



# Coventry Village News

The Newsletter of Coventry Neighbors Inc.

March, 94

## From the President's Pen

In 1959 my mother took me, along with a school friend, to hear John F. Kennedy speak at the Akron Armory. I was finally old enough to pay attention to and care about national politics. JFK's election race was my introduction to involvement.



I was very idealistic. I was also young, and female. Kennedy was virile; handsome; and exciting. I thought he was wonderful. I was naive.

I sometimes wonder, today, how his presidency would have ended, if it had not ended as it did, at Daley Plaza. What an introduction to politics.

In the ensuing 30 years much has been revealed about John Kennedy which is not admirable. It takes away the gloss... makes tempting the inclination to discount what was good and throw it away with the dirty bathwater.

Today even the most idealistic of us would not deny that John Kennedy was a very, very wealthy and ambitious man who was morally in red ink, not dreaming of denying his appetites even though they were exploitive. Nowadays such a man would be greeted with sneers and guffaws were he to suggest we ask not for our country to do something for us, rather for us to do something for our country.

In the early 1960's, however, there was not so much cynicism. There was not such strong a feeling that our country owed us. People volunteered for VISTA. People risked their lives, black and white together, to march for

civil rights. People joined the PEACE Corps. Giving a couple years to public service seemed not just reasonable, but admirable. Certainly, not a sacrifice.



My husband is fond of saying, when I raise less savory conjectures about my own family's past that I know my family's history "warts and all."

The truth of the matter is, mankind (and womankind too) has warts. Meaning that each individual in each new generation, generation after generation, without end, must seek enlightenment anew; that wisdom is not inherited, like hair texture or eye color; that each of us spends our life coming to terms with the good and the bad aspects of our humanity. And therefor, no nation, people, race, tribe, or family can lastingly claim the moral high ground, because there are plenty of warts to go around.

I am fortunate: by race and class, I am not usually the object of prejudice. Some people, however, don't see me -- they see warts. Occasionally, a Jewish individual, seeing my very Teutonic looks, hearing my name, assumes for my family some direct role in the Jewish Holocaust: it does not exist. Occasionally African American individuals, seeing my white skin, instantly and without any knowledge of me at all, treat me as though I have personally oppressed them.

Today I expect these exceptions. I used to be shocked by them. I am still idealistic, but I'm realistic, too. I still believe that what one does, matters. In fact, I think more than ever that it matters. I just don't think the ripples expand as far out as I once thought they did. I still believe individual participation is important, but I think one's effort is most effective at the neighborhood and community level.

In today's Plain Dealer (Feb. 26th) is an article about Dance Afrika Dance. It tells of how they drums create that same spirit of community that I found last fall so profoundly present at the Native American Pow Wow I attended. That is the spirit I dream of uniting us all in this, our physical community, Coventry village. It is a dream of inclusion by and for everyone.

I think it is a dream similar to that dreamed by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, who like John Kennedy, was humanly flawed, and tragically assassinated. Unlike J.F.K., we are not tempted to toss out that baby with the bathwater. Dr. King performed what John Kennedy requested. He was involved. He participated. He gave his life, and all the wisdom he had. Which was considerable.

The P.D. article quotes one of Dance Afrika's drummers. He says "The African culture is not one of watching. It is one of participating." I hope that is the case, because we would like to see more individuals of African American descent involved in Coventry Neighbors.

At our next meeting of Coventry Neighbors we will be showing a remarkable video of the building of the Coventry School playground. Come see it and be inspired by what community participation can achieve in the 90's. Come see it, and be inspired to participate. There's plenty more to do. And we need you.

The Pres

### Coventry Village Library

*We are featuring the Coventry Library in this issue of the newsletter. This is a unique neighborhood facility offering many services. Few neighborhoods of our scale boast their own library. Don't take it for granted!*

Coventry Village Library sits atop a knoll looking out on the commercial area of Coventry Village. Since the building first opened in 1926, services and staff have changed but the warmth of the library has always welcomed people to make themselves comfortable and enjoy the available services.



Every year that I have worked at the library I've seen people enter the building, and stand in the entrance for a few minutes while looking around somewhat misty eyed. I learned years ago to recognize that look that says, "We're reliving happy memories from the past-those very special story hours-those hours of tense and intense research." A few summers ago one couple came in with a camcorder and asked if they could tape the interior of the building. They were thrilled they would have the tape to view in their new home in California. Our current staff hopes to continue to create memories for those who come to the library.

