

VOLLINTINE EVERGREEN

N E W S

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

Volume XXX, Number 4

JULY 2004

POTLUCK SUPPER AND POOL PARTY



Mark your calendars, and join many of your neighbors for great food and water fun on Saturday, July 10, at the Rhodes College pool. The potluck supper will start at 6:00 p.m. and the pool will open to us at 7:00 p.m. The event is free. Those under age 16 must be accompanied by an adult.

Just bring swimsuits and a dish to share (the more people you bring, the larger the dish!). VECA will provide eating utensils and soft drinks. If the weather doesn't cooperate, the event will go on, indoors.

POLICE OFFICERS AT VECA OFFICE

By the time you read this, the VECA office will probably be rearranged to accommodate a police "mini-precinct" several days a week. (Details are still being worked out at press time.) Police officers will report to the VECA office for roll call, and then most will disperse into Vollintine-Evergreen and other nearby neighborhoods, while a few may remain at the office. (In addition, it appears that Wednesday morning visits by Police Service Technicians for code enforcement purposes will continue.)

Stop by or call the VECA office to find out more as this exciting opportunity develops.



2006 HISTORIC HOME TOUR

VECA's Historic Committee is already beginning to look ahead to its next home tour, probably in the spring of 2006. Committee members are looking now for homes that are dramatic, well-built, nicely furnished, or interesting in any other way. The Committee may decide to base the tour on a theme: perhaps homes in a certain area, or homes that have recovered nicely from the 2003 windstorm.

The Committee would welcome your suggestions on homes or themes, and of course the Committee is always willing to accept new volunteer members. Its monthly meetings are in various members' homes and always feature great refreshments.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & COMMITTEES

Unless otherwise marked, all of these meetings are at the VECA office at 1680 Jackson. To be certain, you can call first at 276-1782. Committee meetings and Board meetings are open to everyone.



Potluck Supper & Pool Party	July 10 (Rhodes College)
National Night Out	August 3 (throughout neighborhood)
Cypress Creek event	September 9 (site to be announced)
Ice Cream Social	September 11 (V&E Greenline)
VECA Block Club Reception & General Membership Meeting	January 24, 2005 (McLean Baptist Church)
Historic Committee	second Monday monthly, 7:00 p.m. (various locations; call office)
Code Enforcement Committee	third Thursday monthly, 6:00 p.m.
Block Club Committee	first Monday monthly, 6:00 p.m.
Cypress Creek Committee	third Wednesday monthly, 6:00 p.m.
Youth Committee	call office to help
V&E Greenline Committee	third Tuesday monthly, 6:30 p.m. (but not July or December)
Housing Committee	second Tuesday monthly, 5:30 p.m.
Commercial Revitalization Committee	second Tuesday monthly, 6:00 p.m.
Managing Committee	last Monday monthly, 5:30 p.m.
VENews deadlines:	August 3, October 5, December 3
VECA CDC & VECA Boards	first Monday monthly, 6:30 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.
VECA CDC & VECA Boards	August 2, 6:30 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.
VECA CDC & VECA Boards	September 13, 6:30 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.

VISIT VECA'S WEBSITE

www.vegreenline.org

VECA & VECA CDC STAFF

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VOLLINTINE ↔ EVERGREEN NEWS

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vecacdc@vecacdc.org



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VOLLINTINE-EVERGREEN HISTORY BEING UPDATED

Long-time Vollintine-Evergreen residents may be familiar with the only comprehensive written history of our neighborhood, "Vollintine/Evergreen: A Diverse Community", written in 1980 by Peggy Boyce Jemison under the auspices of MIFA. (If you have not seen it, a few carefully-preserved copies are at the VECA office.) A lot of time has passed and a lot of change has occurred. Accordingly, Vollintine-Evergreen resident Mike Kirby has agreed to work with Memphis Heritage on an update.

- Do you wish to loan photos or information?
- Do you wish to be interviewed?
- Do you wish to reserve a copy for purchase later?

If any of your answers are "yes", contact the VECA office for more information.

NEEDED AT YOUR VECA OFFICE

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INTERESTED IN A NEIGHBORHOOD TOUR?

Call the VECA office (276-1782) if you are interested in taking a tour of the Vollintine-Evergreen neighborhood on a MATA trolley-bus. Sights worth seeing include the VECA office, the V&E Greenline line (especially its two new bridges), some of VECA CDC's rehabbed houses and new houses, the VECA CDC-owned commercial strip, and Cypress Creek. The VECA and VECA CDC Boards did such a tour for their April 5 meeting, and found it worthwhile.



There might a small charge to cover the expense of renting the trolley from MATA. If there is sufficient interest, one or more dates will be chosen later this year, and only then would you need to make a firm commitment.



