



Larchmere Holiday Stroll

Friday, Nov. 24, & Saturday, Nov. 25

Looking for the perfect holiday gift? Start your search with a stroll down Larchmere, whose merchants are preparing special themed activities. Some stores will also be open Sunday. New this year are handcrafted holiday trees that will light up the dark winter months. The lights will be on from 5 p.m. to midnight all winter, perfect for viewing after dinner at a local fine restaurant. *See our Holiday Gift Guide on Page 7 for ideas.*

Small Business Saturday

Saturday, Nov. 25

Support your local shops with this annual event that began in Boston in 2010 as a sensible antidote to the frenzy of Black Friday.



Season's Greetings from Shaker Square

Sunday, Dec. 17, 2 to 6 p.m.

Get your picture taken with Santa Claus, construct a gingerbread house, and take a horse-drawn cart ride around the Square at this festive holiday event. Merchants will host open houses, and you can enjoy live music and other holly jolly entertainment, including RTA's decked-out Holiday Trolley. Activities will be spread around Shaker Square (but not on the south lawn).

North Union Farmers Market

Winter Hours, Saturdays, 9 a.m. to noon



It's cold outside. So after Dec. 16, the weekly market is taking a holiday break from its

outdoor Shaker Square home. Then the market moves inside from Jan. 6 to March 30. You'll find two dozen vendors at Van Aken Market Hall, 3441 Tuttle Road, Shaker Heights. It returns to the Square on April 6.

Burten Bell Carr

Focus sharpens on the future of Shaker Square

By Thomas Jewell

With the rescue mission accomplished and the stabilization phase underway, Shaker Square's nonprofit ownership can now look toward a "blueprint for the future" of the historic community cornerstone on Cleveland's East Side.

To that end, the partnership of Burten, Bell, Carr Development Inc. (BBC) and Cleveland Neighborhood Progress (CNP) has launched a plan for strategic leasing, continued capital improvements and public engagement in a shared visioning process.

During a fall kickoff "Support the Square" reception hosted at Edwins Too restaurant Sept. 28, leaders from the two organizations provided an update showcasing the tangible progress already made as well as the next steps forward.

"It started with intervening where the private market was unable to," BBC Executive Director Joy Johnson said. "When it became evident that Shaker Square was on its way into foreclosure, our first goal was ensuring that it would not go to sheriff's sale where it could be purchased by out-of-town interests."

"We really would not be here today," CNP President and CEO Tania Menesse said, "without the financial support from the city of Cleveland that helped us craft the [\$12 million] deal that kept Shaker Square out of foreclosure and in local hands."

From there, the "stabilization" phase commenced, with more than \$5

million already raised from Cuyahoga County, both the Gund and Cleveland foundations and other sources, going in large part toward tackling "long-deferred maintenance" around the commercial and residential hub built in 1929.

See Focus sharpens on future of Shaker Square, page 9

A first decade of second chances



Photo by Chris Ball

Newly minted EDWINS graduates serve up a special dinner Sept. 29 as the French restaurant on Shaker Square marks its 10th anniversary.

See story on Page 3.

Shaker Square

Safety measures coming to boost foot traffic

By Thomas Jewell

In taking "short-term" ownership of Shaker Square, the goal of the local nonprofits remains to eventually turn it over to a private entity or individual with the same kind of commitment to community.

For the interim, Burten, Bell, Carr Development Inc. (BBC) and Cleveland Neighborhood Progress (CNP) will continue work to re-establish the Square as a destination for shoppers, diners, residents, families and commuters.

That effort will require the right commercial and retail mix that supports current tenants and attracts new ones, along with a shared community vision for a vibrant future coming out of court-

appointed receivership and a pandemic.

"But everything will be for naught if people don't feel safe," BBC Executive Director Joy Johnson said at a "Reception Supporting the Future of Shaker Square" held at Edwins Too on Sept. 28. "And at the end of the day, nothing will improve safety more than foot traffic at all hours of the day and night."

With that in mind, the long-deferred capital improvements include "vastly improved lighting – around the Square, in the parking lots and also in the alleys," Johnson said.

In another vacancy to be filled, two small shops in the southeast quadrant – behind Edwins Too – will be converted to flexible office space where Cleveland police

officers can stop in while on patrol.

About 20 police officers from Cleveland and Shaker Heights – including new Chief Wayne Hudson – met recently to discuss patrols, said BBC Director of Community Relations and Internal Operations Tiffany Allen-White at an Oct. 5 Shaker Square Alliance meeting.

Along with Cleveland Fourth District Police Commander Maurice "Mo" Brown, "they figured out a way to make radio communications work between Cleveland and Shaker police," Allen-White said.

Although Shaker Square is part of the city of Cleveland, Hudson and Shaker Heights Mayor David Weiss are working on a cooperative agreement known as a "memorandum of understanding" among Shaker, Cleveland and RTA police to better coordinate responses.

"But everything will be for naught if people don't feel safe."

– BBC Executive Director Joy Johnson

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In Memoriam



Christine Branche (Cris)

Christine Branche (Cris)

The Ludlow community lost one of its stellar pioneers with the passing of **Christine “Cris” Fears Branche** on July 10 at the age of 95. Cris was born in Arkansas and moved to Cleveland at the age of six. The first in her family to attend college, she earned a bachelor’s degree in early childhood education and master’s degree in education administration at Flora Stone Mather College of Case Western Reserve University. After years of teaching kindergarten in the Cleveland public schools, Cris became its Director of Early Education and inaugurated the city’s Head Start program. She and her husband, Walter, were the first African-American family on Albion Road in the Ludlow neighborhood of Cleveland. They were active in the Ludlow Community Association and its mission to maintain a diverse community. She was active in many other organizations, including the Alzheimer’s Association, the LINKS, Alpha Kappa Sorority and Trinity Cathedral. Cris is survived by sons Chip (JoAnn) and Chris (Karol), four grandchildren and one great-granddaughter. Her leadership and sparkling personality will be missed by the many people whose lives she touched.



