Best of the Heights 2020

Hannah Morgan

Over a period of six weeks, Jan. 1 through Feb. 15, Heights residents cast their votes in the annual Best of the Heights awards, in recognition of the businesses that serve Cleveland Heights and University Heights. As in prior years, FutureHeights, a nonprofit community development corporation and publisher of the Heights Observer, created a list of unique award categories, showcasing the wide variety of establishments that call the Heights home, and asked residents to vote by writing in the names of their favorites in each category.

“While we celebrate these 2020 awarders,” said Deanna Bremer Fisher, executive director of FutureHeights, “we also acknowledge how much has changed for all of them—and for all of us—since the onset of the coronavirus outbreak. For example, Foodhisattva, a vegan, Asian-fusion cafe, was this year’s winner of Best New Restaurant or Bar. Now, only eight months into a successful first year, it has been forced to temporarily close.”

Joshua Sias, who owns Foodhisattva with his wife, Frances Cheng, said that the couple poured their personal savings into bringing their restaurant dreams to life, and he is grateful that neighbors have embraced the unconventional cuisine they offer. After building a dedicated following over years of pop-ups and other events, Foodhisattva chose to open its storefront in the Cedar Taylor Business District. “We live right around the corner, because we want to be here,” said Sias.

“And under the current public gathering restrictions,” said Fisher, “it’s great to remember that Foodhisattva was the winner of one other category—Best Takeout. People who want to continue supporting this, and other Heights restaurants, are encouraged to continue ordering food for carryout and delivery.”

Pacific East, in the Coventry Village Business District, and Aladdin’s, in the Cedar Fairmount Business District, were finalists in the Best Takeout category. “We are staying open to serve the public as long as we can,” said Dany Aoun, manager of Aladdin’s.

Heights businesses adjust hours, services

Deanna Bremer Fisher

Some Heights businesses have temporarily closed, and others have made, and continue to make, adjustments to their business hours or practices, in an effort to help stem the spread of COVID-19. On March 15, Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine issued an order to bars and restaurants, instructing them to close as of 8 p.m. that evening. Earlier, he had issued orders to prohibit large public gatherings. On March 23, many Heights businesses that originally remained open announced they would close in accordance with the governor’s “stay-at-home” order, which took effect March 17, 11:59 p.m.

The Heights has a large number of independently run, locally owned businesses that serve Cleveland Heights and University Heights.

City of CH extends council application deadline to April 6

Kim Sergio Inglis

A March 20 CH council update, found in the March 23 CH City Council meeting packet [note: all March 22–25 meetings were cancelled], included the notice that the application deadline for the vacant city council seat has been extended by two weeks. The new deadline is April 6, at 5 p.m.

The application can be found online at www.clevelandheights.com/1085/City-Council-Application.

Asked how the deadline extension came about, at a time when council members, like others, are engaged in social distancing, CH Mayor Jason Stein explained, “I reached out by phone to individual council members (between March 18 and 20) to solicit their support for the extension. Considering the unprecedented COVID-19 situation, I felt it was appropriate and necessary to extend the application deadline by an additional two weeks. Residents are busy adjusting to the new reality, and should be focused on their family health and continued on page 14

Stone Oven owners reflect on 25 years in business

Bob Rosenbaum

In the 25 years since Jon Emerman and Tatyan Rehn opened The Stone Oven Bakery Café on Lee Road in Cleveland Heights, it has been one of the community’s favorite gathering spots. We asked them some questions about their quarter century in the business.

From Bob Rosenbaum

“One of the true pleasures of the 25 years we have been in business is the relationships that we have developed with our customers. They have become our family and we have become theirs.”

Jon Emerman

“The joy of the business was and is—”

From Tatyan Rehn

“Our original concept was as it still is—a comfortable and inviting place where people can sit and enjoy a fresh-baked good and cup of coffee, or sandwich made with our bread. What’s an important lesson you’ve learned since opening the business?”

From Jon Emerman

“TR: I personally learned that I could never be just a boss. I always got too involved with our people and their life circumstances, which probably isn’t the most effective way to manage a business. JE: I’ve always tried to keep it simple. The menu has changed little in 25 years, but people come back if the food is good and consistent. We could have listened to those who wanted us to expand our menu, but I’ve mostly resisted. Less complexity is a good thing.”

continued on page 9

continued on page 12

continued on page 16

continued on page 12

continued on page 9

continued on page 14
The Heights Observer in the season of coronavirus

OPENING THE OBSERVER

Bob Rosenbaum

These past weeks have been a struggle for everyone—especially small businesses and the people who work for them.

The pandemic forced many to close without warning, and it’s a safe bet that some won’t have the financial reserves to ever reopen. Whether social distancing lasts for a month or a year, it’s certain to change the landscape of our community.

At the same time, I marvel at the energy and ingenuity of the people who run these businesses. Over the course of a weekend in mid-March, they deployed apps, set up curbside service and home delivery, and made other changes to keep money coming in—even at a trickle.

In mid-March, the Heights Observer began keeping a list of businesses in Cleveland Heights and University Heights that are operating. You can access the list at https://bit.ly/2Aj8NcK. We’ll continue to update it for as long as necessary, and will include it each Tuesday in our e-mail newsletter (subscribe here for free: https://bit.ly/2Oyqnuw).

Please use it. Our independent businesses are an important part of what makes the Heights so livable. The people who own them are friends and neighbors; their livelihoods are built around serving you. Doing what you can to give them business now will help them reopen later.

Much of the work to produce the Observer is done remotely, so the governor’s lockdown order hasn’t scrambled many of our processes.

However, many of our distribution locations are closed, and foot traffic is down sharply everywhere else. So for the time being, we’ll print fewer issues than usual. As I write this, we haven’t yet settled on the actual number.

Also, the Observer is sustained entirely by revenue from ads—which is down 30 percent in this issue from what it was supposed to be.

When I worked in corporate media, that would have been catastrophic. We would have been shutting publications and jettisoning people.

Thankfully, we operate the Observer in a way that keeps fixed costs low, and as a nonprofit we don’t answer to investors. So unless the situation goes on and on, we believe we can see our way through this period without interruption.

But there is another concern. By the time you’re reading this, we’re already working on the May issue—and we’re worried that contributions to the paper will suffer as community activities dry up and people turn inward.

What makes the Observer special is that it’s written entirely by readers. That is to say, it’s the community’s that special; the Observer is just a reflection.

So please send us your stories, and we’ll continue to share them. Meanwhile, stay well, stay safe and stay six feet away.

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

Resident is proud of CH’s diversity

To the Editor:

Nothing has made me prouder than returning home to the city of Cleveland Heights after 27 years and discovering that it hasn’t lost its commitment to cultural diversity.

This past January and February, I attended stellar performances of “Intimate Apparel” at Ensemble Theatre, which is housed in the Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Campus, and “Skeleton Crew” at Dobama Theatre, which is located in the Cedar Lee district.

After leaving Ohio, I lived in several cities in four states. None of those cities possessed, within two miles of my residence, two performing arts theaters that simultaneously hosted two African-American female playwright productions with majority African-American casts.

Reflecting on my childhood, I was privileged to have had the opportunity to live among, and routinely interact with, neighbors, classmates, teachers and staff of different races, ethnicities and religions as a student at Oxford Elementary, Monticello Middle and Cleveland Heights High schools.

