



A Hunger to Serve

CLEVELAND HEIGHTS BIO-ORGANIC NURSERY REDEFINES "HOMESTEADING"

By Derek K. Dixon
Press Correspondent

A local homesteader is raising the civic bar for Northeast Ohio's urban agricultural movement with a new approach to "homesteading": the intentional use of a resident's home base to create and provide healthy alternatives to commercial consumerism, within and beyond the realm of food.

"What we have done at Burnt Toast Farms and Studio is reinvent homesteading," begins Jason Eugene-Boarde (BOR-DAY), the founder and chief operator of the Cleveland Heights-based bio-organic nursery. "We're making homesteading more contemporary and relevant by not only cultivating foodstuffs, but also including art, culture and community."

BTF&S picks up the organic consciousness banner where other urban farming outfitters usually drop it. Its programming for individuals, families, schools, and neighborhood centers stretches past nutrition to winery education workshops, floral home decorating, even



Jason Eugene-Boarde

modules that explore solar and renewable energy.

"We really go through great lengths to consider what city-dwellers like, in addition to their existing fondness for urban agriculture and local food. For example, people should not only think about where their food comes from, but where their cut flowers come from. How were the items by which they decorate their homes produced?"

Burnt Toast's foundation was laid in the late '90s when Boarde bolted Cleveland to

pursue dance and photography, first in New York City, then Los Angeles. While out west, he and his housemate lost their incomes and fell into growing food as an economic necessity. They grew a large enough surplus over time to sell to neighboring non-profit charitable organizations. Boarde joined and eventually became executive director of one of LA's premier arts district agricultural non-profits, the Pedal Patch Community. He quickly began

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Cleveland Gift Camp pairs talent, need for community benefit



More than 200 volunteers and nonprofit executives participated in Cleveland Gift Camp 2015

By R.T. Andrews
Editor

When Clevelanders think of themselves at their best, they often envision ordinary hardworking folks who are ready to lend a hand to fellow citizens in need.

Cleveland Gift Camp, a tradition born elsewhere several years but which has taken root here, epitomizes that Midwestern barn-raising spirit.

Originated by Microsoft as a means by which software developers could give back to the

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Euclid Demolition of St. Roberts Raises Concern

CITY WANTS TO TEAR DOWN CHURCH IT BOUGHT FOR NEARLY \$700K

By Mary Jo Minarik
Press Correspondent

EUCLID — The decision by Euclid officials to proceed with plans to demolish St. Roberts Catholic Church is raising questions from both the city council and voters.

The city bought the former St. Robert Bellarmine complex at 23750 Lakeshore Blvd. and its roughly 7.5 acres five years ago for \$674,000, a year after the Diocese of Cleveland announced plans to close the parish.



A spokesman for Wisconsin-based JJR LLC, the firm overseeing Phase II of the \$33 million municipal project to transform the area on Lakeshore Blvd. directly across from the church into public parks, beaches and a marina, told the city at the

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CLEVELAND GIFT CAMP PAIRS TALENT • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

community, Cleveland's software community has taken the concept and run with it. Now in its sixth year, Cleveland is unique in having maintained and grown the idea into a positive force for Northeast Ohio nonprofits, according to local organizer Matt Beyer.

The project "sold out" this year with more than 200 volunteers camping out at Burke Lakefront Airport and the adjacent Lean Dog offices [leandog.com] July 17-19 to work on projects submitted by 19 northeast Ohio nonprofit organizations. Each agency had submitted a proposal for assistance that could be completed by a team of software designers, graphic artists, and copywriters coming together and hyper-focusing for a weekend of work. The esprit de corps experienced by the volunteers, ostensibly a byproduct of their efforts, was clearly a drawing card for many, some of whom came from Ann Arbor, Pittsburgh, and even Toronto.

The Canadian volunteer was Arditia Karaj, project manager for a software developer. She said the camp is "a cool idea. I want to learn how to do this in Toronto."

One of the winning projects [there is a

competitive process] was submitted by the Greater Cleveland Urban Film Festival, which wanted to recreate its website and make it not only more functional but also "sexier" in terms of its attractiveness.

