



Coventry Village News

DECEMBER, 1983

NEWSLETTER OF COVENTRY NEIGHBORS, INC. VOL 8, NO. 10

PARKING PLANS PROCEED SLOWLY; ALTERNATIVES ARE STUDIED

by Larry Baum

The plan to construct a new parking facility on the vacant land at the north-east corner of Lancashire Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard rests on the desk of Joyce Braverman, a designer in the City's Planning Department. Braverman is studying a variety of possible configurations for the lot. She is also studying some other possible locations for added parking in the area. The *CVN* reported in October that construction of the lot might begin as early as the first nice weather of Spring; so early a start now appears impossible, with a mid- to late-Summer start being the earliest possible.

Meanwhile, some Coventry residents and members of the City's Planning staff are having second thoughts about putting a parking lot at Lancashire and Euclid Heights. These critics feel that the site might better be developed as a residential building, or, if developer interest is absent, as a park.

They suggest that locating parking elsewhere might better serve the neighborhood's needs while better preserving its aesthetics and character. The other locations receiving attention include the strip along the east side of Musician's Towers. Generally known as Hampshire Commons and now developed in park-like fashion, serving mostly as a short-cut through the neighborhood, this narrow strip is more centrally located, and therefore more convenient to folks who need parking. Single family houses on Hampshire and Lancashire adjacent to each end of this strip might be removed to allow the expansion of public parking lots already there. On the south side of Lancashire, across from this strip of land and to the east of the Unitarian Society building, are two more houses that might be taken down to allow the expansion of the public parking lot that's already in place.

Those who favor alternative locations feel that the the Lancashire-Euclid Heights site is too prominent--being quite visible from a much-traveled thoroughfare --to be used for parking. The lesser visibility of the alternatives would allow their development as parking with far less disruption to neighborhood aesthetics than would be possible, with even the best of design, at Lancashire-Euclid Heights. Lancashire-Euclid Heights might become a park--perhaps something like the popular play area known as Turtle Park, at the corner of Hampshire and Euclid Heights. More frequently

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HUNGER CENTER SEEKS GIFTS, HELPS NEEDY

Gifts of food for the less fortunate in this holiday season may be dropped off at Quail Quilts, 1511 Coventry Road. Only canned goods and other non-perishable food can be accepted.

The Hunger Center, an arm of the Greater Cleveland Inter-Faith Council, will distribute the food to the needy. Their nearest distribution center is Euclid Avenue Christian Church, 3663 Mayfield Road, across from Severance Shopping Center.

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PERSONS wishing to submit copy for the January issue may do so by sending it to the Editor, *Coventry Village News*, 1811 1/2 Coventry Road, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118, no later than December 16. While no unsigned items will be published, your name may be withheld on request. Phone 875-6095.

MEETING NOTES

November Regular Meeting

A volunteer from the Heights Community Congress (HCC) described an audit of the real estate industry to be undertaken shortly by the HCC's Open Housing Task Force. The HCC is seeking workers in this effort.

CNI's Planning and Zoning Committee will study the City's plans for a parking facility at the intersection of Lancashire Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard; see story on page one.

Larry Beam was formally named Editor of the Coventry Village News, under the same terms under which Bobbie Littell served in that role.

Bob Shields agreed to communicate the CNI's concern and dissatisfaction with the language of signs recently installed in the business district which were intended to discourage bike riding on the sidewalk there, but which seem instead to completely prohibit bikes from the area.

Bruce Hennes was named Statutory Agent for CNI.

COVENTRY VILLAGE . . .
. . . WE WATCH OUT FOR EACH OTHER

HOW COVENTRY VOTED

If only votes from the Coventry area had been counted on November 8, only the results of the School Board race would have been changed. The winners and losers of all other races would have been just the same. Here Coventry is thought of as just the five voting precincts that touch on the Coventry commercial district; the whole of Cleveland Heights has seventy-two such precincts.

