

Coventry Village News

The Newsletter of Coventry Neighbors Inc.

September, 94

From the President's Pen

As Always at this time of year I've got the end-of-the-summer Blues. I'm bored with my ordinary work ... but I can't scare up the motivation to tackle new



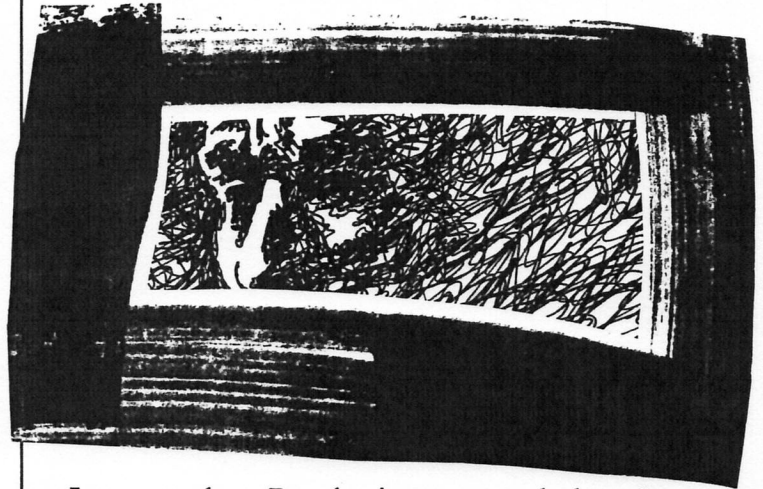
interests. I feel harried to find time at the same time that time hangs heavy on my hands. It's as though the world (my world) took a giant breath... and held it. I sense opportunities flying by. Meanwhile I feel mired in molasses. I'm at the pessimistic end of my personal pendulum swing, and my mood is dark.

The one thing (no small thing) that has weighed heavily on me all year is man's cruelty to man. The more horrific it is, the more unable I am to understand it. I can understand, for example (though I do not condone) the murderous effects of flash-point blind rage, simmering obsessive jealousy, resentful self pity, drug use, or greed married to laziness... on the small scale of one individual toward another. I can understand the processes by which individuals make lethal choices which harm other individuals. What I cannot comprehend is the processes by which murder happens on a large scale, in which neighbor turns against neighbor to commit the sorts of atrocities we read about daily, in Bosnia, in Rwanda. How can human beings commit these calculated rapes?... these planned massacres?... these cold blooded intimidation's and killings of innocent targets? Do I detect a really appalling human capacity to enjoy doing these things? I'm afraid I do.

If these were isolated incidents in the course of human history you and I could think them some passing madness of our time. But they are not isolated incidents. They are merely our freshest

manifestations of a really nasty and enduring facet of human capability. In this century we also must list the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, the Red Guard in China, Stalin in Russia, Hitler in Germany, the Spanish Civil War, etc., etc., through the decades. Further back we have the Slave Trade, the decimation of the Native populations of the "New World," the Inquisitions of the late Middle Ages, etc., etc., through the centuries. And while it is easiest to track these bloodthirsty manifestations in those cultures which early possessed written rather than oral histories there is hardly a nation, race, tribe, religion, or culture which has not at one time or another practiced mass extermination to get what they wanted.

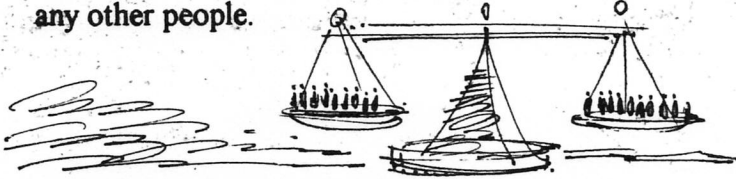
Are you and I so very different from the people of Bosnia, or Rwanda? I think not. Whatever they are capable of, we are capable of. (Isn't that a chilling thought!).



I accept that. But having accepted that, I am no closer to understanding what processes of human thinking allow people to plan, carry out, enjoy, and justify such mayhem. What protects you and me from that bloodthirsty aspect of our own human natures in this most diverse of nations?

We are not at each other's throats.

Yet, there is no room to be self-satisfied... for there is anger and resentment aplenty in this country; and there is polarization aplenty in this country... on almost every major issue you'd care to mention. We must not fool ourselves into thinking it could never happen here when we are as capable of such evil as any other people.



Part of our safety, I'd offer, lies in our constitution, which guarantees to all of us equal treatment under the law, and even though the application of that principle is imperfect, the principle is important.

Another part of our safety, I believe, lies in our system of government with its checks and balances between the Executive, the Legislative, and the Judicial branches, for while this slows down the wheels of needed change, it does prevent the usurpation and consolidation of power by any one person or group.

