



PHOTO BY GREG ROSENBERG  
Saturday, June 13, 2026; Cleveland Public Library The Book Nook at the West Side Market, W. 25<sup>th</sup> and Lorain Avenue: Kenneth Redd, a librarian for the Cleveland Public Library, shares information about the Ohio Library for the Blind and Print Disabled, a free service offered by the Cleveland Public Library.

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# Plain Press

Cleveland's Westside Newspaper

## FBI used to deter lawful participation in democratic process

by Bruce Checefsky

United States Representative Shontel Brown, a Democrat who represents Ohio's 11th District, wrote in a letter to Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director Kash Patel and Special Agent in Charge of the Cleveland Office Joshua J. DelManzo, following the raid targeting the Ohio Organizing Collective (OOC), that "overt investigative ac-

tivity targeting a voter-registration organization risks weaponizing the federal government against lawful civic activity."

The OOC is an organization supporting voting rights and voter registration efforts in Northeast Ohio.

On June 11-12, the FBI and Department of Justice executed a massive sweep involving over 100 agents who searched the Cleve-

land office of the OOC. FBI agents seized extensive corporate documents, records, and computer files. The Department of Justice (DOJ) was looking into the group's voter registration efforts and potential voter fraud, approaching volunteers and canvassers at their residences, often without warrants, asking questions about election fraud. Agents were reportedly heavily armed and intimidating, all part of the Trump administration's attempt to target political opposition in Democratic-led cities.

Molly Shack, the group's leader, told attendees at the Brennan Legacy Award Dinner in 2024, where OOC was honored by the Brennan Center, that "we are organizing people in communities around education and criminal justice reform and democracy issues and an ability to have a government that works, that can actually be responsive to citizens in all of our interests."

Shack did not respond to an interview request.

The OOC is the leading voter registration group in the Buckeye State. In 2024, it registered over 100,000 voters.

Brown continued in her letter to Patel, "Despite no findings of widespread voter fraud, this administration continues to take unprecedented actions to restrict access to the ballot, weaken voting-rights

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## Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument hosts Juneteenth celebration

The Cuyahoga County Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument celebrated the Juneteenth Federal Holiday on June 19<sup>th</sup>.

Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument Executive Director Greg Palumbo offered those touring the Monument some of the history of Juneteenth. He read General Order Number 3, which announced that all enslaved persons were free. The Order was issued by Union Major General



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Saturday, June 13, 2026; Parade the Circle, East Boulevard and Juniper: This young girl in the Cleveland Public Library's Bedtime Story Float sends bubbles floating out to the crowd watching the parade.



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

June 19, 2026; Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument, Cleveland Public Square: Cuyahoga County Civil War monument was the site of a Juneteenth celebration. Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument Executive Director Greg Palumbo gave tours of the interior of the monument, shared some of the history of June 19<sup>th</sup> 1865 and spoke of the participation of Cuyahoga County residents in the Civil War.

## St. Augustine Hunger Center moves to new location

On May 18<sup>th</sup> the St. Augustine Hunger Center moved from its long-time location in the St. Augustine Church Hall at 1400 Howard Avenue to a larger, fully renovated site at 2346 W. 14<sup>th</sup>, (W. 14<sup>th</sup> and Kenilworth) a block north of St. Augustine Church in the Tremont neighborhood. The new location is called the St. Augustine Family Center.

"This new space allows us to deepen our commitment to the Tremont community," said Malorie Phillips, Chief Strategy and External Affairs Officer, Catholic Charities, Diocese of Cleveland. "We are not only increasing access to meals and essential services, but we are also creating a place where individuals and families can connect to broader support that helps stabilize and strengthen their lives."

The St. Augustine Family Center will offer two daily hot meals, food pantry services, and emergency financial assistance for rent and utilities. In addition, clients will have direct access to other Catholic Charities programs housed at the site including Disability Services &

Ministries, Job & Career Training programs, and Behavioral Health - Counseling Services. By bringing multiple programs under one roof, Catholic Charities says the center enables a more coordinated approach to care, helping individuals move from immediate assistance to longer-term stability.

Catholic Charities Director of Emergency Assistance Services Eric Milkie says the St. Augustine Family Center serves breakfast and lunch from Monday through Friday. The Center is open for breakfast from 8 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. and lunch is served from noon to 1:30 p.m. The dining hall is closed on the second Monday of each month for cleaning. The dining hall is accessed from the door on the west side of the building.

The additional support services offered at the St. Augustine Family Center are on the east side of the building. Milkie says the support services side of the building is open from 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. from Monday through Friday.

Catholic Charities says the St. Augustine Family Center increases continued on page 8



PHOTO BY DEBBIE SADLON

Thursday, June 18, 2026; St. Augustine Family Center, 2346 W. 14<sup>th</sup> (W. 14 & Kenilworth): On his way to have lunch at the St. Augustine Family Center, this resident finds the entrance to the dining hall marked by a statue of Saint Vincent de Paul—the patron saint of all charitable works and societies.



PHOTO BY JULIA FERRA

May 2026; Participants in the Neighborhood Leadership Development Program pose outside of a tour bus that took them on a tour of Cleveland neighborhoods.

**ARTS**  
**BORDERLIGHT THEATRE FESTIVAL** returns to the Playhouse Square District in downtown Cleveland for four full days of live theatre and entertainment, from Wednesday, July 8 to Saturday, July 11. Some performances and activities are free and open to the public. Visit [borderlightcle.org/2026-festival](http://borderlightcle.org/2026-festival) for a full list of dates and times.

**CITY STAGES** is a free outdoor concert series hosted by the Cleveland Museum of Art outside its Transformer Station (1490 W 29th St.) in the Hingetown area of Ohio City. Featuring the best in global music, the concerts will take place this year on two Wednesdays in July, starting at 7:30 pm: on July 22 (featuring Beninese singer-guitarist Kaleta and the Super Yamba Band), and on July 29 (featuring the South Korean group Insun Park and Generals). Seating is limited. Bring camp chairs and delight in an evening of music and dancing in the street. Free parking is available in the Lutheran Hospital lot located at West 28th St. and Franklin Blvd.

**DOWNTOWN SUMMER MUSIC SERIES:** Downtown Cleveland Inc. will bring free live music to public locations around the downtown area throughout the summer. To see a full list of dates, locations, and performers, visit [downtowncleveland.com/summer-music](http://downtowncleveland.com/summer-music).

**FREE DRUMMING WORKSHOPS:** Join *Unidos Por el Arte* Mondays from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm at the Julia de Burgos Cultural Center (2800 Archwood Ave.) for a FREE workshop on Afro-Caribbean drumming, presented by the Cleveland Tango School. No registration required.

**METROPARKS SUMMER CONCERTS:** Cleveland Metroparks has announced its free Summer Concert Series taking place at six of its waterfront parks, including these dates at Edgewater Beach: July 16 (featuring disco group Disco Inferno), July 23 (featuring Neil Diamond cover group The Diamond Project), July 30 (featuring reggae artist Carlos Jones), August 6 (featuring Prince cover group The Prince Project), and August 27 (featuring blues group The Jimmy's Band). Please note that all concerts at Edgewater are on Thursdays, from 5 pm to 8 pm. For a full list of dates and locations, visit [clevelandmetroparks.com/concerts](http://clevelandmetroparks.com/concerts).

**SECRET SONGWRITING SOCIETY:** Anyone can write a song. Wanna start? Join us on the third Tuesday of every month at Forest City Brewery (2135 Columbus Rd.) for a celebration of spontaneous creativity. This month, we will meet on Tuesday, July 21. Doors open at 7 pm and the show starts at 7:30 pm. For more information, visit [thebakersbasement.com/secret-song-writing-society](http://thebakersbasement.com/secret-song-writing-society).

**SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK:** The Cleveland Shakespeare Festival will hold free performances of *Richard III* this summer at various public parks in the Cleveland area, including several on the west side, on select days from July 17 to August 2. For a full list of dates and locations, visit [cleveland-shakespeare.org](http://cleveland-shakespeare.org).

**STREET STUDIO:** This month's Street Studio will be Saturday, July 25<sup>th</sup> at 1 p.m. at St. Paul's Community Church, 4427 Franklin Boulevard. All are welcome to share music, poetry, spoken word, or listen in support. Piano, drums, guitar and microphones provided as well as coffee and snacks. For more information contact Ian Heisey at [heisey2140@sbcglobal.net](mailto:heisey2140@sbcglobal.net).

**ASSISTANCE**  
**HEAP SUMMER CRISIS PROGRAM:** The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) Summer Crisis Program is a one-time benefit that can help pay electric utility bills (up to \$500), purchase air conditioners or fans, or repair central air conditioning units during the summer months. This year's program begins July 1. For more information and to see if you qualify, visit [energyhelp.ohio.gov](http://energyhelp.ohio.gov).