Katherine McWilliams (Kathie)

Katherine McWilliams (Kathie)

Katherine Arden Ryan McWilliams was a force for change. Her passing Aug. 14 at the age of 94 was felt deeply across Shaker Heights’ Boulevard neighborhood, where her passion for education and justice are well-known. Born in Cleveland, she graduated from West High School and went on to Otterbein College, earning a BA in English in 1950. She began her career as a teacher in the Berea school district. In 1957, she married her husband of 53 years, Robert “Mack” McWilliams. Kathie served as Director of the Family Life Adult Education Program for Cleveland public schools until retiring in 1994. In Shaker Heights, she served on the Human Relations Commission, the Community Services Board, the Recreation Board, and the School Board for eight years, including two years as its President. Active with Heights Christian Church, she helped found its Peace and Justice Committee. Her work for integration was recognized in 1994 when Shaker Heights awarded her the Martin Luther King Jr. Award for Human Relations. She is survived by children Scott (wife Tess), Doug (wife Jani) and Ellen (wife Wendy); seven grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

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Chef Chrostowski celebrates a first decade of second chances

By Chris Ball

When EDWINS began operations a decade ago, restaurateur Brandon Chrostowski wasn't sure how long he could keep the lights on.

"On Nov. 1, 2013, we opened these doors," Chrostowski told supporters Oct. 7. "We only had enough capital to go two weeks. Fortunately, we made it longer. But it was a close call. Nonetheless, we're here and celebrating."

Those joining him were enjoying a monthlong series of multicourse dinners marking the 10-year anniversary of EDWINS Leadership and Restaurant Institute in Shaker Square. At meals honoring new graduates and old kitchen colleagues, longtime patrons reflected on Chrostowski's journey and the importance of his social justice mission.

Sept. 29: Bon Voyage EDWINS Graduate Dinner

Imagine being invited to a graduation dinner upon completing a grueling training program. Except you must plan the menu, cook the dishes and serve them. EDWIN's 11 newest graduates wouldn't have it any other way. This was a chance to show their stuff.

The six-month boot camp is fast paced, said William Martin, one of the 11 grads. "It's for people who really want it. If you aren't all the way, 100% into it, it can become a lot for you. You learn a lot in a small period of time."

"This is a great opportunity for him to learn, to perfect his craft, and to have the exposure that he needs locally," said his mother, Barbara McGhee.

She's seen this coming for years. One day, when her son was 6 or 7, she got



Photos by Chris Ball

William Martin is one of 11 new graduates this fall at EDWINS' culinary training program. "We're all going for this common goal, to get this food out on time and to make sure it looks great," he said.

"I feel Brandon has earned the right to be heard. He has 10 years of demonstrated success."

- Deborah Hull, Pepper Pike

home from work. "William and his older sister were in the kitchen. They had prepared a full dinner plus dessert. He carved a pineapple. He had beautiful presentation. He showed great skills. I was shocked and amazed because they used my good china. I said, 'This had better be good, because you have my china out.'"

The menu featured pork chops, rice, green beans and chocolate fudge nut brownie garnished with powdered sugar. "The meal was really great," she said.

"My mom was like, 'Oh my god, you're going to be a chef, this is amazing.' And it took off from there," said Martin, 34.

Fast forward to the Graduate Dinner. As McGhee savored courses such as *Carroway Crusted Corned Filet Mignon with Swiss Cheese au Gratin Potatoes & Yellow Mustard Jus*, she heaped praise on EDWINS' founder.

"Brandon has a heart, and his passion for helping people is amazing. He's doing for a lot of people things that would cost thousands of dollars. He's opened opportunities for people to get skilled in their craft, to be exposed to service, the front of the house, the back of the house. And it doesn't cost them anything but their commitment. No tuition. Qualify, get in and then perform. He's looking for people that really have a hunger and a thirst for this industry. And it's an open door for people who would not have been able to go to school."



Chef Brandon Chrostowski, center, and EDWINS staff welcome guests at a special dinner Oct. 7 marking the 10th anniversary of the French restaurant on Shaker Square.

Oct. 7: Chanterelle in the City

Fifteen years ago, Chrostowski knew his way around kitchens but not dining rooms. So, he sought out Karen Waltuck, chef and co-owner of famed New York City restaurant Chanterelle in the City.

"He knocked on the door out of the blue and said, 'I would like you to let me work in the dining room for two years, I want to learn the dining room,'" she said. "He ended up as my assistant manager and was so present and so caring and skilled and hungry. He learned about wine. He made wine in the basement. There was something about him."

Karen, her husband chef David Waltuck, and master sommelier Roger Dagorn came to Cleveland to check in on Chrostowski, tour the EDWINS campus ("It's just unbelievable, fantastic," she said), and cook a special dinner with courses such as *Butternut Squash Ravioli with Oxtail Ragout and Bay Leaf Cream*.

"I remember him as a very serious young man" with a unique plan, David Waltuck said. "I thought it was a great idea, because restaurants are a perfect place for this whole second chances thing. Nobody really cares in a restaurant what you did before. You're as good as your work that particular day. ... Just show up on time and pull your weight. So, it's a really great place for somebody who has to move beyond whatever their past was, to restart their life."

"He was quiet, shy, studious, hardworking," Dagorn said. "He was impressive. We knew he wanted to open a restaurant for a special cause. You don't find many people like that in New York. ... He was just watching closely everything, everybody. Wanting to learn inside and out, kitchen, dining room, wine."

Working with Dagorn was a precious time, Chrostowski said. "I never took a day for granted when I worked with him. Never. I woke up every day trying to absorb as much as I could. ... It was a very full education, from the ground up."

His mentors' visit meant a lot to Chrostowski. "This is like a throwback to early in my career. This team had a tremendous influence on me. Really, EDWINS is not possible without that kind of mentorship. So having them together here in Cleveland, in our home, is very special."

EDWINS' cause gets overlooked, said Shaker Square resident Nancy Lin. "There aren't a lot of institutions out there that

are even trying to help the formerly incarcerated," she said. "It's so important, and I love that EDWINS has such a presence in the city, because it highlights the importance of this issue that a lot of people never think about."

Kalyn Hanselman-Myers often drives up from Akron to support EDWINS. "There's something unique about what he's doing here, to give people a second chance, which is something I'm very passionate about," she said. "And it's how he runs the program. Everyone has a clean slate coming here. No one knows their story. No judgment. They're given training in every aspect of hospitality."



Mona Sang, executive chef of Khmai Fine Dining in Chicago, prepares Cambodian cuisine for a special meal Oct. 15 at EDWINS, as her mother, Sarom Sang, observes from the back.

Oct. 15: Cambodia Culture and Cuisine

For the series' third event, Chrostowski brought in fellow James Beard Award nominee Mona Sang. She is executive chef of Khmai Fine Dining, Chicago's first authentic Cambodian restaurant.

