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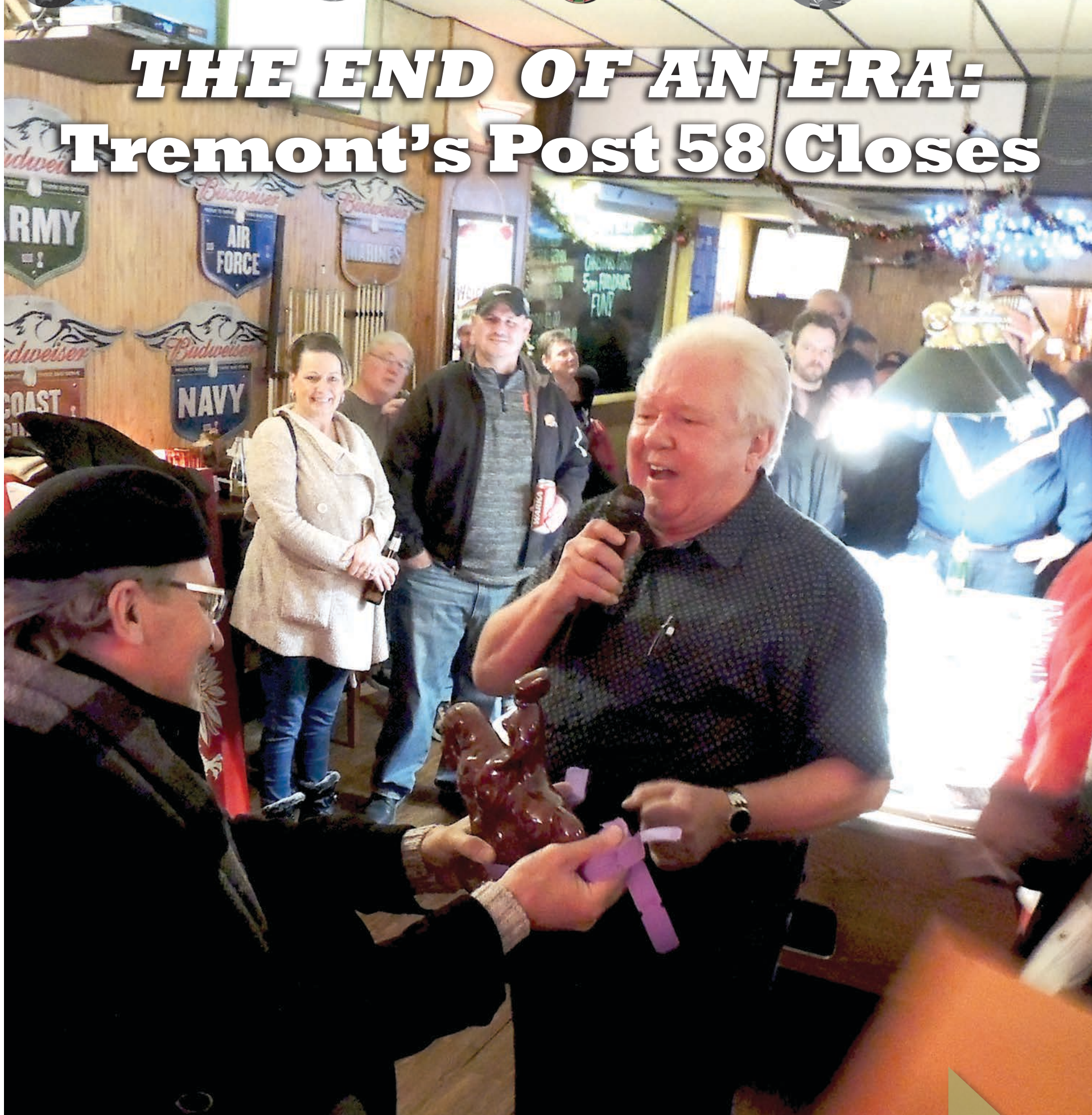
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*"This was a very sad decision on our part. But unfortunately, we did not get the support from Tremont. I don't want to throw Tremont under the bus, of course. I don't want to do that because your paper is a Tremont paper. But unfortunately, the cost of everything down there has risen so high. Not just the taxes, but just a lot of times the average young family starting out getting married cannot really afford to be buying in Tremont."*

*...story on page 7*



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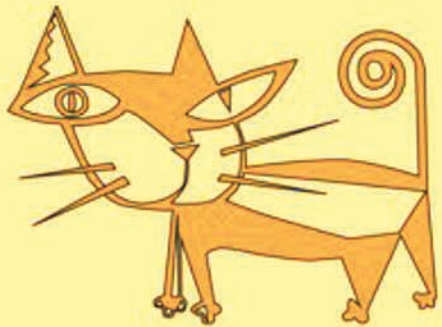
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## TREMONSTER CONTEST: Where's the Bird?



Where's the Bird? Submit your answer to win a Fat Cats gift certificate.

Thank you to all who entered last issue's "Where's the Bird?" contest! No one guessed last issue's location correctly: **Aetomic Digital Marketing (2271 Professor Ave).**

If you think you know the mystery location of this issue's bird character, submit your answer: **P.O. Box 6161, Cleveland, OH, 44101** or email it: **[TheTremonter@TheTremonter.org](mailto:TheTremonter@TheTremonter.org)**.

