



# HEIGHTS OBSERVER

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Published by **FutureHeights**

Written by volunteers for Cleveland Heights and University Heights • Read more at [www.heightsobserver.org](http://www.heightsobserver.org)

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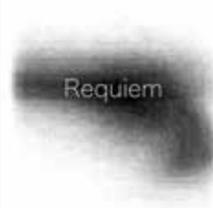
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FutureHeights  
 2843 Washington Blvd. #105  
 Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

## 2019 Heights Holiday Gift Guide

Jessica Schantz

For the past 12 years, the *Heights Observer* has published its Holiday Gift Guide to inspire residents to shop locally for the December holidays. Cleveland Heights and University Heights abound with independent businesses—boutiques, salons, restaurants and artist collaboratives—which enhance our local character and anchor our business districts.

Research shows that these

establishments are good for local economies: they keep dollars in communities, provide employment to residents, and establish a tax base that's less volatile than big box retailers.

Most Heights retailers and restaurants have gift certificates available as well. Grab a bite to eat or a warm beverage at one of our many neighborhood eateries or coffee shops. Make it a local excursion, one much more personal than an Amazon "click."



The holiday gift guide starts on page 24.

### CH filmmaker explores a region once ruled by rail



For the film, J.T. Waldman, one of the last illustrators to collaborate with Harvey Pekar, drew a street scene common to working class neighborhoods in 1890s Cleveland. With no parks, children had no choice but to play in streets made increasingly dangerous by electric streetcars—a conflict explored in "Streetcar City."

Sam Bell

Northern Ohio was an epicenter of electric rail in the early 20th century. Cleveland had one of the largest streetcar networks in the country, and was a key national center of streetcar innovation and manufacturing. Ohio once boasted the largest inter-urban electric rail system in the Midwest, connecting cities and small towns across the state.

What happened to those elegant systems? Was it a mistake to abandon them? What does history

teach us about sustainable transportation choices?

Cleveland Heights filmmaker Brad Masi addresses these questions in his film "Streetcar City," which will have a free screening at the Bottlehouse Brewery & Meadery (2050 Lee Road) on Tuesday, Nov. 12, at 7 p.m.

The film identifies relics of the streetcar system that are still visible in the Heights today—including the urban design patterns of popular mixed-use districts such as Coventry Village, and the

*continued on page 9*

### Noble Neighbors election forums cover candidates and elected-mayor issue

Vince Reddy

Noble Neighbors held well-attended, neighborhood-focused election forums on Sept. 25 and Oct. 2 at Noble Road Presbyterian Church.

The first of the two forums was for school board and Cleveland Heights City Council candidates; the second was on Issue 26, which, if it passes, will change the city's form of government from a council-manager to a mayor-council arrangement.

At the candidates' forum, school board incumbents Beverly Wright and Jim Posch, both running unopposed, talked about school district successes, including improved graduation rates and the three-quarters of Heights High graduates who go on to postsecondary education. A challenge they cited is the financial drain caused by diversion of funds to private schools through the state's voucher programs.

Three CH council incumbents—Mayor Carol Roe, Mary Dunbar, and Kahlil Seren—were joined by challengers Melody Hart and Anthony Mattox Jr., as well as Craig Cobb, who was appointed to fill the vacancy left when former council member Cheryl Stephens moved on to county council, and who is now running against Davida Russell to complete Stephens' unexpired term. Russell was represented at the forum by her campaign manager.

The candidates agreed on the importance of addressing the city's housing challenges and need for economic development.

They also generally supported the Noble Road Corridor plan, with Cobb acknowledging the importance of overcoming prejudice against investment in majority-African American neighborhoods.

Asked how, if Issue 26 passes,

*continued on page 21*

## Noble corridor plan presented to city councils

Sarah Wolf

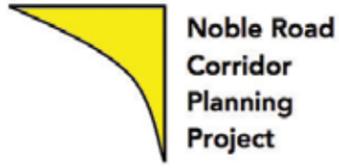
On Sept. 16 and 17, FutureHeights and Bill James, of the consulting firm Camiros LTD, presented a proposal to bolster the Noble Road corridor to the city councils of Cleveland Heights and East Cleveland, respectively.

Plans include improving the roadway, adding specified bike lanes, beautifying the neighborhood, and revitalizing the business districts. (Watch James' presentation to Cleveland Heights City

Council on the city's YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=rSsOLRqXpFU&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rSsOLRqXpFU&feature=youtu.be).)

Noble Road is the most significant street in the northeast section of Cleveland Heights, giving its name to an area known as "Noble neighborhood."

"Noble Road is the 'front door' to a charming neighborhood," said FutureHeights Executive Director Deanna Bremer Fisher. "A revitalized Noble Road should attract new residents and businesses to



the area."

FutureHeights, in cooperation with the cities of Cleveland Heights and East Cleveland, Noble Neighbors, Northeast Ohio Alliance for Hope (NOAH), and GE Lighting, kicked off a planning study of Noble Road in fall 2018.

The study, which comprised a

*continued on page 12*

**Letters Policy**

The *Heights Observer* welcomes letters to the editor. They must be submitted electronically, along with the writer's name, phone number and e-mail address, to: [www.heightsobserver.org/members](http://www.heightsobserver.org/members).

**HEIGHTS OBSERVER**

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**About the Observer**

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

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

Individuals throughout the community decide what stories they want to write, then submit them for publication. 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 Observer*? 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](http://www.heightsobserver.org) and click on "Member Center" at the left.

- For information about writing style, article length, etc., click on "Become an Observer" at the left. For questions that aren't answered there, call the FutureHeights office at 216-320-1423 or e-mail [info@futureheights.org](mailto:info@futureheights.org).

Articles to be considered for the December issue must be submitted by Nov. 11. We publish some articles online as they come in—and still consider them for the next print issue. We also publish an e-newsletter each Tuesday.

**Six good reasons to shop local for the holidays—and every day**



**OPENING THE OBSERVER**

**Bob Rosenbaum**

Here are six good reasons to shop local this holiday season:

1. If you like the Heights for its walkable access to lively, interesting business districts, the way to keep these districts healthy is to spend money in them—for special occasions and everyday life.
2. I value the process of finding thoughtful, unique gifts in shops run by people I know as friends. When I give such a gift, it comes along with a little story about the great shop where I got it.
3. All the money we spend on the Internet and most of what we spend at national chain stores leaves the community forever. But most of the money spent with an independent local merchant stays in the community, where it recirculates and supports the local economy.
4. Our independent merchants support local causes and school kids. They donate and participate. They cater to our local tastes, and collaborate with each other to make our com-

munity special.

5. Many owners and employees of local businesses live here, too. Shopping with neighbors and friends is more enjoyable than shopping at a corporate chain that cares most about maximizing shareholder value.

6. Some part of every dollar we spend with giant corporate retailers is used to fight wage growth, avoid taxes, prevent unions and resist regulation. Our money is the fuel that helps them grow larger and more powerful—while often working against our own interests. Owners of small, independent businesses tend not to have lobbyists and law departments. They're regular people, with the same problems as the rest of us. If you see it the way I do, spending locally is like casting a vote for a better kind of capitalism.

This issue of the *Heights Observer* contains our annual gift guide (starting on page 24) and ads from at least 25 local businesses that have something to contribute to your holidays.

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



Mac's Backs-Books on Coventry is among the local retailers that offer complimentary gift wrap with purchase.

**Correction to October letter**

Issue 26 ballot language that was quoted in a letter in the October issue, "Think before you vote," incorrectly referenced one of the preliminary versions of the ballot language that CH City Council

considered, rather than the final version. The correct ballot language can be found online at: [www.heightsobserver.org/read/2019/10/07/municipal-issue-26-proposed-charter-amendment-by-petition-city-of](http://www.heightsobserver.org/read/2019/10/07/municipal-issue-26-proposed-charter-amendment-by-petition-city-of).

**What happens after the Issue 26 vote?**

Rory St. Jean

My wife and I moved to Cleveland Heights in August 2016, returning to Greater Cleveland after moving back and forth to Toronto on and off for about five years. (The company I work for moved me to Toronto several times on expat assignments.) This was difficult for my wife and me, but we made it work. When we moved back the last time, we were ready to settle down, find a home, and raise a family. We had several ideas of where we wanted to be but didn't know exactly where that was. We wanted to be within the inner-ring suburbs of Cleveland as we both work in the city, but more importantly, we wanted to move somewhere that was conducive to raising a family, where you could feel the history when you drove through the city, somewhere that was walkable, and into a community that shared similar values.

It's this last idea that I think we all need to remember once the debate is over about Issue 26. I believe, and I feel many residents would agree, that Cleveland Heights is a progressive neighborhood that values diversity. When I say diversity, this must include diversity of thought and ideas. We are a community that is educated, involved, and aware. With that come varied and diverse ideas about what is and is not wrong with our current form of government, and what should or should not be done to fix it.

Looking at both campaigns I think one can ascertain the point each is trying to make; you may agree or disagree with either side, but that is what diversity of thought is.

In a progressive city with so many great minds living within our community, I don't think one person—or even seven people, for that matter—can encompass all the ideas and viewpoints of each and every resident.

There have been countless times in our city's history when citizen action and community organizing has spurred action within the city. So regardless of the form of government we choose, I hope that we continue to value diversity in all forms within our city, and that our residents continue to push for change and challenge the status quo.

We improve our city by making sure all voices are heard. That starts with voting on Nov. 5, and it continues with being involved with, and aware of, what goes on in the city and in your neighborhood all year round.

*Rory St. Jean is husband to Ashley and father of one, with another on the way. A finance professional at a Cleveland company, he enjoys getting involved with CH committees and organizations. Music and the outdoors are his retreats.*

# Top Of Hill process demonstrates city's lack of leadership and response

Meredith Holmes

A change in the structure of Cleveland Heights city government is urgently needed for three reasons: the current council-manager structure does not provide leadership, transparency, or responsiveness to the citizens of Cleveland Heights.

Until recently, I thought our council-manager form of government was working fine. However, participating in the public meetings about Top of the Hill (TOH) changed my mind. After attending several meetings, I decided that the proposed TOH apartment project was ill-conceived, unattractive, and inappropriate to the Cedar-Fairmount neighborhood. But I was more dismayed by how the city related to the public during these meetings.

I expected a more coherent and robust community engagement process. The land at the top of Cedar Hill between Euclid Heights Boulevard and Cedar Road is city-owned, and residents should have some say in what is built there. Some TOH meetings included public comment, and some consisted of presentations by developers. When invited to comment, residents—many of them planning experts and architects—lined up to voice their objections to, or support for, the project. Attendees were encouraged to send questions and comments to members of council and to the city's directors of planning and economic development. However, it was not clear how, or even if, this input would be considered.

I wrote a letter voicing my objections to the design and the public comment process to Economic Development Director Tim Boland, to Planning and Development Director Richard Wong, and to the members of the Cleveland Heights Architectural Board of Review. Nobody responded or acknowledged receipt of my letter.

Council members were either absent from or silent at these meetings. They, our elected officials, appeared to have no role in relating to the public on this important project. There was no

explanation of how TOH fit into the Cleveland Heights Master Plan, which was mentioned several times, although relevant parts of it were not discussed or available to meeting attendees.

At one of the meetings, it was not clear which aspects of the project we were permitted to comment on. Issues of design, traffic and parking, and impact on other commercial areas of Cleveland Heights were supposed to be dealt with separately, but this was not, at first, clear.

There appeared to be no leadership on the project. It was not clear to me how decisions would be made and who would make them. The public officials in charge of the project were not engaged in an open dialogue with residents who cared enough to attend the meetings and inform themselves about the project.

Cleveland Heights desperately needs to attract a range of businesses to expand and diversify tax revenue. New residential and commercial developments in University Circle and Shaker Heights have a big head start on us. Apartments and restaurants alone will not keep Cleveland Heights afloat. We need law offices, hotels, tech firms and more. We should be building on the success of having MetroHealth locate in Severance by attracting other medical facilities.

It's evident to me that Cleveland Heights City Council can't be expected to grapple with the tough economic issues facing the city. They are part-time and don't have the necessary expertise. Cleveland Heights needs an executive to negotiate with other city executives. We need someone at the helm with experience in economic development for inner-ring suburbs. Cleveland Heights needs and deserves an elected mayor with vision and the ability to work with the public, city council, and city staff to secure the future of the city we all care so much about.

*Meredith Holmes was the first Cleveland Heights poet laureate. She is a freelance writer, focused on women in politics, science, and engineering.*



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**State funding results in losses for CH-UH**



**A TEACHER'S VOICE**

Ari Klein

I am trying to understand how schools in Ohio are funded, and it seems about as easy as teaching advanced calculus to a toddler who doesn't speak English. Public school districts in Ohio are funded by state and local dollars, with federal monies for some programs that support students with disabilities. But the bulk of school funding comes from local property taxes.

In 2018-19 the state of Ohio arrived at \$6,020 per student as the base amount to educate a child. The state adjusts this amount based on several considerations. For example, if property wealth is high, the state believes the local community should subsidize the state funds. In our school district, the amount we received from the state was about \$2,300 per student, based on our high property wealth.

There is additional state money allocated for students enrolled in career technical education and for students with disabilities. More funds are given to districts where there is a high concentration of poverty. In CH-UH, the average state funding is around \$3,200 per student. This figure also includes students going to charter schools and those using various vouchers.

