

The EVERGREEN NEWS

A Neighborhood Newspaper Working With Vollintine - Evergreen Community Association

Memphis, Tennessee

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CORRIDOR ALTERNATIVES GIVEN THUMBS DOWN BY VECA

On Jan. 12 a public meeting was held at Snowden School in which representatives of Allen & Hoshall, Inc. presented alternatives for a Midtown Transportation Corridor. The following is VECA's response to those alternatives.

INTRODUCTION

We welcome the opportunity to address the issues surrounding the Midtown Transportation Corridor, because they directly affect the well-being of our neighborhood. Our association was formed in 1970 to protect the stability of our residential neighborhood. Our boundaries are Watkins on the west, Cypress Creek on the north, Springdale/Trezevant/East Parkway on the east, and the I-40 right-of-way on the south. There are about 5,000 homes in our neighborhood, many over 50 years old, with a diversity of old and new residents.

For many years large numbers of VECA residents have closely followed and responded with great interest to the I-40 right-of-way issue. They have worked with VECA on this issue for many years and will continue to work diligently to protect their neighborhood and their homes.

Almost three years have elapsed since the last public meeting on this issue took place on February 17, 1981. We received only about three weeks notice before the January 12, 1984 public meeting. This prevented the publicizing of this meeting in our neighborhood newspaper, *The Evergreen News*, which has a longer "lag time." Many of our residents were unaware of the meeting, or there would have been a much larger turnout than the 250 people who were present. While we appreciate the notice and the opportunity to be heard that we did receive, six weeks notice would permit publicity about future meetings to appear in *The Evergreen News*.

Also, some of the Memphis news media reported that there were few unresolved issues and that little opposition was expected from residents, which misled uninformed residents and discouraged them from attending the meeting.

GENERAL RESPONSE

It is difficult for us to respond to a situation where the problem has not been convincingly defined and the goals are unclear. It is also difficult to respond in detail to undesigned alternatives, especially without adequate information. Furthermore, it is most difficult for us to respond without firm commitments that there will be no further efforts in the future to build roadways through our neighborhood.

We have considered all information available, including that gathered at the January 12th meeting, and we have met and discussed at length the various alternatives. We can report that there is very little support from VECA residents for the proposed Cleveland and East Parkway connectors as presented. A typical response is "Why are they needed?"

Whatever traffic problems are now perceived in the Midtown Transportation Corridor are tolerable and minor compared to the potential problems to our neighborhood which may result if the proposed connectors to Cleveland and East Parkway are built. It appears that such connectors will primarily benefit interstate and commuter traffic seeking to save a few seconds by taking a "short-cut" through our neighborhood. It does not seem to us that the enormous

IMPORTANT VECA MEETING

The VECA general membership will elect new officers at 7:30 p.m. March 26 at Lindsay Memorial Presbyterian Church, 1663 Tutwiler. All members are encouraged to attend. Nominations can be made that night for those who wish to fill the positions of president and vice president. The next VECA executive committee meeting will be at 7:30 p.m., April 3 at Lindsay.

capital costs and the risk of damages to our neighborhood are justified.

We are grateful that the study has eliminated from consideration any construction between Cleveland and East Parkway and the elevated ramp designs for proposed interchanges at those streets. We are also relieved that Memphis Director of Public Works, Maynard Stiles, made clear at the January 12 meeting that there will be no physical alteration of North Parkway, except for possible resurfacing. We, however, continue to fear future pressure for additional construction between Cleveland and East Parkway if the connectors are built up to those roads. *We are unalterably opposed to any new or widened roadway through Overton Park or through our neighborhood, and precautions must be taken to insure that such proposals will never surface in the future.* One such assurance would be an absolute guarantee from our city and state officials. Another assurance would be the physical closing of the bus lane at East Parkway.

