Coventry library becomes mobile pantry site

Sheryl Banks

On May 20, Heights Libraries’ Coventry Village branch became one of the newest sites for the Greater Cleveland Food Bank’s Mobile Pantry program.

According to the Food Bank, a mobile pantry is defined as a truck full of food that is brought to a central location where clients can pick items up, just like they would from a regular pantry with a focus on healthy, fresh produce. “Mobile pantries distribute the healthiest and most nutritious food at the Food Bank. A truck will usually contain 90 percent produce (fruits and vegetables), including apples, cabbage, greens, sweet potatoes, onions, carrots, oranges, melons and more. The remaining 10 percent usually consists of bread, yogurt or another donated item.”

Maggie Kinney, Heights Libraries’ special projects manager, who oversees the program, said the community’s poverty rate is one reason the library applied to be a pantry site. “Our community is vibrant and thriving, but we do have poverty here as well, a rate of roughly 18 percent according to the U.S. Census Bureau,” Kinney said. “Our buildings have really become the center of our neighborhoods, and residents already look to us for help with all kinds of things, so the Mobile Pantry is a natural fit.”

The Mobile Pantry is the library’s latest collaboration with the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, which over the past few years has included after-school snacks for kids at the Noble Neighborhood branch and said, “and when I saw kids my age playing the game without adequate equipment, it got me thinking.” Soccer is certainly Ford’s “thing.”

Citizens for an Elected Mayor (CEM), a grassroots campaign to change the structure of Cleveland Heights’ government, has been collecting signatures since mid-May to put a voter referendum on the ballot this November. The proposal would revise the city charter to allow residents to elect the mayor directly.

In the current system, in place since the original city charter in 1921, citizens elect seven part-time city council members, who in turn hire a full-time city manager to run the city. A so-called “weak mayor” is a member of council, chosen by council as first among equals.

Meanwhile, the Charter Review Commission (CRC), appointed by CH City Council, has spent 18 months assembling a wide-ranging set of proposed charter revisions—but declined to include the change to a strong mayor.

City council members will decide which, if any, of CRC’s proposed revisions will go before CH voters in November. This means there could be two competing issues on the ballot this November—one, based on CRC findings, recommending dozens of small changes; and the other, from CEM, recommending a single large change.

Tony Cuda, 64, is chairman of the effort by CEM. He teaches sociology and government at Shaker Heights High School. He grew up in Cleveland Heights and graduated from Heights High. After years outside the city, he has lived here continuously since 2003.

Following is a distillation of a May 2 conversation with Cuda: **Confidence that CEM’s refer-**

**continued on page 4**

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The Heights Observer has published news articles and opinion pieces regarding Citizens for an Elected Mayor, a local group that advocates abandoning Cleveland Heights’ existing council-manager structure in favor of a “strong mayor-council” form of government. This position is inconsistent with the recommendation of the Charter Review Commission (CRC), which voted 10-2-1 (a abstention) against adding a strong mayor and 11-2 to retain our council-manager structure.

The CRC was tasked by Cleveland Heights City Council to answer the question: “What is the best interest of the residents of Cleveland Heights?”

The CRC undertook an extensive 16-month study of our charter and best governance practices for Cleveland Heights, as we look toward our future. The result was a modern, well-organized charter that residents will find easy to understand how the government of Cleveland Heights best operates.

Our proposed “First Amended Charter” and supporting documents can be found on the city’s website, at www.clevelandheights.org/87/council-review-commission.

Members of the CRC are preparing a series of articles that will explain the end endum will be on the ballot this November: “We’d be there 100 percent. I don’t see a way we won’t do it.”

Concern about confusion, if voters are presented with two competing issues: “First, it’s not certain the city will be ready with its own [ballot issue]. The Charter Review Commission has about a hundred items to go over... What they’re doing is very time-consuming. It’s a tall order to get it done in time.”

As an elected official, I give city government credit for ensuring success in Cleveland Heights.

Thank you to Heights Observer readers for your continued support of maintaining and strengthening our council-manager structure, and demonstrate the risks inherent in changing to a less-accountable and possibly less-transparent government.

The CRC recommended that abandoning the council-manager structure, in Ohio and around our nation:

• Nearly all lists measuring business friendliness and quality of life are dominated by cities with a council-manager structure that employ an appointed, professional local government manager to serve as the community’s chief executive, rather than a popularly elected, politically focused mayor.

Cleveland Heights needs both the leadership of an elected governing body and the proven-effective, day-to-day oversight of a professional and talented city manager. Retaining the council-manager form of government rather than switching to the mayor-council form is the best strategy for ensuring success in Cleveland Heights.

Abandoning Cleveland Heights’ current council-manager structure in favor of a strong mayor-council form of government, and centralizing all executive authority (including veto and political appointment) in a mayor rather than a professional administrator employed by and responsible to the entire council, will not strengthen the city’s ability to capitalize on opportunities for revitalization and development.

About the Observer

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

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

Individuals throughout the community decide what stories they want to write, then submit them for publication. The Heights Observer is owned, published and staffed by the Heights Library System.

Letters Policy

The Heights Observer welcomes letters to the Editor. They must be submitted electronically as Microsoft Word documents, with the author’s name and e-mail address, to www.heightsobserver.org/members.

Submissions

If you’re writing a news article, want to express an opinion, submit it as a letter to the editor or an opinion piece. Either way, make sure it’s right to publish and contains no errors, fact issues or personal attacks. If you’re writing a news article, it should be clear and factual. If you want to express an opinion, submit it as a letter to the editor or an opinion piece. Either way, make sure it’s about something specific to our two cities.

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

• For information about writing style, article length, etc., click on “Become an Observer” at the left. For questions that aren’t answered there, call the FutureHeights office at 216-401-9342 or e-mail info@futureheights.org.

Letters are considered for the July issue must be submitted by June 20. We publish some articles online as they come in—and still consider them for the next print issue. We also publish an e-newsletter every Tuesday.
A city manager form of government works well

Alan Rapoport

A pending proposal seeks to change the Cleveland Heights city manager form of government to a strong mayor form, via a charter amendment proposed for the November 2019 ballot. Before any rush to judgment, we all should consider what our present form of government is.

The city manager system adopted in 1921 was a “good government” reform to put less emphasis on political decision-making. Our municipal corporation operates like a traditional corporation. Voters elect a city council as a “board of directors.” Council members are elected at large, not by wards. This board elects one member as its presiding officer with the title of Mayor. It hires a city manager as the “chief executive officer.” Managers are chosen based upon qualifications and experience. Cleveland Heights has prospered with this system for almost 100 years.

