

PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Tuesday, May 19, 2020; Contemporary Views of Tremont, Tremont Art & History Project, southeast corner of Professor and College Avenues: Oil painting of the former Haab's Bakery by artist Tim Herron. Haab's Bakery was located at 2108 W. 19<sup>th</sup> in the Duck Island neighborhood of Tremont and made European breads and pastries for many years. (see related story and photos on pages 7 & 8.)

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# Plain Press

Cleveland's Near Westside Newspaper

## Area businesses respond to pandemic in a variety of ways

by Bruce Checefsky

Several days after Governor Mike DeWine announced that restaurants and bars in Ohio could reopen, the West Side Market parking lot was fuller than it had been in weeks. Missing were the *Cleveland Street Chronicle* vendors selling newspapers.

Since March, many of the fruit and vegetable vendor stands remain

empty and closed. Entrance and exit doors are limited to control the flow of foot traffic. Security personnel monitor customers coming from both directions. Cleaning crews with mops and spray bottles keep pace wiping down surfaces as frequently as possible.

Inside the market, the floor tile is marked with white tape, every six feet. Signs are posted throughout

the space to remind customers to, 'Take steps to protect yourself'. Kate's Fish and D. W. Whitaker Meats have installed large plastic shields at their counters to protect workers and customers from physical contact; credit card processors are mounted in full view for easy access and use. A vase of freshly cut flowers with a miniature American flag adorns Lance's Beef stand.

Most of the vendors wear protective gloves and face masks but not everyone. Fewer of the customers wear them. Many didn't seem to care. People try their best to keep a safe distance from each other, but the layout of the West Side Market is narrow with walkways that form a tight grid causing customers to come within six feet of each other.

Mediterranean Imported Foods has been dark ever since closing in late March. A sign on the door reads, 'Temporarily closed until further notice'. Frank's Bratwurst hasn't reopened yet.

Sean's Meats has seen an uptick in customers, but nothing compared to a month ago. Once restaurants and bars reopen that could change unless a meat shortage drives prices so high that vendors won't be able to sell their products. Meat prices have already nearly doubled from a few weeks ago, according to Sean's

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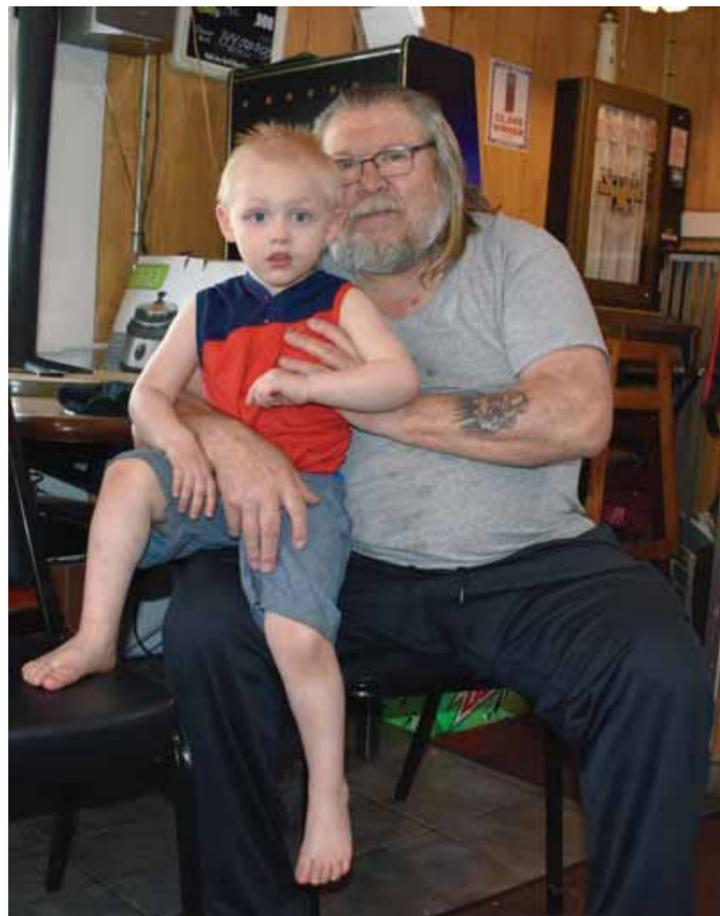


PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Wednesday, May 20, 2020; Diana Baker's Diner, W. 46<sup>th</sup> & Storer Avenue: Nikola Kraguljac, owner of Diana Baker's Diner, and his son Daniel Kraguljac. Diana Baker's Diner has continued take out and delivery services throughout the pandemic.



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Tuesday, May 19, 2020; Tremont Farmers Market, Lincoln Park: Kate Porter of Community Greenhouse Partners sets out fresh carrots for customers. Community Greenhouse Partners has operated a farm at E. 67<sup>th</sup> and Superior Avenue for nine years according to its Executive Director Tim Smith.

## Organizations work to address the digital divide

The arrival of the coronavirus COVID-19 in Cuyahoga County brought to the forefront the necessity to address the digital divide. A number of community leaders and advocates for social change have come forward, urging action to address this serious issue. Schools and health care providers have scrambled to get students and patients connected to the internet to facilitate access to programs and services during the pandemic. Advocates have called for action on the local, state and federal level to address the need to connect low income households to the internet, and to provide them with computers and training necessary to use the internet for services such as health care, education, working from home or applying for jobs or unemployment.

**Connect Your Community**

One local nonprofit organization, Connect Your Community, has been working to help local residents connect to the internet and learn how to use it since 2010. In a recent online newsletter, Connect Your Community called for "Free City wifi for all Cleveland neighborhoods."

In the newsletter, Connect Your Community noted that the City of Cleveland has been providing free wifi for City Council President Kevin Kelly's Ward 13, the Old Brooklyn Neighborhood, since 2011. The newsletter says, "Ward 13 residents can access their free Internet via a system of two hundred and twenty wifi access points mounted on City light fixtures distributed over a 4.5 square mile area."

Connect Your Community says in its newsletter that Councilman Kelly, long before he was City Council President, funded the project with hundreds of thousands of dollars from his ward allocation along with hundreds of thousands more contributed by the Jackson administration from other sources.

Connect Your Community says that the City of Cleveland also provides free internet access at Cleveland Hopkins Airport, Public Square and City Hall. "The Mayor and City Council should expand the City's wifi network to every residential block and every neighborhood business district in Cleveland," says the Connect Your Community newsletter.

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## Ohio job seekers face uphill battle on uneven playing field

COVID-19 exacerbates trends; Women and young workers hit particularly hard

by Kevin Williams

Graphics by Cid Standifer

*This public service journalism article provided by nonprofit nonpartisan Eye on Ohio, the Ohio Center for Investigative Journalism.*

Carmine Ballard (prefers use of pronouns they, them) graduated from The Ohio State University in 2016, with two Bachelor of Arts

degrees—one in Psychology, another in Women's and Gender Studies. Ballard's parents helped them through college—paying their tuition. Yet, despite that, Ballard still ended up with about \$10,000 worth of federal student loans by graduation, for living expenses during college.

Ballard graduated with a 3.0

average, and made the dean's list several times. Ballard planned to get into counseling and spaces that served minorities and other at-risk populations.

However, after more than twenty-five applications and interviews that didn't go anywhere, Carmine,

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PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Wednesday, May 20, 2020; W. 25<sup>th</sup> & Lorain Avenue: Construction is underway for the \$175 million Market Square Project on the site of the former Market Plaza shopping center. Harbor Bay Real Estate Advisors of Chicago is building a 7 story 267-unit apartment building, a 560-space underground garage, and a 10-story office tower on the 3.5-acre site. According to a February 24, 2019 *Plain Dealer* article by Steven Litt titled, "Plenty to like so far about design for rare timber-frame project," once constructed, the office tower may briefly hold the record for the tallest timber frame building in the United States.



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

**Tuesday, May 19, 2020; Tremont Farmers Market, Lincoln Park: (L-R) Tremont West Development Corporation Office Manager Lynn Friedel, Tremont Farmers Market Assistant Manager Angelica Pozo, and Tremont Farmers Market Manager Lisa Nemeth stand ready to handle Ohio Direction Card Electronic Benefit Transfer purchases. Pozo says until the end of June Tremont Farmers Market will offer an unlimited \$1 for \$1 match for all fresh produce purchases by Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients. The market is open every Tuesday from 4-7 p.m. until September 29<sup>th</sup>. Senior Citizens only shopping is available from 3:30 – 4 p.m.**

**ADVOCACY**

**KEEP COVID-19 OUT OF OHIO JAILS, PRISONS AND COURTS:** Visit the Ohio Immigrant Alliance website at [www.ohioimmigrant.org](http://www.ohioimmigrant.org) for a link to a petition.

**ARTS**

**SPACES** gallery is accepting applications from artists for fifty \$1,000 grants. Funding for the grants is coming from the Cleveland Foundation. Grants are for artists significantly impacted by the corona virus -- COVID-19. Grants may be used for "living expenses, medical bills or a similar purpose." To apply visit: [spacesgallery.com](http://spacesgallery.com).

**CUYAHOGA ARTS AND CULTURE** now has applications for 2021 project support grants. Also offering extensions for 2020 grants impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. For more info visit [www.cacgrants.org](http://www.cacgrants.org).

**BENEFITS**

**HOW TO APPLY FOR PUBLIC BENEFITS:** Visit [www.benefits.ohio.gov](http://www.benefits.ohio.gov) to apply for food, medical, cash, and childcare assistance. Available 24 hours, 7 days a week. Or call the Eligibility Contact Center at 1-844-640-OHIO (6446) for real-time eligibility and case changes for food, cash and medical assistance. Available Monday - Friday 8:00a.m. to 4:00p.m.

