



COVENTRY

VILLAGE NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF COVENTRY VILLAGE NEIGHBORS INC.

May 2000

From the President's Den

Last month I attended the Visioning Committee's Strategic Planning meeting in our neighborhood. It was held at the Unitarian Society on Lancashire Road and a large percent of the population was in attendance. I had no way of counting, but I guess about 150 people were present. The discovery process was a classic team technique. Along those lines, the assembled were broken into smaller groups to share values, challenges and opportunities.

Before the discovery mini-groups were assembled, everyone was asked to complete a questionnaire. It asked questions about various aspects of Cleveland Heights life, our expectations and our interaction with the city. Amidst the questions about police, schools and government was a question about building demolition. "How do you feel about the demolition of non-architecturally significant building, done in an effort to strengthen the neighborhood and widen the tax base." (Paraphrased, not the exact wording-sorry.) I guess I expected the questions about the police force and my thoughts on the school system, but this one was intriguing. It had special meaning to me because it touches on an issue that our organization has struggled with for years; what do we do with the troubled properties in our neighborhood? I could not scrawl my approval fast enough. Yes, we should tear down helpless building. Removal of dead wood on a tree helps the remains to prosper. The same applies to neighborhoods. The demolition of structures in our city should be an option.

As we broke-up into small groups, some people started to talk about the questionnaire. This point obviously struck others. At least one person I overheard did not notice the key words in this question, "architecturally significant." Their vote contrary to mine was due to this misunderstanding.

As I think about our city, there are many "significant" pieces of architecture in Cleveland Heights. These must be preserved at all costs. There are also examples of reasonably important area structures. We should do all we can to keep these around. Finally, we have a large amount of average, serviceable buildings. Probably a majority of the dwellings in the city fall in to the latter category. While they are maintained, they remain viable structures. As they meet the fate of abusive owners, they reach a point of diminishing value. If the abuse continues until repairs are too costly, the building is not worth saving. This is the moment in time at which the Vision questionnaire is aimed.

My reaction should not be misconstrued as a reactionary "destructionist." I firmly believe in architectural preservation. My wife and I have been members of the Cleveland Historic Preservation Society for years. Many dollars of donations have headed their direction. We need to insure significant portions of our past are maintained. Preserving our past allows us to better plan a future.

Defining that, which is significant becomes a challenge. One man's jewel is another's thorn. It would be a wonderful and beautiful world if we could save all of our architectural history. That will never happen either. Natural disasters will always take structures indiscriminately. Humans will mistreat the creations

Continued on page 2

**DON'T FORGET
COVENTRY NEIGHBORS
WILL MEET THIS TUESDAY
MAY 9
AT 7:40 P.M.
IN THE COVENTRY LIBRARY**

PLEASE JOIN US!

Continued from page 1

of others without regard to historic significance. In a perfect world, the grand houses that lined Euclid Avenue would still be standing; the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo would today, still house guests and a tornado would topple the disgraceful National City Bank building at 9th and Euclid. That is probably too much to ask. Fate never works so neatly. It is the assignment of an educated society to sort the wheat from the chaff. During that process, opinions will undoubtedly not be shared, but the outcome will be a pretty good solution for society.

Removing misused structures from our neighborhoods can provide a number of benefits. The demolition replaces an eyesore with a building that raises the level of the neighborhood rather than lowers it. In addition to this visual plus, the new replacement is of higher value and raises the tax base. By continually chipping away at the tattered edges of our city, we can raise the quality and the value of the entire community.

Last month, the worn collection of buildings at the corner of Lee Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard were torn down. These were run-down eyesores. The buildings held no aesthetic value and the area was a magnet for loiterers. The city intervened and arranged to have them removed. The corner immediately looked brighter and more exciting. Developers with vision will see possibilities in this once depressing intersection and ultimately build a new tomorrow for the city. The neighborhood will look refreshed, the city will get a financial boost and the neighbors should become energized with an infusion of "new". It is a win for all concerned.

As I have written in the past, the Visioning process excites me. I believe it to be a valuable planning method that will guide us into the future. During this year and a half, we are going to learn many things about our city and ourselves. Some may be difficult to digest; others will be difficult to remedy. Until we know our challenges we cannot face them. A move toward tearing away pieces of our city may be difficult to digest at first. We will then have to start measuring the alternatives. Do we want to be East Cleveland? Probably not. Lets plan action that prevent this possibility.