The city council appropriates money, sets policy, and passes laws. Then, the city manager spends the money, implements the policies, and enforces the laws. City employees report directly to the city manager, and council members may not direct their performance. For this reason, there has been little political interference with how municipal business is conducted, unlike in other cities such as Cleveland.

The system works. Significant projects have been initiated because of the professionalism of city managers. We have a new modern city hall. Two fire stations provide better service at less cost than the three we had before. We have great ambulance service with fast response times. We have glorious facilities at Cain Park. Our revised financial system has earned us a bond rating that greatly reduces borrowing costs to fund capital improvements. Excellent administrators have been hired to run the police, fire, and service departments. Only the real management talent of professional city managers could have accomplished all this.

A city manager form of government is a system dedicated to providing services based upon objective needs. A city manager form of government is NOT a system based upon favoritism or prejudices. It is not one in which decision-making is based on the ego of one individual or on the need of one person to curry favor with voters. Managers are accountable. They can be discharged at will at any time. The city manager meets with all council members regularly and reports to each of them. Council members can question any city employee; a city manager is not their only source of information. Checks and balances are very much in place.

As a board of directors, council members donate their individual skills and knowledge of the community. They question the city manager and members of city staff. They exercise extensive oversight of operations. Because they run at large, not in wards, all voters get frequent opportunities to judge council members. Government works in a collaborative manner with little partisan bickering.

A change in the form of government is no magic solution. Ask citizens of East Cleveland. They changed their form of government. Two indicted mayors later, they are no better off. The way to maintain good governance in Cleveland Heights is not by adopting a new form of government. It is by all of us paying a lot of attention to the election of talented members to our city council.

Eleven of 13 members of the Charter Review Commission recommend that our city retain the city manager form of government. This form has been well tested, and I believe strongly that we should keep it.

Alan Rapoport, a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights, served on CH City Council 1980–1987, and was CH mayor 1982–1987.
can confer. Rounds are 18 minutes, so the pace is rapid-fire.

"Playing to matches over two days was an intense experience," said Laura Buescher, a Monticello seventh-grader. "The questions were tough and definitely challenged us. Besides playing the games, I had a lot of fun being with my teammates in Chicago."

Here’s another toss-up: Name the African terrorist group led by Abubakar Shekau, which kidnapped 276 girls from a school in Chibok in 2014. (Don’t know? Keep reading.)

"I’m so impressed with all the kids and their hard work," said volunteer coach Kari Elsila. "Not many middle school students would voluntarily spend their weekends at practices and tournaments, but this team really embraced it. I was constantly blown away by how much they knew. Certainly, there were many, many questions that I didn’t know the answer to that they did.”

The team finished the Saturday competition with five wins and three losses. The winning record allowed them to advance to Sunday’s playoffs, where two tough losses ended their tournament.

This is the second year in row a Heights Middle School team has made it to the national tournament. This year, in addition to the strong team finish, Roxboro eighth-grader Kenji Sakai’s individual score was ninth among 999 players in the tournament.

The Heights Schools Foundation sponsored tournament registration, and Zagara’s Marketplace provided additional team fundraising.

For more tournament information, check out the website of the competition’s organizer, the National Academic Quiz Tournament (www.naqf.com).

Quiz answers: Fukaryotes and Boko Haram.

Were you smarter than a middle schooler?

Mike Bier is a graduate of Heights High and a member of the FutureHeights Board of Directors.

Students are more than the core

Ari Klein

When I was vice president of the teachers union, 2006-2012, one of my responsibilities was to select three pieces of student work from the annual CH-UH art show to purchase for display in our union office. The artwork that our students create is so personal and interesting that it always took me a long time to choose. Once I had selected, I’d contact the art teacher to find out if the art I had chosen was, in fact, for sale. Most students were happy to sell their work, but not always.

If you visit our office at Lee and Mayfield roads, you will see that all of the art on the walls is from these student shows. It is a constant reminder of not only how important our students are, but also how important non-core academic courses are as a source of enrichment in our lives.

Students in the CH-UH schools are lucky to have the opportunity to take visual and performing arts classes. Many school districts see these classes as unimportant “fluff,” because they are not tested by the state. The state seems uninterested in whether our students are well rounded or interested in school, but is concerned only with how they perform in a few subjects.

I agree that the core skills students have empathy, patience, and a well-rounded education “deformers” to use the word scholars to refer to students.

The implication being that nothing education is neglected in our schools. Scholars to refer to students.

I believe that students who have difficulty academically are at risk of having creative opportunities closed to them. In elementary school, students who don’t finish their work, or who need extra test preparation, may be kept in from recess or steered away from learning an instrument.

Taking away the enriching parts of life for our students will not produce vibrant, curious and thoughtful adults. We feel the pressure to prepare students academically, but often creative or physical activities help focus a student’s mind for the core learning. I believe we need to take a step back and think about the bigger picture of what students should be learning in school. We need to ensure that our students learn what our community values.

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

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Lawsuits threaten housing code enforcement

Deborah Van Kleef and Carla Rautenberg

If you have owned a house in Cleveland Heights or University Heights, at some point you may have received from your city housing department a list of code violations, with a deadline for correcting them. It might have arrived following a systematic (routine) inspection of your home or rental unit, or a point of sale inspection (POS). Regardless, it’s only human to grumble a little before getting down to the work of bringing our properties up to code.

Most of us understand, however, that code enforcement is key to protecting our greatest assets as older communities: safe, healthy, attractive and, in many cases, historically significant housing.

In addition, regular inspections of rental properties can ensure the rights and well being of renters.

Cleveland Heights and University Heights are among 22 Cuyahoga County cities with ordinances requiring a POS inspection. It ensures a house meets interior and exterior codes, and protects the buyer from major unanticipated expenses. It allows the seller and buyer to negotiate with all cards on the table. It’s a good thing.

Maurice Thompson doesn’t agree. Thompson is a lawyer and executive director of the 1851 Center for Constitutional Law, a nonprofit law firm in Columbus.

He seems to believe that individual property rights trump all other interests, including maintenance of a city’s housing stock for all of the above reasons.

Thompson was the keynote speaker at April’s “Pancakes and Politics”—an annual event sponsored by the Akron Cleveland Association of Realtors (ACAR), and attended by real estate professionals and local government officials.

ACAR opposes POS, on the grounds that it delays housing sales and may result in lower prices.

