



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN
 Thursday, December 14, 2017; Neighborhood Family Practice Winter Cultural Festival, 3569 Ridge Road: Lina Alduroobi pours tea for a guest. Alduroobi cooked several dishes to share at the festival: a traditional Iraqi rice and chicken dish and a vegetarian dish called Dolma that includes stuffed grape leaves, stuffed cabbage leaves, onions and eggplant.

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 CLEVELAND, OHIO
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Vol. 45, No. 1 January 2018

Plain Press

Cleveland's Near Westside Newspaper

LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland breaks ground for new facility on Detroit Avenue

The LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland is building a new home for the Center which will front on Detroit Avenue in the Gordon Square Arts District.

LGBT Community Center Devel-

opment Director Shae London says donations from an angel donor will allow the Center to completely own its new building at 6705 Detroit Avenue. Literature about the new facility indicates it will be environ-

mentally friendly with a LEED Silver Certification. The new location will have flexible meeting rooms, space rentals for partner organizations and social events like weddings and anniversaries. The facility will feature a David Bohnett Cyber Center with free public WiFi. It will have a large community drop in space and resource center, a fully operational kitchen, a rooftop patio, street-level entrance and complete physical accessibility.

The architect firm working on the new home for the Center is Weber Murphy. The facility will have a visible façade on Detroit Avenue in the heart of the Gordon Square Arts District. "The Center's new home will be a versatile and modern facility that will be a visible, tangible symbol of hope, pride and equality of LGBTQ+ and ally-identified individuals in Cleveland and beyond," says literature passed out at the ground-breaking ceremony for the facility.

At December 13th groundbreaking ceremony, the LGBT Community Center also celebrated a successful fundraising campaign that will provide funding for its future home and set up a \$1 million endowment to help fund future programs.

LGBT Community Center Board of Directors Past President Bryan continued on page 5



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Friday, December 8, 2017; Westown Winter Frolic, Halloran Park Skating Rink, 3550 W. 117th Street: Jaedon Kendall, age 5, demonstrates his skills on the ice. The Winter Frolic featured free skate rentals, entertainment, cookies crafts, Santa Claus, and gifts.

Blue Eyes and the purple pickled eggs

by B. Chefsky

Marti's bar was a few doors down from where Ralphie Parker and his family experienced *A Christmas Story*. Marta Jankowski lived in a colonial-style home across the street from the famous backdrop and vividly remembers when a Hollywood film crew swept in to setup lights back in 1983. Even though the story takes place in a fictional place called Homan, Indiana, Tremont is the backdrop for the drama/comedy. Marti's was a hangout for the production crew. Cameramen and gaffers alike trampled through her yard late at the end of the night to get to their cars and vans, leaving behind broken tree branches and scuffed earth. Nothing unusual about this other than it had been going on ever since Marti opened his doors back in 1971.

Even then, men too drunk to tie their shoes passed through her yard at all hours of the day and night, stopping to pick tomatoes from her garden in the summer or pee in the crusty icy snow piles left by winter street clearing. The yellow snow annoyed the hell out of Marta who couldn't understand why the

men didn't wait until they got home to their own back yards to relieve themselves. She stopped eating her tomatoes years ago.

Her husband Karl died from smoking nonfilter cigarettes for more than fifty years, combined with a taste for cheap whiskey. It was probably him that started the tradition of peeing in her yard. The feral cat, affectionately named Blue Eyes for his unusual eyes that were as blue as a sunny day in Cleveland and equally as rare, missed Karl's nightly visits. He almost always remembered to bring Blue Eyes something back from the bar – a pickled egg or pepperoni stick, half eaten bag of salted potato chips, or an occasional cigarette butt which Karl mistook for a pretzel.

Marta missed him, too, but for different reasons. Karl could be funny when sober and when he wanted to be funny. But, he was a mean man when he drank too much, which happened more than Marta cared to talk about. She certainly didn't miss his mean drunkenness. On more than a few occasions, she locked him out of the house until his drunkenness had waned, which took continued on page 4



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Thursday, December 14, 2017; Neighborhood Family Practice Winter Cultural Festival, 3569 Ridge Road: Michelle Wilcox, a Neighborhood Family Practice employee who works in Patient Benefits Services, shares two traditional Kwanzaa dishes – Jollof Rice and Chicken and Sausage Gumbo.

Plain Press Board of Trustees seeks public input as Board plans for the future of the newspaper

The Plain Press Board of Trustees is currently seeking community input into a planning process that will prepare for the future of the *Plain Press*. We intend to reach out to our readers, on a one-to-one basis or in small group discussions, to explore what role the *Plain Press* will play

in the community. This discussion could include issues readers feel are important to cover, as well as how you like to receive your copy of the *Plain Press* – in print or online, or some combination of both. We hope you will share with Board of Trustee members what you like about the

Plain Press, as well as, what needs improvement. The primary goal is to develop a plan for the newspaper that will carry the *Plain Press* beyond its 50th anniversary in 2021.

The Board of Trustees also would like to recruit at least five new members what you like about the continued on page 8



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Thursday, December 14, 2017; Cannon-LoPresti & Catavolos Funeral Home Christmas Party, 11200 Detroit Avenue: The Louisa May Alcott Singers from Louisa May Alcott Elementary School entertain guests at the party.



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Saturday December 16, 2017; Christmas Party for Children, St. Wendelin's Parish Hall, 2281 Columbus Road: Marielys Vazquez, age 13, talks with Santa while Captain Keith Sulzer, the Cleveland Police Department's Liaison Officer to the Cleveland Police Foundation, hands her a gift. Cleveland Police Officers hosted the Christmas Party for children along with staff members from the Cleveland Police Foundation; the City of Cleveland Community Relations Department; the Skylight Foundation's Annual Toy Drive; and other community donors and volunteers. Children and their families enjoyed snacks while Santa passed out gifts to the many children present.

ARTS AND CULTURE

LES DELICES STEPS OUT. Free performances of Medieval Music for all ages. Friday, January 12 at 2:30 pm at Larchwood Village at 4110 Rocky River Dr.; Friday, January 12 at 7:30 pm at A Place for Us at Madison Ave. at W. 117th St.; and LD@Play: Medieval Dance Party (45-minute Family Concert) on Saturday, January 13 at 3 pm at the BOP STOP at 2920 Detroit Rd. Parking available. Wheelchair accessible. Free admission. Registration and info at <http://www.lesdelices.org/outreach>. For info, contact Debra Nagy, Director at 216/302-8404 or info@lesdelices.org

