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PREMIERE DIGITAL ONLY ISSUE • OCTOBER 26, 2018  
**PRESS**



Peter Corrigan

**Peter Corrigan for County Executive**  
Time for a change at Ninth and Prospect

When County reform was sold to voters back in 2009, it was touted as a way to end corruption, establish strong executive leadership that would act decisively and be held accountable, and as a platform to drive economic growth.

Results to date have not been encouraging. Cuyahoga County is stagnant. We've had two county executives so far; neither has proven up to the task.

Effective electoral leadership is both an art and a skill. We give Ed FitzGerald a bit of a pass because he was the first [2010-14] to hold the newly created office of County Executive. Establishing new processes in a billion dollar operation, especially in a feudal county government like ours, was not easy. By our estimation FitzGerald did admirable work in many ways.

Problem was, he was kind of a jerk. He might have kept that somewhat under wraps had he kept his head down and continued attending the mundane details of daily governance. But his unchecked ambition led him by

**“Cobwebs have appeared on anyone waiting for a Budish administration to display energy, initiative and imagination to any meaningful degree.”**

the nose to seek higher office, where his jerkiness was quickly revealed on the front page of every newspaper in the state.

FitzGerald was succeeded in 2015 by the thoroughly lackluster Armond Budish, who now seeks re-election.

Budish seems to owe his political success primarily to two factors: being in the right place at the right time, and having the ability to raise copious campaign dollars. The first factor, abetted by the second, helped him become Speaker of the House in the state legislature after only

a single term as representative. He was largely ineffective as Speaker, in part because of the determined obstructionism Republicans practice whenever they are in the minority. But tellingly, nowhere did he display the kind of energy, initiative, and imagination required to rise above, go around, or break through the obstacles that are always in the leader's path.

Budish was again in the right place when FitzGerald abandoned his post to run for Governor in 2014. He raised so much cash that he vanquished would be primary challengers without really having to present his credentials to voters. Although businessman and then-county councilman Jack Schron ran a credible general campaign, Budish's funding, combined with the genial image he had established through his years of Sunday morning television show talks offering legal advice to seniors, made him pretty much a shoe-in.

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# Construction Industry using Community Career Sessions as recruiting tool

By Rhonda Crowder

“There is a shortage in the workforce, plenty of opportunities,” said Cesar A. Sepulveda, manager of community engagement at A. M. Higley, speaking earlier this month to a group at the Northeast Ohio Hispanic Center.

He was echoing the sentiments of many industry professionals participating in the Opportunities in Construction Information Series presented by Construction Employers Association (CEA).

“We need workers. There is a huge void that needs to be filled,” Sepulveda continued, speaking to the needs of contractors to meet construction project contract goals with respect to minority, female, and Cleveland Metropolitan School District resident participation. He explained how he connected to the industry fairly quickly after attending an event at Esperanza. Being a Cleveland schools graduate [James F. Rhodes High] was instrumental in his getting a good start in construction.

At a similar On the east side at Imani Church, also in October, attendees heard from Kyle Jones, president of KBJ Construction. Jones is second generation in construction. His dad became an apprentice in 1966 in the sheet metal trade and worked his way up, eventually co-founding a suc-

cessful mechanical contracting business. “There’s a lot of opportunity. It’s unlimited, the money you can make” in construction, he said.

With the demand for construction and building trades labor across Northeast Ohio, CEA has conducted sessions like these in Cleveland and across Cuyahoga County for the last two years. Sessions have been held in communities from Lee-Harvard to Parma, and from Collinwood to Maple Heights to West 25th and Clark.

Glen Shumate, CEA’s vice president of public affairs and education, is a consistent presence at these events. He constantly reminds potential recruits to the building industry that “[t]here is no job called construction. Construction is the industry and there are specific jobs like pipefitters, plumbers, electricians, etc. ... They need HR, accountants, office managers as well, everything you will need to run a business.”

Victoria Reed, a native Clevelander who attended the event at Northeast Ohio Hispanic Center, said she likes to explore as many opportunities as possible and is interested in construction. An artist, she wants to do something else that could provide a good income.

