Cleveland Heights’ Apollo’s Fire wins Grammy

Jessica Schantz

On Feb. 10, Cleveland Heights-based Baroque ensemble Apollo’s Fire won the Grammy award for Best Classical Solo Vocal Album for Songs of Orpheus. The ensemble, under the artistic direction of Jeanette Sorrell, shares the award with Italian soprano Karin Sulusayman, the album’s solo vocalist.

Songs of Orpheus uses the work of 17th-century Italian composers Monteverdi, Caccini, Landi and d’India to retell the story of Orpheus’ journey to the underworld to recue his wife, Eurydice. Along with providing the instrumentation for these vocal pieces, the ensemble also performed sonatas by Castello and Cima on the recording.

Apollo’s Fire has produced more than 20 albums in its 27-year history. This is its first Grammy.

Sorrell expressed surprise about winning the award, noting, “The other nominees in our category had quite a bit of PR-power behind them, in addition to being compelling recordings. We were the new kid on the block in that world.” Sorrell praised the album’s recording producer, Shaker Heights resident Erica Brenner, calling her work “brilliant.” She also expressed thanks for all of the ensemble’s Heights patrons, who she said have “nurtured and supported Apollo’s Fire from our fledgling state till now.”

continued on page 2

FutureHeights’ 2019 annual meeting is April 10 at Heights High

Sruti Basu

On April 10, FutureHeights will present its 2019 annual meeting at the newly renovated Cleveland Heights High School, 13265 Cedar Road.

FutureHeights, a nonprofit community development corporation, strives to engage Heights residents in order to ensure a vibrant and sustainable future for Cleveland Heights and University Heights.

This year’s meeting will discuss the concepts of place-making and place-attachment as a sustainable means of community development and revitalization in the Heights, and in cities and communities everywhere.

FutureHeights will also report on its activities and accomplishments, as well as its vision for the future, with help from a panel of speakers that includes Nelson Beckford, the program director for neighborhood revitalization and engagement at the Cleveland Foundation; David Tischler, a group of Cleveland Heights residents is seeking to amend the Cleveland Heights charter to enable citizens to directly elect a full-time mayor. Currently, Cleveland Heights voters elect seven part-time Cleveland Heights City Council members. Council then elects one of its members to serve as mayor.

“The city of Cleveland Heights is not a job for a part-time mayor who has no executive responsibilities,” said Tony Cuda, campaign manager of Citizens for an Elected Mayor, the organization seeking the change. “We need a full-time, visionary leader who can address the city’s challenges, such as declining population, housing values that are not recovering as quickly as in similar suburbs, and slow progress on economic development.”

Cuda said a full-time, directly elected mayor would be more accountable and responsive to citizens, and visible across the community and region as the city’s spokesperson. The group will work to gather signatures to place an amendment on the November ballot.

Since Cleveland Heights became a city in 1921, it has had a manager-council form of government, in which voters elect council, and council appoints a city manager. The manager reports equally to all seven council members, a majority of whom is required for the manager’s appointment or removal. Out of the 57 municipalities in Cuyahoga County, Cleveland came a city in 1921, it has had a council-manager form of government, in which voters elect council, and council appoints a city manager. The manager reports equally to all seven council members, a majority of whom is required for the manager’s appointment or removal. Out of the 57 municipalities in Cuyahoga County, Cleveland
Everything old is new again

Kim Sergio Inglis

What goes around comes around. The more things change, the more they stay the same. . . .

As I looked back at 10 years of March issues of the Heights Observer, those familiar and often cliché sayings kept springing to mind. I kept coming upon articles that covered the same themes and topics contained in this March issue.

In March 2009, opinion writer Ralph Solonitz wrote of the near completion of repairs to the University Square garage. Recalling “when the Old May Companys to the Heights held rock ’n’ roll record hops on the parking lot grounds,” Solonitz envisioned a rock concert on the rooftops.

In his first State of the City address, the subject of a page one story in this issue, University Heights Mayor Brennan touched on the need for redevelopment of the now largely vacant University Square. Looking back at the history of that site, Brennan drew a comparison between former mayor Earl Aurelius’ transformation of a former golf course into May’s on the Heights, and the type of reinvention that might be possible for the Wiley Middle School site.

March issues have covered perhaps more than their fair share of stories about changes in school and city leadership.

The March 2009 issue contained a story about a new CH-UH City School District superintendent, to succeed Deb Delisle. In March 2014, the district embarked on another superintendent search, to replace Nyla Jean McDaniel, herself the one-year (by design) successor to Douglas Heuer. Now, in March 2019, the district has announced another interim superintendent, and the search for a “permanent” replacement to Talisa Dixon.

A March 2013 article announced that Cleveland Heights City Council had appointed Kabih Seren to fill the unexpired term of Janine Boyd. This March, an article describes the work of the League of Women Voters in reviewing applicants to replace Cheryl Stephens on CH City Council.

In March 2016, a story announced Cleveland Landmarks Company’s move to Lee Road from Shaker Heights. This month, Shari NACSON’s article describes the details of a merger between the Heights business and another, bringing a name change to the running store that will remain on Lee Road.

As a nonprofit, all-volunteer publication, what the Heights Observer publishes is limited to what writers are interested in, and feel a personal desire or need to write about.

Sometimes the thread of a topic is lost, and a story that seemed perhaps the harbinger of greater change ends up an isolated event, as far as Observer coverage is concerned.

In March 2013, the lead story was about Cain Park officially becoming “dog-friendly.” Six years on, how has that changed worked out? Has, or will it, spread to other city parks? To my knowledge, no one has yet comprehensively revisited that story.

There are many more stories and topics that could be re-explored and revisited.

In his March 2018 “Songs and Stories” column, David Busch, long a part of his experience administering a Facebook group, “Growing up in Cleveland Heights,” that looks back at CH history and experiences. He wrote about things that was fascinating—and frustrating—is that the same topics keep coming up, over and over.

History is rich, complex, and always in danger of being forgotten. For what its worth, and as imperfect and incomplete a record as it may be, every issue of the Heights Observer is archived at www.heightsobserver.org, for those interested in looking back at what has changed, what has stayed the same, and how we got here from there.

Kim Sergio Inglis is editor-in-chief of the Heights Observer, and is a Cuyahoga County master gardener volunteer.
Economic reports contradict latest TOH plan

Loretta Feller

As a 32-year resident of the Cedar Fairmount neighborhood, across Cedar Road from the Top of the Hill (TOH) proposed development, I was surprised to read a Jan. 25 article in the Plain Dealer, “Cleveland Hotel Occupancy in 2018 Rebounds, Exceeds Republican National Convention Year,” which noted, “Hotel occupancy—that’s the percentage of hotel rooms that are filled—was 69.3 percent in 2018 for downtown Cleveland and University Circle.” That’s up from 66.4 percent in 2017, and the highest since 2015, before the city added several new hotels in anticipation of the RNC.

My surprise arose from my attendance at a 2018 community meeting on TOH, when we were told by the city that the developers, Flaherty and Collins, had dropped the “nationwidely branded or boutique hotel” and office space from their original proposal submitted to the city, which formed part of their being chosen to develop this city property. A very low occupancy rate in hotels in University Circle and downtown Cleveland was cited as the reason for the change.

Residents in my neighborhood had applauded the prospect of adding a desirable hotel and office space for their potential to provide the city with attractive architecture and an excellent income from taxes on hotel rooms, as well as higher wages on jobs not in the service or retail sectors. We also know how hard it has been, historically, to find lodging in the area for out-of-town guests.

The developer’s explanation for the change cited “potential competition from existing and potential future hotel uses located down the hill and difficulties in meeting sustainable occupancy rates.” The developer concluded that locating a hotel now at TOH would require the city to subsidize the project to the tune of $6 million, which is not supported by the budget.

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In light of news about desirable levels of occupancy and room rate increases in downtown Cleveland and University Circle, this assessment needs to be revisited, and a more realistic view of the risks analyzed.

According to the Plain Dealer article, downtown and University Circle added four new hotels in 2016 for a 17 percent increase in room supply; yet both 2018 hotel occupancy and overnight rates increased over previous years.

Evidently, there is sufficiently high demand for both hotels and office space in University Circle and Cleveland. According to the article, “The occupancy rate increases are also a result of a growing, healthy economy, according to Laurel Keller, a senior vice president with Newmark Knight Frank, who noted the strong correlation between decreasing office vacancy rates and hotel demand. Cleveland is experiencing its lowest office vacancy rate in more than 17 years. Keller said the increase in both hotel occupancy and overnight rates [up 4.8 percent from 2017] should lead to additional supply growth. Seventy-percent occupancy, she said, ‘is a magic number for developers,’ and the sign of a healthy hotel market.”

I believe including a hotel and office space in the TOH mix would help mitigate the city’s inability to collect taxes on the incomes of “empty nesters,” mostly retirees who will likely represent a large percentage of people moving into the high-end luxury apartments at TOH. Rents starting at $1,200 a month are beyond the reach of most millennials that Flaherty and Collins had in mind originally.

Now, at the “gateway to Cleveland Heights,” we no longer have the originally proposed 120-room nationally branded hotel or 55-80 room boutique hotel, office space with an open and welcoming scale (about six floors), and lots of green space. Instead, new plans show a——some would say——unattractive, 10-story, long, grey wall of apartments facing Cedar Hill and Cedar Road.

