



COVENTRY

January 1997

VILLAGE NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF COVENTRY VILLAGE NEIGHBORS INC.

From the President's Den

I received a phone call a few weeks ago from one of the members of our organization. Since their call, I have come to realize that membership means many things to many people.

This member called to express a concern which had been troubling him throughout the last few months. He suggested to me that we may be getting too "cozy" with the commercial area of our neighborhood. We are, after all a residents organization and should confine ourselves with residential issues. This same sentiment has continually been expressed by one or our board members, so I was familiar with the argument. But while our board member was an active participant in our organization, the caller was an occasional visitor to our monthly meeting. I listened to his concerns, has a nice exchange of ideas, and then delivered what I thought would be a cumulative blow to his argument. I reminded him that most of his concerns had been discussed at one or more of the last few meeting. I told him that most meeting are attended by only eight to fifteen people and I don't remember him being among them. Because he wasn't there supporting our lone board member's argument, the majority ignored the minority. He explained that unfortunately his professional organization meets the same Tuesday each month so attendance was virtually impossible. He told me that while he was not available for meeting he still considers himself an active member and neighborhood participant and he wanted his opinion expressed. After hanging up the phone I was still uncomfortable with his argument. How could I guess the concerns which extend beyond the opinions of our board members and meeting participants? How can I service the needs of those with differing opinions?

Every day and in many ways we are reminded that Coventry is experiencing a renaissance. New buildings and new tenants enliven our neighborhood's commercial district. The reason for that growth is simple. Money. Without change, the district would become an abandoned ghost town like so many in the Cleveland metropolitan area. We residents, sitting on the sidelines can do very little. We can, however be certain that the growth does not impede upon the well-being of our lives and lifestyle (as was evident

during the parking garage planning process). That naturally starts with education. At past meeting we have learned about the Zipkin building before it was built, we learned about the parking garage before it was started and we are being educated about Bruce Hennis' proposed building and the district strategic planning. Our job as a neighborhood organization is to be certain that these new projects consider the residents and the residential area. They will be doing the hard work. They will be raising the money. We homeowners may actually experience some benefits with increased property values in a thriving area. That does not mean we can ignore the homeowners who object to the changes. We must allow for everyone's opinion to be heard. We must make decisions which benefit the greater good.

Late this summer, I received another phone call. I was on vacation and could not attend a meeting I was being asked to, but I did listen to the problem. I was not familiar with the area of Coventry, I didn't know what parking lot was being considered for change and I didn't know who was behind the issue. I needed an education. My wife and I got in the car and drove to the Kensington Road parking lot which had been scheduled for an increase in size at the expense of a small neighborhood playground. We drove around the lot, looked at the area and tried to understand the issue. I then called Julie Alandt, the city coordinator for the Coventry area and asked her what was happening. She clearly explained the facts and told me she could give me additional information after the meeting I could not attend. The meeting took place. The caller arrived with a number of like minded neighbors and their input altered the implementation of the proposed plan. When I returned from vacation I asked Julie Alandt for an update and she explained that the proposal was "back on the drawing board."

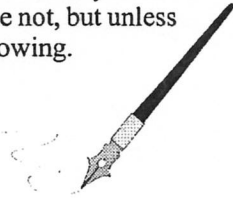
A neighborhood can be affected by commercial areas in so many ways. Groups of neighbors can effect change, once educated about the facts. These residents did. At the time, I faced a similar dilemma as with the first caller. How does a guy without children living on the opposite side of a community know that the removal of a playground to increase parking spaces will bother people? As a kid, my friends and I never used the nearby playground. Taking one away doesn't trigger the emotions in me that it

does for so many others. Lack of parking, however has always been a problem in Cleveland Heights. Without an education from this caller, my first reaction to this proposal might have been, "Great, sounds like a good solution to a growing problem!"

The active members and trustees of Coventry Neighbors can sometimes guess the neighborhood concerns. In many cases we might suppose incorrectly. If you have opinions, call us. If you can't be at the meetings, phone me. I'll bring the issues to the next meeting. Who knows, if you don't tell me what you want I may propose that the city pave over all the playgrounds in Coventry, turn them into parking lots and fill our meeting with talk about Coventry merchants revenue levels!