ACAR’s leaders perhaps failed to sufficiently vet their speaker. According to several people present, Thompson railed against city governments in general, and showed particular virulence toward a few local communities. He reportedly declared, “Any community in Northeast Ohio with the word ‘Heights’ in its name is just like Nazi Germany.”

We are tempted to dismiss Thompson as a crank; however, he has successfully filed class-action lawsuits against two Ohio communities: Oakwood (a suburb of Dayton) and Bedford. He argued that POS and rental inspections are, in effect, warrantless searches, and thus violate Fourth Amendment protection against unreasonable search and seizure.

On that basis, the court found Bedford’s POS and rental inspection ordinances unconstitutional. As a result, Bedford has had to amend its ordinances so that (1) a property owner can refuse an inspection unless the city obtains an administrative warrant, and (2) failure to correct violations is considered a civil offense, not a criminal one. The court also ordered Bedford to cease collecting inspection fees, and to refund $40,677 collected 2014–2017.

The village of Newburgh Heights recently made similar amendments to its ordinances in order to avoid being sued. Cleveland Heights’ ordinances already provide for warrants should a property owner refuse inspection entry.

Thompson’s rhetoric created an unnecessary divide between groups at the ACAR event, according to Newburgh Heights Building Commissioner Kristine Paguyoin.

“Cities want to get along with realtors. You want dialog, you want discussion,” she said.

Cleveland Heights Mayor Carol Roe, who also attended the April event, agreed. “We value the real estate people, who perform an essential service,” she said, adding, “They have been so supportive of our efforts here in the Noble area.” It is the city’s responsibility, she said, “to make sure POS inspections are not bogging down the process of bringing in new homeowners.”

In a democracy, lawmakers must balance individual rights with the well being of others, and of the community as a whole. Rigorously enforced housing codes benefit homeowners, home buyers, renters, neighborhoods and entire cities. Weakening them would tip the balance in the wrong direction.

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

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félice
Ohio LWV votes to reject high-stakes testing

Patience and perseverance have their rewards. On May 12, at the annual policy-making meeting of the League of Women Voters of Ohio (LWV Ohio), delegates from across the state unanimously approved a resolution declaring test-based accountability to be a misuse of standardized tests. Advocating for the end of using tests as a means of holding schools accountable is now part of the organization’s action agenda.

LWV Ohio, a nearly 100-year-old defender of democracy and advocate of sound public policy, has more than 30 chapters and 3,000 members.

Its legitimacy comes in part from its commitment to serious research on its positions and a requirement that its members participate in deciding what matters and what positions to take. It does not jump into issues without serious consideration, and it adheres to democratic methods and principles. The league’s process is a model for our lawmakers. There is nothing half-baked about its positions.

The motion to approve the high-stakes testing resolution was the outcome of nine months of work that started in Cleveland Heights. I was part of a small committee of league members who decided to tackle the issue and pursue the process that is required to gain the organization’s support.

The league does not lobby or advocate for legislation until an idea has been researched, vetted by every local chapter, recommended by its board of directors and then adopted by a vote taken at LWV Ohio’s state convention.

By raising the issue, the league, at a minimum, educates its members and gauges support from engaged citizens. Having the credibility of the League of Women Voters behind our challenge to a destructive public policy made the nine months of research, writing and meetings worth the effort.

Maryann Barnes, the Cleveland Heights-University Heights LWV unit chair, is an expert at navigating league process. With her help, we built a committee, gathered support from the Greater Cleveland league to pursue the issue, and made sure we followed the league’s process for adopting new positions. Barnes also applied her meticulous editing skills to shape our support materials.

Cleveland Heights members Robin Kosen and Adele Cohen, and Westlake member Karen Dodson, completed the team that surveyed positions of league chapters in other states, hammered out our rationale and then attended the policy-planning meetings that are held each year to consider what issues to address.

Enough local chapters supported the proposal to make it onto the agenda for the state convention. Our committee held two caucuses at the convention to share our ideas and clarify the position with delegates who voted at the final plenary session. The conversations were energetic and heartfelt. It was a thrill to discover that members of LWV Ohio reject high-stakes testing. They understand that it damages students and the quality of education in classrooms, and undermines public education.

This process made it evident to me that the public is way ahead of our state policymakers in understanding that testing students does not improve public schools.

In March, the CH-UH Board of Education passed a resolution challenging test-based accountability, and I hope that other communities will follow suit.

LWV Ohio is one more voice holding schools accountable. Our next challenge is to make sure league involvement encourages others to add their voices.

Susie Kaeser is a 40-year resident of Cleveland Heights and the former director of Reaching Heights. She is active with the Heights Coalition for Public Education and the League of Women Voters.
University Heights City Council
Meeting highlights
APRIL 15, 2019
Present were Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan and council members Pamela Cameron, Phil Eitel, John Bach, Michele Weiss and Mark Wiseman. Susan Pardew and Steven Sims were absent. Also present were Luke McGonigle, law director; James Odlie, finance director, and Kelly Thomas, clerk of council. The meeting was held from 7:05 to 8:45 p.m.
Mayor’s report
Mayor Brennan reported that a recent break-in at a library was very well attended—more chairs were needed, and there was strong interest in what the city has to offer home buyers. He also announced that An Jaha is the new chair of the Board of Zoning Appeals.
Mayor’s Municipal Future Committee
Winifred Weizer, chair of the Mayor’s Municipal Future Committee, reported on the findings of the committee, which was tasked with looking at the city’s properties and making recommendations on needs and options. The committee found that the current city hall is inadequate, the fire station doesn’t have facilities for female fire fighters, and the new fire engine will barely fit (options were limited by the size of the station bays). The police department is hoping to disperse to adjacent sites for administrative functions, and the jail has been closed for failing to meet current standards. The committee unanimously agreed that something must be done, but the “what” is less clear. The Wiley school building is under consideration, depending on what the Board of Education decides to do with the property. The committee suggests contacting with a firm to conduct a professional audit of all properties and their uses, and then recommend alternatives where needed. Two committee members voted against that proposal, due to the cost.
Councilman Wiseman noted that city funds being spent for jail space in Solon and for space in the annex might be saved if facilities could be reorganized. Councilman Rach noted that it is a responsibility of the city to maintain adequate facilities. Councilman Eitel noted that the city has a very long history of being frugal, but now is the time to develop a capital budget.
UM City Beautiful Corporation
Council authorized the mayor to enter into an agency agreement with the University Heights City Beautiful Corporation so that the Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) can enter into agreements on behalf of the city for community development projects, property refurbishment, and other such activities as required. The CIC has been rolled into the City Beautiful Corporation.
New zoning category
A proposal to combine properties into a new zoning category, Residential Attached District, was presented to council and will now be considered by the planning commission before returning to council for final approval. This option is being proposed for just seven vacant and contiguous properties between South Taylor and Wyne roads. Combining these parcels will allow the developers to propose high-density housing projects—an option they have been seeking. These properties will constitute the specified district.
Fire safety and EMS equipment
Council authorized five grant applications for new equipment, safety packs from the Ohio Emergency Medical Services organization; BIT Intervention Packs (for retrieving people trapped in a fire without oxygen) from the Ohio Department of Commerce; smoke detectors from the Walmart Foundation Community Grant Program (no match is required but limited funds are available); additional smoke detectors from FEMA’s Fire Prevention and Safety Grant; and refurbishment, and other such activities as required. The CIC has been rolled into the City Beautiful Corporation.

