



COVENTRY

VILLAGE NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF COVENTRY VILLAGE NEIGHBORS INC.

January 1999

From the President's Pen

As an organization, Coventry Neighbors has really had very little to do with the ongoing controversy in Forrest Hills Park. We have been kept well informed of the issue by Bonnie Caplan at our monthly meetings and most everyone in attendance fully supports the extensive (*perhaps exaggerated*) delving, a strong opposition has forced on the proceedings, but it has never been specifically a Coventry issue.

Personally, I voted for the expansion and have had only minor problems with the project (*specifically, the architecture of the building*). Like many people, I have, however grown weary of the interminable bickering, foot-dragging and name-calling this project has experienced, but nothing has urged me to comment about the process until two recent events One by the city, the second by the opposition. The last tact the opposition has tried smells of desperation. They have been complaining in the Sun Newspapers and elsewhere that the vote was unfair because it was held as a special election and they also have been trying to convince people that the voters didn't know what they voted for. Like the recently cancelled Foreman-Norton fight, some people don't know when to retire with dignity.

Fighting the good fight is something with which I am fully comfortable. I supported and worked for George McGovern's failed presidential bid. I valiantly predicted an upset, despite the poll predictions that *he* would in fact suffer the humiliating loss. I did everything I could to convince people that a third party vote for John Anderson would NOT be a waste of their precious right. I held my head high, fought with the resourcefulness that my parent instilled in me and when the die was cast, I faced my opposition and wished them well. I am of course, not a flawless person, I do know, however when the main event is over.

For the last five years I have attended most every meeting of Coventry Neighbors that was held. During those five

years, sixty meetings, a member of council and a representative of the city, Julie Alandt are almost always in attendance. They told the other attendees and me and about the upcoming election. They mentioned it in two, perhaps three meetings. They explained what they hoped to do with the levied monies and reminded us of the date. I, in an attempt to be an even better voter, got in the car and drove around the park, the war memorial and the historical society site to better educate myself about the proposal. At the meetings, people always ask questions. I don't remember if anyone asked specifically about the levy, but if they did I absorbed what was said and used it in my analysis of the vote. Over the years we discussed many issues that would ultimately be placed before the voters. We had an open forum for council candidate during the last council election. We exchanged many heated words during the talk preceding the last CH-UH school levy. I left each of those meetings better informed for the election.

If the supporters of maintaining the status quo for Forrest Hills are correct, they are counting on the fact that people are not active members of their community. They are supposing that a voter is not an informed citizen. They assume that the general public is too foolish to understand the laws that are proposed for their consideration. They forget that they are talking to Cleveland Heights voters.

The Forrest Hills Park opponents seem to not realize what everyone else understands. Their fight is over. Accusing the voters in Cleveland Heights, perhaps some of the best-informed citizens in the state that they didn't know what they were voting for is a mistake. Blaming the victory on the date and type of ballot is a slap in the face of those who take their job as voter seriously.

For two years they have tried to convince the population of Cleveland Heights that a mistake was made. They used compelling arguments and emotions for the land that came from deep inside them. Their passion forced the city to hire some of the premier talent in the field to resolve the issue. Their fight was successful in having major changes made to the plans. They made a difference. Until recently,

they did fight the good fight. The reality is, the opponents cause is not gaining momentum. The reason their support is not gaining strength, the reason the last few meetings have been so sparsely attended is that their job is complete, they will gain no additional support because they are by definition a minority. Their thoughts and opinions have been heard and acted upon. They made an impact. It's time to realize they should move forward. The will of the voters is being heard.

Unfortunately, the city of Cleveland Heights forgot how to play the game. They didn't realize that they were winning and their opponent was deteriorating. In a move I can only describe as goofy, they failed to reappoint Robert Madison to the Planning Commission and instead replaced him with a retired insurance executive, known to be friendly to the cause. Sure, he said he was ready to quit last year, now he wanted the reappointment. I have no doubt that this will evolve into a "he said, she said" argument, but you don't abandon a nationally known architect like Mr. Madison because of semantics. Just as the war's about over, the city provided the opposition with a fresh supply of ammunition, allowing them to claim that the only way the city got what it wanted was to pack the commission with "yes men." From what I could understand, Mr. Madison was simply asking for some design changes that would have made the Goliath structure, appear more at ease in it's place. He was also urging older cities such as ours not to jump quickly in our efforts to compete with the outer ring suburbs by ignoring good design sense. A carefully planned design will benefit the city for many lifetimes. A tacky building is a wart on the community forever. (See the BP building and the National City Bank building downtown, both built at a time when the city of Cleveland was grateful for anything positive, even if it was ugly.)

