


# Coventry Village News

The Newsletter of Coventry Neighbors Inc.

January, 94

## From the President's Pen



For the first time, but perhaps not the last, my husband and I traveled to South Carolina to be with family for Christmas. In many ways it was the best of two worlds... two days at a beach hotel; then three days camped out next to the Christmas tree in Vic's sister's living room, (with excellent food, almost continuous); then back on the beach for the final two days, in and out of hot tubs and swimming pools. As the weather there got better, the weather up here declined. Those last afternoons there were shirt sleeves and sunshine. Here there was twenty some inches of snow, at 6 degrees. Time to come home. Alas.

Traveling, there wasn't much time for introspection or reflection. Quiet time was my daily perusal of the newspaper (not the PD). One piece by George Wills grabbed me; it was a brief history of Christmas, dutifully noting Christmas' early marriage with pagan festivals of winter solstice. Christmas was a rollicking winter event until outlawed by Oliver Cromwell and the Puritans. In this country the Puritans briefly made Christmas a crime in the State of Massachusetts. All the other colonies celebrated it, however.

In this article Mr. Wills attributed the form and substance of our modern Christmas celebration to have followed from two defining sources... both pieces of literature; the 1823 poem "Twas the Night Before Christmas," and the 1843 story, "A Christmas Carol." This, says Mr. Wills, ushered in Christmas as we know it... "a festival of sentiment and material comfort."

An article by a different writer on another day presented the thesis of a present day "Politics of Resentment," (an over simplifica-

tion of complex situations, but one identifying at least one of our problems). I could not help but wonder how "the politics of resentment" and the "festival of sentiment and material comfort" mesh. Or don't mesh. (Not that I am opposed to material comfort. Like most of you, I'd like to have just a little bit more).

These days, though, all our holidays regardless of political, historic, or religious origins, seem to have taken on a sameness... embellishment of sentiment and material comfort. Meanwhile the politics of resentment encourages and abets the anger of one group against another... as though there is only so much pie; and not enough to go around; and no way to make more; and you've got mine!



I don't believe that. It is not that human greed does not exist. It does. But I believe in human decency. I believe in the practice of human decency, by not seeking to take advantage of one's fellow man, or woman, and by treating all fellow men, or women, as one would, oneself, wish to be treated. I believe decency is a choice. And if decency is a choice, so is resentment.

I also believe that resentment takes energy, sours one's life, and can even destroy one's decency. If you doubt this look where the practice of resentment has taken the people of former Yugoslavia.

George Orwell, says Mr. Wills in his article, distilled the doctrine of Charles Dickens' "Christmas Carol" into ten words: "If men would behave decently, the world would be a decent place."

You and I know we feel helpless to heal the world's craziness. We don't even seem to be able to exert much effect on the problems bedeviling our own country. Only on the smallest interpersonal scale can we be sure of having effect... with ripples touching acquaintances, family, neighborhood, community.

You and I have chosen to live in a multi racial, multi cultural, multi religious community. We get along. We don't get along perfectly, but well enough so that we can claim, with justification, to have created here in Cleveland Heights, in Coventry Village, a unique satisfying, stimulating, and remarkably decent place to live.

Thank you for being the decent people you are. May this new year bring your reasonable material comforts, and may you remain free from the poison of resentment, through the exercise of choice.

Elsa Johnson  
President



### Meet Your Neighbors

Their view from 2816 Washington looks out over our library, the Centrum lights and the flags of the new Coventry PEACE towers. The soft blue of this beautiful home stands out especially well against the snow. Walking in, the interior opens in a wide open and welcoming way. But, it wasn't always that way. Over the past three years, Jeff and Michelle Dross, with the help of the Time Life home improvement books and local craftsmen have worked hard to transform this 70 year old dwelling into a bright contemporary living space.

