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Volume 12

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HEIGHTS OBSERVER

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Published by **FutureHeights**

Written by volunteers for Cleveland Heights and University Heights • Read more at www.heightsobserver.org



Free parking in CH on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays in December

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

Neighborhood to gather for Nela Park holiday lights

Hannah Morgan

Continuing a long-held holiday tradition, GE Lighting will illuminate its Nela Park headquarters with a festive display beginning Friday, Dec. 6. This is the 95th year the company will have created the light show. This year's theme, Deck the Halls, uses more than 500,000 LED light bulbs and features a replica of the National Christmas Tree in Washington, D.C., and a selfie station in front of a big red ornament at which visitors can take festive, personalized pictures. The display will be visible from the street through Jan. 6.

At 5 p.m. on Dec. 6, FutureHeights, Noble Neighbors, NOAH (East Cleveland's CDC), East Cleveland's Neighborhood 9, and other community partners invite the public to gather at Chester's parking lot (across from Nela Park at Noble and Neladale roads) to celebrate the beginning of the show,



GE Lighting will illuminate its annual holiday lighting display on Friday, Dec. 6.

when GE officially flips the switch to illuminate the displays.

At the event, volunteers from neighborhood organizations from Cleveland Heights and East Cleveland will greet visitors with hot chocolate and holiday treats as they gather to celebrate the winter season and the neighborhood's rich history, as well as learn about

neighborhood revitalization efforts.

GE will illuminate the display at 5:30 p.m., and neighbors are invited to stroll down the west side of Noble Road to enjoy views of the dazzling displays and patronize local businesses.

The company asks that visitors respect GE's security protocol.

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FH launches housing program



2036 Hampstead Road before renovation.

Abby Lawless

FutureHeights, the community development corporation for Cleveland Heights, has launched FutureHomes, a housing rehabilitation program. In partnership with the city of Cleveland Heights and the Cuyahoga Land Bank, the program is intended to strengthen neighborhoods in which there are vacant and abandoned properties.

FutureHeights works with its



2036 Hampstead Road after renovation.

partners to secure vacant houses and facilitate their rehabilitation with trusted contractors. "We develop a scope of work, monitor the process, and assist with the marketing of the completed property to a new owner-occupant," said Deanna Bremer Fisher, executive director of FutureHeights. "The first home we completed is located on Goodnor Road, about one block north of the high school; based on feedback

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CH voters opt for change

Kim Sergio Inglis

Voters approved Cleveland Heights Issue 26, the charter amendment that will allow residents to directly elect the city's mayor, with a vote of 6,922 (64.10 percent) to 3,877 (35.9 percent).

In Cleveland Heights City Council races, five candidates vied for three 4-year term seats, while two candidates vied for a single 2-year term, to fill the seat vacated by former council member Cheryl Stephens and serve out the remainder of her unexpired term.

In the 4-year term race, Melody Joy Hart garnered the most votes, with 6,358 (25.56 percent), followed by incumbents Kahlil Seren, with 5,644 votes (22.69 percent), and Mary Dunbar, with 4,670 (18.77 percent). Candidates not winning seats on council were Anthony Mattox Jr., with 4,209 votes (16.06 percent), and incumbent Carol Roe, with 3,995 votes (16.06 percent). Roe is the city's current mayor (elected by city council).

In the race for the 2-year term, Davida Russell, with 5,669 votes (57.84 percent), beat out Craig Cobb, with 4,133 (42.16 percent). Cobb was appointed by council in April 2019, to serve through the end of the year.

The race for University Heights City Council was uncontested, with four candidates and four open council seats. On the ballot were new council members Barbara Blankfeld and Justin Gould, and incumbents John Rach and Michele Weiss.

Blankfeld and Gould will take the places of current UH Council mem-

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Residents celebrate UH at sold-out civic awards

Mike Cook

There are problems, and then there are good problems. Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan explained his good problem in his welcoming remarks at the 2019 University Heights Civic Awards, held on Nov. 13.

Even after moving the event to a larger banquet room at John Carroll University (JCU), the event completely sold out. "We had to tell people they could not attend this event," Brennan said. "We had to turn them away because so many people wanted to be here.



Gabriella Kreuz and Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan at the University Heights Civic Awards.

"You all wanted to be here because you love this city, and because you are all part of the renewed success of University Heights."

JCU graduate and Cleveland Indians in-stadium host Gabriella Kreuz hosted the event, and also received an award for her work with her nonprofit organization Love Doesn't Shove.

"It was so nice of the city to recognize Love Doesn't Shove for the violence prevention education it provides the community," Kreuz said. "Thanks to all those who support our initiative to connect with young people and facilitate interactive, informative conversations about how to build and maintain healthy relationships."

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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.

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 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.

Articles to be considered for the January 2020 issue must be submitted by Dec. 9. 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.

One last look at the Observer's role in Issue 26



OPENING
THE OBSERVER

Bob Rosenbaum

With the contentious Issue 26 campaign behind us, residents of Cleveland Heights seem dedicated to moving forward together.

But the purpose of this column is to provide transparency about decisions made at the *Heights Observer*. So at the risk of opening old wounds, here's some background on the past several months.

We set out to serve as a forum for discussion about Issue 26 without inserting ourselves into the debate. It was easier said than done, and we weren't fully prepared for the aggressive lobbying we'd receive along the way, or the pressure we'd feel.

The opinion pieces and letters to the editor started arriving in June and grew steadily in volume and intensity until well past the deadline for the Nov. 1 issue. Each was reviewed by Editor Kim Sergio Inglis and then edited by someone from our corps of editing volunteers.

Many of these pieces were straight-forward—a meaningful point of view on one side or the other. Others were position statements from campaign leaders, which we felt a need to pass along even when they seemed repetitive or peripheral.

We also received responses to previous letters, and airing of grievances large and small about conduct on both sides of the debate.

There was too much to print all of it. What we couldn't print, we published online. Some pieces couldn't be published at all because they made no sense or made misleading claims that couldn't be edited away.

More than occasionally, these decisions were viewed from the outside

as bias. I understand why it may have seemed that way.

Here are big things that factored into decisions for handling every contribution we received:

Length: Long pieces squeeze out other voices, and readers tend to skip over them. They're hard to shorten and put a big burden on volunteer editors. The longer the campaign went, the less patience we had for pieces that exceeded the recommended word counts in our written guidelines.

Authorship: We favored new voices.

Originality: We favored fresh ideas and new insights over those that had already been published multiple times.

Tone: We ran plenty of contributions that I thought were mean or snide, but we favored civility.

Factuality: We identified statements on both sides of the debate that were unsupported, exaggerated or not wholly accurate, and we asked the authors to clarify or eliminate them.

Clarity: Many pieces were confusing—sometimes by mistake and sometimes intentionally. In either case, we edited for clarity and leaned against publishing items that couldn't be brought into shape with the author's cooperation.

Innuendo: We favored submissions that said what they meant, rather than implying it between-the-lines.

Balance: In publishing the print edition, we tried to balance the number of opinions on both sides of the issue. But this was the last consideration after all others had been applied.

Overall, I think we got it mostly right. We found plenty of submissions from both sides of the issue to be problematic. But by Nov. 5, I believe we conveyed the substance of what there was to be said without taking sides.

Here's a noteworthy example that I promised to share as soon as it became

appropriate: On Oct. 18, four days after the article deadline for the November issue, a breaking news story was submitted from the campaign against Issue 26. Its hypothesis was that the pro-Issue 26 campaign wasn't a grassroots movement, but rather a conspiracy orchestrated by local politicians Cheryl Stephens and Janine Boyd.

In the context of politics today, it was just another campaign volley. It drew the most prejudicial conclusion possible from a given set of facts. It was written to be explosive, and submitted when it would have the biggest impact. If we published it, it would have come out on Nov. 1.

It put the *Observer* in a no-win situation. With a policy of being open to articles from untraditional sources, if we didn't publish this one, some would view it as a notable exception and accuse the *Observer* of siding in favor of Issue 26.

If we did publish it, others would accuse the *Observer* of siding against Issue 26 by facilitating an "October Surprise."

There was a lot going on at that moment. We were deep in production of the largest, most logistically complicated issue of the year. Everyone on the *Observer* team was fatigued and brittle. Rightly or not, I viewed the submission as an attempt to manipulate the *Observer* into taking sides at the moment we were most vulnerable to error.

We never published the article, either as news or as a campaign press release. It fell short of proving the accusation it made, and failed to meet some basic journalistic principles. So in the end, voters made their choice on election day after a thoughtful, four-month debate of issues—not because of a late-breaking, bombastic headline.

I wish all politics worked that way.

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

UH continued from page 1

City Hall intern and JCU student-athlete Maya Khawam presented the award to Kreuz. Khawam and her track teammates recently participated in Kreuz's Love Doesn't Shove program, and she credited Kreuz with starting "an immensely important conversation."

"Gabriella does an amazing job engaging students on such a complex and delicate issue," Khawam said.

Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education President Jodi Sourini took home honors as Public Servant of the Year, while Fiona Connor was named Educator of the Year. Long-time UH City Hall phone operator Rob Marcinick was named Co-Worker of the Year.

Executive Fire Captain Andrew Boylan was named University Heights Employee of the Year for his work in running the Fire Prevention and Education Bureau.

"Andy has been an essential leader to this department's cultural change," Fire Chief Robert Perko said, presenting Boylan with his award. "I am grateful for his hard work."

Sourini called Connor "an educator in the truest sense of the word, dedicat-

ing her time and energy to her students, her colleagues and her community."

Brennan had the honor of presenting Becky and Bourbon Zeigler with the University Heights Citizens of the Year award.

"Becky and Bourbon Zeigler have been doing good things in University Heights for years. In the last year, they've gone above and beyond the call of duty," Brennan said. "When a home in their neighborhood was destroyed by fire last year, the Zeiglers opened their home to help. Our fire department and the American Red Cross met with us at their kitchen table to coordinate the response."

"Bourbon literally gave the shoes off his feet to a young man who lost almost everything he owned in the fire. Becky took charge of a donation drive at City Hall. Hundreds of items were donated including dozens of gift cards."

While Williamsport, Pa., claims credit for being the birthplace of Little League baseball, the first organized baseball league for boys, in fact, was created in University Heights in 1937 by Josephine Morhard. Albert Morhard accepted an award on behalf of his late

mother, honoring her for creating the league. (Ruth Morhard, Josephine's daughter-in-law, is the author of *Mrs. Morhard and the Boys*, a book that chronicles Josephine's life and the creation of the league.)

After years of service to the city's Finance Advisory Council, Mike Bohan was presented with the Volunteer of the Year Award.

Local businesses were recognized for their anniversaries this year. Flowerville is celebrating 70 years in University Heights, while Heinen's is commemorating its 60th year in the city. The athletic department at JCU was awarded for 100 years of intercollegiate competition.

