

March/April, 1996

COVENTRY VILLAGE NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF COVENTRY NEIGHBORS INC.

From the President's Pen

When I first heard that Elsa Johnson would not seek another term as president of Coventry Neighbors I was as surprised as many of you. She has always been a tireless worker and a consistent source of new ideas. I suppose I assumed that she would continue

heading our organization for many years. When Elsa and the board asked me if I would consider a nomination as her replacement I was even more shocked. I felt I was a peculiar choice. My wife and I have often been the contrary voice, arguing against the quorum on

a number of issues. I have always felt connected, but not one-of the gang. The office of vice-president was perfect for me. Increasing demands of my job fit perfectly with the minor duties as vice-president (think of the last thing Al Gore did) and chairman of the "Beautiful Place" sub-committee. My first reaction was to ask, "Isn't there someone else who would like to do this?" As some of you know there are not a lot of active members at each meeting. I guess I knew the answer before the question came off my tongue.

A few weeks after the election I received a call from a reporter for the Sun Newspaper. He wanted to know what I hoped to do as the new president of Coventry Neighbors. I explained that we were a small organization that represented the interests of renters and homeowners who lived in the Coventry neighborhood. Because of peaceful times, we have only a few issues which occupy our time. He asked me, "why the change in leadership," and "what has

happened in the past?" When I read his article a few weeks later I found that in his talk with Elsa, he asked her many of the same questions I answered, and most of Elsa's quoted comments mimicked my statements exactly. After reading what we both said I became more comfortable with my newly elected position. I was not a mole who had ferreted my way to the inner circle of "Elsa's Gang." I, like she, am a member of something bigger, sometimes disagreeing, usually agreeing, but always working toward the betterment of our neighborhood.

Sixteen years ago, at the age of twenty-four I ran for a seat on the Maple Heights, Ohio city council. I really didn't expect to win, instead I hoped to get people interested in the process. I became a deputy registrar of the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections and I visited every house (even those without registered voters) in the district, determined to get a vote, register a voter or agitate someone enough to vote against me. My experiment failed. The primary was a victim of low voter turnout and a small group placed me third in a three horse race. I was disappointed with the outcome, but I was taught a valuable lesson on the realities of electoral participation. I would like to visit every house in Coventry and personally invite everyone residing here to become members of Coventry Neighbors, Inc., but in truth, it would probably be as successful as my 1979 council campaign. Instead, I'll tell you about a typical meeting.

We always start with a self introduction so that everyone knows your name and what part of Coventry you call home. This is usually followed by a report from our treasurer, Bob Klemenc (just a few minutes). Someone from the library, usually Shoney



Long tells us what's going on at the Coventry branch. If someone from the Coventry Merchants Association, Coventry P.E.A.C.E. or C.V.D.C. (Coventry Village Development Corporation) is in attendance they will usually give us a status report on their organization. Occasionally, someone attends who represents a new or different group. We always extend the courtesy of offering them the floor. Julie Alandt, Cleveland Heights community relations coordinator for the Coventry area tells us what is happening in the city, Council member Bonnie Caplan (or occasionally a different member of council) keeps us informed of the councils activities. These are all very informal presentations. Questions are freely asked and answered. Everyone is always willing to help. Last year we had guest speakers at about five meetings, we hope to continue this pattern in 1996 (once we return to our usual meeting place in the newly refurbished Coventry library). Finally, we discuss Coventry Neighbor's issues. Last year we created and sold Coventry tee-shirts and calendars and developed a plan for the Coventry-Euclid Hts. Blvd. commons area. The meetings start at 7:45 PM and end at about 9:00 PM on the second Tuesday of every month. We're a nice group of people and we're easy to get along with. Please consider coming to our next meeting. They're interesting, informative and sometimes fun.

Finally, let me thank you for your trust and support as I work for this organization in 1996, but more importantly, let us all thank Elsa Johnson for her dedicated (and continuing) hard work in the name of Coventry Neighbors, Inc. She has provided thoughtful leadership at a very difficult time in our organization's history and we should all be grateful for her efforts.