CLEVELAND METRO SCHOOL DISTRICT

CMSD parents and caregivers can go online and select the school that will best fit their child's needs. The choosecmsd.org portal is now open for picking high schools. K-8 school choices can be made starting Monday, Jan. 8. The portal will remain open until March 9. Though enrollment will continue, students signed up by that date will have the best chance of securing their preferred pick. High School Choice Portal Open NOW! Explore school options and choose up to five schools that best fit your child's needs and dreams! **Jan. 23 - 25** – 8th Grade High School Choice Fair at East Professional Center (EPC) at 1349 E. 79th St. Students are transported via yellow bus to meet with high school students and staff. **Jan. 23** from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. – Family High School Choice Fair at EPC – and **Jan. 30** from 5:30 to 7:30 pm at Max S. Hayes High School at 2211 W. 65th St.. An opportunity for parents and caregivers to meet high school students and staff to make informed decisions about their child's college or career future. **March 16** – High school lottery conducted. **March 26** – Lottery results released. **April 20** – Assignment confirmation deadline. **May - June** – Students accepted via "wait lists" as seats become available. **COLLEGE AID** includes financial resources for two-year college degree,

four-year degree, and industry certificate to help students afford post-high school education. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid provides information on grants and scholarships as well as federal student loans (visit <https://fafsa.ed.gov>). If you need assistance filling out the form, call College Now Greater Cleveland at 216/241-5587 or email info@collegenowgc.org to set up an appointment or receive guidance. The sooner you submit the form, the more resources that will be available. **COURSES FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS** offered free by Cuyahoga Community College and CMSD: **Strategies for Success** teaches planning, time management, reading comprehension, and note and test taking techniques. Will be held Thursdays for 14 weeks starting January 18 from 4-7 pm at Harvey Rice School at 2730 E.116th St. Requires ENG-0980 Language Fundamentals, an appropriate score on an English Placement Test or departmental approval. **Creative Parenting Skills** topics will include facilitating parent-child relationship from birth through adolescence, parenting techniques, contemporary discipline methods, and community resources. Classes will be held Thursdays for 12 weeks starting February 1 from 4 – 6 pm at Almira School at 3375 W. 99th St. No prerequisites. Activities for children 5 and over older, snacks and RTA tickets will be provided for both courses. Must have a child enrolled in a District school. For more information, visit <http://www.clevelandmetroschools.org/Page/12422>. **JOB OPENINGS** at CMSD can be found at <http://www.clevelandmetroschools.org/Domain/41>. **PRODUCE FOR FREE.** A number of schools have partnered with the Greater Cleveland Food Bank to provide families with free fresh produce. Schools in the Plain Press service area are: Almira Pre-K8 Academy (2nd Tuesday from 4 to 5:30 pm), Garrett Morgan School of Science (2nd and 4th Friday from 2:15 to 4:15 pm) Lincoln West High School (2nd Tuesday from 4 to 5:30 pm), Marion Seltzer (1st Friday from 4 to 6 pm), and Walton Elementary (4th Wednesday from 4 to 6 pm). Schedules are subject to change. **SNOW DAYS.** When schools are closed, parents and caregivers will be told by 6 am—through the mainstream media, social media and direct outreach by automated calls when possible. Many families are first checking <https://www.facebook.com/clevemetrosd/> and <https://twitter.com/clemetroschools>



The Plain Press Community Board is a listing of a variety of free activities and resources for neighborhoods served by the Plain Press. The printing of the Community Board is sponsored by Organize! Ohio through donations from readers and supporters.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

THE REDLINE GREENWAY is an active project to create a 3-mile elevated park in the heart of Cleveland's Near West Side. This meeting will provide insight and solicit feedback from the community on how the Red Line Greenway connects to and interacts with the Cleveland Foundation Centennial Lakelink Trail and other important assets and connections near Columbus Road. Scheduled for Wednesday, January 3rd at 5:30pm at Hoopples at 1930 Columbus Rd.

HEALTH

THE LUPUS FOUNDATION of America, Greater Ohio Chapter will host its monthly Call-In support group on Wednesday, January 10th from 7 p.m. until 8 p.m. Please call 1 (888) NO-LUPUS or visit LupusGreaterOhio.org to register and receive the call-in information. This support group is an open environment that encourages discussion among lupus patients and their families. Any individual affected by lupus can attend this support group from any location with access to a telephone. Most discussions focus on the "how-to's" of living with a chronic illness. Individual differences and confidentiality are respected. **YOUNG LUPANS TELETALK.** The Lupus Foundation of America, Greater Ohio Chapter will host its monthly Tele-Talk for Young Lupians on Saturday, January 20th. Please call 1 (888) NO-LUPUS to register. Saturday, January 20 at 2:00 p.m - 3:00 pm. This is a call-in teleconference for adolescents who are affected by lupus. The support group is an open, small-group environment that encourages discussion among lupus patients and their families. It is a place where persons with lupus can share their experiences and ask questions.

LGBT

THE LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER of Greater Cleveland offers a variety of social programs, including a Youth and Young Adult (YOYA) Drop-in program for LGBTQ youth ages 14-24 focused on creating connections and providing a safe, welcoming atmosphere. Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 5 to 7:30 PM. The Center also sponsors a SAGE-LGBT Seniors social support group for LGBTQ seniors such as arthritis exercise, lunch and outings. Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 11 am to 1:30 pm.

LIBRARIES

CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY AND CUYAHOGA COUNTY LIBRARIES are teaming up with Playhouse Square, and the City Club for a new "One Community Reads" program. Throughout January through March 2018, county residents are encouraged to read *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* and join in discussions. All conversations among the public and community leaders will focus on housing insecurity, blight, fair housing solutions that are being implemented around the Cleveland area, and opportunities for the future. This community read will culminate with a visit by author Matthew Desmond on March 15, 2018 at 7 PM at the Ohio Theater in Playhouse Square. Free tickets for Desmond's appearance will be available on this website, which also lists all *Evicted* programs throughout Cuyahoga county. For more information, visit <https://www.onecommunityreads.org/> Local meetings will be: at Monday,

January 15th at 7 pm at Lakewood Public Library – Main Library with Dr. Roland V. Anglin of Cleveland State University. For more information, call 216.226.8275 / bit.ly/2kQMHSV. At Thursday, February 1st at 7 pm at Lakewood Public Library – Madison Branch with Dr. Roland V. Anglin of Cleveland State University. Call 216.228.7428 or visit lakewoodpubliclibrary.org. At Friday, February 2nd at 2:30 p.m. at Cleveland Public Library – Main Branch with Dr. Beth Nagy of Cleveland State University. 216.623.2800 / cpl.org. At Thursday, February 8th at 7 p.m. Lakewood Public Library – Main Library. Join the Nonfiction Book Club for a thought-provoking discussion. Call 216.226.8275 or visit / lakewoodpubliclibrary.org. At Tuesday, February 20th at 5 pm. at Cleveland Public Library – Carnegie West Branch with Dr. Roland V. Anglin of Cleveland State University. At Friday, March 2nd at 12 pm at Cleveland Public Library – Main Branch with Dr. David Hammack of Case Western Reserve University. Call 216.623.2800 / cpl.org or 216.623.6927 / cpl.org. **CARNEGIE WEST LIBRARY** at 1900 Fulton Rd. **Beginning Memoir Writing** starting on Saturday, January 6th at 10:30 a.m.: Taught by Literary Cleveland director Lee Chilcote. Learn how to write about your life and the fundamentals of memoir writing. Using writing samples and prompts as a jumping off point, you'll practice developing your own ideas. In the class, you'll generate new writing and revise it before receiving feedback from the instructor and your peers. For beginning and intermediate writers. This is a series of free two-hour workshops also scheduled for 1/13/, 1/27 and 2/3. **Legal Aid Clinic** on Saturday, January 20th at 10:00 a.m.: Free brief advice and referral clinics offered by the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland's Volunteer Lawyers Program. Service is offered on a first-come, first-served basis. Please bring all important papers with you. Attorneys are available for brief advice and referral only and may assist with civil matters only (no criminal cases.) If you have questions or need more information, please contact the Legal Aid Society at 1-888-817-3777 or visit www.lasclv.org. **Resume Workshop** on Wednesday, January 10th at 3:15 p.m.: Learn how to prepare a resume and get tips on writing objectives. **Job Searching** on Wednesday, January 17th at 3:15 p.m. Learn to use the internet to search for a job. **3D Printing** on Wednesday, January 24th at 3:15 p.m.: 3D printing is coming soon to Carnegie West! Get prepared with this information and demonstration session. This workshop will introduce participants to foundations of 3D printing, including: What is 3D printing? What are its uses? How does it work? Where can I find resources for 3D printing? **Tinkercad Basics** on Wednesday, January 31st at 3:15 p.m.: Learn the basics of designing your own unique 3D models using free Tinkercad software. **Please call the library at (216) 623-6927 to register for either of these two free computer classes.**

