Blackout didn’t stop the ‘rock out’ at HMH19

Ann Kaslow

The seventh annual Heights Music Hop (HMH19), which took place Sept. 12–14, turned out to be unlike the previous six hops. It had more bands—82 in total—and 14 venues, in three districts over three nights. Thursday in Coventry Village, Friday in Cedar Fairmount and Saturday in Cedar Lee. The last event featured a makers’ market of local vendors on the vacant lot at Lee Road and Meadowbrook Boulevard.

The evening of Friday the 13th began beautifully. The sun was out and the winds were calm for the first part of the evening, but the full moon portended something ominous. The forecast had called for rain and potential thunderstorms beginning about 10:30 that evening, but at about 8:30 p.m., a brick wind blew in, culminating in a violent storm that the National Weather Service later confirmed was a microburst.

“Thirty minutes before my set the rain pushed us indoors and 15 minutes later the power went out,” said Thessalonian Turner, a member of the eponymously named band that was scheduled to play at Luna Bakery Cafe at 9 p.m. that evening, in a Facebook post. “People scattered but Jeremy Poparad got his acoustic guitar, we found some light and people that I’ve never met listened to me share my heart. They stayed until the end. I’m inspired more than ever.”

The storm caused blackouts in several neighborhoods, including the south side of Cedar Fairmount. At The Fairmount, where bands were set to play on the outdoor patio, Kiss Me Deadly quickly wrapped up its set as rain began to pour down, and the Heights Music Hop 2019 team quickly continued on page 3

University Heights looks to be counted in 2020 Census

Mike Cook

University Heights has a campaign underway to ensure that all of its residents will be counted in the 2020 U.S. Census.

Allocation of federal funds, grants and support to states, counties and communities is based on population totals and breakdowns by sex, age, race and other factors, as measured by the census.

University Heights will benefit the most when the census counts everyone living in the city. By responding to the census, residents help the city and school district get a fair share of the more than $657 billion per year in federal funds spent on schools, hospitals, roads and public works.

The city will promote its census campaign via its At Your Service newsletter, Mosaic magazine, and social media accounts. The campaign will encourage everyone to be counted, with an emphasis on hard-to-reach populations, such as college students, renters, young children, and new residents.

In 2020, University Heights plans to team up with Heights Libraries, Cleveland Heights, and the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District to ensure an accurate count.

A census aims to count the entire population of a country, at the location where each person lives. The 2020 U.S. Census will ask questions of people in homes and

continued on page 5

Biannual history programs are underway

Jessica Lee Robinson and Kara Hamley O’Donnell

Genealogy; house rehabilitation and house research comprise the themes of this fall’s free historical lecture series. Sponsored by Heights Libraries, Cleveland Heights Landmark Commission and Cleveland Heights Historical Society, all lectures take place at Heights Libraries’ Lee Road Branch (2345 Lee Road).

Tuesday, Oct. 15, 7 p.m.: Planning Your Rehab Project - Cleveland Restoration Society

Dean Diary, ca. 1900, was located at the current site of U-Haul, 3205 Mayfield Road.

Are you planning a rehab project at your home? This program will teach you how to plan for the project, how to choose the right contractor for the job, and what to look for when reviewing bids. Presented by the Cleveland Restoration Society; no registration required.

Tuesday, Oct. 29, 7 p.m.: University of Cincinnati Archives talk with Judith G. Cetina

Judith Cetina, Cuyahoga County archivist, will identify the records in the holdings of the Cuyahoga County Archives that will assist in documenting the history of a home, or other significant structures, in the city of Cleveland Heights. In her talk, Cetina will

continued on page 2

University of Cincinnati campus

Members of the band at a summer concert at Mentor Civic Amphitheater, June 6, 2019.

Mark Souther

This year the band is pleased to inaugurate its first year-round concert season, presenting concerts in Kulas Auditorium at John Carroll University (JCU) on Oct. 20, Dec. 5 and March 8. Additionally, the band will present a series of holiday and summer concerts around Greater Cleveland.

The band is under the leadership of Musical and Artistic Director Matthew Salvaggio, who also serves as music director of the Euclid Symphony Orchestra. Salvaggio continued on page 3

UH Symphonic Band embarks on 50th season

The university is proud to announce the 50th season of the University Heights Symphonic Band (UHSB), an all-volunteer wind ensemble sponsored by the city of University Heights.

This year the band is pleased to inaugurate its first year-round concert season, presenting concerts in Kulas Auditorium at John Carroll University (JCU) on Oct. 20, Dec. 5 and March 8. Additionally, the band will present a series of holiday and summer concerts around Greater Cleveland.

The band is under the leadership of Musical and Artistic Director Matthew Salvaggio, who also serves as music director of the Euclid Symphony Orchestra. Salvaggio

continued on page 3

continued on page 12
Letters Policy
The Heights Observer welcomes letters to the editor. They must be submitted electronically, citing with the writer's name, phone number and an e-mail address, to www.heightsobserver.org/members.

LETTERS/OPINION

Think before you vote
To the Editor:

Before deciding for or against the proposed amendment to the city charter, I urge CH residents to read and think about what it establishes.

“Shall various articles of the charter of the City of Cleveland Heights be amended to change the existing form of city government from Council/Manager to Mayor/Council, eliminate the City Manager and rename all related titles and positions; create a directly elected Mayor with a four-year term, who may have outside, limited employment or other work that does not conflict with assigned duties; provide for recall and filling a vacancy; and set the authority and duties of the Mayor, including the power to veto legislation, the power to hire, direct and discharge city employees, and in certain instances require the Mayor to appoint city employees, subject to Council approval, including a City Administrator?”

Cleveland Heights needs a lot of improvements. The master plan worked out by the council with the city manager addresses these needs, and slow progress is happening. Do we want a politician, with other work concerns and no expertise required, to take over? Should we give all of this power to one individual? We clearly need more highly qualified employees to do the work which the plan details. That we have a master plan being implemented and positions are worked out by the council with the city manager, vice manager, council members and two department directors “shall avoid any actual or perceived conflict of interest and any action likely to give the appearance of impropriety in the execution of their public duties,” and replaced it with a clause simply stating that those individuals have to follow applicable ethics laws. Council also replaced a phrase requiring that all “officers of the City and all employees holding a position with an annual salary” join those other named positions in subscribing to an oath or affirmation that they’ll follow state laws, and limited such an oath to the named offices plus all department heads.

Really! We need a charter revision just to remind lawmakers and city employees to follow the law? That should be self-evident. We need them to follow all the ethics provisions that CRC wanted—in full, not in part.

We’d welcome a modern ethics provision as part of the charter. As soon as the initiative passes this fall, perhaps council can offer one as a further amendment—and include all of CRC’s original language as proposed, not as tinkered with by council.

Michael Bennett
Secretary, Citizens for an Elected Mayor

I support CH council candidate Hart
To the Editor:

Which new candidate for CH City Council has attended most Committee of the Whole and city council meetings for the past three years? Melody Hart. Because Melody has this unique view of city council, she has a very good understanding of how it functions.

Which candidate for CH City Council is a member of the Greater Cleveland Congregations (GCC) Housing Task Force and Melody Hart. Because Melody has been very involved in the actions the task force has taken, she has extensive knowledge of what needs to be done to reduce the number of neglected properties in the city.

Which candidate for CH City Council has a strong finance background? Melody Hart. Melody will bring a unique understanding of the budgeting process to council and will ask necessary questions about the financial operations of the city.

Melody Hart has my vote for Cleveland Heights City Council.

Gail Larson
GCC Housing Task Force member and Cleveland Heights resident

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 brought to you by our volunteers and readers. Individuals throughout the community decide what stories they want to write, then submit them for publication. Anyone in University Heights or Cleveland Heights is welcome to contribute regularly, occasionally or even just once.

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

If you’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 questions that aren’t answered there, call the Heights Observer office at 216-320-1423 or e-mail info@futureheights.org.

Articles to be considered for the November issue must be submitted by Oct. 14. We publish some articles online; they come in—and still consider them for the next print issue. We also publish an e-newsletter each Tuesday.
A park at Meadowbrook-Lee?

From Mentch

Cleveland Heights residents may be interested to know that Ralph Solonitz, Garry Kanter and I submitted a plan for turning the city-owned space at Meadowbrook-Lee into a small urban park. Over the years we have submitted three similar proposals in response to CH City Hall’s RFPs for that space.

Our proposal is that the city work with us, and a committee of like-minded residents, for two years to raise $1 million to pay for the design and creation of an interesting urban space, with a fountain kids and people can interact with, a small stage, and an open space for food trucks and a farmers’ market, etc.

If the funds can’t be raised, no park. But, there is little to lose by trying. It is well documented that parks like these contribute to the economic well-being of the community. And, in the end, it will probably cost much less to build and maintain a park than the subsidies that the city will provide to a company that puts a building there.

Our proposal has been rejected all three times. (Or is it four times? I can’t remember.) Our committee just wants everyone to know of our efforts—actually, some of you may have been involved in our first effort several years ago.

If you think that a smart, sophisticated park at Meadowbrook and Lee is a good idea, I hope that you will contact Cleveland Heights Economic Development Director Tim Boland, 216-291-4877, thboland@chhhs.com, and City Manager Tanisha Briley; 216-291-3737, citymanager@chhhs.com, or anyone and everyone else that you think can help with this. Thank you.

Fran Mentch was a leader of Citizens for Oakwood, the group that tried to stop the development of the former Oakwood Country Club. For more information, visit www.citizensforoakwood.org.

**CENSUS continued from page 1**

The first census was recorded in 1790, that only included measures of race, age and gender, to a decennial (every ten years) report that became part of the Department of Commerce, where it has remained.

From a simple head count in 1790, that only included measures of race, age and gender, to a decennial (every ten years) report that includes more than 200 different surveys, the census has changed over time in order to accurately and effectively measure the demographics of the American people.

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

**BAND continued from page 1**

is the co-founder of Orchestra 19, a 19th-century historical performance practice orchestra based in Cleveland. Since he became its third director in 2013, UHSB has grown considerably. It now numbers close to 60 musicians drawn from throughout the Heights and the region.

The band has made great musical strides. In addition to continuing its tradition of playing a wide range of selections, including film scores and popular music, the band regularly performs both classical and core band repertoire.

