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The alpacas are an instant draw from the second they arrive. "People are usually curious as we're setting it up, and the moment we bring out the alpacas and put them in the pen, we're busy," said Rob. He said the fun, family oriented atmosphere and the great crowd have them excited to return...

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Cafe Social Latinoamericano Grand Re-Opening



Lalo Rodriguez and his team at Cafe Social Latinoamericano (2275 Professor Ave., 216-280-2423) are excited to host their grand re-opening at 6:00 pm on October 15.

Photo by Cafe Social Latinoamericano

by Lalo Rodriguez

October 15, from 6:00 to 9:00 pm, Café Social Latinoamericano is having what we're calling a "Grand Re-Opening" (even though we've been open throughout the pandemic). When we first moved into the neighborhood back in—I think it

was February of 2020—we were just gearing up, and we were starting to plan a grand opening for March, 2020. And we all saw how that went [Ohio's COVID-19 pandemic lockdown began in March, 2020].

We never got to have our grand opening, first of all, and we're overdue for it. Second of all, it's all in the timing: we're going through a little re-branding.

Our website is under construction, we're getting some new business cards, we're re-designing our social media presence, and we're giving a little bit of a facelift to the space—nothing super crazy; most of it is going to be paint—but we're very excited to finally host our big event.

The Grand Opening will be on October 15, from 6:00 to 9:00 pm.

You can still catch us during our regular hours, which are Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 3:00 pm, and Saturday and Sunday from 8:00 am until 5:00 pm.

Find us in Tremont at 2275 Professor Ave. or the best number to reach us while we're open is 216-280-2423.

Submit to The Tremonster: TheTremonster@TheTremonster.org or PO Box 6161, Cleveland, OH 44101

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scottradke.com

Mascot: Abbey

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Tremont's Gentleman's Barber Shop



The Gentleman's Barber Shop (2338 W. 11th St., 216-470-4726), had a new awning installed early on the morning of September 3.

Photo by Rich Weiss

by Bruce Checefsky

Liz Rodriguez and Ashley Cancel, a mother and daughter duo, own and operate Gentleman's Barber Shop at 2338 W 11th Street in Tremont. They offer signature scissor and razor haircuts, as well as specialty cuts completed with hot lather neck shave with straight razor, straight razor shaves using traditional hot lather straight razor shaves, beard trims, and straight razor full head shaves, and a relaxing facial massage. Their mission is simply to "Exceed Your Expectations!" They aim to deliver the best service in quality haircuts and shaves at reasonable prices for the community every day. Walk-in's welcome. Tel: 216-470-4726

Bruce: Tell me about yourselves

Liz: My name is Elizabeth 'Liz' Rodriguez. I'm a fantastic barber. I live in Westlake and started in the barber business thirty years ago. I truly love it. I can't see myself doing anything else. I love making men look nice and clean like a gentleman.

Ashley: I'm Ashley Cancel. Liz is my mom. She opened Gentleman's Barber Shop sixteen years ago in Tremont. As a kid, I always wondered how she could do men's hair. Then I decided to go to barber school about eight years ago. It was the best decision I ever made. I really love my job. I get to meet so many interesting people, some of which have become my friends. They're like family. Tremont is a great community. Everybody knows everybody. I've been working with my mom for six years.

Bruce: Why this particular location for your business?

Liz: I used to come to Tremont in the mid 90s for the restaurants and bars. I really liked the neighborhood. This place was a barber shop, but it was closed back then. One day, I stopped by and knocked

on the door. The owner, John K., wasn't interested in renting it to me. He had a lot of bad experiences with previous tenants. As I was leaving, John called me back. He said, 'I'm going to give you a try because you look like an angel.' My business took off after just two years.

Ashley: When COVID hit last year, we were forced to close for twelve weeks. We remodeled the shop with new plumbing and electricity and expanded the space to make it bigger so our customers would feel safer. We added another cutting chair. We've always been more of a walk-in shop. It's by appointments now until things change with the pandemic. Our customers like appointments because they know they can get in and out easily. On Saturdays before the pandemic, people would be waiting for two or three hours for a haircut. It was so packed. Our business is doing great. In fact, we need to hire another barber.

Bruce: What is it like working together as mother and daughter?