Gift camp organizers say that successful applicants should be engaged in a "really productive mission" and able to be very specific about their needs. Most projects in fact tend to be website designs, database projects or phone apps because of the requirement that the project be done in a weekend.

An exception to this project menu was proposed by Veggie U [veggieu.org], which wanted to develop a web-based game to teach children more about eating vegetables. The task attracted several members of Cleveland Game Designers, a group that includes PNC software engineer Jarryd Huntley and Justin Demetroff, a software developer for Live Data. Justin brought a tent to sleep on the Burke grounds but wound up spending at least one night in a hammock.

The hardest part was figuring out what game engine to use," said Huntley. He and Demetroff were generous in their praise of their team manager, Howard, who was responsible for meshing a 13-member team of strangers that in-

cluded several volunteers who had never worked on game design. They said several of the artists were so all in that there were working around the clock with no sleep.

Camp organizers encourage nonprof-

it agencies in need of assistance to be on the lookout for the application process that begins annually in early spring. More information can be obtained by visiting clevelandgivecamp.org/.



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Wiley has firmly established his place as a painter of grandiose portraits of young, urban, largely African American male subjects. His modern, revisionist works turn traditional expectations of formal European portraiture on its head and cast every day individuals in both a powerful and majestic light that forces the viewer to reflect upon and reimagine historical notions of fine art.

All events are FREE and open to the public. Reservations are recommended. Reserve your tickets through the Cleveland Museum of Art Ticket center in person, by calling (216) 421-7350, or online at clevelandart.org/ For more information, contact Outreach and Programming Services at 216-623-2921.



Gift Camp Volunteers Justin Demetroff, left, and Jarryd Huntley at 2015 Gift Camp. Several volunteers camped outside Burke Lakefront Airport site all weekend.

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THE WORD ON SMALL BUSINESS

Networking is the First Step to Growth

By Kirby Freeman
Press Correspondent



Networking is a word that has been used a lot in recent years to simply describe the method by which business owners, job-seekers, and career-builders improve their ability to sell themselves and/or their ability to meet a client's or employer's needs.

For many small business owners who are struggling with the day-to-day demands of their operations, there is little or no time to think about what event to attend or club to join. For those owners who are trapped in the cogs of their offices and shops, the word "Networking" is something that businesses with a lot of money and resources have the luxury to talk about.

For someone who has a deadline or a shipment to make — it's just not all that important!

Fortunately, more entrepreneurs — especially those who understand how radically the revolution in information technology is changing the nature of everything — get how important it is for owners to consult with business-minded individuals who can help.

Understanding the importance of networking is like understanding the old saying, "If a tree falls in the forest, does anyone really hear it?" The only way for an entrepreneur to grow his or her business is to directly communicate with potential customers, suppliers, or consultants.

Talking to many business owners, the concept of networking can be uncomfort-

able and unsettling. This is mainly due to the fact that most small business owners generally move in small circles. They communicate only with a few people on their small staffs. They may come in contact with customers only within the four walls of their businesses. A few truck drivers or mail carriers deliver supplies to the home office or shop floor. At the end of the day, owners come home to their families.

If allowed to continue moving within these small circles, even currently profitable small business owners will begin to lose touch with macro changes in customer demand and tastes. A short-sighted business owner might ask, "Why do I need to change what I'm doing? All the people I keep talking to everyday

all say they like what I've been doing! Why try to fix what's not broken?"

Many business owners, especially those who have spent many years working in one industry, do not begin to understand the full power of networking until they see that industry decline. It's at that point, when business owners are forced to look for new opportunities, that the power of networking becomes real for them.

In order for a business to grow beyond its current state, the owner has to dedicate time and attention to building a pipeline for new orders, contracts and referrals. In today's marketplace — where company structures and consumer tastes can change on a dime — it is crucial for entrepreneurs to venture out and become the public face of their operations.

It is not a coincidence that some of the best-known businesses locally or nationally have been those that are owned by entrepreneurs that have spent a great deal of time shaking hands, making phone calls, or attending events. Oftentimes, entrepreneurs have to hunt for new customers in unfamiliar places.

