

The EVERGREEN NEWS

A Neighborhood Newspaper Sponsored by Vollintine - Evergreen Community Action Association

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NORTH STONEWALL BLOCK PARTY

By Barb McKee

The block of Stonewall Street between Henry Avenue and Vollintine Avenue is proud to report that their block party of October 1 was a smashing success. Between the hours of 3 and 6 in the afternoon, twenty of the thirty houses on the block took part in a combination supper-business meeting for the purpose of forming a cooperative to insure the safety and continued beauty of the block.

Some of those who helped in the planning and putting together of the event were MR. AND MRS. TED KRAUSSER (893 Stonewall), MRS. ESTELLE BUCKLEY (884 Stonewall), MR. AND MRS. FRED RICHESON (885 Stonewall), and MR. AND MRS. BILL MCKEE (879 Stonewall).

Opened with a prayer by DR. DARRELL C. RICHARDSON (899 Stonewall), the meal was pot luck with neighbors bringing goodies like fried chicken, spaghetti, vegetable dishes, turnip greens and corn bread, and mouth-watering cakes and pies. Special guests were CARL HOLMES, VECAA president, and CHARLOTTE PHELPS (882 Hawthorne) who was representing her block.

After all were filled to the brim with excellent food and good cheer, BILL MCKEE kicked off the meeting by stating the purpose of coming together for neighborhood security and beauty through fellowship. He then introduced MR. HOLMES who gave a few short words of encouragement, offering the support of VECAA. During the meeting, special needs assessment sheets were distributed to permit members of each household to express

needs and suggest concerns and directions for a block organization. One hundred percent of those asked volunteered for block committee work. Ideas of rotating labor for home maintenance, monthly work days, and neighborhood rummage sales were touched on.

A special segment of the meeting was devoted to the concern of home security. The group was delighted to have a presentation by RICK ROBINSON (924 Stonewall), the block police officer who offered safety tips and insights into the neighborhood watch programs.

On North Stonewall positive thinking and the old-timey-know-your-neighbor philosophy are definitely on the upswing. There are hopes that this germ of caring will result in one of many satellite block organizations which will exist solely for the common good and well-being of their communities. "Pride makes it happen!"

WOULD YOU BELIEVE?

With rents and construction costs skyrocketing and vacancy rates approaching the vanishing point while our pockets are being picked by governments under the pretext, among others, of concern for the housing of those who need better than they have, as many do, and our ears are being assaulted and our minds boggled with the squabbings of officials and bureaucrats over how to subsidize and where to locate housing projects, would you believe that in this Place of Good Abode there are at least two apartment complexes, each a long city block long and half a block wide, which were planned, built and financed under United States Government housing programs which are completely vacant?

Would you believe that those vacant, multi-unit apartment complexes, where hundreds of people once lived are not located on the back side of nowhere — where people living there could not get to and from their homes conveniently — but are, instead, located within 30 minutes by public transportation of downtown, midtown, the Medical Center, 75% of the jobs in Memphis and with schools, colleges, churches, shopping centers, entertainment — the whole urban bit — readily accessible?

The next VECAA meeting will be on Thursday, November 16th, at 7:30 p.m. in the Chapel at McLean Baptist Church. On the agenda are voting on VECAA By-Laws changes, planning on VECAA elections to be held in January, committee reports, and proposed VECAA projects for 1979. You are invited to join your neighbors in fellowship and collective solutions to neighborhood problems. Important meeting — mark your calendar. Hope to see you there!

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Would you believe that those two apartment complexes, which were not ineptly planned or shoddily constructed as, alas, too many such projects were, but were instead well designed, well equipped, well built, tastefully decorated and landscaped, are now shambles? The windows are broken, the doors hang loose, the plumbing and cabinets are stripped out and gone, the insulation bulges from holes in ceilings and walls, the carpets are ripped out and gone, the tiling is broken and even the door knobs and hardware are gone. Their artistic efforts, which besmirch the walls, attest to the frequency of trespassers. Old mattresses and tires, broken bottles, beer cans and rubbish foul the parking lots and walkways. Weeds and brambles are everywhere, sometimes higher than the tops of the windows, and desolation dominates the scene.

Moreover, eight of the apartment units were burned out over a year ago — "arson suspected" — and six more were burned out during the recent firemen's strike — "arson period".