Councilwoman-elect Barbara Blankfeld presented the 2020 Beautiful Homes awards. In addition, the city presented Good Neighbor awards to Gesu Kindness Rocks, the Labre Project at JCU, Shari Garzone, Fairmount Cleaners, Rick Creger, Sean Weiss, and Sarah Lehmann.

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

CEM says 'thank you, let's work together'

Michael Bennett

Cleveland Heights voters made history on Nov. 5, 2019. They voted—by a majority in every precinct across the city—to transform a nearly 100-year-old council-manager system to an elected-mayor form of government they believe will be more accountable to the voters.

They said they want a mayor who will spend full time leading Cleveland Heights in a new way to address our challenges and maximize our assets—a mayor who will be our voice across the region and state.

Now that voters have spoken, we need to pull together and make the transition as one community: city council, the administration, city employees and citizens need to collaborate to transform our government into one that is truly representative of the voters' decision.

About a year ago, 10 people created Citizens for an Elected Mayor (CEM) to launch the charter amendment initiative. Support came from a nonpartisan, broadly based, grassroots coalition of volunteers who put in hard work, diligent effort and, ultimately, votes that achieved a new reality that can benefit us and future generations.

CEM would like to thank everyone who attended events, gathered signatures, signed the initiative petition, invited neighbors into their homes, shared thoughts on social and traditional media, talked to elected officials, put up yard signs, distributed literature, made financial contributions and donated professional services.

Passionate volunteers made it all possible. Thank you for showing that people—friends, neighbors and even strangers—can make a difference.

With Issue 26 now in the history books, we ask everyone, regardless of how they voted or whether they voted, to apply their energy to the next challenge, which is just as great. Our community must come together to begin preparing for a mayoral election in November 2021, and the first directly elected mayor taking office in January 2022.

All those who cast ballots acted from sincere conviction and desire to continue to make the Heights the best it can be. We are fortunate to live in a city where people have great passion about the community's future and are deeply engaged in civic affairs.

Outgoing council members Carol Roe and Craig Cobb are among those who have been dedicated to Cleveland Heights; we thank them for their service on council. We congratulate incoming council members Melody Hart and Davida Russell, and re-elected members Mary Dunbar and Kahlil Seren.

We encourage all citizens to remain civically engaged and help ensure a strong future. There is much work to be done. We look forward to working side-by-side with everyone to ensure that Cleveland Heights remains a special place.

Michael Bennett, a 29-year resident of Cleveland Heights, is secretary of Citizens for an Elected Mayor. He submitted this opinion on behalf of the organization.

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Beyond race, CH marketing video remains problematic

Daniel Levin

I have no doubt that the Cleveland Heights marketing department now has an understanding that race was mistakenly misrepresented in its initial marketing video.

While the marketing staff is bound to fix it, it was unfortunate, and certainly preventable.

I have a profound concern that the original video failed for a second, and entirely different, reason, and I'm concerned that, for likely contractual reasons, it will not be fixed on the second go-round.

The video's stagnant camera work, the rigidly scripted "older" voice of the voice-over talent, the editing, and music were '80s old-school and corporate in approach.

I believe that any company that produces marketing films—whether it was a film production house or a marketing firm—that ignores contemporary film aesthetics and techniques will be incapable of making "the proper" video that the city needs and deserves.

Although I don't know him, I am grateful to Adam Dew for his talent and dedication to our community, as reflected in his unsolicited/unofficial promotional

Cleveland Heights video, posted on Vimeo following the release of Cleveland Heights' official marketing video.

While Dew pulled his video together from existing footage, with just a few hours of editing, it was dynamic and represented the similarly dynamic community that so many of us proudly call home.

I hope the city will only release videos promoting Cleveland Heights that package the city directly to young singles and young families, keeping [the aforementioned] four film qualities at the top of their priority list. Otherwise, any marketing video will be reverse marketing; it will not promote our city to this target market, and, in fact, it may repel it.

The approach to making a film is every bit as important as the content within it. Young people today are sophisticated regarding all things communication related. Our city deserves to be continually flooded with a new young population, and it has a responsibility to market to young people in the language that they value.

I recommend breaking off the relationship with the current marketing firm and hiring one made up of the demographic we are targeting.

At the very least, our city's marketing department should have one employee who is in this demographic and is aware of current film trends (but possibly it already has such an individual on staff).

I feel for the marketing department. It cannot be easy having so many caring and vocal citizens passionately speaking out. However, I'm certain our city can make this happen, and I'm sure that it will. We will all be the beneficiaries when it does.

In advance, I thank you for listening to our community and responding.

Daniel Levin has been a Cleveland Heights resident since 2009. He's a father of three, and a professor of photography at Cuyaboga Community College.

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A modest proposal to participate in Cleveland Heights redevelopment

Joan Mallick

After presenting many rejected concerns about Top of the Hill (TOH) [to the city], I realize that it's time to stop resisting and join the city in its redevelopment efforts. I'm offering the city a proposal: instead of selling my 100-year-old house, I will stay in Cleveland Heights and convert it and the house next door into a high-density, mixed-use residential property including a restaurant. In return, I expect the city to grant me the same financial and other assistance it gave to the Indiana-based developers for TOH.

My credentials are that I've lived in my house for 40 years, restored the interior to its original condition and added amenities, including a second-floor enclosed porch and a formal garden. I have successfully developed and sold property in Novelty, Ohio and Sedona, Ariz. Unlike the TOH developers, I know that the main road is called Cedar Road, not Cedar Street.

Here are the specifics of my proposal: First, I'll buy the property next door and sell it to the city, which will then convert it and my house into a tax increment financing (TIF) overlay district (to guarantee the health, safety and well-being of my neighbors). The city will then lease the property to me for \$1/year for 30 years. The city will also help me get a low-interest TIF loan from the Port Authority, which will also exempt me from sales tax on construction materials.

Second, the city must restructure my property taxes, which should be at least \$100,000/year after construction is complete. I'm not asking for tax abatement. I will pay \$100,000 each year. The city will rebate \$75,000 to me after taking \$25,000 for the schools. I'll use the rebated money to pay off my loans and put any leftover funds into my pocket. I'll agree to use that extra money for a public good, like putting new curbs along the neighboring streets. But I doubt the city can force me to do anything once I've booked the money.

Third, I'll publicly promise to use \$2 million of my own money, although I plan to contribute only

about \$750,000. But I expect the city to use the \$2 million pledge in all public presentations so residents will believe in my financial dedication to the project. Also, I will need a bridge loan to secure construction financing. I expect the city to give me enough cash to convince lenders that I am a good credit risk. If the city doesn't have that money, I expect it to get it somewhere, even if the city must issue debt bonds.

Fourth, I will need a zoning variance so that I can add parking spaces for my new, high-income tenants. I will own the parking area and collect all parking fees at the completion of construction. There should be no concern about the lost parking revenue because the city will get payroll taxes from my new employees (chef, housekeepers, handyman and yard workers) and my new tenants.

Finally, design-wise I will promise to leave some elements of my house's original Georgian design visible, but I will not reconstruct another Georgian building. Instead I will integrate the two properties using a respectful and tasteful design that emphasizes CH's new look of visually imposing, glass-dominated structures. I expect the city to publicly reject any criticism directed toward me about the design because it will certainly be emotionally based, totally unenlightened, and [indicative of] backward thinking.

I hope CH City Council will consider an emergency ordinance authorizing a memorandum of understanding with me so that I can assume my role in the reimagining of Cleveland Heights.

(This is a condensation of a presentation I made at the last CH City Council meeting. It is obviously satire, but it is serious in that it very simply outlines all of the special considerations the commercial developer was given for the TOH project.)

Joan Mallick is a 48-year resident of Cleveland Heights. For 40 years, she has lived in a 100-year-old brick Georgian, which she and her husband restored. She cannot imagine living anywhere else, but is concerned about the direction the city is going in, in terms of viable economic development.



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Top of the Hill—bottom of city council

Martin Cosentino

For the last six issues of the *Heights Observer*, there have been two major subjects addressed in its pages—the first, the CH elected mayor and new council members; and the second, the Top of the Hill (TOH) development project at Cedar Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard. We have been relieved, after an election, of the first issue—and the right thing happened at the polls.

The second issue, not subject to election, or any other visible means of effective citizen response has, after nearly 40 meetings, and approaching 50 years, not been relieved, and portends even further absence of relief.

I painfully note that nearly every writer responding to the TOH project in these same pages has accurately noted the total absence of the criteria and policy set by CH City Council itself for the project: Its familiarity and sensitivity to the neighborhood

that surrounds it, the scale and appropriateness of the building volumes, the blatant absence of a visual design that begins to express these qualities. Further, the downgrading of construction specifications, traffic problems, parking problems, the lack of immediate residents' response to this project, all keep piling the straws higher on the citizens' backs.

Suddenly, there is a call to obtain the same 4,000 signatures that put the elected mayor on the ballot. Just exactly how these signatures would be presented, and received, at a TOH meeting, sounds like someone holding a grenade with the pin removed. This is the effect of frustration and years of neglect.

Exactly one year ago this month, the publisher of the *Heights Observer*, Deanna Bremer Fisher, in her capacity as executive director of FutureHeights, Cleveland Heights' Community Development Corporation, sent an extensive letter to CH City Council, voicing many of the concerns I listed above, along with many others. And, as of this current issue, these concerns still hang precariously in the balance.

Again, as has been voiced in the numerous opinions appearing here, CH City Council has failed to focus the TOH project into the very clear criteria set by the city itself. Seven part-time council members, who are primarily legislators, cannot maintain the now 30-year momentum to bring TOH to fruition. To wit, no single planning individual from the city has taken the TOH project under wing, thus forcing on us the distasteful proverb of "art by committee" with its obvious results. And, to boot, Cleveland Heights touts itself as "Home to the Arts"!

It is certainly cosmic coincidence that CH voters have finally approved an "elected mayor," who would hopefully provide the robust leadership necessary to bring TOH to a bright, well-accepted and successfully timely conclusion.

But we will now have to wait another two years to have a hopefully well-chosen, and elected mayor. This would provide the spearhead TOH desperately needs, to overcome all the inertia, indecision, and negligent planning that has plagued this sorely needed project for years in the short-term, and decades in the long-term.

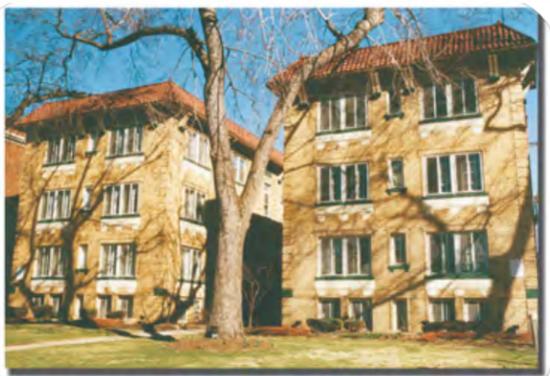
Can this ill-fated project wait, or survive, another two years, before the first shovel goes into the ground?

