“(Ricardo unearthed a worm) You see, that’s just a good sign, right here. You see this little worm, here? That’s why I don’t use any fertilizer here at all. No fertilizer because, essentially, you’re going to kill these little guys in here—these little worms that are right here. And when you see worms in the ground, that’s a healthy ground.”

...story on page 5
Featured Events at Forest City Brewery

**THE SWING TIME BIG BAND FEATURING AVA PRESTON**

Wednesday, June 15, 2022
7:00 PM - 10:00 PM
Forest City Brewery (2135 Columbus Rd.)

Bring your dancing shoes for a swing dance with Ava & The Swing Time Big Band! Plenty of room on the dance floor. Award-winning vocalist Ava Preston is appearing with Cleveland’s Swing Time Big Band.
- No Cover Charge
- Visit the Swing Time Big Band Facebook event for details.

**LAKE ERIE ROOTS COLLECTIVE**

Lake Erie Roots Collective

Wednesday, June 14, 2022
3:00 PM - 6:00 PM
Forest City Brewery (2135 Columbus Rd.)

Explore the magical time when country/rock evolved and emerged with talented local musicians Andrew Bonnis, Christine King, Anthony Papaleo and Anthony Tadeo in the Waldorf Beer Hall.
- Show is free, but a $10 donation is encouraged for the band.

**LAKE ERIE ROOTS COLLECTIVE**

Lake Erie Roots Collective

Friday, June 24, 2022
7:30 PM - 10:30 PM
Forest City Brewery (2135 Columbus Rd.)

The Pretentious Cleveland Portrait Artists are portrait artists who meet every Friday night to draw the portrait of whomever signed up to pose. No money is ever exchanged as the model poses for portraits. We are unique as we prefer to draw in front of the public, all the models come from the public, and the public is welcome to draw with us.
• Hosted in The Clubhouse every 4th Friday of the month.
• Join the group on Facebook to learn more.

**LAKE ERIE ROOTS COLLECTIVE**

Lake Erie Roots Collective

Sunday, June 19, 2022
3:00 PM - 6:00 PM
Forest City Brewery (2135 Columbus Rd.)

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Marco Alexander Salon
Opening July 5

A special report by The Tremonster

Have you ever wondered why salons charge more for a woman’s cut? Marco Alexander considered this question and many other gender-specific hair salon questions before deciding to launch his own salon, scheduled to open in Tremont on July 5th in The Lincoln (2410 Scranton Ave.). The Tremonster met up with Marco and his husband, Sean Szczepinski, at the new salon location, which was under construction at the time.

The Tremonster: It’s going to be called the Marco Alexander Salon?

Marco: Yes. Retail parking is going to be in the back of the building, so there are 42 units there and of those 42 units, four of them are EV charge. The tenants of the building have the garage parking. We all love Tremont, but parking is always an issue.

Marco: Which is what I love about this area. There’s street parking, of course.

The Tremonster: How did you decide to move to the Tremont neighborhood?

Marco: Sean and I started dating seven years ago. We were moving in together…

The Tremonster: —and I was in Gordon Square for over 10 years. I’ve always wanted to move to Tremont because I had family who lived here—the Catania family—Sammy Catania. My aunt Debbie married who lived here—the Catania family—formerly in Rocky River, now in Strongsville, and I graduated in 2009, and it all started from there. This dream came along with just making everybody feel equal and safe. We’re only doing gender-neutral hair cutting—there’s no men’s, there is no women’s— we’re only doing short, barber, medium-long length, or our long-advanced, so that everybody’s on an equal playing field. You’re paying for the time and the artistry. We’re not just stylists; we take it to the next level. That’s what we want people to feel like they’re in here. It’s going to be an elevated space, but we’ll put our all into whatever you can afford. That is Tremont. Because you have $90,000 houses and you have million-dollar houses.

The Tremonster: The space is under construction, but Scranton Ave. is showcased through the east-facing glass wall and through the giant windows to the south, the red brick wall of your neighbor, the Luminis Theater, home of Opera Cleveland.

Marco: We would walk this street to go from the Creamery to the Tappin, and this was always just an empty lot. What I love that SCA did with it, is they not only put a new building here, but they built it to grow into the landscape—especially with all the plants. They definitely invested in it. I don’t want to know that landscaping budget was [Marco and Sean laughed].

The Tremonster: You’re projecting opening in July?