Our neighbors were married about ten years ago and lived on Taylor for the first seven. Upon finding their home on Washington they started a new chapter. They have been in touch with local goings on since they arrived and love dining at Cafe D'Oro and sharing their Saturday morning coffee at Arabica.

It's natural that the man who has restored his home to a new level of brightness is one who has for years worked with light. Jeff is Engineering Supervisor with Kitchler Lighting Fixtures in Independence. With a degree in architecture and, from the looks of the custom design touches in his home, he is a man of fine taste and multiple skills,... proud of the way Kitchler has grown over the 19 years he has been with them. Jeff also likes to write screenplays.

Michelle is clearly proud of Jeff's accomplishments and shares his sense of fine interiors. She loves her work as a nurse at University Hospital. When she finds time to express her creativity she will be found creating quilts and cross-stitchings for her home and friends. Michelle is also looking forward to opening her own little knitting nook on Coventry someday... as soon as she wins the lottery.

For their well-deserved vacations, Mr. and Mrs. Dross fly to the Cayman Islands or Europe among other exciting spots. They are ready to share their recommendations of fine world restaurants with those who are interested.

Bruce Biddle





## Spotlight on The Heights Youth Center

The Heights Youth Center offers both conflict resolution intervention and facilitation as well as training community members as mediators. Since the focus of our agency has been youth and their families, our mediation program has been highly effective with this population.

Court filings in Cleveland Heights are among the highest in the suburbs. Working in collaboration with the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court we have provided training in basic mediation skills, advanced training, as well as intervention mediations for individuals, families and between gang members. Taking a holistic approach, we have been able to integrate much of this activity through the schools.

Since the summer of 1987 we have provided a format and curriculum approved by the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education that allows students .25 academic credit for basic mediation training and .25 academic credit for advanced training and teen panel membership. Training programs for youth at alternative sites within the school system have been provided.

More often than not families have also been involved in mediations after their child had been referred to the program. Mediations between parents as well as parent child have been successful in this program.

In 1991 we entered into a collaborative effort with the Cleveland Heights University Heights School System. The program goal was to train all ninth and tenth grade students

in basic mediation. Within a two year period students were trained, staff trained and integrated, a peer panel established in both school sites and parent support groups established.

Through this effort conflict resolution leaders have been established throughout the schools in Cleveland Heights. Peaceful resolution has become an alternative behavior for often violent resolution. Staff and students in the schools have assumed greater responsibility. With the empowerment of the school community, we are now looking towards expanding conflict resolution programming in the greater community. Community organizations as well as the Cleveland Heights Courts have approached us regarding referrals and training. We are looking forward to the establishment of neighborhood resolution panels within the community.

Saul Isler  
President, HYC

## Faces on Coventry **Elaine Irvin-Director** **Heights Youth Center**

Meet Elaine Irvin, a dynamic woman with a cause: to enable the youngsters of the community to deal with the problems which have been evolving and steadily intensifying in the last quarter of the twentieth century, and perhaps since the end of World War II. We now have an environment where the family is much less able to provide loving care, and instill discipline, and a sense of self worth and hope in children.

The Heights Youth Center is Elaine's field of operations. Though her office is at the back of Coventry Library, the primary center of activity is at Coventry school, where from 60 to 80 children come 5 afternoons a week. The children range in age from kindergarten to 6th grade. All are cared for in one large

room, much like old fashioned one-room schools. Elaine emphasized that this is not a baby sitting program, and that she cares about what happens after the child leaves the Youth Center environment.

Activities for children include arts and crafts, tutoring and helping kids fulfill their homework requirements. Tutors include one CWRU student and several interns who themselves have been served by the center. Anthony, who is now a young adult, came to the center at age 11 and has now become a staff member. Three teenagers and eight younger children also help Elaine carry out the programs. It is a system where everyone learns to handle responsibilities.

A special part of the Center's function is helping children learn conflict resolution. Elaine has written a curriculum on conflict mediation which has been adapted by the Cleveland Heights-University Heights school system. "More than one thousand people have been trained with that curriculum" she told me. The center serves a broad Heights community population, including one-parent families, and families with special needs.