In that School Board race, Maureen Weigand would have finished first, with 476 votes. Saul Ialer would have finished second, with 387. The candidates finishing out of the money in this five-way race with two to be elected would have been Robert Soitz, with 280, Donalene Poduska, with 199, and Daniel Grant, with 158. The actual results were: Weigand, 9,574; Soitz, 8,705; Ialer, 8,631; Poduska, 5,857; and Grant, 3,447.

In the race for Cleveland Heights City Council, Alan Rapoport would have finished first, with 552 votes, if only the Coventry precincts be counted. Second would have been Barbara Boyd, with 491; Joanne O'Brien, who finished comfortably in first place City wide, would have been third, with 424. Finishing out of the money in Coventry, as across the City, would have been Dennis Coughlin, a Coventry denizen, with 298; Robert Asman, 270; and Michael Edelstein, 157. Actual results were: O'Brien, 9,146; Rapoport, 7,899; Boyd, 7,671; Coughlin, 5,766; Asman, 5,602; and Edelstein, 3,326.

The school levy carried Coventry 693 to 341, or about two to one; across the School District, the levy carried 12,767 to 10,256, or about 55% to 45%. Issue 1, regarding drinking age, lost in Coventry, 384 to 662. Issue 2 lost 229 to 795; and Issue 3 lost 693 to 342. Issues 2 and 3 were state tax questions.

HCC HOLDS ANNUAL MEETING; LOTT WINS LOTT AWARD

Lacy Lott, husband of Bernice Lott, accepted the first annual Bernice E. Lott Memorial Award for the Outstanding Citizen of Cleveland Heights-University Heights on behalf of his late wife. The award was made at the annual meeting of the Heights Community Congress (HCC) on November 20.

The evening's speaker, Dr. Arthur Naparstek, Dean of the School of Applied Social Science at Case-Western Reserve University, stressed the importance of community groups in his keynote address. He said that the shortcomings of the nation's present urban policy stem largely from its failure to pay sufficient attention to people and their diversity. Present policy, he said, tends too often to impose the same solutions on Cities and neighborhoods whose problems are quite different and so require differing solutions. He said that community groups must take an active part in the formulation and implementation of urban policy in the Eighties. Only through the involvement of such groups, he said, can the our problems arising from differences in race, class, and ethnicity be resolved.

SEASON'S GREETINGS. HAPPY CHANUKAH. MERRY CHRISTMAS.

HALLOWEEN PARTY BECOMES TRADITION

A mostly costumed crowd, estimated to total about 1100, danced to the music of the Echoes at the Second Annual Coventry Village Halloween Party, held just before Halloween in the park in front of Coventryyard.

Special thanks is due to Susan Hennenberg and the merchants of Coventryyard, who paid for the event. Thanks, too, to the Heights Art Theater and Haagen Dazs Ice Cream, who provided gift certificates for the costume contest.

The event would have been impossible without the help of these people: Marcia Nolan, for taking care of City Hall matters; Jim McManus, for good-humored police work; Kathryn, Gwyn, Judson and Joel Young, Hank Nowak, Janice Cline, and Marion Fisher for decorations; Bob Shields and Diana Cyganovich for providing hay; Susan and Richard Haders for supplying corn stalks, and to Larry Beam and Peter Goldsmith for cleaning up afterward.

--Bruce Hennes, Halloween Party Chair

LIBRARY GOINGS-ON

Several very special events will take place in December at the Coventry Village Library. On December 12, at 7:00 p.m., Tina Schlatter will speak on the topic, "singles in the Holidays: Creating new traditions." The Coventry Village Library Advisory Committee's Singles Forum, which assembled this program, is planning more programs for the winter months. We hope Coventry singles will join us for for these programs. Anyone interested in helping with the planning is also welcome.

Let the Coventry Players brighten your holiday season with two enchanting plays and other surprises on Thursday December 13 at 3:00 p.m.

