

The EVERGREEN NEWS

A Neighborhood Newspaper Sponsored by Vollintine-Evergreen Community Action Association



200 HONOR FRIEND

A unique event took place April 4 at the Church of the Good Shepherd, 1971 Jackson Avenue. Two hundred some neighbors gathered at the church at 7:30 in the evening to give a surprise farewell party for Mr. E.B. Johnson, a mailman who retired in December.

Mrs. George A. Dorman of 1004 Sheridan perceived the idea but did not have to twist anybody's arm to get help organizing the party. She got an enthusiastic response from every resident she contacted in the McLean/University area where Mr. Johnson had delivered the mail for over 25 years.

Among those who volunteered to take care of arrangements and refreshments were Mrs. W.W. Gibbs (Hallwood Drive), Mrs. A.A. Graves (McLean), Mrs. Sidney Schwartz, Mrs. H.A. Schwanke, Mrs. Dan Ross (Barksdale), Mrs. Bess Erhard, Mrs. Umberto Pierini, Mrs. Sam Mermelstein, Mrs. Bernice Hardin, Mrs. H.H. Holt (Sheridan), Miss Rose Evangelisti (Kensington), and Mrs. Stanley Smith, Miss Kate Stoltzfus, Mrs. Olive Jordon (University). Mr. Joe Prock, also of University Street, took charge of the floral decorations.

The party opened with an invocation by the Reverend Lloyd Barker of McLean Baptist Church, and it was emceed by Mr. Herbert M. Soby, Superintendent, N. Watkins Postal Station, who also gave the laudatory address. Music was provided by Mrs. Myra Glascock at the piano, with singers Noel Mason, Mary Lou Threnthem and Beverly Collingwood. Mr. Johnson was greeted by the whole party with a hearty "He's a Jolly Good Fellow" and "Hail, Hail, the Gang's All Here." The climax of the affair was probably the presentation of the \$780 cash gift to Mr.

Johnson, donated readily by the many neighbors he had served so faithfully for a quarter of a century.

Nobody of course who had Mr. Johnson as his mailman was surprised by the esteem and affection displayed for him. Mr. Johnson made friends not only with the long-time residents, many of whom he assisted in his off-time with little chores and services such as cutting the grass, trimming a rose bush, mending a fence, or in providing a reliable tradesman, he also made friends with new residents in the area and with youngsters and dogs.

When Paul Barnett of Channel 3 TV News asked Mr. Johnson what he had done to be thus honored he said his motto was not "to live and let live" but rather "to live and help live," which just about sums it up. Everyone agreed it was a lovely party and hoped it wouldn't take another 25 years before the next one. Luckily, there is the annual neighborhood picnic in the summer, for if we had to wait for the retirement of Mr. Johnson's successor, the youthful Jimmy Weir, it would be a long wait for the next party.

Court Pairs Schools

The school desegregation decision handed down by Judge Robert McRae last month includes several changes for the Vollintine/Evergreen neighborhood. The most significant of these changes are the pairing of its two elementary schools, Vollintine and Snowden, and the desegregation of Cypress Junior High by pairing with Trezevant in Frayser; however, in order to achieve integration at Cypress, ninth grade students in the Cypress district will be bussed out of the neighborhood.

The plan to be implemented this fall is plan A, one of five plans submitted by the school board under court order. The following is a detailed account of its effect on our neighborhood:

Elementary: All students in grades 1, 2, 3, and 4 will be taught at Vollintine School. Grades 5 and 6 will be taught at Snowden. The black/white ratio at Vollintine will be 51/49 and at Snowden 54/46.

Junior high: Snowden district — no change. Cypress district is paired with Trezevant, with grades 7 and 8 taught at Cypress and grade 9 at Trezevant. The black/white ratio at Cypress (grades 7 - 8) will be 66/34.

Senior high: Students now in the Douglass district and living between University and Hollywood will go to Northside. Otherwise the Northside district is unchanged and the school will remain over 98% black. The Central district will not change as far as V/E is concerned but will be enlarged to the south. The black/white ratio at Central will be 37/63, a change from the present 43/57, due to a probable future limitation on transfers-in. Student transfer policies have not been established yet but it is expected that transfers will be limited.