Here is where things get interesting. Each charter student accounts for \$6,020 out of our budget. Each EdChoice voucher for students in grades K-8 costs CH-UH \$4,650; for students in grades 9-12, it is \$6,000. Vouchers for students with disabilities and autism cost our district between \$7,000 and \$27,000 per student.

In 2018-19 our district's state funding was based on 6,578 students. Of those, 77.7% attended our schools. The 22.3% who did not attend our schools accounted for about 34.6% of the state funding, resulting in a net loss of \$4.4 million, which went from our public school

district to private and parochial schools—and this was for just one year!

If every one of those students had attended the CH-UH public schools, then the method the state uses might make some sense. The problem is that the vast majority of these were never CH-UH students. Our enrollment has been stable to growing in the last two years, while the number of students using vouchers has increased.

In the current 2019-20 school year, things become substantially worse for us. Due to last-minute changes in the state budget bill, more students are eligible for EdChoice vouchers. At the same time, the state budgets for school districts throughout Ohio were frozen. Because of this, CH-UH is still funded based on 6,578 students, but now we are responsible for at least 7,200 students. Even though state funding was frozen, the vouchers have been allowed to grow. Therefore, no additional funding will be generated for these additional students, and the district ends up paying the full amount, from \$4,650 up to \$27,000 per student. The loss is staggering!

If the state made just one change, and funded vouchers and charters directly from the state budget instead of through district funding, it would help many districts across the state, and especially CH-UH. We are one of only 11 school districts statewide that is losing more than 15% of our state funding because of the deduction method the state uses. Of those 11 districts, we lose far more money than any of them—\$4.4 million. Besides CH-UH, only Euclid, losing \$1.6 million last year, exceeds \$1 million.

Our community has a long and proud history of support for our public schools. This current school-funding debacle diminishes that legacy and threatens our future. To learn more about this issue, what you can do to help, and what the Heights Coalition for Public Education is trying to do, go to <http://cbub.net/coalition>.

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

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# View from the bench: Bail reform

J.J. Costello

The Cleveland Heights Municipal Court is making dramatic changes to its bond schedule based on recommendations from a task force created by the chief justice of the Ohio Supreme Court. The new schedule gives me more discretion in setting cash bail, putting fewer non-violent defendants in jail while awaiting trial. It's fairer and saves taxpayers money.

A person arrested will now be released on personal bond (a signed promise they will show up in court) unless charged with certain offenses, or where the prosecutor or police request a bond. In cases where a personal bond may not be appropriate—such as felonies, domestic violence charges, sexually-oriented offenses, and offenses involving a deadly weapon—the accused is brought before me as soon as possible, generally the day of their arrest. This allows me to impose secured money bail where necessary, and more nuanced non-monetary conditions such as GPS monitoring, probation check-ins, drug testing, firearms bans, or orders against contact with the alleged victim.

The purposes of a bond are to make sure the accused shows up for court, and to protect the public from harm. This approach should accomplish that in a more just manner.

The Ohio Rules of Criminal Procedure require courts to establish a bond schedule covering all misdemeanors. Most courts use a cash bail schedule tied to the level of offense. It doesn't allow much flexibility. Someone charged with displaying a

suspended license and someone charged with assault, both first-degree misdemeanors, are given the same money bond. Mental health or substance abuse issues are not a consideration. Wealthy defendants can post bond, but poor people are stuck in jail. None of these scenarios justly accomplish the purpose of a bond.

According to a Pretrial Justice Institute report, pretrial detention costs U.S. taxpayers more than \$38 million a day. In addition, studies have shown that as few as three days in jail can make detainees more likely to offend in the future, probably because detention disrupts stabilizing factors like employment and housing. This is during the pretrial stage when a person is innocent until proven guilty. Nearly all the stakeholders in our justice system recognize that something must be done.

The chief justice of the Supreme Court of Ohio recently convened a task force to examine the bail system. It came back with nine recommendations, including using tested tools to determine the risk level of a defendant, and training for judges and court personnel ([www.sconet.state.oh.us/Publications/bailSys/report.pdf](http://www.sconet.state.oh.us/Publications/bailSys/report.pdf)).

The Supreme Court has not yet implemented the recommendations, but as a judge in a single-judge jurisdiction, I can make changes now. I require that an attorney is present for the defendant's initial appearance for all felonies. I also formed a team of our city's justice system partners to attend a pretrial justice summit.

While our court has not yet adopted a formal risk assessment tool due to lack

of funding, with the information the police and my probation department provide to me, I am able to make a reasonable decision on the amount of bond and conditions. Finally, when available and appropriate, we may provide pretrial services, including treatment for drug and mental health problems.

These improvements help ensure that the Cleveland Heights Municipal Court has an effective, just pretrial system that keeps us safe and improves the likelihood that the accused appear in court.

*J.J. Costello is a lifelong Cleveland Heights resident and judge of the Cleveland Heights Municipal Court.*

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Melody Joy Hart, a 14 year resident of Cleveland Heights, is a CPA, a Certified Treasury Professional (CTP) and is certified in Financial Planning and Analysis (FP&A). She has over 30 years of experience in finance with Fortune 1000 corporations.

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# I don't want to be first



THE COMMON GOOD

Susie Kaeser

Being number one is typically a coveted status, but not when it comes to ranking school districts by their unfunded voucher costs.

The Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District has the heartbreaking distinction of subsidizing vouchers at the largest dollar amount per student of any district in the state. Being number one is undercutting educational opportunities for public school students and putting pressure on our community to solve a school-funding crisis not of our making.

In fiscal year 2019, the 5,111 public school students in the CH-UH district lost \$851 apiece so 1,300 other students could attend private schools. The total voucher bill was \$7.36 million, and public-school kids paid \$4.35 million of it. Cincinnati is second in total funds lost. Its unfunded cost was more than \$16 million, but it's a bigger district and receives a lot more state funding for each student. The 34,000 public school students in Cincinnati each lost \$351 to unfunded voucher costs.

These districts are among 18 districts that used more than 10 percent of their state aid to pay unfunded voucher costs. Six are high-poverty districts. These students can least afford to forfeit their state funds to help someone else attend a private school.

The numbers for this school year are even worse. The state budget froze school funding levels for fiscal years 2020 and 2021 at the 2019 level but did not freeze voucher growth. Public school enrollment is up in the Heights, and so is voucher use. The state awarded 600 more vouchers to Heights residents this year, 25 of which went to students who formerly attended our public schools. The budget hole is getting deeper, and it becomes increasingly harder to climb out.

The state legislature created this problem and now needs to fix it.

When legislators permitted the use of public funds for private education (mostly in religious schools), they set the value of each voucher, but didn't appropriate the funds to fully pay for them or create a system to distribute them fairly across the state. Instead, they made local school districts cover part of the cost and put no limit on how many vouchers a district needed to fund.

Vouchers do not reduce school district costs. They just spread the same resources over more people.

The state counts voucher students as enrolled in the districts where they live, so the students generate the same amount of per-pupil state funding as their public-school peers, but this amount is rarely adequate to fully fund a voucher. The unfunded part is taken from revenue allocated to public school students.

Private schools receive their full voucher payment, and public-school kids get what is left. The state contribution to public education shrinks. While a brilliant way to disguise true voucher costs and give away more of them, it is a cruel assault on public-school students and on the communities that the schools serve.

The legislature has forsaken its constitutional responsibility to provide for a thorough and efficient system of common schools, in favor of private education that is neither accountable to voters nor held to the same standards as the public system. This is made worse by requiring local school districts to fund what the state doesn't.

It is time for our lawmakers to rectify the untenable situation they created. They should send additional funds to districts like ours. They should freeze the number of vouchers at the 2019 level until the state funding crisis is fixed, and, if they are unwilling to discontinue vouchers, they need to directly fund them and not implicate local school districts in their retreat from the common good.

*Susie Kaeser is a 40-year resident of Cleveland Heights and the former director of Reaching Heights. She is active in the Heights Coalition for Public Education and the League of Women Voters.*

**On Tuesday!**

**VOTE YES! 26**

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## Decisions . . . and transitions



HEIGHTS OF DEMOCRACY

Deborah Van Kleef and Carla Rautenberg

Regardless of how the Issue 26 vote goes on Nov. 5, we, the people of Cleveland Heights, will be called upon to help our city make a transition to more effective and accountable city government.

As residents, citizens and, most of all, as neighbors, it will be up to us to heal the rifts of a bruising campaign. We either will or will not have a charter amendment changing our municipal government from a council/manager to a mayor/council form; but certainly there will be disappointed and worried people on whichever is the losing side.

It is noteworthy that all three candidates challenging Cleveland Heights City Council incumbents publicly support this citizens' initiative. The challengers—Melody Hart, Anthony Mattox Jr., and Davida Russell—all hope to contribute their talents to a part-time legislative body balanced by a full-time elected mayor.

Council Member Kahlil Seren is the sole incumbent among those seeking re-election to favor the mayor/council form of government. Carol Roe, Mary Dunbar, and the recently appointed Craig Cobb all

oppose Issue 26.

Of course, voters will decide who wins council seats by weighing many factors: In the case of incumbents, judgment will rest heavily on their demonstrated abilities and past performance; challengers may advance based on some combination of their policy proposals, personal appeal, neighborhood connections and relevant experience, among other factors. A candidate's position on Issue 26 may be only one element.

We find it refreshing and heartening to see how this hyper-local campaign differs starkly from the national political scene, where partisanship and identity politics are used cynically to pit citizens against each other. In contrast, supporters of Issue 26 reflect the true diversity of Cleveland Heights: Citizens of every race and gender identity; registered Republicans, Democrats, and Greens, along with independent voters; residents of the largest mansions and the smallest apartments; riders of buses and bikes, and drivers of Porsches; people of all faiths, and those unaffiliated with any religion.

This breadth of support is a source of encouragement and hope for the future of our city. We are all neighbors—citizens, council members and many city staff alike. After our Nov. 5 decision, whatever it may be, we will work together to carry it out constructively. Sitting and re-elected council members will continue to do their jobs, as will our

dedicated and professional city staff.

If the initiative passes, city council and staff will be required to embark upon an intense two-year transition to the new mayor/council system, while keeping current projects and all city operations running smoothly. On July 31, council passed emergency legislation creating a golden parachute for the city manager, effective as soon as voters approve the charter change; so Tanisha Briley may choose to leave abruptly. In that case, council's first job will be to appoint a qualified interim city manager. Citizens will have to closely monitor the actions of both council and the law department to make sure an orderly transition is not undermined. Council members who support the change to mayor/council government will be vital to this effort.

Should the initiative fail, citizens will be tasked with even more work than if it succeeds. We will have to find ways to make council/manager government directly accountable to residents, as well as compel it to conceive and communicate a coherent vision for our future, and exert political leadership within the city, the region and the state. Make no mistake, if our government were achieving these things now, Issue 26 would never have reached the ballot.

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

## CH can elect a mayor under current form of government

Nancy Dietrich

Issue 26 asks Cleveland Heights voters to choose between electing a mayor and retaining its current form of government. That doesn't need to be a choice. We could elect a mayor under our council/manager government. Why is no one talking about that? Why would we throw away the proverbial baby with the bathwater?

If I'm listening correctly, the desire in the community is for a mayor who is a strong and visible presence; who articulates the city's vision; represents the people to council and staff; champions Cleveland Heights locally and regionally; and, perhaps most importantly for a mayor elected by voters, [is] not appointed by council. But Issue 26 abolishes our whole system of government.

I think Cleveland Heights functions well. I thought so during my 12 years on city council. I was proud of Cleveland Heights. I still am. Witness the response to the recent storm. Within 24 hours most roads were passable. The apocalyptic look was gone. The city manager mobilized staff to do their jobs and they did them. That's how it should be. It worked.

Under the proposed change, would the mayor or the administrator have been responsible? And what if we elected a mayor [who] was not an expert in operations and staff management, not educated in public works, human resources, finance? As it was, lines of authority were clear and the response was efficient and energetic.

But many residents feel something is lacking. We lack someone whom we have charged with being out there after the storm, hearing concerns, communicating the city's plans.

We can have that person without changing our form of government. Such a mayor would still be the seventh member of council—its president, but co-equal in power and decision-making. It would still take four people to concur to set policy, spend taxpayer's money, hire or fire the city manager. Having seven people accountable provides a high degree of security and stability. And remember that you can call or e-mail any council member and expect a response. If that's not happening, that's what the ballot box is for.

Every decision has ramifications. Ask yourself if you really want to change our form of government or if you really just want to elect the mayor. I'm voting NO on Issue 26 because I keep thinking about that baby going down the drain with the bathwater.

*Nancy Dietrich is a 44-year resident of Cleveland Heights. She is a longtime supporter of the CH-UH schools, which her four grown children attended and her four grandsons now attend. She was a 12-year member of CH City Council and is currently active in the League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland.*

## Keep Cleveland Heights cooperative

Fred D'Ambrosi

If you ask folks what they like about Cleveland Heights, they almost always mention "the people." We are a diverse, open, welcoming community.

At the core of that positive attitude is our form of government. About 100 years ago, the city chose to adopt a progressive, new form of government that was designed to prevent corruption and foster cooperation. It's no coincidence its goodwill has spread throughout our community, like the trees that line our streets. That's Cleveland Heights.

Our current council-manager form of government requires at least four members of our seven-person city council to agree with an idea before it moves forward to a professional city manager they control. The proposed "strong mayor" would set the city's agenda on his or her own, and have sole power over the city administrator who implements it. Centralized power is not progressive. That's not Cleveland Heights.

