the release: “Mike brings experience, as well as energy and creativity, to City Hall. He will be working closely with me, our city department, and city council to help us raise the overall responsiveness of city government to our residents, and with that, the quality of life in University Heights.”

Prior to taking this new position, Cook worked for the Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court; the Ohio General Assembly, where he was a legislative aid; and the American Red Cross, where he worked in communications and marketing.

As Common Pleas Court bailiff, Cook assisted Judge Michael Astrab in coordinating a series of heroin education town hall forums throughout the county.

Kim Sergio Inglis is editor-in-chief of the Heights Observer, and is a Cuyahoga County master gardener volunteer.

University Heights declares no room for hate

Mike Cook

A local man who pled guilty to making hateful and anti-Semitic calls to local synagogues was sentenced recently to six months in jail.

Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan said the defendant left threatening voicemails at East-side temples, including two voicemails here in University Heights. “The defendant got two six-month sentences, running concurrently, only the second sentence is suspended,” Brennan said. “That means he will be on community control to the court even after he serves time.”

Brennan thanked Judge KJ Montgomery for treating the offenses seriously. In addition, he thanked City Prosecutor Michael Astrab, the UH Police Department and the Jewish Federation for working together to bring the defendant to justice.

“Our city is a welcoming city and there is no place in it for hate,” Brennan said.

“If anyone is considering similar actions, let me be clear,” Astrab said. “If you make these types of threats in University Heights, the hammer will be brought down, you will be prosecuted, and you will be punished.”

Mike Cook is the communications and civic engagement coordinator for University Heights.

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University Heights resident Joshua Marshall meets rescue team that helped save his life

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University Heights Observer September 1, 2018
www.heightsobserver.org

University Heights City Council meeting highlights

JULY 23, 2018
Present were Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan, Vice Mayor Susan Fandee, and council members Pamela Cameron, John Earch, Steven Sims, Michelle Weiss and Mark Wise. Also present were Luke McCline, law director, and James Cofield, newly hired finance director. The meeting was held from 7 to 9 p.m.

Tax abatements on new construction
Having received state approval for the draft, council passed Ordinance 2018-33, which will provide tax abatements on the increased assessed value of any home for all construction completed after passage of the ordinance. The abatement will be based solely on the change in the assessed value and not on the cost of improvements at the full value of the home.

Establishment of bike lanes
Council approved two ordinances (2018-26 and 37): one to establish separate lanes for bicycles (non-motorized forms of transport) and exclude motor vehicle traffic from those lanes, and a second to prohibit parking in those lanes designated for non-motorized modes of transport. This is currently in effect for Warrensville Center Road between Cedar Road and Fairmount Circle. It was noted that all forms of non-motorized transport, including running, can use these designated lanes, and that a bus may pull over into the bike lane in order to drop off passengers.

Community improvement corporation
Council is considering the formation of a community improvement corporation (CIC) for the city, with its own articles of incorporation, as a statutory entity designed to enact real estate transactions on behalf of the city. One of its duties, for instance, would be to seek out development partners to redevelop, or tear down, properties that have severely deteriorated. McCConville recommended sending this ordinance, which was presented on first reading, to committee for consideration (and comparison) to other options, such as a land bank or community development corporation.

A land bank can encumber in property foreclosures but is part of the city, whereas a CIC is a separate entity. The Housing and Governmental Affairs committee will consider this ordinance.

CDBG funds
Council voted to accept $142,965 from Cuyahoga County’s Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to install crosswalks at the intersection of Cedar and South Green roads as part of the traffic calming project. It also reopened a CDBG line in the budget in order to account for these funds. The crosswalks must be completed by November, and the project includes adding ramps and adjusting traffic signal timing to allow for safer crossings. Finally, council authorized the city to seek bids for this project. City Engineer Joe Cioni said the drawings would be completed this week and sent out to bid immediately.

Silby Road Park project
Council accepted a Naturworks grant from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources in the amount of $105,234. This will be used to convert the vacant lot on Silby Road near Allison Road to a mini-park. It will have fencing around the perimeter, an evergreen tree, and other plantings. The city will provide 25 percent of the total project costs, and the park has been awarded to BJ Flotten and work will begin as soon as possible.

Video recording of council meetings
CDBG showed an additional $12,500 to cover the cost for Mandacam Video to record council meetings for the remainder of the year. Mayor Brennan said it was his hope to look at other options but asked for this cost to be approved in the meantime. All council meetings are posted on YouTube with links on the University Heights city website.

LWV Observer: Wendy S. Deuring

Look for earlier and often expanded, postings of meeting summaries online at FutureHeights. To receive email postings of full re ports, send an email to maryannbarnes@ hotmail.com with “LWV Observer” as the subject line through Google groups using “lewishishaobserver reports” as a search phrase.

These reports are the result of member observation and selected highlights of public meetings and are not official statements of the Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland. This disclaimer must accompany any redistribution of these reports.

To provide an accurate overview of the city, the League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland also maintains a comprehensive website at www.heightsobserver.org.

Bankruptcy
Bankruptcy cases are pending in the United States.”

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FutureHeights programs aim to encourage front-porch culture

Courtney Arbogast

On July 17, FutureHeights facilitated a public forum titled “Placemaking: How to Create a Front Porch Culture.” The event, in which four panelists discussed the ways in which they created front-porch cultures in their neighborhoods, took place at The Bottletree Brewing Company with more than 40 Heights residents attending.

Dawn Arrington and Katharyne Starinsky spoke about their experiences helping to coordinate Larchmere’s annual PorchFest, a free music festival that takes place on 30 different front porches in the Larchmere neighborhood. They also help form front-porch cultures in their communities. One idea that she has seen in some neighborhoods is placing chairs on a front lawn, and sitting there as one would on a front porch. She also provided several ideas for neighborhood events, such as a chili cook-off, a block party or a donut day. Stories from the panel sparked conversation and comments from attendees, who shared their own anecdotes about creating front-porch cultures in their communities. One Forest Hill neighborhood resident showed the crowd a yard sign used to promote conversation among neighbors that stated “Stop here and chat.” Another resident mentioned beginning a whiskey-tasting club in her area, as well as a clothing exchange. Other ideas, such as cooking classes, block parties, and dog-friendly events, were discussed as well.

FutureHeights wants to support neighborhood efforts to create front-porch culture. Interested CH residents should consider applying for a Neighborhood Mini-Grant, or participating in the Neighborhood Leadership Workshop Series in spring 2019. For more information about these programs, visit www.futureheights.org/programs/community-building-program/.

Courtney Arbogast was an AmeriCorps VISTA summer associate at FutureHeights.

CH council authorizes MOU for Meadowbrook and Lee property

Jessica Schantz

At its July 30 meeting, Cleveland Heights City Council voted unanimously in favor of Resolution No. 79-2018, which allows City Manager Tanisha Briley to negotiate a non-binding memorandum of understanding with Cedar Lee Connection, LLC, for the proposed development of the Meadowbrook and Lee site in the Cedar Lee Business District.

The city recently selected the team’s RFP/RFQ response, out of two finalists, and council’s vote both formally names Cedar Lee Connection as the developer and initiates processes that will lead to a more detailed development plan.

