

17th Annual Run for Peace
Sunday, April 23



Participants will meet at Our Lady of Peace for the 5k or 1-mile walk at 9:15 a.m. at the corner of East 126th

Street and Larchmere Boulevard. Virtual participants are asked to run 3 miles, walk 2 miles or perform any exercise of their choosing and post a report of their activity and photo on the OLP Facebook page. Children K-3 can partake in the Tot Trot category. Registration is \$20 and \$5 for kids. To register, visit olpchurch.com or contact Matt Foder at 216.308.8302 or musicdirector@olpchurch.com.



24th Annual Larchmere Community Plant Sale
Saturday, May 13 & Sunday, May 14

Get a start on your summer plantings! Pots, flats, hanging baskets of flowers, veggies, herbs and houseplants will be available for purchase. Order by May 6 for best selection and a 10 percent discount. The Mother's Day weekend sale proceeds benefit LCA activities. More information at larchmereplantsale@ameritech.net or call/text 216.269.9060.

Other Important Dates

Outdoor North Unions Farmers Market:
Saturday, April 1 • 8 a.m. to noon

Larchmere Sidewalk Sale:
Saturday, May 27 & Sunday, May 28

Larchmere Rock The Blocks
Sunday, June 11

PorchFest:
Saturday, June 24



See page 10 for more details.

Morelands Group, City Call Out Slum Landlords

By Thomas Jewell

In a shadowy, big money game involving out-of-town property owners playing musical chairs with neglected apartment buildings, tenants around Shaker Square continue to fight for a rightful place at the table.

Cleveland City Council President and Larchmere resident Blaine Griffin, along with Ward 4 Council Member Deborah Gray, recently introduced plans to add “civil nuisance abatement orders” to the city code, targeting deadbeat and very hard-to-reach landlords.

“Basically, if they are not going to take care of their property, we’re going to pursue legal action to try to take it away from them, or hold them accountable,” Griffin said at a press conference outside an apartment complex where residents have been living in “deplorable and especially unconscionable” conditions.

In “really sticking their necks out,” Griffin gave a lot of credit to The Morelands Group and their tenant engagement efforts, spearheaded by Meg Weingart, Bob Render and former Cleveland City Council President Jay

Westbrook, a Shaker Square transplant coming over from the west side.

Westbrook called Shaker Square “the most spectacular part of Cleveland I’ve ever seen, and the most diverse community” in terms of race, class, economics and gender preference.

“But there is one very distinct threat, and it’s people like this ownership group from New York,” Westbrook said. “They have seen on their spreadsheets a place to make ultra-profits—without lifting a finger.

“They just rake it in, and they don’t intend on ever hearing people’s concerns, or ever putting any money back,” Westbrook added. “They only want to take money out. And that is not the Cleveland way.”

Griffin remembered getting calls in zero-degree weather on Christmas morning from apartment residents who had no heat or hot water.

He also commended Cleveland Building and Housing Director Sally Martin and the city law department for their work on the proposed civil nuisance abatement legislation, as well as Cleveland Housing Court Judge W. Mona Scott, for “doing everything in her power to hold accountable

the fourth group that has owned these apartments in three years.”

As far as Gray is concerned, they’re all “slum landlords that we need to make sure are called out for everything they haven’t done.” That included answering the phone only once before they realized she was on council, at which point they quit picking up.

Westbrook said that in many cases, the tenants have invested more in the apartment buildings than the “speculative predators” from distant places.

“People need to know what’s at stake - this is probably the largest concentration of affordable housing in all of Cleveland,” Westbrook said, estimating that “out of 2,000 units here, 1,000 are at risk. We need to preserve them, not lose them.”

See *Morelands Group, City Call Out Slum Landlords*, page 9

Second Phase of Buckeye-Woodhill Choice Breaks Ground

By Kristen Romito

The long-awaited second phase of the Buckeye-Woodhill Choice Neighborhood Transformation has begun, with the Woodhill Center East building breaking ground this past February.

Located at 11305 Woodland Ave., Woodhill Center East will create 77 quality affordable apartments for families and revitalize the Buckeye-Woodhill community. There will be 28 one-bedroom, 43 two-bedroom and six three-bedroom units available. At least 58 units will be reserved for existing Woodhill Homes residents, 19 units affordable will be added for new residents. This phase of the project is expected to be complete sometime in 2024.



The second phase of the Buckeye-Woodhill Choice Neighborhood Transformation broke ground on Friday, Jan. 27.

See *Second Phase of Woodhill Choice Breaks Ground*, page 6

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In Memoriam

Lynne Alfred



Beloved community advocate
Lynne Alfred passed away this past November.

Former SHAD board member and community advocate Lynne Alfred passed away November 13, 2022. Lynne touched many lives in the Shaker Square community as a leader who managed to improve everything she touched. Whether representing SHAD or Larchmere Community Association or Larchmere Merchants Association she contributed an uncommon depth of skills to many initiatives and projects, including the production and placement of the Larchmere community mural. Lynne graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in Sociology and later earned a law degree at Case

Western Reserve University after the birth of her children. Her law career took her to Squire Sanders, then British Petroleum. Eventually, Lynne and her husband Robert Hanson opened the renowned wearable arts and crafts boutique, The Dancing Sheep, on Larchmere Boulevard, operating it from 1998 to 2021. Lynne is survived by her husband Robert Hanson; her children, Lesley Cawley, Michael Durchslag and Halle Durchslag; five grandchildren; sister Alys Mancoff and brother Alan Belofsky; three step-children and five step-grandchildren. She will be fondly remembered as a caring and creative force in the community.