I applaud Cleveland Heights for staying the course of diversity after all these years, and for continuing to make it work even when it isn’t considered the popular thing to do. I have always been grateful for having spent my formative years in Cleveland Heights, and I remain a proud resident.

Michelle Frazier
Cleveland Heights

CH-UH district supports the community; needs our votes

To the Editor:

These past days and weeks have confirmed so much upheaval and uncertainty for our families, our community, and our world. We are benefiting from a governor who has taken decisive action, requiring sacrifices from all to curb what could otherwise be devastating to so many.

Likewise, our CH-UH school district, under the leadership of Superintendent Elizabeth Kirby, has taken quick action to ensure the safety and well-being of our children. But the district didn’t just comply with the state-ordered closure; it is doing much more. It is providing breakfast and lunch to ALL children in the community, not just those who attend CH-UH public schools. It has provided computers to Heights families to facilitate distance learning; it is coordinating virtual social-emotional and mental health services for students and families; and it has communicated with families about what’s happening and what to expect next with both clarity and empathy.

When Heights children return to school, we cannot underestimate the impact the COVID-19 response will have had on them. We will need EVERY facet of CH-UH programming and services in place for students as they find their footing.

If they don’t return until the fall (as some are suggesting), they should not come back to larger class sizes, fewer nurses or guidance counselors, the need to walk to school because of a change in bus routes, limited music classes, and the need to pay to participate in sports. These are the very things that will help them adjust to their new normal.

I voted for Issue 26 BEFORE I saw the district step up. If you haven’t voted yet, now that you are witnessing what a quality public school option we have, I hope you vote for Issue 26 as well.

Saraya Queen/Tahor
Cleveland Heights

County council candidate Baker’s résumé is skinny

To the Editor:

Cheryl Stephens is well known to us. Her economic development leadership for over 20 years, her progressive politics, and her Master of Public Administration degree make her a candidate on page 3
Letters continued from page 2

Gary Benjamin

out a smear piece. It’s their only hope.

No wonder his supporters put

shows someone who can’t hold on to

opponent’s skinny résumé, which

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Another question to be raised

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He is a law enforcement officer

application says.

2017—not from 2013 to 2017 as his

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he claimed to have worked at one job

On his online application to SEL

he has worked for a little over two

years. He is significantly less qualified

Her opponent, on the other

website and look her up.

- Cleveland Heights-University

- Heights Chapter of the League of

The Cleveland Heights-University

Chapter of the League of Women Voters (LWV) of Greater

Cleveland endorses passage of Issue 26, a proposed tax levy for current ex-

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City School District.

Policies recently enacted by the

Ohio state government have created a sudden financial crisis for our lo-

cal public schools. Ohio’s EdChoice voucher program—which is based

on school ratings using questionable testing practices and dated testing

information—was expanded to affect more schools, and to provide vouch-

ers to private-school students who

had never attended public schools.

The state’s practice of paying for

EdChoice vouchers through deduc-

tions from affected districts’ state aid,

is that, in his campaign literature,

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2017— not from 2013 to 2017 as his

application says.

He is a law enforcement officer

with Academy training and has expe-

rience as a patrol officer in three small towns for four years, never staying in

one place more than 18 months.

Another question to be raised is

that, in his campaign literature, he says he is “pursuing” a Master of

Education Administration degree. He

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he omits this fact from his résumé.

He should explain why he is “pursu-

ing” a degree he told SEL he already had.

When compared to Cheryl

Stephens’ qualifications, I think the

choice here is a no-brainer. I am put-

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see how big the difference is between Stephens’ qualifications versus her

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Gary Benjamin

Cleveland Heights

LWV Heights chapter endorses school levy Issue 26

Maryann Barnes

The Cleveland Heights-University

Chapter of the League of Women Voters (LWV) of Greater

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Gary Benjamin

Cleveland Heights
TOH critics not to blame for delay

Eric Silverman

After sitting through the final CH City Council meeting on the topic of Top of the Hill (TOH), on Feb. 18, I found it unfortunate that critics of the project were being blamed for how long it has taken for TOH to happen.

Was it critics who selected a prominent local developer with a history of quality projects, and then could not come to an agreement with the developer? No, that was the city of Cleveland Heights. Was it critics who orchestrated a Potemkin Village of “public engagement,” and then ignored that input? No, it was the city. Was it critics who crafted a poor design and submitted incomplete drawings to the Architectural Board of Review (ABR), drawing out the process? No, it was the developer. Was it critics who failed to conduct any sort of market survey, showing how this project will be a catalyst for the entire city and post all relevant material on the city’s website? No, it was the city. Was it critics who failed to develop this site over the last 25 years and—by the way—are now on their third (or is it fourth?) developer at Lee and Meadowbrook? No, it was the city.

What is most disappointing about TOH is not the bland design, the flawed massing, the lack of three-bedroom units, or even the public subsidies. It is the lost opportunity, as neither the city nor the developer saw value in the geometry, topography, and uniqueness of the site. Instead of buildings that would take advantage of the location and create landmark structures, we will be receiving the developer’s standard design shoehorned into the site with the bare minimum in alterations needed to get the support of two members of the ABR.

If the city had not adopted an “us versus them” Robert Moses approach to this project, if it had been transparent and responsive in place of opaque and combative, if the developer had been willing to move the tall portion of the project to Euclid Heights Boulevard, and had used a design with actual details instead of homages and inferences, I believe support for the project would have expanded beyond those with an economic or ideological interest, coupled with those tired of debate. With the time, money and effort expended on this project, coupled with the uniqueness and location of the site, I feel we should have received something better than “meh.”

I hope that this project will be as “catalytic” as supporters believe it to be for the rest of Cleveland Heights, but after scouring the city’s website, and making repeated requests for documentation to support this premise, this appears to be an act of faith instead of one of data.

With all of the things wrong with TOH, of which there are many, I want it to succeed. More importantly, I want to see CH City Council and its staff work as hard for Noble-Nela, Noble-Mayfield and South Taylor as they have for TOH.


Where’s the TOH public greenery and ‘wow’ factor?

Joyce and Steve Rajki

Cleveland Heights Zoning Code 1165.05 (c), for large-scale residential development (more than 2 acres), calls for 30-percent active or passive open space. The present Top of the Hill (TOH) design falls well short of that requirement. The city has not justified allowing the diminished open space to be approved.

Only one place for public assembly is shown, and it is a skimpy space, intersected by a retaining wall, west of Northtown. The AstroTurf dog park in front of the Buckingham Condominiums is gated, and Buckingham residents cannot use it. The grove of trees currently on that site will be removed.

Let’s go back to Oct. 10, 2018, to a TOH meeting at the CH Community Center chaired by CH City Council Member Michael Ungar, council’s liaison with the developer, Flaherty & Collins. The approximately 130 residents who attended that meeting heard Ungar say that this project would be “the hill where it happens,” and “we were looking for something that would cause us as a community to be proud and to say, ‘Wow!’ ”

Now this project is being rammed along to the city’s desired completion, to serve as a Cleveland Heights icon. What is an icon? A person or thing that is regarded as a representative symbol.

We’ve all been watching. How can we help but watch? The icon will be in our face, whether we like it or not. It seems increasingly likely that the “wow” factor, the icon, will become a “whoa” factor.

Why did city council and city’s professional staff do this? Top of the Hill will not be a symbol of Cleveland Heights and its citizens, but rather an $83-million symbol of the desperation of Cleveland Heights city management to get something done on its watch.