Marco: Yeah. July 5th will be the first day. We will have this space beforehand, but due to holiday weekend, we’re not going to mess with the 4th of July.

The Tremonster: You’re going to be doing hair cutting?

Marco: Yeah, we’re projecting July 5th.

The Tremonster: You’re projecting opening in July?

Marco: Yeah. July 5th will be the first day. We will have this space beforehand, but due to holiday weekend, we’re not going to mess with the 4th of July.

The Tremonster: You’re going to be doing hair cutting?

Marco: Yes. [the development team of Sustainable Community Associates] announced that they were building The Lincoln. I reached out to Josh Rosen—

The Tremonster: —who is our neighbor.

Marco: —who is our neighbor. He reached out back and said, ‘How much space do you need?’ I started with saying I needed anywhere from 1,200 to 1,400 [square feet], and now I have 2,400 square feet.

The Tremonster: And a very Tremont story in itself—you live next to one of the developers.

Marco: Yes, the development team of Sustainable Community Associates is Josh and his friends, Naomi and Ben. Sean: They all met at Oberlin College.

The Tremonster: That’s nice. They’re SCA.

Marco: SCA has been very special to us for a long time. Then, when we had the opportunity to go into business with them, it worked.

The Tremonster: You knew you could trust going into business with SCA?

Marco: Tell Rich how long you wanted to stay in Tremont when we first moved here. Marco: When we first moved here, I was like, ‘Okay. We’re doing a year or two and then we’re out. I want to go back to Lakewood.’ Then, in our second week, we went to Prosperity Social Club, 1109 Starkweather Ave. on a Sunday, and we had the fried chicken dinner and the sangria special, and somebody was like, ‘You guys must live here; we’ve seen you a lot.’ I just loved the neighborhood feel, and then I never wanted to leave.

The Tremonster: You’ve been styling hair at a salon in Westlake, honing your trade. As look around, I see construction workers finishing a giant building space facing Scranton Ave. This seems like a dream coming to reality—tell us a little bit about that dream.

Marco: I’ve been doing hair going on 14 years and, honestly, it all started with my mom. I would stay in and flat-iron her hair and style her hair. Then, she finally was like, ‘Why aren’t you going to hair school?’ I was like, ‘No, I’ll never do hair. I’m going to be a culinary arts school. That was kind of like, meh [Marco and Sean belly-laughed]. But I love food—I love to eat it.

The Tremonster: You’re a very good cook, though.

Marco: I love to cook, but I like to cook within my home, not for the masses. Then, I went to New York...that’s been a standard. California has been a standard.

The Tremonster: New York, LA?

Marco: New York—that’s been a standard. California has been a standard. There is a website called The Dresscode Project. It’s actually sponsored by Pantene. The movement was started by Kristin Rankin, a woman whose salon wentgender neutral. She started the movement. The Dresscode Project—she was like, ‘This is how we need to do it so that everybody feels accepted’ and it was very inspirational used it as my template. I was like, ‘Well, how do I address this and this?’ Actually, I can’t even say we carry her Dresscode Project branding until The Dresscode Project branding does a full evaluation of the space.

The Tremonster: Tremont and Ohio City have a pretty unique ecosystem of salons—do you see Marco Alexander Salon fitting in to that mix?

Marco: Yes. There are other salons, but we also want to be involved with those other salons. We’re not only going to be a salon, but we are also going to be an education house. I think that opportunity for everyone to learn from everyone is just what the beauty industry has constantly been missing. Back in the ‘80s and early ‘90s, these permits would come out and all the salons within blocks would come out one salon, drink wine, have food, and practice the permits. In the 2000s, we branded ourselves and we said, ‘If you’re only Aveda, you stay there. If you do this, you stay there.’ And we became too exclusive. Now, we want to be more inclusive. So just because you’re not using the same hairspray as me doesn’t mean that you can’t cut the same haircut as me.

The Tremonster: So, Tremont salons could gather around the newest trends, share, and help each other in the new era?

Marco: And extending to City Heights. Because there’s great salons there, too. And we have the space and the parking lot to do it!
by Tremont Brainery

Born and raised in Cleveland, Franklin A. Stump, MD, MBA, moved out of Tremont at three years old but remained in Cleveland. A Central Catholic graduate (97), Franklin played football and earned a B.S. in Bio/Chem at Baldwin Wallace University and went on to become one of University of Cincinnati’s college of medicine in 2006. Franklin came back to earn his M.B.A. in Healthcare Administration from Baldwin-Wallace in 2021. He was a U.S. Army psychiatrist for 5 years in Hawaii, Georgia, Colorado, and Kuwait. Currently, Franklin conducts telehealth work with the VA.