When asked if she found the event helpful, she replied,

“Definitely.”

“These are important people in the industry. I will for sure follow up. I want to check out all opportunities,” she said.

Shumate has worked with CLC Stokes Consulting Group to execute the series. Through CLC, they connected with local leaders including elected officials in each community hosting a session to ensure healthy turnouts. Last year’s session at the Harvard Community Services Center drew some 50 people on a Saturday morning.

These events often include presentations from area agencies. Toward Employment, Ohio Means Jobs and Moore Counseling have all provided information about their services at these sessions.

“The construction series is very important to neighborhood communities,” said county councilwoman Yvonne Conwell, D-7, who has hosted four sessions in her district. “There are individuals searching for new career opportunities and we need to be able to offer our youth, the next generation, more options for employment opportunities.”

Malik Kellogg, 25, of Wiloughby attends Imani United Church of Christ. He’s interested in electrical or heavy machine operation. He’s currently working as a mover, which triggered him to consider construction as a career path.

**“These [events] are a good venue to let people know you can have a good life, a job without college.”**

“I’m trying to increase and upgrade my lifestyle,” said Kellogg. Kellogg found the session to be “very helpful.” He continued, “I want to make sure I go in with the right attitude. I needed this.”

Sam Steyskal, human resource coordinator for Precision Environmental Co., spoke at two events about the opportunities available at her organization.

“I think it’s a good overview for people to get an idea of what’s available,” she said of the sessions. She especially commended the list of building trades descriptions and union contact information that is distributed. “That’s important.”

Steyskal also thinks this initiative is important because it changes the career optics for younger people. “There are a lot of people that are not college material and that’s okay. These [events] are a good venue to let people know you can have a good life, a job without college.”

Michael McKenzie, 22, found the Glenville session he attended “very informative.” He’s interested in welding or HVAC. “I really liked Precision and will follow up with them,” he said. “I think it could be a long term career.”



Lee Trotter, Sanford Watson, Rev. Jeff Jemison at benefit for African American Auxiliary Archives

# One Last Roar from an Old Lion

Benefit Gala raises \$100k, leaves question of disappearing black political power hanging

By R. T. Andrews, Editor

In what was likely the last formal public appearance of his storied political career, legendary former Cleveland City Council President George L. Forbes was honored at the Western Reserve Historical Society on Oct. 13.

More than 600 people, including some of Forbes' former arch political enemies, turned out for the Saturday night benefit gala that raised more than \$100,000 for the Society's African American Archives Auxiliary, a group dedicated to documenting and preserving the artifacts of the black presence in and contributions to the area's history.

The event was notable in many respects. Bob Render, whose RLR III and Associates, produced the event, said the Society had never had such a large sit-down dinner in its history. The food was delicious, a combined effort of two MBE caterers — Del's Catering and Pearl Flower Catering — who had never before worked together. The crowd was festive, bringing together old war horses from the 1970s with political cherubs just getting started.

It was announced during the weekend of events at the Society that Forbes would donate his personal papers to the organization.

The gift could prove a rich trove for historians seeking to understand the complexities of Forbes' nearly sixty-year career, a period that shaped present day Cleveland.

Forbes first won election to council in 1963 at a time when the city was Balkanized into 33 wards. Ten years later he became council president, a post he held for a record 16 years until he relinquished it to run for mayor in 1989. He lost that race to Mike White. Four years later, Forbes won a hotly contested three-way race for NAACP president, holding that position for nearly twenty-years. That post helped keep him in the civic spotlight for another two decades.

The evening was quite naturally a celebration of the high points of Forbes' public life and the larger-than-life grasp he had on the city's affairs during his term as council president. He seemed effectively co-mayor during the ten-year mayoralty of George Voinovich.

The gala may have been the opening pages of the examination of Forbes' legacy as a civic heavyweight and the most dominant black politician of his era. Carl and Lou Stokes each attained political heights to which Forbes never ascended — Carl as mayor and Lou as a 30 year Congressman — but neither attained or wielded raw

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ON THE GROUND IN GLENVILLE

# Councilwoman sponsors effort to provide finance coaching

By R. T. Andrews, Editor

The Glenville Recreation Center on East 113th St. just south of St. Clair will deceive you if you approach it from its east side. First off, sitting check by jowl with Glenville High School, it looks like a piece of the school that broke off but hasn't fallen away.