Joyce and Steve Rajki, 49-year residents of Cleveland Heights, are advocating for quality design and construction that will stand the test of time.
It seemed as though time stretched with every new announcement of closures, restrictions, and new coronaviruses infections. As the difficult decision came to close schools in Ohio, there were many unanswered questions. School faculty and staff were charged with figuring out how to “build a plane while flying it.”

How do we care for ourselves and our families during the COVID-19 crisis? How do we help our students and their families? How can we support students who are homeless? What happens to our students who are already in crisis over the illness or death of a loved one? These are serious questions without clear answers.

The CH-UH school administration made some hard decisions quickly, and worked through some tough issues with the teachers union. We were concerned about the students who are food insecure, students for whom school is a place where they get two meals per day. The district made a plan to make breakfast and lunch available at six locations for all children who live in the district.

We were concerned about reaching students electronically. We know there is a digital divide—many students have Internet access while many others do not. The district made Chromebooks available to families without computers. Two companies provided free Internet access for 60 days.

Plans came together very quickly. Our school social workers, counselors and others immediately reached out to discover what families needed. One counselor told me that she had made 168 phone calls in just a few days to ensure that families were up-to-date with information, and that they had access to an electronic connection with the schools. She added that there were only seven families she had been unable to contact. This same work was being played out throughout the district.

At the end of the first week, and heading into a spring break of quarantine, there were tremendous disappointments because events, such as concerts, proms and graduations, will likely be missed. Teaching the standards-based curriculum while trying to determine the lay of the land—which keeps shifting—is difficult, to say the least.

If the school closures continue, and they likely will, we will have to revise our current plan to continue to serve our students. We will use the data from teachers collected during these first few weeks to figure out the next steps. The regular curriculum is going to take a backseat to serving the social and emotional needs of students and their families.

When we are able to return to school, there will be a period of adjustment as students work out the issues they have been dealing with at home. For some it will be the normal tensions of being trapped together with only family; for others, the issues may be more serious.

These unusual circumstances call for caution and caring as we move forward. Here, in the CH-UH school district, we are trying our best to serve our students and their families while also caring for our own families. What I have seen from our union members has been nothing short of amazing. I am certain that, as this quarantine continues, we will pull together, be creative, and focus on the needs of every student.

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

We're here to help you. Engage with Eastwood via phone, email, website, Facebook and Instagram.

COMING TO OUR LOFT IN APRIL . . .
I am grateful to Cleveland Heights City Council for adopting Resolution 20-1020 at its Feb. 11 meeting. By approving the resolution, city leaders took a stand on school funding and vouchers—issues that have critical ramifications for the health and well-being of our community. The resolution states, “This Council demands immediate financial relief be provided to all Ohio school districts impacted by EdChoice vouchers and that the state not deduct EdChoice payments from local school district funds.” It also calls for the legislature to remedy “its school funding system as ordered by the Ohio Supreme Court.”

The resolution does not have enforcement powers, but it makes clear that current state policy has a negative local impact and that community leaders object. Silence is tacit agreement.

Whether or not we use the services of our public schools or any other public institution, we all benefit from their success. The community is the beneficiary of our public institutions. That’s why we fund them with public dollars and elect a school board and a city council to ensure that public purposes are served.

In approving this resolution, council members showed that they understand that public education is an asset to our community and that funding public schools adequately is essential to their success. Council members also know that the local property tax cannot be public education’s only funding source.

The Ohio General Assembly has an obligation to make the funding system fair and adequate, and insisting on vouchers undermines both. The deduction system that puts voucher costs on the shoulders of local taxpayers is a violation of the state’s legal obligation to fund an equitable system. This isn’t just an intellectual idea or an “I wish” kind of thing. The legislature’s failure to own its misdeeds creates real damage to communities, including ours.

Think about the rancor and mistrust that has infected the levy fight and the fallout that we must now live with. Thank goodness our local elected officials understand this and are willing to stand together to demand better state policy.

Council Member Melody Hart has made a point of understanding school issues and funding as part of her orientation to public service on CH City Council. She has reached out to school supporters and school leaders to learn more and to find a way to support better understanding and better policy. I’m hopeful that this kind of mutual understanding among both governing groups will continue.

The relationship between city council and the board of education is not always easy, because policies for each of them have serious implications for the other. Remember that the school board had to give up revenue for the Top of the Hill proposal to go through, but both bodies have increased their interaction and are working toward a stronger sense of shared purpose. This is essential to all of us.

I appreciate that our local elected leaders have now joined state Sen. Sandra Williams and state Rep. Janine Boyd in calling for funding changes, especially related to vouchers. As I write this column, the house majority and senate are deadlocked over who should fund vouchers. Will 10 of the 17 state senators who oppose direct funding change their minds and provide relief to local communities and more than 400 school districts?

I hope that as communities across the state experience the fallout of bad public-education policies, local leaders will rally with a united voice to demand change. The interests of Ohio’s communities should certainly take precedence over the anti-public-school interests of a few state senators.

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More trash talk as task force makes recommendations

Deborah Van Kleef and Carla Rautenberg

“Change is coming to the way we process our refuse, whether we like it or not,” we wrote in “Trash talk” (Heights Observer, December 2018). Now the time for change has arrived. Tree lawns bedecked with plastic trash and recycling bags will soon be a thing of the past.

In September, Cleveland Heights’ recycling contract with Rumpke Waste and Recycling is up for renewal. At that point, absent some interim agreement, Rumpke will no longer take the recyclables our city’s drivers transport in those familiar blue bags. Instead, our jars, cans, plastic, cardboard and paper will have to be transported loose from our city’s transfer station on Superior Road to Rumpke’s recycling facility in Shiloh.

To meet that requirement, the city must replace its fleet of decrepit trucks with automated vehicles, equipped with arms to lift and empty wheeled carts at curbside. Our only other option would be to stop recycling, which is unacceptable.

That is one conclusion of the Refuse and Recycling Task Force (RRTF), which recently presented its findings to Cleveland Heights City Council.

Comprising 10 residents and three city staff members, RRTF did an impressive job. Its members took field trips; brought in experts and officials from other communities; received residents’ comments; and studied in depth the labor, equipment, facilities and finances required to take away the things we discard.

RRTF’s final presentation points out that, in addition to enabling us to continue recycling, automation will make trash pickup faster and more efficient, reduce injuries to workers, and eliminate animal-ravaged plastic bags and wind-blown garbage. While it will require only one instead of two operators per truck, staff can be reduced through attrition rather than layoffs.

According to the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District, communities that automated have seen a 77-percent increase in recyclables collected, and a reduction in workers’ compensation costs.

RRTF’s second major recommendation is that the city continue to provide refuse and recycling services in-house, rather than outsourcing them.

Using figures from the solid-waste district, RRTF determined that the cost of public and private trash collection, excluding one-time automation expenses, would be comparable. The city provides a wider range of services than private companies do, including regular bulk and yard-waste pickup, and is more accountable to residents for the quality of those services.

Owning its own transfer station means Cleveland Heights need not pay to use one in another community. In use before current EPA regulations were adopted, this facility has been grandfathered in. If services were privatized, it would be closed, and most likely could not be re-opened later.

A functioning transfer station, according to City Manager Tanisha Briley, allows the city to “control our own destiny.”