Liz: It's a blessing. When Ashley talks to her clients about family and stuff, I get to enjoy her conversation about her life.

Ashley: There was an adjustment period at the beginning but I really enjoy it. We're a very close family. My mother is my best friend.

Bruce: Describe your typical client:

Liz: Our typical client is about thirty to forty years old, a young professional looking for a barber in their neighborhood. We have a wide range of clients.

Ashley: A lot of empty nesters. Their children have moved out, and they've decided to move back into the city for fun. We don't get many children, but I'm not sure there are many in the neighborhood.

Bruce: What services do you provide?

Liz: Our services include haircuts, shampoos, steam shave with hot lather, towels, straight razor. We do facial massage and beards.

Ashley: We do razor balds, too. We use a straight razor to take it all down. We use beard and skin oils and lotions. You get a mini-facial with every steam shave. It's a way for men to treat themselves.

Liz: It's so different now for men. I feel guys like to pamper themselves more. Everyone loves self-care. A lot of men come here because it's relaxing. We give scalp massages. We offer beer, wine, or water.

Bruce: How did you come up with the name?

Liz: I like seeing a man with a fresh haircut and a clean shaven neck. A gentleman takes good care of himself. That's what we're all about.

Bruce: Do you have any women clients?

Liz: I have a few. Some women like short hair, tight in the back, cut with a clipper.

Bruce: What do you like about cutting men's hair?

Liz: We create style and shape on a man's head. Some men get used to their haircut, but I suggest new things. I understand some men don't like changes.

Bruce: Are men any different from women when it comes to cutting their hair?

Liz: Men's personalities are different from women. They communicate differently. I learn a lot from them.

Ashley: I love our clients. Some men come in just to relax. You have to respect what they want. I only wish we could be open more hours. We need more help. I'd like to hire a barber that's driven, honest, and ready to make money. It's a great opportunity to meet people.

Bruce: Who cuts your hair?

Liz: My daughter cuts my hair.

Ashley: I have a girl that cuts my hair. My mom wants me to keep my hair long, but

I like to have layers. I'm very picky about my hair, and she knows that. My mom says she just can't deal with it. I work with men because I know how I am about my hair. Men aren't necessarily easier. I feel more comfortable because of my experience from barber school and growing up in the barber shop. I think about the men in my family. They're mostly laid back and easy going. Very straight to point like 'Let's get this done' sort of thing.

Liz: Women are more picky. Men are easy and more easy going when it comes to their hair. I love working with them. There's never any drama. They can be picky, don't get me wrong, but mostly they're not complex or complicated.

Ashley: I love when a man gives me a challenging haircut. 'I'm going to make a masterpiece,' I tell them. 'You're my canvas.' Men love the straight razor shave with hot lather. Not many barber shops offer that anymore. The men sit back and sigh with pleasure.

Liz: We want to keep our business old style. We give good service. it's our main priority.

Ashley: We want to make sure everyone leaves our barber shop happy.



Photo courtesy of Gentleman's Barber Shop

Liz Rodriguez and Ashley Cancel are the mother and daughter duo behind Gentleman's Barber Shop.

My name is Rebecca Maurer. I'm a lawyer, a community advocate, and I'm running to represent Ward 12 on Cleveland City Council because we deserve a safe and thriving city that works for everyone.

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Memories of Tremont Ave.

The Unusual, the Challenging, and the Sometimes Risky Places to Play

by Ken Scigulinsky

During the 1940s there were many places for kids to play, especially during the summer. Locally, there were playgrounds at Tremont School, Lincoln Park, and Merrick House.

But, of course, kids are not always satisfied with what has been organized for them and seek the unusual, the challenging, and the sometimes risky places to play. Not the kind of place where your parents would direct you to go and play—a place without supervision.

I was part of a group that frequently spent time in an area that we called “the dumps.” Most of my friends lived on Tremont Ave., and so we would walk up Starkweather to W. 10th St. and take a left at Hotz’s bar, proceeding down West 10th to the point where it curves into Auburn Ave. At the point where West 10th ended, we continued to walk across a short grassy area and before us appeared “the dumps,” a very large valley extending to the Clark Bridge.

