



# COVENTRY

## VILLAGE NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF COVENTRY VILLAGE NEIGHBORS INC.

September 2000

### *From the President's Den*

I have a dirty confession to make. Even though I know it is wrong; despite the fact that I will be ostracized by my friends; even though I know I shouldn't; I have found myself completely enthralled and obsessed with CBS's "Survivor" and "Big Brother" television series. There. I feel better for the catharsis.

Typically, I am not enamored by popular benchmarks in the arts. I've never been able to get through more than a few pages of a Steven King novel before tossing it down, unread. I really dislike movies that contain even one superfluous explosion. Don't even get me started on "Pretty Woman" or Harrison Ford! Whitney Houston reminds me of a cat trapped in a sleeper-sofa. I wouldn't know N'Sync if they slapped me "up the back-side of my head". Even if I did, I'm pretty sure they make music for which a mute button was designed. "Three's Company" annoyed me from the opening credit jingle to the end. I saw one episode of "Who Wants to be a Millionaire" during my recent stay in the hospital. It was more painful than the intravenous Magnesium drip.

So why these two shows? Have I gone soft in the head? Have my sensibilities been so tainted by years of mediocrity that I have finally crumbled under the weight of societal pressure? To make myself feel good, I have concluded that is not the case. I have thought about these shows and my reaction for long hours. I have often found myself contemplating the position of each show's characters. During this analysis, I have reached some not-surprising conclusions.

At their base level, these shows have taught me about people and communities. Each show has illustrated two diametrically opposed communities. At a birds-eye level, they could represent opposing country in an international squabble.

On "Survivor" Richard represents the worst in human leadership. He has used classic aggressive tactics to

*Continued on page 2*

### **CANDIDATE'S NIGHT 2000**

**TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 12, 2000  
7:30 PM TO 9:00 PM  
COVENTRY LIBRARY MEETING ROOM**

Don't forget to mark your calendars and attend Candidate's Night 2000 at the Coventry Library. We have invited all of the Ohio 9<sup>th</sup> District House of Representatives hopeful along with those seeking election to the State School Board. As of this writing, Democrat, Claudette Woodard and Independent Alan Rapoport have agreed to meet the assembled and talk about their hopes as an Ohio legislator. (Republican candidate, Theodore Guerry has not responded to our invitation.) Charles Byrne and Sharon Midura, both seeking election to the Ohio School Board have also agreed to appear. (As of this writing, Jacqueline Swails has not yet responded to our offer.)

We have offered each candidate five minutes to tell us of their hopes and plans, should they be fortunate enough to win in November. Following these statements, an open Question and Answer period will continue until the library closes at 9:00 p.m.

This is our third Candidate's Night. The previous outings have been very informative, but poorly attended. Become an informed voter and make your selection based on first hand knowledge of the office seeker.

Please plan on attending.

*(Many thanks to member Laura Dempsey for her help organizing the participation of the State School Board candidates.)*

*Continued from page 1*

rise to the top. He keeps his cohabitants dumb and happy by feeding them well and then eating his young. Fresh fish have become the de-facto Steven King and Whitney Houston of their society. By the time the participant realize what is happening, they have been voted off the island.

His counterpart on the "Big Brother" show is mild, gentle almost dense family man named George. Through benevolent tenderness and free expression of emotions, he has endeared himself to the household. With an equally huge amount of money at stake, George has taken the high road, while Richard has traversed the low. Occasionally, a show like "Frasier" and a movie like "Fargo" is a critical and popular success. George represents that hope for society.

The world is filled with examples of each type of leadership. It may be easiest however, to relate them to another television series. Years ago, PBS ran a series called "I Claudius" based on the Robert Graves novel. It told the story of the Roman Emperors, most specifically the decadent, whoremonger, Caligula and the physically impaired, but mentally bright Claudius. Claudius witnesses the excesses of Caligula and his ilk. As they make mistakes and stumble through their reign, Claudius absorbs and learns from their flaws. The undesirable leaders fall, one by one and finally, Claudius is available and prepared to lead, not with the decadent hand of his predecessors, but instead with the knowledge of the frailties of that type of rule.