Materials will be shared solely for the education of Tremont Brainery workshop attendees. This workshop is not intended as a replacement for medical diagnosis and/or treatment; the workshop and its question-and-answer session are meant only to educate our community about the importance of mental health.

Meet the Neighbors:
Jennifer and Chris Zellner

by Bruce Checefsky

Jennifer and Chris Zellner moved to Tremont three years ago after grabbing a drink at the Treehouse and falling in love with the neighborhood. They were living in Shaker Heights at the time. Tremont presented an opportunity to live in a walkable neighborhood. Both work from their home on W6th Street. Since moving to Tremont, they have reduced the number of cars they own from three to one and use e-bicycles when needed. Jennifer and Chris co-chair the Central Tremont Block Club. What do residents want?

Jennifer: To meet your neighbors.

Chris: To work with other block clubs on development projects where the boundaries might intersect and overlap. Those types of projects tend to draw a lot of interest from the community. We met at Roasted on Professor Avenue a few weeks ago with members of other block clubs to experience a new business in our neighborhood.

Jennifer: We have reached out to other block clubs to ask their advice on questions we might be trying to understand. I see a way for block club leaders like us to connect and help each other.

There are new development projects in Tremont like The Elliot on Kenilworth Ave, which is near completion, and Driftwood, a mixed-use, 99-unit market-rate apartment on Fairfield Avenue and West11th. Giancarlo Calicchia and Michael Nance propose a 6-story luxury apartment on the former Sokolowski’s University Inn restaurant property. What are your thoughts on those projects?

Chris: I have not met anyone that did not enjoy the Sokolowski experience. The good side of the project is the proposed retail and restaurant space. Retail space makes the community more dynamic. The Fairfield Avenue and West11th project has changed from a building people did not like to one very well received. The Elliot is great.

Jennifer: Street activation and retail spaces make for a vibrant neighborhood. Connecting the development project to the towpath will allow the community to experience that vibrancy. There were some details with the utility panels on the Driftwood project, but they have come back with a design resolution. J Roc Development included retail space on the ground floor. People want more mixed-use development.

Why should residents get involved with their block club?

Chris: To meet your neighbors.

Jennifer: It is a way to feel connected, makes friends, and stay informed about the community.
Fat Cats Chef-Owner Ricardo Sandoval, planting basil.

The Tremonster

At the end of May, the nation was introduced to Fat Cats (206 W. 10th St.) when our Tremont mainstay was featured on Guy Fieri’s popular Food Network show, Diners, Drive-ins and Dives. Although the national program did an excellent job of giving viewers a vicarious taste of Fat Cats, The Tremonster asked chef-owner Ricardo Sandoval for a deeper dive into one of the many stories behind Fat Cats—literally: Ricardo’s vegetable garden located directly behind the restaurant. The Tremonster met up with Ricardo behind Fat Cats recently to interview him as he dug into one of his great passions: planting the Fat Cats veggie garden.

The Tremonster: What are you planting today?

Ricardo: Well, I have oregano and basil, I try to plant not a garden just for vegetables and herbs, but I also want to grow stuff that helps. Milkweed is being demolished throughout the United States. For the monarch population, I planted milkweed here about six, seven years ago. It’s coming up everywhere. This is all milkweed for the monarchs. You see it all over. I have to dig it out and let it grow in the other areas. It just keeps seeding itself, but that’s okay. I love milkweed. We’ll see if this is the one in the back right by our house, and there used to be thousands of them there. Now, you’re lucky to see one. As far as this gardening, it’s just great. I just love it, altogether. I have radishes I want to plant. What have I got here? I’ve got some dill, as you see. The Tremonster: Speak to the dill, as far as when you think dill and Fat Cats—Ricardo: You can think of dill and salmon with pasta, like maybe a salmon carbonara. You can think dill in the pickles that we make. Dill in light sauces, and all the herbs you can basically use in salads, too. So, that’s always a great thing. And then, the basil, it speaks for itself. That’s like pasta and salad and stuff like mozzarella; all those are really, really good for basil. Then, oregano, it’s a little hardier (Ricardo dug out more milkweed for re-planting). But oregano is great for making chimichurri. I’ve got lovage over here…
The Tremonster: This is all stuff that grows great in Tremont—that any Tremmonster could grow themselves?

