



# Coventry Village News

NOVEMBER, 1984

NEWSLETTER OF COVENTRY NEIGHBORS, INC. VOL 8, NO. 10

## CITY TARGETS NORTH COVENTRY

by Larry Beam

City Council is ready to direct more than \$130,000 to housing problems on Hillcrest, Eddington, Belmar, Glenmont, Avondale, and the portion of Coventry north of Mayfield. The area, which the City now calls North Coventry, contains 187 two- and three-family homes, and several apartment buildings.

At its meeting of October 1, Council authorized the purchase--by the City's Housing Preservation Center--of a two-family house at 1653-55 Eddington Road. The Center will pay \$36,000 for the house and spend roughly \$30,000 on repairs and improvements to it. The Center will then sell the house, probably at a loss of a few thousand dollars.

The present draft of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) budget contains \$100,000 for a program of financial assistance to owners of other homes in that area. That funding now appears certain of passage. There is talk of a second \$100,000 to continue the program for a second year.

The precise nature of that program has yet to be decided. Several programs are now being discussed; their common theme is the goal of swift and dramatic improvement to the appearance of housing in North Coventry.

One of the programs receiving consideration was suggested by the Housing Preservation Center. Under that program, the City would offer home repair loans, at a very low rate of interest for ten years, to all home owners in the target area. The proposal is for loans of between \$5,000 and \$10,000, for external repairs only.

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 4]

## PARKING LOT PLANS OFFERED

Plans for a proposed addition to a parking lot on Lancashire will be unveiled at the CNI meeting on November 13, 7:30 PM, at the Coventry Library. A house that now stands at 2736 Lancashire will be razed to make way for an addition to Muni Lot 4, which is just east of the house.

City Planning Department members Cal Caminati and Joyce Braverman will present the plans. They will ask for CNI's support of those plans before an upcoming meeting of the Planning Commission.

## CNI ELECTION RESULTS

The following people were elected to one-year terms of office at CNI's October meeting:

Bruce Hennes, President; Kathryn Young, Vice President and Heights Community Congress Trustee; Diana Cyganovich, Treasurer; Larry Beam, Secretary; Robert Shields, Trustee; and F. David Gill, Trustee.

## HCC ANNUAL MEETING SET FOR NOVEMBER 18

The annual dinner meeting of the Heights Community Congress will be held on November 18, at 6:30 PM, at St. Paul's Church, 2747 Fairmount Boulevard. Harry Fagan, the first director of the HCC, will speak. The winner of the second annual Bernice E. Lott award will be announced.

The cost is \$10. Reservations are requested by November 12.

*COVENTRY VILLAGE NEWS* is published monthly, except in August, by Coventry Neighbors, Inc. in cooperation with the Heights Community Congress.

**EDITOR:**

Larry Beam

**EDITORIAL BOARD:**

Bruce M. Hennes, Kathryn J. Young, Bob Shields, Diana Cyganovich, F. David Gill, and Larry Beam.

**EDITORIAL STAFF:**

F. David Gill and  
Kathryn Young

**PRODUCTION STAFF:**

Bob Shields, Diana Cyganovich, F. David Gill, Kathryn Young, Bruce Hennes, and the Heights Community Congress staff.

**ALL** opinions and statements are strictly those of the respective writers, except when clearly identified as formal positions of CNI or HCC. Circulation: 2000.

**PERSONS** wishing to submit copy for the December issue may do so by sending it to the Editor, *Coventry Village News*, 1811 1/2 Coventry Road, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118, no later than November 15. While no unsigned items will be published, your name may be withheld on request. Phone 371-6095.

## MEETING NOTES

CNI voted to ask that lights serving Muni Lot 20 be replaced, and to ask again that the wall at the rear of that lot be repainted.

Russell Baron, Bob Solts, and Maureen Weigand, all members of the School Board, described impending changes in the schools' organization, and described the need for the levy on the November 6 ballot.

CNI voted to support that levy.

Officers were elected for the next year; see story in this issue.

## HALLOWEEN PARTY

Unusually warm weather helped attract a record crowd to Coventry Neighbors' Third Annual Halloween Party of October 27. Music was provided by True Blue, a country-western group, prizes were given in a costume contest, and the party made the evening news on Channel 3.