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SHAD MISSION STATEMENT

To provide the Shaker Square area with the leadership needed to re-imagine and foster well-maintained, diverse and vibrant neighborhoods.

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- Drexmore/Chadbourne
- Historic Shaker Square
- Larchmere
- Ludlow

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The SHAD Connection

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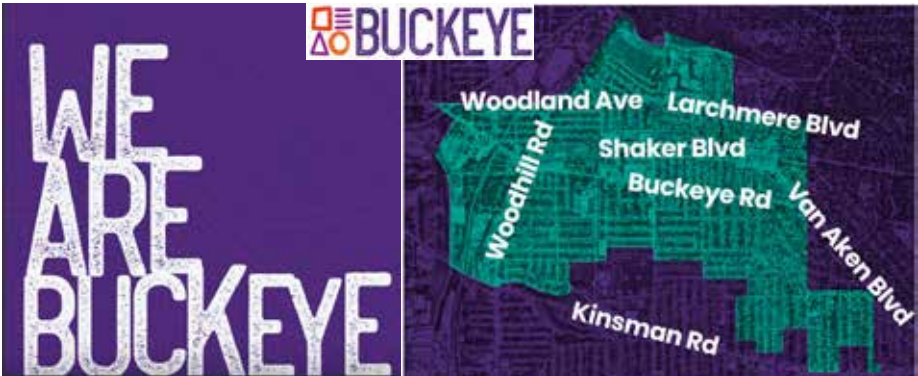
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THE SHAD CONNECTION

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We Are Buckeye Neighborhood Plan Complete

The multi-year community planning process is done and its findings are recapped in a report that is published for the public to review. To find out Burten, Bell, Carr Development Inc.'s 5-year plan for the Buckeye-Shaker neighborhood, read the planning documents at wearebuckeye.com. Have questions? Contact BBC Director of Neighborhood Planning and Engagement Bianca Butts at bbutts@bbcdevelopment.org.



Shaker Square Holiday Jam

Photography by Kristen Romito



Burten, Bell, Carr Development Inc. along with its radio station WOYU 95.9 kicked off the holiday season on Shaker Square with a visit from Santa, music and giveaways on Friday, Dec. 16.

Popping Into Place on Larchmere

By Adam Zimmerman

Jessica Parkison and Jill Vedaa are busy at work building out Poppy, the newest addition to their restaurant collection, which includes the acclaimed Salt+. “Don’t ask me when my restaurant is opening,” reads Parkison’s sweatshirt. The message is satirical of course – Jessica is happy to share that Poppy will be opening in March. Located at the former Felice Urban Café address, Poppy hopes to retain the character and charm of its building’s predecessor. However, as the kitchen construction and scattered ladders indicate, there is also work to be done. The business partners are reimagining the space. “We plan to winterize the outdoor bar by turning it into a speakeasy year-round,” Parkison shares. “We are also moving the second-floor bar downstairs to the main entrance.” Poppy will offer several popular Salt+ dishes, including calamari and white bean puree. But do not be mistaken;

Poppy will have its own original appeal. Vedaa adds, “We do not want to mimic what we are doing elsewhere. While Salt+ is focused on small plates, Poppy will have a traditional style menu with a focus on seasonality.” The vision for Poppy began in late 2022, when Parkison and Vedaa were contacted by the owners of Felice Urban Café about transitioning the property over to them. The business partners were intrigued by the location. “We fell in love with the patio immediately,” Parkison adds. The team also mentioned the nearby Opportunity Corridor as an asset that would help drive potential customers. The namesake for Poppy carries a dual meaning. “My grandmother’s name was Poppy,” Parkison states. “[Felice] is very reminiscent of her home.” Poppy is also the state flower for California, which serves inspiration in the pair’s vision. Parkison and Vedaa had aspired to manage three restaurants. The business partners met 12 years ago and together established Salt+, in Lakewood. Before

the Felice Urban Café had contacted them, they had already been planning Evelyn, a Gordon Square location set to open in the Fall. Thus, each have been hard at work in planning two separate restaurant launches in one year. The tandem is certainly up for the challenge. Each carry quite the talent – not only do each have years of culinary leadership experience, but Vedaa has also been a semifinalist for three James Beard Awards which recognize excellence in the culinary profession.

People are at the center of Parkison and Vedaa’s mission. “Our employees are our core,” Parkison stresses. “If they are treated well, there will be mutual respect throughout.” The restaurant is expecting to hire over 20 employees. Poppy will be open primarily for dinner initially, but following its soft open, it will roll out lunch and dinner Monday through Friday and dinner on Saturday.

Poppy, 12502 Larchmere Blvd.



Poppy owners Jill Vedaa (left) and Jessica Parkison.

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Heard Around the Square

by Margaret Simon

January’s MLK celebration was a memorable collaboration that included the City, Schools, and Library and featured a keynote address by Reverend Dr. Otis Moss, Jr. Winners of the Library’s essay contest were introduced and read their inspiring words to a most appreciative audience. Congratulations to **Michael Peoples, Claire Richards, Ameerah Marie Ford, Robbie McCullough, Asher Nave, and Molly Weingart**. Thanks to the Friends of the Shaker Library for underwriting the prizes. Special thanks go to Shaker PTO’s **Paulanita Barker and Brooke Bribresco**.