**LEAD SAFE RESOURCE CENTER:** Together, we can prevent lead poisoning. Contact the Lead Resource Center today to get access to our free classes, get screened and tested for lead, and receive technical assistance with removing lead from your home or rental property. Call 833-601-LEAD or visit [LeadSafeCLE.org](http://LeadSafeCLE.org).

**SEWER DISTRICT SATURDAY OFFICE HOURS:** The Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District office, at 3900 Euclid Ave., is now open the first Saturday of each month from 8 am to 11 am. Customers can take advantage of the new hours to make a payment, get help with their account, and apply for cost-saving options. For more



information, visit [neorsd.org](http://neorsd.org) or call 216-881-8247.

**WOMEN, INFANTS & CHILDREN (WIC) NUTRITION PROGRAM** provides nutrition education, nutritious foods and breastfeeding support. To be eligible you must be pregnant, breastfeeding, or postpartum (having a baby less than 6 months old) or be an infant or child less than five years old. You must also have a nutritional need and have household income that fits within the WIC guidelines. For more information, call 216-957-9421 or visit [signupwic.com](http://signupwic.com).

**COMMUNITY COMMUNITY POLICE COMMISSION** seeks new members: Interested Cleveland residents can download forms and apply on the City's website or bring applications to City Hall's security desk up until 4:30 p.m. Friday, July 17. Applications can also be mailed to the Office of the Mayor, Room 202 Cleveland City Hall at 601 Lakeside Ave., Cleveland, Ohio 44114.

**MONROE STREET CEMETERY FOUNDATION**, formed in 2008, is a group of dedicated volunteers who help to preserve, maintain and improve Monroe Cemetery (3207 Monroe Ave. in Ohio City). Our work includes: rebuilding the collapsed gatehouse, obtaining certification as the first ArbNet arboretum in the city, repairing fences, planting gardens/trees, repairing/resetting headstones, and providing cultural events for the neighborhood. Our meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month at Forest City Brewery (2135 Columbus Rd.) from 6 pm to 7:30 pm. We welcome all to join, regardless of your level of commitment. We are a group of all ages with diverse backgrounds. For more information, call 216-202-4872 or email [info@mscf1841.org](mailto:info@mscf1841.org).

**OLD BROOKLYN CRIME WATCH:** Join us the third Monday of every month at 7 pm at St. James Lutheran Church (4771 Broadview Rd). This is an opportunity to hear from the 2nd District Police, the fire department, and the county prosecutor's office. There are also occasional opportunities to meet candidates for council, candidates for judge, and candidates for state government. This month's meeting will be on Monday, July 20.

**EMPLOYMENT**  
**EL BARRIO WORKFORCE PROGRAM:** The Centers' free workforce programs are open to anyone 18+ and

**Leadership programs seek 2026 applicants**

If you are passionate, committed and dedicated to taking an active role in improving your community, you may be excited by, and ready for, one of two valuable leadership development programs. The Neighborhood Leadership Development Program (NLDP) and Community Development Corporation Leadership Program (CDCLP) are programs of the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation. Both programs are available at no cost to participants.

The Neighborhood Leadership Development Program (NLDP), for 19 years, has offered community engagement leadership training for residents of Cleveland, and its inner ring suburbs, who are working on projects in the City of Cleveland and who are determined to make a positive impact on their communities.

The Community Development Corporation Leadership Program (CDCLP) just graduated its fifth cohort. CDCLP is the Cleveland area's

only leadership program specifically designed for Community Development Corporation Executive level leadership.

Both programs are currently seeking applicants for their 2026 cohorts. One recent NLDP graduate spoke about what the program meant for her.

"The leadership program gave me the confidence, tools, and network to turn an idea into action. We took our program from a podcast and social media presence to a non-profit actively engaged in programming and partnering with other non-profits and neighborhood leaders. What I thought would be an investment for my community became a true investment in myself. The tools I gained through NLDP are used in every room I sit in, my classroom, committee meetings, and board meetings. I began to see how intentional community-building can create meaningful change and

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more in various Cleveland neighborhoods. Tour at your own pace in each of the annually designated Cleveland neighborhoods. This year's event will be on Saturday, July 11 and Sunday, July 12, from 10 am to 5 pm each day. The Saturday neighborhoods will be: Collinwood, Fairfax, Glenville, Hough, West Park/Jefferson, West Park/Kamm's, Tremont, and Ohio City. The Sunday neighborhoods will be: Clifton-Baltic/Edgewater, Detroit Shoreway, Little Italy, Old Brooklyn, and Broadway Slavic Village. Visit [gardenwalkcleveland.org](http://gardenwalkcleveland.org) for more information.

**EVENTS**

**FOURTH OF JULY FIREWORKS:**

The annual Independence Day fireworks event "Light Up the Lake" returns to Downtown Cleveland Saturday, July 4. This year, the event will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the country. Fireworks will be launched by a professional crew from the Port of Cleveland beginning at sundown (around 9 pm) and will last 20 minutes. Some viewing location ideas include Settlers Landing, Flats East Bank, Superior Viaduct, Voinovich Bicentennial Park, Kirtland Park, Gordon Park, Edgewater Park, and Whiskey Island. **LA PLACITA@CV25** is a vibrant Hispanic-themed outdoor pop-up market celebrating culture, community, and incredible small businesses. From delicious food to music, art, and family-friendly vibes—you won't want to miss it! Weekends in June and July 2026 (excluding July 4th weekend), from 12 to 6 pm at Centro Villa25 (3140 W 25th St).

**TASTE OF TREMONT**, an annual street festival that showcases the best of Tremont's food, art and entertainment, returns for its 22nd year to take over historic Professor Ave. on Sunday, July 19 from noon to 8 pm. As the neighborhood is home to some of the most talented chefs in the region, we invite you to join us and enjoy a day filled with exquisite cuisines, live music and shopping. The event is free and will take place, rain or shine.

**FOOD**

**FREE BREAKFAST AND LUNCH:** School-age children and teens (ages 18 and under) can receive free, healthy breakfast at select City-owned recreation centers, including Michael Zone (6301 Lorain Ave.), Estabrook (4125 Fulton Rd.), and Halloran Skating Rink (3550 W 117th St.), from June 1 to August 14, 10 am to 10:30 am. Lunch will also be served daily at all 18 Neighborhood Resource and Recreation Centers starting June 1. Please check with your local recreation center for specific meal times. Select playgrounds will also serve lunch beginning June 1. Meal times may vary based on delivery schedules.

**GREATER CLEVELAND FOOD BANK:** Food assistance is just a call away. Apply for SNAP (food stamps) and other public benefits over the

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**Plain Press**

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**Writer responds to June letter to the editor:**

**To the editor:**  
In response to Angela Shuckahosee's letter to the editor in the June issue of the *Plain Press* titled "Democratic Party Central Committee member reacts to *Plain Press* primary election coverage," I would like to point out that Democratic Party Chairman David Brock was given an opportunity to be interviewed for the article "Pre-primary endorsements unfairly influence election

results" that appeared in the May 2026 *Plain Press*.  
*David Brock was contacted by email in April for an interview, which he agreed to arrange. He did not. Several more requests were made to interview him. He never responded. I told him that the article would be published regardless of whether he responded.*

**Bruce Checefsky**

**Community Letter to the Plain Press leadership**

**To: Plain Press Managing Editor Charles E. Hoven; Editor Deborah Rose Sadlon; Reporter Bruce Checefsky; and Board of Trustees members; Keith Brown, Peggy Davenport, David Gamble, Dr. Leo Jeffres, Joe Narkin and Helen K. Smith.**

We the undersigned are: residents of the Near West Side/Ohio City area; or people involved with the Democratic Party in Cleveland Ward 7; or people who are or have been involved with political campaigns and voter engagement in the Near West Side/Ohio City area under the leadership of Democratic Ward Leader Paula Kampf.

**LETTER**

Many of us routinely pick up copies of The *Plain Press* at locations in the area.

The *Plain Press*, in the May 2026 issue, linked here: <https://plainpress.blog/2026/05/06/may-2026-full-issue-pdf/>, published an attack on Paula Kampf.

We know Paula Kampf and have experience of her leadership of the Cleveland Ward 7 Democratic Club. Under her leadership, we have seen Kampf collaboratively leading our diverse community to increasing success through community engagement and effective organizing. We know Kampf to be of notable integrity and authenticity in her leadership and her life.

We are appalled that the *Plain Press* chose to run this headline article devoid of factchecking, baselessly slandering Paula Kampf's name and reputation.

