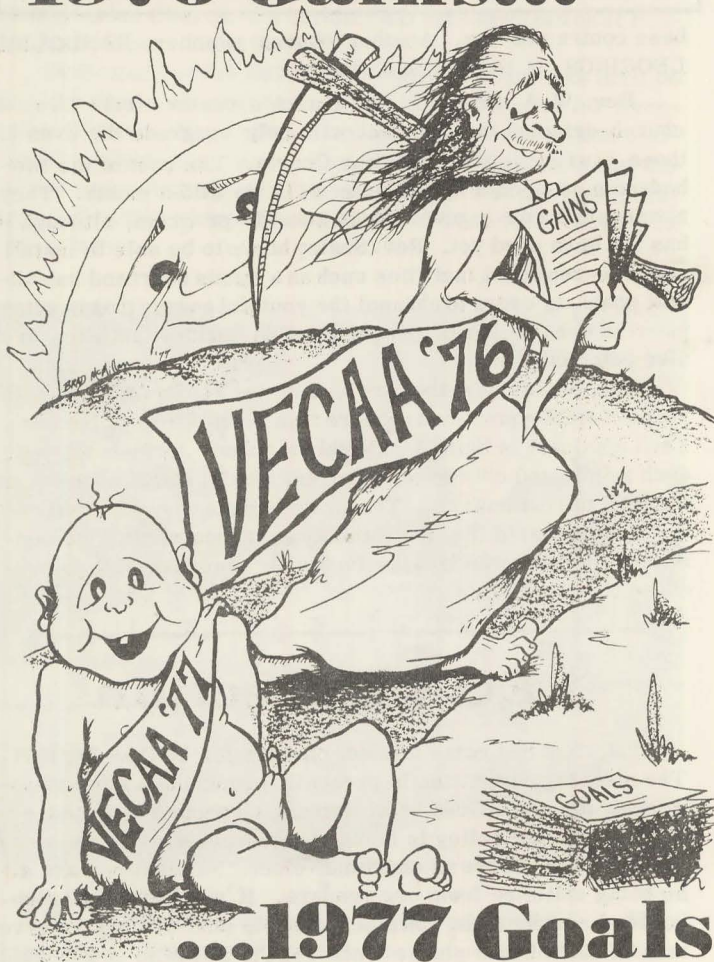


The EVERGREEN NEWS

A Neighborhood Newspaper Sponsored by Vollintine-Evergreen Community Action Association

1976 Gains...



...1977 Goals

The Vollintine/Evergreen Community Action Association appeared to be doing quite well in 1976. However, when one examines the record it is clear that this last year has been VECAA's most successful ever. Understandably, there have been set-backs, but the wins far outnumbered the defeats.

Perhaps the area in which the most has been accomplished can be broadly termed "involvement." Involvement of new people, involvement with other organizations, involvement with Southwestern—these were all obvious during the year. Chairman MIKE KIRBY called for this when he took office last January and the results have been gratifying. Membership in VECAA has increased to approximately 125 households. Under JOE HOUGH the distribution system for the News was reorganized and many new distributors involved. VECAA joined with two other central city organizations—the Central Gardens Association and the Mid-Memphis Improvement Association—in dealing with common issues. Most significantly, VECAA became involved with Southwestern to a greater extent than ever before with beneficial results for both. VECAA

was assigned one of the College's work/study students who, for a small cost to VECAA, is available to do much of the leg-work required by a neighborhood organization. The relationship has resulted in many campus organizations volunteering to work in the community. Examples include a sorority which initiated a neighborhood clean-up campaign and a service organization that agreed to fix up homes for elderly residents.

The other area of success for VECAA in '76 concerned community development and preservation. This broad topic relates to a number of activities aimed at improving the physical and social environment of the neighborhood. VECAA worked closely with the City's Community Development Program which designated part of the area as a recipient of neighborhood improvement funds. This involvement coincided with VECAA efforts to develop a neighborhood plan. Although no final document resulted, the main components have been developed and a zoning revision proposal was presented to the Planning Commission.

In keeping with the 1976 chairman's goal of improving housing conditions several tasks were accomplished. A complete structural survey of the neighborhood's dwelling units was administered and existing problems documented. Many absentee landlords were identified during this process. A VECAA Housing Complaint Board was established to deal with structures that violated City or neighborhood standards. Cooperative arrangements were developed with the City's Housing Improvement Office whereby VECAA complaints are given immediate attention. In addition, the City administered a concentrated housing inspection of a portion of the neighborhood. The *Evergreen News* contributed to this effort by initiating a "House of the Month" feature in the paper. Chairman Kirby was appointed to one of the Planning Commission's task forces on neighborhood development.