Trucks and wheeled carts for residents’ use will cost an estimated $4.9 million. Grants may cover the acquisition of carts, but the city will have to borrow the rest. Paying off that debt will require raising the monthly per-household fee, currently $11.50, probably to $14.50. That would place us squarely in the middle among cities in Cuyahoga County. Outsourcing would require this increase as well. The city has hired a consultant to further study projected costs and fees.

We think trash and recycling collection is an essential municipal service, and should remain in public hands. The city’s aging transfer station needs some investment to keep it operating safely and effectively: we are glad that this was accounted for in the task force report.

We hope to see residents remain engaged and informed as Cleveland Heights moves with all deliberate speed to invest in a sustainable future for us all.

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

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Serving the Heights for more than 40 years

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RRTF’s second major recommendation is that the city continue to provide refuse and recycling services in-house, rather than outsourcing them.

Using figures from the solid-waste district, RRTF determined that the cost of public and private trash collection, excluding one-time automation expenses, would be comparable. The city provides a wider range of services than private companies do, including regular bulk and yard-waste pickup, and is more accountable to residents for the quality of those services.

Owning its own transfer station means Cleveland Heights need not pay to use one in another community. In use before current EPA regulations were adopted, this facility has been grandfathered in. If services were privatized, it would be closed, and most likely could not be re-opened later. A functioning transfer station, according to City Manager Tanisha Briley, allows the city to “control our own destiny.”

Trucks and wheeled carts for residents’ use will cost an estimated $4.9 million. Grants may cover the acquisition of carts, but the city will have to borrow the rest. Paying off that debt will require raising the monthly per-household fee, currently $11.50, probably to $14.50. That would place us squarely in the middle among cities in Cuyahoga County. Outsourcing would require this increase as well. The city has hired a consultant to further study projected costs and fees.

We think trash and recycling collection is an essential municipal service, and should remain in public hands. The city’s aging transfer station needs some investment to keep it operating safely and effectively: we are glad that this was accounted for in the task force report.

We hope to see residents remain engaged and informed as Cleveland Heights moves with all deliberate speed to invest in a sustainable future for us all.

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

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Serving the Heights for more than 40 years
“Time Out Together” is a University Heights initiative that encourages residents, every evening at 6:30 p.m., to come out of their homes, wave to neighbors, usually check in with each other, ride bikes, walk their dogs, chat across yards, share supplies, and generally provide comfort while safely interacting.

The daily event will begin on Friday, March 20, and continue each evening until the coronavirus epidemic is over.

“Let’s take a few minutes each day to step outside and reconnect,” Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan said. The inspiration for “Time Out Together” came from a similar program in Madison Heights, Mich. University Heights residents took to the idea on a local Facebook discussion board. After seeing their enthusiasm, Brennan brought the concept to University Heights.

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

UH city meetings can be viewed live online

Until further notice, all University Heights City Council meetings and Council Committee meetings are being held remotely, via Zoom. Residents can, nonetheless, watch them as they happen.

A schedule of meetings, plus links to view each meeting live, is available at www.universityheights.com/council/agenda-and-minutes/. Also available is a list of past meetings, and links to videos of them.

To view a meeting, go to www.universityheights.com/council/agenda-and-minutes/. Under each listed UH City Council and Council Committee meeting, there will be a “Join Zoom Meeting” link at left. [First-time users of Zoom will be prompted to download the software when they attempt to join the meeting. Once they have entered the requested data, and hit the Register button, a screen will inform them that their registration has been approved. Then, they can click on the Meeting and input the meeting ID.]

Live public comments are not permitted for any of the remote meetings. However, residents can submit questions prior to the meeting to University Heights Clerk of Council Kelly Thomas, at kthomas@universityheights.com.

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

“Time Out Together” for University Heights initiatives where every evening at 6:30 p.m., residents are encouraged to come out of their homes, wave to neighbors, usually check in with each other, ride bikes, walk their dogs, chat across yards, share supplies, and generally provide comfort while safely interacting with each other.

Every day at 6:30 p.m., let’s take a few minutes to step outside and reconnect.”
The stone Oven Bakery Cafe celebrates 25 years in 2020.

I have worked there for 25 years and I have seen the business grow and change over the years. Some of the highlights include:

- The stone oven was built in 1995 and has been in continuous operation since then.
- We have expanded the menu over the years to include a wide variety of items, such as breads, pastries, and savory dishes.
- Our bakery has won numerous awards and accolades, including Best Bakery in Cleveland by Cleveland Magazine.

I am proud to be a part of this community and look forward to continuing to serve our customers for many more years to come.

Sarah Wolfit

Cedar Lee development project is proceeding

Sarah Wolfit

The development project planned for the surface parking lot behind the Cedar Lee Theatre and the adjacent vacant lot to the south is moving ahead. The project is spearheaded by Cedar Lee Connection, LLC (CLC), comprising local partners Sequoia Realty Corp. and Snively Group.

Since the city of Cleveland Heights’ acceptance of CLC’s proposal last summer, plans have begun to take a more concrete shape. The project aims to enhance the community by adding a new complex of approximately 150 market-rate studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom apartments, as well as retail, restaurant and work spaces.

CLC envisions creating a "living street," the Dutch term for "living street," an inviting, connective shared space for pedestrians, strollers, bicyclists and cars in the area behind the Cedar Lee Theatre and adjacent Lee Road businesses. The proposal would allow for public art and create space for community events.

Richard Ferris, head of Sequoia Realty, said, “We would like to investigate how current residents would like to see the new community spaces utilized. We have teamed up with FutureHeights to facilitate community engagement with local businesses, those currently living in the area, as well as those hoping to occupy the new apartments.”

“We are working on a plan to create opportunities for resident and business-owner feedback,” said Deanna Bremer Fisher, executive director of FutureHeights. “The current crisis has presented some new challenges on how, but we anticipate being able to do so in the next few months.”

CCL is proceeding with a parking analysis of the Cedar Lee Business District, with a particular focus on the immediate area near the project site. Because parking requirements can fluctuate considerably throughout the week, options such as valet service are being considered to alleviate any potential parking-related issues. Additionally, services such as Uber and Lyft, the use of public transportation, and biking and walking may impact future parking demand.

Sarah Wolfit is an intern at FutureHeights.

Join Us Online
Easter Sunday
April 12th

Join us Easter Sunday, April 12th for our 10:00am Online Worship Service

The link to this service and other videos can be found at www.fpccle.org.

While we may not be able to gather in person as we are used to doing, we will find ways to experience Christ’s resurrection anew this year!
CH’s Sackey earns technology award

John Horton

Cleveland Heights resident and Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) student Ibrahim Sackey has been named a Student Technology Champion by the League for Innovation in the Community College.

Sackey received one of the League’s three Terry O’Banion Student Technology Awards, given to community college students with a talent and passion for technology.

A first-generation college student, Sackey is set to graduate from Tri-C this spring with an Associate of Applied Business degree in information technology with a concentration in networking software. He has already earned 10 professional certificates.

At Tri-C, he served as president of the Information Technology Career Advancement Club and—with his 3.95 GPA—joined Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. He is also a Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation Scholar at the college.

Sackey balances a full-time class load with a part-time job to support himself and assist his mother with household expenses.

Sackey received a $5,500 scholarship as part of the technology award. He intends to transfer to a four-year school after graduating from Tri-C to pursue a bachelor’s degree in network operations and security.

John Horton is media relations manager at Cuyahoga Community College.

