



## Have You Heard...

### **TOM BIER TO GIVE KEYNOTE AT FHHO ANNUAL MEETING**

by *Les Jones*



Dr. Thomas Bier, senior fellow at the Cleveland State University Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs, will be the keynote speaker at the annual meeting of FHHO on **Tuesday, November 10th at McGregor**. The meeting will be held in the Community Room starting at 7:15 pm.

Tom's research has focused on regional housing dynamics, population movement, and the effects of government policies on cities. Tom will speak to Forest Hill residents about many of the housing issues currently facing Cleveland Heights and East Cleveland and explain why he's optimistic about opportunities for growth in both cities.

### **PETER GREBUS ELECTED AS NEW SENIOR VP OF FHHO**

by *Hester Lewellen*



Peter and his wife Laura describe themselves as reluctant nomads - different jobs have taken them from Ohio to several cities and finally back to Ohio. Their previous time in Ohio was spend in Ohio City, and then Oberlin. They had visited the Coventry area while in high school, but didn't know much about Cleveland or the east side. The famous Sgro home on Monticello caught their eye, and Peter told Laura that he wouldn't hesitate to move back to Ohio for such a great house, and here they are.

Peter quickly signed on with the Forest Hill Action Committee and has met with several members of the community to discuss the challenges that Forest Hill faces. He's glad to see that there is a lot of energy around preserving the friendly, safe, and park-like atmosphere. He's looking forward to helping Forest Hill continue to thrive.

## President's Message

by *Hester Lewellen*



### **FOREST HILL MOVING AHEAD**

Always something new happening at FHHO. This time it was our yearly elections in September. Pete Grebus has been elected Senior VP for 2016 but he's not waiting for January; he has already taken on a series of projects. Pete and his wife Laura own the house on Monticello with the tree growing out of it. He works out of town during the week, so now our Executive sessions include conference calling with Pete from McLean, Virginia.

A sad event is our loss of Sally Miller. Don't worry: she and Bob are in good health but moving to Breckenridge, so Forest Hill will be losing our "energizer bunny." Sally has been the glue holding us together for years, and we will miss her mightily. Fortunately new resident Judy Charlick has volunteered to take over as Chair of Cottage & Grounds and Sally has already got her in training.

Our "donor party" in August went beautifully; the weather was perfect and we all enjoyed each other's company inside the Cottage and out. I'm hoping we can have an even bigger party next summer for those who donate at the gold and platinum levels.

Recently a resident came to me about starting a block association on her street. I was happy to meet with her and give her all the advice and materials she needed to get started. But I thought "Why doesn't EVERY block have a block association to get together for block parties and such?" Any resident who's interested in getting one started can contact me at [President@fhho.org](mailto:President@fhho.org) or call me at 216-371-0674.

Don't forget to check out our website for news and information: [www.fhho.org](http://www.fhho.org). We are still opening the Cottage on the First Saturday of every month for folks to stop by. And if you want to join the Forest Hill social network, send me your email and I will send you an invitation.

**NOTE: If you haven't made your 2015 donation to FHHO it's not too late!**



## Forest Hill Real Estate Activities

Homes sales activity has been very robust in 2015 with 32 homes transferring to new owners and some bank-owned properties finally beginning to see action. Although selling prices

remain below expectations, many of the new owners are enthusiastic about living here and many have started making improvements on their new residences.

- 25 homes are currently up for sale
- 14 vacant homes are bank-owned
- 7 homes remain on the FHHO long-term chronic problem work list
- 29 cited homes are on the latest FHHO violation list awaiting corrective action

A few "For Sale" properties are undergoing renovations and there's been a major uptick in remodeling work throughout Forest Hill.

### **UPCOMING FHHO EVENTS**

**November 10, 2015**  
**FHHO Annual Meeting**  
McGregor – 7:15 pm to 9:00 pm  
Keynote Speaker – Tom Bier - CSU

**December 5, 2015**  
**First Saturday Meet-N-Greet**  
The Blue Cottage – 10:00 am to 1:00 pm

**January 2, 2016**  
**NO First Saturday Open House**

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

# FHHO...What We Do for You!

by Les Jones



Your Forest Hill Home Owners Association was formed in 1950 for the purpose, as stated in its certificate of incorporation, “to promote, safeguard, and improve the property values in, and the general welfare of, the community known as Forest Hill.” It has operated using a

rotating group of residents who volunteer their time and expertise for the benefit of Forest Hill and focuses on the following areas:

**Interpret and enforce the protective covenants** that are contained in the deeds of all Forest Hill homes to preserve and enhance property values. The Standards committee assists Forest Hill residents in making informed choices that will help maintain the architectural integrity and value of their homes.