Also important is the subordination of the military to more than one branch of government. This makes the military responsible to the will of the nation. I'm grateful, therefore, to be a citizen of this nation... despite the great problems we have.

But our biggest protection, I think, lies with each of us remembering that our full range of capacities as a human beings includes not just our beneficent capacities (for kindness, community, creativity, and productivity)... but also our capacities for intolerance, hate, destructiveness and horror. Our real safety lies in us, as individuals, not allowing ourselves to become too sure, too rigid, too comfortable... in our beliefs, our value systems, our rationalizations of history, and above all, ourselves. To me, a degree of discomfort is plainly good.

Excuse me, dear readers, for such a gloomy newsletter.

Your Coventry Neighbors President for 94
Elsa Johnson

A New Friend Lost

I made a new friend last month with one of our Coventry neighbors. He moved to Cleveland Heights 75 years ago and was anxious to tell me about the history of our neighborhood. He told me the story of a five year old boy and his father visiting the site of their future home, watching a team of horses scoop out the earth where a foundation would be built. He told me of the exciting bustle of activity and the constant sound of hammers while our village was growing. He recalled growth so quick that three years after completion the old Coventry school ran out of space. Portable classroom buildings were set up along wooden plank paths behind the original structure and a new wing was planned.

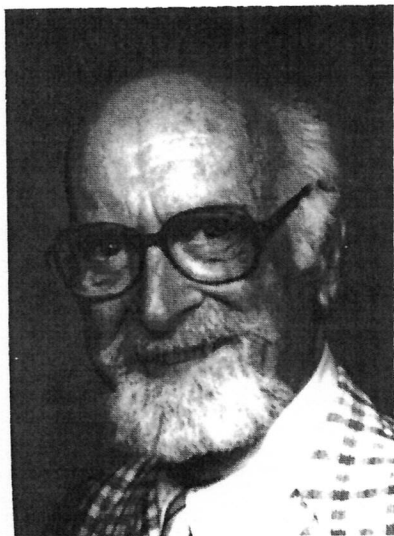
He recalled shooting marbles in the playground, crawling through an open culvert under Euclid Heights Blvd. and playing in the adjoining ravine.



He told me that before there was a library at Coventry and Washington, Coventry Elementary School teacher, Mr. Schweigert supervised the children with growing a vegetable garden. Once construction had started the garden and Mr. Schweigert moved to a vacant space currently occupied by Cumberland Pool.

My new friend returned to Coventry 20 years ago to care for his aging mother, still living in the same house he watched being built. He was very proud of the history of Lincoln Blvd. and the role his mother played in the Lincoln Boulevard Ladies Club. Before their new house was built on this quiet hidden street the ladies club was formed to knit socks and provide humanitarian support for the neighborhood men fighting in World War I. After the war it turned into a street club and now holds the distinction of being the oldest continuous street club in Cleveland Heights. His mother served in many capacities including president during the life span of her membership. As a youngster, he was also involved. It was his responsibility to visit the NEW Coventry library and find a suitable one-act play for the women to read at the monthly meeting.

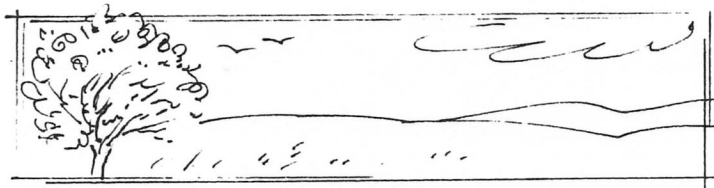
My friend told me about schoolmates with influential fathers (editor of the Plain Dealer, president of Western Reserve University and president of the Cleveland Community Fund, predecessor to the United Way). He told me about Saturday serials and weekend dates at the Height Theater, attending Roosevelt Junior High (located at the current site of Boulevard Magnet Elementary School), playing oboe and watching football at the new Heights High School and meeting Frank Cain, Cleveland Heights city manager at the opening of the new City Hall and fire station. We could have talked forever, (he talked, I eagerly listened) but time was flying and there was always another day.



Shortly after I completed my original "Meet your Neighbor" article I read in the Plain Dealer that my new friend, Allan Stern has died. I would never hear the other stories he knew about our neighborhood's beginning. In the obituary I learned about Mr. Stern's business acumen and his personal achievements. He never told me of his successes, he was too interested in telling us something of our history. He felt it was important to send this information from generation to generation. He was eager for this to appear in our newsletter.

Allan Stern is no longer one of our Coventry Neighbors, but the story of his presence will remain a part of our heritage. Life has made room for a new five year old boy who'll soon reminisce about his father peeling 75 year old wall paper off the walls of their beautiful old house in our vibrant neighborhood.