Jeffrey R. Dross
President, Coventry Neighbors



STATE OF OHIO 9TH DISTRICT CANDIDATES SELECTED

Democrat Claudette Woodard, Republican Theodore Guerry and Independent Alan Rapoport will compete for election to the Ohio statehouse in this fall's election. Woodard narrowly beat Cleveland Heights Councilwoman Phyllis Evans in the March 7th Democratic primary. Mr. Guerry ran as a write-in in the Republican primary and secured the required number of votes. Former Cleveland Heights Mayor, Rapoport has previously run for office as a Democrat, but avoided the winter primary and decided to run as an Independent.

Coventry Neighbors is deciding whether or not to invite the candidates to our September meeting so that the community can better understand how they intend on representing our neighborhood. Let us know what you think!

GOOD-BYE FROM A LONG-TIME MEMBER

Last month we received a message from a long time member of Coventry Neighbors. Her short note should make us feel good about the work we do.

*Dear Members of the
Coventry Neighbors Association,*

Not only has my membership expired, but I've moved out of Cleveland Heights. Thanks for all of your work on behalf of the community. Please remove my name from your mailing list.

*Thank you,
Wendy S. Deuring*

Good Luck in your new neighborhood,
Wendy.

CHOOSE HOW YOU START YOUR DAY TOMORROW

Michael is the kind of guy you love to hate. He is always in a good mood and always has something positive to say.

When someone would ask him how he was doing, he would reply, "If I were any better, I would be twins!"

He was a natural motivator. If an employee was having a bad day, Michael was there telling the employee how to look on the positive side of the situation.

Seeing this style really made me curious, so one day I went up to Michael and asked him, "I don't get it! You can't be a positive person all of the time. How do you do it?" Michael replied, "Each morning I wake up and say to myself, Mike, you have two choices today. You can choose to be in a good mood or you can choose to be in a bad mood. I choose to be in a good mood."

Each time something bad happens, I can choose to be a victim or I can choose to learn from it. I choose to learn from it. Every time someone comes to me complaining, I can choose to accept their complaining or I can point out the positive side of life. I choose the positive side of life.

"Yeah, right, it's not that easy," I protested.

"Yes, it is," Michael said.

"Life is all about choices. When you cut away all the junk, every situation is a choice. You choose how you react to situations. You choose how people will affect your mood. You choose to be in a good mood or bad mood. The bottom line: It's your choice how you live life."

I reflected on what Michael said. Soon thereafter, I left the Tower Industry to start my own business. We lost touch, but I often thought about him when I made a choice about life instead of reacting to it.

Several years later, I heard that Michael was involved in a serious accident, falling some 60 feet from a communications tower. After 18 hours of surgery and weeks of intensive care, Michael was released from the hospital with rods placed in his back.

I saw Michael about six months after the accident. When I asked him how he was, he replied. "If I were any better, I'd be twins. Wanna see my scars?"

I declined to see his wounds, but did ask him what had gone through his mind as the accident took place. "The first thing that went through my mind was the well-being of my soon to be born daughter," Michael replied.

"Then, as I lay on the ground, I remembered that I had two choices: I could choose to live or I could choose to die. I chose to live."

"Weren't you scared? Did you lose consciousness?" I asked. Michael continued, "...the paramedics were great. They kept telling me I was going to be fine. But when they wheeled me into the ER and I saw the expressions on the faces of the doctors and nurses, I got really scared."

In their eyes, I read 'he's a dead man.' I knew I needed to take action." "What did you do?" I asked.

"Well, there was a big burly nurse shouting questions at me," said Michael. "She asked if I was allergic to anything. 'Yes, I replied.'"

The doctors and nurses stopped working as they waited for my reply. I took a deep breath and yelled, "Gravity."

Over their laughter, I told them, 'I am choosing to live. Operate on me as if I am alive, not dead'."

Michael lived, thanks to the skill of his doctors, but also because of his amazing attitude. I learned from him that every day we have the choice to live fully.

**Have any news about Coventry
that you'd like to share?**

**Send us an e-mail at
ladrossceur@stratos.net**

We'd love to share the message!

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 address information]

COVENTRY Village News

c/o Bruce Biddle, Editor

[Redacted address information]

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 address information]



[Redacted text] Expires: 11/9/2000