Many incremental changes initiated by the developer during the past year, over voiced and written objections from Cleveland Heights residents, mean TOH differs radically from the original proposal. That original plan, after so many changes, more resembles a Trojan horse than a clearly thought-out plan. I believe the city is losing income, as well as our best shot at presenting a positive statement about the city. Top of the Hill needs a reboot.

Loretta Feller is a retired federal mediator, founding president of Mediation Association of Northeast Ohio, and a graduate of, and volunteer with, the Cleveland Heights Citizens Police Academy.
Students need opportunities to find and pursue their passions

Ari Klein

Many students discover their passions as a result of their experiences in school. For some it is sports or music. For others it is a special class or club that drives them to get up in the morning. Most of these activities have eligibility requirements that serve as an extrinsic motivator to ensure that students perform well in their academic classes.

At Heights High, hundreds of our students are involved in sports, marching band, dance squad, and more. Students participate in these voluntarily even though most of these activities require dedication.

One of my students told me recently that she had three athletic events during one week when she could not do her schoolwork until 10 at night! I was appalled, but understood her desire to pursue an activity in which she excelled.

I recently came across (and recycled) a journal from the first half of my junior year. There was no mention of my classes except for music. I was surprised how full my schedule was with school, a custodial job, and Boy Scouts. I must have made time for my other classes, but I guess the only one worth mentioning that semester was music.

Because I was at Heights during the pre-standardized-test era, there was time for more academic electives. For example, there were semester-long English courses on a wide variety of topics: literature of the Holocaust (the first class of its kind in the country), fiction, African-American literature, literature of death and dying, satire, and more.

Teachers loved to develop these courses and revealed in sharing their interests with students. Most of these electives were eliminated over the years, the result of needing to conform to state requirements, or to push students into college-level courses.

I would argue that any of these classes would have been perfect for college-level work, but the state prefers “standardized” students instead of inquisitive students looking to find their passion, their own way to love learning, and connect with a teacher who demonstrates these ideals by living them.

The other day, one of my students told me that she was upset because the new course guide did not include most of the electives she was interested in. As a result, she will probably end up spending her time off campus in alternative programs or with a reduced class schedule.

We must re-examine the offerings at the high school on an annual basis to ensure that we not only offer a basic, standards-based curriculum, but also choices that will enable students to become more well-rounded and worldly based on their academic experiences.

School is tougher than it has ever been for students. They have to know more information, and know it earlier in their student careers, and they are held accountable based on tests that limit their capabilities and interests.

Narrowing our high school course offerings removes incentives for students to be successful because they find these classes less interesting. I hope we continue to find ways to excite each and every student’s capacity for, and love of, learning.
Before ‘diversity’ — the integration of Cleveland Heights [part 3 of 3]

By the early 1970s, Cleveland Heights faced realtor actions that, if unchecked, would lead to white flight and resegregation. Real estate agents steered white buyers away from the city, and showed black buyers only a few neighborhoods within it. Block busting, intended to induce panic and white flight, took place by phone. When the first black family moved onto a street, realtors would call the neighbors, iniminating that their property values were about to plummet.

At the same time, things were changing at CH City Hall. Activists Jack Boyle and Lucille Huston were elected to Cleveland Heights City Council in 1971. In 1972, the newly configured council chose pro-integration attorney Oliver Schroeder as mayor. Schroeder and four other suburban mayors agreed to enact a council-mayor structure. At an April 2018 town hall meeting, two-thirds of participants said they preferred an elected mayor to a council-manager. The council-initiated Cleveland Heights Charter proposed a charter amendment to change from a council-manager to an elected mayor. “We believe enough citizens see they declined to recommend an elected mayor to give citizens the opportunity to vote on a new form of government.”

THE CITY

On March 15, 1976, council adopted a nine-point housing plan to support integration. The actions outlined in Resolution 26-1976 had originated as demands by those struggling for fair housing since the founding of Heights Citizens for Human Rights in 1964.

The city began working closely with realtors, training them in fair housing practices, and maintaining a list of preferred agents. They marketed the city through the housing service and advertising. O’Neil recalled, “We told the realtors, ‘You sell the houses. We’ll sell the community.’

Cleveland Heights also initiated point-of-sale inspections, to ensure maintenance of housing stock and protect new owners from unscrupulous sellers. The plan demonstrated the city’s willingness to partner with the community, address issues affecting stability, and effectively counter resegregation.

The city and HCC continued to collaborate to maintain a racially integrated community. The National Civic League recognized Cleveland Heights with an All-American City Award for 1975-76, “in recognition of progress achieved through intelligent citizen action.”

In 1983, co-plaintiffs Cleveland Heights and HCC won a landmark lawsuit against Hilltop Realty for eight violations of the 1968 Fair Housing Act. Although only legal costs were awarded, with no monetary damages, it was a resounding moral victory.

Today, people of all races and ethnic backgrounds choose Cleveland Heights because it is racially and economically diverse. As of the 2010 census, the racial makeup of Cleveland Heights was 49.8 percent White, 42.5 percent African American, 4.1 percent Asian, 0.2 percent Native American, 0.6 percent other races, and 2.8 percent two or more races. Despite some realtors’ 1960s-era predictions, Fairmount Boulevard’s mansions have not become rooming houses. Whites and African Americans are here for the long haul, and those who choose to live here like it that way.

[Throughout this series, the writers have drawn on Susan Kaesser’s as yet untitled book, to be released by Belt Publishing in 2020; “The 1972 St. Ann Audit: Personal Reflections,” by Suzanne Nigro; and personal interviews.]

Deborah Van Kleef and Carla Rautenberg are longtime residents of Cleveland Heights. Contact them at heightsdemocracy@gmail.com.

Michael Bennett, a 29-year resident of Cleveland Heights, is secretary of Citizens for an Elected Mayor.

Noble Road. Additional information can be found at www.citizensforelected-mayor.com.

CH-MAYOR continued from page 1

Heights and Bedford are the only two with this structure of governance.

“The system worked well to manage a growing city in the early days,” said Rhonda Davis-Lovejoy, a member of Citizens for an Elected Mayor. “Given today’s realities, we don’t need someone simply to manage. We need a bold leader who can collaborate with neighborhood, businesses, developers and regional partners to create new opportunities that ensure Cleveland Heights reaches its potential.”

Citizens have shown support for a council-mayor structure. At an April 2018 town hall meeting, and via an online survey, more than two-thirds of participants said they preferred an elected mayor to a council manager. The council-initiated Cleveland Heights Charter Review Commission (CRC) gathered the information. In a draft of its proposed charter amendments, presented at a Jan. 24 public meeting in advance of preparing a final report for city council, CRC retained the council-manager structure.

“We thank the commission for its service. They are offering so many great suggestions to provide clarity and consistency to the charter,” said Susan Efroymson, another member of Citizens for an Elected Mayor. “We are disappointed to see they declined to recommend an elected mayor and give citizens the opportunity to vote on a new form of government.”

CH City Council can revise the CRC’s proposal before putting it on a ballot, according to Larry Keller, the facilitator that council engaged to work with the CRC. Gada said council members he has spoken with do not seem inclined to change the structure of government.

“We believe enough citizens share the view that we should be able to elect a full-time mayor who is accountable directly to citizens, and look forward to working with the community to ensure our amendment is brought to citizens for a vote,” Gada said.

Citizens for an Elected Mayor has scheduled the second of two informational public meetings on Thursday, March 14, 7 p.m. at the Noble Neighborhood Library, 2800 Noble Road.

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Songs of Orpheus
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Wood Tracer Framing
Books can inform, inspire and unite

**The Common Good**

Suze Koester

Ari Klein and I are the conveners of the Heights Coalition for Public Education, where we have observed that discussing a book can lead to a shared understanding of complex issues, and set the stage for action.

More than 180 parents, teachers and others, mostly from Cleveland Heights and University Heights, read and digested *Regime of Error: The Hoax of the Privatization Movement and the Threat to America’s Public Schools*, by Diane Ravitch, in 2014.

The eye-opening discussion brought out the ways in which public education is under attack. It led the readers to establish the coalition, which exists to resist destructive education policy.

Last month, 60 people met at Heights Middle School to discuss another book, Daniel Koretz’s *The Testing Charade: Pretending to Make Schools Better*. It was a diverse gathering of retired, practicing and pre-service teachers from our district and 14 other districts, university faculty, parents, community advocates, all five members of the CH-UH Board of Education and state board of education member Meryl Johnson.

Everyday wisdom might suggest that people are too busy to read a book and leave home to talk about it, and too comfortable using social media to engage in a 90-minute conversation with strangers on uncomfortable stools in a middle school cafeteria. Not so! These motivated readers came for support, catharsis, a chance to be heard, and to search for a way out of a terrible mess.

As people streamed in, they recorded on charts the concerns that brought them to the meeting: worries about our youth and our future, unhappiness about excessive testing and its effects on students and teachers, and interest in fixing the testing problem.

The readers were affected by the book and the personal horror stories shared around each table about the alarming consequences of test-based accountability, including stressed-out and frightened children, disregard for children’s individuality, pressure on teachers to compromise, and the loss of recess and art to time spent on raising test scores. Tests have become the meaning and purpose of education. Tests diminish teachers and undermine the dignity of education professionals.

