



PHOTO BY DEBBIE SADLON
Saturday, June 5, 2021; WOOF WALK, Benefitting the Northeast Ohio Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Edgewater Park: Kana, a Shiba Innu, and her human companion.

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Vol. 48, No. 7 July 2021

Plain Press

Cleveland's Near Westside Newspaper

CPT opens live, in person summer season to take on racial equity

by Lee Chilcote

Cleveland Public Theatre, which normally does not run a summer season, made an exception this year in response to an exceptional year of theaters left dark because of a global pandemic. CPT's Outdoor Stage performances will run July 1 through August 7, with more than ten offerings of free live theatre, music, poetry and more, all produced and performed by local artists on stages protected by tents.

"During this time, we insist that art is an essential business," states Raymond Bobgan, CPT's executive artistic director, who began planning with his staff for a summer season back in March and April. "We just felt like if we're an essential business, and it's possible for us to gather live and in person, we need to do that."

Fittingly, CPT will open the 2021 Free Summer Season with *Panther Women: An Army for the Liberation*, written and

directed by CPT's Artistic Associate, India Nicole Burton. Cast with seven actors of color, the play follows the stories of three prominent women who were members of the Black Panther Party and Black Liberation Movement and explores the lives and unique experiences of Black Women in America.

A workshop production of Burton's play scheduled for April of last year had to be cancelled due to the pandemic shutdown in March 2020, so the theater decided to reschedule it as the first production of the outdoor summer season. "That immediately came to us that this is a beautiful piece, and we should continue to workshop it," Bobgan says. "We're intending to premiere it in February, so let's give it one more workshop and do it outside."

The summer season will also feature workshop pieces from its two ensembles-in-residence: Teatro Público de Cleveland, a collective of Latino theater artists, and Masrah Cleveland Al-Arabi, CPT's project developing work for, by, and with Arabic-speaking communities. Additionally, the Student Theatre Enrichment Program (STEP), Cleveland's longest-running arts and job training program for teens, will give two public performances during its eight-week summer program for youths 14 to 19.

"All of these pieces center black and brown stories, which is not something

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PHOTO BY DEBBIE SADLON
Saturday, June 5, 2021; Cleveland Pride Ride, organized by the LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland, Edgewater Park: Clevelanders Toni Savage and Kimberly Murphy-Savage celebrate Pride in the CLE 2021 as they await the start of the Pride Ride through the Gordon Square neighborhood.



PHOTO BY GREG ROSENBERG
Friday, June 18, 2021; Parade the City, organized by the Cleveland Museum of Art and created by artists with the help of eight community groups, Carnegie South Branch of the Cleveland Public Library, 2064 Scranton Road at Clark Avenue: Artist Ian Petroni used plastic bottles collected by library staff, patrons, and friends in the community, and hung them on top of bamboo poles. The poles are installed around the library's new rear entrance where they blow in the breeze and catch the sunlight.

Landmarks Commission approves new live-work townhomes for Lorain Avenue at W. 47th Street

by Lee Chilcote

A partnership between Knez Homes and Jim Miketo, owner of Forest City Shuffleboard, is planning to build eight new upscale townhomes at Lorain Avenue and West 47th Street. In addition to being the first new homes to be built on Lorain, the units also contain first floor flex spaces that are designed for entrepreneurs or people working from home.

The development, which was unanimously approved by the Landmarks Commission on Thursday, June 10, will replace an empty lot at the corner of Lorain and West 47th Street, as well as a portion of a used car lot between Forest City Shuffleboard and the corner. It will be located next to the "Forest City 5," the developers' name for the 5 townhomes they built along W. 47th St. just north of Lorain.

"We see this as a furtherance of the development down Lorain Avenue," Michael David with Knez Homes told the commission. "We're hoping to continue that development trend westward."

The townhomes, which will be between 1,700 and 3,100 square feet, are slated to include 2-3 bedrooms and 2.5 baths. They will also feature first floor bonus rooms or live/work spaces. The larger, corner unit also includes an English basement style rentable apartment.

In response to neighborhood feedback, the developers significantly altered their designs from the original presentation, adding brick to the entire facade, varying the colors and architecture to create more differentiation between units, adding more depth to the windows and doorways to create a

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Music venues make a cautious return to in-person performances

by Daniel Polleta

After being closed for more than a year due to COVID 19 restrictions, the Happy Dog at W. 58th and Detroit Avenue reopened on June 25, much to the delight of both hot dog lovers, and the patrons who come to hear music and attend other events at the popular Gordon Square spot.

While the doors are reopening, business is not the same as it was pre-pandemic at the Happy Dog or many other places. Clubs and presenters face

decisions on how many people to admit, finding bands that are ready to perform, staffing questions, and other issues that will shape what in-person performances will be like over the coming months

The Happy Dog

If opening weekend is any indication, people are ready to return to the Happy Dog. Both of this weekend's shows are sold out, and tickets are selling quickly for performances scheduled for July 2 featuring Sammy Slims and the July 3 set with Slug Fest.

However, that doesn't mean that everything is back to normal at the Dog. The club will open to a limited capacity on the weekends, with patrons needing to buy a ticket to the shows.

Co-owner Sean Watterson estimates it will take the Happy Dog being open a full month on the weekends, before they begin gradually adding in weekend days, and weekday service.

