



# Coventry Village News

DECEMBER, 1981

NEWSLETTER OF COVENTRY NEIGHBORS, INC.

Vol. VII No. 1

## OPEN HOUSE TO CELEBRATE COMMUNITY TRIUMPH

by

Debbie Graves, Bobbie Littell & Dave Burwasser

On Sunday, December 13, the Cleveland Heights/University Heights Library Board will open its renovated Coventry Branch Library and invites the community to help celebrate the occasion at a gale Open House.

The event will end five years of uncertainty as to the future of the Coventry Branch. Years in which the Board made some controversial decisions about the scope of the branch; in which the citizens mobilized to define its needs and convince the Board to continue services; and finally, in which the Board and the citizens worked together to pass a levy and apply for Community Development Block Grant funds for the restoration of the landmark building.

At 2:30 PM the front doors will open to a library tripled in floor space, and eventually doubled in materials. The design and decoration has been planned for efficient library staffing and to enhance the original details of the building.

At 3 PM, the dedication ceremony will take place with short speeches from the Library administration and Board as well as community leaders, including Charles Owen of Coventry Neighbors.

At 3:45, the children will be treated to a performance of "Contemporary Magic" with Jim Kleefeld who has special "bookish" tricks.

The two other groups who share Coventry Library's building, the Dance Center and the Potter's Coop, will hold demonstration classes. Refreshments will be served.

The community will see many new features including an elevator for the disabled and elderly with its own special entrance, and a multipurpose room which will be used for meetings, quiet study and regularly scheduled library programs.

In the children's area, a structure called the Reader's Roost has been funded by the Friends of the Library. The children will be able to climb onto a platform supported by book cases, to curl up and read. They will be able to crawl underneath the platform to enjoy a partially enclosed private space.

Mrs. Barbara Elia has painted and carpeted the old doll house and after much searching has found some new, sturdy wooden furniture which will be bought with funds from the Friends of the Library. The children of Coventry, who have been asking for the doll house since its renovation began, will be pleased with the results.

A special teen area will have a whole collection of new paperback books as well as a college/career file.

The Friends of the Library have also funded a listening center. Earphones near the window seat will connect to a turntable under the circulation desk - anyone interested in hearing library records will be welcome to use this new feature.

The expanded book collection has come from four sources: the present Coventry collection; the past Coventry collection which has been housed at Main for six years; gifts from patrons; and a collection development fund for new books appropriated by the Board. It is hoped that the expanded collection will increase circulation. (Continued on page 7)

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BOOS AND BRAVOS

- BRAVO:** The new trees planted on the Coventry Village Library grounds are a welcome addition to our neighborhood environment. One should take special notice, also, of the stately old elm tree that watches over the corner of Euclid Heights Boulevard and Coventry Road. It's one of a kind.
- BOO:** It's sad that Keenan campaign workers illegally nailed campaign signs to the trees and lamp posts on Mayfield Hill and Cornell Hill. And weren't those Artha Woods for Cleveland Council signs nailed to the trees on Overlook Road in Cleveland Heights a sight. Of course, let's not forget the Horowitz campaign signs that were placed just over the Cleveland Heights border in Cleveland on the Cedar Glen Hill. Certainly, all these acts against our environment impressed our enlightened electorate in one way or another.
- BOO:** A pair of discarded couches sat on the tree lawn of 2761 Euclid Heights Boulevard for three weeks and still were not picked up by City crews. Clearly the City's bulk item procedures are not working and should be changed.

**BRAVO: H A P P Y**

H O L I D A Y S

T O

A L L ! !

-- Charles J. Owen

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DOBAMA OFFERS A WORLD PREMIER

The holiday offering at Dobama, opening December 3, will be the world premier of a wise and touching new play by Clevelanders Edward J. Walsh, Jr. and Robert Thomas Noll entitled "Harry & Mary." It will play Thursdays and Saturdays at 8:30 PM; Fridays at 9 PM; and Sundays at 7:30 PM through Sunday, December 20.

