



COVENTRY

VILLAGE NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF COVENTRY VILLAGE NEIGHBORS INC.

July 1999

From the President's Pen

Before moving to the Coventry area, my wife and I lived on South Taylor Road near Fairmont Boulevard. During those eight years we never had an occasion to contact the Cleveland Heights Police Department. That is not to say that no events ever occurred during our time there. Shortly after moving in, the neighbor across the street attempted to take his own life, unfortunately for his new wife, he botched the horrible event and landed permanently in a skilled nursing facility. We also lived in the area when a young high school teen was the victim of a drive-by shooting. The police were obviously involved with each. The neighborhood was however for the most part, quiet and uneventful. When we moved to our current house in Coventry, we anticipated having a similar relationship with the police force. That turned out not to be the case. We soon learned that residing on the outskirts of a commercial district was far different than living in a residential-only area.

Our introduction to the Cleveland Heights Police Department came during the first spring of living in our new home. Suspicious dealing were going on in the Coventry Elementary School parking lot. Trunks were open and young people cruised-by, stopped, exchanged some things behind the trunk lid and moved on. Trying to be good neighbors we alerted the police. During our phone calls the answering officer always promised to send someone around. Occasionally, a cruiser drove down the street, but usually after the suspicious dealing were complete. Our frustrations eventually led us to a discussion with Chef Lentz. He was very helpful and told us his hands were tied. "The school has not posted a sign mentioning Ordinance 310xxx. Until that sign appears, his patrolmen can not enter the property grounds."

My wife, Michele immediately went to work with Roger Vince of the Cleveland Heights University Heights Board of Education. They had not intentionally failed to post the sign; it sounded like an oversight. After a few weeks, the

Continued on page 2

WELCOME!

A few months ago, Paul Lammermeier, President of the North Coventry Landlord Association called and asked if a merger of our two organizations was possibility. Because of limited involvement they were searching for ways to serve their group. They needed to insure that a place was available for people to be heard if they disband their regularly scheduled meetings.

I explained that Coventry Neighbors was open and available to everyone and our charter actually encompassed the North Coventry Area of Cleveland Heights. Of course they were welcome! Coventry Neighbors, Inc. was established in 1969 to serve as a forum for the residents, homeowners, tenants and landlords of the Coventry area of Cleveland Heights. Our meetings are open to the public and occur on the second Tuesday of each month (except August) from 7:45 PM to 9:00 PM in the meeting room of the Coventry branch of the Cleveland Heights - University Heights Library located at the intersection of Euclid Heights Boulevard and Coventry Road.

We're a friendly group that talks and learns about the city and our neighborhood each meeting. Someone from the city is usually there and we are currently involved in the rehabilitation of the common grounds in front of the library property. If you need additional information, call me at 321-0206. Join us! We'd love to have you!

*Jeffrey R. Dross
President, Coventry Neighbors, Inc.*

If you are a North Coventry resident and a first time reader, welcome to an organization with lots of history and an exciting future. See you Tuesday!

Continued from first page

school board personnel hanged the sign. It really made no difference. The police response changed very little. We began to feel a bit "used", but still had not developed any lasting impressions of the Cleveland Heights Police Department. Fall had come and peace had returned to our little corner of Coventry.