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CELEBRATIONS
CONVOCATION: Martin Luther King, Jr. Convocation at Case Western Reserve University will feature keynote speaker Nikole Hannah-Jones, *New York Times Magazine* Staff Writer and 2017 MacArthur Fellow, on Friday, January 19 at 12:45 p.m. in the Kelvin and Eleanor Smith Foundation Ballroom at the Tinkham Veale University Center on the campus of Case Western Reserve University. The 2018 celebration theme is "The Struggle Continues: The King Legacy and Fight for Justice in Education." This event is free and open to the public, no tickets will be issued. Seating is first-come first-serve. Registration at <https://case.edu/events/mlk/> is used to help gauge event interest and provide event updates as needed.

CITY YEAR. In tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy of service to others, City Year marks MLK Day as a day on, not off. Nationally they mobilize more than 3,000 AmeriCorps members and thousands of volunteers for a day of service in their communities. Join them on Monday, January 15, for their annual MLK Day of Service at Cleveland's Glenville Recreation Center located at 680 E 113th St, Cleveland, OH 44108 from 10:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. To learn more about our day of volunteer opportunities and to register <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/city-year-cleveland-mlk-day-of-service-2018-registration-41423360386>. Space is limited, RSVP by Thursday, January 11. Contact Allison Morford at amorford@cityyear.org with any questions. **THE GREATER CLEVELAND AQUARIUM** and the United Black Fund of Greater Cleveland Inc. (UBF) invite the public to a community fund- and friend-raiser on Martin Luther King Jr. Day – Monday, January 15, 2018, from 10am – 4pm. Each guest who chooses to donate \$1 or more to UBF receives same-day free Aquarium admission. For more information, visit <http://greaterclevelandaquarium.com/discover/events/martin-luther-king-day/>

HEAR OUR VOICES: MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY CELEBRATION on Monday, January 15, 11am – 5pm at the Maltz Museum at 2929 Richmond Rd. in Beachwood. Free and open to the public. Honor iconic civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. on this free day at the Maltz Museum and discover how everyday citizens fight against discrimination to change America. Join in a panel discussion with Margaret Mitchell (YWCA), Peggy Zone-Fisher (Diversity Center), Jazmin Long (Global Cleveland) and Kayla Griffin (NAACP) on civil rights, gender, and race today at 3 pm. Plus, enjoy music from the Evelyn Wright Quartet on this family-friendly day at 1 pm. Support from the Community Relations Committee of the Jewish Federation of Cleveland. Registrations encouraged: 216-593-0575 or www.maltzmuseum.org. **MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. AT THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART** will be celebrated on Monday, January 15 from 10 am to 5 pm. Performances and art-inspired experiences centered around his nonviolent philosophy. Additional details to come on <http://www.clevelandart.org>.

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Attention Nonprofit Organizations!

The Plain Press Community Guide will be published in the March Issue of the *Plain Press*. If your organization is new, or has changed its name or phone number since last year, please send an email to the *Plain Press* at plainpress@gmail.com with information for your free listing in the guide. To place more than your organization's name and phone number in the guide, please purchase an ad in the Community Guide. If you are interested in finding out about how to advertise in the Community Guide, email Tom Sheehan at plainpressads@yahoo.com for details.

Plain Press
 2012 W. 25th STE
 500
 Cleveland, OH 44113
 Phone: (216) 621-3060
 e-mail:
plainpress@gmail.com
 Advertising e-mail:
plainpressads@yahoo.com
 Website: www.plainpress.org
 Plain Press
 © Established in 1971
 Circulation: 21,000 copies.
 Published monthly.
 Distribution area: Cuyahoga River west to W. 140, Lake Erie south to the Lower Big Creek Valley. Available free at over 500 locations.
Managing Editor:
 Charles E. Hoven;
Editor: Deborah Rose Sadlon;
Photo Editor: Coriana Close;
Community Board & Website Editor: Margie Bray Hoven;
Advertising Sales:
 Tom Sheehan
Graphic Artist: David Myers
Distribution: Ahmed Morad-Mailing: Teresa Calvo
Board of Trustees: Keith Brown, Peggy Davenport, David Gamble, Dr. Leo Jeffres, Joe Narkin, and Helen K. Smith.

Peace, goodwill and a Happy New Year from the Plain Press

As we enter a new year, the generosity, goodwill and welcoming nature of the Cleveland community is evident throughout this issue of the *Plain Press* as reflected in the photos and articles.

Some of Cleveland's newest residents, refugees from troubled parts of the world, joined with Neighborhood Family Practice staff in a cultural festival, inviting the community to sample foods from around the world. Neighborhood Family Practice staff worked with resettlement agencies such as Catholic Charities to make this special event possible.

On a cold day, young Clevelanders from the Salvation Army Ohio City Preschool on Clark Avenue bundled up to join with adult staff members to ring the bell in front of Dave's Supermarket on Ridge Road to raise money for victims in Puerto Rico suffering from the devastation caused by Hurricane Maria.

Children, teachers and the principal from Louisa May Alcott Elementary School gave of their time in the evening after school to entertain guests with the performance of the Louisa May Alcott Singers at a neighborhood Christmas Party hosted by the Cannon, LoPresti & Catavolos Funeral Home.

Kudos to Lindsey Cannon, Don LoPresti and George Catavolos for hosting the party and open house at

their funeral home at 11210 Detroit Avenue. In addition to the singing by the students from Louisa May Alcott the party featured sandwiches, hors d'oeuvres, and homemade cookies. George Catavolos, who grew up on the neighborhood where he now is partner in the funeral home, arranged with the owners of the former St. Rose Church and School to light the church tower for the first time in over 10 years.

Those passing down Detroit Avenue at night by St. Rose will now be treated with a lighted tower, a beacon in the night sky, thanks to the generosity of Accel Schools, the owners of the former St. Rose property and administrators of the Hope Academy Northwest Charter School in the former St. Rose School building.

