

The Evergreen News

A Neighborhood Newspaper Sponsored by VECA, Vollintine-Evergreen Community Association

DO NOT PUT IN MAILBOXES

1663 Tutwiler

Memphis, TN 38107

Volume XIV, Number 6, September, 1988

VECA is a neighborhood organization made up of volunteers and paying members. The Evergreen News is the way in which VECA communicates with its residents. The Evergreen News contains information about VECA, neighborhood residents, businesses, and government policies. VECA is bounded by Watkins on the west, Cypress Creek on the north, Trevevant on the east, and North Parkway on the south. Contact VECA by writing to: 1663 Tutwiler, Memphis, TN 38107.



VECA Annual Picnic

Pictures by Shelly Fingerette

The pictures in this issue are from the annual VECA picnic held at the Rhodes College pool. There was a lot of conversation and friendship and it was a great evening for a swim in the pool.

Special thanks are due to Tom Kepple and Rhodes for use of the pool. Grace Wallace, Carol Warren and Bill Bullock acted as hosts. Sally Dewing coordinated the event.

Steve Simpson, the new Principal of Snowden School attended and explained his plans for the new year to interested residents.

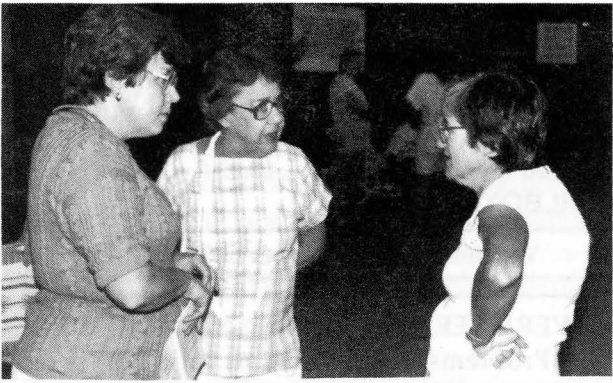
Captain James Bolden attended as a representative of the police department and not only provided information but also asked many important questions about VECA. It is terrific to see our public officials taking time from their busy schedules to attend neighborhood events.

EVERGREEN NEWS CARRIERS NEEDED

Problems in delivery call Julie Borys:

272-2672





New Principal at Snowden

All of us can remember that jittery, excited feeling that came each autumn with the first day of school. Well, it's no different for new principal Steve Simpson than for any student. With the retirement of the beloved Carolyn Pittman at Snowden School, Steve moves into the "big office."

Mr. Simpson, after being Assistant Principal at Snowden for several years, has the advantage of knowing his students, teachers and community and expects a smooth transition. Mr. Simpson says he "does not envision change for the sake of change, especially in the elementary" which is reassuring to any who had worried about changes in curriculum or teaching assignments. He is delighted to announce that 8th grade pre-Latin and 9th grade German have been added. Ninth grade Biology has been retained and further enhancements to the Jr. High curriculum are under discussion.

Richmond Gore will transfer from Hamilton to

become Assistant Principal. We welcome Mr. Gore to the community, wishing him, Mr. Simpson and the entire staff their best year ever.

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VECA Dues

By Bill Bullock, VECA President

I am requesting all VECA residents (those who receive the Evergreen News) to make their VECA contribution of \$7.50 for 1988 dues.

VECA dues are annual and cover the period from January through December. The year has seen an active organization and impressive activities:

- Six issues of the Evergreen News are being published with a professional format, advertising and stimulating articles.
- As the last issue of the Evergreen News noted, VECA successfully mobilized to fight the proposed rezoning at Hawthorne and Jackson.
- VECA has raised an existing zoning defense fund for legal assistance.
- The Housing Committee has improved housing conditions in a noticeable way. It has also terminated business activity in residential areas and is doing a survey of property.
- VECA has developed a close relationship with elected and administrative officials in government.

In order to continue this important work, we need your contribution of \$7.50 for yearly dues.

A coupon is printed on the last page of the paper.