Did the Plain Press editorial staff and reporter know that their main source used a pen name to publish a piece of nearly identical content last autumn in a blog post? And that this publication in your paper indicates not only a lack of Plain Press journalistic integrity but also reveals the editorial staff and reporter to be concerningly gullible when approached by untrustworthy sources.

Surely the editorial staff and writer for the *Plain Press* are aware that ethical journalism should be accu-

rate and fair.

According to the Code of Ethics for the Society of Professional Journalists, "journalists should be honest and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information. Journalists should take responsibility for the accuracy of their work; verify information before releasing it; and use original sources whenever possible."

NONE of these ethical standards are evident in the hit piece in which the *Plain Press* platformed local malcontents who manipulated your presumed good will in order to baselessly attack the reputation of Paula Kampf, a respected and valued leader in our community.

**WE CALL UPON THE PLAIN PRESS TO RETRACT THIS PIECE OF BLATANT YELLOW JOURNALISM AND PUBLISH AN APOLOGY IMMEDIATELY.**

**Bridget Kelley**, Ward 7 Resident, CCDP Executive Committee Member and Democratic Club Member; **Brooke Willis**, Ward 7/Tremont resident, longtime community activist, elected Central Committee rep; "I was very disturbed by the unfair portrayal of community leader Paula Kampf, splashed across the front page like a hot scandal." **Mitsi Wagner**, Ward 7 resident, voter, and previous Central Committee representative; **Carole Hedderson**, Ward 7 resident, voter; "Paula's leadership is impeccable." **Gary Claxton, 1439 W 38th**, 58-year resident. "I attended the first organizing meeting of the PP decades ago. Have published three articles in the paper. Have donated thousands of \$ to the paper. I am disgusted that you published a biased hit piece with NO letting of the source or possibility of rejoinder." **Fran DiDonato**, Ward 7 voter, resident; **Andrew DeFratis**, Democratic

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**Taxes that drain ordinary people hardly touch the well-off**

**by Roldo Bartimole**

It's difficult to figure out who pays more taxes proportionally to their income – ordinary or poor people or well-off people. Well, I think I know. The little guy does!

Property taxes (even if included by the landlord in rent), and then city and state income taxes, mean there's a burden on everyone. Not cheap.

**NEWS ANALYSIS**

And then State and Federal income taxes must be paid.

But that doesn't tell all the whole story.

**THE NICKEL AND DIME GUYS NOW COME FOR YOU.** Salami slicing taxes. Sometimes so disguised you don't know to count them..

**I MEAN YOUR LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES** – the nickel & dimers are your Mayor, Council President, and your City Council members.

They are people you actually select and elect. They are your representatives.

What portion of an ordinary family's income (especially a family with children) do these taxes take?

**THE BIGGEST TAX IS THE SALES TAX.**

In Cuyahoga County the politicians have not chosen to keep it low. Indeed, it's the highest in the State at 8 percent, and it is levied on a lot of different products.

It's a costly TAX for ordinary families -- especially those with children.

But the politicians have to look for more. And they don't look to tax luxury goods more. No. They look much lower.

For wealthy sports teams they invented the cleverly named "sin tax." Who's for SIN?

The sin tax is a tax on cigarettes and alcohol – 1.5 cents on beer; 4.5 cents on a pack of cigarettes (there is talk now of tripling these charges – three times what it is now to raise more revenue for sports multi-millionaires and billionaires). It now raises some \$13 to \$14 million a year. Think about an increase to some \$40 million a year coming from mostly people who can't afford a game ticket.

I suspect it's a tax aimed at a lower economic class. But that isn't

the only tax on smokers.

Ohio cigarette tax: \$1.60 per pack. Keep those kids puffin.

And more.

Arts sales tax: Cuyahoga County - 70 cents a package of cigarettes. Since 2007 it has taken in an impressive amount of \$275 million. It is a tax that hardly touch our well-to-do county residents.

Do you suppose many of those young new smokers avail themselves of the arts at Playhouse Square on Sundays?

Gasoline tax: Ohio with federal: 38.5 cents per gallon. How many gallons do you use monthly?

Admission taxes (Cleveland) to events, sports & entertainment – 8 percent (hiked in 1995).

Parking: Cleveland: Recent upped charges for street parking. First hour: \$1.50; 4 hours - \$10.50.

In other words, don't use the streets you've already paid for.

Maybe you can think of other nickel and dime hits.

They certainly do add up. They take multi-millions from the ordinary person every year.

**Reader seeks answers from Old Brooklyn Development Corporation**

**To the editor:**

There is an extensive 'commentary' about the relocation of the Historical Society Of Old Brooklyn museum in the current (*Summer 2026 Old Brooklyn News*, which is the publication vehicle for the Old Brooklyn Community Development Corporation. This corporation is the owner of the corner where the museum had been until recently, when the coporation evicted them, due to their plans to build something new to replace the historic buildings at this location. This piece in the *Old Brooklyn News* was written by David Robinson, the new Executive Director of the development corporation.

**LETTER**

He writes that "due to uncertainty regarding federal dollars", they apparently have decided to proceed without them. *Was the funding situation for the project always so "comfortable" that they could afford to proceed without federal funding?*

From there, Mr. Robinson goes on to say that the development corporation is using its money to cover all the museum relocation costs, which otherwise would've been furnished to the developer, from a federal fund,

to be used for that express purpose. He further says the developer will reimburse these monies to the development corporation out of its own funds.

If the developer is going to reimburse the development corporation for the relocation expenses, who is going to reimburse the developer??? The developer isn't going to do such a thing out of "the kindness of his heart"; there has to be something in this for the developer. *What is that something?* Perhaps that could have been a transfer of the ownership of the property to the developer, but it's been strongly demonstrated that the development corporation wants to retain ownership of the property.

What is left that will satisfy the developer?

Lynette Filipis – a very concerned resident of the Old Brooklyn neighborhood -- says that she has requested answers to this question and other related questions from the development corporation, but her requests according to her have been ignored.

My commentary is not necessarily intended to suggest that something "shady" might be going on. It's just that a few things might be interpreted that way, particularly since they have yet to be explained by the development corporation.

It would be truly fantastic if someone from the development corporation would respond to this letter to the editor with their own letter to the editor.

**Craig Bobby**

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PHOTO BY GREG ROSENBERG

Saturday, June 13, 2026; Cleveland Public Library The Book Nook at the West Side Market, W. 25<sup>th</sup> and Lorain Avenue: The Book Nook is open on Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. to give away free books to visitors of the West Side Market.

**LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS**  
continued from page 2

deeper connection. The program reinforced my belief that leadership isn't about holding a position—it's about creating opportunities for people to belong, contribute, and build stronger communities together."

NLDP and CDCLP are designed to help emerging neighborhood leaders reach their potential by expanding their knowledge base and personal development through education, one on one coaching and ongoing interaction with their peers and other leaders. Participants and graduates of both programs have ongoing access to the services of a Program Coach who will give advice and support tailored to the needs of the participant.

The programs cover topics such

as organizational and program planning, marketing and communications, program fundraising, board governance, conflict resolution and more. NLDP and CDCLP participants and graduates are a diverse group with many interests who are working on a wide variety of issues that positively impact Cleveland's neighborhoods.

Both programs hold their in-person sessions at Trinity Commons at 2230 Euclid Avenue.

NLDP sessions take place from 8:30am to 4:30pm on Saturdays, CDCLP sessions take place from 8:30am to 5pm on Thursdays.

**The application period is now open! The deadline for NLDP and CDCLP applications is July 31, 2026.**

For additional information on

NLDP and to view the curriculum and online application, visit [www.nldpcleveland.com](http://www.nldpcleveland.com) or call 216-776-6167.

For additional information on CDCLP and to view the curriculum and online application, visit [www.cdclp.org](http://www.cdclp.org) or call 216-776-6172.

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

**Plain Press:**  
Visit the Plain Press website at <https://plainpress.blog>

**Legal Aid can help with unemployment appeals**

by Tonya Sams

Experiencing job loss can be devastating, leaving those affected worried about how they will take care of themselves and their families. Applying for unemployment compensation is an option, but eligibility requirements must be met to get the benefits.

To qualify for benefits, you must have worked enough time and earned enough wages to meet monetary eligibility. To meet monetary eligibility, during the 12-to-18-month period before you applied for benefits, you must have been employed for at least 20 weeks and earned an average of at least \$352 per week. You must also have a qualifying separation from work such as a layoff or a discharge without just cause.

Unlike regular employees, independent contractors are not eligible for unemployment benefits.