At the end of the evening, representatives of each table reported on how the book and discussion had changed their understanding of high-stakes testing. One group felt validated about their concerns. Another appreciated its new-found vocabulary for explaining why testing is not an accurate measure. “I thought the problem was too much instructional time lost to testing,” said school board president Jodi Sourini. “Now I know it’s so much bigger.”

I approached this project safeguarding the wearying reality that high-stakes testing is causing deep alarm. Despite six years of coalition advocacy, the negative effects have only worsened. The discussion renewed my sense of urgency and made me proud of the coalition for its contributions to increasing awareness.

Our book discussions bring together the community and those who are affected by the issues. They provide a venue for meaningful discussion of dangerous policies. The discussions end isolation and promote deeper understanding, and they give participants the courage to act.

Policies are dry on paper and often appear innocuous, but listening to those who live with those policies will drive you out of your comfort zone and, it is hoped, into action.

We have to end high-stakes testing. I hope our dedicated, informed and courageous readers will share their understanding of the “testing charade” with their neighbors, friends and elected officials. This is how we can disguise this destructive threat to the common good.

Susie Koester has been a public school advocate and resident of Cleveland Heights for 40 years. She is co-convener of the Heights Coalition for Public Education and the retired director of Reaching Heights.

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“I’m Native American – Southern Cheyenne – and what the library enables me to do is reclaim my Native identity. There are so many books by and about Native Americans that are worth reading. Heights Libraries enables me to gain that knowledge, to reclaim my identity, and to sometimes share that knowledge with the community. That knowledge is at my fingertips, and the library staff is here to help me find it. The library is valuable just for that reason – preserving knowledge for present and future generations.”

— Josh Hunt

“I live and work in the community, and I come over to the library just about every day, because just about everything I want is over here. And if the library doesn’t have what I need, I can go to my account and order videos and books and so on. I bring my grandchildren here after school so they can play in the Children’s area. They always have a wonderful time: they go on the computer and do their homework and mingle with students from the elementary school right across the street. We all really enjoy coming to the library – there’s a lot to do here.”

— Shahads Raheem

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**FutureHeights continued from page 1**

Jurca, an associate director of Kent State University’s Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative; and participants of the Making Our Own Spaces (MOOS) program, which focuses on engaging and empowering middle and high school students with the skills to transform their neighborhoods’ public spaces.

The event, which begins at 7 p.m., is free and open to the public, but reservations are required. For more information and to RSVP, visit www.futureheights.org or call 216-320-1423.

Sruti Basu is the director of community-building programs at FutureHeights.

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University Heights City Council
Meeting highlights

JANUARY 22, 2019
Present were Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan, Vice Mayor Susan Fawcett, and council members Pamela Cameron (arrived at 7:30 p.m.), Phil Ertel, John Rach, Michele Weiss and Mark Wiseman. Steven Sims was absent. Also present were Luke McConville, law director, and Kelly Thomas, clerk of council. The meeting was held from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Mayor’s comments
Mayor Brennan announced that, because of issues with the chair lift in city hall (only one bid was received to replace it) and concerns that a replacement won’t solve the issue, council meetings will be held, for the time being, in the public meeting room at the UH Board of Education building at 2155 Miramar Blvd.

Fair Housing, BZA appointments
Fathi Carlyle has been reappointed to the University Heights Fair Housing Commission, which was re-established in May. Three people were appointed in staggered terms, with Carlyle’s term being the first to expire. The commission has not had reason to meet yet. Ann Mannen and Kelly Jablonski have been reappointed to the city’s Board of Zoning Appeals Commission for a two-year term beginning Feb. 1. Linda Johnson has resigned from her seat, leaving an opening.

Inspection permitting fines
Building Commissioner James McReynolds noted the inconvenience and cost to the Building Department due to people not showing up for their scheduled inspections. McConville repeated Sim’s concern at the previous meeting that fines be applied uniformly. Council approved Sim’s request to levy a fine of $100 when a person fails to show up for a third inspection. McConville reported that the Fair Housing Center had filed a complaint of fair housing violations by one landlord. The landlord has noted that the charges are false and that the code is unconstitutional by being overly broad.

Online parking system
Police Chief Regan announced that the online parking permission site, allowing people to request parking exceptions for overnight or special circumstance parking, should be available next week.

Service Department updates
Mayor Brennan reported that tree pruning and tree removal is continuing throughout the winter, and leaf collection will resume in April. In the meantime, homeowners can bag their leaves and leave them with the trash.

Upcoming infrastructure projects
City Engineer Joe Comi reported that, starting in February, East Ohio Gas will be replacing gas lines—approximately four miles of pipes. Susan Drucker, economic development director, announced that grant applications are being accepted for storefront and curb appeal improvements for small businesses in a one-year trial program. Patrick O’Rourke, housing and community development director, is meeting with the Cedar Taylor Merchant Association about potential new design elements. He also reported that NOCAA’s Livable Communities Initiative is looking at the Taylor Road Corridor to make it more amenable to all types of transportation, including bicycles.

LWV Observer: Wendy S. Deuring.

FEBRUARY 4, 2019 – No LWV observer was available to cover this council meeting.

LWV observers needed
Would you like to help the League of Women Voters cover our local governing bodies (city councils of both Cleveland Heights and University Heights, the Cleveland Heights-University Heights school board, and the Heights Library board)? The only requirement for LWV observers is that they be impartial and unaffiliated with any political campaign associated with the body covered.

Democracy is healthier when citizens exercise stewardship of their governing bodies, and the LWV observer program is designed for that purpose. If interested, please contact Maryanne Barnes at mbarnes@lwvgreatercleveland.org. Look for earlier, and often expanded, postings of meeting summaries online at www.heightsobserver.org.

To receive email postings of full reports, send an email to heights@lwvgreatercleveland.org or search through Google groups using “ladieshch” as a search phrase.

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

(Excludes oil changes) 216.691.3950
Cleveland Heights City Council
Meeting highlights
JANUARY 22, 2019
Council members present were Mayor Carol Roe, Vice Mayor Melissa Yanow, Mary Dunbar, Khalib Seren, Jason Stein and Michael N. Ungar. The seventh seat is unoccupied. The meeting lasted from 7:33 to 8:53 p.m.

Public comments
Immigration Task Force report: Robin Krieger, who served on the task force, inquired about the disposition of the report and Council Member Seren’s proposed legislation. She mentioned detainee, warrants and refusal to United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and the possible compromise of utilizing a third party between the police and ICE. During the mayor’s report, Mayor Roe responded that the task force report has been completed and shared, and that it includes, but is not limited to, policies related to immigration enforcement. There has not been consensus on an ordinance. She added that bias-free policies are being implemented.

Master plan and council priorities
City Manager Briley presented the 2018 fourth-quarter update for the master plan and council priorities. She noted that this is a multiyear plan and the priorities are ongoing. Highlights included the public dashboard on the city website, realignment of council committees, the formation of a citywide community reinvestment area (CRA), restructuring of joint meetings of the council and school board, and the naming of FutureHeights as the Community Development Corporation (CDC) for the city. She noted that crime was down in the fourth quarter. Briley praised the work of the city staff in 2018 and concluded, “The master plan lives and breathes.” Mayor Roe asked Briley how to respond to citizens who ask why the city’s working on Top of the Hill and not Severance. Briley replied that this is not an either/or situation, and that there has been a lot of city staff engagement with the new ownership of Severance Mall.

Municipal broadband feasibility
Council authorized the city manager to issue a request for proposals for a study of the feasibility of municipal broadband. Council Member Stein pointed out that a knowledgeable citizen has spoken twice to council about this. Briley replied that requesting qualifications does not commit the city to any particular action.

Council seat applications
Mayor announced that 41 citizen applications have been submitted for the unoccupied seat on council. Applications can be read on line (www.clevelandheights.us/1144/city-council-applicants). The applicants will be interviewed on video with the assistance of the League of Women Voters. Interested citizens are urged to apply.

Mayor’s report
Mayor Roe commented about a recent meeting about the Noble Corridor hosted by FutureHeights. Details on http://www.futureheights.org.

Charter Review Commission
A public meeting of the Charter Review Commission was announced for Jan. 24, at the Community Center. A summary guide to charter changes is available on the city website.

Refuse and Recycling Task Force
Council passed a resolution establishing a Refuse and Recycling Task Force and proclaiming its composition (12 members, including 10 residents and 2 designated by the city manager), duration, and purpose and duties. Interested citizens are urged to apply.

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Mayor Roe commented about a recent meeting about the Noble Corridor hosted by FutureHeights. Details on http://www.futureheights.org.

Ready Certify designation presentation
The Cuyahoga County Office of Emergency Management presented Fire Chief Dave Freeman with a plaque certifying that the city’s safety forces had achieved a local level of readiness for major incidents, including a written operations plan for large-scale emergencies. Ready Certify is a voluntary program for cities, villages, townships and organizations that provides objective evaluation of the participating entity’s emergency management program. Cleveland Heights joins an “elite club” of 23 communities and large organizations that have completed Ready Certify.

Housing Code
On second reading, Council amended the section of the Housing Code titled “Family” to read as follows: “Family means a group of individuals who function as a single, cohesive household. The procedure to determine whether a group of individuals constitutes a family shall follow Section 1103.04 of the Zoning Code.”

