



## Forest Hill Residents are Taking the Fight to Area's Problem Properties

by Les Jones

### HOUSING IMPROVEMENT STORIES AROUND...

There continues to be significant progress on a few dozen long-standing problem properties within Forest Hill. Several neighbors have joined in to push forward efforts to tackle this problem using different tactics to help Forest Hill repel housing decline creeping into our historic neighborhood.



**16237 Forest Hills Boulevard** – This property which remained vacant for almost a decade has now been taken over from the Cuyahoga County Land Bank by a Forest Hill couple and a major renovation is well underway. This project is no small undertaking given the length of time this home sat vacant. Phase 1 of the rehab plan involved salvaging the original slate roof which required a complete visual inspection of the underlaying rafters and ceiling areas. Roof repairs are now just about complete and recent heavy rains have allowed for a complete inspection to locate any leaks before replacing the ceilings. Major electrical upgrade work is also underway which will include removing all overhead wires, phone and cable lines and placing them underground as the original house plan called for. That work is scheduled to be completed by early August. Once power is restored Phase 2 will begin with plumbing work, including replacement and repairs to water, sanitary and storm drains. This will be followed by carpentry rough-in work, floor finishing and painting. All of the original windows will be maintained and landscaping will be part of the final restoration steps.



**2557 Newbury Drive** – This property which FHHO had planned to secure will now be retained by the Cuyahoga County Land Bank with rehab work scheduled to start by early August. Once complete this property will be put back on the market for sale.

**1231 Hereford Road** – This property completed a major interior and exterior restoration with a final sale now pending.



**15433 Brewster Road** – This property was successfully transferred to HUD after correcting violations cited by FHHO including gutter replacement, tree trimming, window painting, front door repairs and a full yard cleanup. The property was sold recently and awaits title transfer.

**3045 Monticello Boulevard** – Several Forest Hill neighbors gathered on Saturday, July 2nd to help this returning resident cleanup the yard and hold a yard sale. Cleveland Heights housing services has provided the owner with a \$3,500 grant to paint the house which is scheduled for completion in the next few weeks.

**15725 Glynn Road** – Trustee Diana England worked with this neighbor to successfully get the home painted and the entire property cleaned up.

**3319 Chelsea Drive** – This property just received a major yard cleanup after efforts of some Forest Hill residents were successful in approaching the owner who's son actually lives in the house.

**3325 Chelsea Drive** – The rehab of this property had been stalled for over 18 months but the contractor recently stated that they will perform an immediate cleanup and resume work soon.

**16281 Oakhill Road** – Trustee Diana England, along with Oakhill neighbors David Dewey and Darrell Fields lobbied East Cleveland housing department to secure a new owner for this property which is currently receiving a major cleanup.

**3338 Monticello Boulevard** – Another bank-owned property which was cited by FHHO has completed rehab work and is now back on the market.



Rehab activity is in progress on several other houses that were on the bank-owned listing or were cited by FHHO for violations. Hopefully the current pace of renovation projects will continue to transform these problem homes back into assets for Forest Hill.



## President's Message

by Peter Grebus

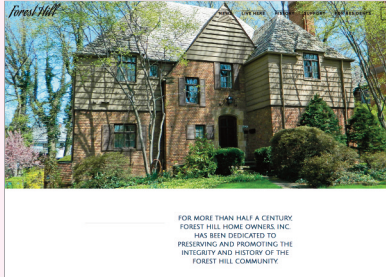
It's been an exciting three months as President of FHHO. We had the most successful Monster Garage Sale to date, thanks to Valda Lewis. We're hard at work to make next year's sale an even bigger event. FHHO has also launched an updated website (**FHHO.org**). This will be the hub for updates about FHHO activities, including a social calendar, periodic blog posts, and links to community information. We'll also be adding the ability to get FHHO updates sent directly to your email inbox.

With the help of Jim Simpson, we've launched the Blue Cottage Guild. The Guild is a way to connect those residents with standards violations to vetted contractors. For more information on the Guild, contact Jim, or go to (**<http://bluecottageguild.localmobil.com>**). As part of the Guild launch, a Guild inspector will be walking Forest Hill, and documenting all violations. With coordination from our Standards committee, the homeowner will be notified, and instructed on the process to correct the violation(s). Note that the homeowner is not required to hire a Guild-recommended contractor, and can use any contractor (or DIY). However, the Guild is expected to become a significant revenue stream for FHHO, as all contractors will be required to pay a fee to be part of the program.

We've also been talking to the Cuyahoga County Land Bank about acquiring all properties in Forest Hill that end up in the Land Bank's possession. We weren't able to acquire the Land Bank home on Newbury because the Land Bank made the decision to rehab the house itself, but we do see this as a potential additional revenue stream for FHHO. We're fortunate to have the Land Bank as a partner. Feel free to check them out at **<http://www.cuyahogalandbank.org/>**.