Networking also forces entrepreneurs to step outside of their businesses and look at the forest, rather than stay trapped between the trees. It forces the business owner to explain to others just what his business is all about. Many

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J. Burner Crew, who writes the REAL MONEY column, is off this month.



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Local and regional business listings from around northeast Ohio region.

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The Stokes Standard

We are saddened to learn that "Our Congressman," the beloved and justly treasured Lou Stokes, has been diagnosed with lung and brain cancer.

For nearly 50 years the Stokes brothers — the elder Lou and younger brother Carl — set the standard in our community for courageous leader-

ship in public service. Raised in poverty by a single parent after their father's early and untimely death, it is clear in hindsight what a remarkable woman their mother must have been.

Louise Stokes was fortunate of course that many in the community reached out at some point or another to help her sons along their paths to exemplary public service. In valedictory appearances speaking to young profession-

als around town the past few years, Lou seldom if ever failed to acknowledge the support he and Carl received from their elders in the community.

As we hold the Congressman and his family in our prayers, let us honor his life and work by being ready to offer support and guidance to the next generation of leaders in our midst.

Whether we agreed with Lou or not or any given issue, his character was such

that there was never a doubt his position was based on his belief in what was best for his constituents and the country he felt privileged to serve.

That should remind us, as we head into the fall election season, and the intensifying battles in both major parties to select their presidential nominees, to pay at least as much attention to the character and commitment of our potential representatives as we do to their policy positions.

EUCLID DEMOLITION OF ST. ROBERTS RAISES CONCERN

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time of the purchase that "the St. Roberts site is a significant redevelopment opportunity for the community and can help achieve the [lakefront] plan's recommendations." The company maintained the site could become a catalyst for future redevelopment efforts leveraging investments in both the city's downtown and waterfront areas, and help rebrand Euclid as a diverse and exciting waterfront community.

Five years later, the convent and rectory have been torn down, the parochial school has been gutted and is now scheduled for demolition sometime this month or next, with only a community garden planned for the property. Where and when did the plan go awry?

A MISSED OPPORTUNITY

At the time of purchase, Euclid's then-development director Frank Pietraivoia wrote Council regarding the Administration's plans, "Upon acquisition we will actively market the property for a tax producing use that is consistent with the larger vision for the waterfront and vicinity. Any interim use of the building or property, whether by the City or a tenant, will be considered temporary until redevelopment occurs."

What if any marketing took place is unknown. The city's current development director, Jonathan Holody, did not respond to requests for specifics as of this writing. The city's neighborhood development manager, Marty Castelletti, could not say more than "feelers were put out" by Pietraivoia. The property has never displayed a For Sale sign, and the real estate website LoopNet lists it as 'off the market' with no updates in over a year.

By way of contrast, when the Pittsburgh Diocese went through a similar parish consolidation, according to a 2014 Pop City Media report, more than 130 church properties were sold, with many of the parishes, with approval from the Diocese, being transformed into residential properties, breweries and more.

CURRENT STATUS

The city has scheduled the 39,000 SF building for demolition using county funds. The winning demolition bid was \$119,100. According to Castelletti, St. Roberts' foundation is fine, but asbestos removal left the inside a mess, and enough other major repairs would be required as to make adaptive re-use cost-prohibitive.

Ward 6 Councilman Patrick

Delaney isn't convinced re-use is out of the question, but says if the building must come down, it is, deconstruction is a better option than demolition.

Deconstruction selectively dismantles a structure for the purpose of salvaging valuable construction and architectural materials to resell, reuse, or recycle. It differs from demolition where a site is cleared of its building by the most expedient means.

Delaney says rather than pay \$119,100 for pure demolition, Euclid could hire a deconstruction company for roughly the same amount to pull all salvageable material from St. Roberts before demolishing and hauling away the remains. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of any salvage would be returned to the City as property owner.

Keith Ludwig, who owns Dynasty Deconstruction of Cleveland, agrees. Ludwig has walked around the building and noted the value in the wiring, the capstone, the brick and even the glass.