Two movies for family and friends will be shown on December 27 at 1:00 p.m. The hour-long festival will include "Miss Nelson is Missing," and "Great Movie Stunts from The Raiders of the Lost Ark." Join us in the Library Meeting Room.

Many excellent programs continue at Coventry Village Library. Preschool evening storytime will continue on Thursday evenings, 6:45 to 7:15, December 6 and 13. Pre-school storytime will continue Wednesdays December 7 and 14 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. For older children, The Magic of our Minds final session will be on December 6 from 2:30 to 3:00.

HELP WITH UTILITY BILLS

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) offers emergency grants of up to \$200 to pay gas or electric bills for low-income persons who have had one of these utilities turned off or who have received a disconnection notice. HEAP's regular program offers assistance with the large gas bills of December, January and February. Related programs assist low-income home-owners with the costs of insulating their homes properly.

These programs are paid for with Federal Windfall Profits Tax proceeds. Cleveland Heights residents should contact the Housing Preservation Office at 371-6696. Similar programs are available to the residents of most other communities.

AROUND COVENTRY . . .

AWARDS . . . In an Olympics-like international competition among theaters for the deaf, The Fairmount Theater of the Deaf (FTD) won a special award for the "most popular production," and sometimes Coventry resident Debby Anne Rennie was honored as "best individual performer." Rennie, winner of the Best Costume prize at last year's CNI Halloween party, plans now to return to her studies at the Rochester Institute of Technology. Rennie and six other FTD people traveled to Brno, Czechoslovakia, for the competition. They performed *Smircus: A Sign-Mime Circus*, which had been adopted from a sign-language play called *A Circus of Signs*, by Deborah Taylor, one of its co-authors. The new version is entirely pantomime, making no use of either spoken or sign language.

HEADLINES . . . Coventry Neighbors Candidates Night attracted *Sun Press* headlines when former CNI Vice President F. David Gill asked Council candidates whether controversial City Manager Richard Robinson should be dismissed or retained. An electric moment in an otherwise dull campaign, Gill's question brought applause, whistles, and other sounds from an audience that hadn't let out a peep the rest of the evening.

We understand that, shortly after the episode, Robinson took steps toward the establishment of a committee to study the causes of citizen upset with his administration. The title, precise charge, and composition of this committee remain unclear, though apparently the committee will consist of senior members of Robinson's staff.

RICOCHET . . . The burned-out building at 2764 Lancashire Road, where last month we reported a third fire, has apparently acquired a tenant. A young friend of ours, a seventh-grader at Roxboro Junior High, led us up the building's back stairs, where, on the top-floor porch, someone was indeed living. The porch was furnished with an old couch, several blankets and sleeping bags, a folding chair, some newspapers and bags of personal effects, a pack of rolling papers, and a very impressive collection of spent wine and beer bottles. Our young friend identified the tenant there as "Ricochet"—a vagrant more formally known as Ed Mickshaw, for whom our young friend and several of his peers hold a troubling fascination. Despite several recent arrests by Cleveland Heights and East Cleveland authorities, Mickshaw's presence in the neighborhood and menacing behavior continue. We recently saw him trying to sell what appeared to be a hand-gun and some ammunition to stunned customers in the Turkey Ridge Tavern; Police Chief Martin Lentz reports that his officers confiscated a flare pistol—having the general appearance of a .38 snub-nose revolver—from Mickshaw a day later. Mickshaw had been carrying the pistol openly visible on his person, Lentz said. Lentz has referred the matter to the prosecutor.

Several weeks before, Mickshaw had brandished a similar gun-like device about the store-front office of Council candidate Alan Rapoport. Numerous businesses have had severe problems with him.

Mickshaw is a ward of the Veterans Administration. He says he was in the Air Force, and that he saw combat in Viet Nam. Asked if the VA might be able to help him, he said, breaking into tears, "The VA doesn't help at all."