If your correct answer is selected at random, you will be awarded our prize in the next issue of *The Tremonter*:

**A \$25 gift certificate to Fat Cats!**

*\*Submit your answer to win today!\**



*The Tremonter* is a newspaper by and for the neighborhood of Tremont in Cleveland, Ohio. A Tremonter is anyone who loves our shared neighborhood of Tremont. Any Tremonter may submit content for consideration by the 15th of each month to:

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**[ScottRadkeArt.com](http://ScottRadkeArt.com)**

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# Tremont West Board President Seronica Powell Has Something to Say



Seronica Powell, President of Tremont West Development Corporation

Photo courtesy of Seronica Powell

by Bruce Checefsky

Seronica Powell, Board President, Tremont West Development Corporation, is Director of Finance at The Center for Black Health & Equity, a national nonprofit organization to facilitate public health programs and services that benefit communities and people of African descent. She earned a BS degree in Operations Management and Business Statistics from Cleveland State University and an MBA from the University of Phoenix. Seronica is a board member of the Near West Land Trust, TechBOOM, and Cleveland Housing Network and part of the Northeast Ohio Black Health Coalition. She is a mentor with Rebekah's Circle. A resident of Tremont for almost 20 years, she is the mother of two, LaKendria and Joseph.

**Bruce:** What is your agenda as Board President of Tremont West Development Corporation, for the next six months to a year?

**Seronica:** Our current Strategic Plan for Tremont West is about to expire. We will work on a new plan over the next few months to guide the agency for the next three to five years.

**Bruce:** Can you talk about any ideas that might make their way into the strategic plan?

**Seronica:** Our work is rooted in the community. As we look into building a plan, we want community input. We will look at affordable housing and ways to assist our long-term residents stay in their homes or help them find a suitable housing solution.

**Bruce:** How will you get the community involved?

**Seronica:** We will work with a strategic planner to initiate interviews with our staff and the board at TWDC and with different community partners, especially the block clubs and active members of the community.

**Bruce:** What experience as Director of Finance at The Center for Black Health & Equity do you bring to your role as board resident?

**Seronica:** The Center for Black Health & Equity is a national organization with

staff throughout the country. Whenever I manage the budget for the agency, I think not only about Cleveland but work with people in other states, understanding their issues and concerns. We receive funding at the Center but also give funding to other agencies. We do a lot of technical assistance and training for community members. I work with so many people that it helps me in Tremont because our neighborhood is vastly diverse. I am constantly communicating with people to oversee their finances. As board members at TWDC, we are responsible for providing financial oversight to ensure the agency is doing what it is supposed to.

**Bruce:** Tremont is less diverse than in the recent past. What plans, if any, does TWDC have to increase diversity in the neighborhood?

**Seronica:** When it comes to the fabric of the community, it takes an entire community to change that. Unfortunately, we do not get to determine who moves into the community or even want to determine who moves in. We have to look at affordable housing to make sure Tremont is open to all colors, gender, and social and economic backgrounds, but at the same time, we must understand our boundaries. We have no control over who ultimately decides to move to Tremont. I have lived here for almost twenty years. Most people do not know that.

**Bruce:** Where in Tremont?

**Seronica:** I lived in Duck Island before Lincoln Heights. I raised my children there. They went to Urban Community School, Saint Joseph Academy, and NEO Preparatory School (I Can) in Tremont. Currently, I live near Starkweather Ave and Scranton Road.

**Bruce:** What has surprised you the most about changes in Tremont?

**Seronica:** The rapid housing development and families leaving their homes. I remember when my kids went to the block clubs and their friends played in our backyard regardless of their race or social status and things like the Duck Island community football team. At some point,

it lost that sense of togetherness, and the community I once knew slowly slipped away. It went from a sense of community to people asking questions about people they didn't know, like my son, who is six feet tall, getting questioned about playing in the park. He grew up here.

**Bruce:** Tremont is going through yet another wave of transformation. With several businesses on the move, including Fahrenheit to downtown, Parallax closing, and rumors of other restaurants and businesses leaving the neighborhood, what is TWDC doing to help stop the bleeding?

**Seronica:** A lot of the transition is happening in the nation, not just Tremont. We had a pandemic. It continues to affect businesses. Employees are hard to find, some do not want to return to work. It's not just the restaurant market, either. I've seen manufacturing companies and other businesses close as well. Tremont is still a desirable place for restaurants and retail.

**Bruce:** I hear people complain a lot about property taxes and, in recent months, about crime, especially auto theft and break-ins. What is TWDC doing to help?

**Seronica:** We have tried at TWDC, over the years, to do our part in looking at those issues. We received a \$40K grant for an extra police car to patrol the neighborhood at various times of day and night. We've done this before to help lower crime. We stay in communication with the Second District Cleveland Police and have our Safety Committee, which is open to the community. Anyone can show up and provide input. We can't solve the issues alone, but we can have an impact together.

**Bruce:** What do you think about the population density in Tremont? It's much denser than a few years ago.

**Seronica:** The density population is part of a larger plan from the City of Cleveland. Density is needed to support local businesses and restaurants. Otherwise, they will move to elsewhere. However, I don't believe we should live stacked on top of each other. I was born and raised in Alabama, where open space and farmland were plentiful. I love the peace and quiet, but I also want the convenience a city can provide. It's not necessarily a bad thing to have a few neighbors.