The Oct. 20 concert, for example, will feature Courtly Airs and Dances by Ron Nelson, Sheltering Sky by John Mackey, Rhapsody for Flute by Stephen Bulla, with flute solo by band member Robert Cotrell, Sea Songs by Ralph Vaughan Williams, and First Suite in E-flat by Gustav Holst. The concert, at JCU’s Kulas Auditorium, is free and open to the public, with a suggested $5 donation at the door.

UHSB is a 501c3 nonprofit organization and a member of the Association of Concert Bands. For more information about the band, a complete list of performances, and information about joining the band, visit www.universityheightsband.org.

Mark Souther plays trumpet in the University Heights Symphonic Band. He is a professor at Cleveland State University and lives in Cleveland Heights.
Classroom technology changes over time

Ari Klein

Last spring I found an unopened roll of plastic, about 10 inches wide, among some old school stuff. I asked several colleagues if they knew what it was, but no one had a clue. It turned out to be transparency film for an overhead projector, the likes of which no one had seen in a while. Other examples of equipment from my early teaching years are now obsolete.

So much of the technology we use in the classroom today we too easily take for granted. It is hard to imagine how we would be able to survive without Internet access in our classrooms or without equipment to project from our laptops. Computers are certainly the most visible tools in schools today. I was an early adopter back in 1999, when I was given a laptop and an LCD projector to use in my classroom, thanks to a federal grant. I soon acquired an interactive whiteboard, which enabled me to control my computer at the board. It was great, and I developed all my lessons on the computer.

All teachers now have this access and capability, and tools and software that are so much more advanced. We—teachers and students—are fortunate to have the materials and support to keep up with technological advances.

On the other hand, our students’ exposure to computers is focused mainly on ensuring that they complete district and state tests. For locally developed common assessments (a phrase meaning “tests”), the computer is used to score multiple-choice sections. Students get immediate feedback on their test results, and teachers can analyze each student’s skill level. Computers take the drudgery out of some test scoring and prepare students for taking state tests, where the stakes are higher. Obviously, many teachers use computers in creative and innovative ways. Unfortunately, even though I was initially ahead in the use of computers in the classroom, I now feel left behind and teach in a mostly traditional manner.

I like to see how students work out problems, and what they are thinking through their handwritten homework and quizzes. I have a hard time making multiple-choice questions that actually show me where an error in the student’s calculations may have occurred.

I know there are ways to give students feedback on electronically assigned work, but I have not kept up with how to do that, instead opting to write notes on students’ daily assignments. It just seems easier, in the long run, for me. “Did you add instead of subtract?” “This looks really good, but please try #4 again using another method.” Many times I show examples of calculations or graphs on this work, which I don’t know how to do in electronic formats. So, I guess I am a bit of a throwback.

I am old fashioned in other ways, as well. I still believe there is value in using a compass and straightedge to do geometry constructions, but you probably already guessed that. I also have a slide rule in my classroom that few people have ever used. Technology can do wonders for teaching and learning in the right hands, but some traditional methods can still be effective.

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

Ari Klein with oversized slide rule.
The status quo can’t cut it

Heights Observer October 1, 2019

The status quo can’t cut it

Tanisha Briley made a minor concession at the most recent CoW meeting—council’s working session as well. Regular council meetings, held the first and third Mondays of the month, take place in council chambers, where they can be videotaped and posted on the city’s Youtube channel. In addition, as required by Ohio law, minutes are kept. Council could conduct CoW sessions with similar transparency, but it declines to do so.

Under the leadership of Mayor/Council President Carol Roe, council committee functions are folded into CoW meetings. No council member is responsible for shepherding a given piece of proposed legislation through development to the floor—again making the process less transparent than it could be.

The current council and City Manager Briley, who came on board in late 2013, have failed to dig Cleveland Heights out of the ditch created by the 2008 financial crisis, and exacerbated by failures of previous councils and former city manager Robert Downey.

Comparable neighboring suburbs, all with directly elected mayors, have done better. By what metrics?

Tanisha Briley made a minor concession. They installed audio equipment in the executive conference room (where they choose to meet), so that audio recordings could be posted on the city’s website. Still, unless you can recognize the participants’ voices, the recorded meetings are hard to follow.

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Comparable neighboring suburbs, all with directly elected mayors, have done better. By what metrics?

Improved housing values, increased median household incomes, and more robust commercial development. Look around. In the once-vital Coventry Village commercial district, there are currently 14 vacancies visible from the street. Our historic housing stock, ravaged by mortgage fraud, is now beset by tax foreclosures, a challenge that foreclosure bond legislation, belatedly passed in 2018, cannot address. We lost 174 homes to demolition from 2011 through 2015. (Housing Director Allan Butler has not returned repeated calls asking for updated numbers.)

A few vacant lots have been sold for $500 to adjoining property owners. The rest must be mowed and maintained by the city which has trouble keeping up even with this.

With city-manager government, much that occurs remains forever behind the scenes. Council protects the city manager; the city manager protects council (sometimes by hiding vital information). In a mayor-led government, the executive has a less cozy relationship with the legislative branch (the first check and balance); the mayor has veto power, which can be overridden by council (a second check and balance), and must answer to voters every four years (a third check and balance).

The beauty of Issue 26 is that it offers Cleveland Heights an executive team, a full-time, elected mayor working day-to-day at city hall with a professional city administrator—the “Shaker model.” We’re convinced that political leadership paired with effective management will be better, and do better, for our city. Please vote “Yes!”

Deborah Van Kleef and Carla Rautenberg are longtime residents of Cleveland Heights. Contact them at heightsdemocracy@gmail.com.
Let’s work together to make Cleveland Heights even better

WHAT PEOPLE WHO KNOW SAY:

“As a trustee of Doan Brook Watershed Partnership, Mary is a strong voice for a healthy habitat in our community. She understands the over-arching importance of the environment in sustaining our city, country and the planet.”

— Peggy Spaud, co-founder; Friends of Lower Lake

“Mary is intelligent, dedicated to achieving the best for Cleveland Heights, and a pleasure to work with. She can and does collaborate as part of a team to get things done. We need her thoughtful, informed presence on Council to keep our current momentum going and growing.”

— Michael Ungar, current City Council member

“Mary Dunbar is all about keeping our city a magnet for residents and small businesses. She is smart, willing to take on complex challenges and works with others to find solutions. Let’s keep her on City Council.”

— Thomas Nobbe, Forest Hill resident

“Mary Dunbar’s recent successes include passage of a Complete and Green Streets Policy (recognized as the nation’s best), foreclosure bond legislation and legislation to protect our historic districts. She has twice helped Cleveland Heights be recognized as a Bicycle Friendly Community. Retain Mary to continue to build strengths.”

— Lee Chilcote, former City Council member

“I love my house, but some landlords and renters in this neighborhood are problematic. Mary Dunbar helped me get action for some needed improvements. She is committed to greatly improving Cleveland Heights performance in dealing with housing issues. Vote for Mary Dunbar.”

— Betty Watts, Caledonia resident

WHAT MARY DUNBAR SAYS:

It’s been an honor to work for you as a Council member since 2012, with these major accomplishments:

- Supported economic development initiatives, sparking numerous projects now under way
- Promoted citizen engagement, resulting in housing renovations and partnering to improve neighborhoods
- Increased transparency and communication
- Added to our strengths as a walkable, bikeable community

We have amazing assets in our homes, business districts, schools, parks, cultural and recreational opportunities — strengths we must build on to keep our city attractive and vital. But our residents are our greatest asset, and I will work for expanded governmental collaboration and citizen engagement to make Cleveland Heights an even more desirable community that attracts new homeowners and businesses while retaining those already here. I am passionate about keeping Cleveland Heights the place to be for diverse families and residents who love living here as much as I do.

Learn more and get involved at www.marydunbar.com

Mary Dunbar
Cleveland Heights City Council

New school year inspires renewed advocacy

Sue Kaster

Each year I have the good fortune of walking across the street on the first day of school to help launch my five neighborhood children as they start a new school year. The ritual includes me standing with the kids for the first-day-of-school portrait. It started 12 years ago when the oldest children, twins Adele and Patrick, started kindergarten. With three younger siblings, including another set of twins, it was a challenge for the family to get these new students to school. I became their walking buddy. For the next eight years, accompanying these five youngsters to elementary school was part of my morning routine.

My young friends no longer need my help getting to school, but I still get to be in their first-day photo. I love this ritual and the chance to let these students know I care about them and their education. This special moment is also a powerful motivator to continue to advocate for public education. This year, their mom posted a photo of me with the big kids as kindergarteners and another one with them as Heights High juniors. In the first photo I towered over them, and now they tower over me. The photos measure the passage of time and how much has changed as these two young people have grown up. It goes fast!

In addition to getting kids out of the house and back on a structured routine, the first day of school marks a new beginning: new opportunities and challenges, the excitement of self-discovery and discovering the unknown, growing as a thinker and problem-solver, uncovering new information and being inspired to search for more, becoming a writer and reader and able researcher, making new friends and working with others, and learning to navigate adults and the daily routine of a school environment.

Education is about human development. It’s priceless. It’s profound. It’s worthy of ritual.

The back-to-school launch reminds me that our system of public schools is essential, egalitarian and worthy of investment and attention. I am grateful to live in a democracy where we guarantee all children access to a free public education, because each individual is valuable, and because we all benefit from having educated and thoughtful citizens. Public schools bind us together. In a world of competition and conflict, they express the common good.

The kids are back at work, and now it’s time for us to resume our advocacy. Public education is under attack. The new state budget shows that providing for a thorough and efficient system of high-quality public schools that advances the common good has taken a back seat to individual rights and private education. Our community is hit hard by these anti-public priorities.

I am grateful to live in Cleveland Heights, where our community invests in our children and values our public schools. I am grateful that we have a coalition of community members, educators and elected officials who fight for this essential cornerstone of our democracy. The Heights Coalition for Public Education persists as an organized voice for state policies that support public education. Citizen leadership is essential if we want the state legislature to fulfill its obligation to provide for a thorough and efficient system of high-quality public schools.

Each day our children must function within the reality shaped in large part by state policy. For that policy to achieve our goals for children, we must demand that policymakers make the success of our public school systems their education priority.

We have a lot of work to do.