Area merchants donated more than \$700 to make the event possible. They were Simon and Company (owners of Coventryyard), Coventry Cinema, Sunshine II, Record Revolution, and High Tide/Rock Bottom.

In addition, the following merchants gave gift certificates that were used as prizes in the costume contest: Carroll Drug, Passport to Peru, Tommy's, Haagen Dazs, Vidstar, and Coventry Cinema.

We deeply appreciate the generosity of these merchants. It is worth noting that many of these donors stood to gain little or nothing from their contributions. Several are located far from the south end of the business district where the event was held. Others are not open in the evening, when the event was held.

They all deserve our support.

--Bruce M. Hennes  
President of CNI.

## SIX AWARDS GO TO COVENTRY AREA

Five homes in the Coventry area were honored with Community Improvement Awards on Sunday, October 14. One home, at 3000 Somerton Road, was honored twice.

The Janczynski residence, at 1656 Belmar Road, won in the "multi-residential" category. In the "individual residence" category, there were three winners in Coventry: the Elder residence, at 2613 Derbyshire; the McCombs residence, 1898 Woodward; and residence of Gene Wilson and Ron Peterson, at 3000 Somerton.

New this year to the Community Improvements Awards was the "Perfect Ten" contest. Prizes were given for "outstanding exterior detailing found on homes, places of business, or other public or private areas in Cleveland Heights." There were ten categories. Three of the winners were from Coventry: for outside sculpture and ornaments, Dr. Charles Herndon, 2380 Edgehill Road; for windows, Mark Hoffman, 2432 Edgehill Road; and for window boxes and planters, Gene Wilson and Ron Peterson, 3000 Somerton Road.

The annual Community Improvement Awards are a joint effort of the City of Cleveland Heights and the Heights Community Congress. Now in its tenth year, the program seeks "to honor and award those who have improved the physical environment of Cleveland Heights."

## VOTE FOR THE SCHOOL LEVY

## PICK-N-PAY SAYS IT WILL STAY

First National Supermarkets, owners of Pick-n-Pay, are once again negotiating with the management of Severance Shopping Center for space there.

These talks have re-kindled old worries that the store might leave Coventry. Some City officials have expressed concern that the food chain would close one of its present Cleveland Heights outlets when—and if—a Severance store opens. Besides the Coventry store, Pick-n-Pay has a store at 2920 Noble Road.

Susan Barlow, Director of Consumer Relations for Pick-n-Pay, said flatly that the Coventry store would not be closed. Barlow argued that the Coventry store serves a clearly different market from that which might be served by a Severance outlet. Barlow added that the food chain is "very pleased" with Coventry's response to the new night hours.

Mayor Alan Rapoport, after expressing concern that the store might be closed, said that another food retailer is interested in the Coventry location, should Pick-n-Pay depart. He declined to name that retailer.

## HUNGER CENTER SEEKS GIFTS

You can help fight hunger this holiday season by donating non-perishable food items to the Heights Emergency Food Center. Hy Herman, proprietor of Quality Quilts and Bedding, 1811 Coventry Road, has offered his shop as a collection point.

Contributions will be taken to the Food Center at Euclid Avenue Christian Church, 3663 Mayfield Road, for distribution to the needy. About 150 families, most from Cleveland Heights, come to the center for food each month.

## CITY TARGETS NORTH COVENTRY . . . continued from page 1

Another possibility, mentioned by Mayor Alan Rapoport, is that the City would offer to pay a large portion—possibly half—of the cost of painting homes in the area. Such a program would involve some control over what colors could be used, and might provide stronger incentives for imaginative schemes using four colors.

Eligibility requirements for assistance are under discussion. Assistance programs of this sort—especially those paid for with CDBG resources—are usually available only to people with relatively low income, and usually only to owner-occupants. In the case of a program for North Coventry, however, there is talk of making assistance available to all owners, without regard to their income or where they live.

Housing code violations are more common in North Coventry than in most other parts of the community, according to officials. The City's initiative to get North Coventry fixed up will probably include vigorous efforts to force compliance with the Code. Just what will be done, and just how compliance requirements will be tied to offers of assistance, remain to be worked out.