VECA CHAT

This column will appear with each issue to discuss VECA activities and to respond to any neighborhood concerns. The Evergreen News is also willing to print letters to the editor.

A captain at the West Precinct indicates that the "Back Yard Burglar" working the area of the railroad tracks in the east side of VECA has been apprehended. VECA was also noted in the department's newsletter after VECA contacted the West precinct for help on the railroad right of way problem.

An advertiser expressed concern that the Evergreen News did not appear in time for a business deadline. The Evergreen News is a volunteer organization which does a fantastic job. It would create unrealistic pressures to meet specific deadlines. We set a loose target which may or may not be met.

A resident complained that she did not receive the Evergreen News. The complaint is valid since we do not have carriers in all sections of VECA. In some cases carriers who agreed to deliver have not been faithful and timely. Contact Julie Borys at 272-2672 if you are not receiving papers or would like to volunteer.

Ron Watkins of the Stage Park neighborhood association called to compliment VECA on the wonderful job of formatting the Evergreen News. He also asked VECA to provide assistance in formatting their newsletter. This is a wonderful testimonial for Teresa Bullock who does the terrific work in the format. It is visually appealing and easy to read. Way to go Teresa.

A VECA member wrote that she was terminating her membership in VECA because VECA had not responded to a problem house in her neighborhood. The following story on "The House at Jackson and Barksdale" responds to her concerns. There was a follow-up to our dog story which

complained about using the 911 number. Our experience is that the Animal Shelter can only be minimally effective in cases of emergencies and disruptive dogs. In cases where the life of the dog is threatened, dogs bark and disrupt a neighborhood to an extreme, or a dog is vicious and is threatening neighbors, we suggest the use of the police department's 911 number.

We are pleased to report that Tom and Daney Kepple's daughter Baker is recovering from a serious auto accident. Tom is a former VECA President.

DINO'S

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The House at Jackson and Barksdale

The Jackson-Barksdale-Sheridan-Kensington areas of VECA is a terrific neighborhood. The houses are well taken care of, and each is unique in its architecture. Lawns and shrubs are manicured. There has been an influx of new homeowners who are an impressive addition to our neighborhood. Property values are increasing. Could there be any problems in this neighborhood?

The house at 1914 Jackson in the middle of this otherwise substantial and impressive neighborhood is an eyesore. Grass and weeds dominate the landscape. The shrubs are overgrown and unkept. There is extensive debris inside the house.

This house has not had a permanent resident for over two years. Neighbors have been mowing the lawn and occasionally the city mows the weeds. There has been no other work. The inside has been described as "trashed". The

condition of the property is enough to make a person gag.

A neighborhood resident recently wrote, saying VECA was making no effort to solve this problem. In fact, VECA has spent more time on this house than any other problem house in the neighborhood. We simply do not know what else to do.

VECA has been working with Steve Shular of the Mayor's Action Center and Johnny McKay of the Department of Housing Improvement. Complaints have been made to the Health Department and the Sanitation Department. VECA has sent a letter to the owner asking her to sell or to maintain the property. We have contacted real estate agents to speak with the owner. Neighbors have even called Leader Federal, the mortgage company to complain. Although the property is an eyesore, the owner treads closely to a legal line.

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We spoke with Steve Shular of the Mayor's Action Center. He indicated that there have been many, and continuing, citizen and neighborhood leaders' complaints about the property. He even acknowledged a complaint from Ray Roberts during his radio talk show.

Shular indicated that as long as the property is structurally sound there is little that can be done. There is currently an order to cut weeds and Shular indicated plans to bring the owner to court to get her attention.

VECA housing chairman Troy Mashburn indicated "we have pursued every agency we know

to address. I am as frustrated as everyone else. I drive past the property at least twice a day."

Mashburn said further "I am very perplexed by the whole issue. Why doesn't the owner dispose of the property and realize what remaining value there is. The owner is losing value every month due to neglect. I am also frustrated that our city ordinances don't allow for more positive response and action."