But the situation did not develop overnight; it's been going on gradually deteriorating for years. Is anybody doing anything about it? Yes and no. Various individuals, delegations and organizations, including VECAA, have conferred with, met, confronted, and protested to all and sundry in both the private and public sectors. With what result? Nothing except experiences which remind one of the famous World Series combination of Tinker to Evers to Chance and of the new (not in Memphis!) parlor game called "Bureaucracy": the one who moves first loses. Memphis to Atlanta to Washington; Tinker to Evers to Chance! The one who moves first loses.

Where are these two apartment complexes located? The north edge of Midtown on the north side of Vollintine on either side of North Watkins. Would you believe that if this festering and dangerous sore on the body politic were by some prestidigitation to be removed from Watkins and Vollintine to say Massey and Poplar that officialdom would be so long remedying the situation? If so, your mother should not trust you out of the house!

Would you believe that if the "owners" of these

offitless and deteriorating properties were, as oft caricatured, the typical "slum lord", officialdom would have so long stayed its powerful hand in giving us "equal protection of the laws"? If so, your faith exceeds credulity.

What is going to be done about it and when? The World Series is over and we're tired of parlor games. So — would you believe it? — we are going to court. (An "appeal to arms and the God of hosts is all that is left to us.")

Yes, we know the law of bureaucratic inertia and that they've got our money to fight us with; that "you can't fight City Hall." We can get lawyers cheap or for free, but depositions and discovery cost money. We intend, if necessary, to take at length the deposition of every official, bureaucrat and entrepreneur who contributed to bringing this plague upon us. This is not a battle for the short winded; so save a dollar or two from your Christmas or vacation budget. We will need it. But the entertainment should be worth the price of admission.

VECAA NEWS

The September 17th VECAA general membership meeting was held at McLean Baptist Church Chapel. CARL HOLMES, President (695 Dickinson, Ph. 278-2746), presided over a thirty-minute business meeting that included: a treasurer's report; the announcement of VECAA elections in January; an explanation of the needs and the purpose of the Land Use Committee — JOE HOUGH, Chairman (871 University St., Ph. 274-5551); a report on the recent revitalization of the Evergreen News staff announcing that monthly publication of the paper will resume in November with regular staff meetings on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month — ANN MOORE, co-editor (1467 Tutwiler Ave., Ph. 274-2163); and a general discussion concerning the necessity of a functioning Membership and Welcoming Committee — MARCIA HEITZMANN, Chairman (1606 Galloway Ave., Ph. 276-6084). Also, the Housing Improvement Committee — JOE SOHM, Chairman (872 Sheridan, Ph. 278-6962), always welcomes volunteers;

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would like to invite ladies to meet with them each Sunday Morning at 9:30am to study God's word and enjoy Christian Fellowship.

and the Education Committee, which has established good working relations with officials, currently needs a chairman and some new volunteers. A social hour followed adjournment of the business meeting, with refreshments supplied by Marcia Heitzmann — yummys from Carl's Bakery. One third of those present volunteered their active participation on various committees, dues for 1979 were collected, and fellowship was enjoyed by all.

PROPERTY VALUES

A Former East Memphian

Your home is worth more than you think! The midtown area in general and the VECAA area in particular have become one of the most attractive areas in Memphis in which to live. Because of the high cost of gasoline and automobile maintenance, nerve-racking traffic, growing awareness of the advantages of older homes, and astronomical costs of new housing, the move to the suburbs has halted--the balloon has burst--the housing movement is now toward the midtown area. "Young professionals" discovered Central Gardens several years ago, and now it is the VECAA area that is a "hot" area for young people. For example, five young families have bought homes in one block of Avalon (between Tutwiler and Jackson) within the last three months.

Housing prices in the VECAA have taken off upward with increasing velocity. Public records indicate that prices of property transferred in the VECAA area in the past year or two have been increasing substantially. Homes are now often selling quickly with little or no advertising. The word is out that there are some excellent bargains in the VECAA area right now, but that prices are escalating rapidly.

The VECAA area is an extremely desirable area in which to live, so DON'T UNDERVALUE YOUR HOME. Neighborhood deterioration begins when homes are sold at less than their true value.

There are many reasons to be positive about housing values in the VECAA area, but here are a few: (1) lending institutions are more inclined to lend money in areas with an active neighborhood association, and (2) some local banks are eager to lend money for purchases and home improvements in the VECAA area. (3) the general condition of housing in the VECAA area is excellent, as reported by representatives of other midtown neighborhood organizations. (4) Young people are looking for older homes in the VECAA area to "fix up," so if your home is not in the best condition, don't downgrade its value but use the potential to fix it up as a selling point.