Vice Mayor Melissa Yasinow introduced the legislation and moved to vote on it. Mary Dunbar and Jason Stein seconded it, and all six eligible council members voted yes. (Michael Ungar abstained from the vote because the law firm in which he is a partner does business with one of the principals involved in the project.)

Prior to the vote, Mayor Carol Roe opened the floor to council for discussion. Council Member Kahil Seren expressed his concern about the city's ability “to be on the outside of the negotiating table” with large development projects such as the Meadowbrook and Lee site, using the current “Top of the Hill” project as an example, but he also thanked Ungar for his willingness to act as “council’s voice” with the Top of the Hill developers. Seren concluded that, despite his reservations, he is “willing to move forward with [the Meadowbrook and Lee] project.”

Council Member Cheryl Stephens had earlier indicated that she would vote no unless her concerns on other important issues were addressed by city staff. Those issues included the handling of the “Top of the Hill” negotiations, and the city’s need to accomplish the stated goal of developing the Taylor Tudor buildings. “We need to set an example on how we own our properties,” Stephens said. She concluded by stating that she felt her concerns had been addressed and would vote yes on the Meadowbrook Lee resorption.

Dunbar expressed how important this project is to the city, and that she is “very pleased to be supporting it.” Yasinow emphasized that council’s unanimous support for the project “sends the right message to the developers throughout Northeast Ohio, and throughout the country, that Cleveland Heights is a place that is open for business.”

Cedar Lee Connection’s mixed-use proposal includes more than 160,000 square feet of ground floor retail space and 75,000–95,000 square feet of upper floor apartments, all contained in a “V”-shaped building meant to promote public gathering. The proposal specifically calls for spaces utilized for “public art and arts programming.”

Once the development’s design is finalized between Cedar Lee Connection and the city manager’s office, council will vote again to approve the plan.

Jessica Schantz is the e-news manager at the Heights Observer and a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights.

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All proceeds benefit Cleveland Montessori
Bob Rosenbaum
To welcome visitors to the 6th annual Heights Music Hop, Cleveland Heights is offering free parking, 7–10 p.m., in each business district on the day the event is held in it. Thursday, Sept. 13, in Coventry Village; Friday, Sept. 14, in Cedar-Fairmount; and Saturday, Sept. 15, in Cedar Lee.

Last year’s event attracted about 7,500 people and delivered economic impact estimated at $200,000, according to organizers. This year’s event features roughly 65 musical acts plus a few non-music entertainments, and organizers hope it will be bigger and better than ever before.

“The Music Hop is designed to show off the liveliness and diversity of the community, while supporting Cleveland Heights’ image as a city of the arts,” said Deanna Bremer Fisher, executive director of nonprofit FutureHeights, which produces the event. “But first and foremost, it’s about having a good time.”

There will be a raffle, too. A raffle ticket buys a chance to win six months of groceries from Zupan’s Marketplace, among other prizes. Proceeds from the raffle underwrite the cost to produce the event.

Highlights of this year’s schedule include:

- Thursday, a 3-hour hip-hop show at The Grog Shop; and a mix of family-oriented events at the Coventry Village Library by Artful, Ensemble Theatre and Family Connections—all residents of the library-owned Coventry P.L.A.C.E. Campus.
- Friday at Cedar Fairmount offers a mix of small-group performances in various storefronts, with three groups appearing at The Fairmount and a nightcap of indie rock band The Mason District at Nighttown.
- Saturday is the busiest night of the event, with many popular Cedar-Lee nightspots hosting performances. CLF Urban Winery will showcase a best of CLE Uncorked—music, spoken-word, magic and other eclectic acts from across Greater Cleveland.
- Again this year, the most unusual venue may be Washington & Lee Service, which will clear the cars out of its bay to make room for a pair of rock bands.

Finally, the popular Music Hop After-Party features three bands—the Bush Administration, Outside Voices and samfox—from 10 p.m. Saturday to 2 a.m., at the Bottlehouse Brewery & Meadow. It’s the only venue that requires a paid ticket, with proceeds helping to underwrite the Music Hop.

Sales are strictly limited. Tickets, $10, can be purchased at www.heightsmusichop.com, and will be available at the door for $15 until they run out.

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

Cleveland Heights City Council
JULY 16, 2018
Council members present were Mayor Carol Row, Mary Dunbar, Kahil Seren, Jason Stein, Cheryl L. Stephens and Michael N. Unger. Vice Mayor Melissa Yasnow was absent.

Public comments
Caledonia Park. State Rep. Janine Boyd thanked council on behalf of her entire family for the resolution to rename Caledonia Park for her mother, Barbara H. Boyd. A former state representative and Cleveland Heights mayor, Boyd put together the agreement with East Cleveland that originally established the park in a vacant area in 1987.

Second quarter Master Plan update
City Manager Tаниsha Briley announced substantial progress on the Master Plan—a document with 10 visions, 45 goals and 157 actions. The public can access an executive summary through the City of Cleveland’s UsEvi, a strategy management and reporting software. The public dashboard is live at http://performance.envisio.com/dashboard/clhcts.

Immigration Task Force
Council Member Seren announced that the task force has held several meetings and is discussing amending his proposed legislation, and bias-free policing. Future meetings are scheduled for July 26, Aug. 9, Sept. 6, and Sept. 20, in council chambers.

Barbara H. Boyd Park
The resolution renaming the park in honor of Boyd and her history of community service passed unanimously, with praise from Seren and Stephens. New equipment will be installed this summer prior to reopening.

2019 tax budget
The 2019 Tax Budget was adopted unanimously on second reading.

Assessment equalization boards
These boards hear objections related to estimated assessments for improvement of streets and parkways, and street lighting within the city. Each board is comprised of three citizens of Cuyahoga County who do not reside in Cleveland Heights (“downtowned freeloaders”).

Proposed Taylor-Superior “Stadium Square” historic district
A first reading of legislation to apply a grant through the Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit Pipeline Initiative to nominate a five-building historic district at Taylor Road and Superior Park Drive, historically known as “Stadium Square,” engendered a great deal of discussion.

Stein expressed concern that, because there is no special improvement district in this area, there is no way for business owners in the affected area to speak with a unified voice. He wants the city to facilitate a merchants’ meeting to discuss the before the resolution is voted on this. This will be pursued. The goal is to facilitate redevelopment of vacant property in the future.

FutureHeights agreement
Council approved a resolution authorizing the city manager to negotiate a non-binding memorandum of understanding with Cleveland Heights Preservation Task Credit Pipeline Initiative to nominate a five-building historic district at the corner of South Taylor Road and Superior Park Drive, historically known as “Stadium Square.” This comprises three addresses on South Taylor Road (1922-46, 1912-26, 1908) and two on Superior Park Drive (3433 and 3440).

FutureHeights agreement
Council passed the second reading of a resolution authorizing the city manager to apply for a grant through the Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit Pipeline Initiative to nominate a five-building historic district at the site known as “Meadowbrook & Lee.” Council approved Unger’s recusal from the vote on this legislation (his law firm has a client relationship with one of the developers).

Stadium Square
Council heard the second reading of a resolution authorizing the city manager to apply for a grant through the Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit Pipeline Initiative to nominate a five-building historic district at the site known as “Meadowbrook & Lee.”

Ungar. The meeting lasted from 7:38 to 10:15 p.m. Council member Seren announced that the task force has held several meetings and is discussing amending his proposed legislation, and bias-free policing. Future meetings are scheduled for July 26, Aug. 9, Sept. 6, and Sept. 20, in council chambers.

