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98th YEAR NO. 22

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2021

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FREE

Send us your chili recipes!

There IS a National Chili Day and it is the last day of this month, Feb. 28. To honor National Chili Day we'd like our readers to email us their favorite chili recipes which will be featured in the Feb. 24 edition of The Neighborhood News.



Judging from the frigid weather we've been having lately in northeast Ohio, it's also a good time to put those chili recipes to good use, so fire up the slow cooker and enjoy a big bowl of comfort food!

Valley View Council news

The Village of Valley View Council met on Feb. 2 and welcomed newly appointed Councilman Ken Pytlak, who was administered the oath of office on Jan. 10. He fills the unexpired term through Dec. 31, 2023, of Councilman David Wingenfeld, who passed away last December.



Councilman Ken Pytlak

Mayor Jerry Piasecki noted in his address to council that there were many positive events going on in the village even with the pandemic, like the acquisition of a fire truck and new police cruisers.

"And congratulations are in order for K-9 Max and Officer Rick Crumbley," he noted. "Last month they were certified in Narcotic Detection, Special Purpose K-9 Evidence Search and Special Purpose K-9 Tracking."

The following ordinances were among those passed at the meeting:

- To appropriate for current expenses and other expenditures of the village during the fiscal year ending Dec. 31, 2021;
- To take all actions necessary to accept Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council's 2021 Energized Community grant funds;
- To enter into a contract with the Valley View Firefighters IAFF Local 2634;
- To authorize the village to make an offer to purchase the property at 8430 Fosdick Rd. at a cost of \$149,959.38 as part of the FEMA HMGP DR-4360.21R-OH Program.

(Continued on Page 2)

I-77 north ramp closed

The following closure will be in place this Friday, Feb. 19, at 6 p.m., through Monday, Feb. 22, at 5 a.m. for bridge deck repairs.

I-77 north to I-490 west

The detour will be I-77 north to E. 30th St./Woodland Ave. to I-77 south to I-490 west.

Broadway Ave. to I-490 west

The detour will be Broadway Ave. to E. 30th St./Woodland Ave. to I-77 south to I-490 west.

WINTER WEATHER WOES



Snowy conditions caused all sorts of problems for area motorists Monday night into Tuesday morning. Garfield Heights police are investigating an accident mid-morning yesterday when a city snow plow truck traveling east on Garfield Blvd. struck a vehicle traveling north on E. 86th St., according to Deputy Chief Mark Kaye. Neither driver appeared to be injured.

Photo by Elena Psenicka

Mustang wrestlers win 10th consecutive L.E.L. title

The Maple Heights High School wrestling team turned the page on a solid decade of Lake Erie League championships last Saturday, Feb. 13, with a resounding victory over six opponents.

The Mustangs tallied 202 points to easily outdistance runner-up Shaker Heights with 98.5 points, Garfield Heights with 69 points, Lorain with 60 points, Bedford with 42.5 points, Shaw with 24 points and Warrensville Heights with 22 points.

The 10 consecutive league championships surpasses the previous school record set by legendary Mike Milkovich, Sr. from 1964-1972 in the old Greater Cleveland Conference.

Winning individual titles for Maple were Jayshawn Eggleton, Khaleal Rasheed, Jhaleal Rasheed, Daniel Eggleton, Christian Edge, Curtis Jenkins and Steven Gardner.

Finishing as runners-up in their respective weight classes were Abijah Cummings-Byrd, Vontez Tyus, Terry Murphy, Kaden Pulley, Duwon Williams and Devin Jones.

Coach Jamie Milkovich's Mustangs are currently 18-3 in dual meets and will finish off their season with matches against Garfield Heights and Trinity this Saturday, Feb. 20, before heading to the St. Edward Sectional the following weekend.

New Garfield Hts. school board member appointed

The Garfield Heights Board of Education met on Monday, Feb. 8, in a special session and appointed Heather Morrison to fill the unexpired term of board member Christine Kitson, who resigned from the board on Jan. 19.



Morrison

According to Garfield Heights City Schools Treasurer Allen Sluka, Morrison was selected from a field of five candidates. She is a mother in the district and is very active with the schools. Her term will expire at the end of this year.

"I am very excited to join this great group of people and help ensure that every student meets their full potential and will be successful upon graduation," Morrison said.

Sluka also said the board discussed plans for the hybrid learning model which will see students back inside their classrooms for at least part of the time beginning March 1.

Neighborhood News online

Neighborhood News readers can now get their favorite newspaper on the web at: theneighborhoodnews.com. The entire newspaper is available on the N.N. website every Wednesday morning and can be read in Adobe Acrobat. Just click on the front page to download the remaining pages.

