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

## A look ahead to Nov. 2 ballots in CH and UH

Kim Sergio Inglis

In the Sept. 14 primary election, Cleveland Heights residents cast votes for one of three mayoral candidates. The top two primary finishers, Barbara Danforth and Kahlil Seren, will now face off in the race for Cleveland Heights mayor, in the general election on Nov. 2.

Voter turnout for Cleveland Heights' first mayoral primary election was low, with votes cast by fewer than 7,000 of the city's approximately 33,967 (as of Sept. 1) registered voters.

Mary Dunbar's resignation from Cleveland Heights City Council on Aug. 16, effective immediately, created a vacancy for her unexpired term, which runs



COURTESY KAHIL SEREN



COURTESY BARBARA DANFORTH

Kahlil Seren (left) and Barbara Danforth are the two remaining candidates vying to become Cleveland Heights' first directly elected mayor.

through Dec. 31, 2023.

After initially announcing that CH City Council members would appoint someone to the vacant seat, council later authorized a

special election for the unexpired term, to be held on the same day as the general election.

Seven residents filed valid

*continued on page 14*

## New book recounts Heights girls' wild quest to meet the Beatles

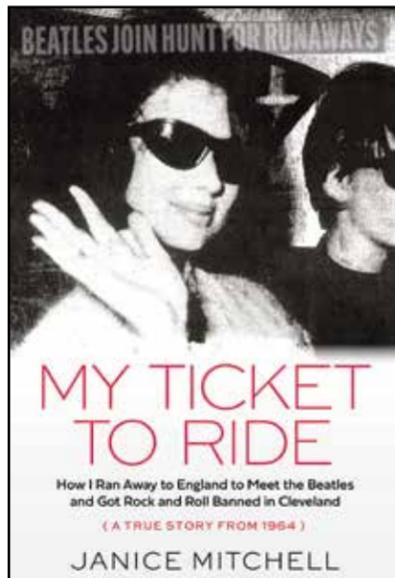
David Gray

Cleveland Heights was at the center of one of the most unusual Beatles fan stories ever, although few people remember it today.

In September 1964, two 16-year-old Heights girls became international news for weeks when they ran away to London, England, in search of the Beatles. Eventually apprehended and returned for a public punishment, they never spoke of their adventure again. Until now.

Janice Mitchell tells her story in a new book, *My Ticket to Ride: How I Ran Away to England to Meet the Beatles and Got Rock and Roll Banned in Cleveland*. It's a vivid, firsthand account of the early days of Beatlemania.

Growing up in an unhappy foster home in Cleveland Heights, Mitchell discovered R&B music by borrowing records from the Coventry library. Then, in December 1963, while doing homework in her



COURTESY GRAY & COMPANY, PUBLISHERS

duplex's small kitchen, she heard the first Beatles song broadcast on Cleveland radio, "I Want to Hold Your Hand," and fell instantly in love.

"Everything about the Beatles transported me into another world," she writes, "a world that I wanted to be part of."

*continued on page 2*

## Halloween festival is planned for Cedar Lee

Mariah Burks

On Saturday, Oct. 23, Dobama Theatre will present the inaugural Heights Halloween Festival, in



collaboration with Wizbang!, the city of Cleveland Heights, and the Cedar Lee Special Improvement District.

This new, free, family-friendly event will take place 4-7 p.m., in the Cedar Lee Business District on Lee Road. The traditional Cedar-Lee Kids Candy Crawl will be incorporated into the festival, so participants are encouraged to bring their goodie bags and be ready to trick-or-treat at businesses along the route.

The centerpiece of the event will take place at the green space at the intersection of Meadowbrook Boulevard and Lee Road. There will be a variety of activities to watch and do, such as character meet-and-greets, where families will have an opportunity to take photos with well-known and beloved characters, and juggling circus performers. There also will be safe, creative and interactive games for children and adults to participate in, such as pumpkin crafts.

The Heights Halloween celebration will also include music and a dance floor. It's an opportunity for community members to gather for a safe and fun time, and create some Halloween memories.

In the event of rain, the Heights Halloween Festival will take place on Sunday, Oct. 24, 4-7 p.m.

*Mariah Burks is the director of engagement at Dobama Theatre.*

## Library presents renovation options for Noble branch

Sheryl Banks

On Wednesday, Sept. 8, Heights Libraries held an open house at its Noble Neighborhood Branch to present rough renovation ideas for the 84-year-old location. A crowd of approximately 30 residents watched a presentation by Rick Ortmeyer from Bostick Design Partnership, the firm hired by the library to create preliminary designs and conduct public meetings to gather feedback on those ideas.

"Rick's firm has lots of experience designing libraries, and a great



COURTESY HEIGHTS LIBRARIES

Rick Ortmeyer of Bostick Design Partnership presents preliminary design ideas for the Noble Neighborhood Branch renovation.

track record on effectively gathering and using public feedback in building designs," said Heights Libraries

Director Nancy Levin. "So we knew they'd do a great job with these first,

*continued on page 27*

## Letters Policy

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

## HEIGHTS OBSERVER

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## About the Observer

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

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

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

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

If you're writing a news article, it should be clear and factual. If you want to express an opinion, submit it as a letter to the editor or an opinion piece. Either way, make sure it's about something specific to our two cities.

- To make a submission of any kind, go to [www.heightsobserver.org](http://www.heightsobserver.org) and click on "Member Center" at the left.

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

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

## Hart thanks Cleveland Heights residents

To the Editor:

The votes in the Cleveland Heights mayoral primary election have been counted, and I will not be moving on to the general election.

While the voter turnout was extremely low and the results were not what I had hoped for, I want everyone to know how much I appreciate the faith many of you placed in me during my campaign.

Thank you to all of my hard-working volunteers, all of my contributors and endorsers. And thank you to everyone who placed their trust in me with your vote at the primary election.

My campaign has made a strong journey during this time, and although it is a disappointment not to have made it through the primary, we have raised some key issues into the mayoral race.

I am already making plans to meet with the other candidates regarding issues that I feel must be addressed by the new mayor.

There is important work that needs to be done in our community, and rest assured, I will continue to work hard as your councilwoman for the good of our city.

Melody Joy Hart  
Cleveland Heights

## CH's future depends on maintaining city's existing homes

To the Editor:

For those who say new construction, such as Top of the Hill, is "building the tax base of Cleveland Heights," I offer a bit of perspective. The value of the city's property tax base is roughly \$2.4 billion. Top of the Hill is adding \$83 million, or 0.036% of what exists. Change in the income tax base will also be minor.

In spite of the scant impact new construction has on our tax bases, Cleveland Heights needs all the new construction it can get in order to add new residents and patrons for local businesses. The strength of our tax bases is entirely dependent on the condition and attractiveness of the city's massive quantity of existing homes and apartments. The more they deteriorate, the more tax revenues suffer.

The city's future depends squarely on maintaining the quality of existing properties through a more effective approach to code enforcement, an approach that aims for code compliance before properties die of neglect and deterioration.

Thomas Bier  
Cleveland Heights

## Don't waste any school board votes

To the Editor:

In this year's school board election, you will be asked to vote for your top three candidates from a pool of seven, and the top three "winners" will take

the three open school board seats.

As a 13-year Heights resident and father of a Noble Elementary school fourth-grader, I implore you to vote your entire ballot in the school board election; please vote for three pro-school candidates.

This seems like an inherently odd request. Vote for three pro-school candidates for school board? Who wouldn't? But in this election, in my view as a dedicated parent and resident, there are four "pro-public school" candidates and three "anti-public school" candidates.

This is an unprecedented school board election, and I ask that you vote for three of the following four candidates: Mario Clopton-Zymler, Dan Heintz, Malia Lewis, and Jodi Sourini. They are the four "pro-school" candidates who will fight for our kids and serve our school district well. The other three (Charles Drake, Mo Lynn, and Mordechai Rennert) are not just registered Republicans, but radical pro-Trump candidates who are working together with an aim to dismantle public education in our district.

Please. Vote your entire ballot and do not waste any of your three votes. We have four great candidates. Please pick three.

Phil Trimble  
Cleveland Heights

## Electing Clopton-Zymler to BOE is a win for arts and diversity

To the Editor:

I have known Mario Clopton-Zymler for 10 years, as a fellow musician, a colleague in the Heights schools, and as a friend. His breadth of experience will serve all stakeholders in our school district—above all, our children.

CH-UH is, or ought to be, THE destination district for the arts. Having Mario on the CH-UH Board of Education can only strengthen that position. Why the arts? Its education teaches the whole child and is demonstrably linked to better outcomes in the traditionally academic subjects. It is a strength of our community that we are home to so many arts professionals, from poets to playwrights, painters, and musicians.

Clopton-Zymler is also the only

Black candidate for school board in a district that is over 70% African American. Alone, this is not a qualification; combined with Clopton-Zymler's manifest qualifications, it is vital representation. Clopton-Zymler is well poised to represent the cultural diversity and bounty that is the Heights.

Juliana Sadock Savino  
University Heights

*BEATLES continued from page 1*

Like many other fans, she sought out anything related to the band: Beatles magazines and trading cards at stores on Coventry Road; Beatles records at Disc Records in the newly opened Severance Center; the Beatles movie, "A Hard Day's Night," at the Colony Theater at Shaker Square. She camped overnight on the street to get front-row tickets to the Beatles' Sept. 15 concert at Cleveland's Public Hall.

The day after the concert, she and her best friend ran away to start a new life in "Beatleland." They flew from Cleveland Hopkins Airport to New York's JFK to London. There, the two girls rented a flat, visited hip music clubs in Soho (described in those Beatles magazines), strolled fashionable Carnaby Street, and met nice English boys.

They had planned carefully, but made one mistake: They assumed no one would look for them. Thanks to the combined efforts of Cleveland Heights police, the U.S. State Department, and London Metropolitan Police, a hunt was on.

Mitchell's tale alternates between sweet and bittersweet, as she discovers how threatened adult society was, in 1964, by young women exercising control over their lives.

*My Ticket to Ride* is available at Mac's Backs-Books on Coventry. Mitchell will talk about the book in a virtual event organized by Heights Libraries on Oct. 20, at 7 p.m. The event is free, but registration is required.

*David Gray is a longtime Cleveland Heights resident, parent of two Heights High graduates, and president of Gray & Company, Publishers, which published Mitchell's book.*

## Heights Observer Election Policy

The *Heights Observer* will review election-related submissions with a goal of providing fair and equitable access for those seeking office.

Candidates for office are expected to identify themselves as such when submitting anything for publication.

Candidates' supporters and campaign representatives, and anyone writing about any candidate or election issue, are expected to disclose any personal or professional relationship they may have with any candidate, or with the subject of their submission. These

disclosures are intended to inform *Heights Observer* review, and will be disclosed to readers when relevant.

The *Heights Observer* will determine whether and when submissions will run in print, online, or both.

Contributions by and about candidates, and any election issue, are limited to a maximum of 400 words.

The *Heights Observer* does not endorse candidates, nor does FutureHeights, the nonprofit community-development corporation that publishes the *Heights Observer*.

## Danforth thanks CH voters

Barbara Danforth

Thank you, Cleveland Heights voters, for your heartwarming support in the recent mayoral primary election!

Over the last few months, I knocked on thousands of doors. I've heard your hopes, dreams and frustrations. And I am more committed than ever to work to address them.

Clearly, we must improve the delivery of city services, *without raising taxes*. Ensuring that we all feel safe and secure in our homes and businesses is essential. And, building on our reputation for equity and inclusion must continue as a top priority.

**Public safety and attacking crime:** Safe neighborhoods are the foundation of a thriving community. That requires well-equipped, highly trained safety forces. If I'm elected mayor, we will develop and implement an action plan, based upon best practices from around the country, to combat crime and address the root causes of that behavior. Our community deserves nothing less.

**Expanding our tax base and smart economic development:** We must attract new residents and businesses to expand our tax base. The Top of the Hill, Meadowbrook-Lee development, and a concentrated focus on Noble-Nela, Cedar-Warrens ville and the Taylor Road area will help. However, creatively moving forward on Severance Town Center is likely our best hope for generating jobs, new residents and significant new tax dollars.

**Equity and inclusion:** Critical to attracting young people to our community is our reputation for these two issues. I broke many glass ceilings during my career, and I will implement policies to make opportunities available for all.

Our first mayor must be able to work collaboratively and collegially with council to formulate policies and approve responsible budgets. With a \$66-million operation, more than 400 employees, and one of the largest police forces in the county, our next mayor must have the experience, maturity and emotional intelligence to achieve outcomes that are in the best interests of the city.

Most important, our new mayor must make certain city hall is responsive to residents. She must make smart hiring decisions, the most important of which will be hiring the new city administrator and naming someone to replace soon-to-retire Police Chief Mecklenburg.

Ultimately, the mayor will be accountable for all of the essential services we rely upon, services that must be handled in a timely and efficient manner.

On Nov. 2, we will elect a new mayor (early voting starts Oct. 5). I hope to earn your support to be that mayor.

*Barbara Danforth is a 22-year resident of CH, living in the Forest Hill Historical District. A candidate for Cleveland Heights mayor, she is the former chief prosecutor, city of Cleveland; and former CEO of TWCA Greater Cleveland.*

## In CH mayor, we need a leader—not another manager

Kahlil Seren

As we venture into unfamiliar territory in local government, our choice for Cleveland Heights' first elected mayor comes down to one question: Who can LEAD our city on this journey in a way that makes the most out of this opportunity?

My opponent will tell you that what's important is having someone who would run government like a business, with experience answering to a board of directors. I think she's setting the bar too low. If the answer to our challenges was just competent management, we could have stuck with a city manager. We deserve—and should expect—more from our mayor.

Being mayor isn't just the technical job of managing public employees as a cautious corporate caretaker. Mayors have to LEAD. Leadership means standing in the vanguard and fighting for progress. Bold, forward-thinking leadership brings people together in common purpose as a community. Running the government is the mechanism for delivering on that common purpose. Making local government a partner with residents to make our lives better and make our city stronger is a skill I've developed by stepping up and doing it.

I've spent the last 15 years learning how to lead local government and working to get the most out of government on behalf of the people

we serve. I've been honored to have your support twice for my candidacy for city council. As the first Black man to serve as Cleveland Heights' vice mayor, and current vice president of council, I've worked hard during my time in office to lead in ways that have made a difference for our city, proposing initiatives that:

- Commit to reducing our carbon footprint by 30% or more by 2030,
- Protect our neighborhoods against banks that refuse to keep up foreclosed homes, and
- Keep landlords from discriminating against renters based on their sources of income.