Coventry Neighbors, who produce the newsletter you're reading, have been meeting in our building for a dozen years. At the last Coventry Neighbor's meeting Pat Cameron related how she had half of an old magazine article and needed the second half. Coventry

no longer had the magazine, but our main library faxed over what Pat needed.

The immigrants who regularly come for material in their native tongue as well as books and tapes in their quest to learn English are creating many memories for the staff as well as themselves. Israil Landsman expressed his appreciation by writing:

"My Library"

My library is like an old castle  
Where Sleeping Beauty --  
the worlds of poetry wakes  
When I take my favorite books

One of the most frequent comments we hear from our customers is "This is the best copying machine I've ever used!" Since September the question, "When can I get an appointment to use the Macintosh?" is what we're asked the most.

The one thing that makes Coventry Village Library different from any library in Greater Cleveland is our commitment to increase deaf awareness and increase library service to the deaf community. Deaf children come monthly for story hour told in American Sign Language by a deaf person. We are proud to be providing these special story hours. If you're are interested in viewing them give us a call at 321-3400 Voice, or 321-0739 TTY.

Coventry is one of the four buildings in the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Library System -- a library system that always strives to expand and improve its services to the community. Each summer the library has invited children and teenagers to join summer reading clubs, sharing their reading experiences and winning prizes.

Starting this June we will offer adults the same opportunity. Be sure to read more about this new reading club in the summer issue of Check Us Out, and then join the club.

We invite you to make suggestions of books you would like us to purchase or ways to improve our services, and, of course, ways we can create happy memories for you at your local library.

Shony Long

Meet Your Librarian

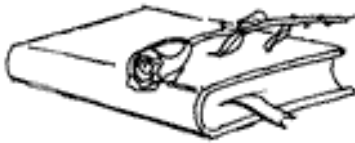
If you've ever visited the Coventry Library you've probably seen her. Librarian, Shushano (Hebrew for "rose," Shony to almost everyone) Long traces her career along the same path our historic library has traveled. Before becoming Coventry Branch Manager in 1985 she worked part-time in the 60's when this building was the Cleveland Heights Main Library and the entire structure was devoted to books. She also worked part-time when the Coventry branch occupied only the space now used by the Cleveland Heights Youth Center. "It was cozy then," she remembers. Shony remains the only person to have worked at Coventry in all three phases of existence.

Previous to her young family's move to the Coventry neighborhood in 1962 a collegiate decision to pursue a career which helps youngsters led Shony to become a Children's Librarian at a branch of the Cleveland Public Library. Once her son was old enough she was able to resume her work in our suburban system. Her commitment to and concern with children's literature remains as she lists The little Prince among her favorite books and as she urges you to consider reading the recent Newbery Award winning children's book, The Giver by Lois Lowry.

A typical day is filled with answering "hundreds" of questions and helping scores of library patrons. She particularly enjoys the discovery of an answer to a new problem. Her evenings are spent involved with the community, reading a new non-fiction book or working on freelance writing.

A lifetime of service to others makes Shony Long a person we are proud to call our neighbor.

Jeffrey R. Dross



### Attention! Attention!

The Tuesday March 8th meeting will begin at 7:40 PM with a brief "social hour." At 8:00 PM we will show the amusing and informative Coventry P.E.A.C.E. video on the Libraries VCR. This video is 45 minutes long, which will adjourn the meeting at 8:45 PM. This will not be a business meeting.

Please join us. And if you happen to have just baked a batch of cookies, bring some along to share. Coffee, tea, and refreshments will be served.

See you there.



### Meeting Notes

February 8, 1994

### Organization Reports:

Library: Librarian Shony Long reported that Evert Freeman's (CWRU Management School) presentation for Black History Month was enlightening. Shony wishes more people would attend such functions, and just generally use the Coventry Library more.

City: The completion of the parking deck has been delayed by the weather. Bitter cold in January pushed the date back to the end of February... then continuing snow and cold pushed the date back again. Maybe March?

The Office on Aging has a call out for volunteers. If you can help, call Lynn Barry, 291-2715.

Heights Lacrosse has mulch on sale to help fund the Lacrosse programs. Either hardwood or cypress mulch is available. The cost is \$3.75 for 3 cubic feet, bagged. Delivery is in March. To order call Connie Gillen, 321-4438.