**Bruce:** What are some of the things you like about Tremont?

**Seronica:** I enjoyed the parks when I first moved here. I've had challenges as a Black female, but I've also been fortunate to have some great neighbors. Most of my neighbors, not all of them, have been very friendly and welcoming. I love the feeling of community.

**Bruce:** Could you talk about the difficulties as a Black woman?

**Seronica:** As a Black female and a Black person generally, you are not seen until you are seen. I have been in Tremont for almost twenty years, and someone asked how I afford to own a home in Tremont. Why should it be a surprise that I can afford a home in Tremont? Another example is my kids got stopped while driving my car and drinking a pop. It seemed racial and has made me want to be more involved in Tremont West Development. Someone has to show that we deserve to be at the table. We have just as much right as anybody else. Take the time to get to know me. I am a single mom of two children with two Chihuahuas that give me great joy at home. I thrive as a Black person and contribute to the community just as much as anyone else.

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## Memories of Tremont Ave. A Problem with Tremont Rats During the 1940s



Tremont Rat (Photo by Chuck Slusarczyk Jr., September 26, 2021)

by Ken Scigulinsky

I never thought there was a problem with rats on the Southside during the 1940s, but apparently there was.

I recall visiting Tremont School one evening after school with my mom for a public awareness program. There were no presentations, but there were various posters and displays throughout the school that showed where rats could hide, the diseases rats spread, ways to eradicate them, and how good sanitation measures would deny them food.

At home, my eldest sister and I would sometimes be directed to empty our small receptacle for garbage and trash that was kept under the sink, concealed with a simple cloth on a rod. That was done when the container was full or the odor of rotting food scraps was objectionable; however, we were never allowed to dump trash after dark because my mom said that's when dangerous rats visited the garbage cans.

I had never seen a rat until one summer night when we kids were playing in the Tremont Ave. area catching lightning bugs. It was an activity that took us all over the neighborhood. Running into backyards that were normally off limits was ignored since lightning bugs were very engaging targets.

It was challenging since the bugs would briefly illuminate then go dark, so you had to run to the area where you thought they might reappear. It was frustrating since you had to guess whether they had flown up/down or left/right then stay alert for the next glow.

Everyone eventually caught lightning bugs, sometimes placing them in a jar for future viewing pleasure only to find they were dead the next day. The way we treated the lightning bugs was cruel kid stuff. We would hold the firefly between our thumb and index finger then squeeze the front part of the firefly as soon as it illuminated, killing the bug while preserving the glow. The glowing material was then smeared on the back of a finger to give the appearance of a glow-in-the-dark ring.

Anyway, our interest in catching lightning bugs that night was abruptly halted when we heard a very loud explosion.

We boys loved loud explosive noises. I previously wrote about our technique of placing strike-anywhere match heads in a nut that had 2 bolts screwed into it and throwing it up in the air to create an explosion when it landed. Of course, we also had our cap guns, but merely shooting a single cap with each pull of the trigger was not satisfactorily loud enough.

We learned we could get a very loud bang if we placed an entire roll of caps on the curb, on its side, and smashed it with a rock. It wasn't an efficient use of caps, but it sure was satisfyingly loud.

Back to my story: We ran to the source of the loud noise and were directed by an adult to not go further than David Cross's back yard. He lived across the street from me on Tremont and there was a long driveway adjacent to his house that led to some garages that were rented out for small trucks.

That night, the owner of the garages had placed some bait in the semicircular approach to the garages and turned on his floodlights to illuminate the area. The owner sat on a chair with his shotgun a short distance from the bait, while we were restricted to a safe distance behind him. I never saw a rat running for the bait, but the shooter was able to see a running rat and he would fire his gun and kill it.

After each killing, he would remove the dead rat with a shovel and dump it in a container. When necessary, he added some more bait then sat down to await his next target.

After witnessing about 3 killings, the time between the shots was too long to hold our interest, so we went back to catching fireflies.

I never witnessed the shooting of rats that way again, but the experience made me aware of the hidden presence of rats in my neighborhood. 🐀

## Free American Sign Language Class Series

with Keri November

EXCITING NEWS! Keri November will teach a four-week FREE ASL WORKSHOP! The ASL workshop at Jefferson Ave. library will be on:

- Tuesday, February 7 from 5:30-6:30 PM
- Tuesday, February 14 from 5:30-6:30 PM
- Tuesday, February 21 from 5:30-6:30 PM
- Tuesday, February 28 from 5:30-6:30 PM

The link to register (active after January 10th, 2023, is:

<https://cpl.libcal.com/event/9720845>

## Mayor Bibb Proposes Investing \$40 Million of American Rescue Plan Act Funding on Education, Jobs, Workforce Development and Modern Technology



In early January, Mayor Justin M. Bibb introduced to Cleveland City Council over \$40 million in proposed American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) investments focused on education, jobs, democracy, and the modernization of city services.

“The pandemic has been hard on all of us, especially our kids and our families. My administration remains focused on helping provide the necessary supports that students, educators, and parents need as we continue to come out of the pandemic,” said Mayor Bibb. “These critical initiatives will help accelerate progress on literacy, mental health, and engagement.”