YMCA HALF-PRICE OFFER

The downtown Fogelman YMCA (245 Madison, next to the Redbirds stadium) is offering VECA members half-price joining fees. Stop by or contact the YMCA at 527-9622 for more information.

POLICE DIRECTOR BOLDEN UNVEILS BOLD PLAN

During his 2004 budget presentation to the Memphis City Council, Director of Police Services James H. Bolden unveiled a sweeping four-year plan that will fully staff the Division of Police Services to allow his community policing efforts to be expanded citywide.

"We are moving forward with our plan and will take Community Policing to a new level during the next four years," explained Director Bolden during a recent meeting with community leaders.

The plan included expanding current staffing levels of the police department to 2,500 officers, creating ten precinct service areas and working more closely with community groups, faith based organizations and other city divisions.

One of the first steps in Director Bolden's efforts is to coordinate police services to involve other city services and improve community development. This will be a very innovative approach to traditional crime fighting methods.

"It has been proven that clean well maintained neighborhoods build strong communities that help stabilize families and in turn reduce crime," he said. The next four years should be very exciting as Director Bolden's plan is implemented in the city.

Do you want to remodel? Do you need home repairs but don't know how to start?

Do you want to remodel? Do you need home repairs but don't know how to start? VECA CDC has staff that can assist Vollintine-Evergreen residents with inspecting and determining necessary repairs. Staff can also prepare the scope-of-work and do preliminary estimates. The fee is modest. Call the VECA office for details.



276-1782



CYPRESS CREEK COMMUNITY EVENT

Mark your calendar for the evening of Thursday, September 9, when VECA will host a free community event focusing on current issues related to Cypress Creek. All interested community residents are welcome. VECA will also invite industry representatives, environmentalists, and state and local government officials. VECA's environmental consultant Jerry Loftin will be the featured expert. This event and some community surveying are partially supported by an environmental justice grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Details on locations and time of the September 9 community event will be decided soon. Check the next (September) issue of this newsletter, or call the VECA office at 276-1782.

CYPRESS CREEK SOIL INVESTIGATION UPDATE

by Chuck Hanson, Vice President of Environment, Health, Safety and Product Safety, Velsicol Chemical Corporation

The Cypress Creek Soil Investigations conducted by Velsicol — and overseen by the state and EPA — since 2001 have given the community the answer to the first important question regarding the safety of Cypress Creek. Based on the results of the available soil analyses and conservative assumptions about potential exposure, there are no immediate or acute health hazards from the soils in and around Cypress Creek.

In fact, for most of the 84 properties that were sampled last summer, the contamination was below the state's screening level, indicating that no further investigation is needed. For the 33% of property owners that received a letter indicating their soil sample exceeded the state's screening level, more study will be done. Velsicol received formal approval from the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) in May for its plan to take soil samples from 50 additional residential properties this summer. The additional sampling will be done on or directly adjacent to those properties between Jackson Avenue and Evergreen Street with levels of chemicals in soil that exceeded the state's screening level. The information will be used to conduct a risk assessment that will answer the second important question: Are the potential exposure and contaminant levels sufficient to warrant clean-up?

Like last year, we will be contacting residents for permission to access properties for soil sampling through letters, phone calls and personal visits to assure questions are answered. Everyone who provides access to their property for soil samples will receive a report regarding the findings.

Over the last few months, particularly since a class action lawsuit was filed against Velsicol by four plaintiffs in the area, there has been a lot of rhetoric that has the potential to cause confusion and unjustified concern. Let me be clear about a few points. Velsicol has done everything it has said it was going to do, including spending over \$500,000 to date on

the investigations to assure the study is done right and that residents get answers to questions they may have regarding any Velsicol-related contaminants in Cypress Creek. Second, prior to receiving the class action complaint, we met every deadline under our control. Third, as long as the lawsuit does not deplete our resources or impede the investigation process, we intend to conduct the remainder of the soil investigation and complete a risk assessment by the end of the first quarter next year. Velsicol had previously planned to have the additional assessment of Sub-Area III completed by October 2004. However, that schedule has changed as we have worked with TDEC to design the study. We are working with TDEC to revise the schedule and will provide an update when it has been defined.

A risk assessment, like the one that Velsicol will complete in the upcoming months, uses conservative assumptions about potential exposure to contamination and the toxicity of contaminants to provide regulators with a worst-case estimate of the potential health risks posed by a site. Regulators then use this worst-case information to help decide how much clean-up is required. If the data shows cleanup is needed, and we have the resources to do it, Velsicol will conduct the clean-up.

Unfortunately, a risk assessment is not designed to determine whether health problems in a community are related to particular environmental contaminants. Answers to this type of question require health and exposure information that is specific to the community. The health study being conducted by the Memphis and Shelby County Public Health Department should gather such information and may help to determine whether there are any identifiable effects on public health in the Cypress Creek area.