Former council member (1982-93) Lenny Horowitz said it best: "Some-

times people might look at city council and say, how come it's seven-to-nothing? So often, it's not because everybody thinks the same way. It's because everybody had their input, and we worked to make things work." That's Cleveland Heights.

The strong-mayor system is based on conflict, not compromise. It's winner-take-all. It's more prone to extremes. It's a single, full-time, highly paid professional politician with a lot of power. That's not Cleveland Heights.

We all get frustrated at the pace of government. That's understandable. We want quick decisions (as long as they go the way we want). The Top of the Hill project has had almost 40 public meetings. Yet I still read about, and talk to people, who say they haven't been heard. Let's talk some more. That's Cleveland Heights.

Our current form of government has a bit of a PR problem. We Americans like the hero-goat. One person in charge to praise or blame, even though we know that's not really true. The CEO is not solely responsible for the success or failure of her com-

pany, and the president doesn't run the economy by himself. The strong mayor gives you that simplistic, but emotionally satisfying, fake solution to a complex problem. That's not Cleveland Heights.

Going to a mayor now is a step backward. Cleveland Heights was ahead of the curve. The form of government we chose long ago is now the most popular in the United States, and continues to grow. That's Cleveland Heights.

We wouldn't let anyone run a highway through here or tear down historic buildings for a strip mall because we knew it was destruction disguised as "progress." Now we must stand together to stop Issue 26 before it rips the heart out of our culture of collaboration and compromise. Vote no on 26. Protect Cleveland Heights.

*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's volunteer communications director for Cleveland Heights Citizens for Good Government.*

Opinions continue on pages 8, 14 and 21, and online at [www.heightsobserver.org/read/news/opinion](http://www.heightsobserver.org/read/news/opinion).

## Issue 26 is about competing in an ever-faster-paced future

Adam Dew

Did you hear about that one guy who moved to Cleveland Heights because he wanted to live under a council-manager government? You didn't because he doesn't exist. There are lots of things that make Cleveland Heights special. Our plodding and dour system of municipal governance is the least of our appeal.

Cleveland Heights is blessed with innate advantages in terms of layout, housing stock and location. And yet we continue to be saddled with a seemingly incurable case of hidden-gem status, living in a self-imposed state of suspended animation, paralyzed at times by denial, fear and nostalgia. A "no" vote on Issue 26 is a vote to continue waiting around to be discovered. The last half-century has produced more than enough evidence to render a verdict and justify charting a new course.

In the end, if you can block out the peripheral noise and the terrible font choices, the question of which way to vote on Issue 26 is straightforward. Vote no if you think that Cleveland Heights is doing well and set up for future success. Vote no if you think that we are incapable of electing a trustworthy and forward-thinking mayor.

Vote yes if you want a say in where the buck stops. Vote yes if you think an elected mayor will put us on a level playing field with our peers, finally giving Cleveland Heights a voice in the region and the chance to compete proactively and decisively in a future where the pace of change is only going to continue to accelerate.

*Adam Dew grew up on Scarborough Road and graduated from Heights High in 1994. He and his wife, also a Heights graduate, moved back to Cleveland Heights from Chicago in 2013. His three kids will be fifth-generation Heights graduates. He owns Dew Media, Inc., a video production company.*

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**HEIGHTS OBSERVER**

# City fails community on TOH

William Eberhard

Concerns expressed at Top of the Hill (TOH) Architectural Board of Review (ABR) meetings have been ignored. At the Feb. 6 meeting, I represented the Historic Resources Committee of the American Institute of Architects Cleveland Chapter (AI-ACLE) and observed that the project, as designed, fails to follow any of the guidelines for new construction in a historic district. The project is fundamentally unchanged from that original design.

The U.S. Department of the Interior states that new construction in a historic district should "be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment." The TOH project fails every such benchmark and is not compatible with the historic district's massing, materials, size, scale and proportion.

The massing is not appropriate to its context, with a 10-story building across the street from one- and two-story residential and commercial buildings. Its heights and floor areas are not remotely similar to adjacent buildings.

The proposed materials—metal panels, utility brick and vinyl windows—are inappropriate to Cleveland Heights and this site. And they are cheap, not at all reflecting "luxury" as

claimed by the developer, Flaherty & Collins Properties (F&C). The architectural details bear no similarity or respect for the neighboring buildings.

The developer's motivation is maximum profit. In a 2018 focus group meeting, residents suggested that the large buildings be separated into various buildings "so that it looks like it—the development—was incrementally developed." This would have also brought the massing and scale of the development into at least a degree of compatibility with the historic district. F&C's written response indicated that they don't give a damn about compatibility and creating a project that fits its context because their design is developed to achieve "a cost-effective framework. Creating separate buildings would decrease efficiencies, increase costs and reduce density." Instead, the project provides a single, small elevator for a 544-space garage, and a single, small elevator in a four-story, Y-shaped apartment building with 142 units and a public corridor that is 525-feet long.

That this project can get this far and be approved indicates that the ABR has failed to apply any recognized standard for assessing the massing, floor area ratios, and heights, and [failed to consider how] the project's design detracts from or competes with [existing] buildings [that reflect] the district's character or its "Period of Significance."

The project has failed to address

these deficiencies because the damage was done when the city adopted its ordinance on Oct. 22, 2018, that mandated excessive density and massing from the work of an ad hoc committee that lacked ANY participant with an awareness of, or sensitivity to, standards and guidelines for development in an historic district. Consequently, the developer knew that it could get away with these abuses.

The city's ABR lacks strong, capable architects who can discern and articulate the issues requiring remedy from the developer, and the city's "leaders" and staff lack an understanding of and respect for the architectural vernacular and character of the city's historic districts.

This project has received exemplary and thoughtful input from a significant number of members of the community. Their respectful input to elicit respect from the TOH developer and architects for the architectural heritage and vernacular of the city has been disregarded. They have been ignored and insulted by the city and the developer.

History will record the actions and inactions taken on this project by representatives of the city and the ABR.

*Architect William Eberhard is managing partner of Eberhard Architects LLC, and a member of the Historic Resources Committee of the Cleveland Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.*

## TOH doesn't meet city's own stated goals

Michael Knoblauch

After many months of presentations, discussion and review, the developer, Flaherty & Collins (F&C), has revealed the fundamental architectural failure of the now-approved Top of the Hill (TOH) design.

From the TOH page of the city's website, dated July 2, 2019:

"Goals Established for the Project: The Developer and the City seek to collaboratively create a signature mixed use destination district that serves as a gateway to the City and a link between the City and the adjacent University Circle area of Cleveland. The City's goal is that the development of the Project Site shall, at a minimum:

- a. Creates a dense, vibrant, pedestrian-friendly commercial district that dovetails with the architecture and aesthetics of the surrounding neighborhood;
- b. Provides a visual and symbolic entrance to the City; . . .
- h. Effectively incorporates community feedback into the design . . ."

The project, as approved, fails—and fails critically—when measured against these goal statements. At the Oct. 10 Architectural Board of Review (ABR) meeting, F&C representatives took pains to create a metaphor describing the entrance feature of the 10-story tower as the welcoming entrance to the city of Cleveland Heights.

Cleveland Heights is a community of homes and buildings with both grand and modest front entrances. The creation of a welcoming and useful entrance requires a setback, giving a sense of space and distance between the street and the entrance. It also needs to be accessible to pedestrians, walking and arriving by automobile, conveying an easy and gracious welcome to guests and visitors. It is especially important for a high-density apartment building to have a front entrance that facilitates resident and guest pick-up or drop-off. This 10-story tower building's position at the point of the property, and its shallow sidewalk-width setback from Cedar Road, does not allow for easy pedestrian approach or automobile accessibility.

I asked F&C representative Brendon Bogan where an Uber would pick up or drop off a resident or visitor. He said, "in the back of the building," citing the inability of automobiles to stop at the building's front entrance. A front entrance that does not or cannot welcome and greet visitors, guests, and residents is without a purpose. A building's entrance, whether great or modest, defines its character, offering a clear and unambiguous statement of "WELCOME!" to guests and residents alike. Flaherty & Collins' message of welcome: "Use the backdoor."

On this alone the TOH design

fails to meet the city's goal statement.

I am astonished and disappointed that ABR approved TOH, as presented by the developer, supported by the city's build-at-all-costs mentality. The failure I am describing is only one of many defects in the project. Again, and again, the city turns a deaf ear to citizens and professionals in the design community who continue to raise sensible and pertinent objections to the project's plan and design, its flaws, and failures. The city and F&C would have avoided this failure and others had they conducted open community meetings and design charrettes, instead of the reported 37 stage-managed "meetings with the community."

TOH does not meet the city's own stated goals: "dovetails with the architecture and aesthetics of the surrounding neighborhood," "provides a visual and symbolic entrance to the City," and "effectively incorporates community feedback into the design."

The Top of the Hill, as approved, most importantly does not say "Welcome to Cleveland Heights." There is still time to stop the building of this impending and catastrophic failure.

*Michael Knoblauch, a 40-plus year resident of Cleveland Heights, is sponsor of Citizens for Great Design, and a former board member of FutureHeights. His three adult children are graduates of Cleveland Heights High School.*

# Kennedy is new University Heights finance director

Mike Cook

University Heights Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan has named Dennis G. Kennedy the city's new finance director.

Beginning in March 2015, Kennedy served as fiscal officer for Cuyahoga County. His last day with the county was Oct. 18; he was scheduled to begin work at University Heights City Hall on Oct. 23.

"Hiring a finance director with the experience and expertise of Dennis Kennedy reflects on the energy and enthusiasm of our city," Brennan said. "University Heights has a bright future. We're reaching new heights, and talented people want to be a part of our city's success. I look forward to

Dennis joining our team here at City Hall."

Kennedy earned a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Ohio Government Finance Officers Association in 2016.

He previously served as finance director in Solon (2011-15), Brooklyn (2007-11), and Beachwood (1996-99). From 1999 to 2004, Kennedy was executive director of the Ohio Lottery Commission.

As chief financial officer for Cuyahoga County, Kennedy was responsible for administration of duties previously associated with county recorder, county auditor, county treasurer, and partial operations of the clerk of courts.

Kennedy will already know at



Dennis Kennedy

least one of his new co-workers in University Heights. He'll be reunited with Economic Development Director Susan Drucker. Kennedy served as Drucker's finance director when she was the mayor of Solon.

Kennedy is a Certified Public Accountant in Ohio, and a Chartered Global Management Accountant. Kennedy has served as vice chair of the Cuyahoga County Charter Review Commission, and president of the Northeast Ohio County Auditors Association.

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

FILM MAKER continued from page 1

rusty iron electric poles lining the median of Fairmont Boulevard. The film, incorporating extensive archival footage and photographs to immerse the viewer in a city shaped by rail, uses these relics as a portal into the past.

The work of the late Harvey Pekar, Cleveland Heights resident and underground-comic writer, plays into the film. Masi uses selections from *American Splendor* comics to show how the streetcars shaped communities more conducive to walking, interaction, and mixing—qualities that inspired many of Pekar's musings about life in Cleveland.

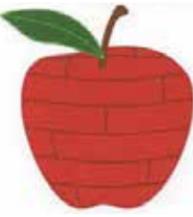
Illustrations by Pekar collaborators Gary Dumm and J.T. Waldman depict the tumultuous early history of streetcars, including the 1899 Streetcar Strikes—one of the most violent episodes in Cleveland's history—and the transformation of Tom L. Johnson from aspiring streetcar monopolist to progressive mayor, championing a municipally owned streetcar system.

Masi says of his film, "It's not so much a nostalgic longing for streetcars as it is a meditation on how transportation choices shape the city in dramatically different ways. My hope is that understanding the past can inform better decisions for the future."

"Streetcar City" is the first in Masi's "Moving Places" film series that explores the history of transit in Cleveland. Other episodes include "Freeway City" and "Bike City."

For more information, visit [www.movingplaces216.com](http://www.movingplaces216.com).

*Sam Bell is a longtime Cleveland Heights resident who serves as a co-chair of the city's Transportation Advisory Committee. He has concentrated on sustainability issues for more than a decade, and was the proprietor of The Lusty Wrench until closing it. Bell is a bicycling advocate whose current business, RoadPrintz, is developing a robotic road-painting system.*



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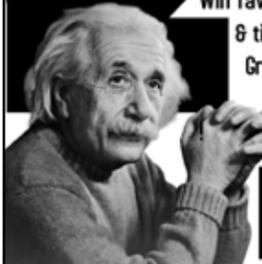
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# CH Warrant Amnesty Day is Nov. 14

J.J. Costello

The Cleveland Heights Municipal Court will host Warrant Amnesty Day on Thursday, Nov. 14, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. On that day, individuals with misdemeanor traffic or criminal arrest warrants will be allowed to return to court without being arrested in exchange for an agreement to complete and comply with any court orders.

Representatives from the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles, Cuyahoga County Job and Family Services, Legal Aid Society of Cleveland, and Ohio Means Jobs will assist with driver's license reinstatement, expungement navigation, workforce development, job training referrals, and applying for financial, food,

medical and childcare assistance.

Anyone with a misdemeanor warrant issued by the court more than 45 days before [Nov. 14] is eligible. Warrants for traffic and criminal cases issued for failure to appear, failure to pay fines and costs, and failure to comply with probation are all eligible. Felony warrants and warrants from other courts are not eligible for amnesty.