I believe it was called the Cuyahoga Valley. Perhaps we called the area the dumps because to the far east in the valley was a large city dump. The distance from the end

clear a pathway for I-490. While we walked single file, sometimes someone’s keen eye would spot a snake and we would catch it. The older, more knowledgeable kids would argue whether it was called a garden snake or a garter snake. I now know that they are both the same and not poisonous.

Coming from the direction of W 11th and crossing the trail was a very tiny stream of water, running over small stones. The older boys decreed that since it was very clear it was safe to drink. We all ritually scooped up some of the water and proceeded along the path. No one ever got sick.

Continuing forward, we eventually passed a swampy area to the east that contained black, filthy water with floating debris. There was no sign of any living thing in the water.

Further beyond the swamp was the city dump for garbage, cans, bottles, toasters, chairs, furniture, etc. The area was usually smoldering from fires, and we never chose to go there for further exploring. One time we found some large pieces of connected wood floating on the edge of the swamp. It looked like someone had tried to make a raft, so we decided to try to see if we could float on it.

Four of us stood on the raft while the others pushed the raft into the deeper water. Unfortunately, the raft was not very buoyant and about 30 feet out it tilted and appeared to be sinking. In a panic, we jumped off yelling for help until we realized the water was barely 2 feet deep.

We walked to dry land, pants soaked with smelly water, hoping we would dry before we got home.

Further along the path, on the left and closer to Clark Bridge, was a dumping ground for old, heavy-duty industrial machinery, some of it quite large. We would climb over the rusted pieces as we might have done in a playground.

I recall one favorite metal piece—a cylinder about 10 feet long and 5 feet in diameter. The sides were composed of steel rods in a rectangular grillwork pattern. I guess it might have served to tumble something. One end was closed, but we’d crawl in a small opening at the other end and just sit and talk.

When we got bored climbing around the machinery graveyard, we’d walk closer to the Clark Bridge where there was a facility that supported road construction. There were huge piles of sand and gravel, probably 30 to 40 feet high, just begging to

be climbed. We climbed, rolled down, and climbed again. Unfortunately, the facility had a manned office, and we frequently got chased away.

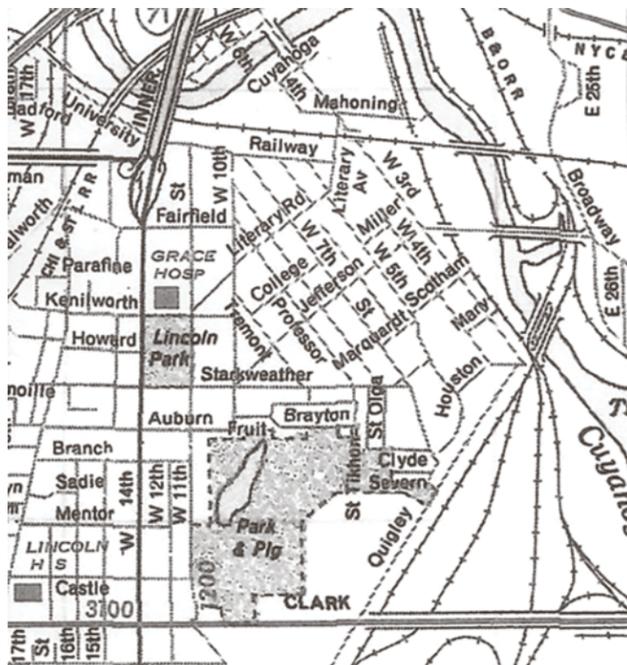
Our last stop for fun was an area almost underneath the Clark Bridge and close to W. 11th high on the hill to the west. There was a relatively clean pond with cattails and frogs. They always jumped before we could catch them. We did, however, pull up cattails to take home with us for a further use.

Having seen movies where flaming cattails were used to illuminate a cave, we imagined how much fun such burning devices would be at night. In failure we learned that cattails would not catch fire, even after drying first. Too late we discovered that dried cattails needed to be soaked in kerosene to burn.