Our first mayor will be entrusted with our hopes for Cleveland Heights' future—the hopes we had when we decided to adopt this new form of government. My Heights H.O.P.E.S. plan is a blueprint for turning these hopes into reality. HEALTHY. OPEN. PROSPEROUS. EQUITABLE. SAFE. These are the qualities that we all want for Cleveland Heights. If you—like me—expect more than the status quo from city government, and want a more vibrant, sustainable and resilient Cleveland Heights, I respectfully ask you to vote for me, Kahlil Seren, for mayor on or before Nov. 2.

*Kahlil Seren is the vice president of CH City Council and a candidate for mayor in Cleveland Heights.*

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- ✓ Increased property values in the Noble and Taylor area with renovation to abandon homes with the help of the Cleveland Heights Community Development Corporation (CDC's).
- ✓ Enhancing the safety of our community by leading a task force to address Systemic Racism and police oversight in our community.
- ✓ More resident engagement by creating a "You Talk, I Listen" forum to give residents a voice.
- ✓ A partnership with Goldman Sachs to bring \$10,000 to business owners.
- ✓ A community task force for the beautification of the city.
- ✓ A developers round table to strategically plan and encourage development projects.



For more information  
visit [davidaforch.com](http://davidaforch.com)



Early Voting Begins Tuesday, October 5th  
Election Day is Tuesday, November 2nd

Paid for by Friends of Davida Russell



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## Why I'm running for UH mayor

Philip Atkin

My name is Phil Atkin. I am running for mayor of University Heights.

I have lived here 30 years amidst a sea of beautiful family homes. I am not a politician.

All those years I watched major issues remain unaddressed, only worsen. We have one of the highest property tax rates in the country. We support a failing public school system at a cost that is over twice the state average, and growing.

Miraculously, four years ago the state inaugurated the voucher program for failing school systems. Everything changed. People started moving here to take advantage of the program. I saw houses being enlarged, upgraded, even re-built. Home values appreciated. Businesses opened. Neighborhoods filled with children. A growing majority of residents send children to private schools.

Even with all this change, there was still no involvement by the mayor or council.

When the education committee of the Ohio Senate held hearings on vouchers this past spring, they came under attack by teachers' unions and public school advocates. Where were our elected leaders touting the enormous benefits of the vouchers on our city and how there would be even greater benefits if educational choices were expanded?

No one is advocating programs

for the children mired in the failing school system. No one demands better financial control of schooling, as we watch our tax rates soar. No one advocates that empty schools be used by packed parochial schools, who don't have room to accept more students.

The residents own the city, not the office holders or the school system. Residents needs come first! The mayor's job is to fight for the needs and rights of residents.

There are other city issues to address—support of police and emergency services, and working with staff to enhance services.

I have a master's in urban and regional planning and went to architecture school. I worked as a senior planner for the Buffalo regional planning board, was director of urban design services for a large engineering firm, was consultant for municipalities in western New York, and the Seneca Nation of Indians. I have been an award-winning builder in New York and Ohio. I designed and built the Chabad Center in Beachwood, condos in the Heights, renovations in Ohio City, and more.

Mayor and council need to respond to resident's needs, turning difficulties into opportunities.

My website is <https://philatkin4uh.com>; my e-mail is [atkin4uh@gmail.com](mailto:atkin4uh@gmail.com).

*Philip Atkin is a builder, a resident of University Heights, and a candidate for mayor of the city.*

## Resident supports BOE incumbents

To the Editor:

Dan Heintz, Malia Lewis, and Jodi Sourini have my endorsement for the three seats in the CH-UH Board of Education election.

As a team, they have represented our district in the fair-school-funding debate, which will improve funding for our district while reducing our property tax burden.

As a parent who has sent children through CH-UH schools, I trust them to make decisions that are in the best interest of students and taxpayers. They have proven their leadership capabilities during a global pandemic by negotiating a teachers' contract and supporting remote- and

hybrid-learning environments to keep students engaged in education.

With the highest levels of integrity, Malia, Jodi, and Dan work on behalf of everyone in the CH-UH community. Join me in re-electing them to the CH-UH school board!

Jennifer Shriver Lang  
Cleveland Heights

## CH boutique owner praises Russell's support for business

To the Editor:

As owner of Chemistry 11 on Taylor Road in Cleveland Heights, please join me in voting for Davida Russell, sitting CH council member.

Davida has worked collaboratively with others to keep Cleveland Heights moving in the right direction. As a result of her leadership, my business and others now have access to grants and resources to help our businesses thrive. In addition, federal dollars are being directed to the Noble and Taylor areas, to help stabilize these business districts.

Davida has achieved so much for our businesses in her short time; that is why I am voting for her in the upcoming council election. Please join me in voting for my friend, Davida Russell, on or before Nov. 2, and help grow our local businesses.

Gurnee Green  
Owner of Chemistry 11 on Taylor Road

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## Sign the petition to put Cedar Lee park on the ballot

Maia White

I am circulating a petition to put the Lee Meadowbrook park on the ballot.

As most residents know, a big development project is planned for Cedar Lee. Many of us would like to reduce this project by about 25% in order to preserve the vacant lot on Lee Road, between Tullamore and Meadowbrook. We want a park there. Over 900 people signed a petition appealing to the city to preserve this green space. Nonetheless, city council is moving forward quickly and, we believe, without sufficient consideration.

Putting the park initiative on the ballot gives us a voice. Even if you are not sure how you feel about the park, you may feel as I do: The citizens should have a say in this.

Some arguments that have been made against the park are:

- The shopping on Lee Road should be continuous; interrupting foot traffic with a park is bad for business.
- The neighborhood needs more businesses, and the city needs tax revenue from the property taxes.
- Lee Road businesses would benefit from increased foot traffic, and condo owners living in the upstairs units will be customers.
- The neighborhood already has parks within walking distance—Cain and Cumberland parks.

- The current development plan includes green space.

Some thoughts on these arguments:

Interrupting foot traffic for one short block seems unlikely to crush business and is presented without evidence. Everyone walks that block now! And it will be even more appealing to walk across a park instead of an empty lot. Many shopping areas across the world include a beautiful park as an anchor, a place to rest, and a place for kids to play.

There is no doubt that the city can benefit from property taxes, and there will be tax revenue from the development even without building on the existing green space. However, our neighborhood need not carry an undue burden of tax generation while the potential at Severance mall and other locations remains untapped.

A park can bring people to the local businesses, and not all Lee Road business owners are against the park! I have spoken to several who are in favor of one.

Meadowbrook neighbors want a voice, and are not just making “political noise.” We are seriously thinking about the long-term implications of an irrevocable decision that impacts our quality of life.

Ask your Meadowbrook neighbors, do you walk to Cain Park and Cumberland Park? No indeed.

These are not neighborhood parks for us.

The allotted area for green space in the current plan is too small to be considered a park. It looks like it belongs to the condos, not as a public space.

Cain Park is a beautiful example of what Cleveland Heights can do when the community wants to create a beautiful park and gathering space. We can do this at Lee and Meadowbrook. A park might host a weekly farmer’s market, a weekly food truck evening and holiday festivals, and provide a playground, picnic area, reading garden. It can be a sanctuary for all of us.

Business-driven construction is all the rage now; we see generic condo/storefront buildings everywhere. What would be truly unique, and in tune with our values as a community, would be to also invest in business beauty, nature and sanctuary. The needs of our local businesses need not conflict with the park.

If you agree that there are good reasons to put the park on the ballot, please sign the petition. If you would like someone to bring by a petition, e-mail [cederleepark@yahoo.com](mailto:cederleepark@yahoo.com).

*Maia White is a retired nurse and social worker. She lives on Meadowbrook Boulevard, close to the proposed development*

## Moore will value sustainability on CH City Council

To the Editor:

Cleveland Heights residents are privileged that Josie Moore wants to represent us on city council with her talent for building civilized discussion and her embracing understanding of sustainability.

Moore listens masterfully, creating respectful, inclusive conversation to address diverse needs that leads to encompassing solutions.

Moore will work to ensure principles of sustainability are built into the decision-making process at City Hall. These principles will guide every plan and every action to be greener and more equitable.

Moore understands that new development is an opportunity to grow our economy and invite in new residents, while serving unmet needs of current residents and revitalizing a degraded environment.

Your vote for Josie Moore for CH City Council on Nov. 2 will help move our city toward a greener, healthier, more inclusive future.

Laura Marks  
Cleveland Heights



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- Financial management that supports a truly sustainable city government

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*Operating a responsive and welcoming city government*

- Working with residents to get things done quickly and efficiently. Your concerns will be our priority!
- Building our city’s future, together! Providing respectful collaborative forums to address resident and community concerns, in addition to planning strategically for our city as we move forward
- Establishing regularly scheduled “Mayor’s Office Hours” to engage with residents one-on-one (by phone or in person) to hear from them!

*The role of the city’s mayor is one of Servant Leadership. It is a selfless and service-driven position that requires a commitment to responsiveness. I will be that mayor for my neighbors and will continue to earn their vote every day I serve the city I love. I humbly ask for YOUR vote on November 2nd so that we can begin working together — because **Working Together is The Best Way Forward!***

# Why not a lake *and* a brook at Horseshoe?

Greg Donley

The discussion around Horseshoe Lake has been presented as a binary choice: either fix the old dam and refill the lake for \$20.7 million, billed to Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights, or get rid of the lake altogether and transform that part of the park into a riparian brook environment. Why only two options?

The cost-benefit issue for the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS) is that repairing the dam would not improve flood control at the critical “pinch point” of University Circle, because the watershed draining into that one lake is quite small. However, NEORS would fund the creation of a brook designed to help slow down and absorb stormwater runoff.

Right now, the drained, man-made lake is filling itself in with wildflowers and other vegetation. It looks lovely and is attracting some wildlife, but its current state is likely temporary. Left alone for 20 or 30 years, it would fill in with trees and look much like the rest of the shallow wooded valley downstream and upstream of it.

Whether that’s the “natural state” of the land depends somewhat on whether one considers humans to be part of, or separate from, the natural world, given the effects of a couple centuries of human settlement here. In any case, we’d end up with neither a lake nor a wetland meadow, but a slightly longer stretch of the wooded valley that is already there.

If the philosophical goal is to return things to their natural state, one worn-out, old, earthen dam retaining a small amount of water is much less of an issue than the few thousand acres of impervious surface built in this watershed long after the Shakers were just a memory.

A map from Doan Brook Watershed Partnership’s website shows that the vast paved expanse of commercial development along the north side of Chagrin Boulevard, this side of Richmond Road in Beachwood, drains into the Doan Brook sewershed; you don’t hear anybody suggesting we return that to its natural state in order to reduce stormwater runoff pressure in University Circle. In that light, it’s hard not to see Shaker Lakes’ issues as yet another instance of older, inner-ring cities paying the price for further-out development.

It may be useful to think of this as two separate potential projects: one would re-establish a nice lake to the “Shaker Lakes” neighborhood that was built around it; the other would construct an additional section of riparian brook configured to suppress stormwater.

When the Shakers built the lake to its original size and 25-foot depth, they needed that large volume of water to power their mills. We have no mills now, and don’t need a lake that large or deep for our current purposes, which are largely aesthetic and recreational: a few feet deep is fine, and somewhat smaller would also be fine. (We’ve done OK with a shallow



Horseshoe Lake prior to draining.



A photoshopped image showing how a smaller lake and stormwater-controlling brook might appear.

lake for quite a while, it turns out).

Would it be that hard to use a bulldozer to make a smaller, intentionally shallow Horseshoe Lake wrapping around the existing park peninsula, and let that drain and meander into a longer section of “flood-control brook” connecting to the existing stream?

Such an approach might retain the flavor of the neighborhood’s historic amenity, provide wildlife habitat specific to a lake, add a bit more riparian brook environment, and address NEORS’s pragmatic stormwater concerns—and it might not cost \$20.7 million (a bewildering figure that must come from fulfilling a bunch of

assumptions about how to restore a 170-year-old dam to its original purpose while meeting modern codes).

A quick survey of online resources suggests it typically runs less than \$5,000 per acre to construct a fishing pond; by that estimate a brand-new, 10-acre Horseshoe Lake should cost

about \$50,000. Certainly, the real cost would be affected by specific factors of that park environment, and by the desire for related amenities, such as paths and bridges, but it’s hard to see those adding up to \$20.65 million.

In fairness to the sewer district, it’s not its job to remedy the inequities of suburban sprawl, or consider what brings desirability and property value to a neighborhood. If it would fund the project related to flood control, and the two cities pooled resources to make a nice, ornamental pond at modest cost, those two projects together might work just fine.

*Greg Donley has lived not too far from Horseshoe Lake since 1987*

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## Don't sit out the school board election



**THE COMMON GOOD**

Susie Kaeser

The November election could not be more important for the Heights community. The future direction of municipal government and the school district will be defined by whom we elect.

As a public school advocate, I am focused on the seven candidates who are running for three seats on the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education.

They have vast differences in values, motivation, experience and priorities. There are stark contrasts in their styles, involvement with our schools, and commitment to public education. There are real choices to be made that will affect student experiences and our community's identity.

Please get informed about this lineup and then vote on Nov. 2. We have a significant opportunity to shape our collective future and reaffirm our commitment to the common good.

According to the Ohio School Boards Association, the job of a school board member is to "set policies that ensure all public school students receive an effective and appropriate education."

It's a clear and profound responsibility. While public education is both a state and local responsibility, it is at the local level that the rubber meets the road. Local school boards working with superintendents shape daily life in schools.

I asked five community members about the characteristics they will look for in a school board member. Their responses were helpful.

Everyone noted that board members must value public education and all that it stands for. This should be a given, but as education has become partisan, one cannot assume universal commitment. They must also value the students and the teachers who are the frontline workers.

Krista Hawthorne, executive director of Reaching Heights, explained the importance of valuing both: "I

need to feel the candidate sincerely cares about the students and school staff, and truly believes that they deserve the best learning and teaching environment that we can provide to them."

Attitudes are important. Leaders should believe in our community and the diversity we embrace, be both realistic and optimistic about public education and the many challenges that exist, and be willing to work for fair and adequate funding. Advocacy at the state level is part of the job.

Decision-making requires a willingness to invest the time needed to be well informed, as well as being able to listen to and consider all sides of a debate.