BOBBIE . . . Bobbie Littell, whose column "Street Talk" graced this space in the *CVN* for several years, says that she is "burned out," and needs at least a few months away from the task. Bobbie's first grandchild, Megan, was born to Bobbie's daughter Peggy a few weeks ago. The father is Jim Strang, a *Plain Dealer* staffer.

COMMUNITY WATCH-DOG: The BZA

Opinion

This month the bottom fell out of two stories I was considering for this column. The youth center will not take final vote on a candidate for executive director by my deadline. The final session of the Workshop on Aging at the Coventry Library was cancelled because the speaker lost her voice.

What is left to stop me from finally revealing the comedy of errors known formally as the monthly meeting of the Board of Zoning Appeals? Nothing but my natural discretion, which has worn thin under repeated recent exposure to this procedure. Pity anyone who must become involved in the process. As an example, take Harold Friedman, of the Heights Medical Building at Cedar and Fairmount. He came requesting a variance to permit him to put up a sign, larger than permitted in the Code, on a bridge leading from the back of the building to the parking lot behind it. Mr. Friedman should have been informed at the beginning of his application process (but obviously was not) that he should first have presented the design of his sign to the Board of Architectural Board of Review. Fortunately for him, the BZA did not delay his variance for this oversight. Had one of the Board members believed the design to be deficient, he might have been required to return to the BZA after going to the ABR.

Mr. Friedman's experience in not being given information from the start about the requirements and process expected is not uncommon, though for him the outcome was more fortunate than most. Anyone who has not gone through it can not believe what a Kafka novel one becomes a part of. One is engulfed by frustration and helpless rage at the nit-pickiness, the lack of clear information, and one's inability to anticipate because of the information lack. For many citizens, this is their first contact with City Hall, which they perceive as capricious, imperious, inhuman, and ultimately ridiculous. I could hardly believe my ears or hold my tongue when the person who was "helping" me some months ago said, "I am not here to give answers. I am only here to ask questions."

Citizen complaints about the process have been heard for many years. Neither changes in Council composition, nor changes in the planning staff or City Manager seem to affect the way the public is dealt with at City Hall. (I have no complaints about the Community Relations Department.) Regardless of the plans to have one person shepherd citizens through the processes, departments and boards, it still appears that public "servants" give as little information and as hard a time as possible to the public. We the public have to provide answers, but they do not. Citizens come to feel that they exist to serve City Hall. I don't believe it is intentional, but it happens too often.

I will leave for later my comments on details of the BZA hearing process itself. I will have to feel very brave or very reckless indeed to tweak the tails of tigers on whose good graces I may depend in the future. Such fear, that we all share, is probably the main reason why the processes at City Hall, especially obtaining permits and variances, never change. All of us are afraid to complain publicly for fear of being skewered later when we come before the BZA or other official body which has the power to refuse, and thus destroy, our hopes and dreams. I hope others will write to the CVN and to City Council if they share my views.

---June C. Wortman

COUNCIL: BOYD ELECTED, INCUMBENTS RETURNED

In a low-key campaign regarded by some as boring, Cleveland Heights voters returned incumbent candidates Joanne O'Brien and Alan Rapoport and elected first-time challenger Barbara Boyd to City Council. Perhaps the biggest surprise was the lack of surprises.

O'Brien ran an impressive first with 9146 votes, 16% ahead of Rapoport's 7899. That she ran so much better with so much less exposure is regarded as a mystery in places like the *Sun Press*--surprisingly in view of the obvious factor that O'Brien, while not shunning controversy, has never provided actual embarrassment to the community.

Boyd's 7671 votes, just 3% behind Rapoport and 33% in front of Dennis Coughlin's 5766, reflect a credible candidate running a vigorous campaign on serious issues. If returning the incumbents suggests a community 2/3 satisfied with the way things are going, Boyd's election suggests a community 1/3 dissatisfied, and prepared to empower a feisty, issue-oriented newcomer to address that dissatisfaction. One clear element of dissatisfaction--but only one element in Boyd's winning combination--is the uniformity of white faces in the power elite of a city whose population is 25% black. That Boyd did not win by race alone is attested by the failure of two black Council candidacies in past elections. Boyd is expected to be a shaker-upper at City Hall.