The play takes place at the twentieth college reunion of Harry and Mary who are married and have been separated for three and a half years. Harry went out to California to become a successful playwright, intending to send for his wife and kids. He just never got around to it. Mary stayed at home and grew up. As they see-saw back and forth about whether to divorce, stay separated, or effect a reconciliation, each of them opting for a different solution at one time or another, we laugh with them as they laugh at themselves, for they are witty, articulate people.

Don Bianchi directs the cast of two: Janis Jacobs and Pat Casey. Joyce Casey, Marilyn Caplane and Caryl Richards co-produce.

For reservations call 932-6838

-- bobbie littell

COVENTRY VILLAGE . . . We Watch Our For Each Other

CITY PLANS APARTMENT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

by

David R. Burwasser

Cleveland Heights plans to implement a federally-funded apartment improvement program in the city, for which \$100,000 was allocated in the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application approved by Council on November 16, 1981.

The program will help finance repairs mostly of a nature that can be done around the tenants, according to John Gustad, head of the City's Housing Preservation Center. Most of the problems in older Cleveland Heights apartment buildings concern major systems, plus some particularly bad individual units, Gustad said, so that massive relocation is not indicated. However, he stated that the City has no obligation or plans to pick up relocation costs.

The program would include a Tenant Councillor, who would meet with tenants in advance to inform them of what was going on.

The City plans to set conditions on landlord participation in what would amount to aid in meeting the landlord's legal obligations under the Building Code. One condition would be some form of agreement limiting sudden hikes in rents. This would especially apply to landlords who already enjoy a large differential between rental income and mortgage costs.

For tenants who would be strapped by unavoidable increases, the City would try to arrange Section Eight rental assistance. This would not include involvement of any new Section Eight tenants; nor would it be particularly certain at all, according to Gustad, who noted that the City has no control over who is certified for Section Eight aid.

Council plans to allocate \$100,000 each out of Ninth and Tenth Year CDBG funds, in addition to the like sum allocated this month, said Gustad. The City would also put in \$30,000 of its own money. If approved by the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corp. (NRC), national sponsors of the program, the City would receive a \$35,000 grant, most of which would go to offset the City's financial involvement. The total program is expected to last three to five years.

An essential part of the program, according to Gustad, is participation by local lending institutions, which the City is currently seeking. This and other components are being pulled together to gain approval for Cleveland Heights' involvement in the program. NRC, which is the offspring of the Urban Reinvestment Task Force and operates under a grant from the Dept. of Housing & Urban Development (HUD), has made no commitment to Cleveland Heights thus far.

The NRC program has been used elsewhere, and includes a computer financial model that can be tailored to a given community. The Tenant Councillor, for example, is part of the standard program. NRC would train two City staffers--Gustad himself and Judy Charlick, according to plans--to handle the program.

Communities across the country are competing for this program, Gustad said, and the City administration has been working toward pulling the right components together for 8-9 months. NRC people have visited Cleveland Heights twice, including one walking tour. Cleveland Heights apartment buildings were found to be sound on the exterior, Gustad said, so the program would focus on interiors.

The program is aimed at buildings with existing, old mortgages at well below current rates, according to Gustad. The program involves a second mortgage at a rate intermediate between the old and current rates. When more is needed--which is often the case, as lending institutions are reluctant to loan more than 80-85% of total value--the municipality steps in with a smaller loan at a rate below that of the old mortgage.

No provision has been made for coordinating this program with that of the Local Development Corporation (LDC) in cases where a building is both commercial and residential, as are many on Coventry Road.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS REPORT. . . . . . Charles J. Owen, Chair

ENVIRONMENTAL TIP: Don't forget. . . the grounds around your home are just as important as the rooms inside. You can enhance the character and flavor of your home, street and Coventry Village by maintaining attractively landscaped grounds. Healthy street trees, shrubs, and well-kept lawns increase property values and make for a good looking neighborhood. And while we are on the subject. . . be a good neighbor and rake your leaves. Why should your neighbors have to do extra work as your leaves constantly blow into their yard?