Sue Kaster is a 40-year resident of Cleveland Heights and the former director of Reading Heights. She is active in the Heights Coalition for Public Education and the League of Women Voters.
Is Issue 26 saw as a recall vote

Vince Reddy

Though it hasn’t been presented as such, the November ballot Issue 26, regarding the future of city government in Cleveland Heights, is a recall vote on the performance of City Manager Tanisha Briley. If the proposal passes, the city’s form of government is up for grabs, and the voters—after seven months of reviewing the Charter Review Commission’s recommendations—will decide whether we need a structural change that will require a transition period of more than two years.

Most of what Cleveland Heights offers comes for granted: its commercial districts, parks, schools and libraries, theaters, nonprofits, stores, restaurants, and a diverse and interesting array of long- and short-term residents. It is easier to argue Cleveland Heights’ design standards surpass those of its neighbors and that planning done throughout the city’s history positioned it to face many of its current challenges. Voters should educate themselves on the council-manager and mayor-council forms of government. The council-manager form is the most common in the U.S. Research shows it is more efficient and less likely to face corruption. I see no reason for Cleveland Heights to change from the form of government that has served it well for nearly 90 years. Vote no on Issue 26.

Vince Reddy is a former Futures Heights board member and a 25-year resident of Cleveland Heights. He recently served on the city’s Charter Review Commission and was the city’s zoning administrator from 1996 to 2005.

New resident advocates for leadership

Patrick Akers

As a relatively new Cleveland Heights resident, I write in support of an elected mayor. My fiancee and I moved to Cleveland Heights in January 2018 after living downtown. Over the past two years, we have fallen in love with this city, and our decision to stay was guided by the strong support of our new neighbors. I’d like to share some of the reasons why we believe an elected mayor is best positioned to solve the city’s problems.

The city’s assets, as well as its problems, are unique. Each of the seven council members is responsible for ensuring that planning done throughout the city’s history positioned it to face many of its current challenges. Voters should educate themselves on the council-manager and mayor-council forms of government. The council-manager form is the most common in the U.S. Research shows it is more efficient and less likely to face corruption. I see no reason for Cleveland Heights to change from the form of government that has served it well for nearly 90 years. Vote no on Issue 26.

Claims that the CRC was biased are unfounded

Mike Gaynir

I am often asked why the Cleveland Heights Charter Review Commission (CRC) recommended against changing to a strong mayor. The answer is simple: We determined it was not in the best interest of Cleveland Heights residents.

Claims that the commission was biased are unfounded. The council was split 3-3 in favor of keeping the council-manager system. Each of the seven council members appointed one CRC member, who, one can assume, supported their point-of-view. I was appointed by Council Member (now Mayor) Carol Roe. Though we both opposed a strong mayor, we disagreed on other issues, including my initial preference for ward representation. The remaining eight appointees were agreed upon by the entire council, and were assumed to be neutral. We were a very diverse body of individuals, ideas and opinions, just like our city community.

After seven months of research, we took two votes. We voted against changing to a strong mayor by a margin of 12-2, with one abstention. We then voted 11-1 in favor of keeping our current council-manager form of government because there was not a sufficient abstention voted with the majority on this vote). After our exhaustive examination of the pros and cons for making a change, only two commission members voted for a mayor. One pro-mayor commission member resigned shortly after this meeting.

Another meritless claim is that the council-manager system failed. It is true that the majority of public comments made us at the close of our twice-monthly meetings favored this position. A little over 30 speakers addressed us at these meetings, several on multiple occasions. At a public forum, which attracted 80 residents, the majority of comments favored a strong mayor. These residents were heard, but their assertions were not as impactful as the evidence, and we were tasked with making recommendations in the best interest of all of the residents of Cleveland Heights.

The reasons members voted against the strong mayor were as varied as their diverse backgrounds. For me, it was the long history of problematic, unaccountable strong mayors in Cuyahoga County that fuel inefficiency and increase costs to taxpayers. Other members cited our long history and successful experience with a shared-power council, and professional, accountable city manager expertise. Most found no evidence a mayor-council government would correct perceived problems, and that this kind of change could destabilize our city, slowing or stopping progress on our master plan objectives.

The other reasons for our recommendation are in our final report, including that a mayor-council system would “generate conflict and gridlock, as opposed to the more collaborative form preferred by our council. . . . that should be expected from a council-manager system.” The mayor system empowers a single individual and “campaigning skills are not necessarily in the best interest of all of the residents of Cleveland Heights.” The reasons members voted

There’s no reason we can’t have this. I believe an elected mayor will give Cleveland Heights a better shot at reaching its full potential. This is no slight to those working under our current council-manager form of government. I believe they are doing the best they can under the current challenges. I also believe that an elected mayor will give Cleveland Heights a better shot at reaching its full potential. This is no slight to those working under our current council-manager form of government. I believe they are doing the best they can under the current challenges. I also believe an elected mayor will give Cleveland Heights a better shot at reaching its full potential.

Said another member: “The CRC is definitely not biased, but that doesn’t mean that the CRC is not representative of residents. We are an elected body.” The CRC is not immune to bias, but we are an elected body.

Since our report was submitted, two professors at the University of North Carolina have published a research paper, looking at more than 2,700 U.S. cities. They found our current form of government is 57 percent less likely to result in corruption convictions than the proposed mayor-council form. I talked to one of the authors, Kimberly Nelson, a leading expert on local government. She said research shows cities that change the form of government often do not realize the benefits they hoped to achieve, and she gave me a quote from Plato: “In politics we presume the greater number of the people how to get votes knowing how to administer a city or a state. When we are ill . . . we do not ask for the handsomest physician, or the most eloquent one.”
Fred D’Ambrosi

A new study, published online in April 2019, concludes cities with the council-manager form of government, like Cleveland Heights, are 27 percent less likely to have corruption convictions than cities using the mayor-council form of government. CH will vote on Issue 26 on Nov. 5 to decide whether to switch to the mayor-council system in 2021.

The study was done by two professors in the School of Government at the University of North Carolina, Kimberly Nelson and Whitney Afonso, and was published in the latest edition of Public Administration Review, a peer-reviewed academic journal (https://tinyurl.com/mayor-corruption). They looked at 2,759 U.S. cities with populations of at least 10,000.

The study analyzed corruption convictions “between 1990 and 2010 to determine which factors, including form of government, affect the probability that a corrupt act will occur.” The findings indicate that municipalities with council-manager form are 27 percent less likely to have corruption convictions than municipalities with the mayor-council form.

Nelson said her teaching and research focus on local government, and do not reflect any political agenda. She said the School of Government is a non-partisan professorship. Professors are prohibited from registering for parties or making political contributions. She is part of a team that travels the state training city managers, mayors, clerks and other officials from across the political spectrum in ethics, money management, leadership and accountability.

The study directly addresses the vote CH voters are facing: “Every year, local communities debate changing their form of government.” The argument is made that the mayor-council form provides greater accountability. . . than the council-manager. . . In fact, oversight is lessened when greater political independence is afforded to a single person . . . and the evidence presented here suggests significantly higher levels of corruption associated with the mayor-council form of government . . .

The final paragraph states, “This study provides evidence that municipalities using council-manager form of government are less likely to have corruption charges filed than are municipalities with the mayor-council form of government.”

The study also found that an elected mayor, only in a council-manager system (not the strong mayor system proposed in Issue 26), also helps lower the corruption rate. Nelson confirmed, “This does not mean a strong mayor in a mayor-council form.”

Nelson said her data, which she believes to be the most up-to-date in the nation, shows most votes to change city government fail. Those that pass do so by a very close margin. From 1990 to 2018, she said, the number of council-manager cities, the most popular form in the U.S., was up 1 percent. Mayor-council cities were flat, and other forms of government were down 1 percent.

Nelson said, “If you look at a research on places that change, they almost never realize the benefits they hoped to realize. The problem isn’t the form of government.”

Fred D’Ambrosi has been an award-winning journalist for 40 years, mostly as a TV news director in Cleveland, D.C., San Diego and Milwaukee. He’s enjoyed living in Cleveland Heights since 2015. He is volunteer communications director for Cleveland Heights Citizens for Good Government.

The case for an elected mayor

Tony Cuda

Cleveland Heights needs leadership that is directly accountable to the voters. That means an elected mayor. We don’t have that now. City council appoints a part-time mayor with no executive authority. The vast majority of voters we have spoken with do not think the current system is working and believe a full-time elected mayor will be more responsive to the needs of our community.

That is why Issue 26 is on the ballot. Not because a 10-member committee in the city itself Citizens for an Elected Mayor thinks so. It is because 4,000 voters signed a petition saying they want to be able to vote for mayor. They talked about their dissatisfaction with Severance, taxes, water collection, their water and sewer bills, the Top of the Hill process, Noble Road, Taylor Road, Coventry Village, Mayfield Road, and a general lack of vision and leadership. There certainly were accolades for police and fire. But the vast majority felt that an elected mayor would give them and our city a better future. Bottom line: Cleveland Heights citizens want to vote for mayor! They don’t want council choosing for them.

The people opposing our right to vote for mayor concede that voting for city council is easier. But you cannot say you trust citizens to vote for city council, but they can’t be trusted to vote for mayor. They applaud voters for somehow managing to elect apolitical, virtuous council members, but fear those same voters would probably elect a corrupt mayor if given the chance. Our supporters have found this insulting, hypocritical and elitist. As former Charter Review Commission member Jessica Cohen said in a recent Facebook post, “I am so disgusted by (the opposition’s campaign). I can’t believe they have resorted to fearmongering and negative campaigning already.”

Another thing voters have told us they don’t like—our opponents accepting outside Political Action Committee money from a Washington, D.C., trade association. The International City Managers Association (ICMA) has pledged up to $5,000 in matching funds to help defeat the elected mayor campaign. But hundreds of our volunteers have responded with hundreds of small donations. Our supporters are proud to be on the side of a grassroots campaign that promotes democracy and voter participation.

Many things the opposition is saying are simply not true. One that stands out among many is Jack Newman’s assertion in last month’s Heights Observer that an elected mayor would “focus power in one individual.” The truth is, power would be shared between two elected, co-equal branches of government, with checks and balances that are currently nonexistent.

This is not a power grab. Giving all the power to the one and only branch of government is a power grab. And the voters are telling us this form of government is not working.

Our elected mayor amendment is actually very similar to the current form of government in Shaker Heights. The mayor would need city council to approve legislation and appointments, including that of the city administrator. The city administrator would have the same credentials as our current city manager and would have to be confirmed by council. In other words, daily operations would be run by a professional administrator who reports directly to the mayor. It’s called a hybrid form of government because it is the best of both worlds: a professional administrator and a directly elected mayor accountable to the voters. The citizens of Cleveland Heights will finally know where the buck stops! Regardless of what happens on Nov. 5, it is the voters who will have the final say. Just as it should be.