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These reports contain member observations and selected highlights of public meetings and are not official minutes of the Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland. The disclaimer must accompany any redistribution of these reports.
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Final community meeting on Noble Road project is June 20

**SOCCER continued from page 1**

He has been playing competitively since he was 5. He began in the Cleveland Heights Recreation League, transitioned to Cleveland Heights-based Northside Youth Soccer, and has been playing for Ohio Premier Futsal Club (OPFC) since 2015. Through OPFC, Ford plays in the Great Lakes Alliance (GLA), where kids compete at the highest youth level.

According to OPFC Director of Coaching Dennis Weyn, “What sets OPFC apart from most other local soccer clubs is our commitment to being family friendly, financially accessible, and culturally and socio-economically diverse.” With this in mind, Ford and his parents knew the club would be open to an idea inspired by his spring break adventure.

Project Pitbull officially launched in April. Working with Muzu, Ford and his parents created a partnership with OPFC and the Crawfish Rock soccer club, Pitbull Futsal. Ford hopes to collect enough gear—including balls, cleats and jerseys—to outfit all village children.

So far, the response from OPFC families has been overwhelming, and Ford has collected more than 100 pairs of cleats.

By collecting and redistributing soccer equipment, Ford and the OPFC community will be able to recycle gear and enrich the lives of children who love the game of soccer. The Honduran club currently has two rental and stampedeable offices available, and has been playing for Ohio Premier Futsal Club (OPFC) since 2015. Through OPFC, Ford plays in the Great Lakes Alliance (GLA), where kids compete at the highest youth level.

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Dewey Decimators are three-peat spelling bee champions

Krista Hawthorne

Congratulations to the Dewey Decimators, representing and sponsored by Friends of the Heights Libraries, for winning the Reaching Heights Adult Community Spelling Bee for the third year in a row. This year Chris Mentrek and Victor Rosenberg, missing their teammate Susan Marshall, battled and Victor Rosenberg, missing their year in a row. This year Chris Mentrek by Friends of the Heights Libraries, for mators, representing and sponsored

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Krista Hawthorne is executive director of Reaching Heights, visit www.reachingheights.org, or call 216-932-5110.

Reaching Heights, and proud and grateful Heights Tiger.

June 25 talk focuses on neighborhood revitalization

Sruti Basu

Can planting flowers lead to neighbor- borhood revitalization? A Future Heights sponsored panel will discuss how on June 25 at a public forum at the Bottle House Brewing Company.

Speakers, including Tom Gib- son and Jan Kious, will discuss the macro-level social implications that gardening, planting flowers, and beautification can have on a neigh- borhood, or, in some cases, an entire community.

They will consider: What posi- tive impacts have other communities seen as a result of thoughtful and deliberate beautification? Can gar- dening help alleviate safety concerns? What message does beautification send to people outside of a neigh- borhood or community? What are exciting local examples of gardening for neighborhood revitalization in the community?

FutureHeights invites all mem- bers of the community to attend this free event at 7 p.m., on Tuesday, June 25 at The BottleHouse Brewing Company, 2050 Lee Road.

Learn more and RSVP at https:// plantingflowersforevitalization.eventbrite.com.

Sruti Basu is the director of community- building programs at FutureHeights. 
Happy 5K/10K gears up for October race

Shari Nacson

The fifth Happy 5K/10K race is planned for Sunday, Oct. 6. In the spirit of the race’s motto—“Come for the run, stay for the fun!”—race coordinators are enthusiastically working to increase participation, expand sponsorship and scholarship donations, and make the after-party even bigger.

The first Happy race, in 2015, comprised 400 runners. Each year since, the number of registrants has grown, with 600 participants in 2018. In a region that has ample 5K opportunities, that is “unusual growth,” according to coordinator Adam Fleischer, owner of The Wine Spot. “Each year we have more runners, more merchants, and more running teams,” Fleischer said.

Runners give the event high praise. Kevin Sosvaco of Lyndhurst said, “It’s such a fun race in a really great community. Everybody comes together.” Nick Becker of Cleveland Heights said he especially likes the community vibe. “Everyone on the block gets involved and cheers the racers on,” Becker said.

Members of North Coast Beer Runners—inspired by the legacy of Brennan’s Colony owner Jim Brennan, who was an ardent supporter of Cleveland Heights’ recreation leagues—proposed the race in 2014. They brought the idea to Fleischer during one of their after-run drinking establishment sessions. Fleischer worked with city officials to think it through together. Thus was born a business-municipal collaboration in the form of a signature event that highlights what the runners, merchants and city officials all love about Cleveland Heights—great merchant districts, welcoming pubs and eateries, tree-lined streets, and diverse and friendly people.

It all benefits the very program that Jim Brennan cherished and supported for decades—youth opportuni- ties within the city’s Department of Parks and Recreation.

Sponsorship is key to the race, as all sponsorship dollars go directly to the city’s Youth Recreation Fund. “The fund helps offset the costs of recreational programming for families in need,” said Joe McRae, director of Parks and Recreation for the city of Cleveland Heights. To date, the Happy 5K/10K has raised more than $22,000 for the fund, ensuring sustainable access for years to come. The fund awards approximately 200 scholarships per year.

MotorCraft Honda was the first official sponsor, with other merchants stepping up to participate as sponsors and in the creation of CLE Heights Cash, a coupon booklet valued at more than $300 that is given to every registered runner.

Ronald LaRue, owner of Heights Uptown Barbershop, has sponsored teams the past three years. “Our team is growing each year,” said LaRue, who said he likes hosting a team because it gives family and friends a chance to bond while doing something healthy. “I encourage everybody to walk and enjoy the weather.”