Only the first 200 individuals may be seen, so [those seeking amnesty] should plan to arrive early. The day's proceedings will take place in Courtroom 1 at 40 Severance Circle.

*J.J. Costello is a lifelong Cleveland Heights resident and judge of the Cleveland Heights Municipal Court.*

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# Cleveland Heights City Council

## Meeting highlights



SEPTEMBER 16, 2019

All council members were present: Mayor Carol Roe, Vice Mayor Melissa Yasinow, Craig Cobb, Mary Dunbar, Kahlil Seren, Jason Stein and Michael N. Ungar. The meeting lasted from 7:49 to 9:57 p.m.

### Noble Road Corridor

A presentation, from the urban planning firm Camiros, of the Noble Road Corridor Study began the meeting. A full report can be read on the FutureHeights website ([www.futureheights.org](http://www.futureheights.org), under "Programs/Planning & Development Initiatives") or in the council meeting packet, which can be found on the city website ([www.clevelandheights.com](http://www.clevelandheights.com) under "Government/city council/meetings and agendas"). Deanna Bremer Fisher, executive director of Future-Heights, introduced city planner Bill James, who spoke at length about the 11-month process to assess existing conditions along the street between Mayfield Road and Euclid Avenue in East Cleveland and Cleveland Heights, with an eye toward reversing the decline and increasing the appeal of the four commercial areas and the housing along Noble Road. A key concept is to make Noble a multi-modal transportation corridor. This would involve putting the street on a "road diet," including narrowing the auto lane areas to create bike lanes, better sidewalks, and landscaping. Studies will be needed of transportation, economic situation, and redevelopment needs. It is hoped the community itself will generate early action projects and tax itself, much like Special Improvement Districts do. Most council members asked detailed questions of the consultant.

### Architectural Board of Review appointment

Council Member Stein proposed, and council confirmed, the appointment of Joseph Strauss to the Architectural Board of Review.

### Economic development loans

Council passed three pieces of legislation providing for loans to:

- Rudy's Pub, 2191 Lee Road, for acquisition of real estate and other assets: \$124,935, at an interest rate of 5 percent with a 15-year repayment schedule.
- Zhug, a restaurant proposed for 12413 Cedar Road, for equipment and improvements: \$150,000, at an interest rate of two percent, with a seven-year repayment schedule.
- BNB Medusa, LLC, will receive a loan of \$396,440 at a fixed interest rate of 0 percent for the term of 15 years, to assist with its acquisition of the commercial property located at 3008 Monticello Blvd. BNB Medusa is assuming the obligations of the seller, GMG Cleveland, LLC. (Council Member Seren said he has high hopes for the project and esteem for the developer, but he voted no, saying he sees too many unknown factors.)

LWV Observer: Blanche Valancy.

OCTOBER 7, 2019

All council members were present: Mayor Carol Roe, Vice Mayor Melissa Yasinow, Craig Cobb, Mary Dunbar, Kahlil Seren, Jason Stein, and Michael N. Ungar. The meeting lasted from 7:40 to 9:13 p.m.

### City manager's report

City Manager Tanisha Briley's full report can be found in the council meeting packet on the city website. Briley asserted that city managers are recognized as chief executive officers of cities among mayors. Highlights from her discussion regarded: city shredding day, community improvement awards, completion of phase three of the Passport Parking application, Architectural Board of Review meeting concerning Top of the Hill (TOH) on Oct. 10, upcoming meetings about the temporary parking plan for the TOH project, progress of storefront improvement loan projects, new businesses, recent grant awards, the ongoing sanitary sewer evaluation survey, Mayfield Road traffic signals, and the Recycling and Refuse Task Force.

### Purchase of fire equipment

Council approved an ordinance to help purchase fire equipment through a third party, the Houston-Galveston Area Council Cooperative Purchasing Program, at a lower cost than the city would be able to obtain on its own.

### NOACA grant

Council authorized the city manager to submit an application to the Northeast Ohio Area-wide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) for funding (80 percent of which would be federal funds) from the Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) program for capital projects to support alternatives to public transportation. These projects will assist seniors and individuals with disabilities, [and provide] new or expanded transportation services, and alternatives that go beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 for individuals with disabilities.

### Mayor's report

Mayor Roe is a member of the Ohio Mayor's Alliance, a bipartisan coalition of the 30 largest cities in Ohio. She spoke about the group's support of Gov. DeWine's "STRONG Ohio bill" to address gun violence. DeWine's recent press conference on the subject can be viewed at: <http://ohiochannel.org/video/governor-mike-dewine-unveiling-strong-ohio-plan-to-address-gun-violence>.

### Council members' announcements

Vice Mayor Yasinow announced future legislation that will create a pilot program to assist with student loan repayment for new residents to build on vacant lots or move into and improve properties in the Mayfield, Taylor, and Noble areas.

LWV Observer: Blanche Valancy.

To receive email postings of full reports, send an email to [heights@lwvgreatercleveland.org](mailto:heights@lwvgreatercleveland.org) or join through Google groups using "lwv-chuh observer reports" as a search phrase. These reports contain member observation and selected highlights of public meetings and are not official statements of the Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland. This disclaimer must accompany any redistribution of these reports.





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At Quintana's, a secret Speakeasy bar complete with artisan crafted cocktails, beer, wine and small plates are located on the second floor of the Barbershop. We also have a private party Bourbon room for 10-12 people. We offer tastings, live music, and cocktail classes.

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You can schedule an online appointment at [www.QBDS.net](http://www.QBDS.net) or telephone us at 216-421-8380.

# FutureHeights awards fall mini-grants

Sarah Wolf

FutureHeights awarded \$3,585 in grants to support five projects in Cleveland Heights in the fall round of its 2019 Neighborhood Mini-Grants Program:

**Bradford Road Neighbors** received \$1,000 for the Bradford Road Pollinator Path (BPP) project, an expansion of a current project to rehabilitate a WPA-era pathway for children en route to Canterbury Elementary School. The goal is to bring sustainable plant life to the pathway to enhance the aesthetic appeal of the path as well as support indigenous growth, replacing invasive plants. Phase 1 of the project will focus on the area between South Taylor and Queenston roads. In their application, organizers stated, “The BPP is a creative local solution to educate and activate first our street and then another street to increase biodiversity in our community,” and expressed a desire to “bring together neighbors through the pleasure of gardening.”

**Beth El - the Heights Synagogue** was granted \$809 to enhance its play yard for children. Organizers of this project noticed children using bike racks and stair rails as climbing toys, which inspired the idea for a more stable and functional play place for children attending shul, as well as those in the neighborhood. “Families will see the synagogue as not just an old

building but part of a kid-friendly neighborhood,” organizers said in their application.

**Boulevard PTA**, which was granted \$1,000 for its Boulevard Learning Garden Enhancement Project, will utilize the funds to purchase seeds, seeding tables, irrigation systems, and materials to build trellises in Boulevard Elementary School’s new raised-bed planters. Organizers stated, “Not only is the garden itself a resource that many parents aspire to have in their schools, but the development of this garden will also send a clear message to prospective parents that current Boulevard families and community members are actively engaged and developing creative programming to enhance the school.”

**Coventry Collaborations** was granted \$276 for its Asset Based Community Development Mapping project, a survey project that aims to “help the community come together stronger to collaborate with organizations like local businesses and nonprofits to achieve mutually beneficial goals.” Sharing skills and abilities, survey respondents will be added to a database that can be used by those in the neighborhood to approach projects efficiently. “If you want to build a treehouse at Spirit Corner, for example, you could check the survey results and see everyone in the area who said they are proficient at carpentry and then reach out to those people,” organizers

explained.

**North Coventry and Eddington Friends** was granted \$500 to support efforts to build neighborhood leadership for their “Eddington Pocket Park!” project. “Unfortunately, many residents in this neighborhood don’t see themselves as connected, capable of change, or being leaders,” organizers said in their application. “This project will keep them at the tip of the spear the entire duration as participatory development practices reveal their ability to connect, their capability of envisioning good things and making them happen,

and serving their neighborhood for the common good.”

(A celebration for these mini-grant recipients will be held in December; details to come.)

The next application deadline is March 15, 2020, at 5 p.m. To learn more, visit [www.futureheights.org/programs/community-building-programs](http://www.futureheights.org/programs/community-building-programs), e-mail [sbasu@futureheights.org](mailto:sbasu@futureheights.org), or call 216-320-1423.

*Sarah Wolf is an intern at FutureHeights, a resident of Cleveland Heights, and a graduate-level community practice student at MSASS/Case Western Reserve University.*

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## Learn how to help keep kids safe

Arlene Castañeda

Keeping children safe from abuse and neglect is the main focus of The Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS), but the agency can't do it alone—it relies on the support of the community to help keep children safe and families healthy.

To enable Heights residents to get to know DCFS—what it does, and how neighborhoods can work with the agency to help families—representatives will be in the Heights on Tuesday, Nov. 12, for an In Your Neighborhood event.

The Heights Suburban Collaborative is sponsoring the Nov. 12 event, which will take place at the

Lee Road Library (2345 Lee Road), 5–7 p.m. Light refreshments will be served at this free event.

DCFS staff will present various topics, and be available to address specific cases and questions. Representatives from The Fatherhood Initiative will talk about safe sleep for babies.

Eligible families who register can receive a free pack-n-play for infants, and other resources. Call 216-325-9132 to register for a pack-n-play, or for additional information.

*Arlene Castañeda is a family resource specialist with the Heights Suburban Collaborative Program of The Centers for Families and Children.*

## CH Senior Center News

Amy Jenkins

Medicare health and drug plans change every year. Are you keeping up? The open enrollment period for Medicare is Oct. 15 through Dec. 7, and it's time to review your coverage.

Counselors from the Ohio Senior Health Insurance Information Program (OSHIIP) will be at the Cleveland Heights Senior Activity Center (SAC) on Tuesday, Nov. 19, to help seniors review their insurance, and answer questions about Medicare coverage.

OSHIIP volunteers are also available to meet at SAC by appointment on other dates.

To schedule an appointment (no walk-ins) to make sure your current health or drug plan is the most cost effective, and to learn about the different coverage options, call 216-691-7377.

Be sure to bring your Medicare card and list of prescriptions to the appointment—the counselors cannot assist you without that information.

OSHIIP is a free service, does not sell insurance, and is pro-

vided at no cost through the Ohio Department of Insurance. Take advantage of this opportunity to get free, unbiased information on Medicare coverage.

The Cleveland Heights SAC, located in the CH Community Center at 1 Monticello Blvd., offers programming for those 60 and older. A complete schedule of programs is available online at [www.chparks.com](http://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 register with Patrick Grogan-Myers, University Heights community development coordinator, at 216-932-7800, ext. 203, or [pgrogan@universityheights.com](mailto: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](mailto:ajenkins@clvhts.com).*

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## Advent at St. Paul's

### All Things Advent December 1

5:30 p.m. - A celebration of the beginning of Advent! Wreath making, crafts, cookie decorating and bulb planting, music, and Advent-themed team trivia. All ages welcome!

Reservations requested in order that we may have enough supplies.  
Call (216) 932-5815



4:30 p.m.  
Handbell Prelude

5:00 p.m.  
Service of Lessons & Carols

A Carillon Concert Follows.

### Advent Festival of Lessons & Carols December 8

A gem of the Anglican choral tradition, this service leads us into the season of light and expectation, featuring readings for Advent and anthems by the Senior, Children's, Youth and Handbell Choirs of St. Paul's.

Free - no reservations needed!



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NOBLE CORRIDOR continued from page 1

market analysis and revitalization strategies for the commercial/mixed-use districts, and several community meetings guided consulting partners Camiros LTD and The Riddle Company to map out these plans.

The goal of the project is to enhance the Noble neighborhood by refreshing and expanding the business districts and improving the quality of life for residents.

Concepts for Noble/Mayfield focus on enhancing the commercial and shopping district to create a welcoming, pedestrian-driven appeal.

In Noble/Monticello, the focus is on reworking the roadways to include left-turn and bike lanes, making better use of transportation options through that part of the neighborhood, and installing a "community kitchen" to host pop-up restaurants—adding literal new flavor to the area.

For Noble/Nela, the goal is to rehabilitate the existing structures to bolster the area's desirability and attract new residents and businesses.

Finally, the aim for Noble/Euclid is to boost residential appeal by filling vacancies and repairing deteriorating roadways.

Full proposal details for each area of Noble neighborhood are available at [www.futureheights.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Noble-Road-Corridor-Plan-Draft\\_September\\_2019.pdf](http://www.futureheights.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Noble-Road-Corridor-Plan-Draft_September_2019.pdf).

The overarching theme involves creating a multi-modal roadway, reducing the traffic lanes from four to two (one in each direction) for motor vehicles, and adding both left-turn and bike-

specific lanes. This "road diet" will allow for more efficient and effective travel through the area, attracting more people to utilize the roadway. The proposal calls for an additional study to assess the plan to implement these structural changes to the roadway.

Raising the appeal of pedestrian traffic through Noble's neighborhoods is another major goal of the proposal. Early action plans call for community support in sponsoring planters, enabling neighborhood participation in making the sidewalks a beautiful place to stroll, and raising community pride in this shared space.

Questions about how the improvements specified in the proposal would be financed are still being evaluated. One possibility, a special improvement district (SID) that incorporates both commercial and residential sites, would enable property owners, including homeowners, annually to contribute directly to the project's funding. Whether or not this mechanism could be implemented would depend on homeowners voting to enact the SID, which many in the community believe to be unlikely. Grants, donations, city funding, and other financial resources are being explored as well.