"Mona is not a chef, she's an artist," Chrostowski told guests. "And this cuisine, I knew nothing about." He described being mesmerized by one of the evening's dishes: *Trei Amok*, or *salmon braised in coconut curry wrapped in banana leaves with crispy lime leaves, roasted guajillo and dragon fruit rice*.

Eat well. Do good. That's Chrostowski's motto.

"He's a man who knows what he's about," said Pepper Pike resident Deborah Hull. "He's very articulate about his mission. I feel Brandon has earned the right to be heard. He has 10 years of demonstrated success. He's set out to do something, and with each step, he's been able to make it happen."

Mary Greathouse of Sagamore Hills agreed. "He's giving back so selflessly. He had a mission to help a certain group of people and saw all these other problems that were in the way of completing his mission, so he started to, one by one, remove those obstacles. Housing, childcare, education. ... He's solving major problems. So, I'm really impressed."



Chef David Waltuck autographs three copies of his new cookbook for an EDWINS charity auction.

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Heard Around the Square

By Margaret Simon

Onaway School is celebrating its 100th anniversary of reading, writing, and arithmetic. The centennial celebration began Oct. 27 with tours of the building, a former Principal meet and greet, alumni visitors, displays of old photos, articles, memorabilia, and more. Other events commemorating this milestone are planned throughout the school year, including the 100th day of school celebration, creation of a time capsule, and planting a tree.

Henry Ward Beecher may have said, “A little library, growing larger every year, is an honorable part of a man’s history,” but I say, “Hip Hip Hooray that **Bertram Woods Branch** has reopened.” Hours are 1 to 9 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays, and 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. Thank you to the library staff and the Library Board and its President **Tom Cicarella**. Let the wild book borrowing begin.

Eight inductees into the Shaker Heights High School Hall of Fame were honored at a dinner and induction ceremony Nov. 4 at the Cleveland Skating Club. **The Honorable Ellen Rippner Cohen**, Class of 1958, CEO of the Houston chapter of the American Jewish Committee and past CEO of the Houston Area Women’s Center who served in the Texas House of Representatives and as Houston’s Mayor pro tempore; **Kevin Clayton**, Class of 1977, Senior Vice President, Head of Social Impact and Equity, for the Rock Entertainment Group; the late **Aisha Fraser**, Class of 1991, 15-year educator at Woodbury Elementary School; **James A. Goldsmith**, Class of 1973, Partner and Co-Group Leader of Ulmer & Berne’s Trusts & Estates Group; **Heather Hanson**, Class of 1995, infectious disease epidemiologist; **Michael Jeans**, Class of 1992, founding President and CEO of Growth Opportunity Partners (Growth Opps); **Russell Stokes**, Class of 1989, President and CEO of Commercial Engines and Services at GE Aerospace; and **Ellen McWilliams-Woods**, Ph.D., Class of 1980, president of Illumine Integrated Solutions LLC.

Geraldine Brooks, who won the 2023 Cleveland Foundation’s Anisfield-

Wolf Book Award for fiction for her novel **Horse**, told a packed house at the Maltz Performing Arts Center on Sept. 28 that after she took a job in 1983 as a reporter in the Wall Street Journal’s former Cleveland bureau office, she moved into a nice apartment on Shaker Square. While moving in, the Australian native noticed a shovel by the front door. She asked what it was for and was told, “You’ll see.” Sno’ better place than Shaker Square, I guess.



Bravo to Braverman!

The Ohio chapter of the American Planning Association awarded its President’s Award to **Joyce Braverman**, Planning Director for the city of Shaker Heights, “in recognition of her exceptional contributions to the field of planning.” Braverman has been with Shaker Heights for more than three decades, guiding significant projects and securing millions of dollars in grant funding. She joined the association in 1980, serving as president from 1998 to 2000. Her legacy in the association’s leadership has shaped the organization and region.



Congratulations to Shaker Girls Cross Country and Field Hockey teams as they continue their journeys to Columbus for OHSA Championships. And high sticks to **Sarah Abbott Brown**, who has started a Shaker girls hockey team. Who said boys should have all the fun? The energetic sports enthusiast took a short break after her efforts for the VeloSano Bike to Cure before she began recruiting for her roster of babes on blades. “*It’ll be like you have ESPN or something.*”

Get your tickets for Shaker Heights High School’s production of the musical **Mean Girls**, scheduled for Nov. 16, 17 and 18. The show features music by Jeff Richmond, lyrics by Nell Benjamin, book by Tina Fey, and Shaker High’s talented performers. It’s based on the hit film of the same name scripted by Fey, which in turn is based on the book *Queen Bees and Wannabes* by Rosalind Wiseman.

While Shaker Heights High School has enjoyed Friday Night Lights, its

Friday Morning Lights on NBC’s Today Show and the WKYC Channel 3 morning show shed light on Shaker when the marching band, Raiderettes, and cheerleaders performed. The segments also featured interviews with superintendent **David Glasner**, band director **Jason Clemens**, and football coach **Alex Nicholson**, as well as a special feature on the Stay in the Game! program and attendance initiative. If you missed the coverage, you can watch it here: tinyurl.com/8w7686mp.

Members of the **African American Quilt and Doll Guild** will display a dozen fiber art quilts on a variety of subjects, including Kwanzaa, at Shaker Library through Dec. 22. The guild’s 75 members hail from Northeast Ohio and display their art throughout the community. Some of their quilts have traveled the world and found their way into museums, including the Smithsonian. The quilters use their pieces to express powerful ideas about political movements and events like the Underground Railroad, Juneteenth, and Black Lives Matter. “We use quilts to tell our history and our stories, from our perspective,” said guild member **Gloria Kellon**. “I hope the exhibit will encourage young people to get into quilting.” To learn more about the guild, visit aaqdg.org.



Sheri Lawrence held her first solo art show at Lakewood’s The Edge, an Artisan Fair, which displayed her prints and originals inspired by the beauty of nature. The talented artist has also sold her wares at The Van Aken District, and you will find her work at local holiday fairs.

Chefs Brandon Chrostowski and Doug Katz dished on their forays into the food industry for Shaker Middle School students. How about serving up a program for adults?

During the COVID-19 pandemic, **Nancy Schwartz-Katz** began drawing every day in her sketchbooks. She is also known for her intricate papercut works, which will be on display alongside her drawings through Feb. 4 at the Shaker Historical Museum, 16740 South Park

Blvd. The exhibit is called *Musings: Drawings from the ‘Great Pause.’* Additionally, the Historical Society will partner with her to lead a papercutting workshop from 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 19, at The Dealership, 3558 Lee Road. Tickets are \$30 per person for society members, \$35 for nonmembers, and include all supplies to create a papercutting work of art. The exhibit and workshop are made possible by state tax dollars allocated by the Ohio legislature to the Ohio Arts Council.

