

# EVERGREEN NEWS

A Neighborhood Publication Sponsored by VECA, the Vollintine-Evergreen Community Association

Volume XIX, Number 6

December 1993

## VECA Legislative Update

by State Representative Carol Chumney

### Crime

Concerns about increasing crime are on everyone's mind. Over the last five years, federal court orders have required Tennessee to build six new prisons costing over 240 million dollars. Yet, we must add an additional 1,350 new beds by June 1996 to keep up with the increasing number of offenders. It costs \$41,529 a year to institutionalize a juvenile offender, but only \$52,429 per student for 13 years of education from kindergarten through high school. It is cheaper to work with young people in school before they become a costly juvenile offender.

The legislature addressed crime this session with several bills, including those strengthening the DUI laws and establishing the penalty of life without parole for those convicted of first degree murder. Along with Senator Steve Cohen, I passed legislation strengthening the stalking law to cover more situations where a person is being stalked and is in fear of her/his safety.

If you have suggestions for legislation to reduce crime, please call me at 327-8528.

### VECA General Membership Meeting

January 24, 1994 - 7:00 p.m.  
Little Flower Church, Nazerath Hall  
Dickenson & Jackson (Behind the Rectory)  
Election of Officers - 1994

Program:  
Housing problems, when is it a code violation?  
When is it personal taste?  
Who do you call?

Guest Speaker: Ms. Jerri Collins  
Director of the Mayor's Citizen Service Center

### Health Care

The Governor's proposed TennCare health care reform plan replacing Medicaid is scheduled to take effect on January 1, 1994. Medicaid presently serves about 1 million elderly, poor, and disabled people, but TennCare covers an additional 500,000 Tennesseans who do not qualify for Medicaid or cannot afford health insurance.

TennCare, which requires a special government waiver, features managed care by a primary care doctor who approves specialized treatments and hospital care. Increased competition between hospital and doctor groups called HMOs and PPOs create cost savings. Consumers pay a nominal fee for services regardless of their income or employment status.

The legislature will review the TennCare plan when it convenes in January. If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions about TennCare, please call me at 327-8528.

### Lick Creek, It Is A Creek!

Lick Creek is in fact a living creek. Fowlers toads, Gambusia Afinis fish, crayfish, and turtles make it their home. VECA asked Tim Brophy of Wetlands Science Applications, Inc. and Bill Duffel of the Tennessee Environment and Conservation Water Pollution Control Division to walk the creek and evaluate its viability as a living creek. Mr. Duffel felt there was enough evidence of biological

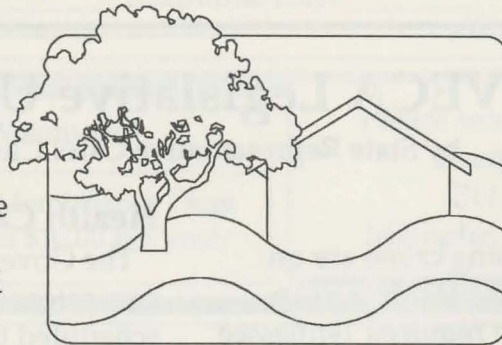
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water life to consider the creek bed as life sustaining. This would mean that a more limited approach to reconstruction than the city's proposed method would be required. The City of Memphis will be required to get an Aquatic Resource Alteration Permit (ARAP) before reconstruction can be done on any creek or river. The ARAP process will review the condition of life in Lick Creek and help define the work to be done.

The creek was channel lined in the late 1930's as a WPA project. At that time the sloped banks were covered with concrete and stone work to help prevent erosion, and the bed was cleared and lined with concrete. Over the fifty year life of the WPA reconstruction work, the creek bed has eroded down to the base and filled in with rock, gravel, sand, and dirt. This has allowed a limited eco-system to develop in Lick Creek. The sloping of the banks allows for birds to fly down into the creek and to use it for bathing and feeding. The growth along the banks provide shade for the creek, keeping its temperature moderate and allowing the fish and toads to live. The *Gambusia Affinis* fish live off of mosquito larvae, providing a



service to the area. The city's proposed reconstruction would be seven foot vertical walls, with a concrete relining of the bed, and a four foot chain link fence surrounding the creek.

This reconstruction would make Lick Creek a sterile drainage ditch, and may not be allowed by the Tennessee Department of Conservation and Environment Water Pollution Control Division.

Birds would not fly down into the vertical wall channel. The clearing of growth and concreting the bottom would kill any life because the water would heat to a temperature too warm to sustain life. The plant growth along the banks would return in time but the bottom would remain sterile.

The Memphis City Engineer's Office told VECA at the November 8th meeting that the reconstruction would not reduce the homeowners' responsibility for growth along the bank, impact on criminal use of the creek bed, or have any effect on mosquitoes. Homeowners who live along the bank own up to the middle of the creek. The City would have to get easement privileges from owners to work on Lick Creek. The owner has responsibility for the property adjacent to the creek because the city sees it as the homeowners' property.

VECA did a survey of fifty-three homeowners along Lick Creek. Eleven residents wanted channel lining. Twenty residents opposed channel lining. Three residents weren't sure about channel lining and wanted more information. Sixteen wanted limited repairs to the existing old WPA creek system. One person opposed any work on Lick Creek. Five residents were not sure of limited repair and wanted more information.