East Side food bank anticipates increased need

Carol Iott

As public health and economic repercussions of the coronavirus continue to impact our community, the Father Michael Wittman Ozanam Center (FMWOC), a local food pantry and clothing bank, is preparing for an increased need for food assistance.

Support for the all-volunteer organization comes from 14 churches in the eastern suburbs, including Cleveland Heights’ Communion of Saints Parish and Church of the Saviour.

The center is located at St. Philomena Church, 13842 Euclid Ave., in East Cleveland. It operates every Saturday, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., as a registered agency with the Greater Cleveland Food Bank under the sponsorship of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Cleveland Council.

Each week, more than 75 families receive free food and clothing.

“As we face an unprecedented need, we want to make sure that people in the Heights are familiar with the work of the Father Michael Wittman Ozanam Center so they can lend their support,” said Annette Cappaert, board member and volunteer manager of the center. “We want members of the community to help us, whether through financial contributions or donated items, or by just by spreading the word to those to whom could benefit from our free services.”

“Even a small donation will go a long way to help our neighbors in need,” noted Cappaert. Financial donations can be made payable to Cuyahoga Community College. Donations can be made payable to Cuyahoga Community College.

“Moreover, the center will continue to impact our community, the Father Michael Wittman Ozanam Center, in memory of the late Father Michael Wittman, who was known for his outreach and commitment to neighbors in need throughout East Cleveland and Cleveland Heights.

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

For more information on the organization and its services, visit www.facebook.com/groups/ FMWOC.

A Cleveland Heights resident for 14 years, Carol Iott is currently an arts consultant, board member for the Father Michael Wittman Ozanam Center, and a member of Communion of Saints Parish.

Happy Hour for Spring!

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Pansies - Violas - Potting Soil - Mulch
Grass Seed - Veggie Seeds
Flower Seeds - Spring Decor

BREMEC on the Heights Garden Center

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LWV needs meeting observers

Maryann Barnes

The Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters (LWV) of Greater Cleveland is looking for volunteers to observe meetings of Heights governing bodies. The goal of the Heights Chapter is to cover Cleveland Heights and University Heights city councils, the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education, and the Heights Libraries Board of Trustees. It needs observers for all four.

The only requirement is that observers be impartial and unaffiliated with the election campaigns of individuals seated in the body covered. Observers do not participate in public comments before the body they cover, unless the LWV authorizes them to do so.

While the reports are published in the Heights Observer, one doesn’t have to be a literary master—the LWV has templates and editors ready to help.

Commenting on her experience as an LWV observer, Blanche Vancil noted, “Observing has helped me personally understand the old adage that all government is local. Observing Cleveland Heights City Council for approximately a decade and a half has given me a deep appreciation of the intelligence, ardor, and dedication of the citizens who are elected to govern the city. In groups of seven, I have watched as, during difficult times, they have dug in to find economies that will stretch income to cover expenditures, with empathy for the needs of the citizens who elect them and those who work for the city.

Betsy Tracy, an LWV observer of Heights Libraries board meetings, said, “I have learned so much about how the libraries operate and their role in the community. I enjoy being able to share information about the libraries with CH-UH community. I was given training and support to do this observer role, so I am comfortable with the task at hand. Most importantly, my observations are edited by someone else, more experienced in writing than me, so I am always assured that what I write up will be readable and presentable.”

- Non-members can volunteer to help with LWV activities, but the league prefers observers to be members. To expand both membership and involvement, the Heights Chapter is ready to grant any new observer, who is not already a member, a one-year membership (value is $60) in the LWV of Greater Cleveland, with a Heights Chapter affiliation.

The LWV’s mission is empowering voters and defending democracy. Members do that by encouraging active participation in government, protecting and expanding people’s access to elections and their government, and providing information people can trust. For the latter objective, LWV observers monitor local governments to observe not only what is happening but also whether our public officials are operating effectively and transparently.

When it is not possible for an LWV observer to attend a meeting, the observer can watch video of the meeting instead.

To learn more, send an e-mail to heights@lwgreatercleveland.org.

Maryann Barnes is chair of the Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland.

CH and UH provide support, updates

Jessica Schantz

Given the rapidly updating news about COVID-19’s impact on communities, the cities of Cleveland Heights and University Heights are using their websites as portals for vital information.

For the foreseeable future, both cities have canceled in-person council and committee meetings, and have closed their city halls for general business. The Cleveland Heights Community Center, including the Senior Center, is also closed.

Both Cleveland Heights City Manager Tanisha Briley and University Heights Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan encourage residents to refer to city websites, or e-mail or call city staff with questions.

Briley’s regular updates can be found on the city’s homepage, under “News and Announcements.”

For detailed instructions on how to contact and access specific city services during the shelter-in-place mandate can be found at www.clevelandheights.com/alertcenter.aspx?aid=coronavirus-update-6. To reach Cleveland Heights City Hall, call 216-291-4444.

University Heights’ online “Coronavirus Information Page” provides daily updates, and can be found at www.universityheights.com/coronavirus. To receive UH’s e-newsletter, “At Your Service,” sign up on the city’s homepage, www.universityheights.com. To reach University Heights City Hall, call 216-932-7800, or e-mail info@universityheights.com.

Jessica Schantz is the news manager at the Heights Observer and a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights.

Primary election now vote-by-mail only; deadline is April 28

Ohio’s primary election, originally scheduled for March 17, then postponed until June 2, will no longer take place as an in-person election at polling locations. Instead, it will be conducted exclusively as a Vote-by-Mail election for eligible voters (those who registered to vote by Feb. 18 and have not yet voted in this election).

The deadline for return of Vote-by-Mail ballots is April 28. NOTE: You must request a ballot; they will not be mailed out automatically. This is a multi-step process.

Here are the required steps to vote by mail:

• Access a vote-by-mail ballot application by April 25 (the application deadline) at votebymail.cuyahogacounty.us/en-US/VoteByMail.aspx. You can print the application yourself or request one be sent to your address.

• Complete the application, and mail it to the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections (BOE), 2037 Euclid Ave., Cleveland, OH 44115.

• Once your ballot application is processed, the BOE will mail you an official, vote-by-mail ballot.

• Complete the ballot, and return it by mail no later than April 27 (ballots postmarked after April 27 will not be counted), or personally deliver it to the BOE by 7:30 p.m. on April 28. There is a drop-off box in the parking lot.

The Cuyahoga County BOE building is closed until further notice. The BOE advises those with questions or special circumstances (including those who lack a printer, or stamps) to consult its website or call 216-443-VOTE (8683), and leave a voicemail.

For more detailed instructions and voter support, visit the League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland site: https://nwv.org/ohio/greater-cleveland/article/2020-ohio-primary-election-april-28-mail-only.

They include community resources available to those in need. Instructions on how to contact and access specific city services during the shelter-in-place mandate can be found at www.clevelandheights.com/alertcenter.aspx?aid=coronavirus-update-6. To reach Cleveland Heights City Hall, call 216-291-4444.

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Jessica Schantz is the news manager at the Heights Observer and a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights.
Heights Libraries temporarily closes all branches

Sheryl Banks

Heights Libraries wants the community to know that the health and safety of customers and staff is its top priority. It therefore decided to close all of its buildings as of Friday, March 13, at 5:30 p.m.

“This was not an easy decision, and not one that library leadership made lightly,” said Heights Libraries Director Nancy Levin. “We decided to close our buildings at the recommendation of the Ohio Department of Health. Research indicates that easily social distancing can slow the spread of the disease.”

