

# EVERGREEN NEWS

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

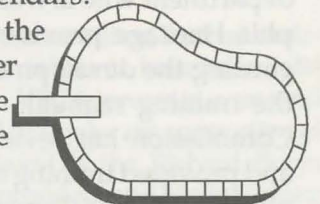
Volume XIX, Number 2

**NEIGHBORFEST 1993**  
Overton Park, May 1, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

April 1993

## VECA Hosts Potluck Supper and Pool Party

It may be too soon to think about swimming, but it's not too soon to mark calendars! VECA will host a free potluck supper/pool party on Saturday, June 19 at the Rhodes College pool. We can eat anytime after 6pm and swim anytime after 7pm. Kids under 12 must be accompanied by an adult. Free drinks will be provided. Bring a dish to share, and be ready to meet new neighbors. Leave a message on the VECA Hotline at 276-1066 if you have questions.



## Updating You on the National Historic District Project

VECA received \$1,817 from the Community Foundation's Neighborhoods Small Grants Program. VECA was to use the grant to organize the VECA community for the purpose of conducting a survey of homes to place VECA on the National Register of Historic Places.

1. VECA organized a volunteer committee, a training committee, and a data collection committee. These are in place and functioning.

2. VECA did not photograph the buildings as stated in the original proposal. VECA instead hired a Rhodes student who helped set up the data base on computer which generated the list of homes to be surveyed. VECA purchased the Shelby County Tax Assessor's records for homes in the VECA area. This gives VECA the year built and basic construction information on the buildings. The student and four volunteers, Bette Ackerman, Mary Wilder, Mike Kirby, and Charlotte Swailes, worked on verifying and setting up on a map the existence of all property to be surveyed in VECA. A survey form was designed by one volunteer, Bette Ackerman, to correspond to the data base. Mike Kirby developed the data base system which will receive the survey and generate the ultimate application report.

3. Volunteers Bette Akerman, Mary Wilder, and Linda Nichols developed the training manual for the volunteers to use in the field.

4. The volunteer committee; Lois Scott, Claudia

Rutkauskas, and Helen Svans, recruited 10 volunteers for the first training session in October, 1992.

5. The first training session was held on October 24, 1992. A hundred people from the neighborhood attended Heritage Day. Fifty or more people sat through the two hour training session. Tennessee Historic Commission, Memphis Heritage, Memphis Landmarks, Copper Young Neighborhood Association, Evergreen Historic Neighborhood, Center for Neighborhoods, and VECA all had display tables and information at the open house/training Heritage Day.

6. First surveys were completed by December 15. Mary Wilder and Bette Ackerman are doing the field checks before entering the information into the computer.

*How Did Your Neighborhood Organization Benefit From This Experience?*

1. VECA has involved eight people; six who have not previously been involved in the association, in the committee process. The volunteers for the survey will involve over 100 people as VECA surveys each area. VECA had the largest turn out in recent years at a general membership meeting, Heritage Day. VECA seems to be getting positive feed back from most of the community regarding the application.

2. The project is involving people who have not been involved before and may serve as a way to

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Do not place in mailboxes

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develop new leadership.

3. This project has VECA working with Rhodes College as the administrator of the grant and with students in the Urban Studies program of the Political Science department. VECA has an intern, Mary Wilder, from Memphis State's History department who is working on the project. Memphis Heritage provided technical assistance regarding the development of the initial grant and the training manual. The Tennessee Historic Commission has reviewed the training manual and provided training at the Heritage Day. Memphis Landmarks Commission has provided technical assistance and attended the Heritage Day. First American granted the neighborhood \$500 for the project as a part of their community reinvestment efforts.

4. VECA will be able to carry this project out; however, it will take longer than originally thought to conduct the surveys with volunteers. Training sessions have to be held in groups of ten and for accuracy, 250 to 300 homes surveyed at a time is reasonable. Completion of this project is at least a year away.

*How Did The Neighborhood Benefit from This Project?*

Members have reported at least two incidents of individuals who said they bought in the area because of the prospect of National Historic District recognition. Two real estate agents have

contacted the organization's newsletter for potential buyers in the area. Some streets in the northwest quadrant have come forward to ask for neighborhood watch programs that have not been as involved before. One grocery store added a new awning and is trying to clean up its appearance-hard to say if there is a relation to the project. The neighborhood is pleased. It is hoped this project and others will keep VECA in the minds of city and county officials when it comes to services.

#### *Lessons Learned*

Communication is essential to a project such as this. VECA continues to use the Evergreen News as tool to explain the project. Not everybody is happy or understands the purpose of the project so VECA works to talk with everyone in the neighborhood. This work could be done faster by professionals or paid volunteers but you would lose the organizing and involvement aspect of the project.



## Volunteers Needed To Deliver Evergreen News

This newsletter is delivered free by volunteers to most homes in the VECA area. But additional carriers are needed. The newspaper is published six times a year and the copies are brought to each delivery person. Most routes include 20 to 40 homes. If you can help with any of these routes, contact Steve Gadbois at 278-4116. Thanks!

### EVERGREEN NEWS

P.O. Box 12011

Memphis, TN 38182-0011

Danny Munns, Managing Editor  
Margaret Brown, Advertising Editor  
Ann Munns, News Editor  
Annice Jennings, Writer  
Julie Baker, Editing and Writer  
Martha Heinemann, Finance  
Nancy Hall, CFN, Proof Reader  
Steve Gadbois, Distribution  
Center for Neighborhoods, Editing  
Regarding Design of Memphis, Layout

**VECA Hotline: 276-1066**

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**Saturday Vigil Mass - 4:30 p.m.**  
Fr. Bob Ewing, Pastor  
276-1412

  
"All Are Welcome"

## NEIGHBORHOOD FOCUS

*This is the first article in an important series in the Evergreen News supplying our readers with very pertinent information regarding security in several areas of interest. Tom Givens, Executive Director of Corporate Security, Inc., Memphis, TN, has supplied Evergreen News with the information and statistics for this series.*

### Preventing Auto Theft

Auto Theft is one of the most common serious crimes. According to the FBI, in 1991, one of every 117 vehicles in the USA was stolen! Memphis is near the top of the worst US cities in auto theft.

