



# COVENTRY

January 2000

## VILLAGE NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF COVENTRY VILLAGE NEIGHBORS INC.

### *From the President's Den*

When I was a child I would continually calculate my age at the time when the year 2000 would come upon us. Depending on the time of year I entered into these ruminations, I would figure an age of either 44 or 45. I had not yet realized the issues involved around the fact that my birthday was neatly positioned in the middle of the year. I just kept getting different answers.

I always wondered who of my relatives would be around in the year 2000. I suspected that my grandparents would not survive the extended journey. I was right. I felt that my parent had a real good chance. I was half-right in that case. I naturally assumed that my sibling would both be around to celebrate this interesting benchmark. I never guessed I would be half-wrong on that account. While my sister is very much a part of our new millennium, a motorcycle accident took my brother, many years before his time and the new century.

I visited a friend the other day. He came limping to greet me at the door. I asked him what was wrong with his leg. He rolled his eyes and cursed the start of arthritis. I looked at this guy with whom I have been friends since we were both sixteen and asked him, "When did we get this old?"

About a month ago, my former boss passed away. As my co-workers and I began to reminisce about our departed boss we stumbled across an old photograph taken at the company office party in 1976. The picture showed three of us. Me, with longer hair, my co-worker with a beard and a full head of hair and our boss, looking much like he had on the day he retired. That could be construed as a compliment, but unfortunately our ex-boss aged early. He always looked older than his years. Later, as I sat alone in my office, the

**DON'T FORGET  
COVENTRY NEIGHBORS  
WILL MEET THIS TUESDAY  
JANUARY 11  
AT 7:40 P.M.  
IN THE COVENTRY LIBRARY**

**PLEASE JOIN US!**

office that was previously occupied by this gentleman, I came to realize that I was now the same age that he was when the picture was taken. I like to believe that I look younger at forty-five than he did, but the truth was, we were passing through the same portal of life.

As a youngster, I thought about what the year 2000 would mean to me and at what age. As a worker, I looked up to a supervisor that carried the wisdom and appearance of age. With my friend I witnessed a reflection of myself on the path of life. In memories of my brother, I understood the loss of a life span cut in half.

With all of this apparent inevitability, how can anyone truly plan a life? So much is left to happenstance. I planned for 2000, alongside my brother, side-by-side in the same bedroom. One of us made it, the other didn't. My ex-boss expected a fulfilling retirement and barely made it past three years. My buddy probably didn't plan for arthritis at this age; his life will subtly change now as a result of its creeping presence. "The best laid plans of mice and men..."

Life's discouraging ignorance of plans should sour me on the upcoming Visioning Process currently being

*Continued on page 2*

*Continued from page 1*

undertaken by the City of Cleveland Heights, but it hasn't. In fact, I can't think of anything undertaken by the city that has me so excited since I moved here over fifteen years ago. I love the concept, I love the progressive, pro-active approach to keeping our community fresh, I love the message and I love the "ground-up" method to problem solving. The only thing I dislike (aside from a very "dry" city hall introduction to a packed house) is the fact that I cannot actively participate in the monumental planning task. I like to think that I have good observatory skills, creative problem solving features and good mediator judgements. I think I could have helped. I wanted to help. Unfortunately, the demands of my "real" job forced me to finally throw-away two separate, completed applications for the Visioning Committee, without submitting them to council. Something had to give. My obligations to this organization, the Heights Youth Center, my wife and my job would now start to compete with a new demand on my time. The result would have been less than stellar performance in one or more area. I had to make a difficult choice and did.

If I can't take place in the planning, I plan on acting as a cheerleader for the process and the project. I hope to influence the outcome in whatever way I can. I firmly believe that our city is at a very risky juncture. The only way we can prevent it from becoming the next East Cleveland is through hard work and creative thinking. The council is demonstrating both in some of their recent land acquisition deals and initiating this strategic planning process. I am very happy and supportive of both.

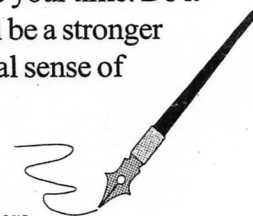
Shortly before his untimely death, my brother moved back to Cleveland from Chicago. His employer needed him in the Cleveland operation. They were suffering from his absences while he set-up the Chicago location. Upon his return, he selected a unique Century home to rent in Garfield Heights. Five weeks after his having established a home in this building, my parents and I were face with the task of dismantling it for the last time. Because it sits in such a prominent place in the city, it is tough not to think of him when passing. Last year the city of Garfield Heights made it even more difficult (especially for my mother, who live near-by) when they bought the house and turned it into the Garfield Heights

Historical Society building. Their plans for the remembrance of the city's past have collided with our personal family history. It has both good and bad aspects. There is a certain reverence in a museum, but it is not what we had planned. I guess the possibility of entering this place again has become more of a reality than if it had continued to be occupied by residing strangers. We never planned to return. Now we could and we need to plan for this latest turn of events.