"If you were a contractor for a company, you will not receive unemployment benefits," said Patrick Haney, a Supervising Attorney in the Economic Justice Practice Group at The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland. "But if you feel like your employer wrongly considered you as a contractor, you should still apply because that's an issue you can raise as part of the unemployment process."

You can apply for unemployment compensation online at [unemployment.ohio.gov](http://unemployment.ohio.gov) or by calling the Department of Job and Family Services (JFS) at 877-644-6562.

The applicant will get a New Claim Instruction Sheet with information about how the claim process works and what happens if you are approved for benefits. JFS will gather information from your employer. If JFS requires additional information from you, they will send you a notice asking you to respond with certain information by a deadline.

Applicants will then get determination letters letting them know if they have met monetary eligibility and if they have a qualifying separation.

You need to be eligible in both areas to receive benefits.

"If your application is denied, you can appeal that determination. But if you get approved, your employer can also appeal," said Haney. "Instructions on how to submit an appeal will be included in your determination letter. You will have only 21 days from the determination date to appeal."

After an initial determination is appealed, JFS issues a Redetermination. A Redetermination can also be appealed. When a Redetermination is appealed, the issue will move to a hearing with the Unemployment Compensation Review Commission, which is usually held by telephone.

"The hearing is a legal proceeding where testimony is solicited and provided. Having an attorney is helpful because they will be there asking questions on your behalf and they have experience with this type of proceeding," he said.

Once you have applied for benefits, you will need to do several things to stay eligible including submitting information to JFS regarding your resume, work-search activities, and a career-profile assessment with Ohio Means Jobs.

Have questions about unemployment compensation? Legal Aid may be able to help! Attend a free Legal Aid Brief Advice Clinic. For a full schedule: [lasclev.org/clinics](http://lasclev.org/clinics).

To apply for free legal services, call 888-817-3777 or apply online: [lasclev.org/apply](http://lasclev.org/apply).

**Tonya Sams is a Development & Communications Manager at The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland**

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# Arch at St. Michael creates senior citizen apartments on Scranton Road

The Arch at St. Michael, a development project recently completed at 3146 Scranton Road, provides apartments for senior citizens age 62 and older. The project, developed by CHN Housing Partners along with Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing, transformed the former St. Michael's High School and the former St. Michael's Convent into apartment buildings. A description available on the CHN Housing Partners website says the project has created 36 one-bedroom apartments in the former high school and 12 one-bedroom apartments in the former convent.

The CHN Housing Partners description of the one-bedroom apartments says each apartment has one bedroom and one bathroom. The units also have a kitchen (with appliances included), a living room, and will be furnished with heat and air conditioning.

The Arch at St. Michael has additional amenities available for all residents and guests. These include bathrooms, a kitchen, Social Service Coordinator Office, laundry facilities, a fitness room, wellness

room, media and library room and ample community space.

The information on the website says the building is owned and managed by CHN Housing Partners. It promises that residents will receive support to age in place. CHN Housing Partners promises to keep residents apprised as to who to call with any issues or complaints. It says it promises to work to actively build relationships with immediate neighbors.

CHN promises to have strong onsite management and build relationships with the police and City of Cleveland to help increase security. CHN also plans to offer space in the building for neighborhood block club meetings.

CHN Housing Partners Communications Project Manager Clare Snape-Gwin says, "Arch at Saint Michael was completed a few months back." She says the building is fully leased, and they are no longer accepting applications. Snape-Gwin says plans are currently underway to have a ribbon cutting ceremony for the Arch at St. Michael in early September.



PHOTO BY DEBBIE SADLON

Thursday, June 18, 2026; The Arch at St. Michael, 3146 Scranton Avenue: The former St. Michael High School building and St. Michael's Convent now provide housing for senior citizens

## In memoriam — Demolition of Old Brooklyn's iconic corner at Memphis Ave. and Pearl Rd. begins

by Lynette Filips

I didn't grow up in Old Brooklyn, but generations of my ancestors did — and some were still living there when I was a child in post-World War II Parma. My parents had to migrate south because there wasn't enough housing available for all the Baby Boomer families in what was then called "South" Brooklyn. But we were back in their old neighborhood to visit relatives so often that certain streets were almost as familiar to me as the streets in our part of suburbia. Pearl Rd. was the main artery between the two localities and even now I can remember landmarks along the route and within Old Brooklyn. One of them was at the corner of Memphis Ave. and Pearl Rd. The triangular-shaped building on the north side of the intersection was like nothing I had ever previously seen. I was especially captivated by the florist shop with all the windows at the tip of the triangle. In my youth, of course, I didn't know that its official name was the Greenline Building and that its unique wedge-shape style was called "flitiron", named after the vintage ironing device for pressing clothes. I just knew that at Christmastime, when the windows were filled with brilliant red poinsettia plants, it was a wonderful sight for my eyes to behold.

As I write this article on Friday, June 26, 2026, it's a whole different story. If the plan for the week which Old Brooklyn Community Development Corporation (OBCDC) Director David Robinson posted on Facebook Monday afternoon is on schedule, the Greenline Building and the one-story commercial building next to it will be a pile of rubble by the end of the day. And so will the circa 1860 little old house situated on the back of the property. The ground will be torn up around the Greenline Building in an attempt to find and ultimately remove some kind of potentially dangerous storage tanks which have been there for more decades than anyone can remember. This is all supposedly "Phase 1" of OBCDC's attempt to revitalize the corner. ("Phase 2" is expected to come later this year.)

This "Phase" concept is a new one

to me. I hadn't heard of it until I read an earlier — but also very recent — online post from David Robinson. What I had previously heard — what we had been promised by Cleveland Councilman Kris Harsh and by a person in a position of authority at City Hall — was that no demolition would occur until the "capital stack" (i.e., the money to finance the entire project) was in place. At that time, about \$8 million in grant money had been secured for dealing with environmental hazards (aka, Brownfield Remediation) and a very large loan from the AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations) had been guaranteed by HUD (the federal government's Department of Housing and Urban Development); roughly another \$15 million was necessary to complete the deal.

Now, after reading the Executive Director's column in the Summer issue of the *Old Brooklyn News*, I have learned that HUD is no longer backing a loan for this project. Exactly what that means I don't know, because no one at the City answers my requests for information. But I do know that the whole list of funding sources I included in my article several months ago is no longer accurate. It could also mean, since the project has now been divided into stages, that after the historic buildings are demolished, there might not be money to move forward with OBCDC's proposed project to replace them. But before I worry too far into the future about a possible scenario, I must return to this eulogy for the corner...

The first time I was inside St. Luke's was in the mid-to-late 1970s. That was the era right after OBCDC was born, and other neighborhood groups were also getting started. One of them was the Greater Brooklyn Ministerial Association. Many of the churches in Old Brooklyn, the City of Brooklyn and Brooklyn Centre participated in it by providing opportunities for their ministers and parishioners to worship and socialize with each other at each other's facilities. I attended the vast majority of those functions and the church which impressed me the most

was St. Luke's. The way that we moved from the beautiful sanctuary where the service was held to the beautiful adjoining parlor after the service was unlike anything I had ever experienced. I was used to going into church halls in basements for such gatherings, not to a gorgeous parlor with stained glass windows which complemented those in the church. St. Luke's did have a basement, I later learned, but that was for rummage sales, not for Sunday get-togethers.

That experience is one of the reasons I want to scream every time I hear the people intent on tearing down this lovely addition refer to it as an educational annex. Yes, it has classrooms, but it was (and still could be) so much more than an addition for a school. Jonathan Sandvick, the local architect highly experienced in doing such things and who also submitted a proposal for this site, was absolutely confident that it could be saved and adaptively reused.

The grand facade of St. Luke's and the raised area in front of it also provided an elegant backdrop for any number of things. One Saturday afternoon during roughly the same time period as the Ministerial Association's gathering, OBCDC had Old Brooklyn history book author Kathryn Gasior Wilmer conduct a tour of St. Luke's and Brookmere Cemetery. A reporter from one of the local TV stations who was interviewing the people attending the tour stood in that grand area right outside the doors of the church when she talked with us. Later, color photos of St. Luke's stained-glass windows became an important component of Wilmer's second history book, *Old Brooklyn New Book II*.

As happened with so many mainstream urban Protestant congregations, the population at St. Luke's declined to the point that it could no longer support itself. I attended their last service on Easter Sunday of 2013 before I went to the Easter service at my own parish and it was indeed a sad day. St. Luke's "turned over the keys" to the Western Reserve Association of the United Church of Christ (UCC) shortly thereafter (though to help ease the pain of the loss, a rem-

nant of the congregation did join a Bible study with members of the neighboring Pearl Road United Methodist Church for a short while.) The UCC then engaged the services of a commercial realtor to find someone to purchase the church. There was a lot of excitement initially, but the church was overpriced and so it did not sell.