This March, Shaker Library joins the City Club of Cleveland and eight other public library systems to create a shared reading experience for the Greater Cleveland community. Read and discuss the Pulitzer Prize-winning book, “Invisible Child: Poverty, Survival & Hope in an American City” by Andrea Elliot, who will speak at Playhouse Square on March 6. On Wednesday evening March 8, Shaker Library will host *A Community Conversation on Poverty in Shaker Heights* featuring representatives from local organizations. Hear from those with expertise and contribute your own ideas about how to meet this challenge. Then come back to the library on Saturday, March 25 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. for a Community Resource Fair where local agencies will be on hand to share resources relating to food, housing, mental health, senior, youth and family services, civic

education and voter registration. All are welcome to browse the tables of local service providers, gathering what they need or want to share with others. Plus a light lunch will be served.

Rock on, gentlemen! Congratulations to Shaker High School’s **Drew English, Devan Bhatia and Jack Landever** for advancing to the 2023 Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Rock Off finals! Their band, Foulmouth, competed in the Final Exam at the Rock Hall on February 25.

Monica Boone produced and directed an Old School + New School Poetry Jam pairing teens with poets and featuring poet Donald King last February at the Library.

The audience cited it as, “Outstanding poetry and performances! Our future is bright through the voices of our youth!” Helping support this artistic initiative were MYCom-Cle and Friends of the Shaker Library.

Shaker High seniors are taking their game to the next level. Volleyball standouts **Allana Apple** will play for Cleveland State University and **Chloe Brown** will play for the State University of New York at Buffalo. Field hockey stars **Skylar Sokal** will play for Bellarmine University and **Javiera Baeza** will join the team at Indiana University. Football star **Raleigh (Trey) Guice, III** will be a scholar athlete at Davenport University (*Felicitaciones al Dr. Guice*). **Aiden Diaz** signed with the University of Akron, and **Kylan Marshall** will take the field at Heidelberg University.

Michael Bowen was recently elected a partner at Calfee, Halter & Griswold LLP with the firm’s Government

Relations and Legislation practice group, where he advises clients ranging from small, closely held businesses to large public corporations and public entities. **Tenille N. Kaus** is the Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Advancement for The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland. **Jenise M. Snyder, Ph.D.** has been appointed as dean of Arts, Sciences, and Professional Studies at Ursuline College.

Wayne D. Hudson, FBI Academy graduate and former Chief Deputy Sheriff of Douglass County, Nebraska has been appointed as the Chief of Police for the City of Shaker Heights.

Kudos and thanks to **Michael Bertsch**, who retires from his seven-year term on the Shaker Library Board at the end of March. Under his watch, the Library renovated the Main Library. Congratulations to **Tom Cicarella**, who is the new Library Board President.

Winnow your wardrobe. City Ballet of Cleveland is sponsoring a Dress Drive this spring. They are collecting gently used dresses, formal attire, and accessories through March 11 at Cleveland City Dance in Shaker Square. The Dress Sale will be held Monday, April 3 through Friday, May 5 during Cleveland City Dance’s regular business hours: Monday to Friday 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; 4:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.; Saturdays 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Questions? Call: 216.295.2222.

Expand your personal library at the Friends of the Shaker Library’s huge Spring Book Sale from May 3 to May 7 on the Main Library’s second floor. It’s not too soon to plan your summer

reading, and readers will find a variety of good books, including some like-new books to give as gifts.

The Shaker Arts Council (SHAC) announces the return of the In Our Back Yard (IOBY) campaign. For the past six years, they have commissioned artists to “art wrap” unsightly traffic control boxes and you can help. Cuyahoga Arts and Culture will match every donation in support of the project up to \$3,000 and for any contribution of \$50 or more, donors will be given a one-year membership to SHAC.

Brandon Chrostowski, founder and president of EDWINS, has been named a semi-finalist for the prestigious James Beard Foundation’s Restaurant and Chef Award. Never one to rest on his laurels, the dedicated chef is recently back from a trip to Ukraine where he distributed goods and fed those displaced by the war.

On a personal note, I will close the book on my 30-plus year library career to take a step back and enjoy the next chapter in my life. It has been my great pleasure to have served Shaker Library under five different directors and to have had the opportunity to work with so many dedicated staff members. I will forever be a booster and supporter of libraries in general and Shaker Library in particular. I’ll be available for lunch anytime beginning April 1. No fooling!

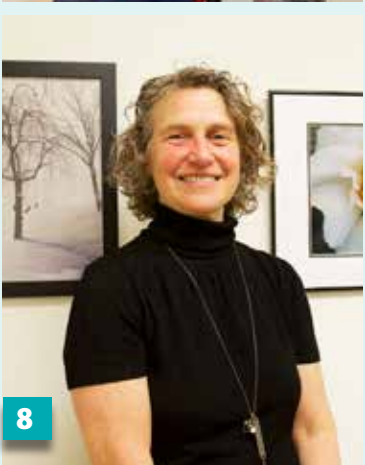
Springtime is the perfect time to stroll the Square and remember to keep your ears open for me.

heardaroundthesquare@gmail.com

Shaker Towers Art Show

Ten Artists in Residence who live in Shaker Towers had their artwork on display at the building’s Clubhouse from January 8-29.