Whenever I re-visit my childhood home in the Tremont area, I always travel to the end of W. 10th to look towards the now demolished Clark Bridge, remembering the enjoyable times I had playing in the valley in the 1940s.



of W. 10th to the Clark Bridge is almost a mile. Completed in 1990, Interstate 490 cut through the valley, totally altering the terrain. To the left of the pathway down was an area known as “Clay Hill” because it consisted of material that was moist and could be molded like clay. We had to walk down a steep, barren hill to reach the bottom valley area that was covered with grass and weeds with a well-worn path towards the Clark Bridge. Off to the southeast were the steel mills, spewing thick smoke and flames. On the right we could see the houses on W. 11th St., later demolished to



Tremont Area 1940s



Tremont Area Post I-490

Lincoln Heights Study Area Map by Seventh Hill architectural design consultancy, Michael Schwartz Library, Cleveland State University, Special Collections, Cleveland State University Library

Tremont area map courtesy of Ohio's Trusted News Source, The Plain Dealer.

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The Gaelic Glen Alpacas Return to Walkabout Tremont



Bailey and Darby (and MaE Hart) of Gaelic Glen Alpacas. Gaelic Glen Alpacas will visit Walkabout Tremont this month, offering interaction with their incredible alpacas beginning at 5:00 pm on October 8.

Photo by Brad Hauber

by Michael Jankus

At this month's Walkabout Tremont on October 8 the Gaelic Glen Alpacas will bring their joy to Professor Avenue from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Rob and Kathy Turk fell in love with these "huggable lawnmowers" at first sight and started Gaelic Glen Alpacas LLC in 2010 to share their newfound lifestyle with everyone.

"People experience a lot of joy with the alpacas," Rob said. "They're happy to see them, and they get a chance to pet them, and feed them, and hug on them." Gaelic Glen Alpacas is a family farm in Perrysville run by retired Rob and Kathy Turk where they breed and raise

Huacaya and Suri alpacas for their wonderful fiber as well as sell them. The couple (and Peggy Needham, whom they credit for invaluable help) are also keen to bring them to places like elementary schools and Walkabout Tremont where people can meet an alpaca for the first time and maybe even form an immediate connection, as they did.

"We love to let people experience these magnificent animals," Rob said.

It was at a fall festival not unlike Walkabout where the pair encountered the lamini and were enamored immediately. They dreamt of a future together with alpacas of their own.

The two gave it a trial run at a farm in Michigan a few years later and found that the life of alpaca farmers suited them, so they set off in search of a place to raise a herd. They said they get a lot of satisfaction out of being able to share their alpacas with people, especially in the city where most people have never had the opportunity to experience their grandeur.

"It's unique, especially with the children. The first time when they

touch them or are able to feed them or hug them — especially when they feed them they are a little nervous, and then the alpaca takes some food from them and they get this infectious laugh, that's just pretty neat."

Since 2017, the couple has been attending Walkabout Tremont along with their herd. Kathy recounted the astounding artists and crowds from all walks of life from their past visits. The alpacas are always a hit with the attendees, and one artist took it upon herself to offer up a rendering of them that she had sketched on the spot.

The alpacas are an instant draw from the second they arrive. "People are usually curious as we're setting it up, and the moment we bring out the alpacas and put them in the pen, we're busy," said Rob. He said the fun, family oriented atmosphere and the great crowd have them excited to return.

The folks at Gaelic Glen Alpacas will be at the corner of Professor Ave. and College Ave. on Friday's Walkabout, and Kathy also teased that the alpacas have been known to come dressed for the occasion.

October's Walkabout begins at 5 p.m. on the 8th and boasts food, drink, shopping, and live music from Baker's Basement and Reverbious in addition to the majestic Gaelic Glen Alpacas, making for a spectacular evening.

Rob closed with an invitation: "Why don't you come out and experience the alpacas?"



Art, Entertainment, Food and More

WALKABOUT TREMONT IS FRIDAY, OCTOBER 8, 5-10 P.M.

Live music includes the Baker's Basement and Reverbious, the one-man band. Plus, see the adorable Gaelic Glen Alpacas.



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WALKABOUT TREMONT



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Photo of artist rendering by Kathy Turk

Maire, Eileen and her cria (baby) MaE, as rendered by an artist at a previous Walkabout Tremont.



