

COVENTRY



VILLAGE NEWS

January 2002

THE NEWSLETTER OF COVENTRY VILLAGE NEIGHBORS INC.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN

My father was an upholsterer. He was quite talented and very good at his work. When my parents met, small talk led to their hobbies. My mother told my father that she liked to sew. He said he did as well. My mother immediately assumed limited romantic prospects until my father showed her the three-inch, sickle-shaped cushion needle he carried in his wallet until the day he died. This was indeed a man's needle. There was never any question after that. The needle, his skill and three jobs kept us fed and clothed.

My father's father retired from Republic Steel in the early 70's and spent the rest of his life watching TV. He had massive hands that engulfed us grandchildren. He had thirteen weeks of vacation that intimidated my 225 pound, six foot, three-inch father.

Our neighbor in Maple Heights, worked at Republic Steel. Over the backyard fence he bragged to my father about the new contract, his burgeoning wages and the amount of time he was able to sleep during a day's work. The neighbor on the other side worked for Ford Motor Company. When the steelworker wasn't planting stories of "sweepers earning twenty dollars an hour," tales of drinking on the job while earning three times my father's salary filled the void from the opposite fence.

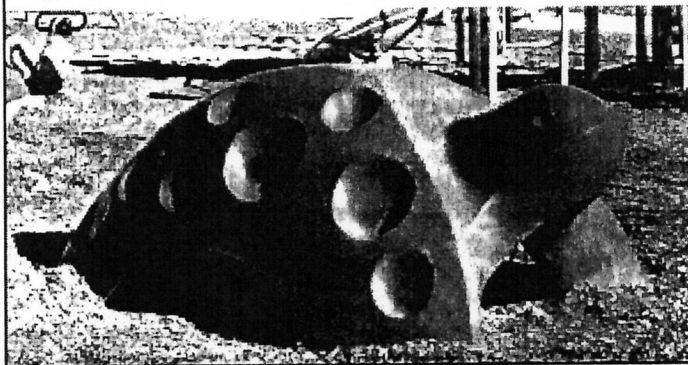
My father held jobs that required skill, but never paid well. Our neighbors had jobs that paid well, but required very little from the worker. The imbalance was destined to right itself. For the last fifteen years, that metamorphosis has been going on. As it comes to a crown, our community acts surprised and shocked. Politicians, attempting to make lasting impressions on voters are stumbling over themselves trying to figure out how to throw good money after bad and save jobs that have been predisposed to elimination since before I sneaked my first sip of beer.

I grew up in a city where cars and steel ruled. My father had to compete with the dollars earned by these monsters. I had to resolve the dichotomy of talent vs. money. The governments, drunk and happy failed to devise plans for a life after these dinosaurs finally fell. Fossils are starting to form and

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A NEW TURTLE IS COMING!

The stone aggregate and epoxy turtle that has resided in the children's park at Euclid Heights Boulevard and Overlook Road will soon be replaced. Rough edges that cannot be repaired pose a possible threat to the hundreds of children who visit this playground each year. Ready for the upcoming play season will be a new reinforced fiberglass and polyester composite turtle, perfectly suited to entertain a new group of kids. Keep your eyes open for a new green neighbor.



WELCOME BACK CENTRUM!

After being closed for almost two years, the Centrum is back. Painting, repairs and cleaning went on for about a month. The theatre opened with a series of free movies at the end of December. Plans consist of showing foreign, classic, independent and specialty films, very similar to the fare shown by former lessee Landmark Theatres. Anyone who was unfortunate enough to have to sit through "Vanilla Sky", can certainly appreciate the prospects of quality film offerings right in our neighborhood.

After a failed attempt to lease the theatre to the Cinema Grill organization, owner Charles Zuchowski was able to make arrangements with the emerging Madstone Theatre Group. Madstone Theatres has decided to begin their national chain in Coventry. They have national plans to open 10 to 15 other theatres across the country. Let's hope Cleveland Heights can support another venue for good movies. It's good to see an old friend active and viable. At 85 years old, it would be a shame to see her close again.

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the hangover has begun. Now we are asking, "What can be done?"