"Optimistically, by our 13th anniversary, on August 1, we'd be back to

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PHOTO BY GREG ROSENBERG
Friday, June 18, 2021; Renee Jones Empowerment Center, 3764 Pearl Road at Archwood Avenue: Staff of the Renee Jones Empowerment Center (RJEC) joined with community partners for an outreach event in front of their center – passing out prepared meals and literature about their programs. (L-R) Trauma Therapist Keesha McMillian, President and Chief Executive Officer Renee Jones, and Program Coordinator Traci Grasso. The RJEC website says, "Renee Jones Empowerment Center is a nurturing safe place to help rebuild the lives of those being trafficked or sexually assaulted. RJEC also strengthens communities by engaging and educating others in anti-trafficking and anti-violence efforts."



PHOTO BY GREG ROSENBERG
Friday, June 18, 2021; Parade the City, Cleveland Museum of Art's Community Arts Center in the PIVOT Center for Art, Dance and Expression, 2937 W. 25th Street: This float, *The Rhino*, inspired by Albrecht Dürer's *Rhinoceros*, was created by artist Robin Van Lear for the first Parade the Circle in 1990.

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ARTS/THEATRE

ART HOUSE, 319 Denison Avenue offers a free papel picado class with artist Wendy Mahon. Papel picado is made by cutting tissue paper into beautiful designs and stringing them together to create a banner. Papel picado is a traditional Mexican folk art. This course is brought to Art House by Comite Mexicano. The course starts July 10th from 10 a.m. – Noon. To register for these free classes visit www.arthouseinc.org

CLEVELAND PUBLIC THEATRE'S (CPT's) FREE SUMMER SEASON OUTDOORS: July 1 to August 7, 2021 outdoors at CPT Stage located between CPT's Parish Hall and Church buildings. All performances begin at 7 p.m. Choose a chair or blanket provided by CPT. *Panther Women: An Army for the Liberation* | Thursday, July 1; Friday, July 2; Saturday, July 3; Thursday, July 8; Friday, July 9; **Eric Schmiedl's The Kardiak Kid** | Saturday, July 10; **The Dark Room** | Tuesday, July 13; Tuesday, July 27; **Teatro Público de Cleveland (TPC) (performance with Papo Ruiz Y La Dulzura De La Salsa)** | Saturday, July 17; **Masrah Cleveland Al-Arabi** | Friday, July 23; **Twelve Literary Arts** | Saturday, July 24; **Student Theatre Enrichment Program (STEP)** | Thursday, July 29; Saturday, August 7; **Siaara**

Freeman's Black Women & Femmes: A Lineage Of Language / Friday, July 30. For more information about each play visit: www.cptonline.org

COMMUNITY ARTS CENTER: The Cleveland Museum of Art's Community Arts Center is located in the Pivot Center for Art, Dance and Expression at 2937 W. 25th Street. (former home of Astrup Awning Company). for more information visit www.clevelandart.org. The Community Arts Center features displays of artists' creations for Parade the Circle and free hands on art activities and experiences. The hours of the Community Arts Center are 2-7 p.m. Wednesday-Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Admission is free. **SPACES**, 2900 Detroit Avenue: Through August 6th, SPACES will exhibit the work of Artist in Residence Nafis M. White. Nafis M. White (Providence, RI) is an interdisciplinary Artist whose recent body of works are created from objects commonly found in beauty supply stores, industrial sites and the seemingly limitless horizons of our global and political landscapes. Gallery hours are Wednesday through Saturday, Noon to 5 p.m. For more information about the artist visit: www.spacescle.org. **TRANSFORMER STATION** features an exhibit organized by the Cleveland Museum of Art titled New Histories, New Futures. The exhibit centers on three contemporary artists' engagement with time and historical revisionism. The exhibit will be on display until September 12th 2021. The Transformer Station is located at 1460 W. 29th Street. Hours are Wednesday thru Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. The exhibit is free. There is a credit card charge to park in the lot. Face masks recommended. For more information visit www.transformerstation.org.

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DONATIONS

TAMIR RICE FOUNDATION + SPACES ART SUPPLY DRIVE: The Tamir Rice Foundation and SPACES invite you to donate clean, new or gently used art supplies and other materials for creative endeavors. Donated items will go to incarcerated youth at the Cuyahoga County Detention Center and the Tamir Rice Afrocentric Cultural Center. Four collection bins, repurposed from ~~A Color Removed~~, have been stripped and re-painted by Cleveland-based artists Antwoine Washington, James Quarles, and Davon Brantley with designs that celebrate Tamir's life. Through the end of August, you can drop off art supplies in collection bins at following locations: **SPACES** - 2900 Detroit Ave, Cleveland, OH 44113; **Robinson G. Jones Elementary School (attended by Tamir Rice)** - 4550 W 150th St, Cleveland, OH 44135; **Toby's Plaza** - 11440 Uptown Ave, Cleveland, OH 44106; **Roxboro Elementary / Middle School (attended by Tamir Rice)** - 2400 Roxboro Rd #3624, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

EDUCATION

THE WOMEN IN TRANSITION PROGRAM AT CUYAHOGA COMMUNITY COLLEGE is hosting free on-site and on-line summer classes to empower women in their pursuit of education, training and a career. Interested participants must attend an hourlong virtual info session. These sessions will take place Tuesday, July 6, at noon; and Tuesday, July 13, at 10 a.m. Register at tri-c.edu/WITregistration to receive a link. Participants build confidence and skills through classes on personal development, career exploration 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. The noncredit program is free and open to the public. Visit tri-c.edu/women-in-transition to pre-register for an upcoming course or learn more about the program.