Point/Counterpoint with two Shaker authors. In his new book **JFK, Oswald, and Ruby: Politics, Prejudice, and Truth**, former Warren Commission assistant counsel **Judge Burt Griffin** shares what he has learned about the 1963 assassinations of President Kennedy and Lee Harvey Oswald while serving on the commission’s staff and studying the evidence. Paul Landis was a 28-year-old Secret Service agent in President Kennedy’s Dallas motorcade on Nov. 22, 1963, and has written **The Final Witness: A Kennedy Secret Service Agent Breaks His Silence After Sixty Years.**

Warm up someone’s winter! Give thanks if you are warm and cozy in your coats. If you have some extras or have outgrown your gently used outerwear, bring them to the Shaker High School North Gym from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 19. Then work up your appetite and sign on for the annual turkeytrotcleveland.com.

Ho Ho Holiday Fun. Plymouth Church volunteers are getting ready for the Sugar Plum Workshop on Saturday, Dec. 2, in the church basement. Generous volunteers help children make gifts for their families and quietly demonstrate what gift giving is really about. (Well, maybe not quietly. There have been hammers and nails.)

The **Larchmere Holiday Stroll** has been a Cleveland tradition for more than 50 years. Stroll the Boulevard this Nov. 24, 25, and 26 to find one-of-a-kind gifts for giving. Start at the Square and stroll and keep your ears open for me. Better yet, visit shakersquare.com to learn about the new ownership, current management, and the future of this historic area.

Email news items to heardaroundthesquare@gmail.com



Garlic lovers packed the Cleveland Garlic Festival in Shaker Square on Aug. 26 and 27. Attendance topped that of 2022, organizers said. The longest lines were at stands for garlic fries, donuts, pierogies and ice cream. Next year’s event will be Aug. 24 and 25.

Dream Town looks at Shaker Heights’ history of racial equity efforts

By Pamela Zoslov



A standing-room crowd at the Shaker Heights Main Library on Aug. 26 welcomed **Laura Meckler**, Shaker native and national education reporter for the Washington Post, for a talk about her new book, *Dream Town: Shaker Heights and the Quest for Racial Equity*.

The book, which addresses the successes and struggles of Shaker Heights to achieve racial equality, grew out of reporting Meckler did for the Post on racial issues at Shaker High. Meckler examines the so-called “achievement gap”: Despite efforts to achieve racial equity, Shaker’s schools have seen significant disparities in academic outcomes between white and black students.

Dream Town (Penguin Random House) delves deeply into the history of Shaker Heights, from its origins as the Shakers’ religious settlement in the 19th century through its development as an ideal elite suburb by the Van Sweringen brothers, through its coming to terms with racism, including discrimination codified into restrictive real estate covenants designed to exclude minorities. In the 1970s, the Ludlow Community Association came

together to devise strategies to integrate Shaker.

Fifty years later, the community is proud of its diversity, but Meckler’s book describes how success has been uneven, particularly in the schools. One illustration is the practice of academic “tracking.” Meckler explained: “For many years, the upper-level courses have been dominated by white students and the regular and lower-level classes disproportionately filled with black students. This is the result of multiple, complex factors, and it has had a pernicious effect on everyone involved. Shaker has tried a lot of things to address the achievement gap, and none has made much of a difference in the overall trends.”

An initiative called “de-tracking” — mixing students of varying ability levels in the same classrooms — is being tried, Meckler said. “I think the jury is still out as to whether it will succeed.”

Meckler described her own rigorous Shaker education, which prepared her well for college and career. “We had three-hour final exams and significant homework. I took a lot of advanced

classes, and the other students were smart and accomplished. It was a competitive atmosphere, with everyone knowing who was thriving and where they got into college. By the time I got to college, I had already written long papers so was ready for those sort of assignments.”

Stories of people — students, teachers, parents — anchor each chapter of the meticulously researched book. Meckler writes about a black student named Emily who was placed in a regular history class but quickly realized she belonged in advanced placement. Emily eventually graduated with honors from Yale, but Meckler wonders why she wasn’t placed in AP classes to begin with. Emily was also discouraged by a school counselor from applying to Yale. The story illustrates how race-based assumptions affect students’ ability to succeed.

On the positive side, Meckler points to programs the schools have initiated to address the needs of minority students: a Student Group on Race Relations; MAC Scholars, for young black men; a tutoring center; and a Family Community and Engagement Center, which helps with issues faced by families struggling financially.

“People have told me that the stories resonate with them.”
- Laura Meckler

Reviewers have praised *Dream Town*, and Meckler has received positive feedback from Shaker residents. “People have told me that the stories resonate with them,” she said, “and that the overall history and narrative has helped them understand their community in a new way.”

“Needless to say, that has been very gratifying.”
Dream Town is available at Loganberry Books among other locations.

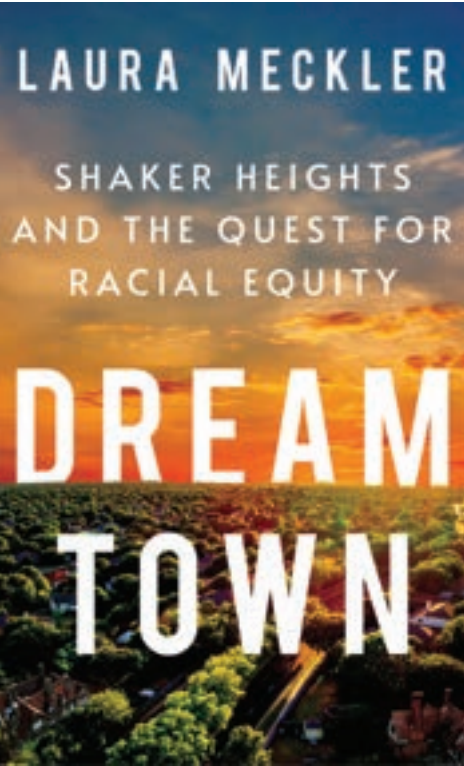


Photo by Chris Ball

EDWINS Chef Brandon Chrostowski shows kids how to make French toast during Summer on the Square on Aug. 19, with help from DJ Lily Jade, 9. “It’s not very French,” he said. “It’s just toast with egg.”

Shaker Square landlord loses bid to remove judge from case

By Nick Castele

Judge W. Moná Scott will continue to preside over Cleveland’s lawsuit against a Shaker Square landlord after Ohio’s top judge threw out a complaint against her.

