

The Evergreen News

A Neighborhood Newspaper Sponsored by Vollintine-Evergreen Community Association

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Volume XVII, Number 1

WELCOME BACK

It has been a long time since the last issue of the Evergreen News. It has also been a long time since VECA [which is the Vollintine-Evergreen Community Association] has been active. The Evergreen News and VECA are back and with your help, we will resurrect the organization and newspaper to serve the neighborhood.

WHAT IS THE EVERGREEN NEWS?

The Evergreen News is the way in which VECA communicates with its residents. It is written, published and distributed by residents of the VECA neighborhood. The Evergreen News will contain information about VECA, stories about neighborhood residents and businesses, information about City of Memphis government policies which affect the neighborhood, and both problems and successes in the neighborhood. The Evergreen News first published in 1969 with a Southwestern Professor, John Bruhwiler, as the first editor and was later edited by Rick Thomas and then Ann Moore.

WHAT IS THE VECA AREA?

The VECA neighborhood is a mid-town community made up of older (30 to 60 years), though elegant homes. It is a large neighborhood with about 5000 housing units and more than 13,000 residents. It is bounded by Watkins on the West, Cypress Creek on the North, Trezvant on the East, and Overton Park and the formerly proposed expressway route on the South.

VECA is a diverse neighborhood. It is one of the few successfully integrated neighborhoods in Memphis. It has elderly residents, younger families, and single residents. It has very attractive institutions such as Snowden and Vollintine optional schools, churches including Protestant, Jewish and Catholic; one of the nations most prestigious colleges in Rhodes College (Rhodes was named by Time Magazine as one of its "nifty nine" colleges); and several small neighborhood shopping areas which include a bakery, delicatessen, butcher shop, care care center and restaurant. The architecture is diverse and attractive. Because VECA was built before the suburban subdivision trend, the houses are both sturdy and distinctive.

WHAT IS THE VECA ORGANIZATION?

VECA, as an organization, was founded in 1969 through the efforts of some neighborhood residents and ministers who were concerned about residential turnover resulting from the actions of some unethical real estate agents. The group set as its aim a peaceful and integrated neighborhood. With the efforts of these first members such as Margaret Dichtel, Joe Hough, Irv Sachritz, and Joe Sohm, the large number of for sale signs dwindled, integration was accepted as desirable, and tranquility returned to the neighborhood.

The neighborhood then turned to other concerns. It worked to prevent rezonings of our residential streets, encouraged some

unconcerned investors to do a better job of maintaining rental properties, saved the trees in the Jackson median strip, worked on the Vollintine Courts' issue, helped alleviate tensions among neighbors, worked with the city government in improving the VECA area, and worked to preserve and improve the neighborhood schools. VECA worked to bring a security patrol to the neighborhood, built coalitions with other midtown neighborhoods and was a watchdog for non-residential use of homes.

VECA did this with a core of hearty volunteers, with some involvement on special projects from many others in the neighborhood. Its past presidents include Margaret Dichtel, Irv Sachrtiz, Joe Hough, Mike Kirby, Dennis Heitzman, Tom Kepple, Rebecca Smith, Carl Holmes, and Carl Rogers.

Though there have been many successes, there have also been some incompleting projects. The railroad right of way issue has not been settled. There are some, though not extensive, signs of some owners not maintaining their property. And most important, the organization itself is now dormant.

WHY HAS VECA BEEN DORMANT?

VECA has not been totally dormant, since a small group of volunteers has been working quietly behind the scenes.

However, the organization has not been functioning effectively. Why is this the case? Part of the reason is complacency. VECA is a success story. Property values have increased. Real estate transfers take place in an orderly way. The residents are by and large, happy with the neighborhood. Many new residents are on the first step to lifetime residency in the neighborhood.

Another reason is that blocks have learned to care for themselves. Neighborhood Watch groups have sprung up. Residents have

learned to deal with city hall for themselves and the city has been more receptive to the individual resident.

Still another reason is that that core of former leaders has moved on to other activities and new residents have not taken the reigns of the organization. Still another reason is that we started to expect perfection. The Evergreen News was a masterpiece; and a masterpiece takes too much of an effort to produce.

WE NEED HELP!

It is time for everyone in the neighborhood to give some effort. With even a little help from a lot of people, VECA can make a comeback. What do we need?