The Westown community raised funds to host its annual Winter Frolic providing free ice skate rentals, Santa, gifts and refreshments at Halloran Skating Rink.

The St. Wendelin's Parish Hall was packed with children and their families at Christmas Party hosted by the Cleveland Police Foundation. City of Cleveland Police officers, Police Foundation staff and City of Cleveland Community Relations Board staff all had a hand in organizing and promoting the event. A local business, Skylight Financial, which

sits atop the tower of the United Building at W. 25th and Lorain Avenue, solicited donations of many of the presents for the children through Skylight Foundation's Annual Toy Drive.

Thanks to many generous donations, The LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland will not only be able to have a new home at 6705 Detroit Avenue, but will also have a large endowment that will enable it to continue to offer support and advocacy to the LGBTQ community throughout the region.

In the spirit of being a welcoming community, Clevelanders have gathered several times this past year at Market Square Park to protest the ending of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, and urge the United States Congress to do the right thing and grant permanent resident status to Dreamers -- people who came to the United States as children. In photos in this issue Clevelanders show their support for Dreamers.

People throughout Greater Cleveland came out to support the work of Women Speak Out for Peace and Justice at their annual Holiday Peace Festival and Bazaar at Pilgrim Church in the Tremont neighborhood.

The *Plain Press* wishes all our readers a Happy New Year, peace and goodwill to all.



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN
Saturday, December 16, 2017; Rally for Dreamers, Dream Act, all immigrants and refugees, Market Square Park, W. 25th and Lorain Avenue: Moira Donovan and Rachel Miller let it be known that Cleveland loves Dreamers.

Reader calls on men throughout USA to take a stand against sexual harassment

To the editor:

This letter is in response to the articles covering the sexual harassment allegations made against men in the media and government throughout the United States.

Letter

To all males living in this country, I issue a collective statement: enough already! Who are you to impose your sexual desires on someone because they did not give you their consent? Once again, we are witnessing those in authority po-

sitions taking advantage of the situation. Resignation is the least you can do. Prosecution is the best we can do...and we will.

What did you expect to gain from making sexual advances on a human being? If this isn't an indication of the failure to grow up, I don't know what is. Those men who have permeated this transgression must seek counseling before they destroy more lives executing their perverted conquest. Otherwise, time spent in prison will allow them to dwell

on their evil actions while trying to survive an environment which is the closest equivalent to hell on earth.

Perhaps I had the advantage of growing up with four sisters in my family which, some say, predisposes males to be kinder to females throughout all stages of their life. Frankly, I remember times when I was embarrassed for making incidental contact with a female followed by an immediate apology.

Ladies of America, please be assured that the actions of a few

do not represent the feelings and beliefs of the many. You are our mothers, sisters, daughters, cousins etc. that compose one equal half of the species we call the human race. For that matter, do not despair because the true, honest and gentle men of this country know better than to act inappropriately in your company. We will always cherish your beauty, charm and most importantly your intelligence. Now, help us to drive this dreadful scourge from the planet once and for all. It is up to all of us. Let us begin.

Joe Bialek, Cleveland, Ohio

Hear some Neighborhood News? Call the Plain Press at 216-621-3060.



Dorn School of Expression Building awarded Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credits

The Ohio Development Services Agency announced on December 19th that the Dorn School of Expression Building project at 7306 Detroit Avenue was awarded \$249,999 in Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credits by the Ohio Development Services Agency. The total cost of the rehabilitation project is expected to be \$1,814,324.

The Ohio Development Services Agency says the Dorn School of Expression Building was "built in 1913 and once housed residential units on the upper floor, and a retail space and a fine and performing arts school on the main floor. Though most of the interior historic details have been lost over time, the exterior retains arched window openings

and dormers. After the rehabilitation project is completed, there will be four apartments and two retail spaces in the building."

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• Market Square 2500 W. 25th St., Cleveland 216-930-KIDS (5437)



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Friday, December 8, 2017; Dave's Supermarket, Ridge Road & Denison: (L-R): Ms. Laura Lambert, Mie'Kiya, Nikolas, Oleidys, Ms. Maritza Linares and Cortez. Staff and children from The Salvation Army Ohio City Preschool on Clark Avenue collect money for the victims of Hurricane Maria. The preschool has two new children, whose families came to Cleveland from Puerto Rico after the hurricane devastated the island.

High poverty rate present in all City Council Wards in Plain Press coverage area

The Center for Community Solutions, a local nonprofit think tank which focuses on solutions to health, social and economic issues, released a series of demographic profiles in late 2017. Data in the profiles on the city of Cleveland, and on individual City Council Wards in Cleveland, compiled by The Center for Community Solutions, show the pervasive presence of poverty in the city of Cleveland and in the City Council Wards served by the *Plain Press*.

The Center for Community Solutions' Profile of the city of Cleveland, using 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, put the city of Cleveland's population at 390,584 with 137,585 people (36.2%) living in poverty. The report notes the percentage of children under the age of 17 in the city of Cleveland living in poverty was 53.5%. According to federal poverty guidelines for a single parent with two children to be classified as

living in poverty, their family income would need to be \$20,090 or less. The median household income in Cleveland was \$26,150 with 61.3% of the city of Cleveland's population, or 242,874 people, considered persons living in or near poverty (under 200% of the federal poverty rate). A measure of deep poverty, persons with income at 50% or more below the federal poverty rate, noted 18.2% of Clevelanders were living in conditions of deep poverty.

City Council Wards 3, 11, 12, 14 and 15, with some or all of their territory in the *Plain Press* service area, also have high poverty rates.

Ward 3

In Ward 3, served by City Council Representative Kerry McCormack, was estimated to have a total population of 25,055. The number of persons living in poverty was estimated at 38.7% of the population or 8,793 people. The childhood poverty rate

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BLUE EYES AND THE PURPLE PICKLED EGGS

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most of the night. She never let him into their bed when he was drunk which meant she slept by herself very often.

One night in particular, a few months before he was diagnosed with lung cancer and given less than a year to live, Marta found Karl sitting on the grass in the backyard leaning against the wood shed. He kept his tools there, like a rake, shovel, and lawnmower, locked behind the door to keep anyone from stealing them. He rarely used the yard tools. The garden was overgrown with hardy weeds and poison ivy. The weather was warmer than it is now, late July, and a slight breeze came down from the north to cool off the night. Still,

the temperature didn't leave the low 90's. Marta heard Karl talking to someone. When she looked at the clock, it was 2:30AM.

"What's that damn fool talking about," she murmured while slipping a robe over her summer night cloths.

By the time she got outside Karl was fast asleep. Blue Eyes lay flat on his back with his paws projectile into the air, purring like a two-cycle engine. She poked Karl in his better shoulder. "Wake up," she said.

She grabbed hold of his elbow and helped him to stand up. His knees were wobbly and the stench of sour whiskey on his breath was overwhelming. Blue Eyes didn't budge an inch.

"Get in the house," she said.

She led him into the house where

he flopped onto the couch. She covered him with a green quilt that her grandmother knitted for her while living in a nursing home in Pennsylvania.

She went back to bed while he slept it off. This was their usual routine.