**MEDICAID:** Medicaid patients can use telehealth services even for first time visits. **RE-DETERMINATIONS ARE SUSPENDED FOR 180 DAYS.** Medicaid Benefits will not be lost if the renewal process is not able to be completed.

**SNAP AND OHIO WORKS FIRST: RE-DETERMINATIONS ARE SUSPENDED FOR SIX MONTHS.** Meaning if benefits were supposed to expire in March they now expire in September, April they now expire in October, and for May they will expire in November. **FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL: 216-987-7000 OR VISIT THE COUNTY WEBSITE AT: [cifs.cuyahogacounty.us/](http://cifs.cuyahogacounty.us/)**

**INTERVIEW ABOUT YOUR BENEFITS:** Northern Ohioans for Budget Legislation Equality wants to hear about your experiences applying for or renewing your benefits like food stamps or Medicaid. To get information to improve the system, they are doing short interviews with people on benefits. If you can do a brief interview, contact Jacie at [jacie@organizeohio.org](mailto:jacie@organizeohio.org) or call (216) 651-2606.

**CENSUS**

**NORTHERN OHIOANS FOR BUDGET LEGISLATION EQUALITY (NOBLE),** urges you to take the Census right now! The Federal Government sends Ohio \$2,880 per person to support health human services and education programs. The State stands to lose this amount for each person not counted! PLEASE TAKE THE CENSUS RIGHT NOW AND PASS THIS INFORMATION ALONG! CALL: 1-844-330-2020 or VISIT: [www.my2020census.gov](http://www.my2020census.gov) to complete the Census today!

**CHILD ABUSE REPORTING**

**CUYAHOGA COUNTY DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES' CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE:** 216-696-KIDS (5437). The Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services can also accept child abuse reports 24/7 through email at [protecting-cuyahoga-kids@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:protecting-cuyahoga-kids@jfs.ohio.gov); via its website at <http://cfs.cuyahogacounty.us/en-us/Report-Child-Abuse-Neglect.aspx>. Click on "Contact Us" to file a report through the County's website.

**CITY SERVICES**

**BULK PICKUP/TIRE DISPOSAL:** 1<sup>st</sup> full week of each month on your regular trash collection day. Limit 3 items such as appliances, tables and chairs, mattresses and box springs, couches, furniture. All mattresses, box springs and cloth furniture must be wrapped in plastic. In addition, can dispose of up to 4 tires. The City does not accept construction material. Boxes and bags are not bulk items. To set out bulk items at times other than the first week of the month, call 664-3711 to schedule.

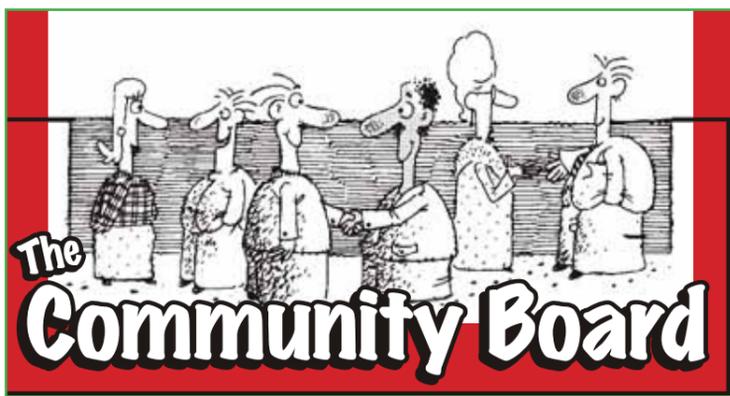
**CUDELL IMPROVEMENT AND DETROIT SHOREWAY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION** offer a list of resources at [cudell.com/coronavirus](http://cudell.com/coronavirus) or [www.dscdo.org](http://www.dscdo.org). The list includes free meals and free food banks and distributions in the Detroit Shoreway, Cudell and Edgewater neighborhoods. The organizations have also created a list of businesses selling take-out food. The list is available at [www.dscdo.org/food](http://www.dscdo.org/food).

**METROWEST** offers a list of resources for residents of the Brooklyn Centre, Clark Fulton and Stockyard neighborhoods on its website at [www.metrowestcle.org](http://www.metrowestcle.org). **OHIO CITY INCORPORATED** lists local resources, information and delivery food options in the Ohio City neighborhood at [www.ohiocity.org/covid19](http://www.ohiocity.org/covid19).

**WESTOWN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION** offers a list of resources for the Westown neighborhood on its website at: [www.westowncdc.org](http://www.westowncdc.org).

**OHIO CITY INCORPORATED (OCI)** website ([ohiocity.org](http://ohiocity.org)). OCI has moved its office to 3808 Lorain Avenue.

**CLEVELAND PANDEMIC RESPONSE – COVID19 COMMUNITY HUB,** at [Cleveland.recovers.org](http://Cleveland.recovers.org), offers assistance to individuals and families with a need by linking you to goods and services that you need. The site also connects those who want to donate supplies to those that need them.



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.

Volunteers can also use the site to connect with organizations that need them.

**CONNECTED IN CLE:** offers a comprehensive list of local resources and help for COVID-19, link via [freshwatercleveland.com](http://freshwatercleveland.com)

**COVID-19 RESOURCES**

**CLEVELAND DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH** has a new online dashboard for tracking coronavirus cases in the City of Cleveland. Visit [clevelandhealth.org](http://clevelandhealth.org) to check it out.

**CUYAHOGA COUNTY DATA:** Cuyahoga County Epi-curve data and the number of lab-confirmed cases of Coronavirus COVID-19 in each Cuyahoga County zip code will be presented each Friday by the Cuyahoga County Board of Health. Presenting epi-curve and confirmed cases by zip code each Friday will allow the Board of Health to demonstrate the evolution of case counts over time. The daily case overview for Cuyahoga County is available at [ccbh.net/coronavirus](http://ccbh.net/coronavirus).

**CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION** website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) offers information on the coronavirus (COVID-19): how to protect yourself, what to do if you think you are sick, resources for the community, information on the incidence of infections throughout the United States and information for healthcare professionals.

**OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH** updates its website regularly with helpful information and regular updates on COVID-19 in Ohio visit: [www.coronavirus.ohio.gov](http://www.coronavirus.ohio.gov). If the web doesn't work for you, the State has a call center to answer all of your COVID-19 questions. **Call 1-833-4-ASKODH, or 1-833-427-5634** any day of the week between 9 a.m. and 8 p.m.

**CUYAHOGA COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH'S** website, <https://www.ccbh.net/>, offers regular updates on COVID-19 and other useful information. To call the Cuyahoga County Board of Health please use the general number 216-201-2000.

**CUYAHOGA COUNTY CORONAVIRUS HELP LINE:** 855-711-3035.

**METROHEALTH 24/7 COVID-19 HOTLINE:** 440-59-COVID or 440-592-6843

**CONSUMER**

**PARATRANSIT SURVEY:** Northern Ohioans for Budget Legislation Equality (NOBLE) is conducting a survey regarding Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA) paratransit rider experiences over the next couple of months in an effort to improve paratransit services. If you, or someone that you know, utilizes paratransit and would be open to hearing more about the survey or would be willing to take the survey, please contact our organizer, Brittney Madison at [BMadison@organizeohio.org](mailto:BMadison@organizeohio.org) or 330-571-3333.

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER** 24 Hour Helpline: call or text 216-391-HELP (4357) or live chat online at [DVCAC.org/get-help](http://DVCAC.org/get-help).

**DONATIONS**

**ALUMINUM CANS FOR BURNED CHILDREN (ACBC):** Instead of throwing aluminum cans out or placing them on your curb, collect them and take them to your local fire station. This will help benefit a pediatric burn survivor or prevent a child from a burn injury. For more information about ACBC call 216-883-6633 or visit [www.acbcOhio.org](http://www.acbcOhio.org).

**EDUCATION**

**CLEVELAND METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT:** Visit the website for educational resources and updates at <https://www.clevelandmetroschools.org/Coronavirus>

**CHARTER OFFERS FREE SPECTRUM INTERNET ASSIST AND SPECTRUM BROADBAND**

including in-home Wi-Fi to new subscriber households with K-12 and or college students as well as teachers for 60 days. Free self-installation kits will be offered to new subscriber households. To enroll call 1-844-488-8395.

**CHARTER** has opened WiFi hotspots across their footprint for public use. A map of the Charter hotspots is available at: [www.spectrum.com/wifi-hotspots](http://www.spectrum.com/wifi-hotspots).

**CLEVELAND METROPARKS OFFERS FREE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM ON FACEBOOK LIVE:**

Mondays through Fridays at 11 a.m. visit [Cleveland\\_Metroparks\\_Zoo's Facebook Page](http://Cleveland_Metroparks_Zoo's_Facebook_Page) to join our biologists who are working to secure a future for wildlife at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo. Check-in with your favorite Zoo animals and learn about what it takes to care for some of the most endangered species in the world. Then, at 1 p.m., visit [Cleveland\\_Metroparks Facebook Page](http://Cleveland_Metroparks_Facebook_Page) to join our park naturalists as we explore the Emerald Necklace and look for early signs of spring, learn about the forest floor, birds and more.

**OHIO PUBLIC TELEVISION STATIONS**

are now offering Pre-K to 12 education programming on TV or online at [pbslearningmedia.com](http://pbslearningmedia.com). For more information visit [coronavirus.ohio.gov/learnathome](http://coronavirus.ohio.gov/learnathome).

**CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY** offers programming and educational materials in its new digital series "CMNH@HOME". The programs are available at [cmnh.org](http://cmnh.org) or facebook.com/goCMNH/ New episodes will be available on Mondays (Museum Mondays), Wednesdays (Wildlife Wednesdays) and Saturdays (Scientist Saturdays) at noon.

**FOOD**

**CLEVELAND METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT's** 22 meal sites will remain open without interruption (M-F: 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.) throughout the summer, providing grab-and-go breakfast and lunch bags, and also making summer reading and enrichment materials available. The sites in the Plain Press service area are: Buhner Dual Language, 1600 Buhner Ave.; Clark, 5550 Clark Ave.; Denison, 3799 W. 33<sup>rd</sup> St.; Garfield, 3800 W. 140<sup>th</sup>; and Louisa May Alcott, 10308 Baltic Road.

**ST. AUGUSTINE CHURCH HUNGER CENTER** offers home delivery of meals to those in need. To sign up call 216-781-5530.

**MAY DUGAN CENTER,** 4115 Bridge Ave., will host drive through food distribution on the fourth Wednesday of the month from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

**FIRST CALL FOR HELP:** For days, times and locations for free food distribution call 211.

**GREATER CLEVELAND FOOD BANK:** Call 216-738-7239, or visit [GreaterClevelandFoodBank.org](http://GreaterClevelandFoodBank.org) for food assistance.

**HEALTH**

**VIRTUAL SUPPORT AND RECOVERY** groups are available and listed on the ADAMHS Board website homepage at: [adamhscc.org](http://adamhscc.org).

**MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES AND HOTLINES:** The Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board of Cuyahoga County mental health resources and hotlines: To reach Cuyahoga County's 24-Hour Warmline, call 440-886-5950 to talk with a peer, or text "4hope" to 741741. To reach the 24-hour Suicide Prevention, Mental Health/Addiction Crisis, Information and Referral Hotline, call: 216-623-6888.

**EMOTIONAL SUPPORT:** call the COVID-19 Careline hosted by Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services at 1-800-720-9616.

**SUPPORT AND INFORMATION ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH:** live chat is available at NAMI Greater Cleveland Helpline. Live chat messages back and forth with NAMI Greater Cleveland Helpline staff at [namigreatercleveland.org](http://namigreatercleveland.org).

**RECREATION**

**YMCA OFFERS FREE VIRTUAL VIDEO WORKOUTS:** On-demand videos are now available on their website at [www.clevelandymca.org](http://www.clevelandymca.org). The videos are for people of all ages and can be accessed at no charge and can be done in the home with no special equipment.

**BASEBALL HERITAGE MUSEUM @ baseballheritagemuseumcleveland** is using Facebook and Instagram to post homeschooling help, baseball instruction tips, fun activities and links to other resources that will help keep you connected to the museum, baseball and each other.

**REUNION**

**THE 1960 CLASS OF SAINT STANISLAUS HIGH SCHOOL** will hold a reunion at the end of July 2020. For more information contact Reie Dix of the Alumni Committee at 216-357-2674.

**SERVICES**

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER'S LATINA PROJECT** offers culturally sensitive services that take into consideration the realities of the Latino life. Services provided in Spanish and free of charge include information about legal rights & Justice System Advocacy, personal assistance & escort, counseling services, weekly Spanish-speaking Support Group/childcare and more. For more information call 216-229-2420 or visit [www.dvcac.org](http://www.dvcac.org).

**SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS CUYAHOGA COUNTY SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN** aims to show how residents are "Spreading Joy" during COVID-19 Pandemic by using the hashtag #SpreadingJoyNEO share ideas and joy and inspire others to do things that feel good for them.

**TAXES**

**FREE TAX FILING** is available again! Schedule an appointment with the Cuyahoga EITC Coalition today. Using virtual and telephone options, our IRS-certified volunteers can help you prepare and e-file your taxes today. Visit [refundohio.org](http://refundohio.org) or call 211 to schedule your appointment. The extended tax deadline is July 15.

**INCOME TAX FILING DATES** have been extended for both Federal and State income tax filings until July 15<sup>th</sup>. You may file your taxes for free at [myfreetaxes.com](http://myfreetaxes.com). Updates on in-person tax prep will be at [refundohio.org](http://refundohio.org).

**VOLUNTEERS**

**CASA of Cuyahoga County,** a program of Child and Family Advocates of Cuyahoga County, needs volunteers to advocate for children who have been neglected and abused. CASAs are everyday citizens who are appointed by the Court to advocate for the safety and well-being of children and represent the children's best interests. CASAs are trained to investigate, facilitate, advocate, and monitor one or two cases at a time to help the Court make the best decision for a safe, caring, and permanent home for children involved in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. Those interested in becoming a CASA, please visit [cfadvocates.org](http://cfadvocates.org) or call 216.443.3377 for more information.

Plain Press Website: [www.plainpress.blog](http://www.plainpress.blog)

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**ATTENTION PLAIN PRESS READERS**

Please feel free to pick up extra copies of the Plain Press to drop on a neighbor's or friend's porch. The Plain Press distribution crew will monitor many of our distribution points and provide additional newspapers as they run out. Thank you for helping to bring the Plain Press to those who are staying at home.

# DIGITAL DIVIDE

continued from page one

Connect Your Community estimates it would cost the City of Cleveland “as much as \$20 million to build a citywide network, and \$1 -- \$2 million a year to operate it. Depending on the system design and financing strategy, the annual cost to City taxpayers could be as much as \$4 to 5 million.”

Connect Your Community then makes a case for why the city should make that investment:

Yes, it's absolutely worth it. Just consider what we'd be buying:

- Basic Internet access would become readily available to tens of thousands of disadvantaged Cleveland households that don't have it now — meaning they could (with some help, see Question 1) start going online to look for jobs, pursue education from K-12 to college, communicate with employers and healthcare providers, stay in touch with family, and so on. Cleveland would take a huge step toward eliminating our horrendous digital divide.
- Every Cleveland resident, worker, businessperson and visitor with a smartphone would have the opportunity to use *unlimited data at no cost*. Public wifi would literally put money back in every Cleveland taxpayer's pocket, while providing a real “financial amenity” for businesses and tourism... not just downtown but in every part of the city. What other new City initiative can offer a personal financial benefit to every taxpayer?
- Among those saving on mobile data costs would be the City's own personnel. If City employees had wifi access throughout the city, City Hall could reduce or eliminate the cost of their mobile data access... returning the savings to the City treasury. The same would be true of other public, educational and civic institutions.
- Ubiquitous public wifi would support an explosion of mobile apps for civic and community purposes because any Clevelander— rich or poor — could use them.

### Digital C

Another advocate for bridging the digital divide is Dorothy Baunach, Chief Executive Officer of the nonprofit organization, Digital C. Baunach wrote a May 20<sup>th</sup> *Plain Dealer Commentary from the Community* titled “Crisis shows broadband internet connectivity is our city's lifeline.” In the commentary, Baunach says, “While we shelter in Cleveland to slow the spread of COVID-19, we are seeing in real time how a lack of access to broadband affects our health and well-being. Digital connection enables us to go to work and school, to connect with friends and family, shop for groceries, or even apply for unemployment benefits.”

In her commentary Baunach notes “in 2018 Cleveland was ranked the fourth-worst internet-connected city in the United States, according to the National Digital Inclusion Alliance.” She goes on to spell out the severity of the problem in some Cleveland neighborhoods. “Too many Cleveland neighborhoods suffer with more than half of households operating entirely without broadband connection, a digital gap that COVID-19 has brought into sharp relief. This is a public infrastructure issue. And it is a public health issue as important as water for frequent hand-washing.”

Baunach says Digital C offers a low-cost solution and has partnered with neighborhood organizations, health care providers, educational institutions and banks to help bring affordable broadband to Cleveland residents. She said subscribers to EmpowerCLE can receive high speed broadband service for less than \$20 a month. This cost is significantly lower than the national average of \$45 to \$70 per month, said Baunach in the *Plain Dealer Commentary*.

Baunach provided a Digital C cost

estimate of \$36 million for “building the citywide broadband backbone to complete the vision.” Baunach called on the Greater Cleveland Community to rally behind securing the funding and acting to close the digital divide.

### Cleveland Metropolitan School District

One of the partners of Digital C is the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD). Baunach said Digital C has partnered with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District “to connect 13,000 households with broadband internet service in less than two years.”

The CMSD News Bureau in a May 8<sup>th</sup> press release reported that CMSD Chief Executive Officer Eric Gordon participated in an online City Club forum titled “Coronavirus Challenge: Bridging Cleveland Education's Digital Divide.”

The article noted that Gordon said that getting students and families access to virtual studies is especially hard in Cleveland “where up to 40 percent of households lack reliable high-speed Internet and two-thirds are without a laptop or tablet suitable for education.”

Gordon is also cited as saying that “Internet access should be treated like a public utility, not a luxury, and that a long-term solution is necessary.”

Gordon, who currently is the chair of The Council of the Great City Schools, and the CMSD News Bureau article notes that in that capacity he “has called on Congress to pass a coronavirus relief package that, among other concerns, cites problems with Internet access.” In addition to the call for national action the article says that Gordon along with other community leaders are “discussing the need for a local Internet strategy.”