The petition of VECAA in behalf of white students assigned to Northside High was denied by the court. VECAA has asked that these students be permitted to attend a significantly integrated school. Judge McRae considered putting the whole neighborhood into the Central High district but rejected this, apparently since this would constitute gerrymandering. He concluded that "until the court is presented a plan within the practicalities of the situation" it was not practical to provide city-wide transportation to relieve the problems of iso-



The May VECAA meeting will be Monday the 15th at 8 p.m. at Fellowship Hall, McLean Baptist Church. Activities will include an analysis of existing committees and a discussion of the desegregation order as it relates to Northside.

PAIRING continued

lated minorities such as the white students at Northside. The decision to implement Plan A leaves Northside as the only school serving the neighborhood which lacks significant integration.

The court decision will most likely be the target of several legal maneuvers this summer. The Board of Education has already filed an appeal, the NAACP is expected to do the same, and the Department of Justice might intervene as well.

It is to be noted that, according to an editorial in the Commercial Appeal, April 29, high absenteeism during the recent school boycott by children of Citizens Against Busing members occurred primarily at "all-white or nearly all-white schools that would not be affected by court-ordered busing," and that integrated schools, among them Central, Snowden, and Vollenline "tended to have much less absenteeism." The editorial then went on to say that the "experiences of integration may have overcome some of the fears and uncertainties that exist in racially isolated neighborhoods," a conclusion with which most residents in our neighborhood would tend to agree.

Happenings

MAY

- 7-14----Christian Home Week at McLean Baptist Church. The week will include dialogue sermons, with panel discussions scheduled for Sunday, Wednesday and Sunday.
- 10-----One day exhibition of original graphic art at Southwestern Student Center. Roten Galleries (Baltimore) will display their collection of international prints and have a representative on hand to discuss this form of art.
- 10-----Graduation for preschoolers in Northside's Child Development Class.
- 11-13---College Athletic Conference Spring Sports Tournament to be hosted by Southwestern. Contests will be held in the sports of baseball, track, tennis and golf, with five schools vying for the conference championship.
- 23-----Last P. T. A. meeting at Vollenline Elementary School. The officers for the 1972-73 school year will be elected and installed at 7 p.m.
- 24-----Northside seniors graduate at 8 p.m. The ceremony will take place at Ellis Auditorium.
- 25-----Monthly XYZ Club meeting at Springdale Methodist Church at 11 a.m.
- 27-----Carnival at Little Flower Catholic Church. Enjoy a full mid-way, pony rides and bingo while eating spaghetti and ravioli. Activities will last from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., and admission is free.

JUNE

- 2-----Registration for Vacation Bible School at McLean Baptist at 10 a.m. School starts the following Monday at 9 a.m. for ages 4 to 14. (V.B.S. for other neighborhood churches starts the second week in June.)

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BORG PHARMACY

Toward The Good Life

by John Bruhwiler

Little Flower Parochial School is similar to Snowden and Vollenline public schools in physical layout, number of students per class, racial composition, teaching staff, curriculum, and even administration. As Vollenline and Snowden, Little Flower is housed in a seasoned brick structure, the number of students per class is determined by a state law, the student body is well integrated (60% white, 40% black), the teachers are certified, and the principal is a professional educator and administrator. The one obvious difference between Little Flower School and the other neighborhood schools, however, is its size. With an enrolment of 250 students it is half as big only as the smallest neighborhood public school.

As a parochial school, Little Flower School is, of course, not under the jurisdiction of the Memphis Board of Education. Along with 14 other elementary schools and two high schools, it is a member of the Memphis Diocesan school system, with its own superintendent and supervisors. There are system-wide guidelines for calendar, texts, and teachers' qualifications and salaries. Each school, however, has its own board of education which, within the given guidelines, determines policy and makes recommendations. These, in turn, are interpreted by the principal.

At Little Flower, the principal is a lady, Sister Daniel Maria who has a B.S. in education, a nearly-completed M.A. in education, and in June will receive an M.A. in guidance and counseling. As a member of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Kentucky, an order renowned for social action, Sister Daniel Maria is totally committed to the school and its goals. The school strives to be "an authentic Christian educational community that enhances the living of the good life," a community where students are helped "to realize a sense of God, a sense of their own worth, a sense of direction, a sense of responsibility and a sense of mission." Emphasis is placed on the cultivation of personal values which "respect the rights of others as individuals and as groups," in order to enable an individual to live "in peace and harmony with others".

