



# Coventry Village News

FEBRUARY, 1985

NEWSLETTER OF COVENTRY NEIGHBORS, INC. VOL 9, NO. 2

## LOW-RATE LOANS NOW AVAILABLE

Home improvement loans, with interest rates as low as 5.5%, are now available to many Cleveland Heights residents in all parts of the City. The rules governing these loans make the program especially attractive to homeowners in North Coventry, the part of Cleveland Heights north of Mayfield Road and west of City Hall. Slightly less than \$300,000 has been made available in Cleveland Heights by the Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) for this program. Loans will be administered here by Continental Federal Savings and Loan and by the City's Housing Preservation Office.

Owner-occupants anywhere in Cleveland Heights who have a family income of less than \$42,938 may qualify for loans at 11.5%. Families of low and moderate income (less than \$24,100 for a family of four) who live anywhere in Cleveland Heights may qualify for loans at 5.5%. Home improvement now typically cost about 14.5% from conventional lenders.

In the troubled North Coventry area, owner-occupants with family income of less than \$42,938 may qualify for the 5.5% loans.

Recipients of the 5.5% loans may be required to repair certain basic health and safety problems in order to qualify. There is no requirement, however, that homes be brought perfectly up the Code requirements. Recipients of the 11.5% loans are exempt from all such requirements.

Contact the Housing Preservation Office at 371-6693 for more information.

**JOIN CNI NOW**

## '85 STREET FAIR IS GO WITH MANY CHANGES; MUCH HELP IS NEEDED

Street Fair 1985, set for June 29 and 30, will cost much more--in money and in volunteer time--than any previous Fair. Running the Fair has become so complex and demanding that several key roles can no longer be filled by part-time volunteers, and more volunteers will be needed than in past years.

Fair Committee Chairman Kathryn Young began in January to work full-time on the event; she will be paid. Also likely to be paid are the people who arrange for the music on the several stages, people who handle the allocation of booth space, and tradesmen (like electricians).

The highly independent Fair Committee of Coventry Neighbors, Inc., (CNI) has pledged to make many changes in this year's Fair. The aim is to make the Fair more accurately reflect the tastes and values of CNI, of Coventry Village, and of Cleveland Heights.

The costs of the Fair will be met, in part, by contributions from merchants. Higher fees are certain for many booth spaces during the Fair.

Changes proposed for the Fair will consume substantially increased volunteer efforts. A much stronger effort will be made, for instance, to clean up the area surrounding the Fair after it is over. Volunteers have always done an excellent job of cleaning up the Fair area itself--but the surrounding neighborhood has been ignored. Doing a proper job here will require dozens of volunteers.

Proposed increases in programming for children and for families will

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**COVENTRY VILLAGE NEWS** is published monthly, except in August, by **Coventry Neighbors, Inc.** in cooperation with the **Heights Community Congress**.

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**ALL** opinions and statements are strictly those of the respective writers, except when clearly identified as formal positions of CNI, CVN, or HCC. Circulation: 2000.

**PERSONS** wishing to submit copy for the March 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 February 16. While no unsigned items will be published, your name may be withheld on request. Phone 371-6095.

## MEETING NOTES

### January Regular Meeting

Members were reminded that it's time to pay dues for 1985; all memberships and newsletter subscriptions expire at the end of each year.

CNI resolved to support a new, tougher litter law soon to be introduced in City Council.

CNI resolved to encourage City Council to pass a tougher drunk driving law, one that would bring the local ordinance into conformity with the state law.

A meeting of the Street Fair Committee was set for Monday January 28.

## LETTERS WELCOME

The *CVN* welcomes letters to its Editor. We will print all letters which seem of general interest and which fit into the space available. We reserve the right to edit for clarity.

Letters should be addressed to The Editor, 1811 1/2 Coventry Road, Cleveland Heights, OH, 44118. In order to be considered for publication, letters should be received by mid-month. Letters must be signed (though names may be withheld on request), and a phone number must be included.

## PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAM

All area pre-school children, ages 3 to 5, are invited to see a short movie and to make a St. Valentine's Day craft to take home. The program will be held on Monday, February 11, at 2:00 PM, and again on Wednesday, February 13, 10:30 AM, at the Coventry Village Library.

## NOVGOROD TO BE OUR SISTER CITY

An organization called City-to-City is now close to establishing a "sister city" relationship between Cleveland Heights and Novgorod, an ancient Russian town on the Volchov River about 100 miles south of Leningrad.

Mayor V. S. Markelov of Novgorod recently sent a letter of greetings to Mayor Rapoport. With that letter came a book about Novgorod and about 30 drawings by Novgorod third-graders; the theme of the drawings is peace.