Board members must be respectful of the public and demonstrate civility. It's a complex task, because they must appreciate the needs of students, teachers and the community.

More than 70 percent of Cleveland Heights voters turned out for the 2020 presidential election. By contrast, the largest number of votes cast for a school board member in the election held in 2017 was 7,266—just 16.7 percent of the registered voters in the school district. There was clearly a lot at stake in the presidential race, but the hyper-local election was also consequential and deserved a much higher level of participation.

Democracy, equality, unity and the common good are on the line. How this plays out for the students, staff and community members of our school district will depend on who we choose to ensure high-quality education for our students.

This election offers a way to participate in shaping the bigger issues driving our society. Please don't sit this one out!

The CH-UH chapter of the League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland and FutureHeights will present an online school-board candidates' forum on Thursday, Oct. 7, at 7 p.m. More information can be found at <https://my.lwv.org/ohio/greater-cleveland>.

*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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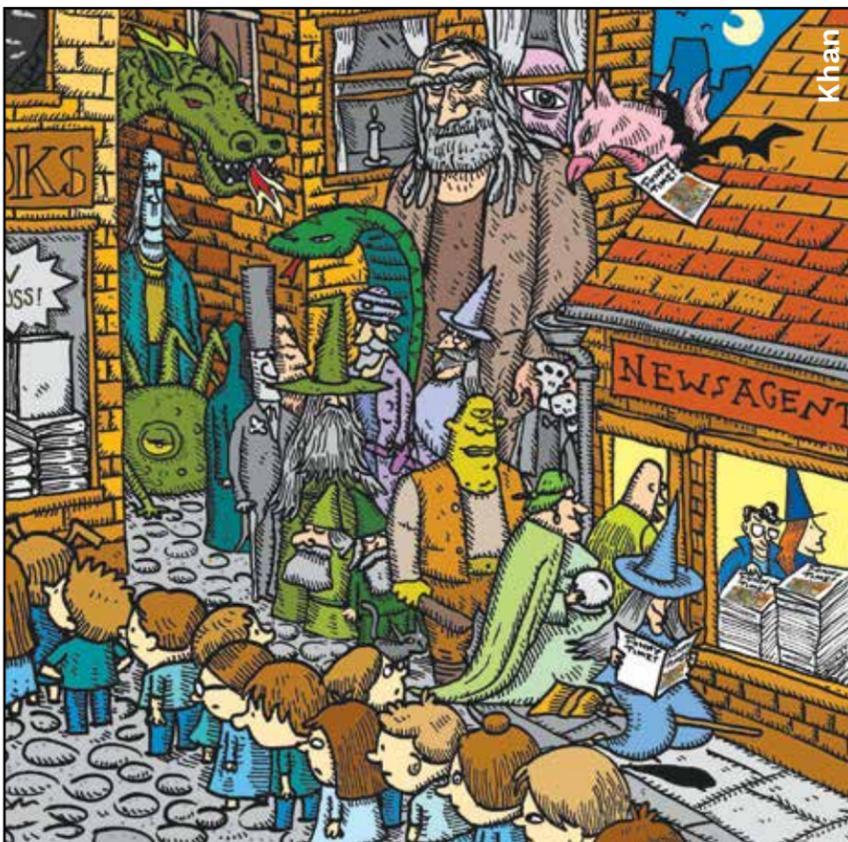
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## Change is coming to Cleveland Heights City Council



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Deborah Van Kleef and Carla Rautenberg

With four newcomers and two incumbents running for four CH City Council seats, and seven more candidates vying to complete the unexpired term of the recently retired Mary Dunbar, a substantial shakeup is in the offing for Cleveland Heights' city council. Personnel changes, however, are only the beginning. The transition to mayor/council government on Jan. 1, 2022, will subject council to structural and functional changes as well. Some of these are easily foreseen; others will become evident only with time.

The charter amendment passed by voters in 2019 establishes that, with the citizens electing a mayor, council will no longer hire and oversee the city executive. This change creates the opportunity for a true separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches of city government. Along with a strong elected executive, we need an effective and independent council legislating on our behalf.

Since 1921, the finance director has performed what in Cleveland Heights has been the quite limited role of clerk of council. Because the finance director has reported to the council-appointed city manager, the

clerk has been, albeit indirectly, under the purview of council for the past 100 years. But as of Jan. 1, the finance director will report directly to the mayor, who will be overseen not by council, but by the people.

It no longer makes sense for council to rely on the very part-time services of a staff member appointed by the head of another branch of the government. To be truly independent and proactive, council should have its own full-time clerk on duty at City Hall during regular business hours (when most part-time council members are earning their livelihoods elsewhere). Section III-6 of the current charter, as amended, permits council to create such a position by ordinance. With a new form of government, and a majority of council members newly elected and not wedded to old ways of doing things, we think early 2022 is the right time for this move.

We are not proposing anything unusual. Clerk of council is a full-time job in many communities with mayor/council governments, particularly those the size of Cleveland Heights and larger. For example, by provision of its city charter, Euclid's council appoints its own clerk. Cleveland City Council has done so since 1931, when an elected mayor replaced the council-appointed city manager.

Lakewood has not only a full-time clerk, but a part-time deputy clerk. Cleveland Heights' council would determine its clerk's exact duties, but, as a possible benchmark, in Lakewood

they include: maintaining records of council proceedings, recording ordinances and resolutions adopted by council, publishing meeting notices, and providing legislative reference and research services. Furthermore, the Lakewood clerk of council is its parliamentarian, and in that role conducts council meetings.

In actuality, the Cleveland Heights city manager's office historically fulfilled many of the clerk's functions, subjecting council to a certain degree of control by the administration. What council needs now is its own independent support structure.

This may be a difficult time to get the attention of either incumbent or aspiring council members, but the election is only a month away. Once the dust has settled, our council members should apply themselves to shaping a truly high-functioning legislative body. With the support of a dedicated, full-time clerk, we hope council will devote itself to enacting well-considered policies to benefit the residents whose interests they are elected to represent.

It may be advisable to incorporate the council clerk's position into a charter amendment later, but since the position can be created by ordinance immediately, we see no reason to postpone this important step forward.

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

## Clopton-Zymler will move CH-UH school district forward

To the Editor:

I first met Mario Clopton-Zymler through our shared love of performing. His beautiful voice, warm smile, and strong work ethic made him a perfect castmate. His talent is only rivaled by his commitment to making positive change.

He's done just that as a community organizer, an arts educator in the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District and beyond, and as an activist.

His lived experience and professional career give him a unique perspective into how CH-UH can truly support all teachers, families and students. His heart is sincere, and his hands are ready to work. I fully believe that he can be trusted to help move the district forward for the students and families it serves.

Mario Clopton-Zymler has my vote for CH-UH Board of Education (BOE). I hope he has yours, too.

Nicole Sumlin  
Cleveland Heights

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## Lynn on why she is a candidate for BOE

Maureen Lynn

I am seeking election for the CH-UH school board because I believe that our public schools and the students are essential for a strong, thriving and successful community.

As seen throughout the country, communities without strong public schools see the population decline, home values decrease, and poverty increase. No one wants to see this happen in CH-UH. I want to be a part of the school board to ensure that the schools are exceptional for children of all backgrounds and abilities.

It is well known that the CH-UH school district is generously funded and has the highest tax rate in the entire state of Ohio. Many in the community have been asking the school board to [request] a state performance audit by Ohio's state auditor.

The last time the CH-UH schools [had] a state audit was in 1999, and \$6 million to \$7 million in potential savings was identified. The audit is conducted to find the inefficiencies, overspending and fund mismanagement, so as to maximize in-classroom spending that is student centered.

As advocated by the current school board, the state has passed the Fair School Funding Plan. This will now require the state to directly fund all vouchers in the district. According to the treasurer's forecast,

this will yield \$16.2 million in savings in 2022, and \$17 million in 2023. The district has also received \$17 million in COVID relief. Finally, the schools refinanced the school bond for an additional \$18.5 million in savings. This is significant additional funding! It is imperative that the school board is transparent and fiscally responsible, and that the students and community benefit.

As a former executive, I was responsible for managing very large budgets. I cannot understand how this [district's] administration has never been able to balance the five-year forecast, for 25 years. There are always significant deficits. My goal would be to completely balance this forecast, with no shortfalls, but surpluses. This would be done with the students in mind so that NONE of their education or activities would be diminished, but only enhanced.

Strong schools need the support of a community that trusts the school board. Unfortunately, the overreaching administration and school board have undermined that support. I am asking this community to vote for "New Voices with a New Vision & Direction" for the betterment of the schools and CH-UH.

*Maureen 'Mo' Lynn, her husband and three children have lived in Cleveland Heights since 2011. She is a self-employed sales consultant and is running for CH-UH City School District Board of Education.*

## Why I'm running for school board

Charles Drake

I am a graduate of Height High, and two daughters graduated from Heights.

In a recent news article, three career academic math scholars, from NYC, Georgia Tech and Princeton, gave a stern warning about the "deplorable" state of math education in the United States. They said U.S. schools prioritize social justice and diversity over merit, thereby allowing China to successfully advance as the world leader in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). This is their opinion; I believe educating our students to compete in the 21st century should be the number one objective of this district. This is the reason I am running for the CH-UH Board of Education (BOE).

I previously wrote about the largess paid to the principals, administrators, treasurer and superintendent, only to witness the board penalize the teachers; not the administrators, treasurer or superintendent.

Reviewing recent financial transactions, I question irresponsible stewardship of this board:

1. Sale of Coventry school to the Heights Libraries board for \$1. Did you know the BOE's elected members appoint all the library trustees? The library board is attempting to enter into a 99-year lease with the current tenants.
2. Sold four vacant parcels of land

to the city of University Heights for \$10 per parcel. This did not benefit Cleveland Heights or South Euclid taxpayers of the district. How was this equitable for the taxpayers? How much in savings was realized? How much does it cost to maintain four vacant parcels? Was consideration to "market value" made?

3. A \$835,679.33 [erroneous direct deposit] on Oct. 15, 2019, made by the [then] assistant treasurer, [who subsequently resigned].

4. The BOE spent \$34,675 on a survey for the levy passed last November, after the voters rejected [one] earlier in the year. [The survey was] determined by the Ohio Auditor of State and Attorney General to be illegal use of public monies.

5. The BOE continues to reject a request from numerous taxpayers for a performance audit by the state auditor of the operations of the board for inefficiencies in operations and deployment of physical facilities.

As a 10-year member of a community school finance committee, I understand school funding and the issues.

I believe strong schools improve the community and are a factor in attracting new young families. Vote for a "New Voice with a New Vision and Direction" for better schools.

*Charles Drake is a 50-year resident of Cleveland Heights who attended Heights High and John Carroll University. He is a former CPA, running for the CH-UH Board of Education.*

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# Oakwood Club subdivision added to National Register

Mazie Adams

Earlier this year, Cleveland Heights gained its 15th district on the National Register of Historic Places, when the Oakwood Club Subdivision Historic District was listed for its historic and architectural significance.

Founded in 1905, on Warrensville Center Road, the Oakwood Country Club served as a social and recreational center for some of Cleveland's most prominent Jewish families.

After building a beautiful clubhouse and completing the 18-hole golf course, club leadership turned its attention to developing a private street of grand homes for its members, along the red brick Oakwood Drive.

The families hired prominent Cleveland architects to design their homes. Among them was the firm Howell and Thomas, which was responsible for significant public and private buildings throughout Cleveland, including residences in the Euclid Golf, Ambler Heights and Inglewood neighborhoods of Cleveland Heights. The firm designed seven of the 15 homes in the Oakwood subdivision, all of which were completed between 1918 and 1959.

The original homeowners included Isaac and Jennie Joseph, Julius and Carrie Feiss, William and Emmy Halle, Rebecca Haas, and



This home, at 1648 Oakwood Road, was originally the Rebecca Haas residence.

Alexander and Mira Printz.

All were associated with significant Cleveland companies, such as men's clothing manufacturer Joseph & Feiss Co., the Cleveland Stock Exchange, Empire Plow, and women's apparel maker Printz-Beiderman. The beautiful street served as a safe enclave, free from the discrimination many of these Jewish families faced elsewhere in the community.

Current Oakwood Drive homeowner Diane Calta said she and her neighbors have a "deep interest in preserving the history" of their street, and saw the project as a way to peel back that history.

She and her neighbors spent

four years on the designation, hiring preservation firm Naylor Wellman to complete the application.

They see listing the street on the National Register as a way to preserve its heritage and increase property values.

Said Calta, "We are committed

to our properties and their stories. It's a unique street and we take pride in it."

*Mazie Adams is a lifelong resident of Cleveland Heights, a supporter of the Heights schools and chair of the city's Landmark Commission.*

## CH Eco Fair planned for Oct. 9

Catalina Wagers

The first Cleveland Heights Eco Fair will take place on Oct. 9, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Coventry PEACE Park, 2843 Washington Blvd.

The fair, hosted by the Cleveland Heights Green Team, in partnership with Heights Libraries Coventry branch, and Future-Heights, will provide residents and businesses with information and resources that promote and encourage greener, healthier choices and behaviors.

Green Team Co-founder Natalie Elwell said of the festival, "We believe that each one of us can make better or different choices that can help support the environment while also increasing personal well-being. Our mission is to work with the community to reduce and better manage our impact on the environment through advocacy, education, and stewardship. We are committed to bringing issues related to a more sustainable future into the spotlight."

The Eco Fair will feature local organizations and businesses that promote healthy lifestyle choices and offer resources that are readily available to Heights residents. Among the participants are: Refill Goodness, Rust Belt Riders, Cuyahoga Recycles, City Fresh, Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, Cleveland Pollinator and Native Plant, and Heights Tree



People.

The fair will provide opportunities for attendees to engage in and learn about:

- Sustainable Lifestyle – Resources, tips, and solutions to make one's home and garden eco-friendly and sustainable.
- Arts & Kids Zone – Eco-friendly, hands-on activities for children.
- Healthy Living – Healthy activities for everyone.

The Cleveland Heights Green team is a local volunteer group focused on promoting sustainability practices. For more information about the group and the event, visit [www.chgreenteam.org](http://www.chgreenteam.org).