Ricardo: Yeah. Well, I would recommend because of the steel mill to build boxes. I build boxes, and I add to it every year. So, I have 100% organic manure that I put in here. Last year, I had a couple of trees cut down here. I had three trees here that were overshadowing the garden. The trees that I cut down, I replaced. So, it wasn’t like I lost anything…and they were ugly. I mean, the trees were like weed trees—so, they would never grow. He picked his daisies working so hard, building his clinic there…and he sold it and all.
The Tremonster: Yep, and did a lot for Tremont when he ran Gateway. People started coming from miles away to Tremont—out from the suburbs—they would come just for Dr. Brian.

Ricardo: Yeah. He was a rockstar. He was as much a rockstar vet as Michael Symon has been in the food business. The Tremonster: Absolutely.

Ricardo: Dr. Liz is over there now, and she’s great. She’s really nice, and she’s like a protege of Dr. Brian.
The Tremonster: Yes.

Ricardo: At the end of the day, his personality is so infectious; it’s sad, though. You’re happy and sad. You’re sad for selfish reasons. (Ricardo inspected garden soil after scooping some with his hand) See, another worm! See, when you start—when you find these babies, this is a good sign. There are some great books about worm management, really. That’s why you’ve got to make sure you take care of the soil. Don’t poison it, though. Poisoning it is the worst thing…

The Tremonster: This is a different basil you’re planting, now?

Ricardo: Yeah, this is a larger leaf basil that we’re planting right here. I have parsley over here, which you can use like a finishing product, which you can use like a finishing product to a dish because it stands out. Nice floral taste. And then you can make salsa verde with that as well or any other green sauce, really.
Eye on Ohio

Former PUCO Chair Texted He Knew FirstEnergy Charge was Likely Unlawful, but Company Would Keep Money Anyway

Texts about the $456 million charge may further undermine public confidence in the PUCO.

By Kathi M. Kowalski

This article is provided by Eye on Ohio, the nonprofit, nonpartisan Ohio Center for Journalism in partnership with the nonprofit Energy News Network. Please join the free mailing lists for Eye on Ohio or the Energy News Network, as this helps provide more public service reporting.

Newly disclosed texts from a former head of the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio suggest he knew a grid modernization charge that cost ratepayers nearly half a billion dollars was “likely to be found illegal and could not be refunded.”

Former PUCO Chair Asim Haque and former FirstEnergy Vice President Michael Dowling exchanged text messages on the same day the Supreme Court of Ohio held the charge unlawful. Challengers in the case had argued that the commission’s order imposing the charge basically had no strings attached to make FirstEnergy take any specific actions to modernize the grid.

At the same time, the court ruled against refunding the charge. By that time in 2019, Ohio ratepayers had spent roughly $456 million. Dowling texted: “And knowing that it would likely be found illegal and could not be refunded, I knew you would hold onto the funds,” Haque wrote.

The text suggests the ruling wasn’t a surprise to him and that the failure to provide for any refund in the 2016 order was deliberate.

The court ruling and text message exchange were in June 2019, more than two months after Haque’s resignation. Haque is now a vice president at grid operator PJM.

In an email response to Eye on Ohio and the Energy News Network, Haque maintains the exchange was a joke. But advocates for Ohio ratepayers aren’t laughing. “This is just wrong and improper on its face,” said Howard Learner, executive director of the Environmental Law & Policy Center.

The PUCO’s stated mission is “to assure adequate, safe and reliable utility services at fair prices, while facilitating access to adequate, safe and reliable utility services at fair prices, while facilitating access to adequate, safe and reliable utility services at fair prices, while facilitating access to adequate, safe and reliable utility services at fair prices. By that time in 2019, Ohio ratepayers had spent roughly $456 million.”

Learner added: “When you break down this, the first thing that [Haque] says is that he knew that his ruling was likely to be found illegal. And he made the ruling anyway,” said attorney Rob Kelter, also at the Environmental Law & Policy Center.

“The second part of it is that he knew the money couldn’t be refunded, and that part of his thinking was that he knew FirstEnergy would be able to hold onto the money because of the longstanding prohibition against retroactive ratemaking,” Kelter said.

“It speaks volumes about his integrity as chairman,” Kelter added.