Richard Holladay, Director of the City's Department of Housing Improvement, indicated that there was "no law against a vacant house as long as it does not represent a threat to health and safety". The owner of a vacant house is required to secure it from entry and to keep the premises somewhat orderly. There is little that can be done without further deterioration to the actual structure. Holladay expressed concern and wished he had a legal basis for proceeding. He did indicate that his housing inspectors had regular contact with the owner.

Clearly, VECA and the City have made efforts and they are continuing these efforts. The prognosis for immediate relief is not very positive as long as the ordinances and their interpretation remain the same.

Who is this owner who would allow her property to deteriorate? It is owned by Karen Kinard, who called the property home for several years. She now lives at 899 Charter Drive in Southaven, Mississippi. She has been described as difficult to deal with. She moved out of the house because she was "scared" and the house had been "burglarized". She has indicated that it is for sale as is, yet there is no for sale sign or real estate agent. She also rejected an offer from a prospective buyer as too low for the property.

What can be done? We do not know. What has been done? A lot.

In preparing this article, the author placed 12 phone calls to Karen Kinard and was unable to reach her to obtain her side of the story. We sent a copy of the story through the mail, but Ms.

Kinard did not respond. Our sources tell us she is not pleased with neighborhood pressure.

The next issue of the Evergreen news will examine the legal and administrative system that creates such a neighborhood problem.

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School Changes

The VECA community should be aware of changes being proposed for Snowden, Vollentine and Cypress schools. Because enrollments at Klondyke and Cypress have continued to decrease while Snowden and Vollentine are pressured with overcrowding, the Board is again considering changes in school boundaries. Tentative studies propose converting Cypress Jr. High to a K-9 school, absorbing the southeast corner of the Vollentine district and the Northeast corner of the Snowden district. It is further proposed that Klondyke school absorb students from the western edges of the Vollentine district.

It is important that all families that might be affected by the decision seek further information from their school board representative and advise their representative how to vote.

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September at the Shell

September will be an exciting time at the Overton Park Shell.

The Shell will be present a FALL FOLK FEST with a variety of performers. The festival is being financed by several large grants received by the Shell.

It includes such groups as the Tennessee Gentlemen, Crawdad, Gospel Wonders, Gospel Harvesters and many others.

The fest will be held on most Fridays and Saturdays in September.

The Memphis Symphony appeared on September 3 and Marguerite Piazza celebrated the anniversary of the Shell on September 10.

Programs begin at 7:00 PM. The performances are free, though donations are important to continue the important work of the Shell.

For information, call 274-6046.

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Sunday Services: 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m.
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A New Neighbor

[Editor's Note: The following notice came to us from Rhodes College. We welcome our new neighbor and we are excited by its potential to serve the community.]

For 34 years the Pi Kappa Alpha Memorial Headquarters has stood at University and Parkway, always a good neighbor to Rhodes. But this August the handsome Georgian structure will

become the home of the College's Meeman Center for Special Studies.

Extremely roomy and well-proportioned, the interior is paneled in rich, dark wood, like many of the Rhodes buildings. There are marble fireplaces, pocket doors and gleaming hardwood floors. Wide hallways, including a gracious entry hall, and a comfortable stairway to the second floor are features of the building.

The first floor will contain a reception room, offices, classroom for 75 people, seminar room for 30 people and lounge area for students in the Adult Degree Program. On the second floor are rooms for classes, the Institute for Executive Leadership and a workroom.

The Meeman Center's new location puts Rhodes into the community more than ever before. Its easy access, ample parking and meeting facilities make it ideal for Special Studies programs as well as business and community meetings from off campus.

Watch for news of an open house. The number of the Meeman Center for those interested in adult classes is 726-3965.

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Return \$7.50 yearly dues to VECA at 1663 Tutwiler, Memphis, TN 38107

Name _____

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WRITERS AND REPORTERS NEEDED

Evergreen News

Call Mike Kirby: 274-3875

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Chris and Patrick Tong, owners

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