Your membership in Coventry Neighbors can mean many things. Perhaps you just like this newsletter. Maybe you want to use us when and if something "happens." Keeping connected to your community is also a possibility. For whatever reason you are a member, keep in mind we want to be of service to you, but we can not read your mind. Maybe we can do something, maybe not, but unless you tell us we'll have no way of knowing.

Jeffrey R. Dross
President, Coventry Neighbors



SECOND FAMILY CONCERT A SUCCESS

Coventry Neighbors held our second family concert in November. So many of you missed it that we feel obligated to make try to you feel as guilty as possible, so you can't possibly miss the next one.

We made about \$230 on this concert after expenses (peanuts compared to what we'll need to implement landscape improvements on the upper green by the library once the sewer installation is completed). That we actually make money at these concerts despite the few people who turn out is indicative that we could make considerable money with a really good turn out (it didn't help that the Free Times, the only paper to list our concert, overlooked mention of the date and time).

This concert, like the first, was held at St. Alban's on Euclid Heights Boulevard. Father Weaver again graciously allowed us the use of his acoustically wonderful space. For this concert many of the merchants on Coventry donated raffle items ... everything from gift certificates (Arabica, Tommy's, Grum's, Mac's Backs, Sunshine Too, Delphic Books, to name a few), to a Superman gets married comic book (Daily Planet), to a genuine Derf T-shirt (Free Times), to a bust of Elvis (Big Fun) and much, much more. Hardly anyone left without receiving an item.

After the scheduled performances there was a short sing-a-long session to fill the participatory part of the program. At the first concert the fabulous Dance Afrika Dance got us all dancing. Unfortunately they were already booked and couldn't help us with this concert. Little Eric Thiem (who is about two years old) was delighted with our uninhibited renditions of Old MacDonald, and Twinkle Twinkle Little Star.

Our thanks to Carol Edwards, the mayor of Cleveland Heights, for attending the concert. Her support was appreciated. Our special thanks to Delphic Books for their generous cash donation, which they gave in addition to raffle items.

Oh neighbors of Coventry, you really should plan to attend these concerts. Not only will you be helping your community — you'll have a good time. A therapist I know once said: "Guilt is Good." So be guilty, good neighbors.... and "God Bless You, Every One."

Elsa Johnson

YOUR SENIOR NEIGHBORS NEED HELP THIS WINTER!

When really big snow falls, many senior residents become isolated in their own homes with no snow removal. Won't you please help? Use your snowblower to clear walks for designated seniors in your neighborhood.

BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR!

For more information, call Lynn Barry at 291-2715

CLEVELAND
HEIGHTS
Office on Aging

S.I.D. COMING TO COVENTRY

At our last meeting of Coventry Neighbors, Bruce Hennes, a consultant to the City of Cleveland Heights, told everyone that the Coventry Village Development Corporation (CVDC) will soon be replaced by the new Coventry Village Special Improvement District (CVSID). He explained that merchant associations and development corporations have voluntary dues structures and almost by definition they have little money. Our CVDC has a budget that fluctuates between \$10,000 and \$15,000 a year. A SID, on the other hand is a special tax district, and in this case, will raise \$70,000 per year. Once 60% of the property owners in a given district voluntarily assess themselves, it then becomes a mandatory property tax on all the property owners in the district. The property tax is then levied as a percentage of the assessed value of the building. In some cases, depending on the landlord's lease, this tax is passes straight through to the tenant. In all cases, this spreads the burden fairly, 100% of the tax generated stays directly in the neighborhood, and the SID guarantees a regular, unfluctuating, renewable funding stream.

There are over 1000 SID's in the U.S. (with New York's Times Square being among the most prominent), although they are quite new to Ohio. In fact, Coventry's

HARRY CAMERON 1924-1996

Dear Coventry Neighbors:

All of you who knew Harry Cameron will be saddened to hear that Harry died Christmas Eve.

