This year marks 200 years, 1812–2012, since the arrival of the first American settlers on the western bank of the Cuyahoga River, in the neighborhood that we now know as Brooklyn Centre.

The community is commemorating its bicentennial with exciting activities designed to bring neighbors together through celebratory events (see “Bicentennial Events,” on page 2), and to educate and encourage local residents and businesses to make physical improvements throughout the neighborhood.

The bicentennial started on Memorial Day, with a ceremony at the Brooklyn Centre Burying Grounds, located at 2300 Garden Avenue, behind Aldi’s. The Brooklyn Centre Burying Ground’s first interment was in 1823, and the cemetery was deeded with the name Brooklyn Centre when it was founded in 1835. Memorial Day ceremonies have taken place here for the past 33 years. This historic cemetery is the final resting place for many of the neighborhood’s founding families as well as veterans of every major U.S. war.

**Pioneer Life in Brooklyn Township**

In May of 1812, Brooklyn Centre’s founder James Fish arrived with his family to settle at what is now the northwest corner of Pearl Road and Mapledale Avenue, in what was to become Brooklyn Township. This was the first American settlement west of the Cuyahoga River in what would become Cuyahoga County.

Brooklyn Township was born out of the Connecticut Western Reserve. In 1795, land claims were sold from the state of Connecticut to the Connecticut Land Company for $1.2 million. In 1796, the Land Company sent a team of surveyors, led by Moses Cleveland, to the Western Reserve to divide the land into 25-mile square townships.

However, settlement of the area was not possible until several U.S. treaties with Native American tribes and frontiersmen were signed. For the ten-year period between 1795 and 1805, the Cuyahoga River was actually the western border of the United States. It was not until the Treaty of Fort Industry was signed in 1805 that land west of the Cuyahoga River was opened for settlement.

James Fish, with his family and two other families, left Groton, Connecticut in 1811. They traveled by oxen team and lumber wagon and arrived in the area of Newburg early in the autumn of 1811. In spring of 1812, James crossed the river and constructed a log house. In May, he brought his family to their new home.

By 1818, over 200 people were living in the area surrounding what is now known as the Brooklyn Centre neighborhood. The process of clearing the forest and developing a village progressed, and the area from the Big Creek to Scranton Road became the center of Brooklyn Township. On June 1, 1818, Brooklyn Township was formally organized. The village of Brooklyn served as the center of the township until the early 1830s. Through the late 1830s, the neighborhood was known as Brooklyn Centre, and was where the region’s settlers came to vote, attend church, and purchase goods.

**From Annexation to the Twentieth Century**

From the 1830s until its annexation to Cleveland in 1867, Brooklyn Centre was a fashionable suburb between the forests, farmlands and small towns to the South and the growing city of Cleveland to the north. This period was also marked by a great immigration from Europe that brought Germans, Irish and others to America. Brooklyn Village boasted highly skilled tanners, shoemakers and other tradesmen and service providers, so that the shops on what is now Pearl Road met all of the village’s needs.

From the 1900s through the end of World War II, Brooklyn Centre served as a refuge from Cleveland’s bustling city center and the more heavily industrialized Cuyahoga River valley. In the early 1960s Interstate Route 71 was built after the passage of the Federal Aid Highway Act in 1956. The freeway displaced many families and hastened changes in how and where the residents of the neighborhood conducted their business and did their shopping.

Recent interest in protecting and revitalizing Brooklyn Center began in the 1940s and extended into the 1980s. The Southwest Citizens Area Council was formed in 1946. Brooklyn Center Community Association, formerly known as Archwood Denison Concerned Citizens, was founded in 1978, as was the Brooklyn Centre Historical Society. In 1981, the Crossroads Development Corporation was formed. The city recognized the historic importance and architectural significance of the neighborhood with the creation of the Brooklyn Centre Historic District in 1984.

This vital neighborhood continues its legacy of transition and activism with the formation of the Friends of Big Creek in 2005, the Brooklyn Centre Naturalists in 2007, and the designation of the new Jones Home National Historic District earlier this year. Activities planned to celebrate the bicentennial this August will further highlight the neighborhood’s rich history. For more information and details about the events planned for the bicentennial, go to www.brooklyncentre.net.

Compiled by Darren Hamm and Brian Cummins
Ward 14 Heritage Home Program

1.4% 12-year loans available for home improvements

Eligibility:
• House is 50 years old or older
• Property is owner-occupied, three units or less
• Property can be owner-occupied or rental
• Common projects include painting, roof replacement, porch repair, kitchen and bath renovations, basement waterproofing, window replacement, new furnaces, mechanical system upgrades, driveways, sidewalks and much, much more.

Brand new changes to the 2012 Heritage Home Program
• NEW! Hours with vinyl or aluminum siding are now eligible for the loan! However, the loan cannot be used to fund new vinyl siding or windows.
• NEW! Fees have been reduced!

The CIS historic preservation team will work with you and your contractor from start to finish. There are no closing costs or points involved with the Heritage Home Program loan. And, the interest is tax deductible.

Call Jessica Ugarte of the Cleveland Restoration Society at 426-3101 for more information or to schedule a free site visit at your home. More information can also be found at the Heritage Home Program website: www.heritagehomeprogram.org.

Ms. Kate Dupuis was born in Cleveland on the near west side. Kate is a designated Master Glass Painter and served part of her apprenticeship at Canterbury Cathedral in England.

Ms. Dupuis owns Rainey Dupuis Studio which has been designing, fabricating, and restoring, stained glass windows for 30 years. The studio’s most recent installation can be seen at the Hospice of the Western Reserve’s Westlake office.

