



# Coventry Village News

June, 1988

The Newsletter of Coventry Neighbors, Inc.

Volume 12 No. 6

## **CNI meeting is on June 14, 7:45 PM at the Library; group's fundraising efforts dominate its agenda**

**Cash resources lowest  
in many years**

**Support CNI: give generously**

Without the financial support of our members and friends, Coventry Neighbors, Inc. (CNI) cannot continue to provide the strong support it has offered the neighborhood.

We publish this monthly newsletter, we provide summer events to promote the neighborhood, we lobby with the municipal government for the welfare of the area, we contribute substantially to the continuing efforts to clean litter from the commercial district, and we work in other ways for a healthy neighborhood.

All these efforts cost money. In the past year, postage for the *Coventry Village News* (CVN) has increased substantially. Paper, once supplied free, must now be purchased. And a lack of volunteer hands to perform production tasks has required the hiring of occasional workers. Subscription and membership fees do not cover these costs, largely because more than 90% of the copies distributed each month are passed out free.

The concerts and related events planned for this summer are expensive, and since there's no way to charge admission, contributions must be counted on the pay the bills.

CNI recently contributed more than \$500 to the purchase of new equipment that made it

possible for the street-cleaning project, which had been suspended in October, to resume.

Until last year, an annual Street Fair helped to pay the bills for CNI. But when that Fair became uncontrollably large, and lost its support from most Coventry Neighbors, the organization replaced the Fair with a series of smaller events which provide family entertainment and promotion for the area. These new events will cost CNI several thousand dollars this year—far more than the income they will generate.

We hope that readers who do not receive the CVN by mail will join the organization, and—when they're able—will send a bit of additional money to keep us going. We hope

*continued on page 2*

## **A tour and concert on June 25 are first of summer's events**

A walking tour of Lakeview Cemetery and a concert featuring Primavera Consort will be the first phase of Celebrate Coventry, a three-part series of events in Coventry Village.

Tour participants will meet on Saturday, June 25, 2:00 PM at the Garfield Monument. Tickets are \$3.00. For reservations and information call Barbara Valis at 932-4647.

Primavera Consort will perform at 8:00 PM, June 25. The concert is free and open to the public.

Part two of Celebrate Coventry will take place on July 23 with an art fair, music festival, trolley tours, children's activities, and merchant specials.

The final event will be a walking tour of the Lanes of Coventry and a performance by Primavera Consort on August 27.

**Send money . . .** [from page 1] that those who are already members (and other supporters) will send us additional donations.

Contributions may be sent to us at Coventry Neighbors, Inc., 2776 Hampshire Road, Apt. 1-B, Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44106. The form on the last page of this newsletter may be used for new membership, renewals, or other contributions.

## Notes on the meeting of May 10

At the May 10 meeting of CNI, John Spoden, a designer and planner for the City of Cleveland Heights, reviewed plans for the rebuilding of the public parking lot across from

Tommy's Restaurant, between Coventry Beverage and Pizza and Hyde Park Café.

Members expressed special concern about the lighting of that lot. Mr. Spoden said that the plans as now proposed involved no lighting improvements. Neighbors pointed out that the present lighting scheme leaves portions of the lot in the shadows, partly because of the design of the present lighting, and partly because trees that aren't trimmed often enough block light.

The lot is of special concern because of its history as a place where young folks and others gather at night, often to drink and be rowdy. Better lighting is widely believed to be an essential weapon against anti-social behavior.

Other members suggested that the species of shrubs planted in the landscaped buffer at the Coventry Road edge of the lot ought to be carefully selected, so that they do not grow tall enough to block easy view of the entire lot from passing vehicles, especially cop cars.

To allow the watering of plants and the washing-down of the area, a water spigot should be installed there.

One member argued for the preservation of a small, very simple bench now serving the bus stop there. The City proposes to replace that bench with a far more expensive one resembling the benches in front of the new City Hall. It was also suggested that a fence be installed around the rear of the landscaping, to make it difficult to walk across the area.

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Larry Beam

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Larry Beam, Marilyn Pryor, Gary Schumacher, and Nancy Miller, Mary Ann Rodewald, and Lori Solomon-Hess.

**Editorial Staff:**  
Bruce M. Hennes and Betty Sennenhof

**Production Staff:**  
Larry Beam and the Staff of the Heights Community Congress.

Opinions expressed in these pages are strictly those of the respective writers, except where clearly identified as those of CNI, CVN, or the HCC.

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Anyone wishing to submit copy to the *Coventry Village News* may do so by sending it to the Editor, *Coventry Village News*, 2776 Hampshire Road Apt. 1-B, Cleveland Heights, Ohio, 44106.

The deadline for each month is the 16th day of the preceding month. While no unsigned material will be used, names may be withheld from publication at the writer's request.

Phone: 371-6095.

**Coventry Village . . .**  
*where we all get along together  
pretty well.*



## Work begins on two more apartment building fix-ups

Work is progressing on the renovation of apartment buildings at 2717 and 2753 Hampshire Road. The buildings are owned by Bill Sahlini and Mel Fishman. Both are on the north side of Hampshire, west of Coventry, in an area where the appearance of apartment buildings has improved dramatically in the last few years.