The Tuesday afternoon I showed up there I wasn't allowed to enter directly from the street, but was directed by a semi-official person to head around to the other side. Regulars who use the facility enter by that northwest door just off the parking lot and a sizable playground.

Inside, the place looked worn and well used. In fact, it is very well used. There were people of all ages working out, playing games, and enjoying themselves. I was surprised to run into an old acquaintance, a financial adviser who once handled the business affairs of some Major League Baseball all-stars. I had thought he was still living in Paris but he was there for the same reason I was: curiosity about a financial fitness pro-

gram that a team of professionals was presenting on a volunteer monthly basis under the auspices of county councilwoman Yvonne Conwell.

This Oct. 2 session was the sixth in a series focused on topics like estate planning, life and health insurance, budget planning, home ownership, savings and investment, and more. Programs are offered in both lunchtime and after work sessions.

The audience has grown steadily, say the presenters. Only one person came to the first session, but word has been spreading by mouth to mouth. This particular day, there were about 15 attendees.

What struck me was how the presenters, who included an attorney, a wealthy developer, a seasoned financial advisor, an insurance agent, and a real estate agent, spoke to the crowd matter-of-factly. There was no trace of the condescension often on display when there are wide gaps in knowledge and/or resources between presenters and audience. The result was a sense that the team Conwell is presenting has the interests of the community genuinely at heart.

The information offered was useful. What's more, it was presented in context: for example, the advantages of home ownership in a community where macro forces like the Opportunity Corridor have already begun to bring lasting change to the area, starting from its southern boundary and moving towards the lake.

Developer Jon Schaefer, who is part of a team rehabbing apartment buildings on East 115 St., two blocks north of Wade Park Ave., talked about how "the beauty of Glenville is in the diversity of its housing."

His partner, Henry Butler, noted how "Tremont and Ohio City have recaptured all of their lost pop" and that Glenville, Hough, and Fairfax were starting to trend in that direction.

Attorney and businesswoman Stacey Polk told the audience that financial fitness was akin to physical fitness and that regular checkups were essential. Financial specialist Antonio Bond followed with a discussion about the uses and importance of insurance as a financial planning tool.

Dominique Smith, a registered nurse, closed out the October session with a discussion of living wills

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Published weekly at Cuyahoga County OH.

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The mission of The Real Deal Press is to attract, articulate and amplify civic intelligence and community engagement for a healthier, stronger community.

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and durable powers of attorney.

The next sessions in the Glenville series will be December 4. Plans call for the program to be extended to the Fairfax neighborhood early next year, and gradually moving throughout Conwell's District 7 boundaries.

The program is coordinated by the Angel Rose Insurance Agency. Call 216.236.4219 for more information about the program.



Top-Left: Lonnie Coleman, Tracey Peebles, and Michael Jeans. Bottom-Left: Deirdre McPherson and Councilman Matt Zone. Bottom-Right: Peter Corrigan. Right: Grace Ann Scales, Ayris Scales, and Angela Jones.

## One Last Roar from an Old Lion

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political power the way Forbes did.

Now that all three are gone — Carl and Lou to their eternal rest, and George to a proverbial rocking chair —

the question of the day in the black community is where do we go from here. No one on the local horizon has either the skill or the will to exercise political power — black power,

for good or ill — the way those three did. They ushered in an era when the black community could not be ignored. Sadly, while there are now more black elected officials in

Cuyahoga County than ever before — likely close to a hundred — the political strength of the black community has diminished and become easy to manipulate or ignore.

# Peter Corrigan for County Executive

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Problem is, being chief executive of this county takes even more energy, initiative, and imagination than is required to lead a legislature. Cobwebs have appeared on anyone waiting for a Budish administration to display those traits to any meaningful degree.