Next morning, she asked Karl about the conversation with the cat. He didn't recall talking to Blue Eyes.

"I heard your voice from the bedroom window last night and went outside to check on you," she said. "I thought maybe you had been mugged or something. You were both asleep by the time I got there."

Karl scratched his head in wonderment. He poured himself another coffee and went give Marta more but she placed her hand over the cup.

"I don't recall the conversation," he said. "Blue Eyes must have asked me a question."

Marta was visually perplexed and annoyed with his response. "You

know that damn cat can't talk, don't you?" she said with sarcasm.

Karl rubbed his eyes in slow circles. He stood there for another minute or two, then drank the last of his coffee before putting the empty cup into the sink.

"I know you're going to think I'm crazy," he said, "but, Blue Eyes was asking me a question and I was doing my best to answer him."

Marta was not impressed. She did, however, concede. She decided to ask a follow up question just as Karl might expect her to do.

"I'll take the bait," she said. "What did he want?"

Karl rolled his bloodshot eyes in quiet objection. He leaned his back against the ceramic sink and crossed his arms

"He asked me about the pickled eggs," he said. "Blue Eyes wanted to know how to make them."

Marta choked with laughter. She took a paper napkin from the table

to wipe saliva from the corner of her mouth.

"Purple pickled eggs," added Karl. "You know, the ones made with red beet juice."

"Why in God's name would a cat want to know about pickled eggs?" "He likes them, I guess" Karl replied. "I told Blue Eyes that I would ask Marti for the recipe next time I was at the bar."

"Which is probably tonight," she sniped.

He didn't respond to the question about whether he had plans for Marti's later that night but tried to redirect the conversation back to the eggs. For her part, Marta relinquished a hold on the image of him drunk.

"And?" she asked. "What did Blue Eyes say in response?"

"He wanted to talk to Marti so I gave him his phone number," he said, then quietly slipped out the back door.

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LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER

continued from page one

Bowser talked about the history of the organization which was founded in 1975. He noted the move to the lower level of the Gordon Square Arcade in the Detroit Shoreway neighborhood fifteen years ago. Bowser said, ten years ago during dark financial times, the Board of Directors of the Center was challenged to plan for the future of the Center. He said the Board was tasked to find a way to continue the services of the Center and to also think about the costs and requirements of a new facility.

In 2014, while the Board of Directors weighed the need for additional space with the need to provide funds raised for continuing its services, education and advocacy to Greater Cleveland's LGBTQ community, Bowser said a friend of the Center called to inquire about plans to move to a new home. When the friend learned of the financial dilemma faced by the Board of Directors, Bowser said the friend became an Angel Donor, making a large donation of \$1.8 million toward the fundraising effort for the new home of the LGBT Community Center at 6705 Detroit Avenue and the expansion of its programming.

According to the LGBT Center of Greater Cleveland The Community Blog piece titled "The Center Breaks Ground," the angel donor continued to donate after the initial donation and "contributed nearly \$5 million to cover the cost of the building, including the purchase of the lot,

the demolition, new construction and related expenses."

Bowser said that the angel donation allowed funds being raised to match a \$500,000 challenge grant from the Milton & Tamar Maltz Family Foundation to be dedicated to creating an endowment to fund future programs and services of the LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland. Bowser thanked the angel donor, the foundation and the many donors that contributed matching funds to help create The Center's \$1 million endowment fund.

Ward 15 Councilman Matt Zone said, "The Center means so much to this neighborhood." Zone praised The Center for its role in advocacy on state and national issues and had praise for Cleveland's support of the LGBTQ community, saying that he found in his travels as President of the National League of Cities that "It speaks to the soul of a city" when it supports LGBTQ advocacy and works to move policy into action.

Ward 3 Councilman Kerry McCormack, who described himself as an openly gay man, praised the efforts of elected officials such as his predecessor Joe Cimperman, and colleague Matt Zone, who took a stand to advance the rights of the LGBTQ community members through legislation in Cleveland. He also noted Senator Sherrod Brown's advocacy on the national level. McCormack said in returning to Cleveland after working in Spain, he, personally, felt comfort in knowing he could come to the Center for health care services. McCormack praised the Center for



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN
Wednesday, December 13, 2017; Atrium at Gordon Square Arcade, celebration of the beginning of work on the future home of the LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland at 6705 Detroit Avenue: (L-R) Ward 15 Councilman Matt Zone, Suzanne Hamilton of First Federal of Lakewood, LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland Executive Director Phyllis Harris, Paul Clark of PNC Bank, and LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland Board of Directors member Andrew Thomas.

its advocacy on the local, state and national level.

Bowser said it is projected the new home of The LGBT Community Center to be ready in seven to 12 months.

The LGBT Community Center of

Greater Cleveland says its mission is "to enrich the lives of the diverse LGBTQ community through advocacy, education, support and celebration."

"As one of Ohio's most prominent LGBT community organizations, and

the third oldest in the nation, the Center works to enrich the lives of our region's diverse LGBTQ community through advocacy, support, education and celebration," says LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland Executive Director Phyllis Harris.

HIGH POVERTY RATE IN COUCIL WARDS

continued from page 4

is estimated at 61.8%.

Ward 3, which includes affluent areas in Ohio City and Tremont neighborhoods, has a higher median income (\$35,314) than Cleveland as a whole, yet its poverty rate at 38.7% is higher than the City of Cleveland's poverty rate of 36.2%. The number of people in Ward 3 living in deep poverty (income less than 50% of the poverty rate) at 18.8% was also higher than the city average, but the number of persons, 13,381, with family income under 200% of the federal poverty rate was 58.9%, less than the city average of 61.3%.

Ward 11

In Ward 11, served by City Council Representative Dona Brady, the total population is estimated at 25,050. The profile estimates 32.7% of the population living in poverty, or 8,793 people. 61.8% of children in the ward were estimated to be living in poverty. 18.8% of the population was estimated to be living in deep poverty. 58.9% of the population, or 15,717 people, were considered persons living in or near poverty with family income under 200% of the federal poverty rate. The median household income in Ward 11 is listed at \$29,150.

Ward 12

In Ward 12, served by Councilman Tony Brancatelli, the total population is estimated at 24,254. The profile estimates 39.2% of the population living in poverty, or 9,476 people. The poverty rate for children under the age of 17 was estimated at 59.4%. The percentage of residents of the ward living in deep poverty was estimated at 16.8%. The number of persons in or near poverty with family income under 200% of the federal poverty rate was estimated at 62.7% of the ward's population, or 15,175 people. The median household income in Ward 12 is listed at \$26,505.

Ward 14

In Ward 14, now represented by newly elected Councilperson Jasmin Santana, the population is

estimated to be 23,468. The profile estimates that 43.1% of the population or 10,003 people are living in poverty. The poverty rate for children under the age of 17 is 60.8%. The percentage of people in the ward estimated to be living in deep poverty is 20.7%. The percentage of people in the ward estimated to living in or near poverty with family income under 200% of the federal poverty rate is 71.8%, or 16,661 people. The Median Household Income in Ward 14 is listed at \$23,431.