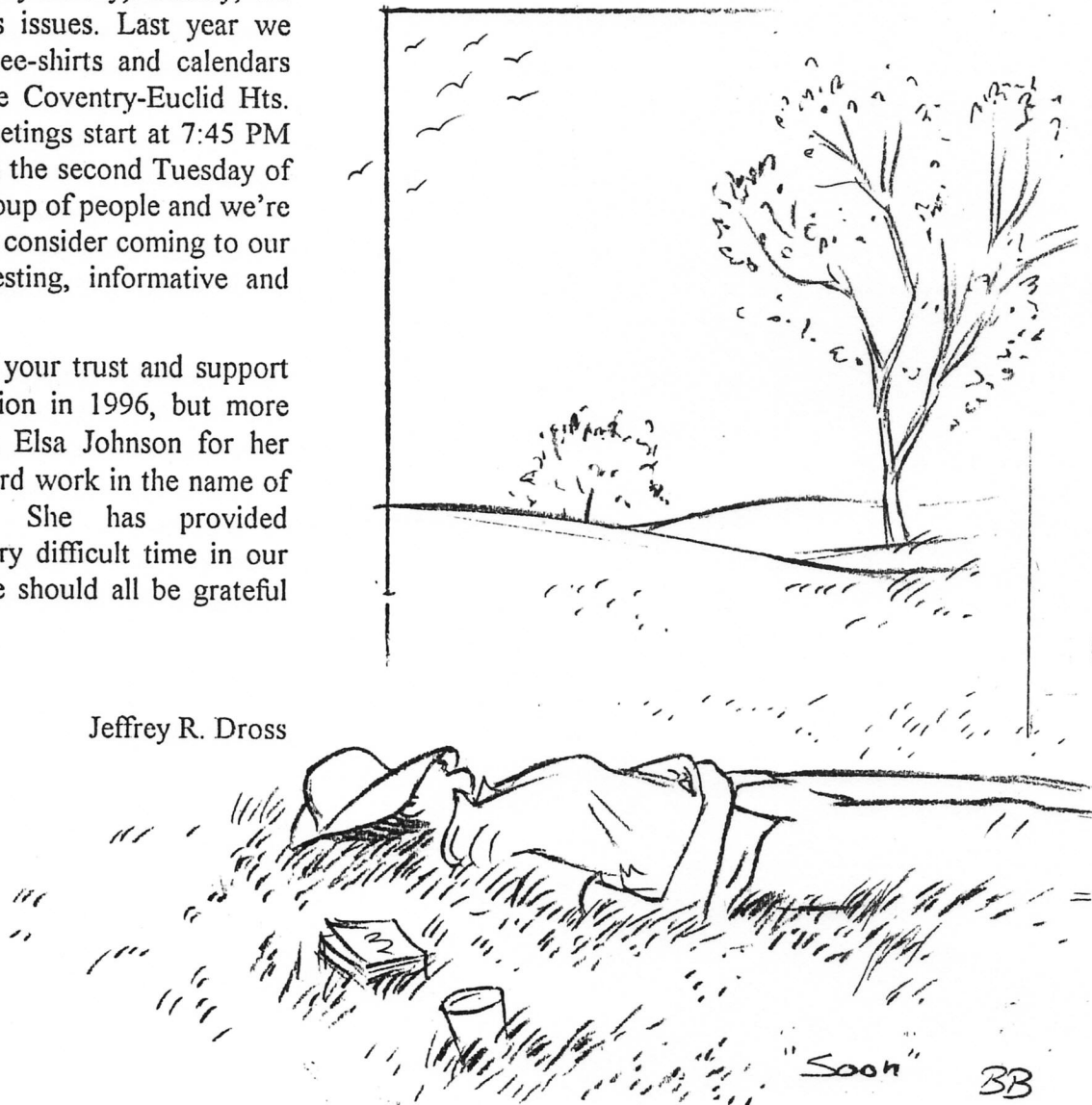
See you at the next meeting!

Jeffrey R. Dross

Rental Rights Information in Cleveland Heights

Landlords and tenants in Cleveland Height can get free information about their rights and duties under the Ohio Landlord Tenant Law every Wednesday evening from 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM at the Unitarian Society, 2728 Lancashire Road in Cleveland Heights. Staff of the CTO Rental Information Center will be on hand to provide individual consultation on such issues as getting repairs, terminating rental agreements and returning security deposits.