*Catalina Wager lives in Cleveland Heights' Fairfax neighborhood, and is actively involved with several organizations supporting the advancement of Northeast Ohio. She is co-founder of the Cleveland Heights Green Team.*

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## Cleveland Heights City Council Meeting highlights



AUGUST 16, 2021

Council members present were Vice President Kahlil Seren, Craig Cobb, Mary Dunbar, Melody Joy Hart, Davida Russell, and Michael N. Ungar. Council President Jason Stein was absent. Also present were Susanna Niermann O'Neil, city manager; Amy Himmelein, clerk of council; and William Hanna, law director.

### Council actions

- Transferred 3424 Beechwood Ave. from the Cleveland Heights Land Reutilization Program to FutureHeights Inc.
- Approved a pass-through purchase agreement with Cuyahoga County Land Reutilization Corporation for the Taylor-Tudor buildings at 1908 and 1912-1926 South Taylor Road, for \$200 plus closing and transfer costs.
- Approved a non-binding memorandum of understanding with Amato Homes to redevelop single-family homes on city-owned vacant residential lots along Desota Avenue.
- Authorized a request for proposals for redevelopment and rehabilitation of 1932-1946 South Taylor Road, also a Taylor-Tudor building.
- Designated the city-owned Bradford Cinder Path as a landmark.
- Changed the name and function of the Transportation Advisory Committee to the Transportation and Environmental Sustainability Committee.
- Amended the 2021 budget to increase fire and police department salaries based on labor contracts.
- Approved a resolution adopting and supporting the ideals, principles, and engineering and roadway design concepts of Vision Zero, affirming that the acceptable number of annual traffic deaths is zero.
- Accepted the OneOhio Subdivision Settlement of the OneOhio Memorandum of Understanding of the July 21, 2021, National Opioid Settlement Agreement. This agreement with several opioid distributors will yield the city between \$121,000 and \$173,000 to enhance safety forces' services in drug-related situations. Michael Ungar, who had been professionally involved in previous litigation, was recused from the vote.

### Council Member Mary Dunbar resigns

Mary Dunbar resigned from CH City Council, effective immediately. She stated that she had expected to complete her third term, which runs through 2023, but was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in January 2020. She said that, despite therapy, her condition is worsening, and she will move by October to an assisted-living residence closer to family, in New Hampshire. Council presented her with a proclamation, and all members spoke about working with her.

LWV Observer: Blanche Valancy.

AUGUST 25, 2021 - Special Meeting

All (six) council members were present, as were the city manager, clerk of council, and law director.

### Special election for vacant council seat

Council passed an ordinance calling for a special election to fill the unexpired council seat vacated by Mary Dunbar, the term of which ends on Dec. 31, 2023. The ordinance was needed to meet the deadlines necessary to hold a special election, to take place on the same day as the Nov. 2 general election.

Council President Stein thanked resident Garry Kanter for drawing council's attention to city charter wording that prescribes a 60-day threshold for council vacancies going on the ballot. [Kanter is one of seven candidates for that unexpired council term.]

LWV Observer: Gail Larson.

AUGUST 30, 2021 - Special Meeting  
All (six) council members were present, as were the city manager, clerk of council, and law director.

### Council actions

- Approved the refunding of certain outstanding bonds, with the maximum principal amount of \$1,725,000 for Severance Ring Road improvements, to achieve debt service savings.
- Amended the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Start Right Community Development Corporation to allow 60 additional days to complete a redevelopment plan for new single-family homes on city lots. An amendment proposed by Ungar to reduce this to 30 days failed, by a vote of 1-5.
- Authorized an agreement with All City Management Services for \$180,207 for crossing guards. The school district will reimburse half that amount (\$90,103.50).
- Amended the MOU with Flaherty & Collins concerning the Cedar-Lee-Meadowbrook development, adding 60 days to develop an agreement.
- Approved a proposal by Davida Russell to allocate funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Ungar voted no, saying he agreed with the goals of the legislation, but claiming that it was piecemeal and did not make sense. Other council members praised Russell's plan, stressing the long-overdue and transformative potential of the funds to correct geographic imbalances in investment and racial equity.
- Agreed to place a charter amendment on the Nov. 2 ballot to establish a timeline for filling council vacancies. Originally, the draft legislation specified a 45-day deadline, with the mayor having 10 days to fill the vacancy should council fail to appoint a member [after 45 days]. The appointment would be in place until the end of the calendar year, with the unexpired term going on the ballot at the next general election that is more than 120 days after the vacancy occurs. Ungar voted against the proposed amendment, claiming it was put together too quickly and should be done after careful study by a committee or commission.
- Hired a consultant to help with the Horseshoe Lake decision, with Seren voting no.

LWV Observer: Blanche Valancy.

Meeting packets, legislation, and other information can be found on the city's website at: <https://www.clevelandheights.com/1142/2021-Agendas-and-Minutes>.

Videos of council meetings can be viewed on the city's YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/ClevelandHeightsOH>.

Expanded reports are available online at [www.heightsobserver.org](http://www.heightsobserver.org).

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# ELECT

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ELECTION continued from page 1

candidate petitions in the race for the unexpired CH City Council term, ending Dec. 31, 2023, that has been added to the Nov. 2 ballot. The seven candidates are: Erin C. Johnson, Garry Kanter, Robert Koonce, Josie Moore, Ellen M. Roth, Eric J. Silverman, and James A. Williams.

In addition, four full-term (four-year) CH City Council seats are on the Nov. 2 ballot, in a separate race. The six candidates for those four council seats are: Lee Barbee II, Craig Cobb, Tony Cuda, Anthony Mattox Jr., Davida Russell, and Allosious K. Snodgrass.

There will also be a proposed Cleveland Heights Charter

Amendment on city ballots, Issue 31, in which voters will be asked to vote on setting a timeline and procedure for filling city council vacancies. CH council efforts to fill recent vacancies have been marked by delay and confusion.

In University Heights, there are four candidates for UH mayor: Philip M. Atkin, Barbara Blankfeld, Michael Dylan Brennan, and Ken Simmons.

University Heights voters also will elect three UH City Council members, from a field of seven. The candidates are: Christopher Cooney, Danny Grand, Brian J. King, Paul Miller, Katie Nelson Moody, Sheri R. Sax, and Winifred Weizer.

Residents of both Cleveland Heights and University Heights will vote in the CH-UH City School District Board of Education (BOE) race, in which seven candidates are running for three board seats. The candidates are: Mario Clopton-Zymler, Charles C. Drake, Dan Heintz, Malia Lewis, Maureen Lynn, Mordechai Rennert, and Jodi L. Sourini.

This issue of the *Heights Observer* contains a comprehensive voters guide—compiled by the League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland - Heights Chapter (LWV)—to all of the Cleveland Heights and University Heights issues and races that will be on

Heights ballots on Nov. 2.

An earlier LWV Voters guide, published in advance of the Sept. 14 Cleveland Heights primary election for mayor, contained questions and answers for the then-three mayoral candidates. Those same questions and answers for the two remaining CH mayoral candidates—Kahlil Seren and Barbara Danforth—are reprinted in the current LWV voters guide, and can be found online at [Vote411.org](http://Vote411.org).

Questions and answers for the seven candidates for the unexpired CH City Council term are included in the print version of the LWV voters guide, but not in their entirety, due to space limitations. The full question-and-answer section for those candidates can be found at [Vote411.org](http://Vote411.org).

[Vote411.org](http://Vote411.org) is the LWV's online election guide. It includes a Q-and-A section for all of the candidates, in every Cleveland Heights and University Heights race, and an explanation of CH ballot Issue 31.

For a look at sample ballots, and information on deadlines for voting early and voting by mail, visit the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections website, [boe.cuyahoga-county.gov](http://boe.cuyahoga-county.gov).

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



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## Silverman cites experience in run for CH council

Eric J. Silverman

This November the city of Cleveland Heights will see big changes with the direct election of our mayor. In January, there will be at least three, maybe four, and possibly five new members of city council. I believe it is important for us to have at least one new member with previous elected experience. For this reason, I am running for the two-year unexpired term on council.

I firmly believe that experience matters. We have seen on a national level what happens when we elect those with ZERO experience. In this race, I am the only candidate with local elected experience, having been elected three times to the CH-UH school board (1993, 1997, 2013), as well as being appointed to a seven-year term on the CH-UH library board.

With 19 years of service, I understand how local government works,

the importance of thinking long term, the necessity of holding staff accountable, and the importance of responding to public inquiry.

Two of my proudest accomplishments are being a part of the renovations of the Lee Road Library and the transformation of Cleveland Heights High School. Not only was it great to give our community the facilities we deserve, but I learned the questions to ask when Cleveland Heights looks to develop the Noble Road corridor, Lee and Meadowbrook, South Taylor, and Severance.

Why focus on development? Because we need income tax revenue to provide city services and property tax revenue to support our public schools.

While I see the challenges we face as a city, I also see so much potential—potential we have failed to utilize. Between our location, housing stock, local businesses, cultural

amenities, and pluralism, we already have the assets we need. What we can use is a city council that shares my enthusiasm, understands our unique history, and has the vision to get us where we need to be.

This campaign will be a challenge. I have a full-time job. I have a part-time job where I sell my photography at arts shows. I help my mother in taking care of my ailing father. I do not have a phalanx of volunteers from another campaign to deploy, nor a cadre of acolytes to utilize. I do not pander for endorsements, and I expect I will be outspent and out endorsed. This means I will run on what I believe matters—ideas, experience and honesty.

*Eric J. Silverman was a member of the CH-UH school board from 1994 to 2001, and from 2014 to 2017. He served on the CH-UH library board from 2003 to 2009.*

## 'Top 10' reasons to support Cuda for CH City Council

Rhonda Davis-Lovejoy

**10.** Tony Cuda led the successful campaign in 2019 to change Cleveland Heights' charter to an elected mayor form of government.

**9.** Tony is laser-focused on housing issues and will collaborate with the mayor, his fellow council members, and the community on a strategic plan to protect and expand our housing stock.

**8.** Tony's experience teaching and working in government will be invaluable during this critical transition period.

**7.** Tony and his wife, Sandy, live on Fenley Road in the Oxford/Noble neighborhood. Council would certainly benefit from the perspective of another member who lives north of Mayfield Road (where, currently, only one council member lives).

**6.** Tony grew up in Cleveland Heights, graduated from Heights High, received a B.A. from Cleveland State University in political science, and a master's in education from John Carroll University.

**5.** Tony has regularly attended council meetings for the past four years.

**4.** Tony is a strong supporter of the arts, and is himself an accomplished composer, bass player and bandleader.

**3.** Tony is a team player who appreciates diverse views and easily builds relationships. Tony can also stand up and be independent when the time is right.

**2.** Tony will be a strong voice for developing the Noble, Taylor, and Severance commercial districts.

**1.** Tony has the ideas and vision, and a strong work ethic. Tony will bring a fresh perspective to Cleveland Heights City Council.

*Rhonda Davis-Lovejoy is vice president of the FutureHeights Board of Directors. The opinion expressed here is her own.*

## How a CH council appointment became an election

Garry Kanter

Mary Dunbar resigned from Cleveland Heights City Council on Aug. 16, effective immediately.

That was about 78 days before the upcoming general election on Nov. 2, where a mayor and four council members will be elected.

The very next day, the city issued a press release announcing that applications were being accepted to be considered for appointment to the remaining two years (plus a little more) of the term.

I saw that press release on Facebook, and decided to read the city's charter to see if that was correct. I've read that paragraph previously, so already had my doubts.

As you know by now, since you've already read the title of this article, the press release was wrong. Since the resignation was more than 60 days before the election—as set out in "III-4 Vacancy," the only relevant

portion of the city's charter—an election was required.

I notified Kahlil Seren immediately—including the unambiguous charter language—and left a similar comment on that Facebook posting. The press release and application were withdrawn from the city's website immediately.

Thereafter followed a week of damage control by the city, described as legal research and communications with the Board of Elections (BOE). Then, yet another special city council meeting was called for Aug. 25, at which the council voted 6-0 to pass emergency legislation instructing the BOE to add the race for the Unexpired Term Ending 12/31/23 to the Nov. 2 ballot. Before adjourning the meeting, Council President Stein thanked me for my e-mail to council.

I'll let the city try to explain how a city manager, six city council members, a clerk of council, a law director, and an entire legal department got it

wrong. Whatever the explanation—which has not been offered—there's no excuse for depriving We The People of a vote that belongs to us. Our vote. Perhaps our most sacred civil right. And they were going to toss it away. Just like that.

I'm on the ballot for that council seat. People have asked me why I think I'm qualified for the job. Well, if my 10 years or so of watchdogging the city council and school board somehow aren't enough, being personally responsible for putting an election on the ballot ain't nothing to sneeze at. I don't guess any of the other candidates have that on their résumé. Neither do most—or any—of the current council members.

I hope you'll vote for me for that council seat.

*Garry Kanter resides in Cleveland Heights. He is a candidate for CH City Council, for the unexpired term ending Dec. 31, 2023.*

## Moore announces run for vacant CH council seat

Josie Moore

I'm excited to announce my candidacy for the unexpired term of the vacant CH City Council seat.

But let's begin with the elephant in the room: I ran for mayor. While I am proud of my campaign—that I focused on my own message, ideas and vision, and did my best to raise the level of dialogue—I reached a point when I knew I had gone as far as I could in the race for mayor. Because I want the results of that election to accurately reflect what Cleveland Heights residents want for our city, I felt that the right thing to do was to pull out of the race.

One could say that—in running for such a high-profile office before living here long enough to create the kind of community network needed for a successful campaign—I had put the cart before the horse. Or perhaps my mayoral campaign created a horse

for a future cart. Little did I know that the cart would pull up so soon.

I am running for the vacated city council seat because:

I want to see our city to become a model of what can be done at the local level to become truly sustainable—not just energy transition but also adopting regenerative practices and preparing for climate change impacts.

I want our city council to be mindful that we work for everyone who lives here, even when communities have no one on council who directly represents them. We must be keenly aware of our gaps in representation. We must be intentional about connecting with overlooked communities and listening to people who feel ignored or forgotten.

I want our city to build a thriving, diverse local business ecosystem that will serve our people's needs, help us attract new residents, and make us

more resilient in the face of larger economic fluctuations.

I want our local leaders to think more expansively about what quality of life really means and then invest accordingly to create a city that offers our residents the opportunities and security needed to be safe, healthy, prosperous and connected.

And I am running because I am a collaborator. I am ready to work with our future mayor and council members to get things done and make our city what we all know it can be.