Since its beginning, the Happy 5K/10K has worked with Western Reserve Race Management, a known entity for quality run experiences according to Kelley Robinson, executive director of the Cedar Lee Special Improvement District. “They do a great job helping us to promote the run and making sure everything runs smoothly on race day,” she said.

A well-run race enables the coordinators to focus on the fun aspects—from the costume contest to the after-party.

Fleischer said he would love to see teams from all segments of the community—PTAs, street associations, student groups, businesses and more. “To form a team, just e-mail us and we will add the team name as an option when people register,” Fleischer explained.

In addition to this year’s anticipated growth in participation, teams and sponsorships, Fleischer said he is excited to expand the after-party. For 2019, the plan is to take the post-race fun to a new level, with a block party that will last into the afternoon.

For more information about the race, visit www.westernreserveracing.com/events/cleveland-heights-happy-5k-10k. To learn more about the city’s Youth Recreation Fund, visit www.deparks.com/cle/Youth-Recreation-Fund. To start a Happy 5K/10K team, e-mail info@westernreserveracing.com.

Mostly a mom, Shari Nacson is freelance editor, social worker, and nonprofit consultant who makes her home in Cleveland Heights. More than anything, Nacson is inspired by kids and adults who build connection through kindness.
Register now for Peace Lutheran’s free day camp

**Jessica Shields**

Peace Lutheran Church, carrying on the tradition of Hope Lutheran, one of its predecessor congregations, will offer its 10th annual Christian Day Camp June 10–14. The camp is free of charge and runs 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily at the church, located at 3450 Mayfield Road in Cleveland Heights.

The camp is open to all children who will have completed any grade from kindergarten through grade five as of the end of this current school year.

Registration is open now, with a June 3 deadline, and is limited to 30 campers each week.

As part of Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Ohio, the camp’s main staff will be three professionally trained counselors, organized under the guidelines of the American Camp Association.

Activities include daily Bible study discussions around this year’s theme, Transformed Community. Children will also participate in sports and games, arts and crafts, singing, storytelling, and nature education. Visits from the Cleveland Heights Police and Fire departments are also anticipated as part of the activities.

As part of registration, each child’s medical history and drop-off and pick-up information must be included. While afternoon snacks are provided, the congregation asks that families supply each camper with lunch.

For more information, or for registration materials, call the church office at 216-382-4545, or visit www.peacelutherancleveland.org.

Jessica Shields is a pastor at Peace Lutheran Church. She has lived in Cleveland Heights since moving to this region in 2007.

**CH Senior Center News**

**Amy Jenkins**

Innovative programming, in cooperation with University Circle’s Distance Learning Department, continues at the Cleveland Heights Senior Activity Center (SAC) on Tuesday, June 11, 11 a.m., with a videoconference lecture, “Japanese Art: Humble and Bold.”

In this program, viewers are introduced to Japanese art in a variety of media, including ceramics used in the tea ceremony, enameware, and folding screens made from paper and wood. The aesthetics range from earthy and subtle to colorful and luxurious. The discussion will focus on the formal qualities of these works, as well as their practical uses. Participants are encouraged to look at the works of art as indicators of Japanese social values and tastes.

Then, on the morning of June 18, the group will travel to the Cleveland Museum of Art to tour the special exhibit, Shinto: Discovery of the Divine in Japanese Art.

This exhibition features art from collections in the U.S. and Japan, and introduces works exemplifying Kami worship from the Heian period (794–1185) through the Edo period (1603–1868). From costumes worn in dances and theatrical performances at shrines, to paintings of medieval pilgrimage routes and images of Kami and Buddhist deities, the exhibition reveals the everyday engagement of people with the divinities in their midst.

Questions for the lecture and excursion (including transportation) is $50, and must be paid in advance. Seating is limited, so early registration is advised.

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.ci.chpark.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 216-932-7357 or ajenkins@cityofcin.org.

Questions about Mobile Pantry eligibility can be directed to the Greater Cleveland Food Bank by calling 216-738-1261, or by visiting the Food Bank’s website, www.greaterclevelandfoodbank.org.

Community members interested in volunteering for the Mobile Pantry program should contact Maggie Kinney at 216-932-1369 or mkinney@heightslibrary.org.

Sheryl Banks is the communications manager for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System.
Roxboro Elementary installs unique vending machine

Heights Observer June 1, 2019

The school is distributing “book bucks” that can be used only in the vending machine, which sits in the first floor hallway. Book bucks are intended simply as an incentive to read, not as a reward for good grades, attendance, or behavior. “The idea is that ‘you are a reader and you deserve a book’ for your home library,” said Jolivette. Every student has had the opportunity to select one book this spring to read over summer vacation. Purchases will continue on a monthly basis starting next year.

Books were purchased in groups of five so that students can read the same titles as their friends. “Maybe that will facilitate an organic book club,” said Jolivette.

“We might have all poetry books in April, or books about the African-American experience in February,” said Jolivette.

Krissy Dietrich Gallagher is a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights and a freelance journalist under contract with the CH-UH City School District.

Cleveland Heights - University Heights Board of Education

APRIL 16, 2019

Superintendent’s Student Cadre update

Members of the superintendent’s 2018-19 Student Cadre reported on their activities with a video presentation. The Student Cadre provides insights into what it is like to be a student at Heights High, and [suggestions on] how to implement positive change and improvements in the district.

Roxboro Elementary installs unique vending machine

Heights Observer June 1, 2019

have been phasing out vending machines in the interest of student health. But Roxboro Elementary School has just installed one.

This is no ordinary vending machine, however. Instead of soft drinks and chips, it is stocked with books.

D&S Vending, located in downtown Cleveland, refurbishes old vending machines for unique purposes. The Roxboro PTA paid for the custom machine and an initial set of books to fill it, taking advantage of the discount earned as a result of using Mac’s Backs-Books on Coventry for the school’s book fair. The PTA also received a grant of $600 from Reading Is Fundamental, a nonprofit organization that promotes children’s literacy, to purchase additional books.

“We’ll eventually accept used and donated books,” said Mary Pat Jolivett, a PTA member. “But we wanted to start with nice spanning—new books.”

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Krissy Dietrich Gallagher is a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights and a freelance journalist under contract with the CH-UH City School District.
Heights Libraries goes green with yellow receipts

Sheryl Banks

Customers at Heights Libraries may notice that the check-out receipts, computer passes, and hold-item covers look a little sunnier lately.