Martin Cosentino, design/builder and managing director emeritus of Ensemble Theatre, has lived in Cleveland Heights for 49 years. He was a member of the planning committee that successfully saved the Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Campus building and park, a cooperative arts center, from demolition and commercial development.

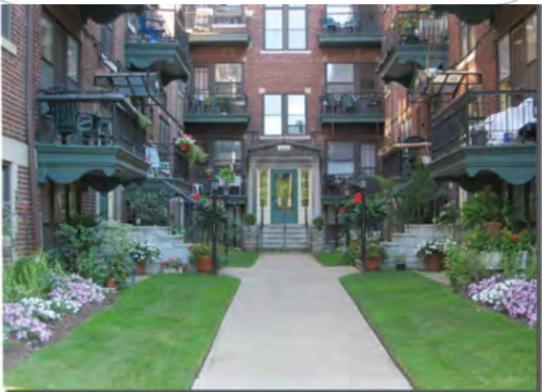
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Looking back, and looking forward



HEIGHTS OF DEMOCRACY

Deborah Van Kleef and Carla Rautenberg

As the winter solstice approaches, we consider events of the past year and our hopes for the future.

Cleveland Heights City Council kicked off 2019 by establishing the Refuse and Recycling Task Force. Composed of residents and city staff members, the group's charge was to address the need to modernize our collection system, tackle the perennial debate over bags versus carts, and recommend future actions.

We urge everyone to read the task force's findings, which will be released early in 2020. Meanwhile, the group's agendas, minutes, e-mails and other documents are available at www.clevelandheights.com. As we said last year ("Heights of Democracy: Trash talk," *Heights Observer* Vol. 11, Issue 12), we oppose privatizing this essential service.

During its abortive re-branding process (aired in March, and withdrawn shortly afterward), the city found that survey respondents valued diversity most among their city's attributes. We spent several months writing about the residents and organizers who helped to transform Cleveland Heights from an all-white enclave to the community it is today ("Heights of Democracy: Before 'diversity'—the integration of Cleve-

land Heights," *Heights Observer*, Vol. 12, Issues 1, 2 and 3). Initially unsupportive, city government eventually took over many of the pro-integrative programs launched by grassroots organizations.

Now, as then, it is up to citizens to make our city what we want it to be.

Economic diversity is an inherent characteristic of Cleveland Heights, with its wide variety of housing stock. As we seek to improve our most distressed neighborhoods in the aftermath of the foreclosure crisis, economic disparities may be one of our greatest challenges. We must ensure that residents of the target areas are involved in all planning efforts. Anything else will amount to a gentrification scheme.

Last summer we wrote with pride of our city's award-winning Complete and Green Streets plan. We look forward to a progress report early in the new year.

In October, the city completed a two-year, \$6-million capital improvements project, expected to pay for itself through energy savings. Upgrades and repairs have eliminated 2,822 metric tons of carbon emissions per year, and reduced the community center's energy use by 50 percent. We applaud these results, and hope to see Cleveland Heights become a regional leader in sustainability.

On Nov. 5, Cleveland Heights voters made history, with 64 percent voting for a charter amendment (Issue 26) to change the city's government from a council/manager to a mayor/council form. Hundreds of residents contributed time and money to this grassroots effort, which succeeded despite well-funded, power-

ful opposition. A particular low point was Council Member Melissa Yasinow's weaponizing of the firefighters' union, by convincing a fraction of the membership who happened to be present at a union meeting to formally reject and campaign against Issue 26. This stunt demeaned our safety forces and ultimately backfired. We are proud of the thousands of Cleveland Heights voters who ignored constant fearmongering by the opposition and embraced the potential for positive change.

As the city embarks on a two-year transition, leading to the first mayoral election in 2021, a reconstituted city council will play a key role. Newly elected council members Melody Hart and Davida Russell will join re-elected council members Mary Dunbar and Kahlil Seren,

along with Jason Stein, Michael Ungar and Melissa Yasinow, whose terms extend through 2021. We thank Carol Roe and Craig Cobb for their service.

We don't know who the new council president will be, but expect him or her to set high standards for openness, civility and rigorous debate. We hope for a welcoming atmosphere when our first elected mayor assumes office in January 2022. Until then, we will be watching and sharing our observations, as will our friends from the successful Issue 26 campaign.

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

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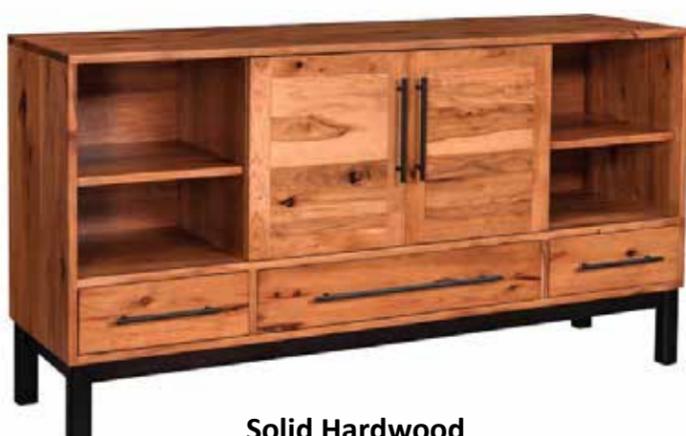


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Celebrating community ownership of our public schools: Reaching Heights turns 30



**THE COMMON
 GOOD**

Susie Kaeser

My, how time flies!

It's already been 30 years since an idea that was hatched on my deck became a reality. Fresh from a two-year examination of the best ways to support a successful, integrated school district, a half dozen public-school advocates, who shared a commitment to equity and excellence, created Reaching Heights.

This community-based organization— independent of district administration, the teachers' union, and the Board of Education—was designed to stay out of elections and mobilize the community as a full partner in providing a quality education for its students. The mission also called for nurturing public appreciation and respect for the public schools.

To this day, Reaching Heights provides connection, appreciation and information, in place of grumbling and rumors. It reminds our community that our public schools belong to us and that we have a lot to bring to the success of this important community asset—an asset that benefits all of us. Reaching Heights advocates for public education by providing support to teachers and parents and offering events such as its annual summer music camp.

In 1987, after two years of intensive public input, school visits, and discussion focused on the challenges facing the public schools, the schools' consensus project task force completed its work. The final task force report noted the crucial role of the community: "The expectations that the community holds, as well as the investment of money, time, talents, caring and energy, and demonstrated support by a broad base of community residents will be the driving forces toward excellence in education."

Task force members followed their own advice and created Reaching Heights to make sure residents had a way to advance excellence. Steve Bullock and I, two members of the task force, served as founding trustees,

along with 10 other activists committed to public education. By 1989, we had incorporated and earned a start-up grant from the Gund Foundation. Two years later, I became the executive director—my dream job.

For the next 17 years I was energized and driven by our mission and by a wonderful board of trustees who shared my passion for our children, our schools, our community and the equal opportunity afforded by public education. Collaboration with dedicated advocates for students and the common good was uplifting and fun, and was the model for what we hoped to do for our educators, which was to create a sense of shared purpose and responsibility.

Over the years, Reaching Heights has focused on the community as a resource. While its programs and activities have evolved, the organization continues to facilitate connections and build trust, communicate high aspirations, set achievable goals, and deliver support in large and small ways.

It is at the community level that we can see, hear, feel and assess what is going on in the schools. This is where problem-solving, built on trust and high expectations, not judgment, can advance needed changes. This is where each of us can make a difference by encouraging students and educators, shaping informed perceptions of life in our schools and the value of our students, and advocating for public education.

On Dec. 10, Reaching Heights trustees and staff, past and present, along with donors, teachers and friends, will gather to recognize the endurance and continued relevance of this small community-based nonprofit. I will be there to celebrate this 30-year legacy and to congratulate Krista Hawthorne and the Reaching Heights board on keeping alive the vision and purpose we found so compelling when we met on my deck so many years ago.

Authentic voices are needed more than ever, and so is Reaching Heights.

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.

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Participation in fall musical teaches students essential skills



A TEACHER'S VOICE

Ari Klein

I expect some students will succumb to illness following the high school musical production. There is such a buildup; late evening rehearsals, along with all of the exhaustion that comes when teens pour their hearts and souls into a common effort.

There always seems to be some magic at work when the fall musical finally comes together. This year was no exception with Heights High's production of "Damn Yankees."

Students from all of our schools came together to sing, dance, and perform, comprising two different casts over four performances. Orchestra members were in the pit playing some complicated jazzy tunes, alongside a handful of hired professionals.

An army of students, all dressed in black, moved sets and props that they had created and built, operated spotlights, and adjusted sound levels. Each contributed a special part to the practice, study, and mountain of work that goes into producing a

show.

At the same time, these students were expected to attend classes, complete their homework, participate on sports teams, and do all of the other things kids are signed up to do. It is no wonder that some students get sick after the final performance—they are completely spent.

I keep reminding myself that I am a math teacher, but I really think that the learning that goes on in an authentic experience, such as putting on a play with all of its complexities and necessary cooperation, is probably more useful to most students than some of the curriculum they are required to learn in school.

Aside from developing competence in whatever one's part is in the production, a student needs to understand teamwork, leadership, patience and determination, and should have the skills to cope with frustration.

There is no test for these skills. Every student involved in this year's production will remember it and will have grown in some way because of it. I wish I could say that students will have similar fond memories of solving quadratics, but math experiences seem unlikely to stick with them in the same way as the play.

What if skills could be learned through experiences more like the

musical? Having something real to present to an audience raises the stakes in learning. We have classrooms and entire buildings that present projects on a regular basis to the community, not including musical performances. But these are part of the curriculum.

Ever since testing and standards have overtaken logic in the state of Ohio, it is harder to have project-based and authentic learning activities. We are so set on what needs to be learned, and how that learning will be assessed, that we lose out on the kind of open-ended, large-scale projects that lead to real interest and discovery on the part of our students.

I am, perhaps, somewhat jaded because I tried to teach this way early in my career. But if specific standards are required for a particular project, it narrows the scope of what students are free to question and discover through their own curiosity. If the outcome of a project creates restraints that limit the scope so completely, then it hardly seems worth doing.

I am not against standards, but I believe there are many valuable things to learn that may not be prescriptive.

Perhaps things will change in education to allow more flexibility in how and what students learn. Unfortunately, I believe things will get worse before they get better.

As school districts fight for additional money through levies, the arts are usually among the first things to go. A case in point is Willoughby Eastlake that lost a school levy on Nov. 5, and has begun making cuts to arts education. Our district has always valued the arts. I hope we have the will and determination to continue funding our schools so that enriching activities, like the fall musical, will continue.

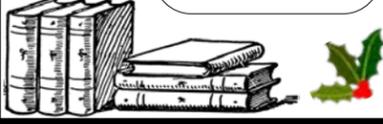
Ari Klein is a lifelong community member, math teacher at Cleveland Heights High School, and president of the Cleveland Heights Teachers Union.

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New UH logo scarves are available

Mike Cook

This winter, University Heights residents can stay warm while looking cool. The new University Heights city logo scarf, is now available, exclusively at UH City Hall, for \$10.