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Valley View Council news

(Continued from Page 1)

The following purchases were authorized:

- 2021 Ford police vehicle with emergency equipment and graphics at a total cost of \$44,170.95;
- \$22,000 for the Youth Softball and Baseball Program;
- Renew the HVAC contract at the safety center with Geopfert Co. at a cost of \$4,371;
- Advertise for bids for a new garbage truck, approximate cost \$200,000;
- Upgrade the electrical service at the Village Hall at a cost of \$7,481;
- Hire a traffic engineer for the proposed Scannell Project at a cost not to exceed \$15,000.

Council also approved Mayor Piasecki's appointment of Scott Jones as a member of the EDG Committee for a two-year term.

G.H. residents can still apply for community committee

The mayor's office of the city of Garfield Heights is continuing to accept letters of interest and resumes from residents for its newly revamped Community Relations Committee.

Duties of the members include advising city council and officials in fields of community and diversity, promoting communication and understanding between institutions, citizens and citizen groups in the community, improving equity of opportunity in government, education, employment and housing in the community, and conducting research and studies in the fields of community and diversity in an effort to lessen prejudice and discrimination.

Those interested in applying for a committee position are asked to send a letter to: Office of the Mayor of Garfield Heights, Attention: J. Duber, 5407 Turney Rd., Garfield Heights, OH 44125.

Letters can also be emailed to Jduber@garfieldhts.org. Deadline is Feb. 28, 2021.

Cuy. Hts. Council update

The Village of Cuyahoga Heights Council met in regular session last Wednesday, Feb. 10, and in a short meeting passed just two pieces of legislation.

The first was for the routine monthly pay resolution and the other was an ordinance to accept the Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council 2021 Energized Community Grant funds.

The next meeting of village council is scheduled for March 10.

Get COVID-19 vaccine info at county library

The Cuyahoga County Public Library recognizes that there is an overwhelming amount of information out there about Phase 1B COVID-19 vaccinations, and they want Cuyahoga County residents to know they are here to help.

Call your local Cuyahoga County Public Library branch if you need assistance with any of the following:

- Finding a vaccination provider
- Registering for a vaccination appointment
- Preregistering for a vaccination appointment at University Hospitals

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Slavic Village effort takes HIV prevention to neighborhood level

(Editor's Note: This story is provided by ideastream as part of special community coverage of COVID-19 and funded by Third Federal Foundation and University Settlement.)

By Rachel Dissell

On a crisp fall day, a small group of masked community researchers fanned out on the streets of Slavic Village to ask residents a few questions about their sex lives.

The effort was one part of a plan to understand why the Cleveland neighborhood has seen higher levels of new HIV cases diagnosed over the past five years, despite an overall downward trend in Cuyahoga County. The clipboard-toting volunteers also popped into local stores to record condom prices and availability.

The Slavic Village ZIP code, which also includes the Union-Miles neighborhood, was one of two in the county to report 50 or more new HIV diagnoses between 2015 and 2019, according to the most recent Ohio's HIV Surveillance program. (The other ZIP code, 44102, includes the Detroit Shoreway and Edgewater neighborhoods.)

Slavic Village's hyper-local response to the rise in cases, aided by a \$25,000 AIDS Funding Collaborative grant, mirrors a national trend in prevention and treatment efforts, which until recently were orchestrated at the city or metro level.

It also means combatting two viruses at once: HIV, which has lingered stubbornly for decades, and the coronavirus that has ripped through a neighborhood already exhausted from efforts to tackle cycles of generational poverty, food insecurity and low literacy.

Viruses don't respect neighborhood boundaries, but learning more about how HIV is being transmitted in Slavic Village is key to tailoring a prevention strategy, said Bob Eckhart, a public health practitioner who has worked on HIV prevention and treatment and AIDS services since the 1980s, when he helped catalyze the local and national response.

Hearing from the community

Though it can be awkward to ask questions about a person's sex life or what protection they use, hearing directly from residents helps to avoid assumptions, said Autumn Franz, a recent John Carroll University graduate who helped to organize the community "research mob" and collect surveys from about 50 residents to learn more about how often they use protection during sex.

It's particularly important in Black communities, where it can be harder to come out as gay or bisexual, or where transgender women of color are not always part of the

conversation, Franz said.

Another challenge is figuring out who can help pay for and deliver prevention messages and services to the neighborhood's 22,000 or so residents, many of whom are low income.

When Eckhart started reaching out to interview community leaders, most were surprised to hear HIV infections were on the rise.

"People haven't thought about AIDS and HIV in a long time," he said. What he heard was 'we just didn't know.'"

One thing, though, was clear: Residents don't want people to come in from outside the neighborhood to address the issue.