GRANTS

NEIGHBOR UP is offering new grants, microloans, and fundraising support (with partners at joby) to fuel your community work. Check out what is available at neighborupcle.org/grants.

HEALTH

SUICIDE PREVENTION: The Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board of Cuyahoga County joined the statewide "Life is Better with You Here" suicide prevention campaign, with the goal of reaching Black and African American residents of Cuyahoga County with messages of hope and mental health and addiction resources. The campaign is designed to reach African American and Black adults and older adolescents and includes messages specific to parents of children ages 12-17, young adults ages 18-24, and family members who

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Plain Press

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Website:
<https://plainpress.blog>
Plain Press © Established in 1971
Circulation: 21,000 copies.
Published monthly.
Member of the
Neighborhood and Community Media Association of Greater Cleveland
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;
Copy Editor: Craig Bobby
Reporters: Bruce Chechelsky & Jack Barnes
Photo Editor: Coriana Close;
Photographer: Greg Rosenberg
Advertising Sales: Ed Tishel
Graphic Artist: David Myers
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Election information for voters residing in the 11th Congressional District

A special Congressional Primary Election will be held on August 3, 2021 in the 11th Congressional District for the seat that opened up due to the appointment of former Congressional Representative Marcia Fudge to be the United States Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

In the City of Cleveland all of wards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 15 are in the 11th Congressional District. Parts of wards 11, 12 and 14 are also in the 11th Congressional District. In addition to the part of the district in the City of

Cleveland, the 11th Congressional District includes most of the eastern suburbs in Cuyahoga County and stretches south through Newburgh Heights, Cuyahoga Heights, Brooklyn Heights and Seven Hills into parts of Summit County.

Registered voters, who identify with the Democratic or Republican party, and reside in the 11th Congressional District will be asked to choose a candidate to represent their political party in the general election.

As of June 23, 2021, there are **continued on page 6**

Neighborhood Leadership Development Program seeking residents for 2021 class

If you are passionate, committed and dedicated to taking an active role in improving your community and would like help enhancing your leadership skills, the Neighborhood Leadership Development Program (NLDP) is now seeking applicants to its 2021 program. NLDP is a free community engagement training program for residents of Cleveland, and its inner ring suburbs, who are working on projects within the City of Cleveland and who are determined to make a positive impact on their communities. It was established in 2006 by the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation and is directed by former Cleveland mayor, Michael White.

NLDP has helped emerging neighborhood leaders reach their potential by expanding their knowledge base and personal development through education, coaching and ongoing interaction with their peers and other leaders. Participants and graduates also have ongoing access to the services of a Program Coach who will give advice and support tailored to the needs of the participant. The program covers topics such as program planning, marketing, communications, program fundraising, conflict resolution and negotiation, community engagement methods and more. After the application process, 20 committed individuals are chosen for the program year. NLDP participants and graduates are a diverse

group with many interests and are working on a wide variety of issues to improve life in their communities.

Alex Robertson, a NLDP graduate, is one such person who is taking on an impressive community project. Helping leaders create and implement a vision is part of the NLDP curriculum. Alex knows first-hand about making sure his vision for his organization, Recess Cleveland, remains a reality ... "NLDP's programming in one word: Transformational. Five years ago, before NLDP, I found myself struggling to manage my full-time job, and Recess Cleveland was in its idea phase. Now, thanks to the lessons, relationships, and continued support from NLDP...Recess Cleveland IS my full-time job. I would highly recommend NLDP to anyone looking for the perfect blend of inspiration, strategy, camaraderie, resource development, and know-how needed to scale their organization's impact".

Recess Cleveland helps build active, healthy, and connected communities using recess, organized sports, and playful learning. They are best known for their Restore Recess programming where, during the summer, they organize community "pop-up Recess" events featuring kickball, dodgeball, soccer, bounce houses, zorbs, art, music, and play activities for people of all ages and abilities. Their goal is to have neighbors come out to exercise, socialize, and build relationships with each

Reader responds to the letter concerning noise in the Fulton/Denison area

To the Editor:

As a resident of West 25th Street and Chatham Avenue, I can empathize with the fine people of the Fulton Road and Denison Avenue area! I too have endured countless hours of disruption from intentional motorcycle and automobile noise. The altered mufflers, the enumerable high speed "parades" of dirt bikes, motorcycles and the blaring music are making it intolerable to sleep and enjoy the outdoors in the Summer. The highspeed actions of these reckless individuals are not only endangering themselves, but pedestrians, bicyclists, and the law-abiding motorists!

LETTER

I would suspect that some strategically placed speed bumps or rumble strips on these thoroughfares would reduce the speeding of the swarms of motorcycles and cars. Having speed bumps would not interfere with the snowplows, as they are used in the equally snowy city of Chicago! Another traffic calming idea are traffic circles. How nice would it be to have a traffic circle at Fulton and Denison? That may solve a few of the citizens' complaints.