Planing for a future in Cleveland Heights has been the task of the Visioning Committee for the last two years. A few weeks ago each household received a synopsis of the vision uncarthed by this group. This was followed by a city hall presentation. The fact, that it did not contain anything earth shattering, is probably a tribute to the Cleveland Heights communities of the past. The fact that it did not include anything earth shattering should probably scare us just a bit. Nonetheless, there is grist here. Here are a few salient points.

"...recommends shifting focus to preservation and maintenance by hiring a chief preservation office...ensuring greater enforcement of maintenance codes, notifying neighbors of critical external inspections, assisting elderly or other needy homeowners...."

"We recommend hiring a city landscape architect, develop planting plans for neighborhoods and homeowners to improve existing green space...implement tree/shrub planting programs...restore backyard garbage collection and develop litter control plans."

"...shifting maintenance of sidewalks to the city...."

"...increase noise ordinance enforcement to lessen the effects of booming car stereos and insensitive use of power equipment."

"We recommend a methodical approach to rebuilding our commercial districts, which includes charrettes, master development plans, new urbanist buildings and zoning codes, community development corporations, land banking to facilitate development, public investment and coordinated private investment."

"...bringing our elected officials, school board and city council together to collaborate and listen to the citizens of Cleveland Heights."

And most importantly (in my opinion)

Today, most Cleveland Heights neighborhoods are fine places to live, but there is much room for improvement. Many of the homes - and some neighborhoods - are suffering from poor maintenance and neglect that threatens their economic viability... There are neighborhoods where the number of homes in poor condition is approaching a level of negative impact that puts the entire neighborhood at risk. As neighborhoods weaken their neighboring commercial district also suffer.

Because most of our neighborhoods are fairly densely populated, the decay or neglect of one house can detract from the entire neighborhood... Significant architectural details and character of some houses have been dismantled in favor of economy or low maintenance has cheapened the fabric of the neighborhood. If this trend persists, our neighborhoods' framework will fray, or fall apart. (The underline is mine.)

At the community meeting introducing the "vision", citizen comments were invited. Amidst the prepared statements of support, the humorous nitpickers and their stand-up commentary, one person's belief that the document was a communist inspired mandate and complaints about the make-up of the committee (this could not possible be a fair assessment of our city's beliefs without the inclusion of a blind, left-handed, Bulgarian bicyclist), one stood out. The folks from the Home Repair Resource Center recognized the importance of maintaining housing stock as a linchpin to continued community success and reiterated the Vision Committees sentiment. They offered their group as one that had been battling this fight for years. They are experts, they understand the problem and they believed better results could come with more refined direction on this matter by the city. It made me happy that I have financially supported them for years.

In my comments, I thanked the Visioning Committee and asked the members of city council to pay particular attention to the area of housing maintenance. I suggested that without improvements in this area, the rest of the vision document was useless. If the homes are deteriorating, we don't have to worry about commercial districts, civic vitality, being a home to the arts or city hall accountability. No one will live here to care.

The city of Cleveland dropped the ball twenty years ago when it became apparent that the old industries of the past were headed to Asia and beyond. Akron moved from "rubber" to "polymers", Cleveland decided to provide welfare money to millionaire ball players and team owners. Cleveland could have gathered a group of twenty-three citizens to spread out through the neighborhoods, collecting ideas and concerns. They could have asked them to develop a vision for the future without steel mills. They could have used that as a foundation for future policy and community direction. By now, the loss of these antiquated industries would mean a blessed end to the dirty skies, not a tragic disappearance of a vital paycheck. We are very fortunate that two years ago the City Council of Cleveland Heights had the foresight to plan for the future. It is now left to the City Council of 2002 to act on the recommendations within.

At the same time that my father was struggling with the realities of being a craftsman in an industrial age, the Cleveland Heights citizenry and council realized that we live in a multi-cultural nation and set about developing policies and actions that today insure I can live peacefully in an integrated city. A new challenge of equal importance faces this council. Developing bold new policies to maintain the aging buildings in our city. The "Vision" provides them with direction and demand. The citizens have already provided support. All that is left is action.

