

The EVERGREEN NEWS

A Neighborhood Newspaper Sponsored by Vollintine-Evergreen Community Action Association



CHRISTMAS '74

As the city's retailers prepare for the Christmas rush, most VECAA residents are preparing for the Season in a quieter, more traditional manner. For some reason Christmas in our neighborhood is characterized more by sincere warmth than by tinsel and artificial snow. Maybe the excesses generated by those who profit from the Season are tempered in our neighborhood by an older populace, people who remember the Yule Log and green Christmas trees. Many of the customs currently associated with Christmas are drawn from diverse and often non-Christian origins. These diverse origins are nurtured by the cosmopolitan air of a community in which the continuance of old world customs is common. To this is added the more reserved ceremonies of the Jewish residents, allowing the VECAA community to maintain more of the original meaning of the day.

Christmas celebrations for many V/E residents will be centered around the church, with each denomination adding a distinctive touch. Activities begin early in the month with Evergreen Presbyterian and Southwestern presenting the musical, "Godspell". Other music programs include a Dec. 8 presentation by the "Singin' Bunch" at McLean Baptist and a production of "Amahl and the Night Visitor" on Dec. 11 also at McLean. The Children's Choir there will perform at the 7 p.m. service on Dec. 18.

Evergreen Presbyterian will have performances of special Advent music on Dec. 8 and 15, while the Chancel Choir at Lindsay Memorial Presbyterian will present a Christmas Cantata on Dec. 15. Trinity Methodist's choir will sing portions of "The Messiah".

Many congregations will have Christmas Eve ceremonies. McLean Baptist will have a carol and candle-light service and Evergreen Presbyterian will have a communion service. Both Little Flower Catholic Church and the Church of the Good Shepherd, Episcopal, will observe the traditional Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve.

On New Year's Eve, Open Door Bible Church will have a Watch Night Service, following Christmas programs earlier in the month.

For our Jewish neighbors, the season is Chanukah, or the Festival of Lights. This ceremony commemorates the time in 165 B.C. when Judas Maccabeus entered the city of Jerusalem. Purification of the city was begun and, on the 25th day of Kislev, it was completed and a sacred candle lighted. Since the small candle burned for eight days, the eight days before Dec. 25 are celebrated each year. The season is one of home worship for Jews and study courses take place in several of the neighborhood's homes.

Cabanas Chronicle

by Hershel Lipow

It wasn't so long ago that spotted rabbits and quail battled adventurous kids for possession of the Briggs field at the corner of Vollintine and University. That was when THOMAS W. BRIGGS, founder of Welcome Wagon International was alive and Dr. PEYTON RHODES was president of Southwestern College. Today row townhouses veil the University Cabanas which are "home" for nearly one thousand young adults, newly weds and empty-nesters.

Thomas Briggs was said to be a brilliant man who loved Memphis. He traveled throughout the world promoting the idea which is known universally for its friendly basket. According to Mrs. Briggs, it was natural for him to will his property to Southwestern. "He was a well read man and although he never went to college, he had a great deal of respect for Southwestern."

When Mr. Briggs died, Southwestern sold the property for approximately \$350,000. As a fitting tribute to a man who prompted friendship, Southwestern decided to use the proceeds to construct the Thomas W. Briggs Student Center. With additional funds the center was dedicated on May 2, 1966. Dr. Rhodes, who is a physicist, reports that the building has some interesting features. "It is the northern element of the school's planned quadrangle. The building is constructed on the school's center line. It is right in the middle of the campus."

While its location implies unity, the sale of the Briggs property almost threatened to divide Southwestern from its northern neighbors. MARGARET DITCHEL of 893 Oakmont



The next VECAA meeting will be on January 20 at 7:30 p.m. at McLean Baptist Church. Election of 1975 officers will be held.

Pl. remembers several meetings at the Church of the Good Shepherd where residents met with Dr. Rhodes to protest commercial rezoning of the land. Since commercial property has a higher resale value, Southwestern was anxious to have it rezoned. Contrarily, residents were anxious to prevent the noise and depreciation which commercial property brings.

After several compromises, the present combination of townhouse and apartment zonings was agreed upon. The corner lot of Vollintine and University which was left vacant in anticipation of a fast food operation has been subsequently turned down for rezoning by the Board of Adjustment. A plan to add commercial convenience stores within the complex has also been rejected.

C. A. OSWALD of 2048 Hallwood remembers the rezoning hearings as a "rejuvenating spirit that united people in common peril." Mrs. STANLEY SMITH of 900 University also remembers the meetings as a fight to preserve the residential character of the neighborhood. "When I moved in twelve years ago, my moving man left his card. I told him my next move would be to Memorial Gardens. I intend to keep that promise."