This striving for "the good life" involves the whole community at Little Flower, principal, parents, teachers, students, priests, and all the parishioners, and it permeates every facet of school life. Sister Daniel Maria believes parents are their children's primary educators. Through the PTA, parents participate "in the decision-making processes of the school and in the continual evaluation of its educational programs." The PTA also publishes an informative and entertaining monthly newsletter.

The teachers make use of the latest audio-visual equipment and, in spite of their large classes, give individual attention to the progress of students slower as well as quicker than average. Miss Greer, a black

GOOD LIFE continued

teacher and a Methodist who is at present working on an M.A. at Memphis State, for example, has several students in her fourth level class who move to another level for reading, while several come to her room from another class. Mr. Russotto, who teaches the eighth level and shares some duties with Sister Nancy Jane on the seventh level, also teaches Spanish. Mr. Russotto's wife, Maria, an education student at Memphis State, teaches modern dance to the girls on a part-time basis. The three teachers I talked to stressed the friendly cooperation among themselves, with the principal and, perhaps more importantly, with the students.

The students, eighty-one of whom are from Baptist or Methodist homes, seem indeed to be touched by the spirit the school is striving for. Every single boy and girl I talked to had nothing but praise for the curriculum, their teachers, and their fellow students. The teachers, on the other hand, have the same fondness for their charges. Perhaps the proximity of the church is not without influence, certainly not the guiding hand of Monsignor Leppert or the presence of Father Kirk who, in Sister Daniel Maria's words, is "totally available".

School support by the entire parish is evident in the fact that, though Little Flower is "the poorest parish", the school is nearly self-sufficient, which in the more affluent suburban parishes is not the case. This is due to generous Sunday collection but also to the parish school board whose recommendations and leadership saved the school from near financial collapse two years ago. In fairness it must be said that the teachers, with the modest top salary of \$4000 a year, make perhaps the most substantial contribution to the financial and academic health of the school.

The near financial collapse, according to the Monsignor, started six years ago when the school accepted the first black students. A large number of the congregation transferred their children to other parochial schools or left the parish altogether. Sister Daniel Maria is quick to point out the other parochial schools are not havens for segregationists but are white (or black) due to their geographic locations. She also says that the percentage of non-Catholics in those schools is relatively small.

Today, Little Flower School appears far from collapse. It gives the impression of being a vibrant institution in the heart of a neighborhood that has taken it to heart.

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VECAA News



At the last VECAA meeting, April 24, Margaret Dichtel was reelected chairman of the steering committee for another year. The only other nominee, the Reverend Lloyd Barker of McLean Baptist Church, declined to be a candidate at this time. Dr. Barker said he felt VECAA should be run by laymen, with the neighborhood clergy playing an active supporting role. Miss Dichtel has the community's congratulations and gratitude for devoting so much of her time and energy to the welfare of the neighborhood for another year.

Transport Truths

Michael Tate, president of the Memphis transit system, spoke to the VECAA meeting April 24. He attributed MTA's current financial crisis to the combination of rising costs and fewer passengers. Cutting service and raising fares, two proposed remedies, he said, would make the bus attractive to even fewer passengers. Privately-operated bus systems in other cities which have gone this route, he predicted, will be forced to shut down in a few more years. Mr. Tate revealed that MTA has asked the city for a subsidy of one-half to one million dollars per year. A half million would bring the system to a break-even point; a million would permit a 10-20 per cent improvement in service, providing buses every 10 minutes on all lines during rush hours, and every 20 minutes during the rest of the time. Improved service, Mr. Tate said, will get more passengers when gimmicks won't.

Wanted

Wanted to rent. Room in McLean-Jackson area. Private bath preferred. Mature gentleman. Phone 386-0685 evenings.

Saturday School

Closing exercises of the Saturday School of the Memphis Academy of Arts will be held on May 6 at 11 a.m. The Saturday School offers instruction in visual arts to students aged 6 to 16. Annual awards to be presented include four scholarships for next year's Saturday School and a full-tuition scholarship to a Saturday School student entering the Academy as a freshman in the fall.

Work done by the students will be on exhibit until May 6 and includes drawings, paintings, prints, pottery, textiles, sculpture and metal arts.

Summer classes for school-age students will begin on June 5 and run through July 14.