### National Digital Inclusion Alliance

Policy Matters Ohio published a guest blog by Bill Callahan, Research and Policy Director for the National Digital Inclusion Alliance. In his blog, written in early April, Callahan stressed affordability as a big problem limiting internet access to Ohioans. Callahan said, “In 2018, two-thirds of Ohio households without broadband had household incomes below \$35,000, and nearly half had incomes below \$20,000. The monthly bill for a home internet connection in most Ohio communities is now at least \$60 to \$70 a month. That's just not affordable for many Ohioans who are already struggling to get by.”

Callahan said some internet providers are offering free or cheap plans for new users for the next few months in response to the pandemic, but he said many Ohioans can't take advantage or haven't heard about these “because they're not already online.”

Callahan called for governmental, institutional and private sector leaders to support local digital inclusion efforts. He said, “They need home computers or tablets to distribute, money to operate, media exposure, and cooperation from internet providers. Connecting the unconnected must be a community priority or it

won't happen.”

However, Callahan said local action is not enough. He said, “Closing Ohio's digital divide requires state and federal policymakers to act now.” He noted how far behind other states Ohio is in having the capacity to address this issue.

Callahan suggested some federal actions that could help address this issue:

- The CARES Act appropriated \$50 million for the Institute of Museum and Library Services to “prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus, including grants to States, territories and tribes to expand digital network access, purchase internet accessible devices, and provide technical support services.” That's a good first step, but it's a tiny drop in a big empty bucket. The next stimulus package must increase the appropriation to at least \$500-million, and make clear that this funding is meant to support concrete, practical community action — by libraries, of course, but also by other public and nonprofit organizations as well — that will quickly connect poor and rural households to the internet.
- Congress should also act quickly to create a new, across-the-board federal broadband subsidy that would be available to all households below an income threshold, similar to SNAP or LIHEAP.
- The FCC must pressure all home broadband providers, especially the major cable and telecom incumbents, to offer robust internet connections, free of data caps and disconnections, to all low-income and unemployed households for the duration of the crisis — not just a month or two. Congress should appropriate funding to provide reasonable reimbursement to providers.
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, along with state Medicaid agencies, must make all costs of home telehealth services — including home internet access, devices and digital skills training for patients who need them — eligible for Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement.

On May 13, Callahan wrote another article on the National Digital Inclusion Alliance's website (digitalinclusion.org) titled “House Democrats' COVID Relief Bill includes Emergency Broadband Benefit.” In the article Callahan describes what the HEROES Act proposes:

The new, three trillion dollar COVID-19 relief proposal (the “HEROES act”) unveiled yesterday by Democratic leaders in the U.S. House of Representatives includes \$8.8 billion to fund an Emergency Broadband Benefit for consumers who are eligible for Lifeline phone discounts, or have suffered major income loss due to the pandemic.

The Emergency Broadband Benefit proposal would require the FCC to reimburse internet providers up to \$50 per month for discounts on “normal” home broadband bills, i.e. services and prices advertised to the general public as of May 1. (The monthly reimbursement for residents of tribal lands would be up to \$75.) Providers could also be reimbursed up to \$100 per household for computers or tablets supplied to eligible households. The Emergency Broadband Benefit is designed to begin immediately upon Congressional approval (the FCC is given only seven days to promulgate the necessary regula-



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Wednesday, April 29, 2020; Utility Restoration Car Protest, Cleveland Municipal Parking Lot, 1500 South Marginal Road: Members of the Cleveland End Poverty Now Coalition and partners meet for a planned caravan to the nearby Carl B. Stokes Public Utilities building on E. 12<sup>th</sup> and Lakeside to demand the City of Cleveland reach out to households that have had their water or electricity shutoff by Cleveland Water or Cleveland Public Power. The Coalition urges the City of Cleveland to let these residents know they have the right to be reconnected during this pandemic. (L-R): Ted Seuss of the Single Payer Action network, Paul Sherlock and Tim Walters of End Poverty Now. The City of Cleveland says Cleveland Water customers who have recently experienced disconnection should contact Cleveland Water at 216-664-3130 to discuss options for the restoration of service. CPP customers who have recently experienced disconnection should call 216-664-4600 to discuss options for the restoration of service. As of May 22, Cleveland Water has restored service for 1,231 customers and CPP has restored service for 100 customers.

tions), and is authorized to continue for the duration of the Federally declared COVID-19 public health emergency, plus an additional six months. How long the \$8.8 billion appropriated by the HEROES Act could support the program is dependent upon how many households use it and thus is unclear. It would not be supported by the existing Universal Service Fund.

### Free Press Action

While the United States House of Representatives has passed the HEROES Act, it faces an uncertain future in the United States Senate.

A group called Free Press Action urges public involvement to get the Senators to vote for the HEROES Act.

Here is part of a message sent out by Free Press Action:

Your Senators need to hear from

you before they vote on this important legislation. Tell them to fight for the HEROES Act. The HEROES Act would help people access essential information and services during the coronavirus pandemic by:

- Providing an emergency benefit of up to \$50 a month for broadband access, available to people in the FCC's Lifeline program and to those who have lost jobs or income due to the current crisis.
- Making it unlawful for internet providers to shut off service to individuals and small businesses, or impose data caps and overage fees during the COVID-19 emergency.
- Driving down call rates to and from prisons, jails and detention centers to no more than 4 to 5 cents per minute, and restoring the FCC's authority to regulate all prison and jail phone-call rates.

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PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Tuesday, May 19, 2020; Fat Cats, W. 10<sup>th</sup> and Thurman: Fat Cats owner and chef Ricardo Sandoval said they offered take out service after the restaurant closed in March. Sandoval says he is willing to wait until it is safe to return to a full-blown operational restaurant. Fat Cats planned to begin offering outdoor patio dining in May.

**AREA BUSINESSES**

continued from page one

Meats. Workers at Sean's Meats said, "People are coming to the West Side Market because they can't find beef and pork in the suburbs."

On the corner of Storer Avenue and West 46th Street in the heart of Ward 14, Diana Baker's Diner has been open 24/7 ever since the pandemic broke full stride. Tucked among rows of gable-roofed, cape cod and colonial homes build in the 1920s, the diner serves takeout breakfast, lunch, and dinner. They make a lot of deliveries, too. Top menu items include the House Breakfast with two eggs, two bacon strips, two sausage links and your

choice of two pancakes or French toast.

"We do pick up, delivery and curbside service," said Nikola Kraguljac, owner of Diana Baker's Diner. "We've been doing delivery of food for quite a while. We cut down on our hours during the lockdown. We close at 2AM and open again at 9AM."

Kraguljac doesn't have enough work to pay his people. The Small Business Loan program as part of the CARES Act was of no help. By the time he got around to filing the paperwork, all the money was gone. His customers won't notice much difference in service once the ban on restaurants is lifted. He can't normally seat more than 6 or 8

people in his small space. Still, he's complying with the rules.

"I took the two round tables out. I don't have any distance. You walk into my place and you have six feet to the counter."

Large sheets of plastic mounted at the counter protect his employees. Kraguljac thinks it looks more like a bank than a diner. But the protective barrier prevents contact with customers.

"I'm hardly making any money," he said. "I own the building, but if I had to pay rent I would be closed by now."

When the COVID19 economic relief checks arrived last month, the diner was busy nonstop. He couldn't keep up with the orders. Then the money ran out and customers stopped coming. The government can open all it wants, but people don't have any money to buy food, according to Kraguljac. The pandemic virus has been devastating on his business but that's not the worst of his problems.

"I can't find anyone to work," he added. "People just don't want to work, no matter how much you pay them. They see what we do, and they don't want to come back."

Getting food supplies hasn't been much of a problem at least not yet. Some suppliers ran out, but hand sanitizers and toilet paper are plentiful if you're willing to pay the higher prices.

"Corned beef is a harder to find, but not impossible," he said, then laughed. "I retired two years ago,

but I'm still working."

Caribe Bake Shop on Fulton Ave near Seymour Ave is Cleveland's oldest Latino owned bakery and has been at the same location since 1969. Red tulips trim the entryway into the cafeteria-style operation. Freshly baked sweet bread fills the air. Irresistible sweets like flan, coconut pudding and pastelitos de guayaba, or flaky guava-filled pastries are plentiful. Crispy empanadillas filled with beef or chicken are ready to eat. With only a handful of seats, Caribe is the furthest thing from a traditional restaurant. Tables and chairs have been removed for now. An adjacent banquet room has been closed for months. Responding to the needs of the community, Caribe was determined to remain open despite the financial hardship of so few customers.

"We have to provide food to the community," said owner Sandra Burgos. "We feel a lot of pressure because many people who come inside don't use protective masks. Some people don't believe in the virus. I worry for them and our workers."

Burgos is very grateful to help the community even though she can't find enough product to serve her customers. She has to contact several different distributors and even then, the supply is limited. Meat is especially hard to find. At the end of the day, Caribe is providing what they can despite the lack of food supplies. Customers need to eat. She just wishes they would wear protection when they come to her restaurant.

"People call us looking for food. We are very grateful to help them," she said. "I wish they would listen and wear protection. We have families, too."

There's no sit-down service at Caribe. Customers decide if they want to stay or leave after picking up their food at the food stations. Everything is served in styrofoam containers. That won't change anytime soon even with the lifting of restrictions on restaurant dining. Caribe is about providing food to the community, according to Burgos. That is their main mission.

"We've been in this place for many years. We've seen a lot including the economic depression in 2008. People didn't have any jobs or any money back then. We tried to help. There were no bank loans," she said. "It's worse now. We have to be brave to survive this. We have to be faithful and believe we can do it."