The continued unanswered question of possible road construction between Cleveland and East Parkway has for over 25 years caused an unstable and unsettled condition to pervade our neighborhood. This has been a detriment to property values and *must end*. For our peace of mind and the stability of our neighborhood, this question must be answered and the issue put to rest.

DANGERS OF INCREASED TRAFFIC

It seems clear to us that the intention of the city and state is to encourage commuter traffic to use North Parkway more, in order to take the pressure off of Poplar and Union. This is an *unacceptable* "solution" to the traffic congestion on Poplar and Union. Additional traffic on already-heavily traveled North Parkway and on other neighborhood streets will decrease the desirability and property values of the homes along those streets in particular and have a negative ripple effect throughout the neighborhood.

Furthermore, the desirability of land in the abandoned I-40 Corridor between the Park and Watkins will be decreased, lessening the desirability of homes to be built upon it, and resulting in lower property values. Lower property values for both the existing and the proposed homes will lower the City's tax base.

It should be quite clear that *North Parkway* between Watkins and Trezevant/East Parkway is not just another City street. It is a *residential* street. It is lined by desirable, historic homes, where families live. This part of North Parkway is officially designated by Memphis City Ordinance and by the City Beautiful Commission as a "Residential Corridor." By law, no trucks may travel upon it. It is a part of our City's park system. North Parkway and its homes have

(Continued on page 6)

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VECA LOGO WINNER ANNOUNCED

NEW VECA LOGO TIES ELEMENTS OF COMMUNITY TOGETHER

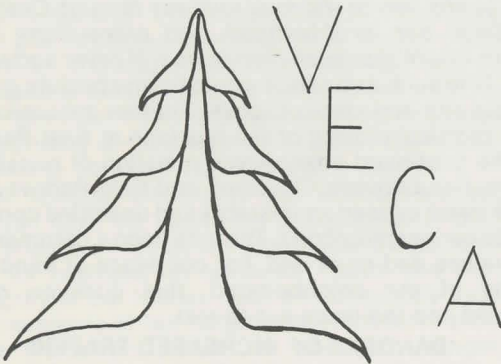
Carol Neal of Snowden has won the VECA logo contest and a cash prize of \$100. Her artwork will be seen on future VECA's letterheads, shirts and bumperstickers. A life-long native of this community, Neal is a printer at Fox Photo on McLean and is also an artist for Channel 5. She has a fine arts degree from Maryville College in Maryville, Tenn.

Neal's design ties in all the elements of our community. "I wanted it to be simple and bold, something to tie the whole community together. Having the church, the school and the house overlap shows a spirit of unity," Neal said.

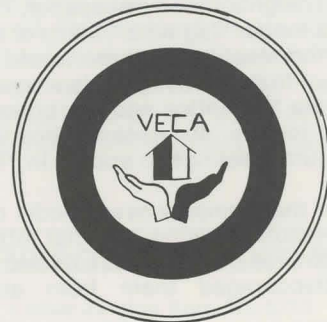
Honorable mentions went to Bill Berry of Mignon, an illustrator and design artist at Oden & Associates of Memphis; Martha Heinemann of N. Belvedere and Vollintine School student Bradis Merkson of Faxon.



Winning logo by Carol Neal



Martha Heinemann



Bradis Merkson

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Bill Berry

SNOW PARTY
by Lois Fingerett

"Everyone talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it." That's become a familiar saying this winter. But the University Street Neighbors are doing something to make being snow-bound more enjoyable.

As the snowflakes begin to fall the telephones are busy as the folks who live on University St. between Vollintine and Jackson plan that night's pot luck supper. Those who are able to brave the ice and snow bring the kids and meet for super at the designated house (usually in the middle of the block). It's a great way to share food, friends and the neighborhood news. All too often we only see neighbors when we're outside, and this snow party lets us know that summer cookouts will be here before we know it.