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## EVERGREEN NEWS

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State Representative-District 89  
**Carol Chumney**  
*Call Carol!—327-8528*

- ★ State Government Quality Improvement Act
- ★ Stalking Law
- ★ Open Appointments Act
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**Saturday Vigil Mass - 4:30 p.m.**  
Fr. Bob Ewing, Pastor  
276-1412



**"All Are Welcome"**

## VECA NEIGHBORHOOD FOCUS

### Kill Lick Creek?

**Editorial Opinion of the VECA President, Mary Wilder**

*(not necessarily the view of the VECA board or members)*

This is not a decision to be taken lightly. It will radically affect the way the community looks. When other cities are trying reduce the effect of urbanization by "greening" the cityscape Memphis wants to pour concrete through a living creek. Channel lining will kill Lick Creek. The problems most residents associate with the creek-criminal activity, plant growth and mosquitoes are not changed or cured by this work. This project of 1.3 million dollars will only make it easier for the City to maintain Lick Creek as a drainage system; this is the driving reason behind the project. There has not been a condition survey done of Lick Creek to determine the life or stability of the existing WPA channel lining. There may not be a need for the work or a less costly repair and planting method could be used where time has lessened the erosion and flood protection of the old channel lining. If it's not broke why fix it? As residents along the Creek, do not be passive. New is not always better - environmentally or esthetically.

If others wish to comment please send your written views to Ann Munns, 1891 Lyndale, 38107.

### Alex's basic concept has remained the same

For over 40 years, people have been making friends, listening to good music, enjoying "Greekburgers", and sipping cold beer at a small Midtown-neighborhood tavern called "Alex's Tavern". The neighborhood around Jackson and Watkins has changed since the unpretentious bar opened on November 13, 1953, but the basic concept has remained the same -- "treat the customer right, and they'll come back."

It's also one of Midtown's most well-known businesses which has seen customers ranging from judges, to baseball players, to state legislators, to professors, to authors, and physicians. "Alex's" is also near Rhodes College, UT-Memphis, and Southern College of Optometry, and hundreds of "class parties" have come and gone since the bar opened.

"We just try to give the customers what they want," said Rocky Kasafes, who has managed the tavern since 1978 when his father, Alex Kasafes -- for whom the bar is named -- passed away. Kasafes says he always remembers what his father told him about his formula for success -- "It's not how many customers come -- it's how many come back." Alex also told his son it was important to keep the menu simple, but consistent. Eugenia Kasafes, Alex's widow and Rocky's mother, still plays an active part in the tavern's operation as bookkeeper, and a large, framed picture of Alex Kasafes still hangs over the CD-jukebox, which constantly plays a combination of hits ranging from Frank Sinatra, to George Strait, to the Doobie Brothers. The entertainment also includes live music on various nights, as well as shuffleboard, bumper pool, and video games.

Recently, "Alex's" celebrated its 40th anniversary at 1445 Jackson Ave. and, in front of a standing-room only crowd, Kasafes was honored by Councilman Jack Sammons who pre-

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VECA gave the results of the survey to the City of Memphis' Engineering Department. The City will start work on reconstruction at Claybrook and work east until there is opposition. This work may be altered by the ARAP process. The City of Memphis, at present, only seems willing to do total reconstruction. If neighbors are opposed to total reconstruction the City will not do any work at this time. VECA gave copies of the surveys to Councilman Sammons and he stated he will work with the community. VECA was told this is a maintenance project and the creek is in remarkably good shape. There appears to be no immediate danger of flooding or erosion. However, if residents wish to comment please call VECA or write the City of Memphis Engineering Office, 125 N. Main. The City is particularly interested if you have property erosion due to the Lick Creek.

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sented him with a proclamation from the Memphis City Council. Sammons also gave Kasaftes a proclamation from Mayor W.W. Herenton, along with a Key To The City. Kevin Kane, Director of the Memphis Convention and Visitor's Bureau, was also on hand, and gave Kasaftes a proclamation from his office.

"Alex's" has played host to a long list of well-known names such as actress Stella Stevens, actors John Schneider and David Keith, baseball's Tim McCarver, and musicians Don Henley, Joe Walsh, Belinda Carlisle, Greg Allman, and Billy Gibbons of "ZZ Top". The poplar band "Chicago" has stopped in two times after appearances in Memphis.

Sports-watchers are also a major part of "Alex's" clientele (the bar was being called a "sports bar" long before that term was a common one), and its huge, big-screen projection TV was the first of its kind in town. The satellite dish at "Alex's" -- also one of the first in Memphis -- has been offering several sports events and teams that can't be seen on network TV or cable. "This year," Kasaftes said, "one of our busiest nights was Wednesdays when quite a few loyal (Atlanta) Braves fans came in to see the game on satellite because it wasn't on cable that night.

Members of the Memphis River Kings

hockey team, and their fans can be found after almost all the home games. "Quite a few of the players came in last year," said Kasaftes, "and this year I'm glad to say they're coming back." The tavern was named to the Memphis Park Commission "Hall of Fame" because of its longtime support of league softball and baseball. A Memphis radio station contest saw listeners vote its "Best Hamburger" Award to "Alex's", and a Memphis magazine honored the tavern with its "Top Jukebox Award".

Rocky Kasaftes says he is particularly proud that some of his best customers are other lounge and restaurant employees who come by after work. "I consider it a real compliment," said Kasaftes, "that so many fellow workers think of my place when it's time to unwind after they've put in a hard day."

Kasaftes said, "We've made a lot of friends in the downtown and midtown area over the last 40 years, but we're always happy to meet new people. We would like to invite all our neighbors to stop in anytime for a cold beer and good food."

*Happy Holidays  
to our VECA community*

# VECA Needs Volunteers

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## VECA

### Vollintine-Evergreen Community Association

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.