Large dirt piles, backhoe loaders, excavators, and bright orange barrels lay scattered across the street near the intersection of West 10th and University Road in Tremont. Construction on the fourth and final stage of the Towpath Trail has been underway since last summer. Less than a block away, Fat Cats, an eclectic neighborhood bistro, has provided delivery and curbside service ever since the restaurant closed

in March. That's about to change. Ricardo Sandoval, owner and chef at Fat Cats, is ready for customers to dine in.

"I'm planning to open with a few tables outside on the paved patio," he said. "We're using a communal table. A local artist is building a partition artwork in the middle of it. We'll have a couple of double tables. We will exceed the requirements for separation. The inside of the restaurant will have only five or six tables at least ten feet apart. I want to protect our staff and customers."

Sandoval owns the 125-year-old house where his restaurant first opened in 1997. He doesn't worry about being financially over leveraged. He has very little overhead. With no mortgage payments or rent like many other restaurants struggling to stay open, a decision to ease into a full-blown operational restaurant was easy. He's ready to wait it out until there's more antibody testing or even a vaccine.

"I'm in no rush. I'm waiting for something that's going to make our society look a little rosier than right now," Sandoval said. "I want our customers to feel safe."

He's working on a new menu with a QT scan, so customers can use their cell phones to order. Seasonal foods, a core concept to Cleveland's original farm to table restaurant, will be offered. He plans to open with outdoor dining in May.

Financially, the first two months of 2020 were the best January and February the restaurant had in years, according to Sandoval. That changed to only 25% of the business in March and April. His staff was fully laid off. Most will be rehired. He plans to offer customers good food in a safe environment. The rest, he's waiting to see.

"We're getting a lot of people calling about reservations," he added. "I'm not chasing the dollar. We're doing the right thing. I want to take care of our customers and provide them with the best experience possible while protecting and providing a healthy environment for our workers."

Other restaurants like Flying Fig, Le Petit Triangle Cafe, Plum and Astoria Market Cafe plan to provide dine-in service after May 21 while following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for reopening. CDC guidelines include promotion of healthy hygiene practices such as handwashing and employees wearing cloth face coverings; intensified cleaning, sanitation, disinfection and ventilation; encourage social distancing and enhance spacing.

Recent outdoor overcrowding at TownHall and Lago East Bank raised concern that businesses may not be willing to enforce the CDC guidelines. Governor DeWine has vowed to deal with them harshly.

"They will lose their liquor license," he told NBC4 in Columbus, Ohio.

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## Journey North to South through the Near West Side on Fulton Road

by Greg Kocsan

*Editor's Note: The Plain Press will be celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2021. In a run up to that date we are publishing historical features that focus on the neighborhoods in our circulation area. The first batch of features looks at «streets.» This one focuses on Fulton Road. Fulton stretches from Ohio City through the Clark Metro area and Brooklyn Centre neighborhoods to Old Brooklyn. Readers are welcome to suggest other institutions and topics, or to offer contributions along the way to our anniversary.*

Fulton Road begins its long trek south at Franklin Circle, once the intersection of seven streets, then meanders through several turns while passing through a rich variety of neighborhoods and history.

That history includes a Jewish cemetery; one of the original Carnegie libraries; a manufacturer of cellophane bags and cigar pouches; pre-prohibition brewers modern day entries; the Lyceum Theatre; the Buechler-Jaeger Sausage Company; and a bunch of churches and schools. And it does this while passing over or under freeways and railroad lines before crossing the Big Creek and arriving at the old Brookside Park and Old Brooklyn.

If you visited Franklin Circle in its early years, you might have been there to purchase fresh tomatoes, corn on the cob, or perhaps a pumpkin. Twenty years later, you might be sitting on a bench taking a rest underneath the shade of a tree in what the locals called Modoc Park. Twenty years after that, if you were on Franklin Circle, you just might have been one of the richest people in Cleveland. Today, the street is home to such landmarks as Lutheran Hospital, the former Masonic Temple, and the Franklin Circle Christian Church, although, in the eyes of a few, the parklike atmosphere can still be found there.

Franklin Circle has been around as long as Ohio City itself has been around, having been surveyed in the same year as the city's founding in 1836. Designed by Josiah Barber, the area did not serve an official purpose in the 18 years that followed. It did not even have an official name, also being called such names as Franklin Place and Franklin Square.

Lots of change has come to Fulton in recent years. Just south of Franklin Circle is Momocho's, a small, fairly new, and, as it likes to call itself, hip Mexican restaurant. In the thirteen years it has been open, its owner and main chef, Eric, has seen an incredible transformation in nearby establishments and the neighborhood along Fulton.

"I almost don't even recognize the place anymore," he said. "New places are going up like crazy, restaurants and breweries. People are buying old houses for renovation and resale...it has grown exponentially in the last five years or so, but the seeds were planted eight to ten years ago."

Just down Fulton to Bridge Avenue, across from St. Patrick's Catholic Church, is the Ohio City Carnegie branch of the Cleveland Public Library. Although updated and restored throughout the years,

the building has retained its original character. The library opened in 1910 and was designed by Edward Tilton, who also designed four buildings for the U.S. Immigration Station on Ellis Island in New York. The architecture is described as modified Renaissance with elements of classical style. The building was completely remodeled in 1979.

After crossing Lorain Avenue and continuing a few blocks south, Fulton Road passes by a Jewish Cemetery on its western edge, directly across from what was once the Dobeckmun Co., one-time manufacturer of cellophane bags and cigar pouches. This is the point at which Fulton crosses over the RTA and railroad tracks, as well as Train Avenue, a storied street filled with potholes that local stories say remain to discourage anxious commuters avoiding freeway traffic but looking for a fast route without patrol cars to get downtown. Train Avenue prior to World War II was called Walworth, a name that's still retained for a small stretch of street west of W. 53<sup>rd</sup> Street. John Walworth was an early settler and government official, arriving here about 1800. Walworth Run was a creek that over the years was merged with the sewer and paved over for use as a street.

Crossing the rapid tracks, Fulton arrives at a spot that brings together Cleveland's brewing history and the current brewing culture. On the east side of Fulton is the site of the Isaacv Leisy Brewing Company, across the street from one of the Leisy buildings, is the new home to a brewery that supplies the Platform Beer Company on Lorain Avenue with canned and kegged beer. For a time, the same building housed the Cleveland Fruit Juice Co.

This stretch of Fulton Road between Lorain Avenue and Clark Avenue is also home to La Boricana Foods and Caribe Bake Shop. Boricana Foods sells imported foods from all over the Caribbean, Central and South America and Africa. Owner Enrique Muniz Junior says his family opened the grocery in 1994.

Caribe Bake Shop in recent years built a new building just to the rear of its previous home on Fulton between Erin and Seymour. The bakery dates back the 1960s when it was first opened by Francisco "Pancho" Morales. The business is now owned by the Burgos family.

As you cross Clark Avenue, you will see the Lin Omni Center, housed in a former industrial building restored by Jason Lin in 2002. One of the original tenants was Merrick House which offered senior and youth programs from the building until 2011. The building still offers a range of services to the community including programs of MetroWest Community Development Organization, Murtis Taylor Clark Metro programs, and Councilwoman Jasmin Santana's Ward Office.

St. Rocco's Church lies just south of the Lin Omni Center. The church has been around since 1952, although the Parish was officially recognized by the Diocese of Cleveland 30 years earlier in 1922. Eight years before then, it was informally established to serve the spiritual



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

**Tuesday, May 19, 2020: La Boricana Foods, 2127 Fulton Road: La Boricana Foods, owned and operated by the Muniz family, celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2019. Over the past year the building received a make-over with new façade and signage. La Boricana Foods sells imported foods from all over the Caribbean, Central and South America, and Africa.**

needs of the then-predominately Italian neighborhood. St. Rocco's parish still celebrates many of its Italian traditions.

Like many churches, the building was self-funded by the parishioners, but St. Rocco's boasts a claim not many other churches can say. It was also built by the parishioners. They laid down the brick and mortar. They installed the electricity and running water. They crafted the marble altar. They carved the crucifix. Three immigrants from southern Italy stand out, their names Michael Girardi, Gaetano Farrugia, and Gennaro Di Pasquale. Known affectionately as the Three Musketeers, the three elderly men were specifically recognized for their contributions to the construction.

Across from the church is the celebrated Johnny's Bar, an Italian restaurant with a city-wide reputation for excellent Italian food. Built on the site of what had been a grocery store, this section of the street was a largely rural area in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, consisting of many lakes, farms, and fruit trees. The restaurant was established in 1925 as Louise's Gardens, named for its founder, Louise Santosuosso. Today, her grandson, Bo, and his brother, Joe, are the current owners.

It seems as though whenever a celebrity passes through Cleveland, they go to Johnny's. "Oh God, there have been so many famous people here. Ricky keeps a list of them all, and it has names like Andy Williams on it," Bo said. Ricky wasn't available for comment, but Bo added

a few names of his own to the list, which includes athletes, politicians, singers, and actors. Travis Hafner was a regular at Johnny's, as was former Indians owner Dick Jacobs. Zydrunas Ilgauskas, Julius Erving, and Bill Russell have been here, too. Former Texas governor Rick Perry stopped by when the Republican National Convention met in Cleveland. Bo also mentioned music icons John Oates and actors such as Hal Holbrook.

Bo has seen a lot of things change over the years. Many iconic places from his childhood are gone now. Bozak's dairy sold fresh milk straight from the farm and processed on site, and until it closed around 30 years ago, it was promoted as the best milk you could ever drink. Mussara's was one of the first major grocery stores on the street. And many children would visit Kovar's corner after school. "You could get a pop and play pinball for hours," Bo reminisced.