On November 29, an exhibit of about 30 photographs, solicited from Cleveland Heights residents, was shipped to Novgorod. Novgorod put that collection on public display in December. A collection of photographs of Novgorod is on its way here. No decisions have yet been made as to how and where the photographs, drawings, and other items will be displayed.

Mayor Markelov has promised that his equivalent of City Council will vote to formalize the sister city relationship within a few months. Mayor Rapoport said that while he could not *promise* any vote of his Council, he feels confident that it, too, would vote to formalize the relationship.

Anyone wishing to become involved in the sister city program is invited contact Norm Robbins at 932-9077.

## JOIN CNI FOR 1985

All memberships in Coventry Neighbors, Inc., and all paid subscriptions to the *Coventry Village News*, expired at the end of the year.

If you have not yet paid your 1985 dues or *CVN* subscription, you can use the form on the last page of this newsletter to do so. New members and new subscribers may also use that form. All dues payments, *CVN* subscriptions, and other contributions to Coventry Neighbors, Inc., are tax-deductible.

## MERCHANTS SEEK CITY GRANT FUNDS

The Coventry Merchants Association has requested a total of \$35,660 from the the City's Commercial Areas Improvement Fund (CAIF). The CAIF is a part of the federal Community Development Block Grant program.

Funding is sought for four projects: a vinyl-covered fence to be placed on top of the wall at the rear of the parking lot next to Coventry Beverage and Pizza (Muni Lot Number 20), \$1880; continuation of the merchant group's litter clean-up program and maintenance of flowers and other plantings on the street, \$3,000; replacement plants for the planters on the street, \$780; and the redesign and rebuilding of the mini-park in front of Coventryard, \$30,000. The \$30,000 for the redesign and rebuilding of the mini-park is about one-third of the estimated total cost of that project; the owners of Coventryard have tentatively agreed to pay the balance.

The request of Coventry Merchants Association for these funds has gained the support of the City's administrative staff. A City Council decision on the request is expected some time in February.

## HCC AUCTION COMING; DONATIONS SOUGHT

The Heights Community Congress (HCC) is seeking contributions of things to be auctioned off at a fundraiser on March 9. All contributions are tax-deductible, and all proceeds benefit the HCC. All gifts will be listed in an auction book.

Mud in Yer Eye, a local contra dance group, will perform at the fundraiser party to be held on Saturday March 9 at Sts. Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church, 3352 Mayfield Road, beginning at 6:30 PM.

## EDITORIALS: TOUGHER LAWS FOR TWO CRIMES

### LITTER

Cleveland Heights City Council should enact a strengthened anti-litter law which is now in draft form. That law would give police officers the authority to issue tickets for littering the streets. These tickets would be waivable, as parking tickets are, and the fine would be five or ten dollars.

Coventry Merchants Association has attacked the litter problem with a clean-up program that began in November. Results of that program have been impressive. Yet, by the end of each day, an astonishingly large amount of paper and other debris has again accumulated on the street. The proposed legislation might effectively substitute fear of punishment for social conscience among those responsible for the street trash.

There will be loud squeals of protest from those who get ticketed. Maybe Jim Neff will report that the Cleveland Heights Police have found a new way to harass the Common Man. We think such heat is worth taking, for the City and for us.

### LIBRARY GOINGS-ON

Woop! the Wonder Dog will perform on Wednesday, February 13 at 3:30. Admission will be by ticket only, so be sure to stop in at the Coventry Library to pick up your free ticket.

The Cleveland Heights Highschool gospel Choir will perform at 4:00 PM on Sunday, February 17; the concert is part of the Black History Month celebration.

The Library is again making space available to the American Association of Retired Persons, to provide tax counseling to the elderly. This free service will be available from February 17 through April 11, on Thursdays from 1:00 PM to 4 PM. The service is available by appointment only; call Coventry Library at 321-3400 to make an appointment. IRS forms and books to help with them are available to everyone.

Are you aware that the Library has Art for Lending? Art works circulate for

### DRUNK DRIVING

The City of Cleveland Heights should toughen its law on drunk driving.

The State Legislature acted wisely when it required stiff minimum penalties for drunk driving. Those changes attracted much publicity, and led some who drink and drive to pledge reform. Then one began to hear stories of drunk drivers being treated by the courts much less harshly than the newspaper accounts of the new state law had led one to believe possible. The fear of punishment which had motivated some to pledge reform evaporated.

This soft treatment arose from the fact that Cleveland Heights, like nearly every community in Cuyahoga County, charges drunk drivers under its own local ordinance, not under the tougher state law. When cities charge offenders under their own laws, *they* get the fine money; when charges are brought under the state law, the *state* gets the fine money.

The local law should be brought into conformance with the state law.

six weeks, so come in to pick up a new picture for your home. Perhaps you'd like to take pictures. Coventry Library would like to help you; a Polaroid Sun Instant Land Camera is available for circulation, but you must supply your own film. Engravers, too, can be borrowed.

