



# SHAKER SQUARE AREA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION – SHAD

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# the SHAD Connection

WINTER 2025

Vol. 49 No. 2

FOR THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE, WORK AND SHOP IN THE SHAKER SQUARE AREA

Nonprofit Org  
Presorted Standard  
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## Annual Christmas Bazaar

Saturday, Nov. 15, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.  
Our Lady of Peace Church, Cummins Hall  
12406 Buckingham Ave.

## Community Breakfast

Our Lady of Peace Church offers breakfast on  
**Saturdays, Nov. 22, Dec. 20, and Jan. 24,  
2026, 10 a.m. to noon** in Cummins Hall

## Fitness, Dance, and Yoga

Fairhill Partners, 12200 Fairhill Road, offers  
FREE community fitness classes this fall.

**Chair Yoga** (Wed: 10-11 a.m.)

**Walking Club** (Thurs: 9:30-10:30 a.m.)

**Chair Zumba** (Thurs: 10-11 a.m.)

**Self-Defense** (Thurs: 12-1 p.m.)

**Line Dancing** (Thurs: 12-1 p.m.)

Contact 216.402.0118 for more info.

Sponsored by the HEAL Initiative  
of Greater Buckeye.

## FREE Community Programming at Sunbeam School

Schools as Neighborhood Resources (SNR)  
provides free recreation and community  
programs for all ages, (Mon, Wed, & Thurs)  
at Sunbeam School, 11800 Mt. Overlook,  
from 5-7:30 p.m. beginning Nov. 6, through  
March 2026. Includes sports & rec, arts &  
creativity, wellness & fitness and more.

Register at: [neighborhoodleadership.org/  
recreation-neighborhood-program](http://neighborhoodleadership.org/recreation-neighborhood-program)

## FREE Fruits & Vegetables

Courtesy of Hunger Network Pantry  
Fourth Saturday of the month from 9-11 a.m.  
Hosted by Bethany Baptist Church  
1211 East 105<sup>th</sup> St.

First Wednesday of the month from  
10 a.m.-1 p.m. Hosted by Delta Alpha  
Lambda Foundation at CPL Rice Branch  
2820 East 116<sup>th</sup> St.

## FREE Mini-Retreats

Feeling pulled in many directions? Or at-risk  
for burnout in your community work? Attend  
a FREE mini-retreat for community builders'  
renewal and resilience. Friday, Nov. 14 or  
Saturday, Dec. 6, from 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Includes semi-potluck lunch. For info & to  
RSVP, contact *Neighborhood Connections* at  
216.361.0042, or *Tony Vento* at  
216.313.0546. [neighborupcle.org](http://neighborupcle.org)

## Holiday Caroling Stroll

Participate in this festive annual tradition in  
December. Meet for caroling at each of the  
three locations below from 6:30-8:30 p.m.  
Dress for the weather. Caroling books  
provided, free hot chocolate and cookies, lots  
of laughs and singing in community! Invite  
your neighbors and share some winter joy.

**December 2:** The Tavern Coffee House,  
12302 Buckeye Road

**December 9:** The Reform Church of Love,  
11501 Mt Carmel Road

**December 16:** Batuqui Brazilian  
Restaurant, 12624 Larchmere Blvd.

## Holiday Meal Donation

The Larchmere Community Association  
(LCA) is accepting donations at its upcoming  
meetings via check, cash, or credit for its  
annual Holiday Donation to benefit the  
Benjamin Rose Meals on Wheels program  
for adults age 60 and older.

Send checks to: LCA  
12200 Fairhill Rd. Cleveland, OH 44120

## Shaker Square Farmer's Market

Saturdays: 8 a.m. to noon through Dec. 20.

## Housing

# Sale of apartment buildings to result in \$5 million in repairs

By Christine Jindra

A landmark settlement and  
a victory for tenants' rights.

That's how Cleveland Law Director  
Mark Griffin describes the deal  
to sell three apartment buildings  
on Shaker Boulevard to a buyer  
with the financial wherewithal to  
make sorely needed repairs.

More than \$5 million of repairs  
at 12500-12600 Shaker Blvd. (The  
Vista) and 12701 Shaker Blvd. (The  
Residences), just west of Shaker Square,  
were to start once the sale closed in  
early November. These include heat,  
elevators, roofs and safety upgrades.

The settlement requires payment of  
\$2.1 million in delinquent taxes, water  
bills and court-ordered fees. Occupancy  
at the buildings has dropped to 40%  
and the settlement requires some  
80 vacant units to be renovated.  
Currently a one-bedroom apartment  
rents for \$850 to \$950 per month.

Upkeep at the buildings has  
long been neglected with residents  
complaining about lack of heat and

hot water, non-working elevators,  
as well as trash and safety issues.

"This is a victory for Cleveland  
residents. Tenants will see long  
overdue repairs, taxpayers are  
made whole, and our community  
is stronger," Griffin said. "The  
settlement sends a message: Cleveland  
will not tolerate absentee landlords  
who profit while tenants suffer."

The settlement is also a victory for  
the Morelands Group, neighborhood  
advocates for the preservation of  
Shaker Square apartments. The group  
worked for years with the tenants  
to push city officials to address  
hazardous living conditions.

See *Sale of apartment buildings to result in  
\$5 million in repairs*, page 9

## Nov. 4 General Election Results for Key Local Races

**Cleveland Mayor:** Justin Bibb will serve a 2nd term

**Cleveland City Council:** Newly-drawn Ward 3: Deborah A. Gray

**Cleveland City Council:** Ward 6: Blaine A. Griffin (unopposed)

**Cleveland Housing Court Judge:** Cheryl Wiltshire

**City of Shaker Heights Tax Levy  
for Shaker Historical Museum:** Passed

**Shaker Heights City School Board of Education:**  
Lora Cover, Kate Nielson, & James E. Reed III

**Shaker Heights City School District Tax Levy:** Passed

**Cleveland Heights Mayor:** Jim Petras

For more results, visit [boe.cuyahogacounty.gov](http://boe.cuyahogacounty.gov)



## Dining

# After two-year wait, Batuqui opens in new location

Story and photos by Christine Jindra

The wait is over and wow.  
Batuqui, Larchmere's iconic  
Brazilian restaurant, is finally in its  
spacious new home after two years  
of planning and construction.

The result is stunning.  
The vibe was cozy and comfortable  
in the converted little house the  
restaurant had occupied for 10  
years. It had 38 seats and a four-  
seat bar tucked among rooms.

Batuqui's move in September to  
the 5,000-square-foot former St.  
Paul's Evangelical Church, two doors  
west, has created an elegant and  
sophisticated dining experience to  
serve nearly five times more people.

The two-story Craftsman-style  
building (at 12624 Larchmere Blvd.)  
has soaring ceilings, stained glass  
windows, gleaming wooden floors,  
airy dining rooms and a 10-seat bar.

The restaurant can seat up to



Batuqui now features a 10-seat bar

180 people, in two dining rooms  
– one up, one down – and a patio.  
The downstairs room, with 70  
seats, can be reserved for events.

Batuqui's mood is still incredibly  
welcoming, due to the vision of  
owners Carla Batista and Gustavo

Nogueira, spouses and business  
partners, who designed the space  
and loaded it up with Brazilian  
pottery and photos in bookcases and  
tables throughout the building.

See *After two-year wait, Batuqui opens in new  
location*, page 11

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## Message from the SHAD President



Melissa Garrett-Hirsch

As autumn settles into the Shaker area, we are reminded of the beauty and resilience of our neighborhoods and of our shared responsibility to nurture their evolution. Our mission centers on the stewardship of our community's resources and fostering meaningful collaboration among neighbors, organizations, and volunteers. Together, we shape the future of our many beloved neighborhoods that create our community.

### Stewardship and the Evolution of our Neighborhoods

Stewardship means caring for today while planning for tomorrow. The neighborhoods within the Shaker Area are evolving—welcoming new families, businesses, and ideas. We are committed to preserving

# Stewarding our Community's Future through Collaboration

what makes our community unique while embracing positive change. This requires ongoing dialogue, transparency, and collaboration with all stakeholders.

### The Power of Collaboration

Our neighborhoods are vibrant precisely because of the many hands and hearts committed to their well-being. Collaboration is more than a buzzword – it's the engine that drives revitalization, inclusion, and progress. When we come together we create opportunities that extend far beyond what any single entity could achieve alone.

### Projects in Process

- **50 Years and Counting Celebration**  
Shaker Square and its neighborhoods have thrived for decades, thanks to many dedicated citizens who value preservation. SHAD invites everyone to help us recognize

those who have positively impacted our community. As we prepare for 2026, let's unite to celebrate, reflect, and inspire continued commitment. Watch for a formal invitation or contact a SHAD board member for details.

- **Shaker Square Area Development (SHAD) and Shaker Square Alliance (SSA)**  
These two organizations and Burten, Bell, Carr Development are collaborating to help preserve the Moreland Theater in Buckeye, supporting broader efforts to unify the neighborhood. Let's continue to build bridges between organizations, neighbors, and generations to ensure that our neighborhoods thrive for years to come!