The community, though, hopes for more than minimum compliance with the Code. The law requires that houses be safe and healthy. It does not require that they be attractive.

The economics of rental housing are such that there is little to motivate owners to make properties attractive. Motivation to make houses aesthetically pleasing arises largely from factors like pride of ownership and social conscience. These motivations are frequently quite absent from the decision processes of absentee landlords, whose goal is a narrowly-defined effort to maximize their return on investment.

It is here that programs of

governmental assistance come in. The added revenues—from higher rents—that a landlord can expect from an attractive house are generally not enough to cover the debt service on the costs of aesthetically-oriented improvements. It's not worth it, that is, if he has to pay 17% or 18% on a conventional home improvement loan. But if an investor can borrow for such improvements at rates under 10%, then, suddenly, making the improvements is worth while to him. He can charge slightly higher rents, pay off the loan he took for those improvements, and have something left over for his own pocket.

The cost of the governmental assistance is a sort of bribe paid to the profit-seeking investor, motivating him to do the sorts of things that owner-occupants of single-family housing so often do out of pride of ownership and social conscience.

The beauty of such programs, from the government's point of view, is that it can expect, over the course of the years, to recapture most or all costs of the program through loan repayments and implied impacts on the tax base. When such programs reverse the fortune of declining neighborhoods, the government can end up making money.

## STREET FAIR DECISION COMING

A discussion of whether or not to sponsor a Street Fair next summer will be held at the regular CVN meeting of December 11. If a Fair is held next summer, it would be the twelfth annual mid-summer fair sponsored by Coventry Neighbors, Inc.

See the December Coventry Village News for more on this controversial topic.

## AROUND COVENTRY . . .

**COVENTRY CAFE . . .** Raj Mathur, proprietor of the Taj Mahal restaurant, at 1763 Coventry, plans to remodel the place completely, changing its name to Coventry Cafe. The new restaurant will offer sandwiches. Plans include a new facade for the restaurant portion of the building.

**HATS . . .** Ladies' accessories, including jewelry, handbags, rain wear, and hats are offered by In Addition To, a new shop on the lower level of Coventryard. Proprietor Erma Somerville has high hopes for Coventryard, and for all of Coventry Village. She believes the Coventry market is ready for a shop like hers, which appeals to the well-dressed professional woman.

**CINEMA DOING WELL . . .** Coventry Cinema, formerly Heights Art Theater, is consistently doing better since its format changed, according to its manager, George Fitzpatrick. Revenues from ticket sales are down a bit, but candy stand sales are up by enough to bring the total above the old levels. From the point of view of the theater's out-of-town ownership, the change has had an even bigger favorable impact on profits. That firm also owns the Westwood Theater, which still shows porn. Apparently, many patrons who once came to Coventry to see sex films now go to the Westwood, making it also more profitable than it was under the old arrangement.

**AFRICAN IMPORTS . . .** Biashara, a shop specializing in imports from Kenya, Nigeria, and the Ivory Coast, has opened at 1807 Coventry. Offerings include contemporary and traditional clothing, art, and custom work of resident jeweler Phillip El. Though the inventory of the new shop is small now, proprietor Linda Watson-Kimenderi hopes to expand rapidly. Biashara and the neighboring Coventry Fish will soon have new signs, both designed by Edgewise, a local firm.

These signs and some other improvements to both shopfronts will be paid for largely by the Cleveland Heights Local Development Corporation.

**THE WALL . . .** The City of Cleveland Heights has agreed to repaint, with a more appropriate color, the large retaining wall at the rear of Municipal Lot 20, next to Coventry Beverage and Pizza. Already the City has repaired the lot's lighting system; half the lights there had been out of order for several months. These improvements are in response to repeated requests from CNI. The City, however, is holding firm in its refusal to provide more adequate light there, or to repair the leaning and badly-deteriorated retaining wall. City staff argues that the entire area could be redeveloped soon, so these improvements would be a waste of money. There has been talk of a large project in that area for more than ten years.