The decision by Chief Justice Sharon Kennedy removes a roadblock from City Hall’s effort to declare a public nuisance at the set of apartment buildings on Shaker Boulevard. The conditions in the buildings have become a focus of Cleveland’s effort to get a handle on investor-owned properties.

In September, an attorney for the landlord complained that Scott revealed a bias when she referred to out-of-state property owners

as “incestuous” and “intertwined.” He asked the Ohio Supreme Court to remove the housing court judge from

“A well-informed, objective observer would not harbor serious doubts about Judge Scott’s ability to impartially preside over the nuisance case.”
- Sharon Kennedy
Chief Justice
Ohio Supreme Court

the case. Scott argued she was trying to address a real problem for the court: landlords who ignore court summonses.

Kennedy ruled Oct. 25 that Scott would remain over the lawsuit.

Although Scott’s comments were “unnecessary,” they did not rise to the level of disqualifying her from overseeing the case, Kennedy wrote.

“A well-informed, objective observer would not harbor serious doubts about Judge Scott’s ability to impartially preside over the nuisance case,” the chief justice wrote.

In their lawsuit, attorneys for the city accuse the landlord, Shaker Heights Apartments Owner LLC, of failing to maintain its buildings — leaving tenants with faulty heat, vermin, water leaks and more problems. The city is asking Scott to appoint a receiver over the properties until repairs are made.

Tenants, activists and City Council members had urged the city to take action against the New York-based owners.

Attorneys for the landlord argued in a court filing that the properties were already in bad condition when their client bought them. The new owners had put “significant hours and millions of dollars” into fixing up the buildings, their attorneys wrote.

Originally filed in March, the case has proceeded slowly. Shaker Heights Apartments Owner LLC sought unsuccessfully to move the case into federal court.

Cleveland is contending with an influx of out-of-state property investors who see an opportunity in apartment buildings and single-family rental homes. Mayor Justin Bibb’s administration has drawn up a slate of changes to city housing laws meant to streamline the process of issuing code violations to long-distance owners.

This story appeared in Signal Cleveland.

Cities consider amenities for controversial project

By Thomas Jewell

As detailed design work – and lawsuits in opposition – continue on the Doan Brook restoration project at Horseshoe Lake, the cities leasing the 60-acre parkland have pooled resources on possible amenities to add into the mix for future public use and enjoyment.

In seeking their respective council approvals earlier, officials in Shaker Heights and Cleveland Heights made it clear that paying \$481,000 for a set of design plans does not commit the cities to proceed with any construction at this point. Bids are expected to go out in 2025.

It simply allows them to go after grants and other funding sources for the proposed amenities under consideration.

A possible “Beaumont path” would connect to the main shared-use path funded and maintained by the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS), which will pay for removal of the dam and realignment of the north and middle branches of Doan Brook that fed into the 170-year-old lake created by the original Shakers.

Along with footing the \$20 million cost of the project, NEORS will restore and maintain the 28-acre interior footprint, including the removal of invasive species that have crept up since Horseshoe Lake was drained in recent years on orders from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR).

The sewer district will also pay for a pedestrian bridge over the original spillway.

Other design plans sought by the cities include hillside seating areas and wetland observation decks on both the Shaker and

the Cleveland Heights sides, a “Nature Play” area just west of the old beach in the original 6-acre Horseshoe Lake Park, along with sensory and pollinator gardens, an outdoor classroom and lounge swings.

Based on geographic boundaries, the design fees for the proposed amenities – roughly 7% to 10% of projected

construction costs – work out to \$313,000 (65%) from Shaker and \$168,000 (35%) from Cleveland Heights.

“Save Horseshoe Lake” supporters argue that costs for the project have escalated to the point where the district could go ahead and rebuild the failing dam so that it complies with state safety regulations, keeping intact what they contend is the greatest amenity of them all.

Lawsuits filed against both cities and dismissed in Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court remained under appeal, and the Friends of Horseshoe Lake sued NEORS in a subsequent case.

Meanwhile, the sewer district and a separate team of consultants began preliminary planning this fall with community outreach on what will be more than two years of design on the Lower Shaker Lake dam reconstruction project. Construction is set to begin in August

2026, carrying into 2028.

With most field surveys already done, the spillway’s stormwater handling capacity was estimated at one-sixth of what it should be for the 187-year-old earthen dam in the event of a 100-year rainstorm.

Consultants said it remains to be seen whether they can rehabilitate the existing dam, if they will need to remove and replace it, or whether a safety-compliant dam can be built adjacent to the landmark.

The goal there will be to “integrate dam safety improvements with consideration given for historical features and park space” that will still eliminate “overtopping” of the existing dam, spillway and embankment that causes flooding on Coventry Road and North Park Boulevard.

In a completely separate project, the city of Shaker Heights also conducted community outreach on plans for a

connecting multipurpose recreational trail through Lower Lake Park along South Park Boulevard, where the westbound curb lane and a worn dirt footpath have served runners, walkers, cyclists, wheelchairs and strollers.

Shaker received a \$309,000 Clean Ohio Trails grant through the ODNR this year, kicking in a \$103,000 local match for the nearly half-mile, 10-foot-wide path, with construction to begin in the spring.

Along with footing the \$20 million cost of the project, NEORS will restore and maintain the 28-acre interior footprint.

Proposed amenities:

- ➔ **Primary circulation paths with connectors to Attleboro Road on the Shaker side and Shelburne Road in Cleveland Heights.**
- ➔ **A Park Drive shared-use path that gets pedestrians and cyclists off the roadway, which includes an obstructed curve for motorists.**
- ➔ **A South Park sidewalk and trail connection to Lee Road.**
- ➔ **A “Beaumont path” across from the school, running over one of the floodplain boardwalks from a western entrance at Lee Road south of Doan Brook.**



This rare view under the bridge from the east end of Lower Shaker Lake shows a waterfall on the other side. The public can paddle on the lake only one day a year, which this year was Aug. 26, hosted by the Doan Brook Watershed Partnership. Guided hikes, yoga and live music added to the fun.



Robert Edwards, community outreach coordinator for Burten, Bell, Carr Development Inc., answers questions at one of a dozen tables staffed by community organizations at the Morelands Group Festival at Shaker Square on Sept. 23.