## Advertise!

### The SHAD Connection Deadlines Winter Issue

For advertising rate and ad size information and media kit go to [shad.org](http://shad.org) or email [jgdalessandro@gmail.com](mailto:jgdalessandro@gmail.com).

**Reserve ad space for the SHAD Connection** Spring issue covering March, April and May by **January 9, 2026**. **Ad artwork is due** no later than: **January 30, 2026**.

Send artwork to Jim at [jgdalessandro@gmail.com](mailto:jgdalessandro@gmail.com).

**Your ads support and serve your local communities!**



### SHAD MISSION STATEMENT

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

### NEIGHBORHOODS COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apartment Corridor</li> <li>• CHALK</li> <li>• Drexmore/Chadbourne</li> <li>• Historic Shaker Square</li> <li>• Larchmere</li> <li>• Ludlow</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shaker Square</li> <li>• Larchmere Blvd.</li> <li>• Van Aken Plaza</li> <li>• Shaker Boulevard West</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

### SHAKER SQUARE AREA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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Johnnie Spates-Greene

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Sandra Graubard

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Your support sustains, maintains, improves & grows our neighborhoods!

TO LEARN MORE  
VISIT [SHAD.ORG](http://SHAD.ORG)

OR SCAN  
THE QR CODE!



To become a member, go to [shad.org/why-join/](http://shad.org/why-join/) or scan QR code

### YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN SHAD:

- Maintains our charming, artistic, accessible residential community
- Preserves this architectural gem
- Encourages local businesses and restaurants to thrive
- Contributes to fun, area activities
- Provides you with discounts from our merchants

### MEMBER BENEFITS

- Tax deductible membership fees
- The SHAD Connection mailed to your home or business
- Special discounts from participating local merchants listed here in Neighborhood Shopping Savings

## Community Organizations

# St. Luke's Foundation plans to build new headquarters in 2028

By Thomas Jewell

The St. Luke's Foundation recently announced plans to continue its work on the ground in the surrounding neighborhoods the nonprofit has served for nearly three decades.

That will mean moving its headquarters off of the sixth floor of the historic former St. Luke's Hospital on Shaker Boulevard to a more accessible location, currently a vacant lot at the corner of Woodland Avenue and East 110th Street.

Woodland Hills is one of the core "neighborhoods of choice" where the foundation has remained committed to improving the overall health of residents, along with Buckeye-Shaker, Woodhill, Mount Pleasant – including Shaker Square and Larchmere.

With a mission to address health inequities at various societal levels, the foundation invested nearly \$2.4 million in those neighborhoods in 2024 alone, part of the roughly \$8 million secured overall in grants on an annual basis over the past decade.

"This is not simply about a building – it's about creating a place that mirrors our community-facing philosophy and culture," said Timothy L. Tramble, Sr., President and CEO of the St. Luke's Foundation.

In their joint announcement, Tramble and board chairman Terry Allan said they look forward to moving the headquarters off of the sixth floor to a ground-level operation.

"It has everything to do with accessibility, to being present in the community with a space where neighbors are welcomed, where voices are heard and where people can gather with dignity," Tramble said.

To that end, the new 21,000 square foot, \$17 million building will consist of 35% office space for foundation operations, with the remaining 65% providing amenities for the surrounding neighborhoods.

Those will likely include community gathering space as well as an internet café, offering neighborhood access to computers in the ongoing effort to bridge the digital divide. The community-led process has also brought discussion of outdoor attractions as well

on nearly two acres of total available space, with the foundation seeking further input from residents on what they would like to see put in place.

St. Luke's already hosted a community barbecue that drew more than 100 people over the summer and plans a "Design and Dine" event on Wednesday, Nov. 19, from 5-8 p.m. at Morning Star Baptist Church on 10250 Shaker Blvd. in Cleveland.

Residents will have further opportunities to meet and ask questions of the four finalists selected from the field of 20 architectural teams who submitted proposals in the fall. Two are local: Bowen+, formerly Richard L. Bowen & Associates on Shaker Blvd., along with City Architecture on Larchmere Blvd.

The national strategic diversity and design firms are Moody Nolan – the largest African American-owned design firm in the country, with an office in Cleveland – along with the fellow Black-led Colloqate Design, based in New Orleans.

Further pop-ups and meet-and-greets will be held through the winter, with the selection coming in early 2026, "although we should have a good idea in December," Tramble said.

The foundation's selection committee consists of three board members, three staff members, and six other community stakeholders, including residents from Crestwood, Woodhill Estates, Larchmere and Cleveland city officials.

In laying the groundwork for the new headquarters with a "really well thought-out plan" already in the works, Tramble said construction should get underway in 2028.

Tramble and Allan noted in an earlier press release that health equity demands access and transparency through doors that are open to the people they serve.

"Our headquarters will stand within eyesight of the former Saint Luke's Hospital and campus, a site that represents both legacy and resilience," the letter from leadership noted. "It will rise alongside the Woodhill Choice Neighborhood redevelopment, becoming part of an emerging renaissance that will amplify the catalytic convergence of placekeeping and placemaking."

## Letter to the Editor

# Horseshoe Lake: A Matter of Public Trust

By Erin R. Flanagan

*Editor's Note: While the SHAD Connection doesn't typically print letters to the editor, we feel this submission is worthy of readers' attention.*

As NEORS D prepares to break ground in January, residents must insist on lawful review and the preservation of a nationally protected landscape.

The Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS D) has stated that, starting in January 2026, it plans to move forward with the bulldozing of more than 25 acres, the felling of over 1,000 habitat trees, and the construction of a paved access road through the bed of Horseshoe Lake. The project, presented as "stormwater management," would erase a historic landscape that has defined Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights for nearly two centuries. This is happening soon — and it can still be stopped.

The Shaker Lakes are not utility containment projects. They are part of a federally recognized historic landscape — the Shaker Village Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1980. That protection predates the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District by nearly a century.

NEORS D is not the steward of the Shaker Lakes. It is an overlay — a modern sewer-infrastructure district superimposed on a pre-existing, publicly owned park and historic landscape. Created in the 1970s under Ohio law to handle regional wastewater and runoff, the district was never charged with redesigning or erasing public reservoirs that have served generations for recreation, habitat, and civic heritage.

The Shaker Lakes were formally recognized by the National Park Service in 1980, decades before NEORS D introduced its "Regional Stormwater Management Program" and its self-created "Doan Brook Corridor." In legal and historic terms, this area is the Protected Horseshoe-Lower Lake Riparian Area — a contributing component of a federally protected historic district. That means NEORS D's "corridor overlay" arrived after this landscape was already protected. The district is now attempting to impose sewer-management works and engineered conveyance structures over an existing historic park system — the very landscape the National Register designation was meant to preserve.

And here is the real problem: NEORS D answers to no local electorate. It is a self-perpetuating utility district, created by statute and governed by an appointed board that is not elected by, nor directly accountable to, the residents whose lands and parks it affects. Its accountability runs upward to state auditors and permit offices — not outward to the communities it alters. That is the difference between human-scale stewardship and bureaucratic infrastructure control. The Shakers built their reservoirs to serve community purpose and local life; NEORS D operates as a mechanized drainage network that scrapes the living story from the land, leaving only function where residents once had place. Horseshoe Lake has earned the first kind of care, not the second.

In 2020, under a claimed "emergency," NEORS D breached the Horseshoe Lake dam and drained the reservoir without completing any required federal review under the National Historic Preservation Act. Since then, the drained basin has been left to deteriorate while sediment from the breach continues to migrate into Lower Lake, degrading both the

ecosystem and the historic setting. The result is heartbreaking — but not irreversible.

Horseshoe Lake is not dead. Its original contours, stonework, and mill-era design still exist beneath the surface. With lawful oversight and informed restoration, Horseshoe Lake can again serve as an open, reflective centerpiece within the protected Shaker Lakes landscape — a space shaped by community purpose, not utility engineering.

The federal Section 106 review required by the National Historic Preservation Act was never completed before NEORS D breached the Horseshoe Lake dam in 2020, though the law plainly requires that consultation occur before any action affecting a protected historic site. Both the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Ohio State Historic Preservation Office recognized federal involvement years ago, which should have triggered that review. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation has, to date, remained on the sidelines even as the site continues to deteriorate. It still has the opportunity to carry out its responsibility in good faith and in full view of the public — an outcome far better than one compelled after the fact. (For public comment, contact Section106@ohiohistory.org and ofap\_help@achp.gov.)

To reach that outcome, local governments must show due diligence, not deference. The Section 106 process guarantees communities a voice in federally linked projects that affect historic sites. That review should have begun years ago — and it must be completed before NEORS D proceeds with any further permanent work.

The mayors and councils of Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights owe the public and the City of Cleveland — which owns the land — full transparency. "Trusting" the sewer district is not oversight. Rubber-stamping NEORS D's plan to replace a historic reservoir with constructed containment zones would sacrifice both history and habitat.