Judy Charlick, formerly the Chair of Cottage & Grounds, has changed roles to Social Activities & Street Clubs Chair, but not before overseeing the transformation of the cottage lawn. A group of FH residents volunteered to help maintain both the cottage and Burlington lots. We followed this up with the removal of the hedges that lined the cottage, replacing the high-maintenance plants with grass, and making the cottage a more visible landmark. Jan Milic is back, taking over Cottage & Grounds, and is already set to work on additional landscaping improvements.

It's been great to meet many of you at the local block parties, and I look forward to meeting more of you at upcoming events. And one last note...if you haven't yet made your 2016 donation to FHHO please do so today!



## Strengthening Our Sense of Community Through Street Clubs

by Judy Charlick

Would you like to know your neighbors better? feel more comfortable and connected to your community? A street club or occasional street get-togethers can give neighbors an opportunity to know each other, work together to address common issues, watch out for each other, have some fun together, and strengthen everyone's sense of belonging to a community. Your street association can be as informal or as structured as you'd like – whatever works for the residents.

Specific street activities can include regular or occasional meetings on topics of concern or interest, block parties with the street blocked to traffic, tool loan systems, baby- or pet-sitting co-ops, plant sharing, holiday parties or gourmet dinners at someone's house. Cleveland Heights City Hall will provide free photocopying of flyers for your activities, street barricades and a volley ball & net for street parties, and a staff or Council person for meetings. FHHO's Social Activities/Street Clubs chairperson, Judy Charlick, will gladly assist you to explore street club and activity options with your neighbors. She has 40 years of experience doing this in Cleveland Heights. Judy welcomes your contacting her at **[jcharlick@ameritech.net](mailto:jcharlick@ameritech.net)** or **216-321-4077**.

## Forest Hill Summer Street Parties

by Jan Milic

On Sunday, June 26, Chelsea and Kew held their first ever "Block Party" to welcome new homeowners and get acquainted with others they did not know. Because there were some new people on Burlington, that street was also included.

The theme was a Mexican Fiesta and the many of the guys turned out in bright shirts. The food was fabulous and we thank all that attended.

Burlington again held their traditional Fourth of July noon potluck. For this year, rather than decorated bikes and holding a parade, children enjoyed a visit by a CH Police K9 officer and his dog. Kids got to try out the siren in the police car and explore a Fire Truck on display from Cleveland Heights. As always, Dick Secor shot off his Musket. Thanks to Andrea Johnson, Jeff Olson and Cindy Young, who organized and hosted this year's event.

## Welcome Our New Neighbors

by Dr. Mary Rice

Please extend a warm welcome to these new residents that joined our Forest Hill family from **April 10 to July 20, 2016**:

- Eric Arc and Awilda Rodriguez Maisonet – Brandon
- Seike Shabazz – Brewster
- Whitney and Georgia Lloyd – Burlington
- Allan and Henrietta Silberger – Kew
- Gordon Van Metre and Cynthia Pentler – Blackmore
- Margaret Robinson – Monticello
- Treavor Watkins and Lae'I Hughes Watkins – Rumson
- Sami Judeeba and Abdulhadi Suror Esraa – Burlington
- Shane Carroll – Mount Vernon



## Standards Report

by Dale Rothenberger and Dean Sieck



“If you see something, say something.” It’s a phrase we have become familiar with in times of heightened fear of violence. Most of us wouldn’t equate a lack of attentiveness to our property maintenance with terrorism. But it’s not a bad adage to remember on our morning constitutional or daily dog-walking. We, as a collective body, are after all the best alert system to property that needs attention and may erode our property values and neighborhood image. And it gets results.

In the last couple of months, neighbors’ complaints about property condition has resulted in the new fence at the corner of Burlington and the removal of several cars that the City of Cleveland Heights terms as “undriveable.” Those sharp-eyed neighbors contacted the Standards Committee through the website or by calling **216-932-8952**, and following the committee’s notice to Cleveland Heights Housing Inspection Department, those cars have now been removed.

Cleveland Heights ordinances permit any number of cars on a property, but all cars must be currently licensed and have no flat tires. Your Standards Committee has been very pleased with the prompt response of the Cleveland Heights inspection department. So pay attention to cars that seem to have found a permanent home on a driveway near you and let us know, so they can be removed. The same goes for keeping a sharp eye on your street in East Cleveland. And thank you to the neighbors who complied with the City’s request and helped to beautify our historic neighborhood.