(5) The crime rate in the VECAA area is lower than almost any other area in Memphis according to police information. The policeman who patrols part of the VECAA area just bought a home here a few months ago. He has stated that criminals now recognize that this area has been cleaned up, is well patrolled, and is off-limits to them. Haven't you noticed the amazing number of joggers, bicyclists, walkers, and porch sitters out in the VECAA area both before and after dark?

(6) still some people may say, "But this is an integrated neighborhood." So what? At one time, integration was a big factor in housing prices, but times have changed. It is not the color of your neighbor's skin that affects the value of your house. It is how he maintains his house and keeps up his yard and what his property sells for when he moves. Blacks live in many parts of East Memphis now, and housing prices have continued to soar there. Our city has become more and more homogeneous in housing patterns and the effect of integration on housing prices is continuing to lessen. The blacks who live in the VECAA area are generally well-educated and hard working people, who care about the appearance of their homes, and who are good neighbors.

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BINGO

In determining the value of your home, don't let a VA or FHA appraisal mislead you--they are only setting a figure for a loan guaranty, and they do not take into consideration the intangibles of the current popularity and upward movement of the VECAA area and the potential for rapid increases in the value of the home. You can often find a purchaser readily willing to pay thousands more than the appraisal figure. Don't let a real estate agent undervalue your home, when he or she may know very little about the VECAA area. Don't let past sales of your home and your neighbors' homes mislead you into undervaluing your home. Homes that sold for comparatively little just a few years ago have increased in value tremendously, so don't settle for a small profit when you sell.

The value of a home and of the homes in a neighborhood depends heavily on the attitudes of the residents. There is absolutely no tangible reason why homes in the Central Gardens area that are no larger, in no better condition, and often on much smaller lots should be valued higher than the homes in the VECAA area. Pride in their neighborhood is a major factor in the value of their homes. If you believe your home is worth more, then others will too. Let's continue to nurture the positive attitude that has developed about the value of homes in the VECAA area. Just imagine the impact on the value of these homes if each resident would just mention to his or her friends, relatives, and business associates that the VECAA area is a very attractive neighborhood with a lot going for it. Talk to people! Tell them how glad you are to be living in the VECAA area! Tell them what a great area it is and just watch what happens to housing values here!

The following is a random sampling of some sales in the V/E area during the last few months. This information is a matter of public record in the Shelby County Tax Assessor's and Register's Offices. For this article only, block numbers (not specific addresses) are used.

BLOCK	STREET	PRICE
700	N. Auburndale	\$37,273
900	N. Auburndale	42,500
1700	Autumn	72,000
1800	Autumn	97,000
400	N. Avalon	36,000
700	N. Avalon	38,500
800	N. Barksdale	34,653
600	N. Belvedere	29,200
700	N. Belvedere	27,500
800	N. Belvedere	42,000
600	Dickinson	44,000
700	Dickinson	30,500
800	Dickinson	38,500
900	Dickinson	31,500
1400	Faxon	32,500
1600	Faxon	35,000
1500	Forrest	38,975
1600	Forrest	45,000
1800	Forrest	50,500
1600	Galloway	39,950
900	Hawthorne	36,500
600	N. Idlewild	32,950
1800	Lyndale	37,000
700	Maury	38,000
300	N. McLean	57,000
300	N. McNeil	39,000
400	N. McNeil	36,500
700	N. McNeil	34,000
800	N. McNeil	26,700
1500	N. Parkway	69,500
1700	N. Parkway	46,080
300	N. Stonewall	67,571
400	N. Stonewall	66,500
800	N. Stonewall	35,000
1000	N. Stonewall	30,981
1400	Tutwiler	32,000
1500	Tutwiler	36,000
1600	Tutwiler	30,079
1900	Tutwiler	37,000
1500	Vollintine	27,700
400	N. Willett	32,500
600	N. Willett	31,000
700	N. Willett	26,950
800	N. Willett	30,250

Vollintine-Evergreen Community Action Association

1978 NEW AND RENEWAL MEMBERSHIP **1978**

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Membership \$2.50 - Individual, Family, Business

Make checks payable to VECAA.

Send to: Mr. Irvin Sachritz
899 Sheridan Street
Memphis, TN 38107.



Production — Karen Tynes, 274-2255
Copy — Ann D. Moore, 274-2163
(address correspondence to Evergreen News,
Ann Moore, 1467 Tutwiler Ave., Memphis,
TN 38107)
BUSINESS MANAGER/ADVERTISING
Sue Fagan, 272-3776
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