- 1 Ken Harvey and his “Garden Gaze”
- 2 Allen Kirkland and his “Spider Man”
- 3 Rosemarie Paine with her Fairy and woven top
- 4 Sherri Null with “Lily Pads”
- 5 Valda Lewis and her “East Berlin 2015”
- 6 Back Row (left to right) Ken Harvey, Martha Towns, Jo Levine, Kirkland Allen
- Front row (left to right) Norma Storer, Valda Lewis, Rosemarie Paine
- 7 Lou Braman and “Water Buffalo”
- 8 Jo Levine with her Living Statues and macro flower photographs



Community Leaders and Biz Owners Want Shaker Square Arts District

By Grant Segall

The Shaker Square area has a wealth of arts, artists, patrons, and artistic architecture, plus a RTA Rapid line to connect them. It also has an idea gaining momentum: an arts district.

Despite a storm a few minutes beforehand, more than 80 drivers, riders, and pedestrians splashed into Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church on January 19 to talk about forming such a district. Discussions continued in early February at meetings of the Shaker Square Alliance and of Burten, Bell, Carr Development Inc. (BBC), which is developing a Greater Buckeye Plan and co-owns the historic Shaker Square buildings with Cleveland Neighborhood Progress.

As press time drew near, neighborhood leaders said they’d keep bouncing the district proposal off artists, merchants, and others.

The idea’s been around awhile. Ten years ago, a customer gave \$5 in change to owner Susan Rozman at Fiddlehead Gallery to form an arts district. Hearing the story over the years, a few other customers have chipped in. “I now have \$13,” Rozman told the crowd in January. She and other community leaders are trying to speed things up.

At that meeting, some participants called for promoting a wider range of



A Cultural Exchange

activities equally instead of highlighting the arts. But others said that artists tend to lead neighborhood redevelopment. That seems to have been the case in recent decades in Playhouse Square, and the Tremont, Waterloo, and Gordon Square neighborhoods.

“Artists can be the catalyst to revitalize our commercial areas,” said resident Jack Boyle, former mayor of Cleveland Heights.

Other participants said that arts can help a neighborhood stand out. “Do we want to be another Van Aken [District],” asked resident Fran Kalafatis, who helped organize and run the meeting. “No. We want to be unique.”

In an interview later, Charles Bromley, who leads the Shaker Square Alliance, said, “How do you take a very diverse neighborhood with very diverse communities and join them at the hip? This [district] might be the glue.”

The neighborhood hosts Atlas Cinema, Loganberry Books, A Cultural Exchange, Cleveland City Dance, ArtsPlymouth, the ATNSC live-work space on Cromwell Avenue, other cultural institutions, and plenty of outdoor art.

District advocates want to help artists find affordable places to live, create, display, and perform. And the neighborhood has many vacant or underused spaces in a wide range of sizes.

Joy Johnson, who runs BBC, said in February, “We are working to highlight arts and culture as an anchor for the revival of the Buckeye corridor.” She said the district idea was being considered in current work on a Greater Buckeye Plan and imminent work on a plan for the Shaker Square buildings her group co-owns.

Locals have also asked BBC to consider creating a culinary arts district, expanding the work of EDWINS Leadership and Restaurant Institute. Said Johnson, “Everything is on the table. It’s not either/or.”

The term “arts district” has no special status under the law. The state recognizes an “entertainment and arts district” purely for discount liquor licenses. Such districts exist in Playhouse Square and the Waterloo neighborhood on Cleveland’s eastside.

Most arts hubs in Cleveland are not officially arts districts. But Columbus has two official arts districts in Short North and Franklinton, both run by nonprofits.



Fiddlehead Gallery and Eclectic Eccentric are just a few art-centric shops that would be a part of the proposed Shaker Square Arts District.



Johnny Riddle, head of Franklinton’s district, which dates to 2008, said, “It’s been wildly helpful in the growth of the area. Artists are doing something cool, and then other sectors or residents or visitors want to be a part of it.”

The nonprofit Gordon Square Arts District operated from 2007 to 2019, raising about \$30 million for Cleveland Public Theatre, Near West Theater, and the Capitol Theatre. According to founder James Levin, it proved easier to coax state aid for a whole district than for individual arts organizations.

Levin said that Shaker Square arts district “has great potential.” He said the Square “has great access to public transit. It has wonderful spaces that could hold a variety of media.”

Then again, Rozman said at a Shaker Square Alliance meeting in February, “We don’t have to wait for an organization.” She said that locals could start right away to try to boost the Square’s arts.

Burten, Bell, Carr Offers Free Paint for Healthy Homes in Shaker/Buckeye

By Jason Novak

The Buckeye-Shaker neighborhood has roots going back over a hundred years. While the neighborhood’s longevity has allowed it to develop its own history, culture, and sense of place, it also comes with hazards. The lead paint that was once used on some of these older homes and businesses poses a health risk, especially to children.

In 2017, the City of Cleveland announced the Healthy Homes Interdepartmental Initiative. The program seeks to identify homes and businesses that may pose a health risk due to lead and match homeowners and tenants with resources to remedy the issue. In the Shaker/Buckeye neighborhood, Burten, Bell, Carr Development Inc. (BBC) has teamed with the City of Cleveland to offer

free paint to those who are removing lead paint from their home exteriors.

“Basically [we] collect property condition data to assess problems and support tenants and landlords with quality-of-life improvements,” says BBC’s Sharon Spruill, the community engagement specialist and Healthy Homes coordinator for the Buckeye/Shaker area.

Spruill works with tenants and landlords, as well as with neighborhood block clubs and other stakeholders, to determine what needs there are and how to meet them. In her role with Healthy Homes, Spruill and staff assess homes that are being stripped of lead paint and issue free paint to homeowners and landlords while supplies last. Spruill can also help to navigate the application process.