The soccer-style scarf prominently features the city's new logo and colors. The scarf made its debut at the recent University Heights Civic Awards, and is available while supplies last.

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



University Heights City Councilman-elect Justin Gould sports the new UH logo scarf.

VOTERS continued from page 1



Davida Russell



Melody Joy Hart



Justin Gould



Barbara Blankfeld

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11:00am – St. Ann Church

Tuesday, December 31st – New Years Eve

4:00pm – St. Philomena Church

Wednesday, January 1st – New Years Day

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bers Pamela Cameron and Steven Sims. Cameron opted not to seek reelection, and Sims had to step down due to term limits.

CH-UH Board of Education candidates also ran unopposed, with two incumbent candidates, James Posch and Beverly Wright, retaining

their seats.

For complete election results, visit the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections (BOE) results page.

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

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FutureHeights Neighborhood Mini-Grant helps community leaders create aging-well guide

Sarah Wolf

Forest Hill neighbors Sue Kenney and Judy Charlick saw a need for a resource about at-home services for the aging members of their community. Through discussions with others involved in a local social activity committee, they decided to do some research and compile a list of nonprofit and public organizations that could benefit the older population. The result: Cleveland Heights Aging Well At Home Resource Guide.

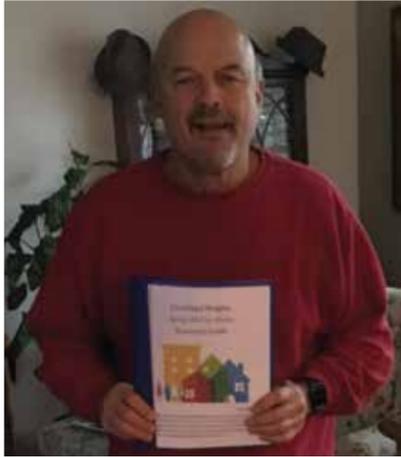
"This document lists background info about services available by category. For example, grocery delivery, home repair assistance, social activities, and transportation," Kenney said. Both the city of Cleveland Heights and the Forest Hill Homeowners Association offer online access to the guide, which can be found at <https://cbparks.com/DocumentCenter/View/527/CH-Aging-Well-At-Home-Resource-Guide-May-2019>.

Kenney and Charlick soon discovered that some of the older members of the community don't have access to (or knowledge about) the technology required to find the guide online. If they wanted it to reach everyone it could benefit, they were going to need a hard-copy version, something that proved a strain to fund on their own.

Kenney and Charlick searched for partners to help finance the process; it was during that phase that they met Sruti Basu, director of community-building programs at FutureHeights, who suggested the pair apply for a mini-grant to cover printing costs.

"The application process was straightforward, relatively easy," Kenney said. They submitted their paperwork and then met with a panel to discuss their ideas in person. "They appeared very interested in our initiative, very aware of the need for this type of resource," Kenney said.

After that two-step application process, Kenney and Charlick were awarded \$720 to proceed with their



Forest Hill resident Jack Kenney with his Aging Well At Home Guide.

project in spring 2019. "We were ecstatic to get the funding. A few days after learning of the grant receipt, we began planning and executing—identifying volunteers, purchasing printing supplies, getting documents printed. We started right away," Kenney said.

Thanks to the FutureHeights mini-grant, they were able to meet their goal of printing and distributing 240 resource guides.

Twice annually, FutureHeights offers mini-grants of up to \$1,000 for neighborhood projects like Kenney and Charlick's. The goal of the program is to support neighborhood leaders by supplying some funding to turn their community-driven dreams into reality.

Details about the program and how to apply can be found at www.futureheights.org/programs/community-building-programs/ or by e-mailing sbasu@futureheights.org. The next deadline is March 15, 2020.

FutureHeights invites all community members to the 2019 Neighborhood Mini-Grant Celebration, to mix and mingle with past and current mini-grant recipients, at The BottleHouse (2050 Lee Road) on Dec. 10 at 7 p.m.

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.

CH prepares for 2020 U.S. Census Count

Hannah Morgan

With the first phase of the 2020 U.S. Census just six months away, Cleveland Heights is preparing for this initiative.

In 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau will collect data on more than 330 million U.S. residents. The data will inform decisions on how to allocate \$675 billion federal tax dollars annually for the next 10 years. Population counts also determine a state's number of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and number of votes in the Electoral College.

On Feb. 10, 7 p.m., Heights Libraries will present "The 2020 Census: What You Need to Know" at the Heights Libraries Lee Road Branch. Audrey Wynn, partner specialist for the U.S. Census Bureau, will explain what to expect and why everyone should participate.

Participation by all Cleveland Heights residents is important to the future of the city. The more individuals confirmed as residing in Cleveland Heights, the more funds, social programs, and decision-making power will

be made available to the city in the coming decade.

Traditionally, renters, who comprise about 43.1 percent of Cleveland Heights' population, and families with young children (children younger than 5), who comprise about 6.2 percent of the city's population, tend to respond at lower rates than the general population.

Because a correct count of every person in every household directly impacts how governmental funding is distributed, Heights organizations—including the city of Cleveland Heights; the League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland, CH-UH Chapter; Heights Libraries; and FutureHeights—are leading the charge to organize complete count initiatives.

To ensure the most comprehensive count in each neighborhood, the U.S. Census Bureau is employing residents to help with outreach and data-collection efforts. Learn more at 2020census.gov/jobs.

Hannah Morgan serves as an AmeriCorps VISTA at FutureHeights.

Cleveland Heights City Council Meeting highlights



OCTOBER 21, 2019

Council members present were Mayor Carol Roe, Craig Cobb, Mary Dunbar, Kahlil Seren and Michael Ungar. Jason Stein and Vice Mayor Melissa Yasinow were absent.

Evans Energy presentation

Jeff Evans reported on the two-year project his company, Evans Energy, implemented to improve energy efficiency of city-owned buildings. The work primarily upgraded city hall, the community center, and the service garage. The project was in partnership with the county's sustainability program. Improvements will generate an expected \$6 million in savings in energy use and maintenance.

Public comments

Animal control ordinance: Three residents spoke in favor of ending the practice of designating specific breeds as criteria for defining a dangerous dog. They cited research and experience indicating that dangerous dog behavior is not a function of specific breeds.

Severance redevelopment project: Resident Paul Volpe expressed his opposition to the proposed selection of the firm AE7 to lead the planning process for the redevelopment of Severance Town Center. He urged council to find a firm with a track record in suburban redevelopment projects and offered his assistance in selecting an appropriate firm.

Issue 26 campaigns: Gary Kanter, Tony Cuda and Len Friedson, all supporters of issue 26, the proposed city charter amendment to establish an elected mayor, took turns criticizing council members for their relationship to the campaign. Kelly Zender, who is undecided, criticized the "no" campaign because Jimmie Hicks is a visible advocate. Bob Jefferes, who is opposed to the issue, encouraged voters to read the wording of Issue 26 and expressed concern that it gives too much power to a mayor.

Vice city manager's report

Leaf pickup will begin on Nov. 4 and may extend beyond the Dec. 6 end date, depending on "how the leaves fall." The city is a partner in a local coalition to encourage a full count for the 2020 Census.

Severance redevelopment plan

Planning and Development Committee Chair Michael Ungar introduced, on first reading, a resolution to approve an agreement with AE7 Pittsburgh to provide planning services for redevelopment of Severance Center. He also introduced a resolution to remove the emergency clause from the legislation, which was approved, with Mayor Roe voting no.

Change in code on dangerous animals

Safety and Municipal Services Committee Chair Craig Cobb introduced, on first reading, an ordinance to end the practice of naming specific dog breeds as vicious.

Mayor's report

Mayor Roe, acknowledging the acrimony surrounding the referendum on city leadership, called for some form of reconciliation process after the election so the community can move forward together.

LWV Observer: Susan Kaeser.

NOVEMBER 4, 2019

Council members present were Mayor Carol

Roe, Vice Mayor Melissa Yasinow, Craig Cobb, Mary Dunbar, Kahlil Seren and Jason Stein. Michael Ungar participated by telephone, but did not vote. The meeting lasted from 7:31 p.m. to 8:39 p.m.

Public comments

Small Business Saturday: Mayor Roe introduced Myra Orenstein, executive director of Cedar Fairmount Business District and Cleveland Independents, who spoke on behalf of Shop Small and Shop Local on Small Business Saturday, Nov. 30. Because the Heights community is home to "so many wonderful" businesses, Orenstein said, they will be celebrated on Nov. 30, the 10th annual Shop Small event, supported by American Express. Later in the meeting, council unanimously approved proclaiming Nov. 30 as Small Business Saturday.

Master Plan update

City Manager Tanisha Briley gave the third-quarter update. She reviewed successes to date, pointing out the tracking mechanism that can be found on the city website, called the Master Plan Dashboard. More than 1,000 residents provided input to the plan the city is following. Highlights include five houses that have been rehabilitated, and 18 more that have been rehabilitated through partnership efforts with other organizations. Cleveland Heights now has the number one ranking in Smart Growth America for complete streets policies. The city has continued to add businesses, including ProXimity Golf Lounge, and Black Canvas CLE, the new Lee Road art center. Her department continues to make progress on the 24 priorities to be completed in two years, such as addressing delinquent properties through payment plans and foreclosure bond release.

Severance Town Center redevelopment

Council introduced a resolution for entering into an agreement with AE7 Pittsburgh. A full presentation will be given on Tuesday to the Planning and Development Committee.

Delamere Drive NEORS D grant

Council approved a grant agreement with the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS D) to fund the Delamere Drive Basement Flooding Relief Project.

Refuse and Recycling Task Force

Council approved extension of the Refuse and Recycling Task Force term until Jan. 31, 2020. Vice Mayor Yasinow encouraged everyone to visit the leaf date pick-up map on the city website, under Residents/Leaf Collection, for specific neighborhood and street information.

LWV Observers: Jeannine Gury.

To receive email postings of full reports, send an email to 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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REHAB continued from page 1



Members of the FutureHeights Housing Committee walk through the Goodnor property with Home Consulting Solutions staff.



The garage at the Hampstead house had caved in on itself. A third car was found underneath the rubble.



The new garage at the Hampstead Road house. An open house will be held at the home on Dec. 8.

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from neighbors, we already know it's having an impact on the surrounding neighborhood.”

Home Consulting Solutions LLC renovated the circa 1920s, three-bedroom, one-and-a-half-bathroom home on Goodnor, including porch repair; all new plumbing, electrical, heating and air conditioning; as well as an upgraded and expanded kitchen, and updated baths. After renovations were complete in October, the home sold to a new owner-occupant for its full asking price after only three days on the market.

FutureHeights currently has five other homes in the program, two of which are nearing completion.