To help customers understand the closing and its repercussions, the library put the following FAQs on its website and Facebook page, and also sent it to customers in an e-blast:

**All four Heights Libraries buildings closed?** Yes. The Coventry Village, Lee Road, Noble Neighborhood, and University Heights branches are closed until further notice due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

**Do you have any idea when you will be open again?** We do not know when our buildings will re-open. We will be closely monitoring information from Gov. DeWine’s office and the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) about the situation, and will abide by the directives and recommendations of the ODH and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

**How did you close all the buildings?** Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine and ODH Director Dr. Amy Acton closed all schools and recommended that gatherings of 100 or more be canceled. Social distancing is the best way to slow the spread of COVID-19, and our buildings are heavily used and get very crowded. We anticipated crowds in our buildings would only increase with the closing of schools and other major institutions, such as museums.

**What if I have items due?** We have locked all book drops, so are asking customers to hold on to items until further notice. Overdue fines will be suspended during the closure, and no accounts will be sent to collections during the closure.

**What if I have items on hold?** While you cannot pick up hold items at this time, hold items will be held during the closure; they will NOT be sent back.

**What kind of services are you still offering?** All of our online and digital services are available 24/7 via our website, http://heightslibrary.org/services/digital-collection. We also have free WiFi that can be accessed in our parking lots and near our buildings. We are assessing what other services we may be able to offer. Please watch our Facebook page and website (www.heightslibrary.org) for updates.

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

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*One Community Reads 2020*

**One Community Reads is a collaboration among the City of Cleveland, Playhouse Square, and nine local public library systems to create a shared reading experience for the Greater Cleveland community.**

**Eric Klinenberg’s Palaces for the People is the focus of discussion and public programming starting in January.**

**In Palaces for the People, Klinenberg suggests that the future of democratic societies must not only on shared values, but on shared spaces—libraries, child care centers, churches, and parks—where crucial connections are formed. Heights Libraries has created and is maintaining the website for this initiative: www.onecommunityreads.org.**

**Partnerships with schools**

Covington Library’s Youth Associate Monica Wilson partnered with the Rodboro Middle School librarian on the monthly Mug Club. This volunteer student book club meets to discuss books and enjoy hot beverages together. In January, each student picked his or her own book to summarize and recommend to the sixth-grade group of 25. Mary Looby began offering a new after-school book club at Noble Elementary School for K-2 students. They read a book together, discuss it, and then do some fun activities.

**Recycling team**

Isabelle Rue and Nico Turner are a team of staff members who are working on a plan to improve the recycling program for library buildings. The goal is to collect trash usually sent to landfills in a new program to divert waste from trash to recycling.
Scooter McGruder tackles reading with Heights students

On March 6, retired NFL player Michael “Scooter” McGruder visited Noble and Oxford elementary schools. As part of NFL Tackles Reading, in partnership with Church on the Heights and Reaching Heights, McGruder shared his story and encouraged students to dream big and take their education seriously.

“I graduated from Cleveland Heights High School and I got to play in the NFL, like Jason and Travis Kelce, who both played for teams that won a Super Bowl,” McGruder told students. “The next successful person from Heights High could be you or you or you!”

He asked the students, “Which person from Heights High could be successful?” McGruder asked students, “Which athlete’s mother. McGruder asked the students to “lean in” so he could share his “secrets” to success: 1) Read, read, read. Successful people are readers. 2) Surround yourself with people who will lift you up and won’t pull you down. 3) Don’t do drugs. People who get involved in illegal drugs lose all of their money. 4) Believe in yourself and dream big.

McGruder read a story about retired NFL player Dion Foxx, from the book Tackle Reading by Kathryn Starke, about how Foxx persevered to overcome stuttering. To another group of students, he read, Dream Big: Michael Jordan and the Pursuit of Excellence by Deloris Jordan, the athlete’s mother. McGruder asked the students to share something they remembered from the stories, and tied their comments back to his secrets of success.

McGruder brought with him his Super Bowl jersey, footballs from the championship game, his Super Bowl rings, and a few signed photos, and took photos with each group of students. One young man walked away saying, “This is a great day!”

Krista Hawthorne is executive director of Reaching Heights, and a proud and grateful Heights Tiger.
BEST OF THE HEIGHTS cont. from page 1

Aladdin’s, “Many people have said that they wouldn’t know what to do if we closed. They don’t cook at home.”

Many restaurants that are better known as eat-in destinations are finding creative ways to serve their customers in the new environment.

Before Ohio restaurants and bars were ordered to close by Gov. DeWine, Zhug, located in the Cedar Fairmount Business District, had removed several tables from the dining room to accommodate “social distancing.” “We want to stay open, for our community, for our employees,” said Todd Thompson, Zhug’s director of operations. The restaurant, a finalist for Best New Restaurant or Bar, can take orders online and by phone, and rumor has it that owner Doug Katz himself is helping deliver them to customers.

Many other restaurants are making similar adjustments. Just a block up the street, Stone Oven Bakery Café, a finalist for Best Eco-conscious Business, is making good use of its new compostable takeout boxes as takeout business remains brisk. One Heights dining staple, Tommy’s restaurant in Coventry Village, is taking some time off to plan for the future. Heights residents must temporarily endure their Tommy’s milkshake cravings as this favorite gathering place, and winner of Best Gathering Place, decided to temporarily close to protect the health and safety of its employees and patrons.

Rising Star Coffee, winner of the Best New Business (other) category, had to temporarily close down its Market Hall location in Shaker Heights, but its other four locations remain open for carryout and delivery, including the one in the Cedar Lee Business District. It has modified its hours and is currently open Monday, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday and Wednesday, 7 a.m. to 2 p.m.; and Thursday through Sunday, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Boss Dog Brewery, a finalist in the Best Outdoor Dining category, is following suit in the Cedar Lee Business District. As a brewery, it is also able to sell carry-out beer directly from its brick-and-mortar store. Just down the street, Stone Oven Bakery Café, a finalist for Best Eco-conscious Business, is making good use of its new compostable takeout boxes as takeout business remains brisk.

BEST OF THE HEIGHTS CONT.

Those considerations were top of mind when owners Dawn and Alex Quintana decided to temporarily close Quintana’s Barber & Dream Spa in the Cedar Taylor Business District. Quintana’s was one of three winners of Best Community-Conscious Business and winner of Best Cleveland Heights Business. “We’ve been praying and are trying to be forthcoming with staff,” said Alex.

Heights residents who wish to support temporarily closed businesses can purchase gift cards for future meals, haircuts, and other products and services online. “We encourage Heights residents to patronize our Best of the Heights winners and finalists—and all of our locally owned businesses—as much as they can during these difficult times,” said Fisher.

The other two winners of Best Community-Conscious Business were The Wine Spot and CLE Urban Winery, both in the Cedar Lee Business District. “This is the first time that I can remember that we’ve ever had a three-way tie for a category,” said Fisher. “But I can see why Heights residents had such a hard time choosing just one winner—all of these businesses are so generous in donating to community causes and supporting local events. We are so grateful to have them in our community.”

While CLE Urban Winery and The Wine Spot are known for the community events they sponsor, they both temporarily moved to retail only. With the governor’s stay-at-home order, which took effect March 23, CLE Urban Winery closed its tasting room, it remains open to accept online orders for delivery. The Wine Spot, likewise, has closed its store to the public, but continues to fill phone and e-mail orders via curbside pickup and delivery.