When spring arrived, events started that were to carry on for three years before finally being resolved. Events that almost drove us to leave this neighborhood. Conga drum players. On most any night, at most any hour, a rather talented individual or duo or trio of drum players pounded away. Despite the fact that I am fan of most every type of music, the continual din, sometimes lasting three to four hours began to wear on us. We began our fruitless campaign to enlist the services of the police. For three years, the police treated this obvious low priority infraction accordingly. The drummers would play for a short while. We called the police. They did not show-up. An hour went by, sometimes more time, sometimes less. The drummer stopped. The police arrived, looked around discovered nothing and left. The drummer resumed his concert. Was he psychic? Did he have a police scanner? Was he some officer's nephew? I suspect none of the above are the truth. Still, I could not determine why we could not get satisfaction. We called the police, talked to the Coventry Road beat cops, filed a complaint at the police station, wrote letters to the Chief, expressed our problems in letters to the editor of the Sun Newspaper, but still no resolution. The incessant drumming continued. The only reprise was the cold and fowl weather. We couldn't wait for a rainy night and fall could not come too soon. Finally, in an act of desperation, we contacted a real estate agent. It was time to move. We told Bonnie Caplan at the next Coventry Neighbors meeting that we were at the end of our ropes. The drummer obviously had more rights than we did. Two weeks later, in the Sun Newspaper police blotter, it was reported that a conga drummer was arrested in Coventry Yard and fined \$75 for public nuisance. I sent a thank you note to Bonnie Caplan (who has always been helpful and supportive) and our problem disappeared.

Between the trunk-lid commerce and the music hall encores, we found ourselves in contact with the police more than we'd ever imagined. Two boys were beating the blood out of each other on our treelawn; a cruiser arrived ten minutes after the beaten loser dragged himself up and away. A drunken driver not noticing that Washington Boulevard ends in our front yard hops the curb and tears off the bottom of his car on the buried boulders in the grass; the cops arrive on time, but incredibly pass the car and

drive away! The drunk's friends rescue him and his ailing wheels. Coventry guests parking in fire lanes, visitors blocking the end of Washington Boulevard so others need to hop the median curb to pass, people parking on my treelawn. Each infraction reported and each time response was less than prompt. The offenders eluded the police, usually by minutes.

I bring all of this up again because of last newsletter's President's Pen editorial about living in Cleveland Heights. I received many positive comments about the article, but some people noted that I did not fully explain myself when I criticized the Cleveland Heights Police Department. They felt that my generally balanced commentary was flawed by my failure to back up those comments with reason. As I reread the article, I was compelled to agree. Cause and effect were clear on the other points, but absent when it regarded my critique of the police. I remembered that I wrote that article in record time and felt uncomfortable that due diligence was not executed. At the risk of repeating myself (*if you are a regular visitor of the Coventry Neighbors Meetings, you have heard all these stories, sorry*) I needed to explain from whence I came.

Last month I wrote about the joy of living in a unique neighborhood with amenities not currently available in most every other suburb in our county. I talked about all the good things Cleveland Heights had to offer. I pointer out in a one to one comparison, Cleveland Heights is a hands-down winner. My opinion excluded the police, not in whole, but in a very important part. Part of a vital and vibrant community is successful police department. Cleveland Heights Police Department can obviously be called a success. Bean counters from around the states continually rank our police department as one of the best in the country. For this we should be proud and happy. Serious crimes are handled in recbrd time. Our force is largely college educated and prepared to handle the socioeconomic events that dominate a police blotter today. When the FBI investigated corruption in the county jail system, about 50 officers from around the area were indited. All the other forces with suspected participants put the arrested on leave, pending conclusion of the investigation. Cleveland Heights alone fired the suspects. Even the appearance of impropriety would not be tolerated in our city. Those are good things. At the highest level, we are safe and secure in our homes. During our time on South Taylor Road, I would have rested well with this information. I don't live on South Taylor any longer. I now live on the cusp of an electric commercial district. Our needs are different. Our problems are unique

Continued on page 3

Continued from page 2

(or at least as unique as similar surrounding on Cedar Hill, Noble Road and Cedar-Lee.) The police force has forgotten this portion of their calling as they accept all the laurels being heaped upon them.

Cleveland Heights lives on the edge of some unsavory neighborhood communities. We unfortunately receive some of their spillage of crime. To properly protect use, the Cleveland Heights boarder patrol must be strong. So strong, in fact, they have little time in which to do what the Orange Village and the Westlake City Police excel. Public schmoozing. The criminals from Avon Lake and Bay Village do not form as great a threat on Westlake as those from East Cleveland and Euclid do to Cleveland Heights. Pepper Pike and South Russell insulate rather than threaten Orange. Crime is present, but not anywhere as pervasive as in our neighborhood. Our police force must constantly be available to resolve the problem of "bigger fish." They can not be bothered with the simple parking problems and noise violations my wife and I face. It is believed, two snott-nosed, high schoolers beating themselves silly over some romance-gone-wrong does not pose as much a threat on the city as the bank robbers approaching our area from a recent heist downtown.