In the summer the center runs a daylong program starting at 7:30 and ending at 6:30. Last year they served 90 kids, with 40 on the waiting list.

They have also started an adolescent counseling program. Counseling is carried on in a room connected to the Center office, located at the back of Coventry library. The adolescents counselled are referred by schools, other agencies or the police department. Elaine pointed out that results are often neither immediate, nor guaranteed. Those who work with these children must have inner convictions that they are performing a service whose worth is incalculable though possibly not measurable in the short term.

Elaine has been director of the Heights Youth Center for 12 years. The position started out as temporary. Her eclectic educational

background which includes transactional analysis, and non-profit organization management, serves her well to help her with the varied problems she faces in her position.

Every community needs a copy of Elaine Irwin. She is totally committed to the community, and we are fortunate that community happens to be Coventry. But the HYC includes not just Coventry but the Heights area as a whole. A branch of the Youth Center is now in operation in the Caledonia area, and operates at the Hope Lutheran Church.

Elaine would like to have the whole program in one facility, but that would add, perhaps \$12,000 a year to the current budget of \$140,000. The funds come from block grants, United Way, and income from a small Trust at the Cleveland Foundation. The latter is restricted, and at this time none of it is available for operations (rent, lights, supplies, etc.). Elaine is highly appreciative for the support received from the Coventry Merchants Association.

Anyone who would like to help make the world a better place to live in could start here. Send contributions either to the Heights Youth Center 1925 Coventry Road, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118, or the Cleveland Foundation Heights Youth Center Fund, 1400 Hannah Building, Cleveland, OH 44114. It will be money well applied.

Harry Cameron



BARRY & ELAINE IRVIN

## On The Street

Les Groynom is a familiar figure to many Coventry neighbors. Slender and soft-spoken, he has lived most of his 48 years in the Coventry neighborhood. For the past 11 years, his Vidstar Video Systems has anchored the corner of Lancashire and Coventry.

Les is probably the only business owner on Coventry who can claim to have grown up within earshot of the street. At age 8, he moved with his family to an apartment on Lancashire. He recalls playing Frisbee on the street directly in front of his present store, and drinking virgin "Tom Collins" at the soda fountain in Uberstein's drug store. (For those curious to try a "Tom Collins" try mixing 7-Up and a squirt of cherry syrup.) Uberstein's occupied the corner that is now Hunan Coventry.

Les' first job was as a pin setter (10¢ a game) at the Coventry Lanes, now occupied by Dobama. Les eventually started his own family, and has lived variously on Desota, Bellfield, Hampshire, and Coventry. His three high-school and college age children help out in Vidstar on their school breaks.

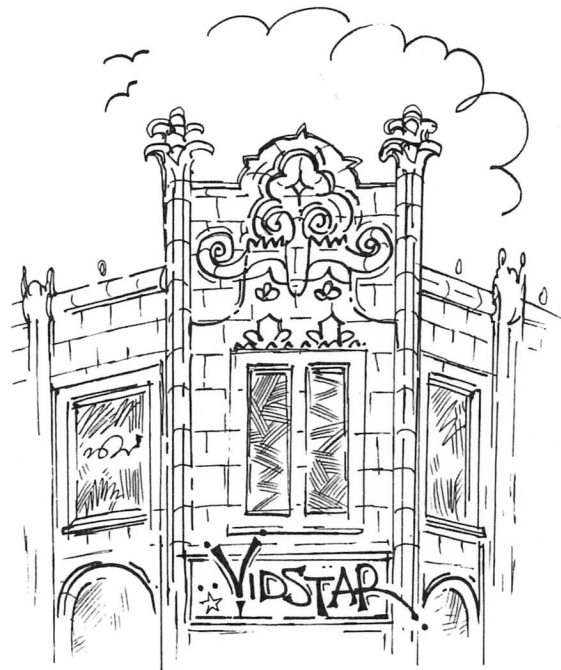
His children, in fact, gave Les his first introduction to the video world. They were fascinated with Atari and other TV-based video games, and Les recognized the growing demand for a neighborhood video outlet. He took over the space previously occupied by the Inuit Gallery. For those with a good memory, the space has also been a "Gap" store. Vidstar is a valuable asset to the neighborhood. Les will order those hard-to-find titles that the chain video store doesn't stock, and he has an extensive children and adult section.