Learn more at [josiemoore4ch.com](http://josiemoore4ch.com), follow me on social media @JosieMoore4CH, or e-mail me at [josie@josiemooreforclevelandheights.com](mailto:josie@josiemooreforclevelandheights.com).

*Josie Moore is a proud Cleveland Heights resident, mother, wife, and small-business owner. She is a candidate for the unexpired term on CH City Council, which ends Dec. 31, 2023.*

### Going shopping?

Here are 4 reasons to buy from local small businesses:

1. They're part of the community's character
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3. They support local causes and institutions
4. If you don't support them now, they may not be around later

**HEIGHTS OBSERVER**  
Published by FutureHeights

## Sen. Brown, others endorse Snodgrass for CH council

Madison Newingham

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown, who has represented Ohio in the U.S. Senate since 2007, has endorsed Al Snodgrass for Cleveland Heights City Council.

“Al Snodgrass is a leader who will fight for affordable housing, economic development, and to expand vaccination efforts

and help Cleveland Heights recover from this pandemic. A long-time community organizer, Al understands that the Dignity of Work is not just a slogan, it’s how we govern—that’s why I’m proud to endorse Al Snodgrass for Cleveland Heights City Council,” said Brown.

Snodgrass said of his candidacy, “We can’t wait another four years to elect next-generation council members who will work to drive economic growth, invest into our housing stock, and streamline council operations that help us better serve residents.

“It’s kind of symbolic—I’ll be the youngest member on council, the first Black gay member of council, and the only renter—in the same year we elect our first mayor and celebrate 100 years as a city. With over 5,400 rental units in CH, and only around 10 elected officials identifying as LGBTQ+ representing Cuyahoga [County], this is a big deal for me. I want young people, renters, and LGBTQ+ residents to see me on council and say, ‘I can do that too. Cleveland Heights really is a place where All Are Welcome.’ I want these words to be more than words.”

Also endorsing Snodgrass is

Cuyahoga County Council Vice President Cheryl Stephens, a Cleveland Heights resident and former member of CH City Council. “Al Snodgrass has my vote this November,” said Stephens. “Al has gained a great deal of experience working on several of my campaigns and as my executive assistant. These experiences, combined with previous campaign and work experiences, have prepared him to be a strong council member.”

Snodgrass has also received the endorsement of LGBTQ Victory Fund, a national organization dedicated to electing LGBTQ leaders to public office. Other endorsers include state Rep. Janine Boyd, Ohio Senate Assistant Minority Leader Nickie J. Antonio, Ohio Sen. Sandra Williams, the Ohio Environmental Council PAC, the Cuyahoga County Democratic Party, Primary Ohio, Run For Something, Northeast Ohio Young Black Democrats, and the UAW NEO CAP Council.

To support or learn more about Snodgrass, visit [www.alsnodgrass.com](http://www.alsnodgrass.com).

*Madison Newingham is a member of the Friends of Sherrod Brown team.*

## AFL-CIO, Sen. Brown endorse Russell in CH council race

Dan O’Malley

The campaign to re-elect Davida Russell to Cleveland Heights City Council has received an extensive list of endorsements.

Already endorsed by U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown, state Rep. Janine Boyd, state Sen. Sandra Williams, Cuyahoga County Council Vice President Cheryl Stevens, the Cleveland Heights Democratic Club, and the Cuyahoga County Democratic Party, Russell recently added the North Shore AFL-CIO to that list.

“Organized labor supports me because I’ve been a steward of labor and an advocate of the people my whole life,” Russell said. “Together, we will continue to work on community/neighborhood investments, work closely with our police force to increase safety, support our schools, and improve resources and programs provided to youth and senior populations.”

Representing Cleveland Heights on city council for the past year and a half, Russell continues to advocate for equal opportunities, fair treatment, and dignity for all residents.

The North Shore AFL-CIO is happy to extend its endorsement to Davida Russell, [in her campaign] to be re-elected to city council in Cleveland Heights.

*Dan O’Malley is the executive secretary for the North Shore AFL-CIO.*

## Russell gives CH residents a voice

To the Editor:

I urge Cleveland Heights voters to re-elect Davida Russell to city council this November.

Council Member Russell created “You Talk, I Listen” forums, several of which I attended, giving residents a voice. Topics included affordable housing for seniors, racial equality, and safety in our neighborhoods.

It is refreshing to have access to our local leaders and, even more so, to know Ms. Russell will follow through on her promises to keep Cleveland Heights moving forward; by focusing on underserved areas of our community, ensuring the safety of our neighborhoods, and adding to the beautification of Cleveland Heights.

Brenda Moore  
Cleveland Heights

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“There are so, so many reasons we’re happy at Judson.”

chapter in their lives. After the Malliks relocated from Seattle in 2018, their son and daughter-in-law quickly pointed them to nearby Judson Park. And for Pat and Singh, there’s been no looking back.

Gardening, reading, staying fit, and freely sharing her beauty expertise with neighbors are everyday occurrences for Pat. “We’re so busy! Just because we are retired doesn’t mean we’re going to sit in a chair and sleep. The exercise options are great, people are so friendly, and help is here if you need it,” says Pat.

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# A MAGA school board coup is afoot in the Heights

Adam Dew

If you voted for Donald Trump in 2020, chances are your core values do not align well with the 80% of CH-UH residents who voted for Joe Biden. The Trump/Biden choice was stark. So far as I can tell, Maureen Lynn, Mordechai Rennert, and Charles Drake, the GOP slate running for CH-UH school board, are three red peas in a Trump-loving MAGA pod.

Let's meet the candidates: Maureen Lynn is a proud Trump supporter. She's hosted several GOP fundraisers. Driving down Stillman, you may have caught a cardboard Trump waving to you from her living room window. Or maybe your kids were confused to find a Trump 2020 campaign sticker on the Halloween candy handed out by the Lynn family. Hopefully you didn't see Lynn proudly leading that anti-mask protest inside the Lee Road Library. She forced our librarians to call the police.

Mordechai Rennert is a relatively new resident of Cleveland Heights. Or is he? He makes it hard to tell, since as recently as two months ago, in court proceedings, he claimed his current city of residence is Rochester, N.Y. He either lied under oath in New York, or he lied when he pulled school board petitions. He's also being sued by his kids' former New York private school for \$125,000 in unpaid tuition.

Finally, we have Charles Drake, a

former CPA whose certification was revoked by the state board in 2012. He claims to support public education, yet he steps to the mic at city council meetings to rail against our "failing public schools." No supporter of public education I know uses the racist state report card as a trustworthy measure of school performance or quality.

While "All Are Welcome" in Cleveland Heights, that doesn't mean that everyone is a good fit for every board. City council? Maybe. Recreation board? Possibly. Two of the three might even be a decent fit for the library board.

I fear that Lynn/Rennert/Drake represent an existential threat to the core principles most of this community holds dear. Please do not be fooled as they drape themselves in the flag of fiscal responsibility. They are running to set it all on fire. If Lynn is as transparent as she claims, she'll be honest about their intent.

Dan Heintz, Jodi Sourini, Mario Clopton-Zymler and Malia Lewis love our schools. Please vote for three of those four.

*Adam Dew is a proud member of the Heights High Class of '94. He owns Dew Media, Inc., a video production company. [The Heights Observer is a promotional, non-monetary, partner of Dew's podcast. His opinions are his own, and do not reflect or imply any position on the part of the Heights Observer or FutureHeights.]*

# Heintz, Lewis and Sourini deserve four more years on school board

Ryan Routh

In the upcoming CH-UH Board of Education election, I'm voting to reelect Dan Heintz, Malia Lewis and Jodi Sourini for many reasons. Here are three:

First, they are committed to running the district in a fiscally sustainable manner while maintaining educational quality. Reasonable public-school advocates recognize that the desire to fund our schools must be balanced against the high tax burden we face in CH-UH. Heintz, Lewis and Sourini each have real-world business experience, know how to balance a budget, and will get us the most educational bang for our property tax buck.

Second, the most important job a school board has is hiring the right

leader, and the incumbents did just that when they hired Superintendent Liz Kirby. Whatever your opinion of the schools, Ms. Kirby's dynamic leadership makes our district better, and the current board members deserve credit for hiring her before Shaker could.

Third, they are humble public servants running out of a sense of duty. They are not running to build a name for themselves, or as a stepping stone to "bigger and better" things—they are running because they love our community and want to give back.

For these and other reasons, I'm voting for Heintz, Lewis and Sourini.

*Ryan Routh is chair of the CH-UH school district's Lay Finance Committee, and the parent of a current Heights High student and two Heights High grads.*

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# Lynn's divisive behavior makes her an unfit BOE candidate

Joan Lederer

I read with disbelief and disgust Maureen Lynn's opinion in the September *Heights Observer*, "Parents question library's mask requirement." According to reports, she chose to ignore Heights Libraries' COVID mask rules, and subsequently engaged in a loud and threatening confrontation with librarians so serious that police had to be summoned. Our Heights librarians are among the most laid-back, helpful and nicest people around. Bullying them as a publicity stunt is inexcusable.

Worse, her statement that masks "impede oxygen to the brain" would be laughable if not so deadly serious. Virtually every medical expert agrees that wearing a mask helps prevent the spread of COVID, especially among the most vulnerable—children too young to be vaccinated. Ignoring science and endangering children to make a political point is unconscionable. (Thank you, Sheryl Banks, for your article in the September *Heights Observer*, "Library's mask policy protects visitors," quoting evidence-based guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control.)

As a physician, I am acutely aware of how many of Ms. Lynn's facts are incorrect. Ms. Lynn's behavior at the library (and, yes, it is within the library's purview to instate mask rules) is embarrassing, and certainly not how I would expect someone on our school board to behave. Her behavior was divisive. The fact that library staff needed to call the police indicates how rude and offensive these antics were.

As a mother of two children who attended the Cleveland Heights-University Heights public schools from pre-school through

12th grade, and as a resident of Cleveland Heights for over 35 years, I have been very proud of the way the city and school district have responded to the COVID-19 crisis.

Ms. Lynn's antics regarding wearing masks is an ugly distraction from an epidemic that has already killed 650,000 Americans.

Ms. Lynn is an unfit candidate for the CH-UH Board of Education.

*Joan Lederer is a retired psychiatrist who has resided in Cleveland Heights for 35-plus years, and is the proud mother of two CH-UH public school graduates.*

# Our school district needs Sourini, Lewis and Heintz

Kristen Bidingger and Kim Hodgkiss-Lilly

Boards of education across the country have faced some of the toughest decisions they have ever faced over the last two years. When we think about what board members are needed for the decisions of today, and for the years to come, we believe in Jodi Sourini, Malia Lewis and Dan Heintz to do the work on behalf of our students. We have valued their advocacy to obtain fair funding for our district, which is work that will need to continue beyond this election.

We have been in the CH-UH school district since our son, currently

a junior, entered kindergarten at Boulevard Elementary School. Our daughter, a fourth-grader, is currently at Boulevard, with her four cousins.

In CH-UH, we are a community. We are advocates for our students and passionate about providing access to a high-quality education for ALL! That is also the mission for the Board of Education (BOE), so we must make thoughtful choices as voters when determining who is prepared to do this work.

We reminisced about a candidate forum during Jodi, Malia and Dan's first runs for BOE in 2018, and felt thankful that we had many strong voices who were passionate about

making our schools successful in that BOE race.

At that time, there were four great candidates running for three seats. This race will be different in many ways than it was four years ago. The field is much larger, [and candidates have] widely differing views on public education. Our students deserve three candidates who will put their education first.

What we know is that Jodi,

Malia and Dan have been doing this critical work over the last four years, and we look forward to voting for them so that they will continue to advocate for all students, and make policies that give them access to the education they deserve.

*Kristen Bidingger and Kim Hodgkiss-Lilly are Cleveland Heights residents and district parents. Hodgkiss-Lilly is a Heights alum.*

# Three BOE candidates have worked against public schools

Krissy Dietrich Gallagher

All are welcome here. It's our city's slogan, and an ideal I believe in. We are a community whose residents represent a wide array of backgrounds, races, religions, socio-economic classes and lived experiences. We also have residents with varying political views, though it is clear we are predominantly a Democratic, progressive city.

While all are welcome here, and all are welcome to share their views, argue for or against certain issues, and speak up in public forums, I strongly believe that when people seek to serve in an official capacity, where they are charged with making decisions and setting

policy on behalf of other people, they should at least share those people's values.

We have three candidates for CH-UH school board who have never done anything to demonstrate that they love, or even like or respect the institution of public education. They have worked for years to discredit and defund our public district and, as far-right-wing Trump supporters, they certainly do not reflect the values of the vast majority of the students and families who use our schools.

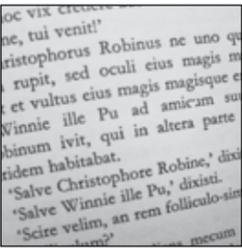
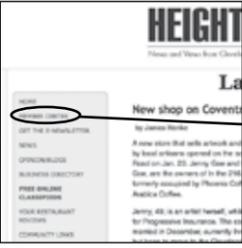
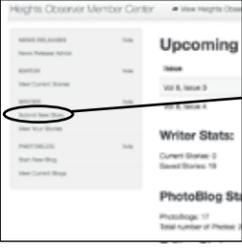
I can't imagine that anyone would believe that I, as a pro-choice atheist, should make decisions or set policy on behalf of Communion of Saints . . . and I would have to agree! That is most certainly not my place. Similarly, it is most certainly not the place of anti-science, right-wing extremists like Mo Lynn to sit on our community's school board.

I urge voters to choose any three of the four pro-public school candidates in this race: Mario Clopton-Zymler, Dan Heintz, Malia Lewis and Jodi Sourini. They have values we can be proud of.

*Krissy Dietrich Gallagher is a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights, a graduate of the Heights schools and a former Coventry School teacher. She is a freelance journalist under contract with the CH-UH City School District, and is proud to raise her two sons in this community.*

# Observe!

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- Reward yourself**; you're about to be published. We'll review and edit your article, and let you know if we have any questions.
 

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## Seren should be CH's first elected mayor

Lynn Tramonte

Kahlil Seren wants every street in Cleveland Heights to see the street sweepers, not just the ones lined with mansions.

The mayoral candidate unveiled this “radical” position at a backyard meet-and-greet, after an attendee noted disparities in street services between affluent and less-affluent neighborhoods. She wanted to know what he would do about it if elected mayor.

Kahlil had an answer. He almost always has a well-thought-out answer, and when he doesn't, he is ready to listen and learn.