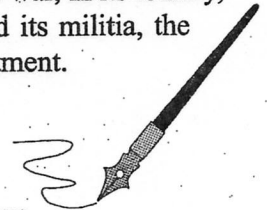
This is where I disagree. In the competitive housing market, residents have come to expect things from police. Police protection commiserate with expectation is the foundation of a desirable city. When I grew up in Maple Heights, an auto accident would bring two or three cruisers to the scene. Reports would be written and the citizenry would feel they got their money's worth. My tax money righted a wrong and the offending driver was duly punished. While handled well, there were not enough major crimes in my hometown to fill an officers day. They were at your beck and call. Officers in today's Westlake and Orange are similarly available. Had I lived in South Russell when someone was discovered parking in a way in which my driveway was blocked, the police would have been there in a flash. That is the world in which Cleveland Heights competes today. This is the expected level of protection and response for many people.

I know my calls of conga drum playing are of tertiary importance. Obviously the attempted rape suspect that is being pursued, must take precedence. The problem now becomes a much more personal and immediate one. When do these types of issues come to the fore? When is the nuisance that I experience, severe enough to warrant first priority? When will there be staffing adequate to solve the large AND small needs of the community? My complaints

of the Cleveland Heights Police Department are centered almost exclusively on the fear that they will win the battle, but Cleveland Heights will lose the war.

During the late 80's and early 90's, management guru Tom Peters commented about what caused employee displeasure in the workplace. Premium parking for management, penalties if hourly staff arrived late for work, who makes the coffee in the morning and relative office or cubical size topped the list. All of these insignificant in the bigger picture, but large enough to topple or raise a Fortune 500 firm. Cleveland Heights is a Fortune 500 city. It competes in a marketplace of young lions like Orange and Westlake. It would be a shame if we did everything right from a myopic CEO's point of view. We would most assuredly lose. We must pay attention to the things that are important to the taxpaying public, whether it is the neighbor's barking dog, the parked car on blocks in the front yard of the house down the street or the conga drum serenade that prevents a full night's sleep. The war, in its totality, must be the goal of the city and its militia, the Cleveland Heights Police Department.

Jeffrey R. Dross
President, Coventry Neighbors



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, [REDACTED]
CLEVELAND HEIGHTS, OHIO 44118

HEIGHTS YOUTH CENTER REPORT

The day-care center located at Hope Lutheran Church is now open and available for participants. A high caliber staff has been hired and the interior of the building has been decorated using a series of base colors, one to a room. Indoor play areas have been established, a crib room has been created for youngsters too small to walk and the outdoor playground is under construction. Linda Cross, Executive Director of the Heights Youth Center predicts that full enrollment capacity of the center will occur by September. "There is a tremendous need for quality day-care. We intend on providing the finest available programs. Space will not be available for much longer."

The extremely popular summer day camp for school age children is under way. This has traditionally taken place at Coventry Elementary School. Because of the amount of work being done at the school this summer, the camp was forced to move to Fairfax Elementary School. Next year, they intend on returning to Coventry.

If you feel you could benefit from any of these programs or if you would like to help serve the community, call the Heights Youth Center at, 932-9785.