Tony Cuda is a longtime CH resident and campaign manager for Citizens for an Elected Mayor.
The inaugural University Heights Fall Fest will take place on Sunday, Oct. 6, 1-5 p.m., at Walter Stinson Community Park.

Jersey, the Bruce Springsteen tribute band, will headline the event, with a concert at 3 p.m.

There will be plenty of shopping at Fall Fest, as dozens of local artists and small businesses will have booths at the festival. Vendors include Altemus Leatherwork, Milan’s Bead Company, Dude About Town photography, LeLux Jewelry & Accessories, Judy’s Jewelry Basket, Sunshine on Silk, Milk & Cookies, and Shebaflora.

For kids, Fall Fest will feature inflatables, Balloons by Blake, RW Magic, Kool Kiddz Face Painting by Samantha Bias, and pumpkin painting. For adults, Beachwood Boot Camp will present an exercise session at 1 p.m.

Attendees are encouraged to show up hungry, as Ye Olde School Treats-n-Eats will be serving up novelty ice creams and other carnival food out of a retro-fitted school bus.

Rock and roll historians will remember that Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band played University Heights back in 1975. Tim Russert produced the show at John Carroll University, while Kid Leo from WMMS served as the emcee. To celebrate the ’75 show, Jersey will perform songs from Springsteen’s JCU set list, including “Spirit in the Night,” “Thunder Road,” “She’s the One,” and “Born to Run.”

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

Scalise is new UH city prosecutor

Mike Cook

A former Cuyahoga County assistant prosecutor, attorney Stephanie B. Scalise is the new city prosecutor and assistant law director for the city of University Heights.

The first woman city prosecutor in the history of University Heights, Scalise replaces Michael K. Astrab, who recently accepted a private sector position.

“Ms. Scalise brings prosecutorial experience, thoughtful temperament, and a strong sense of justice to the position,” said University Heights Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan. “I am delighted she accepted our offer to serve the residents of University Heights.”

Scalise is owner of Scalise Legal Services, where her litigation practice focuses on juvenile law, family law, criminal defense, and appeals. She is an advocate for children as guardian ad litem in the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court and the Domestic Relations Court.

Her other legal work includes partnering with the Ohio Domestic Violence Network, The Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence, and the Cleveland Rape Crisis Center to provide representation to survivors seeking civil protection orders. As an assistant county prosecutor, Scalise worked in the General Felony Unit, the units for Children and Family Services, and the Juvenile Justice unit.

“University Heights is a beautiful community where diverse people are genuinely happy to live, work, and learn together,” Scalise said. “I feel very privileged to have this opportunity to serve a place I can be so proud of.”

Scalise earned her law degree from Case Western Reserve University. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Wilson College as a double major in legal studies and history/political science. In addition, she studied at the University of Oxford.

Law Director Luke McConville appointed Scalise, upon the mayor’s recommendation. UH City Council approved the appointment at its Sept. 16 meeting.

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

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Open house kicks off Fire Prevention Week

University Heights Fire Department (3980 Silsby Road) invite community members of all ages to their station on Sunday, Oct. 6, 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Activities will include fire safety talks, station tours, and food, as well as inflatables and a coloring contest for kids.

University Hospitals will provide health screenings and food, including Kosher options, while the American Red Cross will distribute fire detector batteries.

This year, national Fire Prevention Week runs Oct. 6-12, and this year’s theme is “Not Every Hero Wears a Cape—Plan and Practice Your Escape.” Fire safety tips will be featured on the city’s social media accounts throughout Fire Prevention Week.

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

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Hang out with the University Heights Fire Department at its second annual Open House on Sunday, Oct. 6 from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Mike Cook

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

UHPD to distribute candy on Halloween night

As is their tradition, members of the University Heights Police Department will be ready for Halloween night, Oct. 31, with candy for trick-or-treaters. Trick-or-treat hours will run from 6 to 8 p.m. that evening. Residents are asked to leave their lights on if they will be distributing candy.

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

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Cleveland Heights City Council

Meeting highlights

SEPTEMBER 3, 2019

Council members present were Mayor Carol Roe, Vice Mayor Melissa Yasinow, Craig Cobb and Mary Dunbar. Members absent were Kohli Seren, Jason Stein and Michael N. Ungar. The meeting lasted from 7:46 to 8:46 p.m.

Public comments

Residents spoke about a wide variety of concerns:

- Mark Pultusker spoke again about his experience with municipal broadband projects on both sides of the issue. He is quite concerned and offered the city a free study to show pros, cons, and potential pitfalls. Mayor Roe stated she would discuss this with council and staff.
- City Manager Tanisha Briley encouraged him to submit a proposal soon, as the RFP period is closing.
- Joan Mallick urged a market study for the police had performed a study. She feels this should be done before proceeding.
- Joyce Rajke asked that the next Archaeological Board of Review meeting be video recorded; she claims that the court reporter is inadequate. She asked that a complete drawing be presented because at the last meeting the drawing was incomplete—and that a shadow study be done.
- Alex Pesta encouraged council to be “bold and intentional” about Top of the Hill, he pointed out the developer’s and the city’s commitment, adding that so many meetings and studies can lead to a project “getting stuck,” and concluding “you cannot satisfy everyone.”

City manager’s report

Briley’s full report may be found at: www.clevelandheights.org/documentcenter/5594. City manager’s report may be found at: www.heightsobserver.org.

She also asked that council meeting minutes be included in the packet and for an explanation of when emergency legislation is appropriate. Vice Mayor Yasinow answered the last query by explaining that legislation can take immediate effect if it is passed after a single reading (“Emergency”), but must wait 30 days if there are two or more. She noted that the Charter Review Commission has recommended a modification of the wording of this matter in the Amended Charter, but that will not be presented to voters until future date.

- Bill Brum livens on Middlehurst Road and is concerned that building an 8-story apartment building with only eight garages on the block south of Mayfield Road will cause a parking problem. There is currently informal parking on the lot that will be built upon. He was referred to Richard Wong to discuss his concerns.
- Joyce Rajke asked that the next Architectural Board of Review meeting be video recorded; she claims that the court reporter is inadequate. She asked that a complete drawing be presented because at the last meeting the drawing was incomplete—and that a shadow study be done.
- Alex Pesta encouraged council to be “bold and intentional” about Top of the Hill, he pointed out the developer’s and the city’s commitment, adding that so many meetings and studies can lead to a project “getting stuck,” and concluding “you cannot satisfy everyone.”

Mayor’s report

Mayor Roe urged citizens to look at council updates on the city website and announced the following events:

- Oct. 2: Noble Neighbors Governance Forum
- Oct. 3: League of Women Voters Candidates Forum at the Community Center
- Oct. 10: League of Women Voters Issues Forum at Cleveland Heights High School

LWV Observer: Blanche Valancy.

Look for earlier, and often expanded, posts of meeting summaries online at www.heightsobserver.org.

The disclaimer applies to company any redistribution of these reports.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

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

These reports contain member observations and select highlights of public meetings and are not official statements of the Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland. The disclaimer noted company any redistribution of these reports.

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worked to get the band's equipment under cover. Members of AJ & The Woods were waiting inside The Fairmount for their scheduled 9:30 p.m. performance when the power went out. Not missing a beat, the band played an acoustic set in the dark as the crowd listened intently. Upstairs at Green Tara Yoga, Michael McFarland continued on in the dark.

“...exemplifies the love these musicians and all of the musicians who played tonight have for the spirit of this festival and this community,” posted Jason Patrick Meyers, a member of the Heights Music Hop 2019 team, on Facebook.

“...on Saturday morning, it be-...
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COURTESY Futureheights

Cleveland Heights hit by massive storm

City crews and First Energy responders spent multiple days clearing debris, fixing downed utility poles, and restoring power after a major storm and microburst damaged neighborhoods in Cleveland Heights and nearby suburbs on Friday, Sept. 13. The microburst—a rapidly descending wind and rain shaft caused by storm convection—was the second to hit the community in the last three years. The vast majority of damage occurred in the neighborhoods south of Cedar and west of Lee roads, fanning out from the Fairmount Boulevard, Coventry Road and Scarborough Road intersection.

As a result, the annual Heights Community Congress (HCC) Home & Garden Tour, scheduled for Sept. 14, was canceled. The houses and yards that were to have been featured on this year’s tour are all located in the historic Coventry and Fairmount neighborhoods that were among those most affected by the storm. [For information on receiving a refund for HCC tour tickets, or donating the cost of tickets purchased to the nonprofit, see article on p. 15.]

The Heights Music Hop—an other annual Cleveland Heights event, held this year on Sept. 12, 13 and 14—was able to proceed both the night of the storm and the following evening, in spite of many venues losing power. At approximately 8:45 p.m. on Sept. 13, the south side of the Cedar Fairmount Business District lost power, but the music continued—in the dark—as the three bands scheduled to play in businesses there adjusted to the situation and went acoustic.

“We knew lots of folks didn’t have power [that] Saturday morning,” said Deanna Bremer Fisher, executive director of FutureHeights, the organization that presents the Heights Music Hop. “We made the call to go forward with the event for Saturday once we determined that 14 of our 19 Cedar Lee venues had power. Our thought was that people would want to come together—where there was music and light.

“We were hoping that power would come on for the other five venues, but that didn’t happen. The Rib Cage was able to move forward with its pig roast and outdoor music, Dewey’s hosted the music on its patio, and CLE Urban Winery hosted its bands via candlelight. New Heights Grill and Lopez were not able to open and host music as planned.”

Most residents had power restored by late afternoon on Sept. 17.

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

Eric Dillenbeck

Due to extensive storm damage that occurred on Friday, Sept. 13, Heights Community Congress (HCC) had to cancel its 42nd Annual Heights Heritage Home & Garden Tour, and its Sept. 14 preview party.

HCC had been planning its annual home and garden tour, set for Sept. 15, since last February. The profits from this annual tour are a major source of support to HCC’s ongoing mission to monitor and advocate for fair housing practices in the Heights and throughout Cuyahoga County. It is HCC’s largest fundraiser, and an opportunity to showcase the beauty and diversity of the Heights.

HCC sold more than 600 tickets in advance of the tour. Anyone who would like to request a refund should visit HCC’s website, www.heightscongress.org, for details. (Refund processes vary depending on where and how the tickets were purchased.)