**Apprise residents of important information about our community** via the newsletter, website, e-mail, annual meeting and our Nextdoor social network. We also use the FHHO website to disseminate information requested by residents and educate the public about Forest Hill. Our website (which will undergo a design refresh in 2016) receiving hundreds of visits each month.

**Represent Forest Hill residents to the Cities** of Cleveland Heights and East Cleveland. The association seeks to obtain results by speaking with a unified voice on behalf of all Forest Hill residents.

**Welcome new residents to the community.** Our vice president of Membership or the area trustees work hard to greet every new resident in person and provide them with a welcome package containing information about Forest Hill and the association.

**Support organizations with related purposes,** such as the Forest Hill Historic Preservation Society and the East Cleveland Parks Association, along with Forest Hill local block/street organizations in their efforts to foster community through neighborhood social events such as block and holiday parties.

# Forest Hill Action Committee

by Pete Grebus

The Forest Hill Action Committee was formed and has been operating for just over a year now. During that time this team of volunteer Forest Hill residents has:



**Researched and proposed legal options** for FHHO board approval to help accelerate the process for dealing with the chronic problem properties within Forest Hill including a review of the costs and requirements to begin legal intervention when necessary.

**Launched a program to promote Forest Hill** both internally and externally to help improve community involvement and promote positive messages about the benefits of living in Forest Hill.

**Held discussions with University Circle and Case Western Reserve University** about promoting Forest Hill during new employee orientations and utilizing a variety of housing options in our area.

**Upgraded informational and promotional materials** used to welcome new residents, alert contractors about housing standards and providing realtors with more accurate statistics to present when working with buyers considering a home in Forest Hill.

**FHAC is working to support the mission of FHHO in these areas:**

Current members of the FHAC are:

- Peter Grebus
- Les Jones
- Mike Reilly
- Jim Simpson
- Howard Maier
- Jamain Owens
- Quatrice James
- Frank Ricchi
- Mike Wells
- John Satola
- Darrell Fields



# Suggestions from Residents for New Services and Programs for Forest Hill

from various FHHO Residents

Over the past few months several Forest Hill residents have submitted proposals or ideas for new programs, services and events that could benefit the entire Forest Hill community. Some of these suggestions came during discussions on “Nextdoor”. Others were outcomes from FHAC meetings...and a few came from the recent Thank You Reception and Fall Trustees meeting at the Cottage. Here is a sampling of some of those suggestions and the status of those already started. Many more will be highlighted in the next newsletter.

We welcome your comments and feedback to: [president@fhho.org](mailto:president@fhho.org)

**1. Develop a plan to take legal action on homes that remain on the chronic problem list for more than 18 months.**

**Current Status:**  
FHHO has approved a FHAC proposal to initiate a legal test case on one home which has been on the chronic problem list for over 2 years and approach a select group of Forest Hill residents to help fund that test case.

**2. Explore the formation of a Yard Maintenance and Snow Plowing Co-Op for the Forest Hill area.**

**Current Status:**  
FHHO is distributing a survey to gauge the interest level with residents and will draft a Request for Quotes which could include tree services, sidewalk snow removal and basic yard maintenance to vacant homes until they're sold.

**3. Make a formal request to Cleveland Heights City Council to give Forest Hill residents in East Cleveland access to the CH Community Center.**

**Current Status:**  
The idea was raised with vice-mayor Cheryl Stephens at the Thank You Reception. FHHO will follow up with a formal proposal for CH City Council consideration in early 2016.

# FHHO-Owned Property for Sale

by Sally Miller

FHHO continues to list one of the two FHHO-owned wooded lots along Mayfield Road for sale. The lot recently drew two offers to purchase but both bids were well below the asking price and would have barely returned a profit to FHHO after all property taxes, realtor fees and transfer costs were applied. We will continue to accept bids on the land and are reevaluating the asking price based on the latest county property tax reassessments. We are also reviewing the current zoning status for the property to insure any sale would require a single-family home be built on the land per the FHHO standards for that lot.