“These ARPA funds are once-in-a-lifetime investments in Cleveland's future,” Bibb added. “That's why we're focusing on the building blocks of a stronger tomorrow: our kids, our workers, and our civic fabric. It's this kind of catalytic investment in the things that matter most that will ensure Cleveland thrives for generations to come.”

### This docket of ARPA proposals includes:

Education for Everyone (\$16.68M)

- **Coordinated Supports to Catch Students Up:** These initiatives serve to develop and scale innovative education practices that work, further engage families in their students' learning, and ensure all early learners have supports for reading.

- **Education Pathways to Good Jobs:** Education is a critical pathway toward family-sustaining wages for all Clevelanders. This initiative aims to re-engage residents whose educational pathway was disrupted during COVID and to establish stronger career pathway planning for Cleveland students in grades 6-12.

- **Integrated Health Initiative:** Integrate health services into CMSD schools to

provide students with physical and mental services on-site and remotely, build trust in healthcare, increase health literacy, and destigmatize mental health.

Inclusive Economic Recovery (\$13.5M)

- **Built Environment Workforce Development:** Grow the workforce pipeline in high-demand good jobs in “built environment” sectors (construction, transit, green infrastructure, broadband, lead and brownfield remediation), with specific metrics to bring more Black, Latinx, and women workers into the skilled trades and other occupations that build the community around us.

- **Site Acquisition and Development:** Acquire, remediate, and prepare commercial sites for business development and growth along Opportunity Corridor, ultimately attracting more jobs to the City.

Modernizing City Hall (\$4M)

- **311 Digital Government Software:** To better provide essential City services, this initiative will modernize 311 operations with a digital resident engagement platform and revamped call intake capabilities.

Violence Prevention and Public Safety (\$0.85M)

- **Violence Prevention Strategic Plan:** Engage the community in the development of a long-term violence prevention strategic plan.

Civic Participation Fund (\$5.5M)

- **Participatory Budgeting:** Enables residents to propose and vote for projects in their neighborhoods by piloting a participatory budgeting process, a new investment in Cleveland's civic infrastructure which lets community decide how to spend part of a public budget.



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by Nancy Geiser  
Owner-Operator, Devoted Matchmaker Services

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# END OF AN ERA: Tremont's Post 58 Closes

Photo by *The Tremontster*

**Tom Matia, Post 58 Marketing Coordinator and devoted member**, presented Commander Terry Zacharyj and the Post 58 Officers a Mayoral Proclamation from Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb commemorating the contributions of Post 58 to the Tremont neighborhood, the city, and the nation.

by Rich Weiss

*The Tremontster* office received a voicemail this past December from Terry Zacharyj, Commander of Tremont's Roosevelt Post 58:

"Rich, this is Terry Zacharyj from Post 58. We have an exclusive—you're the first one to know: We sold Post 58, and we are going to be closing. Our last day of operation is going to be December 17, 2022, and we're going to have a huge party—it's going to be all catered, free food, the whole bit—so, the building will be closed; that will be our last day of operation. I'm going to tell you the truth: we're going to be moving out of the area. Tremont ... none of our members live here anymore; they can't afford to live down here anymore. I just wanted to let you know because this will be the end of an era—I mean, 37 years...but either way, my friend, happy New Year."

We attended the mid-December Roosevelt Post 58 closing event at the 37-year-old Tremont institution at 2442 Professor Avenue and can report the night lived up to Terry's description: it was a huge party. As we climbed the steep staircase to the second-floor buffet (which was served up in the Post 58 Membership Hall), we were greeted with the smells and sights of pierogi, unstuffed cabbage, bratwurst, and sauerkraut, once familiar staples of pre-pandemic Tremont food culture.

Two seats happened to be available at one of the long, folding tables of attendees, offering an opportunity to sit down and catch up with our Tremont community over bottles and cans of Ukrainian and Polish beer.

Downstairs on the bar level, the festivities began around 6:30 pm with an auction of Post 58 memorabilia. George Melnyk,

winner of a cherished Post 58 statuette, grew up in Tremont and has seen the neighborhood go through many changes. "The Southside. This is the Southside. It will always be the Southside," George said just after Terry handed him the prized statuette for which George held the winning raffle ticket. "Amen, right?"

We asked George for his views on the changes he's seen. "Well, everything goes through a cycle, so I guess it's okay," he prefaced, "...but it will still always be the Southside. They can change the name, but this was a great neighborhood to grow up in. It was very diverse—with people from all walks of life, all nationalities—and it's still the Southside."

Longtime members took the mic to share their own stories about first discovering Post 58, about becoming members, or about the welcoming feeling of family that was palpable to anyone who buzzed the doorbell for admittance over the past 37 years.

Tom Matia, Post 58 Marketing Coordinator and devoted member, presented Commander Terry and the Post 58 Officers a Mayoral Proclamation from Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb commemorating the contributions of Post 58 to the Tremont neighborhood, the city, and the nation.

As we said our goodbyes and made our way home, a light snow had begun to fall. Not like the bomb cyclone Christmas Blizzard of '22, which was to arrive just five days later—this was a gentle, quiet snowfall. Warmed from the inside by Eastern European comfort food and heavily discounted beer, we strolled down Professor Avenue with the sounds of the gathering going strong at Post 58 fading

behind us, and that old-world-urban-village feeling once quintessential to Tremont's identity seemed to fill the neighborhood again.