Those who would like to donate the price of their tickets to support HCC’s mission should simply keep the tickets. On them is a tax-exempt donation statement, which makes each ticket a tax receipt. For more information, or to request an official statement of donation, visit HCC’s website.

The community’s continued support will be critical to HCC in the coming months. HCC’s Board of Directors is at work, brainstorming ideas for a different type of “FUNdraiser” that will highlight the uniqueness of the Heights community and HCC’s commitment to ensuring fair housing for all people. Please stay tuned.

Eric Dillenbeck is the executive director of Heights Community Congress.

With your vote on Election Day, my top priorities on council will be to focus on:

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- Attracting residential and business investment
- Securing economic development opportunities

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Don’t follow In East Cleveland’s footsteps: Vote no on Issue 26

Jackie Shakir

Cleveland Heights should take a lesson from East Cleveland and vote “NO” on Issue 26 to stop the politicization and destabilization of our city. I’ve seen this show before and it isn’t pretty.

I was raised in East Cleveland, and I was part of the second black family on my street. I remember the days when we had ice skating rinks on Shaw Avenue, dances at the YMCA, and three outdoor swimming pools with tennis courts. I graduated from Shaw High School in 1974, and I gave back by teaching at Kirk Middle School in East Cleveland. My children were born in East Cleveland. I loved Cleveland Heights, and I still do.

But in 1986, East Cleveland swore in its first mayor, Darryl Pittman, after voters rejected our council-manager system for a strong mayor by a ballot initiative. Sound familiar? Promises were made that with a strong mayor, instead of a city manager, our city’s problems would go away. They didn’t. Instead, they got worse.

East Cleveland was placed under fiscal emergency under Pittman. The emergency continued under Wallace Davis, whose previous leadership experience included running a funeral home. Then East Cleveland got Emmanuel Onunwor, who spent nine years in federal prison for public corruption. Eric Brewer followed Onunwor, and then East Cleveland got Gary Norton, who was ultimately recalled in a special election and replaced with the current mayor, Brandon King. East Cleveland is a shell of its former self under this mismanagement.

I do not want Cleveland Heights to follow in East Cleveland’s footsteps. I have lived in Cleveland Heights for over 20 years, am a proud resident of the 44112 area, and serve as my Democratic precinct captain. I live only a couple of blocks away from my daughters and their families. I love Cleveland Heights, and I want it to stay strong.

Cleveland Heights has withstood the problems that have harmed East Cleveland because our city has been, and continues to be, professionally managed. We have a qualified and non-political city manager, Tanisha Briley, who manages city services and city employment, and is held accountable by our elected council. This is the most common form of municipal government in the country and prevents public corruption. Roads get paved because they need to be, not because a donor lives on that street. People get hired and fired because they’re qualified for the role, not because they’re a political ally’s relative. Does anyone wonder why Frank Jackson hired disgraced former judge Lance Mason, or why Frank Jackson’s grandson wasn’t prosecuted by the Cleveland city prosecutor?

I want to keep Cleveland Heights government accountable. I want to keep politics out of city services and employment. I want to stop the destabilization of our city, and stop us from going the way of East Cleveland. Anyone who says that it can’t happen here is fooling themselves.

I hope that East Cleveland has a brighter and stronger future. I really do, and I am working toward that goal with my fellow Shaw alumni. However, we in Cleveland Heights cannot ignore East Cleveland’s past.

Cleveland Heights should not follow in East Cleveland’s footsteps by throwing out our form of government on the promises of a magic mayor. I urge everyone to vote “NO” on Issue 26.

Jackie Shakir has lived in Cleveland Heights for over 20 years, but was raised in East Cleveland. She is a proud resident of, and advocate for, the 44112 area of Cleveland Heights.

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Belarusian delegates visit CH

In August, a delegation from the country of Belarus—advocates and leaders in the field of diversity and inclusion—visited Greater Cleveland to observe and learn about programs here for those with disabilities. They plan to take what they learned back to Belarus, and implement the ideas there. Cleveland Heights’ Loving Hands Group (whose principal, Judith Eugene, is third from left in the photo) was among the companies and organizations that the delegation met with. The U.S. Agency for International Development funded their visit, in partnership with World Learning, and Cleveland Council on World Affairs planned their itinerary.

CH Senior Center News

Amy Jenkins

Attention, music lovers! The Cleveland Heights Senior Activity Center’s (SAC) partnership with University Circle’s Distance Learning programs continues this month with an exploration of Chopin on Tuesday, Oct. 22, 1 p.m., at the center.

Julia Russ, Cleveland Institute of Music faculty member, will present “Chopin in Paris”—a talk about the composer’s life and work, and the cultural life in Paris at the time. Russ is a recipient of the Steinway Top Teacher award and has concertized extensively as a soloist and collaborative pianist.

In the second part of the program, planned for Sunday, Oct. 27, 3 p.m., participants will travel to Cleveland State University’s Waetjen Auditorium for a musical program, also titled “Chopin in Paris.” It’s part of the innovative Kulas series of Keyboard Conversations with Jeffrey Siegel—a unique concert-plus-commentary in which Siegel explains the musical pieces before performing each piece in its entirety.

Advance registration and payment of $20, which includes both the lecture and the concert, is required, as seating is limited. 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.chparks.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-Myers, University Heights community development coordinator, at 216-932-7800, ext. 203, or pgrogan@universityheights.com. Membership is $10 for University Heights seniors.

Amy Jenkins is supervisor at the Cleveland Heights Office on Aging and the Senior Activity Center. She can be reached at 216-691-7379 or by e-mail at ajenkins@clvhts.com.
Tiger Nation signs promote district unity

Krista Hawthorne

You’ve seen the signs in yards throughout the neighborhood—Heights Tiger Nation. The slogan with the face of a tiger has popped up on T-shirts, cups and hats. But some people do not have a clue what Tiger Nation means.

Around 2010, CH-UH City School District leaders were looking for a way to encourage district unity. They wanted all CH-UH students, families, staff members, and residents to feel pride in their district. They understood that to feel a connection with others who have shared experiences helps build unity and a sense of belonging.

At about the same time, the words “Tiger Nation” started appearing on district spirit-wear, marketing materials, gift items and exterior signs. Many of the district’s schools encouraged students and staff to wear Tiger Nation gear. The popular yard signs started appearing a few years later, in neighborhoods throughout the community. Thus, the tiger went district-wide; it became everyone’s mascot.

“When I first came here, I immediately saw how everyone embraces Tiger Nation,” said Superintendent Elizabeth Kirby. “I love that students from kindergarten to high school, alumni, families, staff, and merchants show their pride by wearing and displaying Tiger Nation gear.”

Reaching Heights supports Tiger Nation in many ways, including as a distributor of Tiger Nation yard signs. If you would like to join the Tiger Nation, contact Reaching Heights at 216-931-5100 to purchase a yard sign for $10, with proceeds going to the PTA of your choice.

You can also purchase Tiger Nation gear on the school district website, under Shop Heights Gear.

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

Cleveland Heights - University Heights Board of Education Meeting highlights

SEPTEMBER 3, 2019

President Jodi Sourini, Vice President James Pouch, and board members Dan Heintz, Maia Lewis and Beverly Wright were present. Superintendent Elizabeth Kirby and Treasurer Scott Grover were also present. The meeting began at 7 p.m. and ended at 7:51 p.m.

District events

The district will host its fall Heights Family Academy on Sept. 14, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the high school. All schools have been holding open houses over the past week. Board members set up a schedule to attend as many as possible.

AP scholars

Dan Heintz said that the high school has 36 Advanced Placement (AP) scholars, and offers 20 AP courses.

LGBTQ support

To support LGBTQ students, the schools are offering resources such as clubs and access to social workers.

Metal detector purchase

The district received a grant for metal detector purchase. A new detector will be in use for the high school football game on Friday, Sept. 6.

Resolution on state takeovers

Dan Heintz presented a resolution concerning Ohio House Bill 70. It passed unanimously. The resolution states “that the Board of Education of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District calls for the complete and immediate repeal of HB 70 and the enactment of HB 134, which restores local control and focuses on the improvement of student outcomes.” The full resolution can be viewed at: https://go.boarddocs.com/oh/chuh/Board.nsf/Public.

LWV Observer: Carol Spackey.

Look for earlier and often expanded postings of meeting summaries online at www.heightsobserver.org. See disclaimer on page 11.

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Heights Observer October 1, 2019

18 www.heightsobserver.org
Dougbe River School plans annual gala event

John Luttermoser

The Dougbe River Presbyterian School, a mission in Africa that was conceived of in Cleveland Heights, will hold its annual fundraising gala on Sunday, Oct. 27.

The school is the first ever in a remote region of the West African nation of Liberia, which is the birthplace of Isaac Monah, elder in the Noble Road Presbyterian Church. He left Twarbo Region in 1990, fleeing Liberia's civil war.

In 2007, shortly after returning from a visit to Liberia, Monah brought his idea for the school to the church’s elders, where it was met with enthusiasm.

Working with other worship communities and individuals, the school opened in 2012. It now has about 160 students, boys and girls, from preschool through ninth grade. The school is open to all regardless of religious affiliation.

Monah serves as the school’s executive director. Several members of the board live in Cleveland Heights or University Heights. All staff members are from West Africa, mostly Liberia, and it’s an all-volunteer effort on this side of the Atlantic Ocean.

Current challenges for the school include building dormitories and continuing to develop the school farm, which is at the heart of a plan to make the school self-sustaining. Some of the food grown on the farm is used to feed students and staff, and some is sold to support the school.

This year’s annual Dougbe River School gala will be held on Oct. 27, at the Banquet Center at St. Noel, 35200 Chardon Road, Willoughby Hills. The event begins at 5 p.m., and will feature news from the school and information about plans for its future, as well as food, drinks, a silent auction, and a wine pull.

Tickets are $55 per person, or $400 for a table of eight, and can be reserved with a check payable to Dougbe River School, mailed to Dougbe River School, P.O. Box 18017, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118; or by using PayPal at the school’s website, www.drpsl.org.

John Luttermoser is a member of the board of the Dougbe River Presbyterian School.

Proud graduates of the Dougbe River Presbyterian School.