Our communities have stood up for these lakes before. The 1970 Freeway Fight saved the Shaker Lakes from being buried under concrete. The challenge now is to bring sunlight and accountability to those who would bury them under neglect — to the unelected sewer district that answers to no community, and to the elected officials who too readily defer to it. True public stewardship demands daylight, diligence, and the courage to ask hard questions of those who act in our name.

Write to your elected officials, the Ohio State Historic Preservation Office (Section106@ohiohistory.org), and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ofap\_help@achp.gov). Urge them to require a full, retroactive Section 106 review before NEORS D takes another irreversible step. That review must include a genuine alternative: restoration of Horseshoe Lake as an open, historic feature within its original landscape.

This isn't over. The Shaker Lakes need you — now.

*Erin R. Flanagan is an attorney and long-time resident of Cleveland Heights. A Board Member of Friends of Horseshoe Lake, she writes about the intersection of infrastructure, accountability, and the public trust in American governance.*

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# Shaker Heights School District's Early Learning Center opens at former Ludlow School

Photos by Mary Ann Kovach



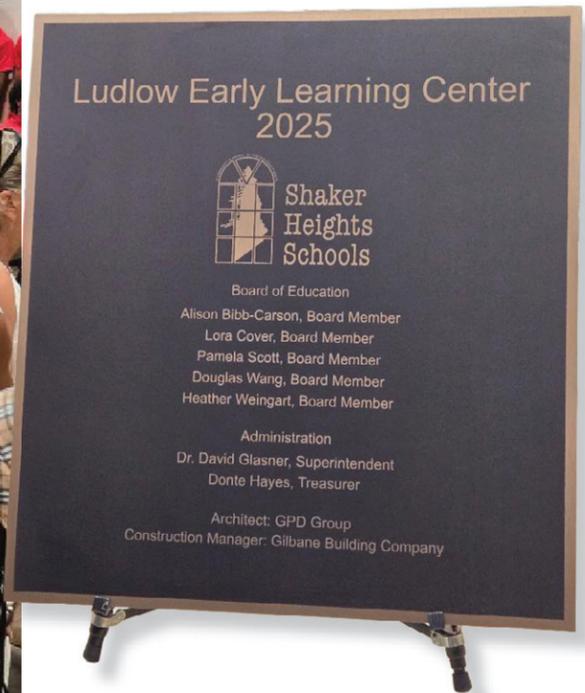
Ludlow School alumni gather for a class photo to celebrate the reopening of the school.



Special guests included Ludlow alumnus and Federal Court Judge Daniel A. Polster with his mother Elinor Polster. She is the last surviving founder of the Ludlow Community Association.



A full house of Ludlow neighbors, alumni, and Shaker Heights City Schools administrators and students gather for a dedication ceremony and open house on Sept. 12.



New signage for the Ludlow Early Learning Center.

## Retail

# Strong Bindery breathes new life into old books

By Grant Segall

It's sometimes cheaper and easier to buy a new copy of a book than to repair an old one.

But the new one wouldn't be the same.

"People want *their* book," says Ellen Strong of Strong Bindery (strongbindery.net), which recently moved to 13005 Larchmere Blvd. "They've put themselves into their book."

They might have pored over it, highlighted it, scribbled in its margins, added photos to it or sketched a family tree there. It might bear an author's autograph or a loved one's inscription.

For about 55 of her 80 years, Ellen Strong has been practicing the increasingly rare craft of rebinding and repairing books, magazines, diaries, posters and other paper media. She also makes journals, notebooks, labels, boxes, sleeves, and lapel pins in the shape of books.

Strong likes to say, "Every book is different." She has repaired covers as small as about a square inch and as big as about 6 square feet. She has restored a book from 1537 and made new books by binding manuscripts. She has charged anywhere from \$10 to \$10,000, though usually between \$50 and \$250.

Strong has two full-time employees and two part-time ones. Employee Kelly

Pontoni recently spent four to five hours per page repairing the 110 pages of a 1930 issue of the *Architectural Review of the Mississippi Basin* devoted to Walker & Weeks, the Cleveland architects of the Cleveland Main Public Library, Public Auditorium and other local landmarks. She bathed and pressed each page twice. She soaked bits of similar fiber, mashed them together, and attached one bit at a time to the badly worn corners. (See photo accompanying article.)

Strong was born Ellen Strong Hauserman and dropped the surname for business. Her brother, Martin Hauserman, is another expert in old texts, having spent 35 years as Cleveland's city archivist.

Strong has lived all her life in Cleveland Heights except for a few years at Marquette University and in New York City. She worked at Cleveland's Publix Books and started restoring books there. She co-founded Coventry Books in 1972, and closed the store in 1985. Now she binds books for other sellers, librarians and individual owners.

For 20 years, Strong Bindery was located at the Murray Hill Galleries. Then it moved into a room at Loganberry Books, crammed with presses, shears, bone folders and other tools. Now the two businesses are side by side. Loganberry hires Strong for tough repair jobs.

Why do books go bad? Blame bookworms, dust, mold, mildew, spills, acid in paper, extreme temperature, extreme humidity, and too much love. Also blame harmful repairs with tape, glue or rubber cement.

Despite radio, television and the internet, physical books remain popular.

"Books are always going to be around," says Strong. "Here at Loganberry, kids are getting stacks of books. It's almost like it skipped a generation."

Satisfied customers include former Pittsburgh Mayor Thomas Murphy. "What a great job you did on the latest stamp album!" he messaged her this summer.

For local customer Ron Kisner, Strong has put new covers on old books and repaired his childhood Bible. "She's working away, doing amazing things," he says. "These books are coming to life again."

How long will Strong keep binding? She says, "I expect to die with a bone folder in my hand."

Will the business outlive its childless



Photo courtesy of Strong Bindery



A before and after image of two pages of a 1930 journal about Cleveland architects Walker and Weeks, repaired by Strong Bindery.

owner? "I hope so. We have some ideas. But that's another chapter."

An earlier version of this article was published August 26, 2025, on *The Land's* website: [thelandcle.org/stories/even-in-the-digital-age-clevelands-ellen-strong-still-binds-books/](http://thelandcle.org/stories/even-in-the-digital-age-clevelands-ellen-strong-still-binds-books/)

# Heard Around the Square

By Margaret Simon

Now that my circadian rhythms are finally back in sync after that “extra” hour from Daylight Saving Time, it’s time to turn my attention to the holidays. Whether it’s giving thanks in November, celebrating generosity in December, or coming together in community service and justice through January and February, there’s no shortage of opportunities offered by our neighbors around the Square.

First, a thank-you and a welcome. Many thanks to **Chris Ball**, former editor of *The SHAD Connection*, and a warm welcome to **Andrea C. Turner**, the new editor. Turner is principal of ACT One Communications, specializing in public and media relations, digital marketing, campaign messaging, social media strategy, web development, video scriptwriting, freelance journalism, book editing, and benefit event photography. (*Whew! Does she sleep?*) She’s also a freelance writer and photographer for *Currents* newspaper and former managing editor of the *Heights Observer*. You can reach her at [act\\_one@sbcglobal.net](mailto:act_one@sbcglobal.net) with the subject line “SHAD Connection.” Welcome aboard!

It was a hockey “who’s who” at the Celebration of Life for Southington Road’s late **Byron (“Byro”) Wallace** last October at the Cleveland Skating Club. Many of “the boys” he coached in baseball and hockey traveled near and far to honor him, his wife **Jan**, and “his kids” **Chris, Jennie, and Matt**.

Condolences to **Tania Menesse** and her family on the death of her father, **Noel Menesse**. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to the Cleveland Institute of Music or City Music.

Looking for inspiration? Meet **Andre Norman** on Wednesday, Nov. 19, from 6-8 p.m. at the Cleveland Public Library’s Martin Luther King Branch.

The author of *Ambassador of Hope* chronicles his journey from incarceration to Harvard – a powerful testament to transformation, resilience, and purpose. He’ll discuss how communities can prevent youth incarceration, support justice-impacted families, and build safer, more hopeful futures for youth.

*More inspiration for little ones:* On Saturday, Dec. 6, from 10:30-11:30 a.m. at Shaker Main Library, children can build a snowman with author/illustrator **Jashar Awan**. Enjoy a reading of his book *I’m Going to Build a Snowman* and make a special snowman craft.

*Kick off your holiday season* with the **Larchmere Stroll**, Nov. 28-30. Merchants up and down the boulevard will feature special offerings to celebrate. Loganberry Books will serve cookies, cider, and holiday cheer in its pop-up gift shop, Otis’ Old Curiosity Shop.

The kind folks at Plymouth Church will sponsor their annual **Sugar Plum Workshop** from 9-11:30 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 6. Adults and teens can help kids make affordable, memorable gifts for their families.

