

EVERGREEN NEWS

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

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VECA As I Remember It *By Thomas O. Schrodt*

Editor's note: Tom Schrodt, the author of this article, is a native Memphian who lives with his wife Helen on Dickinson. Their home was built in 1926 by his newlywed parents, who purchased a vacant lot from Marx and Bensforf and had the home built by contactor Storey for \$5,300. At the time, Tom's grandfather, Preston D. Schrodt, exclaimed to his son, "Good heavens, Calvin! Why do you want to live way out there? That's too far from the center of Memphis."

The development of today's VECA neighborhood was nearly complete by 1935. Southwestern Presbyterian University (now Rhodes College) had moved here in 1925 from Clarksville, Tennessee, and the huge Sears Roebuck building at North Parkway and Watkins was finished in 1927. Both building projects depended on the Louisville & Nashville railroad, which bisected the neighborhood diagonally. This track

was maintained as the only link between a small freight yard downtown, behind St. Joseph Hospital, and the large Leawood Yard to the east. One spur track extended from a switch just west of University and Jackson south about 200 yards into the college campus. At the track's end, near the present football field, was a pile of Arkansas limestone, surplus from the original construction.

Those who laid out the Parkway system in 1902-03 encountered, at the future junction of North Parkway, Watkins, and the L & N tracks, a dilemma in the form of a steep hill, east of and parallel to the tracks from Watkins to Stonewall. The engineers chose to have North Parkway cross the track at Watkins on a diagonal. So, for years, east-bound drivers on North Parkway turned to the right 45 degrees to cross Watkins and the tracks, then turned to the left 45 degrees to continue on their way, on the south side of the hill.

To further complicate matter, the #7 Crosstown streetcar turned around in the northern end of that crazy intersection after crossing the tracks. "Somerset and Watkins" was the transfer for hundreds of daily wartime passengers continuing north to the Firestone Rubber plant of the Fisher Aircraft plant (now the site of Kimberly Clark).

Each neighborhood had its own commercial strips, which included a grocery store, pharmacy, barber shop, and beauty shop. There were two pharmacies at Jackson and

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General Membership Meeting

Lick Creek

Is it a ditch or is it a creek?

Come and discuss your concerns and find out about proposed plans for Lick Creek.

November 8th, Monday

7:00 p.m.

St. John Orthodox Church

(corner of Dickinson and Tutwiler)

Do not place in mailboxes

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Evergreen -- Holcomb's on the southwest corner and Hollmes's on the north side. But the place to purchase big ticket items was downtown, where there were four large department stores, all on the west side of Main Street. All transit lines went into this central business district except the two north-south lines -- the #7 Crosstown street-

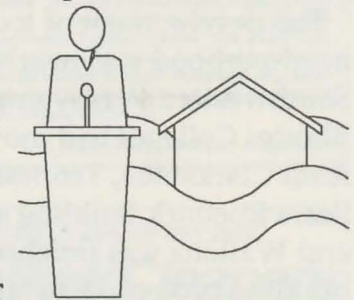
car and the #16 East Parkway bus. Residents of today's VECA neighborhood could take the #12 Chelsea-Florida streetcar, the #9 Glenview-Faxon bus, or the #6 Jackson-Lamar electric coach (trolley-bus). Though many families had no car, travel inside Memphis was easy and convenient, with 7 cent fares and free transfers!

It was a pleasant time and place to live.

Is It A Creek or A Ditch?

Many of the VECA neighbors in the area around Lick Creek noticed surveying going on this summer. A call to City Hall, by Tom Schrodt, revealed that the City is planning some work on Lick Creek. City of Memphis Department of Engineering is planning to put up vertical concrete walls and surround the creek with a four foot fence. The VECA area has long been concerned with security for, and erosion, of adjoining property. VECA is pleased to see the City taking some action. There is concern about this plan and there has been no discussion with the area residents.

To some, Lick Creek is a viable creek and a bit of wildlife in an otherwise urban neighborhood. The planting along the creek provide food and shelter for many migrating birds on their north/south Mississippi valley migration pattern. For some it is a pleasant place to walk with their dog or take their young child to explore. For others Lick Creek is the "ditch," a concern because of its use for criminal activity. The plant life is weeds and a problem for some homeowners next to the creek. In some areas where the stone work is falling there is erosion of homeowners property. How can the City and the neighborhood take



EVERGREEN NEWS

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VECA Hotline: 276-1066

care of security, prevent erosion, maintain a more natural appearance, and allow for natural habitat along Lick Creek? Is there a compromise in the current planned work for the Creek? VECA would like your ideas. There will be a meeting November 8th, Saint Johns Orthodox Church at 7:00 p.m. Speakers will discuss the different approaches possible regarding improvement of Lick Creek. If you would like to contribute to the discussion please call the Hotline 276-1066. Please bring your friends and come. Take part in making decisions for your neighborhood.