In time, keeping St. Luke's became too much of a financial liability, so the UCC gave it to the Cuyahoga County Land Reutilization Corporation, aka the "Land Bank", who ultimately gave it to OBCDC. (All these transfers can be viewed on the "My Place" segment of the County's website; this month's article is meant to be more about heartfelt feelings and less about relating facts.) OBCDC also tried to find a buyer for the building and they almost succeeded. Dwight and Tim, the highly creative owners of a business originally located on W. Schaaf Rd., All Things 4 You, were on the verge of signing the papers to begin turning their dream of owning a unique business space in the neighborhood into a reality. But at the last minute they were presented with important information about the process which they should have been told at the beginning. Perhaps before this drama is over, they will want to add their story to the saga. OBCDC continued to take individuals through the building, but I never saw a formal "Request for Proposals" issued. Folks who wanted to see the building preserved were never able to obtain a list of who went through it and who, if any of them, had an interest in possibly purchasing it and who was just curious.

Knowing of Tom Yablonsky's success stories with downtown Cleveland buildings, I asked him if he would be willing to get a team together to look at St. Luke's. He replied that he would be interested and I repeatedly asked OBCDC to contact him. But they did not request a proposal from him. Finally, Tom contacted them without having an RFP (Request for Proposals) and had a team — Sandvick Architects, a developer and a financial person — working on putting a proposal together. But, in the midst of

that work, they were told that another developer was chosen and they were dismissed. The developer's company's name was NRP.

This is turning into a very long eulogy, but the whole story needs to be told because an important grassroots effort, "Save Our Historic District", began at this time. So, it's probably a good place to stop for now.

I had planned to do a recap of last month's Cleveland History Days and Take-a-Hike events in Old Brooklyn but those will have to wait until next month. While there won't be any hikes in Old Brooklyn in July, there are two nearby areas being featured which should be of particular interest to people who like learning about old cemeteries: the Willet Street Cemetery, the Jewish cemetery at 2254 Fulton Rd. at Monroe Ave., will be featured on Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. and the Monroe Street Cemetery, 3207 Monroe Ave., will be featured on Thursdays at 6 p.m. Visit [takeahikecleveland.com](http://takeahikecleveland.com) to learn about all the hikes (90 minutes) and strolls (60 minutes) scheduled between now and September 30th.

Till next month, if you want to refer to any previous *Plain Press* articles about this historic Old Brooklyn corner, access them on the *Plain Press*'s website, <https://plainpress.blog>, or on the HSOB's website, [www.oldbrooklynhistory.org](http://www.oldbrooklynhistory.org).

### SUMMER SOCIAL

Here is an invitation from the Historical Society of Old Brooklyn to its Summer Social: *It's become a Historical Society of Old Brooklyn tradition to gather during the summer, and this year we'll meet on Friday, July 10, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Cleveland Winery at West 41st Street and Memphis Avenue—the former site of Memphis Elementary School, for those who appreciate a bit of local history. In addition to wine, beer, and cocktails, the Winery now offers pizzas and cheese boards for purchase. You're also welcome to bring a favorite dish or snack to share. Most important of all, bring yourself! This will be a chance to catch up with friends, hear the latest news about our new home at 2221 Broadview Road, and share ideas for future programs and activities.*

**Planning to join us? We'd appreciate an RSVP at [info@oldbrooklynhistory.org](mailto:info@oldbrooklynhistory.org) so we can plan accordingly.**

## COMMUNITY LETTER

continued from page 3

Ward Club Member; **Phyllis Bambeck**, Political ally; **Rachel Napolitano**: "I live on the near west side and have known Paula Kampf for 25 years. She organized the counter protest movement locally to the attacks on drag performances at Near West Theatre, which I have been a part of. I also joined her at a protest she organized in front of the City Club in the freezing cold when they hosted an anti-LGBTQ speaker from a hate group. She organizes caroling around the neighborhood, which I have been a part of. I volunteered with her to be local supports for the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. She volunteers for local organizations and organizes the community to volunteer and donate to worthwhile local causes. She steps in when leadership is needed to protect and affirm our youth, members of persecuted groups, and protect democracy from fascism. She

hosts at her home, the Harvest Moon Festival, every year and has made sure that everyone is safe at that party. She and I have sung in the same church choral group. Why would you slander such an upstanding citizen by publishing slandering statements without any context? Without reaching out to her for a response? Did you even try to find out what lies she was accused of spreading. Paula is the most neighborly person and puts her sweat equity behind all of her convictions. She does everything for nonprofits, the Democratic Party, and grassroots causes UNPAID. The man you quoted obviously has an axe to grind and you just let him swing and swing without any accountability for swinging an axe! At all of the volunteer and grassroots causes I have participated in, I have not seen any leadership from her accuser. You can't throw a stone on the near west side without meeting someone impacted by her leadership, so it wouldn't have been hard to do

some factchecking on her integrity." **Kate Durban**, previous Ward Club leader/prior to redistricting; "Paula Kampf deserved the opportunity to respond before the article was published." **Nicole McGee**, past collaborator, friend, and neighbor to Paula, "Paula's integrity as a Clevelander is something I admire. Her civic engagement is something I constantly learn from, and her character is something I am inspired by. I have such regard for the *Plain Press* and always have. Please do the right thing and address this matter with the attention it deserves. Thank you." **Colleen Traud**, Resident of Ward 7; **Megan Gergen**, Near West Side/Ward 7 resident; **Mark McDermott**, resident of Ward 7; **Casey Olyer**, neighbor in Ward 7; **Randi Allard**, Near West Side resident for 42 years, Ward 7 voter; "Paula Kampf is the most dedicated citizen I have ever known or worked with. Her integrity is about reproach." **Carol Vang**, Ohio City resident and voter; **Frederick J. Calatrello**, member of the Ward 7 Democratic

Club, member of Central Committee for Ward 7 Democratic Party; "We should be measured by the people who dislike us and the people who authored this attack don't begin to measure up to Paula Kampf." **Cam Hughes**, neighbor in Ward 7; **Joseph Giuliano**, Ward 7 resident and voter, previous Central Committee Democratic Party Executive Committee member; **Christopher Toddy, AIA**, Ward 7 voter and resident; **Stephen Kachmyers**, Lifelong Near West Side resident. **Richard Clark**, Duck Island West 18th Street resident, Central Committee member; **Elizabeth Ackerman**, Ward 7 resident and voter; "I grew up on the Near West Side and have known Paula Kampf to be an advocate for and asset to the community for over 25 years." **Al Wasco**, Longtime resident of Near West Side; "Paula Kampf's tireless activism on behalf of this neighborhood deserves praise not criticism." **Michele Sommerfelt**, local election work and voter; **Angela K. Lowder**, resident and voter;

**Karen Desotell**, Ward 7 Voter, neighbor and friend; **Liz Grady**, Ward 7 volunteer and voter; **Bobbi Reichertell**, resident and voter in Ward 7; **Julie Myers**, work and volunteer in Ward 7; **Diane Fedak**, Ohio City Resident; "I'm a big fan of Paula Kampf and everything she does for our Community." **Lauren R. Welch**, resident and former Councilmember; **Jane Doherty**, 28-year friend of Paula and former resident of the near west side neighborhood; **Mike Harrison**, Farkas Pastry; **Kerry McCormack**, neighborhood resident, active Democrat and lover of Cleveland; "Not only has Paula spent her life serving and helping other people and her community, she has done more than anyone to organize residents and get them involved in their community and the democratic process. Our neighborhoods remain strong because of people like Paula. Any attack on her character and intentions is inaccurate at best and at worst malevolent." **Mary Zaller**, Ward 7 Resident for 25 Years.



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

June 19, 2026; Soldiers and Sailors Monument, Cleveland Public Square: This panel inside the Soldiers and Sailors Monument is titled "The Emancipation of the Slaves." The emancipation of the enslaved is represented by the open shackles in Abraham Lincoln's right hand. The panel also depicts the establishment of the United States Colored Troops, represented by Lincoln handing a weapon to the newly emancipated man. The model for the man kneeling, Dan R. Fields, was born in the slave state of Louisiana. Fields fled to Ohio where he later participated in the construction of the Monument. Fields became a caretaker of the Monument once it was completed. The men standing behind Lincoln are major Ohio abolitionists – (L-R) John Sherman, Salmon P. Chase, Benjamin F. Wade, and Joshua R. Giddings.

## SOLDIERS' & SAILORS'

continued from page one

in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore ex-

isting between them becomes that between employer and hired labor."