- The Evergreen News needs writers for stories about the neighborhood. It needs proofreaders. It needs a composer to put together the issue. And most of all it needs an editor who will guide the other workers.
- The Evergreen News needs distributors and people to deliver the newspaper on their block.
- VECA needs moral support with your presence at the next neighborhood meeting which will be held March 16.
- VECA needs neighbors to serve on an Executive Committee. The Committee meets once a month for 90 minutes to discuss neighborhood concerns and to plan strategy.
- VECA committees need an hour or two a month of help. The committees include membership, housing, Evergreen News and nominations.
- VECA needs your financial support of \$5.00 in a yearly membership contribution.

Please help by filling out the coupon at the end of the paper.

MEETING

VECA will hold its next general meeting on Monday, March 16 at 7:30 in the basement of Lindsey Memorial Presbyterian Church at 1663 Tutwiler. There will be an update of current VECA activities. The main speaker will be Richard E. Wallace, a prominent mid-town realtor, who will speak on the topic: "VECA in the Midtown Real Estate Market".

VECA t-shirts will be on sale at the meeting for \$5.00 and Treasure Martha Heineman will accept the \$5.00 yearly dues.

UNIVERSAL SECURITY SERVICE

Universal, a subscriber security service in the VECA area, will hold a meeting for subscribers and those interested in knowing more about Universal on Monday April 6 at 7:30 in the basement of Lindsey Memorial Presbyterian Church at 1663 Tutwiler.

MAILING ADDRESS

VECA's mailing address is 1663 Tutwiler, Memphis 38107.

EVERGREEN NEWS

The Evergreen News will start a column next month called "VECA Neighbors". If you have a neighbor who has a new job, has recently moved, or was honored for his activities, please send a note to the Evergreen News and the neighbor will be mentioned in the column.

The Evergreen News will also be starting a column on issues related to our neighborhood. If there are neighborhood events or issues in which you are interested, Evergreen News would like to hear from you. The neighborhood newspaper needs to hear from you.

Our mailing address is 1663 Tutwiler, Memphis 38107.

WELCOME BACK HERSHELL

Hershell Lipow has returned to Memphis from Washington, DC to become head of the City of Memphis Division of Community Development. As the Director, Hershell will be responsible for coordinating housing services, such as code enforcement and neighborhood strategy areas.

Hershell lived in our neighborhood at one time and he was very active in VECA. He graduated from Rhodes in 1972. Hershell has lived in Washington for the last 4 years and served on the staff of Congressman Harold Ford and later with the American Institute of Architects.

RHODES COLLEGE

There is a lot of construction at Rhodes College, as it moves towards its stated goal of becoming of the nations finest liberal arts colleges.

Construction is starting on townhouses at the corner of Tutwiler and University which replaces on of the less attractive structures on the campus. This comes after a rezoning of the property by the City Council. A disagreement between the College and the adjacent neighbors was settled before the decision of the City Council.

Rhodes also is adding to the college dining hall, called the refectory.

VECA UPDATE

The Veca housing committee has been working with property owners who are neglecting homes. If you are concerned about a property in your neighborhood, please send a letter to the VECA Housing Committee at the following address:

VECA Housing Committee
1663 Tutwiler
Memphis, TN 38107

ED'S EXXON

By now, most residents know that Ed Cisson has relocated his Exxon station from the corner of McLean and Faxon to Madison and Evergreen. The change was brought about by the Exxon Corporation which wanted a station that pumped more gas. Ed was famous for his car maintenance services and was especially popular with the senior citizens of the neighborhood. He was honored by Snowden school for the concern that he displayed toward the Snowden students. Ed, We wish you the best.

The neighborhood owes a vote of thanks to Snowden principal, Ms. Pittman. When a Stop and Go was proposed for the site, she went to the Board of Adjustments and argued that the store was inappropriate for the area.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

VECA needs your financial help. Please fill out the following coupon and mail it with \$5.00 to: Martha Heinemann, Treasurer of VECA, 705 N. Belvedere, Memphis, TN 38107

* Name _____ *
* Address _____ *
* Zip _____ *
* Phone _____ *

VOLUNTEERS

Please fill out the attached coupon if you would like to help VECA and mail it to VECA at 1663 Tutwiler Memphis, TN 38107

* Please check any committee which *
* interests you: *
* *
* Housing _____ *
* Evergreen News _____ *
* Executive Committee _____ *
* Nomination _____ *
* *
* Please describe any problem that VECA *
* might address. *
* _____ *
* _____ *
* _____ *
* *
* Please check the appropriate item if *
* you are willing to work for the *
* Evergreen News: *
* *
* Deliver _____ *
* Distribute _____ *
* Write _____ *
* Edit _____ *
* Type _____ *
* Edit _____ *
* Administer _____ *

Steve Gadbois
862 Kensington