Les has taken an active role over the years in guiding and shaping the Coventry commercial scene, as a member of the Coventry Merchants Association, and as the present president of the CVDC. He is generally upbeat about the commercial district. He sees a trend of more stable,

successful merchants and thinks the future looks bright for the residential district as well. He credits the many concerned merchants working closely with the City Planning Commission for this bright prospect.

With his unique background and perspective, Les is a valuable, active asset to our Coventry Neighborhood.

Michael Madorsky



## Library News

### **Senior Tax Counseling**

If you are 60 years of age or older you can get help with your basic income tax forms from the CH-UH library.

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) again will provide free tax counseling at our CH-UH libraries from February 1 to April 15. An appointment is necessary. The service is for basic taxes only. Appointments may be made beginning January 18. Call the following numbers for an appointment:

Main Library 932-3600

Tuesdays 2/1 to 4/12

Coventry Branch 321-3400

Every other Saturday, 2/12 to 4/9

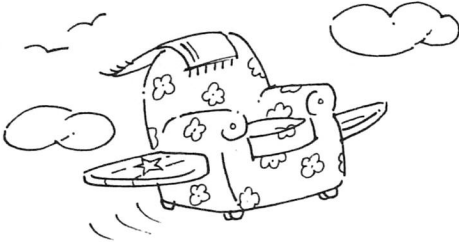
### Whose Dream Is It Anyway?

Everette J. Freeman will lead a discussion of diversity for adults on Thursday, Feb. 3 at 7 pm. This mediation is held in recognition of Black History Month. Call 321-3400 to register.

### Armchair Travel

Tour the world from the comfort of the Coventry Library at 7 pm on the third Thursday of the month. Travel to "Alaska" with Nancy Rozell on February 17. Winifred Dean will take you "Bicycling Across Ireland" on March 17. Al and Marilyn Enlow will take you on a "Moorish Montage: Spain, Portugal, Morocco" on April 21.

Shony Long, Librarian



### Summary of 12/14/93 Meeting

CVDC Report: Deli Delicious (next to Trapazoid) is closed. It will reopen as Apple Deli under new ownership. It will offer salads and other prepared foods as well as pizza by the slice. Pizzeria Uno will begin work (?) (open?) by February. The space over Centrum will open as BW3, specializing in Buffalo Wings. They will have a wide screen TV. Turkey Ridge restaurant is shedding its old image. In addition to a decor face lift there will be a new chef and menu.

City: Julie Alandt reports the ice show held at the Pavilion was fabulous. This event is held every 3 years, but because of turnout (capacity or over capacity for all 3 shows) the city is considering holding it every two years. Julie also reports that Community Relations and Planning are working

intensively with the North Coventry area. Phyllis Evans, council person, reports that the garage is progressing on schedule and should be open the end of January; plans have been submitted for a new Zipkin building (the Pit) and optimistically we may see a ground breaking in March. Also the building that houses the little deli on Mayfield and Shear Illusions got an exterior renovation of tiles (and looks charming). Nothing new on the Taj Mahal... planning would like to see an effort there that goes beyond just repairs.

### Old Business:

Les Groynom reported that he is pursuing a wider interest base to tackle upgrading the Heights High Auditorium. He will keep us informed.