Palumbo said the hope in General Order Number 3 was that in creating a new relationship of employer and hired labor that former slaves would be able to accumulate resources and not become destitute. Palumbo said it was up to the Union Army to enforce this rule.

It took the ratification of the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> amendments to the Constitution to solidify what was stated in the Emancipation Proclamation, said Palumbo.

Palumbo then shared some history of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument and the involvement of Cuyahoga County residents in the Civil War. The Monument, he noted,

## DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

continued from page one

protections, and cast doubt on our election administration."

The First Amendment protects the rights of individuals and organizations to engage in political advocacy, she explained, and "any investigation of these protected activities must be conducted with the utmost care and in accordance with all relevant law and Department of Justice policies designed to prevent political bias or retaliation."

To better understand the basis and scope of the FBI's actions against the OOC, Brown asked for the specific authority or legal basis used to authorize the search and to produce the "warrant and affidavit."

She added, "What are the policies and protocols that govern investigations that involve organizations that legally participate in voter registration?"

Ohio Senator Bernie Moreno dismissed criticisms regarding the FBI raid and said the investigation is a "necessary measure to protect election integrity and stop potential voter fraud."

Reagan McCarthy, communications director for Moreno, responded to a request for a comment by directing the *Plain Press* to X @berneimoreno, where the first-term senator born in Bogotá, Colombia, and former North Olmsted luxury car dealer salesman, said in a post, "It's not just the SPLC (The Southern Poverty Law Center). The Democrat dark money machine has propped up "activist" groups like this across the country, including Ohio. If Americans are going to have faith in our elections, every single fraudster must be investigated and prosecuted. No stone unturned."

The European Journal of Political Economy published a paper in June 2019, titled "Electoral fraud and voter turnout: An experimental study." Authors Vardan Baghdasaryan, Giovanna Iannantuoni, and Valeria Maggian investigated the consequences of electoral fraud on voter turnout. The study showed, among other findings, that

the majority group, against which the fraud is undertaken, "responds with significantly higher participation in the extensive ballot-box stuffing case."

The academic paper provides evidence that electoral fraud might increase, rather than decrease, voter turnout.

Low voter turnout has plagued Cleveland for decades, with the city failing to surpass 50% any time in the last four years. In 2025, there were 239,238 registered voters in Cleveland, while only 44,644 cast votes in the municipal general election, or just 18%, and turnout for the primary election was a dismal 7%.

The least amount of votes cast was Ward 14 with 1,287, followed by Ward 5 with 1,886; Ward 2, 3, 6, 8, 11, and 13 averaged 2,453 votes, with the remaining Wards 1, 4, 7, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, and 17 between 3,015 and 4,617 votes.

Voter turnout for the City of Cleveland wards during the May 5, 2026, Ohio primary averaged under 22%, with some wards reporting as few as 976 votes (Ward 5).

Political endorsements and political advertisements provide some insight into the low voter turnout, researchers claim. A large portion of political advertisements come from the candidate or campaign committee, asking voters to consider the credibility of the candidate.

Political endorsements and political advertisements provide some insight into the low voter turnout, researchers claim. A large portion of political advertisements comes from the candidate or campaign committee, asking voters to consider the candidate's credibility. Political endorsements are, by design, "statements from a third party indicating their support of a particular candidate," according to Tom Vizcarrondo and Milad Minoie, Kennesaw State University. "A voter's evaluative process of a political endorsement, therefore, will likely consider the credibility of the endorser as the messenger of the communication, rather than consid-

ering the credibility of the candidate when evaluating a political advertisement."

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is dedicated to the over 9,000 individuals from Cuyahoga County that served the Union in the American Civil War. Palumbo noted that was a large portion of the population of Cuyahoga County. At the time the Civil War began, the County's population was estimated at 78,000 people. Palumbo says the 9,000 individuals' names on the walls of the monument represent those from Cuyahoga County that enlisted locally. The Monument staff are still doing research and adding names of those Cuyahoga County residents that enlisted directly as Federal troops. This list includes 107 names, some of which are former slaves that enlisted after the Emancipation Proclamation.

The architect and sculptor of the monument, Levi T. Scofield, was a veteran of the Civil War. Scofield served as a Captain in the 103<sup>rd</sup> Ohio Infantry Regiment. Scofield donated his work on the Monument, refusing to take any compensation, said Palumbo. The program passed out at the celebration indicates that Elizabeth Scofield, the wife of the architect, "led the compilation of the 9,000 names inside."

The tour of the interior of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument led by Palumbo included a look at four panels. According to the program, one panel, Northern Ohio Soldiers' Aid Society and Sanitary Commission, features the women from those groups that "sent over a million dollars' worth of resources to soldiers on the front lines." A second panel, titled Beginning of the War, features Ohio Governors during the Civil War and generals who were from Ohio or commanded units from

Ohio. It also shows civilians signing up to serve in the war on one side and leaving in uniform on the other side. A third panel, titled The Emancipation of the Slaves, features President Abraham Lincoln holding shackles representing the freeing of the slaves in one hand and handing a rifle to a newly emancipated man joining the Union Army. Standing behind Lincoln in the panel are four major Ohio abolitionists. The final panel is titled Peacemakers at City Point. It features President Lincoln with the Union generals toward the end of the Civil War.

Palumbo says, The Emancipation of the Slaves panel was considered by Civil War veterans to be the most important of the panels at the time of Monument's creation in 1894. Veterans wanted the message of the panel to be front and center. Palumbo said that for many years when most people visited the Monument by streetcar, they came into the Monument from the North side, and The Emancipation of the Slaves panel was the first thing they saw when entering the Monument. Now the main entrance is on the south side, as most people come from that direction to visit the monument.

The Cuyahoga County Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument is on the southeast quadrant of Public Square in downtown Cleveland. Admission is free. The exterior of the monument is open to the public. From Memorial Day through Labor Day the interior is open every day from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. During the rest of the year, it is open from Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. For more information visit [www.SoldiersandSailors.com](http://www.SoldiersandSailors.com).

enough to actually vote in that particular election."

Intra-party endorsements create political friction by alienating grassroots voters, as seen in the recent Cuyahoga County Democratic Party May 5, 2026, primary election, where internal friction and division caused a hard-fought proxy war for control of the party's central committee between the progressive establishment and more moderate, law-and-order factions.

David Brock, chair of the Cuyahoga County Democratic Party, in an interview with *Signal Weekly Chatter*, described the winning candidates as "active" campaigners, not activists.

Brown closed her letter to Patel and DelManzo with a prediction. "Federal law enforcement is being deployed in a manner that could have a chilling effect on lawful civ-

ic engagement," she said. "Against this backdrop, further aggressive federal investigative actions like the raid in Cleveland and the indictment of the Southern Poverty Law Center create serious concerns that federal law enforcement is being used to intimidate civic organizations and deter lawful participation in our democratic process."

The letter to FBI Director Kash Patel and the Special Agent in Charge of the Cleveland Office was signed by Rep. Brown (OH-11), Rep. Marcy Kaptur (OH-09), Rep. Joyce Beatty (OH-03), Rep. Greg Landsman (OH-01), and Rep. Emilia Sykes (OH-13).

"The FBI let us know they received our letter," said Kenya Harris, Digital Director/Press Secretary for Congressional Representative Brown. "Other than that, we have received no response."

## Can Brook Park collect enough new taxes to support its investment in a new stadium?

### NO, AND TAXPAYERS SHOULD PREPARE FOR HIGHER TAXES

by Alex Calder

The NFL is America's most successful sports league. Since 2020, franchise values have increased in many cases by more than 100 percent. The Seattle Seahawks are expected to sell for more than \$9 billion. Players also benefit from the league's success as each team can spend more than \$300 million each year on player salaries.

#### NEWS ANALYSIS

While NFL teams don't need the public sector's financial help to build a new stadium, local governments could benefit from its investment if tax revenues increase because of a team's presence. Brook Park's leadership recently decided to invest \$640 million to ensure that the Browns' new stadium would be built in the city. Is there a likelihood that the city would enjoy a financial return on this investment? Unfortunately, the answer is no, and local taxpayers will likely face higher property taxes in the future. Why?

The first challenge is the size of the debt. At today's borrowing rates, Brook Park needs to generate almost \$40 million in new revenues to repay the debt. Brook Park will receive new earnings taxes from the salaries earned by players, coaches, and staff salaries. The

new salary cap means players (home and visiting) will generate \$6.1 million. The coaches, other staff members, and venue workers also pay an earnings tax. If we estimate that those earnings are approximately \$100 million, there would be an additional \$2 million in tax revenue. That elevates the new tax collections to \$8.1 million per year.