According to Delaney, it's a win-win situation. Material is kept out of the landfill and reused. Euclid gets a portion of the profits and at the same time

gains a reputation for 'Going Green.' "Deconstruction as a policy is inevitable," he said. "There's a limited amount of dollars for demo. Sooner or later, cities will have to find a way to increase revenues available and decrease costs."

On June 15 Delaney and Ward 1 Councilwoman Stephana Caviness introduced two pieces of legislation having a direct impact on the future of St. Roberts. Ord. 107-15 would require the City to request deconstruction bids for the removal of residential and commercial structures as an alternate in the demolition bids unless the structure to be removed interferes with the health and or safety of the public. Ord. 109-15 would require city administrators to submit proposed residential and commercial demolitions to Council for approval before entering into contracts for asbestos and demolition services. Both ordinances were referred to the Housing Building & Standards Committee.

Should Council approve the legislation the demolition of St. Roberts might be halted while a search was undertaken to see if a better use could be found.

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NETWORKING IS THE FIRST STEP TO GROWTH • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

banks, neighborhood associations, city governments, and even churches sponsor networking events or small business seminars that provide entrepreneurs a chance to meet and greet.

Here are some well-known practical tips that can lead toward effective networking:

1. Take time to look for and attend meetings of local chambers of commerce, neighborhood merchant

associations, or community associations to get to know other business owners.

2. Find out if the bank where you keep your personal or business deposits sponsors events tailored to business owners, and

take time to attend those events.

3. Develop an “elevator pitch” or 60-second speech that can describe your business, sell your services to others, and give your contact information at one time.

4. Spend time creating or improving your business cards.

Due to the importance of this topic to all business owners, we will re-examine the importance of networking in future articles.

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COURTSHIP: The Story of John & Melissa Torres

If there was ever a real life recasting of the classic sports movie, “Love and Basketball”, John and Melissa Torres could play leading roles.

After attending a 2008 summer Cleveland Pro Am tournament game where he observed Melissa Woods display her point guard skills, John offered her a post-game compliment, an opening move that would eventually lead to their exchange wedding vows at the Manor Banquet and Conference Center.

“It was just a ‘friend’ date for both of us,” John, a former professional point guard himself, explained about their first evening together at Bar Louis in mid-February of 2012. “After that, we saw each other a few times a week, just getting to know each other.”

Up until that time, and for more than a year afterward, neither one even considered the idea of a relationship leading to marriage. By September, 2013, however, John felt open to the possibility. “I told her one night that I was beginning to reconsider the idea of marriage,” he said. Her response? “I think if you were to ask me, I’d probably say ‘yes.’ “We never really did have a date where we became committed,” he continued. “We

understood what we had built to that point, and we wanted each other in our lives.”

So the Manor became the winner among five suggestions from their wedding coordinator, who already knew Manor manager Angela Slocum-Newby. “(The difference was) Angela’s demeanor, meaning she was not pushy or smug. There was a willingness to accommodate what we wanted.”

“As a bride, you have thoughts and ideas of how your day should go,” added Melissa. “They try to help your vision become a reality.”

For a prospective groom, there is usually another major consideration. “Just the overall price and value,” reflected John. “We received overall staff friendliness and the ability to do the wedding and the reception there...and the chef”, he said, referring to four-star Chef Valkof who specializes in customizing a variety of pre-sampled dishes. “You will never find a better overall value or service, from Angela all the way down.”

Melissa agreed. “They did everything to make sure my bridesmaids and I were comfortable and that the day went smoothly.”

Take it from two people who know the importance of a well-timed assist. Swish!



MANOR BANQUET CENTER

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A HUNGER TO SERVE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

motivating a reachable market toward home-based gardening using window ledges, balconies, rooftops, or any other convertible portion of a private dwelling.

"I quickly realized that feeding people is not a hard thing to do," he said.

A family emergency in 2011 brought Boarde back to Cleveland. He entered Cleveland State University's urban and regional planning program, which helped sustain and grow his vision of urban farming. By the fall of 2014, Boarde had moved into a modest Yorkshire Road home and established Burnt Toast Farms. The benefits community-wide haven't stopped since.