“It’s the vitamin C,” said Circulation Manager Ty Emerson, pointing out the lemon-yellow tone of the paper.

Vitamin C is a key component of the new BPA- and BPS-free thermal paper that the library started using in March as part of its ongoing efforts to make healthier and more environmentally-friendly decisions part of its every-day operations. Receipts and other paper items created with thermal printers don’t require ink or toner and instead rely on heat and chemicals on the paper to create an image. The new paper at Heights Libraries means vitamin C as a developer to create the letters on the paper instead of phenol-based chemicals like BPA and BPS that have been linked to health problems, including cancer.

“The old products used were labeled BPA-free, so we assumed it was safe, but after a customer wrote to us with her concerns, we did some research and learned that many companies replaced BPA with another phenol-based chemical called BPS, which is very similar to BPA and should also be avoided,” said Emerson.

Additionally, the old paper caused other problems. “We learned through one of our own public programs on recycling that flimsy paper like receipt paper cannot be recycled,” said Emerson.

But this new paper is thicker, and more substantial, so it can be recycled.

“Cleveland Heights residents have always been progressive when it comes to things like the environment,” said Heights Libraries Director Nancy Levin. “This new paper may seem like a small change, but we know it means a lot to our community that we take every opportunity to have a positive impact on the health of our customers, staff and planet.”

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

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Cleveland Heights - University Heights Public Library Board

Meeting highlights

APRIL 15, 2019

Present were Board President Chris Mentrik, Vice President James Roosa, Secretary Dana Flesher, and board members Susanis Mosenkova, Vikas Turakhia and Matt Gerbic. Annette Laxenroth was absent.

SPARK program

The library will partner with Family Connections to provide the SPARK [Supporting Partnerships to Assist Ready Kiddle] program, proven to narrow the kindergarten readiness gap. SPARK currently works with 11,000 children in 11 counties across Ohio, targeting highpoverty and rural districts. Libraries are proven SPARK partners. Families are invited to the home and trained to become their child’s first teacher using an Ohio preschool curriculum with rigorous evaluation for tracking results. SPARK’s response services component identifies children who may need additional services, such as speech and language therapy.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

physical or occupational therapy, etc., prior to entering kindergarten. Family Connections is the sole provider of SPARK services in Cuyahoga County. The library’s board of trustees approved a resolution for the director to enter into the memorandum of understanding with Family Connections and the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District for SPARK services. The board also allocated $40,000 from the general fund to Family Connections for providing SPARK services for five years, beginning in 2019.

Financial report

Height Libraries will be hosting the Greater Cleveland Food Bank Summer Lunch Program again this year. The program will run June 3 through Aug. 9.

Youth services department staff will offer library programming and projects twice a week. HCK (Heights Knowledge and Innovation Center) staff will teach coding and technology-related programming once a week.

Summer VISTA Program

Recruitment for the summer Ohio Association of Food Banks VISTA (Amencorp) member has begun. This person will work with the library full time to assist with the 2019 summer lunch program, including its promotion, outreach, and mobile food pantry.

Cleveland Heights - University Heights Public Library Board
Coventry launches Final Fridays

Coventry Village kicked off its inaugural monthly Final Fridays event on April 26. Merchants offered discounts, and artists and nonprofits hosted events. Coventry Village Final Fridays are slated to take place every month, until the last Friday of each month. The next will take place on June 28. For information on upcoming Final Friday programs, visit www.coventryvillage.org.

Mallory Phillips, Coventry Village Special Improvement District’s executive director, said the concept was inspired by her experiences living in Los Angeles. “The downtown art walks would bring the small business districts alive with local artists, musicians, great food, and all sorts of shopping. MIU Phillips wanted to bring this lively community-centric vibe to Coventry. ‘It’s a great way to bring this diverse community to the neighborhood in a new way,’ said Phillips.

She hopes Final Fridays will become a lasting Coventry tradition. “We will be including more discounts, more music, more improv, more special offers, and more artists,” said Phillips. “The whole neighborhood is primed to be a vibrant and bustling creative community. Final Fridays is just one night a month to celebrate what happens here every single day.”

The kickoff event attracted plenty of foot traffic, and praise from merchants. Stephen Celeste, assistant manager at City Buddha, said, “People there, while bringing in local artists to showcase their work and bring inspiration to the neighborhood in a new way,” said Phillips.

Coventry Village kicked off its Final Fridays for Information about the Final Fridays—interested in the discounts.”

Visitors ventured in from other parts of Cleveland because of the event. Courtney McCrone of Ohio City came with her sister, who hails from Euclid. “I loved it,” McCrone said. “My favorite part might’ve been the improv group outside. It was such a fun, new and different experience. I felt like I was part of the neighborhood—something personal and authentically friendly.”

At Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Campus, ARTFUL and Ensemble Theatre hosted an art exhibit and opening night performance, respectively. The building was abuzz throughout the evening.

Mostly a mom, Shari Nacson is a freelance editor, social worker, and nonprofit consultant. She lives in Cleveland Heights. More than anything, Nacson was abuzz throughout the evening. “My favorite part might’ve been the improv group outside. It was such a fun, new and different experience. I felt like I was part of the neighborhood—something personal and authentically friendly.”

Former pop-up Foodhisattva brings vegan-Asian to S. Taylor

Six years ago, Joshua Sias and Frances Cheng began offering pop-up vegan fare—first, from a chocolate shop in Lyndhurst, then at various other locations in Greater Cleveland, including The Bottlehouse in Cleveland Heights. These themed dining experiences were a way to bring new cuisine to the area and show that great food can be made without harming animals—something important to Sias and Cheng. What started as little more than a hobby has led the couple to establish their own Asian-themed restaurant in Cleveland Heights.

The two, partners and spouses, are looking to a June opening for Foodhisattva, their vegan Asian restaurant, at 2158 South Taylor Road. “We were the first in the area to have a vegan pop-up,” Sias said. “And after a while, people started asking us to do it again.” When their semi-regular pop-up nights at The Bottlehouse on Lee Road became increasingly popular, the couple realized there was a demand for vegan food on the East Side. “It was just like the food back home,” she said. “I had to ask him, ‘How did you learn to cook like that?’”

Soon after Sias impressed Cheng, a physicist with a focus on nutrition, by preparing a traditional Asian meal during one of their first dates. “It was like the food back home,” she said. “I had to learn to cook for myself.”