“Cleveland Heights housing stock exhibits a variety of architectural styles and details that highlight our rich history,” said Fisher. “These homes represent the time in which they were built and are a big part of what makes Cleveland Heights unique. Recognizing the importance of preserving these homes and showcasing their distinctive features is what led to the creation of our FutureHomes program. We seek to set a high standard for housing renovations

and restore neighborhood pride.”

Another home, 2036 Hampstead Road, constructed in 1922, is being renovated by Frank Kuhar of Revived Housing Developers Inc. Kuhar updated the kitchen and baths, and installed new electrical, heating, air conditioning and plumbing systems. He finished a portion of the basement and added a second full bathroom. He also completely rebuilt the front porch and the garage, which had collapsed.

FutureHeights and Kuhar will host a community open house at 2036 Hampstead on Sunday, Dec. 8, from 2 to 4 p.m. so that the public can see the renovations firsthand and learn more about FutureHomes.

“We are excited about the amazing transformation of this house, but there are still many homes that need attention throughout Cleveland Heights,” said Fisher. “We are looking forward to continuing to work with our partners to enhance our city's housing stock and build more resilient neighborhoods.”

Abby Lawless is the director of real estate development at FutureHeights.

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Neighborhood Leadership series helps realize a dream



Donna Johnson with her street's Little Free Library.

COURTESY DONNA JOHNSON

community leaders and learn what they are working on or hoping to achieve.

For Johnson, her dream was to have a Little Free Library (LFL) installed on her street—a dream she discussed during the workshop with Sruti Basu, FutureHeights director of community-building programs. Basu was able to connect Johnson with Nancy Levin, Heights Libraries director.

“As a result, a nicely painted, and registered, LFL house was donated by the library! A very kind and supportive neighbor allowed us to install the house on his front lawn. We unveiled it at a neighborhood block party in September,” Johnson said.

As part of the process of obtaining an LFL, Johnson co-hosted a Common Ground event on June 30 to discuss any and all community engagement projects for the neighborhood. (Common Ground is a series of community conversations sponsored by the Cleveland Foundation.) Based on the response and success of these initiatives, Johnson said 2020 will include more Common Ground events, as well as another block party.

“If you are seeking resources to help improve your neighborhood or need technical assistance developing a neighborhood project, FutureHeights Neighborhood Leadership program is worth the

time,” Johnson said.

FutureHeights is now accepting applications for its 2020 Neighborhood Leadership Workshop Series. Dates and program details are available at www.futureheights.org/programs/community-building-programs. Additional questions can be directed to Sruti Basu at sbasu@futureheights.org. The deadline to apply is Jan. 17.

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

Sarah Wolf

Donna Johnson has lived on the same street in Cleveland Heights since 1995. Her children attend Heights schools, her professional life is rich with connection to the nonprofit world, and she has an active sense of volunteerism. “Community is important to me,” Johnson said. “Without it, neighborhoods decline.”

In recent years, though, Johnson felt a disconnect with her neighbors. “It seemed like every spring there were new faces on my street. I knew my neighbors on either side, but felt a strong need to connect and engage with more of my neighbors,” Johnson said.

One day she read a *Heights Observer* article about how FutureHeights was conducting a Neighborhood Leadership Workshop Series and decided to apply.

The workshop series is for any Cleveland Heights resident who, like Johnson, wants to take a more active role in the community. The free program consists of six, three-hour sessions that cover a range of topics, such as leadership, project planning, an understanding of the various Cleveland Heights neighborhoods, city policies, and advocacy related to those neighborhoods. The workshops provide an opportunity for residents to gain skills and resources, and a chance for them to connect with other

CH Senior Center News

Amy Jenkins

If you enjoy trivia and want to be part of a team, this event is for you! The Cleveland Heights Office on Aging is excited to be participating in the second NEO Mind Challenge for the New Majority. The first year was great, and we look forward to more fun and continued success in year two.

The concept is similar to Academic Challenge, with teams representing as many as 36 senior centers competing in playoff tournaments similar to NCAA's March Madness.

The initial competition for Cleveland Heights will take place on Thursday, Jan. 16, 10 a.m., at the CH Senior Activity Center (SAC). There is no cost to participate, but you must register in advance at the senior center.

All participants will receive a T-shirt and an opportunity to attend the championship round, to be held at Jack Thistledown Racino on Wednesday, May 6.

Bragging rights and cash prizes will be awarded to the winning team members and their senior

center. The local competition schedule and playoff information is available at www.themindchallenge.com.

The Cleveland Heights SAC, located in the CH Community Center at 1 Monticello Blvd., offers a variety of programming for those 60 and older. A complete schedule of programs is published in the community center's newsletter, available online at www.chparks.com.

SAC membership is \$5 for Cleveland Heights residents. To sign up, bring a recent piece of mail (such as a bill) and a photo ID.

University Heights residents who would like to join SAC must first register with Patrick Grogan-Myers, University Heights community development coordinator, at 216-932-7800, ext. 203, or pgrogan@universityheights.com. Membership is \$10 for University Heights seniors.

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

LIGHTS CONTINUED continued from page 1

Nela Park is not open to the public, and security personnel will only allow entrance to badged employees.

"Light Up Noble!", a neighborhood effort to display lights during the long nights of December, will again complement Nela Park's annual holiday display. Residents, businesses and institutions are invited to display lighting in their Noble Road-facing windows. Window lights reflect the area's diversity—including holiday-themed decorations, solstice observance illuminations, and displays showing pride in Cleveland sports teams. Neighbors are encouraged to join together to display neighborhood pride.

Look for window lighting on Noble Road from Euclid Avenue to Mayfield Road. Participating businesses include: All Auto Car Repair, Noble Food Deal, Metro/T-Mobile, Eddie's Discount, Hilltop Lounge, Hair by Nora, New Era Barbershop, Premier Barbershop, Hair Melodies, Journey Hair, C J's Passion Cuts, Mike's Deli, Tiffany's Spa, Enchanted Hair and Nails, I Style Hair Design, Nela Florist, Quality Braiding, Island Style Jamaican Restaurant, and International Hair Salon.

For more information, visit www.nobleneighbors.com or <http://noahorganizing.org>.

Hannah Morgan serves as an AmeriCorps VISTA to FutureHeights.



King's College, Cambridge, has been the site of the BBC's "Carols from King's" broadcast since 1928

First Baptist hosts Advent service and reception

G. Michael Skerritt

As part of its Advent season observances, First Baptist Church of Greater Cleveland will present a service of Lessons and Carols, followed by an International Tea reception, on Sunday, Dec. 15, at 4 p.m. All are welcome to attend this traditional service, and the reception afterward, which will be held in the church's Spahr Center, and feature edible treats from around the world.

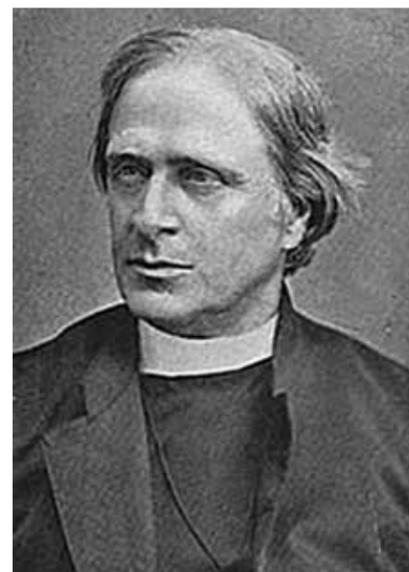
The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols is a service of Christian worship that is traditionally celebrated on Christmas Eve. Thanks to the inspiration of Bob Schneider, the church's late music director, the First Baptist Chancel Choir several years ago began presenting this traditional service during Advent, as a way to prepare hearts and minds for the coming celebration of the birth of Christ.

In the service, the story of the fall of humanity, the promise of the Messiah, and the birth of Jesus is told in short Bible readings—or "lessons"—from Genesis, the prophetic books, and the Gospels, interspersed with the singing of Christmas carols, hymns and choir anthems.

Until the late 19th century, Christmas carols were primarily performed by singers visiting houses. Generally considered to be secular in content, carols had been excluded from Christian church worship.

In the Victorian era, the rising popularity of hymnody encouraged church musicians to introduce carols into worship services.

On Christmas 1878, the composer and organist John Stainer introduced carols into the service of Choral Evensong at St Paul's Cathedral in London. In 1880, Rev. Edward White Benson, at that time Bishop of Truro Cathedral, conducted the first formal service of Nine Lessons and Carols on Christmas Eve. Benson, concerned at the excessive consumption of alcohol in Cornish pubs during the festive season, sought a means of attracting revelers out of the pubs and into church by offering a religious celebration of Christmas.



Edward White Benson, is credited with having devised the service of "Nine Lessons and Carols" in 1880.

The first Nine Lessons and Carols service took place there at 10 p.m. on Christmas Eve, with more than 400 in attendance.

In 1918, Rev. Eric Milner-White, the new Dean of King's College, Cambridge, introduced the service to the college chapel, taking advantage of the established choral tradition of the King's College Chapel Choir. It proved highly successful, and began an annual tradition from 1919 onward, with some alterations to Benson's original format. Notably, Milner-White introduced the tradition of opening the service with a solo treble (child) singing "Once in Royal David's City"—a tradition that First Baptist observes each year.

The BBC began to broadcast the service on the radio in 1928 and on television in 1954, establishing "Carols from King's" as the most popular and widely recognized presentation of the service. It can be heard here in Cleveland every Christmas Eve on WCLV 104.9 FM.

Even during the Second World War, despite the stained glass having been removed from the Chapel, and the lack of heating, the broadcasts continued. (For security reasons, the name "King's" was not mentioned during wartime broadcasts.)

G. Michael Skerritt is a retired engineer and a member of First Baptist Church. Music and theater are his avocations.

No need to wait a month for more community news.

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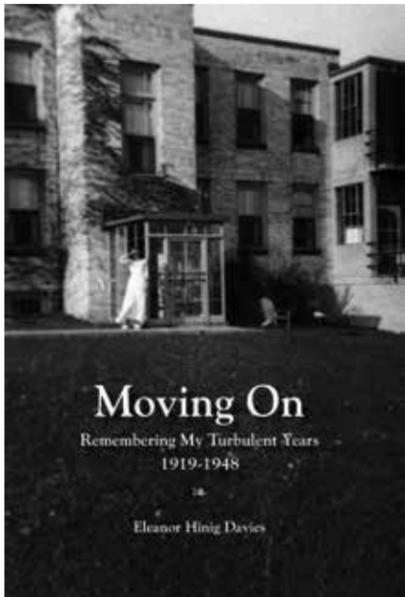
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New memoir sheds light on early Heights history



COURTESY STEPHEN DAVIES

Stephen Davies

In a new memoir published by her family, Eleanor (Ellie) Hinig Davies vividly describes her experiences growing up in Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights in the early 20th century.

Her father—Benjamin C. Hinig—was a prominent builder who

built 26 houses in Cleveland Heights between 1910 and 1928; a dozen of them on prestigious Fairmount Boulevard.