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Meet The Neighbors

Teacher

by John Bruhwiler

What does a man with a family who grosses \$4000 a year do for a living? The initial reaction may well be "nothing" because the first thing that comes to mind is a welfare case. The man in question, however, John Russotto, is far from a welfare recipient. He is, quite to the contrary, a very productive individual.

Born and raised in New York City, Mr. Russotto came to Memphis six years ago to study social work at Memphis State University. After graduation in 1970, equipped with a B.A. in social work and an elementary teacher's certificate, he applied for a position at the black parochial Father Bertrand School in South Memphis. At the time, Father Bertrand did not have a position open and Mr. Russotto was encouraged to apply at Little Flower School which was then, as now, the only integrated Catholic elementary school in the city.

At Little Flower, Mr. Russotto, aspiring social worker, became Mr. Russotto, teacher, totally involved in the life of the school. Since his tenure, eighth graders at Little Flower study not only language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies but also Spanish. In addition to introducing the study of a foreign language into the curriculum last year, he was also instrumental in creating a basic physical education program in which he taught calisthenics and tumbling. In accord with the spirit of a parochial school, he takes a natural interest in the religious education of his charges. He shares the teaching of religion with Father Kirk and, on Sunday, teaches Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (Sunday School) for Catholic children in the parish who attend public schools.

Recently, Mr. Russotto took his class on the "Walk for Mankind," a 25-mile benefit hike for Saint Jude Hospital, Memphis House, and Project Concern, raising \$380. Another class project of his eighth graders at present is a noise pollution study on Jackson Avenue. In this civics project, the children record the deafening noise made by trailer trucks passing the school and write letters to our councilman and the editors of the local newspapers. Mr. Russotto says he is trying to involve the children in "living situations," the "real world."

Mr. Russotto is no stranger to the "real world" either. In order to supplement his salary, he took a summer job last year with a local bakery, counting stale loaves at a truck stop where it was "hot as hell." The real hell, however, Mr. Russotto says, was the weekly discard-

ing of hundreds of day-old loaves of bread which were ground up and sold as dog food ingredient to a local mill while, a few blocks away, hundreds of children had to do without any bread at all.

John Russotto is a cheerful man. He earns enough to pay the rent for a neat duplex at 895 Oakmont Place and to provide for his family, wife Maria, a senior at Memphis State in secondary education, and 9-month-old son, John Christian. Mrs. Russotto, a native Memphian who is expecting another child in October, earns her university tuition by teaching modern dance at Little Flower School.

Even with another child on the way, John Russotto is not worried about the future. This summer he hopes to find another summer job, and for September he has been promised a raise. In another year he expects to go back to Memphis State and work toward an M.A. in social work. As a social worker he probably won't be earning much more than as a teacher, but I don't think that has occurred to him yet.

Gossip

Welcome to William Dante Sneed who was born March 12. The young Mr. Sneed is the son of Robert and Laura Sneed and joins his sisters and brother: Pamela, Alan, Bridgett, and Yvette, at 1826 Brown. The older Mr. Sneed is distributing the Evergreen News in the Brown-Rosebud Circle area.

Congratulations to Steve and Bonnie Barker who were married March 20 in Mexico. Mrs. Barker's parents are Mr. and Mrs. M.H. Stovall, former residents of the V/E neighborhood. Mrs. Stovall has also taught the third grade at Snowden for several years. Mr. Barker's parents are the Rev. and Mrs. Lloyd O. Barker of 2124 Volintine. Steve and Bonnie will reside in Little Rock where they plan to open a leather shop.

Allan Tynes of 1607 Jackson is beginning a new morning talk show called "Tynes Line" on WREC Radio at 10 a.m. weekdays. Allan and his wife Karen distribute the Evergreen News in the Lyndale-Jackson-Stonewall triangle.

Dr. and Mrs. John G. McCarter of 1949 Jackson are welcoming a new grandson. Jason Andrew Fox was born February 29 to Sandra and John Fox, Jr., of 2367 Forrest.

Morris S. Fogelman of 1550 North Parkway has been named Outstanding Businessman of the Year by the College of Business Administration at Memphis State. His sons Avron and Robert Fogelman have recently given a \$100,000 endowment to the College in his honor. The Fogelman real estate firm owns both the Woodmont Towers and Parkway House high-rise apartments in the V/E neighborhood.

Phone items of neighborhood interest to Gossip Editors Mrs. Warren Lowry (278-5997) and Mrs. Cornelia Morris (274-1278).

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