

# The Evergreen News

DO NOT PUT IN MAILBOXES

*A Neighborhood Newspaper Sponsored by VECA, Voluntary Evergreen Community Association*

**P.O. Box 12011**

**Memphis, TN 38182-0011**

**Volume XVI, Number 12, November 1991**

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, Trezevant on the East and North Parkway on the South. Contact VECA by writing to P. O. Box 12011, Memphis, TN, 38182-0011.

## **CODE ENFORCEMENT SUBJECT OF VECA MEETING**

The next VECA General Membership Meeting will be at 7:30 pm, Monday, November 18, 1991, at 840 Dickinson (The convent behind St. Therese Little Flower Church). The topic will be code enforcement in Memphis. If you have questions about zoning violations, shade tree mechanics, yard sales, coke machines, or sidewalks, you will find the program worthwhile.

## **SECOND VECA FALL FAMILY FESTIVAL WAS HOT**

VECA was cooking with fun, sun, and activity on September 14 this year. About 1,000 people showed at the festival held at Little Flower. The heat made it hard to think of the festival as a fall event but everyone seemed to have a good time.

Many thanks are owed to lots of folks. The collage of pictures is a glimpse of that total day. VECA says thank you to Dale Gartrell, John Boatner, Terrie Howie, John Phillips, Jim

Spake and friends, and Ron McDonald for providing the entertainment. The Churches that cooked were Saint Therese Little Flower, Open Door Bible, and St. John Orthodox. Many community agencies and volunteer organizations participated. Thank you Girl Scout Council, Snowden PTA, The Memphis Zoo, Lichterman Nature Center, The Children's Museum, Memphis Humane Society, Shelby County Interfaith, Davies Sowell Realty, Center for Neighborhoods, Memphis Heritage Foundation, and Memphis Police and Memphis Fire departments.

The Children enjoyed the story telling and puppetry of the Memphis and Shelby County Public Library's North and Main Branches, as well as the Memphis Emergency Management Big Bird show and the Idlewild Puppets. Trinity Preschool, Evergreen Preschool, McLean Baptist Daycare, and Lamp-lighter Montessori provided art activities for the kids.

The Festival was truly a community event. Thank You to all the VECA volunteers who gave your time to sell drinks, clean up, set up, and work on committees.

The VECA sponsors this year were First American Bank and SovranBank. VECA couldn't have done it with out you.

**GOOD WORK FOLKS, LETS DO IT  
AGAIN NEXT YEAR!!!!!!!**

(See Page 2 for collage of Festival photos.)



## HOW TO BUILD/REPAIR/ALTER WITHOUT VIOLATING BUILDING CODES

Contractors should, but homeowners often don't, know when a building permit is needed when work on property is planned. It is not necessary for maintenance, but is required for repair, as well as alterations and additions. This can be confusing. Building or altering is obvious: adding on, putting in a new bath, removing walls, etc. Obvious repairs are things like damage from a tree, a car, a storm. Maintenance vs. repair is less clear. Painting and decorating are maintenance. Putting on a new roof is maintenance. But stripping a roof and replacing decking is repair. Replacing window glass is maintenance, while replacing the entire window is repair. So is putting on vinyl siding.

The purpose behind the definitions and permits is to prevent covering up or hiding a significant problem. Repairs have to conform to the codes in effect at the time of the original construction. These permits are pretty routinely issued. Additions and alterations must be current codes. Permits are issued to the homeowner or to a contractor, except that those for heating, air conditioning, and plumbing are issued only to a licensed contractor.

Additions or alterations are also affected by zoning laws which control land use and placement on the site, e.g., encroachment on a set-back, on easement, and historic district rules. If you want to put up a storage building or garage, this comes into play. The city easement goes from the side of a sidewalk nearest a house to the street. The homeowner is responsible for maintenance of the sidewalk, neutral strip, etc.. The only construction allowed on an easement is a driveway. If you have no curbs or gutters, you have complete control of your property to the street. Sometimes, especially in older neighborhoods like ours, easements run behind the homes. Be sure to check its location

before doing any building. If building codes and zoning laws conflict, the most restrictive prevails.

There are very explicit requirements regarding curb cuts, driveways, and sidewalks. This involves placement, materials and preparation. Any work in the easement must be done by someone on a list of city bonded contractors. Work done on the private part of your property can be done by an unlicensed person, but this would be done at the owner's risk.

Curbs and gutters are the responsibility of the traffic engineer. These will be repaired by the city at no cost to the homeowner. It can sometimes take 12 months or more before the work is done, due to money availability and the number on the list. But, it won't get done if it's not on the list. If you know of such a need, call Eric Grisham, at the City Asphalt Plant, 528-2911.