A transcript of the texts was among thousands of pages FirstEnergy provided to the Office of the Ohio Consumers’ Counsel as part of an ongoing and protracted effort by the state’s consumer advocate to get materials relating to the ongoing House Bill 6 corruption scandal. The Energy News Network and Eye on Ohio received the document in response to a records request.

“Money wasn’t tracked Audits by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and by Daymark Energy Advisors released earlier this year found that FirstEnergy’s regulated utilities put the rider money into a money pool managed by an unregulated affiliate. After that, FirstEnergy failed to track how the funds were spent.”

“[G]iven the inability to trace how Rider DMR funds were spent, we cannot rule out certainty use of Rider DMR funds in support of the phaseout of H.B. 6,” Daymark wrote.

DMR stands for “distributed modernization rider.”

House Bill 6 is the 2019 law at the heart of Ohio’s ongoing corruption scandal. FirstEnergy has admitted that it and its affiliates paid roughly $59 million to dark money groups to benefit former Ohio House Speaker Larry Householder and others. In return, lawmakers passed the nuclear and coal bailout bill that also gutted Ohio’s clean energy standards. Additional actions by the dark money groups thwarted auditors’ efforts to track the spending, the Office of the Ohio Consumers’ Counsel and Ohio Manufacturers’ Association Energy Group have asked the PUCO to order restitution and impose penalties on FirstEnergy up to $1.4 billion dollars. The consumers’ counsel referenced the texts in its May 4 reply comments on the Daymark audit.

“Distressingly, we learned from FirstEnergy’s discovery responses that it apparently was known within the PUCO that the DMR charges would likely be found illegal and that, even so, FirstEnergy would get to hold onto the funds,” the filing said.

“Now the PUCO can right some of this wrong for two million Ohio consumers” by ordering substantial forfeitures and damages of $456 million, the filing concluded. That request is distinct from the refund request that the court ruled on three years ago.

Other questions:

“It’s up to Chair Randazzo now to find a path for you,” Haque also texted in 2019.

Haque may not have known about the $4.3 million FirstEnergy admitted paying to a company linked to Randazzo shortly before DeWine named him as PUCO chair in 2019. Haque likewise may not have known about the additional $18 million FirstEnergy paid to that company while Randazzo was representing a group of large industrial energy users in multiple cases before the PUCO, including the one that led to the unlawful rider.

Nonetheless, Haque’s comment raises a question about whether he thought part of his job at the PUCO had been “find a path” for FirstEnergy.

The PUCO’s stated mission is “to assure all residential and business consumers access to adequate, safe and reliable utility services at fair prices, while facilitating an environment that provides competitive choices.”

“Remember me fondly, my friend,” Haque also texted Dowling. “It was the regulator that annoyed you the most, that simultaneously gave you the most: DMR and grid modernization spend. I should have a small picture in memoriam in those hallowed halls in Akron,” likely a reference to FirstEnergy’s headquarters.

Dowling’s responses to that initial comment included a frowning emoji. “Are you talking about your just found to be illegal DMR?” Dowling asked.

That comment suggests the concept for the rider came from the PUCO. Support for that idea also comes from a 2016 FirstEnergy filing. It said the company liked the PUCO’s idea of a distribution modernization rider but wanted $585 million per year instead of the $131 million the PUCO suggested.

Haque’s last text on June 19, 2020, stated, “I’m kidding around with you albeit my timing is probably bad.” Nonetheless, he added, the DMR rider “was a lot of work so I feel bad it was overturned.”

“While I’m unable to comment on the text exchange itself, there are not photos of regulators hanging in our offices,” said FirstEnergy spokesperson Jennifer Young.

Haque also said “his response to Dowling about knowing, three years prior, how a 4-3 Ohio Supreme Court decision would turn out is purely sarcastic.” The rider was “infinitely smaller than what the company wanted, and they demanded. FirstEnergy was not pleased,” he added.

“I am proud of my work as a regulator in Ohio,” Haque concluded. “I have never been a subject of this investigation and I stand on my record in defending the interests of Ohio ratepayers.”

“I just think his words speak for themselves,” Kelter said.
Brian Kazy Releases Statement Prior to Council Vote on Name of Browns Stadium

by The Tremonster

Three days prior to Cleveland City Council’s vote on his proposed resolution calling for FirstEnergy to remove its name from the Browns Stadium, Cleveland City Council Representative Brian Kazy released a statement explaining the legislation.