Satellite TV
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FutureHeights agreement
Council approved a resolution authorizing an agreement with FutureHeights for services as a community development corporation for the city. Under the agreement, the city will provide FutureHeights with $140,000 over two years, which will enable the hiring of a staff specialist in real estate development. The agreement is broad and flexible in scope, and allows FutureHeights to define its own activities, budget, and performance metrics at its own approval. For now, the focus will be on residential housing, in both rehabilitation and infill development. In the future, with additional funding, activities might expand to commercial development.

LVW Observer: Katherine Salander.

Look for earlier and often expanded presentations of meeting summaries on-line at www.heightsobserver.org. See disclaimer on page 10.
On three consecutive Saturdays, Cleveland Heights gardeners are invited to participate in the Noble Gardeners’ Market, to sell fresh vegetables, fruits and flowers that they’ve grown in Cleveland Heights community gardens and in their own backyards. (No processed foods may be sold at this market.)

The mini-park at Roanoke and Noble roads is the site of the market, which kicked off on Aug. 25, and will also operate on Sept. 1 and Sept. 8, from 10 a.m. to noon.

The mini-park, a proclaimed parcel one block north of Monticello Boulevard, was formerly occupied by a gas station. Thanks to Superfund monies, the city of Cleveland Heights cleaned and landscaped the site. Gardeners representing Noble Neighbors, a local grassroots organization, have planted a public perennial garden on the corner and tend perimeter gardens on the site.

Noble Neighbors leader Brenda May called the gardeners’ market a “seed-planting” effort, tipping a hat to the phrase’s multiple meanings. “We’re starting small,” said May, “just a few weeks, just a few gardeners/growers, and just a few items to sell.” Our hope is that both sellers and buyers will be able to imagine our market’s possibilities and prepare for next summer’s sales as they plant community garden and backyard plots in the spring of 2019.

“Community building is our highest priority, which makes this event unique among the numerous farmers’ markets in our region. This is about neighbors meeting up with neighbors and sharing the abundance of their gardens and the gifts of new friendships.”

“A gardener’s market in our new mini-park is a logical next step for the city’s collaboration with Noble Neighbors,” said Carol Roe, mayor of Cleveland Heights. “One of the distinguishing features of Cleveland Heights is its history of creative grassroots involvement. The city government functions best when it fosters.”

So, where are you right now?

A. At home, sitting on the couch with a bad cold and an iPad, bored and cranky
B. On the RTA, riding home from work, playing with your smartphone and wishing you could start that new John Grisham novel
C. At the kitchen table with a stressed-out child who’s trying to write a school report after the library has closed, and whose teacher has forbidden the use of Wikipedia
D. Just laid off, needing to sharpen up your resume and interviewing skills
E. A recent immigrant, looking for information on becoming a citizen
F. Trying to find affordable advanced training in Photoshop to stay competitive as a freelance designer
G. Just retired, wondering what to do with your newfound freedom
H. Looking for a cozy place to read the paper
J. Stream a movie or audiobook directly from our website (that’s the bored part covered, at least…)
K. Four easily accessible buildings with comfy chairs and local and national papers
L. Oh, so, so many programs. Book clubs, concerts, improvement…
N. Online databases never close, and include trusted sources like the World Book Encyclopedia
O. We offer regular job search classes like Resume Workshop and Searching for Jobs Online
P. We offer free citizenship and ESL classes
Q. Heights Libraries card holders get free access to Lynda.com, an extensive online learning company
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Here’s what we can do for you:

A. Stream a movie or audiobook directly from our website (that’s the bored part covered, at least…)
B. Your wish is granted! Explore our digital catalog to find the eBook, and read it instantly on your phone
C. Online databases never close, and include trusted sources like the World Book Encyclopedia
D. We offer regular job search classes like Resume Workshop and Searching for Jobs Online
E. We offer free citizenship and ESL classes
F. Heights Libraries card holders get free access to Lynda.com, an extensive online learning company
G. Oh, so, so many programs. Book clubs, concerts, local history, tai chi, art study, film, home improvement…
H. Four easily accessible buildings with comfy chairs and local and national papers
I. Yes, we still have thousands of books. On shelves. And our collection is always expanding to meet your interests and needs.

Details about the Noble Gardeners’ Market, go to www.nobleneighbors.com.

Tom Gibson, a resident of Cleveland Heights since 1980, is a former president of Heights Community Congress, a board member of Reaching Heights, and a founding board member of HeightsArts. He is the principal of Green Paradigm Partners, a community organizing and landscape design firm. Gibson established a permaculture garden project in the Oxford Community Garden, and is currently helping to neighbors on Langton Road establish Pocket Pollinator Gardens in the Noble neighborhood.

This perennial garden marks the site of the new Noble Gardeners’ Market, at Roanoke and Noble roads.

Community Gardens and Backyard Gardens

Tom Gibson

neighboRhoods’ market comes to Noble neighborhood

This page contains a table of contents and a list of events. The text is in a readable font and is organized in a logical manner. The page also contains a photograph of a garden. The text is clear and concise, and the information is easy to follow. The use of headings and subheadings makes it easy to navigate the page. The information is presented in a logical sequence, making it easy to understand. The page is well-organized and easy to read.
The 41st annual Heights Heritage Home & Garden Tour, presented by Heights Community Congress (HCC), will be held this year on Sunday, Sept. 16, from noon to 6 p.m. The theme, Our FAIR City, honors the fact that this year, 2018, marks the 50th anniversary of the landmark Fair Housing Act of 1968.

The tour will be special in another way, in that Harcourt Manor will be one of eight tour stops this year. Harcourt Manor will be one of eight tour stops this year.

Other houses and gardens on this year’s tour are:
• A stately, red-brick Colonial in the Ambler Heights Historic District, with lovely architectural features, that has been thoroughly renovated and brought back to life.
• A quintessential Tudor home, with touches of India and Europe.
• A small, cozy home that has retained its 1930s’ character, with an impressive garden curving around the large backyard.
• A traditional red-brick Georgian, with a stunning and colorful contemporary interior, along with its lovely garden filled with garden art.
• A comfortable mid-century home, in the friendly and charming Noble neighborhood.
• Two newly renovated apartments in The Alcazar—identical in layout, but uniquely decorated.
• The formal, courtyard garden of The Alcazar—an urban oasis, surrounded by this historic building.
• A permaculture garden, originally based on a “gardens not lawns” concept.

From 2 to 4 p.m., tourgoers will be welcomed for refreshments at The Alcazar, a Cleveland Heights Historic Landmark with gorgeous Spanish/Moorish tilework defining its stunning atrium. There, guests will be free to see the first floor, along with the formal gardens not visible from the outside.

Tickets for the Sept. 16 tour ($25 each if purchased after Labor Day, $20 if purchased before the holiday) can be purchased online at www.heightscongress.org, or at one of the businesses listed on the website.

The night before the tour, on Saturday evening, Sept. 15, patrons are invited to a Preview Party Gala, to be held at Harcourt Manor, where guests will be free to roam all four floors of the home, and explore its spectacular grounds. Guests will partake of delicious food, live music provided by a local jazz ensemble, and a talk by featured keynote speaker Sarah A. Leavitt, curator of the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C. (The entire evening will be spent in, in lieu of the traditional trolley tour of past preview parties.)