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"All Are Welcome"

NEIGHBORHOOD FOCUS

Leaves Leaves Everywhere, Don't Leave Them Just Anywhere

Dear Sirs:

Some neighbors and owners of houses when they cut the grass or rake leaves instead of putting the grass/leaves in plastic bags or in the garbage carts, they put it on the street in front of their house or throw it in back alleys. The garbage men will not pick up this mess unless it is placed in plastic bags or cardboard boxes. Therefore it remains there INDEFINITELY . . . Let's keep VECA clean and beautiful. Concerned Neighbors.

Editors note: The City has cut back on street sweeping so debris at the curb will get washed into the drain system sometimes causing back up. Help out if you can, mulch your old leaves and grass cuttings, or place them in containers for the garbage pick up.

Garbage Carts:

Dear Sirs:

On days when your garbage is not being picked up. PLEASE remove the cart from the street. Most residents try hard to keep the neighborhood and their yards neat and attractive, but it seems we have some in the area who could care less. The few who don't care reflects on the whole neighborhood. We would appreciate your help. THANKS

Curbside Recycling

Dear Sir:

Could you please include some information on getting curbside recycling in VECA in the next newsletter? I called the folks in the recycling department . . . to add my name to the list of people requesting our neighborhood be added and was told that people should call 576-6851 and ask for recycling. When enough names are on the list, the process will begin. It is not mandatory; people who don't wish to participate don't have to, but those of us getting tired of lugging things to Dixie would get some relief.

Who is Memphis Heritage, Inc.?

Memphis Heritage is a non-profit historic preservation and advocacy organization for the entire City of Memphis and Shelby County. Vital issues regarding historic building demolition, downtown development, and neighborhood preservation all are issues Memphis Heritage is involved in. VECA has benefited from many hours of free consultation, time developing VECA's survey, and help in review of VECA's work on the Historic Designation Project from Memphis Heritage.

Heritage can be many things, from that which might be very personal and intangible within a family, to material objects to cultural heritage that is significant to the community, city, state or nation. Our urban heritage is reflected and perpetuated primarily in the historic built environment, with includes all buildings and streets.

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If buildings in a particular neighborhood are destroyed, that part of everyone's urban heritage is destroyed, not just the community that lives there. Ultimately everyone who lives in the city, to some degree, suffers a cultural, economic and aesthetic loss. The city as a whole, which "belongs" to everyone who lives there, must be considered. No neighborhood, however rich or poor, "belongs" to the people of that neighborhood; it belongs to the whole city, and therefore is part of everyone's heritage. As such, Memphis, and everyone who lives here, has a responsibility for the welfare of all its neighborhoods, as well as the privilege of enjoying the rich heritage that only cities can impart.

If you are interested in the work of Memphis Heritage Inc., please contact them at P.O. Box 3143, Memphis, 38103. They will continue to work with VECA throughout our Historic Designation Project.

The Bungalow as a Feminist Statement

VECA has often been referred to as a bungalow community. In fact, in VECA, the majority of the 2,800 homes are bungalows. Judith Johnson from Memphis Heritage Inc. has looked at her humble bungalow with a woman's insight. Evergreen News would like to share with you, "The Bungalow As A Feminist Statement."

As the tide of progressive reform began to rise in the 1890's, middle-class American women demanded change in society's treatment of women; reformers called for a more rational approach to homemaking; there was an appeal for "scientific management" in all aspects of modern life and architects decried the excesses of nineteenth century home decoration. Professionals and non-professionals alike considered the modernized home as a key to the larger reforms they espoused. For the first time, the active involvement of women in planning residential architecture was sought in order to meet their needs and improve the quality of housing for all. All of these agendas and new technologies coalesced in the form of the relatively unpretentious bungalow.

Compared to the Victorian home, the smaller

bungalow was radically simplified, uncluttered space and smooth surfaces; Venetian blinds replaced draperies; easily cleaned linoleum replaced Oriental rugs; sanitary, healthy sleeping porches and screened-in sun parlors were added. The modern bungalow offered the homemaker labor-saving devices and economical mechanisms such as modern systems for power and heat, bathrooms with porcelain fixtures, lead pipes instead of wooden pipes, smaller kitchens equipped with new appliances, and breakfast nooks and kitchenettes.

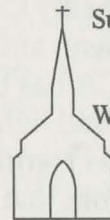
The wide-spread popularity of the bungalow reflected radical changes in middle-class family life in the first decades of the twentieth century. These include: the decline in domestic production of goods such as quilts and home canned vegetables; less formality in the home; smaller families; the increasing isolation of homemakers since children were now trained at schools and the use of domestic servants had declined; women entering the workforce outside the home and the continuing suburbanization of American society.

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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.