The statement read:

The resolution I am sponsoring is self-explanatory. First Energy spent nearly $61 million to get Ohio HB 6 passed to secure a $1.3 billion dollar bailout by ratepayers for its nuclear power plants. A federal investigation led to felony charges in connection to the bribery scheme to influence state legislators to pass the legislation. FirstEnergy Corp. has agreed to pay a $230 million fine for its central role in a bribery scheme. A corruption trial on the issue is scheduled for early next year.

“This Council believes that First Energy applied political pressure using phony citizen groups and paid out significant dollars to restrict or destroy Cleveland Public Power and to influence or control this Council,” the resolution states. “That First Energy continues to market itself using the public’s taxpayer-funded stadium signifies its failure to fully acknowledge its criminal behavior and unintentionally implies community support for a criminal enterprise.”

Simply, I don’t believe that the municipally-owned stadium that the Cleveland Browns play in should bear the name of this tainted company. The sign, seen as people enter Cleveland, gives the impression that they represent the city. This is false.

FirstEnergy Releases Statement Vowing to Continue Naming Rights Sponsorship ‘for Years to Come’

Two days prior to the passage of Cleveland City Council’s resolution calling for FirstEnergy to remove its name from the Browns Stadium (and one day after a statement from Cleveland City Council Representative Brian Kazy), FirstEnergy circulated a statement of their own. The statement showed no willingness to remove the utility’s name from the Cleveland arena it paid $107 million to name it FirstEnergy Stadium in 2013.

In 2019, FirstEnergy and its affiliates paid roughly $59 million to dark money groups to influence former Ohio House Speaker Larry Householder and others to pass House Bill 6, a nuclear and coal bailout law that also gutted Ohio’s clean energy standards (see page 6: “Former PUCO Chair Texted He Knew FirstEnergy Charge was likely Unlawful, but Company Would Keep Money Anyway”).

The statement read:

FirstEnergy has been a dedicated partner to the Cleveland Browns, not only on naming rights of the stadium but also on our efforts to improve the lives of many members of the Northeast Ohio community through our youth football and education initiatives. They have taken meaningful action to address the issues that transpired in 2019-2020 and are committed to upholding a culture of integrity and accountability by installing the appropriate policies and procedures going forward.

FirstEnergy is also a significant regional employer and strong contributor to the economy of Northeast Ohio, and we remain committed to our relationship and look forward to our continued partnership.
Slow Roll Cleveland
Comes to Tremont

Photo Essay by Nathan Stroempl

Slow Roll Cleveland gathered at our Lincoln Park gazebo to kick off their Slow Roll through Tremont on May 23rd, which turned out to be a beautiful evening for an urban neighborhood bike ride.

Slow Roll is a leisurely-paced parade of bikes through the nooks and crannies of urban environments. Each 10-mile Cleveland ride (originated in Detroit, MI) on Monday nights of the warmer months welcomes riders of all ages and experience levels. Each Slow Roll is supported by Slow Roll’s “one and only” Squad—easily distinguishable in their yellow shirts—who ensure a safe and smooth ride each week. Learn more about Cleveland’s Slow Roll movement and find a schedule of upcoming Slow Roll events at slowrollcleveland.com. If you’d like to reach out to Nate Stroempl directly, call 216-408-5176 or email nate.stroempl@gmail.com.

Nathan Stroempl submitted this breathtaking photo essay for The Tremonster.

216-408-5176
nate.stroempl@gmail.com
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by Rich Weiss

Although Ohio redistricting maps were ruled unconstitutional in March and again in May, a federal court has ordered the use of these maps this election cycle. My wife and I noticed a “Fair Districts Ohio” yard sign while walking our dog in Tremont and decided to contact the organization. I spoke with Catherine Turner, a member of Fair Districts’ steering committee, shortly after the May 27th 2-1 decision from the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Ohio.

Rich: We wanted to check in on your effort and get a comment on the future of Ohio redistricting from the perspective of Fair Districts Ohio.

Catherine: Thanks so much. So, gerrymandering of course, goes back to Massachusetts in 1802. It’s based on a political cartoon that highlighted a Massachusetts district that looks like a salamander. The person who approved it was Governor Elbridge Gerry, and it became known as ‘gerrymandering.’ This has been going on for a really long time. Elbridge Gerry was a Founding Father. He signed the Declaration of Independence. He was an advocate for the Bill of Rights and got in back rooms and got in public listening to the will of the voters. And yet, we need to use that anger to push for better. And when they’re focused on issues like public safety, racism, and education, they’re more likely to pay good attention to what’s actually happening at the Ohio Statehouse and in Congress. And they’re more likely to be invested in who’s representing them and to call for greater accountability. And, clearly it’s incredibly painful right now to know that we’re going to be voting on maps that were found to be unconstitutional not just once, but twice. And yet, we need to use that anger to push for better.