MaE Hart

Photo by Brad Hauber

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Cleveland's United Way, Legal Aid Society, and CHN Housing Partners Offer Free Eviction Help



Eviction notice photo by rickonline

According to the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland, when a Legal Aid attorney provides help to a tenant, they are successful more than 90% of the time.

by **Chuck Hoven**

This article is republished with permission from the Plain Press. The press conference on "eviction help" was organized by the Neighborhood and Community Media Association of Greater Cleveland (NCMA-CLE), an association of 14 community media outlets serving Greater Cleveland, including the Plain Press and The Tremonster.

United Way of Greater Cleveland, the Cleveland Legal Aid Society and CHN Housing Partners have teamed up in a public private partnership with the City of Cleveland to offer free help to qualified Clevelanders facing eviction.

Two programs paired together, the Right to Counsel Program of Legal Aid and Rental Assistance Program at CHN Housing Partners are successful in helping those eligible to stay in their homes and avoid the destabilization and life altering impact of eviction. Program advocates from United Way, Legal Aid and CHN Housing Partners would all like to see the City of Cleveland increase its commitment to these programs and expand eligibility to more households facing eviction.

Julie Wisneski, Director of Housing Stability at United Way, says tenants facing eviction can seek help at the website: www.freeevictionhelp.org or by calling 211. She says United Way, as part of its commitment to market the program, works with Cleveland Housing Court to insert a notice about assistance programs with each eviction notice.

One of the programs available to tenants facing eviction is the City of Cleveland Right to Counsel program run by Cleveland Legal Aid. Melanie Shakarian, an attorney at Cleveland Legal Aid Society, says that prior to the Right to Counsel program less than 1% of the 9,000 households facing eviction, in the year before the program started, had access to counsel. Now, she says 25 – 30% of Cleveland tenants facing eviction have access to legal counsel. Shakarian urges tenants to call Legal Aid when they are worried about an eviction, even before an eviction process has started. She says there is a lot Legal Aid attorneys can do to help, especially with all the rental assistance money now available.

Shakarian says, currently the Right to Counsel program is only available to households with income at 100% of the poverty level or less who have children in the home. Shakarian would like to see eligibility expanded to all households at 200 percent of poverty or less – including senior citizens and households without children.

Currently, the cost of the Right to Counsel Program in the City of

Cleveland is \$2 million per year. \$300,000 of that amount is contributed by the City of Cleveland through the Community Development Block Grant funding with the remaining of the funding coming from philanthropic sources. To fully fund the program to include all households at 200% of poverty or less, Shakarian estimates it would cost \$4 million per year. She would like to see the City of Cleveland fully fund the program with public dollars as a long term right for all Cleveland households with incomes at 200% of poverty or below regardless of household composition.

Shakarian says when a Legal Aid attorney provides help to a tenant, they are successful more than 90% of the time. Shakarian says evaluation of the Right to Counsel program shows its success in helping with housing stability (allowing families to stay in their home), increasing healthy conditions in housing (which sometimes involves a family moving out of an unhealthy house to a house that is in better condition), documenting the status of housing stock, making sure tenants get security deposits back- (crucial in getting new housing), providing tenants with rental assistance, removing evictions from tenants' records (a huge barrier to future housing), and holding landlords accountable.

Wisneski says Cleveland Housing Court sends United Way a weekly list of those households facing eviction. She says each week there are roughly 125 to 170 households on the list. Wisneski says United Way sends a letter to each household on the eviction list describing the Right to Counsel Program. Cleveland Housing Court also includes in each eviction notice contact information about eviction prevention help available that is printed in both English and Spanish, said Wisneski.

Citing data collected by United Way while monitoring the program, Wisneski says two of the three zip codes in the City of Cleveland currently with the highest eviction rates are zip codes 44102 and 44109. (Both are in the Plain Press service area.) The zip code in Cleveland with the third highest eviction rate is 44105.

[Read the rest of this report: TheTremonster.org]
 Editor's Note: Information about free eviction help in Cleveland is available online at www.freeevictionhelp.org or by referral from United Way by calling 211. Other important phone numbers are: Free Eviction Help at 216-861-5835; Legal Aid Society of Cleveland Traditional Intake Line at 216- 861-5835; and CHN Housing Partners at 216-672-3553.