WHY NOT JOIN US? Our next meeting will be on Thursday, 3 December, 1981 (7:30 PM) at the Ricketts' residence, 2922 Somerton Road. Telephone 321-1268 or write to Coventry Neighbors, 2745 Hampshire Road, Cleveland Heights 44106 for details.

CRIME PREVENTION TASK FORCE REPORT. . . . . . Bruce M. Hennes, Chair

The Coventry Neighbors Crime Prevention Task Force is currently in the process of planning a winter educational campaign along with a series of workshops on rape and personal crime prevention for both men and women.

The best way to stop crime in Coventry Village is to educate yourself, educate your friends and neighbors, and report suspicious activity to the police.

Please help us take back the streets and join the Crime Prevention Task Force.

The next meeting will be on Monday evening, December 21 at 8:00 PM 2910 Hampshire Road, Cleveland Heights.

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YOU may become a member of COVENTRY NEIGHBORS, INC. simply by filling out this tear slip and retraining it with your check, made payable to COVENTRY NEIGHBORS, INC. to 2745 Hampshire Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44106.

Check one of the following classes of membership.

\*  Individual (\$2.50)  Family (\$3.50)  Seniors (\$1.50)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

I am now receiving COVENTRY VILLAGE NEWS by mail.  Yes  No.

\*Cost of membership represents yearly membership pro-rated to reflect the last six months of 1981, until December 31, at which time full membership will be due.

COVENTRY VILLAGE . . . WE Watch Out For Each Other

SERVICE DEPARTMENT READIES FOR SNOW FALL

By the time you read this we may have had our first major snow fall of the year. In anticipation I went to call on Dominic Tomaro, Commissioner of Services for the City of Cleveland Heights to learn about snow plowing. I was Impressed by what I learned and with the efficiency of operation of this vital city department.

During the day the Commissioner of Public Service and the Commissioner of Traffic and Signals are responsible for initiating the action of the plows. From the close of the working day to the beginning of the next, the Police Department, specifically the officer in charge of each shift is responsible for initiating the process.

First three salt trucks and a front end loader are called. These are deployed where needed and the Commissioners of Service and Traffic and Signals are alerted. The two determine if and when the snow plow crews are called. (Crews include: drivers, loaders and mechanics.)

Once the crew assemble there commences an elaborate mechanized ballet choreographed in advance -- executed by mammoth trucks working sometimes in fours and some times in pairs according to predetermined patterns.

In order to allow clear passage of through traffic and keep arteries from becoming clogged the "mains" are plowed first using 4 trucks in two teams. The city is divided into two segments of about 40 miles each. Each street is cleaned in two sweeps -- resulting in about 80 miles of mains to be plowed.

On a typical run four trucks leave the garage at Mayfield, head north to the top of the Mayfield hill and split off, two trucks going down the hill, across Murray Hill and back up on Edgemoor; the other two would go across Kenilworth. They would re-group and plow down Cedar Hill to the RTA turn-around and back up Cedar. They plow four trucks in tandem on the wide streets, splitting, looping and re-grouping to sweep the narrow ones. Using this system, the main routes can be cleaned in three to four hours depending on the time of day, temperature and snow accumulation.

On completion of the mains the trucks report back to the garage where the vehicles are checked and fueled and the drivers pick up their assignments for plowing the secondary roads.

The secondaries are plowed by teams of two trucks which loop from one street to another according to plan designed to deploy resources as efficiently as possible. Because of the necessity to plow both sides the mileage is doubled, totaling 300 miles of secondary roads. These are plowed in three to four hours. If a parked car hinders the operation it is noted on the drivers report and a smaller plow is sent to complete the operation later.