Ms. Dupuis is very involved with the Stockyard, Clark-Fulton and Brooklyn Centre Community Development Office. She helped form and currently serves as Chair of the Housing Committee. Kate also contributes to the Community Development Office by representing Clark-Fulton on the Advisory Board, chairing the Hispanic Outreach Committee, and participating on the Safety Committee.

Kate is very active in Democratic politics. She is President of the Ward Club, a member of the Executive Committee and serves as a precinct committee person.

Ms. Dupuis started Cans for Cats, a small Trap Neuter Return program to help address the plight of feral cats. She raises funds by collecting cans and turning them in for recycling. The money she receives from collecting the cans goes to help pay for spaying and neutering of cats.

Kate is an avid reader and especially enjoys reading about English Medieval History. She encourages others to get involved in the community. She is passionate about making a difference in the Ward 14 community and Cleveland.
**Cleveland Junior Jitterbugs**

The Cleveland Junior Jitterbugs is a group of outstanding students from Denison Elementary School in the Brooklyn Centre neighborhood who are interested in learning and performing swing dance styles. The group is led by professional dancer Valerie Salstrom from Get Hep Swing. Valerie first began teaching swing dance in the neighborhood when she became a visiting artist at Denison School in 2003. She has taught dance at the school, at Art House and all over the neighborhood every year since then. She has been able to share her love of swing dance with Brooklyn Centre with the help of Progressive Arts Alliance, Art House, the Ohio Arts Council, Young Audiences and Neighborhood Connections.

The Jitterbugs have performed at a variety of venues throughout the Cleveland area including the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, House of Blues, and have been featured on TV twice. The team has also traveled around the country performing at swing dance events and competing in junior division swing dance contests in cities like, New York, Washington D.C., San Francisco, California, and Houston, Texas.

The Cleveland Junior Jitterbugs have twice weekly after-school swing dance sessions. The program is free and is made possible through a very generous grant from Neighborhood Connections and in cooperation with Macall's Giant Eagle, Get Hep Swing, and Progressive Arts Alliance.

If you would like more information about the Cleveland Junior Jitterbugs team, their practices, their performances, or how to make a donation, please contact coach Valerie Salstrom at 216-374-1927 or juniorjitterbugs@gmail.com.

Donations are being sought currently to help pay for expenses to their participation in the International Lindy Hop Championships swing dance workshop that will take place in Washington D.C. August 23rd - 26th, 2012.

**Business Development**

Nestlé Professional is in the finishing stages of two projects that will ensure their strength, productivity and future success at their L.J. Minor W. 25th Street manufacturing plant. As a part of the world’s largest food company and with a 60-year old Cleveland home-grown history, they are making a large multi-million investment to their state of the art plant to add advanced technologies and processes as well as enlarge their employee parking facilities. Nestlé is the areas’ largest private sector employer with over 250 workers and managers, many who live within the neighborhood.

The company services the professional food service industry and is well known for their culinary bases, sauces and stock products. Thanks to WIRE-Net, Tremont West Development Corporation, Stockyard Clark Fulton & Brooklyn Centre Community Development office and the City’s Department of Economic Development for their assistance with this project. The City assisted with a $250,000 loan and grant package for this important project.

**Small Business Matching Grant Fund Now Available**

As part of the effort to clean and green Ward 14 major business districts and to help current local businesses and attract new ones, a new matching grant program has been developed with the City of Cleveland’s Department of Economic Development.

The $50,000 fund will offer matching grants of up to $5,000 to small business. Funds are targeted for exterior improvements to businesses and the program is designed to compliment other efforts being taken to clean up and beautify area commercial districts.

Most people have heard the expression that small businesses are the “lifeblood of our economy”. In fact small businesses employ about half of all private sector employees, pay 43 percent of total U.S. private payroll and have generated 65 percent of net new jobs over the past 17 years.

The program was developed with the Ward 14 council office and Stockyard, Clark Fulton and Brooklyn Centre Community Development office in collaboration with the City’s Department of Economic Development. Interested businesses should contact Adam Stalder for details at 216-961-9071 xtn 209, or by email at astalder@dscdo.org.
On Saturday, July 14th over 120 MetroHealth employees spent the morning cleaning-up and beautifying parts of West 25th street as part of MetroHealth’s Employee Service Day. The project was also born out of planning and works under the W. 25th Street/Pearl Road Corridor Initiative.

Volunteers helped plant mini gardens, paint over graffiti “tags,” remove trash and create artistic designs on municipal waste receptacles. Within a couple hours they collected a ton of trash, planted 247 lavender plants and 72 maiden grass plants, installed 10 waste receptacles painted with a design that will unify West 25th Street corridor and removed 50 graffiti “tags”.

“Our employees gave up their time because they wanted to do something for the neighborhood and residents,” said John Corlett, Vice President of Government Relations and Community Affairs.

The service day was tied to revitalization efforts aimed at the W. 25th Street/Pearl Road corridor, the “front door” leading to both MetroHealth Medical Center and the MetroHealth Old Brooklyn Senior Health & Wellness Center. MetroHealth is a key partner. The Stockyard, Clark-Fulton & Brooklyn Centre Community Development Office partnered with the System for the service project and LAND Studio and Art House also contributed to the effort, which is the first of many other improvements to come.

MetroHealth is also celebrating its 175th anniversary this year and there are plans in the works for redesigning and re-investing in their main campus.

For more information about MetroHealth initiatives and the W. 25th Street/Pearl Road Corridor Initiative see: http://www.metrohealth.org and http://planning.city.cleveland.oh.us/w25/cpc.php