While many of these houses were built for prominent Clevelanders, the family lived in a series of homes that he built speculatively. The family stayed in each new house until it was sold, then moved on to the next new house, until Hinig's bankruptcy in 1928 brought it all to an abrupt halt.

With a unique asset of 20 rooms of furniture, the family demonstrated exceptional resolve after "losing it all," moving into "other people's houses" that were sitting vacant in Shaker Heights. As before, when a house sold, they "moved on" to another.

Davies shared her eloquently written memoir with her friends and family in 2010. After her death in 2017, at age 97, her family came across an exceptional archive of journals, poetry, photographs, and other short works.

Her memoir tells the compelling coming-of-age story of a remarkable woman who transcended a series of

family tragedies during the Great Depression and World War II, when she moved from Cleveland to Meadville, Pa. The lessons she learned through those very difficult years are timeless, and have much to teach about resilience, love, and the families we choose.

The book, *Moving On: Remembering my Turbulent Years (1919-1948)*, is available at local stores—Mac's Backs -Books on Coventry, Appletree Books, and the Heights Arts Holiday Store—and online at www.lulu.com.

Stephen Davies, Ellie's son, is co-founder of Project for Public Spaces, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping people create and sustain public spaces that build strong communities.

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Literacycooperative.org for registration information

HBC invites all to holiday party on Dec. 8



LIFE CYCLE

Heights Bicycle Coalition

Every December, Heights Bicycle Coalition (HBC) celebrates its progress, outlines its plans, and recognizes community "roll models" at a free public event. This year, join the fun on Sunday, Dec. 8, at 4 p.m., in the Secret Garden room at Nighttown, 12383 Cedar Road. Everyone is invited!

Jessica Yox, HBC president, will provide a brief update on the group's accomplishments in 2019 and the outlook for 2020.

Then HBC will recognize its roll models—those members of the community who either exem-

plify or contribute to the thriving bike culture in the Heights. HBC will honor four this year—one from each of the communities represented in the organization: Cleveland Heights, University Heights, Shaker Heights, and South Euclid.

Visit HBC's website (www.bikesintheheights.org) or Facebook page (facebook.com/bikesintheheights) for more details and updates.

This Dec. 8 event is open to the community and offers free refreshments for all, as well as a cash bar.

Heights Bicycle Coalition is a 501(c)3 nonprofit dedicated to educating and encouraging Heights community members to use bicycles as a sustainable and healthy form of transportation and recreation. Angel L. Reyes-Rodríguez and members of the coalition's communications committee wrote this article.



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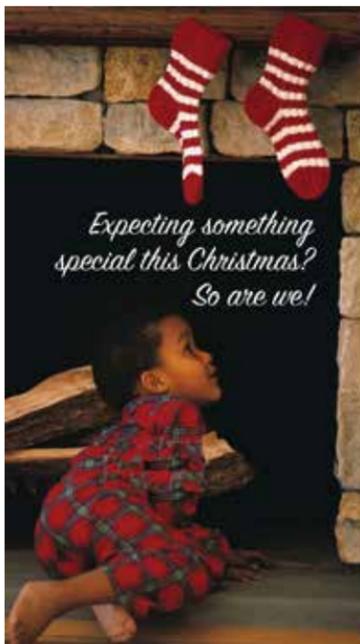
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Lessons & Carols
Sun, Dec 15 at 11 am

Children's Pageant
Sun, Dec 22 at 11 am

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Advent Festival of Lessons & Carols
Sunday, December 8

4:30 p.m. Handbell Prelude

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



Join us for Christmas Worship!

Tuesday, December 24: Christmas Eve

- 2:00 p.m. The Christmas Story for the Young with Eucharist
- 3:15 p.m. Organ Noëls and Carol Sing-a-long
- 4:00 p.m. Pageant with Live Animals, Eucharist (ASL)
- 8:00 p.m. Music of the Season
- 9:00 p.m. A Choral Service of Lessons and Carols
- 10:30 p.m. Festival Eucharist

Wednesday, December 25: Christmas Day

10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Sunday, December 30: The First Sunday after Christmas Day

10:00 a.m. Christmas Lessons & Carols with Eucharist

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School collaborates with Heights businesses to make book fair local



William Skok, a fourth-grader at Communion of Saints School, wrote in Appletree Book's front windows during Communion of Saints School's Book Fair.

stormed better ways to fundraise for their library. They wanted the best quality books for students and, knowing Cleveland Heights' rich history of supporting libraries and independent bookstores, wanted to keep things local.

Appletree Books, at 12419 Cedar Road, is a half-mile down the road from Communion of Saints School. After meeting with owner Lynn Quintrell, the school set its book fair for Nov. 2, at Appletree.

There, in the warmth of Quintrell's beautiful store, students, parents and parishioners browsed the bookshelves and shopped from the thoughtfully curated library and teacher wish lists, to benefit the school's library and PTO.

Throughout the day, students took turns sitting at tables in Appletree's front windows, working on personal stories, comic strips, plays and illustrations, in honor of National Novel Writing Month. Afterward, many families enjoyed an additional fundraiser, held next door at Vero Pizza Napoletana.

Thanks to the generosity of Appletree and Vero, as well as the support of Communion of Saints School families and friends, the school library is well stocked with excellent new titles.

Eileen Ryan Ewen is a local artist and children's book illustrator living in Cleveland Heights. She's also a volunteer librarian at Communion of Saints School, and mother to students who attend the school.

Eileen Ryan Ewen

In the vast third-floor library at Communion of Saints School, the school's volunteer librarians take very seriously the task of helping students find their "book match"—whether it's the newest Newbery Medal winner, a book about sports, a graphic novel, or material to help with a school report. They note student requests for books that aren't part of the library's collection, and follow book releases and national library lists to stay on top of the most recent titles. Then, they compile wish lists and start preparing for the school book fair.

Tired of the highly commercialized fairs that seem to be part of today's "big-box" school book-fair experience, the librarians brain-

Cleveland Heights - University Heights Board of Education Meeting highlights

OCTOBER 15, 2019

Board of Education members present were President Jodi Sourini, Dan Heintz, Malia Lewis and Beverly Wright. James Posch was absent. Also present were Superintendent Elizabeth Kirby, Treasurer Scott Gainer, and Director of Data and Assessment Allison Byrd. The meeting began at 7:05 p.m., after an executive session, and ended at 8:45 p.m.



Five-year financial forecast

Scott Gainer presented and discussed the five-year forecast. The board voted unanimously to approve it. Details can be viewed on the BoardDocs site for this meeting (go to www.chuh.org/boardofeducation.aspx and click on the BoardDocs button in the left hand column).

Ohio School Report Card performance, part II

Allison Byrd presented the second in her Data Series reports on the district's performance based on the latest Ohio School Report card. She discussed the five-year trend in the district's performance, and how it compares to Ohio overall and other first-ring districts. She also explained what the district is doing to make progress and impact achievement. (The charts and analyses presented can be viewed on the BoardDocs site for this meeting, which is accessible at www.chuh.org/boardofeducation.aspx.)

LWV Observer: Adele Cohn.

NOVEMBER 5, 2019

Board members present were President Jodi Sourini, James Posch, Dan Heintz, Malia Lewis and Beverly Wright. Also present were Superintendent Elizabeth Kirby and Treasurer Scott Gainer. The meeting began at 7:05 p.m., after an executive session, and ended at 9:26 p.m.

Shining Star CLE winner

The board recognized Kristen Lyons, winner of the Shining Star CLE contest. The competition is a unique solo vocal competition that gives high school students (including home-schooled students) from Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, Medina, Portage and Summit counties the chance to compete for college scholarships and perform at the prestigious Ohio Theatre in Cleveland. All participants must have a 2020-23 graduation date.

Public comments

Middle School Inequalities: Two Monticello Middle School parents spoke about the inequity in class size and staffing between Monticello and Roxboro middle schools. Superintendent Kirby said she and staff are working to address this.

Operating levy proposed

Ryan Routh, chair of the Lay Finance Committee, explained how the committee came to a unanimous recommendation concerning a new operating levy. The committee recommended that the amount of the operating levy be set between 7.9 and 9.5 mills, and recommended that the levy be placed on the ballot in the first half of 2020.

After much discussion, the school board approved a first reading of a proposal to place a 7.9-mill operating levy on the March 17, 2020, ballot. The board will vote on the proposed levy at a later meeting.

Proposed UH residential development

University Heights Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan and UH Communications and Civic Engagement Director Mike Cook presented the proposed residential development at Cedar Taylor. The school board voted unanimously to accept a letter of intent for the purchase and sale of real property so that the proposed development can start.

Other announcements

The district now has an app for smart phones, and district website improvements are forthcoming.

The district received an award from the city of Cleveland Heights for the renovations to Roxboro and Monticello middle schools.

Jodi Sourini announced a Jan. 5 fundraiser with the Cleveland Cavaliers.

LWV Observer: Adele Cohn.

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

Middle school students propose green solutions



Middle school students visit the Watershed Stewardship Center.

Krissy Dietrich Gallagher

We've all seen it: puddles of water gathering around the clogged drains in our driveways, rivulets of water running down the sidewalks, and standing water pooling in our yards. That's stormwater runoff, and it's a problem.

As that water moves over impervious surfaces, such as roads and parking lots, it picks up pollutants and harmful chemicals and carries them into freshwater and oceans. Due to urban development and an increase in paved surfaces, stormwater is increasing in communities throughout the country, including Cleveland Heights and University Heights. But seventh-graders in Lee Ann Chambers' and Sarah Cusick's science classes at Monticello Middle School, and Christine Smrdel's and Joshua Luton's classes at Roxboro Middle School, have solutions.

The students began their Earth's Water unit by visiting Cleveland MetroParks' Watershed Stewardship Center to learn about stormwater runoff and explore green infrastructure options to reduce its impact. They worked in pairs or small groups to research solutions, eventually settling on one or two that they would like to see implemented on their own school campuses.

Students priced out the options, from installation of permeable pavers in the parking lots to planting and maintaining rain gardens on their school grounds; sketched prototypes of their ideas; designed 3-D models on top of GoogleEarth images of their school buildings; created slideshows detailing their proposals; and presented them to their classmates, teachers, and guests from the Board of Education.

The most popular student suggestions were permeable pavers, either in school parking lots or near frequently used entrances and exits, along with rain gardens and green rooftops.

Students were aware of the challenges some of these ideas pre-

sented, such as the risk of rooftop gardens leaking from the added weight, and the need for someone to maintain rain gardens, which most felt could be done by members of their schools' environmental clubs.

While the proposals are hypothetical at this stage, the lessons learned extended beyond the classrooms. Roxboro student Olivia Bruening plans to talk to her parents about installing permeable pavers around her garage, where water accumulates after rain. Other students said the unit helped them to think differently. "I didn't realize how much runoff actually affects us. I'm going to make my mom more aware," said Marissa Woods, a student from Monticello.

