

Coventry Village News

The Newsletter of Coventry Neighbors Inc.

January, 95

Thoughts on Our Community and the Coventry Neighborhood

The community is the basic building block of any society. In a democratic society it is an arena in which the voice of the individual can be heard. Most of us belong to many communities, such as our neighborhood community, a social circle of friends of which we can be active and express ourselves, local political organizations, and others.

The world we live in is not a benign place. Conflict is in the nature of the human species because self interest predominates in the individual as well as in groups, i.e., communities. Only to the extent that group interest can be identified with self interest can the group voice become strong and powerful.

It is important to explicitly recognize the great role that our communities play in the welfare and well-being of each person. The other way around the community depends on the strength and commitment of its members.

The people who have been active in the Coventry Neighbors have been trying to enhance the community spirit in our Coventry area. To some extent we have succeeded: We have built bridges to commercial establishments, Coventry School, Heights Youth center, and City Hall. The community representative of City Hall and often a City Council person attend our meetings, so that information on our area's developments, planned or unplanned are communicated to us in a timely manner.

We have been involved in the way the garage on Coventry was designed and placed. We have also been involved, along with many others from different areas, in the building of the Coventry Peace playground.

A bimonthly newsletter goes out to our members. It is also distributed to the community at large through

placement in the library and various other public places.

Where we have not succeeded is in drawing more neighbors, members, or not, to our monthly meetings. We are committed to making these meetings more interesting and informative. We plan to have speakers, so that the business part of the meeting does not take up the whole 1 1/2 hours we have available.

So if you live in the Coventry area, or its adjacent or close-by streets, come and join us on Tuesday, January 10th at 7:30 PM at the Coventry Library meeting room. Hear what is going on in the neighborhood and add your viewpoint of what you like to see happen.

Please put that date and time on your calendar. If you can't come in January, meetings are held at that time on the second Tuesday of each month.

Harry Cameron

Profiles on Coventry

Coventry School has certainly changed since I was a parent and PTA co-president twenty years ago. Most striking is the welcoming of parents in the classroom as regular teacher helpers, not only as "Room Mothers." Also notable is the "special person" evening activities, such as the Family Read-In in March, when parents and children each bring a book to read. There is "Celebrity" Night, when people such as Tommy Fello, Rev. Otis Moss, and officer Bryan Whitman come to read. Officer Bryan also has lunch with the children on Wednesdays. Elderly citizens as well as parents bring their skills to the classes. One man teaches chess to third-graders; others help with math, the arts, writing -- you name it.

There are also school/community times. The children take tours to Coventry enterprises: going back stage at Dobama; learning about coffee growing and



brewing at Arabica; learning about the history of old toys and such at Big Fun. Supported by PTA, two classes have a residency with Dobama on a continuing basis. There is skiing day for the fourth and fifth grades at Boston Mills, riding on the PTA funded bus (with parents invited). The children were also consulted about their own environment -- what did they want on the playground?



In other respects Coventry School is like it was in my day -- 505 students (formerly 420), the best integrated of the schools, the highest yearly turnover (one third of the students leave and are replaced by new arrivals). Coventry is still a little United Nations.

What has changed is the principal, Linda Gay. It was hard to start our interview because so many children claimed her friendly attention. It was hard to end the interview because of her boundless, friendly and contagious enthusiasm. One sees her personal and welcoming approach to children, parents and community in every aspect.

Mrs. Gay has been an educator for 22 years. Born in Cleveland, she attended Glenville High School, and Bowling Green State University, and received her masters in education at CWRU. She is married, has two children age 6 and 15. Her family is close knit and supportive. She taught in second, fourth, and sixth grades for 11 years. She became an administrator and curriculum specialist for the East Cleveland School System. She became principal at Coventry in 1988, when her son was 3 years old. Not surprisingly she uses her "personal time" to enjoy quiet, especially reading. She would like to travel more.

Mrs. Gay's goal is to have school be a place of learning and joy. She feels greatly rewarded by the support of the children, staff and community. Her stories about the planning of the Coventry Peace Playground are full of human details about all the people who helped, and show her astute use of rewards, "the carrot," to induce children to be active themselves and involve their parents in helping with all school projects. She has a talent for improvising, for persevering, and for encouraging others to do so. A constant is her use of all situations to involve the children in learning about the world in new ways. Mothers helping build the playground functioned in different roles, and she noticed that the children noticed. Construction workers, rained out of their work on the Coventry Parking Garage came over to help build the playground -- a lesson to children about making use of time and caring. While Mrs. Gay did not make it all happen her way with people, her friendliness and creative ways of encouraging active involvement of all ages set the stage that makes possible unlimited cooperative community effort.

I have only scratched the surface in this profile. So much is going on in Coventry School. Mrs. Gay is a spellbinding storyteller -- stories of real magic, of real transformation, of bringing about the best in everyone. If Coventry Neighbors does not invite her to speak at one of our meetings, the loss is ours. She has stories of effort and hope to tell -- and we all should hear them. With Mrs. Gay here, the world is definitely not "going to hell in a hand basket" despite reports to the contrary.