Supplant Caligula with Richard and Claudius with George. Move ancient Rome to an island in the South Asian Sea and a cloistered home in Los Angeles. With the intelligence of history, predict the outcome of the two shows. If history does indeed repeat itself, Richard is sure to loose, despite his calculated drive toward that end. He has abused and castigated each member of the island community. They are waiting to pounce upon him. George, slow, plodding, "Claudius-dumb" George is almost assured of victory. He has learned from his house mates and works to earn their respect and trust. He takes nothing for granted but his years of life experience shine through the virginal lives of his housemates.

These two programs teach us some things about the sexes as well. Susan, the "Survivor" first mate is the opposite of Richard. While he is intelligent, but not physically brutal, she talks tough and acts as the moll. He defines her directional motivation (even though she may have plans of her own). Cassandra backs "Big Brother" George. Again, a contrast shows itself. She is

bright, articulate and has risen above the "game-show" triviality of the situation. He plays the fool's game and she sits back and knowingly observes and advises.

Society has presented us with many Susan's and Cassandra's. Most recently, the support First Lady's Hillary Clinton and Rosalyn Carter (respectively) provided their husbands. Mirroring our world, women are relegated to second-tier status. Never out of the fray, always a part of the fight, but usually in a supporting role. While we see this as unacceptable, twenty years ago (see Pat Nixon and Betty Ford) they would not have been active participants. There is maturation in our world. It is reflected in our entertainment.

Most important, the two shows illustrate alternate paths a community/society/ neighborhood can take. Dictatorial leadership provided by a possessed personality or benevolent leadership from one that understands the struggle and the reward. As we relate this choice to our own community, it is important to understand the lesson that is being taught by the network shows. Fascist leadership can provide immediate results. Forced labor does work in the short run. In contrast, a neighborhood, with slow, methodical goals might appear less motivated and missing enthusiasm, but ultimately results in the strongest community. You want one to succeed; you don't care if the other fails.

In our world, we have community-nations that are typically run by George/Claudius. If Richard/Caligula rises as a force, they may thrive for a short while, but their demise is imminent.

As I predict that Richard will not win the \$1,000,000 prize, I see an end equal to that you'd find in a community. Like George Forbes, the mighty tumble and the meek (Jay Westbrook) rise. I suspect remaining "Survivor" Kelley, who found the error of her ways and Saul-like tried to repent will win the money and the glory. Despite our pessimistic society, good often prevails and ultimately defeats evil. But don't get too excited. Forbes did indeed suffer defeat, but can we really say he is down? Such may be the case for Richard. The "game" will only serve to enliven his life and he will benefit from it regardless of the outcome. Art and life will always commingle.

*(If my predictions are wrong, hey, it's only a game show!)*

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



## CINEMA GRILLE CLARIFICATION

Last issue, this publication ran an article about the upcoming changes at the Centrum Theatre. We said, "... for the transformation of the Centrum Theatre into a second-run movie theater...." That was enough to set off an explosion. The spark was ignited by Morrie Zyrl. Many of you may remember him as the original Manager of the Centrum and former Manager of the Colony Theatre and Hoyt Theatre in Tower City. Mr. Zyrl is passionate about movies and his reappearance as Manager of the new Centrum Cinema Grille brings immediate credibility to this much-maligned project.

During a spirited, hour-long conversation, Zyrl talked about his hopes and aspirations for his movie house. He also hoped to clarify some of the points that had been misstated by the local media (and us.) The most important thing that he wanted to convey was the fact that this will be a FIRST-RUN theater. The Cinema Grille organization features both first and second-run houses. Most of the second-run places are franchised operations. The theaters called by the Plain Dealer, in their story were franchised locations. Consequently, they left the impression that the movie being shown would be well past their prime. That will not be the case in Coventry. Only the finest, new films will be shown at the Centrum.