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— Sam Wolf

“"We moved here from Virginia and come here all the time, at least 2 to 3 times most weeks. We go mostly to the Children’s section, and we’re always looking at the How-To books. I homeschool my son, and we rely on the library to provide all the books we need for his learning. We don’t use a set curriculum, so whatever he wants to learn, we’ll come here and browse and check out different books on that subject. The library is a wonderful resource for us both.”

— Sarah & Sam Nemecek

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Elected mayor is a step toward more-real democracy

Greg Coleridge

People the world over are increas-
ingly demanding a greater voice in the decisions directly affecting their lives, communities, nations and natural world.

Many/most government, cor-

munity, religious “leaders” are increasingly publicly perceived as unaccountable, not transparent, captured by special interests, corrupt and disconnected from the problems affecting people in their everyday lives. Rather than exploring real alternatives to our fundamental problems, our “leaders” seem visionless.

Our own nation’s history is filled with profound movements to give greater voice to citizens over elites. These include a colonial revolution against a self-anointed king; popular resistance to a new Constitution until the Bill of Rights was added; and social movements to provide voting rights to freed slaves, women, indentured servants and indigenous people, as well as to directly elect senators (formerly appointed by legis-

latures). Those who strive to end voter suppression, gerrymandering, big money in elections, and corporate personhood represent this movement today for real democracy. So do those advocating for ranked choice voting, direct election of the U.S. President and, specifically at the local level, direct participatory governance.

It is this spirit for a greater public voice that drives the effort in Cleveland Heights to popularly elect a mayor.

Let’s be clear: there is no single solution to the challenges Cleveland Heights faces, some of which are root-
ed beyond our community and beyond our ability to directly influence. All we can do is maximize opportunities for both residents and elected repre-

sentatives to be mutually heard and accountable.

There is also no single form of government that should be seen as for-
ever, or blindly believed to be adequate. Times change. Conditions change. Choosing a mayor and appointing a city manager should no longer be “in house” decisions—actions beyond the reach of voters. Let Cleveland Heights voters decide.

Having city council selecting who will be city manager and who will be mayor isn’t remotely the same as citizens directly electing who will represent us and our interests in run-

ning the city. Accountability and re-

sponsibility under the current system is too dispersed. It’s too easy to pass the buck. We need a full-time mayor (with professional staff) who is directly accountable to voters.

There are those with concerns that a reformed system will invite outside influence from special in-

terests who could flood the local mayoral campaign with political con-

tributions. This implies that special interests currently have no influence on public policy-making, which is not true, though it may be more hid-

den. It also ignores the reality that politically astute Cleveland Heights voters will see through and reject blatant attempts by special interests to manipulate our elections. Direct voter election of a mayor is consistent with the current trend to provide residents and citizens a greater authentic voice—which is essential to improve civil skills and competence, to increase a sense of community, and to make people feel more personally responsible for public decisions.

There will be many possibili-
ties to tap our collective skills as we face a future of uncharted political, economic, social and ecological chal-

lenges. An urgent first step, however, is to transform the “in-house” selec-
tion of the mayor to a public election. Cleveland Heights is our collective “house.” All who dwell here should have the right to decide who will represent us.

Greg Coleridge is national outreach direc-
tor of Move to Amend Coalition, and a Cleveland Heights resident.

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OPINION
Fostering a resilient city doesn’t demand change in form of government

Jill Taten

Citizens for an Elected Mayor’s (CEM) advocacy for changing the form of Cleveland Heights government from councilmanic to strong mayor relies on three propositions:

• Our city is in severe decline.
• The approach of our current city government to our problems is ineffectual.
• We cannot solve those problems under our current structure of city government.

I think there is ample evidence to refute each of those propositions. Here’s just a sample:

• In 2018 violent crime decreased by 28 percent, 18th straight year of decreases and entering by 50 percent from the previous year.
• Median home-sale prices increased by 37 percent from 2014 to 2019.
• In 2017 and 2018, 95 new businesses opened in our city, nearly one each week.
• Even at CEM meetings, participants praised police, fire, public works departments, parks, and senior center.

Certainly we have serious problems, as do many inner-ring suburbs. But these are not data that portray a city in severe decline. Neither are these positive trends an accident. They are the product of effective and efficient management coupled with a strong city council, responsible for determining the city’s direction and priorities. Each member is held accountable for those decisions by the voters every two years.

In my single-minded focus on a strong executive officer reporting to the mayor, I am confident that the city government does not make decisions and implement programs more quickly. Just as many of us urge the city to postpone decisions, gather more information, product more studies and have more public meetings. Compro- mise does not come easily to us. The difficulty of balancing these competing expectations will not evaporate by changing the form of government.

Cleveland Heights government all accepting responsibility for developing the community we want to live in. Consolidating power in one person does not foster a culture of shared responsibility.

Our city’s problems were not caused by our government structure. Nor will changing that structure solve those problems. We cannot afford to waste time and energy on ineffective measures that don’t address the root causes of our problems and risk disrupting recent progress.

Maintaining the current form of government in Cleveland Heights is not an invitation to complacency and inaction. It is an opportunity to engage more actors in the vital work of improving our community.

Jill Taten is a longtime Cleveland Heights resident.

Where is the evidence that a strong mayor system would be better for CH?

Jack Newman

In the nearly two years since a group promoting a strong mayor emerged, its members have poured out thou- sand words of praise. But they still have not demonstrated (as opposed to merely claimed) that the daily lives of Cleveland Heights residents would be better, or will be in the future, safer, more prosperous, or otherwise better if only the city were run by a political executive and appointed underlings.

This failure is not surprising. There is no meaningful foundation for any such conclusion. The evidence points strongly in the other direction.

Consider several developments in our city in recent years under our city council and professional executive, all reflecting a sharp upswing:

• A comprehensive, multi-year master plan that addresses, with specificity, housing, economic develop- ment, infrastructure, sustainability, and much more. Execution on the master plan is well underway, with quarterly updates to council.

• A 37-percent increase in single-family home sales since 2014, in the top third of cities in the county by sales and among the top cities in the county for the first half of 2019.
• Advanced-stage development at Top of the Hill, following multiple phases of planning and public input. Developer selected for a much-expanded, mixed-use project at Cedar/Lee/Meadowbrook.
• Designation of the city as a Community Reinvestment Area with accompanying tax abatement, on a basis that can accommodate the particular needs of the Noble neighborhood.
• A formal, outside-funded planning study of the Noble Road Corridor, and early county funding for reap- praising Noble Road.
• Development of the College Club property into residential units.
• Ongoing process to acquire the Taylor-Tudor buildings for redeveloping Cedar/Top of the Hill.
• Designation as a Certified Local Government, facilitating investor applications for historic tax credits on redevelopment projects.
• A completed feasibility study tar- geting redevelopment of the Sever- ance property (75-percent outside-funded), followed by a request for proposals on redevelopment.
• A self-funding foreclosure loan program that requires financial in- stitutions to post a substantial bond to pay for potential code violations. Partnership with FutureHeights in a Community Development Corpora- tion to deal with blighted homes.
• A GIS mapping technology program through the National Resource Network and New York University to help the Police and Housing departments respond to nuisance properties.
• A stabilized bond rating, reflecting much-improved financial circum- stances that have allowed increased budget allocations, and a five-year capital plan.
• A Complete/Green Streets program developed and proceeding on many fronts, ranked number one in the nation, to optimize roadways for all users: pedestrians, bicyclists, disabled people and people of all ages, as well as motorists.

• Running a city is hard labor, calling for a vision (as in the master plan), diligent planning, and faithful execution day-to-day and over extended periods. Speculative as- sertions about a prospective nirvana following a jettisoning of the current professional government in favor of a powerful political mayor should carry no weight—particularly when considered against the hard evidence of substantial progress our city gov- ernment has been making for the well-being of our citizens and the big risks and major unknowns a new government structure would bring.

In the absence of its needs and issues. After all, that’s why we have government in the first place. Our council/manger system continues to serve us well in systemically tackle- ling what lies before us. The effort to discard that system is unwise, desta- bilizing, and a thorough disservice to the citizens of Cleveland Heights.

It should be rejected.

A single-minded focus on a strong mayor overlooks the significance of our community’s culture. We are a com- munity of strongly held views, usually conveyed quite empathically. Many of our neighbors express frustration that city government does not make deci- sions and implement programs more quickly. Just as many of us urge the city to postpone decisions, gather more information, product more studies and have more public meetings. Compro- mise does not come easily to us. The difficulty of balancing these competing expectations will not evaporate by changing the form of government.

And the argument that a single-minded focus on a strong mayor system would be better for Cleveland Heights runs on three assertions about a prospective nirvana extended periods. Speculative assertions about a prospective nirvana following a jettisoning of the current professional government in favor of a powerful political mayor should carry no weight—particularly when considered against the hard evidence of substantial progress our city government has been making for the well-being of our citizens and the big risks and major unknowns a new government structure would bring.

The logical conclusion of this type of governance on the November ballot.

As Cheryl Stephens, former Cleveland Heights City Councilman and mayor, and now Cuyahoga County Council member, argued in her opinion in the September issue of the Heights Observer:

“Strong mayors . . . have respon- sibilities and can take action. They set priorities and build support for them. By combining administrative responsibility and political account- ability, a strong mayor can engage and focus community attention in ways a city manager can’t.

I agree with Stephens and also with her rejection of arguments that question the viability of the elected strong mayor system. Quite clearly not all such mayors will be the best leaders, I am confident that the voters of Cleveland Heights can and will choose among highly qualified choices for the position of elected mayor.

Danny Keating is a professor emeritus at Cleveland State University’s Levin College of Urban Affairs, a 54-year resident of Cleveland Heights, and a FutureHeights board member.

In support of an elected mayor

Danny Keating

When the city manager form of government emerged in the mid-20th century, it often did serve as a good government response to politi- cal corruption and incompetence. I believe that it no longer serves as the good governance model for the city of Cleveland Heights. Our city has been challenged on many fronts as it has had to compete not only with exurbs in the region but also with some of Cleveland’s inner-ring suburbs (e.g., Lakewood).

To compete successfully—to retain present, and attract new, resi- dents and businesses in the face of factors such as population decline, more aging residents, a housing stock that has problems, and reliance upon policies primarily directed at business the city needs to take more aggressive and innovative action. The city manager system does not readily lend itself to this.

To almost all other local govern- ments in Cuyahoga County have elected “strong” mayors who can provide needed leadership. Shaker Heights provides a model of a strong elected mayor, while a chief adminis- trative officer reporting to the mayor largely manages the city’s affairs. Citizens for an Elected Mayor (CEM) proposes this type of governance on the November ballot.