The farm was the recent summer field trip destination for a dozen school-aged campers from Lake Erie Ink, another Cleveland Heights non-profit organization dedicated to promoting creative, artistic expression in children. "I don't think any of them had visited someone's 'house' as a gathering place for community," said executive director Amy Rosenbluth. "They appreciated how BTF brings together art, gardens and wellness in a positive way. Jason got them thinking about how one per-

son might do something different to bring about a positive change."

On July 1, Boarde held a Yelp event called "Homage to Homegrown: Vertical Gardening, Infusions and Snacks" where several area youth gathered to work in all aspects of gardening right on the Yorkshire Road property. Participant Cara Lageson tweeted that there was "no better way to spend Social Media Day than with Yelpers at this rad event hosted by @burnttoastfarms."

In their latest outreach, BTF&S is looking to hire a curatorial intern. The chosen candidate will have an opportunity to work with the spectrum of local, regional and national urban agriculturalists and cultural artists in their unique endeavors. He or she will be influential in developing future programs and events. This paid internship spans the last four months of 2015 with applications being considered on a rolling basis. The Burnt Toast Farms and Studio Facebook page contains all the details.

Eugene-Boarde wants to stay engaged. "We're always looking to collaborate and work with community groups, artists, thinkers, innovators, and do-gooders."

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New Coach Looks to Revamp Euclid Football Culture

By Armand Holmes
Press Correspondent

Generosity, Family, and Grades are cornerstones of the philosophy that new Euclid High School football coach Jeff Rotsky is using to undergird Panthers football this season. Rotsky took over the Euclid High School football team this past January, resigning as Cleveland Heights coach after school administrators declined to move football games to Saturday afternoons, so he could watch his son play football for Mayfield on Fridays.

Coach Rotsky has been a winner at every inner ring Cleveland area suburb he's coached in during his illustrious career. His first job as head coach was at St. Peter Chanel where he led his teams to both the state semifinal and the state finals for Division V playoffs. He continued on to Maple Heights where he compiled a 45-11 record and saw the Mustangs make the Division II playoffs in every one of his five seasons there. In 2007 Rotsky was named head coach in Cleveland Heights, where he led the Tigers to two playoff appearances and held a career record of 45-36.

Rotsky attributes his past coaching successes to players buying into his philosophy both on and off the football field. He says before every season he exhorts his players to be men of their word. He said he tells them he will always love them and that he will do everything in his power to get them into college.

Rotsky says all 112 student-athletes who have come out for the football team are eligible to play this fall and have increased their SAT scores. Some even signed up for summer school.

Rotsky says he coaches in the inner-ring suburbs because "I want to give kids a chance to be successful and be confident young men of honor and respect." John Miller, now a senior and wide receiver for Cleveland Heights High, spoke



Jeff Rotsky, New Euclid High Football Coach. Image Courtesy of localtvwvjr.files.wordpress.com

highly of his former head coach: "Rotsky is a great coach and like a father figure to me. I broke my leg last year and was not able to make it to the game against Euclid. He came to my house after the win and presented me with the game ball. It's just the type of man that he is."

Coach Rotsky and his wife Gina established the nonprofit The Rotsky Foundation for Mentors in 1993 to encourage Cleveland public school students to set a personal goal of going to college. When asked what he loves most about coaching besides winning, he responded, "National Signing Day, because being able to see players get the opportunity to continue their playing careers and being a part of these student-athletes getting scholarships to attend college is special. After his final two seasons at Cleveland Heights, Rotsky said that 48 of his senior players graduated and 28 of them won scholarships to play college football. Rotsky's players have gone on to enroll at such schools as Ohio State, Michigan State, Bucknell, Brown, John Carroll, Northwestern, Case Western and Boston College.

Coach Rotsky was asked of his expectations for the coming football season he response echoed his philosophy "If you build young men of incredible character, and teach them to love another, take care of each other and their studies then that will equal a successful football season." The Panthers kick off their season August 29 with a 7pm road game against Glenville.