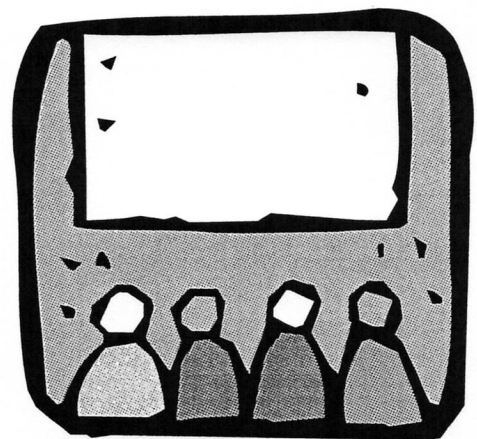
While we had him on the phone, we thought we'd ask him all of the questions that had been tossed around during many of our Coventry Neighbor's meetings. Here's a recap.

- ⊙ "Who wants to see a movie with a noisy waitress banging around?" Mr. Zyrl reports that food orders will be taken ONLY before the movie begins. If additional food is required during the show, the patron will be required to go to the lobby (as is currently the case) and order what is desired. The kitchen will give them a time to return for their order.
- ⊙ "Who wants to eat in the dark?" The Cinema Grille has been perfecting this type of operation for years. The lights are not fully dimmed like those in a regular theater. This means that the projection is different and it requires a special lamp to properly illuminate the film, so that no quality is lost to the viewer. In addition to the adjusted lighting, aisles are wide enough to accommodate the table in front of you and allow your fellow movie-lover to pass without knocking over your

beer. "After all," Zyrl states, "People are eating wings and nachos at the Richmond Mall Theater. At least here, we'll be giving you a table!"

- ⊙ "What about the movies?" As most of you are aware, Morrie Zyrl is quite the showman. He has plans for movie series, Three Stooge's night, theme movies, and even an Academy Award night. When asked whether we can expect to see some of the "smaller, arty" films that have been so popular at the Centrum, he unhesitatingly said, "Yes." He wants the neighborhood to continue its pride of the showplace.
- ⊙ "What about the beautiful building?" The marquee will remain. A Cinema Grille logo will be tastefully added in an appropriate place. To take care of inside renovation, owner Charles Zuchowski has rehired the Architect that transformed the crumbling Heights Art Theatre into the Centrum. He has agreed to invest a substantial amount of money to insure the finest home for great movies. "The beauty of the old place will not be harmed," Zyrl promises.

This appears to be a very long advertisement for a business in a community newsletter. That is due to two factors. First, Morrie Zyrl is a magnetic personality and simply talking with him immediately charges you with his energy. Secondly, the writer is a big fan of movies. "A theater within a five minutes walk from my front door has been sorely missed." Sorry if it appears patronizing, but only after our talk did I fully understand what would happen to this neighborhood treasure. As you, I am anxious to see the "New Centrum."





### COVENTRY NEIGHBOR'S MEETING CHANGE

As a child, I always enjoyed going to church on the Sunday after Easter. Tongue, firmly planted in cheek, our Pastor would comment on the appearance and disappearance of, "The Easter Bunnies;" those parishioner that showed-up in church once a year and mysteriously disappeared for twelve months.

Well, the "Easter Bunnies" made a mid-year visit to the July meeting of Coventry Neighbors to vote against a change in our meeting schedule. A proposal was made to switch to a bi-monthly schedule coinciding with the publication of this newsletter. Monthly meetings will continue, with the exception of August (as has always been the case) and December (the concession made by the voters.)

As was the case with my former Pastor, I hope the "Easter Bunnies" don't stay away. As a matter of fact, I hope they breed like, well, rabbits and a new constituency develops in our meetings. Now that we will continue to be here each month, please come and participate.

### NEW COVENTRY VILLAGE LOGO

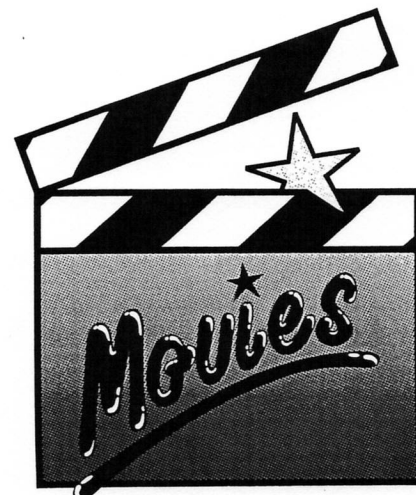
Have you noticed the new Coventry Village logo being used by the Coventry Village Special Improvement District? Some ads in the Sun Press, Free Times, Gay People's Chronicle, Northeast Ohio Live and Cain Park programs have already started to use this design created by nationally known, Cleveland Heights illustrator, Cathie Bleck. Keep your eyes "peeled". It's hard to miss this new identity of the area merchants.