**GOOD WORK . . .** The north end of the Coventry commercial strip has been given a much-improved appearance with the completion of changes to the parking lot that serves Open Pantry and Revco. The lot is elegantly landscaped, and the safety of the lot has been greatly increased. Much of the credit for the improvement goes to Marvin Bilsky, owner of the property. Landscaping at Mr. Bilsky's Metropolitan Savings building, at the opposite end of the business district, has consistently been the best in this area, maybe the best among commercial buildings in Cleveland Heights. Other credit goes architect Phil Hart, who conceived the original plan; to Howard Maier and his staff, especially Joyce Braverman, in the City's Planning Department, who nurtured the project through five years of frustration; and to City Council, which voted funds to help pay its costs.

--Ed.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**To the Editor:**

I was encouraged to learn of the steps that the government of Cleveland Heights is taking to relieve the parking shortage for residents of apartment buildings in Coventry Village.

It is now time to do something to aid the merchants on Coventry Road.

Contrary to Mayor Rapoport's contention that "merchants must quit blaming the lack of parking for their problems and work on better merchandising," the parking problem is paramount. No amount of advertising, merchandising, or cleaning-up can compensate for the lack of customer parking.

Without substantial new municipal parking facilities, Coventry Road will remain a local shopping area for those who live within walking distance. Few potential customers are willing to face the inconvenience of searching for a parking space before they can shop or dine.

—John Campbell,  
Coventry Village

**CNI President responds:**

While I do not disagree with Mr. Campbell's contention that Coventry Village is in desperate need of parking, I am unhappy with those merchants who use the lack of parking as their sole excuse for poor profits.

I will concede that the service merchants, such as the dry cleaning establishments and the hardware store, are needful of close in parking. But the restaurateurs and the specialty shops must realize *now* that it is unlikely that sufficient parking will be provided in the commercial area soon. That is the reality.

While Coventry Neighbors and the Coventry Merchants Association continue to work for additional parking, I encourage the merchants to place their emphasis on better marketing and merchandising.

—Bruce M. Hennes

**To the Editor:**

I am very concerned about the chemical lawn-care companies who spray toxic pesticides in our city. I have been attending hearings in Lyndhurst, where legislation is being considered which would make the lawn-care companies responsible for notifying neighbors when these toxins are applied to lawns or shrubs.

I have listened to a litany of testimonies by people describing the fatal and near-fatal effects that lawn-care sprays have had on animals, pets, gardens, and persons.

Besides the health hazards, we are faced with a right-to-know issue. This is a basic right. The State of Ohio has recognized the right-to-know, and specifically requires that customers of lawn-care companies be notified when lawn chemicals are applied. Customers are also supplied with pertinent information regarding any related health hazards.

If you are concerned about lawn chemicals, contact your City Councilmen. For more information about this issue and what you can do, contact the Cleveland Heights Committee for Safe Chemicals at 932-1590.

—Barry Zuckor  
Chairman, Cleveland Heights  
Council For Safe Chemicals

## NEW ALBUM ISSUED BY MICHAEL SPIRO

Michael Spiro has released his second full-length album. It's called "Fixed in a photograph, lost in a song," and is on Midas Records. Spiro is a Coventry resident, and has regularly performed at CNI Street Fairs. His album is available in local stores.

## A QUESTION OF EMPHASIS

by J. B. L.

As I walked out of the Corkscrew recently, I saw that a couple of Cleveland Heights' finest were busy jotting down my license plate number in the course of their Saturday afternoon duties. Sure enough, the parking meter flag was at full mast. I admitted my guilt.

"I'm the lawbreaker," I said. "And there's no excuse for this sort of anti-social offense."

The cops looked a bit sheepish, but the one with the pad finished the ticket. We all knew the rules. My shopping had taken longer than expected, and they were on their regular 5:30 rounds. When you live in Coventry, you learn to be good natured about that sort of thing.

But it was a good excuse to ask a nagging question.

"Why don't you fellows ever ticket the cars that park in the fire lane next to Coventry Pizza, blocking the entrance to the muni lot?"

The officers looked at each other and started to move on.