KINDERGARTEN OPTIONS

If you have a young child who will be entering kindergarten in the next few years, you may want to attend a meeting on kindergarten alternatives in our neighborhood. The meeting will be at 7 p.m., March 8, in the Fellowship Hall at Trinity Methodist Church. Trinity's pre-school program is sponsoring the meeting.

Schools sending representatives include: Grahamwood, Idlewild, Magnet, Vollintine, Snowden, Little Flower, Grace-St. Lukes and Idlewild Presbyterian. Each representative will be given five minutes to talk about his or her school's philosophy and program.

SILVER SHINES AT BROOKS!

Memphis Brooks Museum of Art will present one of the most notable collections of Sheffield silver in the world. *Sheffield Silver: The Kirby Collection* represents more than 25 years of collecting by Dr. Lowry Dale Kirby. Over 200 pieces of his collection will be exhibited in the Museum's Decorative Arts Galleries from February 1 through April 23, 1984.

NATIONAL RADIO HOST TO VISIT SOUTHWESTERN

Musicologist Karl Haas, author and host of the acclaimed "Adventures in Good Music," a syndicated daily program of classical music broadcast by over 120 stations nationally, will speak and perform at Southwestern March 11. His 4 p.m. Sunday afternoon program on "Viennese Classics" will include a piano recital and commentary.

Haas, a native of Germany, studied piano, composition, conducting and art history at the Conservatory of Mannheim and University of Heidelberg. He later studied in the United States with the famed Arthur Schnabel and at Detroit's Wayne State University. A recipient of eight honorary doctorates, he has also won the coveted George Foster Peabody Award, the "Emmy" of broadcasting.

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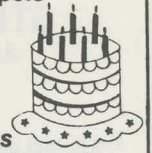
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TVA ADDRESSES VECA

Save money on utilities and earn the Vollintine Evergreen Community Association money at the same time, was the message that TVA representatives John Tracy and Andre Miller brought to the January 23 VECA meeting. Tracy explained that TVA will give free home energy surveys to residents of VECA. And for every resident who requests a survey, TVA will donate \$1 to VECA. For more information, please call the Center for Neighborhoods at 526-6627 and request a free home energy survey by TVA. An energy audit form has been published in *The Evergreen News* this month.

and inventive approach in preparing for the "second-half." The program is scheduled for March 24 and 25 at Southwestern. For more information, please call the Continuing Education Department.

SOUTHWESTERN'S EVENTS CALENDAR

MARCH

- 4-30 **Art exhibit** featuring paintings and drawings by Jim Cogswell, from Tallahassee, Florida. Opening reception March 4, 3-5 p.m. Weekdays 9-5 p.m. and Saturdays noon-5 p.m. Clough-Hanson Gallery. FREE
- 15-18 **Theatre production** "The Chalk Garden," & directed by Julia "Cookie" Ewing. All evenings 8 p.m. performances as well as Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. the 18th and 25th. McCoy Theatre. Admission: \$6 Adults, \$3 Students.
- 22-25
- 29 **M.L. Seidman Memorial Town Hall Lecture** featuring labor leader Francis Blanchard. This year's focus: "The Changing Job Market: How Is It Affected by Technology, Education and Society?" Hardie Auditorium, 8 p.m. FREE

**Memphis Energy Education Committee
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CORRIDOR (cont.)

been nominated for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places as part of an historic district. North Parkway cannot and must not be thought of, or treated like, another Poplar Avenue or Union Avenue. Overton Park Avenue, Galloway Avenue, Stonewall, McLean, and Evergreen are also beautiful residential streets lined by fine, desirable homes, and are unsuitable for increased traffic. These streets are specifically named because they appear to be the most at risk if the Cleveland and East Parkway connectors are built. Families, many with children, live on all these streets. The number of small children living on these streets has increased significantly in the last approximately five years, because of the large numbers of young people moving into the neighborhood during that time.

