COVENTRY VILLAGE NEWS

February, 1978

Newsletter of Coventry Neighbors, Inc.

COVENTRYARD BURNED DOWN

There has been a lot of publicity about the recent fire which destroyed the Coventryard mall at the corner of Euclid Heights Boulevard and Coventry Road. Concern and shock has been expressed by people from all parts of metropolitan Cleveland. Unfortunately, there is not much for us to add to what you probably already know about the fire. We will, however, try here to summarize the details as we now know them.

The fire appears to have started in the lower level of the Good Food Store, commonly known as a Light of Yoga Society location (although the two organizations consider themselves as separate entities). No official explanation for the cause of the fire has emerged, and Fire Warden Robert Mayer continues to diligently and thoroughly investigate the scene. While rumors and random speculation are common, there is presently no hard evidence of cause. The intense heat of the fire may have destroyed all such evidence.

The damage to walls and foundation remains problematic. Engineering studies are in progress, and City action has assured that people will be kept away from walls thought to be unsound. There are no visible cracks in the walls, but fears are expressed about water seeping into concrete, then freezing and expanding.

There were initial reports that firemen had to cut through concrete to reach gas cut-off valves. These reports were not true. However, some unexplained delay in finding the location of the cut-off valves did apparently occur.

No residential tenants were in the building at the time. The Carol Lindemuth clothing store and the Water Works store suffered smoke damage only, though one potentially dangerous wall adjoins the latter. Between these two stores, destruction was total. Electricity is reportedly now cut off to Mitchell's and the Heights Art Theatre, and residential tenants in those buildings are undoubtedly affected. This problem will probably be remedied by the time you read this article.

Rocco's Market was fortunately spared. Damage to Arabica (in the Courtyard behind Coventryard) was reportedly not severe. The firefighters who came from four cities to help did a fine job of containing the fire. It could have been much worse.

The fire destroyed a lot of property, and more than a few hopes and dreams. Coming as it did so soon after the Water Works fire, it has given rise to shock, concern, and stunned silence. CNI will continue its inquiry into the fire and discussion at its next meeting will no doubt center on CNI's proper response to it.

- Alan Rapoport

The next meeting of Coventry Neighbors, Inc. will take place on Tuesday, February 14, 1978, at 8:00 p.m. at the Unitarian Society on Lancashire Road, across from Musicians' Tower.
Running Clubs Formed

There are two newly formed running clubs in the Cleveland area: Cleveland Women Running and the University Circle Striders. Both groups are registered with the American Athletic Association and the Road Runners Association. While neither club is exclusively for men or for women, Cleveland Women Running will emphasize running for women of all ages and running experience. University Circle Striders and CWR will be closely affiliated with each other.

University Circle Striders will emphasize as many aspects of running—race walking, short and long distances, track and field—as there are interested members. For more information, contact Ted Creighton at the Complete Runner, 2218 Lee Road.

Cleveland Women Running has been formed by women just beginning to jog, as well as those interested in competition. They meet each Saturday and Sunday at 9:00 a.m. behind the Cleveland Heights Recreation Pavilion at Monticello and Mayfield Roads. They run anywhere from 1-8 miles through Forest Hills Park. The distance they run depends upon the women who come. For further information, call Carole Rounds at 331-5724.

The Cleveland Heights Office on Aging will again offer elderly and low-income residents assistance with income tax preparation through the cooperation of the Cleveland East Chapter of the National Association of Accountants.

Volunteer accountants will be available on two Saturdays—February 25th and March 4th—between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., at the Office on Aging, 2989 Mayfield Road.

Recreate!

Planning is now underway for the programs listed below. For information on these programs, call the Parks and Recreation Department, 321-0100, Ext. 283.

- School for Performing Arts: an exciting six-week recreational/educational program is offered to youngsters presently in grades one through six; activities include dance, drama, art, and puppetry. Classes will meet Tuesday through Friday, June 27 – August 4. This is a full or part-day program.