### COVENTRY GOES HOLLYWOOD

"Nightowls of Coventry" a film loosely based on Director, Laura Paglin's mid-eighties experiences at Irv's Deli is about to be made. The filmmaker along with Producer, Alison Maier need your help. They are looking for secure housing for out-of-town cast and crew. If you have available space, please contact Nightowls Productions at 216 321-3280.

"Nightowls" was a Sundance Screenwriter's Lab Competition finalist in 1999. A cast assembled from Los Angeles, New York and Cleveland will join Academy Award nominee, Seymour Cassel who has signed a letter of intent to play Marv, owner and father figure at Marv's Deli. Like Irv's did, Marv's attracts a wide variety of unusual characters. The bikers, hippies, political radicals and older Jewish patrons develop a sense of place and community as they deal with the Deli's imminent demise at the behest of neighborhood watch group, "Coventry Friends".

*Filming is expected to begin in September, so please contact Nightowls Production if you can help.*



### YOU CAN STILL ORDER A COVENTRY NEIGHBORS T-SHIRT

#### AND WHY NOT JOIN COVENTRY NEIGHBORS TOO!

- THE COOL 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

ZAGARA'S

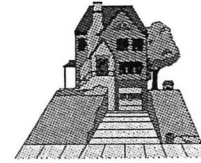
As American communities go, ours is quite old. My house was built in 1920. Most of my neighbors have homes with similar history. When the first owners moved in, there was a trolley line running down the median strip of Washington Boulevard and many other streets in our area. If the owner had a car it would have certainly been no more than one.

It is no understatement to say that the neighborhood, along with the country has changed. The trolley cars are gone; most every driver owns a car and our shopping preferences have matured along with them.

A few months ago I talked about my belief that part of the healthy future growth of our city may involve some structural pruning. The time may have arrived to bring out the saw. One of the most substantial changes in our evolved world is grocery shopping. Despite what we purport, we apparently want larger, more service oriented stores. We like to say that we want to shop in smaller stores, but in reality we have abandoned them in favor of mega-stores. Hence the expansion of our neighborhood grocer, Zagara's.

By no fault of their own, their store is becoming obsolete. Their ability to compete and serve in 2000 and beyond is diminishing. Expansion or closure seems to be the only options. To insure that we have a food service choice in the future, it is imperative that they enlarge. This unfortunately takes a toll on our compactly built community. In order to provide room for growth of the businesses that are crucial to our future validity, some sacrifices are necessary. In this case, the community sacrifice involves the pruning of some residential structures. As I stated in my previous article about this point, I do not take this position lightly. I consider myself to be a preservationist and hope to save as many important building as is possible. With the exception of one house, the buildings proposed for destruction are not really architecturally significant. As a community, we should be prepared to let these go for the good of the whole.

This is an issue we will face more and more in the future. It is one of the discussion points in the Cleveland Heights Visioning process. Become involved in the process. The decisions that are made today will literally effect the future of Cleveland Heights.



**THERE IS A WELL-MAINTAINED HOME  
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



**THERE IS A HOME  
IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD  
THAT IS NOT BEING MAINTAINED.**

**Please let us know  
so we can help get that corrected.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Address)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Your name (optional)*

Mail to:  
Jeff Dross, President Coventry Neighbors  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Cleveland, Heights, OH 44118-2010

**See you at the meeting  
September 12  
7:40  
Coventry Library**

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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

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Coventry Neighbors Inc.	or	Coventry Village News
c/o Jeff Dross, President		c/o Bruce Biddle, Editor
[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]
Cleveland Hts., Ohio 44118		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.

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Please return this form with your check to:

COVENTRY NEIGHBORS, INC.  
c/o Bob Klemenc  
[REDACTED]  
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118

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## **COVENTRY** Village News

c/o Bruce Biddle, Editor

[REDACTED]  
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118