In this way the almost 80 miles of mains and nearly 300 miles of secondaries are cleared by 12-14 men in 8 hours using some \$300,000 worth of machinery.

In addition Tomaro has 16-20 men on stand-by so that he can spell his crews so that no man needs to work more than a 12 hour shift in an emergency. He may also request the assistance of the stand-by resources of the Police Department when needed.

One of the most frustrating aspects of the process for Tomaro is the complaints he gets from homeowners because of snow dumped onto driveway aprons. The homeowner can help with that Tomaro says. If while cleaning out his drive the homeowner will clear into the street a foot or two, in the direction of the traffic flow - the plow, as it makes its sweep, will not dump as much snow onto the apron.

In January the CVN will examine the laws regarding the homeowners responsibility for the removal of snow from his property.

-- bobble littell

CNI MEETING NOTES

The November 11, 1981, CNI meeting took two positions on current issues. The organization voted to support, conditionally, the sign changes that the Coventry Village Branch Library wants to seek. The Library wants to erect a sign on each side of the building that faces a street, to indicate the three uses of the building -- one each for the branch itself, the Potter's Gorp and the Dance Center. The total sign area is to be less than the Library currently uses under a prior non-conforming use, but it is over code and requires permission of the City. CNI voted to support the library, provided the sign designs are viewed and approved by representatives of the Environmental Concerns and Planning & Zoning Committees.

CNI also took a stand against proposed Council Resolution 110-1981, which would change the zoning regulation of public land, at least in the present form of the resolution.

Councilmember Alan Rapoport reported to the meeting that the City was repaving Mayfield Hill despite lack of a remuneration agreement with the City of Cleveland, because the road had been in such bad shape that prompt action had been indicated. Rapoport said City Hall hopes to negotiate a settlement on costs with Cleveland after the fact and also is considering repaving of Kenilworth, which is in similarly rocky shape.

Rapoport relayed a fact discovered by F. David Gill: An ordinance regulating video games and pinball games, arising from Texas, is before the United States Supreme Court for review.

In a special report, June Wortman discussed her activities on the public advisory committee to the RTA Board of Trustees. She shared several instances of poor internal communications and/or resource allocation decisions of questionable wisdom within RTA, and stated that RTA needs a lot more public attention.

-- gave Burwasser

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WLYT TO HIGHLIGHT COVENTRY

Coventry Village, its people, its history, and its highly diverse culture, will be the focus of a one hour program, to be heard in two 30-minute segments on WLYT (92.3 FM).

The shows, to be aired December 20th and 27th at 8 AM on WLYT's "Behind The Lines" talk show, will focus on Coventry Village as it is today. But it will also look at the Coventry of old, and how the area made the transition from being something of a "hippie haven" to a sort of Greenwich Village. Hosted by WLYT's Judi Thompson, the show will feature interviews with members of Coventry Neighbors, Inc., Coventry Merchants, and other individuals who are part of the Coventry area. The show will look at some businesses flourishing there, and of course examine the history of Coventry. The main focus will be the people of Coventry -- those who live, work and participate in its life.

Don't forget to tune in Sunday, December 20, and Sunday, December 27th, at 8 AM on WLYT for an in-depth look at a fascinating, vital part of Cleveland Heights.

COVENTRY VILLAGE. . . We Watch Out For Each Other

CRIMESTOPPERS NOTEBOOK . . . . . By Bruce Hennes

The following is abstracted from "Operation Crime Alert" published by the State of Ohio.

Rape is the most violent, frightening and serious of all crimes against women. It is a disgusting, painful and emotionally disturbing experience. Rape affects all women without regard to age, race, physical appearance, marital or economic status. A rapist is, in many respects, like a burglar looking for the right chance, the right location and the easiest victim. A woman's best defense is to eliminate the opportunity for attack. Much of the information below is applicable to both women and men.

