

HEIGHTS THEATER SHIFTS FROM SKIN TO "CELEBRATION OF FILM"

The Coventry shopping area's only cinema, the Heights Theater, has shifted from its long-standing matinee and evening format of long-playing, soft-core skin flicks to a repertoire of quality films that will be shown for two or three days at a time--a change much welcomed by most of the neighborhood and by the theater management itself.

For those who came in late: The Heights Theater is part of a chain. Both the matinee-evening content and the Midnight Movie makeup (of which the latter will continue unaltered) are determined elsewhere. Local manager George Fitzpatrick has, after some effort, won the opportunity to try this new format, with the argument that "Annie Hall" and "Elvira Madigan" will play more profitably in Coventry than what the Heights Theater has been showing. Preliminary results bear him out.

The new content is far from bland; the bill includes Wertmuller's "Swept Away" and "Seven Beauties;" and "WR: Mysteries of the Organism," rated "X" because it is based on Wilhelm Reich's theories of sexual energy. What is replaced is the monomaniacal skin-and-coupling of safe-for-the-suburbs porn which, after a few repetitions, is bland. That this should be a welcome change at the Heights Theater is historically ironic; this theater was the locus of an early, landmark freedom of expression court case in the early Sixties over "Les Amants (The Lovers)", a racy French film of overwhelmingly innocuous wholesomeness by 1977 standards.

Fitzpatrick is adamant that he is not declaring a "range war" with the New Mayfield Repertory Theater. The two houses are promoting one another's programs. Fitzpatrick also notes that the Heights Theater has a mailing list that one can get on for the asking; and that the theater is one of the most popular outlets nationwide of the Midnight Movies, whose tenth anniversary is now being celebrated.

- Dave Burwasser

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Committee on Traffic and Transportation

A Citizens Advisory Committee on Traffic and Transportation meets regularly to:

1. Review the recommendations made by William T. Jackman and Associates, Traffic Engineering Consultants.
2. Acquire feedback from the residents of various neighborhoods.
3. Seek advice from and make suggestions to the City.

The Jackman report deals with the traffic flow problems on Mayfield, Lee, Noble, and Taylor Roads. The Advisory Committee seeks to relate these recommendations to their effects on surrounding neighborhoods, and to work with City Council, the Planning Department, and Police Department to solve many of the traffic problems that exist in our community. The Advisory Committee seeks community opinions. Our community member in Coventry is Joanne Bailis (932-7785). If you have an opinion, give her a call.

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PROPOSED NEW FAMILY DEFINITION CONCERNS ROOMERS, SCHOOLS AS WELL

Cleveland Heights City Council reported out the Planning and Development Committee a new definition of "FAMILY" at the August 15 Council meeting. In addition to expanding the concept of family embodied in Cleveland Heights zoning law, the measure addresses the "roomer permit" question with a completely new approach, and brings to the surface what has heretofore been a quietly exercised municipal concern for the schools.

A public hearing on the bill, Ordinance 60-1977, will be held in Council Chambers on September 26th at 7:45 p.m.

In response to a Supreme Court decision striking down the "nuclear family" definition of East Cleveland, nearly identical to the Cleveland Heights wording, the Planning and Development Committee proposes a definition that would include all grandparents, parents, children and grandchildren of the head of household or the spouse of the head. Spouses of married children would also be included, as would be "two additional persons...whether or not related in any manner" to the head of the household or spouse of the head, "provided such person(s) are at least 21 years of age." The latter clause is intended to cover such instances as siblings forming a household, and roommates in an apartment dwelling unit.

The present law regards roommates as a species of "roomer," as in someone renting a room in one's home. This has been interpreted to require roommates to take out a City roomer permit at \$10 per year, generating a certain amount of protest, but until now no conclusive change in the law. The proposed reformulation would do away altogether with the old roomer permit, which permitted up to two roomers, replacing it with the "two additional persons" covered in the family description. Beyond that, a "ROOMER" is to be defined as a "person not included within the definition of family..." and a special hearing before the Board of Zoning Appeals is required to house any roomers (new definition), just as it is presently required to house three or more roomers (old definition).

Despite some community pressure, mostly from Coventry apartment dwellers, Planning and Development Chairman Lee Chilcote held off on these matters until the Supreme Court had disposed of the East Cleveland case, and has now put all the changes together in one package.

In any roomer hearing before the Board, specific care is to be taken that granting the request "will not constitute an undue burden upon the appropriate school district...", a concern which has motivated the Zoning Board to take a generally conservative posture in the past. Under the proposed formula, this would be taken into account if and only if school authorities present evidence of such a burden. A roomer request could not be granted if it would create a "boarding or lodging house."

- Dave Burwasser

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SCHOOL CROSSING GUARDS NEEDED

\$13 PER DAY

*Steady daytime work year 'round, ideal for retired persons or mother of school children. Average work hours: 4 hours per day Monday thru Friday. Apply at: City of Cleveland Heights, Personnel Office, 2953 Mayfield Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118.*

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Summer On Coventry.....

It is almost fall. Those who left town for the summer will be surprised by how much could happen on a short commercial strip in such a brief period of time.

Tommy's left in late March. By June, the Fello family had a new location on the street at 1820 Coventry Road (former site of the Coventry Cafe). Final City approval came in late June. Renovation is underway--and it is both extensive and costly. The site requires new flooring, wall supports, construction of an entire mezzanine platform, kitchen facilities, wiring, etc. Tommy told me he hoped to open in October. However, experienced tradespeople on the street say he'll be lucky to open by Thanksgiving.

Cargo is now vacant. The public auction this month marked the final act of liquidation. One of Coventry's oldest stores, a veteran of good times and bad, passes from the local scene.

Where Tommy's once stood, an Italian restaurant will soon operate. The front decor has been most controversial, upsetting many merchants and neighbors. A word often used to describe it is "tacky." Opening date of this new dining place is not known.

Greene's Camera Store has literally disappeared this month. Many people did not even realize the store had closed--an indication of the minimal impact it had on the neighborhood. "What do you mean its vacant," one person asked me, "I just got my film there last weekend!" Though the front sign remains in place, the interior is most definitely bare.

And then, of course, there was the 1977 Coventry Street Fair. Over 40,000 people came, had a good time, ate, drank, bought a lot of merchandise, and made no trouble. Too bad the Plain Dealer and Press were too busy covering disasters and scandals to report all this.

Now the schools are in session and the vacations are over. Geese flying overhead indicate the coming of an early winter. Summer is over, but fall is here --and fall, too, is a time for change. More later.

- Alan Rapoport

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Executive Editor: Alan Rapoport Contributing Editors: F. David Gill
Dave Burwasser
Karen Lind
Jay Seaton

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Ignore alien orders.