Board of Education
On second reading, Council amended the city code to include age along with other clauses to protect citizens’ access to housing, employment, education and public accommodations.

Immigration Task Force
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Fair housing
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Immigration Task Force
Mayor Roe commented about a recent meeting about the Noble Corridor hosted by FutureHeights. Details on http://www.futureheights.org.

Ready Certify designation presentation
The Cuyahoga County Office of Emergency Management presented Fire Chief Dave Freeman with a plaque certifying that the city’s safety forces had achieved a local level of readiness for major incidents, including a written operations plan for large-scale emergencies. Ready Certify is a voluntary program for cities, villages, townships and organizations that provides objective evaluation of the participating entity’s emergency management program. Cleveland Heights joins an “elite club” of 23 communities and large organizations that have completed Ready Certify.

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Heights Observer March 1, 2019

Cleveland Heights council seat applicant interviews are posted on city’s website

Blenche Valancy

The League of Women Voters (LWV) of Greater Cleveland, Heights Chapter, conducted non-partisan video interviews of 34 applicants for the vacant seat on Cleveland Heights City Council.

Both the applications and LWV’s video interviews are available for public viewing at www.clevelandheights.com/144/citycouncil-applicants.

Former CH Council Member Cheryl Stephens vacated the seat on Nov. 26, after being elected to represent District 10 on Cuyahoga County Council.

This current Cleveland Heights council members will view the video interviews as they decide whom to appoint to Stephens' council seat.

(Editor's note: Stephens had been re-elected to a third four-year term in November 2017. Whom ever council appoints to her seat will serve out the remainder of her term in November 2019, to serve out the remainder of Stephens’ unexpired term.

According to the writers of this article, six of a total of 41 applicants withdrew from consideration prior to the interview stage of the process, and another applicant did not show up for the scheduled interview. E-mails and/or phone calls to city staff to confirm this information were unreturned as of press time.

This LWV-interview process was created in 2016, the last time a CH council seat was vacant between local elections. Council felt the involvement of a strictly non-partisan organization would produce better results than if council conducted the interviews itself. It was Stephens who developed it, in consultation with the LWV and chapter member Katie Solender, who interviewed the then 12 applicants.

This time, the field of applicants required three LWV volunteer members, Khaliah Fisher-Grace, Kathy Petrey and Blanche Valancy, who worked with Susanna Niernman-O’Neil, vice city manager, and Steve Barker, digital and GovTV program coordinator.

LWV Heights Chapter members developed the questions, which are similar to those asked of candidates responding to the VOTE41 process that LWV uses to create its voters guides for general elections. Among the questions were:

• Why do you want to serve on council?

• What skills, qualities and previous civic activities do you bring to the table?

• What do you see as the top two or three issues or opportunities facing CH?

• What are your opinions about incentives to developers, such as tax abatements, tax increment financing, and the free or below market conveyance of city-owned property?

Each interview was limited to 10 minutes. Niernman-O’Neil received and oriented each applicant, and LWV members asked the questions off-camera.

The interviews took place between Jan. 31 and Feb. 6, at CH City Hall.

LWV is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to informing the public about the election process and the individuals who are asking to represent citizens in government. Its members do not support or oppose candidates or political parties. LWV welcomes new members. For more information, visit www.lwvgreatercleveland.org.

Blanche Valancy is voter services chair and Robin Kolten is co-chair of membership and leadership development of the Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland.

Cleveland Heights is on the rise.

Brennan stated.

The city has a mandate to use the courts to clean up the city’s first Economic Development Department, headed by Drucker is currently...
Talk addresses problem of non-native plants

Peggy Spaeth

Plants have been moving around the globe for millennia, hitching rides on mammals, traveling through avian digestive systems, and riding the wind. Explorers collected them on one continent for agricultural, medicinal and other uses on another.

Gardeners and nurseries have cultivated species to feed and delight us. The taste of a delicious Evercrupt apple and the fragrance of lilacs, native to Eastern Europe and Asia, are unquestioned pleasures.

But plant migration and cultivation have had unintended consequences throughout most of the world. Each continent struggles with non-native species that have become aggressive and invasive, and threaten healthy habitat and biodiversity.

Many plants that we’ve invited into our gardens are now dominating, unwanted and dangerous guests in our native ecosystems.

An in-depth look at identifying, removing and replacing invasive plant species, “Plant This, Not That,” will be presented on March 21, 7 p.m., in the Brody/Nelson Room at the Lee Road Library.

Our own yards and public spaces are the geography we can most affect. There is not enough land in the national parks and wildlife refuges to support native insects and migratory birds in the face of agriculture monocultures and pesticides, so we must reconstruct healthy habitats in our own yards and public spaces.

Why do non-native species pose such a threat? They grow unchecked by insects, birds, and other plants that compete with them for space. Many create monocultures that are food deserts for native insects and birds. Biodiversity is important to all life on earth.

Chinese privet is an example of a common Ohio hedge that has negative consequences for healthy habitat. Introduced to the United States in 1852 as an ornamental shrub, it rarely stays in its planted rows. Bird eat and spread the berries, which are less nutritious but more common than our native shrub berries. A walk around Lower Lake in the Shaker Parklands reveals privet at all sizes dominating the shrub layer. Privet also leaves out earlier in the spring than native shrubs, preventing native wildflowers from blooming by shading them.

Japanese barberry, another common yard plant here, is also fast-spreading, both by root and by bird- and rodent-carried berries. It is associated with higher populations of deer ticks (a threat to humans) because tick-carrying mice can safely avoid predators among the thorns of the barberry.

What can we do in our yards and public spaces? We can garden with native trees, shrubs, vines, ferns and flowering plants. We can increase biodiversity and provide food and homes for native insects that are food for native birds. As entomologist and author Doug Tallamy advises, “Garden as if life depends on it.”

We can learn what non-native plants are in our yards, and remove and replace them as possible. The state of Ohio publishes lists of invasive plants, including those whose selling is banned. Replace privet with the native holly inkberry. Replace burning bush with highbush blueberry that also has spectacular fall color.

The March 21 program is one of a free series of talks on ecological gardening. For information about upcoming talks, visit www.doanbrookpartnership.org/upcoming_programs/events.

Peggy Spaeth is co-chair, with John Barber, of Friends of Lower Lake.

LWV Forum will explore impact of school vouchers

Maryann Barnes

The League of Women Voters (LWV) invites the public to a forum on Ohio’s school voucher programs and their local effects, to be held on Thursday, March 14, 7 p.m., at Heights Libraries’ Lee Road Branch, 2345 Lee Road.

Susie Kaeser, a Cleveland Heights LWV member and co-convenor of the Heights Coalition for Public Education, will offer an overview of Ohio’s voucher policies and concerns. James Posch, a member of the Cleveland Heights–University Heights Board of Education (BOE), will address how voucher policies have affected our local public schools.

After their presentations, Kaeser and Posch will be joined by Scott Gainer, treasurer and CFO of the CH-UH City School District, and Meryl Johnson, a member of the Ohio State BOE, representing District 11, for a panel discussion moderated by Jayne Geneva, past chair of the Lay Finance Committee for the CH-UH BOE. The panel will answer written questions submitted by the audience.

Since 2003, the Ohio legislature has created four education voucher programs that transfer public funds to religious and other private-education providers. The EdChoice vouchers are linked to high-stakes testing. While vouchers are mandated by the Ohio General Assembly, they are funded by monies allocated to local school districts. The policy has significant implications for local school districts, school funding, and oversight of public funds.

LWV of Ohio has long held the position that public funds should be used only for public schools, and that the public elementary and secondary education funding system should be “accountable and responsive to the taxpayers.”

The forum is presented by the Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland, and co-sponsored by the Heights Coalition for Public Education, the CH-UH Council of PTAs, and Reaching Heights.

Maryann Barnes is chair of the Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland.
Making the Heights more bicycle friendly

Heights Bicycle Coalition

Heights Bicycle Coalition (HBC) traces its history back to May 2010, after an application submitted to the League of American Cyclists resulted in Cleveland Heights being recognized with an Honorable Mention as a Bicycle Friendly Community. The goals of HBC were to help make the Heights even more bicycle friendly and inspire residents to use bicycles for commuting and recreation.

To that end, in October 2010, Heights leaders met with officials from University Circle Inc. (UCI) and the city of Cleveland Heights to ask for improved bicycle connectivity between the Heights and University Circle, which has had some of the largest employment growth in the state of Ohio. Many Heights residents work in the Circle, which is now more conveniently served by the Health Line and bike lanes on Euclid Avenue. Heights bicycle commuters wanted their ride to work to be safer and more convenient.

Everyone agreed that encouraging bicycling between the Heights and the Circle was a good idea. For example, UCI President Chris Ronayne cited the high cost of building garages for cars, and noted that the opportunity for institutions to expand had been compromised when much of the limited supply of land in the Circle was used for parking.