Also, the students of **Snowden School** on North Parkway, one of the finest schools in the nation, must be protected from the dangers of increased traffic. Snowden is a neighborhood school and many students walk to it. The 15 m.p.h. school zone speed limit is often dangerously ignored already. Increased traffic, especially traffic going from one expressway to another, will seriously endanger our children.

Increased traffic through our neighborhood will damage the present small-town atmosphere and the quality of life of our neighborhood. There is a spirit of neighborliness, friendliness, and civic participation that is beneficial to the City as a whole. If this atmosphere is hurt, the character of the neighborhood could well change and become less desirable. This would hurt downtown, which needs a solid, healthy residential midtown. If midtown begins to deteriorate, downtown redevelopment will be discouraged.

At the present time, some interstate traffic already uses North Parkway as a short-cut. In recent months, there have been reports of an increase in tractor-trailer rigs spotted on North Parkway in our neighborhood. There have been reports of lost interstate travelers knocking on doors in our neighborhood. *Cleveland and East Parkway "connectors" can only greatly encourage and entice interstate drivers to use this "short-cut"*. Future maps showing interstate-type roadways ending at Cleveland and East Parkway will make the distance in between look very short, indeed.

Other adverse effects of the alternatives requiring modification have not been fully investigated or described yet. The effects of increased *noise and air pollution and vibration* for example, on residents' health and the structural integrity of our homes must be adequately assessed.

The residents of our neighborhood deserve protection from the disruption, noise, air pollution, danger, and decreased property values which increased traffic would bring. To protect the quality of our lives, the safety of our children, the value of our homes, and the desirability of our residential neighborhood, and prevent serious law enforcement problems resulting from interstate traffic, planning decisions must include means to keep increased traffic off of our neighborhood's residential streets.

ALTERNATIVES TO CONSTRUCTION

We do not feel that the alternative of improving the *Memphis Area Transit Authority* service has been seriously considered. The available federal funds may be used for the purchase of new buses, building bus shelters, and building park and ride lots.

The alternative to moving people by means of individual passenger cars, that of mass transit, must be seriously considered. The increased availability of modern, comfortable buses, park and ride lots, and increased bus routes to the eastern parts of Memphis, could reduce automobile use by commuters. This would relieve the traffic congestion on Poplar and Union, reduce damages to the city by air and noise pollution and vibration, reduce accidents, and save millions of dollars on building roadways in midtown.

A great city must have a great public transportation system. MATA is in great need of new buses and new routes. The best way to relieve pressure on Poplar and Union from

vehicular traffic is to provide the necessary encouragement and inducements for east Memphis and Germantown commuters to ride the MATA buses to the medical center and downtown.

It is a well-recognized principle of land use planning that land should be utilized for its highest and best use. The vacant corridor property would be of much greater benefit to the city as a whole if homes were built along its entire length, bringing more property tax revenue into the city and more people into midtown who will be generally inclined to support the redevelopment of downtown Memphis and the city as a whole.

To be concluded in April Issue.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

While attending the recent Midtown Transportation Corridor public meeting several points became quite clear; one being that there are very few who want to adopt anything other than the "no modification" plan on either the west or the east side of the park. The majority of the Midtown residents and business owners who attended this meeting voiced the opinion that they felt we had no severe traffic problem that needed major alterations and that any change could only increase the chances of more traffic traveling through this area. One statement that was presented by the engineering firm was the fact that no significant increase in traffic flow was to be expected in the foreseeable future unless possibly after these changes are made. Therefore, there just does not seem to be the need for these changes in our Midtown city streets.

There appear to be finances available for this project and there also seem to be people eager to spend those finances. Exactly who stands to profit from them is one question.

As one observer pointed out, it would be such a waste to take the chance of ruining or changing the neighborhood atmosphere of the Midtown area that we have all worked so hard to attain over the years. The Midtown area is loved by its residents and business people and we wish to continue in the same quiet, neighborly direction with "no modifications."

Kristine Heuer
VECA resident

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