The demographics of the street have changed as well. There was once a time when those who lived in this area of Fulton were almost entirely Italian. "It's mixed now, a lot of Latinos live here now, especially from Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic," Bo observed. There are also many African American residents, although many Italian Americans still live on the street today.

As you continue down Fulton Road you pass a long-time neighborhood business, Joe De's Pizzeria at Fulton and Sackett. You soon come to the Family Ministry Center

housed in one of the buildings of the former Blessed Sacrament Parish.

Moving south, past the former Blessed Sacrament Church at Bush and Fulton, was the Lyceum Theatre. This neighborhood theatre opened in the 1930's and closed in 1978. During the 1970's the theatre showed porn. The Lyceum Theatre, later demolished, is now the site of the Fulton Branch of the Cleveland Public Library.

Once again, Fulton crosses another freeway, Interstate 71. One business along Fulton, before the freeway came through, was the Buechler-Jaeger Sausage Company. A number of years ago, Brookside Meats was located just two blocks further south along Fulton.

As we continue Fulton's trek south from Franklin Circle, we cross Denison and arrive at the former Brookside Park and cross Big Creek as the street moves into Old Brooklyn where if you continue straight south the road briefly becomes a Fulton Parkway before losing its name at Memphis. If you go around the bend west on Park Drive, you will once again come to Fulton Road. This stretch of Fulton includes Estabrook Recreation Center, Dollar Bank, Drug Mart, Save-A-Lot and many other retail and service establishments. Fulton then crosses Memphis and continues its southward journey. It passes through a primarily residential neighborhood of a later vintage and finally terminates at its intersection with Pearl Road.

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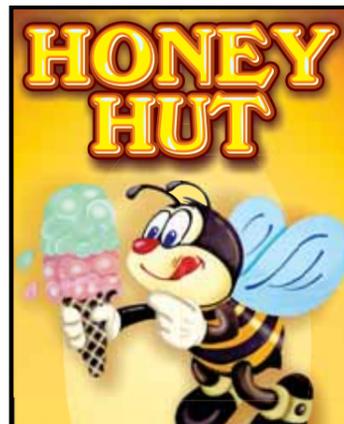
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PHOTO COURTESY OF CONNOR BROWN

Connor Brown of Reynoldsburg, Ohio decided to work full time right out of high school. After working low wage jobs for nearly a decade, he landed a job at Spectrum in March. His new job pays \$15 per hour plus benefits.

**OHIO JOB SEEKERS**

continued from page one

short on cash after three months of applying, ended up taking a food service job to make ends meet. The \$114 a month for their student loan repayment was too much to handle

with very little income, so Ballard's parents continued to help out.

"When I tried to apply for jobs, I just wouldn't hear back. I couldn't even get a job doing clerical work," said Ballard.

After a while, Ballard eventually got a job at BarkBox - doing customer service, making \$14 an hour.

Although not what they went to school for, the job was steady and offered benefits.

Then the stay-at-home order issued by Governor DeWine happened, and Barkbox laid off Ballard. Ballard had been struggling to find gainful employment before the advent of coronavirus, but now Ballard said its impact makes them feel insecure about their future. Currently, Ballard has been focusing on applying for the new unemployment provisions the state of Ohio has provided.

**Job Growth had been slow, not enough jobs to cover the amount of unemployed**

(GRAPH) <https://public.flourish.studio/visualisation/2193001/>

For years, Ohio's job growth has lagged behind the national average. Today, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics is set to release its statewide unemployment tally for the previous month. The graph shows that in the month of March Cuyahoga County had 20.56 new unemployment claims per 1,000 people. (GRAPH) <https://public.tableau.com/profile/cidmonster#!/vizhome/CountyunemploymentMarch-14toApril4/Mapbyweek>

Post COVID-19, job losses accelerated dramatically— particularly in Northeast and Northwest Ohio.

"Large numbers of formerly employed individuals are suffering from what will probably be certified in a few months by National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) as a sharp and damaging recession," said Ohio economist George Zeller. "The damage is not only in Manufacturing and Government, but is also, for the first time in years, concentrated in retail trade, airlines, hotels and related industries. That is extremely dangerous of course, both for public health and also for the Ohio economy itself."

(GRAPH) <https://public.flourish.studio/story/287392/>

Ohio women and young people have been particularly hard hit by COVID-19; filing the most unemployment applications compared to everyone else. Although women only made up around a third of unemployment filings for all of 2019,

they made up more than half of all unemployment filings in March 2020— when Ohio's Stay-at-home order saw many businesses close.

GDP accounts for care industries like childcare and eldercare - but only the paid positions and wealth generated by those jobs. However, a great deal of care work remains unpaid, such as raising kids or caring for elderly or sick family members. The Center for American Progress in 2018 estimated that nationally, working mothers are more likely to provide childcare, and spend more time doing so. Between paid work, unpaid work, and leisure, working mothers spent an average of 14.2 hours per day on activities; compared to a mere 11.8 hours per day average of all workers, regardless of familial obligations.

"Nationally, the median age for employees in the leisure and hospitality sector and the accommodation and food services sector is 32 and 31 respectively. That is significantly lower than the median age across all industries which is 42," said Dr. Christelle Khalaf, an economist at Ohio University. "In addition, school closures might be forcing younger households with less flexible jobs to work less in order to care for their children. The gender division of labor usually allocates household production to women. Therefore, there is a real concern here that COVID-19 is reversing a lot of the progress that women have made in recent years in terms of labor force participation."

Some have withdrawn family members out of nursing homes. Out of the 1,825 coronavirus deaths in the state as of May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1,247 of them have been in long-term care facilities, which includes nursing homes and assisted living facilities. That's around 68%.

Some caretakers are still working from home— and many report that there is reduced productivity at work, since many now have to mind their children during the day. But refusing to return to work, even with underlying conditions, can have legal consequences.

Donna Sprague, a retired nurse, was working as a rideshare driver.

Until the stay-at-home order, Sprague was driving anywhere from

five to six hours a day, roughly 30 hours a week. Her husband had a stroke two years ago and now is completely unable to work. Her income from Social Security only covers around 60% of her living expenses, so she would drive to close the gap, in between taking care of her husband.

However, with the advent of COVID-19, Donna is forced to stay home.

"I have a lot of co-morbidity and health issues, so my doctor told me to stop driving [for Lyft and Uber]," she said.

Lyft and Uber both have a COVID-19 fund to compensate drivers, but it only applies to those formally diagnosed or told to quarantine by a doctor.

Traditionally, gig economy work hasn't been eligible for things offered to traditional employees - like unemployment insurance. But Ohio implemented the "Pandemic Assistance Program" funded by legislation in the federal CARES Act. This not only extends unemployment benefits to people previously not eligible but also adds an extra \$600 a week on top of regular unemployment benefits paid out.

Donna Sprague isn't sure how to apply for the benefits, and she is unsure if she will qualify for any expanded unemployment, or if answering incorrectly will jeopardize her chances of receiving assistance.

"I don't know what to put, because technically we weren't laid off," she said.

Aside from the \$1,200 one-time stimulus payout, Sprague has no income until her next Social Security check. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services created the "Pandemic Unemployment Assistance" or "PUA" program specially created for independent contractors and anyone else who got rejected for unemployment. But two full months after the shutdown went into effect, the agency is just now starting to pay claims.

"Pandemics are not gender neutral. Women are overrepresented in service occupations and occupations that involve care and interacting with people. In an increasingly service-based economy, this has continued on page 8

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# Work Share Ohio offers an option to help employers and employees adjust to difficult times

Policy Matters Ohio released information on a voluntary program, called Work Share Ohio, that says it, "allows employers to avoid layoffs and workers to receive unemployment benefits proportionate to the time they don't work."

Policy Matters Ohio Research Director Zach Schiller tells of his role in helping to initiate the Work Share Ohio Program. "Eight years ago, I talked with then-Representative Mike Duffey about how Ohio should enact a work-sharing bill. That's a form of unemployment compensation (UC). Instead of laying off workers, an employer reduces work hours, and all the participating workers receive UC benefits proportionate to the time they don't work. Rep. Duffey took up the idea and shepherded it through the General Assembly. Lawmakers passed it in the next session," said Schiller.

Schiller sees work share as "a good thing for both employers and workers. Many are seeing how this can be a way to avoid layoffs. It can also be used as a way to bring employees back to work gradually, which could be especially useful as Ohio's economy gets going again. But too few people know about this valuable tool, and it remains underutilized."

Policy Matters produced a fact sheet explaining how the program works and is available at [policymattersohio.org](http://policymattersohio.org). It provides an example of how an employer with 10 employees could use the program. If the employer only has a budget to pay 60% of their workforce under the traditional system, they could layoff four workers or 40% of their staff. Under Shared Work Ohio, the employer could keep all 10 employees working

three days a week for the same budgeted amount, and all ten employees could collect Unemployment Compensation for the other two days of the week. Under this system, employees "will also retain their employer-sponsored health care and other benefits," according to the Policy Matters fact sheet.

The Policy Matters fact sheet says, "Work-sharing could be especially helpful to local governments that otherwise might have to lay off or furlough workers." As an example, it uses a Case Study of the Cuyahoga County Public Library.

Cuyahoga County Public Library has put 557 employees on a half-time schedule. They will receive regular unemployment compensation (UC) that covers the other half of their time.

Most library employees will get UC benefits that are half of what they would have made in pay. Under the CARES Act, they will also qualify for an additional \$600 a week in benefits through July. If the library had laid these people off, they would get regular UC benefits and the additional \$600 a week.