June Wortman

December's Meeting

The world won't stop spinning if you skip a monthly meeting of Coventry Neighbors, but you may miss out on news of your neighborhood and community.

In December, the group:

- Voted to intervene on behalf of the Heights Youth Center. CNI sent a letter to the CH/UH Board of Ed. asking that the after-school

program be allowed to use the school space rent free. The board was also asked to absolve the center of past debt.

- Heard reports from committees formed to promote membership, produce the newsletter, raise funds and provide for better public relations. You should expect to hear of some fun and exciting neighborhood activities in the coming months.
- Received a briefing on city activity from Council Person Bonnie Caplan. In addition to allocating \$28,000,000 budget, the council has been reviewing a proposal that will revamp Severance mall, and they are working on legislation to allow loose dogs that bite to be detained in a kennel. City council also honored students from area high schools, including the state track champions from Beaumont, the citywide football champs from St. Ann's, and the national merit scholarship winners from Cleveland Heights High School. Heights High had more national merit finalist than any other school in Ohio.

Coventry Walking Tour/Calendar

During 1995, Coventry Neighbors will be working on a Historical Calendar/Walking Tour for 1996. The calendar will concentrate on any significant site, building, or house within the Coventry Neighbors boundaries (see map below). We are very interested in any piece of history you may have. Please check your attics for old pictures, letters, diaries, catalogues, pamphlets, records, etc. We are even interested in "stories" you may have heard about the area or the history of your own house. If you feel you have anything of interest please send copies, or listings, or a request for a personal meeting to review your articles to the following address:

Coventry Neighbors Calendar
1836 Cadwell Avenue
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118

Also, if you are an artist, photographer, writer, etc., and are interested in working with us on the calendar, please send you name, address and phone number with a description of the particular media or talents you would like to contribute.

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,

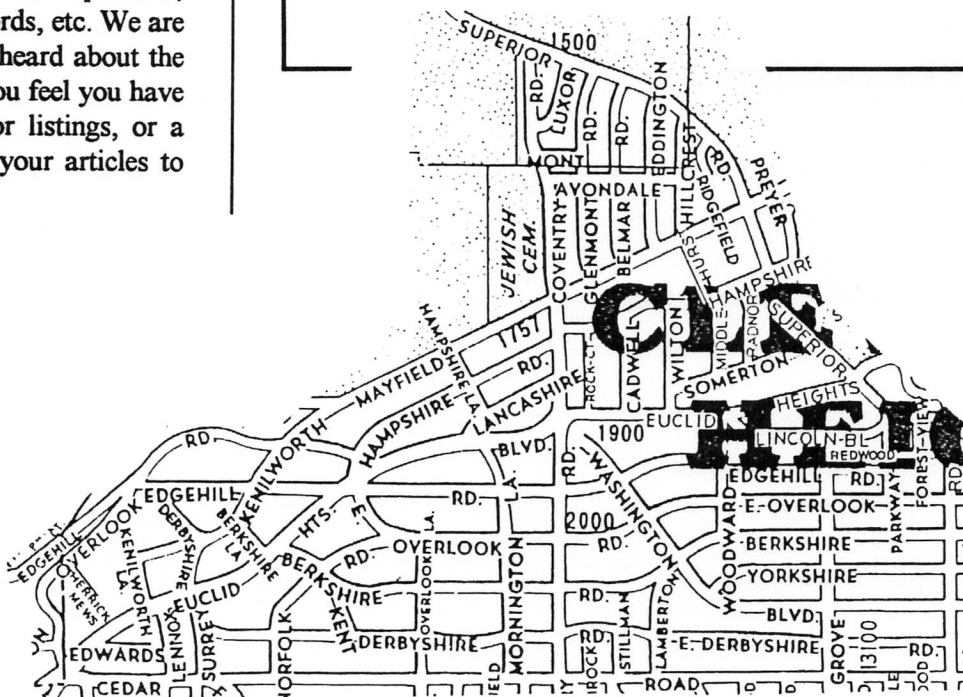
Editorial Policy: It is our intent to make *Coventry Village News* a reflection of the diversity of Coventry with a focus on people. We hope that our editorials foster discussion of important community issues. Our editorials represent the consensus of our editorial board and are intended to represent 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.	Coventry Village News
c/o Elsa Johnson, President	Bruce Biddle, Editor
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Cleveland Hts., Ohio 44118	Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

or



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.

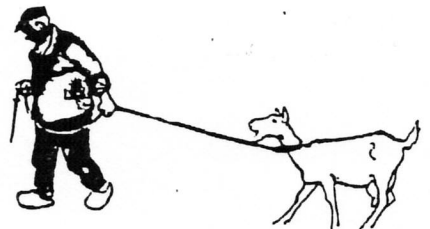
Indicate the kind of membership you desire and complete the form:

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

NAME _____ Phone _____

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Please return this form with your check to: **COVENTRY NEIGHBORS, INC.**
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c/o Bruce Biddle, Editor

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