Several levels of sponsorship are offered for the preview party. For additional information, and group rates, visit the HCC website, www.heightscongress.org; e-mail info@heightscongress.org; or call the office at 216-321-6775.

Susan Roberts is the home search committee chair for the 2018 Heights Heritage Home & Garden Tour.

Peace Lutheran hosts free monthly meals

Louise Gerlak

Peace Lutheran Church will begin serving once-a-month hot meals for the community starting on Thursday, Sept. 20. The meals will take place on the third Thursday of each month, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., and are free and open to everyone.

The organizers hope that whole families will join them, as they believe that family dinners build relationships, and help kids do better in school.

Peace Lutheran Church is located at 5740 Mayfield Road, just east of Severance Town Center. The church is easily reached via Cleveland RTA bus number 9—the Mayfield route. The closest bus stop is right in front of the church, at the intersection of Mayfield Road and Cleveland Heights Boulevard.

For more information, call the church at 216-352-1454.

Louise Gerlak is active in the Heights community and beyond. At Peace Lutheran Church, she participates in gardening, sings in the choir, and is a member of the welcome and outreach committees.
Friends of Lower Lake volunteers restore native habitat

The Shaker Parklands, a green oasis in the midst of suburbia, span Cleveland, Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights. The boundaries are North Park Boulevard on the north; Eaton Road on the east; Martin Luther King Boulevard on the west; and an irregular line following Fairhill Road, South Park Boulevard into West Park Boulevard, South Woodland Road, and South Park Boulevard on the south and southeast. The main artery is Doan Brook, which spills into Lake Erie. Everything that happens in the Parklands doesn’t stay in the Parklands. Everything that happens ultimately impacts the Great Lakes, the largest body of freshwater in the world.

The Parklands contain four lakes. The Shakers first deforested the area 200 years ago by damming Doan Brook for lumber and flour mills, creating Horseshoe and Lower lakes. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Van Sweringen brothers dammed the South Branch to create Marshall and Green lakes for their Shaker Village “Garden City” development.

The Parklands as a whole are under the oversight of the three cities, the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District manages the hydrology with major infrastructure projects. The Nature Center at Shaker Lakes manages its 20-acre green space, and the Doan Brook Watershed Partnership (DBWP) convenes an advisory group, the Parklands Management Committee, to address land management across municipal borders.

In spite of the many capable and well-intentioned governmental and nonprofit entities that oversee the Shaker Parklands, one vital aspect of its environmental health has been neglected: plant life. Attention is paid to the water in the watershed; to paved trails for running, bicycling and walking; to environmental education for young children; to trash removal; and to mowing and blowing the grass. But tending the health of the vegetative habitat has been neglected. The Parklands have been invaded by aggressive non-native plants.

Japanese knotweed, tree of heaven, porcelainberrry, honeysuckle, English ivy, and buckthorn have outcompeted the indigenous plants that support the native birds and insects dependent upon them. Unless they are removed and replaced with native plants, and a maintenance plan is created, the entire watershed is imperiled.

Many people have become alarmed by the dramatic degradation of the Parklands habitat, particularly at Lower Lake. With land stewardship and restoration activities its most requested volunteer activity, DBWP convened a meeting of volunteers who want to make a difference at Lower Lake, and Friends of Lower Lake (FLL) was launched. The mission of this new citizen-led DBWP volunteer program is to restore habitat and biodiversity at Lower Lake, in partnership with the stakeholders who oversee the Shaker Parklands.

FLL selected the Canoe Club site on the south side of the lake as its first project because of its historical significance and outstanding vista of the lake. The Canoe Club was built in 1909 and razed in 1976. The building housed 30 canoes, and the club presented annual regattas for many years, attended by crowds of up to 5,000 people. The foundation, complete with a cement boat launch, has been filled in with 40 years of silt overrun by porcelainberry, poison ivy and more.

Volunteers of all ages, including Boy Scouts from Troop 22, have been working Sunday mornings since May to expose the foundation and remove unwanted vegetation. “It feels so good to be working locally on the environment,” University Heights resident Emma Shook said. “This has been bothering me since I first moved here.”

Cleveland Heights resident Nancy Thrams said that she’d put it “out to the universe to do something at Lower Lake” when she first saw evidence that people were working there. And Kathy Smachlo of Shaker Heights is using expertise developed from years of gardening with native plants in her own yard to whack away at honeysuckle roots and suggest replacements.

FLL is realistic that habitat restoration and maintenance is a project with no end. There is not only physical work to be done—the cities and organizations that oversee green space need to create a vision and a maintenance plan for healthy habitat that goes beyond mowing and blowing. But someone has to start somewhere, and FLL has done that.

On a recent Sunday morning at the Canoe Club, volunteers stopped to look up at two osprey as they swooped to grab goldfish and flew off. A kingfisher ratted its call, a hummingbird flashed by. Dogs, new babies, runners, walkers, friends, and strollers wended their way on the path. People said “thank you for what you are doing.” Some asked, “How can I help?”

To volunteer, e-mail friendsolowerlake@gmail.com. More information is available at thefriendsoflowerlake.blogspot.com.

Peggy Spaeth is co-chair, with John Barber, of Friends of Lower Lake.
September HBC rides showcase homes, gardens and art

Looking for a way to get some exercise with like-minded people, while seeing many of the great sights the area has to offer? The Heights Bicycle Coalition (HBC) frequently hosts group rides, including the two September rides below. Hop on your bike and join in the fun!

**Sunday, Sept. 16 – Heights Bike Fix-it Station at the Corner**

A great way to enjoy the Heritage Home and Garden Tour is by bicycle. Parking is easy when all you need is a patch of grass! Join Heights Community Congress and HBC for an afternoon of biking and touring.

Pedal up and purchase your discounted $20 bicycle ticket at the bike fix-it station at the corner of Coventry Road and North Park Boulevard on Sunday, Sept. 16, between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. We’ll give you our recommended turn-by-turn route to enjoy all the homes and gardens on the tour before you set out for a fun and healthy afternoon. For more information about the tour, visit [www.heightscongress.org/index.html](http://www.heightscongress.org/index.html).

**Saturday, Sept. 22 – FRONT Triennial Tour de Art**

This all-day bike tour will visit several exhibitions in FRONT International: Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art. FRONT is a mix of artist commissions, performances, films and public programs examining the ever-changing and politically urgent conditions of an American city.

The ride will depart from the bike fix-it station at Coventry Road and North Park Boulevard at 9:30 a.m., then head to University Circle to visit Judy’s Hand Pavilion outside of the Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland, as well as several exhibits and installations at the Cleveland Museum of Art. The tour continues on to Playhouse Square for a viewing of Love Story, a video installation that centers on the cult of celebrity and the overwhelming influence the media exerts on our world view. After stopping to enjoy the Canvas City murals on Prospect Avenue, riders will head downtown to the Cleveland Arcade and Cleveland Public Library. The Arcade features Cleveland’s 1973 City Canvas public art project, while the library’s exhibit, The American Library, consists of 6,000 books, each bearing the name of a first- or second-generation immigrant whose life and work impacted culture.

