

IRV'S DELI DESTROYED BY FIRE

For the third time in almost six months, the Coventry Road commercial strip has suffered a major fire disaster. The victim this time was Irv's Restaurant & Delicatessen, located on the northwest corner of Coventry and Hampshire Roads. Damage to the Deli and adjacent bar seemed total.

The fire began about 2 a.m., according to patrons who were in the restaurant section drinking coffee at the time. "I noticed smoke pouring out from a heater vent," states Steve Lewis. "I yelled over to Dave immediately to call the Fire Department." Steve rushed downstairs, where he then figured that the fire was coming from, and he says he found the basement "completely covered in smoke and fire." Cardboard cases located near the boiler were on fire. Steve came back upstairs.

At this point, Paul Webster, another patron, rushed downstairs to fight the fire. The Fire Department had been called and restaurant patrons and employees were being hurried out of the building. Paul tried to drag merchandise away from the fire to keep it from burning. But after a few minutes, Paul was overcome by smoke and forced to return upstairs. Though Paul was then observed choking from the smoke, he later appeared unharmed. No firemen or civilians are currently known to be injured.

Fire fighters appeared to have responded promptly. The fire proved stubborn, sending high clouds of black smoke out suddenly at times without warning. Flames flared in the ceiling and basement areas, and firemen were still attacking the smoldering ruins six hours later as the usual Monday breakfast crowd arrived on the scene. It appears that fire walls held and that stores adjacent to Irv's Deli on both Hampshire and Coventry were spared fire damage. But smoke damage to stores may have been severe. Smoke probably also entered the apartment suites above Heights Hardware and other commercial storefronts to the north. In fact, smoke was so intense that it may have set off a smoke alarm several buildings west in an apartment on Hampshire Road, according to the tenants who live there.

Irv's Deli has been a Coventry institution for nearly nineteen years. "It's a real landmark," exclaimed one Cleveland Heights resident upon learning of its destruction. That overstates the case, of course. Irv's was certainly no four-star restaurant. As a regular patron once noted, "At Irv's, the food may not be good, but it sure is expensive." Such unsubtle, deprecating humor often appears in comments about Irv's. But despite all its drawbacks as an eatery, the restaurant had a loyal clientele which patronized Irv's through good times and bad

Part of the charm of Irv's lay in its ability to attract a most interesting crowd of customers. A recent newspaper article called it "Cleveland's last coffee house." The unemployed and the professional, the elderly and the small children, all races, creeds, national origins, and points of view imaginable were in evidence there. In Irv's, one found both the diversity and the sharp contrasts which have made Coventry Road a Cleveland legend these past fifteen years. The little known bar adjacent to the restaurant was the last of the old-time, hard-core Coventry bars -- heir to a tradition once shared with the old Pepper Pot (now the Saloon) and the late, infamous C-Saw Cafe. Thus, the fire has destroyed a major rallying point for "old" Coventry regulars.

As Irv Gulko surveyed the damage, there was a certain calm in his voice. He had seen those good times and bad. His business had survived economic stagnation on Coventry, hippies, Hell's Angels, City harassment, and the relentless criticism of local gourmets. During the last three years, he noted, business had been pretty good. Extensive remodeling was done within the past year. With an ironic smile, he observed that if he could stick with the Street through bad times, he could certainly come back to enjoy good ones again. He said that he had come back from a fire once before around 1961, and he said that he would come back again. Many residents fervently hope that he will.

*Editor's Note:* Last month, this newsletter published an opinion by Richard Wortman on the subject of library service. In an effort to present other viewpoints, the following article is presented. CNI has not endorsed any viewpoint in this continuing controversy. Both Mr. Wortman and Mr. Cook will be invited to submit brief additional comments for our next newsletter.

Opinion: Dr. Wortman Does It Again

Although I am one of the seven members of the Library Board, I am writing this reply as a personal response to Dr. Wortman's "Opinion" of March, rather than as the response of the Library Board.

I thank Dr. Wortman for supporting the library levy, no matter how half-heartedly. I cannot accept, however, that his "opinion" comes close to the actual situation. Let us consider the points he made.

(1) "There are no promises." Those who attend the Library Board meetings, and Dr. Wortman is one of them, heard promises which he has not bothered to tell you about. He heard that providing the levy passes, there will be \$65,000 available the first year and \$50,000 in succeeding years to put into improvements recommended by the Library Planning Committee (of which Dr. Wortman was a member). These include increasing the library staff by one and one-half people to carry out these improvements, and also upgrading the Coventry collection.

(2) The "gun-to-the-head" point of view is not that of the Library Board. However, a public body cannot spend money it does not have, and if a needed levy is not passed, belts must be tightened. This is not a threat, if is fact, and we have already seen it a few years ago when a school levy was not passed.

(3) I personally resent the implications of negative P.R. I have attempted to be as cooperative as public policy allows, and will continue to do so, even if it is not appreciated.

(4) As Dr. Wortman well knows, the recommendations of the Library Planning Committee are not being ignored or filed away. While specifics have only been briefly touched on at Board meetings, the recommendations have been included in the proposed budget for the next five years, which Dr. Wortman, as well as others, has. When an opportunity arose to negotiate with a probable new landlord at Coventry, the Board appointed a committee of local citizens, and followed their recommendations. It would be improper at this time to suggest what they are, but we are acting. In addition, at the last Board meeting one of the reports dealt directly with staff reaction to the Planning Committee Report, and action being taken to follow up on the report. Again, Dr. Wortman may be displeased, since his personal supplements to the Planning Committee Report (pp. 49-61) were singled out for some criticism, but the report is being acted upon, and you will continue to hear more about it.