In the days following the closing event, we were able to ask Terry for his perspective on the building closure and his perspective on the future for Post 58 as an organization. "This was a very sad decision on our part. But unfortunately, we did not get the support from Tremont. I don't want to throw Tremont under the bus, of course. I don't want to do that because your paper is a Tremont paper. But unfortunately, the cost of everything down there has risen so high. Not just the taxes, but just a lot of times the average young family starting out getting married cannot really afford to be buying in Tremont."

Terry wanted to make sure readers of *The Tremontster* know that Post 58 will continue its giving traditions to the neighborhood that was its home for 37 years.

"We're still helping St. Augustine's church," he said. "And we're helping St. John Cantius with the profits that we're getting from the sale of the building. So, some of that money is going to be used substantially and not just a hundred dollars. Some substantial money will be given to St. John Cantius, St. Augustine's, the Ukrainian Museum. So that's a start." Terry continued, "We're going to still be helping any veterans that are in need of assistance. We don't care if they're Polish or not—anybody that needs assistance."

Post 58 has plans for the logistics of how its membership will continue to help veterans in need.

"We will still be reaching out through St. Hermann's on Franklin Avenue, and

wherever we can find veterans who are either homeless or in need."

Primarily, the help Post 58 provides each of its areas of charitable focus comes from the generosity of its membership.

"We make donations—substantial financial donations—so they can go ahead and fulfill their programs," said Terry. "We know St. Augustine's main program is feeding the homeless. St. John Cantius had a serious problem with their beautiful, beautiful organ that's very expensive. A substantial amount was given to St. John Cantius to repair the organ, so the parishioners can enjoy the music of the organ again. And then there is the Ukrainian Museum, to support their projects—support for Ukraine's defense against the Russian invasion, and also to maintain their building; they're in the process of renovating their main building in the front."

Even though the organization's home of 37 years has closed, Terry wants to emphasize the Post 58 membership is still meeting and is still active.

"I would also mention that The Post still does exist. Our building is gone, but we are meeting at the American Legion 469 on Memphis Avenue (4910 Memphis Ave, Cleveland, OH 44144). We are meeting there, and we have pretty much made that our location where we meet on a regular basis and continue our camaraderie."





# 'Dry January,' Said No Chef Ever!



Chefnuary pairings

Photos by Chef Natasha



Chef Natasha Pogrebinsky

by Chef Natasha Pogrebinsky

As we all slam open that proverbial swinging kitchen door into the new year, we reflect on what we are looking forward to and what we are leaving in the past.

The December battle grounds are behind us; you can still see the faint smoke hovering on the horizon in the dusk. Some of us didn't make it, and some of us barely escaped with war wounds we will attempt to nurture for months to come. Let's all take a minute here to remember the fallen, those lost to addiction, to the pressure, the stress, and to the economy.

Ahead, the wide and mighty, cold, empty flat lands of January and February, with nothing but a pop here and there. I don't love comparing my industry to what a soldier goes through in war, but it does make for a great visual. And don't you for a second think that I'm complaining. There's something in the way chefs are made that makes us thrive in extreme and drastic conditions: in and out of walk-in freezers and coolers all day in just a tee-shirt, standing for hours next to a 700-degree oven that's been cracking for 12 hours, a burn, a sprain, a cut...all in a day's work. The pain we feel is not physical, but the pain of empty seats after the holiday season can be excruciating.

Hospitality has never had it easy and (given the life-altering experience of what COVID has seasoned the pot with) is transforming our industry in major ways, even today. As consumers, we are all struggling with the price of food, gas, utilities, etc. As a chef, translating that struggle into a plate of food is a little bit like contorting yourself into a tiny box and then wrapping it all pretty with a bow. Of course, that conundrum is also one of my favorite parts of the job, figuring out the pieces of the puzzle, creating something delicious.

I hope many of you are taking January off to refresh and cleanse.

Most importantly, if you or a friend is in need of help, let someone know, find help, and get well. We need you and your friends, and we need this industry to stay healthy, strong, and vibrant. However, if you choose to responsibly enjoy a cocktail tonight, here's one you can try. It's called Chefnuary. Now, don't forget a snack of course, the perfect pairing is my dish called Tin Mussels—try it on the menu at The South Side this season. And as always, I've thought of you, my friend, and made this recipe for 4. Batch it for yourself and have 4 cocktails or share with a friend. No one is judging.



## Chefnuary

Serves 4

### Ingredients:

8 oz carrot juice  
 9 oz apple or white grape juice  
 8 oz vodka  
 9 oz lemon/lime soda  
 juice of one lemon  
 about 10 leaves of fresh tarragon  
 a pinch of kosher salt and a pinch of paprika (about 1/4 teaspoon)  
 equal parts salt, sugar, and paprika for the rim (about 1 tablespoon)  
 orange wedges and tarragon sprigs for garnish  
 4 oz grand mariner, brandy, or cognac

### Directions:

Glass: If you've got nice crystal, use it. What are you saving it for? A coffee mug works well, too.

1. Combine juices, vodka, soda, and tarragon in a glass or shaker with ice and stir fiercely.
2. Add salt and paprika, stir again.
3. Rim the glasses or mugs with the dry spice mix.
4. Over a small flame, like a lighter or a candle, burn the orange skin and then squeeze the oils into each glass. Place the orange wedges into each glass.
5. Pour the cocktail mix through a sifter into glasses.
6. Add 1 oz brandy or cognac to each glass gently as a floater.
7. Cut tarragon sprigs in half and lay across glass rims.