The next stop is a haunting installation of works by photographer Dawoud Bey at Saint John Episcopal Church in Ohio City, then on to SPACES for A Color Removed—a citywide project that seeks to remove the color orange from Cleveland in response to the shooting of Tamir Rice (the toy pistol he was holding was mistaken for an orange tip meant to denote it was not a real gun). At Transformer Station, we’ll visit Human Right, a project that examines the relationship between personal narratives and social conditions in Middlesbrough, England.

The tour ends at the West Side Market for a fusion of food and art with John Riepenhoff’s [Curry Kojiwurst](http://www.heightscoalition.org) special sausage, an original FRONT-commissioned product, being featured in various collaborations with vendors and restaurateurs during the exhibition’s three months. After a lunch break, the group will ride the eight miles back to the Heights. Riders will also have the option to take public transportation back home.

As with all HBC rides, participants are urged to remember to wear a helmet, and bring water and a bike lock. Children under 16 must be accompanied by a parent.

For more information on rides, or to get involved, visit [www.heightscoalition.org](http://www.heightscoalition.org).

Volunteer Match

Kim Sergio Inglis

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

Submit your organization’s volunteer needs by calling the Future Heights office at 216-320-1437 or e-mailing shasa@futureheights.org.

The CAMHP Foundation, based in Cleveland Heights, and organized and run by women of color, is a grassroots movement working to increase community well-being by bringing social capital and opportunities to the South Collinwood neighborhood.

The foundation has bought five vacant and neglected lots on E. 145th and E. 157th streets that it plans to rehabilitate into community gardens. These gardens will be used to combat the food desert and lack of green space that plagues South Collinwood and other neighborhoods, and to provide vocational training and other opportunities to the area.

The first of the gardens to break ground, at 782 E. 154th St., will be home to lavender blackberries, eight raised garden beds, and beehives, and will be a model for the other four. The foundation plans to have all five gardens completed and ready for the 2019 grow season.

The CAMHP Foundation is looking for volunteers and donations of plants, tools and other gardening supplies. For more information, or to get involved, visit [www.camhpfoundation.org](http://www.camhpfoundation.org) or e-mail emiliana@camhpfoundation.org.

Kim Sergio Inglis is editor-in-chief of the Heights Observer, and a Cuyahoga County master gardener volunteer.

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Heights High students honored as AP scholars

Scott Worrman

The College Board’s AP program recognized 31 Cleveland Heights High School students as AP scholars for their outstanding performance and college-level achievement on Advanced Placement (AP) exams.

Class of 2018 graduates Melanie Graham and Mary Jane Reinhardt were honored as National AP Scholars. This, the program’s highest distinction, is granted to students who receive an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on five or more exams. These students were: Evangeline Bambakisid, Londyn Crenshaw, Sylvie Crowell, Sophie Gilson, Melanie Graham, William Hopkins, Georgina Jolivette, Rosalind Madorsky, Jordan Major, Schuyler Radiovovitch, Mary Jane Reinhardt, Emma Routh, Adam Smith, Macy Smith and Hannah Thellian.

Three students, Hannah Gibson, Maria Tarnay and Ethan Zoldak, were named AP Scholar with Honor, granted to students who receive an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on four or more exams.

Earning AP Scholar status were 13 students who received scores of 3 or higher on three or more exams. These students were: Glennis Covault, Jenna Dent, Kimberly Fisher, Alexander Gillooky, Remi Godard, Jackson Henninghe, Connor Karbowski, Julia O’Donnell, Gerald Shazor, Maria Vaughn Jones, Jayden Weaver, Rylee Woldman and Aminah Wyatt.

Heights High offers 19 AP classes in the subject areas of English, math, science, social studies, world languages, economics, art, and music.

The College Board administers the AP program. Students enrolled in college-level courses take an end-of-course exam and receive a score of 1 through 5. Colleges and universities often grant advanced placement based on the AP scores.

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

Cleveland Heights University Heights Board of Education

Meeting highlights

JULY 24, 2018

President Jim Possch, Vice President Jodi Saurin, and board members Dan Herzog, Malia Lewis and Beverly Wright were present, as were Superintendent Taliax Dixon and Treasurer Scott Ganner. After a 5 p.m. executive session about employment concerns, the board reconvened at 6 p.m. in open session. The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Roof repair contract approved

The board awarded a contract of $65,100 to Triving Builders to repair the high school auditorium roof. The roof section requiring repair was not part of the high school renovation.

Middle schools renovation update

Doug Myers of PMC, Janet Sander of Moody Nolan, and Jack Kellogg of Turner Construction provided updates on total costs to date. The total costs for Roxboro Middle School are $91 million, and for Monticello Middle School, $18 million. The board approved change orders totaling $247,323. These orders include heat trace, science classrooms and masonry wall anchoring.

Potential change orders at Monticello could cost $831,620. These changes include freestanding partitions, kitchen modifications, door hardware and repair, interior signage, monitors, painting of metal grates, and task board modifications. Potential Roxboro change orders could be $204,704, which includes masonry, star door and hardware repair, interior signage, repair of damaged millwork, reclining the cupola and floor leveling.

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Wednesdays, 7–9pm

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Cleveland Institute of Art

Creativity Matters

CIA.edu/lifedrawing
Students prepare for classes at Heights High’s AP Success Camp

Scott Wortman

The thought of taking Advanced Placement (AP) courses can seem daunting for many high school students. These courses, in which students can earn college credit through an end-of-year exam, are structured like college courses, with an increased rigor that includes extra work and oftentimes more stress.

Cleveland Heights High School and the CH-UH City School District sought to alleviate these worries for students with their second annual AP Success Camp, which was held in July at the high school.

A total of 23 students, in grades 9-12, attended the four-day camp in order to prepare for their upcoming classes in the 2018-19 school year.

The majority of the students have at least one AP course on their schedule this year, but some, like rising freshman James Huff, were there to sharpen their study skills and see what AP is all about before diving in as a sophomore.

“This camp has been helpful in terms of getting opinions of other people that took AP classes,” said Huff. “Seeing other people saying ‘it’s OK, you’ll be fine, you just have to work a little harder’—I think it makes it a little easier to say I want to do all AP classes when I get to 10th grade.”

“Even though we’re focusing on AP classes, it’s really helpful in any class you’re going to take because you’re going to have stress in all classes. You’re going to have work in all classes—so you can apply what you’re learning this week to all your other classes,” added rising sophomore Emma Vail.

Five former AP students served on a panel to talk about their experiences in taking AP courses. Dash Chesney, a 2018 graduate, discussed how he was able to juggle the workload while playing on the varsity basketball team.

“There were times that I would fall behind, but the teachers either stay late or come early to help,” said Chesney. “There were a lot of mornings where I would have to wake up earlier just to come in for school, and there were times where, when we had study tables, I would go talk to my teachers. Or I would go during my lunch hour. That helped me get caught up and freed up more time after school for sports and [to] still maintain good grades.”

Scott Wortman is the supervisor of communications for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.
Eliminating fines saves money for Heights Libraries

In January 2018, Heights Libraries stopped charging overdue fees. The move was part of an overall shift in focus from restrictions and chastisement to forgiveness and easier access to materials and services.

“All we really want is for folks to return physical items so they can be recirculated,” said Circulation Manager Ty Emerson. “The elimination of fines makes that the focus of our interaction with customers with overdue items, as opposed to scolding and growing fines and fees, so they are more comfortable bringing the items back.”