Destiny Burns, owner of CLE Urban Winery, deeply cares about the social engagement her business is known for. “We try to position ourselves as a community center that also makes wine,” she said. “It is the very same measures being taken to protect people during this crisis that are, unfortunately, forcing people to face it all in isolation, without the ability to come together for comfort and support.”

The Cedar Lee Theatre, voted Best Place to Visit During a Snow Storm, was forced to temporarily close. “When people have been buying homes, they’ve chosen to live in walking distance of the theater,” said Cedar Lee Theatre owner Jonathan Forman. “The haven of the theater is so important that people move into the neighborhood with the intention of having it be a consistent part of their lives.” Forman encourages patrons to buy gift certificates in anticipation of the time when people can gather again.

Heights Libraries, a finalist in the “Snow Storm” category, has temporarily closed its four branches. Patrons are still able to access e-media online, and the library is assisting with food bank distribution and emergency blood drives.

The state order to close all gyms and wellness centers during the crisis has meant the temporary closures of the winner and finalist in the Best Place to Help You Keep Your New Year’s Resolution category: Yoga Roots, winner, in the Fairmount Taylor Business District, and Atma Center, finalist, in the Cedar Lee Business District. Scott Curtis, owner of Yoga Roots, had hoped to avoid this outcome. “There was an outcry from...
students for us to stay open,” he said. Atma Center has adapted by offering its classes through a virtual platform, so that people can participate from their homes.

Also creatively adapting to the current crisis is Cedar Fairmount’s Appletree Books, winner of Best Beautiful Storefront. Before DeWine ordered the closure of all non-essential businesses, the bookstore was offering free delivery in Cleveland Heights so that people could continue ordering books online and over the phone. With the new state order, the book-store has temporarily closed. On its Facebook page, the store announced, “Appletree is now part of Bookshop.org! An easy and convenient way to buy books online and have them delivered directly to you. Just go to our storefront https://bookshop.org/shop/appletreebooks to see suggestions and to order. All sales benefit Appletree!”

In the Mayfield Lee Business District, Best Beautiful Storefront finalist Stems Fleur also has had to close. On Facebook, owner Scott Robertson said, “Thank you all for your amazing support and we’ll be back to delivering joyful flowers very soon.” Stems Fleur was also a finalist in the Best Cleveland Heights Business and Best New Business (other) categories.

Zagara’s Marketplace, finalist for Best Cleveland Heights business, continues its dedication to serving the community. Its Facebook page said, “We are committed to providing our customers with a safe shopping experience. With this in mind, please check out our PrestoFresh grocery delivery service at prestofreshgrocery.com. You can order and receive your groceries without leaving your home.”

Zagara’s remains open to the public. Owner John Zagara has been working long hours to ensure that customers are served, and employees have been staying late to clean the store and restock shelves.

The winner of Best University Heights Business, Lox, Stock & Brisket, is doing brisk takeout business. Known for its breakfast and lunch options, owner Anthony Zappola has extended its hours, remaining open until 7 p.m.

Geraci’s Restaurant, a finalist in the Best University Heights Business category, has continued offering takeout service but is asking that all customers phone ahead so that meals can be delivered directly to patrons’ cars. In addition, Geraci’s has created a pizza-match program. Patrons can call the restaurant and ask to order a “donation pizza,” or go to “online ordering” at geracisrestaurant.com. Geraci’s will then deliver a pizza to a local hospital. As of March 26, the restaurant had donated 296 pizzas.

Best Heights Vibe finalist Heights United Soccer Academy started as a small soccer camp 25 years ago, and has evolved into a communitywide outreach program that has provided soccer scholarships for more than 1,000 Heights children. “Our programs strongly reflect the diversity of our great city and our style is uniquely Cleveland Heights,” said owner Sean Sullivan. “I can promise you that we are unlike any sports program you have witnessed, especially when we do our foot skills to music. It is an amazing sight to see 100-plus kids and their soccer balls in the center of the field all moving as one to the carefully selected beats, with their families and friends cheering them on.”

Down and Alex Quintana, owners of Quintana’s Barber & Dream Spa and Quintana’s Speakeasy.

The 2020 Best of the Heights winners and finalists are:

Best Cleveland Heights Business
Winner: Quintana’s Barber & Dream Spa
Finalists: Zagara’s Marketplace, Stems Fleur

Best University Heights Business
Winner: Lox, Stock & Brisket
Finalist: Geraci’s Restaurant

Best New Restaurant or Bar
Winner: Foodhisatta
Finalist: Zhug

Best New Business (other)
Winner: Rising Star Coffee
Finalist: Stems Fleur

Best Business to Help You Keep Your New Year’s Resolution
Winner: Yoga Roots
Finalist: Atma Center

Best Place to Go in a Snow Storm
Winner: Cedar Lee Theatre
Finalist: Heights Libraries

Best Outdoor Dining
Winner: The Fairmount
Finalist: Boss Dog Brewing Co.

Best Takeout
Winner: Foodhisatta
Finalists: Aladdin’s, Pacific East

Best Eco-Conscious Business
Winner: Fairmount Cleaners
Finalist: Stone Oven

Best Community-Conscious Business
 Winners: CLE Urban Winery, Quintana’s Barber & Dream Spa, The Wine Spot

Best Beautiful Storefront
Winner: Appletree Books
Finalist: Stems Fleur

Best Heights Vibe
Winner: Tommy’s
Finalist: Heights United Soccer Academy

Hannah Morgan serves as an AmeriCorps VISTA to FutureHeights.

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In addition to takeout service, some businesses offer online or by-phone ordering, and free local delivery. Purchasing gift certificates for future use is another way that Heights residents can support businesses during this difficult time.

The Heights Observer has compiled the following partial list of changes that Heights businesses have made to their services due to the outbreak. The list is not comprehensive, and will be updated online as Heights Observer staff become aware of additional changes. Businesses are invited to send updates to info@futureheights.org. It is best to call ahead, or check a business’s website or social media, for the most up-to-date information. And if you don’t see a favorite business listed here, please contact it. Again, this is a partial list only, and while we’ve checked and double-checked, things are changing quickly for businesses.

Retail and service businesses open:

- Bremec: Open; only two customers permitted in store at a time. Curbside pickup is available. ([https://bremec.com](https://bremec.com))
- Dave’s Markets: Seeking additional team members. Asks that 7–8 a.m. shopping be limited to those who may be especially at risk for the coronavirus. ([https://davesmarkets.com](https://davesmarkets.com))
- Fishstix: Curbside pickup is available; delivery is free for any order over $50. “Family-size” packaging is now available for many items. ([www.fishstixonline.com](http://www.fishstixonline.com))
- Heights Hardware: Open. Hardware and supply stores are considered essential businesses. ([www.heightshardware.com](http://www.heightshardware.com))
- Howard Hanna: All agents are working from home. Many sellers and agents are choosing to cancel open houses. New listings coming on the market are being postponed. Virtual tours are available online or directly from an agent. (Mortgage rates are low. The city has paused compliance documents on interior point-of-sale inspections, and has moved to exterior inspections only.)
- MJM Window Restoration: Open normal hours. Crews will be taking extra precautions regarding any interior work. All exterior work will continue as usual.
- Sits ’n Wiggles Pet Care & Training: Limited services, as of March 23. Call (216-910-7487) or e-mail (info@sitsnwigglescle.com).
- Swedish Solutions Cleveland Heights: Free vehicle pickup and dropoff; extra health protections and no-contact procedures in use. ([https://swedishsolutions.com](https://swedishsolutions.com))

Restaurants and bars open for takeout/delivery:

- Aladdin’s Eatery: Open for takeout and delivery. ([https://aladdins.com](https://aladdins.com))
- Bibibop Asian Grill: Open for takeout and delivery
- Bodega: Open for takeout and delivery. ([www.bodgarestaurantandlounge.com](http://www.bodgarestaurantandlounge.com))
- Boss Dog Brewery: Takeout food and beer available. ([http://bosstdogbrewing.com](http://bosstdogbrewing.com))
- Buffalo Wild Wings: Open
ROAM seeks donations and vendors for May fundraiser

Mick Latkovich

Roots of American Music (ROAM), with support from the Ohio Arts Council, plans to host a live-music community event in Coventry Village on Saturday, May 16, 1-5 p.m., as part of its Garage Band/Garage Sale project. [Note: The details for this event are subject to change and cancellation as a result of coronavirus public-health concerns.]

