



# COVENTRY

May 1998

## VILLAGE NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF COVENTRY VILLAGE NEIGHBORS INC.

### *From the President's Pen*

When Caribou Coffee announced they would be opening an outlet on Coventry Road, I was a bit shocked. I couldn't understand why they would want to open a store only a few doors from the legendary Arabica. Despite the growing popularity of our neighborhood strip, I could not conceive of it supporting two coffeehouses. Upon completion of the Courtyard Building, Caribou was among the first stores to open. Because it was new, my wife and I thought we'd give it a try. For six years we had our weekend coffee and newspaper at Arabica and we hadn't expected to change...until we visited the new place for the first time. Caribou was clean, light and airy. The Arabica chain had allowed their signature store to deteriorate into a slophouse mess. The Caribou employees were friendly, charming and able to carry on an intelligent conversation. The Arabica staff was barely awake. Those who did appear to have brought their faculties to work never lasted more than a few weeks. Arabica's pastry seemed to be getting worse each year. Caribou's was fresh and good. We stopped patronizing Arabica and now spend our weekend mornings at Caribou Coffee.

I thought about this over the weekend. A neighborhood couple was seated at Caribou while we were ordering. We exchanged cordialities and they remarked that they too had tired of the deteriorating state of Arabica, and sought something better. Our conversation naturally turned to Coventry Neighbors new issue concerning crumbling houses in our community. As so many people have over the last two months, they wanted to tell us about their disturbing neighbors. They explained that they were being as good as run out of their home by rowdy, college age tenant neighbors surrounding them on Hampshire Road (near Superior). While they loved their house, they did not see a viable end in sight, other than moving.

### MAY MEETING

The May meeting will **NOT** be held at the Coventry Library. The staff informed us long ago that they have alternate commitments for the meeting space on Tuesday May 12<sup>th</sup>. We have arranged to have our monthly meeting at the Recreation Pavilion (*Mayfield and Superior*) During the meeting we will discuss:

- The city will discuss the merchant's request for additional parking in the area.
- The possibility of sending out a recognition for well-maintained homes in our neighborhood. We should not only complain about deteriorating properties.)
- An update on our crusade against deteriorating homes in our community.
- A discussion about the organization's involvement in the rehabilitation of the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District sewer hole landscaping.
- Additional discussion on that projects funding.
- Anything else YOU'D like to talk about.

Come to the meeting. We'd love to have you join us at 7:45 P.M., Tuesday, May 12th.

Last month in the article I wrote about deteriorating property in our neighborhood and the impact it has on those of us, whom deeply care for our homes, I suggested that the inevitable outcome was Cleveland Heights turning into the next East Cleveland. That may have been a slight exaggeration, but the premise is a sound one. Just as longtime Arabica patrons are abandoning their dying friend, so will residents, fed up with neighbors who are not or can not be put under control. If the good and honest and true citizens are not protected, they will leave for an area that promises better shelter. Those remaining are then free to wallow in the waste they created.

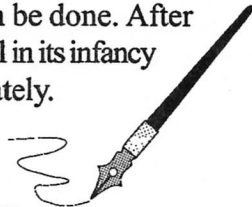
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Since that editorial about deteriorating housing stock appeared I have come to realize that this is an issue that troubles many people in our city. The March meeting was the best attended session we have had in three years. A number of people have sent addresses of offending neighbor's property. Letters of support have also appeared. I feel strongly about this issue. I want to find a way to press for resolution. Bonnie Caplan and Julie Alandt from the city have been a big help, but even they are a bit baffled as to what to do. I have offered myself as a prosecution witness in housing court, either personally or as a representative of this organization, if the prosecutor feels that will help. I have composed letters of concern to our State Representative Barbara Boyd, State Senator Jeffrey Johnson and Attorney General Betty Montgomery asking what options we have on a more global scale. I intend on writing a letter to Cleveland Heights Judge Lynn Toler. I want to see what types of court records are available for review to determine if the judge is a link in this complex problem. In the meantime, please continue to send me your letters of support (or criticism) and addresses of offensive properties. I'll try my best to find an answer.

Someday, my wife and I may again become weekend Arabica regulars. It will take lots of work, many changes and a new commitment to improvement. Perhaps new owners of errant properties will set a standard for them to follow. We know it can be done. After all, the Coventry renaissance is still in its infancy and look how far it has moved lately.