Half a year later, the new fine-free policy has benefitted not just the pocketbooks and wallets of customers, but also the library’s bottom line.

“We receive reports from our collection agency detailing how much money and materials we receive back per month through their efforts,” said Emerson. “Because we were no longer requiring overdue fees be paid, we were expecting to see a loss of cash revenue, but the actual cash driven in from our collection agency increased from January to May by $3,785 over last year. And the value of material returned to us more than doubled, from $39,716 to $88,891. That’s $49,175 worth of materials we did not have to pay to replace.”

If an item is so late that it is considered lost, the account is turned over to a collection agency to help retrieve the material. Emerson believes that customers whose accounts have been turned over to the collection agency have now learned that, instead of having hundreds of dollars of fines to pay, they can just return the items and pay a $10 fee to cover the agency’s costs.

Customers still see fines accumulating on overdue items, but when those items are returned, the fines are wiped from the accounts.

“The fine-free policy does have some restrictions, and it only applies to items owned by Heights Libraries. Through its membership in the CLEVNET consortium, Heights Libraries customers have access to items at other participating Northeast Ohio libraries via a hold system. If a customer borrows an item from a library that charges fines, the customer must pay those fines—Heights Libraries cannot waive them. This applies to any item obtained through the interlibrary loan service, as well.

“Response has been great,” said Emerson. “We’ve begun to see it reflected in our circulation numbers.”

Over the last few years, Heights Libraries’ circulation numbers have been dropping roughly 5 percent each year, but that trend has reversed since the fine-free policy was implemented. A comparison of March 2018 and March 2016 numbers shows nearly identical numbers, with 2018 a mere 0.87 percent lower than 2016.

“People feel welcome, and forgiven,” noted Emerson, “so they’re coming back and checking out lots of materials. And bringing them back.”

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

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Wednesday, Sept. 26, 7–8:30 p.m.
The Art of Exile: Art Study Group at the Cleveland Museum of Art. Turning our minds from summer travel by choice, this program will examine the flight from home of the escapee, the exile, the fugitive—the refugee. Artists often have been such travelers, and art has sometimes offered sanctuary, asylum, or haven that they (or we) seek. This event takes place at the Cleveland Museum of Art. Registration opens Sept. 12.

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

Monday, Sept. 17, 5–6 p.m.
A Taste of Nepal. Learn about our Nepali neighbors by listening to Nepalese music, playing Bagh Chal, and sampling some delicious cuisine. This program is part of Heights Libraries’ On The Same Page initiative.

Lee Road Branch
2346 Lee Road, 216-932-3600

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Cleveland Heights-University Heights
PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

AUGUST 6, 2018

Board members present were President Abby Botnick, Vice President Chris Mentink, Secretary James Roosa, Dana Fiskell and Vikas Turakhia. The meeting began at 7:30 p.m. and adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Financial report
The board approved a resolution to accept the financial report for the year to date, June 30, 2018. The report indicates a total cash balance of $13,299,815.12. In separate resolutions, the board approved a $100,000 increase to the 2018 permanent appropriation for the Washington Boulevard property, legal services and contingencies grant to bring together underserved communities. The Sept. 28 program will cover estate planning. Registration begins two weeks prior to each event.

University Heights Branch
3866 Cedar Road, 216-321-4700

Thursday, Sept. 27, 4–5:30 p.m.
Banned Book Slam. Exercise your first amendment right at this anti-censorship celebration. Choose your favorite banned book and share a passage with the audience. Snacks and refreshments will be provided.

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CH Senior Center News

Amy Jenkins

The Cleveland Heights Senior Activity Center (SAC), located in the CH Community Center at 1 Monticello Blvd., offers a variety of programming for those 60 and older. A complete schedule of programs is published in the community center’s newsletter, and available online at www.clevelandheights.com. Here are a few of the new and noteworthy programs SAC is offering in September:

Attend a Bead Weaving workshop on Wednesdays, Sept. 5 and Oct. 3, 1-3 p.m. Myriam Ribenboim will teach the introductory steps used to create a beautiful beaded rope. The workshop fee of $5 includes materials. Participants should bring magnifying glasses and, if they have one, a bright LED lamp. Class size is limited; participants must register in advance and be able to attend both sessions.

Participate in a free Pre-Pilates Chair Class on Wednesday, Sept. 26, at 11 a.m., taught by Val- entin, a certified Pilates instructor. Learn the Pilates principles of centering, concentration, control, breath, flow and precision as you work through the activities of living. Increase range of motion, gain core strength, and pair visualization with movement. The major muscle groups of the chest, back, arms, legs and core will be addressed. Soft shoes and some standing is required.

On Thursday, Sept. 27, at 5:30 p.m., join Cleveland historian Dennis R. Sutcliffe for his talk, Bomb City USA: The Danny George Era. He’ll describe how Danny Greene and John Nardi tried to muscle in on the Cleveland Mob’s operations. The result was a bloody mob war that left Cleveland with the moniker “Bomb City USA.”

Two expos are scheduled at the center in September. On Saturday, Sept. 15, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., the Home Repair Resource Center will host BoomerFest. On Friday, Sept. 21, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., PNC will sponsor a Senior Health Fair. Fair attendees can get their flu shots (bring your insurance card) along with valuable information on health and aging.

SAC membership is $5 for Cleveland Heights residents. To sign up, bring a recent piece of mail (such as a bill) and a photo ID. University Heights residents who would like to join SAC must first register with Patrick Grogan-Myers, University Heights community development coordinator, at 216-932-7800, ext. 203, or pgrogan@universityheights.com. Membership is $10 for University Heights seniors.

Amy Jenkins is supervisor at the Cleveland Heights Office on Aging and the Senior Activity Center. She can be reached at 216-932-7257 or by e-mail at ajenkins@clvhts.com.

HRRC’s BoomerFest is Sept. 15

David Bruck

Home Repair Resource Center (HRRC), along with the Cleveland Heights Office on Aging, will host BoomerFest on Saturday, Sept. 15, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m., at the Cleveland Heights Community Center. The event is free and open to residents of all communities, with light refreshments available.

BoomerFest brings together advice, discussions and products for people looking for resources to help them plan their futures, and for those that care for aging loved ones. Experts will staff tables that will be organized to offer personal advice and contacts on a variety of topics, including home repair and remodeling, health and safety, money management, consumer protection and more.

Don’t miss the keynote address by Marlene Robinson-Stater, interim administrator of Cuyahoga County Adult & Senior Services, at 11 a.m.

David Bruck is the education coordinator for Home Repair Resource Center.

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2. Register/log in at the Member Center (www.heightsobserver.org).

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

4. Reward yourself you’re about to be published. We’ll review and edit your article, and let you know if we have any questions.
Heights Observer September 1, 2018

HEIGTHS BUSINESS

Heights business offers holistic healing

Shari Nacson

Since 2010, Heights resident and Observer contributor Judith Eugene has been teaching yoga, arts and holistic healing to older adults and people with disabilities. “I love it. I love every day that I wake up and get to do this,” reflected Eugene.

Originally, the Loving Hands Group was a solo enterprise. Eugene then found that she wanted to offer a broader scope of services, to include massage therapy and the fine arts. Currently the studio has five additional instructors who are dispatched throughout the community, teaching adaptive classes that range from cooking and henna art to fiber arts and flower arranging. The company also offers supportive classes and services for caregivers.