- Sports Camp: a four-week day camp experience for youngsters in grades 3 to 6, this camp is centered around a wide variety of team and individual sports. Held at the Pavilion, camp will be from June 26 to July 21.

- Soccer: an eight-week program this spring for students in grades four through nine. This program, held at the Cain Park soccer field, will consist of four weeks of clinics and four weeks of competitive play.

- Basketball: two basketball programs are offered at the Pavilion from June 26 through August 4th for students in grades four through nine.
SOLICITOUS ABOUT SOLICITATION?

The Comprehensive Real Estate legislation passed by City Council in 1976 included a section in which citizens could choose not to be solicited for the sale of their homes by a real estate agent. If a homeowner signed a card stating he/she did not wish to be contacted for sale of his/her home it would be against the City ordinance and punishable by fine if an agent contacted the person by phone, letter, or in person for a listing of the property.

Unfortunately, some residents have taken the position that they do not want to sign a card so that they will know what calls the industry is making. As a result, about half of the complaints the staff receives are from homeowners who have not signed a card. There is nothing that can be done about these complaints as there is no violation of the ordinance.

Only strong public support of the anti-solicitation program will discourage real estate practices designed to stimulate panic-selling. Your support will help deter attempts to panic others by making mass solicitation difficult. Each card does count. Solicitation could be virtually eliminated if we could get 90% of our homeowners to sign cards. Have you signed a card since April 1976? How many people on your street have signed? Call the Heights Housing Service (321-0100, Ext. 277) or Barb Orban (321-0100, Ext. 288) for additional cards.

CNI to Elect New Secretary

The resignation of Joel Jordan as Secretary of CNI was accepted by the membership at its January meeting. An election to fill the vacancy will occur at the February meeting. The basic prerequisites for candidacy are: Coventry residency, interest, and a sense of humor. (And at least two sharp pencils.)

In other actions at the January meeting, CNI voted:

- to recommend continued suspension of City enforcement of parking meters on Coventry after 6 p.m. for at least an additional trial period;
- to endorse the Light of Yoga Society application for a conditional use permit at the Fairmount Center building;
- to oppose a parking variance on Lancashire Road;
- to postpone consideration of a Neighborhood Advisory Board proposal.

Music...Music...Music...

Look for something out of the ordinary on Sunday mornings during May and June—and hear something special, too! Through the School Community Program, the Coventry Cadre received a $200 award for the most creative idea submitted by the CNI/UN School District Cadres.

Open air pops concerts are being arranged to take place on the Coventry Elementary School grounds, overlooking the Coventry Road shopping strip.

More to come in the April edition of Coventry Village News.
What Now?

I suppose it is premature to speculate about the fate of Coventryard. Certainly, its absence will have great impact on an already deteriorating situation on Coventry. However, I refuse to believe that the future of Coventry is as bleak as it may now seem. Many very promising developments are possible.

First and foremost, there is the imminent return of Tommy's. It will not have the same appearance or style of the old familiar restaurant, but its impact on Coventry even in a new location cannot be doubted. Tommy's drew people to Coventry—residents and visitors. It will do so again. Look for the store to finally open in March.

Second, there are the other parts of Coventry. It would be myopic to suggest that Coventryard is Coventry. It isn't and never was. Though the awful loss cannot be completely discounted, one must remember that most of the commercial strip is still healthy and alive.

Finally, the fire has created new possibilities for development. I can suggest some of those possibilities. A park? A parking area? New and smaller commercial structures? Perhaps some combination. I do not believe for a moment that the City is inclined to "abandon" Coventry, and with the help of a dedicated, enthusiastic, and talented crew of planners at City Hall, options are already being explored.

In sum, while the situation is bleak now, there is no reason to write-off Coventry as a failed experiment. Winters do end, folks. Come the spring, there is always new life and hope.

- Alan Rapoport

***Typist's note: I certainly hope that AR is not referring in his last paragraph above to the Street Fair!!!!!!!

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Ancient Chinese Curse:
"May you live in interesting times."

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