Verb Ballets on a History of Performing in Tremont



Verb Ballets, during a well-attended Arts in August Lincoln Park performance in the summer of 2018. Photo courtesy of Verb Ballets

by Michael Jankus

From her blue folding chair she watched one of her dancers rehearse her piece, “Five Minutes of Silence,” on the Lincoln Park stage to the sounds of chirping birds and electric scooters whizzing by.

“Bring the art to the community, rather than make the community come to us,” Dr. Margaret Carlson, producing artistic director of Verb Ballets said. “That’s kind of our motto.”

A collection of contemporary dances from Carlson’s diverse company of dancers is what attendees would have seen in Lincoln Park on August 13 as part of Arts in August had the weather permitted. These outdoor, summertime shows are a specialty of Verb Ballets, and they have been showcasing their art in Tremont for more than a decade.

“What we’re trying to do with today’s program is put together a series of pieces that are almost like solos so that every dancer is featured. There’s one group piece at the very, very end that everybody comes in for, but other than that it’s just solos and duets so that each dancer is kind of featured throughout the program,” Carlson said.

Carlson began her career in ballet as a dancer, herself, with the second iteration of Cleveland Ballet in the 1970s, by Dennis Nahat and Ernie Horvath, which is now in its third iteration. She was an original member, and went on to do choreography for Cleveland Opera as well as several musical theater tours during her active years.

She retired from dancing in her early 30s and afterwards became a college professor.

Eventually, that led her to Verb, where she’s been the producing artistic director since 2003.

“We started doing Arts— it wasn’t even Arts in August at that point, but it was just Verb, and we would do a weekend of performances here, and I think it was at least 15 years ago and we’ve come every year.”

Verb Ballets is a professional ballet company with a 6,000 square-foot rehearsal space in Shaker Heights and dancers from all over the world, including a couple of locals from North Royalton and Richfield, as well as a South African artist as part of a cultural exchange program.

The ability to bring art and culture from a different continent right here to us in our neighborhood is truly unique to Verb

Ballets, but sadly they were unable to do so this year due to thunderstorms. Last year, health and safety protocols threatened the performance as well, but Carlson and Co. persevered through ingenuity.

“Last year, because of COVID, we were actually over there at the Greek church,” Carlson said, as she gestured to the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church on West 14th St. across from the park. “We performed in the parking lot, and people sat in their cars.”

Outdoor events like Arts in August bring our neighborhood together, introduce newcomers to this special place, and bring arts to our doorstep. They are also at the mercy of the weather.

Forecasts for storms around performance time meant that Carlson’s magnificent streak would see its end, and unfortunately it did. Her parting sentiment before she returned to her blue director’s chair had been, “We’re really glad to be back in Tremont, this is our home.”

Verb Ballets will of course be back next year and for many years to come, but for anyone who would still like to see a performance this year, you can see Verb Ballets as a part of Neil Zaza’s “One Dark Night...” performance at the Akron Civic Theatre on October 29.



Cleveland Consent Decree Public Meeting on Community Involvement

By Rich Weiss, for Neighborhood & Community Media Association of Greater Cleveland



September’s public meeting on Cleveland’s Consent Decree focused on the “Cleveland Police Commission and Citizen Involvement.”

The Neighborhood and Community Media Association of Greater Cleveland is providing monthly reports on a series of community conversations about the 2015 Consent Decree negotiated between the US Department of Justice and the City of Cleveland regarding the policies and practices of the Cleveland Police Department.

“On a scale of 1 to 10, what percentage of the Consent Decree [is] considered to be completed? 10 percent, 30 percent, 70 percent?”

“Do you think the Community Police Commission (CPC) should play a more significant role with enforcement power? And are there any down sides to shifting disciplinary enforcement power from the Chief of Police?”

“Why should Clevelanders believe that the CPD can police itself and its behavior without significant oversight from citizens, since we’ve had two federal probes and we still are underneath a Consent Decree beyond its five-year deadline?”

These were among the questions being asked and answered during the monthly conversations held online about the workings of Cleveland’s Consent Decree. The September meeting focused on the “Cleveland Police Commission and Citizen Involvement.”