The Loving Hands Group provides group and individual services. Group services are offered at senior centers and other gathering places, such as Anytime Fitness Center in University Heights. The yoga class at that venue includes a mix of club members and individuals with disabilities. Eugene loves bringing together populations that might otherwise not cross paths. “It’s a wonderful dynamic,” she said.

Individualized services typically take place at the client’s residence. “We work with the hobbies and interests they currently have or had in the past,” said Eugene. The goal of these individualized sessions is to give people a sense of purpose, “something to wake up for.” Activities allow the client to have as much choice and self-control as possible.

Clients gain mobility and artistic expression, and many thrive emotionally through the programming. Staff observe that clients seem more empowered and optimistic. Loved ones and guardians build connection with the staff, as well, often contributing ideas to help engage the client. For example, when one client’s guardian mentioned a former interest in gardening, Eugene arranged several sessions to work with potted plants and to install a bird feeder outside the client’s window at the nursing home. This positive engagement resulted in the client becoming more social and less isolated.

Eugene did not always work in human services. Born and raised in Cleveland Heights, she attended Kent State University. From there, she went on to a career in architecture and interior decorating during 22 years in New York City and Washington, D.C. “When my mom passed away, that changed my perspective,” Eugene said. She didn’t want to wait until retirement to give back to society. Inspired by a friend who used photography to give back to nursing home residents, Eugene decided to return to her hometown and commit full time to doing what she loves—the arts and holistic healthcare—while helping people and making a living. “It’s a win-win-win situation,” said Eugene. Learn more about available services and classes at www.lovinghandsgroup.com.

Mostly a mom, Shari Nacson, LISWS, is a freelance editor, child development specialist and nonprofit consultant who makes her home in Cleveland Heights. More than anything, Nacson is inspired by kids and adults who build connection through kindness.

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Dobama presents Ohio premiere of ‘Sunset Baby’

Colin Anderson

Dobama Theatre opens its 2018-19 Mainstage Season with the Ohio premiere of “Sunset Baby,” by Dominique Morisseau. The play, directed by Justin Emeka, will run Sept. 7–30.

In “Sunset Baby,” Morisseau, a writer on the Showtime series “Shameless,” calls into question the ways in which we love one another and what we choose to forgive. Nina, a tough, independent woman, is visited by her estranged father, a former revolutionary in the Black Liberation movement, who seeks to mend their broken relationship. As father and daughter circle one another, deep-rooted wounds are discovered, generational differences are exposed, and burning truths are laid bare. The play is a smart, entertaining, and moving story about family, survival, and the nature of liberation.

The New York Times called “Sunset Baby” a “smart and bracing new play about two generations of urban outlaws struggling to stay afloat in the lower depths... [that] covers vast acres of social and political ground.” “Sunset Baby” features actors Mary-Francis Miller, Ananias J. Dixon and Greg White.

Performances are Thursdays through Sundays at Dobama Theatre, 2340 Lee Road. Individual ticket prices range from $29 to $35, with senior, student and military discounts offered. Season memberships are also available. Call the box office at 216-932-3396 for information or to purchase tickets by phone. Tickets are also available online at www.dobama.org.

Colin Anderson is the assistant to the managing and artistic directors at Dobama Theatre.
At Table again brings art and food to Heights Arts

Micah Brown

This September, 24 artists are partnering with some of Cleveland’s most creative culinary experts to transform the Heights Arts main gallery into four unique, themed installations that speak to the art of food and community through the materials we use to eat and drink. The exhibition, At Table: Cleveland Culinaire, opened Aug. 31 and will run through Oct. 14.

In addition, on Sept. 14, 6–9 p.m., Heights Arts invites the community to the opening of a new exhibition in its Spotlight gallery, featuring the work of Cleveland Heights printmaker Paula Zinsmeister.

At Table showcases the vision of chefs Douglas Katz of fire food & drink, Provenance, and the Katz Club Diner; Gerry Grim of Edwin’s Leadership & Restaurant Institute; Zeleke Belete of Zama; and Karen Small of the Flying Fig. The 24 participating visual artists are William Brouillard, Timothy Callaghan, Cheryl Cochran, Dana Depew, Adrien Eisenhower, Tyler Federico, S. Jordan Fine, Scott Goss, Amy Halko, Lari Jacobson, Scott Larson, Andrea LeBlond, Joyce Morrow-Jones, Shayna Roth Pentecost, Matthew Pritchard, Bally Ritter, Heidi Robb, Carmen Romine, Randall Slaughter, Jessica Coven Stenson, Ashley Sullivan, Krista Tomorowitz, Art Warner and Carl Zuck.

“Bringing back our extremely successful At Table series exemplifies our organization’s continued dedication to artistic collaboration in new and innovative ways,” said Rachel Bernstein, Heights Arts executive director. “Through this project, we have intertwined multiple disciplines within the art world with something we can all connect to—food. Visual and culinary artists have worked together for several months to create a tangible experience we can share with our community through the exhibition itself, neighborhood activities, and food events at the gallery.”

Four multi-course food events are part of At Table: Cleveland Culinaire, each planned by one of the participating chefs. Attendees will enjoy an array of culinary creations along with engaging conversation with chefs, exhibition artists, and Cleveland Heights Poet Laureate Damien McClenon in an intimate gallery setting.

These visually stunning and Pavlovian response-inducing events are planned for September and early October. Tickets, $55 each/$50 for Heights Arts members, are available online at www.heightsarts.org, at the gallery at 2375 Lee Road, and by phone at 216-371-3457. Advance ticket purchase is necessary as space is limited.

On Sunday, Sept. 9, 5 p.m., Douglas Katz will present a menu featuring cured meats and local aged cheeses; house pickled vegetables; sliced and freshly baked country baguettes; whipped grass-fed butter and foraged herbes; morning baby lettuces with fall turnips, beets and foraged berries; morning baby lettuces with marinated burnt peppers; labneh with marinated burnt peppers; labneh and roasted beets with caraway; local sheep’s milk cheese with chili honey, apple butter, whipped ricotta with egglant caponata and assorted pickles. The aesthetic of the corresponding art installation is inspired by local urban farms, including the Ohio City Farm and the North Union Farmers Market, and by the urban landscape.

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Micah Brown is the marketing coordinator for Heights Arts.
Cleveland Heights’ Ensemble Theatre is set to begin its 39th consecutive season, offering its signature mix of classic American plays and definitive contemporary works.

“This coming season’s theme, ‘The Future is Bright,’ is filled with meaning,” said Ensemble’s Executive Artistic Director Celeste Cosentino. “With the culmination of continuity of our space and location, to collaborating and creating a vision for the future of this corner, each one of our upcoming shows speaks to that sense of community and outlook to the days ahead.”

The season opens with Kenneth Jones’ historical play “Alabama Story,” which will make its Ohio premiere on Ensemble’s Main Stage on Sept. 7. The play is based on the true story of the attempted censorship of a children’s book at the dawn of the Civil Rights movement.

Set in 1959, the play centers on Alabama State Librarian Emily Wheelock Reed as she faces off with State Sen. E.W. Higgins, who is determined to get the popular book The Rabbits’ Wedding off the shelves of Alabama libraries for the crime of portraying a black rabbit marrying a white rabbit. The book’s writer, Garth Williams, serves as the narrator and guide to the play that also portrays the story of two childhood friends—Joshua, who is black, and Lily, who is white—as they reconnect two decades after a dramatic separation.