Invest in good locks for your doors and windows -- most importantly, use them. Install a chain lock on your door and if at all possible, a one-way peep hole so you can see who is outside. All entrances to your home or apartment, parking lot or garage should be well lighted at night.

One of your best defenses against rape on the street is to avoid walking alone. After dark, always carry a flash light and avoid poorly lighted streets, alleys, vacant lots or parking areas and keep a respectable distance from alley entrances and tall shubbery. By walking on the side of the street facing traffic you can see all automobiles approaching you.

You should avoid burdening yourself with anything that will hinder your vision or movement. If you wear anything other than flats or tennis shoes, you should be aware that your choice of footwear might hinder quick movement in a dangerous situation.

Car doors should always be locked -- any time you enter or leave the car. Before getting in, check the floor and the back seat for intruders. If you park in an open lot or a public garage keep an eye open for loiterers and always have your keys in hand so you won't have to fumble in your purse or pocket. When getting out of your car at home, take a quick look around before unlocking the door, and have your house keys out and ready for use.

Although it's sometimes difficult or inconvenient, try to choose a lot or garage with an attendant; otherwise, park in a well lighted area. If you must work late, ask your employer or a friend to accompany you to your car, or plan to leave as a group.

Avoid stops at out of the way, poorly lighted places unless car service is absolutely necessary. It's a good idea to make sure your car is operating properly and has sufficient gas before you leave home.

Despite all your precautions, if you are attacked, keep a level head. Think, don't panic.

Always look for a way to escape. Most women escape possible rape by talking their way out of it. . . few escape by fighting or trying to overpower the attacker. Distract him, disrupt his pattern by screaming, telling him you have VD or that he really doesn't want to hurt you or upset his family. Getting him to talk to you may give you the chance to get away.

The choice of whether to physically fight back is a decision only you can make. If your attacker is armed with a weapon, your alternatives are relatively limited. If you do fight, take advantage of items in your purse -- i.e. your keys, or try to scratch your assailant about the face or eyes. Kicking the attacker in the knees or groin area is effective only if you connect.

There is no way to predict his actions under assault -- use judgement wisely -- your life is too important to risk. Fighting, unless you are expertly trained, should be a last resort.

Your first, and best defense is noise -- scream long and loud. People will react to a scream of FIRE more readily than for HELP.

COVENTRY POETRY CONTEST

In the July issue of CVN we announced a Poetry Contest and solicited poems about Coventry. We renewed the request in September but only received four entries, Three by Daniel Thompson and one by Ben Berky. We have therefore declared it "no contest" and herewith publish one of Daniel's and Ben's.

COVENTRY -- MORE THAN JUST A STREET

A street is just a street, you say?  
Not so! Some streets have a heart,  
And a soul, and rich, red blood pumping  
In its veins;  
Streets play a part in the drama of life,  
With its share of trouble and travail.  
Treasures and pleasures are here as well;  
It is not Paradise, but very close --  
And bids all welcome!

That sense of immortality, the breath  
Of indestructibility is strong,  
As is the feeling of survival;  
Home is where the heart is, poets say.  
Coventry is the heart of the home!  
Come summertime, the street seems immortal  
In its prime, deep in a mellow interim of time.  
If you listen, you can hear a gossiped word  
From house to house, invoking memories  
Of the past -- memories that will not sever.  
The seasons change, but some streets, never!

- Ben B. Berky

WE ARE GOING TO COVENTRY

Fast-as-molasses Seymour  
Works at County Welfare  
Lives alone, in his rooms  
Books, a tape recorder  
Tempora rily out of order  
While around the corner  
Are the wife & daughter  
In their genteel squalor  
Living better thru 'lectricity  
Color TV, a new dryer  
Watch the trash get higher  
Watch the dust gather round the bro  
Beard, ash & glasses Seymour  
Play that damn piano  
Then eat your supper with a spoon  
After soup & crackers  
Like a couple of characters  
We'll go out & act as crazy as a lo  
We are going gambling  
Drinking & exploring  
We are going to Coventry  
To the C-Saw Saloon  
Fast-as-molasses  
Beard, ash & glasses  
We are going to Coventry  
To howl at the moon

- Daniel

Thank you gentlemen!