Huntington Bank plans to close Buckeye branch

Huntington Bank announced plans to close its branch at 11623 Buckeye Road in Cleveland in early 2024. The Columbus-based bank is cutting expenses by closing 34 branches nationwide, including three in Cleveland and seven in Ohio, a spokesman said. The community is organizing a petition drive to keep the branch open. For details or to sign a petition to keep it open, contact bromleycharles@yahoo.com.



Holiday Gift Guide

Merchants share ideas for shopping close to home

By Chris Ball

Eat your vegetables. Fasten your seatbelt. Shop locally. Doing the right thing can be easier said than done. So for this busy holiday season, we did some of the legwork for you by asking local merchants to suggest their top gift idea for less than \$100. **The result is our first Holiday Gift Guide.**

Happy Shopping!



Fine Points Inc.

12602 Larchmere Blvd. • finepoints.com

These handwarmer mitts “are the most practical thing on the planet,” said owner Liz Tekus. “Sometimes you don’t need a whole glove or mitten, you just need a little coverage.” These mitts leave your fingers free for texting and other digital needs. And they’re machine washable. The Italian yarn is a wool-nylon blend. Or craft your own. A ball of the yarn makes three pairs. **Price: \$55 for a pair of mitts, or \$24.25 for the yarn.**



Photo by Chris Ball

Lotus Candles

12617 Larchmere Blvd.
216.225.1701 • shoplotuscandles.com

Forget the flame. This Illumination Fragrance Warmer is a sensible alternative to lighting a candle, said shop owner Gwen Penn. The Santa-shaped device uses a halogen bulb to warm wax melts in a dish, releasing the fragrance. And the bulb gives off a soft glow, like a candle. **Price: \$19.99.** With Candle Melts, \$5 each or five for \$20.



Photo by Chris Ball

Monarch Butterfly

12723 Larchmere Blvd. • 216.299.8297

Vintage sweaters are owner Karla Henderson’s warm recommendation. **Price: \$22 each.**



Photo by Chris Ball

Misfit Xchange

12721 Larchmere Blvd.
216.508.0679 • misfitschange.com

Stay toasty warm while tailgating at chilly sports events with this Browns-themed jacket, said co-owner Adam Southivong. A new item, the down-filled jacket made in Vietnam has a polyester shell. **Price: \$80.**



UnBAR Café

12635 Larchmere Blvd.
216.293.4480 • unbarcafe.com

This black, 100% cotton t-shirt sports a positive message that is UnBAR’s slogan, said owner Melissa Garrett-Hirsch. **Price: \$20.**



Photo by Chris Ball

Our Favorite Things Boutique

12730 Larchmere Blvd.
216.400.6081 • ourfavoritethingscle.com.

This stylish jacket with hood comes in sizes from small to 3XL. “People love the way it looks, and it lasts for years,” said owner Lisa McGuthry. The Fair Trade product, made from 100% cotton, comes from India Boutique in New York. **Price: \$89.99.**



Photo by Chris Ball

Fiddlehead Gallery

12736 Larchmere Blvd.
216.231.9400

Unusual “geode” coasters, made of ceramic and glass, come in your choice of eight colors. Decorative and functional, they’re from Dock 6 Pottery in Minnesota. “The style is very neutral,” said store co-owner Susan Rozman. “It looks beautiful with antiques or in contemporary settings.” Gift wrapping is available. **Price: \$44 for a package of four.**



Fashions By Fowler

13119 Shaker Square
216.397.0808 • fashionsbyfowler.com

Bling is the thing at this shop on the Square. “Everybody loves a black purse with bling,” said co-owner Tracy Fowler. “And sequins never go out of style.” She selected a black purse from Handbag Express. **Price: \$58.**



Mr. Gilbert’s Hats

12900 Larchmere Blvd.
216.374.4745

Hats off to Mr. Gilbert for suggesting the most affordable idea here. His back wall is covered with wool snapback caps, one size fits all. Some even promote Cleveland sports teams. **Price: \$5 each.** The shop also cleans hats.



Photo by Chris Ball

Larchmere Fire Works

12406 Larchmere Blvd.
216.246.4716 • larchmerefireworks.com

Metal and glass go together perfectly with this Hand-Blown Winter Witch Ball and Hand-Forged Stand. It can be custom made with your preferred colors. Anvil not included. **Price: \$80.**



Kings & Queens Cultural Village

12806 Larchmere Blvd. • 614.516.5584

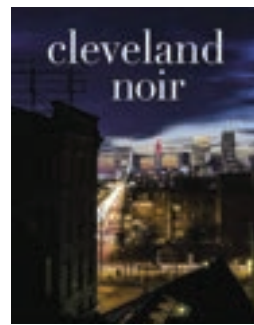
West Africans used cowrie shells as their main form of currency for centuries. To owner Sista Queen, cowrie means abundance. She has an assortment of cowrie shell earrings in a wide variety of designs. **Price: \$8, or two for \$15.**



Photo by Chris Ball

Loganberry Books

13015 Larchmere Blvd.
216.795.9800 • loganberrybooks.com.



Owner Harriett Logan’s top pick stays close to home. *Cleveland Noir* is an anthology of pieces by 15 local writers. Twelve have done book signings at Loganberry, and four are former staffers. Edited

by Michael Ruhlman and Miesha Wilson Headen, it was released Aug. 1 by Akashic Books, the latest in their series of city noir books. **Price: \$16.95.**

OMA Vintage

13006 Larchmere Blvd. • 614.861.8719

Oma means grandma in Dutch, said sales associate Saralila Kalafat, and grandma no doubt would love the soft feel of this bright red argyle sweater made of 100% pure cashmere from Scotland. **Price: \$42.**



Photo by Chris Ball

Eclectic Eccentric

13005 Larchmere Blvd. • 216.798.3002

After wrapping presents, wrap yourself up in a Molina Indian Blanket, said owner Tracey Hilbert. The handwoven covering from Mexico is a blend of 50% acrylic, 40% polyester, and 10% cotton. **Price: \$58.**



Photo by Chris Ball



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Books

Griffin still contends Oswald and Ruby acted alone

By Grant Segall

Sixty years later, Burt Griffin is still trying to debunk conspiracy theories about President Kennedy’s assassination.

Among his many civic roles over the years, Griffin was assistant counsel for the Warren Commission. In his recently published *JFK, Oswald and Ruby: Politics, Prejudice and Truth* (McFarland Books), he defends the commission’s main findings about perhaps the nation’s most investigated crimes: the slayings of Kennedy and Patrolman J.D. Tippit on Nov. 22, 1963, and of their killer, Lee Harvey Oswald, two days later.