City Councilwoman **Tenille N. Kaus** reminds residents that the City of Shaker Heights has compiled a list of resources for those experiencing food insecurity. For an up-to-date list, visit: <https://bit.ly/FoodinSH>

If you love the outdoors, don’t miss the **Nature Center’s Winter Solstice Luminary Walk & Holiday Market** on Dec. 12 at 5:30 p.m. Celebrate the season with a stroll along the illuminated All Peoples’ Trail boardwalk, then warm up around the bonfire where both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages will be available for sale. Help light the night by donating large, clean glass jars (think marinara or sauce jars) for luminaries.

*Kudos* to the 15 Shaker Heights High School seniors recognized in the 2025 National Merit Scholarship Program. Semifinalists: **Olivia Cavallo**,

**Nathaniel Price, Lara Sesenoglu-Laird, Kyle Szalay, and Neko Tien**. Commended Students: **Julienne Avril, Sarah Holbrook, Isaac Hren, Ezra Phillips, Kelsey Rogers, Audrey Steinmetz, Eli Stollfuss, Alison Teeter, Parisa Tendulkar, and Caro Ziv**.

If you thought PTO stood for “Paid Time Off,” think again! So many generous school-age parents give their time and talents for all students’ benefit. PTO leaders deserve all the help they can get, so if one of these PTO Presidents calls—please say yes:

**Richard Cissell** (Boulevard), **Sara Chengelis** and **Kyle Stimpert** (Fernway), **Leah Markowicz** and **Samantha Ciriaco** (Lomond), **Jennifer Rosenstein** (Mercer), **Meghan Jordan** and **Cheri Dellelo** (Onaway), **Jen March-Wackers** (Woodbury), **Erin Stockdale** and **Julia Sifford** (Shaker Middle School), **Meghan Breitzmann** and **Lisa Hopkins** (Shaker Heights High School), and **Kristina Gobel** (PTO Council). (*And just FYI—none of these folks are getting paid or taking any time off!*)

Last October, the Rotary Club of the Heights of Greater Cleveland honored Shaker Heights first responders at Fire Station #1 on Chagrin Blvd. for exemplifying the Club’s motto, *Service Above Self*. **Sergeant William Wedeking** of the Shaker Heights Police Department was named 2024 Police Officer of the Year, and **Firefighter Connor Groh** of the Shaker Heights Fire Department was named 2024 Firefighter of the Year.

Friends of the Shaker Library sorting maven **Stephanie Jonas** missed the Fall Book Sale to recover from shoulder surgery, but that didn’t stop **Melanie Cornelius** from shouldering the load of staffing the five-day event filled with bargains on books, CDs, and DVDs. If you missed the sale (Nov. 12–16), you can browse the Friends’ Never-ending Book Sale at both the Main Library and

Bertram Woods branch. Want to get involved? Come to a Volunteer Interest Meeting from 10-11:30 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 31, at the Main Library to learn about opportunities for adults over 18. Coffee and donuts will be served! Call 216.991.2030 to reserve your spot.

In April 1964, as a tenth-grader, she joined 95% of Black students across the district in protesting school segregation. Now **Dr. Donna McIntyre Whyte** will share the story of that boycott and the broader fight for equality in Cleveland schools. Join her for “The History of the Civil Rights Movement to Desegregate Public Schools in Cleveland,” Sunday, Feb. 8, 2026, from 2-3 p.m. at the Main Library, followed by a reception featuring the African American Quilt & Doll Guild and their creative quilt exhibit.

*Save the date!* The 34th Annual “**A Night for the Red & White**” will be held March 14, 2026, at the Agora Theatre and Ballroom, featuring Gumbo Dance Party.

Kudos to **Sarah Gutin Barsman**, who received the 2025 March of Dimes Nurse Award for her work at the Cleveland Clinic as a Neonatal Nurse Practitioner (NNP) in the NICU, Developmental Clinic for premies and the Fetal Care Center. It also honored her work as faculty director at Case Western Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing in the NNP Program, training the next generation.

Finally, bundle up, circle the Square, and give thanks. Celebrate generosity. Come together in community service ... and keep your ears open for me.

Email news items to [heardaroundthesquare@gmail.com](mailto:heardaroundthesquare@gmail.com).

## Arts and culture

# Public art projects create a sense of place on Buckeye Road

Stories and photos by Chris Ball

Josiah Britt creates public art, but he doesn’t shy away from criticism of projects in marginalized neighborhoods with countless pressing needs. In fact, he embraces it.

“Public art is place making,” said Britt, head of the nonprofit arts engagement organization CollectivExpress ([collectivexpress.org](http://collectivexpress.org)).

“It creates third spaces and celebrates culture,” he said. “And whenever you can do that, in neighborhoods that are seen as not being people’s ‘first choice,’ their identity is shifted.”

“This is true whether it’s a mural on a wall or a statue in a park, like Trumpet Man Plaza on Buckeye Road,” he said. “It certainly creates a sense of home and cultural identity that people can really take pride in where they live and who they are,” he added.

Britt serves as project manager for two Buckeye Road art projects nearing

completion. One is on the Huntington Bank branch wall at East 117th Street. The other is a pair of crosswalk murals at East 128th Street. He’s conscious of critics who say the money could be better spent in other ways.

“You always hear, you know, rumblings about that kind of stuff because while it is true, it’s not true. It’s both. No matter how much money we throw at certain issues, it’s not going to be solved overnight. So does that mean that we should go without everything until we’ve solved structural racism and infant mortality and police brutality and black on black violence and all these things? There’s obviously a hierarchy of issues, hunger and housing and so on and so forth.”

But these won’t be solved quickly, Britt said. “And so in the meantime, you do have to create a sense of place.”

“Art and culture are part of the solution,” he said. “Because people’s morale will quickly drop

if they have nothing to be proud of, nothing to celebrate.”

Not everyone sees the big picture this way, but that doesn’t frustrate Britt, 42. “No, not me personally,” he said. “I think that tension is necessary. I think it keeps everybody honest. So I don’t mind it at all. You know, you see certain years and certain waves of progress in one direction or another. And then it seems to swing like a pendulum and come back the other way. So I think that that kind of give and take is necessary, and if we can all just keep a level head, everyone gets the thing that’s burning in their heart.”

And the critics? “Those voices are necessary too,” he said. “It’s inclusive then.”

The crosswalk mural project has taken a year, but Britt doesn’t mind. “Because the odds are so stacked up against these projects, most of them don’t come to fruition at all,” he said. “So as long as it’s moving ahead, even at a snail’s pace, I’m happy with that.”

The first step is coming up with a concept. “You have to dream up a project with no funding, normally, and then have to try to get the money to pull it off. And that’s where I’d say 75% of them die right there. If you’re lucky enough to get the funding, then you may have to go around and ask for the permissions and hope that the political landscape is the same as when you started up. So we lose a lot of projects at that point, too.”

Mural artists need to please bureaucracies and building owners. “That’s why a lot of artists work on canvases,” he said. “When you have your canvas, you just do whatever you want, and then you later find the buyer. So this is the opposite. You find a location, and now you’re trying to get everybody on board with a concept.”



See Crosswalk murals near finish line after long and winding road page 6

# Crosswalk murals near finish line after long and winding road Continued from page 5

Stories and photos by Chris Ball

Josiah Britt has helped create many murals in Cleveland, but he never had to worry about tire marks before.

Now he's directing traffic as two murals are painted in crosswalks at intersections, on either end of a one-block stretch of East 128th Street. One is at busy Buckeye Road, while the other is north at Drexmore Road, south of the parking lot behind Shaker Square's Atlas Cinemas.

The black-and-white designs, with a hint of color, celebrate African heritage, tying in with the adjoining Amos Norwood Park, with its mural of famous African Americans.

Britt came up with the concept a year ago. As project manager, he steered the two crosswalk murals around various hurdles before paint could hit pavement in October. In addition to needing the usual Citywide Design and Review Committee and City Planning Commission approvals, these bookend murals had to pass muster with the city's Division of Traffic Engineering. No lettering was allowed, because it might distract drivers.

"We are trying to be very respectful of the safety and the traffic considerations here," Britt said.

So out went the African proverbs Britt had envisioned using. In came geometric shapes. The result is an "Afro-futurist version of Kente cloth with Adinkra symbols," he said.

"The ones we're highlighting are the community symbol, the symbol for strength, and then the symbol for love and understanding," said lead artist Lacy Talley.

Britt set up engagement stations to gather community input in May at Cleveland Public Library's Rice branch. The East 128th Street Block Club, headed by Robert Render III, had final say on the design. Render took the lead on the permit process and raised nearly \$15,000 for the project, which includes new signs. St. Luke's Foundation was the major donor, Render said, with Neighborhood Connections chipping in as well.

East 128th Street runs one way northbound and ends with a right-turn-only onto Drexmore. The quiet residential street seems like it would not get a lot of traffic. That would be an incorrect assumption.

"This is quite a challenging intersection," Britt said. "A lot of people come down this way." Traffic cones block one side during painting, but some drivers think the entire road is closed.

"We've seen a couple of cars turn around, even though it's one way, and go back. And I'm standing out here trying to play traffic cop and guide them in."