Fast forward to today. After six years of planning and raising funds, much improved bike routes are now in place, with more improvements to come. Here’s some of what’s been accomplished:

• Edgewood Road between Edgewood Park and Fairhill Park, an elevated and improved bicycle route.
• The Lake to Lakes Trail, running along Amberl Ravine and Fairhill Road from the western terminus of the existing all-purpose path along the Shaker Lower Lake at Coventry Road and North Park Boulevard. The Heights Bicycle Coalition is a 501(c)3 nonprofit dedicated to educating and encouraging Heights community members to use bicycles as a sustainable and healthy form of transportation and recreation. This article was written by Mary Dunbar with assistance from the coalition’s Communications Committee and president.
March 4 fundraiser to benefit all-volunteer food and clothing bank

Carol Iott

A March 4 fundraiser at Lopez Southwest Restaurant is planned to raise awareness of, and donations for, The Father Michael Wittman Ozanam Center.

This all-volunteer food pantry and clothing bank, located at the St. Philomena campus of Communion of Saints Parish, operates with the support of volunteers from 15 churches and other organizations on Cleveland’s East Side, including Cleveland Heights’ Communion of Saints Parish and Church of the Saviour.

A registered agency with the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, the center operates every Saturday, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Each week it provides 75 families with free food and clothing. It has been serving families in East Cleveland and the surrounding area since 2006.

The original center was established at the former Christ the King Church on Noble Road in memory of the late Father Michael Wittman, who was known for his outreach and commitment to neighbors in need throughout East Cleveland and Cleveland Heights.

The center moved to its current location in 2010, when four Catholic parishes—St. Ann, St. Lewis, St. Philomena, and Christ the King—were consolidated into the current Communion of Saints Parish.

With ongoing demands for food and clothing, the center will hold its first fundraiser on Monday, March 4, 5–9 p.m., at Lopez, 2196 Lee Road in Cleveland Heights. All tips on purchases that evening will go toward the continued operation of the center. The event will also feature a Chinese auction, and musical entertainment provided by local favorite The Rifferees.

“We hope Heights residents will join us for a night of fun in support of those in need in our community,” said Annette Cappaert, event co-chair and board member of the center. “We want to make sure that people in the Heights are familiar with the work of the Father Michael Wittman Ozanam Center so they can lend their support, whether through financial contributions or donated items, or just by spreading the word to those who could benefit from our free services.”

For more information, e-mail cliott216@yahoo.com, or call 708-606-0863.

Carol Iott, a Cleveland Heights resident for 13 years, is a member of Communion of Saints Parish.

Free tour and program will celebrate iconic synagogue

Ellen Petler

During its 150th anniversary year, Park Synagogue is celebrating the art and architecture of Park Synagogue Main in Cleveland Heights, designed by the world-renowned architect, Eric Mendelsohn.

On Sunday, March 10, the community is invited to a free program at, and about, this iconic space, located at 3300 Mayfield Road, in Cleveland Heights.

In “Park 150: Celebrating the Art & Architecture of Park Synagogue,” Samantha Baskind, professor of art history at Cleveland State University, will highlight many of the significant works of art in the exceptional collection that hangs in the building. Steven Litt, Plain Dealer art and architecture editor, will discuss Mendelsohn’s innovative and symbolic architectural designs for the synagogue.

Attendees are invited to take self-guided tours before and after the program, and attend the reception that will follow the talk by Baskind and Litt.

Doors will open at 12:30 p.m., and the program will begin at 1 p.m. While the program is free and open to all, RSVPs are requested, by March 5, via e-mail (epetler@parksyn.org) or phone (216-371-2244 Ext. 122).

Ellen Petler is Park Synagogue’s program and volunteer director.

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Heights High Swim Cadets live ‘Glam Life’ in annual show

The Cleveland Heights High School Swim Cadets, a 14-member synchronized swim team, will present its 2019 annual show Thursday through Saturday, Feb. 28 through March 2, at 7 p.m.

Performances take place at the Heights High pool, at 1326 Cedar Road (entrance on west side of the building). Tickets, $9, are available from Cadet members in advance, and at the door. The show will also be livestreamed on Friday, March 1, on the school district’s YouTube channel, www.youtube.com/chuhschools, where it will remain for future viewing.

This year, the school’s oldest extracurricular club celebrates its 80th anniversary with the theme, “Swim Cadets Live the Glam Life.” Since 1939, Swim Cadets have been a part of Heights High’s rich history, starting as a girls club to help around the pool and gym, and evolving into a highly organized team that produces yearly themed shows, choreographed to music and lights, complete with costume changes.

Heights High Swim Cadets have traditions that span the decades, bonding these girls to the generations before them. It is not uncommon for members to be second- or even third-generation Swim Cadets.

Current club members are:

- seniors Emma Henninge, Georgie Jolivette and Brynn Pierce; junior Emma Hubbard; sophomores: Zoe Burns, Sophia Forniti, Arden Lindberg, Fiona Macke and Anna Turner; and freshmen Estelle Covault, Lily Fawcett-Dubow, Ella Herr and Sophia Manotta.

The team’s coach is former Swim Cadet and Heights High graduate Esther Bergson.

The show is the result of five months of 12–15 hours of practice per week. The girls choose the show’s theme and music, choreograph the routines, host fundraisers, and choose and order costumes, working as a team in and out of the pool.

Spending that much time together makes the girls feel like a family. Junior Emma Hubbard commented, “Swim Cadets has made me a much more social and confident person, and the constant support from the group of girls can’t be found anywhere else! If I hadn’t joined, I wouldn’t have made the closest friends in my life today.”

Senior Emma Henninge said, “Swim cadets has changed my life in the best way possible! It has taught me the true meaning of girl power.”

Kara Hamley O’Donnell and Mary Pat Jolivette are Swim Cadet parents.

BOE names Williams district’s interim superintendent

The Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.

Williams will assume the interim role on March 4, the date on which current Superintendent Talisa Dixon plans to start her new job as superintendent of the Columbus City School District.

The BOE unanimously approved the appointment of Williams at its meeting on Jan. 30. He will serve through the end of July, and return to his role with the Options program on Aug. 1. Williams is not a candidate for the superintendent position.

“We wanted an interim superintendent who has a demonstrated track record of success in leading our district through transitions. We are excited to have Dr. Williams lead our district, and we are fortunate to have a deep pool of qualified candidates who could fill the interim role,” said Board of Education President Jodi Sourini. “Dr. Williams is a proven leader, an outstanding educator, and someone who is universally respected throughout our school community.”

The BOE is currently undertaking a national search for its next superintendent. The board expected to begin interviewing candidates in February, and have the new superintendent begin on Aug. 1.

Scott Wortman is the supervisor of communications for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.
CH-UH Students receive health care at school

Krisy Dietrich Gallagher

There are many barriers that may prevent CH-UH students from receiving appropriate health care. Some students lack health insurance, others may have transportation issues, or their parents may have jobs without paid time off to care for family members. This can result in students not receiving the care they need, or missing school time because of illness.

To the rescue: Cleveland Clinic’s Mobile Health Unit. These vans—literally, a doctor’s office on wheels—travel to schools in six districts in and around Cleveland, including CH-UH. The vans have visited both Boulevard and Oxford elementary schools once each week for the past two years, and will add Gready and Noble elementary schools this spring.

Pamela Taylor, school-based health center project manager for the clinic, believes that convenience is the most important aspect of this program. “We meet children where they are. Their parents don’t have to miss any work and students miss only a minimal amount of school,” usually only about 15 minutes or so.

Health professionals perform well-child visits, vision checks, fill prescriptions, and keep vaccinations current, among other services. They also screen for a variety of conditions, including mental health issues, and make necessary referrals.

The mobile unit will send medical updates to a child’s regular pediatrician or specialist. “We are not trying to take anyone away from their current providers; we just want to fill the gaps in care,” said Taylor.

Karen Allen, a social worker at Boulevard, is a big fan of the program. She described one family with three children at Boulevard, one at Heights Middle School, and another at Heights High, all of whom received care at Boulevard’s mobile van. “The mother was thrilled. She has no car and yet her kids were able to get their vaccinations, their prescriptions filled, and complete their well visits.”

Heights High students can participate in a similar program in which students can use the school nurse’s office for a virtual visit with a Cleveland Clinic pediatric provider. Using advanced virtual technology, providers can assess, diagnose, educate, prescribe and refer as needed, all while the student remains at school.

Students enrolled in any CH-UH school can receive care in the vans, although parents are responsible for bringing the child from his or her assigned school to wherever the mobile unit is located.

Taylor encourages families to call the mobile unit at 216-442-7442, to leave a message. A health team member will contact the parent directly. Taylor summed up the program this way: “We want to remove as many barriers to health care as possible.”

Krisy Dietrich Gallagher is a long-time resident of Cleveland Heights, a graduate of Heights schools, and a freelance journalist under contract with the CH-UH City School District.

CH-UH schools will host kindergarten info nights

Cathan Cavanaugh

Beginning Feb. 27, each Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District elementary school will host a Kindergarten Information Night for incoming and prospective families.

Attendees will have the opportunity to meet the school principals and teachers, ask questions, and tour the buildings. Several of the schools will also offer dinner, and childcare or playtime services.

To find the school that corresponds to your place of residence, use the district’s online interactive boundary map.

Boulevard Elementary School hosted its information night on Feb. 27. Here is a list, by date, of each remaining elementary school’s info. night:

Wednesday, March 6, 6-7 p.m., Roxboro Elementary School, 2405 Roxboro Road. During the presentation for parents, children will meet in a kindergarten classroom for crafts and a chance to meet future classmates. After information night, families are encouraged to tour the school, view the book fair and attend Roxboro Elementary Multicultural Night.