The Fishman Building (2753) suffered a fire which gutted one basement suite last fall. The damaged suite has been rebuilt. In addition, the red brick building is getting a thorough cleaning and repointing. Steps are being rebuilt in the front and rear. The building's trim is being repainted. The improvements to the exterior of the building will cost about \$44,000, of which the City government will pay about half, using funds from the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.

At 2717 Hampshire, a tired and worn building is getting a thorough exterior renovation and some improvements to the interior. Casement windows are being restored on the building's front, while some other old windows are being replaced.

Front steps will be rebuilt, and a marquee which once covered the entrance way is being recreated. The cost of exterior work is estimated at \$43,000, and interior work about \$14,000. The City, using CDBG resources, will pick up about \$18,500 of this.

## Cleveland Heights offers new parking permits for merchants and workers

The City of Cleveland Heights recently began to offer a new class of parking permits for merchants and their employees. Dan Campbell, a member of the City's economic development staff, announced the plan at the May 10 meeting of Coventry Neighbors, Inc.

The new permits will be valid only during the daytime hours for the parking lots west of the business district that are now mostly vacant during the day, while holders of the permits are off at work. These special permits cost \$30 for three months. They are valid 8:00 AM to 6:00

PM, Monday through Friday.

The aim is to get business proprietors and employees to park in these less-convenient spaces, so as to leave prime spaces in the commercial area available for customers.

Forty-five of these new permits are now available at City Hall. None been sold as of June 3.

If a substantial number of workers in the business district would regularly park in the residential lots, the gain in the supply of available parking spaces for customers would make a big difference to the ease of customer parking.

## Painting and landscaping help are still available for the area north of Mayfield

A new City program offers up to \$1,500 toward the costs of housepainting and free landscaping. The program is available only to owners of two-family houses in the portion of Coventry Village north of Mayfield Road.

In the month that the help has been offered, twelve applications have been received at City Hall. Funding is sufficient for another eight to thirteen applications.

Application materials and other information are available from Jay Gardner at Cleveland Heights City Hall, 291-4818.

## Heights Heritage Tour set for September 24 and 25

"Jewels of the Jazz Age" is the theme of the Heights Heritage Tour, which this year will be held on September 24 and 25. Cleveland Heights homes built in the 1920's will be open to tour participants.

Anyone willing to become involved in the production of the tour should call Lana Cowell at the Heights Community Congress, 321-6775.

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Wilton Road Journal

## A View from the Front Porch

Wilton Road has a deep-forest feel to it in the summer, an ambience created by the many tall, older trees that line the streets and anchor the yards here. They keep the homes cool in summer and the yards leaf-strewn in the fall and provide a home to the birds and squirrels that entertain our kids year-round. The trees are part of a casual, 1920's elegance that colors much of the neighborhood. It's an elegance many of us respect and have tried to uncover and restore over the years—as if it had ever, really, been lost!

Wilton's expansive front porches are one of the lasting reminders of that earlier era. On the warm summer evenings after dusk, the smell of citronella candles wafts from porch to porch and you will find many of us sitting in rockers and gliders and lawn chairs, watching the kids chase fireflies in the front yards. Our neighborhood was one of the first housing developments in Cleveland Heights, and I am sure the scene was much the same sixty years ago.

In that earlier time the porches were part of a neighborly lifestyle that included a little socializing in the evenings. A time before TVs and air conditioning became the icons of the nuclear family. Privacy was a matter of a trellis and a wisteria vine—and the good sense to mind your own business, even if the family next door was only twenty feet away.

If you look up and down Wilton, you can see many of the other touches the neighbors have tried to restore. Winding slate walks bordered with ivy gardens and pachysandra and myrtle. Iris gardens. Cut-stone front stoops.

Our back yards are deep on Wilton, cut generously out of old Mr. Brown's platt, and they have room for bird baths and lily ponds, vegetable gardens and jungle gyms. Many of the garages still have swinging barn doors and large lofts. At least one is still wired with the equipment to charge electric cars. The yards are separated by old stands of mock orange and rhododendrum and rose of sharon. The ivy and

pachysandra and shade are ubiquitous here, too.

In fact, the shade is one of the minor problems here on Wilton, at least when it comes to maintaining a grassy yard. The trees contend (aggressively) for the light, the nutrients, the moisture ... and the grass often suffers. It takes special work to keep it healthy—liming and fertilizing as early as February; reseeding while snow is still on the ground (the early thaws and freezes create natural seed holes and give you a head start on the birds looking for a free lunch), watering in the summer.

You have to give the grass a head start before the leaves come in and the all-day sunlight is gone. High quality fertilizer works much better than off brands, and Wood & Co. (2267 Lee Road) sells a special blend of grass seed that must have been developed just for our shady neighborhood.