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

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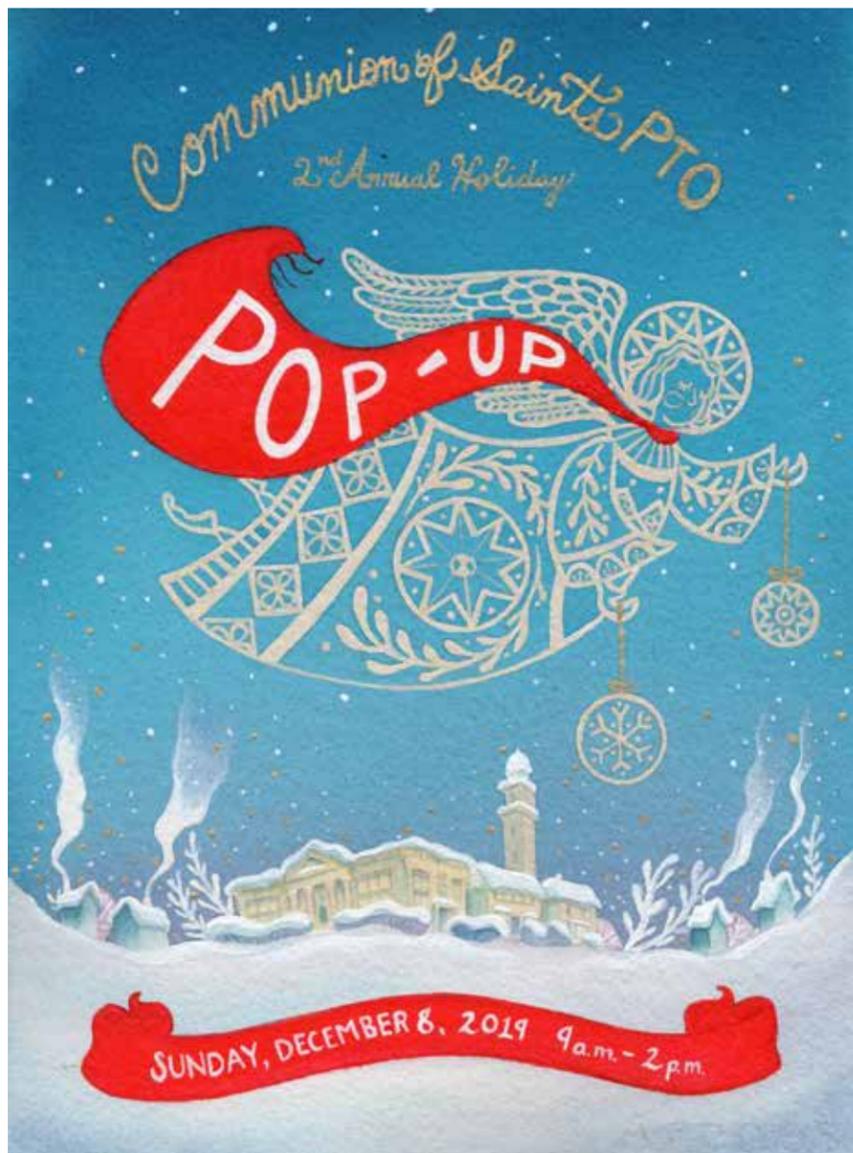
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What's going on at your library?

Coventry Village Library

1925 Coventry Road, 216-321-3400
Tuesday, Dec. 10, 7 p.m.

Exploring the Heart of Dying Through Courageous Conversation.

This program, the first in a series, will consider "Ritual, Ceremony and Sacred Intention: The Balm in Compassionate End of Life Care." Journey deep within, opening to one another while exploring ritual, ceremony and ancient practices in preparation for conscious dying.

Lee Road Library

2345 Lee Road, 216-932-3600
Friday, Dec. 13, 7 p.m.

Graphic Novel Reading Club. From high-brow to low, and everything in between, this discussion group features rousing dialogue on artistic styles, favorite writers, and contemporary political and social topics. Light snacks provided; participants must be 16 or older.

Noble Neighborhood Library

2800 Noble Road, 216-291-5665
Friday, Dec. 20, 4 p.m.

International Tastebuds—Sweet Edition. Kids in grades K–5 will have a chance to test their tastebuds on foods from all over the world. They'll rate and rank their favorite treats, snacks, and drinks from international locales, and compare them to American foods. Registration required.

University Heights Library

13866 Cedar Road, 216-321-4700
Monday, Dec. 2, 6:30 p.m.

Foodie Movies. This series of movies that will whet your appetite kicks off with "The Hundred-Foot Journey" (2014, PG, 122 minutes), in which the teenage son of an Indian restaurateur finds work across the street with his dad's culinary foe. With a war between the two eateries brewing, the teen displays his unique talents in the kitchen by merging Indian and French cuisines.

Cleveland Heights – University Heights Public Library Board Meeting highlights

OCTOBER 21, 2019

Board members present were President Chris Mentrek, Vice President James Roosa, Dana Fluellen, Annette Iwamoto, Susan Moskowitz and Vikas Turakhia. Max Gerboc was absent.



Times Magazine. The event was such a success that follow-up discussions will be held in November and January. Staff members John Piche, adult services, and Peyton Meeks, circulation, facilitated the program.

SPARK (Supporting Partnership to Assure Ready Kids)

Chrissy Zoldak, a parent partner from Family Connections, gave a progress report on SPARK, a program for preschool children intended to build academic and social-emotional skills for school readiness.

Incidents report

Kevin Echols, security manager, gave an update on incidents report tracking. The library is on pace to match the previous two years for the number of incidents. There have been 174 incidents this year, as of Sept. 30. Current visitor numbers are 554,059 as of Sept. 30; this puts the rate of incident at 0.0406 percent of incidents per visitors.

Financial report

The board reviewed and accepted the September financial statement. Total cash balance across the operating accounts, Bauer Fund accounts, and investment accounts at the end of September was \$17,156,976.55.

Policy amendments

The board approved two changes to the Service and Administrative policies of the library board of trustees. In section E, Civic Responsibilities, the following sentence was added: "Political materials may be distributed to the public outside of the library, but not inside of any building." In Appendix G, Meeting Room Guidelines, the following sentence was added: "Any violation of the Library Code of Conduct or Meeting Room Guidelines can be cause for suspension of meeting room privileges."

Library cleaning services

The board approved the advertisement of bids for cleaning services for all of the library facilities at a cost not to exceed \$130,000.

Coventry waterproofing project

For the waterproofing project at the Coventry Village branch, the board accepted the bid of F. Buddie Contracting, Ltd., which had a lowest base bid of \$296,100, and the lowest alternate bid of \$47,630, for a total contract of \$343,730, which is under the estimated cost of \$385,000. The library had received four bids for the project.

Racial equity training

All staff participated in racial equity training in October, and the board of library trustees will undergo training in December.

'The 1619 Project'

On Monday, Sept. 30, the Adult Services Department hosted more than 90 people for a discussion on slavery in America, prompted by the "The 1619 Project," published in *The New York*

Greater Cleveland Food Bank's mobile pantry

The mobile pantry served 66 families during the last outdoor event at the Coventry Village branch in September. It will continue on the fourth Monday of the month at the Lee Road branch, starting in October.

Ohio Library Council (OLC) Convention

Seven employees attended the 2019 OLC Convention in Cincinnati, Sept. 25–27. Manager Ty Emerson presented a program there, "Fine Free is Overdue," in which he shared the library's journey through the process of eliminating fines and the tangible results of that change.

Strategic plan community survey

An online survey was conducted to gather information regarding challenges the community faces to help the library meet community needs. In addition, library staff administered surveys in person at programs and community events, attended community meetings to take notes, and spoke with patrons and neighbors. Data has been collated and will be presented to the board. This information will be used to influence the direction of the [library's] strategic plan for 2020–21.

New Youth Services programs

Youth Services launched several new programs in September. Librarian Charlotte Blasier started a monthly STEM-based program called STEAMondays, and a monthly Saturday drop-in Lego program. Associate Kareem Hairston brought back the Teen Advisory Board. Associate Chris Fries introduced Prehistoric Madness, a competition wherein the community votes for its favorite prehistoric animals. In September, Youth Services staff visited five preschools, daycares, and schools to read stories to 210 children. Youth Services Librarian Sarah Rosenberger and Associate Colin Marshall visited Heights High and signed up 39 teens for library cards.

Circulation report

Electronic-media streaming currently makes up about 10 percent of materials circulated. Three of the four library branches increased circulation from a year ago. Visitors to the library remained about the same, except for the Noble Neighborhood branch, which showed an increase compared to a year ago.

LWV Observer: Elizabeth M. Tracy.

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

Library waterproofing will require tree removal

Sheryl Banks

Built in 1926, Heights Libraries Coventry Village Branch is the first and oldest Heights Libraries building. Committed to maintaining and improving the building, Heights Libraries, over the past three years, has invested in both the exterior and interior, undertaking an extensive tuck-pointing project, and a redesign and expansion of the children's area.

The latest improvement project for the building will be a full waterproofing of the foundation on all sides. In order to complete this project, two large oak trees and a number of smaller trees will have to be removed.

"It is very hard to part with these beautiful oaks," said Nancy Levin, Heights Libraries director. "Cleveland Heights is known for its beautiful tree canopy—but saving



This large oak on the west side of the Coventry Village Library (in this photo from 2015) is one of the trees that will be removed.

the historic building from pervasive moisture is also very important. Our Coventry branch has stood for nearly 100 years, and we want it to last 100 more.

"The timing of the tree removal will depend on the weather, and could be delayed as late as spring 2020, but we wanted to make sure our community knew, in case it

happens sooner.

"The oaks tower over the library on the Coventry Road side, and we agree that they are very majestic," continued Levin. "When the project is complete, new trees will be planted and landscaping will be replaced all around the building.

A representative of VanCuren Tree Services, the contractor, said the company repurposes trees for mulch, wood chips and firewood.

After the waterproofing is complete, Heights Libraries plans to renovate the lower level of the building by adding meeting rooms, a kitchenette, and other amenities that will allow the building to be even more useful to community members.

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

Heights Libraries cooking up 'Culinary Comforts' this season

Isabelle Rew

"Cast off the winter doldrums and dig into our savory menu of programs this quarter," invites Heights Libraries' winter program guide, *Check Us Out*, introducing this season's Culinary Comforts theme.

From December through February, the library will offer a feast of culinary-themed literature, film and tasting experiences for all ages as a way to celebrate the multifaceted role that food plays in our lives.

"Our adult programming team was throwing around ideas for the library's upcoming quarterly themes, and food and food-related topics seem to be perennially popular," said L.P. Coladangelo, adult services associate. "We agreed that winter is a great time to highlight the fact that, in the darkest time of year, we often come together as families and communities to connect through shared meals."

With this in mind, the library will offer food-related twists on some of its regular programs, such as the Original Voices Book Club and Lee Road Movie Night, which will feature *My Life in France* by Julia Child with Alex Prud'homme on Dec. 11, and the film, "Julie & Julia," on Dec. 13.

For those who cannot consume food-related content without drooling, there will be plenty of opportunities for tasting.