"That wasn't the worst of it," he said. "We've seen our cones run over a couple of times by larger vehicles. And we've seen a couple of idiots just speed right through as if nothing's happening at all. And then the most egregious of all was today. We had two cars see us out here working and still trying to enter the wrong way and loop around us. And each time they've done that, it's at the exact same time one or more cars is coming this way."

Traffic laws don't faze some drivers. "Your odds of getting caught are low," Britt said. "And they're not going to let an art project stop them from cutting through here."

A young man was arrested on a gun charge five feet from them as they were painting, Britt said. "The last thing we heard [from him] before the cops got him, he was asking us, 'What is this? What does this mean?' And we didn't even have time to fully answer before two cops jumped out and had him against the wall right there."

With the first mural, the paint didn't adhere to the road properly. So they had to redo the completed work with different paint.

"Despite all the bumps in the road, it's worth it," Britt said. "When we're out there, the amount of people that stop and just receive joy from seeing it down there and ask a whole series of questions: 'What is this? And who sent you all out here to do this? And thank you so much. There's abandoned buildings around here, and this community needs something to be hopeful about.' So we hear it all."



Robert Render III (left), Lacy Talley and Josiah Britt study a mural in Amos Norwood Park of famous African Americans on March 31, as preparation for a crosswalk mural.



Lead artist Lacy Talley paints a mural crosswalk at East 128th Street and Drexmore Road on Oct. 9.



Christa Freehands and Marquel Hawkins use rollers to apply a foundation of paint on the side of Huntington Bank's Buckeye Road branch Oct. 9.



A mural in progress on the east wall of Huntington Bank at East 117th Street and Buckeye Road.

## Bank mural urges Buckeye residents to circulate money locally

By Chris Ball

The side of a bank seems like a natural place to paint a mural about money. It's also a good spot for artist Christa Freehands' advice about keeping money in your community.

Freehands' winning design now adorns the east wall of Huntington Bank's branch at Buckeye Road and East 117th Street. When the branch reopened a year ago after intense community lobbying, the bank agreed to pay for the mural. Freehands' team did most of the painting in October, and a community unveiling is planned for mid-November.

On the left side, children operate a lemonade stand. On the right, someone makes money doing yard work. In the middle, kids sell candy door-to-door. But the mural's theme goes beyond entrepreneurship, Freehand said.

"It's about having a healthier

relationship with making money, how to spend your money, and the community exchange of money. A lot of communities thrive better when you spend your money within your community," she said.

Freehands has lived all over Cleveland and now resides in Cleveland Heights. "Most of the time, if I'm spending money, I try to stay within the parameters of my neighborhood," she said. "I'll come over here because it's still close enough to affect how my neighborhood moves. So I'll spend money in this area or even on Larchmere or Shaker Square, because those are close enough to have positive effects on my neighborhood."

She hopes the mural will encourage residents to exchange money with each other whenever possible in the Buckeye neighborhood, which has seen decades of disinvestment. "Keep the dollar bill floating in the area, so that it's not just always leaving. It

might seem like it's leaving, but you're putting it back into the community."

It's another way of thinking about money. "If I keep it traveling within my community, it's going to have a positive effect on where I live and those around me," she said.

"So it's like mainly not even just being an entrepreneur, it's just the mindset, just understanding, having a different relationship with money."

Freehands hopes the mural inspires children. The artwork features kids and resembles a children's storybook.

"It's just giving light to those opportunities so that kids understand like, hey, if I want something, I can figure

out how to get it," she said. "Like, maybe there's something I could sell or maybe there's a service I can provide. So, just educating them on that aspect, especially since it's the side of a bank. If you're making your own money when you're young, even if it's just a little

bit, it just gives you a better understanding of finances and how things work."

Directly across East 117th Street from the mural is another one featuring a giant image of author Maya Angelou. But that didn't influence Freehands' design, she said.

"I'm very excited to be directly across from that mural, but no."

Freehands is on Instagram: @freehandschris

**"It's about having a healthier relationship with making money, how to spend your money, and the community exchange of money."**

**- Christa Freehands**

# Editor's Notebook

Story and photos by Andrea C. Turner



Photo by Andrea C. Turner

Moreland-area resident Ali Black reads from her book, *We Look Better Alive*, at the Cleveland Arts Prize (CAP) ceremony on Oct. 22, at Tri-C East. The anthology is dedicated to Black women and girls in Cleveland that have died needlessly. She received the Emerging Artist Prize for Literature.



Photo courtesy of Jason Vieaux

Classical guitarist and Larchmere resident, Jason Vieaux, was awarded the CAP Mid-Career Artist Prize for Music. Vieaux's versatile and acclaimed renditions of Bach, jazz, pop, and contemporary music have earned him performances with 100 orchestras.



Photo courtesy of Cleveland Port Authority

Shaker Heights native Jeff Epstein was named President and CEO of the Port of Cleveland in September. Epstein began in the role on Oct. 15. He brings more than two decades of experience in

economic development, public-private partnerships, and transformative urban investment. Epstein formerly served as Chief of Integrated Development for the City of Cleveland under Mayor Bibb. Prior to that, he served as Executive Director of Midtown Cleveland Inc. and the Cleveland Health Tech Corridor.

The Hanna Perkins Center for Child Development, 19910 Malvern Road in Shaker Heights, received a \$100,000 gift from Sheldon & Terry Adelman in honor of retired CEO Karen Baer at the non-profit's Harvest Homecoming benefit on Oct. 4.

## Hello Readers,



I've enjoyed writing the *Up and Down the Boulevard* column this past year, but it's been an honor to take on the role of Editor of the SHAD Connection newspaper beginning with this issue. While it will be tough to follow in former editor Chris Ball's footsteps, I'm excited to continue his quality work of elevating the paper – making it a relevant source of hyperlocal news and giving voice to the community and neighborhoods we serve. If you have story ideas or are interested in being a writer for the paper, please e-mail me at [act\\_one@sbcglobal.net](mailto:act_one@sbcglobal.net) with the subject line: *SHAD Connection*. Thank you!

Sincerely, Andrea C. Turner

*Andrea C. Turner*



BEFORE

Photo by Andrea C. Turner



AFTER

Photo by Chris Ball

*Farewell to the obsolete Van Aken Plaza. The two-story structure (2742-2782 Van Aken Blvd.) was demolished on Oct. 23. Cleveland Neighborhood Progress believes the area will be opened up for new development opportunities.*



Photo courtesy of St. Paul's Episcopal Church

The Rev. T.J. Freeman and his family On Aug. 1, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 2747 Fairmount Blvd. in Cleveland Heights named The Rev'd T.J. Freeman as its 17th Rector. T.J. and his wife of 15 years, Annie, their two school-age children, and golden retriever relocated to Shaker Heights from Ft. Wayne, Indiana. The Freeman children are attending Shaker public schools. Freeman succeeded Rev. Jeanne Leinbach, who re-located to the Boston area.



*Volunteer Nancy Moore and Mo Drinkard, Ph.D., Executive Director of Doan Brook Watershed Partnership, educate residents about maintaining a cleaner, healthier Doan Brook, a waterway that leads to Lake Erie.*

The Doan Brook Watershed Partnership's Take to the Lake event took place on Aug. 23 on Lower Shaker Lake. Folks in canoes, kayaks and on paddleboards took advantage of the once-a-year opportunity for boating recreation on the lake, all while sampling bites from food trucks, and learning about eco-conservation of our natural surroundings.



*Boaters paddle on the smooth water of Lower Shaker Lake.*

The beloved Cleveland Garlic Festival attracted thousands to Shaker Square to spotlight our region's garlic growers and the delicious foods that result from it. Proceeds from the weekend festival helped fund food assistance programs like SNAP, WIC, Produce Perks, and senior vouchers at the North Union Farmers Market.



*All ages relax and enjoy the festival's music and activities.*



*Garlic vendors hawk their fresh goods and wares at the Garlic Festival.*

## Kids enjoyed the fun at this summer's Circus on the Square



**“Circus on the Square was all about celebrating community, creating joyful memories, and showcasing the incredible energy of the historic district. It was a chance for neighbors and families from across Cleveland to come together and experience everything that makes Shaker Square such a special place.”**

**- Tania Menesse, CEO, Cleveland Neighborhood Progress**

Photos courtesy of Shark & Minnow.

Year-round events like the North Union Farmers Market and Summer Concert Series bring thousands of visitors, and potential customers, to Shaker Square. *To learn more about available leasing space, visit [shakersquare.com/leasing](http://shakersquare.com/leasing).*



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### Crime Prevention

# New Era Cleveland works to deescalate violence, strengthen community

Story and photo by Isaac Imas

### Hood-to-Hood events serve residents' needs

A truck stuffed with food and toys rolls down East 118th Street, blasting music. Behind it, a flurry of activity extends down the block. College students with clipboards knock on residents' doors, asking what they may need and relaying information to "runners," who swoop in with bags of fresh produce, hygiene kits, and toys. A trash cleanup crew makes quick work of clearing debris in the streets and in people's yards, while an 11-year-old joyfully chants into a megaphone to keep the energy up. Joined by a City Council candidate, at least two puppies, and a growing tail of neighborhood kids doing bike wheelies, a spontaneous Conga line forms. It all feels like a slow-moving block party.