*Jeffrey R. Dross*  
President, Coventry Neighbors



**HAVE YOU PAID YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES?**

Check your mailing address label. Your membership expiration date appears on the label next to your name. We have a lot of important work to do this year. We need your continued commitment and you can only benefit from the information provided in this newsletter. It's a win-win situation. If you're not a member, why not consider signing up with your support. We appreciate it!

**IS THERE A HOUSE ON YOUR BLOCK THAT NEEDS HELP?????**

A house in my block is a disgrace to the city:

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Please help me help my neighborhood.

Your name (optional)

Mail to:

Jeff Dross, President  
Coventry Neighbors  
c/o 2816 Washington Boulevard  
Cleveland, Heights, OH 44118

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

Dear Mr. Dross

While shopping in Coventry, I read your March '98 comments on what can only be honestly called 'slum housing' in our city. I don't live in Coventry, but I believe many, many residents of our city are exasperated with this situation as you are. We need City Council to put together a Task Force to restructure housing code enforcement from top to bottom. If real reform means going to Columbus to change our housing court, so be it.

I, and I believe many others, would be eager to sign a petition to force City Council to try radical reform in code enforcement. Thank you for speaking out, and I hope you consider writing to the Sun Press.

Thanks  
Oswald Sobrino

**LETTER OF REQUEST FOR HELP**

Below is a letter we have sent to Ohio Representative Barbara Boyd, Ohio Senator Jeffrey Johnson and Attorney General Betty Montgomery.

*Coventry Neighbors, Inc. is a neighborhood organization that works for the homeowners and residents of the Coventry Village area of Cleveland Heights, Ohio. In the March issue of our organization's newsletter, the Coventry Village News, we wrote an editorial asking if anyone was as upset as we were, over deteriorating property in our neighborhood. We also said we would be discussing this issue at the next meeting. That meeting was the best-attended session in three years. In addition, we have received many supportive editorials and requests to investigate troubled properties in the area.*

*Opinions on fault range from the city inspection department to the courts, from the city ordinances to the state housing laws. Some city officials are as confused about whom to blame as the residents. The only common thread running through the issue is everyone's frustration with the problem.*

*Residents who take care of their property have reached the end of their patience with this issue. We need a voice; we need your help.*

*As an organization we are willing to do what it takes to keep our neighborhood sound. We do not intend to move to a new suburb tract house fifty miles from the city center. We like our older homes, we like the character they possess, we understand they take more care to keep in shape and we gladly acquiesce. The noncompliance of others, for whatever reason, hurts us both emotionally and financially. Ultimately, the spoiled apple does indeed poison the basket. Good people leave and those without the resources or the wherewithal to maintain their property triumph to become king of the remaining garbage heap.*

*What can be done? Who can help? How can we find answers and solutions which will keep our neighborhood whole, by enticing good people to stay and remove people who breed blight?*

*Please help. The survival of our (and many similar) neighborhoods rests on your impute.*

If you feel strongly about this issue, you might consider writing your own letter to our legislative representatives and candidates.



**DON'T FORGET TO ORDER YOUR T-SHIRT!**

- THE ~~BANK~~ T-SHIRT \$15.00
  - THE COMBO PACK: T-SHIRT & MEMBERSHIP \$20.00
- Specify:  Black or  Gray

All memberships come with a subscription to The Coventry Village News.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_



MAIL TO : BOB KLEMENC  
c/o COVENTRY NEIGHBORS, 1860 CADWELL AVENUE  
CLEVELAND HEIGHTS, OHIO 44118

**THERE ARE A FEW 1998 CALENDARS AVAILABLE**

You can still get your copy of the 1998 Coventry Calendar by calling Jeff at 321-0206 or Bob at 397-1254.

**It's worth the \$3.50 reduced price!**

*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 Boulevard. & Coventry Road.

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 ██████████ Cleveland Hts., Ohio 44118	or	Coventry Village News c/o Bruce Biddle, Editor ██████████ Cleveland Hts., OH 44118
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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

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Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

Michele J. Ladouceur    **Expires; 8/20/98**

Jeffrey R. Dross

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Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