The University Cabanas were finally constructed by Smith and Turley, Inc. who also constructed three other Cabana complexes throughout the city from 1962 - 1970. They are presently owned by JOHN S. SMITH and managed by his son, KEITH. Complete with tennis courts and swimming pools, the Cabanas offer convenient, modern environment to many young medical and optometry students. Southwestern students and recent graduates have also found their way to the Cabanas. The circle seems to be complete. Maybe that's the way Thomas Briggs planned it.

Classifieds

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Around The Neighborhood

By mid-January the V/E area should have its own branch of the YWCA. Ms. BETTY AMMONS, new director for the "North Center," has announced that First United Lutheran Church at Jackson and Willett will provide the space for a variety of activities and programs. Watch next month's issue for a list of events and the date of the grand opening.

ED DALSTROM of 905 Kensington Place recently received the Americanism Award from the Daughters of the American Revolution. The 88-year-old retired executive received the national award for distinguished service to his country and for his assistance to aliens seeking citizenship. Mr. Dalstrom was born in Sweden and became a naturalized citizen in 1914.

A new family moving to the neighborhood is the BLANCHARDS who are enjoying living at the end of Sheridan at 1072. NESBY and MARY have three children—DEBRA, 8, in the third grade at Little Flower, NESBY, 7, in the second grade at Little Flower and DERRICK, 3. Mr. Blanchard has recently associated with Bankers Life and Casualty Insurance Company and both Mr. and Mrs. Blanchard are with the city school system.

Thanks are due to John's Bakery on Jackson and Delicious Foods Bakery on McLean for the ten dozen cookies they collectively donated for VECAA's November party honoring Evergreen News carriers.

In town last weekend were DOUG and LAURIE BARKER, who were married November 16 in Lafayette, California, where Doug has been associated with Calvary Baptist Church. Laurie is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. ANDREW ROBERTSON of Lafayette and Doug is the son of Rev. and Mrs. LLOYD BARKER of 2124 Vollentine. Doug is well known in the neighborhood as the organizer last year of the Children's Church at McLean Baptist and driver of the church bus.

Last month DAVID and DIANE KUBITZ bought the old Bailey home at 1618 Forrest, where they are now busy recovering the roof and rebuilding the chimney. Mr. Kubitz is employed by Western Electric; Mrs. Kubitz is a part-time instructor at Memphis Academy of Arts. Their son, CHRISTOPHER LEE, is 18 months old. Their hobbies are antiques, flea markets, and old cars.

Welcome to DUNCAN FOX who was born October 6 to Mr. and Mrs. JOHN FOX of 1957 Jackson. Duncan joins his older brother JASON, who is two.

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Finish Line

The final results of the Nov. 5 general election are now available and V/E residents voted as expected. Neighborhood voters generally supported the Republican candidate although the mixed precincts (40-2 and 41-2) to the north often voted Democrat. The major difference in this election was the fact that the predominantly white precincts (36-1, 36-2 and 36-3) generally supported the losing candidate.

In the most hotly contested race, that for 8th District Congressman, Ward 36 gave Kuykendall 75% of the vote. Precincts 36-1 and 36-3, in fact, allotted over 80% to the Republican incumbent. On the other hand, mixed Precincts 40-2 and 41-2 supported Ford by a two-thirds majority.

In the other major contest a similar pattern prevailed with Ward 36 throwing its support in the gubernatorial race to Alexander. About 65% of the ward's vote went to the Republican while the mixed precincts gave a similar majority to candidate Blanton. In both the Congressional and gubernatorial races the V/E community was split much like the rest of the voters in Shelby County.

One other statewide race — that for Public Service Commissioner — generally elicited party-line voting, with the predominantly white sections voting 3 - 1 Republican and the mixed precincts 3 - 1 Democrat.

The race for District 89 State Representative resulted in a split vote in Ward 36, with precincts 36-1 and 36-3 giving incumbent Daniels slightly more than half. Precinct 36-2, on the other hand supported Gaia by the same margin. The rest of the district supported Gaia nearly 2 to 1. In District 98 Harper Brewer, Jr., was unopposed.

Neighborhood voters were generally opposed to the first proposed city ordinance (salary raises for city councilmen) while they were split fairly even in regard to the other two relating to city purchasing policies. All three were soundly defeated.

City-wide, voters turned out at a rate of 58% and overall the V/E community approximated this figure. Ward 36 participated at a higher rate (65%) while the two mixed precincts voted at a lower rate (54%).