Ward 15

In Ward 15, served by City Council Representative Matt Zone, the ward population is estimated to be 24,352. The profile estimates that 38.2% of the population, 9,101 people, had family income below the poverty line. 54.5% of the children in Ward 15 were living in families with

income below the poverty line. The percentage of persons in the ward living in deep poverty was estimated at 17.2%. The number of persons in the ward living at or near poverty with family income under 200% of the federal poverty rate was estimated at 62.7%, or 14,950 people. The Median Household Income in Ward 15 is listed at \$26,344.

Editor's Note: To view or download the profile for your City Council Ward visit: www.CommunitySolutions.com/WardProfiles. The Center for Community Solutions notes sources for its data include the 2011-2015 American Communities Survey 5 Year Estimates as calculated by the Northeast Ohio Data Information Services (NODIS) at Cleveland State University. It warns that because of the small areas being studied the margins of error may be high and differences between areas should be interpreted with caution.

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Lorain Avenue Cycle Track receives funding

The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) awarded \$47 million in federal transportation dollars to transportation improvement projects in December of 2017. The Lorain Avenue Cycle Track was one of the recipients of funding. The project is slated to receive \$6.119 million to "construct a cycle track and other enhancements on Lorain Avenue from W. 20th to W. 65th," says NOACA.

According to the Ohio City Incorporated Newsletter, the Lorain Avenue Cycle Track is part of the Lorain Avenue Complete Street Project, in

which NOACA is collaborating with the City of Cleveland, Ohio City Incorporated, Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization, and Ward 3 Councilman Kerry McCormack and Ward 15 Councilman Matt Zone.

This initial phase of the Lorain Avenue Cycle Track will create a ten-foot-wide traffic-protected cycle track along the stretch of Lorain Avenue from W. 20th to W. 65th. It will go along the North Side of Lorain Avenue from W. 20th to W. 45th and along the South side of Lorain Avenue from W. 45th to W. 65th.

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PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Saturday, December 16, 2017; Rally for Dreamers, Dream Act, All Immigrants and Refugees, Market Square Park, W. 25th and Lorain Avenue: Brooke Willis holds up a sign saying, “No Human Being is Illegal.”

Cleveland’s poverty rate – how we compare with Cuyahoga County, Ohio and the nation

by Chuck Hoven

How does the poverty rate in Cleveland compare to the poverty rate in Cuyahoga County, the State of Ohio and the rest of the nation?

A City of Cleveland profile, published by The Center for Community Solutions, indicates the percentage of the City of Cleveland’s population living below the poverty rate is 36.2%. Cleveland’s Child poverty rate was listed at 53.5%. Another stat for Cleveland in the profile indicates 18.2 percent of the population live in abject poverty (household income less than 50% of the poverty rate). The number of Clevelanders living on income at 200% of the official poverty line or less (the poor or near poor) is estimated at 61.3% of Cleveland’s population.

The Center for Community Solutions also prepared profiles for Cuyahoga County. The poverty rate in Cuyahoga County is 18.7%, with 231,823 County residents estimated living in poverty. The child poverty rate in Cuyahoga County was listed as 27.9%.

The percentage of people in Cuyahoga County living in abject poverty (household income less than 50% of the poverty rate) was 9% of the county’s population. The profile estimated that 460,406 individuals with household income less than 200% of the federal poverty rate or 37.2 percent of Cuyahoga County’s population.

An October 2017 report by the Coalition on Human Needs and the Ohio Association of Food Banks titled *Poverty and Progress: The State of Being Poor in Ohio and New Threats Ahead* cites recent data released by the U.S. Census Bureau, indicating that the poverty rate in Ohio was 14.6 percent in 2016. The child poverty rate in the State of Ohio is listed at 20.5% of the State’s children living in households with income below the federal poverty line. The report says that roughly 1.6 million Ohioans are living in poverty. The poverty line for a family of four is an annual income of \$24,563.

The report also notes the number of Ohioans living in abject poverty, those households with income less than half the federal poverty line (or \$1,023 or less a month for a family of four). The report estimates that 756,400 Ohioans or 6.7 percent of the state’s population live in abject poverty.

According to the report, the number of Ohioans with income less than 200% of the poverty rate – the poor and near poor— were estimated at 3.6 million in 2016 or 31.7 percent of Ohio’s population.

Cleveland’s Child poverty rate was listed at 53.5%.

Source: Center for Community Solutions Cleveland profile

The report by the Coalition on Human Needs and the Ohio Association of Food Banks notes that without successful federal anti-poverty programs like Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), housing assistance,

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Security Income for persons with Disabilities, and the Earned Income Tax Credit, the poverty rate would be much higher. The report expressed concern that these programs are threatened as the expected mounting debt from the tax cut passed by Congress will likely lead to pressure on Congress to cut funding to these anti-poverty programs.

As the reports above indicates, the poverty rate in Cleveland is substantially higher than that in Cuyahoga County and the State of Ohio.

How do we compare nationally?

A WalletHub study looking at 2017’s Neediest Cities compared 180 United States cities and found

continued on page 8

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PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Friday, December 8, 2017; Westown Winter Frolic, Halloran Park Skating Rink, 3550 W. 117th Street: After taking a spin on the ice, Jaedon Kendall, age 5, visits with Santa.

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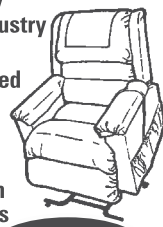
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Ohio State Bar Association explains Ohio's Standards for Gifted Student Education

According to Ohio's Gifted Operating Standards, a "gifted" student will perform or show potential for performing at remarkably high levels when compared to peers of the same-age, experience or environment. As of July 1, 2017, the operating standards have changed and can be found at Ohio Administrative Code 3301-51-15.

The new regulations give increased protections to minorities, economically disadvantaged English learners and students with disabilities. Schools look at a child's superior cognitive ability and his or her specific academic ability in math, science, reading and writing, social studies, and visual or performing arts ability. The new standards also require schools to offer testing twice, once before the end of second grade and once between second grade and sixth grade.

Special Education Attorney Emily Haynes with **Albeit Weiker, LLP** provides a rundown of some of the changes to how Ohio deals with gifted students and what parents and teachers can expect from the process.

Suspect a student is gifted?

Parents, students or teachers can refer a potentially gifted child for screening at any grade. Public school districts in Ohio must provide screenings at least twice per year, and must have a procedure for parents to appeal any decision about the results or scheduling of testing, or the placement of a student in a gifted program.

Early identification is especially important because the benefits of gifted education are cumulative. Alternatively, gifted students who aren't identified may eventually exhibit behavioral and learning issues in a regular classroom environment. School districts should provide standardized testing, which is a useful method of identifying gifted students.

Once a student is identified as gifted, the school's principal or gifted coordinator should be contacted to discuss the next steps, and to develop a Written Education Plan (WEP) for the student.

An important caveat to gifted education: All public school districts are required to meet minimum standards for identifying gifted students, but are not required to provide gifted or advanced educational curriculum. This means that some districts offer gifted reading, others gifted science or math, while still others may not offer any gifted programs at all.