Kahlil honed a simple strategy for governance at the Levin College of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State University, at Policy Matters Ohio, as an advisor to Cuyahoga County Council, and serving on Cleveland Heights City Council. First: collect data. Are street services parceled out differently in neighborhoods across Cleveland Heights? That's step one. If the answer is yes, then figure out why, and how to fix it.

Another example: Now that the city has data regarding disparities in police stops by race, Kahlil said, we can create and implement a plan to address it. He praised Police Chief Mecklenburg for gathering and publishing the information, which he sees as the first step to real change, not window dressing.

He doesn't talk like a politician, because he isn't a politician. He is a problem-solver. That's why he's been endorsed by the *Plain Dealer/Cleveland.com*, Cuyahoga County Democratic Party, North Shore AFL-CIO, Our Revolution Ohio, Cleveland Building and Construction Trades Council, Young Democrats of Cuyahoga County, Cleveland Stonewall Democrats, Cuyahoga County Progressive Caucus, #VoteProChoice, and Primary Ohio.

During the candidates' meeting with the *Plain Dealer/Cleveland.com* editorial board, others on the ballot promised 48-hour response times to phone calls, and a direct line for residents to speak with the mayor. The endorsement noted that “Seren emphasized the importance in engaging with the citizens at the beginning of decisions and debates, rather than waiting until decisions are already made and dealing with the fallout.”

I don't know about you, but I would much rather have a mayor who has done the research on policy problems and solutions, and solicits input from residents before making major decisions, than one whose time is eaten [away] by phone calls from every NextDoor complainer.

If Kahlil Seren is our first elected mayor in Cleveland Heights, our city will be one of the best-managed places in all of Ohio, and beyond.

*Lynn Tramonte is president of Anacaona, LLC, and director of the Ohio Immigrant Alliance. She lives in Cleveland Heights.*

## Resident grateful for public schools and their advocates

Joan Spoerl

Despite Cleveland Heights' many challenges, I often feel like I live in a utopia, especially when engaging in public-school activities.

As a parent, I've been blessed to work with a vast array of wonderful people to support our schools and uplift all, advancing the common good.

Those wonderful people include CH-UH Board of Education incumbents Malia Lewis, Jodi Sourini and Dan Heintz, and CH City Council candidate Josie Moore.

Malia, Jodi and Dan all have long-standing involvement and commitment to our district as parents of current students or recent graduates (now at Howard University, Morehouse College, and The College of Wooster). For years, I've seen them volunteer and advocate on behalf of all children, not just their own. I've worked with all in various capacities.

Malia served on the Fairfax PTA, PTA Council, and numerous committees, and has provided much

support to the Heights High theater department, career tech program and cross-country teams over many years.

A resident of University Heights, and the only candidate whose child currently attends our schools, Jodi's smarts and skills were apparent at Lay Facilities Committee and other district meetings, and in PTA and extensive volunteer work.

A public-school teacher and advocate himself, Dan deeply understands the issues and challenges our community's students and our district's teachers face.

I was impressed by the special presentation about school vouchers impacting our district's finances, and was inspired to watch Jodi, Dan and Malia testify on behalf of our students and taxpayers in Columbus in February 2020.

I've quickly come to value city council candidate Josie Moore's initiative, thoughtfulness, insight, and skills in organizing and collaborating. A keen observer of our community, she seeks solutions that work for everybody. She joined several of

us who returned to Columbus to testify in favor of fair-school-funding legislation in May.

Over the years, I've had questions and concerns for district leadership and have learned to ask, listen, learn and work collaboratively before making assumptions, or reacting in frustration. I've learned much from this approach, and am grateful for Malia's, Jodi's and Dan's thoughtfulness, responsiveness and deep knowledge of our district and its issues. They prioritize children's needs, know and value our teachers, and care about the future strength and viability of our community.

With a learning curve to serving on a school board, and many challenges and changes in state policy, we need experienced leaders to lead us into a strong and productive future.

*Joan Spoerl has been a proud resident of Cleveland Heights since 2004. She is the mother of a Heights High junior, and a former teacher who currently works to advance literacy in Cuyahoga County.*

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## Danforth might discard essential housing preservation tools

Deborah Van Kleef

Cleveland Heights' first elected mayor will have to rebuild the city's housing department and programs. The need is especially critical for those neighborhoods that have long suffered blight and disinvestment.

A candidates' survey by the Greater Cleveland Congregations Cleveland Heights Housing Team (<https://chhousingteam.wordpress.com>) provides a useful glimpse into the thoughts of Barbara Danforth and Kahlil Seren on housing policy.

I was dismayed to read that Danforth would consider two policy changes in particular:

1) "The interior point of sale inspection process needs to be evaluated to ensure that it is not an obstacle to homeownership," Danforth stated in the survey. Is Danforth open to removing what is, in fact, an important protection for homebuyers? Houses changing hands would then have to conform only to the codes that address their external condition. A house might

sport a fresh coat of paint and a manicured yard, but conceal costly and dangerous code violations in its electrical, plumbing, heating and other systems. Such a move would eliminate the city's only way to ensure that owner-occupied single dwellings conform to housing codes both inside and out. (Rental properties are inspected throughout every few years.)

2) Danforth also stated, "[Staff could] explore the opportunity for the lending institutions to provide the incentives for the rehabilitation contractors in lieu of the annual foreclosure bond payment of \$15,000." Currently, when a house becomes vacant due to mortgage foreclosure, the bank that holds the title must pay the city a bond of \$15,000. The city uses these funds to cover maintenance of the property, should the bank fail to maintain it. It's not clear what Danforth means by "incentives," but given the history of neglect that necessitated foreclosure bonds in the first place,

her confidence in the banks seems misplaced.

We have point-of-sale inspection and a foreclosure bond ordinance because residents fought hard for them. If used rigorously, they are proven tools for ensuring safe housing and viable neighborhoods. It appears that Danforth is getting her advice on housing policy from people in real estate and banking—sectors not often known to act in the long-term best interests of neighborhoods and communities.

If elected, Danforth could undo the results of decades of citizen advocacy by dismantling essential programs for protecting our housing stock. We can't afford this risk. Seren will move our housing programs forward, not backward. He is the right choice for Cleveland Heights in 2021.

*Deborah Van Kleef is a writer and folk-singer. She and her husband have been owner-occupants of a Cleveland Heights duplex since 1985.*

## Moore endorses Seren for mayor

Josie Moore

On a personal level, I really like all three [primary election] candidates for mayor. I have spoken with Barbara, Melody, and Kahlil, and each cares deeply for this community, has their own distinct leadership style, boasts an impressive résumé that will be useful to our incoming administration, and presents a compelling vision for the future of our city.

While I see the strengths of each candidate, I am endorsing Kahlil for two reasons. First, his values and vision most closely align with what I believe in and want for our city; and second, of these candidates, he has the most experience working in government.

Voting one's values is important because, as 2020 showed us, we can't predict what the future will bring. When we elect people whose values are most like our own, we can rest assured that, when the unexpected happens, they will make decisions we can feel good about. I am confident that Kahlil's progressive values will serve us well, come what may.

And I'll confess: my political interests are a little selfish. My husband and I love our home and neighborhood, and we want to stay here for the rest of our lives. But we also want our children to live nearby when they're older and ready to settle down. My vision for Cleveland Heights is shaped by my desire to create a city that offers future generations everything they may want and need in a community. Kahlil's plans will help build a Cleveland Heights that will appeal to the next generation when they are looking for a place to call home.

Finally, Kahlil's knowledge of and experience in government are unparalleled in the race. I do not believe that "government should be run like a business." On the contrary, the purpose and scope of government are not those of any other sector; because of this, its processes and structures are like no other. Kahlil's education, professional experience, and government service have prepared him well to lead us through this transition smoothly and skillfully.

We are living in a moment of transformation—globally, nationally, and locally. This is a time to let go of what no longer works and to embrace fresh ideas and new realities. Kahlil Seren is ready to lead us toward a sustainable, equitable, prosperous, accountable, and safe Cleveland Heights.

*Josie Moore was formerly a candidate for Cleveland Heights mayor, who suspended her campaign in August. She is now a candidate for the unexpired two-year term on Cleveland Heights City Council.*

# ENDORSEMENT ALERT!

## In recognition of my administration's commitment to sustainability:

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- to upgrade the sewers and apply ARPA funds to same;
- to promote multimodal transportation and complete streets (including building the first two miles of bike lanes and our commitment to bring scooters to the City);
- for taking the "30 by 30" pledge to reduce the City's carbon emissions by 30% by 2030;
- for obtaining the City's first hybrid vehicles;
- for seeking and obtaining an EPA grant to build EV charging stations in the City;
- for seeking green solutions in our ongoing study for new municipal facilities;

**I am honored to receive the endorsement of the Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund.**

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**we've only just begun.**

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# Good lake, bad lake

Korbi Roberts

We have two well-loved lakes in the Heights—Lower Lake and Upper Lake (Horseshoe Lake) of Doan Brook.

They were created in the early 1800s as mill ponds for the Shaker Societies' water-powered mills. By the early 1900s the land, renamed Shaker Heights Parkland, became the property of Cleveland, but only on the condition it be reserved and protected continuously for public use.

Shaker Heights and Cleveland Heights embraced the land's beauty and unique recreational value, and gained responsibility for it by lease agreement. Caretakers and visitors over time seemed to agree that the two lakes are the crowning glory of this parkland.

Fast forward to 2021. Horseshoe Lake has suddenly been taken from us, and we deserve to have it back. The Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORSRD) drained it quickly a few years ago, without warning, saying it was to fix the dam, and would be temporary. But the water is still missing. No provisions were made by the supposedly "ecologically concerned" sewer people to relocate or save the fish, frogs, turtles, birds, and other wildlife left stranded by the receding water. Some flew or crawled away, but a large number suffered and died in the resultant mud flat.

NEORSRD uses the Doan Brook watershed, with its Shaker lakes—along with a network of storm-sewer pipes along neighborhood streets—to collect rain and stormwater runoff from a portion of the Heights. It has a fiduciary responsibility to help pay for its upkeep. Citizens pay the NEORSRD monthly fees to help maintain this and the larger regional system, so NEORSRD has an obligation to return a portion of what we pay, to cover the cost of local needs.

Instead, NEORSRD is turning a deaf ear. When the Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources announced that both Shaker Lakes Class 1 dams needed repair, NEORSRD took it upon itself to decide for everybody that Shaker Heights Parkland had no value other than as a sewer system. It said

Horseshoe Lake had to go. It didn't fit into NEORSRD's goals, and had no "commercial value."

Originally allocating \$14.7 million, from our payments to the district, for Horseshoe Lake, NEORSRD changed its tune and announced it won't pay a penny if the cities don't forfeit their lake. Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights deserve and depend on this funding to maintain the lakes as promised.

Lower Lake barely missed the chopping block itself, and only because NEORSRD needs that lake for sewer purposes. NEORSRD has convinced the Doan Brook groups (who should be protecting the parkland) that Lower Lake is GOOD, but Horseshoe Lake is BAD. But wait a minute, they are BOTH LAKES.

(Keep in mind this same sewer utility recently turned our Ambler Park downstream into a cement wasteland for sewer tunnels. In violation of the deeds, I might add.)

Horseshoe Lake, when properly maintained, has the same flood-control, water-filtering and nutrient-recycling benefits, and provides the same wildlife and migratory bird habitat, as Lower Lake. A man-made, human-landscaped, replacement stream is in no way better than our irreplaceable, historic lake. With miles and miles of our Eastside streams presently in dark, underground, lifeless, sewer tunnels (just waiting to be rehabilitated), why are so many eager to get their paws on Horseshoe Lake's small, drained real estate, using the lie, "it's ecologically better."

The Doan Brook watershed is already over-developed (which is the real reason for flooding in University Circle). Horseshoe Lake's demise will put that priceless park's real estate in the path of future danger and development. We have fought so hard to protect that lake that was part of the Shakers' consecrated holy land, always open and free for all to share.

*Korbi Roberts is a trustee of the Cleveland Heights Historical Society, and a Shaker Heights resident. This opinion is hers, not that of the historical society.*

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



AUGUST 17, 2021

Board members present were Dan Heintz, Malia Lewis, Jodi Sourini, and Beverly Wright. President James Posch was absent. Also present were Superintendent Elizabeth Kirby and Treasurer Scott Gainer.

**Pandemic relief fund survey**

The district will receive \$17.5 million in pandemic emergency relief funds that is to be spent by September 2024. This represents 14 percent of the 2021-22 budget. The district administration surveyed many stakeholder groups; the survey included items concerning the needs of special student populations, such as English language and special education learners. Overall, responses were similar between groups and centered on academic instructional loss, and social and emotional concerns

**Strategic plan evaluation**

The board discussed at length the school district's strategic plan and the manner and metrics that will be used by departments to evaluate progress toward established goals.

LWV Observer: Robin Koslen.

SEPTEMBER 8, 2021

All board members were present, as were the superintendent and treasurer.

**Public comments**

Before public comments began, James Posch read aloud the board policies reminding presenters of the five-minute time limit and the policy that restricts school facilities from being used to promote a political cause or candidacy.

Dorothy Moulthrop, CEO of Open Doors Academy (ODA), thanked the board for the opportunity to run a summer camp at Monticello Middle School, which served 490 students. ODA is an educational nonprofit that runs out-of-school academic and enrichment programs.

Charles Drake, a resident and Heights High grad [and a candidate for the CH-UH Board of Education], questioned how residents benefit from the sale of Coventry school to Coventry library, and sales of other vacant properties owned by the school board. He also complained about fringe benefits paid to administrators.

Melissa Wood accused the school board of a false narrative regarding negotiations with the teachers' union. Wood stated the negotiations were not a success and that the school board should step down. When she spoke of a candidate running for school board, Posch asked her to comply with the policy against presenting election issues.

A Heights High student said that community infighting and online misbehavior needs to end, and objected to his school becoming a battleground for conflicting ideologies.

Resident Maureen Lynn [a candidate for the CH-UH Board of Education] stated her belief that public schools are essential for a community. She holds that the district is well-funded. She requested a state performance audit and called for transparent funding. When she spoke of a candidate running for school

board, Posch asked her to comply with the policy against presenting election issues.

**Recognitions and awards**

Superintendent Kirby recognized the 28 AP (Advanced Placement) Scholars for spring 2021; of those were 12 with honors and eight with distinction.

