

THE

COVENTRY VILLAGE

N. G. W. S.

NEWSLETTER OF COVENTRY NEIGHBORS, INC.

June, 1973

Volume 6-73

...from the editor

New ideas are afloat, and with them comes a new format for our meetings. Members present at the last general meeting voted to reinstate our former speakers series in the form of monthly program meetings. At much the same time, members of the Steering Committee grew tired of hearing the same committee reports at two separate meetings each month & sought to eliminate the redundancy. As a result, starting with our June 11 meeting, one monthly business meeting will be held embodying a Steering Committee meeting at 7:30 P.M. (open to all members who wish to hear the committee reports and discussion) and a general membership meeting at 8:30 P.M. Reports will be read only at the first session, and minutes of each session will be read at the appropriate time for the benefit of those who wish to attend only one or the other. These combined business meetings will be held on the 2nd Monday of each month. On the 4th Monday of each month we plan to have a speaker, panel, entertainment, or discussion of a relevant topic. The communications and public relations committee has, at least temporarily, assumed the responsibility of planning and publicizing these program meetings. We hope to have a steady flow of suggestions of discussion topics and/or speakers from the membership. Please share your ideas with us! The first program meeting will be June 25. Details will be announced later via the Telephone Tree and general publicity. We hope this type of meeting will keep members active and encourage more people to participate in Coventry Neighbors. The most effective way to increase our membership, though, is for each member to attend and to bring along at

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M E E T I N G I

Monday, June 11 Unitarian Society
2728 Lancashire Road

7:30 P.M. Steering Committee
8:30 P.M. General Meeting

Watch for details of the June 25th
Program Meeting!

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...from the editor (continued)

least one friend or neighbor. This will also make it easier for newcomers to get acquainted. Hope to see you and your friend at the June 11 meeting. Theme of the meeting will be "Coventry--are you part of the problem or part of the solution?" Please come! A.H.

ANTI-COMMUNE ZONING LAW VETOED BY U.S. COURT

Zoning ordinances may not be used to prohibit communal living, under a recent ruling of the U.S. Court of Appeals of the Second Circuit, reports Civil Liberties (May, 1973), national ACLU newsletter. In invalidating a statute of a small New York town that held the town to single family dwellings occupied by "no more than two people not related by blood, adoption, or marriage," the Court stated: "The ordinance (permits) exists existing inhabitants to compel all others...to conform to its prevailing ideas of lifestyle...Such social preferences...have no relevance to public health, safety, or welfare." The New York Civil Liberties Union, which brought the suit on behalf of six students, cited constitutional rights of privacy and association.

D.B.

LANDLORD-TENANT BILL

On Sunday, June 3, a discussion of Senate Bill 103, the proposed landlord-tenant bill before the Ohio Senate, was held at the moot court at CPU Law School. The meeting was coordinated by Dennis Niermann of Coventry Neighbors, Marcia Mauer of Resources for Social Change, Christing Randels of Hough Housing Services Corp., and Ed Kramer of the National Tenant Organization. Speakers were Mrs. Randels, Avery Friedman of Lawyers for Housing, Senator H. Morris Jackson (D-21), and Rep. John Sweeney (D-14). Chairman of the meeting was Dennis Niermann, our Housing Committee chairman.

Mr. Friedman indicated that 1 of every 10 Ohio residents rents, and that current Ohio rental laws date from our agrarian background and are not only unfair, but totally obsolete. Mrs. Randels pointed out several advantages of the bill--primarily its delineation of both the rights and the responsibilities of the landlord and the tenant. The bill, for instance, gives both the landlord and tenant certain responsibilities regarding the upkeep and sanitation of rental premises. It would prohibit inclusion of the "waiver of rights" clause frequently used in leases today. It provides for recourse for the tenant to an eviction notice and protection from eviction or rent increase for reporting housing code violations. It would prohibit "locking out" of tenants or disconnection of their utilities by a landlord. Perhaps the most controversial aspect of the bill is its provision for rent-withholding in cases of code violations until necessary repairs are made. In the case of rent-withholding, the landlord has the right to request the court to deposit all withheld rent, and this deposited rent may be used to pay for the repairs or, after 30 days if the repairs are not made by the landlord, the tenant may make the repairs and deduct the cost from his rent. The bill also requires that security deposits less applicable charges for damage, must be returned within 30 days of termination of the lease.

Sweeney spoke for the bill and is eager for its passage, though not in a position to do a great deal while it is in the Senate. He is giving it support, though. Senator Jackson indicated (with no great show of conviction) that if the bill gets to the Senate floor without changes, he will vote for it. He made it rather clear that he will not make any attempt to get the bill to the floor (it has been locked up in sub-committee for several weeks) or to persuade other Senators to vote for it. He did, however, point out that the best thing supporters can do is to write their representatives in the Senate and House and, in particular, to the sub-committee chairman, Senator Richard Reichel. It might also help to write Sen. Paul Matia, the sponsor of the bill, and encourage him to do whatever he can to get the bill out of committee.

The bill probably needs a little more work, and will undoubtedly be modified before it comes to the Senate for a vote, but it is an essential bill which will assist and protect both responsible landlords and responsible tenants. It can only work against those landlords and tenants who neglect or misuse rental property. This fact, that the bill benefits responsible landlords as well as tenants, cannot be overstressed. A few landlords who would be forced by the bill to make extensive repairs or face rent-withholding have tried and will continue to try to scare off all landlords. There is nothing in the bill to hurt a good landlord, and by forcing slum-lords to upgrade their property, the values of well-kept property will be protected falling along with their neglected neighbors.