Brook Park could implement a tax collected from fans for tickets to games, concerts, and shows at the new stadium. Using the Browns' average attendance levels, the same number of entertainment events at the new stadium that match what Ford Field hosts (in a larger market, Detroit-Ann Arbor metropolitan areas), average ticket prices to NFL games and concerts, and an admission tax rate of 7.5 percent, Brook Park should collect \$12.5 million. Combined, the new revenue levels should produce \$20.6 million each year.

If it is assumed that these estimates are too conservative, and if tax collections are 20 percent higher, Brook Park's taxpayers could expect \$24.6 million in new revenue. The shortfall could mean the need for an addition \$15 million to repay the money the city borrowed to ensure the stadium was built in Brook Park.

Could property taxes increase be-  
continued on page 8

## Benjamin Franklin Year End Concert is about more than music

by Greg Cznadel

Benjamin Franklin Elementary School held their year-end music concert on May 24 at the Benjamin Franklin Elementary School in Old Brooklyn. It brought love to the hearts of the people that filled the seats, even the tabletops of the school cafeteria.

This article could be about the little third graders holding up the letters R-E-S-P-E-C-T, smiling and moving their feet in rhythm to the music of "Check it Out (It's About Respect)." Or students showing off for the first time their newly found improvisation skills the director had taught them. (Or even the small group of 4th graders that kept bugging the music director for months to learn to play, who so willingly gave up their lunch or recess for several weeks prior to the concert to learn trombone.) It could be about Elexia, an eighth grader showing off her multi-talented skills on the sax, piano and drums. Or of course, Jeanette giving one of her last renditions of "Hit the Road Jack" prior to moving on to high school, hitting every note.

Some things you can't teach kids from a book. Some subjects don't lend themselves to multiple choice questions. Mr. Scott Franklin, schoolteacher for eleven years at Benjamin Franklin School and an alumnus of the school itself (six years at the time), has found a way to instill the love of music, song, improvisation, and dance in his elementary school music classes. Friendship and commitment too. Also how to take the bull by the horn.

Like when the microphone was being intermittent and Mr. Franklin was trying to fix it, Jeanette kept shouting out the steps to Mango Walk, with a smile on her face. And last year, to Scott's surprise, when she took up the wireless microphone she was handed and started strolling around

the isles of the church like she owned the place.

At this spring's concert at the Benjamin Franklin school in Old Brooklyn, Scott gathered a medley of music and dance to showcase the students' hard work throughout the year. From "Check it Out (It's About Respect)" by the youngest students to the closing solo "Hit the Road Jack."

### IN MY MIRROR

A special song written by Scott, "In My Mirror", was introduced by Mr. Franklin with him telling the story of its origin. Alumni and anyone who knew it stepped up and joined the choir.

"In my first-year teaching at BF I went to a music teacher convention for three days. On the last day, when all of the businesses had closed their booths, and almost all teachers had left for home, there were a handful of workshops still going on in the last time slot.

"I was on my way out of the convention as I walked past a room with a workshop that caught my eye. In one part of the class they read a book called "In My Nana's House There Are No Mirrors". It sparked something in me...a thought that all of us already have our own mirror inside.

"In this mirror, we see everywhere we've been, what we've done, what's been done to us, our shaping and experiences both good and bad. We can describe this mirror to others, but they can't see it.

"We all tend to judge others according to what's in our own internal mirror. But we have no idea who others truly are and what has shaped them. The only way we could ever know others is by putting down our expectation of what they have lived through, because we have no idea. We have to listen to them and their experiences.

"Less judging, more listening and more compassion."

### BAND

The band performed with songs like "C Jam Blues," composed in 1942 by Duke Ellington in the key of C major. The tune is well known for being extremely easy to play, with the entire melody featuring only two notes: G and C giving the students a chance to improvise. When asked how this is taught Scott said, "The first thing we do is give them one or two notes and encourage them to play whatever they want with those two notes. Then I introduce the blues scale or the pentatonic scale and tell them to only use as many or few notes as they want to. Sometimes they use notes from the melody."

Elexia switched from Alto Sax to drums for this piece with Scott on the trumpet and Mr. Demetrius Steinmetz performing alongside.

Mozart Melody, the famous opening bars of *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, known in English as "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" was played by fourth graders that according to Mr. Franklin "kept bugging me for months, so I finally said they could come at lunch/recess, even though all I had were trombones."

Chameleon is a jazz fusion standard composed by Herbie Hancock. It gets its name from the way the song constantly shifts its musical styles, moods, and textures. Like a chameleon changing its color to adapt to its surroundings. Hot Cross Buns, and Pass the Peas finished off this section.

### DANCE

Jeanette, an eighth grader, called out

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the "Mango Walk," a traditional Jamaican folk song. The lyrics playfully tell a story of someone accused of going into a neighbor's orchard to steal "number 'leven" mangoes (a popular pinkish variety in Jamaica). This was followed by the dance Alabama Gal, similar to a Virginia reel, described as a banana being peeled, the path followed laid down with tape on the tile floor. Cha Cha Slide called by 5<sup>th</sup> grader Sophia Gomez, invited alumni familiar with the dance to come up and show off their moves. Alumni afraid to show off their moves were grabbed by one another to finally join the kids.

Elexia (Alto Sax), and Janelly (Clarinet) will attend the Cleveland School of Arts for high school next year. The alumni will continue to attend these concerts to support the students.

### MUSIC IN THE GARDEN

The following Wednesday the Benjamin Franklin Community Garden opened up their pavilion to these students to share their music. Mr. Franklin thanked the four students that came of the ten who were asked to come and perform.

Carmela on trumpet is in 4<sup>th</sup> grade, Sophia and Hianais in 5<sup>th</sup> grade on Sax, and Kilan on trumpet and drums in 7<sup>th</sup>. Scott said, "that is how life is... you have a commitment and you keep it."

Janelly Gomes, Sophia's sister, had an 8<sup>th</sup> grade dance to go to at 5:30. She had one request for showing up, that Scott save C Jam Blues for her. She got dressed (in a beautiful ruffled blue dress) and came with her clarinet. The band performed admirably. Scott said he "really wanted to thank all the parents that made this work tonight. He really appreciated Kilan taking over the drums. Scott was so excited that he hopped on the drums, he pointed to his parents in the audience and told them he would loan them his set for the summer for Kilan to keep practicing. Scott explained how music skills are Life skills.

When talking to Kilan's father Kevin afterwards he said he never had the opportunity to learn music when growing up and is so proud that Benjamin Franklin has this program.

This past year The All City Jazz Band reached out to younger kids to play with the high school students to help recruit them for their program. Eleven of Benjamin Franklin's kids joined them at the Cleveland School of the Arts every Wednesday. Scott said, "We were the only school in Cleveland that responded to them."

Scott said the next song is Coña Brava. Scott said, "Whenever they get together, it's always funny. Some want to play this, others don't. They are going back to summer camp in August. When they get back they will all want to play it."

### From "In My Mirror":

*In my mirror on the wall, I see the truest me of all  
What I long to change and grow, what I love that no one knows  
In my mirror I look so fine, I sparkle, shine, I'm mine, all mine  
I'm everything I want to be, In my mirror where nobody else can see.*

### THE LOST STATE OF FRANKLIN

One would not know that this Mr. Mister Rogers of school kids, music director Scott Franklin, lives a life outside his school.

His band, the Lost State of Franklin, began in earnest in 2005, when Franklin, then preparing to move to Nashville, played his first set at Mike's Barn in Elyria, Ohio. By Christmas 2005, Franklin was visiting his parents in Jonesborough, Tennessee, and saw a street named State of Franklin. Intrigued, he researched the history of the "lost" state — a real historical footnote — and the name resonated with him. The band was officially named Lost State of Franklin on Christmas Eve 2005.

Their debut album, Quarter Til Lonely, was released in 2006. Today, Lost State of Franklin continues to perform, though less frequently than in earlier years.

"I write to give you real stories, even if they aren't all mine. And even if they aren't all true. They're all real. I never sat down to write a hit. I sat down to write the best story I am capable of, even on the funny songs. Although I spent a weekend with Lost State of Franklin playing my own songs to crowds of 10,000 in Belfort, France, I am just as happy playing to 25 people who will listen to every word."

"Before the pandemic, while working full time teaching music in an urban district, I averaged 80 performances per year, often logging 100+ hour weeks. I've spent my life trying not to be a public-school teacher, but the path keeps sending me back there."



PHOTO BY GREG CNZADEL

Wednesday, May 27, 2026; Music in the Benjamin Franklin Community Garden Pavilion, 1905 Spring Road: Janelly Gomes (with sister Sophia), had an 8<sup>th</sup> grade dance to go to at 5:30. She had one request for showing up; that the music director Scott Franklin save C Jam Blues, composed by Duke Ellington, for her. She got dressed (in a beautiful ruffled purple dress) and came with her clarinet, ready to play.

