*** COVENTRY VILLAGE NEWS ***

September 1978 Newsletter of Coventry Neighbors, Inc.

It Has Been An Interesting Summer

Summer is a time for vacations. Consequently, most neighborhood organizations slow down their pace, as key members literally disappear from sight for a while. Batteries recharged, these members usually reappear in the fall. But the processes of government and the normal changes of affairs never await their return. This is all true in Coventry, of course. So here is a status report for all of you who wonder "what ever happened about..."

Coventryard. There has been no visible work there lately. The deadline for submission of a building permit is early October, so demolition is still a possibility. At least one Council member feels that no permit would be possible without a whopping big parking variance. But don't count it out yet. I've seen the insides, and the building looked rebuildable to me--if financing is obtained.

Coventry Library. The Library Board committed itself to build a 2,400 square foot addition onto Coventry School (Euclid Heights Boulevard side). Critics want it bigger still. They also want a meeting room in it, which present plans exclude. A small committee is looking into sources of money, since the Board insists the basic limitations are financial. Everyone seems pleased with the choice of Fred Toguchi as architect. When plans are drawn, we will all know more about the future of library service in Coventry.

Coventry School. The School Board is redistricting to compensate system-wide for school "conversions." (The word "closing" is a taboo.) Coventry School will have a slightly larger number of students and this will make virtually no difference in the racial balance there. Seems that Coventry already has a racial balance close to the City average.

Fires. Sorry about this, but there is one more to report. A basement apartment at 2780 Hampshire burned late one Saturday night. Arson has not been proved, nor has it been ruled out. Apartment dwellers in the immediate area are a bit upset.

Carell Drug. Bet you didn't know it's now open until midnight every weekday!

Well, there is more to report. We may or may not get it all down in this newsletter. So you are all cordially invited to the first CNI meeting of the fall to see what it is like when we compare notes about summer in Coventry.

- Alan Rapoport

The next meeting of Coventry Neighbors, Inc. will take place on Tuesday, September 12, 1978, at 7:30 p.m., at the Unitarian Society on Lancashire Road, across from the Musicians' Tower.

IRV'S DELI DELAYED: TAJ MAHAL DENIED BY ZONING BOARD

Irv's Deli ran into rough sailing, and Raj Mathur's proposed Taj Mahal Indian restaurant walked the plank, at the August 16th meeting of the Board of Zoning Appeals. The City staff was given a go-ahead to finish the parking lot at 2768 Hampshire Road, first by the BZA and later, on the evening of August 21, by City Council.

Irv Gulko's ambitious proposal to expand a reconstructed Irv's Deli into the shoe shop and dry cleaner adjacent to his old location ran into neighborhood opposition. Gulko withdrew his associated party-room proposal, which had already been criticized by a formal vote of Coventry Neighbors, Inc. at the beginning of the hearing. With the exception of residents of the immediately adjacent apartment complaining about noise and fumes, there was no direct objection to Irv's Deli re-opening; some speakers were quite supportive of this, including F. David Gill presenting the views of CNI.

The extension, however, took heavy flak, mostly relative to the proposed displacement of Stein's Dry Cleaning. Several strong pleas were made, including statements by Mrs. Stein herself; attorneys representing her; an East Cleveland resident who shops in Coventry; and Coventry resident Doris Goist, who spoke eloquently to the effect that Mrs. Stein is (a) a very nice lady, (b) engaged in a wholesome and valuable neighborhood business, and (c) continuing into the present the old Jewish roots of Coventry.

The Zoning Board, after inquiring as to whether Gulko could supply physically any of the parking places for which he was asking variances (negative), delayed action on the grounds that Gulko does not in fact hold control of the property for which he is presenting plans. Gulko intends to buy the building, and premises his expansion on the economic necessities thus entailed, but is not now in possession.

In another matter, the City Administration received BZA permission to go ahead wit the lot planned on City property at 2768 Hampshire. Certain landscaping requirements are pegged to the right of the building on a lot; there being no building, the staff's ad hoc arrangements had to receive a variance (approval) from the BZA. Council confirmed this decision 4-0 at its following meeting, and construction can proceed at once. The lot will be mostly for residents--permits, not meters.

The proposal to relocate the Taj Mahal restaurant on Coventry at the old Water Works frontage--which has also been discussed by CNI--was removed from the BZA calendar due to the continued absence of the owner of the property, Kenneth Ross. Although he had appeared at one CNI meeting, this was Ross's second consecutive no-show at the BZA, and the Board, while expressing its regrets to operator Raj Mathur, decided that nothing more could be done. This is Mathurs' second disappointment in Cleveland Heights; he earlier sought to move the same operation into the building occupied by the Sun Press, and was refused a parking variance.

- Dave Burwasser

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CNI Bids Farewell to Sarah Cody

Even her critics admit that Sarah Cody was a tremendous Director of the Cleveland Heights- University Heights Library. During her tenure, Main Library became a fantastic facility perhaps unmatched by any other library in the county save the downtown Cleveland Public Library. Strong community support of the recent library levy was a tribute to her accomplishments. Her retirement is a great loss to the cities she served so well.

CNI voted unanimously at its last meeting to make a $25 donation to a children's book fund established by the Library Trustees in honor of Miss Cody. The gift has been made and receipt thereof was gratefully acknowledged by Rachel Nelson, Acting Director.

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TIRED OF TRASH?