## 2015 FHHO FUND DRIVE CONTRIBUTORS

Your FHHO Executive Committee sends out a sincere "THANK YOU" to the following Forest Hill residents for their generous contributions in support of FHHO programs from **August 1 thru October 31, 2015.**

### PLATINUM LEVEL – \$200 +

Agnes Lina  
 Michael Beckman and Mary O'Shea  
 Judge Una Keenon-Bush and Cory Bush III  
 Grace and Michael Bailey  
 Boris Gringauz  
 Alfred and Terry James  
 David Henry and Sharon Leary

Katherine Lewis  
 David and Sharon Munford  
 Barbara Price and Ann Smith  
 Andrea Russo and Lester Edge  
 Harry and Shelia Young  
 Ronald and Rachel Young

### SILVER LEVEL – \$75 to \$124

Bettye Cleveland  
 Nick Danikas and Lacy Danikas-Chick  
 Ronald and Jan Hart

Willie and Elizabeth Harvey  
 Mary Mann  
 JP Morgan Chase Bank  
 Jean-Patrick Ducroux  
 Gerald Silvera  
 Minnie Williams

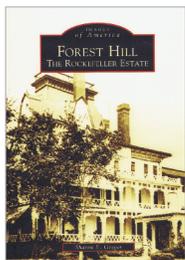
### BRONZE LEVEL – Up to \$74

Mildred and Charles Chambless  
 Joseph and Linda Pavlovich  
 Wanda Rollins  
 Dianne and Clarence Smith

## August Open House for Top Donors

by Les Jones

On Saturday, August 29th over 60 of our 2015 Platinum and Gold Level contributors to FHHO gathered at The Blue Cottage for a "Thank You" reception hosted by the FHHO Executive Committee. Vice Mayor Cheryl Stephens was in attendance and received lots of feedback and ideas on how CH city government can assist in, or help raise awareness of, issues facing our area. Some of those suggested ideas are highlighted in the article below.



In appreciation to our Platinum Level \$200 and over contributors, FHHO board members personally delivered signed copies of the book "Forest Hill: The Rockefeller Estate" by author and Brewster resident Sharon Gregor to each homeowner. Silver and Bronze Level donors received "Thank You" cards by mail.

## Welcome Our New Neighbors

by Dr. Mary Rice

Let's extend a warm welcome to these new residents that have joined our Forest Hill family from August 1st to October 31st:

- Trevor Joyeson and Ashley Edwards – Chelsea
- Michael Beckman and Mary O'Shea – Hollister
- Rachael and Ronald Young – Fenemore
- Deborah McKissack – Glynn
- Joshua Jordan – Hereford
- Boris Gringauz – Forest Hills
- Brady Bocucci – Rumson
- Anthony Shaw – Brewster
- Michael Davis – Glynn
- Carol Drayton – Glynn
- Nick Daikas – Rumson



Parts from the new "Forest Hill Welcome Kit" that each homeowner receives after move-in.

## FHHO Needs to Grow Annual Donations

by Les Jones

Many of the homeowner associations in newer suburban developments require dues from each household ranging from \$100 to over \$300 each month. Those funds are used for paid staff, cover some services not handled by their cities along with covering of some home repairs, yard and snow service, and public areas.

FHHO has no mandatory dues program and is operated by all volunteers. It relies solely on voluntary donations. Currently only about 22% of Forest Hill residents are contributing to FHHO each year. While we've seen a little growth in 2015 we can do much much better.

**1059** homes are part of FHHO including several outside of the original subdivision, on Glynn and Oakhill Roads.

If FHHO could collect just the suggested \$75 donation from each household we would be able to annually raise over...

**\$75,000**

to help fund a broad range of programs and services that can bring added value to all homeowners within Forest Hill.

**231** households have made contributions totaling just over...  
**\$20,000** so far in 2015.

**4.** Research the idea of starting a Farmer's Market Co-Op possibly located near the Rockefeller building.

**5.** Negotiate discounts for home improvement supplies and labor services with local suppliers for all Forest Hill residents.