**Superintendent's report**

Tiger Virtual Academy (TVA) has a current enrollment of approximately 200 K-12 students.

Noble Elementary School was named a PTA National School of Excellence. Also, the National Network of Partnership Schools awarded the school its 2021 Partnership Award.

Kirby announced the COVID dashboard is up to date and on the CH-UH district website.

**Air conditioning**

Initial research has begun into air conditioning for buildings without it, in preparation for a feasibility study. The board agreed that the next Lay Facilities Committee meeting needs to discuss air conditioning.

**2026 Strategic Plan**

The bulk of the plan was presented in August. At this meeting, the superintendent presented the planning timeline and the strategic plan dashboard, which enumerated key data targets and the strategies to be employed and measured for each goal. The detailed 2026 Strategic Plan is available online. The strategic plan and the process for implementing it will be on the district's website, for people to view and track the progress of each goal. The board approved the plan.

**Treasurer's report**

Bond sale will close Sept. 9. Taxpayers will benefit from savings on the general obligation bonds. Savings on certificates of participation (COPs) will free up funds for school improvements.

Treasurer Gainer is waiting for specific funding amounts to be allotted under the state budget's Fair School Funding Plan. The state distributes funds twice a month. The October payments will provide a clearer [look at the] amount of the allocation to CH-UH schools.

**Wiley property**

The Wiley property is being considered as a location for a bus depot, but needs modifications for this purpose. Also, sharing part of a bus depot at the Wiley site with the city of University Heights has been discussed with UH Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan. He will receive an invitation to the October work session to discuss this issue.

LWV Observer: Rosemarie Fairman.

Documents for all board meetings can be accessed at [www.chuh.org/BoardofEducation.aspx](http://www.chuh.org/BoardofEducation.aspx).

Board meetings are livestreamed on the district's YouTube channel ([www.youtube.com/CHUHSchools](http://www.youtube.com/CHUHSchools)) and recorded for later viewing.

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 HOMES OF DISTINCTION

# Heights High students and alums beautify yards of seniors

Krissy Dietrich Gallagher

When Heights High students and recent graduates joined with youth leaders this summer to freshen up the lawns of Heights seniors, everyone benefitted. The teens learned landscaping and professional business skills; neighborhood yards were beautified, and, in one case, a woman's slide into depression was averted.

The program, WAVE: We're A Village of Efficacy, is the brainchild of community leaders Steve Walker and Jerod Johnson. The two have worked together for years with children and teens in the Heights, teaching, mentoring, and guiding them as they improve both their neighborhoods and their lives.

In collaboration with the city of Cleveland Heights and its Office on Aging, elderly homeowners in need of yard work were identified. Using Community Development Block Grant funds, the Parks and Recreation Department facilitated the purchase of tools, equipment and plants. The city also provided storage space for equipment in between jobs.

Various staff at Heights High helped identify students who would enjoy and benefit from participating in a yardwork project called Bridging the Gap. In all, 24 young people rehabilitated the yards of eight homes throughout the Heights.

Because Walker and Johnson



Students Troy Gentry, Jemier Johnson, Chris Cotton, and Jason Perry, with WAVE leaders Steve Walker and Jerod Johnson.

wanted the students to experience landscape work from start to finish, they and the student participants first met with homeowners for an evaluation of their yards and to hear their preferences, such as favorite colors and flowers, how they hoped to use their space, or specific safety concerns.

"It was crucial to get their input," said Walker, "but we also wanted to promote the social-emotional piece for our kids. Those conversations helped [the students] practice communication skills, build self-confidence, and inspire leadership."

The students then crafted designs, and purchased the necessary materials. On Fridays, a minimum of six students would spend four to eight hours working at a residence.

For Barbara Taylor, the experience was transformative. Like so many, she described the past year and a half as "long, depressing, and horrible." She had hired a landscaper to fix up her long-neglected yard, but once he was paid up front, he never returned. "I can't describe how despondent I was. I felt depressed every time I looked out the window," said Taylor.

Taylor called the Office on Aging, and staff recommended the WAVE group. "Within a week, they were here," Taylor said. "These kids were just astounding."

The one thing she wanted to keep was the overgrown rose bush her mother had planted 40 years ago. "They brought another to put next to it, and I nearly cried. When these guys came over, it was like the heavens



Heights High sisters Taylor, Jordan, and Bailey Evans plant flowers for an elderly neighbor.

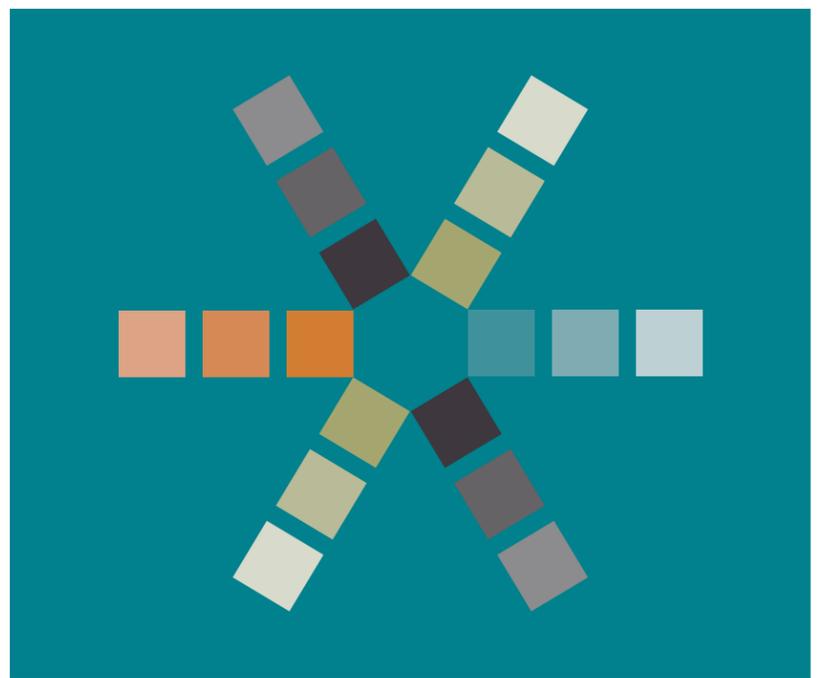
opened up. They were such cool kids and did such a good job," said Taylor.

Johnson and Walker hope to expand the program to include more homes, and provide long-term maintenance care. Johnson suggested the possibility of making the program year-round, with leaf raking and snow shoveling in fall and winter.

Both men were proud of how the program broke down generational barriers, hence the name Bridging the Gap. This experience enabled young and elderly people to get to know one another and interact on something positive and meaningful.

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

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# RoxEl PTA celebrates literacy with first read-a-thon

Clare Taft

The Roxboro Elementary School (RoxEl) PTA held its first read-a-thon in September. The event followed more than five years of PTA and school partnerships designed to encourage literacy, and expanded on Roxboro's 2021-22 school-year theme: #RoxREADS.

The 10-day event encouraged students to pledge to read for at least 20 minutes each night—with the schoolwide goal of reaching 46,000 total reading minutes during the event. RoxEl students surpassed that goal, reading a total of 72,035 minutes, or 1,200 hours. The top reader for the school, fifth-grader Oliver Costello, read for 2,160 minutes. Students who read and logged their reading minutes were rewarded with raffle tickets for prize baskets. Prizes were also awarded to the top readers in each grade; to Costello, as top reader for the school; and to seven additional students who each read for more than 1,000 minutes.

Many local businesses sponsored read-a-thon prizes. They included Luna Bakery & Cafe; Card My Yard, Shaker Heights; Justin Ragor, State Farm agent; Little River Pet Resort; Cari Nelson, of McDowell Homes; The Children's Museum of Cleveland; New Leaf Landscaping; Skettle Electric; Quintana's Barber & Dream Spa; Mac's Backs-Books on Coven-

try; S'Wonderful Gifts; Jumpstart Gymnastics; Tommy's; and Appletree Books. Students were encouraged, but not required, to ask family and friends to sponsor their reading with donations.

During the week, the PTA hosted themed days to increase motivation. "Wednesday's theme was 'Chill out with a good book,' and we provided popsicles for everyone," said Mary Pat Jolivette, co-chair of the PTA's literacy committee.

The read-a-thon also included nightly virtual read-alouds, enabling students to listen to books read by teachers, staff, and Superintendent Elizabeth Kirby. Students were encouraged to log the minutes they spent listening to read-alouds, reading in school, and reading at home to family, friends, or even to the family pet.

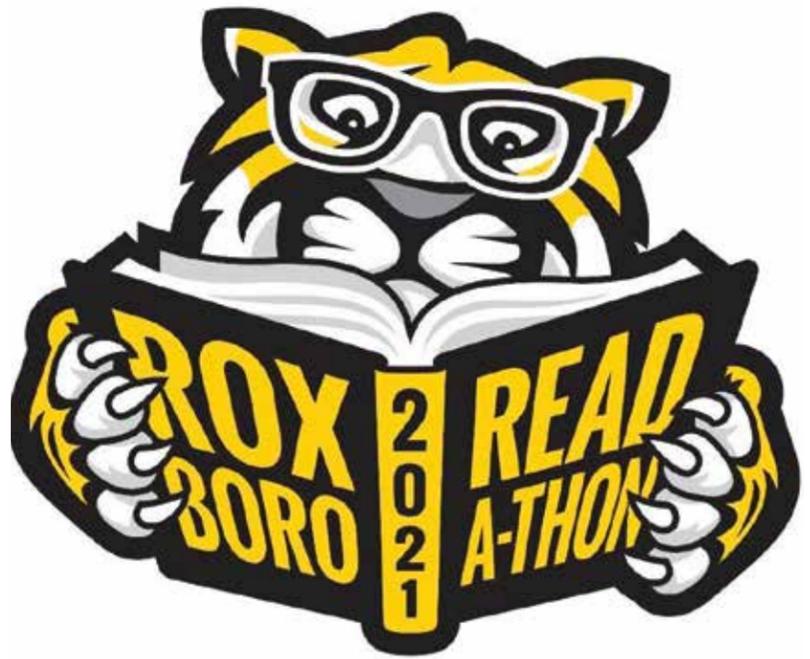
The PTA capped off read-a-thon week with the Amazing Reading Race, an outdoor event in which students and their families raced through six stops in the Coventry neighborhood, playing literacy games, and finding clues to finish the race.

"The Amazing Reading Race wasn't just fun for the families, but really important in reconnecting our community. Many families have felt isolated [during the pandemic], and this event enabled us to see one another safely, and to remember what fun it is to be part of Tiger Nation," said Jolivette.

Since 2016, the PTA, administration, and teachers at Roxboro have partnered for literacy-based programs. The PTA purchased, and continues to stock, a book-vending machine in the school, providing free new books to students several times a year. This year's #RoxREADS theme builds on the momentum created.

"The RoxEl staff is committed to getting our students excited about reading. We want to model good behaviors through different activities, such as Drop Everything and Read, sharing books we enjoy with students, reading during lunch time, and demonstrating that we all love to read," said Shelley Pulling, RoxEl's principal.

Literacy-based initiatives also help the school meet its learning goals.



"The #RoxREADS initiative has helped to close our achievement gaps by engaging in routines and programming that are inclusive of all students. Our staff has shown great determination as we ensure that all students have opportunities to increase daily reading time," said Candace Summers, Title I lead at the school.

As Roxboro celebrated nearly

100% participation in the read-a-thon, students were rewarded with an outdoor dance party sponsored by the PTA. To learn more about RoxEl PTA's literacy-based initiatives, go to [roxelpta.org/read-a-thon.html](http://roxelpta.org/read-a-thon.html).

Clare Taft is co-chair of the PTA's literacy committee and former president of the RoxEl PTA.

*Focused Tattoo welcomes all*  
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## Noble CLC aims to support students and community

Kristiaun Copez-Minor

Noble Elementary School is piloting a Community Learning Center (CLC) during the 2021-22 school year. The CLC model is shown to increase school attendance, decrease negative behaviors, increase parent involvement, and increase test scores and grades.

Learning centers utilize local organizations and resources to benefit the community. The model supports schools, organizations and the community, working together to remove any barriers to achieving excellent grades that students may face. The centers also provide services and programs to benefit the community at large.

From September through No-

vember, a series of surveys and focus groups will seek to engage the community in identifying what its needs are, and what programs and services should be offered at Noble's CLC.

In the long term, Noble Elementary School may open for extended hours, for family engagement and community services.

The results of the surveys and goals for the Community Learning Center will be shared with the community in February.

If you would like to give input through a survey, send an e-mail to [K\\_copez@chuh.org](mailto:K_copez@chuh.org).

Kristiaun Copez-Minor is the Community Learning Center organizer for Noble Elementary School.

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# FOR CH-UH SCHOOL BOARD ★ ELECTION NOVEMBER 2



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**LYNN**



Mordechai

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- We believe all schools in the district must be treated equally and with the same passion.
- We believe special education families should have easy access to all guaranteed benefits and services.
- We believe that more-of-the-same leadership offers no chance for forward momentum or different outcomes.
- We believe angry, slanderous speech has no place in this community if all are truly welcome.

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## VOTE FOR CHANGE ON NOVEMBER 2



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**DRAKE**



Maureen "Mo"

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## UH library encourages creativity with new traveling sketchbooks



The traveling sketchbooks can be found in the children's area at the University Heights branch of Heights Libraries.

COURTESY HEIGHTS LIBRARIES

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SCAN TO DONATE



Sheryl Banks

Heights Libraries University Heights branch is encouraging kids to share their creativity—with the library and with one another—by way of a new traveling sketchbook collection.

Throughout the months of October and November, young people can come in and draw in a sketchbook at one of the library's tables, or sign out a sketchbook and take it home to draw in, and then return.

At the end of the project, the library hopes it will have a collection of local young artists' work that it can

share with the community.

"This project is an opportunity for kids to showcase their creativity, and be inspired by the creativity of other kids, too," said Youth Services Associate Kate Atherton, who is also a visual artist whose work can be seen every year as part of the Pekar Park Comic Fest promotional posters. "We are really looking forward to seeing what the kids create!"

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

## Phil Atkin for University Heights Mayor

I'm a builder, living here 30 years watching homes being renovated or added to; and neighborhoods changing over.

I have background in government, a master's in Urban Planning. It's bothered me that over the last four years issues were not addressed, matters were not being handled with decency.