Here are some suggestions when you plan work on your property:

1. Call the Memphis and Shelby County Office of Construction Code Enforcement before going to apply for a permit. Find out what plans, papers, or other information you need to have with you when you go.
2. Be sure that you or your contractor/designer verify that your intended use complies with all zoning district regulations.
3. Before letting a contractor start work, ask for copies of the permit, or call the Code Enforcement Office to verify that he is a licensed contractor and has gotten permits. (The contractor, not the homeowner, is responsible if he fails to get a permit. But, the homeowner may not have any recourse regarding the actual work.)

Call for Information:

Code Enforcement Office: 576-5279  
Terry Hughes or Ted Illsley  
Complaints: 385-5197 Ed Landers  
Board of Adjustment for zoning variance:  
576-6632 Anita Forrester

**UPDATE ON STREET WALKING IN VECA**

by: Grace Wallace

It has been some months since I reported on my daily walks which are usually along University, North Parkway, West Drive, Charles Place and Jackson, back to University.

Why do I walk? Two reasons: for exercise to maintain constant weight and to limber joints, and for aesthetic reasons-I pick up the litter from the streets. They look better without cans, bottles, and paperscraps, large and small.

I'm finding it easier to pick up the small ones, gum wrappers, candy papers, match-books, and drinking straws; that is not because I am more limber. It is because I had a cataract operation a year ago and I was cautioned to keep my head erect and not bend over. I mastered the skill of tying my shoes while I looked at the ceiling, but I took the easy way out of it when it came to continuing my litter picking. I purchased a "pick-up" stick: 39" of added reach with a clamp operated by squeezing the handle. It is so effective that I have even started

to do something I have said I would never do: pick up cigarette butts, which has its problems. The supply of butts is endless and they accumulate along the curbs, which means walking on the street, rather than the sidewalk.

Has the fence at Rhodes college made any differences in my walking and litter picking? Well, yes. It's tantalizing to see potato chip sacks just beyond the range of my pick-up stick on the inside of the fence. And, the fence has modified automobile and bicycle traffic. From 6 pm to 6 am, the only gate open is at Snowden Avenue, which means that at 7 pm, all Rhodes traffic going in and coming out uses that one gate and some evenings, it is continuous. Pedestrians, be alert!

Is the population of walkers, joggers, runners changing with time? Yes, the numbers in all categories are increasing, and more babies in strollers have been added. One stroller has wheels big enough that the adult can run and the passenger seems to enjoy the speed.

The autumn introduces a new factor into my litter picking activities. From a distance, browned off leaves, big like magnolia and

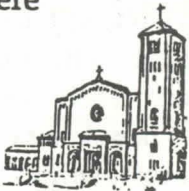
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**Walking, continued**

sycamore leaves can make me think brown paper bags, empty and crumpled or containing vodka bottles, and quite smooth. Leaves from the tulip poplars seem subject to a white mold that makes them look like crumpled napkins from carry-out food orders. It does mean crossing from the sidewalk to the center strip or vice versa to be sure of what I'm seeing.

One day, I found a dead female cardinal on the street close enough to the curb to have been spared being run over by tires. Since she had a band on one leg, I took her to Ben Coffey on Belvedere. He told me she was one he had banded a year earlier. Apparently, she had spent her short life in the VECA neighborhood.

Wishes? Yes, I wish I knew bird calls and I wish I knew more about the stars that are still visible before sunrise when I make my morning walks at this time of year.

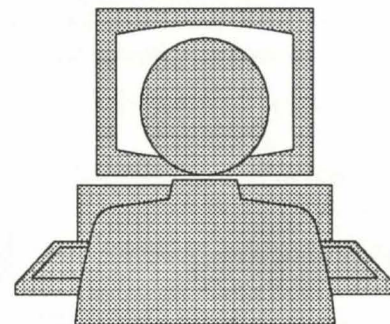
Enough for this update.

**EVERGREEN NEWS  
RECRUITING NEW EDITOR**

The VECA executive committee is asking for names of individuals who would like to work with the Evergreen News team as the editor. VECA puts out the newsletter six times a year. There is a team of seven people who put the newsletter out. The editor is the coordinator. Several writers submit articles to the editor who in turn gives the material to the typist. From the

typist, the articles go to the proof readers. Center For Neighborhoods gets the newsletter next and does the layout and the ads. After the newsletter is laid out and camera ready, the editor takes the newsletter to the printer. When the printer is finished the editor takes the newsletter to the distribution volunteer who then gets it to the people who do the street delivery. The Evergreen News editor decides, with the writers and the executive committee, what articles to work on. The current editor has had the job for two years and is moving on to other areas of volunteer work within VECA. There will be a transition training period for the new editor, as the current editor helps the new person learn the system. You do not have to be a writer. The current editor readily admits she has no journalism background. Concern for VECA, a good sense of what people in VECA might find interesting, and access to a personal computer are all that are needed.

If you are interested please call Steve Gadbois, 276-1066 or Mary Wilder, 272-2620. Please give this some serious thought. Your help is wanted.



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