To learn more about the project, visit [www.futureheights.org](http://www.futureheights.org) or [www.nobleneighbors.com](http://www.nobleneighbors.com), call 216-320-1423, or e-mail [sbasu@futureheights.org](mailto:sbasu@futureheights.org).

*Sarah Wolf is an intern at Future Heights, a resident of Cleveland Heights, and a graduate level community practice student at MSASS/Case Western Reserve University.*

## Preschool hosts bake sale and craft show

Anne Barach

Heights Cooperative Preschool (formerly St. Paul's Cooperative Preschool) is excited to host its annual combined bake sale and craft show on Saturday, Nov. 23, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., at Church of the Redeemer, 2420 South Taylor Road.

A portion of the proceeds will go to the school so that it can continue to provide a fun, safe, and nurturing environment in which kids can learn and grow.

Organizers invite the community to stop in to purchase cof-



fee and gift-worthy baked goods, browse the work of local crafters, and enter for a chance to win great prizes at the chance auction.

*Anne Barach is the parent of a student at Heights Cooperative Preschool.*

## Novemberfest celebrates Swedish heritage Nov. 2

Louise Gerlak

Novemberfest is Peace Lutheran Church's annual celebration of its Swedish heritage. This year, the 46th Novemberfest event will take place on Saturday, Nov. 2, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Novemberfest features a home-cooked Swedish meal, the opportunity to purchase handmade crafts, a bake sale, a Swedish "coffee house," a sale of attic treasures, and more.

Admission to Novemberfest is free. The cost of the luncheon meal, served from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., is \$10 for adults, \$4 for children under 12 years, and free for those ages 4 and younger.

Peace Lutheran Church is located at 3470 Mayfield Road. For more information, call 216-382-4545.

*Louise Gerlack, a member of Peace Lutheran Church, is active in many community groups and organizations.*

## Rabbi to speak on human rights in Israel

Richard Zigmond

Rabbi Arik Ascherman will speak on human rights in Israel at a Lunch and Learn on Saturday, Nov. 16, at Beth El - The Heights Synagogue. While the political climate in Israel has become increasingly conservative in recent years, there are still several groups promoting human rights for all. Among these groups is Rabbis for Human Rights, which Ascherman has led for many years.

Ascherman has been involved in direct action to protect the olive groves of Palestinians from Israeli settlers and to protect the homes of Bedouin citizens in the Negev. In 2017, he founded Torat Tzedek (Torah of Justice). Believing that every human being is created in God's Image, Torat Tzedek defends the human rights of all Israelis, as well as those under Israeli control.

The organization encourages socioeconomic justice for Israelis, Palestinians, African asylum seekers, and Israel's Bedouin citizens.

Ascherman will talk about his years of personal experience fighting for human rights in Israel and the Occupied Territories.

Arik Ascherman grew up in Erie, Pa., and is the brother of Cleveland photographer Herb Ascherman. After graduating from Harvard, Rabbi Ascherman worked for Interns for Peace, a community work program that sought to bring Israeli Jews and Arabs together in positive interaction. He was ordained by the Hebrew Union College in 1989.

Beth El - The Heights Synagogue is located at 3246 Desota Ave., in Cleveland Heights. Lunch will be served at about 12:30 p.m., following Shabbat services. The event is free and all are welcome. Non-members should call 216-320-9667 or e-mail [info@bethelheights.org](mailto:info@bethelheights.org) for reservations.

*Richard Zigmond, Ph.D., is professor of neurosciences, neurosurgery, and pathology at Case Western Reserve University.*



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## Noble corridor plan is not noble

Diane Hallum

The Noble Road Corridor Plan focuses not on Noble Road but instead functions as an extension of the city of Cleveland Heights' Mayfield Road Corridor Plan.

For more than 50 years city leaders have not invested in or allocated city resources in an equitable way to the north side of the city. Numerous past city plans imply this, beginning with the 1976 Nine-Point Plan, which, among other goals, aimed to prevent re-segregation.

This time city leaders state Noble Road will not receive any city resources or investment until the area "stabilizes." It will, however, use its resources to ensure that property values along and south of Mayfield are not contaminated by Noble Road's poverty.

Blaming the victims of 50 years of racist and classist policies, city leaders who led the Noble corridor plan process declare that, "Since disinvestment is progressing from north to south, it makes sense that reinvestment should

progress in the opposite direction" (page 73 of the plan).

Disinvestment? Rather than provide any assistance to existing Noble Road businesses, provide a reassuring and friendly police presence, or support the successful businesses along the corridor, this plan blatantly will ignore us. It also suggests specifically taxing residents along the northernmost section of Noble Road, some of the poorest and blackest in the city, to pay for an elitist wish to install bike lanes along Noble Road.

At the Noble Neighbors candidates' forum, all candidates lauded the plan. One bragged of attending the opening of a business near the Mayfield Road intersection. He failed to explain that this business operator closed her successful Noble-Greyton location because of crime, with a carjacking being the last straw.

The April 4 iteration of the plan was more direct in its language: no parks, no green spaces and no business district investments until the area "stabilizes" on its own! Meanwhile, city leaders, in their Compton Road Greenway Study, also in the works, suggest pocket parks with benches, play areas, and greenspaces, while Cain Park lies one to two blocks away!

Racist? Elitist? Classist? Yes, yes and yes.

Council members are not historians, but they need to know and acknowledge and correct for decades of neglect and abuse by past city leaders.

*Diane Hallum is a longtime resident on the north side of Cleveland Heights.*

## Power sharing is the opposite of power concentration

John Donoghue

As a volunteer for Citizens for an Elected Mayor, I started out collecting signatures on the initiative petition and I now knock on doors—literally knock on them, because rare is the house with a working bell. I'm long retired, and while the walking is good for me, all this knocking is bad for my hands. But I keep doing it because I believe power sharing in government is a good thing, and the concentration of all political power in just one branch of government—as is currently the case in Cleveland Heights, where all power is vested in the legislative branch—is a not-so-good thing.

I have always thought of Issue 26 as a power-sharing ballot issue. Its passage would change our government so that political power is shared between the legislative branch (where all of it currently resides) and an executive branch. What keeps me banging my knuckles on doors is my belief that sharing power will result in more leadership, more accountability, and more access to government for us citizens, and that these in turn will lead us out of our current logjam of inaction.

It is surprising to hear those opposed to Issue 26 worry us with

*continued on page 21*

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## Heights High senior wins Shining Star CLE



Kristin Lyons performing at the Ohio Theater.

COURTESY KRISSTY DIETRICH GALLAGHER

Krissy Dietrich Gallagher

The first time Kristen Lyons performed on stage was in a youth production of "The Pied Piper." She played a rat whose sole job was to scurry across the stage and steal a pot from a townsman, who happened to be played by her sister. The Heights High senior has come a long way since then, and was recently named the grand-prize winner of Shining Star CLE, an annual singing competition, sponsored by Montefiore.

Lyons has been singing as long as she can remember, and hopes to study musical theater in college next year. According to her mother, Andrea Lyons, "She joined this competition as a way to give back to the community." The money raised through admission tickets

for the final event helps fund memory care units at Montefiore and The Weils.

High school students from eight counties are invited to submit audition tapes to Shining Star CLE. Singers advance through a series of steps to make it to the final ten. These finalists participate in a week of seminars and rehearsals, and receive individual feedback from professional musicians.

Lyons said that she and the other contestants "became so close during our week of rehearsal. We were all so supportive of one another that I felt like I had already won." And win she did.

Following her performance of "I'm Not Afraid of Anything" at the Ohio Theater at Playhouse Square on Sept. 22, judges announced her first place win. The honor comes with a \$10,000 scholarship and an additional \$2,500 for Heights High's vocal music department.

Lyons is a member of Singers, a bass in the Women's Barbershoppers, and the student choreographer for "Damn Yankees," Heights High's fall musical production.

(For tickets to "Damn Yankees" Nov. 1-3, visit online at [www.showtix4u.com/event-details/35171](http://www.showtix4u.com/event-details/35171).)

*Krissy Dietrich Gallagher is a long-time resident of Cleveland Heights, a graduate of the Heights schools and a former Coventry School teacher. She is a freelance journalist under contract with the CH-UH city school district.*

## Cleveland Heights - University Heights Board of Education Meeting highlights

SEPTEMBER 17, 2019

Board members Jodi Sourini (president), Dan Heintz, Malia Lewis, Jim Posch and Beverly Wright were present, as were Superintendent Elizabeth Kirby and Treasurer Scott Gainer. The meeting began at 7:05 p.m. and adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

### Union agreements

Jodi Sourini expressed pleasure that the school district has a one-year agreement with all of its unions. She also expressed appreciation for the staff's hard work to improve student test scores.

### Family Engagement Task Force update

Family Engagement specialist Lisa Hunt reported on the task force's work. Fifteen community members, including parents, alumni, and parents who are also alumni, serve on the task force. Their work is guided by the district's strategic plan, and the three areas the task force uses to guide its work to build family-school partnerships are: feedback and communication, partnership and communication, and events and planning. The task force is continuing to work in teams on these areas.

### District report card: data series, part 1

Allison Byrd, director of data research and development, gave a presentation on the district's 2018-19 report card. This was the first session for the board this year. The district's overall grade was a D. There were improvements in several categories. Byrd extrapolated the data for Cleveland's inner-ring suburbs for comparison. One of those communities, Cuyahoga Heights, received an A. All the others received C, D or F.

Board members asked many questions, which Byrd said she would research for their next meeting. They also expressed frustration with the report card.

LWV Observer: Robin Koslen.

OCTOBER 1, 2019

Board members Jodi Sourini, Dan Heintz, Malia Lewis, James Posch and Beverly Wright were



present, as were Superintendent Elizabeth Kirby and Treasurer Scott Gainer. The regular meeting began at 7:20 p.m., after conclusion of an executive session, and ended at 8:45 p.m.

### Recognition of building crews and students

The board thanked members of the building crews (trades, grounds, custodians and bus drivers) for donating their time to renew the Roxboro Middle School kitchen.

The board also recognized AP scholars and Tiger Team Members of the Month for their achievements.

### Facilities renovation update

The Bond Accountability Commission reported that the middle school project was completed on time and under budget.

Scott Gainer indicated that a lay facilities committee will be formed to study all buildings.

### Approval of five-year financial forecast

Gainer presented the five-year forecast and commented on it. Because the district is still under the state-funding cap, it will receive the same amount of state funding this year. After discussion, the board unanimously approved the forecast.

### Levy for 2020

The board discussed when they would have to meet in order to put a levy on the March 2020 ballot. The last levy was passed in November 2016; it was calculated to last three years but has lasted four years.

LWV Observer: Adele Cohn.

Look for earlier and often expanded postings of meeting summaries online at [www.heightsobserver.org](http://www.heightsobserver.org). See disclaimer on page 10.

## MEGA BOOK SALE

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Friday, December 6th - Sunday, December 8th

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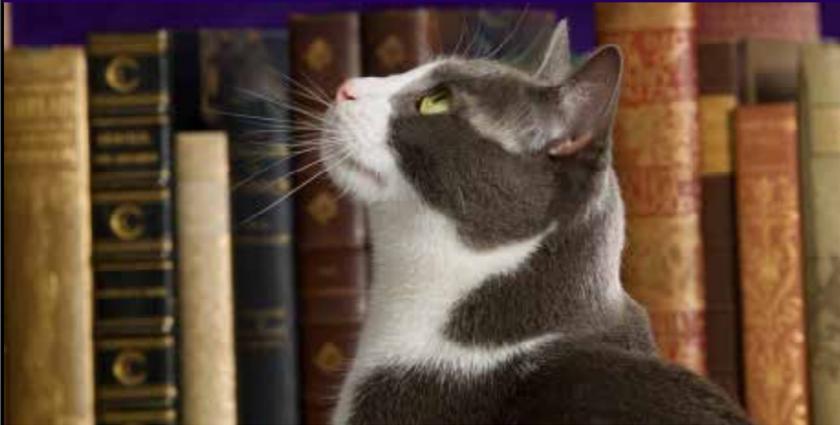
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# Beaumont wins back Golden Racquet

Mary Patton

The Beaumont School Varsity Tennis Team took home the coveted "Golden Racquet" on Sept. 23, triumphing 4-1 over the Cleveland Heights High School Girls Tennis Team in a match at Purvis Park in University Heights.

Beaumont Tennis Coach Mike Pellechia created the Golden Racquet competition in 2013. The trophy is an actual racquet painted gold which goes to the winner of the annual Beaumont-Heights High match.

This year, Heights senior Ruby Kauffman defeated Beaumont senior Amanda Desamito in two sets; Beaumont senior Nicolette Kelley defeated Heights junior Sophia Mita in three sets; and Beaumont senior Gianna Velotta defeated Heights senior Madeline Nicol in two sets.

In the doubles matches, Beaumont juniors K.K. McNeill and Jackie Patton defeated Heights senior Syd-



Beaumont Girls Varsity Tennis Team holds the Golden Racquet after defeating Heights High, 4-1.

ney Ball and junior Adele Dooner in two sets; and Beaumont sophomore Carlson Jones and junior Lena Stewart defeated Heights freshmen Leela Manne and Libby Warren in two sets.