This means that the gifted child might need to transfer schools in order to receive an advanced curriculum in their area of giftedness. If your child moves schools, you should request that your former district transfer the educational file to the new district. All public districts in Ohio must honor students' gifted identification if it was from another Ohio school.

Finally, districts are required to enact a policy for gifted education; be sure to request the policy if anything is unclear.

Students with disabilities

Students with a disability—such as physical disability, mental illness, learning disability such as dyslexia, autism, or Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD)—may also be gifted. These children are considered "Twice Exceptional."

Identifying these students can be challenging because the characteristics and symptoms associated with certain disabilities can overshadow high cognitive ability and/or exceptional aptitude. The new regulations provide increased protection and specialized gifted testing of individuals with disabilities that reflect the student's aptitude or achievement and not their disability.

Remember though, by law, gifted students with disabilities must receive special education services from their public school to accommodate any special needs, but they are not required to receive gifted instruction.

Gifted academics

The results of gifted screening will determine the areas in which the child exhibits high levels of accomplishment. Gifted instruction can take many forms: a self-contained classroom for gifted students in a particular academic area; a self-contained general education classroom for only gifted students; co-teaching with a general education teacher and a gifted instructor who "pushes in" for specific lessons; push-in services for differentiated learning in the general education classroom; honors courses; International Baccalaureate courses; Advanced Placement courses; grade acceleration; dual enrollment opportunities such as College Credit Plus; and others.

Whichever models of gifted instruction a district provides, it is essential that parents stay aware of and involved in their student's learning.

The new regulations strengthen the standards for professional development of gifted teachers, and increase the communication between schools and families with gifted students.

The Written Education Plan (WEP) must be updated annually, and parents should stay in close contact with their student's gifted teacher to ensure his or her needs are being addressed. A gifted child—when provided with the appropriate services and education—can flourish academically, embrace learning, and expect a future full of opportunity.

The role of an attorney

Gifted students who are not appropriately challenged often have behavioral issues in later school years that can culminate in suspension and expulsion. This can be especially true of those children considered "Twice Exceptional."

calls together its community of change makers to reflect on gains won during the Civil Rights Movement and to address contemporary issues facing our nation through act of volunteer service. There are several ways you can get involved in MLKDay: <https://www2.pointsoflight.org/mlkday>

MENTAL HEALTH

SUICIDE PREVENTION. "A Friend Asks" smart-phone application for iPhone and Android provides the information, tools, and resources to help a friend (or yourself) who may be struggling with thoughts of suicide. Search "The Jason Foundation" for the free app on the Apple App Store and the Android Market. The "A Friend Asks" app contains information on warning signs of suicidal ideation, resources for help, and even a "Get Help Now" feature. This feature will automatically connect the user to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 24/7.

POT HOLES

REPORT POT HOLES to the Division of Streets Street Repair at 216/664-2510 Weekdays from 8 am to 5 pm

SAFETY

WARD 3 COMMUNITY SAFETY MEETING in Ohio City. Hear from Ward 3 Councilman Kerry McCormack, Chad Biggers – Community Safety Organizer in Ohio City and Tremont, as well as representatives from the Second District and the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office. Contact Chad Biggers at cbiggers@nearwestsafety.org or **216/375-4840** with any questions. On Tuesday, January 9th at 6pm at Forest City Brewery at 2135 Columbus Rd.

TAX PREPARATION

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED. The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is the largest poverty relief program in the country, aimed at helping families with children



Friday, December 8, 2017; Westown Winter Frolic, Halloran Park Skating Rink, 3550 W. 117th Street: Westown Community Development Corporation staff member Austin Bloom passes out cookies to guests.

PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Although districts are not required to provide gifted instruction, students who are considered "Twice Exceptional" have additional protections.

A recent United States Supreme Court case, *Andrew F. v. Douglas County School District*, rejected a lower court ruling that the standard for educational services for disabled children was to provide "merely more than de minimus" educational benefit.

Instead, schools must provide educational services "reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child's circumstances." Additionally, "every child should have the chance to meet challenging objectives." The objectives are generally aligned with curriculum for non-disabled children, but that alignment is only a guide, and can be replaced by individual goals specific to each child.

Skilled education attorneys can help parents advocate for gifted services based on the individual needs of their disabled, twice exceptional child.

This "Law You Can Use" column was provided by the Ohio State Bar Association. Articles appearing in this column are intended to provide broad, general information about the law. This article is not intended to be legal advice. Before applying this information to a specific legal problem, readers are urged to seek advice from a licensed attorney.

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continued from page 2

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. CELEBRATION CONCERT will be held at Severance Hall in University Circle at 11001 Euclid Avenue on Sunday, January 14 at 7 pm. This annual musical performance celebrates the spirit of Dr. King's life, leadership, and vision with a program of music, song, and community service recognition. Admission is free, but tickets are required. Tickets will be available from a lottery on clevelandorchestra.com. Or call 216-231-1111 to sign up. There is one entry per household, and a 4 ticket limit per entry. Ticket winners will be chosen at random on January 4, 2018, and winners will be mailed tickets on that date.

CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY at 1 Wade Oval Drive in University Circle. FREE general admission from 10am -4pm on Monday, January 15. Curators will talk with guests outside of their labs and showcase specimens that are not usually on display. Guests can meet Cleveland's neighborhood wildlife in special live animal presentations, and make a craft to take home. Auditorium opens at 10:30 am; music, live animal presentations, and performances all day. (Seating is first come, first served.) Paid parking in Museum garage. More information at cmnh.org.

POINTS OF LIGHT. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. lived his life serving others. Following his example, millions of Americans serve on Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service. Points of Light's legacy is rooted in its founder, President George H. W. Bush's, belief that "any definition of a successful life must include serving others." On MLK Day, Points of Light

provide basic needs and save for the future. Free tax preparation not only helps with EITC claims and accurate returns, but also provides an entry point for families to become better banked, determine eligibility for and claim public assistance, and receive financial education. This year, Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization and Metro West Community Development Office will be offering free tax preparation Monday through Thursday evenings and Saturday mornings starting in late January. Anyone can sign up to become a volunteer. There are greater positions and tax preparation positions available. No experience is necessary; just attend a training to become certified. Sign up today by visiting www.refundohio.org.

WOMEN'S ISSUES

The Women in Transition program at Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C®) is launching a new session of classes to empower women in their pursuit of education, training and a career. The program begins Jan. 16. The eight-week, noncredit program is free and open to the public. Participants build confidence and skills through classes on personal development, career exploration and financial and computer literacy. The course is designed to assist women in transitional periods of their lives, such as a career change or return to the workforce. Registration is required for the Women in Transition program, which offers day and evening class options. Metro Campus, 2900 Community College Ave. From 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays – Jan. 16 to March 8. A second spring session will begin the week of March 19. To learn more or to enroll, call 216-987-4974 (Metro Campus). Details (including information on other campuses) are available at www.tri-c.edu/women-in-transition.

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2017 – A terrible year for democracy here

by Roldo Bartimole

As we slide toward the end of 2017 it's hard to see this as a year of progress or advancement. Quite the opposite.

Yes, Cleveland elected the familiar, if not exciting, Frank Jackson for a record four-year, fourth term. A Cleveland caretaker mayor. Not the first nor the last to be sure

There is not much to be cheerful about. We continue Cleveland's stumbling way.