Moving below the winners' circle, we find an intriguing inversion of gaps: a mere 3% separating Coughlin from Robert Asman (5766 to 5602), and a full 15% dividing Asman from Jack Kolesar's 4885. Coughlin and Asman, like O'Brien, were endorsed by the Committee for Heights Progress (CHP), a well-heeled and experienced force on the Heights Council scene. They represent attempts to repeat previously-successful CHP strategies: candidate recruitment from neighborhood-leader and official-family figures (Coughlin of CNI and Asman of the Zoning Board). Apparently neither appealed as strongly to satisfaction as the incumbents, nor to dissatisfaction as Boyd.

Kolesar's poor showing can be attributed partially to campaign strategy choices and partially to the internal politics of the Cleveland Heights Democrats (Dema), who endorsed him as well as Boyd and Rapoport. While the CHP finally learned *not* to present themselves as carriers of the banner of Marjorie Wright and Fred Slashower, Kolesar depended heavily on the personal endorsement of veteran Council-member Jack Boyle, who chose not to stand for re-election. As one Coventry observer stated, "You've got to wear your own pants in this town."

The low profile of the Dema in this race (another alleged mystery) arose from internal dissension. Many Dema, including many Kolesar supporters, have been unable to accept Rapoport since he formed a fusion government with Republicans O'Brien and Bob Arnold in 1961. This year, the Kolesar campaign refused any action in the nature of collaboration with the Rapoport campaign; and Boyd would not approve any collaboration with only one of the other two Dema. This effectively precluded any Dem action on behalf of all three, mostly to the detriment of Kolesar.

Kolesar ran a large 47% ahead of Mike Edelstein's 3326, the largest percentage gap in the returns. Edelstein was endorsed by neither CHP nor Dema and had had little previous public exposure. Edelstein attributes his support base to a religious

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WORKERS SOUGHT FOR OPEN HOUSING EFFORT

The Open Housing Task Force of the Heights Community Congress is seeking workers who will pose as home buyers in a fresh effort to police the racial steering activities of realtors.

Workers will pose as couples seeking to buy homes. Paired couples of various races, having identical housing needs and financial resources, will contact realtors and visit homes suggested by the realtors. A detailed report will be made on the the treatment the couples receive. Any differences in the way each realtor treats couples will be evaluated by the task force for evidence of possible discrimination.

It was through just such audit efforts as these that the foundation was laid for the lengthy law suit against HGM-Hilltop Realty; a decision in that case is expected soon. In more routine cases, the Task Force takes the more conciliatory stance of meeting privately with realtors when audits reveal evidence of discrimination. The need for auditors to participate in court actions or even meetings is very very rare.

The Heights Community Congress will provide six hours of training. Audits typically take four to five hours. Workers will be paid a small stipend for each audit they conduct. A car is necessary. Call the Heights Community Congress at 321-6775.

MEDICAL HELP FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

by Ben Selzer, HCC Senior Class Trustee

Mt. Sinai Hospital has established an office in the Severance Medical Arts Building. It is called Mt. Sinai Family Medicine Associates, Inc. The office is headed by Dr. Robert L. Dickman, Director of Family Medicine and Chairman of Geriatrics at Mt. Sinai.

This statement by Dr. Dickman clarifies the concept under which the office operates: "We have established a health care facility that is dedicated to a commitment to provide comprehensive health care to the elderly. We are prepared to work closely with groups to ensure that no other person in the community is denied health care for financial reasons."

PARKING . . . continued from page 1

discussed is its development as a much simpler open space--maybe as just flat grassy area with a volleyball net; its treatment in this fashion might be a holding action, allowing attractive and productive use until a developer willing to put an appropriate residential building there can be found.