Are you concerned with litter in our neighborhood? Please come to the next Coventry Neighbors meeting! Much concern has been expressed by Coventry residents that a solution to the trash problem be reached...once and for all! Dominic Tomaro, City Service Director, has accepted our request to attend our next meeting (September 12th at 7:30 p.m.) to discuss the problem. He will be early on the agenda.

Complaints currently include unsightly litter on Coventry as well as the volume of trash strewn along side streets branching from Coventry. A growing group of side street residents feel strongly that it is not their responsibility to clean up after Coventry merchants' customers. Are trash cans a solution? Would an on-going clean-up program work? How can any solution be funded? Is it the City's problem?.....the merchants'?......the residents'?

Please come to the September 12th meeting....Your input and opinion is needed!

- Bob Rose

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1978 Heights Heritage Tour

Visit historic homes in Cleveland Heights, Sunday, September 24, 1978, 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. Tea-musicale at the elegant Alcazar Hotel, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Donation: $6 per person! Special price for senior citizens: $2. Includes tour and tea.

For information, call the Heights Community Congress at 321-6775.

Volunteers to help at the tea are urged to contact Jane Wertheim before September 15th at 371-4587.

P.S. *Donations are tax-deductable contributions to the Heights Community Congress.*

WHAT KEEPS A NEIGHBORHOOD GOING STRONG?

This is a question which can never be completely answered. Circumstances change, the challenges become different, and people come and go. Solutions are elusive and indefinite. But people still search for the answers to this one fundamental question.

The question has a special meaning in Coventry. Three fires on a commercial strip during a depressing Cleveland winter would be enough to kill some neighborhoods. In Coventry, where the "strip" serves as the focal point for surrounding residential areas, the psychological impact of the fires had as devastating an effect as the economic impact. Could Coventry survive the turmoil?

We believe that it could and that it did. Fifty to sixty stores did not burn. Hundreds of creative people did not leave. The energy and excitement that is Coventry did not disappear. As proof we point to the 1978 Coventry Street Fair.

The 1978 Fair was a production of Coventry Neighbors, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life in the COventry area. A committee of 13 planned the fair. Some 80 to 100 other area residents helped barricade side streets, sweep trash, move stages, and handle problems. Nearly 30 bands were booked to perform. None of these people were paid for their time --they just got into the spirit of things and volunteered.

The Fair proved that residents, merchants, commercial landowners, and the City could cooperate smoothly. Without the financial support of merchants and landowners, and without the logistical support of the City of Cleveland Heights, no Fair would have been possible. Special thanks are due to:

* Heights Hardware
* Pick-N-Pay
* Heights Are Theatre
* Coventry Beverage and Pizza
* Coventry Audio
* Daffy Dan's
* The Saloon
* High Tide/Rock Bottom
* New World Haircuts

The special people at City Hall who did so much are:

Dominic Tomaro (Sanitation Department)
Walter Oswald (Health Department)
Robert Maver (Fire Warden)

We cannot say enough good things about the Cleveland Heights Police Department detail led by Commander Lester Lagatta--they did a superb job, handling all problems promptly and courteously.

Cooperation made the Street Fair work. But it was the dedication of people to improving their community which made it fun. Perhaps "dedication of people" is what keeps a neighborhood going strong. We like to think so.

THE CNI STREET FAIR COMMITTEE

If you ever want to throw a party for 40,000 people, you might want to contact the following people. They did a helluva job.

JUDITH AYERS (mellow images)
DAVID BUDIN (music)
ANDREW HAVAS (finances)
THOMAS LEE (first aid)
CHARLES OWEN (second aid)
ED RITZ (posters and yurt)
LARRY BEAM (City Hall liaison)
F. DAVID GILL (traffic control)
BRUCE HENNES (publicity)
JIM MC CONOCHA (electricity)
MARCIA POLEVOI (permits)
ELVIE ZELL (crafts)

And I don't want to forget thanks to Wayne Koury of Chester's (lemon aid).

I said that last year's Street Fair Committee was the best group I ever worked with. I was wrong. This year's was the best.

- Alan Rapoport, Chairman
Street Fair Committee

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ICE CREAM PARLOR PROPOSAL MELTED... Hundreds of Coventry residents signed petitions in favor of it. Over 80% of the merchants on Coventry indicated approval. CNI voted unanimously to support it. The City Planning Commission approved it. Nobody came out against it. Nobody but the City Council of Cleveland Heights.

"It" was the proposal of Marvin Silver to open an ice cream parlor to be called "A La Mode" at 1801 Coventry Road. This location has been vacant since Casbah moved nearly six months ago. The hang-up, as usual, was a parking variance. The Council vote of September 6 was on a motion to overrule and reverse the decision of the Planning Commission granting a variance. Voting for the motion to reverse were Mayor Marjorie Wright and Councilmembers John J. Coyle, Robert Arnold, and Lee Chilcote. The lone dissenter was Councilman Richard Weigand, a Coventry resident.

Mr. Chilcote, speaking at length about parking problems in Coventry, mentioned that a parking plan for Coventry is being formed. He suggested that Mr. Silver might reapply for a variance at a later time.

Mr. Silver has a three year lease for the property. The lease, however, is contingent on the grant of a variance.

Observers feel that a precedent has now been set and that no more parking variances will be granted in Coventry until a parking plan is at least on paper. The City hopes to have such a plan by the fall of this year.

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ITEM: The Phoenix has been nominated to be the official bird of Coventry, replacing the Bronx Cheer.