Rental rights information in Cleveland Heights is supported by a grant form the City of Cleveland Heights, Community Development Block Grant program. for more information, call 621-0621-0540 or the Rental Housing Hotline at 363-5290.



Neighborhood Notes

From our January meeting:

Our old friend and long time Coventry Neighbor Shony Long has been transferred to the Noble library. This is a sudden switch. One wonders how Shony is making the adjustment... it used to be so easy for her to stroll out her door and down the street to her job at Coventry Library. We hope she likes her new position and we hope she is as well liked there as she was here.

Pat Carterette is now acting as library manager and attended our February meeting. She reported that the new circulation desk is not in operation. She says it looks a bit like Pizza Hut, but imagines we'll all get used to it. Most walls are painted. A new reference desk has been specially built to make finding and using reference materials easier. Pat Carterette also reports that Coventry is going to be known for being an electronic reference library. There will be public training sessions. There may be a special C.N.I. tour and training session... we'll let you know.

Other library news is that the "new" Coventry Library has big plans for children. One new program will be a family story time. The Library also plans to work with the Youth Center on an after school program.

There will be an open house - mark it on your Coventry Neighbors Calendar - for the public on April 21, a Sunday.

At the Main Cleveland Heights Library check out the Japanese Experience (during World War II) exhibit.

Coventry Neighbors sold all the 1996 calendars. Thanks to all of you who bought one. Next years is already in the planning stage. We do need photographs of houses in the chosen area. If you think you're good with a camera, get in touch with Robin VanDevender (321-1178).

The March meeting will again be held at Tommy's; it will probably be the last meeting held there before we

return to the Coventry Library meeting room. Tommy has been extremely gracious and generous in allowing us to use his upstairs meeting room. We're grateful. Thanks Tommy.

The city reports that the vacant lot on the corner of Derbyshire (Kensington) and Euclid Heights Boulevard has been zoned for use as a park. The city had hoped to develop this site for low rise multi-family residential use, but in meetings to present ideas to the neighborhood, no one wanted to see the site developed as anything but green space. The city acquiesced to community wishes. The park will be developed through the Ohio State Extension Service with community involvement.

The city is working with several commercial districts - Coventry is one; Cedar Lee another - to develop Special Investment Districts. This is a necessary step that must be taken to continue street cleaning services and fund each district's development corporation. The city wishes these to become self sufficient. Federal block grant funds have been drastically cut and there is great demand for such dollars as there are. A Special Investment District would provide each district with more freedom and more dollars, and remove the districts from dependency on the City.

The last school levy lasted three years but has no run out. There will be a 9.5% replacement school levy on the ballot at the next election.

The city has not gotten far yet in its plans for improvements to the Recreation Pavilion. There has been a lot of community input.

Kaiser Permanete will build at Severance.

Coventry Village News is published by Coventry Neighbors, Inc. The newsletter is distributed free throughout Coventry Village. Mailed subscriptions are available. Meetings 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.

Editor: Bruce Biddle

Editorial Board: Jeff Dross, Elsa Johnson, Bob Klemenc

How to reach us: You may contact us by mail at:

Coventry Neighbors Inc. or Coventry Village News

c/o Jeff Dross, President c/o Bruce Biddle, Editor

[Redacted]

Cleveland Hts., Ohio 44118 Cleveland Hts., OH 44118

Individual \$7.50 Family \$10 Senior Citizen \$5

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

ZIP CODE _____ Phone _____

CNI needs street representatives to communicate with the local neighborhoods and assist with the delivery of the newsletter. YES, I would like to assist CNI by becoming a CNI representative for my street.

Please return this form with your check to:

COVENTRY NEIGHBORS, INC.
C/O Bob Klemenc

[Redacted]
Cleveland Hts., Ohio 44118



Mark Your Calendar...

- * **March 12, 1996**
Regular Monthly Meeting, upstairs at Tommy's
- April 9, 1996**
Regular Monthly Meeting, Coventry Library meeting room (hopefully)
- April 21, 1996**
Coventry Library Open House
- * *Newsletter Publication Month*

Coventry Village News

c/o Bruce Biddle, Editor

[Redacted]
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118