This was the scene of a Hood-to-Hood event staged Sept. 27 by New Era Cleveland, a mudroots violence intervention and community support organization serving neighborhoods around Buckeye, where they opened a "one-stop shop" community clubhouse earlier this year.

Austreeia Everson, who helms the organization alongside Antoine Tolbert, widely known as Chairman Fahiem, explained that the monthly Hood-to-Hoods serve a dual purpose: delivering essential resources right to Buckeye residents' doorsteps, and calling on them to get involved in their community. The reactions she gets from residents tell her she's reaching them.

"When people see it, they start crying," Everson said. "We get all different types of responses because they haven't seen positive Black unity in so long."

The Hood-to-Hoods are a flagship New Era program. But the initiative



*New Era Cleveland volunteers form a Conga line while delivering needed supplies to Buckeye-area neighbors during its Hood-to-Hood event.*

that's attracted the most attention isn't their food and toy distributions, neighborhood cleanups, community brunches, summer camp or juvenile detention programs, their Safe Zone Business Partnership, or even their collaboration with law enforcement to track down missing kids – it's their community engagement walks.

### Funding from Saint Luke's Foundation

New Era conducts weekly armed patrols, or Community Engagement Walks, in high-crime neighborhoods to deter violence, act as first responders to crises, and connect with residents to determine what support they need. In 2024 the patrols landed New Era a \$150,000 grant from Saint Luke's Foundation, earmarked for funding the elite and trauma response team, after the foundation received community feedback praising the patrols as an alternative pathway for mediating conflict – one focused on deescalation and prevention rather than criminalization.

### Jury acquits in gas station controversy

The Engagement Walks came under intense scrutiny this summer when New Era leaders were tried on 15 criminal counts related to a dispute with local gas station owners – and found not guilty by a jury on all 15 counts. Tolbert argues that prosecutors' (ultimately unsuccessful) framing of the patrols as gang-adjacent violent posturing ignored the function of the patrols, in favor of racialized fear mongering.

"The perception of a threat came solely from us being on the premises with guns," Tolbert said. "Who are these Black people with guns in this crime-ridden neighborhood? There is no way possible they could be here to do good.' That's the culture that we're pushing to change."

The trial gave them ample opportunity to set the record straight. Everson explained that New Era started doing community engagement walks not to assert authority over their neighborhoods, but in response to residents' needs that were going unmet.

"Residents ask us all the time, 'Who are we supposed to call to help us? We done called the police.' So they call us. And I think that it gives our communities an extra layer of protection because they know somebody cares."

*See New Era Cleveland works to deescalate violence, strengthen community, page 10*

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## Local Entrepreneurs

# Robotic street-painting is brainchild of Shaker Square resident

By Benjamin Sperry

Back in 2017, two friends sat in a bar talking over beers. Sam Bell, an automotive systems technician and businessman, had just wrapped up a frustrating experience having served on a transportation advisory committee in Cleveland Heights. He vented his distress to his table mate, Wyatt Newman.

The committee, Bell reported, had haggled endlessly over a proposed design and re-striping of Noble Road in the city's north end. In his view, the project was sure to be too expensive, too dangerous and too impractical. He pointed in particular to the labor content – teams of workers in fluorescent yellow shirts bending over and holding paintbrushes and stencils for hours in the sun as cars whiz by. The Noble project was about to be done the same cumbersome unimaginative way as had been done for decades.

Bell took a sip. "Would it have been possible to do this differently?" he asked Newman, a robotics expert and at the time a professor at Case Western Reserve University (CWRU). The question was not rhetorical, not to these two practically-minded friends. "In painting and striping a road, is it in fact possible to use robots?" Newman leaned forward, paused and broke into a slight smile. "Yes," was his answer.

Thus was born the idea for RoadPrintz, Inc., a now-fledgling company the two men started eight years ago which operates out of the former White Motor complex on Bittern Avenue on Cleveland's East Side. Newman, a Shaker Courts resident since 2011, has the title of Chief Technology Officer. Bell, RoadPrintz President, was the long-time owner of The Lusty Wrench, an auto repair shop on Lee Road in Cleveland Heights.

RoadPrintz modifies large Ford F-550 flatbed trucks adding robotic equipment connected to containers of quick-drying paint to create the various signs you see every day on paved roads, typically in yellow or white. The signs might read "school," or "slow," or indicate a handicap space, or display a bike lane icon, or perhaps show an arrow directing traffic to turn left or right. In RoadPrintz's system,

the painting process is controlled by the driver operating a computer set up in the truck's cab.

The idea seems so simple, to bring mechanization, speed, and safety to the rather rote and routine painting functions that city, county and state transportation departments have to perform on roads constantly.

Simple in concept, but highly complex in execution. The trucks, once purchased from Ford, need first to be customized, a job currently performed by a firm in Akron. Then, once the up-fitted vehicle is shipped to Cleveland, the robotics and software are added. That whole process can take up to five months and the finished vehicles, or what RoadPrintz calls the "Electra" system, sell for about \$500,000 apiece. On a typical workday, Newman, Bell, and a

small team of standout former CWRU electrical engineering and robotics students now on the RoadPrintz staff toil over wiring problems and complex design issues.

This is at some distance from the academic classrooms and the research laboratories where Newman spent the bulk of his career in highly specialized robotics-related fields including mechatronics, informatics, and computational intelligence. After 34 years on the CWRU faculty, including several semesters teaching "unrewarding" COVID-imposed virtual classes, he took a buyout in 2022 to devote himself full time to RoadPrintz.

The company is showing definite signs of "ramping up," Newman says. There is the innovation award at a recent conference of the American Traffic Safety Services Association, the invitation to show videos of the Electra system in action at an upcoming National League of Cities meeting, an order for a vehicle from the Missouri Department of Transportation, grants from the National Science Foundation among other prominent sources, and talk of adding more technicians and even sales people to their team. At an open house on September 25, the company hosted an array of public officials touting the company's future. "Friends in local government are important for many reasons," Newman noted. "We'd like Cleveland to be the first city in the country to purchase one of our systems."

**The idea is simple: bring mechanization, speed, and safety to road painting.**



Photos courtesy of RoadPrintz.

RoadPrintz trucks feature a robotic arm that paints street signage. The signs are programmed by the driver inside the truck's cab.

## Sale of apartment buildings to result in \$5 million in repairs

Continued from page 1



Photo courtesy of GoogleMaps

The Residences at 12701 Shaker Blvd., as well as The Vista at 12500-12600 Shaker Blvd. have been sold to The Lenox at Shaker Square LLC.

"For the tenants to have a safe and healthy place to live, that's what we're after," said Meg Weingart, the group's convener.

The sale needed the permission of Cleveland Housing Court Judge W. Moná Scott who placed the buildings under the court's control for four years. That was after the owner failed to make dozens of court-ordered repairs and pay back taxes and utilities.

New York investor Michael Chetrit, using a holding company, purchased the buildings for \$12.4 million in January 2022.

Tenants and city officials were already concerned about living conditions at that time and living conditions did not improve after Chetrit took over. In February 2023, Ward 4 Councilwoman Deborah Gray went to New York City to pressure Chetrit's company to make repairs.

At the time, Gray said, "We're sick and tired of them (tenants) not having heat, water, and [experiencing] electrical problems – just deplorable conditions."

At a news conference, Council President Blaine Griffin said, "As a landlord you have a responsibility to keep your tenants warm, safe and dry," adding the landlord "struck out" in all three of those categories.

Despite pressure from city officials, Chetrit completed few repairs. His lawyers fought the housing court's orders, even appealing Scott's order, disputing her legal right to order repairs and place the buildings under court supervision.

The Chetrit family's real estate empire – which once included part ownership of Chicago's Willis Tower – has been under financial

pressure. Crain's New York Business newspaper reported earlier this year that their companies had defaulted on \$1.6 billion worth of debt, with an additional \$300 million at risk.

Chetrit's \$9.7 million mortgage on the three Shaker Boulevard buildings from New York's Metropolitan Commercial Bank also was in arrears.

The bank was instrumental in finding a new owner for the properties. He is Martin N. Shkreli, founder of New York City's Alba Construction which has a long-time relationship with the bank.

When lawyers for the city and Chetrit jointly asked Scott to approve the sale, their filing states it "represents the best possible outcome for these properties."

The sale will resolve loan default issues between Chetrit's interests and the bank, the joint court filing noted.

Shkreli set up a holding company – The Lenox at Shaker Square LLC – to own the buildings. He hired Progressive Urban Property Management in Ohio City to manage the buildings.

Before the settlement was announced, the Morelands Group and tenant leader Anderson Waldon met Shkreli via a Zoom call.

Weingart said group members "felt the plan, as presented, met the key conditions needed to protect tenants."