"I'll pay this ticket; that gives me the right to ask," I continued. "My car's just blocking a parking meter. Those cars block the sidewalk, the parking lot entrance, and the vision of drivers trying to get out of the lot. Ticketing them would be a community service."

The officers acknowledged my point, turned serious, and offered an explanation.

"We can't make the tickets stick," said one. "The signs on that wall are so faded that you can't read them. We can't get the courts to enforce them."

"We've asked for replacements," said the other. "But after you argue over whether they're legible in court a few times, you give up."

The cops walked on and the conversation was over. A true story? Mine is, though I can't vouch for the officers'. I suspect it's true.

On Saturday and Sunday mornings that lot is usually filled with litter and broken glass from back-seat partying the night before. A few months ago, the back retaining wall sprouted a healthy (or unhealthy) dose of graffiti, as if it were an aging NYC subway car on its way back to Flatbush.

At the CNI meeting a few weeks ago, the issue of the City's reluctance to adequately light and patrol the lot was raised again. Some people also made much of the City's lack of sensibility in choosing day-glow aqua paint to cover the graffiti.

One neighbor's suggestion that CNI volunteer to repaint the wall was ignored. The organization ended up writing to the City, criticizing it for not having used a color from an "official" palette.

What's the point? The color used was awful, but it's an insignificant problem compared to others facing the neighborhood, including that of maintaining that lot.

Cleveland Heights has always emphasized parking ticket revenue over parking lot responsibility. And many of Coventry's oldest neighbors have always been willing to emphasize individual—even inconsequential—points of view over pragmatic efforts to develop a constructive working relationship with the City.

Volunteering to paint that wall would have been an excellent way to make the point without making any ill will. At the same time, a little police detective work—rather than ticket-writing—might nab the litterers, the bottle-breakers, or the graffiti artists.

And a little innovation in the local courts could give Coventry Village a Saturday morning litter patrol courtesy of the graffiti painters or litterers of the week before.

It all depends on emphasis.

## A SUMMARY OF THE CURFEW LAW

The City of Cleveland Heights has a law—Chapter 531 of the General Offenses Code—which imposes curfews on persons under the age of 18. Violations are minor misdemeanors.

With certain exceptions, the curfew hours are darkness to 6:00 AM for persons under 12 years of age. For persons 12 through 15 years, the curfew hours are 10:30 PM to 6:00 AM. For persons ages 16 and 17, the curfew hours are midnight to 6:00 AM. There are no curfew hours for persons 18 and older.

The law contains these exceptions: when a youngster is accompanied by a parent, guardian, or other family member who is 18 or older; when a youngster is on an errand or other legitimate business; and when a youngster is engaged in gainful employment during curfew hours.

Parents or guardians who knowingly allow their children out in violation of curfew hours have violated the law.

## LIBRARY GOINGS-ON

The Coventry Village Library has several exciting specials in the month of November.

Poetry readings will continue on Sunday, November 4 at 2:30 with two excellent Cleveland area poets, Marilyn Murray and Meredith Holmes.

Monday Cinema and John Ewing return to Coventry on November 5 at 7:00 with special election-eve short films entitled "Ad-Vantages." These films are several shorts from the "Great American Dream Machine" seen on PBS in years past.

November 11 is the beginning of Children's Book Week and the Coventry Library is celebrating with a program for children and adults of all ages on dolls and trains. Mrs. Mary Vogel Smith will be here to display and discuss her extensive doll collection. Mr. Harold Sichernan will bring his train collection and discuss his experience with model trains. There will also be a discussion of books on the above subjects.

## PROGRAM SEEKS PERSCHOOL KIDS

The School-Community Program and the PTA sponsor frequent programs especially designed for preschool children.

If you would like to receive mailings inviting you and your child to these exciting programs, please fill in the information requested below.

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Parents' names \_\_\_\_\_

Child's birth date \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Elementary school district (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

Send or bring the completed form to: School-Community Relations Program, Cleveland Heights-University Heights Schools, 2155 Miramar Boulevard, University Heights, OH 44118.



## FACADE PROJECTS MAKE PROGRESS

About one month ago, a covering of weathered metal panels was removed from the commercial building that houses D.O. Sommers, Design Lines, Charles Gallagher Clocks, and Coventry Laundromat (1793 to 1805 Coventry).