“There was no conspiracy,” Griffin said. “Oswald and Ruby did it acting completely alone.” Among many reasons, he says Oswald was too much of a loner, and both killers were too volatile for conspirators to work with.



Beatrice (Bunny) and Burt Griffin greet readers of his new book at Loganberry Books on Sept. 28.

The book also explores the personal and political conflicts that spurred Oswald to kill Kennedy and Tippit and Jack Ruby to kill Oswald.

At 89, Griffin still climbs up and down his three-story Tudor home across from his former Boulevard Elementary School. He’s part of a line of public servants. His father, Burt, was chief judge at Cleveland Municipal Court and later a judge at Cuyahoga Common Pleas. His son, Mark, is Cleveland’s law director.

Griffin went to Amherst College, Yale Law School, and the U.S. Army. His

jobs included U.S. Court of Appeals clerk in Washington, D.C., assistant U.S. attorney in Cleveland, head of the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland, director of the federal Legal Services Program, and Common Pleas judge from 1975 through 2004.

For the Warren Commission, Griffin mostly investigated Ruby. “I made every effort to find evidence of Ruby’s involvement in a conspiracy,” Griffin said. “I found none.”

Griffin came to accept Ruby’s statement about wanting to “show the world that a Jew had guts.” In Dallas that year, several Jewish homes and stores had been marked with

“There was no conspiracy. Oswald and Ruby did it acting completely alone.”

– Burt Griffin

swastikas. On the morning of Kennedy’s motorcade, the Dallas Morning News ran a black-bordered ad against the president signed by Bernard Weissman. Since that name sounded Jewish,

Ruby, born Rubenstein, feared that Jews would be blamed for the assassination.

The book also explores Oswald’s troubled life: bouncing between jobs, homes, and two countries; plotting to hijack a plane to Cuba; and shooting retired General Edwin Walker, a vocal Dallas foe of Kennedy, integration, and Communism.

Griffin says Oswald seemed to target Kennedy partly to foil the White House’s leaked plot to kill Cuban President Fidel Castro. Oswald also hoped Kennedy’s death would be blamed on right-wingers.

Griffin criticizes several agencies’ actions before and after the killings. The CIA hid its assassination plots. The FBI destroyed a note from Oswald protesting its questioning of his wife and failed to alert other agencies about him.

The book says even people with distorted views of the world can be influenced by it. “Leaders need to think about the risks they’re raising, not only for the country, but for themselves when they stir up passions in this country that can lead disturbed individuals like Ruby and Oswald to violence.”

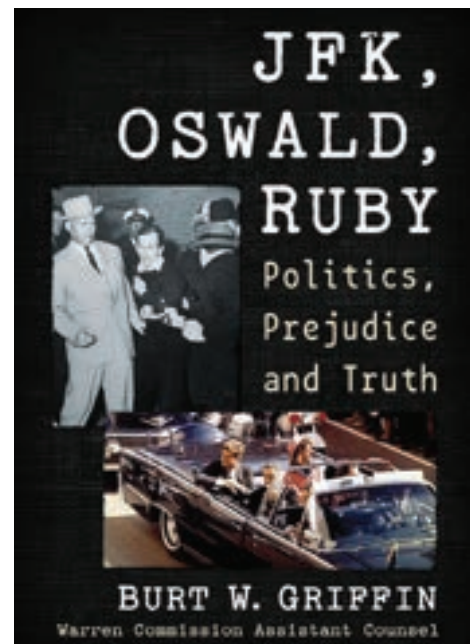
In 1979, the House Select Committee on Assassinations, chaired by Cleveland Congressman Louis Stokes, found a likely conspiracy against Kennedy. Griffin says the panel was misled by a recording of a supposed gunshot later reinterpreted by a National Academy of

Sciences panel.

The author got help from CHALK resident C. Ellen Connally, former Cleveland municipal judge and Cuyahoga County councilwoman, who collects Kennedy memorabilia. Connally said of the book, “It’s important because it shoots down so many of these conspiracy people.”

Griffin hopes next to help make a docudrama about the assassination.

FreshWater Cleveland published a version of this story, at tinyurl.com/lymz8pdvs.



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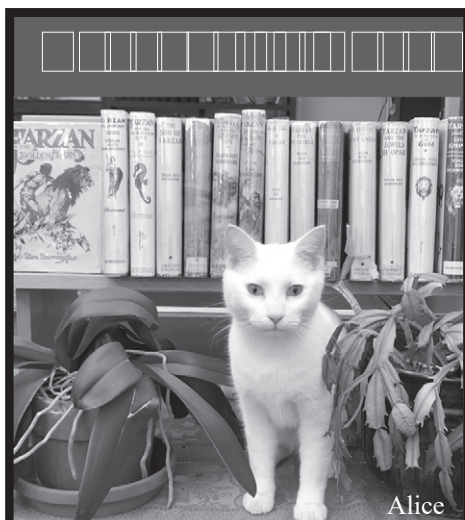
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Photos by Chris Ball

Destination Cleveland, the city’s convention and visitors bureau, parked its #The Land sign for photo opps Sept. 18 on Shaker Square as workers raised roofing materials onto the Atlas Cinemas marquee.

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Focus sharpens on future of Shaker Square

Continued from page 1



Workers on cherry pickers raise up high in the sky for tuck pointing of the brick wall behind Atlas Cinemas on Sept. 8, part of the restoration work taking place at Shaker Square.

“You’ve probably noticed the scaffolding up – the roof work should be completed before the snow flies,” Johnson said. “And the facade improvements will allow us to return the buildings to their original grandeur.”

That work all leads into “Phase Three”: positioning the nearly century-old commerce and transportation hub for the next generation.

“Our other incredibly important initiative will answer the question: What is the vision for Shaker Square?” Johnson said.

By year’s end, they could have chosen a consulting team to assist with that determination, after issuing a request for proposals over summer and getting eight responses, five of those advancing for further consideration.

“They’ll be looking at what kinds of commercial and retail mix will work best to bring people back to the Square,” Johnson said. “We realize how different retail looks since the pandemic.”

A steering committee of roughly a dozen residents from all neighborhoods, business owners and elected officials will help make the selection of the consulting team.

“Shaker Square can only be as strong as the neighborhoods around it, from Buckeye-Shaker and

Woodhill to Larchmere, Ludlow and CHALK,” Johnson said.

Menesse said in a community that has been “splintered for too long, we are now poised to achieve true progress.”

Although the Square was “90% leased” as of September, Johnson said at least two conspicuous vacancies remained: “The Balaton [former restaurant] and the coffee shop [Dewey’s, then Biggby] are what people want to see.”