## Cleveland teens get World Cup experience at Boston festival

Six teens from Cleveland SCORES have been chosen to take part in an international youth festival connected to this year's 2026 FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) World Cup™ in Boston, one of the tournament's host cities.

The group from Cleveland SCORES, a nonprofit providing afterschool programming through soccer, poetry and service learning, will be one of the more than 40 U.S. and international delegations attending Festival 26, which takes place July 5-13. It will bring together 400 youth from around the world for a cultural exchange, a fair play football tournament and football for good workshops.

A FIFA World Cup quarterfinal match will take place in Boston during the festival.

The trip and once-in-a-lifetime experience are possible thanks to the support of Major League Soccer's Columbus Crew. The teens and two Cleveland SCORES leaders

will stay on the Boston University campus.

The Cleveland SCORES delegates are Love Johnson, 13, and Mariyah Lewis, 14, both of Warner Girls Leadership Academy; Savannah Davis, 13, of the John Hay Cleveland School of Science & Medicine; Saib Meslat, 13, of New Tech West High School; Tamir Abakar, 13, of John Marshall High School; and Kamron Perkins, 13, of North Royalton High School.

The festival aims to empower young people and give them a voice while creating a sense of belonging.

"I'm extremely excited. I'm excited for the new experience, the bonds that I'll make and the knowledge I'll take in from it," Davis said.

Johnson said, "I'm feeling low-key nervous because this is the first time I'm going somewhere without my parents. And it is my first time riding on a plane, so I'm scared about that. But I feel like it's going to be pretty cool."

SCORES leaders attending the

## COMMUNITY BOARD continued from page 2

phone by calling 216-738-2067. For information about SNAP applications, food pantries, free produce, and hot meals, text "FOOD" to 63566 or visit [GreaterClevelandFoodBank.org](http://GreaterClevelandFoodBank.org).

**KIDS EAT FREE AT THE LIBRARY:** Cleveland Public Library (CPL) invites youth to have summer lunch on us, Monday-Friday, from 11:30 am to 12:30 am. In partnership with the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, free nutritious meals are available on a first-come-first-served basis to youth ages 18 and under at all CPL branches. Visit <https://cpl.org/locations> to find a branch near you.

**HEALTH FREE SUMMER GYM MEMBERSHIP FOR TEENS:** Teens ages 14-19 can work out for free this summer by signing up for a High School Summer Pass at any Planet Fitness location, including the Ohio City location. (3333 Lorain Ave). Sign up in person or online at [planetfitness.com/summerpass](http://planetfitness.com/summerpass). Teens under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian when signing up. **MOMSFIRST:** Are you pregnant? Do you live in the city of Cleveland? The MomsFirst program can help you learn how to deal with the stress that comes

with being a parent; connect you to resources for housing, education, and healthcare; teach you how to keep your baby safe; and find birth control options that work for you. To enroll, visit [momsfirst.org](http://momsfirst.org) or call 216-664-4194.

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**CLEVELAND READS** is a summer reading program from Cleveland Public Library that brings school-aged readers of all ages together to discover books, strengthen reading skills, and stay connected through the power of stories. In this year's program, entitled "Main Character Energy," kids can gain XP and win prizes by reading and participating in events at library branches throughout the city, now until July 31. To sign up, visit your local branch or go to [cpl.org/cleveland-reads](http://cpl.org/cleveland-reads).

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### SENIORS

**OHIO AGING COMPASS** is a user-friendly suite of tools designed to help older Ohioans, caregivers, and others easily access aging-related data, services, events, and long-term care information. Developed by the Ohio Department of Aging (AGE), Ohio Aging Compass brings together three integrated tools: 1) The Long-Term Care Quality Navigator was launched in 2024 as part of Governor Mike DeWine's Nursing Home Quality and Accountability Task Force. It allows users to search for and compare nursing homes and assisted living facilities across Ohio. 2) The Healthy Aging Resource Hub, a one-stop shop for healthy aging information, events, and supportive programs and services. 3) The Aging Data Explorer is an interactive dashboard tracking the state's progress on key aging priorities across more than 80 metrics. Visit [compass.aging.ohio.gov](http://compass.aging.ohio.gov) to get started.



PHOTO BY CHUCK HOVEN

Saturday, June 13, 2026; Parade the Circle, East Boulevard and Juniper: This Ice Cream Truck was created by some residents of a West Side neighborhood. Blogger Angie Schmitt wrote of the work neighbors did on the float and the fun they had test driving it through the neighborhood. Schmitt's substack blog is called *From Love of Place* and the post is titled "Pro-social community heroes".

**BROOK PARK STADIUM**

continued from page 6

cause of new residential, retail, and commercial development and produce an additional \$20 million? That would require growth rates that exceed what

is taking place in NE Ohio and having people and businesses decide to live and work in Brook Park as opposed to downtown Cleveland or growing suburban areas. New homes and businesses will need services from Brook Park and

local schools, meaning most of the new property taxes will be needed to pay for those services.

These revenue streams will grow over time. Even a 3 percent growth rate resulting from higher salaries or ticket prices

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**Greater Cleveland Food Bank plans new West Side location**

A June 16, 2026 article, by Kaylee Remington in *Cleveland.com*, titled "Greater Cleveland Food Bank to build resource center to expand food access, services", says the

Greater Cleveland Food Bank plans to build a new West Side Community Resource Center at 9830 Lorain Avenue. The new center is expected to open early next year.

**HUNGER CENTER**

continued from page one

the organization's ability to respond to food insecurity and financial instability in the neighborhood by expanding the kitchen capacity to serve more meals daily; providing a larger, more welcoming dining space; improving accessibility for individuals and families; and connecting clients to additional services in one location.

In the new location, Catholic Charities will continue its partnership with St. Augustine Parish, maintaining the strong community relationship that has defined the hunger center for decades. The new name, St. Augustine Family Center, reflects an expanded mission to serve the whole individual and family while honoring the center's legacy in Tremont.

Catholic Charities officials said the move keeps the hunger center in the neighborhood it has served for more

than 50 years and expands its ability to meet rising community needs. In 2024, St. Augustine Hunger Center served a total of 116,022 meals to individuals and families in need in the community.

"Food insecurity in Cleveland is only getting worse as our community faces the hardships of economic inequality and limited access to healthy food," said Jim Mullen, president and CEO, Catholic Charities, Diocese of Cleveland. "St. Augustine Parish and the hunger center have been essential to our emergency assistance network, and they exemplify the value of seeing every individual in the image and likeness of God. We are honored for the opportunity to help build upon this legacy and strengthen our collective impact."

Catholic Charities says this project was made possible through the support of two generous donors, whose investment helped bring the vision for this expanded center to life.

will fall short of the amount necessary to fully repay the bonds. It is likely that the revenue gap will have a cumulative shortfall of approximately \$183 million. Taxpayers in Brook Park should be concerned that as the stadium ages there will be a need for substantial renovations and maintenance. The Browns, like other teams in the region, may also ask the City and County to support some of those costs.

There is another reason to be cautious.

Ticket taxes are often capitalized. In other words, some portion of the tax ultimately comes at the expense of team revenues because consumers are only willing to pay so much for a ticket. If the admissions tax did not exist, the team could potentially charge higher ticket prices and capture that revenue itself. As a result, the Browns may seek to ask Brook Park to use some of the ticket tax money to pay for maintenance and modernization.

New stadiums often attract concerts and marquee events during their early years because they are state-of-the-art facilities. As venues age, however, they typically face greater competition from newer facilities. The number of major entertainment events hosted each year may decline over time, making long-term revenue projections even more uncertain. Especially given the competition that Cleveland has from markets like Columbus, Cincinnati, and Detroit.

The stadium will raise Brook Park's profile. Residents must decide if that benefit is sufficient to justify the additional taxes residents and businesses will need to pay. The Browns will be an asset for Brook Park, but value and profitability are not the same thing. Based on the numbers, residents should not expect this \$640 million investment to pay for itself.

**Editor's note:** The new Browns' stadium is projected to cost \$2.4 billion. Team owners have committed to \$1.2 billion, and the State of Ohio has offered to contribute \$600 million. The above article examines the expected local contribution of \$640 million.



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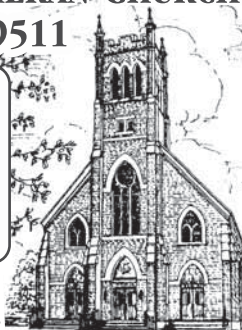
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