C.V.D.C.: Work on Pizzeria Uno has not yet begun. Hopefully it will begin in March.

The Taylor Road Merchants have asked the Coventry Village Development Corporation for help in organizing a similar organization. Kudos, C.V.D.C.... would Coventry be as far along on the road to economic recovery without your help? You play a valuable role and set an example.

Coventry P.E.A.C.E.: Two phase planning focuses on landscaping the new playground, and deciding which piece of the Master Plan to tackle next. Preliminary landscape plans for the playground were presented Feb. 7th.

Problems continue with winter use of the hillside slide. A chain link gate was put over the top (entrances) and bottom openings, to prevent injuries from inappropriate winter-time use. The slide is very long and fast: it is not recommended for small children under normal circumstances. With snow and ice on it, it is dangerous.

Twice the gates have been pried off. This cannot be done by elementary school children. They are not strong enough. Some big kids and most teens do have the strength to pry the gates off, as well as the freedom to use the playground unsupervised.

Parents, please advise your big kids and teens to respect the gates. They are there to protect little brothers and sisters. Encourage delayed gratification. Spring is almost here. Soon the slide will be reopened for everyone.

Coventry P.E.A.C.E meets the 1st Monday of each month at 7:00 PM in the Coventry School Library. Newcomers welcome.

### **Old Business**

Heights High Auditorium: Les Groynom raised this as a possible service project several months ago and volunteered to investigate. The auditorium is missing light bulbs and seats. Other seats are broken. There is cracked and unpainted plaster work. Les feared students would respond to this shoddy environment with equally shoddy attitudes toward education. In mid-January he wrote to Dr. Shadow about his concern.

Dr. Shadow responded, saying that the condition of the auditorium has been a sore point with him since his arrival here over three years ago. However, he reports that the passing of last year's bond issue has at last permitted the appropriation of moneys to refurbish the auditorium.

New curtains have already been hung in the auditorium and a new state of the art sound system has been installed. Samples of seats and carpeting are coming in for selection. Dr. Shadow hopes this systematic approach to renovation will see the auditorium complete by the opening of the school year of 1994-1995.

If you are interested in participating on the School Improvement Committee, contact Dr. Shadow at Cleveland Heights High School, 371-7100.

Reading Garden: This was proposed last month as a service project for CNI as a way of taking some of the load off of Coventry P.E.A.C.E. for implementation of the green space Master plan. Walter Thiem and Michael Madorsky volunteered to chair this committee. Walter has talked to Steve Wood, of the Library Board, who told him that planning and landscape design that responded to the conceptual master plan would be welcomed, but Steve suggested a potentially tight schedule. The library steps are due to be

replaced this summer. Some of the landscaping will probably be redone at that time.

If you'd like to see a reading garden in front of the library and have ideas and/or skills to offer, contact Walter Thiem, 397-0260. The next meeting on the Reading Garden will be held March 15th at 7:00 pm, at the Coventry Library.

Collaborative Coventry Celebration: This proposal has finally made the rounds of the various neighborhood organizations. General response is favorable but much research and planning would be required; this is more possible for summer of 1995 rather than 94.

The event under discussion would be a one day, family oriented celebration of this neighborhood and its spirit of community. Ideas under consideration include a fun run; a soap box derby; a trolley tour of the neighborhoods; an tour of neighborhood churches; day long movies and cartoons for kids and possibly children's live theater; an art exhibit; a cultural diversity craft fair; a sidewalk sale; a strawberry festival; a multi-cultural POW-WOW; a family concert; and limited street entertainment.

If you've helped plan events in the past and have expertise, or are just interested in one particular aspect of this, call Les Groynom, 932-7287.

Fundraising Projects: Three projects are being studied in depth. The first is Coventry note cards with Bruce Biddle's artwork (the author of the sketches which so enliven this newsletter). Second is a walking tour poster of the Coventry area with photographs, drawings, anecdotes, and history. Third is a Coventry calendar with area photographs, perhaps some anecdotal history, and advertising. If you have ideas to contribute toward these or can donate a service to reduce costs, contact Elsa Johnson, 371-3404.

### The Newsletter

As always need your subscriptions! We have been distributing the newsletter by volunteer effort and by direct mail. We do not have volunteers to cover every street, so the only way to ensure you get every issue of Coventry Neighbors is to subscribe. A Membership is inexpensive, helps us defray our costs, and insures that you get the local news. Join today. A form is on the last page of this newsletter.