VECAA was fortunate in 1976 to receive national publicity in March when an NBC film crew came to the neighborhood to report on one of the few successfully integrated communities it could find in the country. The film was shown on the NBC Evening News and was followed up with an interview with Kirby on a local TV talk show.

Other highlights of the year included the holding of a Food Fair at Little Flower Church several times during the summer. VECAA was also successful in having the pinball machines removed from the Seven-Eleven Store at Jackson and Belvedere.

There are a few disappointments to report. A bill introduced to the State Legislature by mid-town Representative Pam Gaia that would have given VECAA tax-exempt status



Meetings

The next meeting of VECAA will be held in February. The meeting will focus on the impact of the reorganization of the Planning Commission on the neighborhood, especially in the area of zoning. New officers will also be announced. Watch the February News for the time and place.

Memphis, Tennessee
Volume VI, Number 1

7 January, 1977
Circulation: 5000

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failed to pass. The YWCA program started at First United Lutheran Church was not supported as much as anticipated. Several attempts to secure outside funds for VECAA projects failed. The Commercial Appeal printed a misleading story concerning mid-town neighborhoods which no doubt raised the apprehensions of many residents.

All in all it was probably VECAA's most productive year. Hopefully 1977 can retain the momentum built up during 1976 and the organization will have continued success.

Volunteers Needed

For the past seven years many adult volunteers from the Memphis community have had rewarding experiences working one-to-one with seniors at Northside High School. Volunteers supplement the work of the school guidance counselors in post-high school planning with the senior students. Interest and dependability are the qualifications for volunteer participation. . . training in specifics and continuing support are provided by Memphis Volunteer Placement. Each year large numbers of students apply for the service. WE NEED YOU. Please call Dot Bailey, Volunteer Coordinator, at 774-7504 for information.

Church Buys Courts

Many V/E residents have already noticed the refurbishing that has been underway in the last months at the corner of Watkins and Vollintine. What is unusual about this is that a church, the Morning Star Holiness Church, is behind it. The church purchased the Vollintine Courts Apartments for \$500,000 and plans to spend another \$50,000 remodeling them. A great deal of painting has been done along with the replacing of windows, sheet rock, cabinets and carpeting. Church members themselves are lending a hand to augment the work that has

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been contracted for. Another church member, RANDOLPH LEGGINGS, is the resident manager.

Rev. W.A. SESLEY, the church's pastor, feels that a church-oriented management will help up-grade the lives of those living in the Vollintine Courts. The rent of the two-bedroom, one-bath apartments will be \$115 a month. They also qualify for a government subsidy program, although it has not been used yet. Rev. Sesley hopes to be able to install some recreational facilities such as a tennis court and basketball goals, in order to channel the youthful energy that is often spent in destruction of property. The laundry facilities are also being upgraded.

Rev. Sesley says they are looking for stable families with regular employment and no more than two children as tenants. Each applicant is being thoroughly checked. He feels that with such people and church management the Court will become an asset in the community. The pastor spoke very favorably of our area and said that the stability and appearance of the surrounding neighborhood were factors in their decision to purchase the complex.

VECAA Election

The time has come to elect officers for VECAA for 1977. The steering committee is presently preparing a slate of nominees for the offices of chairman, vice-chairman and secretary. A new policy is being considered whereby the vice-chairman will serve as chairman-elect. Nominations are also being solicited from our readers. If you know any neighborhood resident that you feel is capable (and willing) to serve as a VECAA officer please contact RICK THOMAS at 278-2210 or 522-8336 by the end of January.

Only those families and individuals who were paid-up members in 1976 or have joined for 1977 can vote in the election. A ballot will be mailed out to all such members once the nominations have been closed. VECAA by-laws allow only one vote per family.

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PiKA Headquarters

The V/E community is noted for the many institutions found in or near the area. One, however, that is likely to be overlooked at a casual glance is the Pi Kappa Alpha Fraternity National Headquarters at 577 University. Located across the street from the Southwestern campus and next to Evergreen Presbyterian Church, the building and the organization it houses bear closer inspection.

Dedicated in 1954 this three-story structure was built on land donated by the adjacent college (as was the lot for Evergreen Church). The national headquarters was originally located in Atlanta but was moved to Memphis when the fraternity started expanding outward from the South. The fact that Southwestern's PiKA chapter is one of the oldest in the country was also a factor.



The building was designed by architect GEORGE F. MAHONEY and houses, in addition to the fraternity's administrative offices, a museum, a library and conference rooms. The building's traditional architecture provides a clue to its contents. On the main floor the Harvey T. Newell Memorial Library and the National President's office are paneled in walnut and furnished in antique wood-inlay furniture and oriental-style rugs on hardwood floors. A fireplace and a large chan-

delier further adorn the library. In it are found fraternity publications dating to the 1890's, as well as books by and about fraternity members and various college catalogues and directories. The portrait of Mr. Newell above the fireplace was painted by Memphis artist PAUL PENCZNER as were several others in the building.