Chief Justice Maureen O’Connor identified an independent citizens commission to actually establish an independent citizen commission to do the map-making. I also believe that, beyond that ability to take a vote directly to the voters—beyond that—more and more people are focused on issues that they really care about. And when they’re focused on issues like public safety, racism, and education, they’re more likely to pay good attention to what’s actually happening at the Ohio Statehouse and in Congress. And they’re more likely to be invested in who’s representing them and to call for greater accountability. And, clearly it’s incredibly painful right now to know that we’re going to be voting on maps that were found to be unconstitutional not just once, but twice. And yet, we need to use that anger to push for better.

That compromise was put before voters in November of 2015, and it was overwhelmingly approved. Issue 1 of 2015 garnered 72% of the vote. So, just overwhelming approval. The rule said, ‘Hey, we want bipartisan map-making,’ and we created the Ohio Redistricting Commission and changed the apportionment board, which was there before to create the Ohio Redistricting Commission.

Then, we created rules that keep communities together. Basically, they did that by saying, ‘Let’s keep political subdivisions together,’ and then there’s a prohibition on gerrymandering: you can’t draw district lines to just favor one political party over the other. Then, they created a metric called ‘representational fairness’ (sometimes they call it ‘proportionality’), and they chose not to follow that metric and not to listen to what the Ohio Supreme Court has said. It was always going to be a challenge to figure out the map-making. But what happened is, the majority members (you’re talking Governor, Secretary of State, Speaker of the House, and the Senate president, although the members have changed)—those are the folks that are at point. So, we now have Jeff LaRe [R-Violet Township] and Rob McColley [R-Napoleon]. But—and I realize this is a little complicated, but—because that changed, essentially, the majority members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission basically have been thumbing their nose at the Ohio Supreme Court. And, I think what’s much more important is, they’re not listening to the will of the voters. Voters overwhelmingly approved bipartisan, transparent map-making that kept communities together and did not gerrymander. And, because a federal court (this federal panel) stepped in and took this away from the Ohio Supreme Court, in fact, when we have our August primary, Ohioans are going to be voting on district lines that have been found to be unconstitutional twice.

They were first found to be unconstitutional in March, and then they were found to be unconstitutional at the very end of May because the fifth maps were identical to the third set of maps.

If you’re concerned about public safety issues, or you’re concerned about education, or you are concerned about basic pocket book issues like utility issues, then you should be paying attention to the Ohio House and the Ohio Senate, because they make very important choices when it comes to utilities. They make important choices about regulations related to schools and related to your education or that of your kids.

Folks should be caring a lot about what happens to the Statehouse. And right now, there’s a super majority of one political party. And this political party has chosen to manipulate voting districts so they can institute even more power. And that power translates into decisions that are not reflective of Ohioans.

Our elected officials, constitutional officers, and governor did not choose to follow the rule of law. Not just once, but repeatedly. And decisions are made at the Ohio Statehouse that are increasingly problematic. So, it is hard. It’s hard to feel hopeful.

The reason that I feel hopeful is that, although these folks are drunk on power and it’s time to take away their car keys, we do have the ability to do a citizens initiative to actually establish an independent citizens commission to do the map-making. We also believe that, beyond that ability to take a vote directly to the voters—beyond that—more and more people are focused on issues that they really care about. And when they’re focused on issues like public safety, racism, and education, they’re more likely to pay good attention to what’s actually happening at the Ohio Statehouse and in Congress. And they’re more likely to be invested in who’s representing them and to call for greater accountability. And, clearly it’s incredibly painful right now to know that we’re going to be voting on maps that were found to be unconstitutional not just once, but twice. And yet, we need to use that anger to push for better.
of broken cookies sold at a discount. The cookies were a mix of many kinds, with little resemblance to the original shape. You had to scoop them from a bin, hoping your mixture included some of the more expensive, desirable cookies such as a sandwich type with jelly or frosting. Once home, my sisters and I would sort through the mix of broken cookies searching for a piece of highly prized chocolate chip cookie. Unfortunately, there were few of those. Chicken was relatively inexpensive and offered many possibilities for meals. To get the most for our money, my mom always bought a whole chicken and utilized every possible part of it for food. The chicken processing facility that used to be adjacent to the West Side Market was the best place for chicken, especially a live one since my dad insisted it was the best tasting. When my mom dissected the chicken, she frequently had me watch to educate me about where internal parts were and what they were. Sometimes she would point out an egg that was beginning to form. All parts of the chicken were boiled for soup, and we would eat the heart, liver, gizzard, neck, and feet. After cooking, the skin on the feet of the chicken became soft, and we would eat the meatless skin and tendon. Interesting fact: in China, people prepare chicken feet in numerous ways and the most expensive part of the chicken is the feet. The chicken soup was augmented with homemade noodles and the cooked chicken meat lightly fried in butter.