It is important that supporters of the bill, especially landlords, make their support known in Columbus. Urge anyone you write to get the bill out of sub-committee and before the Senate. Encourage your Senator to vote for it and to solicit support among his peers. Write any or all of the following:

Senator Richard Reichel

Senator Paul Matia (sponsor of the bill)

Senator H. Morris Jackson

At, The Statehouse, Columbus, Ohio, 43215.

COMMITTEE CORNER

For information on activities and/or meeting dates of any of the committees, call the committee chairman listed below:

COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Dave Burwasser, chairman (932-7575)
Pat Fantone, P.R. sub-committee chairman (321-0257)

Ann Hunter, NEWS editor (932-9729)

MEMBERSHIP & HUMAN RESOURCES

Ellen Gardiner, chairman (932-8729)

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Marilyn Waltrip, chairman (321-4034)

HOUSING

Dennis Niermann, chairman (321-2403)

PLANNING

Al Papoport, chairman (932-1144)

New members are needed on most of the committees, so call for information on those which interest you.

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COUNCIL COLUMN

Our Council reporter, Mike Diamond reports the main content of the May Council meetings as follows:

Bids have been awarded for traffic marking paint, line marking machine, light dimming equipment, etc. Bids are to be accepted also for watermeter and fire hydrant parts. It was pointed out as a matter of interest that \$5.5 million worth of building permits have been issued this year in contrast to about \$1 million for the same period last year....Streets & Services committee reported that wood chips are available to anyone who wishes them. If interested, contact Mr. Zabo, the City forester, who will issue a permit and tell you where to go--cops--tell you where they may be found....The suspension of the parking ban has been extended until December of 1973 for all streets now covered by it, with the addition of Grandview Avenue, effective June 7, 1973....A bid was finally received for fuel after several months with no response. The bid was from Sohio and differed from past bids in that Sohio reserved the right to limit quantities and to change prices on 30 day notice. H.D.

BULLETIN BOARD

Our Bulletin Board is really cluttered this month:

The Telephone Tree was put to use for the first time last week to inform members of the public discussion of the landlord/tenant bill (see full page report, page 2). Most members were reached, and with a minimum of effort on the part of callers....Speaking of trees, Coventry Road is displaying quite a number of trees, courtesy of the Coventry merchants, Coventry Neighbors, and the City Forestry Dept. Still a few more merchants who have not donated, but several have already promised to do so shortly....A few months ago we published a toll-free number which Ohio citizens can call to receive the latest info on bills pending in the State legislature and its committees. It really is a useful service and we hope members will take advantage of it. Once again, the number is 1-800-282-0253, and there is no charge to you when you use it. Clearly a case where your tax dollars do serve you....Don't forget to recycle paper and glass the first Saturday of every month. Tie or bag the paper and sort glass by color, after removing the metal caps and rings....Friendly Town, which sponsors a week with a suburban family for inner city children, is looking for more host families. The week is June 23 to July 1, so call as soon as possible if you can take a child. The greatest need right now is for 11 and 12 year olds. Call Del Jones at 421-5155 if you can help or want further information....The Diabetes Association will have their mobile unit at Severence Center in the Theater lobby on June 13 through 16 for the free diabetes test. The test involves a two-hour waiting period and must be started between 10:00 A.M. and 3:00 P.M. as the unit leaves Severence at 5. It's a free and painless test (even I took it and survived, and I'm chicken!) and is worth the few minutes on each end of a two-hour shopping spree....Anyone who thinks they may be eligible for food stamps may learn more about the requirements by calling 381-8020 to make an appointment to meet with a USDA

(continued on page 4)

representative who will be in the Heights Area on June 20. If you know someone who may be eligible, please pass this information along to them....An exhibition of Vietnamese art will be sponsored by Medical Aid for Indochina at the New Gallery, 11427 Bellflower Road, from June 15 to 19. A \$5.00 ticket for opening night includes and auction of art donated by Clevelanders, refreshments, and Prof. Paul Howe of the Cleveland Museum to discuss the exhibit. The exhibit is free on the remaining days, 1:00 to 5:30 P.M. on the 16th and 18th, 3:00 to 5:00 P.M. on the 17th, and 1:00 to 8:00 P.M. on the 19th. For opening night tickets, call 381-2335 or 795-3210.

A.H.

Editor's note:

At the last meeting of the Communication Committee, someone inadvertently mentioned to the chairman that the NEWS needed a cartoon. It follows. My apologies. A.H.

WORKSHOP REPORT

In order to discover whether Coventry Neighbors can function more effectively in the community, and how, an organizational workshop for the Steering Committee and other interested members was held on Saturday, May 19. Dr. Paul Ables, Associate Dean of the School of Applied Social Sciences at CWRU donated his time to lead our discussion and offer professional assistance. Many new ideas came out of the project and a few old ones were rediscovered. One idea already bearing fruit is the change in our meeting structure. We rediscovered the "Bring a friend" approach to organizational growth. We seem to have overcome a few problems and, more important, learned to recognize and hopefully avoid some new ones. We certainly appreciate Dr. Ables' help, and hope the results will soon be apparent in the community.