Jeffrey R. Dross
President, Coventry Neighbors



SOUL VEGETARIAN MOVES TO COVENTRY

Soul Vegetarian Central has relocated to Coventry Road in the storefront previously occupied by Bike One. If you've ever visited their place on Lee Road (near Meadowbrook) you know that the food is something special. Tempered by religious requirements, the owners produce strict vegetarian cuisine using no dairy and no meat. If you need a recommendation for your first visit, try the sunflower burger and the brown rice. It's a winning combination that will make you forget about burgers and fries! Welcome Soul Vegetarian Central.

LAST MONTH LIBRARY FORUM

At the October meeting, Steve Wood, Director of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Library system presented plans for the expansion of the main library on Lee Road. After having renovated and remodeled all of the branch sites (including Coventry) they were now ready to tackle the task of joining the new building across the street (the former Heights YMCA) with the aging main structure. The architect's plan call for walkway over Lee Road, an expanded youth center, a media room and plenty of additional space for books. As has already been reported, Coventry's Dobama Theatre has signed a lease for space in the former "Y". It will be their responsibility to remodel and develop the theatre space. The library has also formed a coalition with the Heights Art Collaborative to provide artistic instructions and to showcase the work of local artists in the library surrounding. Thanks to the passage of the library building Levy, all of this will become a reality in the next few years. If you missed the preview we were afforded, you can see the model and drawing at the main library located on Lee Road between Ormond and Dellwood.

HELP YOURSELF WHILE HELPING THE HEIGHTS YOUTH CENTER

The Heights Youth Center has made arrangements with MCI WorldComm to provide you with long distance telephone service. If you sign up for this service through the Center, you will receive low, competitive rates and the HYC will earn \$1 per month, per phone line. Similar savings and earning are attached to pager service, cell phones, Dish satellite service, home security, Internet access and web hosting. If you need any of these or are preparing to make a service provider change, please call 216-932-9785 for more information.

Do you shop on-line at j crew? How about Walmart.com? The Disney Store, Avon, Hickory Farms, Sony Music, National Geographic or GiftBaskets.com? If so, you can help the Heights Youth Center by first visiting www.itilink.com/hyc.itl. When your purchases are totaled, HYC will receive a "reward" because you visited via the Youth Center link. There is no additional cost to you and your purchases will help their programs and kids.

Are you searching for a new Internet Service Provider (ISP)? Why not do some good while surfing the net? Fund Raiser Net in an all purpose ISP that will donate five dollars a month to the charity of your choice. It is very simple to begin. Contact Fund Raiser Net, tell them that you want your donation to go to the Heights Youth Center and your ready to have fun on the net AND support the kid of the Heights area. Fund Raiser Net can be reached at 216-341-3181 or 866-250-FUND (3863). You can also contact them via e-mail at info@fundraisernet.com. Visit their web site at www.fundraisernet.com. If you're going to pay somebody for your Internet service, why not pick someone that helps others.

Remember that quality childcare provided by the staff of the Heights Youth Center is available for your youngster at Hope Lutheran Church 2222 North Taylor Road. This is a state-licensed facility providing daytime care for children from 8 weeks to 5 years old. Breakfast and snacks are included. Head Start Classes are available and they are open from 6:30AM to 6:30PM. School Age Programs, Before and After School Programs and limited transportation is available. If interested, please call 932-9867.

DON'T FORGET TO ORDER YOUR T-SHIRT!

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> THE COOL T-SHIRT
\$15.00
Specify: <input type="checkbox"/> Black or <input type="checkbox"/> Gray | <input type="checkbox"/> THE COMBO PACK:
T-SHIRT & MEMBERSHIP \$20.00 |
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All memberships come with a subscription to The Coventry Village News.

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MAIL TO : BOB KLEMENC
c/o COVENTRY NEIGHBORS, [REDACTED] AVENUE
CLEVELAND HEIGHTS, OHIO 44118

PLEASE JOIN US
Tuesday
January 8
7:40 p.m.
at the Coventry Library

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 January, April, July, and October 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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[Redacted]
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Individual \$7.50 Family \$10 Senior Citizen \$5

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

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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:

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[Redacted]
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118

COVENTRY Village News

c/o Bruce Biddle, Editor

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