That makes sense to Gary Scofinsky, who has called Slavic Village home since 1995. Despite all of its pressing problems, it's a place that has a strong network of neighbors who take care of their own, he said.

Scofinsky is known for his massive garden operation, which provides vegetables like kohlrabi and eggplant for neighbors, and jalapenos for employees at the nearby Dollar General, where he often shops.

The 54-year-old, who has lived with HIV for more than two decades, believes one way to raise awareness might be to use neighbor networks to pass out literature and condoms, particularly to younger residents who might be harder to reach or who aren't openly gay or bisexual and have concerns about people passing judgment on them.

Scofinsky also thinks there should be more outreach at local drug rehabilitation centers. Often, he said, people are careful about needle sharing but not as cautious about unprotected sex when drinking and using drugs.

Scofinsky, who is partially paralyzed due to a violent physical attack decades ago, says he has mostly stayed inside during the pandemic. But once it is safe, he'd

volunteer to hand out condoms or answer questions at community events.

"There's a lot of people who know me," he said. "They might hear it coming from me."

Local voices key

Information gleaned from community research can be invaluable, said John Barnes, executive director of Funders Concerned About AIDS.

For a variety of reasons it is harder to give federal money to small neighborhood groups. The formulas used to measure the problem and dole out the money have also disadvantaged communities with new or emerging outbreaks, he said.

In some ways, the work to eradicate HIV has been hampered by strides in treating the virus. "The success of treatments and prevention strategies have lessened the sense of urgency," Barnes said, though the people currently at the highest risk for infection are among the most marginalized.

The grant to University Settlement was one of the first the Cleveland AIDS Funding Collaborative gave for a "neighborhood deep dive," said Julie Patterson, director of the collaborative.

It has since awarded "catalyst" grants to several other community or neighborhood organizations that might not qualify for larger federal grants with more rules and restrictions, Patterson said.

Brainstorming solutions

COVID-19 halted the door-to-door part of the community research as infections climbed this fall and winter, so

(Continued on Page 7)



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Community police reports

CLEVELAND

Shootings

•On Feb. 12, at 10:18 p.m., a 46-year-old man was conveyed by private auto to St. Vincent Charity Hospital with a gunshot wound to the leg, which occurred on Fleet Ave. The victim said he was getting into his car when someone drove by his house, slowed down and shot at him. The suspect is unknown.

•On Feb. 13, at 2:15 a.m., a shooting occurred at E. 49 St. and McBride Ave. A 33-year-old man suffered a gunshot wound to the leg. EMS transported the victim to MetroHealth Medical Center, and was combative with EMS personnel and intoxicated.

•On Feb. 15, at 4:27 p.m., a 28-year-old male was shot in the right shoulder at E. 71st St./Harvard Ave. Victim reported he was traveling in a friend's vehicle at the time of the shooting and did not see who shot him. He was transported to the hospital in a private auto.

Foreign Agency Pursuit

On Feb. 13, at 9:36 p.m., East Cleveland police chased a vehicle into Cleveland that ended in a three-car crash with injuries at Broadway and Harvard aves.

Crash

On Feb 15, at 10:45 a.m., a three-car accident occurred at 4175 E. 131 St., when one

of the cars hit a pole and caught fire. Two victims were transported to the hospital.

GARFIELD HTS.

Burglary

On Jan. 31, at about 8:15 p.m., officers were dispatched to the 9700 block of South Highland for a burglary report. The caller said she had walked into her kitchen to find an unknown black male standing in the middle of the room. The male fled the house on foot and headed north, across South Highland toward the McCracken-E. 94 St. area. Police immediately began tracking fresh shoe prints

in the snow originating from the caller's home. They saw the suspect as he headed north on E. 90 St., crossing Garfield Blvd., but he refused to obey police orders to stop. A Bedford K-9 and his handler continued track-

ing the suspect, eventually ending up on Macomb, where the shoe prints led to the east entrance of a home in the 9000 block of Macomb. GHPD and Cleveland officers formed a perimeter around the resi-

dence. Police were able to take the suspect into custody and he gave them written permission to search his home. During the search they found a stolen ipad from a previous burglary. They also found the suspect's jacket and shoes at a side door landing which matched the shoe prints they had been tracking. Suspect was booked at GHPD jail and held on no bond for burglary and receiving stolen goods.

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Slavic Village effort takes HIV prevention

(Continued from Page 3)

the group went virtual, organizing a Zoom call recently with nearly a dozen residents: mothers, artists, health care workers, a young couple with a chubby-cheeked baby.

From their couches and kitchens, they brainstorm potential places where free condoms could be distrib-

uted in the community, such as the rapid transit station on E. 55th St. or a blood plasma donation center on Broadway Ave. They also discussed how to best weave conversations about sexual health into the fabric of neighborhood events that already exist.