**6.** Establish a formal Neighborhood Watch program with special yard or window signs.

**7.** Organize a monthly "Potluck Social" at the Blue Cottage and/or a annual Community Picnic at Forest Hill Park.

**8.** Create an emergency street pothole repair and curbside leaf pickup fund to augment city services.

**9.** Work with the Forest Hill Historic Preservation Society to draft grant proposals to raise funds for upgrades to Forest Hill Park grounds.

# Standards Report

by Dean Sieck and Dale Rothenberger

## NOW FOR MORE GOOD NEWS

Recently there has been some movement on homes that have inhabited the chronic problem portion of the Standards Committee work list. This is heartening, since it is never good to have unresolved problems drag on for years.

When FHHO Standards started tracking vacant homes, we found that it was next to impossible to contact the banks that own some of the properties, let alone get someone to maintain the property. Now seven years later things look like they are finally starting to loosen up.



This long-term chronic problem house on Henley Road has FINALLY been sold and will transfer soon to new owners.

Recently we have begun to see homes that were long-term problem properties show some signs of hope. In particular, two homes across from each other on Forest Hills Boulevard near Mount Vernon – one in East Cleveland and one in Cleveland Heights – have had some good fortune. Both homes were recently acquired out of foreclosure by the Cuyahoga County Land Bank. The home in East Cleveland was purchased by an eager home owner who is excited to live in Forest Hill. The other home has a pending offer waiting to close.

Another chronic problem home on Newbury near Brewster was transferred from two years of bank owned never-never-land and is now owned by HUD. At the other end of Newbury near Mayfield a home that has been vacant for years has finally wound its way through the courts and is now owned by the state of Ohio. We expect to see these homes back on the market soon.



This Rumson Road home recently completed major renovations and is now back on the market.

A home on Lee across from the park in East Cleveland has been vacant after being rehabilitated in late 2012. The bank holding the lien agreed to allow the home to be sold short (less than the amount of the mortgage), and there is a sale currently pending.

The above properties are the more dramatic cases, but we have had some success with residents who have moved forward with performing home repairs after being put on notice. We don't take all the credit. We have worked closely with the Cleveland Heights Housing Department on problems where they have been able to apply additional pressure. We are also trying to foster a stronger working relationship with East Cleveland to do the same.



This Carver Road home slate roof was repaired rather than being replaced.

We're also pleased that we were able to work with a homeowner on Carver who agreed to repair his original slate roof rather than using asphalt shingles, saving him \$5,000. It is a slow process. We have to keep the faith and keep plugging along. With your support and watchful eyes, we will be able to both clear our chronic problem list and reduce the number of standards violation notices.



# Brewster Home Hit of Home Tour

by Les Jones

On Sunday, September 20th we celebrated a beautifully sunny end to summer as visitors from all over greater Cleveland flocked



to Brewster Road to get an inside look at the historic Rockefeller home of Trina Prufer. Her home was the hit of the 38th Annual Heights Heritage Home & Garden Tour and had people lining up well before the 12 noon starting time to be the first to get a glimpse inside. Many of the visitors

to the home also spent time strolling and biking all along Brewster and the surrounding streets admiring the majestic Rockefellers and asking questions about the history of the area. They routinely were heard commenting on the tree-lined beauty of the neighborhood.

The Prufer Rockefeller was one of six homes and 5 gardens featured this year, attracting more than 1,000 tourgoers.

Trina's home was also featured on Cleveland.com in an article titled "Cool Spaces: Rockefeller Home" posted on October 28th.



# FHHO Volunteer Opportunities

by Hester Lewellen

Our treasurer Tony Rucpic needs an assistant to help him track the collection of transfer fees from annual home sales. If you were thinking of volunteering, this is a job that can be done on your computer at home. No meetings required and Tony will walk you through the process. If you're interested in helping, contact Tony Rucpic at Treasurer@fhho.org or call him at 216-371-6233.

A few of our Trustee positions are vacant or soon will be. The job of a Trustee is to be the liaison between the residents on the street and FHHO. When a new resident moves in, the Trustee delivers the welcome packet and explains our organization. Sometimes the Trustee is asked to hand-deliver flyers or the Newsletter. The Trustee is also our eyes and ears on the street, letting the Standards Committee know if there is a home that is in need of reminding about our restrictions. There are two Trustee meetings per year, usually in April and September. If you live in or near any of the following areas and you're interested in becoming a Trustee, please contact Hester Lewellen at President@fhho.org. If you have questions, feel free to call me at 216-371-0674.