The first floor contains most of the administrative offices including the bookkeeping and clerical sections as well as the executive director's office. This office is occupied by city councilman PAT HALLORAN. Marble is used for much of the floor on this level.

Perhaps the most interesting room in the building is the FREEMAN H. HART Museum. This room contains a variety of memorabilia relating to the fraternity, its founders and members. The collected documents include the minutes from the fraternity's first meeting in 1868, letters of early members and other official documents. Convention souvenirs a hundred years old are on display as are personal belongings of the founders. Photos of famous PiKA's are included and even a copy of Bing Crosby's million-dollar record, "Dream Girl of PiKA". Also on display are stained-glass windows from a church in Virginia whose every minister had belonged to the fraternity. There is also a modern stained-glass window built into the east wall that is visible from University Street at night.

The second floor also includes a cherry-paneled Board Room with marble fireplace, a general meeting room (that, incidentally, is available to the public), and an audio-visual room. In conjunction with the museum there is a room dedicated to fraternity members killed in various American military engagements. A real eye-catcher is an illuminated map of the U.S. about five feet tall and ten feet wide that indicates

Circulation

The distribution of the Evergreen News has been taken over by the recently-reactivated VECAA communications committee and various improvements are being made to assure fast and thorough circulation. JOE HOUGH, chairman of this committee, wants anyone who is not receiving the News on a regular basis or who wants to deliver on his street to call him at 274-5551.

staff: editors: rick thomas, karen tynes/news: chris menard, bruce schisler, marty thomas/art: brad mcmillan/photography: george bradfute/typing: sallee bruwiler/business: shirley johnson/printing: courtesy southwestern at memphis

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the locations of the various fraternity chapters across the country.

The Headquarters staff of 25 includes eleven professional workers who run the fraternity. A major function of the office is publications and JOHN KAEGI, director of communications, oversees the production and distribution of magazines, newsletters, manuals and invoices. The headquarters last year sponsored and published a bicentennial history of all fraternities in the U.S. (In fact, at one time, the headquarters was the fourth largest publisher in the city.)

In addition to publications the national office oversees the financial operations of 202 chapters, including major real estate holdings in the form of dormitories. It also administers various loan and scholarship programs. Six consultants work out of the University location, traveling to various chapters across the country. The fraternity owns a townhouse on Vollintine in which these consultants are housed when in town.

It is unfortunate that so few people are in a position to appreciate the craftsmanship that went into the building. Anyone who can find an excuse to visit the PiKA national headquarters will certainly be impressed by its well-appointed interior.

Around The Neighborhood

Suspensions frequently voiced by neighborhood residents were confirmed last month when a report was issued on "redlining" in the city of Memphis. The Tennessee Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) found, based on recently released figures, that Memphis financial institutions have been discriminating against certain parts of the city—including the V/E community—in the granting of home loans. This practice benefits suburban home buyers at the expense of those in the central city and has been found illegal in other cities.

* * *

A move is underway in Memphis to form a federation of various non-profit community groups in the central part of the city. It is felt that such a federation could more effectively influence policy-making and each organization could benefit from the experience of the others. VECAA officials are looking into the possibility of participation in such a coalition.

* * *

Professor CHARLES WARREN of 1696 Forrest Avenue has been appointed Southwestern's Acting Academic Dean for the 1977-78 academic year. He will replace Dr. BOB PATTERSON who will be on sabbatical leave during this period. Charlie has been a frequent carrier of the News in past years.

* * *

CHARLES COON of 888 Hawthorne is presently Acting Coordinator for the Common Cause organization in Congressional District 8. He is hopeful of building the strength of this consumer-oriented organization in the Memphis area and encourages anyone wishing to participate as a Common Cause volunteer to call him at 278-2643.

V/E Membership Drive

Continuing for the next few weeks households in the Vollintine/Evergreen community will be telephoned and the families asked to either become new members of VECAA or to renew their original memberships.

In order for VECAA to be successful this year, we are going to need your help. When you are contacted, please agree to pay the \$2.50 family membership fee. Please mail your payment to the address shown below at your earliest convenience. This money will help pay for services such as mailing, compiling reports, student assistants, etc.

Issues such as zoning, redlining, housing deterioration, and problems of the retired and elderly have been only a few of VECAA's major concerns. Your community organization needs your continued moral and financial support.

Vollintine-Evergreen Community Action Association
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