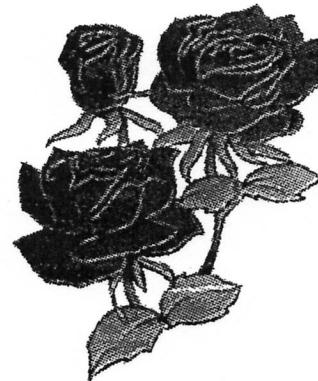
NORTH COVENTRY LANDLORDS AND COVENTRY NEIGHBORS COMBINE FORCES

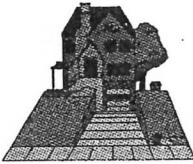
Last newsletter we reported that the North Coventry Landlord Association was suffering from low attendance in the face of better times with fewer problems. They wondered if we would consider incorporating their membership. Without regular meetings, they wanted to insure a place for their constituency to express their opinions. At the May meeting, the assembled discussed this issue. It really was of little controversy. The North Coventry area has always been included as part of our charter. There was no reason to exclude our neighbors to the north. We welcome each and everyone to any or all of our meetings! The attached letter was included in the recent edition of the North Coventry News published by the city.

COVENTRY GARDENS MARCHES ON!

The public space portion of the Coventry PEACE playground has just been granted financing by a Community Action Block Grant. The city of Cleveland Height in cooperation with the federal government has awarded a grant of over \$60,000 to rehabilitate and refurbish the public area of the school property at the intersection of Coventry Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard. This is the portion of the rehabilitation that Coventry Neighbors has worked for, for over five years. Because this is CH-UH School Board property, and because the Coventry PEACE parents oversee this space, it was determined that they were the best group to apply for the available grant money. As you may be aware, our organization wrote a letter of support for this award. Now that this money has been awarded, Coventry Neighbors intend on playing an active role in its implementation.

Bids have been invited for the completion of the work included by this grant money and awards would appear to be imminent. The CH-UH School Board has already awarded contracts to a firm to build the playfield conceived in Jim McKnight's master plan. You can see the results of that now when you pass the area. It is hoped that the rehabilitation of the public area will start shortly after the play area completes. On top of all this groundwork, the Coventry School building is undertaking a total rehabilitation this summer. The building is in good condition, but the board must insure that it remains that way by constantly repairing and upgrading the building. To make matters even worse, sewer work is imminent on Washington Boulevard. This summer, if you have an option, stay away from the Coventry Schoolyard! It's sure to be an exciting mess!





**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

**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

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!

OCTOBER CANDIDATES NIGHT

During the last municipal elections, Coventry Neighbors held a Candidates Night for the community. All of the candidates attended and most of the guests agreed that it was a valuable tool in helping them make an electoral decision. This year, in conjunction with the Coventry branch of the Cleveland Heights University Heights Library, a candidate's night will be held on **Tuesday October 12, 1999**. This is the normal time for the Coventry Neighbors meeting, but we intend on starting at 7:00 PM to insure that all your questions are answered and that a proper forum can be conducted. More information will follow, but please mark your calendars now to reserve the date. Tell your neighbors and friends. It may be the most important two hours we spend this year.

THANK YOU DELPHIC BOOKS

Over the years, Jerome Germany, owner of Delphic Books on Coventry Road has been a quiet, yet forceful supporter of Coventry Neighbors. When asked to donate something for a fundraising event, he has always complied. Membership renewal has always been presented in a timely fashion, encouraging letters of support have always been sent. In short, we could ask for no better support. Recently, in response to one of the articles in our newsletter, he again proved actions speak louder than words. He is truly an admirable gentleman and we are proud to call him "neighbor." Now it is time for us to respond in kind. Visit Delphic Books, see what he has to offer and patronize the establishment. Together, we can build a better community and the best neighborhood.

REMEMBER

As is normally the case, we will not hold a meeting in August. Many people are involved in vacations, summer fun and baseball; little time can be spent on community activity. Please rejoin us in September when we'll work on our involvement of the Coventry Gardens and the upcoming Candidates Night. Have fun and enjoy the summer!

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 [Redacted] Cleveland Hts., Ohio 44118	or	Coventry Village News c/o Bruce Biddle, Editor [Redacted] Cleveland Hts., OH 44118
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COVENTRY Village News

c/o Bruce Biddle, Editor

[Redacted]
Cleveland Heights, 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 Heights, Ohio 44118



Michele J. Ladouceur Expires: 9/8/1999

Jeffrey R. Dross

[Redacted]
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118