Of course, the Library's main service is providing reading material. If this branch does not have the books you want, we will be glad to try to locate them for you, and to obtain them through inter-library loans. There is a \$0.25 charge to reserve a book or to obtain one through inter-library loan.

Library hours are: Sundays, 1:00 to 5:00 PM; Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 12:00 to 8:30 PM; Wednesdays and Saturdays, 9:00 AM to 5:50 PM; the Library is closed on Fridays.

## AROUND COVENTRY . . .

**RESTAURANT ACTION . . .** Faces, the bar and restaurant once called bliss (1867 Coventry), reopened, as a bar only, on January 25. Rick LaPorta and Martin Riley, its new owners, say they'll soon offer a menu that Coventry's working folk and students can afford. They plan to broil—not grill—the steaks and burgers they offer. They will be open from 6:00 AM to 1:00 AM.

LaPorta once operated St. John Bosco in the Murray Hill neighborhood, and Rick's Place (known before that as Val's Place) on Mayfield near Warrensville Center Road. Faces is a first venture for Riley, a manufacturer's representative in the machine tool industry.

Plans for another new restaurant, in the former home of Coventry Bike and Ski (1827 Coventry), are likely to become public soon. Though landlord Ken Ross refuses comment on the matter until a formal agreement has been reached, we understand that the folks behind the plan are experienced restaurateurs of high quality.

**CONGRATULATIONS . . .** Charles J. Owen, a three-term President of Coventry Neighbors, Inc., and founder of the Heights Heritage Center, was recently appointed to the City's Landmark Commission.

**CLOSED . . .** Lady and Company (1868 Coventry) and David's Cookies (1856 Coventry Road) closed recently. The closing of Lady and Company, a designer dress shop, was attributed to personal reasons. David's Cookie shops in downtown Cleveland and on Haight Street, near Ashbury Street in San Francisco, closed at about the same time. The Coventry shop will, appropriately, relocate at Beachwood Place.

**GOOD BYE; WELCOME BACK . . .** City Manager Richard Robinson, who left that post on January 25, made an indelible mark on this community. More than to

any other single person, credit goes to Robinson for two new fire stations, a Police Academy building, the beginnings of a new City Hall, and much road paving and other improvements. He overhauled the City's financial operations and oversaw the computerization of its business operations.

Robinson was succeeded by Robert Downey, Vice City Manager here until he left, briefly, for a job in the private sector. Downey faces immense challenge and opportunity.

The challenge is to continue the delivery of public services with the efficiency and effectiveness to which Cleveland Heights has become accustomed under Robinson and his predecessors. As Robinson's protege, in charge of budgets and personnel, Downey came to know how Cleveland Heights works. This experience, coupled with the continuity in other administrative staff positions, smooths the way for his being able to meet the challenge of service delivery.

Downey's opportunity is to return our city manager form of government to the high respect which it deserves. Robinson's principal public defect—an abrasive, arrogant, and rude manner in dealing with citizens and merchants—has kindled and fueled a move to eliminate the office of City Manager. Downey seems to have the grace and manners necessary to restore belief in the professional management of local government in Cleveland Heights.

On February 12, Downey will be a guest at a meeting of Coventry Neighbors, Inc., and will answer questions from those who attend. The present Council leadership was a bit embarrassed of Robinson, and hid him, as much as possible, from the public. The change implied by Downey's appearance with CNI is most welcome.

--Ed.

**STREET FAIR** . . . from page 1  
consume still more volunteer time.

An essential element in making the Fair closer to what CNI wants will be basic changes in the sorts of music and other entertainment offered, and the elimination of certain sorts of booths. Making these changes will put new and increased demands on Fair organizers.

Always, the Fair has required hundreds of volunteers to staff barricades, information booths, and first aid sta-

tions. Fair guides must be distributed, and trash must be collected. If volunteers cannot be found for all these jobs, there will be no Fair.

If you have the time and energy to help with the 1985 Coventry Village Street Fair, contact Kathryn Young at 321-3413. All who are interested in working on the Fair are also invited to the the next meeting of the Committee, to be held on February 21 at the home of Bruce Hennes, 2910 Hampshire Road.

## Letter to the Editor: Street Fair

### To the Editor:

You see, as the world turns, the hippie tie-dyer of yesterday becomes the yuppie quiche-eater of today.

And that's the way it is. In a situation of true-believers--and Coventry Village lends itself to true belief--there is a sad trend toward elitism and closed systems.

In the December issue of the *Coventry Village News*, we were told that the December meeting will decide the fate of Street Fair 1985. We were invited to participate in CNI's decision. Well, it didn't turn out that way.

Upon arrival, we were told that the decision would be made by the Fair Committee, per CNI's constitution; that we shouldn't worry, because the Committee is controlled by an inside group, and they will do the right thing; and that there would be a meeting of the Fair Committee in January so a report could be made at the February meeting, as voted at the December meeting.