Coventry Merchants Association prefers Lancashire-Euclid Heights. And many area residents feel that we've talked enough about parking, and that we should get on with building it--*wherever*--without further ado. The Lancashire-Euclid Heights site is already City-owned and vacant, a substantial cost advantage. What is more, the City plans to use Federal Job Bill money for this project; the Federal government wants this money spent swiftly, perhaps more swiftly than would be possible if houses are to be razed, and new homes found for the residents.

Anyone wishing to participate in the formulation of CVN's position on these questions, or who wants to express a written position in these pages, should call the CVN at 371-6894.

CANDIDATES NIGHT A HIT

The traditional Coventry Neighbors Candidates Night was held at Coventry Elementary School just before the recent election; it was broadcast several times by Viacom Cablevision.

We wish to thank Arnie Rosenberg, Editor of the *Sun Press*, for a superlative job moderating both the City Council and School Board portions of the evening.

Joe Wyant, Program Director at Viacom, graciously allocated video equipment and staff time to the effort.

Many thanks are due to Sarah Rapoport, Director; Martin Friedman, Camera-man; Mike Borken, Transportation, Kathryn Young, Hospitality; Bob Shields, Microphone; F. David Gill, Narration and Editing; Jean Harper; and to Larry Peacock and the Staff of Coventry Elementary School.

This production of Coventry Neighbors, Inc. cost CNI \$15.00.

--Bruce Hennes and Larry Beam, Co-Chairmen

SINGLES FORUM: SCHLATTER ON THE HOLIDAYS

by Dave Burwasser

"What's it like to be single during the Holidays?"

Tina Schlatter, singles columnist for the *Plain Dealer*, will address this topic for the Coventry Village Library Singles Forum at its first program meeting on Monday evening, December 12, at 7:30 PM at the Library. Discussion and social hour will follow.

All are cordially invited.

GIRL SCOUT COOKIES

Senior Girl Scout Troup 25 will be selling home-made chocolate cookies from a stand in front of High Tide/Rock Bottom on December 3 and 17. Proceeds will finance a camping trip next summer. Folks who won't be around Coventry these Saturdays may order by calling Carol Gibeon at 932-8733.

ELECTION ANALYSIS . . . continued from page 7

Jewish vote no longer willing to be represented in politics by secular Jewish candidates. A contrast with Boyd is instructive: Boyd secured the interest of non-Cleveland Heights blacks through, e.g., the Cuyahoga County Black Women's PAC; and of non-black Cleveland Heights residents through, e.g., emphasizing such issues of universal concern as the those of youth. Ethnicity alone is not adequate to secure election to Cleveland Heights Council.

Winners are exciting, and analysis is interesting, but one thing should be remembered about those who backed the losers: They don't go away. The CHP resources, the religious Jewish vote and the partisan Dems are still out there, and will be heard from in future Council contests.

--David R. Burwasser

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TIME VALUE -- PLEASE DELIVER BY FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1983

COVENTRY NEIGHBORS, INC. General Meeting, Tuesday, December 13, 7:30 PM in the Community Room of the Coventry Village Library. The public is invited.

COVENTRY NEIGHBORS, INC. Trustees Meeting, Thursday, January 5, 7:30 PM at 2910 Hampshire Road. Committee Chairpersons are asked to attend. The Trustees meeting is open to all dues-paid members of CNI.

NOW is the time to join COVENTRY NEIGHBORS, INC. Membership includes a subscription to the *Coventry Village News*. All memberships will expire on December 31, 1984.

Please check one of the following:

Class of membership: _____ Individual (\$5.00) _____ Family (\$7.00) _____ Senior (\$3.00)
_____ Just a subscription to the *Coventry Village News*—no membership.
(\$5 for 11 months; the *CVN* is not published in August.)

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____ ZIP: _____

I am now receiving the *Coventry Village News*: YES _____ NO _____

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