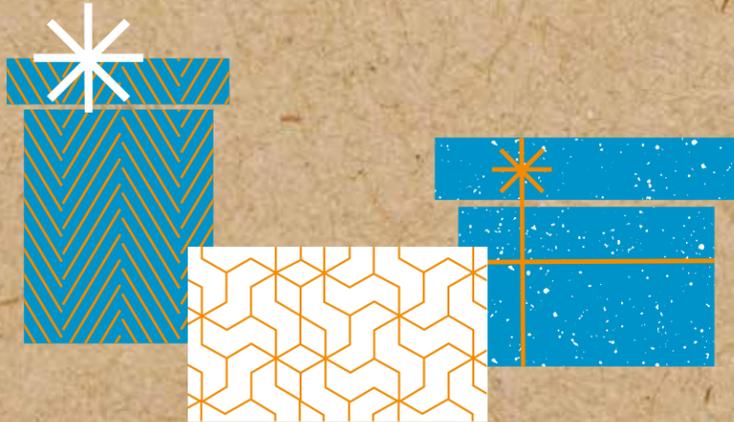
Pellechia and Heights High coach John Laskarides said the girls are excited about their rivalry and look forward to it.

*Mary Patton is a public relations professional who resides in University Heights.*

Fri Nov 22 6-9pm  
 Sat Nov 23 10am-6pm

cia.edu/holidaysale

# Cleveland Institute of Art Student Holiday Sale



Cleveland Institute of Art  
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# Access to information is topic of school event

Krista Hawthorne

About 50 people from at least nine organizations joined Superintendent Liz Kirby and key members of her staff for Access to Information About the Cleveland Heights-University Heights public schools on Oct. 2.

The program used a format of three rounds of 20-minute conversations that enabled participants to ask more questions, and meet more people. It left Chris Ruma-Cullen, director of Bellefaire Social Advocates for Youth (SAY) begging for more. She met 17 people and said, "If there had been more rounds, I would have met even more new people!"

The first round focused on electronic and printed information, such as websites, e-newsletters, printed calendars, brochures and fliers. The second round moved into human connections and the communications/decision-making structure. The third round reviewed partnership scenarios and the process for realizing specific projects together.

Throughout, participants captured discoveries, ideas, and questions on colorful notes, which they

posted on the walls.

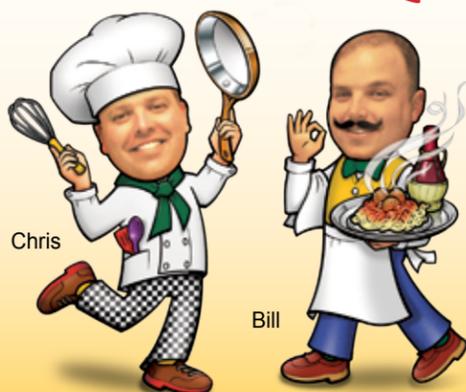
Discoveries included finding helpful information on [www.chub.org](http://www.chub.org), such as flier-approval guidelines and requesting facility use. Ideas included adding students members to groups that support students, and cross-promotion of library programs. Questions included, "How can we find out what teachers are covering in their classes so we can offer relevant programs?" and, "How can I access stats about our district?" Conversations continued over cider and donut holes after the program ended.

Among the groups attending were Heights Libraries, Girls On The Run, Bellefaire SAY, New Community Bible Fellowship Church, Shaker Lakes Nature Center, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Lake Erie Ink, Heights Community Congress, and various PTAs, as well as board of education members, Supervisor of Communications Cathan Cavanaugh, and four school social workers.

For more information, go to [www.reachingheights.org](http://www.reachingheights.org).

*Krista Hawthorne is executive director of Reaching Heights.*

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# Popular '1619 Project' discussion prompts further conversations

Sheryl Banks

On Sept. 30, Heights Libraries hosted a "1619 Project" discussion group. It was so popular that the library system is planning additional discussions, in November and January.

The 1619 Project is an initiative by *The New York Times* that re-examines the history, and lasting influence, of American slavery on our society. *The New York Times* published a special edition of its Sunday magazine devoted to essays that re-frame economics,



"Because of this, we're continuing the discussion by adding more program dates."

The next two discussions will be at 7 p.m. at the Lee Road branch, 2345 Lee Road, on Monday, Nov. 18, and Monday, Jan. 27. Copies of the 1619 Project essays will be available in the Lee Road branch lobby, on the 1619 display. Staff at the Coventry Village, Noble Neighborhood, and University Heights branches can print copies for interested customers.

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

## Cleveland Heights – University Heights Public Library Board Meeting highlights

SEPTEMBER 16, 2019

Present were board members Chris Mentrek (president), James Roosa (vice president), Dana Fluellen (secretary), Suzanne Moskowitz, Vikas Turakhia and Max Gerboc. Annette Iwamoto was absent.

### Financial report

Heights Libraries fiscal officer reviewed the September financial statement. Total cash balance across the Operating Accounts, Bauer Fund Accounts, and Investment Accounts at the end of July was \$16,269,517.62. The board approved a resolution to accept the financial report.

### Northcliffe Road adopts a Little Free Library

Donna Johnson of Northcliffe Road contacted the library about obtaining a Little Free Library for her street and was provided one for installation. It was revealed at a Sept. 8 block party. There are a small number of Little Free Libraries available for the community from a partnership with City Year. Those interested should contact Heights Libraries Director Nancy Levin.

### Banned Books Week

Libraries are promoting Banned Books Week for Sept. 22-28. The American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) offers resources and activities for libraries and readers that highlight the Banned Books Week 2019 theme "Censorship Leaves Us in the



Dark. Keep the Light On." Heights Libraries will participate with displays. Books are banned in America all the time; recently a target was the Harry Potter series.

### U.S. Census

Libraries everywhere continue to work to promote the 2020 Census. On June 27, the Supreme Court ruled against the proposed addition of a question about citizenship status to the 2020 Census, removing a significant distraction from preparations for a complete count. On July 11, the White House announced it would abandon efforts to add the question. Heights Libraries, in conjunction with other libraries and city, county, and state governments, continues to plan activities to promote census reporting, especially in undercounted areas. Every branch will provide information and assistance for individuals who are being asked to fill out the census form solely through an online platform in 2020.

LWV Observer: *Khaliah Fisher-Grace.*

Look for earlier and often expanded postings of meeting summaries online at [www.heightsobserver.org](http://www.heightsobserver.org). See disclaimer on page 10.

medical care, popular culture, and the legacy of racism. The essays served as a launching point for the discussion.

"While we anticipated a large turnout, we were completely overjoyed to welcome 93 people to our program," said Adult Services Librarian John Piche, who organized and oversaw the discussion. "It was the largest turnout for a library-hosted discussion this year and, due to the size of the turnout, we had to break into two large groups."

Piche said the discussion of the "1619" essays, which followed a curriculum designed by the nonprofit Pulitzer Center, was honest and informative, and participants shared their opinions as well as family histories and personal experiences.

"Participants [in] the discussion groups stood in the parking lot long after the library closed to continue sharing and talking," said Piche.

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## Library display gives kids a voice



Youth Services Associate Talia Linina with her Question of the Week display at the Lee Road branch

Sheryl Banks

Talia Linina, a youth services associate at Heights Libraries, wants to know what kids are thinking, and she has a fun, creative way of finding out.

Every Monday, she creates a display by the Lee Road branch children's reference desk called Question of the Week. She sets out a sign with a question, slips of paper for writing down the answers, colorful pens, and something she calls "the rainbow box of mystery"—a multi-colored box with a hole in the top where kids submit their answers.

"I wanted to create an interactive display that would get kids to practice reading and writing," said Linina. "And I also wanted to get to know the kids that come to our library and see what was on their minds."

Linina plans questions months ahead of time and alternates simpler questions, like "What's your favorite color?" with ones that require a little more thinking, such as "How do you show your family members that you love them?" Then, at the end of the week, she collects the answers and displays as many as she can fit on the Question of the Week board. "The wider variety of questions I ask, the more kids I can engage," she said. "And the kids like seeing if their answer from the previous week made it on the board."

"I hope the display shows them that we want to know what they think about things, that we're here

and we're listening," she said. "We've based some programming ideas on the answers they've submitted, so I really hope that the kids see that their voices have power."

Linina said it also gives staff a way to get to know the kids by giving kids a reason to spend time at the reference desk, talking to staff about the new topic each week. "I love seeing the answers kids give—there's always something unexpected, from snarky, to sweet, to incredibly insightful," she said. "Some kids even draw us pictures."

The display is a hit with the library staff. "I'll go to tell another staff member about a cute or funny response, and they'll tell me that they've already seen it—we're all peeking at it throughout the week." Recent staff favorites have included "Care about our planet" and "Not go to war" in response to the question, "What do you wish grown-ups did more?" and "Kind of bossy" in response, to the question, "What is your best friend like?"

For those who are curious, the answers are periodically posted on the library's Facebook and Instagram accounts, and the display is easy to find in the children's area. Just ask a staff person.

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

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## Artist finds success in library gallery

Isabelle Rew

From Sept. 3 through Sept. 13, Ghanaian artist Nana Kwesi Agyare Ansah shook up the art scene with his Cleveland Heights debut at Heights Libraries' Lee Road art gallery, selling 10 of his vibrant acrylic paintings, ranging from the figurative to the abstract, along with three handmade African masks.

Ansah's display was just one of dozens of exhibits the library's gallery has hosted over the past six years. Being an accessible community gathering place, it is an ideal public venue for displaying art, and artists of all ages and backgrounds are encouraged to apply for the opportunity to exhibit their work.

Stopping in Cleveland for part of his United States tour, Ansah discovered Heights Libraries' Lee Road branch and happened upon the library gallery, which is located on the first floor of the library's HKIC building.

"Kwesi came to us about displaying his art in our gallery," said Nancy Levin, Heights Libraries director. "We usually book exhibits months in advance, but we just happened to have a two-week window available before our next show. We were thrilled to provide a platform for him to display his work."

Ansah opened his show with a live painting demonstration. The following week, he coordinated with the library's children's department to teach a recycled art workshop.

"Little did we know that he



Ansah stands beside his painting at the Lee Road branch.

would give so much back to the library community by engaging visitors and staff alike," Levin added.

Ansah hopes his exhibition served as a tool to shape the perception of the arts in Ghana, and would like to return next year for another show. Until then, the library purchased one of his paintings, using money from the Friends of the Heights Libraries, which is displayed on the upper level of the Lee Road branch.

"Maryland, Virginia, D.C., New York; I've been all over the country and no place has welcomed me like Cleveland Heights," Ansah said. "I've fallen in love with this place where art is a priority. It's a friendly place, one where you have the space, time and opportunities to thrive as an artist."

The gallery is open during regular library hours. Gallery applications can be downloaded from the library's website at [www.heightslibrary.org/art-gallery](http://www.heightslibrary.org/art-gallery).

*Isabelle Rew is the community engagement associate for the Cleveland Heights University Heights Public Library System.*

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# Church presents 'Requiem' for victims of mass shootings

Donna Key

The Fairmount Choir of Fairmount Presbyterian Church in Cleveland Heights will present the Ohio premiere of the short work *Requiem* by Joshua Clausen on Nov. 17 at 10 a.m. The work was written to honor the victims of American mass shootings

and their families and friends. The piece was inspired by the work of Sophie Cho, a journalist who took data about mass shootings and turned it into sound form to illustrate gun violence in America. What resulted was a recorded data sonification (series of piano notes) where each piano note represents the day of an American

mass shooting, from January 2013 to November 2017. The louder the note, the more people were killed on that particular day.

Hearing this recording, composer Joshua Clausen felt moved to give the data sonification a second life as actual music. "I was just amazed by it," Clausen told The Word podcast. "It's so direct. Obviously, it's the sound of real facts, you know, of these terrible stark facts of our world. But it also struck me how human and vulnerable it sounded. The requiem text, of course is a traditional Latin text for the dead. I wanted to bring out with the music a hope for peace. There's a text in the middle and the Latin is *Lux Perpetua Luceat Eis*, which means 'let perpetual light shine upon them,' to make sure that these stories are told and they're not forgotten, that these people are seen."

According to Artistic Director Leah Wyman, one of the most distinguishing features of this outreach is the diversity of its participants. "We have students from Shaker Middle School singing alongside musicians from Cleveland Institute of Music, Oberlin,

and Baldwin Wallace and longtime members of the Fairmount choir," Wyman said. "All generations united in a desire to share this tremendously powerful work, which will hopefully be as transformative to the listener as it has been as we've prepared it. This is not a piece about a political issue. We are singing music of heart, humanity and survival."

Fairmount Presbyterian Church, 2757 Fairmount Blvd., is on the southeast corner where Fairmount Boulevard and Coventry and Scarborough roads meet. For more information, call 216-321-5800 or go to [www.fpccl.org](http://www.fpccl.org).

Donna Key is a colleague of Leah Wyman, the artistic director at Fairmount Presbyterian Church.