In that three high-end apartment buildings are going up, (Lorain @ W. 20th & 25th, and W. 25th @ Swift/Potter), it will be interesting to see what action is taken by the developers and city regarding the horrible motorcycle noise. Certainly the 800+ new neighbors that we will soon have will share our thoughts on this problem.

With this being an election year, I feel that it is imperative that our Mayoral and Council Candidates address these issues that are eroding our quality of life. We as citizens must do our part by working creatively and proactively with the elected officials and police department to see that these noise issues are abated.

In the meantime, we will try to sleep well, enjoy our yards, porches and hope that this situation is solved soon!

Thank you....
Tim Del Papa



PHOTO BY GREG ROSENBERG

Friday, June 18, 2021; Parade the City, Cleveland Museum of Art's Community Arts Center in the PIVOT Center for Art, Dance and Expression, 2937 W. 25th Street: These puppets, called *Saltimbanques*, were created by artists Robin Van Lear and Robin Heinrich for the 2016 Parade the Circle. The puppets were loosely inspired by Pablo Picasso's *Family of Saltimbanques*.

other in a fun way and to connect residents who don't usually attend community meetings or events to resources they can use to increase their quality of life such as foodbank, books, health screenings, sanitary items, employment opportunities, school supplies and more.

This year, their focus will be empowerment for the event participants by bringing community stakeholders to them and connecting attendees with valuable resources they need while they are having fun in a controlled recess-like inclusive environment.

This year, their staff will aim to reach 6,000 people by hosting 70+ Restore Recess events this summer. Of the 50 Events already confirmed, 40 will take place in Cleveland recreation centers, 10 are in partnership with the Salvation Army in East Cleveland. They also have a goal of 10 Restore Recess Events in each of the following neighborhoods Midtown/Hough Union-Miles, Glenville, Central, St Clair Superior and Detroit-Shoreway ... so it will be a busy summer.

The 16 NLDP sessions are on Saturdays at Trinity Commons, 2230 Euclid Avenue, beginning September 18. The application period is now open, and the deadline is AUGUST 15, 2021. For additional information and to view the curriculum and online application, visit www.nldpcleveland.com or call 216-

776-6167.

Think you have what it takes? Apply to make a difference!!

If you would like to learn more about Recess Cleveland visit <http://recesscleveland.com/about/> or on Facebook and Instagram via @RecessCleveland.

Reader asks for police monitoring of noise problem on Denison Ave. at Fulton & Pearl

To the Editor:

I would like to comment on your recent letter to the editor about the noise problem on Denison Avenue. It appears peace and quiet are out of reach and people responsible for that continuous disruption most likely do not read *Plain Press*.

LETTER

How much of a difference would it make to have police patrol monitor each end of Denison at Fulton and Pearl

roads for a couple hours on any given day? Violations as stated in the letter could make a difference when you rob the pocketbook.

It was nice to see my thoughts on paper, knowing my husband and myself are not done in being bothered by this on a daily basis in the summer months. We should not have to dread summertime. Thanks for reading my comments. Love the paper.

Pauline Clark

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PHOTO BY GREG ROSENBERG

Friday, June 18, 2021; Parade the City, Cleveland Museum of Art's Community Arts Center in the PIVOT Center for Art, Dance and Expression, 2937 W. 25th Street: This artwork created this year by artist Rafael Valdivieso, honors the spirit of the arts, dance, music and theatre associated with the Cleveland Museum of Art's Parade the Circle.

MUSIC VENUES

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normal, but realistically, it might be September. There's just so many unknowns we are facing," Watterson said.

Among those unknowns is assembling a list of performers.

"There are some bands who are ready to play, while others haven't been able to practice, because they couldn't afford to maintain their rehearsal space, because they weren't out making money. Until we can get people back together, we don't know the full extent of the impact of COVID on the musicians. We don't know who had to give up music to do something else," Watterson said.

Watterson also indicated sound technicians are in short supply, because like the musicians, many of them had to get other jobs during the pandemic.

Since the pandemic began, Watterson, as the Ohio precinct captain of the National Independent Venue Association, has been active in lobbying state federal leaders to provide funds to help support performance venues that were forced to close or curtail hours.

Watterson's hard work paid off earlier this week, when he received the news that the Happy Dog would be receiving funding from The Shuttered Venue Operators Grant program, which is being administered by the Small Business Administration.

What will it be like when the door finally opens?

"It's going to be joyous, and a little terrifying. I know the staff has muscle-memory but the first time someone walks to the register to punch in a hot dog order, you'll have to remind yourself how to do it," Watterson said.

The Bop Stop

The Music Settlement's Bop Stop at 2920 Detroit Avenue is making plans to gradually welcome back more music fans.

Currently, the club is presenting a mix of outdoor shows which allow for up to 60 socially distanced patrons, and indoor performances which require concertgoers to purchase a table for the performance, rather than individual tickets.

Bop Stop director Gabe Pollack said the plan is to continue that mix of outdoor and indoor performances, but with more patrons being allowed for the indoor shows as summer progresses.

In June the Bop Stop increased the number of patrons permitted indoors from 25 to 40, with all four of the shows selling out. The plan is to continue to gradually increase that number every few weeks, with the hope of being up to full capacity by August.