Thursday, March 7, 6-7:30 p.m., Gready Professional Development School, 2323 Wrenford Road. Dinner 6-6:30 p.m. Parents and students will then tour the classrooms and partake in kindergarten games 6:30-7 p.m., concluding with an information/Q&A session 7-7:30 p.m.

Thursday, March 7, 6-7:30 p.m. Noble Elementary School, 1293 Ardoin Street. Light refreshments and childcare will be provided.

Thursday, March 21, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Canterbury Elementary School, 2530 Canterbury Road. Dinner 6:30-6:50 p.m., playdate 6-6:50 p.m., and informational meeting 6:50-7:30 p.m. (childcare will be provided during that time).

Thursday, March 21, 6:30-8 p.m. Fairfax Elementary School, 3510 Fairfax Road. Dinner 6:30-6:50 p.m., during Fairfax Literacy Night (all are welcome).

Thursday, April 4, 6-7:15 p.m. Oxford Elementary School, 939 Quilliams Road. Pizza and punch served 6-6:30 p.m., building tour, kindergarten information and activities 6:30-7 p.m.; Q&A session 7-7:30 p.m. Childcare will be provided.

Cathan Cavanaugh is the communications administrative assistant for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.

Scholarship honors Ron Register

Quentin Smith

Attending college is an opportunity for students to expand their horizons, discover and develop their strengths, and make a path to achieve their dreams. Advanced education, however, is too often a financial difficulty that denies many motivated, gifted and capable students the opportunity to fulfill their dreams.

This lack of equal access to college inspired the Black Caucus of Forest Hill Church, Presbyterian, to propose and implement a college scholarship fund for deserving Cleveland Heights High School graduates. This scholarship honors Ron Register, a church elder and advocate for equity, inclusion, justice, excellence and quality public education for all.

Register retired from 16 years of service on the CH-UH Board of Education in 2017, having served as board president for six terms. In 2014, the Ohio School Boards Association recognized his exemplary service with its Award of Achievement.

The church warmly embraced the caucus’ proposal for the Ron Register Scholarship Award and, in April 2018, kicked off fundraising by contributing $5,000 and pledging administrative and mailing costs, ensuring that 100 percent of scholarship contributions would go to deserving students.

Members of the congregation and the Heights community contributed to the scholarship fund as well, making it possible for the scholarship committee to provide up to two scholarships of $2,000 each for the next five years to worthy graduating Heights High seniors.

The scholarship committee seeks to keep this scholarship, and Ron Register’s name and contributions to our city, alive for at least a generation. To make a tax-deductible contribution, send a check payable to Forest Hill Church, Presbyterian, 3031 Monticello Blvd., Cleveland Heights, OH 44121. In the memo line of the check, indicate that the contribution is for the Ron Register Scholarship.

Black Caucus Committee members are Forest Hill Church members Doris Allen, Barbara Cloud, Darla Character-Johnson, Vikki Nowak and Diana Woodbridge, and community members Reginald T. Evans and Susie Kaezer.

Black Caucus member Quentin Smith chairs the Friends of the Ron Register Scholarship Fund.

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Fine elimination at Heights Libraries is paying off

Sheryl Banks

On Jan. 2, 2018, Heights Libraries joined a growing number of public libraries that have eliminated overdue fines for most late materials. Despite the fact that the benefits have been supported by research, the elimination of fines still strikes many as an almost sacrilegious act. Libraries and fines, in some people’s minds, go together like peanut butter and jelly.

“Some customers were very opposed to it, to say the least,” said Heights Libraries Director Nancy Levin. “I heard arguments ranging from the effectiveness of fines for teaching children responsibility, to the belief that people wouldn’t return their items anymore because the fear of fines is what keeps them honest. But what we have found is just the opposite.”

At Heights Libraries, the elimination of overdue fines has resulted in more returned items, which has saved the library significant money; in more returned items, which has resulted in a less punitive, more generous and accessible approach to customers. Another surprising result of the elimination of fines has been the amount of cash collected by the library’s collection agency, Unique. That number has also risen since 2017, from $22,347 to $26,366 in 2018.

While late fees are waived on books, CDs and DVDs, as long as the materials are returned, the library still charges fees for damaged or lost items, and late fees for video games and wireless hotspots still apply. Accounts with fines of $25 or more are still handled over to collections, but even then, as long as materials are returned, the customer can pay a $10 fee and be welcomed back, no questions asked.

“I think what we’re seeing are customers who might otherwise be dissuaded from bringing the materials back because of excessive overdue fees are able to get back into the library by only paying the $10 referral fee,” said Emerson. “And we want them back! We want people to use the library, not be scared off by punitive policies.”

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

Cleveland Heights - University Heights Public Library Board
Meeting highlights

January 22, 2019

Board members present were President Chris Mentrek, Vice President James Rossie, Secretary Dana Fluellen, Suzanne Moskowitz, Vikas Tendolkar, Max Glerick and Annette Iwamoto.

New trustees and board officers

Annette Iwamoto was sworn in as new member of the Heights Libraries Board of Trustees. A resolution was made and accepted for the 2019 board officers. They are President Chris Mentrek, Vice President James Rossie, and Secretary Dana Fluellen.

Annual security update

Safety and Security Services Manager Kevin Mentrek presented an annual security update. In 2018, there were 736,764 visitors and 221 reported incidents, including 42 police calls, 8 EMS calls, and 49 long-term evictions.

Financial report

Heights Libraries fiscal officer reviewed the September financial statement. Total cash balance across the Operating Accounts, Bauer Fund Accounts, and Invest- ment Accounts at the end of December was $13,471,652.99. The board approved a resolution to accept the financial report.

LSTA funding for Mental Health First Aid

Heights Libraries has been awarded on LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) grant in the amount of $5,000 to continue Mental Health First Aid and Suicide Prevention (QPR) Training for staff, and to expand training to community partners and the public in 2019.

Coretta Scott King awards anniversary

The Coretta Scott King Book Awards celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2019. These book awards have made a name for themselves within the library and book industries and designate notable books that celebrate the black experience for today’s youth. Updates and announcements about the libraries’ celebration of this anniversary will be made.

LWV Observer: Khaliah Fisher-Grace.

Monday, March 18, 7 p.m.

ASL, professor Clara Jean Muly Hall presents her book, “Paris in America.” The hearing daughter of a deaf Nanticoke Indian, Hall describes the intersections of her various identities in her new book, Paris in America: A Deaf Nanticoke Shoemaker and His Daughter. Her memoir is a celebration of her family, faith, journey and legacy. A question and answer period will follow the talk.

Lee Road Library
2345 Lee Road, 216-932-3600

Sunday, March 3, 3 p.m.

Green Eggs and Ham Opera. Happy birthday, Dr. Seuss! Celebrate his legacy through this interactive performance, in which soprano Lara Troyer and her friends will perform the one-act opera “Green Eggs and Ham” by composer Robert Kaplow.

Tuesday, March 12, 6 p.m.

Award Nominated Movies. Join us for popcorn, and watch some of 2018’s award-nominated movies. This month’s feature is BlackkKlansman (2018, 135 mins, R), directed by Spike Lee, in which a black detective sets out to infiltrate the KKK.

What’s going on at your library?

Coventry Village Library
1927 Coventry Road, 216-731-4500

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University Heights Library
13866 Cedar Road, 216-321-4700

Noble Neighborhood Library
2800 Noble Road, 216-291-5665

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Look for earlier and often expanded postings of meeting summaries online at www.heightsobserver.org. See disclaimer on page 7.

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CH Senior Center News
Amy Jenkins

In March, University Circle’s Life-Long Learning Consortium is coming to the Cleveland Heights Senior Activity Center (SAC), with two related programs about biomimicry.

On Tuesday, March 19, at 11 a.m., participants will learn about the science of biomimicry with Doug Paige, Cleveland Institute of Art professor. Then, on Tuesday, March 26, at 11 a.m., they’ll have the opportunity to visit The Machine Inside: Biomimetics exhibition at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History.

Embraced by visionaries, including da Vinci and the Wright brothers, biomimicry (from “bios” meaning life, and “mimesis” meaning to imitate) is a discipline that studies nature’s best ideas, then imitates those designs and processes to solve human problems.

In the exhibition, developed by The Field Museum in Chicago, in partnership with the Denver Museum of Nature & Science, visitors will meet the scientists who investigate various plants and animals, experiment with new adaptations and applications, and learn about the future of biomechanics and biomimicry—fields that are re-energizing the imaginations of architects, engineers, and designers alike. Highly interactive and specimen-rich, the exhibition brings biomimicry to life, and explores the exciting promise it holds for the future.

Advance registration is required, and the cost of $10 includes both the lecture at the SAC and the trip to the museum.

The Cleveland Heights 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, available online at www.cbarks.com.

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, 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 216-691-7379 or ajenkins@chcagoheights.com.

UH Senior Happenings

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

March 14: Bill Rudman, founding director of The Musical Theater, and Amy Jenkins, technology trainer, will discuss the problems of bank erosion, channel downcutting, invasive plant species, and an undersized/failing culvert.