2 Under such coverings on many older commercial buildings is an elegant old facade. Not this time. The brick underneath was rough, unfinished, dirty and damaged. It appeared to skeptics that plans drafted by architect David Howe would have to be scrapped. Then a crew from M/A Building and Maintenance began work. Matching brick was found, damaged bricks were removed and replaced, and mortar was pointed. The brick work now looks elegant.

The incongruous facade applied to the Laundromat portion of the building about six years ago has been removed. Brick work there will be replaced, giving the structure a strong sense of architectural consistency. New signs, of consistent design, are being worked on.

Work on the facades of Coventry Discount (1813 Coventry), Heights Hardware (1792 Coventry), the Coventry Village TV Shop (1827 Coventry), Biashara (1707 Coventry), Taj Mahal Restaurant (1763 Coventry), and Coventry Fresh Fish (1809 Coventry) should begin soon. All these shops will receive new signs and varying amounts of work on bulkheads, transoms, and doorways. The plans for improvements to all these facades has been approved by the Cleveland Heights Local Development Corporation (LDC), which will help pay the costs of the work.

Plans are being developed the white *terra cotta* building on the south west corner of Coventry and Lancashire.

The LDC will typically pay more than half the costs of these projects. It will pay up to \$1,000 of the costs of new signs, and will pay all the costs of removing signs that do not meet City code. The LDC will pay as much as half

the costs of other exterior work.

Work on the facade of the Covham Building, on the east side of Coventry north of Hampshire, is progressing slowly. Work on the project began more than two years ago, and remains incomplete, largely because the original contractor simply did not perform.

A related City program is about to install signs identifying Coventry Village at each end of the commercial district.

## AIP WORKSHOP DRAWS A CROWD

More than 110 persons attended an investor workshop sponsored by the City's Apartment Improvement Program (AIP) and held on October 13 at the Alcazar Hotel. About a third of that number went on a walking tour of Coventry's apartment district after the morning meeting. At the City Council meeting the following Monday, Councilman Joanne O'Brien, who helped develop the AIP, praised the conference, calling the response to it "great."

Planning Commission member and former CNI President Karen Lind joined area landlords Ken Montlack and Larry Fisher on a five-member panel at the workshop.

The AIP held the workshop in order to communicate to investors the attractiveness of Coventry, and to describe the low-interest loans, technical assistance, experience, and other resources it offers.

Recent improvements to the Manor Building (2742 to 2750 Hampshire) were financed, in part, by a low-interest loan from the AIP. That building's outside front stairways were replaced, and a set of handsome new awnings were added.

The AIP is now negotiating a loan with the owners of the building at 2761 Euclid Heights Boulevard.

*Coventry Village News*  
Heights Community Congress  
2163 Lee Road  
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

Non-Profit Org.  
U. S. Postage  
PAID  
Cleveland, Ohio  
Permit No. 1441

ADDRESS  
CORRECTION  
REQUESTED

TIME VALUE -- PLEASE DELIVER BY FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1984

COVENTRY NEIGHBORS, INC. General Meeting, Tuesday, November 13, 7:30 PM in the Community Room of the Coventry Village Library. The public is invited.

COVENTRY NEIGHBORS, INC. Trustees Meeting, Thursday, December 6, 7:30 PM at 2910 Hampshire Road. Committee Chairpersons are asked to attend. The Trustees meeting is open to all dues-paid members of CNI.

NOW is the time to join COVENTRY NEIGHBORS, INC.. Membership includes a subscription to the *Coventry Village News*. All memberships expire on December 31 of each year. The form below may be used for renewals.

Please check one of the following:

Class of membership:  Individual (\$2.50)  Family (\$3.50)  Senior (\$1.50)

Just a subscription to the *Coventry Village News*--no membership.

(\$5 for 11 months; the *CVN* is not published in August.)

I wish to make a tax-free contribution of \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

I am now receiving the *Coventry Village News*: YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form with your check to  
COVENTRY NEIGHBORS, INC.,  
3081 East Derbyshire Road, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118.