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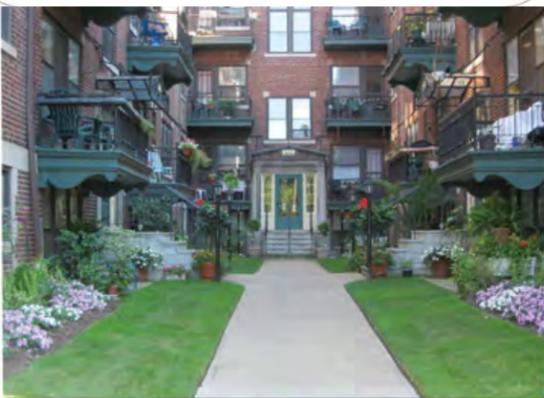
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## WRC presents holiday concert Dec. 8

David Gilson

The Western Reserve Chorale's (WRC) first concert of the 2019-20 season, featuring Respighi's rarely performed masterpiece *Lauda per la Natività del Signore*, will take place on Sunday, Dec. 8, 3 p.m., at Church of the Gesu (2470 Miramar Blvd., University Heights).

This year's holiday season concert, featuring the 100-voice chorale, will offer a variety of works highlighting the winter season, including traditional and not-so-traditional arrangements of songs for Hanukah and Christmas by Gustav Holst, David Willcocks, Susan LaBarr, John Rutter, Dan Forrest, Stephen Schwartz, David Chase and others.

The centerpiece of this year's performance, Respighi's masterpiece *Lauda per la Natività del Signore* (*Laud to the Nativity of the Lord*), scored for soprano, alto and tenor soloists, chorus, four-hand piano and wind sextet, is music of wonderful clarity and lyricism. The WRC will be joined by soloists Sandra Simon, Natasha Ospina Simmons and J.R. Fralick, as well as some of Northeast Ohio's finest woodwind players.

If you know Respighi only from his massive orchestral works, such as *The Pines of Rome*, the *Laud to the Nativity* may come as somewhat of a revelation, with its delicate scoring and simple lyricism. While known mainly for his large-scale tone poems *The Fountains of Rome* and *The Pines of Rome*, Respighi composed in a wide variety of forms and styles. He had a lifelong fascination with music from the Renaissance and Baroque eras, which heavily influenced his own music. *Laud to the Nativity* (1930) is undoubtedly his most charming and successful composition of music in the antique style.

The concert is free (donations are encouraged) and includes a post-concert reception. Free parking is available at the church.

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

# Reasons to fear a change

Alan Rapoport

As an opponent of Issue 26, I fear what will happen if it passes and we lose our special system of local government.

I am afraid our current city manager will quit if she considers passage a vote of “no confidence.” City services have been good during her tenure. She deserves credit for that. During recent bad storms, she personally knocked on doors to make sure our fellow residents were safe. It would be good if she still is here when the next crisis happens.

I am afraid other high-level administrators will quit. Some will leave because of their professional commitment to a council-manager system. Others will leave because a “strong mayor” will hire loyalists. Safety, security and health protections from police, fire, ambulance and service departments that we often take for granted will decline. We pay high taxes and demand, in exchange, excellent services. Passage of Issue 26 will jeopardize that arrangement.

I am afraid some talented members of CH City Council will quit and not be replaced by others with similar qualifications. One member already has expressed to me privately an unwillingness to serve under the new system. It will become more difficult in the future to find that quality of elected officials we have come to expect.

I am afraid a two-year transition to a new system will disrupt city hall during the changeover and thereafter. Disruptions can affect services. They also can be costly. Governmental performance determines municipal bond ratings. A rating determines interest rates for municipal bonds. Cleveland Heights regularly issues such bonds to pay for capital improvements and equipment. Higher borrowing costs mean less money left to pay employees and provide services. That means higher taxes might be necessary just to maintain the current level of services.

I am afraid future elections for mayor will resemble those in other communities. The choice of a single

chief executive will become a political matter. That can result in problems. A recent study found municipalities with a council-manager form are 57 percent less likely to have corruption convictions than municipalities with the mayor-council form. We would give up a 100-year history of good local government and take a risky plunge into the political unknown.

I am afraid passage of Issue 26 will destroy confidence many have in our city. Families moved to Cleveland Heights because our high quality of life is protected by good municipal government. Many chose not to live in cities such as Cleveland and East Cleveland that have massive political problems. They often voted with their feet. If Issue 26 passes, many again will vote with their feet and leave. That would have negative consequences.

Cleveland Heights is special. It does not vest exclusive power in one person. It delegates power to seven elected members of city council who each are accountable. This council acts collectively. It controls the performance of a non-partisan and professional city manager. There are checks and balances. Political deals do not determine how, where, when, or to whom services and public resources are allocated. Employees are more likely to be hired based on merit than on political connections. [As demonstrated] by history, the council-manager system has given us stable and effective municipal government. This was neither an accident nor a coincidence. Retaining our special system will continue to provide us with good basic services and with unique programs such as those at Cain Park and the Recreation Pavilion.

Issue 26 instead would bring about drastic and negative changes. And so, I urge a “NO” vote on Issue 26 to keep our city special.

*Alan Rapoport, a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights, served on CH City Council 1980–1987, and was CH mayor 1982–1987.*

POWER SHARING continued from page 14

claims that changing from our present form of government to a form that shares power between two branches is a move that will lead to terrible things—corruption, instability and decline. Their arguments against power sharing seem to be based on the belief that in the face of a mayor, council will simply collapse and all political power in the government will gravitate to the mayor. They then go on from there to list the evils that will flow from such a collapse. I find that idea of a collapse ridiculous. If I were a member of council, I think I would find it insulting.

Cleveland Heights has an informed citizenry that elects dedicated and talented people to council—people who possess the skills to meet their responsibilities and who would never hand over their authority to an executive branch. This same citizenry also has the wherewithal to elect a good mayor. Other cities do it—why can’t we?

I’m the kind of person who has always been a little slow to embrace change. I’ve often wished I were otherwise. But I’m betting on Issue 26 and will vote Yes.

The energy for change in Cleveland Heights, the thirst for it that I have run across collecting signatures and knocking on doors, is enormous. But there is also a palpable cynicism—that no matter what you do, nothing will change in this city, it will just continue to be the same-old same-old at city hall.

I hope our natural caution about embracing change does not end up justifying that cynicism. I hope we can share power in our city. To help that sharing come about is the reason I’m ruining my knuckles.

*Before retirement, John Donoghue taught electrical engineering at CSU for 40 years. He has been a Cleveland Heights resident since 1979.*

# Reject the fear of voters

Len Friedson

The current “NO on 26” campaign delivers a single message: “Don’t trust the voters.”

This distrust and fear of the voters was actually the genesis of the council-manager form of local government in the early 20th century, when establishment leaders reacted with horror to the prospect of universal suffrage. It was a brilliant way to dilute the power of the electorate and keep those pesky voters away from government as much as possible.

I think a balance of power between the executive and legislative bodies in Cleveland Heights will be good for the city. Why? It corrects the concentration of power that is now vested in a single branch of government—the legislature.

There is ample evidence that our part-time city council members, though doing the best they can, just can’t accomplish what is needed. In addition to their legislative function, they must also oversee the city manager and municipal operations, while

providing a vision and a path for our future. It’s too much to expect from them. Nor can seven individuals be a leader in any meaningful way.

We need a full-time mayor [as well as a] full-time administrator, in addition to a great legislative branch of dedicated citizens serving in their part-time positions.

I don’t think we need to fear the voters: after all, this is Cleveland Heights, with lots of residents who will vet all candidates, for both city council and mayor.

I’m reminded of the old expression: If we continue to do the same things, we should not be surprised when we get the same (mediocre and disappointing) results.

Let’s reject fear of voters, win the Issue 26 charter amendment, and give ourselves the opportunity to create a better future for our community.

Join me in voting YES on Issue 26.

*Cleveland Heights resident and Heights High graduate Len Friedson is treasurer of Citizens for an Elected Mayor.*

ELECTION FORUMS continued from page 1

they would address the gap that would exist between this year’s election and the start of a new government in 2022, the candidates were split according to whether they support the issue.

Those supporting a switch to a mayor-council government—Seren, Mattox, and Hart—said they didn’t foresee problems during the two-year transition.

Cobb said he thought the issue was tearing the city apart and expressed concern about a possible staff exodus if it passes. Roe and Dunbar urged votes against Issue 26, and Roe expressed the importance of reassuring the development community that the change, if it comes about, will not slow momentum.

The candidates agreed that the city does a good job of providing basic services, with more attention needed on economic development and housing issues.

Mattox stated that African Americans feel they have no representation, and Hart said she thought economic development efforts should be concentrated in areas that need it most.

All agreed that deer overpopulation is a problem. Seren was the only candidate to express concern for the deer, and he also stated his discomfort with the prospect of shooting taking place in the city’s neighborhoods.

At the Issue 26 forum, each campaign had three representatives, with the pro-Issue 26 Citizens for an Elected Mayor (CEM) led by Tony Cuda, and the opposition Cleveland Heights Citizens for Good Government (CHCGG) led by Mike Gaynier.

The opposition speakers cited the 98 years of effective, accountable, and professional management the city has experienced under the council-manager system. The pro-Issue 26 group stated that the current system lacks accountability and a balance of power. In CEM’s view, a new system would shift power to the people, while CHCGG’s stance is that it would shift power to one person.

*Vince Reddy is a 23-year resident of Cleveland Heights and a supporter of Cleveland Heights Citizens for Good Government, which opposes Issue 26.*

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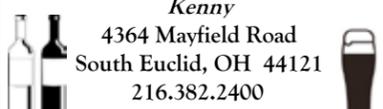
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## Heights Arts keeps holiday focus local



Last year's Heights Arts Holiday Store window enlivened Lee Road.

Laura Freeman

Holiday season is here, and Heights Arts celebrates with the opening of the 2019 Holiday Store. From Nov. 1 through Dec. 30, 100 local artists will fill the Heights Arts gallery with unique fine arts and crafts. The public opening is Friday, Nov. 1, from 6:30 to 9 p.m., with a members' special preview that evening from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Get a jump on holiday shopping with refreshments and other special treats. The 2019 Holiday Store is open seven days a week, except for Thanksgiving and Christmas days.

Heights Arts offers community partner events in the Holiday Store and throughout the year. Memberships start at \$50 for individuals and \$150 for businesses, and members are eligible to participate in community partner events for free. Heights Arts will promote the partnership, invite the partner to co-host the event, and provide a cash bar and complimentary food for attendees. In addition, Heights Arts' 10-percent membership discount will be extended to partner attendees. Attendees who are already Heights Arts members will receive an additional 5-percent discount for purchases that evening. For more information, visit [www.heightsarts.org/community-partner-events](http://www.heightsarts.org/community-partner-events).

The *Close Encounters* concert

series is underway. On Nov. 24, the second concert of the series features four First Ladies in Classical Music. The program includes string quartets by the first woman chosen to perform for Abraham Lincoln, the first female composer-in-residence at the Cleveland Institute of Music, the first woman instrumentalist in a major orchestra, and a brand-new clarinet quintet by a young New York composer, Anna Weesner, recipient of a 2009 Guggenheim Fellowship and a 2008 award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Mari Soto, 23-year violinist in the Cavani String Quartet, will guide the audience through these selections. Other performers in the concert are Isabel Trautwein (the Cleveland Orchestra), violin; Eric Wong (Cavani Quartet), viola; Paul Kushious (the Cleveland Orchestra), cello; and Robert Woolfrey (the Cleveland Orchestra), clarinet. Purchase tickets online at [www.heightsarts.org/concerts](http://www.heightsarts.org/concerts). Discounted member and student tickets are available.

For more information on Heights Arts community programs and events, including house concerts, gallery performances and outreach, visit [www.heightsarts.org](http://www.heightsarts.org).

*Lauren Freeman is a marketing intern at Heights Arts.*

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# 2019 Holiday Gift Guide



Find something for everyone on your list at the many independent merchants in the Heights. Most will gift wrap or ship your items, too. Here are some of our favorites:

**GIFTS \$10.00 OR LESS**

Brownie player coaster. (\$8.00, Blank Canvas CLE) **1**

Fossilized shell heart keepsake. (\$10.00, Cleveland Rocks and Beads) **2**

Furaser: an eraser in the shape of a cat. (\$4.99, Mac's Backs) **3**



Cocktail Napkins. (\$6.50, Jubilee Gifts) **4**

Frosted glass eggs. Can be paired with a wire nest. (\$3.25 each, Still Point Gallery & Boutique) **4**

Handmade lip balms made with essential oils, natural butters, and moisturizing carrier oils. (\$3.50 or two for \$6.00, Cleveland Candle Company) **5**

Handmade bath bombs in a variety of scents. (\$7.50, Cleveland Candle Company) **6**

Wooden ornaments by Danielle Rueger. (\$9.75, Heights Arts)

Handmade and costume jewelry. (\$5.00 and up, Record Revolution)



Handmade incense and essential oils. (\$1.00 and \$8.00, Record Revolution)

Aveda hand relief cream, travel size. (\$9.00, Quintana's Barber and Dream Spa)

**GIFTS LESS THAN \$50.00**

"Welcome to Cleveland." (\$20.00, Blank Canvas CLE)

Carved shungite pendants. (\$24.00, Cleveland Rocks and Beads) **8**



Retractable animal gel pens. Choose from Cats, Dogs, Hedgehogs or Unicorns. (\$2.50, S'Wonderful Gifts) **9**

Tresi necklaces with variety of stones. (\$38.00 each, Still Point Gallery & Boutique) **10**

Aveda Men's Pure-Formance Grooming Clay. (\$26.00, Quintana's Barber and Dream Spa)

Mariposa frames. (\$49.00, Jubilee Gifts) **11**

Red glass bird by Sue Berry. (\$25.00, Heights Arts) **12**

Bowie's Bookshelf: The Hundred Books That Changed David Bowie's Life, by John O'Connell. (\$18.00, Mac's Backs) **13**