Citizens for an Elected Mayor’s (CEM) advocacy for changing the form of Cleveland Heights government from councilmanic to strong mayor relies on three propositions:

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Certainly we have serious prob- lems, as do many inner-ring suburbs. But these are not data that portray a city in severe decline. Neither are these positive trends an accident. They are the product of effective and efficient management coupled with a strong city council, responsible for determining the city’s direction and priorities. Each member is held accountable for those decisions by the voters every two years.

In my single-minded focus on a strong executive officer reporting to the mayor, I am confident that the city government does not make decisions and implement programs more quickly. Just as many of us urge the city to postpone decisions, gather more information, product more studies and have more public meetings. Compro- mise does not come easily to us. The difficulty of balancing these competing expectations will not evaporate by changing the form of government.

Cleveland Heights government all accepting responsibility for developing the community we want to live in. Consolidating power in one person does not foster a culture of shared responsibility.

Our city’s problems were not caused by our government structure. Nor will changing that structure solve those problems. We cannot afford to waste time and energy on ineffective measures that don’t address the root causes of our problems and risk disrupting recent progress.

Maintaining the current form of government in Cleveland Heights is not an invitation to complacency and inaction. It is an opportunity to engage more actors in the vital work of improving our community.
Heights Libraries embraces fandom with fall programs

Isabelle Rew

This fall, Heights Libraries will host a series of programs that celebrate the books, movies and cultural phenomena that have drawn people in and inspired followers to transcend the original piece and make it their own.

“Few among us are new to the experience of seeing a favorite TV show get cancelled, or reading an enthralling series to its finale and longing to stay in touch with that world,” said Greg Osborn, adult services librarian. “Whether it’s sports, music, art, film, or a thrilling read, die-hard fans have expanded on the stories they love through the development of discussion groups, fan fiction and even cosplay.”

While fan culture might seem a product of the Internet age, wherein online forums teem with theories dissecting every plot twist, fandom dates back to the turn of the century, with Arthur Conan Doyle’s creation of his iconic character Sherlock Holmes. Early fans of the deductive detective were not satisfied just reading the books; they took matters into their own hands, immersing themselves in his world by designing their own mysteries in homage to Holmes himself. And with that, the fan was born.

“At the end of the day, people who appreciate books and movies can put them aside and not think about them. They can say, ‘I like that, but it’s time to move on with my life,’” said Osborn. “Fanatics, on the other hand, live and breathe their chosen subjects. They become a part of the legacy of the story, and in doing so, the story never has to end.”

Heights Libraries will embrace fan culture by hosting 20 programs about subjects people can’t seem to let go of, including film screenings, book discussions, trivia night and a gaming series.

“We are hoping to reach those people who want to share their passions or perhaps explore new ones with members of the community,” said L.P. Coladangelo, adult services associate. “There’s nothing more contagious than enthusiasm, and we want to give fans the opportunity to celebrate what it is they love and appreciate about a particularly compelling story.”

Programs will include book discussions of Good Omens by Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett and Watership Down by Richard Adams, a study group at the Cleveland Museum of Art on the topic of fans and fanatics in the arts, sports- and musical-themed movie nights, and an open-mic Harry Potter fan fiction night.

The 1986 film “Little Shop of Horrors,” one of those stories showing Oct. 8, 6:30 p.m., at the University Heights branch, is based on the 1982 off-Broadway musical, which is itself based on a 1960 movie of the same name. The film has spawned fan fiction, a cartoon show, yearly screenings and multiple new musical openings on and off Broadway.

“Fandom is a great way to bring people together and inspire creativity,” Osborn explained. “It’s always exciting when you find a group of people that you can completely connect with about a subject, whether totally fantastical or a reflection of our everyday lives. And that’s what the library is really all about.”

For a full schedule of Heights Libraries fandom-inspired programs, visit www.heightslibrary.org.

Isabelle Rew is the community engagement associate for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System.
Call for Heights Holiday Gift Guide entries

Deanna Bremer Fisher

FutureHeights has issued a call for entries for its annual Holiday Gift Guide that the Heights Observer will publish in its November issue. Entries are due by Oct. 18.

The guide is designed to help Heights residents discover the unique items Heights retailers are offering this holiday season andassist them in “shopping local first” to support the local economy.

The 2019 guide will contain listings in each of the following categories: Stocking Stuffers ($10 or less), Gifts Less Than $50, Gifts $50 to $150, Gifts More Than $150, and Gifts For the Person Who Has It All.

Heights retail business owners are invited to e-mail high-resolution photos and brief descriptions of items they would like to be considered for publication in the 2019 guide to Jessica Schantz (jschantz@futureheights.org) no later than Oct. 18. Put “Holiday Gift Guide” in the subject line. Entries must be purchasable at a brick and mortar store, and not available exclusively online.

Submit the following for each item: item category (one of the five categories listed above), item name, item price, name of business submitting the item, and a JPG photo of the item. Please limit descriptive text for each item to one sentence, or no more than 30 words.

The guide will remind readers that local retailers have gift cards for goods or services, so there is no need to submit those as items for consideration.

Submit the following for each item:

- item category (one of the five categories listed above)
- item name
- item price
- name of business submitting the item
- a JPG photo of the item
- a brief description of the item, limited to one sentence or no more than 30 words.

The guide will appear in the November print issue of the Heights Observer, as well as in weekly e-newsletters in the lead-up to the holidays, and online at www.heightsobserver.org.

The annual guide is just one of the ways in which FutureHeights supports locally owned, independent Heights businesses and encourages residents to “shop local” for the holidays.

Deanna Bremer Fisher is executive director of FutureHeights and publisher of the Heights Observer.

Heights Observer Holiday Gift Guide

Fair Trade Expo comes to JCU

Rachel Jewell

“There is no better way to eradicate poverty, strengthen families, and better our global community than through the empowerment of women,” said Kara Valentine, co-founder of Threads Worldwide, a social enterprise that provides sustainable income opportunities for women worldwide through the creation and sale of fair trade jewelry and accessories.

Valentine and Angela Melfi, Threads co-founder, will be the keynote speakers at the Ohio Fair Trade Teach-in & Expo on Saturday, Oct. 26, at John Carroll University’s Dolan Science Center.

Fair trade, a system of commerce that is respectful and equitable to both purchasers and producers, has made access to education, dignified housing, and work much more possible. This, in turn, means that families have a greater chance of staying together and avoiding a treacherous journey to migrate elsewhere.

Sharing the success stories of artisans and partners who are working in fair trade communities, and bringing fairly traded goods to the Northeast Ohio market, are the main goals of the Ohio Fair Trade Expo. Now in its 14th year, the expo showcases approximately 30 vendors displaying work by artisans from throughout the world and provides an ideal opportunity for early holiday shopping.

“Not only does the fair trade market provide handmade, unique goods to give as thoughtful gifts to your friends and family, but it provides an opportunity to shop your values; providing opportunities, empowerment and advantages to those living in poverty situations and allowing them to create long-lasting, meaningful change in their own lives as well,” said Laura Porter-Sadowski, manager of One World Shop, Cleveland’s oldest nonprofit fair trade organization.

The Ohio Fair Trade Teach-in & Expo will take place Oct. 26, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Registration is free through Eventbrite. Lunch will be available for purchase from the Italian Creations food truck and from nearby eateries. Attendees are welcome to bring their own lunch or snacks.

Rachel Jewell is a member of the Ohio Fair Trade Network and a fair trade advocate.

Angela Melfi and Kara Valentine, founders of Threads Worldwide, are keynote speakers at the Ohio Fair Trade Teach-in & Expo.

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LEI youth writers attend international congress in San Juan

Shari Nacson

Three veteran Lake Erie Ink (LEI) participants attended the second International Congress of Youth Voices, in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Aug. 7–11. This year’s congress gathered young writers and activists, ages 16–20, from all around the world, with the goal of enabling them to learn with and from accomplished writers, activists and elected officials.

For the three local delegates, the selection process began with LEI nominating them to the 2019 Congress. After acceptance and submission of required materials, Tess Kelly (of Pepper Pike), Ayelet Travis (of University Heights), and Grace Yoo (of Mayfield Heights), traveled with Amy Rosenbluth, LEI’s executive director, to be part of the event.

According to the congress, “student delegates are chosen based on their commitment to leadership and social justice and their passion and eloquence as writers.” This opportunity to cultivate leadership among accomplished youth was created by author Dave Eggers and nonprofit leader Amanda Uhle.

Many participants are identified through the International Alliance of Youth Writing Centers, a group comprising more than 60 organizations worldwide that believe “young people need places where they can write and be heard, where they can have their voices polished, published, and amplified.”

If that mission sounds familiar, it may be because Cleveland Heights-based LEI is a member of the alliance. Rosenbluth has found the relationship to be fortifying, in terms of developing best practice models and building a sense of community that is not bound by geography.

This year’s delegates participated in public performances and programming that included open mic nights, poetry slams, writing workshops, and a teen editors/book project.

The five-day event included “many amazing and inspiring educators and activists,” said Travis, a Fuchs Mizrachi and Heights High alum. “Between seminars, we got to explore the beautiful city of San Juan and volunteer with an organization that aims to rebuild Puerto Rico.”

For Travis, the most meaningful aspect of the congress was meeting other delegates in a setting where peer mentorship, with invested adults ensuring a supported infrastructure, can thrive. Said Travis, “When you are young and a creative or activist, it is hard to not feel small when your role models are all adults. Surrounded by so many creatives and activists in my age range was uplifting and inspiring.”

Travis believes her creative work and social activism will be changed by this experience. She explained, “Listening, learning, and advocating for those who suffer from oppression isn’t enough. Often we rule the social-justice wave and only listen to who everyone else is listening to (which often are the people who have the most privilege within the group). After the congress, I have made it a point to actively seek out marginalized voices, listen to their stories, learn from their perspectives, and then advocate for them and educate my community about their struggles.”

The congress covered lodging and meals for student delegates, who paid their own way. The three LEI-affiliated youth writers received partial financial assistance and a chaperone via LEI.

To read about the 2019 delegates, visit www.internationalcongressofyouthvoices.com. To learn more about Lake Erie Ink and its upcoming events and programs, including The College Essay Workshop (Oct. 2), Teen Writing workshops, and a Stories of Suspense writing workshop (Oct. 26), visit https://lakeerieink.org.