As more concertgoers return, the Bop Stop is bringing back its staff, but Pollack said the kitchen will be serving a very limited number of items for the near future, but patrons are permitted to bring their own food.

During the pandemic, the Bop Stop livestreamed the indoor performances, a policy which will continue, even when capacity returns to 100%.

"They are great for getting our name out and growing an archive of performances at the club. Also, for those patrons who can't make it in for a concert, or aren't ready to attend, they can tune in to the livestream," Pollack said.

As he has continued to book shows,

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MetroHealth President and CEO Akram Boutros honored

MetroHealth President and CEO Akram Boutros, MD, FACHE, has been named one of America's 50 Most Influential Clinical Executives by *Modern Healthcare*.

The honor, from one of the industry's largest and most respected news outlets, recognizes the top clinicians in health care as selected by their peers and the magazine's senior editors for extraordinary leadership qualities, innovation, service to patients and community, and achievements inside and outside of their organizations.

Modern Healthcare recognized Dr. Boutros for navigating the system through the pandemic both operationally and financially while also opening new access points for patient care, addressing social determinants of health through the system's Institute for H.O.P.E.™, breaking ground on a new affordable-housing project and continuing the on-time-and-on-budget construction of The MetroHealth Glick Center, the system's new main campus 11-floor hospital scheduled to open in autumn of 2022.

"I'm honored to represent 7,800 colleagues at MetroHealth who have been instrumental in achieving this recognition," Dr. Boutros said. "We are driven

by the relentless pursuit of healthy thriving communities for everyone."

Patrol Officer of the Month

The Cleveland Police Foundation recognized Cleveland Police First District Patrol Officer Anthony Lee as the May 2021 Officer of the Month. Officer Lee has created the "Cops & Clippers" program that provides disadvantaged youth in the First District with a free haircut. The program works as follows: an officer or individual donates or purchases a ticket for \$10.00 which is then handed out to a neighborhood youth.

Community Partner of the Month

The Cleveland Police Foundation recognized Chef Bruno DiSiena as its May 2021 Community Partner of the Month. Chef Bruno DiSiena, through his namesake restaurant Bruno's Ristorante, has been a wonderful community partner to the Second District of the Cleveland Division of Police!

Chef Bruno has generously donated food and catering services to local events, including the annual Second District Awards Ceremony.

Pollack has found that most musicians are anxious to get back on the road and to play in front of as many people as possible.

"My experience is that once band members get vaccinated most of them have no problem going on tour. They are polite about honoring the safety policies in place but would play to full rooms if given the opportunity," Pollack said.

Jim Wadsworth Productions

After presenting countless shows at Nighttown in Cleveland Heights, veteran music promoter Jim Wadsworth, head of Jim Wadsworth Productions, had to find new venues to stage performances, when the popular Cleveland Heights restaurant closed due to COVID-19 in March of 2020, and remained closed after a change of ownership earlier this year.

Wadsworth was scouting new locations, when he received a call from Dennis Barrie, who was working as a consultant to the Cleveland History Center of the Western Reserve Historical Society. Barrie asked Wadsworth if he'd like to present performances in the Center, which offered both outdoor and indoor performing spaces. Wadsworth agreed and booked a month of shows in June.

Wadsworth has been pleased with the crowds who attended the performances, noting "there is a hunger out there to hear live music."

In addition to the History Center performances, Wadsworth has also booked a series of outdoor shows, in conjunction with BluJazz+ in Akron.

While Wadsworth booked and promoted a few shows during the pandemic, he spent most of his time relaxing and waiting for things to improve. He

admits after getting up when he felt like it and, doing what he wanted during the lockdown, getting back into the swing of things had taken him a minute.

"It's been a radically different lifestyle being in COVID., being locked down and having dinner at home every night, instead of being out 200 nights a year, constantly booking shows and picking up musicians at the airport. I did three shows this past week and thought, 'Wow, I have to shake off this rust,'" Wadsworth said.

Tri-C JazzFest

Tri-C JazzFest has a new venue and month for 2021.

The festival, which is normally presented in June in Playhouse Square moves to September 11 and 12, in Cain Park in Cleveland Heights.

The two day event will feature a mix of local and national performers, ranging from brilliant young pianist Emmet Cohen, to saxophonist Lakecia Benjamin to a concert billed as "A Moment in Cleveland" featuring trumpeter Dominick Faranaci and saxophonist Ernie Krivda.

After consulting with other jazz festival directors around the country, many of whom said they were pushing their early summer festivals to late summer or early fall, Pontremoli realized it was a good move for JazzFest, to move to September.

However, staging the mix of indoor and outdoor performances in Playhouse Square, given the set of circumstances due to COVID-19, wasn't going to be feasible.

"If we wanted to do it outside, it didn't make sense for us to go to the expense and trouble, to build a stage, then if the weather was crummy, nothing would happen, plus there were other events booked for Playhouse Square in September," Pontremoli said.

Pontremoli said Cain Park provided ideal, because it offered both outdoor and covered seating.

With COVID restrictions now loosened, the festival will be able to welcome more concert goers, although Cain Park will still limit capacity to under 100%.