"In some cases, we'll be talking about stories that focus on how food and cooking can change our lives," said Coladangelo. "But we'll have other events where we can come together to enjoy culinary delights with our friends and neighbors."

Among the edible food programs on the winter program menu, amateur cupcake decorators can test their talents in "Nailed It! Adult Edition," a confectionary contest at the University Heights branch on Feb. 18. Library visitors can sip on hot chocolate at five programs throughout the winter months, including Hot Chocolate and Cookies Book Swap Night at the Lee Road branch on Dec. 10, and a number of cocoa-themed storytimes for kids.

In the children's department, which consistently offers food-related programs for children and teens, staff chose to combine the culinary theme with their ongoing goal of offering more Afrocentric programs.

"This was a major request in the community survey that was completed in 2018," said Shamekia Chandler, youth services associate. "We hope to provide children with culinary literacy skills that may help them in forming future career choices, and give young people a cohesive understanding of the African Diaspora and its place in our country's history through food."

Chandler will facilitate a Black History Month cooking series for ages 10 to 18 at 3:30 p.m. on Tuesdays in February. She will invite a local chef to demonstrate how to make simple meals that are both rich in flavor and history.

For more information, visit www.heightslibrary.org.

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

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'The Power of Ten' fills White Gallery



23 and Everyone Else, by Mary Ann Tipple.

COURTESY ST. PAUL'S CHURCH

Robin M. Outcalt

The Power of Ten opens Dec. 1 at the White Gallery at St. Paul's Church, with an artists' reception planned for Dec. 6.

The exhibition features the work of 10 talented Northeast Ohio fiber artists—Deb Berkebile, Joann Giordano, Ann Kmieck, Barb Lind, Ruta Marino, Amy Reed, Sandy Shelenberger, Mary Ann Tipple, Kathleen Vanmeter, and Martha Young.

"We call ourselves 'The Tens' because there are 10 of us . . . who have been meeting once a month for years," explained Young. "Through those years we have supported and guided each other through the joys and sorrows of our lives."

The members also offer one another constructive criticism on

work in progress, advice on useful techniques, and updates on exhibits to enter and to view.

Since its inception, some members have come and some have gone. Each comes to fiber arts with a vision formed by her own background and experience. The resulting artwork is unique to each member of The Tens.

The community is invited to view this exhibition and attend the Dec. 6 artists' reception, 5-7 p.m. The nonprofit gallery is located at the church, at 2747 Fairmount Blvd.

For additional information, and gallery hours, visit www.stpauls-church.org/music-and-art/gallery-shows.

Robin M. Outcalt is the co-chair of the White Gallery at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Cleveland Heights.



A work by Kathleen VanMeter.

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Heights Arts invites community involvement

Rachel Bernstein

It's been almost 20 years since Heights Arts began shining a light on greater Cleveland's local artists, musicians and poets.

Its most visible program, the Heights Arts Holiday Store, is currently in full swing at 2175 Lee Road. More than 100 artists are participating to ensure that visitors can purchase one of thousands of unique and beautiful gifts created by artists who live and work in the region, while contributing to the creative economy at the same time.

While the holiday and year-round store is highly visible and has become a favorite destination, residents and visitors may not be aware of many other opportunities Heights Arts has for residents to become engaged, whether they dabble or work professionally in the arts.

Currently, the organization is accepting submissions for its popular Members Show in March. With just a \$10 entry fee, all are welcome to submit a work of art for this show, which celebrates the Heights' creative community. The work is not curated, and all submissions are accepted until the show is complete, so participants are encouraged to submit early.

Exhibitions at Heights Arts are planned, designed and hung by



Members of the Heights Arts staff and Exhibition Community Team work to install a show.

a volunteer Exhibition Community Team, along with Heights Arts staff.

As the Members Show comes together, Heights Arts' Heights Writes Community Team will be choosing the 10th Cleveland Heights Poet Laureate for a term beginning April 2020. Applications from poets who live in, or have a strong connection with, Cleveland Heights are being accepted through the end of the year. The Heights Arts Cleveland Heights poet laureateship is the longest-running poet laureate program in the state, and serves to educate and delight the local

community by providing public readings and poetry programming in association with Heights Arts exhibitions and community engagement efforts.

Heights Arts continues to offer a range of opportunities for

Cleveland Heights, University Heights, and other area residents to become more deeply involved with the nonprofit arts organization. Its exhibition, Heights Writes, and music community teams all enable members to provide expertise and use their connections with the arts community to create vibrant, creative and relevant programs.

Those interested in becoming more involved are invited to visit www.heightsarts.org for information about opportunities to deepen their relationship with the local arts community through these teams, as well as others, to support the arts in the Heights.

Rachel Bernstein is executive director of Heights Arts. A professional musician, educator and administrator, she has worked in the arts for more than 30 years, partnering with many regional arts organizations, businesses, and people who share her belief in the power of the arts.



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Shadow puppets and live music create mystical setting

Colin Anderson

Dobama Theatre's 60th anniversary Mainstage Season continues with "The Old Man and the Old Moon," opening Dec. 6.

"The Old Man and the Old Moon," written by PigPen Theatre Co. and directed by Melissa T. Crum and Nathan Motta, is a mystical epic—an odyssey of music and theater magic in which actors playing instruments create live sound effects on stage, and interact with elaborate shadow puppets.

In the play, the old man has the important job of filling the



moon with liquid light each night. When his wife is drawn away by a mysterious melody, he abandons his duties and crosses the seas in search of his lost love. Along the way, he contends with apocalyptic storms, civil wars, monsters of the deep, irritable ghosts, and the fiercest obstacle of all: change.

PigPen Theatre Co., which describes itself as "a band of storytellers," was founded in 2007 by a group of Carnegie Mellon School of Drama students. Since its creation, PigPen has toured its original plays around the world. It was the first theater company to win the NYC Fringe Festival's top honor for a play for two consecutive years.

PigPen Theatre Co. members stated that they "created 'The Old Man and the Old Moon' as friends and collaborators. There were no rules other than to follow what excited our imaginations. Through years of performance,

we discovered the Old Man and the Old Woman's quest to seek out adventure, rekindle lost love, and rediscover their past was as universal as it was magical. We can't wait to see how new ensembles will come together to tell this story in more ways than we could ever imagine!"

Dobama's production of "The Old Man and the Old Moon" features Gabe Reed, Emmy Brett, Jourdan Lewanda, Tim Keo, Josh Innerst, Treva Offutt, Kieran Minor and Amy Bransky.

Performances, which run through Jan. 5, are Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., and Sundays at 2:30 p.m. Visit www.dobama.org for a full schedule, ticket information, and box office hours.

Colin Anderson is the general manager of Dobama Theatre and a graduate of Oberlin College. His training is in directing and dramatic literature.

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Christmas Carols



SONGS AND STORIES

David Budin

When I was 4 years old, I started going to nursery school in a big house on Taylor Road, between Shannon and Bendemeer roads. The women who ran it were nice, but I hated going there, just like I hated going to every other school I attended. However, I did look forward to being there every day for a few weeks in December, when we started learning Christmas carols.

I loved the music. I didn't understand the words. Having been raised in a Jewish family, and being only 4 years old, I had no background in the Christmas story, no reference points. But I had never heard these songs before and I thought they were beautiful. I still do—even now, when I understand the words.

The next year, I started kindergarten at Coventry School. We sang Christmas carols there, too. And did so every year of elementary school. Christmas carols and Christmas songs. I never cared what they meant; I just liked hearing them and singing them. Well, I liked the carols, not the songs so

much. I thought the songs were kind of contrived and silly and musically simplistic (though I might not have described them that way in the third grade—but I felt it).

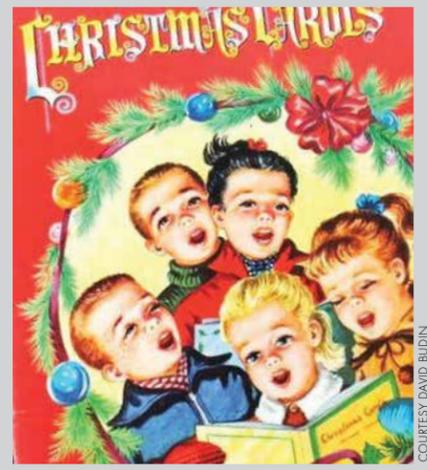
At Roosevelt Junior High, I played sax in the school band, so I didn't get to sing carols. But the kids in the school choir did. (When my kids went to Roxboro Elementary and Middle schools, they still sang Christmas songs there, but the schools had added a couple of Hanukkah songs, too, to make it all equal. So they'd sing a bunch of songs about how Jesus was born to save the world, and then, for balance, a song about potato pancakes and one about a toy, the dreidel.)

It got really good at Heights High, when I joined the Choir and we sang not only beautiful versions of Christmas carols, but also the amazing religious choral works by all of the great composers. I found it all quite gratifying to be a part of and the music very moving. And I still do.

And if I was annoyed by commercial Christmas songs in the third grade, I'm exasperated now—not because of their content, but because they're just full of such bad music. And I hate, like most of us do, that these insipid songs start playing, on radio stations and in stores, constantly, relentlessly, six, and in some cases eight, weeks before Christmas. And we really don't need 900 versions of "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town" or "Jingle Bells" or "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," by

everyone who ever sang a pop song. But, of course, with so many radio stations and stores playing nothing but Christmas music around the clock for two months, they're desperate for material to fill up the time. It's a circular problem, which I could easily remedy, if given the opportunity. And speaking of requiring too much Christmas music, if you've ever wondered why songs that have nothing to do with Christmas—like "Let It Snow," "Winter Wonderland," and even "Baby, It's Cold Outside" (both the politically incorrect and the new politically corrected versions)—are considered "Christmas" music, that's why: They just have to fill the time.

My wife and I go to a Christmas Eve service every year, mainly for the music (and also, a little, because everyone is nice that night). We spent a few years trying to find the church with the best music. It's a slow trial process because you only get one chance a year. We enjoyed the music in many Cleveland Heights churches, but we finally settled on Church of the Covenant, in University Circle, on Euclid Avenue, a few steps from the end (or is it the beginning?) of Mayfield Road. The church is in Cleveland, but for this publication's purposes, I'm proclaiming it Cleveland Heights—because it's so close to Cleveland Heights, and because so many of its members are Heights residents. In fact, if I had a map—the kind we used to have, printed on paper—I would take it to the President, so he could use his black marker to officially make Church of the Covenant part of Cleveland Heights.



I'm the kid in the . . . oh, wait—I was absent that day.

That church's Christmas Eve service includes a good choir, organ, trumpet, tympani and sometimes other instruments, and usually some songs by their bell ringers. They do traditional carols and lesser-known older and newer music. It's all majestic and heart-warming.

I haven't been a practicing Jew for decades, though almost everyone in my extended family is, and I have been steeped in that culture. But I have loved Christmas carols since I was 4 (and that's a long time). It's not the religion, it's the music. And the memories.

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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