Enjoy with delicacies such as cured meats, pates, cheese, and my Tin Mussels, a very special smoked mussels packed into a tin can with extra virgin olive oil, herbs, and spices. Goes perfectly with grilled bread.

Stop in and say hello!

Happy New Year,

- Chef Natasha  
**Natasha Pogrebinsky**  
 Executive Chef  
 The South Side  
 Hi & Dry

ORGANIC  
 SPANISH  
 MUSSELS  
 IN  
 OIL  
 &  
 VINEGAR





# Bobby's Towing Offers Free Snow Plowing for Stranded Tremont Seniors

Photo by *The Tremontster*

Bobby Bray outside Bobby's Towing and Roadside Assistance at the intersection of Clark Ave. and West 11th St.

***Bobby's Towing and Roadside Assistance (216-375-0777) is offering free snow plowing to stranded seniors in distress who call (or whose families call in for them) needing help getting access to the street.***

## A special report by *The Tremontster*

*The Tremontster's* delivery vehicle battery died last month in the parking lot of Dave's Market in Ohio City.

Once the car was loaded with emergency supplies to hunker down for The Blizzard of '22, which was forecasted to arrive the next day, the original 2015 battery simply didn't have the charge to withstand the already dipping temperatures and was frozen cold.

After two clearly unsuccessful tries to start the car, it was time to consider what to do next.

We allowed our AAA membership to lapse during the pandemic after a four-hour wait for road service that took multiple calls to learn was not coming after all.

AAA was the first call, but if restarting the service was affordable, the same-day service fee and the price of a brand-new battery were too much to bear, even staring down a bomb cyclone.

An AutoZone clerk answered the second

call and quoted a more reasonable battery price but warned the battery required professional installation.

Cleveland meteorologists across the board—WOIO's Jeff Tanchak, Fox 8's Jenn Harcher, WEWS's Mark Johnson, and WKYC's Betsy Kling—all were warning of 0° temperatures and sustained negative 25° wind chills long in advance of the storm.

The dropping temperature inside the vehicle shivered loose the memory of the mom-and-pop auto repair shop near A Christmas Story House & Museum, at the top of Clark Hill on the way down to Steelyard Commons...and a tow truck in front that was branded "Bobby's Towing and Roadside Assistance" (1095 Clark Ave., 216-375-0777).

Bobby Bray is an "OG" Tremontster—like those of us that refer to the neighborhood as "The Southside." And when the phone rang at Bobby's Towing, it was Bobby that answered.

Bobby's Towing had our vehicle on its way to Bobby's shop within an hour, and less than an hour after that we were back on the road and heading home with a new-to-us battery, professionally installed, and out the door for less than 100 bucks.

Needless to say, *The Tremontster* will be relying on Bobby's Towing and Roadside Assistance from now on.

## Free Snow Plowing for Stranded Tremont Seniors

During the battery installation, Bobby got to talking with us like he does with all his customers. He mentioned his own history growing up in Tremont, and he mentioned that he feels a calling to use his snow plow this winter to give back to his neighborhood.

Bobby's Towing and Roadside Assistance is offering free snow plowing to stranded seniors in distress who call (or whose families call in for them) needing help getting access to the street.

Bobby said, "If they're mobile seniors with cars who need to get out to wherever they need to go, I'm going to make it a priority to get down there and get them out of there."

This is not a new calling for Bobby.

A good plow is hard to find, and when Tremontsters would see Bobby digging out a senior in need, "people started to get me to plow for them ... and pay me. But that's not really what I'm trying to do." Bobby explained the reward he feels after he digs himself out of a heavy snow to then help others: "I get out the house when I'm so snowed in and do something, man. And help, how I can—give back a little."

## Moment Of Truth

On the morning of December 26, we tested *The Tremontster* vehicle after the blizzard had finally subsided. With temperatures still in the single digits, the car started up like a charm.

Thanks, Bobby!



## Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Emergency Allotments to End in March

Beginning March 1, 2023, Cuyahoga County residents who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) benefits will see a reduction in the total amount received each month, as the federal emergency allotment program ends in February.

**The last SNAP emergency allotments will be issued throughout February 2023. In March 2023, customers will receive their standard SNAP allotment only.**

In December, the U.S. Congress passed the **2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act**, a spending bill for the 2023 fiscal year

which eliminated the Covid emergency allotment. At the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) opted into a federal waiver that increased SNAP benefits during the pandemic. The state has been issuing this emergency allotment since April 2020.

Cuyahoga Job and Family Services (CJFS) recognizes the impact this change will have in our community. Currently, about \$53 million in SNAP benefits are spent each month in Cuyahoga County. CJFS estimates a \$23 million reduction in SNAP

benefits county-wide when this change occurs in March 2023. Approximately 212,000 residents will see a monthly reduction, ranging from \$95 to \$300.

Recipients who want to check their standard benefit amount can call the Ohio Direction Card Customer Service Center at 1-866-386-3071 or visit the Self-Service Portal at [ssp.benefits.ohio.gov](https://ssp.benefits.ohio.gov).