Jeffrey R. Dross



Condolences

Coventry Neighbors extends sympathy and condolences to Alan Stern's wife Enid and their family. Mr. Stern, a long time Coventry resident and new member, attended the July meeting and we were looking forward to his participation future meetings.

Coventry Neighbors extends sympathy and condolences to long time Coventry Neighbors supporter Lou Zipkin on the loss of his mother.

Coventry Neighbors extends sympathy and condolences to Coventry Neighbors President Elsa Johnson on the loss of her mother.

Congratulations

To Joanne Seigel and Walter Thiem on the birth of their son Eric.

To Judy and Russ Rosen on the birth of their son Andrew (Drew).

August Picnic

Coventry Neighbors held a pot luck picnic in August for all members and guests who had attended a meeting in the last year. Although the weather was unseasonably chilly (it felt more like October) the turn out was satisfying and the group enjoyed a couple hours of camaraderie without an agenda.

The food was wonderful, and ranged from sushi to warm casseroles to birthday cake. The general consensus was that the event was worth repeating next year, though hopefully with better weather.

September Meeting

Two major areas of business will come up in September... nominations for officers for the coming year ('95), and membership renewal. We will take care of this business promptly. Then we will present a guest speaker. Eric Silverman will speak on the state of Cleveland Heights Schools. After his talk there will be a period for public questions and debate. Refreshments will be served. Please Come.



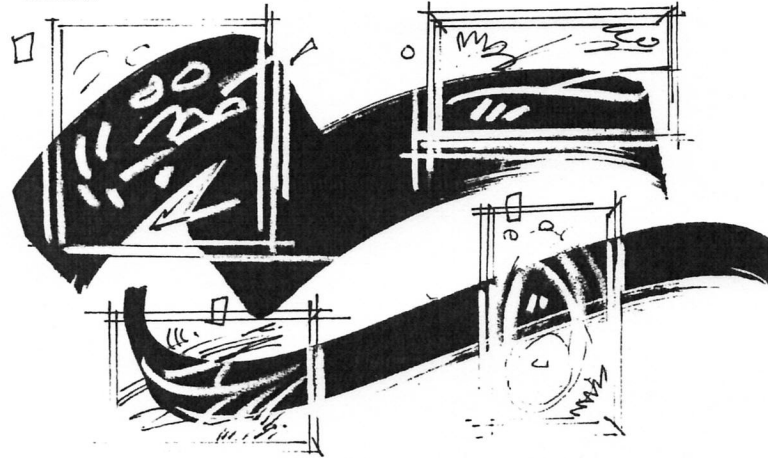
Remember, you must be a paid-up member to vote at the October meeting. If your last dues payment was before 10/93 you won't have a vote in the elections. This newsletter is mailed to all active (paid-up) members, recently inactive members (no dues paid for a year), selected organizations, and recent visitors to CNI. If you received this newsletter in the mail you can find your membership status on the mailing label. The month/year printed in the upper right corner of the mailing label is your last recorded date of your dues payment. If this date is incorrect please let one of the officers know. We will correct it immediately. If the date is older than 10/93 please send in your dues payment right away.



Profiles on Coventry by June Wortman

How to capture the essence of this vibrant and complex woman in a short profile? Impossible.

Recently evicted by her landlord from the duplex on West Hampshire, Joy Marshall rented the place next door, and not only fixed it all up inside, but, with the help of friends, moved her entire garden. They did it in one day, in the pouring rain, then feasted on bread, black bean salad and other home made foods from Joy's kitchen. All this while she worked the night-shift at University Hospitals as a resident in Family Medicine, and days as a medical director of the Free Clinic.



Joy crams many identities and interests into a day that would, for most of us, be three days. She has four daughters. Lor, 24, graduated from University of Wisconsin, and is applying to university of Chicago for graduate work in Latin-American studies. Clementine, 21 apprentices in stone cutting, hopes to study in Greece and, on return, to work on the renovation of St. John Cathedral in New York; her goal is sculpturing. Calen, 15, is in 10th grade at Heights High, receives awards for her writing talent, and participates in "Free Your Mind," a peer discussion group at Safespace. Lisa, 9, begins 4th grade at Coventry School. All of them are artists, their works beautifully displayed in Joy's home.

Besides raising her family, Joy has worked for years in the Coventry area – her employment history being Coventry history. In the 60's she started the first

restaurant (no name - just "That French Restaurant") at the site later occupied by Tous Le Monde, then Chester's, the Turkey Ridge Tavern, now, The Pepper Ridge Tavern. She has cooked at all of them. She also waitressed at Irvs and was specialty cook at Nighttown. During all of this she managed to put herself through medical school!