Our political leaders should know by now that we'll never prepare for the future by wooing residents from Westlake and Solon. That's very unlikely. The people who live in Cleveland Heights are a different type of citizen. People with a special idea about what makes a livable city. Maybe it includes an Olympic size ice skating rink, but probably it includes an Olympic ring in a well designed community center, positioned in a historical park, sensitive to the surrounding, conscience of the needs of the community and built with the input of all. That is what the Forrest Hills proponents, Robert Madison, Marion Pressler and I really want.

Jeffrey R. Dross

President, Coventry Neighbors



SOME HOUSING RESOLUTIONS HAVE BEEN AGREED UPON

During the November meeting of Coventry Neighbors, Brother Michael Nussbaum met with the group and valiantly fielded questions about problem tenants in our neighborhood. One home in our community was of particular concern. After listening to the problems, we agreed to a plan for ultimate resolution that will help to solve this serious problem for our neighbors. Following is a letter we intend to send to the landlords of the homes in question. The agreed upon plan is mentioned within.

At a recent session of the Coventry Neighbors organization, we invited a guest to join us. Brother Michael Nussbaum, Director of Off-Campus Student Affairs at John Carroll University agreed to talk about the continuing problem student residents have presented to our neighborhood. During the course of conversation, the property you own at (insert address) was mentioned as the center of some very disturbing events. Your property's neighbors are very upset. If you are not aware, troubling things are occurring in the property you own. Residents in the area have called the police repeatedly. They have contacted the city, city council members, fire authorities and legal professionals. Their attendance at our meeting turned into an outpouring of emotions and a feeling of "desperation" for resolution. They had hoped that Brother Nussbaum could assist them. They were treated with as much support as possible and during the course of the meeting, some resolution was agreed upon. Because it involves you, I thought it was only fair to let you know what we agreed was a fair response to their continuing problem.

If a problem continues and resolution by the police is not having an impact, the resident will call the community relations department of the City of Cleveland Heights. The city will forward the complaint through the proper channels in the city. They will also send a copy of the letter to Brother Nussbaum at John Carroll.

If the problem consist, the residents will contact the police and then shortly after, the landlord of the property under siege. The next day they will again contact Community Relations and Brother Nussbaum will again be notified. The letter to the Brother will also be sent to the landlord of the property. Similar events will occur on third offenses but Brother Nussbaum will take additional steps within the academic community.

The problems that occur with student residents in our community have reached a crisis level. To stop their despair, permanent residents have decided that a move will probably be necessary. They do not want to leave their home, but it is becoming inevitable. They can no longer stand to be at home. Unruly tenants are driving permanent homeowners away from the neighborhood and causing community instability. Because of this, neighborhood organizations such as ours are compelled to respond. We must look after the community when no one else will.

We hope you will help. As a nonresident owner, you are not subjected to the by-product of your tenant's poor behavior. However, as a landlord you must surely care about your property and you must at least have some compassion for your fellow man. The neighbors of your property have suffered while you benefit. Surely, justice compels you to make rectification and solve the problems for now and for always. Please try and do your part to make life better for everyone.

**PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE
JANUARY MEETING**

Tuesday, January 12

Coventry Library

7:45 p.m.



NO RESPONSE FOR CONCERT TICKETS

Last month, our organization had the opportunity to share in the profits of ticket sales for a vocal concert held at the Jewish Community Center. This would have been a nice way for us to make some much-needed money to support our percentage of the redevelopment of the intersection of Coventry Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard. Unfortunately, only one person called with request for tickets, not enough to help us earn some money. Perhaps this was not your cup of tea, but we're trying to find ways to earn money and we need your support. When we offer the next fundraiser, please consider contributing. The funds raised will go to a good cause.

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

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

Address

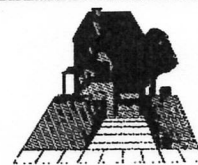
Please help me help my neighborhood.

Your name (optional)

Mail to:

Jeff Dross, President Coventry Neighbors

Cleveland, Heights, OH 44118-2010



**THERE IS A WELL-MAINTAINED HOUSE
IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD.**

**I believe the owners should be commended
for their EXTRA effort.**

(Address)

Your name (optional)

Mail to:

Jeff Dross, President Coventry Neighbors

Cleveland, Heights, OH 44118-2010

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!

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.

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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

Cleveland Heights, OH 44118



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