While most agreed free

condoms should be widely available, they also thought opportunities for discreet testing would be helpful for those unwilling to get tested at a doctor's office or at the AIDS Task Force office, which features its name on a large sign over the door.

It's also essential to acknowledge men are in relationships with women and

have sex with other men on the "down low" because it is not culturally acceptable, said Mimi, 41, who runs a church-based group for mothers of all ages. (She asked that only her first name be used.)

The place to start, most agreed, was to raise awareness about how to prevent HIV and reduce the stigma of talking openly about it.

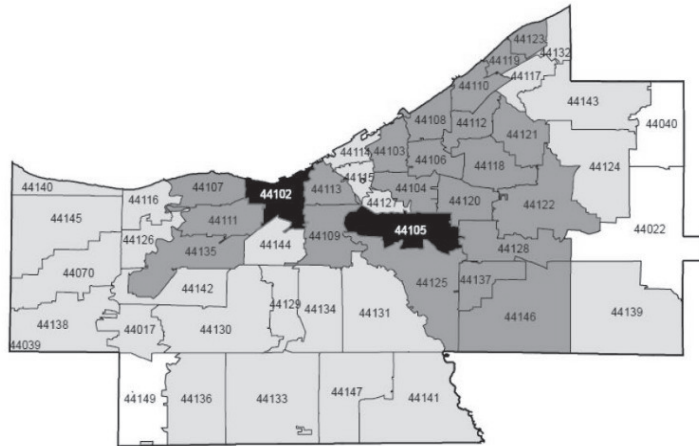
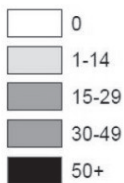
"People that I know have shut down and they have feared for their lives because people may get angry and treat them a certain way, and so they are scared to let people know what is going on," Tyra Jackson, 44, told the group.

"We know everybody is not going to be accepting," said Jackson, who last year started an outreach organization called "The Caring."

"But if we can get more people to be a little more welcoming, she said, "maybe we can make a difference and make people feel like they can come out and say, 'Hey, I have HIV.'"

Reported New Diagnoses of HIV by Zip Code, Cuyahoga County, 2015-2019

New Diagnoses, 2015-2019



Two Cleveland ZIP codes, 44102 and 44105, have the most new reported diagnoses of HIV between 2015 and 2019.

Ohio Department of Health HIV Surveillance program

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**CITY OF MAPLE HEIGHTS
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
PUBLIC NOTICE FOR OPEN POSITION**

Applications for the **City of Maple Heights Planning and Zoning Commission** will be available to qualified Maple Heights residents beginning **Wednesday, February 17, 2021** in the **Clerk of Council Office**, 5353 Lee Road, Maple Heights, Ohio, 44137, to fill one (1) open position for the term expiring **May 31, 2025**.

The Planning and Zoning Commission consists of five (5) qualified electors of the City not holding any other official position in the Municipality, who have resided in the City not less than two (2) years prior to appointment, and who shall retain such residency during their appointed term.

Completed application forms are to be submitted only to the **Clerk of Council Office**, Maple Heights City Hall, 5353 Lee Road, Maple Heights, Ohio, 44137. **The deadline for submission of said applications is by 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday March 3, 2021.** For further information, call the Clerk's office at (216) 587-9000.

Leonette Cicirella Johnson
Clerk of Council
City of Maple Heights

The Neighborhood News
February 17, 2021
February 24, 2021

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NEW QUAD CITY CERT MEMBERS

The QUAD CITY Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) welcomed six new members this month. The CERT program allows civilians and government employees to be trained to respond to an emergency to save lives. Independence, Brooklyn Heights, Seven Hills and Valley View comprise the QUAD CITY CERT. Surrounding communities are welcome to join.

Mayor Kurtz administered the State of Ohio Loyalty Oath to graduates: Lisa Umphrey, Anna Umphrey, Colleen Bennett, Kevin Nowak, Monica Bradley and Gina Co.



Back row, from left: Independence Fire Chief Steve Rega, Brooklyn Heights Fire Chief Joe Stefanko, Walt Ellert, Kevin Nowak. Middle row: Colleen Bennett, Gina Cook. Front row: Monica Bradley, Anna Umphrey, Lisa Umphrey, Independence Mayor Greg Kurtz.

Named to Dean's List at Muskingum U.

Sarah Piteo of Independence has been named to the Fall 2020 President's List at Muskingum University in New Concord, Ohio.

To be named to the President's List, students must earn a cumulative GPA of 3.90 or above on a minimum load of 12 completed semester hours of A-F graded coursework.

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All food distributions will be drive-through only until further notice.



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