Budish's opponent in the Nov. 6 general election is a 60-year old little-known international businessman who lives in Rocky River and got on the ballot as a write-in candidate in the GOP primary. Such is the public lethargy in this town: Corrigan is virtually a stealth candidate for an office that county "reform" leaders predicted would be the second most important powerful in the state.

I was asked a few weeks ago by friends of his campaign team to meet with Corrigan. We met for a Saturday breakfast at Tommy's on Coventry in Cleveland Heights. I confess that my low expectations for the encounter were not dislodged when I sat down in a booth across from a large, ruffled and ruddy-faced fellow with a reindeer Rudolph's nose.

Turns out, he explained with the good-natured affability that is undoubtedly one of his many strengths, he had committed a novice candidate's campaign trail blunder when he turned to address a stranger calling his name and awkwardly fell off a step, bloodying himself in the tumble.

Corrigan's deep emotional intelligence, the kind essential for success in any primary leadership role, began to shine through quickly as he talked about his family (35-year marriage, three successful adult children), his education (Ignatius, a physics degree from Wake Forest, an MBA in finance from Case Weatherhead School of Management), and his high level business career (includes two and a half years living in and running a manufacturing business with 900 employees in Buenos Aires).

But it was when he began to deconstruct the problems with our county government and his pragmatic way of addressing them, born of his engineer's common sense approach (diagnose,

experiment, resolve), that it became clear why he was the superior candidate in this race.

Cuyahoga County is an insider government. Rearranging its electoral spokes did nothing to change its essential character and mechanisms.

Armond Budish may have come late to politics but the ease with which he has slipped into key governance roles testifies to his quintessential insider status.

It turns out that the two ostensible factors of Budish's political success — timing and money — are rooted in this insider status. Budish is a club member of the highest order. He will never ruffle a single feather of any important interest, which means this county and thus this region will continue falling further behind as it slogs through the accumulated mud of outmoded approaches to contemporary issues.

You needn't be either rocket scientist or engineer to understand that our antiquated political ways would reveal their inadequacies in the county's futile and evermore costly search for a new software system. Ten years ago we might have explained away this botching of a critical governance function by smugly pointing out that a sanitation worker with a high school degree was running the operation. But while that cartoon of an insider is now in prison, county authority now rests with another insider, albeit one with a distinguished educational and professional pedigree.

Corrigan referred in our breakfast conversation to the continuing "soft corruption" that remains a part of our local culture, irrespective of political party.

It goes much deeper than mere partisan politics. It explains why Budish would turn to insider attorney Fred Nance to negotiate the details of the publicly funded expansion of Quicken Loans Arena. Nance was a horrendous choice, his work an egregious conflict of interest. (It went unmentioned that the fee his firm was paid was, according to at least one lawyer in a position to

know, substantially out of line with industry norms, where fees are based on the size of the deal.)

Our tolerance of "soft corruption" also explains silence from Budish when outrage is called for over what's happening at the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority. It seems par for the course, an acceptable level of incompetence. Ditto for Budish's mishandling of so many personnel issues, including that of his chief of staff and the overtime debacle.

Corrigan suggested that part of the county mess rests in its unwieldy disorganization. The county organizational chart, he said, has the county executive with 47 direct reports, 400% more than a smart business of similar size would have. There is no way that any executive can know what's happening under his watch with this kind of structure.

A Corrigan administration would bring substantial necessary improvements to our county. Among his priorities: flattening the county organizational structure that has a ridiculous 13 organizational levels, each of which serves as a expensive filter that impedes accountability; addressing the crisis in children and family services, where a 25% turnover rate disservices children and costs money; and developing a long-term strategic plan for growth.

A non-ideological outsider, Corrigan's very presence and practical approach would be a healthy disinfectant. His ability to delegate and hold direct reports accountable would improve county functionality immeasurably. And, notwithstanding his GOP affiliation, we believe that a Corrigan administration — hiring, evaluating and retaining talent based on competence as

opposed to connection — offers a better and healthier way to genuine inclusion than the patronage model that currently reigns, notwithstanding the reformers' 2009 rearrangement of the deck chairs.

Cuyahoga County should elect Peter Corrigan as its next county executive.



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