Tens of thousands of new and used vinyl records. (Starting at \$0.99, Record Revolution) **14**

Posters and hand-drawn artwork. (\$8.00 and up, Record Revolution)

Sixteen-ounce Cleveland glassware candles, featuring Cleveland's favorite scents: Cleveland Snow, CLE Magic, and more. 60- to 100-hour burn time. (\$25.00, Cleveland Candle Company)



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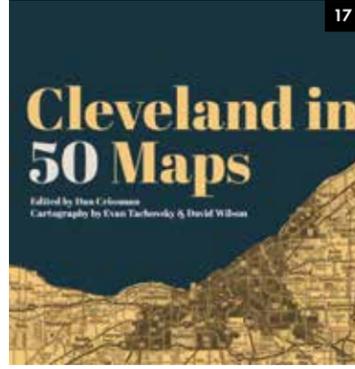
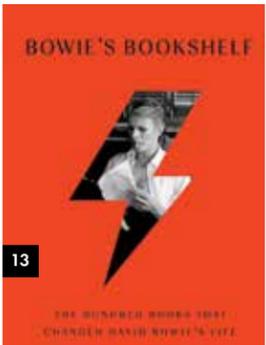
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"Funny Times." (\$28.00 for a one-year subscription)

Ruth Bader Ginsburg women's crew socks. (\$14.00, S'Wonderful Gifts) **15**

Illustrator: For Creative Kids and Their Grown-ups. A quarterly magazine published by McSweeney's. (\$16.00, Mac's Backs)

Photo frames in wood, acrylic, and leather. (\$15.00 and up, Wood Trader) **16**

A Fortune for Your Disaster, poetry by Hanif Abdurraquib. (\$15.95, Mac's Backs)

Cleveland in 50 Maps, edited by Dan Crissman. (\$30.00, Mac's Backs) **17**

Shoyeido Palo Santo and Patchouli incense gift sets (\$19.95, Atma Center) **18**

Little Penguins, by Cynthia Rylant, illustrated by Christian Robinson. A board book about penguins and winter. (\$8.99, Mac's Backs)

Bernadette. A cat with one enemy: houseplants. A comic by Lauren Barrett. (\$10.00, Mac's Backs)

Travel mug, ceramic mug and shirts. (\$10 to \$25, Luna Bakery & Café)

Grog Shop merchandise: T-shirts, tanks, hoodies, onesies and hats. (\$15.00 to \$25.00, Grog Shop)

**GIFTS FROM \$50.00 TO \$150.00**

Vinrella bottle umbrella. When sheathed, this umbrella looks like a bottle of wine. Available in an array of designs. (\$22.00, S'Wonderful Gifts) **19**

"KongZilla." (\$65.00, Blank Canvas CLE) **20**

Incense and ceramic hand holder, made by Astier de Villatte from Paris. (Incense \$50.00, hand holder \$135.00, Still Point Gallery & Boutique) **21**

Aveda Rosemary Mint Hand and Body Wash. (\$73.00, Quintana's Barber and Dream Spa)

Framed print by Joan Lederer. (\$75.00, Heights Arts) **22**

New and vintage record players. (\$25.00 to \$175.00, Record Revolution) **23**

David Sedaris Diaries: A Visual Compendium. (\$50.00, Mac's Backs)

Crocheted necklace. (\$150.00, or learn to make your own for \$35.00 plus the cost of materials, Cleveland Rocks and Beads) **24**



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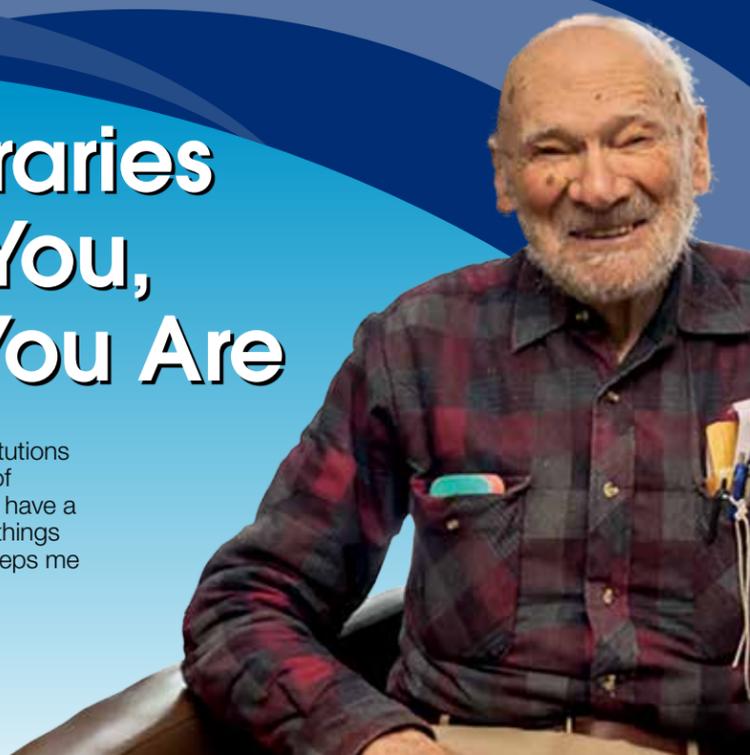


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# Heights Libraries Is Here for You, Wherever You Are

"I think libraries are one of the greatest institutions ever created. They're a wonderful source of knowledge and information. Even though I have a smartphone now and can look up a lot of things myself, the staff and community always keeps me coming back."

— 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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*American Science Fiction: Eight Classic Novels of the 1960's.* Library of America boxed set. (\$75.00, Mac's Backs) **25**

Wine Spot customizable gift baskets featuring wine, craft beer, and locally-produced products. (\$50.00 and up, The Wine Spot) **26**

MATCH Italian pewter rocks glass. Handmade in Italy. (\$75.00, Pavilion Home & Floral) **27**

**GIFTS MORE THAN \$150.00**

Natural amethyst point. (\$520.00, Cleveland Rocks and Beads)

Necklace, Julie Cohn Design. Lapis stone and bronze. (\$495.00, Still Point Gallery & Boutique) **28**

Aveda Signature Dream Ritual Package. Includes a 50-minute Aveda customized facial, 50-minute Swedish relaxation massage, signature manicure, and dream pedicure. (\$225, Quintanta's Barber and Dream Spa)

Tall serving bowl by Amy Halko. (\$175.00, Heights Arts) **29**

**FOR THE PERSON WHO HAS IT ALL**

French macaron. (\$2.00 each, Luna Bakery & Café) **30**

"Untitled 1," framed embroidery by Katie Mongoven. (\$920.00, Heights Arts) **31**

Two tickets to an upcoming Speakeasy Cocktail Class. (\$80.00 plus tax, Quintanta's Barber, Dream Spa and Speakeasy)

"Wind Breaks Over the Marsh." Collector's edition of 10; 24" by 16." Archival pigment ink print on watercolor paper depicts winter in Northeast Ohio. (\$895.00, Still Point Gallery & Boutique) **32**

Pharaoh cylinders, a relaxation and meditation tool. (\$60.00 to \$350.00, Cleveland Rocks and Beads) **33**

# Workshop will cover social-media basics for businesses

## Future Heights

Sarah Wolf

Social media plays a huge role in how consumers seek out goods and services, but knowing how to navigate those waters can sometimes be daunting for small-business owners. FutureHeights, in partnership with US Bank, is offering a free workshop that will teach the basics of how to “Socialize Local,” with two opportunities to attend: Friday, Nov. 8, 3-4:30 p.m., at Christopher’s Pub (1318 Warrensville Center Road), or Friday, Nov. 15, 3-4:30 p.m., at CLE Urban Winery (2180 Lee Road).

By utilizing Facebook business pages, Instagram, and Twitter, small businesses can get the word out about everything they have to offer. Small business owners in Cleveland Heights and University Heights are invited to attend “Socialize Local” to unlock the mysteries of hashtags,

learn how to write effective posts, decide which platforms make the most sense for them to utilize, and learn how to use these social-media platforms in tandem with one another, enabling them to reach the widest possible audience.

Many community members are already inclined to shop local during the holidays. This workshop is designed to help Heights business owners show off what’s fresh and exciting at their store or restaurant by using these powerful—and free—tools.

Advance registration is required; go to [www.eventbrite.com/o/future-heights-12412681779](http://www.eventbrite.com/o/future-heights-12412681779), or e-mail [swolf@futureheights.org](mailto:swolf@futureheights.org) to be added to the guest list. Be sure to indicate which session you’d like to attend—Nov. 8 or Nov. 15. If you have any specific questions about social media that you’d like answered in the workshop, include them in your e-mail.

*Sarah Wolf, a FutureHeights intern and Cleveland Heights resident, will lead the workshops. A graduate-level community practice student at MSASS/Case Western Reserve University, she has a decade of experience utilizing social media to promote small businesses, arts and community activities.*

# Odd Dog Coffee sets up shop at The Walt



Michael Hancock of Odd Dog Coffee sets up for business in Walter Stinson Community Park.

Mike Cook

If you need another incentive to get out of bed on a Saturday morning this fall, Odd Dog Coffee has one for you.

Odd Dog Coffee will set up a pop-up café every Saturday morning at Walter Stinson Community Park, from 8 a.m. until noon. Owners Michael Hancock and Mary-Elizabeth Fenn will serve up their Good Boy

Blend, plus spiced blends including Pumpkin Spice, Cardamom & Clove, and Cacao, Cinnamon & Cayenne Pepper.

Odd Dog Coffee plans to run its pop-up café through December, weather permitting.

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

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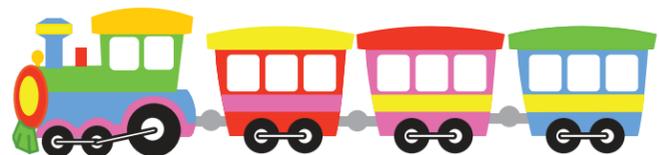
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# All-night walk and talks



SONGS AND STORIES

David Budin

I grew up in houses on Belmar Road, near Mayfield. It seems like one house, but there were two. I spent my first 15 years in half of a two-family up-and-down duplex; the first house after the apartment building on Mayfield, on the east side of the street. Then, in the summer between my 9th- and 10th-grade years, 1964, we moved next door, to a house with the exact same layout. So it seems like I lived in one house. Until I picture the main difference.

In the second house—where I stayed until I was 18—we lived downstairs. That was a big change. No more 20-stair climb (four steps from the ground to the front porch, then 16 more steps to our half of the house). What I also discovered, that first summer in the new place, was that the land it was built on sloped toward the street. So while there were a few steps up to the front porch, the windows in the back bedroom, where I lived, were only four to five feet off the ground.

That meant that I could easily and silently jump out one of the windows next to my bed, after my

parents fell asleep, and walk all over Cleveland Heights. I did that just about every weeknight. Some of those nights, I walked to a friend's house on Derbyshire, near Lamberton. He was usually awake late at night, so I'd knock on his first-floor bedroom window and he'd come outside and we'd smoke cigarettes and talk for most of the night. Then I'd go home before my father got up—he rose early for work—and I'd pretend to be asleep on the front porch glider. (Things were different then. We didn't lock any doors, either, which sounds crazy now. My parents reluctantly started locking their doors in about 1983, at my insistence.)

But more often, I'd go visit a girl I knew, who lived on Fairfax, not far from the elementary school. That was a fairly long walk. But it was well worth the time and effort. She lived in a huge house and her bedroom was in the back, over the attached garage, and far from her parents' room. She told me to throw pebbles at her window. I would toss two or three before she'd open the window and whisper that she'd be right down.

We'd usually sit on the ground with our backs against the garage door—something I would find unbearably uncomfortable now, but it seemed like heaven then—and we'd talk, in between other activities.

I actually enjoyed the long walks home from her house. I would compose poems (I did that back then) and songs. Two or three of those songs actually made it onto an album I recorded for

Sire Records five years later.

When that summer ended, I started high school, at Heights High. The girl was there, too, but she graduated with the January class that year and I never saw her or heard from her again. Of course, that was 40 years before the advent of Facebook, so people could really get lost then, if they wanted to.

After the school year started, I didn't need to sneak out to visit my friend on Derbyshire, because I stayed over one night and stayed for the next few months. When we moved into that second house, my older brother had just graduated from Heights and in early September he left for college. So he lived there for only a few weeks, and his bed was unused after he left, until my friend, who came from what they called a "troubled home," took up residence. He didn't officially move in, but every night it was, "John is staying over again." (John is not his real name.) He would eat dinner with us and then we'd go to the back room and play our guitars and write songs.

By the next summer we had started a band that played a bunch of weird gigs over the next couple



COURTESY DAVID BUDIN

One of my three concurrent high school bands. This one was called the Streets. Within a few years, two or three of us would be living on the streets. I'm second from the right. The person whose name isn't John is one of these other guys.

of years. I'm still in contact with two of its members. "John," I hear, is a homeless guy on the streets of Phoenix. After high school, when I sort of got kicked out of the house, I was homeless for a while in Cleveland and, off and on, in New York City. At least "John" had the sense to go someplace warm.

Back in high school, the only thing I ever wanted to do was get out of school and get out of that house. When we moved next door and people would ask my father why, he'd often joke, "I guess it's just the gypsies in us." He really didn't know how true that was, at least for me, for a while.

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



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