The play has received American Library Association New Play Award. Jones said he wrote the play after reading Reed’s obituary in 2000. “I instantly saw her struggle as the stuff of drama, filled with contrasts: black and white, north and south, insider and outsider, male and female, open and closed, free and restricted,” said Jones. “And Emily Reed and Senator E.O. Eddins (the inspiration for Higgins) were two bigger-than-life forces with a gift for rhetoric. Great theater characters.”

Given that Heights Libraries recently purchased Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Campus, home to Ensemble (as well as other arts and nonprofit organizations), a play about the important role libraries can and have played in service to their respective communities seems a good fit to open Ensemble’s new season.

“I think this play speaks to how libraries, like theaters, can be culture makers and agents for change and inclusion in their communities,” said Cosentino.

With “Alabama Story,” Ensemble continues its mission of casting Cleveland talent, with the incomparable Anne McEvoy portraying Emily Wheelock Reed. Recently seen in Ensemble’s production of “The Hairy Ape,” Joseph Milan will play Sen. Higgins, and Cody Steele will be making his Ensemble debut as Reed’s assistant, Thomas.

Eugene Sumlin will also make his Ensemble debut in this production. He’ll portray Joshua, alongside Adrienne Jones as Lily. Craig Joseph, who wowed audiences last season in Ensemble’s production of “Well,” and as Louis in both parts of “Angels in America,” rounds out the cast as Garth Williams, the real-life illustrator and author of The Rabbits’ Wedding.

In conjunction with Ensemble’s production of “Alabama Story,” Heights Libraries has ordered extra copies of The Rabbits’ Wedding. “Alabama Story” runs Sept. 7–30 at Ensemble Theatre, 2843 Washington Blvd., in the Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Campus. Performances are Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., and Sundays at 3 p.m.

For tickets and information, visit www.ensembletheatrecle.org, call 216-21-2930, or e-mail info@ensemble-theatre.org.

Tyler Whidden, playwright and associate artistic director at Ensemble Theatre, is the director of “Alabama Story.” He also co-hosts “The Cleveland Stage Podcast.”

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Art at St. Paul’s contemplates light and color

September arrives and so does a new show at the Nicholson B. White Gallery, in St. Paul’s Episcopal Church. Four talented artists from Cleveland’s East Side—Marilyn Farinacci, Ben Hauser, Ruthe Stone and Catherine Davies Paetz—are featured in Contemplating Light and Color. The public is invited to attend the artists’ reception, which opens the show, on Friday, Sept. 7, 5–7 p.m.

Farinacci’s vibrant paintings are stunning and complex. She creates visual concepts on canvas using layering, color and form in a unique way. Her contemporary paintings give the illusion of a three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional surface.

Hauser refers to himself a photographic artist. The abstract dimensional surface.

Rounding out the show is the work of Paetz, a jewelry artist and metalsmith—and an active parishioner at St. Paul’s! She demonstrates how colorful enamel, metal and light can be combined and made into beautiful finished pieces of jewelry.

The show will be on view through Nov. 24. The gallery is free and open on weekdays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturdays and Sundays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Robin Outcault is co-director of the Nicholson B. White Gallery.

Join the Western Reserve Chorale in its 26th season

David Gilson

Western Reserve Chorale’s (WRC) 26th season begins rehearsals on Sept. 4. It welcomes new members to join in a community of singers who enjoy the process of working together as an ensemble to create a musical experience for the Greater Cleveland area. The Chorale has a roster of nearly 100 members, so no singer needs to fear having to carry a part on his or her own.

Highlights of the upcoming 2018–19 season will include, for December’s concert, Bob Chilcott’s Wenceslas. This vivid musical narrative tells the story of Good King Wenceslas on the Feast of Stephen, and will feature the chorale, soloists and a brass ensemble, in a colorful array of styles, to recount this snow-bound story.

For March, the chorale has been invited to perform as part of the Cleveland Institute of Music. The ensemble will present two works for choir, soloists and orchestra: Haydn’s St. Nicholas Mass and Beethoven’s Mass in C, both of which were written as commissions to the Esterhazy family, though composed some 35 years apart.

The final concert of the year will feature the Sunrise Mass by Norwegian composer Ola Gjeilo, as well as a tribute to the poetry of E.E. Cummings on the 125th anniversary of his birth, with settings by Eric Whitacre, David Dickau, Vincent Persichetti, Z. Randall Stroope and others.

Rehearsals are held Tuesday evenings from 7:15 to 9:30 p.m. at Church of the Gesu in University Heights. If you’re interested in joining the ensemble, visit www.westernreservechorale.org to contact the group.

David Gilson is the artistic director of the Western Reserve Chorale, the director of music for Church of the Saviour and the associate dean for student affairs at the Cleveland Institute of Music.

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It’s a night on the town

Last September, I attended the first public meeting for the Top of the Hill Project, the development of the plot of land where Cedar Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard come to a point, at the apex of Cedar Glen Parkway, which we all call Cedar Hill. About 150 people attended and expressed about 237 ideas and opinions. One thing that everyone seemed to be in agreement on, however, was that Nighttown should be left alone. No one wanted to see it go.

But why? What’s the big deal? It’s just a restaurant, and Cleveland Heights is home to tons of restaurants. Well, it’s also a nightclub. But, again, Heights is home to tons of restaurants.

Nighttown opened when I was in high school. But the space had served as a bar long before that. There were four separate stores on the first floor of the 1920s building. When John Barr bought one of the middle storefronts, the Silhouette Lounge, in 1965, it became Nighttown, named after the Dublin red-light district in James Joyce’s Ulysses. Over time, Barr took over the other three adjoining storefronts and merged them all into Nighttown. He also amassed the 275 pieces of artwork that adorn its walls.

I left Cleveland after high school. When I moved back in 1972, it had become the most prestigious restaurant in Cleveland Heights. This was a few years before the big food boom in Cleveland, but, regardless, it was still one of the top spots in town.

Dublin native Brendan Ring, who had served as Nighttown’s general manager since 1993, purchased it from Barr in 2008. Among his other innovations, Ring has added three outdoor dining areas. So, with six dining rooms, three bars and three patios, seating capacity now totals 350. Ring also brought in Jim Wadsworth early on, to handle music bookings, greatly expanding on the single piano players the club originally employed.

In 2003, when the northeast quadrant of the U.S. lost power on a hot August afternoon, I listened to a portable radio for news updates. At one point, I heard that Nighttown was open, powered by a generator. I rushed over for dinner with my teen-aged kids.

The place was totally packed, despite scant air conditioning, and warm water. It was open and serving the community—and beyond: Prince Albert in her building and chauffeured them to the gathering in Nighttown’s limousine. “How did it go?” I asked him when he got there. “It was a bit of a push,” he answered pleasantly, in his Irish brogue. I knew he was downplaying what must have been an ordeal. I appreciated it.

Just as Cleveland Heights residents—many, I could tell from Face- book—appreciated last month’s official announcement from the Top of the Hill developers that they were creating 50 parking spaces for Nighttown as part of the project. That meant Nighttown was not going away.

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.