Latoya Logan, Cleveland Police Commissioner, was asked why she decided to volunteer as a community member to fill a seat on the Commission. She replied, “I think if you ask most individuals who have given time to this process, they would say the Consent Decree was created to address a long history of police abuse within the City of Cleveland (and throughout the nation)

that led to the over-policing of black and brown communities, police misconduct, improper arrests, deaths of more than 87 members of families within the City of Cleveland, including Craig Bickerstaff, Malissa Williams, Timothy Russel, Thomas Yatsko, Desmond Franklin, and we could go on. When you hear something like that, if it doesn’t call you—if it doesn’t pull you—if it doesn’t let you know that this isn’t an employment issue; this isn’t a crime issue; this isn’t a diction issue. This is an issue of not addressing what community members actually are looking forward to... for me, as a person who volunteers my time freely and willingly, this is something that you just do—this is about social justice.

The next meeting in the series is Wednesday, October 13, at 6:00 pm. The topic will be “Youth and Policing.”

Have you seen mandated changes in how the Cleveland Police Department interacts with the youth in our communities? How much input do Cleveland citizens have on the constitutionality, effectiveness and community-consistent values of our Cleveland Police services?

The Consent Decree between the City of Cleveland and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) mandated a CPC be established to bring community input in the process of police reform. The Commission’s charge is to win crucial community input on police practices to help ensure “that police services in Cleveland are delivered in a manner that is constitutional, effective, and consistent with community values, while preserving officer and public safety.”

The public is invited and encouraged to participate in these sessions to help in the monitoring process. These conversations, sponsored by United Way of Greater Cleveland and the Cleveland NAACP, are conducted via Zoom on the second Wednesday of each month.

To attend the next meeting, ask questions, or voice your concerns, register for any of the two remaining Consent Decree public meetings by visiting unitedwaycleveland.org.

St. John Cantius Polish Festival



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2021
3:00 P.M. – 11:00 P.M.

LIVE POLKA MUSIC WITH LENNY GOMULKA & THE CHICAGO PUSH
STUFFED CABBAGE DINNERS
PIEROGIS & KIELBASA SANDWICHES
AUTHENTIC POLISH BEER

ST. JOHN CANTIUS CHURCH

THE POLISH HEART OF TREMONT

906 COLLEGE AVENUE - CLEVELAND, OH - 216.781.9095

by Michael Jankus

This year’s Tremont Polish Festival, “Half Way to Dyngus Day,” is happening Saturday, October 16 at St. John Cantius church on College Ave (906 College Ave). The Polish springtime holiday, Dyngus Day, lends its name to the fall festival in a slightly tongue-in-cheek manner, an idea of a St. John Cantius parishioner.

The festival is a celebration of all things Polish, complete with pierogi, kielbasa, stuffed cabbage, Polish beer and spirits, and live polka music from Lenny Gomulka & the Chicago Push.

The church festival dates back to when St. John Cantius church would have fundraising carnivals. In the early 1970s, in order to support the elementary school, Father Ralph began the tradition of the weekend festival, in the style of the popular Greek festival, in place of the carnival.

Bernie Sokolowski provided food for the festival for many years when he was operating Sokolowski’s University Inn,

and he remembers enjoying the festival in sweet but brief glimpses in between a lot of hard work that made it all possible.

“You’re filled with pride because this is your ethnic background; this is your church,” Sokolowski said. “And you see all your friends come by, and you only see them once a year, so it was good to get reacquainted. I got reacquainted when they came down to eat. A lot of my friends would come down and I would talk to them there.”

He would spend most of the day, and many of the days leading up to it, working incessantly to prepare food, but in the evenings when things wound down he fondly remembers grabbing

a Polish beer and going to listen to some polka as the old timers jawed and joked over drinks.

Joe Sutowski, business manager at St. John Cantius, said that the one-day Half Way to Dyngus Day celebration is in place of the previous weekend-long Polish festival on Labor Day weekend. With no festival last year due to COVID-19, and the emerging local popularity of the Dyngus Day holiday, this year’s festival will go by a different name, but Sutowski said all the same great Polish traditions will still be there.

“We thought that Dyngus Day was so popular that we would give this a try,” he said.

The festival begins at 3 p.m. and goes until 11 p.m. on October 16 and promises to provide all the very best Tremont’s Polish community has to offer.



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