ROAM will sell donated items, including musical instruments, in a garage sale/tea market format, as a fundraiser to support its educational mission. A community marketplace will be made available for residents and local merchants to purchase table space for $15.

Anyone interested in reserving table space, or donating items for ROAM to sell, can leave a message at 216-321-9350, or e-mail darcy@rootsofamericanmusic.org.

The event, which will also feature entertainment by professional musicians, will be held at the Euclid Heights Boulevard end of Coventry Road—at the Harvey Pekar Courtyard and inside the Grog Shop. In the event of poor weather, the entire event will move into the Grog Shop and the B-Side.

ROAM is a Cleveland Heights-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Its mission is to provide arts education, musical performances and playing opportunities to audiences and musicians of all ages, means and abilities, while supporting the preservation of American music and its roots.

Mick Latkovich is a Heights resident, retired nonprofit agency administrator, and frequent dog walker.


BUSINESSES ADJUST continued from page 17

Eastwood Furniture: While closed, shop invites inquiries about its products. (www.eastwoodfurniture.com)

Eddy’s On Coventry

Eddy’s Barber Shop

Ensemble Theatre

First Watch

Foodhisattva: Closed for take-out, as of March 24. (www.facebook.com/Foodhisattva)

Green Tara Yoga & Healing Arts

Grog Shop (www.facebook.com/grogsoph)

Heights Libraries: All branches are closed, but online services and WiFi are still available. (https://heightslibrary.org)

Inn on Coventry

Jack’s Deli & Restaurant

Mac’s Backs – Books on Coventry: Online, phone and e-mail orders can be placed. (www.macsbacks.com)

MQO world eats: Limited menu available; curbside pick-up. (http://mqoeats.com)

Nighttown

Passport to Peru (www.passporttoperu.com)

Record Revolution: Updated status not posted, as of March 23.

Quintana’s Barber & Dream Spa and Quintana’s Speakeasy

Silva’s Massage Therapy: (www.silvasmassagetherapy.com)

Still Point Gallery: Online gallery store is open. (https://stillpoint-gallery.myshopify.com)

Sunshine Headquarters Too: (www.facebook.com/sunshinehq2)

S’Wonderful Gifts: Online ordering and curbside pickup available. (www.facebook.com/swonderfulgifts)

The Exchange (www.theexchange.com)

The Whiskey Bar

Trapped CLE Escape Room (www.trappedcle.com)

White Cloud Studio

Wood Trader (www.facebook.com/woodtraderframing)

Vero Pizza (https://verocleland.com)

Zero Below Rolled Ice Cream

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We’ve got a no-hitter going, so far

David Budin

I remember April 17, 1960. Part of it, anyway. I was standing in the tiny front yard of my house on Belmar Road when someone told me that the Cleveland Indians had traded Rocky Colavito to the Detroit Tigers.

It’s not quite accurate to say the Cleveland Indians traded him; the Indians’ general manager, Frank Lane, traded him. He traded everyone. He was obsessed with trading players. And even managers, once. And he was despised by everyone, all the time.

Rocky Colavito was by far the most popular player in Cleveland, and one of the best. There was no real reason to trade him, and everyone knew that. Plus, April 17 was just two days before the season started. The Indians opened the season on April 19, against the Detroit Tigers. (The Tigers won, 4-2.)

What made me think of this? Well, April, for one thing. And the fact that the baseball season opens so much earlier these days, in late March. And the other fact that, as of this writing, in mid-March, we don’t know when, or if, the baseball season will start at all. Spring training has been suspended, and if Major League Baseball decides to eventually start the season, it will need to reinstate some kind of spring training first. So if the season does begin, it will be very late, well beyond 1960’s April 19 opening.

Baseball starts much earlier now, and the season ends much later, because they have added more teams and, as a result, they need to play more games. April 19, 1960, was a Tuesday. I was in the fifth grade at Coventry School, with one of the very few bad teachers I ever had. That reminds me that only four years later, in April of my ninth-grade year at Roosevelt Junior High, I was studying Shakespeare with one of the best teachers I ever had, Mrs. Bossinger, preparing to go with the class to the Hanna Theatre to see a Shakespeare play.

Mrs. Bossinger was one of two teachers in my life who encouraged me to actually do what I did well—in this case, writing—in the other case, music. She was also funny. That same year, she appeared in the Roosevelt parent- and-teacher talent show, performing in a skit based on the Ernest Lawrence Thayer poem “Casey at the Bat,” wearing a full baseball uniform and a fake mustache. In comparison, the fifth-grade lady was kind of like the Frank Lane of teachers. I mean, she didn’t trade anyone, but, well . . . see above. About Frank Lane. (Hint: The part about being universally despised.)

Wednesday, April 20, 1960, all that anyone (that I knew) could talk about at Coventry School was The Trade. Baseball was a much bigger deal then than it is now; and other professional sports, like football and basketball, were nowhere near as popular then as they are now. People still talk about that trade. Books have been written about it. Really. Books.

Lane was fired from the Indians just a few months later. In his baseball career, as general manager of five teams in about 14 years, he made more than 400 trades. A more reasonable and logical number would have been, maybe, 40.

So Major League Baseball is in limbo, like almost everything else right now. If Lane were still here, I’m sure he’d be filling the time making unnecessary trades. But he’s not. Every year I complain that the Indians open at home too early, before the weather makes sitting through a game bearable. I always wonder why the Eastern teams don’t open on the West Coast or in the South. This year, I seem to be getting my wish, at least the part about opening at home later than March or early April.

If this happened in another year, a year that wasn’t experiencing a pandemic, I could substitute other activities for Cleveland Indians baseball—go to the gym at the Cleveland Heights Community Center, go to dinner and a concert at Nighttown, watch the Heights High baseball team. But I don’t have those this year, for the foreseeable future.

Some things don’t change. Or change a little, but at their core stay the same. Like, most teachers in the Cleveland Heights-University Heights school system are good. That hasn’t changed. Major League Baseball alters its rules somewhat every year, but you still have to throw the ball, hit the ball, catch the ball, run the bases and try to score. All of that hasn’t changed.

Cleveland Heights has evolved, like every place has. But I still live here. That hasn’t changed. But no baseball in April, no school, no activities, restaurants shutting down. All of that is new. And I would trade that for a lot of things. I wouldn’t have traded Colavito, but I’d trade this.

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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