There are five Trustee positions which are currently vacant or soon to be vacant:

- Hereford from Monticello to Rumson
- Newbury from Monticello to Mayfield.
- North Taylor from Northvale to Monticello (west side of street only)
- North Taylor from Monticello to Rumson (west side of street only)
- Northvale from Mount Vernon to Taylor

**Interested in Other Volunteer Opportunities within FHHO? Call the FHHO Office at 216.932.8952**



# Forest Hill Home Owner Survey

## Proposal: Formation of a Forest Hill Neighborhood Yard Maintenance and Snow Plowing Service Cooperative

**Proposal Overview:** This survey is to gauge interest in forming a yard maintenance and snow plowing co-op to service the Forest Hill area. This co-op would include seasonal yard maintenance and snow plowing services to any resident that wants to participate. Based on the level of participation Forest Hill would be divided up into sections to allow for timely service to those specific areas. FHHO would leverage our collective buying power to get lower service contract rates for all participating residents. FHHO would also seek to find companies that have landscape design and tree maintenance expertise which residents could also contract on an individual basis. All participating homeowners would be invoiced individually and would pay the contracted company directly at the master agreement rates. FHHO would also seek to have the contract possibly cover public sidewalk snow removal services during heavy snow periods. Selected contractors would also provide basic yard services to neglected homes up for sale or in foreclosure. The servicing fees for those properties would initially be covered using a portion of the annual resident contributions to FHHO. FHHO would then recover those service costs as part of the closing title transfer process from the new owner(s).

### Survey Process Steps:

**Step 1:** Gather survey responses from residents between now and December 15th. Based on the number of positive responses FHHO will move to Step 2.

**Step 2:** FHHO will draft a Request for Quote (RFQ) to send out to several local contractors by January 1st. Residents are welcome to recommend companies they currently use to also receive the RFQ. The contractor RFQ responses would be due back by February 1st. FHHO would then compile the responses and select up to 6 finalists for interviews on their proposals and draft master agreement terms.

**Step 3:** FHHO board along with trustees would approve the final proposals at the March FHHO board meeting. The selected contractors would then be notified and the final master agreement would be signed.

**Step 4:** Approved contractors would be assigned to a specific service area of Forest Hill. FHHO would provide the contractors with contact information for all residents in their designated service area. The contractors would then send out individual contracts to each homeowner by April 1st.

### Benefits to FHHO Residents:

- Lower costs for yard maintenance and snow plowing services
- Provide faster and more timely service for driveway snow removal
- Help our seniors “age in place” with more affordable services
- Ensure that vacant houses keep the yard areas looking “lived in”
- Provide more coordinated Fall leaf cleanup and curbside pickup

### Advantages for the Contracting Companies:

- A guaranteed block of customers in close proximity, reducing their travel distances and repetitive setup times
- Ability to expand their business using FHHO to help market and sell their services within Forest Hill
- Ability to upgrade their equipment and/or hire staff to accommodate the growth in services

**PLEASE NOTE:** Completing this survey does not constitute any commitment to participate in any final agreement negotiated by FHHO. It will only be used to gather overall interest for this proposal. Any resident is free to continue using their current suppliers for these services. After joining the co-op participating residents will have the option to opt-out of the FHHO master agreement each year. Homeowners wishing to participate after the initial master agreement is finalized may be able to join at a later time on a space available basis.

### Yes I'm interested in the Forest Hill Yard Maintenance and Snow Removal Co-Op

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  Over 62

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I would be interested in:  Yard Care  Snow Plowing  Tree or Landscape Design Services

I currently use the following yard/snow contractor(s) and would recommend them for consideration:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### How to Return this Survey:

You can return this survey using the following options:

#### By E-Mail:

Just scan this survey form and e-mail to: [president@fhh.org](mailto:president@fhh.org)

#### By Mail:

Clip the bottom of this page and send to:

FHHO Yard Co-op Survey  
2419 Lee Boulevard  
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

**Please return by no later than:  
December 15, 2015**