But the summer view from our front porches makes up for the extra effort. We can look ahead to the lazy summer evenings that are coming and look backward to the comfortable past of our neighborhood roots. As the dusk comes on, the birds sing an evening rain song and there is a faint pitter-patter in the trees as a summer shower begins. On our front porch I rock slowly back in forth in an old wicker rocker. There is a sense of gratitude; the rain will be good for the grass. —*Silence Dogwood*

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### Library Goings-on

The Summer Reading Program will begin with an Opening Day celebration on Thursday, June 19, 2:00 to 4:00 PM. Youngsters and parents are invited.

Preschool Storytime, for three- to five-year-olds, will meet Tuesdays, 7:00 to 7:30 PM, and Wednesdays, 10:30 to 11:00 AM, July 5 through August 10. Registration is required.

Bill Polak and R. C. Wilson will perform at the season's last poetry reading, Sunday, June 5, 2:30 PM. Readings will resume in September.

Library branches will be closed on Sundays beginning June 19 and ending September 11. The Main Library, 2345 Lee Road, will be open on Sundays, 1:00 to 5:00 PM, through the summer.

## Around Coventry . . .

**Opening soon . . .** The Mr. Hero restaurant proposed for the south end of the strip, approved by municipal authorities several months ago, is "alive and well" according to Lew Zipkin, the landlord, and Steve Howard, who proposes to operate the franchise.

Bids on the building of the restaurant facility are now being sought; that process could take as long as two months before work starts.

**Dry cleaning . . .** The D.O. Sommers shop at 1793 Coventry (at the intersection with upper Hampshire) has closed. A large chain mass marketer has been beaten in economic competition by smaller, locally-operated businesses. Two firms providing these services—Heights Laundry and Dry Cleaning and O'Grady's Professional Cleaners—remain. Both are strong, healthy, and locally-owned.

Kevin O'Grady has worked in the cleaning and laundry business that bears his name for fifteen years. He bought the business seven years ago, and changed its name from Kreigers. A broad smile comes across his face at the mention of D. O. Sommers departure. "I can handle the extra business," he says.

In the past year he's purchased large and expensive pieces of new equipment—one for shirt laundry, the other for dry cleaning. His shop was amount the first Coventry Village storefronts to undergo renovation.

**No Siam . . .** T.C., the proprietor of Hunan on Coventry, has given up, at least for now, his effort to open a Thai restaurant in the old location of his restaurant, behind Coventry Yard. The new place was to have been called Siam.

He says that he could not pull together the elements necessary to do it right—so he'd prefer not to do it. He'd hoped to bring to our country several key staffers from a restaurant in Thailand. But immigration regulations made that difficult; and, in the end, those workers preference for their native climate (which resembles Southern California) kept them in Thailand.

**Save the bench . . .** A friend who sometimes sweeps streets in these parts sent us this note:

Across from Tommy's Restaurant, in the

front of the municipal parking lot, is a small, very simple bench. It's used, mostly, by people waiting for the east-bound busses. I have long admired the thing for its simplicity of design. It's constructed of two pieces of neatly-decorated pre-cast concrete, which form its supports, and two planks of wood, to sit on. It has been vandalized several times, and its repair has been quick and simple.

The City government proposes to replace it with a far more expensive, much larger bench—one just like the benches in front of the new City Hall. Repair of a bench like the one the government wants to put there would be far more difficult and immensely more expensive.

The old bench should be saved.

It was put there by a benefactor from the private sector, using *no* government money—a rare and generous contribution of private resources to an essentially public purpose. It shouldn't be removed to make way for expensive, hard-to-maintain, fancy new government bench. The old bench is symbol of private participation in the public wheel, and a small but significant element of this neighborhood's unique history. To remove it is to forget its history—and to suggest that the government ought to do *everything*.

A member of the City's administration argues that the old bench would be expensive to save—he says that its construction involves a complex of massive sub-surface iron bars. This is nonsense; besides, if his assertion were true, (and how could one tell without x-ray vision?) a nearly-identical new bench could be purchased and installed a tenth the cost of the fancy one the government wants to put there.

If the government planners get away with replacing this bench with one suiting only their own insensitive taste, they'll take that success as license to behave similarly up and down the Coventry strip—and they'll give us lots of cute doo-dads, like those they put on the sidewalks around Mayfield and Warrensville Center Road. That sort of work is nice for that particular neighborhood—but it's all wrong for a place with the strong character of Coventry Village.

—Ed.

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DATED MATERIAL—PLEASE DELIVER BEFORE JUNE 11

The next regular meeting of Coventry Neighbors, Inc. will be held on Tuesday, June 14  
7:45 PM, at the Coventry Village Library.

The next meeting of the Trustees of Coventry Neighbors, Inc. will be held on Thursday,  
July 7, 8:00 PM, at 1641 Hillcrest Road. The meeting is open to all dues-paid members.

Join Coventry Neighbors, Inc. Today! You must be a member for at least 30 days  
to vote at our meetings

Please check one of the following:

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(\$5 for 11 months; the *CVN* is not published in August)

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