You may know that Harry had heart bypass surgery twice. Once several years ago, and again last summer. He never seemed to totally regain his strength after the second surgery. This last election day Harry suffered a massive heart attack. He recovered enough to be able to return home, but remained critically ill. He knew his heart had suffered irreversible damage and that he had only a little time. Despite this, his wife Pat reports, there were some good moments to remember.



Harry Cameron was a willing, sweet, gentle elf-man. There was kindness in his heart, and twinkles in his eyes. A few years back, when Harry turned 70, he and Pat hosted a birthday party in the Natural History Museum. I couldn't imagine what I'd done to merit an invitation. Of course my husband and I went. There were people from the many sides of Harry's multifaceted life — colleagues from his days as a NASA engineer; friends from the Audubon Society; hiking friends; fellow community activists; good neighbors, and family. We sat at big round tables, festively set. Who but Harry would

have thought to have a party amid exhibits of rearing polar bears and arctic snow? What a fabulous party!

I often ran into Harry — or, more accurately, Harry ran into me — when I was hanging out around Coventry, sipping coffee at Arabica, or sitting outside. Suddenly this smiling, sparkling, wild-haired gnome of a man would hail me. Out for a walk, he'd spotted me, ... always stopped for a little cheerful talk. Sometimes these conversations took unexpected turns — Harry was very hard of hearing. I confess, I was not always patient with this disability. Harry, however, was always patient with me.

Pat Cameron says not everyone knows how wise Harry was. She says solutions to problems he came up with always turned out to be exactly right. She will miss his wisdom and guidance.

Harry believed in the importance of community — as I do, as do all of us who are active in Coventry Neighbors. There are, unfortunately too few of us active in Coventry neighbors. This was a source of frustration to Harry, as it is to me, and the rest of us. That was the bond we shared. For Harry, community could never be merely an abstract concept...had to be an active way of life. As long as he was able, Harry stayed involved in all the communities to which he belonged. Our Coventry community is undoubtedly better for his involvement.

It's hard to believe there will be no more "Harry sightings" around Coventry. Our dear friend Harry Cameron is gone: How we will miss him.

Elsa Johnson

S.I.D. may well be the first S.I.D. in Ohio to be fully operational!

The New CVSID Board of Directors, headed by Tommy's Restaurant owner, Tom Fello, is comprised of property owners along Coventry's commercial strip. A few of Coventry's longtime merchants, too, are on the board as designees of their landlords.

The CVSID promises to keep Coventry cleaner than it has been, bring more security to Coventry (especially during the later night hours), and promote the Village as a great place to eat, shop, and live. Because of the CVSID it is also likely that we will see new tables, chairs, and umbrellas in front of CoventryYard Mall, keeping our neighborhood competitive with all of the outdoor dining that has sprung up in Little Italy, The Flats, and The Warehouse District.



TEENS 13-18 YEARS OLD!

HELP SENIOR ADULT HOMEOWNERS

south of Cedar in the Coventry area with home/yard chores

**AFTER SCHOOL & WEEKENDS
JUST SIGN UP. CALL 291-2737**

CLEVELAND
HEIGHIS
Office on Aging

1997 COVENTRY CALENDARS ARE GOING... GOING...

It's not too late! You can still buy our exciting Coventry Neighborhood Calendar featuring homes in the Calhoun area.

Last year's calendar sold out of two printings. This year we have only a few left. If you are interested, call Jeff at 321-0206 or Bob at 397-1254. We will also have the calendars available at our next meeting on Tuesday, January 14 at the Library.

At \$6.50 each, they are quite a bargain.

DON'T GET SHUT OUT!

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. c/o Jeff Dross, President ████████████████████	or	Coventry Village News c/o Bruce Biddle, Editor ████████████████████
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
████████████████████
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118

COVENTRY Village News

c/o Bruce Biddle, Editor
████████████████████

Cleveland Heights, OH 44118



Michele J. Ladouceur
Jeffrey R. Dross
████████████████████

Expr:5/14/97

Cleveland Heights, OH 44118