"We've also met with the new property management team and are encouraged by their early engagement and commitment to collaboration with tenants. We are now working to schedule a meeting between tenant leaders and management to begin that partnership."



Cleveland City Council Members Deborah Gray (far left), Stephanie House-Jones (2nd from right) and Council President Blaine Griffin (far right) greet RoadPrintz Co-Founders Sam Bell (2nd from left) and Wyatt Newman (center) at a September open house.

# Up and Down the Boulevard

Photos courtesy of Instagram.



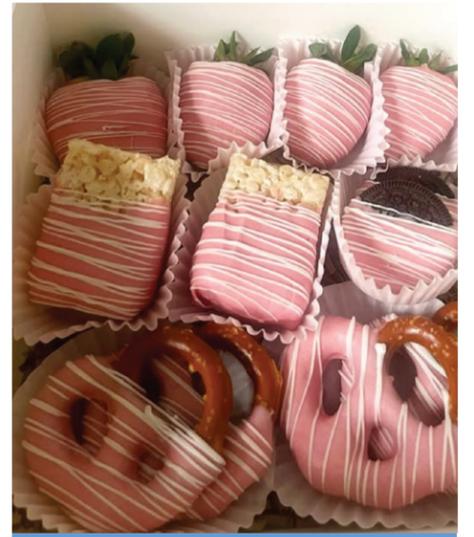
ArtAffect & Familyography



Fiddlehead Gallery Craft Night



Sha'Ran Dance Studio



The Original Makery

By Kevin McLaughlin

The season of lights finds Larchmere bustling again—craft nights, book events, wine dinners, and new collaborations that make the boulevard glow through winter.

## Adun Spice Co.

(12721 Larchmere Blvd., 216.200.6367) Celebrating its first year on Larchmere, Adun Spice Co. offers small-batch spice blends that bring bold, global flavor to home cooking. As the holidays approach, stop in for aromatic gifts that brighten any meal. Their Cookbook Club opens for registration in late December and begins in January 2026. Hurry, seats sell out fast.

## Fiddlehead Gallery

(12736 Larchmere Blvd., 216.231.9400) Keeps the creative spirit alive with First Friday Craft Nights through the end of the year, where visitors can make ornaments or small gifts for \$10. Make a Scrap Fabric Tree on Dec. 5, from 5-8 p.m. The Winter Schedule for Craft Night CHANGES to Sunday afternoons from 1-4 p.m. \$20 each craft. Make Crafty Creature Pins on Jan. 18, and Love Shrines on Feb. 15.

## Scorpacciata Pasta Co.

(13051 Larchmere Blvd., 216.279.9800) Plans a lively season of special dinners – a Spirit-Free Tasting Dinner on Jan. 13 for Dry January, and a Valentine's Wine Dinner on Feb. 24.

## Loganberry Books

(13015 Larchmere Blvd., 216.795.9800) Celebrate the holidays with its Larchmere Holiday Stroll (Nov. 28-30), featuring

author signings, cider, and the reopening of its popular gift shop. More festivities follow with a Holiday Open House (Dec. 11) and Jólábókaflóð read-in (Dec. 17).

## Academy Tavern

(12800 Larchmere Blvd., 216.229.1171) The winter lineup includes Trivia Tuesdays (8-10 p.m.), an Ugly Christmas Sweater Party on Dec. 20, and a New Year's Eve bash on Dec. 31, with DJ and champagne toast.

## Fine Points Inc.

(12602 Larchmere Blvd., 216.229.6644) Remains a haven for knitters and makers. Owner Liz Tekus curates unique yarns and creative workshops that warm the hands and the spirit.

## Strong Bindery

(13005 Larchmere Blvd., 216.231.0001) Continues the art of preservation, restoring books in cloth, paper, and leather, or crafting protective boxes for treasured volumes.

## Literary Cleveland

(13002 Larchmere Blvd., 216.400.9488) This creative writing center empowers people to explore other voices and discover their own. Through an expanding roster of multi-level classes, workshops and events, it assists writers and readers at all stages of development, promotes new and existing literature of the highest quality, and advances Northeast Ohio as a vital center of diverse voices and visions. Literary Cleveland and Ohio Humanities are planning a yearlong statewide celebration of Toni Morrison in Ohio. Details at <https://ohiocelebratetonimorrison.org/>

## Sha'Ran Studios

(12812 Larchmere Blvd., 216.403.0456) Has opened a bright new space for dance, movement, and wellness classes. The studio can also be rented for creative gatherings and events.

## UnBAR Café

(12635 Larchmere Blvd., 216.293.4480) Expands its concept with The Larchmere Wine House, a collaboration between owner Melissa Garrett-Hirsch and restaurateur Christopher King – a cozy new lounge serving wine, tapas, and conversation. Garrett-Hirsch is also joining forces of Café Indigo with Chrissy Clowtis of Psychopomp Café at Shaker Square for upcoming cultural events.

## Poppy

(12502 Larchmere Blvd., 216.415.5069) The festivities continue with themed pop-up bars: Chill opens Nov. 22 with holiday cocktails, followed by the Valentine-themed Be Mine in February 2026. Monday wine dinners remain a monthly tradition.

## Familyography

(12805 Larchmere Blvd., 216.417.0130) Familyography recently opened in the Larchmere neighborhood – its third location. In business for over 16 years, Familyography offers top of the line services to digitize photos, slides, negatives, film, videotape and audio recordings at an affordable price. To celebrate the opening of its newest store, mention this article and receive 20% off your first order. Preserve your family memories now. (Offer good thru Dec. 15.)

## ArtAffect Gallery

(Also located at 12805 Larchmere Blvd., 216.396.3587) Newly opened ArtAffect seeks to promote and sell the work of talented local artists. The Grand Opening of this new Gallery is on Dec. 6, from 6-9 pm. For more info, go to [instagram.com/@artaffectcle](https://instagram.com/@artaffectcle)

## The Original Makery

(12732 Larchmere Blvd., 216.937.9729) Samone Senevoravong opened her brick-and-mortar eat-and-paint sanctuary this past summer. Specializing in chocolate-covered strawberries handcrafted by Ari Gibson, this creative space offers painting classes and after-hours events designed to inspire creativity. Call to sign up for Thursday night workshops from 6-8 p.m. Nov. 13: Origami & Paint, \$10; Nov. 20: Turkey Painting, \$10; Dec. 4: Kaws Bear Painting, \$20; Dec. 11: Ornaments Decor, \$10; Dec. 18: Christmas Ornaments Painting, \$10. Students receive 10% off.

## The Powerhouse Vintage Collective

(13010 Larchmere Blvd.) Long-time vintage retailers Monarch Boutique and Eclectic Eccentric have collaborated to move to this newly repurposed shared location. Six other vendors including Oma Vintage have joined the space, making it a destination for vintage shoppers.

From craft nights to cozy nights out, Larchmere proves once again that good taste, good stories, and good neighbors make the best kind of winter warmth.

E-mail news tips to Kevin McLaughlin at [kmclaugh24@yahoo.com](mailto:kmclaugh24@yahoo.com)

## New Era Cleveland works to deescalate violence, strengthen community

Continued from page 8

### Deescalation, mitigation, and firearm safety

Drawing on her seven years of service in the Marine Corps and training as a social worker, Everson trains New Era members in deescalation, mitigation, and firearm safety. Rather than taking on violent crime, they aim to address “those gaps of care that [police] are not equipped to handle.”

“We’re not trying to deal with murders and robbery – we leave that to the police,” Everson said. “But the civil things, the domestic things, the things about our youth – we do have the expertise in addressing those things.”

An equally important function of the patrols is harm reduction through

education. In neighborhoods with high rates of gun violence, patrol members model firearm safety — a crucial intervention especially for young people who are already carrying weapons.

“We model what positive gun ownership looks like, what it means to be a protector in your community, versus being a destroyer of your community,” Everson said. “And our kids need to see that, because right now they’re only seeing these young boys in music videos, shooting up places. And that’s what they’re thinking honor looks like.”

For months leading up to the trial, the pending criminal charges

had restricted New Era’s ability to conduct engagement walks. And during the trial itself, their summer programming ground to a complete halt.

### Forming coalitions of support

Despite the lost opportunities, New Era emerged from the trial with a newly forged coalition of organizations and individuals who’d rallied around them – or who’d encountered them for the first time and wanted to get involved.

Student activists from Cleveland State and Case Western Reserve University sat in the gallery nearly every day of the trial. Members of the Cleveland Palestine Advocacy Community, Boricua Libre, and the

Party for Socialism and Liberation came to hear testimony and show support. And an intern on New Era’s legal defense team, a student at Case Western, recruited his cross-country teammates to volunteer with the organization. These were the people New Era mobilized to carry out their September Hood-to-Hood.

“Everybody that was here today, we all been through something together that fortified that relationship,” Tolbert said after the event. “This is what community looks like. It’s not just one particular race, one particular ideology – it’s a combination of all these things mixed together that’s defining our culture.”