### Meet Your Neighbor

Their strong commitment and involvement with the Unification Church has played a major part in the lives of Bruce and Keiko Biddle. While serving the needs of the church in its California printing facility, Bruce met recent Japanese immigrant Keiko Furukawa, and married her in San Francisco in 1982. The church's teachings of racial and ethnic unity lead them to Cleveland Heights where their multi-cultural family could feel comfortable, and an understanding community would reinforce for their children the ideals presented by the church.



The road back to Cleveland (Bruce was born in Euclid) was filled with interesting diversion. Bruce completed his study of art in California, did some missionary work in Argentina and earned his masters degree in religious studies in New York. Keiko traveled to many worldwide locations working for the church, eventually rendezvousing with Bruce in

Manhattan where she worked at bookkeeping while Bruce completed school.

While in New York, Keiko gave birth to their first child Noah, now 4 years old. His sisters Sun Young (2 1/2) and Kyoko(1) have since joined the family, creating a chaotic and loving family environment in their Wilton Road home.

Shortly after moving to Coventry, the Biddles received a copy of this newsletter. Bruce offered to "help" with his skills as an illustrator. He was promptly appointed Editor (you know what they say about volunteering). Bruce's experience in printing and his talent at art have provided a much needed facelift to this circular.

In the future Bruce would love to rely on his skills as an artist and create publications for children. In the meantime they plan on helping their community as well as their church realize their deep felt belief in cultural, racial and ethical unity.

Jeffrey R. Dross

### Kid Quotes from the Playground

The big slide was the favorite. Here is more of what the kids had to say about the playground last fall:

Karl age 11: "It's bigger than all the playgrounds I ever went to."

Ben age 11: "I think it's a small amusement park."

Brook, age 13: "I like the big slide best... it's real fast... it's the biggest slide I have ever been on."

Julie, age 8: "...the tire swing...you can swing with ten or twelve kids on...tow push and ten ride or ten push and two ride...you can't fall off."



### Check Your Mailing Label

This CNI newsletter is mailed to over 100 current members and other selected parties in the Coventry Neighborhood. We do our best to keep the membership/mailling list current. Please let us know if your mailing label is incorrect or someone wants to be dropped or added to the list.

From time to time we get questions about the status of someone's membership/dues. So, there is an extra bit of information on this month's mailing label. In the upper right hand corner I have added the last year in which your dues was paid. Next month I will include the month also. Strictly speaking, according to our constitution, dues is due at the beginning of the year. However, as a practical matter, last year there was a push to get dues paid-up prior to the September elections. The when is not terribly critical. Just be sure to keep your dues paid so that you may vote.

Bob Klemenc

*Coventry Village News* is published by Coventry Neighbors, Inc. The newsletter is distributed free throughout Coventry Village. Mailed subscriptions are available (see last page).

**Editor:** Bruce Biddle

**Editorial Board:** Elsa Johnson, Bob Klemenc, Mary Ann Rodewald

**Editorial Policy:** It is our intent to make *Coventry Village News* a reflection of the diversity of Coventry with a focus on people. We hope that our editorials foster discussion of important community issues. Our editorials represent the consensus of our editorial board and are intended to represent the views of Coventry Neighbors.

*CNI exists for the residents of Coventry Village. It needs your involvement and input. If there are neighborhood issues that concern you we urge you to bring them to CNI. We welcome your input. CNI can serve as a social, political, or community action organization. It's up to you! This is your neighborhood, get involved*

**How to reach us:** If you can't come to the monthly meetings send a letter to:

Coventry Neighbors Inc.  
c/o Elsa Johnson, President  
2753 Hampshire Rd # 1  
Cleveland Hts., Ohio 44106

or

Coventry Village News  
Bruce Biddle, Editor  
1857 Wilton Rd.  
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118



Regular meetings of Coventry Neighbors, Inc. are held on the second Tuesday of every month at 7:40 p.m. at the Coventry Village Library, Euclid Heights Blvd. & Coventry Rd. When you join Coventry Neighbors, Inc. you can be sure of having a voice in shaping your neighborhood's future. Membership includes a subscription to the Coventry Village News.

Indicate the kind of membership you desire and complete the form:

Individual (\$7.50)     Family (\$10.00)     Senior Citizen (\$5.00)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

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