According to Mary Ann Kovach, the president of the Shaker Square Area Development Corporation (SHAD), the program is important to the area. “In older homes, especially with older residents, people sometimes need a little help,” she says. “However, these programs can only help improve the neighborhood if people apply for them.” SHAD has been involved in efforts to raise awareness of the free paint program.

Besides the free paint program, BBC and SHAD are also involved with connecting residents with other resources, including home repair services for seniors, bed bug extermination services, and a program that can assess lead hazards inside the home, such as pipes and interior paint. Applications for the free paint program will be available from April 1 on the BBC website (bbcdevelopment.org). For paper copies of the application, or for other resources, email Sharon Spruill at sspruill@bbcdevelopment.org, or call 216.306.3312. If you would like to volunteer to help spread the word about these programs, contact Mary Ann Kovach at info@shad.org.

Second Phase of Woodhill Choice Breaks Ground

Continued from page 1

Utilities such as underground electrical lines and storm sewers were installed in February. Concrete will be poured for the foundation and additional sewer lines and underground plumbing will be installed throughout March. Masonry work for elevator shafts will also start.

The Buckeye-Woodhill Choice Neighborhood Transformation project came to fruition after the Cleveland Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) received a \$35 million Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant in 2018. After receiving feedback from residents and other stakeholders, the plan went into motion to replace the rundown, antiquated Woodhill Homes that were built in the late 1930s.

In addition to providing modern, livable housing, the development project is expected to generate economic growth in the community.

“Though we are still early in the construction phase of Woodhill Choice initiative, the project is beginning to demonstrate economic impact on businesses and individuals. This project has created significant opportunities for local businesses, and we are hopeful it will continue to gain even more momentum in the days, months, and years ahead,” said Jeffery K. Patterson, chief executive officer for the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority.

“And together with our partners, we are striving to ensure local, low-income individuals benefit from the neighborhood transformation through access to construction skills training and job opportunities associated with this exciting project.” Patterson further noted that as a result, “There are a number of Woodhill residents who are excited about not only access to new units with modern amenities, but also these workforce development opportunities that promote resident empowerment.”

Up the road from the construction site, Shaker Square will also see the impact of this transformational project.

“Shaker Square is only as strong as the neighborhoods surrounding it. A multi-million-dollar investment in the housing and businesses in the Woodhill district will ensure a customer base for businesses locating in the Square,” says Joy Johnson, executive director for Burten, Bell, Carr Development Inc. (BBC)

While plans for Woodhill Choice were completed before BBC’s five-year plan for the Greater Buckeye neighborhood, it was a factor when BBC was setting its long-term vision for the community.

“BBC incorporated the Woodhill Choice Plan into our broader [We Are] Buckeye neighborhood plan because it was created

and approved by residents, government, and community leaders in the Woodhill district. The completion of the Woodhill Choice plan brought us one step closer to a broader community plan,” states Johnson.

There are a total of four phases of the Buckeye-Woodhill Choice Plan, with the final phase completed sometime in 2026. Additional phases will include construction of an on-site

early childhood education center, a new recreational park and a new community center. The first phase of the Buckeye-Woodhill Choice Neighborhood Implementation – Woodhill Station West located at 9511 Buckeye Rd. - began in 2021 and is expected to be complete sometime in 2023. It features 120 total units that include 42 one-bedroom, 62 two-bedroom and 16 three-bedroom apartments. Of the 120 units, 90 will be reserved for existing Woodhill Homes residents, and 30 affordable units will be added for new residents.

The estimated combined cost of Phases 1 and 2 is approximately \$79,830,000.



A rendering of Phase 2 Woodhill Center East located at 11305 Woodland Ave.



Ward 6 Councilman and Council President Blaine Griffin spoke at the ground-breaking.



The groundbreaking of the Buckeye-Woodhill Neighborhood Choice Transformation on Friday, Jan. 27.

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Fourth District Welcomes New Commander

By Thomas Jewell



With a new commander at the helm in Cleveland's Fourth District, plans continue to meld on a police office for Shaker Square. But police have walked back the concept a bit, in terms of logistics and semantics. For now, just the facts, ma'am. And please don't call it a "mini-station."

That was an earlier reference made by the new nonprofit owners of Shaker Square, who announced in January that two adjacent businesses had closed in the southeast quadrant: the Accessories So Necessary shop and Chanelle's Treatz bakery.

In their place, Shaker Square owners Cleveland Neighborhood Progress (CNP), its real estate subsidiary New Village Corp. and Burten Bell Carr Development Inc. (BBC) plan to combine the spaces, creating one larger unit to rent and some space for police patrol officers.

They broached the idea initially with former Fourth District Commander Brandon Kutz, who has since moved downtown to head up Special Projects and Innovation for Cleveland Police Chief Wayne Drummond.

"We tend to shy away from the term 'mini-station,' Kutz said later. "It harkens back to the days when we actually had them in each ward, funded by the city. Probably 20 years ago, they were shuttered and the city has since been resistant to the idea, for some valid reasons."

At the same time, Kutz said that if an organization wanted to open a space for police to use, "for breaks, reports and so on, then we let our officers know that space is available and encourage them to stop in regularly."

Enter **new Fourth District Commander Maurice "Mo" Brown** who said that plan is still a "go," especially after meeting with the Shaker Square ownership team in early February.

"We did discuss further the creation of a space for our officers to utilize during their down time someplace on the Square," Brown said. "They would take advantage of it. So that has taken a step closer to fruition."