***It's the residents who own the city! Their Needs matter!***



### WHAT I'LL DO AS MAYOR

- ✓ **Education:** Active Advocacy for Parents and Children. The children need help!
- ✓ **Police:** Support a storied department that takes care of its residents.
- ✓ **City Departments:** Work with staff to review and improve services.
- ✓ **Finances/Taxes:** Property tax rates are among the highest in Ohio, yet little comes to the city. RITA taxes are set at the highest bracket in Ohio. **Taxes have to be brought down, and the city share improved.**
- ✓ **Floundering Commercial Development:** Professional planning is needed to bolster potential and taxes to city.

**I will Address Issues, Not Ignore Them** – bring all the players together to address problems, **including residents, staff, City Council, experts from outside.**

**Turning Difficulties Into Opportunities For Improvement**

**LET'S TAKE THIS PATH!**

## What's going on at your library?

### Coventry Village Branch

1925 Coventry Road, 216-321-3400

Thursdays, Oct. 7, 14 and 21, 4 p.m.  
*Chemistry of Clean.* Why do ordinary household products have extraordinary cleaning powers? It's all about the chemistry! Learn how to make safe and environmentally friendly bath bombs and cleaning products with cleaning expert Brandi Smith. Help make the environment safe by using basic home materials and the power of STEAM. For ages 12 to 18; younger children allowed, with supervision.

### Lee Road Branch

2345 Lee Road, 216-932-3600

Tuesday, Oct. 12, 7 p.m.  
*Tech Talk: 3-D Printers.* You've heard of 3-D printers, but how exactly do they work? What are they used for? And why do we have them at Heights Libraries? Join us to learn what these powerful, innovative machines have to offer. Registration began Sept. 28.

### Noble Neighborhood Branch

2800 Noble Road, 216-291-5665

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 11 a.m.

*Stories for Sky Watchers.* Explore the wonders of the night sky during the day, with stories, songs, and a hands-on craft project. Learn about the objects in the night sky, and take home tips for stargazing with the family.

### University Heights Branch

13866 Cedar Road, 216-321-4700

Monday, Oct. 18, 6 p.m.

*Painting for Everybody.* For beginners and seasoned pros, an evening of relaxation and painting. The library will provide the paint-by-numbers painting kits and ambiance—all you have to do is have fun. This is a drop-in event, so come or leave whenever you like. Space is limited. Registration is open.

### Online

Mondays, Oct. 11 through Nov. 15, 6 p.m.

*Basic Introduction to American Sign Language.* Join us on Zoom to learn the basics in communicating in American Sign Language. Refresh and build upon your skills. Registration began Sept. 27.



COURTESY HEIGHTS LIBRARIES

Residents examine possible design elements for a renovated Noble Neighborhood Branch.

LIBRARY continued from page 1

broad steps.”

Ortmeyer’s presentation included several options for increasing space for library users of all ages by building an expansion where the Noble Road Presbyterian Church building, and surrounding 1.3 acres of property currently stand. The library purchased the church building and property in March, for \$315,000.

After the presentation, attendees were invited to examine and respond to 16 posters featuring possible indoor and outdoor design concepts, such as outdoor event and reading spaces, larger indoor workspaces with computers, more natural light, and reading nooks for teens and school-age kids. Attendees were encouraged to put red stickers on ideas they didn’t like, and green stickers on ideas they did like. They also were encouraged to write down more-nuanced feedback on sticky notes.

“The primary intent was to spark dialogue around topics and ideas to inform the future design,” said Ortmeyer. “It’s less about a thumbs up or thumbs down on the pictures themselves.”

Those who were unable to attend the open house still have time to examine the conceptual images

and give feedback. The physical posters are at the Noble Neighborhood Branch, 2800 Noble Road, and can be studied anytime the library is open. The poster images and Ort-

meyer’s presentation are available on the Heights Libraries website at <https://heightslibrary.org/noble-branch-renaissance-project>.

All public input will be exam-

ined and quantified, and will inform the next stage of the renovation. The library expects to put out a request for proposals for the design project in early 2022.

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

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## Scorpacciata takes over Lee Road ghost kitchen



COURTESY MEGHAN CONNELLY

Scorpacciata, owned and operated by Cleveland Heights native Peter Reuter, is bringing pizza to the north side of the Cedar Lee Business District. Operating as a "ghost kitchen," in the same former diner where Rising Star Coffee is located, Scorpacciata offers carryout only, and takes orders by phone. Scorpacciata's pizza is a hybrid of New York and Neapolitan styles. Reuter's focus is creating innovative menus inspired by local and seasonal harvests. Patrons are welcome to dine on the patio just outside of the building, or take their meal down the street to enjoy at another Cedar Lee business, such as The Wine Spot or CLE Urban Winery.

## Heights Observer seeks ideas for annual holiday gift guide



Jessica Schantz

Each year, the *Heights Observer* asks local businesses to submit gift ideas for its annual Holiday Gift Guide, which the *Observer* publishes in its November print issue. This year, suggestions are due by Oct. 15.

The guide is designed to help Cleveland Heights and University Heights residents discover the unique items independent brick-and-mortar retailers are offering this holiday season, and encourage them to "shop local first" to support the Heights economy.

The 2021 guide will contain listings in each of the following categories: Stocking Stuffers (\$10 or less), Gifts Less than \$50, Gifts \$50 to \$150, Gifts More than \$150, and The Non-Traditional Gift.

Heights retail business owners are invited to e-mail high-

resolution photos and brief descriptions of suggested items to [jschantz@futureheights.org](mailto:jschantz@futureheights.org), no later than Oct. 15. Put "Holiday Gift Guide" in the subject line. Entries must be available for purchase at a brick-and-mortar store in Cleveland Heights or University Heights, and not available exclusively online.

For each item, submit the following information: item category (one of the five categories listed above), item name, item price, name of business submitting the item, and a JPG photo of the item (PNG files not accepted). Limit descriptive text for each item to one sentence, of no more than 30 words.

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

In addition to appearing in the November print issue, the guide also will be featured in the *Heights Observer's* weekly e-newsletter in the lead-up to the holidays, and online at [www.heightsobserver.org](http://www.heightsobserver.org).

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

# Baldwin Wallace students find new venue at Beaumont



Baldwin Wallace musical theater seniors will perform Disney songs at Beaumont on Oct. 4.

Wadsworth Productions, noted that the move to Beaumont continues the Nighttown tradition and will again bring the students to Cleveland's East Side. Wadsworth handled the music at Nighttown and has been producing music events at a variety of regional venues since it closed.

The first production under the new arrangement will take place at Beaumont at 7 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 4. Seniors in the Baldwin-Wallace music

theater program will present an all-Disney show, featuring hits from several musicals.

Wadsworth noted that the kid-friendly show will appeal to audiences of all ages, and will provide the audience with a chance to see a new group of theater professionals as they prepare for careers on the national stage.

The Baldwin Wallace musical theater program, under the direction of Victoria Bussert, is recognized as one of the top programs in the country, with graduates actively working in the theater.

Tickets for the Oct. 4 event cost \$15, and can be purchased at <https://tinyurl.com/59v5fys9>. To arrange for groups of 10 or more, call 216-978-2047. Proof of COVID vaccination will be required of those who are eligible for the vaccine. Children who are unvaccinated will be required to remain masked throughout the performance.

*Bruce Hennes is a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights and CEO of Hennes Communications. Over the past 10 years, he has donated his time and energy to bringing Baldwin Wallace productions to Nighttown.*

Bruce Hennes

For more than a decade, Nighttown in Cleveland Heights was an important resource for Baldwin Wallace University's (BW) music theater program, giving students the opportunity to perform in a nightclub setting similar to what they would experience as working artists.

When Nighttown closed last year, it looked as though these budding theater professionals might lose the opportunity to hone this

aspect of their performance skills; but, luckily, those students have found a new venue at Beaumont School.

Beaumont, an all-girls Catholic high school in Cleveland Heights, houses a 147-seat black box theater, with professional-grade sound and lights. When Beaumont was contacted about the possibility of using the space as a training ground for BW's musical theater students, school president Wendy Hoke readily agreed.

Jim Wadsworth, of Jim Wad-

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# Heights Arts' next Haiku Hike is Oct. 30

Megan Gallagher

Enjoying nature in all forms became especially popular during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, with folks getting out for walks, hikes and bike rides, even in the cold of winter.

To celebrate all that nature has to offer, Heights Arts now offers Haiku Hikes, led by Ray McNiece, Cleveland Heights poet laureate and Cleveland Arts Prize winner.

The art of haiku poetry dates back to ancient Japanese culture, where poems were written in three sentences, with five syllables in the first line, seven in the second, and five in the third.

Each Haiku Hike takes place in and around Cleveland Heights, in a park or public space where nature inspires the poems. McNiece leads hikers through the park to observe the beautiful scenery and write their own compositions as inspiration strikes.

Upcoming hikes will take



Cleveland Arts Prize-winner Ray McNiece shares a poem on a recent Haiku Hike.

place at Cain Park on the following Saturdays: Oct. 30, Jan. 8 and April 23. Hikers will meet McNiece at a defined location (disclosed upon registration) at 10 a.m., and set out on a two-hour haiku adventure.

Hikes will begin with a formal introduction to haiku, continue with stops along the way, then conclude with a final sharing. For more information, visit [www.heightsarts.org](http://www.heightsarts.org).

Haiku Hikes are part of Heights Arts' longstanding Heights Writes program, one of the core elements of its mission to celebrate the region's literary, musical and visual artists.

Heights Arts names a new Cleveland Heights poet laureate every two years, and offers programs that infuse poetry into community life. Other Heights Writes projects include the lively Haiku Death Match, and the Ekphrastic series that pairs poets with artists in bi-monthly exhibition talks.

"Our literary programming has really grown over the last 20 years," said Executive Director Rachel Bernstein. "We are proud of the fact that our poet laureateship was the first of its kind in the state of Ohio. Ray's Haiku Hikes are a perfect way to celebrate Cleveland Heights' 100th anniversary, while providing opportunities for our community to engage with poetry in a deeply personal way."

McNiece's guidance on the hikes is intended to inspire poets, from rookies to veterans. McNiece was just awarded the 2021 Cleveland Arts Prize Lifetime Achievement Award. His poet laureateship will be extended by one year due to the COVID pandemic.

"Ray became poet laureate just as the pandemic took hold and we had to close our doors," said Bernstein. "It was frustrating for all of us not to be able to move forward with our programming for many months, and to have to instead simply concentrate on staying alive as an organization. This August, our Heights Writes Community Team unanimously agreed that Ray's term be extended, and we are delighted that he has accepted!"

Megan Gallagher is the Heights Arts marketing intern. Reach her at [marketing@heightsarts.org](mailto:marketing@heightsarts.org).

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# A long road



SONGS AND STORIES

David Budin

I used to walk up my street, Belmar Road, to where it ends at Mayfield Road; illegally run across Mayfield; go to the opening in the old stone wall; and walk up a long flight of old stone steps. At the top, a gravel path led between two houses to the top of Hampshire hill, above Coventry Road. Across the street, just south of Cadwell Avenue, was the entrance to the mysterious Rock Court.

The dark walk up that dirt road, through a tiny forest and past a few spooky houses, led to a big hill that, toward the bottom, passed the back of a Pick-N-Pay supermarket (now Marc's); a loud, foul-smelling kosher chicken market (wait—I mean fowl-smelling); and a few not-so-scary houses. The road ended at Euclid Heights Boulevard, across the street from the original Coventry Elementary School.

That was my route to and from school on many days when I attended Coventry, from kindergarten through sixth grade—though some days I got there and back via Coventry Road, with its three bakeries

(where I bought sweet rolls), three drug stores (where I bought baseball cards and comic books), Eastern European butcher shops and fish mongers, two Jewish delis, and other old stores that changed into head shops and clothing, arts, and crafts boutiques, starting when the hippies (like me) invaded the neighborhood in the late-'60s.

Those things I described at the top of Rock Court are still there. But the three houses at the bottom of the hill are gone—the subject of protests in the 1970s, when the houses' residents and some community activists tried to save them, but lost out to an expanded Pick-N-Pay and its parking lot. The kosher chicken market is long gone, along with the squawking chickens, and the feathers that flew out every time a customer opened the front door.

The original Coventry school is gone, razed in the mid-'70s, in favor of a new building, which still stands, but is no longer a school. And those old stone stairs from Mayfield to Hampshire have disappeared. They deteriorated to the point of being unsafe, so the city closed the gap in the wall and removed the path at the top.

But all of that was my world through elementary school. In my junior high years, I still used the old stone stairs to get to school, but when I hit the top, I turned left and followed Hampshire into Cumberland Park on the way to Roosevelt. In the eighth and ninth grades, on nice days, sometimes I wouldn't make it out of the park. I would hide out in a stand of bushes (that is still there) and I'd read, eat and sleep until the end of the school day. In my junior high summers, I



The entrance to Rock Court, off of Hampshire Road, looks exactly the same today as it did when I was a kid.

spent most days at Cumberland Park, playing on its softball team and hanging out. I also discovered bike riding in new neighborhoods—the streets that ran west off of Coventry Road, like Edgehill, Overlook, Derbyshire and Berkshire—and it was a revelation to me how much nicer and larger those residences were than the one I lived in, just a few block away.

When I reached Heights High, I met new people and explored new areas, surprised, again, by huge houses in areas like the Fairmount Boulevard Historic District, and those of two good friends who lived in a couple of giant houses on Fairfax—houses that are easily four times the size of the one I lived in.

Once I went with one of those friends to sell candy bars for a Heights Choir fundraiser. We had a lot of success, especially on a street called Delaware Drive, at the top of Cedar Hill. I was impressed by how friendly and generous its residents were. It opened my eyes and my mind, and altered my attitude a bit, about how people can be. I always remembered that street, in particular. I thought that the kids who lived in neighborhoods like this

and the others I had discovered were the lucky ones. It's not that I didn't understand that their parents worked hard to be able to afford living there. But I thought the kids were lucky to have that opportunity.

Now I live on Delaware myself. We've been here for the past 36 years, so my kids spent their childhoods here. And my grandchildren, who also live on a very nice street in Cleveland Heights, spend a lot of time here. And they spend a lot of time at their other grandparents' house, on yet another beautiful street in Cleveland Heights. We've all worked hard. And we're all lucky. I know that not everyone—even in Cleveland Heights—has had as many opportunities.

And when kids come to my door selling stuff for school fundraisers, I always say yes. I feel I owe it to them, and the world.

*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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