March 17: Elizabeth Hiser, manager of the Euclid Creek Watershed Program for the Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District, will discuss the problems of bank erosion, channel downcutting, invasive plant species, and an undersized/failing culvert.

March 19: Kim DeNero Ackroyd, deputy director of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System, will discuss its new, free digital collections: Acorn TV, Kanopy, StingRay Qello, and Indie Flix. Along with Ann MacNamara, technology trainer, she’ll discuss how to access and use them.

March 26: Geralyn “Geri” Presti, president and CEO of The Music Settlement (TMS) in University Circle, will describe her “dream come true” of heading the music school. After 27 years in corporate law, she’s returned to TMS, where she studied piano at the age of 6. She will be joined by TMS music director, Amy Jenkins.

To receive the monthly schedule by email, call 216-932-7800, ext. 203, or pgrogan@universityheights.com. Member-
Heinen’s and University Heights celebrate 60 years together

Ashley Grinonneau-Denton and Brian Denton have opened the Ohio Center for Relationship & Sexual Health in University Heights.

Psychotherapists and spouses Ashley Grinonneau-Denton and Brian Denton have opened the Ohio Center for Relationship & Sexual Health in the Waterstone Medical Building in University Heights.

The center’s five clinicians, including professional counselors Megan Davis, Matt Lachman and Beth Thomas, offer talk therapy aimed at improving the sexual functioning of the clients it serves.

Previously, Grinonneau-Denton and Denton each operated their own private practices in the Cedar Fairmount Business District, for six and eight years, respectively. For their new venture, they looked throughout the Heights to find the right space for a multi-provider center.

“‘We knew we wanted to stay in this geographic region,’” said Denton, “as it is a good draw from the surrounding communities.”

Partner Grinonneau-Denton shared her opinion that people from other communities are drawn to the Heights for this type of service, commenting, “People expect to find it here—people seek it out because it is in the Heights.”

Denton noted that the Heights is known for what he termed its “multicultural intersectionality of diversity.” The Cleveland Heights residents sought a community and a building where the word “sexual” could be on the door. “Colleagues in other states have this issue. In our leasing, this was an essential question,” said Grinonneau-Denton.

Grinonneau-Denton acknowledged that there is often a misconception that sex therapy is sexual surrogacy. According to the center’s website, sex therapy is a form of talking therapy that is intended to help individuals and couples resolve sexual difficulties, many of which stem from anxiety or other issues.

In addition to talk therapy, the center provides supervision, consultation, and education for therapists and health professionals.

The center is designed, more than anything, to be a place that feels safe and open to people who may have felt marginalized in other therapeutic settings.

To learn more, visit www.clevelandrelationshiptherapy.com.

Mostly a mom, Shari Nacson, is a freelance editor, social worker, and nonprofit consultant who makes her home in Cleveland Heights.

Heinen’s Grocery Store is celebrating its 90th anniversary in 2019. For 60 of those years the family-owned grocer has served the residents of University Heights.

Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan presented Jeff Heinen a proclamation declaring Friday, Feb. 15 “Heinen’s Day” in University Heights, at Heinen’s 2180 South Green Road location.

Heinen’s story began in 1929 when local butcher Joe Heinen pioneered the city’s first supermarket by selling traditional grocery items alongside hand-butchered meats.

Bringing these two shopping experiences together was revolutionary in the grocery industry, but what truly set Heinen apart was his commitment to quality.

Throughout 2019, Heinen’s will host special anniversary sales and events to thank its customers for their decades of loyalty.

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

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www.heightsobserver.org
Amy Fish

On March 31, after nearly a decade on Coventry Road, Blush Boutique will be closing the doors to its small, intimate Cleveland Heights boutique.

Owner Laurie Klopper, a Cleveland Heights resident, said she is closing to focus on her other business, In the Lack of Support from the Local Community. "I wish people would see that 'Shop Local' isn't just a trite slogan. It's so important to the local economy," said Klopper, "but I wish people would see that 'Shop Local' isn't just a trite slogan. It's so important to the local economy." Klopper also noted a lack of support from the city of Cleveland Heights. "My landlord was good to me. His properties were rented. But there have been buildings empty for years on Coventry," Klopper explained. "There is a lack of business development and creative programs in the city to help the landlords and merchants resolve this problem and make Coventry a destination to visit."

Blush Boutique Coventry, 1783 Coventry Road, will offer 50 percent off all items until closing at the end of March. After that, Blush can be visited at its Chagrin Falls location (9 N. Franklin St.), which has been open since 2016.

Amy Fisher is a friend of Blush owner Laurie Klopper.

FutureHeights announces Best of the Heights Award winners

In the 2019 Best of the Heights Awards contest, readers of the Heights Observer honored outstanding businesses in Cleveland Heights and University Heights by voting, Jan. 1 through Feb. 15, for their favorites in 12 categories. In all, 178 businesses were nominated. Winners and Finalists in the FutureHeights 2019 Best of the Heights Awards contest are:

**Best New Restaurant or Bar**
- Winner—Loo, Stock and Brisket
- Finalist—Boss Dog Brewing Co.; Fishstix

**Best New Business (other)**
- Winner—Botao CLE
- Finalist—Studio How-To; Steams Fleur

**Best Place to Find Unique Gifts**
- Winner—S’Wonderful Gifts
- Finalist—Heights Arts; In the 216

**Best Bang for Your Buck**
- Winner—Barrio
- Finalist—Aladdin’s

**Heights Observer**

Heights Observer March 1, 2019

18 www.heightsobserver.org
Cleveland Running Co. merges with like-minded store

Owner Jeff Fisher is excited to announce that his Lee Road business, Cleveland Running Company, is merging with the Achilles Running Shop, a like-minded regional running store with locations in Mentor and Erie, Pa. As of press time, the store’s new name had yet to be finalized.

The merger came about quickly. Fisher and David Jacobson, general manager of Achilles, met in December 2018. Familiar with one another through the industry, it was business-sector kismet. The future partners began discussing the merger in January 2019. By early February, the partnership was designed, the lease transferred, the inventory management software in use, and the management team was enjoying day-to-day collaboration.

“It’s a win-win,” said Fisher, who is excited for customers to experience the expanded inventory, expertise and programming that is on the horizon.

Achilles is owned by a podiatrist, Dr. Mark Mendeszoon, who saw his patients misfitted for running. “The customers become your friends,” he said.

Fisher brought the store to Lee Road because he always wanted to be in a neighborhood setting. “This was much more of what I always pictured—an integrated business and residential district, walkable, family-oriented and runner-friendly,” explained Fischer. “On a nice Saturday, with so many people walking around, it’s a great place to be.”

Fisher’s new business partners agree, with Jacobson saying he is pleased to be expanding to the Cleveland Heights location. “It’s a different vibe,” he said. “There are a lot more people out and about. People are friendly and interested in talking to staff.”

Achilles manager Kyle Griffith, who will work full time at the Lee Road store, said he is enjoying the process of becoming familiar with Cleveland Heights. “It has a very different feel than our other locations.”

While there will be some new faces at the Lee Road store, familiar faces will remain. “All of the staff are staying,” said Fisher.

The merger will bring with it aesthetic upgrades to the Cleveland Heights store, a new name and logo, expanded inventory access, and more brands.

Another benefit of the merger is that Fischer will have time to get out into the community, doing the education and programming that he loves. Jacobson said Achilles has long wanted to do more community outreach. “Jeff brings a lot more experience to our staff,” he said.

Online reviews show that Achilles is adored by its customers, who value the conscientious staff and fitting process—the very traits for which Fisher’s shop is praised locally and in online reviews.

The Lee Road store will celebrate the changes with an open house sometime in April. Visit www.clevelandrunning.com for information on the open house and other upcoming events.

Mostly a mom, Shari Nacson, is a freelance editor, social worker, and nonprofit consultant who makes her home in Cleveland Heights.

Cleveland Running Co. merges with like-minded store

The driving force was the pleasure Fisher takes in sharing his passion for running. “The customers become your friends,” he said.

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Spring show opens March 1 at St. Paul’s gallery

Featuring the work of four artists, the spring show at the nonprofit Nicholson B. White Gallery at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church opens on Friday, March 1, with an artists’ reception, 5–7 p.m. The show will be on view through June 2.

Paintings from John Davis’s recent “Urban Period,” in which he explores distinctive spaces and places unique to Cleveland, will be featured in the spring show. A native of Cleveland, Davis works in his studio in the city’s Tower Press Building. He spent 30 years in Chautauqua, N.Y., where he established Davis Pottery and Gallery while raising his family.

Susan D. Lowe creates her historic Shovel Works Building in mixed-media artwork at the Nicholson B. White Gallery at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church. She is a pioneer member of City Artists at Work (CAAW), which began as an organization of artists aiming to educate the public by opening up their studios and demystifying these workplaces. Inspired by nature, her work combines a range of painting materials, inks, paper and wood surfaces. This show includes both two- and three-dimensional work by Lowe.

Tyler Whidden

March 8–31, Cleveland Heights’ Ensemble Theatre will stage another timeless Eugene O’Neill play, “A Moon for the Misbegotten,” directed by Ian Wolfgang Hinz.

“A sequel to “Long Day’s Journey into Night,” the play continues to explore themes of deceit—both of others and within oneself—and the ever-presence of death.