While the festival isn't quite the full-scale extravaganza that happens over three days in Playhouse Square, Pontremoli is optimistic that JazzFest goers will still have a great experience.

"This year, it's not necessarily about the celebrity, but instead about how great, diverse and accessible this music is," Pontremoli said.

Editor's Note: This article was produced and provided to the Plain Press by The Land. The Land is an online Newsletter that reports on Cleveland neighborhoods and inner ring suburbs. To subscribe to The Land visit: www.thelandcle.org.

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LORAIN AVENUE TOWNHOMES

continued from page one

less blocky exterior, and stepping back the upper level so it's not so massive. "It feels like a residential storefront," said Patrick Thornton of Sixmo Architects. "There's more individuality within the units."

The local design review committee recently approved the design, adding as conditions that there be no vinyl windows, and also that composite siding or full brick should be placed on the front and side elevations that can be seen from the street. Neighbors also want to see the city add benches and trash cans, along with the lighting and street trees the developers are already planning to install.

The project also received feedback via the website Courbanize, Ohio City Inc. Director of Neighborhood Development Donna Grigonis reported. "They're excited to see something go up here," she said of residents. "We think it's an important development for the area."

CLEVELAND PUBLIC THEATRE

continued from page one

new for us," Bobgan explains. "We didn't really think about that; we were just programming what made sense to us in the moment."

While the productions are focused on stories of African American or people of color or issues of racism, the plays are not just for that group of people. They are intended for the wider public.

Bobgan, who is of Middle Eastern heritage, says: "When a group like Masrah Cleveland Al-Arabi presents a play and a majority of the characters are well-rounded human beings, that contradicts 95% of what you see on TV. Nine times out of ten, those characters are presented as two-dimensional villains. So, the work of a group like Masrah is leading to greater freedom for me personally, and when I'm more

City staff and commission members added that the innovative design could be a potential model for other retail streets in Cleveland with empty lots. "We anticipate more development density on Lorain, and we think this could be a real standard to set for form and design on the street," said city planner Matt Moss. "The city plans to work with the city's office of capital projects to add amenities."

"This area has a lot of missing teeth, and this is the direction we want this area to go," concluded Julie Trott, chair of the Landmarks commission. "We appreciate you listening to our feedback. This is a great example of what this type of collaboration can be."

Editor's Note: This article was produced and provided to the Plain Press by The Land. The Land is an online Newsletter that reports on Cleveland neighborhoods and inner ring suburbs. To subscribe to The Land visit: www.thelandcle.org. Lee Chilcote is a freelance writer and editor of The Land.



PHOTO BY GREG ROSENBERG

Friday, June 18, 2021; The Grand Piano Pursuit, Julia de Burgos Cultural Arts Center and Archwood United Church of Christ, 2800 Archwood Avenue: To commemorate an upcoming 2021 Cleveland International Piano Competition local artists were commissioned to repurpose pianos into reimagined musical artwork. This artwork, by artist Nathalie Bermudez, is one of fifteen such artworks in Cleveland. Contest participants are challenged to use a map found at www.pianocleveland.org to find all 15 artworks before the piano competition begins on July 8th to win an Experience Cleveland Prize Package.

in Lincoln Park in partnership with Tremont West Development Corporation, Ward 3 Councilman Kerry McCormack, and LAND Studio, CPT will venture into a new realm this summer by offering programming from *Panther Women*, Teatro Público de Cleveland, Masrah Cleveland Al-Arabi, and STEP at the Cleveland Cultural Gardens.

"I think a lot about the strength of the immigrant communities in Cleveland, many of which have been here for four or five generations," Bobgan says. "When they come see a Masrah production, they will hear a very specific story, but that reflects the stories of their ancestors. So, we're thrilled to

be part of the cultural gardens and that journey of understanding not just a place of tolerance, but a place of celebrating."

Fully aware of the disruptive political turbulence exacerbating wealth disparity, impeding social equity in the U.S., and chipping away at the Constitution, he concludes: "In the European tradition, democracy and theater were created at the same time. We're here to

support democracy, so now more than ever is when we need theater that is serving that purpose."

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Friday, June 18, 2021; Parade the City, Cleveland Museum of Art's Community Arts Center in the PIVOT Center for Art, Dance and Expression, 2937 W. 25th Street: This artwork, titled Grasslands, was created by artist Lisa Goodell for the 2015 Parade the Circle. The buffalos were designed so two people inside could control the movement of the legs and head as they marched in the parade.

PHOTO BY GREG ROSENBERG

SPECIAL CONGRESSIONAL ELECTION

continued from page 3

422,226 registered voters in the 11th Congressional District. 95,915 have previously declared themselves to be Democrats. 15,817 have previously declared themselves to be Republicans. The remainder are nonpartisan (310,429 voters) or members of a minor party (65 voters). To declare yourself a member of a political party, you simply need to request a ballot for that political party in the primary election.

In the Democratic Primary you can choose one of thirteen candidates. In alphabetical order, the congressional candidates in the Democratic Primary are Martin Alexander, John E. Barnes Jr., James Jerome Bell, Shontel Brown, Seth J. Corey, Jeff Johnson, Will Knight, Pamela M. Pinkney, Isaac Powell, Lateek Shabazz, Tariq K. Shabazz,

Shirley Smith, and Nina Turner.