Mostly a mom, Shari Nacson, is a 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.

Burning River Baroque to perform at Blank Canvas CLE

Paula Maust

Thoughtfully crafted programs inspired by the current social climate are at the heart of Burning River Baroque’s eighth season, which focuses on unconventional 17th-century women and perceptions of mental health. Known for its socially motivated programming and dynamic interpretation of early modern music, the group will bring “A Mad, Burning Desire” to Blank Canvas CLE on Oct. 19.

The performers will also engage the audience with dialogues about the myriad ways the perception of mental illness in the early modern period is directly related to the stigma surrounding mental health in contemporary times.

Praised as a group that “left an indelible imprint on my psyche” (Boston Musical Intelligencer), Burning River Baroque offers vibrant musical performances that inspire engaging dialogues and meaningful social change.


Paula Maust (Harpsichord) is co-director, with Melanie Kauschke-Jenks (co-piano), of Burning River Baroque.

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Open House
November 10
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Dobama presents new Will Eno play

Gavin Hubbard

Dobama Theatre continues its 60th Anniversary season with “Wakey, Wakey” by Will Eno. The play runs Oct. 18 through Nov. 10.

The New York Times called the play “profoundly moving,” and Variety described it as “a work of humor, humanity and grace that makes you want to hug your lover, your neighbor and maybe an usher on the way out.” This new play from Pulitzer Prize-nominee Will Eno (“The Realistic Joneses,” “Middle-town,” “Thom Pain”) features a guy named Guy who knows, like all of us on some level, that he is about to die. Guy engages in a conversation about life and what is worth celebrating, what is worth treasuring, and what is worth letting go in this moving and hilarious play.

“Wakey, Wakey” is the final piece Eno wrote in his five-year residency with Signature Theatre. He explained that, during his residency, he wanted something that had the sense of “time to get up,” and also of an Irish wake.

Eno is an American playwright based in Brooklyn, N.Y. His play, “Thom Pain (based on nothing)” was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Drama in 2005. Eno’s “The Realistic Joneses” appeared on Broadway in 2014, where it received a Drama Desk Special Award and was named Best Play on Broadway by USA Today, and best American play of 2014 by The Guardian. His play “The Open House” was presented off-Broadway at the Signature Theatre in 2014 and won the Obie Award for Playwriting as well as other awards, and was on both Time magazine and Time Out New York’s Top Ten Plays of 2014.

“Wakey, Wakey” features Jason Martin as Guy and Katrice Headd as Lisa, and is directed by Christopher Mitro.

Performances are Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., and Sundays at 2:30 p.m. Tickets are $32–$38. Senior, student and military discounts are available.

For more information and to purchase tickets, call the box office at 216-932-3396, or visit www.dobama.org. The box office is open Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday, noon to 4 p.m., during performance weeks, and one hour before all performances (when all remaining tickets are available at the pay-as-you-can rate).

In an effort to remove economic barriers and to make Dobama’s productions accessible to everyone, the first Sunday of every production is pay-as-you-can. Sunday, Oct. 20 at 7:30 p.m. is the pay-what-you-can performance.

Gavin Hubbard is Dobama Theatre’s administrative intern and a graduate of Heidelberg University, where he is currently pursuing an M.B.A. in arts administration.

The Fairmount exhibits CH artist’s fiber series

Katie Mongoven is the latest artist to have her work featured at The Fairmount as part of its emerging artist exhibition program. The exhibition features Mongoven’s fiber series, Periodic, and will be on view until Nov. 28.

Mongoven, who lives and works in Cleveland Heights, is known for her use of vibrant color and attention to detail—bringing unique patterns into focus.

She began the Periodic series at the Vermont Studio Center last winter, as an exploration of embroidery and a denaturing of its established purpose as a decorative embellishment. Each piece bonds the intangible qualities of light and color with texture, pulling inspiration from traditional quilt-making, geometry and pattern-making.

Her work has previously been shown at Arc Gallery in Chicago and site:Brooklyn in Brooklyn, N.Y. She received her degree in fine arts from the University of Michigan.

To view more of her work, visit www.ktmongoven.com.

The Fairmount is located at 2448 Fairmount Blvd. It is open Monday through Friday, 4 p.m. to 2 a.m., and Saturday and Sunday, 5 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Sadye Mascia is a freelance journalist living in Boston. A Cleveland native, she attended Beumont School in Cleveland Heights.
First concert in chamber music series is Oct. 13

October marks the opening of the 2019-20 Close Encounters chamber music concert series. Now in its 14th season, Close Encounters celebrates Heights Arts’ 20th anniversary with four unique afternoons of chamber music performed by some of the world’s finest musicians—who just happen to live here in the Cleveland area.

The first concert, to be hosted at a historic carriage house in Herrick Mews, will take place on Sunday, Oct. 27, at 3 p.m. Performing is the Omni Quartet, who will present Robert Schumann’s String Quartet in A-minor, written during a brief and singular period of happiness in his otherwise melancholy life. Musicians in the Omni Quartet are also members of the Cleveland Orchestra.

The second concert in the series will take place at Dunham Tavern on Sunday, Nov. 24, with subsequent concerts planned for March 1 and May 3.

Annual benefit event will feature Ohio’s poet laureate

Donna Johnson

Ohio’s poet laureate, Dave Lucas, will read his work at the eighth annual “Afternoon with an Author,” hosted by the Cleveland Heights Chapter Q of Philanthropic Educational Organization (PEO) International. The poetry reading will be followed by a Q&A session, a book signing, and a dessert reception on Saturday, Nov. 2, 2–3 p.m., at Forest Hill Presbyterian Church (301 Monticello Blvd.). Tickets are $20.

Lucas’ first book of poems, Weather, received the 2012 Ohioana Book Award for Poetry. Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Rita Dove named him one of 13 “young poets to watch.” Lucas has also received a Discovery! The Nation Prize and a Cleveland Arts Prize. In 2018, he was appointed the second Poet Laureate of the State of Ohio. He lives in Cleveland Heights, and teaches at Case Western Reserve University.

Past speakers at the event have included other area writers, including award-winning novelists Mary Doria Russell and D.M. Pulley, and mystery writer Annie Hogsett. PEO International (www.peointernational.org), organized in 1869, is a nonprofit, philanthropic educational organization of women that raises money for women’s education. It has about a half-million members in the United States and Canada, and chapters are designated by letters, not numbers or geographical location.

Ticket sales will benefit its International Project for Women’s Education. Book sales will benefit A Cultural Exchange, a nonprofit organization promoting literacy.

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

Laura Freeman is a marketing intern at Heights Arts.

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My awesome sports career

David Budin

Most of the way through Coventry Elementary School, I was a chubby kid who hated sports (except for baseball, though I wasn’t very good at it). And I always hated running—except to first base, after hitting the ball in a baseball game, though, fortunately, I guess, that situation was pretty rare.

But then, around the fifth grade, I started getting taller. By the sixth grade, I was among the tallest kids in the school. I didn’t realize that I was never going to grow any taller. But it was nice for a few years. Then, starting in, maybe, the ninth grade, I got shorter every year. (Not literally, of course. That’s happening now.) Then, when I got to Heights High, I had to try to remember which kids I might have bullied during my tall years. (But then, around the fifth grade, I started getting taller. By the sixth grade, I was among the tallest kids in the school. I didn’t realize that I was never going to grow any taller. But it was nice for a few years. Then, starting in, maybe, the ninth grade, I got shorter every year. (Not literally, of course. That’s happening now.) Then, when I got to Heights High, I had to try to remember which kids I might have bullied during my tall years.

But, going back to sixth grade and my sudden tallness, and its resultant thinness, another unexpected result was speediness. I suddenly became a really fast runner.

In the summer, between seventh and eighth grades, my second summer playing for Cumberland Park’s softball team and hanging out at Cumberland every day—mostly playing tether ball, which I still think should be an Olympic sport—this man, Mr. Tupta, Roosevelt Junior High’s guidance counselor, came around and started timing kids in the 50-yard dash, in search of participants for the upcoming Junior Olympics. I did well, and he wanted me to run in that event, but I declined (I don’t remember why). But he strongly suggested that I try out for the Roosevelt football team in the fall, because I was fast and big. He thought I could be a ball carrier.

Except that when I tried out, and made the team, we all figured out that I couldn’t see much without my glasses—and that included the ball—so Coach Jackson put me on the line. Which was awful. But I lasted the full season. Because I didn’t play very much. The next year I played a lot. Enough that halfway through the season I quit. I also ran track at Roosevelt, which was much nicer than football. Except for all that running we had to do in training. So that was the end of my athletic career. All I really wanted to do was music, anyway.

Though at Heights High we did have to go to gym class. The first semester, my gym teacher was the school’s football coach. The class was fun, in a way, mainly because he said things like, “Okay, boys, run on the count of three. One, two, three, ready, GO.” Which meant that every one of us fake-started. And, after dividing the class into four football teams: “Okay, boys, I want teams one and two over there, and teams two and three over there.” So, team two ran back and forth, not knowing where to go, and team four just stood there watching. My friend, who helped out in the school’s athletic offices, described this coach as the kind of guy who sticks his head into a room that has one person in it and says, “Anybody want any coffee?”

But my most memorable gym class was the day our teacher, Coach Cappalletti, had to attend a meeting and put all four of our period’s gym classes—100 kids—together in the gym to play ball. The substitute gym teacher laid out the rules. He said, “Okay, boys, when you get hit, be honest and raise your hand and go sit on the side.” My friend Bellamy and I both—as soon as one ball was thrown—raised our hands and sat down on the side. After watching for a minute, I said to him, “Look, let’s just go get dressed and take off. There’s a bunch of guys here. And chaos. No one will know.” So, that’s what we did. While we were walking through the hall, on our way to freedom, I joked that we’d probably run into Cappalletti, who would say, “Budin? Bellamy? Where you guys headed?” We laughed, and immediately ran into Cappalletti, who said, “Budin? Bellamy? Where you guys headed?”

We received some kind of suspension. About 30 years later, when I was doing some kind of volunteering at Heights High, I ran into Cappalletti, who, by then, had become one of the state’s best high school basketball coaches. (He died a few months ago.) Cappalletti and I talked for a while and I told him the ball story, which I thought he might find amusing. He began to apologize, and I stopped him and said, “No. You were right. You were doing your job.” He thanked me. I thought about it for a second and I said, “No. Thank you.”