Meanwhile, fundraising continues for other initiatives, including enhanced use of the public space on the Square, with plans for

“Food Truck Fridays,” “Live Music Saturdays,” yoga and zumba classes, as well as a children’s playscape.

More immediately, planning continued for the holiday season on Shaker Square, with at least one community event, a visit from Santa and “bigger, better and sturdier decorations” than the ones donated last year, Johnson said.

“It’s time to make the leap toward reinventing Shaker Square, and we can’t do it without public support,” Johnson said.

To donate to the capital campaign with a remaining goal of \$7.5 million, visit friendsofshakersquare.org.

“They’ll be looking at what kinds of commercial and retail mix will work best to bring people back to the Square.”

– BBC Executive Director Joy Johnson

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Up and Down the Boulevard

Larchmere has a lot happening over the upcoming holidays and into 2024



Photos by Barb Mooney

By Barbara Mooney

In-store sales and specials will be luring shoppers to Larchmere Boulevard during Thanksgiving weekend, Friday and Saturday, Nov. 24 and 25, and individual stores are holding their traditional holiday events.

At Lisa McGuthry's **Our Favorite Things Boutique and Event Center** (12730 Larchmere Blvd., 800.975.0731), children are invited in for fun activities inspired by "The Polar Express" storybook, complete with holiday treats, hot chocolate and entertainment. The store will also host a collection of outside vendors to sell their holiday wares.

And, as it is the weekend of the annual Small Business Saturday, McGuthry's store and other Larchmere retailers will have holiday promotions (*see the holiday gift guide on Page 7*). McGuthry is especially excited about and proud of the line of children's clothing, called Sassy Tots, that bears the name and likeness of her granddaughter, Aila.

Fiddlehead heads up decorations

Also, to make the streetscape festive over the holidays, Susan and Sophie Rozman of **Fiddlehead Gallery** (12736 Larchmere Blvd., 216.231.9400) have enlisted their neighbors to decorate and light up handcrafted holiday trees in front of various properties, both residential and retail, along Larchmere.

Inside Fiddlehead Gallery, the Thanksgiving weekend festivities will include hot spiced Sangria for visitors.

Fiddlehead's final monthly "First Friday Craft Night" of the year will be the evening of Dec. 1. For only \$5, guests can craft holiday ornaments or gifts using upcycled materials.

One more Gentleman's holiday

It probably will be the last holiday season for the longest established retailers along Larchmere Boulevard. The owner of the **Gentleman's Quarters /Frog Legs** stores (12807 Larchmere Blvd., 216.229.7083), Walter Thompson, has decided to retire next year.

Look for the upscale store, which has specialized in European men's fashions and high-end women's accessories since 1969, to remain open through the holidays.

Bursting on the scene

In place of the closed Hiit Factor training and exercise facility at 13010 Larchmere Blvd. is **Fawakay Burst**, an intensively health-oriented smoothie and juice bar with a health-food menu.

Open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday to Saturday and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday, Fawakay Burst (fawakayburst.com) has an extensive selection of pressed juices, smoothies, salads, paninis, wraps and quesadillas.

Owner Muhammad Sahied opened the eatery Oct. 1 after relocating from a Mayfield Road storefront in South Euclid. He said he looks forward to filling out the expansive space with more chairs and tables on the historic building's upper level in the coming months.

UnBAR pouring wine

UnBAR Café (12635 Larchmere Blvd., 216.293.4480), which celebrates its fourth anniversary in January, is stretching into the wine business to add to its signature nonalcoholic cocktails business. The UnWine Zone had a grand opening Oct. 21.

UnBAR owner Melissa Garrett-Hirsch is mulling over whether to expand the business literally by expanding into the market space next door.

UnBAR has become one of the most popular coffee and light-meal gathering places for the Larchmere and Shaker Square neighborhoods. It also hosts periodic poetry readings, hip-hop music events, karaoke parties and exercise classes.

A new vintage place

OMA Vintage (13006 Larchmere Blvd., michal@omavintage.com) is a newcomer to the Larchmere scene. The vintage apparel store is in the former Peony Antiques space, which is across the street from one of Larchmere's longstanding vintage stores, Eclectic Eccentric, making it the fourth such retailer on the street. OMA is open from noon to 6 p.m. Wednesday to Sunday.

Vintage retail has supplanted antique stores as the retail heart of Larchmere. Recently, the owner of the space that had been occupied by (appointment only) Elegant Extras at the corner of East 128th Street and Larchmere announced on Facebook that the space is available.

A Berry good place to write

Loganberry Books (13015 Larchmere, 216.795.9800) played host in November to three Friday evening "write-ins" for NaNoWriMo, a nationally designated month for budding writers to start penning their novels. Writers can bring their favorite writing tools, whether it's a notebook or laptop. The final session at the bookstore is Nov. 17 at 6 p.m.

The holiday season at Otis' Old Curiosity Shop inside Loganberry, a wonderful source of unique and handmade gifts, starts Thanksgiving weekend. Local authors will be on hand to sign books from Friday through Sunday.

Loganberry's 29th birthday celebration and open house will be at 6 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 6. Join bookstore staff and musicians for the traditional ringing-in of the holidays.

Special occasion spots

An Oct. 17 article in Cleveland.com that featured the 35 best restaurants in Northeast Ohio for special occasions included two Larchmere spots. **Batuqui** (12706 Larchmere Blvd., 216.801.0227), the gourmet Brazilian restaurant that has a second location in Chagrin Falls, was highlighted. So was **Poppy** (12502 Larchmere Blvd., 216.415.5069), which the article called "worth the trip for the homey atmosphere."



Seeing that Shaker Square has no coffeeshop at present, Chrissy Houtz is bringing her mobile café to give customers their caffeine fix. The Shaker Heights resident plans to park her Psychopomp trailer in front of Dave's Market at least through November. She's still finetuning her schedule but expects to be open most days from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Her focus is artisanal specialty espresso drinks, including the popular Freddo, but the menu also includes teas, hand-crafted zero-proof cocktails, plant-based soft-serve ice cream and nonalcoholic craft beers. Oat milk is available instead of dairy at no extra charge.

Online at www.psychopomp.cafe.

—Chris Ball



Photos by Chris Ball



Mary Boyle tracks the flight of an airborne pancake and then mostly catches it at SHAD's first Pancake Breakfast, Oct. 14 at Cummins Hall of Our Lady of Peace Church.
Photos by Chris Ball



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