"However, there is no plan to have a staffed mini-station or anything of that nature," Brown added. "It will be a BBC space that our officers have access to."

Full staffing of a satellite office is off the table, as it is for just about anything else in the Cleveland Division of Police, which remains "so strapped for people," Brown said after being introduced at the Fourth District Commander's meeting early in the year.

Down by more than 50 officers in the Fourth District - roughly one quarter of a full contingent - Brown told the audience that the law enforcement labor shortage is a city-wide as well as a national problem.

Thirty years ago, Brown graduated from the police academy with 83 officers.

"Our class was so big, they had to split us into four sections," Brown recalled, adding that in terms of district staffing, "if they took 26 percent of your paycheck, would you be happy?"

Cleveland's Fourth District encompasses Buckeye-Shaker, Larchmere, Lee-Harvard, Slavic Village, Mt. Pleasant, Warner-Turney, and Union-Miles neighborhoods.

Meanwhile, Brown and the Shaker Square ownership team have also discussed a safety collaboration with Block by Block services, an offshoot of the Downtown Cleveland Alliance's Ambassador Program.

In addition to its own employees, Block by Block also contracts with off-duty Cleveland police officers.

"And yes, they will be on the [Shaker] Square," Brown added. "I look forward to working with you to help resolve the challenges we are currently facing in the Shaker Square area."

Those challenges include panhandlers, visitors' cars parking around the Square in the evening, as well as some recent afterhours break-ins to businesses, the new owners noted at a recent Shaker Square Alliance meeting.

You name it, Brown has probably dealt with it at some point in his career, most recently serving as Acting Commander of the Bureau

of Special Services. Cleveland born and raised, Brown is a Collinwood High graduate and a Marine Corps veteran participating in Operation Desert Shield/ Desert Storm.

"In that role I was tasked with overseeing the SWAT unit along with all the task force units such as the Northern Ohio Violent Fugitive Task Force and the Gang Impact Unit to name a few," Brown said.

After being introduced by Kutz at the Fourth District Commander's Meeting as "a good man with a lot of experience," Brown said the new assignment came as a bit of a surprise.

"Six months ago, I did not envision this at all," Brown told Fourth District residents. "I thought I was going back to the Homicide Division. But God had other plans."

Meanwhile, Kutz said he will be taking some of the initiatives begun in the Fourth District - the ShotSpotter gunshot detection system, services through the May Dugan Trauma Recovery Center, among others still in the works - and expanding them citywide.

In passing the torch, Kutz thanked the residents of the Fourth District.

"It isn't always easy solving problems," Kutz said. "But at the end of the day, working with you and getting to know the people of the Fourth District made it worthwhile."



The space of the former Accessories So Necessary shop and Chanelle's Treatz bakery will now serve as a space for police officers to write reports and have down time.

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Fiddlehead owner Susan Rozman rehangs the refurbished Larchmere sign, which is located on the northside of Larchmere Boulevard, in front of the BP gas station.



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“Since 1972”

Ashley Stewart Brings Style to Shaker Towne Centre

By Pamela Zoslov

Nikeia Johnson can sum up why she loves working in retail clothing in a single word: “Fashion.”

“I love putting pieces together. Once I put the pieces together, [customers] are like, “I want that whole outfit!” says the vivacious Johnson, who has worked in retail for 23 years, starting her career at a now-closed Kmart on Broadway Avenue.

Now she is a sales manager of the recently opened Ashley Stewart women’s clothing store at Shaker Towne Centre. The store, relocated last December from the Lee-Harvard Plaza, offers plus-size fashion, with a particular focus on African American women.

The Ashley Stewart chain, based in Secaucus, New Jersey, and named after style inspirations Laura Ashley and Martha Stewart, has 89 stores across 22 states, offering clothing ranging from casual wear to dresses and shoes. Sizes range from 10 to 26, with larger sizes available on the Ashley Stewart website. Other Northeast Ohio locations are at Severance Town Center and Southgate Shopping Center.

Inside the store, located a few doors down from Heinen’s, racks and mannequins beckon with bold, brightly colored blouses, dresses, activewear, accessories and other stylish wares. Not very long ago, larger women were offered a narrow range of muted styles. “It

used to be just flowers and stripes,” Johnson remarks. Now the trend is toward size inclusivity, part of a growing industry recognition that women with curvier figures want and deserve the same chic fashions as everyone else. Today there are plus-sized supermodels, all with avid Instagram followings, among them Jessica Leahy, Precious Lee, Tess Holliday and Ashley Graham, who broke barriers by appearing four times on the cover of the Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue.

The new store was welcomed to Shaker Heights at a December 10 grand opening event, with Mayor David Weiss doing the ribbon-cutting honors. The event included a dance contest, sweet treats, a trivia competition with gift card prizes and a donation on behalf of Ashley Stewart to Dress for Success Cleveland, which provides support for women seeking financial independence.

Ashley Stewart customers look forward to events like “Diva Dollars Days,” a promotion in which shoppers who spend \$50 or more receive a coupon for \$25 off a future purchase. Personal styling is also available by appointment; the fashion experts at Ashley Stewart will



Ashley Stewart sales manager Nikeia Johnson (right), with assistant managers Charnell Maxwell (left) and Mary Smith (center).

assemble clothing in your size and personally create a special look for you.

Johnson says business has been great. “The customers love the new location. When they come in here, they’re happy because they can find their size.” She heads a staff of ten, working alongside assistant managers Charnell Maxwell and Mary Smith. “I have a very good team. We’re friendly, and we give the customers what they want and need. I believe in good customer service.”