## Recent Area Home Sales Activity

by Frank Ricchi

Forest Hill continues to see recovery from the 2008 recession effects in the selling prices of many homes along with robust rehab activity in progress at several properties. Here is a summary of the latest sold and pending sales activity with final selling prices:

• 3060 Chelsea Drive	\$112,500
• 3360 Chelsea Drive	\$112,500
• 1118 Rutherford Road	\$135,000
• 1437 Westover Road	\$115,000
• 3374 Rumson Road	\$189,000
• 1531 Burlington Road	\$184,000
• 1099 Mount Vernon Boulevard	\$ 84,500
• 3361 Monticello Boulevard	\$135,000
• 1561 Kew Road	\$159,000
• 1573 Kew Road	\$180,000
• 1493 Blackmore Road	\$168,000
• 1345 Forest Hills Boulevard	\$140,000

You can visit the **FHHO.org** anytime to get more detailed information on Forest Hill properties both up for sale or sold.

## What a Smashing Success... the Forest Hill Monster Garage Sale

by Valda Lewis

### I LOVE GARAGE SALES

I love both going to them, and holding them. My partner is completely the opposite but has managed to struggle through the four Monster Garage Sales we have participated in, and frankly, never complains about the takings.

Classic garage sale items seem to go in trends. Several years ago, no garage sale was complete without an eight-track player in the offerings, and now its VCR’s and fat, heavy televisions. People used to ask for military memorabilia such as medals and even guns. “No guns here mate,” I’d say, “except for the one I’m carrying.” (I wasn’t really carrying one – but it did see them off.) Now folks are looking for vinyl. But at any given sale, there is always something that catches the eye, “somebody’s trash” becoming somebody else’s treasure.

Betsy Kaufman for example, was thrilled to find a Hostess Twinkie Maker for sale. It was one of those treasures that she didn’t know she needed until, well, there it was.

This years Monster Garage Sale (MGS) was the biggest ever, with a



total of 63 houses participating. I took over the organizing from Marla Zwinggi, who started the MGS five years ago. She and her husband Nick were moving out of the neighborhood and she handed over perfect instructions on what to do and when.

My biggest concern – that still remains at the top of the list – is how to let people in the neighborhood know it is happening. When asked, many residents did reach out to others, by talking to people directly or by printing off the flyer and putting it through doors in their street. That really helped a lot.

Not everyone is signed up to “Next Door Forest Hill,” and gone are the days when everyone chats across the back fence to spread neighborhood news. I had some complaints from people who missed out in the past, and had people signing up at the last minute that had just found out about it even after weeks of publicizing it on “Next Door” and Facebook not to mention countless Garage Sale listings, the PD and Cleveland.com. I’d like to have a big banner next year – akin to the one the Greek Festival has. That might do it.

I’d like to give a special thank you to Adrian at Animal Zen who pitched in for the yard signs and to Dick Secor for making some street signs early on to help spread the word. I’d also like to thank Betsy Kaufman for helping deliver the signs and balloons – we looked like something from the movie “Up” after loading 60+ smiley face balloons into the car. Pete Grebus was stellar - provided some great food and refreshments. All in all we had a great event again. I’ve already started stockpiling for next year!

# FHHO Meets with CH City Council

by Les Jones

On May 2nd, over a dozen Forest Hill residents attended the Cleveland Heights council meeting. Les Jones, FHHO marketing chair, made a presentation to the full council highlighting several initiatives going on within Forest Hill to deal with housing code violations and efforts to improve and beautify the neighborhood. Each councilperson was presented an information kit highlighting those programs along with actions council could take in support of those efforts. Among those requested actions were:

- **Expediting housing court actions on homes in violation of city housing codes and raising fees for non-compliance**
- **Providing tax abatement or property tax relief for the FHHO - owned Blue Cottage so a bigger share of resident contributions to FHHO could be channeled to community investment**
- **Supporting FHHO activities by providing more prominent coverage in the city promotional, website and media outlets**
- **Opening access to the Cleveland Heights Community Center for residents who reside on the East Cleveland portion of Forest Hill**
- **Working with Motorcars and Forest Hill to find a solution to preserve, renovate and repurpose the Medusa building**

The Council was extremely impressed with the presentation and assigned councilperson Mary Dunbar along with Mayor Stephens to work with Forest Hill on reviewing options to assist with these requests. In the audience was Thomas Jewell, a reporter for the Sun Press who routinely covers city council meeting. He reached out to FHHO for a copy of the information kit to do a followup on Forest Hill. After review Tom drafted a half page article on our efforts to improve the area which appeared both on cleveland.com and in the Sun Press which appeared on Thursday, June 16th.