-- bobble littell

ODDS 'N ENDS

Central Bank has opened its automatic, card operated teller. This should prove a real boon, once it starts living up to its "24-hour" billing consistently. These things are very handy, when reliable. . . Most of the windows on the street look very festive with their holiday decorations. I do wish Phil (The Drill) Imperi would do something about the sun rotted drapes in his window. . . There are some parking places designated for the handicapped in Coventry. Those who are sound of limb and wind should respect them.



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCHDOG: "THAT IMPOSSIBLE FAMILY"

Every neighborhood has one - "that family" whose adults and children are noisy, violent, abusive, steal, abuse alcohol and/or drugs, destroy property, etc. The neighbors all suffer but are too afraid to do anything. However, by persistent and concerted neighborhood action, these families can be dealt with. In the next several articles we will present, first, a success story, and later an un-success story, and try to pin-point reasons for un-success.

Blank Street did not have a street association, but after consulting with Helen Payton of the Heights Community Congress, and Barbara Vails, the city community worker, they formed one to deal with such a family. Even starting a street association was an act of courage because that family warned a 11 not to attend the meeting, or else. . . The association's first task was to tread the minefields of racial feelings. The street was integrated; that family was black. Black neighbors hesitated to act against "brothers." White neighbors feared appearing racist. During the discussion these reluctant feelings were voiced. But also they spoke of living in fear for themselves and their children, being constantly harassed, prisoners in their own homes. Finally they decided that behavior was at issue, not race. They united around a shared feeling that living in terror was no way to live. They had had enough. They agreed that all action would be decided by the group and carried out by the group, so that retaliation would be more difficult to carry out. As a result of many conferences involving the police, community worker, housing inspectors and health department personnel a plan was developed to use all legal methods of surrounding that family with social controls. They used every possible agency, filed complaints as a group, attended hearings as a group.

On the noise problem (motor-bikes, fights, loud parties, hi-fi) the police were called at every problem incident, and record was kept of every call. It soon was clear, from the sudden quiet after a call to police, that some warning system was operating. The neighbors suspected a short-wave radio or CB. The police agreed to make more frequent patrols without radio calls. It worked; that family was caught in the act. Arrests and court filings resulted. The same follow-through occurred with the inspections and health departments, also with success.

On the problem of the children, filing had to be made through Youth Services of the police department, the youth prosecutor, and Juvenile Court. All incidents of harassment, abuse, and theft were reported and records kept. (If children not of the immediate family live there, illegal occupancy is possible, and action may be taken through zoning authorities.) If child abuse or neglect is suspected, Protective Services of Cuyahoga County Child Welfare Dept. can be called, anonymously if necessary, and investigation may be requested.

Finally, one of the neighbors had a brilliant idea; they found out what bank held the mortgage on the home and urged the bank to take any legal action possible. This information is available in public records at City Hall.

One member of the street association told me that when the case came to court the judge said the family was "incorrigible" and ordered them to move. That is not so. The judge does not have the power to banish people. The judge could order a stiff sentence, then offer to suspend it if the family accepted family therapy. But it did not get to that point. What happened? That family moved out. They got the message. Rather than change their behavior, or put up with more "social controls," they left. Besides, the bank was about to foreclose.

Things are quieter now on Blank Street. People sleep better. They don't worry about their kids' safety so much. They feel proud to have stood together against terrorist neighbors, regardless of race, to insist on a decent life. But it did not come free. It took courage. It took learning to work together and not give up. It cost hours of planning and follow through, and took months to accomplish. They feel it was worth it. Besides, if they didn't act to protect themselves, who would?

June C. Wortman