Customers are drawn to Johnson’s warmth and charm. “My sister,” she relates, “says ‘People come in there and tell you their whole life story!’ Yes, they do,” she says with a smile.

Ashley Stewart, Shaker Towne Centre, 16675 Chagrin Blvd., Shaker Heights, 216.752.9424

Take a Tour of Cleveland’s Civil Rights Trail

Want to learn more about Cleveland’s role in the Civil Rights Movement? Start at the Ludlow Community Association marker (on the median strip at Hampton and Corby Roads), which is a part of the African American Civil Rights Trail. Dedicated in the fall of 2023, Ludlow is one of seven stops on the Trail, which was spearheaded by the Cleveland Restoration Society. The other historic points on the trail include: Cory United Methodist Church, Carl Stokes/Cleveland City Hall, Glenville High School, Olivet Institutional Baptist Church, Hough Uprising and Greater Abyssinia Baptist Church. *More information at civilrightstrail.com.*



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Brandon Chrostowski Helps Ukrainian Refugees

In early February, Brandon Chrostowski, President and CEO of EDWINS Restaurant & Leadership Institute, traveled for the second time to war-torn Ukraine to lend his culinary skills. He first went to Lviv to work with Ukrainian chef Ievgen Klopotenko. The chefs prepared traditional Ukrainian meals together and fed nearly 300 men and women who have been displaced from the war and live in temporary housing nearby. He also traveled to Burtyn to meet other chefs and volunteers who prepared meals daily for wounded soldiers. Additionally, he delivered supplies, including seeds, to the small village outside of Kyiv. There will be enough seeds to feed the 700 villagers through summer.



Brandon with Ukrainian chef Ievgen Klopotenko. Both chefs came together to prepare meals and feed those displaced by the war.



Chrostowski poses with a school teacher from the village Burtyn.



Seedlings were delivered to villagers in Burtyn.



Morelands Group, City Call Out Slum Landlords

Continued from page 1



Kristen Romito

Residents at The Residences at Shaker Square (12701 Shaker Blvd.) have been living in deplorable conditions such as no heat and leaky water pipes, which have caused significant water damage.

There may be other means to do that.

“If there is any way possible to put these buildings into receivership, I want that to happen,” Griffin added. “And I hope the judge makes one of these owners actually live in the conditions they’ve created and then see how urgent of a matter it is.”

Meanwhile, The Morelands Group continues to meet at 9:15 a.m. on the first and third Tuesdays of each month at Edwin’s Bakery, 13106 Buckeye Rd.

“We’re really focusing on the apartments around Shaker Square, continued tenant engagement and building code compliance,” Weingart said at a recent Shaker Square Alliance meeting. “And we’re very interested in the new legislation that’s coming from Cleveland City Council. It sounds like some changes are on the way, and it’s beautiful to see it coming together.”

The city may also be able to make necessary repairs to a property and then place a lien on it.

Morelands Group member Fran Kalafatis would like to see some changes in Ohio law as well. Although tenants living in deplorable conditions are encouraged to put their rent into an escrow account, she learned that “state law prevents residents from escrowing their money electronically, so that electronic transfers of funds are not allowed.”

In the pursuit of further “building owner engagement,” Weingart said team member Sarah Wean compiled a list of all property owners in the Morelands Group area, which includes parts of both Shaker Heights and Cleveland.

The Morelands Group is also working with the Shaker Heights City Schools, whose district includes some of the Cleveland neighborhoods on and around Shaker Square, to assist families with children who need decent housing, including heat and water.

Shaker Square Alliance Director Charles “Chip” Bromley and former Cuyahoga County commissioner and Ohio state representative Mary Boyle also plan to revive the Cleveland Tenants Organization (“CTO2”), working with lawyers and Legal Aid to step in when needed.

“We want to get that back off the ground, in light of the painful circumstances that some tenants are living in,” Boyle said, “to continue the fight for equity for all people in all forms of safe and secure housing.”



Chrostowski captured images from the war.



Brandon poses with a man who lost his brother at night on the frontline. He collects remnants of Russian bomb shells and welds them into maps of Ukraine. His goal is to sell the artwork to raise money to buy night vision goggles for soldiers.

Up and Down the Boulevard

Larchmere and longtime shop owner Liz Tekus get a star turn on national TV.



By Barbara Mooney

Liz Tekus has a lot of patience, which serves her well in knitting and in her 38-years of running the yarn and knitting supply shop, **Fine Points Inc.** (12602 Larchmere Blvd., 216.229.6644). Her patience paid off big-time in her quest to be featured on “The Late Show with Stephen Colbert,” and the dividends from her star turn – which included an on-air shout-out to Larchmere Boulevard - are still paying off.



“They call the segment of the show “Colbert Small Biz Bump,” but it really gave me a shove,” said Ms. Tekus, who’s still basking in the glow from the comedy segment that aired Nov. 23. “It took me a month to fill all the orders that poured in, and it’s still going on. We have at least 100 new Instagram followers. It was like hitting the jackpot. It’s like I’m an overnight success – after 38 years.”

Ms. Tekus submitted her video-taped entry to be on “The Late Show” more than two years earlier, with the help of her professional videographer son, Jay. She finally heard just in early November that she was picked by the show, but she couldn’t tell anyone until after it was aired.