The Policy Matters Ohio Fact Sheet also demonstrates how Shared Work Ohio can help "employers ramp up as the state reopens." The fact sheet offers an example of how this could work: "Take a restaurant that has cut back from 10 workers to two, because it's running only a carryout business. It could bring back the other eight on a half-time basis, and they would continue to receive unemployment benefits for the time they aren't working. Over time, the employer could

bring everyone back on full-time."

The Fact Sheet offers details on which employers qualify and how to go about applying for the program:

- The program must cover at least two employees (including part time) who qualify for regular UC benefits and can't work on a seasonal, temporary or intermittent basis.
- Employers submit plans to the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services for approval.
- Employees individually seek UC benefits after their employer's plan is approved. They are not required to seek other jobs.
- Employers can designate different work units for different hour reductions if an across-the-board reduction would be impractical, and they can have multiple shared work plans.
- Plans can last up to 52 weeks; the employer can modify or end a plan during that time. A plan can reduce hours between 10% and 50%. Work hours for employees covered under a plan are reduced by the same amount.
- Workshare will not change how much employers pay for this year's UC benefits, or conceivably may allow some to reduce such costs.

The Fact Sheet also supplies a link to the State of Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services where employers and employees can find more information and how to apply for the program. The link is: [jfs.ohio.gov/ouio/SharedWorkOhio/](http://jfs.ohio.gov/ouio/SharedWorkOhio/).

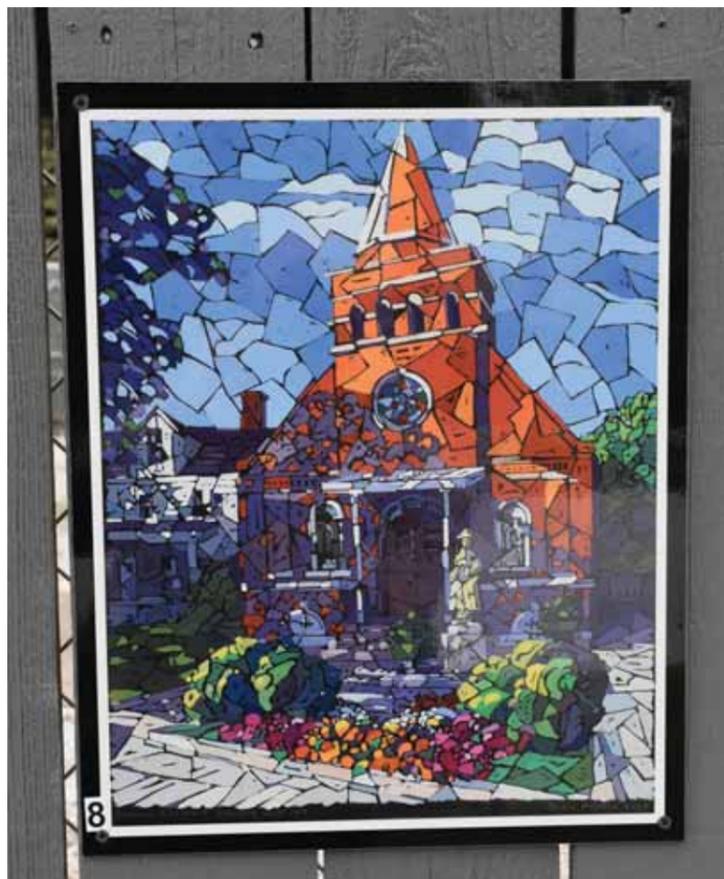


PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Tuesday, May 19, 2020; Contemporary Views of Tremont, Tremont Art & History Project, southeast corner of Professor and College Avenues: St. Andrew Kim Korean Catholic Church (gouache) by artist Brian Pierce ([avradiovisual@yahoo.com](mailto:avradiovisual@yahoo.com)).

## Cuyahoga County Board of Elections releases Primary Election results

Cuyahoga County Board of Elections released results for the March 17 Extended Primary Election in May. Due to the corona virus COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Mike DeWine cancelled in person voting at neighborhood voting booths on election day. Voters were given additional time until April 28<sup>th</sup> to cast their ballots by mail, or in person at the Board of Elections for a limited number of voters.

Overall 196,785 ballots were cast out of 858,057 registered voters in Cuyahoga County. Of those ballots, the Board of Elections counted 10,849 Early In-Person ballots; 181,232 Vote-by-Mail ballots; 2,760 Provisional Ballots; and 1,944 Post Election Vote by Mail Ballots.

The Board of Elections said 22.93% of registered voters voted in the Primary Election. This compares to 23.75% voter turnout in the May 2018 midterm primary election and 42.52% voter turnout in the last presidential primary in March of 2016.

In this year's primary 98.6% of voters either voted by mail or took advantage of early in-person voting. In the 2018 primary that percentage was 34.78% and in the 2016 primary that percentage was 24.62%.

Of the ballots cast in Cuyahoga County 143,621 or 72.98% were Democratic; 40,412 or 20.54% were Republican; 211 or .11% were Libertarian; 12,541 or 6.37% were Nonpartisan, and 3,662 or 1.86% were blank.

In the Democratic Presidential Primary, although most of the candidates had officially withdrawn by the time many voters cast their ballots, their names still remained on the ballot. Of the 143,621 Democratic Ballots cast, Joseph Biden received 98,097 votes or 69.75% of the vote; Bernie Sanders received 22,564 votes or 16.04%; Michael Bloomberg received 6,873 votes or 4.89%; Elizabeth Warren received 5,826 votes or 4.14%; Pete Buttigieg received 2,569 votes or 1.83% and Amy Klobuchar received 1,814 votes or 1.29%. Rounding out the rest of the field were Tulsii Gabbard, Michael Bennet, Tom Steyer, Deval Patrick and various write in votes – all with less than 1% of the votes cast.

In the 9<sup>th</sup> District Democratic Primary race for the United States House of Representatives Marcy Kaptur received 21,387 votes or 87.75% of the vote in Cuyahoga County compared to Peter Rosewicz who received 2,985 votes or 12.25% of the vote in Cuyahoga County. (Editor's note: The 9<sup>th</sup> District extends over many counties – all the way to Toledo.)

In the 11<sup>th</sup> District Democratic Primary race for the United States House of Representatives, the incumbent Marcia Fudge received 62,628 votes or 91.07% of the vote; Tariq Shabazz received 3.29% of the votes; Michael Hood 3.28%;

and James Jerome Bell 2.26%.

In areas served by the *Plain Press* there was one contested primary for State of Ohio House of Representatives. In that race, in the 10<sup>th</sup> District, Terrence Upchurch won with 6,151 votes or 81.95% of the vote over J. Allen Burger who received 18.05% of the vote.

There were also a number of contested judicial races in the Democratic Primary.

In a race for a seat on the 8<sup>th</sup> District Court of Appeals, Emanuella D. Groves came in first with 49,836 votes or 42.64%; Gayle Williams-Byers was second with 20.31% of the vote; Denise Nancy Rini third with 19.35%, and Hugh Carlin came in fourth with 17.71% of the vote.

In another contested race for a seat on the 8<sup>th</sup> District Court of Appeals, Lisa Forbes came in first with 67,918 votes or 55.96% of the votes cast; she was followed by Gabriella Rosalina with 31.16%; James Satola with 6.77%; and Alyson Monroe Brown with 6.11%.

In the Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas there were several contested races. In the General Division Richard Bell received 49,348 votes or 44.86% to come in first; Jennifer O'Donnell came in second with 40.39% of the vote; and Anne McDonough came in third with 14.75%.

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In the Domestic Relations Division of the Court of Common Pleas Colleen Ann Reali received 51,551 votes or 44.47% to come in first; Joy Kennedy was second with 26.57%; Joseph Russo was third with 16.37%; James Reddy was fourth with 7.25% and Genny Millas was fifth with 5.35% of the vote.

On the Republican Primary Ballot there were contested races for both the 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Congressional Districts.

In the 9<sup>th</sup> Congressional District Republican Primary race, Rob Weber received the most votes in Cuyahoga County with 60.99% of the vote; Timothy Corrigan was second with 25.57%; Tim Connors third with 7.19%; and Charles Barrett fourth with 6.25%.

In the 11<sup>th</sup> Congressional District Re-

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## Tremont's Art + History Museum expands its outdoor art display

Tremont's first outdoor Art + History Museum was expanded in late April to include an additional one dozen prints. The new display—entitled “Contemporary Views of Tremont”—includes digitally-reproduced renderings of Tremont street scenes (e.g., Lincoln Park, Christmas Story House, area churches) by local artists such as Tim Herron, Glenn Murray and Brian Pierce. These artworks will join the original exhibit on the southeast corner of Professor and College Avenues: more than 40 watercolor, oil, line-art and postcard images of old Tremont.

The project is a joint effort launched by Tremont West Development Corporation (TWDC) Arts Committee, the Tremont History Project and the Tremont Central Block Club. All pieces are high-resolution, waterproof, digital prints designed for 24/7, 12-month exposure. The display is fully lit and protected

by closed circuit security cameras.