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Cain Park ticket office day is June 1

The Cain Park ticket office opens to Cleveland Heights residents on Saturday, June 1, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., for the sale of tickets to the 2019 season from a specially held block of seats. The ticket office will open to the general public on Tuesday, June 4, noon to 9 p.m.

Residents need to bring a photo ID and two proofs of current residency (e.g., mail, utility bill, current CH Rec ID) to register with staff outside the main ticket office. After registering, each resident will get a number that represents his or her place in the ticket-buying queue. Residents cannot bring extra IDs to the ticket office, nor can they fill out a ticket-order form and leave it with staff to be filled at the end of the day, if seats are still available.

The Tony Award-winning "Ragtime" kicks off Cain Park’s 1st season, on June 14.

Appearing for the first time at Cain Park are Grammy-winning musical artists Ani DiFranco (June 11), Air Supply (July 28), and India Arie (Aug. 19). The Robert Cray Band, Marc Cohn, Blind Boys of Alabama, and Shemekia Copeland take the stage on June 18. Grammy-winning legends Dionne Warwick (June 22), Lyle Lovett and His Large Band (July 24), Judy Collins (Aug. 10), and Chris Botti (Aug. 16) return by popular demand. The Musical Theater Project will explore a new generation of musicals on July 17, and those that are "Just for Laughs" on Aug. 7.

The Cain Park Arts Festival, rated among the top 200 festivals in the country, takes over the park July 12-14. Five Dollar Movies begin with "Singing in the Rain" on June 26, and end with "A Star is Born" (2018) on Aug. 17. Alma Theater will host its first Heights Arts Haiku Death Match on Aug. 3. For a complete schedule, go to www.cainpark.com.

Cain Park is partnering again with The Wine Spot for this season’s Wine Tastings, starting with "American Blends" on the opening night of "Ragtime," June 14, and running through August. Call the ticket office (216-371-3000) to buy tasting tickets ($20 per person), or go online to Ticketmaster. Last year’s wine tastings sold out, so purchasing tickets in advance is strongly suggested.

This year, the free parking shuttle will run for all evening ticketed events. Ticket holders can park at Cleveland Heights City Hall (40 Severance Circle), and take the shuttle to the park. The shuttle will operate beginning one hour before, and up until, a performance begins, and up to one hour after the performance ends.

Ksenia Roshchakovsky is the public relations/marketing manager for Cain Park.

One-woman play will benefit memory-care programs

One-woman play "Living on the Moon," written and performed by Molly McFadden, will benefit memory-care programs managed by Benjamin Rose Institute and its affiliates. The performances take place at Ensemble Theatre, 2841 Washington Blvd., in Cleveland Heights.

The one-act play explores the bittersweet journey Molly McFadden shared with her mother, after her mother’s diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease in the 1980s. Drawing on a lifetime of producing, acting and singing professionally, McFadden’s play brings meaning and light to her late mother’s story.

Locally renowned pianist Vince Robinson will accompany McFadden during performances of the show, directed by Christina Courtenay.
Bands take the summer stage in UH starting in June

Surf Rock, Bruce Springsteen songs, and traditional patriotic anthems will be featured in June as part of the University Heights Summer Concert Series.

The series kicks off on June 13 at Walter Stinson Community Park (533 Fenwick Road, University Heights) with a surf rock show by the Kahunas and the Lava Ladies. “The Kahunas are a fun throwback,” said University Heights Mayor Michael Brennan. “They’re a retro party dance band. They’re the perfect lead-off band for our summer concerts.”

The band’s album, Who Wants to Party with The Kahunas, is available at www.thekahunas.bandcamp.com.

On June 20, Springsteen tribute band Jersey will perform a set with songs from that famous show, including “Tenth Avenue Freeze Out,” “Backstreets,” “She’s the One” and “Born to Run.” They will also perform newer selections. “This show will be a rock-and-roll history lesson,” Brennan said. “Jersey is going to put on a great show for everyone who was at the ’75 show, and those of us who wish we were.”

On June 27, the University Heights Symphonic Band (UHSB) will perform its annual Patriotic Show at JCU. “This is always a highlight of our summer,” Brennan said, “and this year will be no exception.”

UHSB performs several times a year at JCU and other venues throughout Northeast Ohio—at concert halls, amphitheaters, music festivals, senior citizen homes, churches and synagogues. Band members come from Greater Cleveland, including Cuyahoga, Medina, Lake and Geauga counties. In addition to professional musicians, performers are also students and people in other professions, such as doctors, nurses, professors, music educators, teachers, engineers and accountants.

All UH summer concerts are free. For more information, visit University Heights City Hall on Facebook.

Brennan encourages attendees to arrive at shows early, as food trucks will start serving at 5:30 p.m. The concerts will start at 7 p.m. and run until 8:30 p.m.

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

Heights Music Hop returns September 2019


Heights Music Hop showcases local live musical talent, performing in local businesses and unique locations to promote the Heights as home to the arts, while also helping to support the local economy and promote a vibrant and great quality of life. The 2019 festival will showcase new musical talent from all genres, including jazz, rock, R&B, classical, rap, indie, Americana and folk.

“Tenth Avenue Freeze Out,” “Backstreets,” “She’s the One” and “Born to Run.” They will also perform newer selections. “This show will be a rock-and-roll history lesson,” Brennan said. “Jersey is going to put on a great show for everyone who was at the ’75 show, and those of us who wish we were.”

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Mike Cook is the communications and civic engagement coordinator for University Heights.
WRC concert will be Poderis’ last

David Gilson

Western Reserve Chorale (WRC) will present the final concert of its season at 3:30 p.m., Sunday, June 2, at Church of the Gesu (2470 Miramar Blvd, University Heights).

The concert, “Sonic Sunrise,” will be the final one with accompanist Joanne Poderis at the keyboard. Poderis, a founding member and longtime executive director of WRC, is stepping down from her roles with the Chorale. WRC invites all to celebrate Poderis’ artistry and the conclusion of its 27th season.

The concert will feature Ola Gjeilo’s Sunrise Mass as well as a celebration of the 125th anniversary of the birth of E.E. Cummings. Gjeilo utilizes the text from the Ordinary of the Mass: Kyrie: The Spheres; Gloria: Sunris; Credo: The City, and Sanctus and Agnus Dei: Identity & The Ground. While Gjeilo set the meaning of the Latin text respectfully and observes the traditions that masses are expected to exhibit, his overall vision for the piece lies within the titles of the work, only loosely related to the meaning of the Latin. In so doing, he reveals a structure outside of the text; a metaphysical journey from the heavens to earth. The intent and the story in his Mass are expressed through the way in which the music comes across sonically.