The world changes and continues to alter the rules. Only a strong, forward-looking approach can prepare you for the challenges you don't know are coming. You need to be ready and you need a plan. Cleveland Heights and its city council understand that and have reacted accordingly.

It is now our turn to help in the plan for the year 2000 and beyond. If you have never involved yourself in community issues, start with this bold initiative. Offer to help, participate in the meetings donate your time. Do it for yourself (AND me.) The result will be a stronger city, increased property value and a real sense of planned belonging and participating.

*Jeffrey R. Dross*  
President, Coventry Neighbors



## CHANGES IN COVENTRY

Many of you may have read the newspaper articles telling of the switch, soon to happen at the Centrum Theatre. Second-run features shown in a reconditioned interior will replace the first-run "boutique" films currently being shown. The existing seats will be removed and replaced with a tiered floor covered by tables and chairs. A waitstaff will serve sandwiches, pizza and drinks. The work is expected to start at the end of January. The current leaseholder, Landmark Theaters, decided not to renew its connection to the Centrum in April of 1998. The theater's fate has been in limbo since.

The Royal Dragon restaurant located off the lobby of the theatre has closed. Unconfirmed reports are that it is moving to a location on Mayfield Road in Lyndhurst.

## BIRDHOUSE ART SHOW A SUCCESS!

In an effort to finance the Coventry PEACE Public Art Project, the managing committee staged an art show at the Coventry Library in late November. Local artists and students were asked to create an artistic birdhouse or bird that could be offered for sale. The show was imaginatively installed and made available for public viewing that weekend. If you did not see the show, you missed a truly spectacular transformation of the central library reading room into a sudo-gallery. The work was exciting and stretched from functional to funky. Both the artists and the patrons appeared to have had a great time and over \$1000 was raised for public art in Coventry.

The Coventry PEACE Public Art Committee was formed to bring public art to the Coventry Commons area at the southwest corner of Euclid Heights Boulevard and Coventry Road. Funded by a grant from the Ohio Arts Council as well as financial support from PEACE, CVSID, and Coventry Neighbors, they have initially been involved in a planning phase. Since formation, they have reviewed slides of ten regional artists who responded to their call for entries and selected five to present talks on their work.

Artists, Barry Gunderson, Joan Damankos, Irina Koukanova, Angelica Pozo, and Rob Bliss met with the committee to discuss his or her vision of the work. After the artists' talks, the committee made the difficult decision to select three artists to build proposals for the site: Barry Gunderson, Irina Koukanova, and Angelica Pozo. Finally, they arranged the previously mentioned "Birdhouse Art Show."

The work continues. Please come to the Coventry Library on Sunday, February 13 to hear each artist-finalists explain what he or she has imagined for the project. We need your involvement and feedback!!!

1:30: Barry Gunderson  
2:30: Angelica Pozo  
3:30: Irina Koukanova

Please call Peggy Spaeth with any questions or suggestions 932-5392  
(email: [spaethcoburn@juno.com](mailto:spaethcoburn@juno.com))

## CONGRATULATIONS BRUCE BIDDLE

On Thursday November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1999, Bruce Biddle was featured as the Sun Press "Eastyle" Person of the Week. The article talked about Bruce's artistic background, his deep religious beliefs, his strong connection between children and literature and his emerging publishing company, Coventry House. The feature explained that in addition to his work as a children's librarian, he is pursuing a Master's Degree in Library Sciences, illustrating, printing and publishing books and other materials, all while raising four children. To top it off, he continues to serve as Editor of this newsletter!



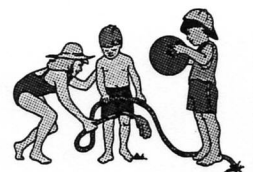
Next time you see Bruce, congratulate him and give him your encouragement. With all of these activities going on, he must be a very tired guy!

## LOOK FOR THE NEW NEWSLETTER

There is another newsletter available to residents of our neighborhood. Reaching Heights, a citizen's group dedicated to improving the value of our public schools is distributing "Currents", news for the Coventry Community. The Fall/Winter issue featured articles about the new Coventry Elementary School Principal, Toni Domonkos, teacher Terry McGeary and the recently completed PEACE project. Updates on Roxboro Middle and Heights High informed the reader of their news. Keep an eye out for this informative distribution. It's worth the effort.

## HEIGHTS YOUTH CENTER OFFERS DAY CARE

A few months ago, the Heights Youth Center opened its first day-care center at Hope Lutheran Church. The HYC has an excellent reputation in child-care circles. This new endeavor promises to follow along that same path. If you're interested in finding out more about this service, call Executive Director, Linda Cross at 932-9785.



---

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.    or    Coventry Village News  
c/o Jeff Dross, President    c/o Bruce Biddle, Editor

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

---

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]

---

**COVENTRY** Village News

c/o Bruce Biddle, Editor

[REDACTED]