The resources below may assist families in need:

**Produce Perks** – Stretch SNAP dollars in partnership with select Dave's Supermarkets and local farmers markets.

**Greater Cleveland Food Bank** – The online "Find Food Near Me" tool provides locations of food pantries, mobile pantries, and hot meal sites. **United Way 2-1-1** – The United Way Help Center is open 24 hours a day by calling 2-1-1 for resources and information about food, clothing, housing, health care and more. **The Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless (NEOCH)** – NEOCH publishes a street card with information on meal sites, housing, counseling, and more.



# ‘Cleveland Reads’ Challenges Clevelanders to Read One Million Books in 2023



Photo by CMSD News Bureau

**Shari Obrenski, President of the Cleveland Teachers Union:** “There’s a lesson in every story and we’re bringing 40,000 of them to the city of Cleveland. We’re proud to help families build their libraries through the Cleveland Reads challenge.”

## A special report by *The Tremonster*

The “Cleveland Reads” Kickoff Celebration was well attended on Saturday, December 17, 2022, at Public Auditorium in downtown Cleveland. Cleveland Mayor Justin M. Bibb kicked off the event by saying, “Reading is a passion of mine and it’s helped guide me through various stages of life. Books have influenced me emotionally, spiritually, and professionally and I hope Cleveland Reads brings that same love to all Clevelanders.” Bibb added, “Boosting literacy is one way to improve outcomes in our community – from academic success to workforce development.”

The Mayor’s Office, Cleveland Public Library, Cleveland Teachers Union, Cleveland Metropolitan School District and nearly 30 community organizations are working together to encourage reading and boost literacy levels in the city.

The goal is for the entire city to collectively read one million books in 2023. The initiative encourages all city residents to sign up online at [clevelandreads.com](http://clevelandreads.com) and to use the website throughout 2023 to log their books and the minutes they spend reading.

Readers will win fabulous prizes, but program partners believe the greater benefit will be long-term increases in resident literacy rates across the city.

According to a 2009 study by Case Western Reserve University, 69% of adults read at or below the 7th-grade level.

A 2018 Seeds of Literacy study found 66% of Cleveland adults are functionally illiterate.

Felton Thomas, Jr., Executive Director and CEO of Cleveland Public Library, said, “Cleveland Public Library is excited to work with the Mayor’s Office on the Cleveland Reads challenge. Literacy is the cornerstone of every library and the foundation to everything that we do. Every book is an opportunity to explore new ideas and open doors for discovery.”

In partnership with Euclid Public Library, the Cleveland Reads Kickoff Celebration featured a live reading and book signing by children’s author Kelly Starling Lyons who wrote the *Ty’s Travels* series, *Tiara’s Hat Parade*, and *Going Down Home with Daddy*.

“There’s a lesson in every story and we’re bringing 40,000 of them to the city of Cleveland. We’re proud to help families build their libraries through the Cleveland Reads challenge,” added Shari Obrenski, President of the Cleveland Teachers Union. Obrenski’s organization and the American Federation of Teachers donated 40,000 books that were given away during the Cleveland Reads Kickoff Celebration. Families picked up FREE books as well as contact information and outreach materials from a tunnel of Cleveland reading support service tables lining the event.

RTA revealed one of four buses wrapped with messages supporting the Cleveland Reads Challenge that will be rolling around the city.

Cleveland’s youth and their families were attracted with a chance to win a Nintendo Switch with a one-year game subscription, Beats wireless earbuds, Southwest Airlines gift cards, and other prizes.

Transportation to Public Auditorium was provided to and from five Cleveland Public Library locations: Carnegie West, Glenville, Hough, Rice, and Rockport.

Families were treated to performances by the John Marshall School Band, Cleveland Federation of Musicians Local 4, local cheer teams, and DJ Phatty Banks.

Jessica Walsh-Frazier, Community Outreach Director for the Cleveland Kids’ Book Bank, said, “The Cleveland Kids’ Book Bank takes new and donated books and redistributes them to the community. And as part of that work, we were asked to be part of this Cleveland Reads initiative. The ultimate goal of the campaign is for Clevelanders to collectively read 1 million books and or 1 million minutes. We want everyone to come to the table. So, we have been a part of the campaign by helping with our outreach, recruiting wonderful neighborhood reading ambassadors to help spread the word. We want no stone unturned; we want everyone hearing from their neighbor. What are you reading to get excited about reading? And we’re going to log those books throughout the year of 2023.”

Walsh-Frazier explained, “We’ll have summer events to culminate and go along with any summer reading. We’ll

also close out the year, hopefully celebrating our city collectively reading 1 million books and or 1 million minutes. So, we’re super excited about that, and we want as many people involved as possible, so everyone has to do their part and read a little bit more.”

Rhonda Crowder, journalist and literacy advocate, said, “It is a very special day just to see so many families coming out and partaking in this joy and love of reading. A lot of work and effort was put into this event. To see it finally all come together and the excitement and the energy is really nice. When Margaret Bernstein approached me to coordinate Huff Reads back in 2018, we were in two neighborhoods. At that time, she had just done Slavic Village and we were kicking off Huff. She said that she wanted the momentum to spread across the city... and here we are, starting 2023 with a Cleveland Reads initiative.”