Well, once again it didn't turn out that way. At the January meeting we were told (actually, the first word to us ever--watching Mary Strassmeyer in Ohio's largest morning English-language daily) that there could be no Fair Committee meeting because decisions must be made before February; and that the Trustees met the previous week and recommended that a series of mini-events be held instead.

Now, isn't that interesting: in December we are told that the Fair Com-

mittee must make the decision, and in January we were told that a decision must be made without a Fair Committee.

All this seems to have a certain *Alice in Wonderland* curiousness, but what the heck; the world will not suffer too much from this. We suspect that there is no malice in the hearts of the present officers and trustees, simply an attitude of *we know best as insiders*.

Well, that just won't work if CNI is to be a broad-based citizens' group working for progress in the neighborhood. It turns people off. CNI has something between 130 and 150 members in an area of 3,000 households. It is unlikely to grow in size and reputation if this seemingly elitist (forgive the harsh tone) attitude continues.

As this is written, a Fair Committee meeting looms. Will there be a Fair? Who knows? There certainly won't be one without a broader base of participation. Should there be a Fair? Who knows? Are there people who really want to work on a Fair? Can it be cleaned up, and can we get rid of the commercial hucksters and lousy food merchandisers?

Whatever CNI does in all its programming, let's take a hard look at what will really help the economic vitality of our commercial strip. But more about that in our next missile. Love, peace and may the force be with you. Quiche and white wine for all.

--Mary K. Schwendeman and  
Peter Halbin, Coventry Village

## In praise of sand, with a touch of salt

A couple of years ago, the folks at *Rodale Press*, in Emmaus, Pennsylvania, published a well thought-out series of pieces in the *New York Times*. Several of these pointed out the reasons why indiscriminate winter road salting is bad for the country's water supplies and environment, and why a more responsible sand-and-calibrated-salt policy is in our greater health-and self-interest.

With winter now settled in, this is a good time to consider and heed *Rodale's* advice. It is also a good time for Coventry's landlords, merchants, homeowners, and tenants to join the City in making sure that each has on hand the right tools and materials needed in the community-wide effort it takes to keep streets and walks safe and passable.

Sand seems to have an especially beneficial effect on mossy slate and sandstone steps and sidewalks that are common here. (Who hasn't almost fallen on one of the neighborhood's charming but slippery paths?) Sand is versatile, adding a gritty sureness to wet steps and porches and going down well on either packed or melting snow.

It also has other, less obvious advantages. It doesn't stain your shoes or poison the soil. It can be swept up easily from threshold areas when carried indoors on boots or shoes. Sand doesn't burn your fingers when spread by the handful; it's also kinder to the feet of the neighborhood's dogs. Sand welcomes your guests and emboldens the mailman. Left out overnight, it doesn't cake up when exposed to damp air.

Around the house the best way to keep sand handy seems to be in tin pails stashed on the porch or in the garage. Milk jugs are also good, especially for the car, but are a bit harder to fill.

None of this is to deny the real advantages of rock salt to melt those icy patches that February always brings. Even then, sand is a good second seasoning that will remain after the salt has done its work.

For a safer Coventry Village this winter, keep your tin pails ready, and put them to use as the season requires. Look at it as a favor to your neighbors, and to the many steadfast pedestrians who contribute--winter and summer--to the ambience of Coventry Village.

--JBL

## *The news in Coventry, sixty years ago*

In late January, 1925, a major push to continue the development of the Coventry commercial area was announced.

Developers told a large meeting, held at the just-completed City Hall, that "We want the right kind of buildings for the right kind of merchants. We want development that will be harmonious and well-organized. We expect our center to become the center of business in Cleveland Heights." Department stores, large modern markets, community theaters, and banks were planned. The commercial area, already much developed south of Mayfield, was to be extended north to Superior.

A central district heating plant to serve the commercial area and the nearby apartment buildings was part of the plan. The facility was touted as fuel-efficient, and capable of reducing the area's winter smoke and soot pollution.

St. Ann's Parochial School had opened a few weeks earlier, and the Superior School House has been closed the spring before; its historical importance had already been recognized. City Manager Harry Canfield was seeking funds to start a blacksmith shop; the City still had eighteen horses, and commercial smiths had become rare.

--LB

Coventry Village News  
Heights Community Congress  
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TIME VALUE -- PLEASE DELIVER BY FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1985

COVENTRY NEIGHBORS, INC. General Meeting, Tuesday, February 12, 7:30 PM in the Community Room of the Coventry Village Library. The public is invited.

COVENTRY NEIGHBORS, INC. Trustees Meeting, Thursday, March 7, 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 expire on December 31 of each year. The form below may be used for renewals.

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.)

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