The segment, which is a spoof of the “NCIS” shows, features Fine Points and Ms. Tekus as the supplier to the “crochet killer.” The segment also features the cast of “NCIS: Los Angeles” and comedian/game show host Drew Carey, who plays the mayor of Cleveland. A sign at the end of the segment credits “Fine Points on Larchmere Blvd.” The show is available to view on YouTube.

It was a fun experience, Ms. Tekus said. “I was a theater major so I was immune to getting too nervous. I loved it.” Along with the fantastic business bump, Ms. Tekus proudly displays her plaque from the show on her shop’s wall.

More TV Fame

Fine Points wasn’t the only recent Larchmere TV celebrity. The Fox 8 morning show’s “New Day Cleveland” host David Moss interviewed Harriett Logan, owner of **Loganberry Books** (13015 Larchmere), who gave viewers a full tour of the store in a five-minute-plus segment that aired Jan. 25. And **Busy Boss Bakery** (12732 Larchmere, 216.417.8626) also got a recent visit from the “Moss Man.”

Save the Dates

Larchmere’s Annual Memorial Day weekend **Sidewalk Sale**, the annual **Larchmere Community Association Plant Sale** and the **Larchmere PorchFest** are each on the calendar and being prepped to happen this spring and early summer.

The 24th annual **LCA Plant Sale** is scheduled for Mother’s Day weekend (May 13-14). Flats, potted plants and hanging flower pots will be for sale. Pre-order forms and pickup information will be available at larchmereplantsale@ameritech.net and posted at Larchmere shops at least a month before the sale. Two weekends later, the Memorial Day **Sidewalk Sale**, May 27-28, will usher in what promises to be a busy summer season of street-wide events. Stores will invite outside vendors to join them in setting up stands and booths along the street.

Organizers of the biggest street event of the year, **Larchmere PorchFest**, have spread the word and made signs announcing that it will happen Saturday, June 24. They rely on volunteers to help mount the free, daylong celebration of music, with venues at dozens of sites along the boulevard, and with food and family fun. The website to go to for information on helping out is: <https://linktr.ee/larchmereporchfest>.

Browsing a New Shop

Larchmere has a new shop to join its lineup of personal care salons. **Aruba Brows** (12609 Larchmere, 440.321.3255) has two chairs for eyebrow threading and also sells CBD products, jewelry and repairs watches.

Convenient Vegan Blossoms

Another new neighbor on Larchmere, **Convenient Vegan** (12210 Larchmere, 216.395.9601), is blossoming since its opening last fall in the spot where SomethinGood To Eat had been. Its hours are now Monday, Thursday and Friday, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday, 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., and Sunday noon to 3 p.m. Its plant-based menu includes salads, sandwiches and wraps that come with sides, such as garlic parmesan fries and vegan mac & cheese. It also has soups you couldn’t find elsewhere, like orange lentil dumpling.

New Name

Mikros on Larchmere micro-suite apartment complex that opened a year ago has been rebranded. It now goes by **Delilah Lofts** (12607 Larchmere, 216.200.6755, thedelilahlofts.com).

Loganberry Books Clubbing

Loganberry Books (13015 Larchmere, 216.795.9800) is adding two more book clubs to its calendar. It already has clubs for book lovers who want to read and discuss booksellers’ recommendations (“Berry Good Books”) and one for young readers. March 16 is the first meeting of the “Queer Book Club” for those interested in LGBTQ topics. “Light from Uncommon Stars,” a novel by Ryka Aoki, will be discussed. The Queer Book Club will alternate months with “For the Thrill of Lit,” a book club focused on thriller/horror/mystery genres. The book club’s first meeting is the third Thursday in April. Both clubs will be held in-store and over Zoom.

Loganberry invites anyone who has their own book club to get in touch with the store if they want to find more readers, or borrow some space, or receive group (10 books or more) discounts.

Fire Works Spreads Out

Larchmere Fire Works (12406 Larchmere, 216.246.4716) has taken its show on the road. With its mobile unit, it took its glassblowing and blacksmithing classes down to Coventry Village in Cleveland Heights last year. Now it’s holding weekend classes at the Goldhorn Brewery, 1361 East 55th Street. LFW is also selling its metalworking and glass-blown items at its neighbor **Lotus Candles** (12617 Larchmere, 216.225.1701).

Spring Crafting at Fiddlehead

With the spring comes a fresh lineup of crafting classes at **Fiddlehead Gallery** (12736 Larchmere, 216.231.9400). Owner Susan Rozman said the first-Friday classes will start in March, from 5 to 8 p.m., where a featured artist will teach about a specific craft, such as jewelry making or crafting with upcycled materials, like flower arrangements made from recycled plastics. A nominal \$5 fee will be charged.

Scorpacciata Italian on the Menu

Rumors about **Scorpacciata Italian Restaurant** coming to the building long occupied by **Larchmere Tavern** apparently are true. The building that anchors the Larchmere District’s northeast corner (13051 Larchmere Blvd.), that’s been empty for two years, this summer will be reopened by the owner of Scorpacciata Pasta Co. and Scorpacciata Pizza, which are both in Market Hall of Shaker Heights’s Van Aken District. The entire operation will relocate to Larchmere, according to a recent report in *Scene* newspaper. Owner Peter Reuter plans to have a complete menu that goes beyond pizza and pasta, as well as cocktails and a wine list. He anticipates seating for 75 and a 12-seat bar. His vision is to also have a wood-fired a pasta room on display and a pizza oven. He also plans to overhaul the front patio, perhaps adding garage-type doors. *Scene* reports that the opening will be in July.



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