What does she do for fun and R&R? She roller blades regularly - a 27 mile route down-town, to Shaker Square, to Borders and to Cafe Brio. She runs 5-6 miles a day - five days a week. She makes gallons of home made jam and bread. She reads, Edward Galiano, Cartera, Jack Black, McCoy (The Politics of Heroin), the books of Trollop. Reading counters the stress and keeps her alive. And she gardens, flowers and "found art objects" in the front, and plans for currant bushes and vegetables in the back next year.

Joy Marshall loves life and lives "with gusto." A life that exhausts me to hear about provides self-propulsion, excitement, outlets for compassionate care, challenge, and an intense involvement in her family, her community and The World.

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Editor: Bruce Biddle

Editorial Board: Elsa Johnson, Bob Klemenc, Mary Ann Rodewald

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.

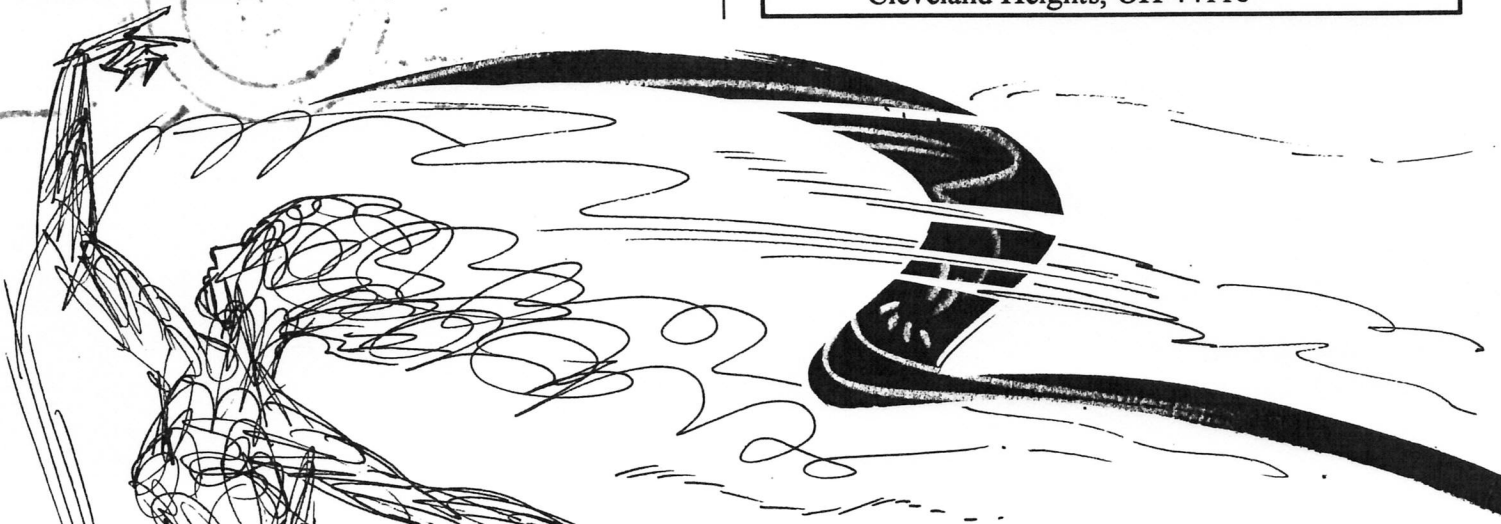
CNI exists for the residents of Coventry Village. It needs your involvement and input. If there are neighborhood issues that concern you we urge you to bring them to CNI. We welcome your input. CNI can serve as a social, political, or community action organization. It's up to you! This is your neighborhood, get involved

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

Coventry Neighbors Inc.
c/o Elsa Johnson, President
██████████
Cleveland Hts., Ohio 44118

or

Coventry Village News
Bruce Biddle, Editor
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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:

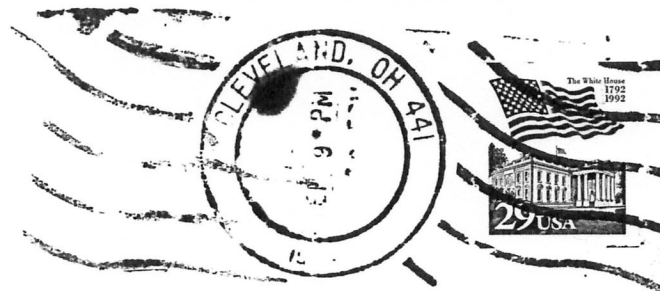
Individual (\$7.50) Family (\$10.00) Senior Citizen (\$5.00)

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11/93

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