### New Business:

A letter was presented from June Wortman that asked Coventry Neighbors to support the Heights Youth Center. Four alternatives were suggested. After discussion it was decided that at this time no monetary support can be offered but that we will feature the HYC in our next news letter.

The puzzle of CNI's non-profit status was discussed. We are currently listed as a foundation rather than a public charity. As such we can be approached for money but not request it ourselves. Maryanne Rodewald reports we are filing this way because it is what the IRS insisted on (when we held the street fair and made lots of money our filings with the IRS became problematic). Bob Klemenc will be investigating.

A membership in the Cuyahoga Tenants Organization, which holds weekly meeting in the Unitarian Church, was voted in unanimously due to their sending Coventry Neighbors' a membership check. This membership will keep us informed about tenant and landlord rights and regulations so that we can in turn inform our membership. The meeting adjourned at 9:00.

Other News

♣ Connie Schult Gard, a Cleveland Heights resident who is a free lance writer, published an article in the Chicago Tribune (12/8/93) about building the Coventry PEACE playground. It is too long to duplicate but a copy will be available at Coventry Library. It's worth reading, funny and warm.

♣ Coventry PEACE recently produced a video about the process of playground planning, fund raising, and building. It is surprisingly skillfully done (it is a non-professional effort) and a delight to watch, unpretentious, fresh, witty, and informative. Copies are for sale. Kudos to Chris Hagan.

♣ Congratulations to Tommys' Restaurant and Centrum Theater for winning 1993 Cleveland Heights Community Improvement awards.

♣ Congratulations to the Cleveland Heights Planning and Development Department for winning an Award of Excellence for Program Innovation (for the redevelopment of Coventry Village) from the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials.

♣ January 11th Coventry Neighbors meeting will hold a 15 minute fellowship get-together preceding the business meeting. Cookies and tea will be served. (We'd love to have you join us).

*Coventry Village News* is published by Coventry Neighbors, Inc. The newsletter is distributed free throughout Coventry Village. Mailed subscriptions are available (see last page).

**Editor:** Bruce Biddle

**Editorial Board:** Elsa Johnson, Bob Klemenc, Mary Ann Rodewald, Laura Hong

**Editorial Policy:** It is our intent to make *Coventry Village News* a reflection of the diversity of Coventry with a focus on people. We hope that our editorials foster discussion of important community issues. Our editorials represent the consensus of our editorial board and are intended to represent the views of Coventry Neighbors.

*CNI exists for the residents of Coventry Village. It needs your involvement and input. If there are neighborhood issues that concern you we urge you to bring them to CNI.*

*We welcome your input. CNI can serve as a social, political, or community action organization. It's up to you! This is your neighborhood, get involved*

**How to reach us:** If you can't come to the monthly meetings send a letter to:

Coventry Neighbors Inc.

[REDACTED]  
Cleveland Hts., Ohio 44106

or

Coventry Village News  
Bruce Biddle, Editor

[REDACTED]  
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

Regular meetings of Coventry Neighbors, Inc. are held on the second Tuesday of every month at 7:40 p.m. at the Coventry Village Library, Euclid Heights Blvd. & Coventry Rd. When you join Coventry Neighbors, Inc. you can be sure of having a voice in shaping your neighborhood's future. Membership includes a subscription to the Coventry Village News.

Indicate the kind of membership you desire and complete the form:

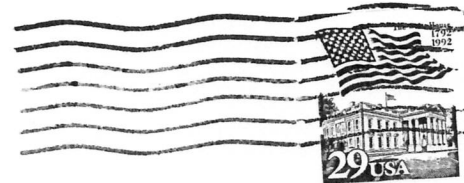
Individual (\$7.50)     Family (\$10.00)     Senior Citizen (\$5.00)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form with your check to: COVENTRY NEIGHBORS, INC.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44106



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Coventry Village News  
c/o Heights Community Congress  
2163 Lee Road  
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

Jeffery Dross  
Michele Ladouceur  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Cleveland Hts. OH 44118