The artwork displayed includes: *Haab's Bakery and Grumpy's* -- two oil paintings by artist Tim Herron ([manlypad@sbcglobal.net](mailto:manlypad@sbcglobal.net)); *Lincoln Park Gazebo and St. Andrew Kim Korean Catholic Church* (gouache) by artist Brian Pierce ([avradiovisual@yahoo.com](mailto:avradiovisual@yahoo.com)); *Churches of Tremont* (ink) by Chris Dieghan ([artfromchris.com](mailto:artfromchris.com)); *Down Scranton* (acrylic) by Glenn Murray ([lgmurray@netzero.net](mailto:lgmurray@netzero.net)); *Christmas Story House and Moon* (photo) by Glenn Petranek ([photoeye56@gmail.com](mailto:photoeye56@gmail.com)); *Krasa Salon* (oil) by Robin Roberts ([robinrobertsfineart.com](mailto:robinrobertsfineart.com)); *West 14<sup>th</sup> Street* (watercolor) by Jeff Suntala ([SuntalaWatercolors.com](mailto:SuntalaWatercolors.com)); *Columbus Road* (“watercolor photograph”) by Mark Yanocho ([yonoch@juno.com](mailto:yonoch@juno.com)); and *View of Downtown from Tremont* by Ron Joranko. An additional piece – *Manly Pad* by Brian Pierce is posted online at [ExperienceTremont.com](http://ExperienceTremont.com).

## OHIO JOB SEEKERS

continued from page 6

comparatively helped women over time in terms of employment — though in terms of wages many service-based and care occupations are lower paying,” said Dr. Amanda Weinstien, a University of Akron Economist. “In a pandemic where contact with people can increase the spread, many of those service jobs (retail, restaurants, daycare) have been eliminated. This leaves many women without work — unemployed. Add to that the increased stresses of childcare, housework, even increases in domestic violence reports ... women are struggling right now.”

**Affordable Education Slipping Further Out of Reach** (GRAPH) <https://public.flourish.studio/visualisation/2092201/>

Some Ohioans go into tremendous amounts of debt to obtain a higher degree, but it may be worth it. Education levels are strongly correlated with both higher annual incomes and lower employment rates. The American Community Survey's 2018 five-year estimate said the unemployment rate for Ohioans with no diploma was 6.9%; for those with a high school diploma it estimated 5.2%; for those with some college, it estimated 3.7%; and for those with a bachelor's degree, unemployment was estimated at 1.9%. Median annual income for those with no diploma was just over \$20,000; for those with a high school diploma — just over \$30,000 per year; for those with some college — average annual income was about \$35,000; for those with a bachelor's degree annual income was about \$53,000; and for those with a graduate or professional degree annual income averaged about \$68,000.

The Ohio Department of Higher Education estimated that 64% of all Ohio jobs would need some form of post-secondary education or skill by 2020. But many of the new Ohio jobs left unfilled require some form of post-secondary education. According to the Ohio Department of Education, the current post-secondary education rate in Ohio is 44.6%. This lags behind the national

average of 47.6%.

<https://public.flourish.studio/visualisation/2016644/>

Getting an education is particularly hard for minority populations. Ohio's high-school graduation rate for African-American students is the 7th lowest in the nation; at 67% in 2018. The college attainment rate is also low - 27%; lower than the 31% national average, and much lower than the 48% for white students. Hispanic students also see similarly low numbers, with a 27% college attainment rate.

And COVID has further complicated the cost-benefit analysis.

According to The Institute for College Access and Success, in 2018, 60% of all Ohio college grads (who attended a four-year college or above) graduated with an average of \$30,323 of debt; the 18th highest amount of debt in the country.

In 2019, non-profit youth organization Junior Achievement surveyed a representative sample of 1,000 teens nationally and found that 59% thought that getting a four-year degree was an important goal of theirs, but 47% of them had concerns of how to pay for it.

In April of 2020, Junior Achievement did a special COVID-19 survey, and learned that 44% of the high school juniors and seniors they surveyed feel COVID-19 has affected how they will pay for college. Of the ones who said that COVID-19 would change their plans, 58% said they're now more likely to take out student loans to pay for college. The survey also showed that 27% of the teens surveyed have decided to skip college altogether and just work right out of high school, and around 18% of teens said that COVID-19 has caused them to reconsider their career choice.

Connor Brown is from Reynoldsburg — and has been working since he was 19. Most of his jobs have paid low wages. Brown said that his parents could not afford to give him any financial support for college, as all of them struggled financially. Focused on taking care of himself, he decided to work full time right out of high school.

“I decided to get a job, and see where it takes me,” said Brown.



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Tuesday, May 19, 2020; Contemporary Views of Tremont, Tremont Art & History Project, southeast corner of Professor and College Avenues: *Lincoln Park Gazebo* (gouache) by artist Brian Pierce ([avradiovisual@yahoo.com](mailto:avradiovisual@yahoo.com)).

Brown has worked a series of low-wage jobs, usually multiple at once. His first job was at Burger King, where, from the age of 19, he worked regularly 40 hours a week, as a crew member. His schedule varied wildly. Oftentimes, the bus schedule didn't line up with his work schedule — especially on his overnight shifts.

“I walked on the side of the road to work, a lot of times,” said Brown.

For him, the walk from his home in Reynoldsburg, to his job in Canal Winchester, was more than two hours, and he often travelled late at night.

Later, he moved up to a crew trainer position at Burger King which came with a pay bump — moving from making around \$8 an hour to \$9 an hour. Still, his take-home pay was only around \$280 per week - after taxes. Brown said he often had at least one other job at the same time, fitting them in between working full time at Burger King. His cash went to living expenses, namely rent and utilities. After paying for those things, and food, there often wasn't much left.

“I've been in the red, even while working-full time. With the time I've spent [at work], I shouldn't have trouble paying my bills,” said Brown.

With such low pay, setting money aside for emergencies or saving to buy a vehicle was nearly impossible for Brown. The second (and sometimes third) job he worked in tandem with Burger King did help give some of a boost to his finances, but often at the expense of his quality of life.

Brown said he worked at least 55 hours minimum between his multiple jobs, not including the increased commute time from not having a vehicle. That left him with little free time to rest, relax, or see family and friends.

Brown said that the health insurance plans offered to him from Burger King and the other low wage jobs he worked were too expensive. For him, they usually came with high monthly premiums, sometimes taking nearly a third of his take-home pay. So, he stayed on his mother's

plan until he aged out at 26. Shortly after, he had a medical emergency where his throat closed up. He recovered, but tests didn't reveal why he had trouble breathing. A few weeks later, a bill for his care showed up at his apartment — more than \$2,000. Brown says he's still paying off his hospital bill, little by little.

After nearly a decade of working, Brown, now 27, eventually started work at Spectrum Wireless in early March- making \$15 an hour with benefits.

Still, Brown doesn't feel that going back to school is possible for him at this time; “with the work culture, I don't see it. I work so much to pay bills, I don't know where I would have the time to take off work and go [to college].”

**COVID-19 also creating new opportunities**

Melissa Kelsey, age 54, originally from Cincinnati, now lives in Columbus. After her recent divorce last year, she found herself on her own — and needed to work to take care of herself. For a while, she drove for Lyft and Uber - she said that on average she could make \$3,000 a month - enough to pay her bills and live comfortably. Yet, after COVID-19, reduced rideshare demand meant that she was no longer bringing in enough income to make ends meet.

She applied to an Amazon Fulfillment center and was approved to work within a week.

She said the \$17 an hour offered, \$2 more an hour than normal, was going to likely be more than she ever made from Lyft and Uber driving, and offered a consistent 40 hours per week scheduled.

“I went ahead and [signed up] for 40 hours, which terrifies me because driving your vehicle around is different than being on your feet. But I want to get ahead of the game and stay there,” she said.

She hopes that her teaching degree will prove valuable to her job, and hopefully put her in line for promotions within, potentially training new hires.

“All I care about right now, is just

getting in there, because we're drowning,” she said.

Governor DeWine's [coronavirus jobs website at www.coronavirus.ohio.gov](http://www.coronavirus.ohio.gov) has more than 35,000 jobs available - links to employers all around Ohio. However, at least 1.1 million Ohioans are unemployed.

Dr. Andrew Kidd, an economist with the right-leaning Buckeye Institute, said the key was to give people the skills for in-demand jobs, like programs that are designed to train people on the job and expanding similar programs to high schoolers.

“We have to find ways to get people the skills that are in demand now, or will be in demand in the future. That is the key that will get people the access to jobs that pay well where they can provide for their families.”

The Buckeye Institute also publishes an annual “Piglet Book” that identifies potential areas where the state of Ohio can cut spending and reduce the tax burden of both regular Ohioans and Ohio businesses, Kidd said.

Hannah Halbert, Executive Director of left-leaning Policy Matters said crafting “people first” policies should be at the forefront of Ohio Legislation, especially post COVID-19. The think tank said that before COVID, six out of the ten most popular jobs did not pay enough for a family of three to live without assistance. For them, making sure workers can have a good standard of living is part of their ethos; as is investing in state-funded education, affordable healthcare, and affordable housing for all Ohioans.

Halbert said that making sure state grants and revenue-generation options for post-secondary education remain funded post- COVID-19 is essential.

“The share of Ohioans with degrees is higher than it has been in the past, but we haven't been able to bring the poverty rate down to where it had been before 2007. We have to ask ourselves, what kind of jobs, and for whom?”

**Bonus Graphs:** (GRAPH) <https://public.flourish.studio/visualisation/2129756/>

Nearly half of Ohio's workforce is aged 45 or older. Older people are working for longer, and there may be fewer opportunities for younger workers to step in to.

(GRAPH - Workers who can't work from home?)

<https://public.flourish.studio/visualisation/2123956/>

Nearly 3/4ths of all Ohio workers have never worked from home before, and more than half have no paid time off.

Visit

the Plain Press website at:

[plainpress.blog](http://plainpress.blog)

for links to graphs and websites referenced in this issue.