It was a dispiriting year. One that gave us a quick glimpse of possibilities. Then snatched it away.

NEWS ANALYSIS

That made it more depressing and debilitating for civic possibilities.

Cleveland's 17-member City Council is all-Democratic. It rules, however, about 100 percent Republican on most economic issues.

Bought off by the same old names to rule Cleveland for decades. The powers to keep Cleveland colonized. See Sam Allard's piece (*Kevin Kelley's Community Chest: How a Cleveland City Council Campaign Fund Rewards Allies and Stifles Dissent* at clevescene.com) about the same old names buying City Hall for corporate Cleveland.

And this doesn't account yet for donors to the mayor's campaign.

Government purchasers.

Hell, the same old names from the 1980s-1990s: Ratners, Carneys (they go back to the '60s if not '50s...) the major league team owners, the developers, the familiar law firms, the DeGeranimos, the Council ticket long-term punchers—John Zayac and Mary Anne Sharkey and even friendly Jim Rokakis, who

should know better—who does know better.

They all have their teeth in the meat of city dollars.

Our downtown government is bought and paid for.

A vote shortage should be a warning to Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, Ohio and national Democrats.

The telltale warning of Cleveland 2017 – the dismal turnouts of voters in the mayoral elections—some 13 percent in the primary and a paltry 22 in the general that produced Jackson's record fourth term.

The most depressing aspect of 2017, however, was the what-could-have-been. It turned out to be the **BIG SELLOUT.**

“The most depressing aspect of 2017, however, was the what-could-have-been. It turned out to be the BIG SELLOUT.”

-- Roldo Bartimole

The bullet killed community activism. For how long we don't know.

It was the distinguishing emblem of a civically ill city.

The one distinctive move could have renewed the spirit that makes a city a community.

The defining event: subsidy of Quicken Arena, of course, to not only cost the city and county tens of millions of dollars but the sense of community that it so sorely needs.

We all know by now the story

of the Quicken deal and how City Council, Mayor Jackson and his law department, along with others, killed hope.

It all started with a sweetheart deal for Cavs owner Dan Gilbert that could cost more than \$250 million with interest on bonds let by Cuyahoga County for \$140 million. The County, city and news media quietly neglect to say that we are still paying on 1990 arena bonds and will have to shell out next month (Jan. 15) some \$8-million or so city and county subsidies to bondholders.

That's the financial costs. Not insignificant.

But what about the civic cost?

When citizens balked at the arena cost without some payback for taxpayers, three groups decided to test community reaction. The arena deal represents a gift to billionaire Dan Gilbert, Cavs owner. It will be a big money-winner for the billionaire phony.

The blowback by citizens was remarkable. In a short time, volunteers collected more than 20,000 signatures to put the deal to the voters. A remarkable achievement. Only to be sold-out.

The corrupters took charge.

The signature gatherers – the Greater Cleveland Congregations, the Cuyahoga County Progressive Caucus and SEIU members—collected and carried boxes of signatures to City Hall; Council President Kevin Kelley refused to accept them. Council Clerk Pat Britt was in hiding as usual.

To show resolve, some petitioners held out their hands in protest, demanding arrest if the boxes were not accepted. They should never



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Saturday, December 9, 2017; Women Speak Out for Peace and Justice Holiday Peace Festival and Bazaar, Pilgrim Church, 2582 W. 14th Street: Jeanetta Ho displays her artwork made from repurposed items, including bicycle parts.

have left but they did. Arrest would have been the proper response and a politically powerful show. It was the first retreat.

Council leadership, Jackson and Law Director Barbara Langhenry thwarted the petitioners with a silly law suit of one part of city hall against another.

The legal gimmick worked.

Not that simply, however.

It took high-level “civic” pressure on the Congregations to get them to fold and withdraw the petitions citizens had worked hard to gain. (Fred Nance of Squires law firm and a traitor to real civic action ends up with a no-bid \$325,000 contract on the new bonds. That's how this community plays with governance.)

The pressure on the church leaders has never been truly revealed. Another media failure by the *Plain Dealer*. Wouldn't it be interesting to put Nance under legal questioning on this?

It must have been heavy pressure

for such a betrayal. The deceit damages the church group's reputation. It destroyed a long-awaited surge of civic action, absent from Cleveland for decades.

This stain will be hard to eliminate. It has to stand with the city's most disgusting swindles.

A civically dead city cannot thrive.

Further, by withdrawing the petition on its own, the Congregations group severely damaged its reputation as a community advocate.

Why would any real community group work with it again?

2017 proved to be a very bad year for ordinary Cleveland and Cuyahoga County citizens.

We will pay a heavy, sad price for decades. That's in dollars not just spirit.

Editor's Note: This article was first published in the blog: *Have Coffee Will Write* on December 13, 2017. For more articles by Roldo Bartimole, visit the blog at: havecoffee-willwrite.com.



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Saturday, December 9, 2017; Women Speak Out for Peace and Justice Holiday Peace Festival and Bazaar, Pilgrim Church, 2582 W. 14th Street: Volunteer Wyleane Darden sells fair trade coffee and chocolate at the InterReligious Task Force on Central America stand.

CLEVELAND POVERTY COMPARISON

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that Cleveland tied with Detroit Michigan and Rochester New York in having the highest child poverty rate among the big cities in the nation. Cleveland's overall poverty rate was 2nd in the nation, with Detroit, Michigan having the highest poverty rate in the country.

Overall, using 25 key metrics, the Wallet Hub ranked Cleveland as the 2nd most-neediest big city in the country. Some of the other indicators in the WalletHub study rank Cleveland 4th in Unemployment rate, 91st in Homelessness Rate, 17th in Food Insecurity, 15th in Percentage

Cleveland tied with Detroit Michigan and Rochester New York in having the highest child poverty rate among the big cities in the nation.

Source: WalletHub's Report: 2017's Neediest Cities

of Homes with inadequate plumbing, and 8th in Percentage of Homes with inadequate kitchens. For the full WalletHub study visit wallethub.com/edu/cities-with-the-highest-lowest-population-in-need/8795.

PLAIN PRESS PLANNING

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bers. As the board circulates in the community to gain input about the future of the paper, please be prepared to share with board members your nominations of individuals you feel can help shape the future of the *Plain Press*.

The *Plain Press* staff and Board of Trustees are also seeking volunteers to participate in the production of each issue of the *Plain Press*, and to assist with increasing revenue so that volunteers might eventually be paid for their talents. As our staff members approach the age of retirement, we are hopeful that a younger generation of journalists, graphic artists, photographers, ed-

itors, distributors, mailers, website managers, and advertising sales representatives will emerge to continue the work of the *Plain Press* in providing quality, independent neighborhood news.

The *Plain Press* staff and Board of Trustees are currently laying the groundwork for this planning process. We are looking into opportunities to participate in networking events in the neighborhood to gain input from our readers. Please keep tuned to future issues of the *Plain Press* for opportunities to participate in networking with our Board of Trustees. In the meantime, please feel free to send comments or suggestions to plainpress@gmail.com.

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