In the Republican Primary, the congressional candidates are Laverne Gore and Felicia Washington Ross.

If you live in the 11th Congressional District and are not yet registered to vote or need to submit a change of address, you have until July 6 to submit your voter registration form in order to be able to vote in the August 3 Primary. For more information or to obtain a voter registration form visit the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections website at: www.boe.cuyahogacounty.gov.

Early voting begins on July 7. Early in person voting hours at the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections, 2925 Euclid Avenue are: Weekdays, July 7 – July 23, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Weekdays, July 26-July 30, from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.;

Saturday, July 31, from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.; Sunday, August 1, from 1 – 5 p.m.; and Monday, August 7, from 8 a.m. -2 p.m.

On Election Day, August 3, polls will be open from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. If you are not sure where your polling place is located, you can go to the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections website and click on the heading "Where do I vote?"

Voters can also choose to use a Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB). The ballots are available 46 days prior to the August 3 Primary Election at www.fvap.gov. To vote absentee you must follow the instructions to complete the Voter Declaration/Affirmation. You can print out the ballot and write in the name of the candidate you choose or complete the process electronically using the website's FWAB Wizard. When completed mail the printed ballot to the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections at 2925 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115. Absentee ballots from anywhere in the United States must be postmarked by August 2, 2021 and received by the Board of Elections by August 13. Oversees absentee ballots can be postmarked by August 3, and must be received by August 13 to be counted. If you are turning in your absentee ballot in person at the Board of Elections you must do it by Election Day, August 3, by 7:30 p.m. for your vote to be counted.

If elected mayor, State Senator Sandra Williams promises to rebuild Cleveland

by Bruce Checefsky

State Senator Sandra Williams was greeted by supporters as she entered the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections on June 8 where she filed petitions to run for Mayor of Cleveland. She pledged a campaign focused on a new, better Cleveland. Williams, who has held positions in both the state House of Representatives and Senate since 2007, would be only the second woman mayor in Cleveland history, following former Mayor Jane Campbell, and the first Black woman elected to the post. The Cleveland mayoral election is officially nonpartisan, with the top two candidates from the September 14 primary election advancing to the general election on November 2. Her current term as state senator ends on December 31, 2022.

If elected mayor, Williams promises to rebuild Southeast Cleveland including Woodland Hills, Mt. Pleasant, Buckeye, and Union Miles by removing abandoned and dilapidated housing, providing affordable housing, and bringing job hubs into the community.

"I'll be working directly with the state of Ohio to raise the necessary financial capital for development using funds available from local government and money from the American Rescue Plan Act," Williams said in a phone interview. "I'll entertain public/private partnerships and take advantage of the many grant and loan opportunities through the state of Ohio Department of Development as well as Jobs Ohio."

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 is a \$1.9 trillion coronavirus rescue package designed to facilitate the United States' recovery from the devastating economic and health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Cleveland is expected to receive almost \$521 million.

Cleveland's population continues to decline despite the surge of new development. Neighborhoods with the lowest housing prices experienced the steepest declines in population. For every 100 people who left Cleveland, only 82 people arrived in 2019.

"I know many people who have

left Cleveland including family members. Most people are leaving for job opportunities and safety. The majority are leaving because of our school system," Williams said. "People don't believe there are opportunities in the city but once we have good paying jobs, safe streets, and affordable housing, people will change their minds."

As mayor, Williams plans to work with developers to encourage investment beyond the Ohio Opportunity Zones Tax Credit Program, a federal program



Mayoral Candidate
Sandra Williams

enacted to encourage economic development and job creation in economically distressed communities. The challenge of finding new investments is also an opportunity to promote the benefits of Cleveland's diverse community, according to her.

In areas of the city where development has grown as a result of tax abatements, including downtown, Tremont, and Ohio City, property taxes have more than doubled for some residents. People on fixed incomes, especially the elderly, have been forced to sell their homes and leave the city.

"I believe tax abatement should be directed towards areas of the city where we need investments and used more effectively and efficiently," said Williams. "I have a bill in the legislature that will cap property taxes at no more than 10% in any given year so people who have lived in the city for many years won't get priced out."

More than 59% of Cleveland residents live in food deserts, where the availability of affordable, nutritious foods is limited and people experience inequalities in economic opportunity and quality of health. African Americans represent nearly 60% of the food desert population. Neighborhoods including St. Clair Superior, Fairfax, Buckeye-Woodhill, and Stockyards have the highest percentage of food deserts where residents have to travel between one and two miles to a grocery store. In some areas, residents must travel two or more miles to find fresh nutritious food.

"One of the first calls I ever received as a legislative aide was from a man living near E. 55 St. 'I have no place to buy milk in this city', he said. 'What are you going to do about it?' I reached out to community leaders, owners of grocery stores, and encouraged them to move into the community," said Williams. "We need smaller stores, not just the larger chains, to open businesses in our neighborhoods. I

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COMMUNITY BOARD

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TREMONT HISTORY PROJECT hosts a monthly walk along a different segment of the Towpath Trail each tour. A general history of the Tremont area will be addressed for all tours. The monthly History Walk will be the 3rd Saturday of each month, meeting at 9:30 a.m. at Lincoln Park Gazebo. The July walk will be on Saturday, July 17th. For questions contact towpath@tremont-west.org, or Dan at dlotz9@yahoo.com.