Become a supporter of the Cleveland Reads challenge. Financial and in-kind donors can help amplify this important community initiative. Local donor generosity makes a difference in the neighborhoods served by the Cleveland Reads challenge. Interested supporters should contact Gio Gravino at (216) 902-4925 or email [foundation@cpl.org](mailto:foundation@cpl.org).



# City of Cleveland Seeks Applicant for Civilian Police Review Board Vacancy

As part of its ongoing commitment to the full implementation of Issue 24, the City of Cleveland is looking for a qualified applicant to fill a vacant seat on the Civilian Police Review Board. The selected applicant would be appointed to complete a four-year term that runs through December 20, 2025. The individual appointed to fill out the current term would also be eligible to apply for the new full four-year term that would begin in December 2025. The candidate for this vacant position must be a resident of the City of Cleveland at the time of the appointment. The Civilian Police Review Board (CPRB) has the power to receive, cause investigation of, and recommend resolution of non-criminal complaints filed with it alleging misconduct by officers and non-sworn employees of the Cleveland Division of Police when such alleged misconduct is directed toward any person who is not a CDP employee. Investigations of alleged police misconduct are conducted by the Office of Professional Standards (OPS). The OPS reports directly to the CPRB, and the CPRB reviews the investigations completed by the OPS. Following an OPS investigation, the CPRB holds a public

hearing and recommends an administrative resolution for each of the complaints. Applicants are encouraged to review City of Cleveland Charter Section 115, which governs the CPRB and OPS and which was significantly reformed following the passage of Issue 24 in 2021. Members of the CPRB have a unique role as public servants with respect to reviewing the conduct of Division of Police employees. The community, government, and law enforcement have entrusted members of the CPRB to conduct their work in a professional, fair, and impartial manner. This trust is earned through individual members of the CPRB having a firm commitment

to the public good, the mission of the CPRB, and the exercise of high ethical and professional standards. The work itself requires a keen focus on detail, a strict adherence to the governing rules, and a willingness to attend every meeting having fully reviewed every case. **Requirements:** Persons applying to fill a vacancy on the CPRB cannot be employed currently as a law enforcement officer and cannot be a current or former employee of the Cleveland Division of Police. Also, such persons cannot be currently employed by the City of Cleveland or by any public agency having a connection with the City of Cleveland, including county agencies and

community development corporation. The City of Cleveland Charter now requires that two members of the CPRB "should be attorneys with experience representing victims of police misconduct or criminally prosecuting police misconduct." Preference will be given to candidates who meet that description.

- Applicants must live in the City of Cleveland
- Compensation for board members is \$8,963 per year.

 To apply, please submit a resume with work history and a cover letter to Ryan Puentes, Chief Government Affairs Officer, at [rpuentes@clevelandohio.gov](mailto:rpuentes@clevelandohio.gov) by July 11, 2022.



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To find out more about the Dementia Caregiver Study, please contact us at **216.368.8848** or [caregiver@case.edu](mailto:caregiver@case.edu).

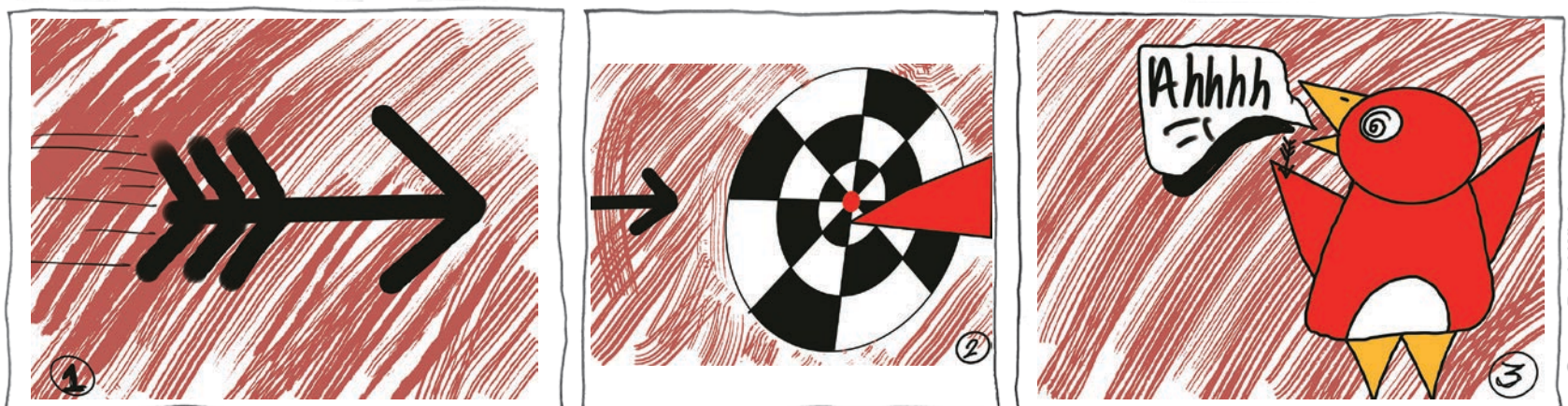
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**6:00 – 8:00 pm**

East Professional Center  
1349 E 79th St  
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**Wednesday, Jan. 18**

**6:00 – 8:00 pm**

Max S. Hayes High School  
2211 W 65th St  
Cleveland, OH 44102

**Thursday, Jan. 19**

**6:00 – 8:00 pm**

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