Vollintine-Evergreen Community Action Association
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Planners' Progress

The long-discussed effort to formulate a neighborhood plan for the Vollintine/Evergreen community has finally gotten underway. The project will combine the ideas and energy of the long-active Vollintine/Evergreen Community Action Association, the Inventing the Future seminar held last April, and the community liaison committee recently set up by Southwestern.

The proposed plan would help V/E residents decide what, if any, changes they would like to see in zoning, streets, schools and many other areas of community concern. Such a plan will also give the neighborhood a little leverage in dealing with city agencies, developers and others who would change things in the area. This will probably be the first time such a plan has been developed using primarily neighborhood resources.

The area to be included in the plan is bounded roughly by Watkins on the west, Cypress Creek on the north, Trezevant on the east and Overton Park Avenue on the south. These boundaries will be vague and care taken to consider the needs of adjacent areas. The plan will be coordinated with those of the Mid-Memphis Improvement Association whose territory overlaps VECAA's on the south.

The plan's development is being coordinated by the long-range planning committee of VECAA. Committee chairman is MARGARET DICHTTEL of 893 Oakmont Place. The committee is composed of ten members from the neighborhood and most of these also form the subcommittee for land-use planning, considered to be the most urgent activity. JOE HOUGH, a real estate appraiser,

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871 University heads up this subcommittee.

To deal with the various areas of concern, nine task forces have been set up. Each of these will be composed of several community residents with expertise or interest in the particular area. The task forces and some of their activities are as follows:

TRANSPORTATION — Review plans for new and improved streets and expressway construction; have input into bus routing.

EDUCATION — Work with V/E public schools in obtaining new programs; participate in desegregation decisions; get Southwestern more involved with schools.

CHURCHES — Reactivate neighborhood ministers committee; keep track of membership and help dwindling congregations; use churches for promoting neighborhood projects.

COMMUNICATIONS — Utilize all types of media to enhance neighborhood spirit and disseminate information on community projects; develop radio and TV specials on the community.

PUBLIC SAFETY — Keep track of crime and accident trends; work with police and residents to reduce both.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES — Make politicians aware of neighborhood problems and residents aware of politicians' platforms; influence governmental decisions that affect the community; make political boundaries coincide with neighborhood boundaries.

SOCIAL SERVICES — Identify problems of groups such as senior citizens and pre-schoolers; work with appropriate governmental agencies in planning for and implementing neighborhood services.

BUSINESS — Keep neighborhood businessmen active in community development and remain informed of their problems.

In addition to these task forces, the land-use subcommittee will deal with real estate practices and recreational facilities and the long-range planning committee will handle any unforeseen matters in the appropriate manner. All activities will be coordinated with plans developed by the various city agencies.

There is plenty of room on these task forces for anyone concerned with the future of the V/E community. Changes will take place no matter what. But, if we as neighborhood residents want to have a say in it, now is the time. If you would like to participate, call Margaret Dichtel at 275-4671.

National Neighbor

Perhaps the best way to determine how successful VECAA has been in creating a stable biracial community is to bring in an outside expert. And this is just what was done. On Dec. 2 Ms. JEAN MILGRAM, representative of National Neighbors in Philadelphia, spent the day here and gave us a good looking-over and some advice.

The visit was arranged by MIKE KIRBY of 683 N. Idlewild and lodging was provided by Southwestern. Ms. Milgram represents a national organization founded in 1970 to encourage the development of biracial communities and VECAA is one of 72 member organizations. A Ford Foundation grant enables her to travel about consulting with neighborhoods such as ours.

Ms. Milgram came in Sunday night and met with four of the founders of VECAA—MARGARET DICHTEL, TOM KIRK, LLOYD BARKER and MODEANE THOMPSON. On Monday, MAUREEN HOUGH of 871 University gave her the grand tour of Vollintine, Snowden, Little Flower and Northside Schools. That afternoon she visited the city's Policy Planning and Analysis Office to discuss their plans for citizen involvement.

After dinner with IRVIN and DOTTIE SACHRITZ, Ms. Milgram met with various members of the VECAA steering committee, the long-range planning committee and other interested community residents. During the meeting she related her impression of the community and gave out some useful advice.

Ms. Milgram first pointed out some good characteristics of the area. The commercial areas, for example, have remained attractive and the overall physical condition is good. She also had praise for the community newsletter.

In regard to the problem of a lack of widespread neighborhood involvement, she suggested a membership drive. On the point of low participation by black residents, Ms. Milgram stated that this was a problem all over. Blacks in biracial neighborhoods, it seems, view integration a lot differently from white residents.

After a discussion of plans underway in the V/E community, the meeting ended on an optimistic note, with the twenty residents in attendance leaving determined to make the neighborhood the best possible place in which to live.

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