## FHHO Upcoming Events

**August 6, 2016 – First Saturday Meet-N-Greet**  
The Blue Cottage – 10:00 am to 1:00 pm

**September 3, 2016 – First Saturday Meet-N-Greet**  
The Blue Cottage – 10:00 am to 1:00 pm

**September 15, 2016 – FHHO Trustees Meeting**  
The Blue Cottage – 7:15 pm to 9:00 pm

**October 1, 2016 – First Saturday Meet-N-Greet**  
The Blue Cottage – 10:00 am to 1:00 pm

**November 10, 2016 – FHHO Annual Meeting**  
Location to be announced – 7:15 pm to 9:00 pm

**GOT A QUESTION OR CONCERN ABOUT THE FHHO NEWSLETTER?**  
You can send in your comments or issues to [newsletter@FHHO.org](mailto:newsletter@FHHO.org) or contact Les Jones, FHHO Marketing chair at 216-906-0646.

## 2016 FHHO Fund Drive Update

Your FHHO Executive Committee sends out a sincere **“THANK YOU”** to the following Forest Hill residents for their generous contributions in support of FHHO for the period **April 15, 2016 to July 18, 2016.**

**2016 FHHO Goal is \$50,000 in donations along with raising overall homeowner participation to 550 Forest Hill households**

**Currently \$16,716 has been raised from 157 Forest Hill households**

**HAVEN'T DONATED YET? Please help us reach our goal by donating Today... visit [FHHO.org](http://FHHO.org) to make a payment using PayPal or mail your contribution to: Forest Hill Home Owners 2419 Lee Boulevard Cleveland Heights, OH 44118**

**PLATINUM LEVEL – \$200 +**  
Theodore and Coralyce Carten  
Peter and Laura Grebus  
Hattie Helm  
Joseph and Mary Horvath  
David and Patricia McMurray  
Dr. Jess and Gloria Young

**GOLD LEVEL – \$125 to \$199**  
Marcia Allen and Pauline Tomlinson  
Judge Una Keenon-Bush and Cory Bush III  
Dr. Edna and James Connally  
Jeffrey Dross and Michele Ladouceur

Jeremy and Allison Dunning  
Carolyn Holt and Audrey Smith  
Ted and Rolande Howard  
Christopher Hubbert and Dr. Abigail Behrens  
Patricia and Robert Joseph  
Katherine Lewis  
Diane McLaughlin  
John Moody, Jr.  
David and Sharon Munford  
Jamain and Keshia Owens  
Richard and Molly Secor  
Judith and Dean Sieck  
Scott Simpson and Faith Bond  
Mayor Cheryl Stephens

**SILVER LEVEL – \$75 to \$124**  
Michael Beckman and Mary O'Shea  
Robert and Marilyn Cameron  
Carleen Carver  
Bettye Cleveland  
Carol Miller and Dennis Freeman  
Leevearn and Arleast Grimes  
Miriam Hargate and Laura Pokorny  
Ronald and Jan Hart  
Harvey and Sondra Jacobs  
Graylon and Hattie Keeton  
Valda Lewis and Dorothy Miller  
Patricia and Luis Ortez  
Frank and Effie Ricchi  
Clark and Joan Bender Rice  
Clara Robinson  
David and Eileen Smotzer  
Stephen and Irene Szaraz  
Timothy Welsh and Wendy Smither  
Michael and Catherine Wells  
Johnny Williams and Marguerite Henry  
Minnie Williams  
Warren Williams

**BRONZE LEVEL – Up to \$74**  
Lynn Haney and Marsha Steele  
James and Lola Harris  
JoAnn and Richard O'Donnell  
Emmett Saunders  
Brian Smith and Marjorie Edguer

## Heights, Homes...and All That Jazz!

by Les Jones

The 39th Annual Heights Heritage Home & Garden Tour returns this fall with some special surprises! Sponsored by Heights Community Congress, and in conjunction with the Heights Library Centennial celebration, the 2016 tour will recall the 1920s period of fashion, flair and pizzazz!



Guests will be taken back to an era of “glam” at the exciting Preview Party, which will be held at the Ensemble Theatre on **Saturday, September 17th** with all guests being encouraged to celebrate in costume. The Preview Party will take guests on a preview of a select group of homes in advance of the Sunday tour via Lolly the Trolley. They'll return to view actors from Ensemble Theater performing a scene from “The Great Gatsby” followed by jazz music, dancing and food catered by The Fairmount.

The full Home & Garden Tour takes place on **Sunday, September 18, from noon to 6 pm** and will feature seven historic homes including two mansions on Fairmount Boulevard along with three gardens chosen for their history and connection to this era.

For additional information about the Preview Party and Sunday Tour visit the HCC website at [www.heightscongress.org](http://www.heightscongress.org).