## After two-year wait, Batuqui opens in new location

Continued from page 1

Batuqui's menu has the same authenticity as before, with dishes drawn from the owners' hometowns in Brazil's Bahia and Minas Gerais regions.

For starters, the cocktails include caipirinha, the national cocktail of Brazil made with cachaça, a liquor similar to rum but made with fermented fresh cane sugar juice but without molasses used in rum.

Classic Brazilian entrees include long-simmering stews: moqueca baiana (fish or vegetarian), feijoada (black beans with Brazilian sausage and locally sourced pork and beef cuts) and xim xim (chicken with coconut milk and carrots).

Batista said her husband is the master of steaks and other meats, while

she handles the seafood menu that includes mariscada (a mixture including calamari, mussels, crabmeat and shrimp) and pan-seared wild salmon.

Steak dishes include picanha acebolada (with onions) and churrasco de picanha (grilled). Both are traditional Brazilian steakhouse cuts of tri-tip sirloin, served with pinto beans, rice and farofa made from toasted cassava flour.

Batista and Nogueira met 20 years ago in Cleveland when they were chefs at Brazilian restaurants. Nogueira was at the now-closed Brasa Grill in Cleveland's Warehouse District, and Batista worked with Sergio Abramof, a trailblazing chef with restaurants at Shaker Square and University Circle.



Batuqui's new main floor dining room

Nogueira soon joined Abramof's team and the three were planning a new restaurant before Abramof died 13 years ago and his restaurants closed.

In May 2015, the couple opened their first restaurant together in the repurposed house at 12706 Larchmere Blvd. Batuqui, meaning "sound of drums" and pronounced "baa-too-kee," has thrived, drawing patrons from Northeast Ohio, Columbus and Pittsburgh.

In June 2021, they opened a second Batuqui in a restored Victorian house in downtown Chagrin Falls. Two years ago, they began planning their recent move.

As diners approach the newest Batuqui, they are greeted by colorful ribbons tied to the front gate enclosing the 40-seat patio. These bonfim wish ribbons are linked to a Catholic church

in Brazil and are a nod to the power of prayer in healing. On Larchmere, the colorful ribbons welcome patrons as they climb two sets of steps to the restaurant.

Inside, curtains on the stained-glass windows are multicolored Brazilian fishermen nets, adding drama as light filters through their open weave. The main floor dining room seems vast, with tables cozily arranged. A round table in the former sanctuary seats up to eight and the area can be shuttered for privacy.

A former confessional box is now a sink in a tranquil room where patrons can wash their hands, a Brazilian custom, Batista said.

At the back of the downstairs dining/event room is a mercadinho, or mini-market, that sells Brazilian products and Batuqui carryout foods.

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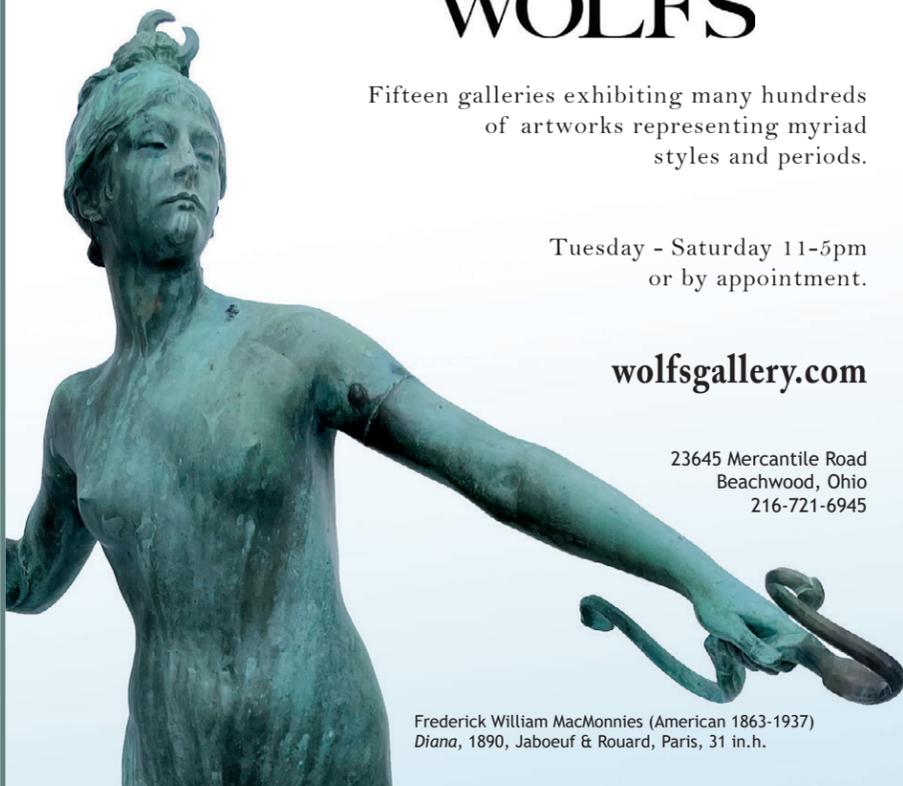
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Frederick William MacMonnies (American 1863-1937)  
Diana, 1890, Jaboulet & Rouard, Paris, 31 in. h.

## Arts and culture

# Arts group paints the town

Story and photos by Mary Ann Kovach

Shaker Arts Council (SHAC) unveiled its nine latest decorated utility boxes at the Shaker Square Farmers Market on Sept. 13. André Taylor, President of the SHAC Board of Directors, introduced artists whose work were chosen for various utility boxes in Shaker Heights and Shaker Square.

The box located at the west end of the center lawn, titled "Fair Night," was

introduced along with designer Renée Parker Boyle. Photos of the additional newly-wrapped boxes were also on display.

SHAC has been beautifying the grey utility boxes in Shaker Heights since 2016, choosing designs from submissions by professional artists. If you're motoring, walking or biking around beautiful Shaker Heights, look for these colorful gems! Or take a virtual tour of the boxes at [shakerartscouncil.org/public-art-tour.html](http://shakerartscouncil.org/public-art-tour.html).



André Taylor with artists Nancy Schwartz-Katz, Renée Parker Boyle, Sandra Graubard, and Pam Spremulli, whose artwork were chosen for various utility boxes.



Renée Parker Boyle with her design, "Fair Night," on Shaker Square's utility box.

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# Holiday Gift Guide

By Kevin McLaughlin

Holiday shopping doesn't have to mean big-box parking lots, overnight shipping scrambles, or supporting tech billionaires. Our Annual Holiday Gift Guide brings together thoughtful finds from unique businesses, locally made, and affordably-priced under \$100. Support neighborhood shops, discover something special, and **spread a little Larchmere cheer this season.**

*Happy Shopping!*

Photos courtesy of the businesses listed.



## Adun Spice Co.

Sample Kits offer an easy, delicious way to try new spice blends — perfect as a hostess gift, stocking stuffer, or flavorful introduction to the shop's global seasonings. Several curated sets available.

**Price: \$22 each.**



## Fiddlehead Gallery

The Lucky Cup Line by The Bowl Maker. Colorful ceramic mugs with thumb indents.

**Price: \$32-\$38.**



## Scorpacciata Pasta Co.

Gift cards in any amount, perfect for pasta lovers.

**Price: \$10 & up.**



## Academy Tavern

Gift cards starting at \$25, the perfect stocking stuffer for trivia buffs and regulars alike.

**Price: \$25 & up.**



## Fine Points Inc.

Cozy knit hats, scarves, and hand warmers.

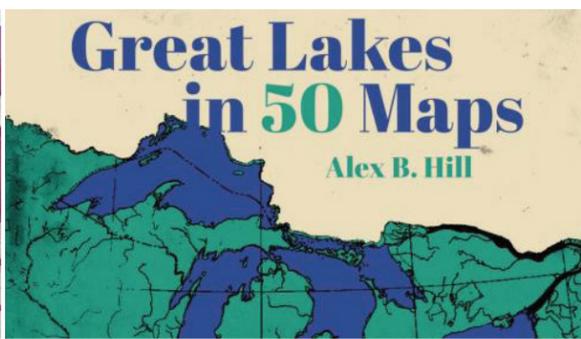
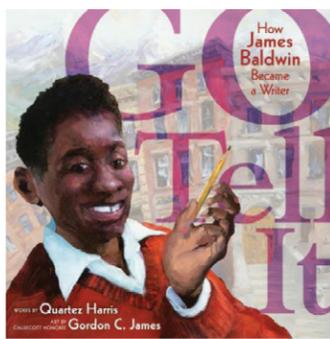
**Price: \$24-\$45.** Or a gift certificate.

**Price: \$25-\$200.**



## Loganberry Books

Books for every reader — *Go Tell It: How James Baldwin Became a Writer* by Quartez Harris. **Price: \$18.99.** *Great Lakes in 50 Maps* by Alex B. Hill. **Price: \$30.**



## UnBAR Café

Signature black cotton t-shirt printed with UnBAR's positive slogan. **Price: \$20.**

## Sha'Ran Studios

Rent the studio for a private event, class, or celebration.



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