MOTOR VEHICLES
OHIO BUREAU OF MOTOR VEHICLES announced the end of COVID-19 extensions for driver license, ID and vehicle registrations. Individuals with an expiration date of March 9th, 2020 and after need to renew by July 1, 2021.

PUBLIC POLICY
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COLLABORATIVE TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING will host two events in July: **Human Trafficking 101** Wednesday, July 14, 2021, 7:00 - 8:00 p.m. (ET) To register visit: <https://bit.ly/34dPtcd>. **Understanding the Trauma of Human Trafficking**, Wednesday, July 28, 2021, 7:00 - 8:00 p.m. (ET) To register visit: <https://bit.ly/3dsVRSx>

LAKE EFFECTS: PROGRESSIVE THINKING FOR THE CLEVELAND WE WANT: A website created by David Beach is now online at: www.lake-effects.org. The goal of the site is to create a resource for citizens and candidates for Mayor and City Council that will provide a useful collection of issues and ideas while stimulating a discussion about what a progressive city can be like. David Beach is the founder and former director of the GreenCityBlueLake Institute and served as the editor of the *Plain Press* in the early 1980s.

POLICY MATTERS OHIO: Read the latest research reports from this nonprofit policy research institute at: www.policymattersohio.org.

READ ROLDO ONLINE: Read columns by Cleveland’s premier investigative journalist Roldo Bartimole online at: <https://havecoffeewillwrite.com>
THE AFRICAN AMERICAN POLICY COMMITTEE (AAPC) encourages all those who will, to come to the table to seek out solutions, rooted in public policy, that will help solve these myriad crises facing African American communities in Northeast Ohio. The AAPC meets the first Monday of every

month from 2-3 p.m. For more information visit: www.noebblackhealthcoalition.org, call 216-295-0283 or email: neobhc@gmail.com.

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SANDRA WILLIAMS

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will work with the City Council and CDC’s (Community Development Corporations) as well as encourage farmers markets throughout the city so people have access to fresh food.”

Williams pledged to address violent crime with a targeted approach to finding solutions by adding more police presence on the streets. Williams would like to see the demographics of the police force reflect the diverse population of Cleveland.

“We need to provide more training opportunities for our police,” she said.

Lakefront development has been a part of every Cleveland mayoral campaign for decades. Burke Lakefront Airport is owned and operated by the City of Cleveland, which also operates Hopkins International Airport. Burke covers an area of 450 acres built on landfill, with 3.1 miles of Lake Erie shoreline. Flight operations at Burke have declined 69% since 2000.

Williams wants to see more residential and commercial development along the lakefront. Whether the airport remains open is up to the Federal government. Regional airports can support flights to the area, in her view. When asked if closing the airport was a possibility, she said, “I promise it will get done under my administration.”

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VOLUNTEERS
CLEVELAND POLICE AUXILIARY UNIT: The Bureau of Community Relations is always recruiting dedicated volunteers to help assist the Cleveland Division of Police and the community. Contact Ashley Graham for additional information at agraham2@clevelandohio.gov or 216-623-3329.

Cleveland’s arts and culture sector is one of the most undervalued industries in the region. The creative sector in Cleveland is estimated to contribute \$9.1 billion to the local economy, according to *Crain’s Cleveland*. Dozens of small towns and cities across the country have instituted artist relocation programs to encourage professional artists to move and open businesses. Many towns and cities offer low-interest loans, grants, reasonably priced mixed-use properties, tax benefits for working artists. Williams plans to open a department for the arts at City Hall to attract more artists and art related businesses.

“We will look at what artists need in order to expand and grow, and incentivize art businesses,” she said.

Williams has been publicly criticized for her support of House Bill 6 (HB 6), passed by the Republican-controlled State legislature, and signed by Gov. Mike DeWine in the summer of 2019. HB 6 was packaged as a “Clean Air Program” for a bailout of FirstEnergy Solutions economically failing nuclear power plants Davis-Besse and Perry.

Considered a “massive handout to old, dirty coal plants” by Neil Waggoner, head of the Sierra Club’s Beyond Coal campaign in Ohio, FirstEnergy Solutions said it would close its two nuclear plants if it didn’t get a government

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PHOTO BY GREG ROSENBERG
Friday, June 18, 2021; Julia de Burgos Cultural Arts Center, 2800 Archwood Avenue: This artwork titled Luna Llena by Mariela Paz is one of several artworks on display on the grounds of the Julia de Burgos Cultural Arts Center.

bailout. The Akron-based energy company spent years working towards legislation which led to a federal investigation and arrest of Ohio Speaker of the House Larry Householder, and four associates, accused of organizing a bribery scheme to accept \$61 million from FirstEnergy in return for passing HB 6.

Williams voted for the bailout along with two other Democratic

State Senators and nine Democratic State Representatives. She reportedly received campaign donations from FirstEnergy Solutions for years including more than \$12,000 in 2020.

She has not been accused or implicated in any wrongdoing.

Williams joins a crowded field of candidates including Zack Reed, Kevin Kelley, Basheer Jones, Dennis Kucinich, Justin Bibb, Ross DiBello, and Landry M. Simmons.

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