(5) The figure of \$1,374,375, presented by Dr. Wortman as the amount spent on the main library, is highly misleading. The operating budget of the Library over the last three years went to 66.6% to Main, 13.5% to Noble, 13.5% to University Heights, and 6.3% to Coventry, while the cost per item circulated was \$1.10 for Main, \$1.00 for Noble, \$0.89 for University Heights, and \$1.32 for Coventry. In other words, Coventry was the most expensive of the four buildings in terms of circulation. I and the other Board members are aware that the Coventry branch has some problems that influence the figures, and we are working on the answers to these problems, although the visibility of this work may not be completely satisfying to observers.

(continued next page)

Opinion...(continued)

(6) Responsible criticism is always welcome. We have heard it at Board meetings from a variety of people, including Dr. Wortman. We have heard it from the committee appointed to advise us on the Coventry lease; we have listened, and are following that criticism as far as circumstances allow. It is my opinion, however, that polemics such as were published in this column last month are not constructive. They tear down; they are calculated to build resentment among readers without the careful presentation of facts. I suggest you go back and carefully re-read Dr. Wortman's comments. You will see that they are full of innuendo, with few facts, and many of the latter are misleading. To me, this is not constructive, but destructive of good will and cooperation in the community, and it is an attitude I find reprehensible. As I said earlier, I fully intend to cooperate with all persons during my term on the Library Board. I would prefer that the task not be made more difficult.

- William R. Cook Jr.

Group Home Proposed for Kenilworth Road

On Wednesday, April 12, a public hearing of the Planning Commission will be held to consider the request of the Positive Education Program (PEP) for a conditional use permit to use 2541 Kenilworth Road, presently a single family residence, for a group home to house 8-10 boys ages 14-18 and three live-in adults. This community-based residential center will serve teenage boys who are residents of eastern Cuyahoga County and are being reintegrated into the community from residential programs.

PEP is a service agency of the Cuyahoga County Community Mental Health and Retardation Board and operates under the auspices of the Cuyahoga County Board of Education. PEP serves children who have learning disabilities/behavior disorders, and their parents and school personnel. Behavior disorders such as violent acts of aggression or drug abuse would not be treated at this facility.

The full time staff at the facility will include live-in house parents, a live in teacher-counselor, and a liaison teacher counselor, plus services of a half time director and other support personnel. PEP is planning to spend approximately \$50,000 on renovation of the home at 2541 Kenilworth.

There are presently two group homes operating in the Kenilworth-Overlook neighborhood. The Jewish Children's Bureau has a facility for ten children at 2434 Overlook, and a P.V.A. home for ten children is located at 2528 Overlook. The Christian Community is presently negotiating to buy a seven suite apartment at 2555 Kenilworth to be used as a residence and educational facility.

If you have an opinion pro or con, the use of 2541 Kenilworth as a group home, you are encouraged to attend the public hearing at 7:30 p.m., April 12, City Council chambers.

- Barb Orban

Dateline: Coventry, 2018 "It won't be long, now," sez Tommy Feller, 68, proprietor of Tommie's Restaurant on Coventry Road. Feller adds, "If the landlord ever gets around to fixing the damage from the Third World War, I should open up sometime in the mid-21st century."





HEIGHTS COMMUNITY CONGRESS

NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY QUESTIONNAIRE

The Heights Community Congress has received a \$40,000 grant from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) to establish a community anti-crime program. The focus of the program will be in four areas: women, elderly, tenants and neighborhoods. The overall goal of the program is to eliminate the fear of crime by offering safety workshops which have been carefully tailored to the specific concerns of the community.

The Women's Rights Class of the Congress, in cooperation with the Rape Crisis Center, is designing activities to deal with crimes against women. The Class has plans to bring their versatile program to targeted areas within Cleveland Heights.

Realizing that Cleveland Heights is a community of responsive people, we invite your comments particular to your neighborhood so that we may assist YOU in developing a workshop directed toward specific anti-crime techniques.

Please fill in this questionnaire and return it to the Congress (address on the back, just fold and staple.) For additional information, contact Helen Payton, 321-6775.

Do you know your neighbors on either side, across the street? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you keep your doors locked? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you feel free to walk in your neighborhood at night? \_\_\_\_\_

How often do you see a police car on your street? \_\_\_\_\_

Does this make you feel secure, or is it a concern? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you know your neighborhood beat officer? \_\_\_\_\_

What school district do you live in? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you lived in Cleveland Heights? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you live in a single family house? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you live in a duplex or double? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you live in an apartment? \_\_\_\_\_

If you are a tenant, do you feel that your building is secure? \_\_\_\_\_

What age range are you?	20-30	_____	Sex - Male	_____
	31-45	_____	Female	_____
	46-55	_____		
	56-65	_____		
	over 66	_____		

Do you feel safety is a concern in your neighborhood? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, comment:

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Would you be interested in attending a neighborhood safety workshop? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, please include your name, address and telephone number: (please print)

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