Saving money meant father would fix our shoes. He had something called a cast iron cobbler that looks like an iron flat foot attached a stand. When I wore a hole in the sole of my shoe, my mom would cut a piece of cardboard to fit inside of the shoe until my dad could repair it. The shoe would be placed on the cobbler with the sole up. Then a large piece of leather would be placed over the shoe and nails would be pounded around the edge of the sole to keep it in place. Then the excess leather would be cut away. He could also replace heels.

We never visited a doctor or dentist for regular checkups and the only house call that I remember was when my youngest sister, Alice, was diagnosed with rheumatic fever. She was sent to Rainbow hospital for many months of treatment and had lingering effects for the remainder of her life. We never sought medical help since my mom seemed to know how to treat anything: for a cold, she applied Vicks Vapor Rub to treat anything: for a cough, she received a very severe slice. My mom had occasion to use them again. The chicken processing facility that used to be adjacent to the West Side Market. Men supported their families by working in the steel mills or in factories, but they provided for their families without the need for subsidies. Many were able to eventually move out to places like Parma and own a home. It was an achievement that was based upon adaptability, frugality, and sense of purpose.
Cleveland History Days in Tremont

June 27 @ 4:00 pm - 8:30 pm
Tremont History Project is participating in the 2022 Cleveland History Days! On Monday, June 27th from 4-5:30pm, Tremont History Project presents “Tremont’s Lincoln Park Mural: Public Art, Local History, & Inclusive Community Engagement” at Lincoln Park.

During this free program, Tremont History Project introduces artist/project organizer Angelica Pozo who will showcase this expansive tile mural installation featuring dozens of original illustrations of historic landmarks, explain the process of inclusive community engagement, and discuss collaboration with local artists in celebrating community history.

Additional Tremont events for 2022’s Cleveland History Days include an Open House at the Ukrainian Museum-Archives (1202 Kenilworth Ave.) on Monday, June 27th from 4-8:30pm; and a ‘Take-A-Hike’ walking tour on Monday, June 27th from 6-7:30pm (starting at Sideyard Park, 1370 Abbey Ave.). Additional events and further information about the Cleveland History Days series can be found at www.canalwaypartners.com/clevelandhistorydays.

Are you curious about Tremont’s history? Want to learn more, or get involved in researching, sharing, and celebrating our history? Please join us!

Tremont History Project continues to host monthly committee meetings the third Saturday of each month at 10:30am. Our June meeting will be Saturday, June 18th, at 10:30am, at the South Branch location of the Cleveland Public Library (Scranton & Clark Ave.).

This hybrid meeting will offer both in-person and remote/virtual participation using Zoom.

To request the Zoom link for virtual participation, or for more information about Tremont History Project, please email Dan at Tremonthistoryproject@gmail.com. We hope to see you soon!

On June 12, Join Us at Kaiser Gallery to Raise Funds for Tremont West’s Annual Arts & Cultural Festival!

Garden of the Arts
SUNDAY, JUNE 12, 2 - 6 PM
Join us at Kaiser Gallery to raise funds for Tremont West’s Annual Arts and Cultural Festival
MUSIC, ART, COCKTAILS, FOOD, A FORTUNE READER, & MORE!

About this event
You’re invited to join us for a garden party of the arts. Get ready to recharge your creative soul, dress in your most colorful florals, and bring a friend. There will be music, food, inventive cocktails, prizes for best dressed, a tarot card reader, art, and more! A portion of every ticket goes to Tremont West and their annual Arts & Cultural Festival. This fundraiser is to help keep the arts alive in our community and to provide opportunities for everyone to participate. So come out, have some fun, and support a great cause!

You can still donate to Tremont West if you can’t make it by calling 216-575-0920.