Similarly, the choral settings of E.E. Cummings feature various means to create an aural impression and interpretation of the language used by Cummings. The poet’s lyric inventiveness and use of metaphor, as well as his misuse or strained use of words and phrases, allow for broad interpretation and atypical tonality to be explored.

The concert is free and open to the public, though there will be free-will donations collected.

David Gilson is the artistic director of the western reserve chorale, director of music at Church of the Saviour, and associate dean for student affairs at the Cleveland Institute of Music.

Dobama presents world premiere musical

Casey Venema

June 27 through July 14, Dobama Theatre presents the world premiere of “33 1/3,” a new musical about coming of age and coming out.

Matthew Wright is the director of Dobama’s production, which will feature choreography by Holly Handman-Lopez and music direction by Matthew Dolan.

The book, music and lyrics are by Jay Turvey and Paul Sportelli, co-writers of eight musicals.

In the musical, set in 1974, Jules finds small-town existence stifling. He lives for listening to the latest music at Church of the Saviour, and dreams of an exciting life in New York City. His father is trying his best with his only son. Jules encounters Francis, an openly gay David Bowie-loving young man, and Victor, an angry teen who seeks relief by pounding on the drums in his basement. All four experience a tumultuous New Year’s Eve that will change their lives forever.

“33 1/3” was conceived and work-shopped at the Shaw Festival at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, and won the 2015 Playwrights Guild of Canada Stage West Pechet Family Best New Musical Award at the Hendry Awards in Toronto. It will be workshopped once again during the rehearsal process, and receive its first full production at Dobama.

Dobama’s production of “33 1/3” will feature Jim Bray, Jay Lee, Ben Richardson-Piché, Hanna Shykind and Tyler Tanner, and is made possible with support from show sponsor James F. Brown. Performance days and times are Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., and Sundays at 2:30 p.m.

Regular performance tickets are $33 to $39; preview tickets are $17; member, senior, student and military discounts are available. For tickets, call the box office at 216-932-3396, or visit www.dobama.org to purchase tickets online and view box office hours.

Sunday, June 30, 7:30 p.m. is a pay-what-you-can performance.

Casey Venema is a directing intern at Dobama Theatre.
I lived in a series of houses and the entire, very large living room. I moved out, rather than help repaint the fireplace—on Valentine’s Day—I tree by sticking it into the burning basement and let us live in the (former) friends of mine who had become junkies and stole some valuable stuff from me. I didn’t mind that as much as I did the shag rug that surrounded the toilet. That was when I began my year in the old University Circle mansion. That was when I began my year as an overnight failure. So I moved to New York City for a few months. From that ideal situation I moved back to Cleveland Heights. But while I lived there, I spent almost all of my time in Cleveland Heights, mainly on Coventry, eating at Tommy’s every day.

When I was born, my family lived on Belmar, two streets east of Coventry, in the first house after the apartment building on the corner of Mayfield. When I was 15, we moved to the house next door. When people asked my father why, he said, “It’s just the gypsy in us.”

When I moved out, at 18, after spending my life hanging out on Coventry, I moved to an apartment on Coventry, right above Heights Hardware. Tommy’s hadn’t opened yet, so I had to eat at Irv’s. I learned a lot sitting in Irv’s for hours every day. I’m not going to tell you the kinds of things I learned there, because I love the Heights Observer and I don’t want to see it get shut down.

I was a young folksinger and songwriter then, and I played at Farragher’s, a folk club on Taylor Road, near Cain Park, and at La Cave in University Circle. I became friendly with the other local folkies, and a bunch of us moved into a house on Kenilworth, where a young, rich guy had built a nice recording studio in the basement and let us live in the house for free.

From that ideal situation I moved to New York City for a few years. I did play with a lot of illustrious rock legends, and I was in a band that later became world-famous, and I did get signed by a national record label, but in a pretty short time I became what might be described as an overnight failure. So I moved back to Cleveland Heights.

I lived in a house on upper Hampshire, a nice place—except for the mushrooms growing out of the shag rug that surrounded the toilet. I didn’t mind that as much as I did the (former) friends of mine who had become junkies and stole some valuable stuff from me. That was when I began my year in the old University Circle mansion. But shortly after a drunk housemate decided to get rid of our Christmas tree by sticking it into the burning fireplace—on Valentine’s Day—I moved out, rather than help repaint the entire, very large living room.

I lived in a series of houses and apartments, almost all in the Coventry area, including five places on Euclid Heights Boulevard alone. My favorite was in The Manor, the Tudor building with the gargoyles over the entrance. I had the efficiency—which the custodian, when he was showing it to me, kept calling the “deficiency,” but he wasn’t joking. He really thought that was the correct word.

I loved that place. It was one room, plus a tiny kitchen and a bathroom. But it was all I needed. After playing or practicing with my band, or on nights when I didn’t do either, I would hang out at Chester’s on Coventry. Sometimes I would spend time there during the day, too. That continued when I moved to a third-floor apartment in a house I hated, at Cedar and Coventry. I was sitting in Chester’s one afternoon with a few other musicians when one woman expressed her wish that we could have a clubhouse, rather than having to meet in a bar, drinking.

That’s when I got the idea to rent a place that cost $60 a month (pretty cheap, even for 1975) and pay half of it myself, and have eight other people pay $10 each, per month, to use it as a hangout. We did that for a few years, first in a basement apartment on Euclid Heights Boulevard, and then in a house on Derbyshire, near Lee. We called it Chez Beaux Eau, which is grammatically incorrect French, but it is pronounced “Bozo.”

And then I got married and we bought a house on Berkshire, near Cottage Grove, followed by our current house on Delaware Drive, only 600 steps from the front door of Nighttown. When Long Road plays at Nighttown, my house sometimes functions as the “green room.”

I can’t name all of my dwelling places here, but there have been 30.

Details at HeightsLibrary.org

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SONGS AND

David Budin is a freelance writer for national and local publications, the former editor of Cleveland Magazine and Northern Ohio Live, an author, and a professional musician and comedian. His writing focuses on the arts and, especially, pop-music history.

Celebrate The Great Outdoors with Heights Libraries’ Summer Reading Program! Select a prize book for signing up, another prize book for reading 30 days, and be entered to win awesome prizes, like Cedar Point passes, gift cards, and more. Parents: Don’t forget to sign up your little ones for our special preschool program, too! Register at any Heights Libraries branch starting June 1.

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