After Ensemble’s recent productions of O’Neill’s “Long Day’s Journey . . .” and “The Iceman Cometh,” Hinz felt it was time to bring “A Moon for the Misbegotten” to Ensemble’s stage.

“It’s one of O’Neill’s last three plays,” Hinz said, “and those are his most famous works. He’s America’s greatest playwright, and the time was right to bring this one to light.”

Like all of Ensemble’s productions, “Moon” will feature an all-Cleveland cast, including Cleveland Critics Best Actress Award-winner Lara Mielcarek (for Ensemble’s “Well”), Robert Hawkes, Mitch Rose, James Rankin and Nate Holmka.

“It was a nice confluence of having a notoriously difficult play to cast and having talent in the area, who we’re familiar with, be at the right stage in their careers to cast it,” Hinz commented.

Hinz said he was attracted to the play’s depiction of class and the message of humanity that it conveys.

“With all of the negativity today, this play gives audiences a respite from all of that in the world,” Hinz said. “It’s a prayer to O’Neill’s brother, offering peace after a lack of compassion toward his older sibling. I think audiences can recognize that offering of peace. The play is telling us, simply, that human beings should be kind to each other.”

O’Neill struggled to finish “Moon” before his death in 1953, and the play made its Broadway debut in 1956. Even in the later stages of his life, O’Neill’s work was still as lyrical and thought-provoking as ever, Hinz said.

“He’s a poet who is deliberate in his writing,” said Hinz. “O’Neill’s plays are composed like musical scores, with long thoughts and phrases, and he puts the drama in the context of those thoughts.”

“A Moon for the Misbegotten” will be performed on Friday and Saturday evenings at 8 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m., at Ensemble Theatre, 2841 Washington Blvd.

For tickets and information, call 216-331-2200, e-mail info@ensembletheatre.org, or visit www.ensembletheatre.org.
Cleveland premiere of ‘The Nether’ opens at Dobama

Both a twisting criminal drama and a haunting sci-fi thriller, “The Nether,” by Jennifer Haley, explores the consequences of living in our most shocking utopia in the age of virtual reality. Dobama Theatre’s production of the play, directed by Shannon Sindelar, will run March 8–31.

In her play, Haley creates a possible future in which The Nether is a virtual wonderland that provides total sensory immersion. Participants log in, choose an identity, and indulge their every desire. But when a young detective uncovers a disturbing brand of entertainment, she triggers an interrogation into the darkest corners of the imagination.

“The New York Times” called the play “a parade for where we’re headed.” “The Nether” was conceived at the Eugene O’Neill Theater Center as part of the National Playwrights Conference in 2011. During its residence in Los Angeles, where it had its world premiere in 2013, “The Nether” won seven Ovation Awards for theatre excellence. It has been performed throughout the country and around the world, and was nominated for an Olivier Award in London.

In “The Nether,” Haley examines how relationships are affected by technology and addiction, and how these are detrimental to individuals, families and society at large. In an interview, she argued that technology—rather than being the focus of her play—is merely “an interesting way to examine these really limitless, long-standing, global questions of identity, and waking life versus dream life.”

Haley has said she hopes that the play will highlight the problem of addiction—something with which she has first-hand experience, as her father died of complications of alcoholism in 2013. Dobama’s production of “The Nether” features Sarah Durn, David Peacock, Matthew Wright, Callista Zajac and Joe Pine.

Performances are Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., and Sundays at 2:30 p.m. Call the box office (216-932-3396) for information or to purchase tickets, or visit www.dobama.org.

In an effort to remove economic barriers and make Dobama’s productions accessible to everyone, the first Sunday of every production offers a 7:30 p.m. Pay-As-You-Can Performance. For this production, that performance will take place on March 10.

Colin Anderson is the assistant to the managing and artistic directors at Dobama Theatre.

WRC to sing Haydn and Beethoven

There may be other examples of a teacher and student sharing a concert stage, but rarely are both held in such high regard. In this instance, the Western Reserve Chorale (WRC) will share the work of Franz Joseph Haydn (the teacher) and Ludwig van Beethoven (the student) as part of the Silver Hall Concert Series at the Milton and Tamar Maltz Performing Arts Center on March 24.

The chorale will present Haydn’s St. Nicholas Mass with Beethoven’s Mass in C Major. Both works represent the legacy of music commissioned by Prince Nicolaus Esterhazy II for performance in Eisenstadt, Austria. The St. Nicholas Mass is not on the same scale as Haydn’s late masses (it is about half the length of the Nelson Mass) but it is nevertheless quintessential Haydn in its energy, its tunefulness and, above all, its infectious joy.

The Mass in C Major was written at the same time as Beethoven was writing the Symphony No. 3 in C Minor, however, at its premiere, the piece was ill-prepared and not in keeping with that to which Esterhazy had become accustomed from Haydn’s six great masses. Esterhazy did not hold back his criticism, writing, “Beethoven’s Mass is unbearably ridiculous and detestable, and I am not convinced that it can ever be performed properly. I am angry and mortified.” It was the last commission Beethoven would receive from the house of Esterhazy.

The Mass was heard by a wider public just over a year later when, in December 1808, it was part of a massive concert at the Theater an der Wien in Vienna. Its durability and popularity over the next two centuries suggests that it was Prince Nicolaus’s ear that was at fault and not the Mass.

WRC will perform with orchestra and guest artists Marian Vogel, Joanne Unionowski, JR Fralick and Brian Keith Johnson. Though the concert is free, tickets are needed and may be reserved. Find the link for tickets and other information at www.westernreservechorals.org. The concert begins at 3 p.m., at the Maltz Performing Arts Center, located at 1857 Ansel Road (off of E. 105th St., in University Circle).

David Gilson is artistic director of the Heights-based Western Reserve Chorale, director of music at Church of the Savoir, and associate dean for student affairs at the Cleveland Institute of Music.
Guest curator Julianne Edberg invited her friends to have some serious fun with the group exhibition Sideways Thinking, on view at Heights Arts March 8 through April 21. Artists Leslye Discont Arian, Catherine Butler, Julianne Edberg, Laurie Garrett, Jenny Mendes and Melissa O’Grady focus on playing—the less serious side of art.

“It may look like fun, but it’s all the artist can do!” Edberg explained. “When we play, we let loose the inspired part of our mind to think sideways instead of logically. Ideas flow more freely. Questions may be raised. Is this an alternate, more fantastic world we are looking at? Is this an alternate, more lighthearted result. (Q: How did you think of that? A: I was just playing around.)

The exhibition opens with a public reception on Friday, March 8, 6-9 p.m., at the Heights Arts gallery (2175 Lee Road). On Thursday, April 4, a related gallery talk, “Elephrastacy: Artists Talk + Poets Respond” brings together the exhibition artists with invited community poets to discuss the inspiration for and interpretation of the works.

In the gallery’s Spotlight exhibition space, a solo show by Michelangelo Lovelace will open on March 22, with a public reception from 6 to 9 p.m. Heights Arts exhibition committee member Bill Schubert wrote of the show, “No cultural institution has kept its eye so relentlessly focused on our home town, its neglected neighborhoods, and its citizens. In acrylic on canvas, Michael shows the streets of our often troubled inner city and the rich lives that are lived on them. These recent works have never been shown in public until now, and are a must-see for anyone who loves “The Land.”

The talk, receptions and exhibitions are free and open to the public. For more information on Heights Arts community programs and events, including house concerts, gallery performances and outreach, visit www.heightsarts.org.

Genevieve Schwartz is the program manager at Heights Arts.

Communion of Saints School presents ‘Honk!’

More than 70 Communion of Saints students are involved in the school’s upcoming production of “Honk! Jr.” to be performed on April 5 and 6, at 7 p.m., in Powers Hall at Communion of Saints School.

Now in its 10th year, the school’s drama program invites the community to escape the cold with the heartwarming tale of an ugly duckling’s transformation.

Whether working behind the scenes or on stage, students are under the guidance of Lydia Chanenka, director and scenery painter extraordinaire, and Maria Botti-Lodovico, choreographer and musical director, as they bring the story to life through music and magical scenery.

Adult tickets are $3, making this an affordable family evening to be enjoyed by young and old alike.

For more information, visit www.communionofsaintsschool.org.

Carlita Skok is mother of three, currently working in executive search. An avid volunteer, she is currently focusing her efforts on Communion of Saints School and Heights Youth Theatre.
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Remembering Norman Tischler

Norm Tischler lived in Cleveland Heights for decades. He moved to the area in 1969, three or four years out of college, when he was a VISTA volunteer, assigned to the Karamu House in Cleveland, where he taught kids music, and also taught them about music.

He was an extraordinary musician, who played with just about every other musician in the region, and with some nationally known ones. No, really—just about everyone in this region. It sounds implausible, but he was always everywhere, he seemed, and never without his instruments. And he knew everyone. Some percentage of them—about 500 people, and, it appeared, about half of them musicians—showed up for his memorial service last month at The Temple-Tifereth Israel in Beachwood.

Norm died on Jan. 21, at the age of 72, soon after a sudden diagnosis of cancer. During his final week, his hospital room constantly overflowed with musicians and other friends, and, much of the time, with music.

The bands Norman played in over the years included the nationally known Ohio Live, an author, and a professional musician and musicologist. His writing focuses on the arts and, especially, pop music history.