Auto thefts seem to be committed by two main types of offender. One group steals the cars for the value of its parts. The stolen car is taken to a "chop shop," where it is dismantled. The parts are then sold to unscrupulous mechanics, garages, and body shops. These offenses make up a smaller percentage of overall auto thefts, but the cars are rarely recovered.

The other main group of car thieves is composed of relatively youthful offenders who steal the car to use as a means of transportation, particularly while committing other crimes. Typically, three or four gang members together will steal a car, cruise in it for a while, and perhaps commit a robbery or other crime. They will then "dump" that car, and steal another to continue "cruising" in. This goes on all night, with the same set of offenders sometimes stealing a succession of three to five cars in the same night. Most of these cars are recovered quite quickly, with little damage other than that incurred in stealing it.

These offenders are emphatically not the "joy riders" of earlier years, who occasionally stole a car for a brief fling of fast driving and excitement. The modern offenders tend to be gang members, extremely unconcerned about anyone's welfare. They are quite often armed, and will not hesitate to injure or kill anyone who interferes with them. They are often under the influence of drugs/alcohol, and the car theft is incidental to other crimes, including armed robbery and murder.

The cars most often taken are those that are easiest to steal. A surprising number of stolen cars had the keys left in them by careless owners. Cars should always be locked, and keys should never be left anywhere in a vehicle.

As to specific makes, the easiest cars to steal are those made by General Motors after 1978. This

includes Cadillac, Buick, Oldsmobile, Pontiac, and Chevrolet vehicles. It also applies to Jeep/American Motors cars, which use the same ignition lock system as the GM cars. Any car in this category can be stolen in a matter of minutes with the use of only a screwdriver.

Ford/Mercury cars, European cars, such as BMW or Mercedes, and the various Japanese cars are significantly harder to steal because of a different ignition lock system. Generally, these cars are only stolen if the keys were left inside.

The following observable items MAY indicate that a car is stolen:

1. Broken out rear side window or vent window;
2. Car engine running with no key in ignition switch;
3. Large piece of the steering column broken away on the left side;
4. Clean license tags on a dirty car, or vice versa;
5. Trunk lock or door locks missing, leaving a hole;
6. Car with local dealer decal but out of state license plates; or
7. Car with only one headlight working.

If you find an abandoned car with some of the items listed above, DO NOT touch the car. It may have been used in a murder or other serious crime, and you might destroy valuable evidence, such as fingerprints. Call the police, giving them the make, model, and license number of the car, along with its exact location. Try to have an address for the location, not just a block in the street, so they can enter the call in their computer system.

Prevention of auto theft requires constant attention. The following tips are not guaranteed, but they help.

1. NEVER leave the car running when unoccupied. NEVER leave keys in the car.
2. ALWAYS keep the doors locked, even when you are in the car.
3. DO NOT park on the street. In parking lots, try to park near the business, under a street light.

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4. CAR ALARM SYSTEMS are useful, but do not over-rely on them. They can be defeated. In addition, the thief can elect to drive away with the alarm sounding and disable it at another location.

5. USE A STEERING WHEEL LOCK, such as "The Club." This not only prevents actual theft, but if the thief

sees the Club, he won't bother to break out your window.

6. A "Kill Switch" is a hidden switch you can use to make it impossible to start the car. It will keep the car from running, but it will not prevent several hundred dollars' worth of damage to windows and steering column before the thief finds out the car won't start.

## VECA Annual Meeting Election of Officers Held

VECA held its annual membership meeting January 26, 1993 at Vollintine Elementary School. Mary Wilder continued as VECA president and Lois Fingerett was elected vice president. Martha Heinemann, continues to serve as the treasurer. Rich Olcott will serve another term as treasurer. The dues were not changed for 1993 and remain at \$10.00 for the year.

VECA presents two awards each year at the annual meeting. The Margaret Dichtel award is given in honor of the founding president and long time active neighborhood organizer and supporter. This year the award went to Mary Wilder. Mary has been active in

the neighborhood as newsletter editor, festival chairman and president. Past recipients have been Julie Borys and Mike Kirby. VECA presents a second award to government officials who are supportive of neighborhoods. This award is the Richard Borys award in honor of a past president and hard working public servant. The award this year went to Vernua Hanrahan from The Center for Neighborhoods. Vernua has been at CFN for several years and is currently the director. She is very accessible for community leaders and will help in any way she can. She regularly attends the VECA executive meetings and has been seen volunteering at festival and meeting events. VECA has a good friend and advocate for community concerns in Vernua Hanrahan. The Richard Borys award is in recognition of her work for neighborhoods.



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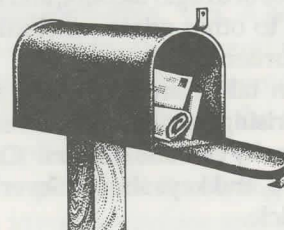
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**VECA General Membership Meeting**  
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VECA is a neighborhood organization made up of volunteers and paying members. The Evergreen News is the way in which VECA communicates with its residents. The Evergreen News contains information about VECA, neighborhood residents, business 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.