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continued on next column

WHY ARE THERE POLES ON BOTH SIDES OF JACKSON AVENUE?

by Tom Schrodt

Have you wondered as you drove along Jackson Avenue just why there are rows of utility poles on both sides of the thoroughfare? The answer goes back to 1940, when trolley coaches replaced street-cars there. In 1928 a German engineer invented the trackless trolley, a bus running on rubber tires but drawing its power from two electric wires overhead. Why two wires? Whereas the street-car needed merely one wire because the electric circuit was completed through the tracks, the trolley coach, with its non-conducting rubber tires, required an extra overhead wire in order to complete the circuit.

Memphis before June 1947 had three types of vehicles, all owned by the Memphis Street Railway Company: street-cars, motor buses, and trolley coaches. The last type ran on only one street — Lamar Avenue, where trolley coaches were installed in late 1931. The company policy was to link two routes using the same type of vehicle into a double route that used Main Street downtown in both directions. The photo here shows a coach of the #6 Jackson-Lamar route facing north on Main Street. Residents of the Vollintine-Evergreen neighborhood were near all three types of routes. The #12 Chelsea-Florida cars ran on a private right-of-way just south of the concrete street and turned around at the small Buckeye plant adjacent to the Illinois Central freight tracks.



Colonel Roane Waring, president of the privately owned MSR Company, had a passion for efficiency and neatness. On a wide street, such as Jackson Avenue or Firestone Boulevard, there was no long cable strung across the thoroughfare to support the twin lines in each direction. Instead, a triangle was attached to each steel pole to carry the two lines, and said triangle (called an arm) extended less than 15 feet from the pole. Originally the electric coaches on Jackson turned around at University Street (which was wide open with no traffic light), but it soon was extended one mile east to tiny Bingham Street, just west of the first viaduct. People wanting to cross it and enter Highland Heights transferred to a small motor bus that ran every thirty minutes.

Vollintine-Evergreen had one motor bus route, #9 Glenview-Faxon, on which buses ran every seven minutes during the day and every three minutes during the rush hour. Actually, this route combined parts of several street-car routes — Lane Avenue, Faxon on the north side of Memphis with the Glenview neighborhood on the south side. To reach Glenview, the buses used McLemore, a major east-west thoroughfare in one of the oldest parts of Memphis.

All motor buses built in the 1930s had manual transmissions, commonly known as stick shifts. To the left of the steering wheel was the clutch pedal, which was depressed to the floor when the operator applied the brake. When he closed the door and pulled away, he gradually released the clutch and depressed the gas pedal; upon reaching 10 m.p.h. he removed his right foot from the accelerator and depressed the clutch before shifting gears manually from low to second gear; upon reaching 20 m.p.h. he repeated the action, pushing the gear stick into high. If he failed to depress the clutch, there was a grinding sound because he had stripped the gears: a major repair job. Back then, learning to drive was far more tedious than today because you had to coordinate both feet.

In contrast to the motor bus, the trolley coach had no clutch. That meant automatic transmission and quicker acceleration. There were two large pedals to the right of the steering wheel — the power pedal and the brake. Speed was measured in points of power, and there were seven. This was a "run and coast" operation.

As a small boy, this writer crossed Jackson Avenue five days a week enroute to school at Vollintine Elementary. In the fifth grade he was on the safety council stationed at Jackson and Belvedere. From that vantage point he observed the smooth and quiet operation of the electric coaches (the name used constantly by Col. Waring), and he determined that some day he would operate one. That happened years later in Chicago.

Even though you may not be a baseball fan, undoubtedly you have heard of Wrigley Field, home of the Chicago Cubs. Wrigley Field faces Addison Street and the rapid-transit trains going to Evanston are on the east side. Half a mile to the north is Irving Park Road, a wide thoroughfare running east to west, similar to Lamar Avenue here in Memphis. Coaches of the #80 I.P. route turned around between the west trestle and Lake Michigan. After leaving on the westbound trip, the tall coach had to pass under that trestle, which had a low clearance, so low that the trolley poles almost lay on the coach's roof, but after clearing, the wires rose up quickly as the coach climbed a long, steep hill bounded by a cemetery on the north. I remember so well giving the coach three points of power and coasting UP the hill with no loss of power before reaching Clark Street. Man, those were the days!

[Editor's note: Tom Schrodt is a native Memphian who grew up in the Vollintine-Evergreen neighborhood. He and his wife Helen now live in his parents' former home on Dickinson.]



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Saturday Confession - 3:45 - 4:15 p.m.



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YARD OF THE MONTH HONOREES!

Congratulations to these honorees! Please drive by and admire these homes. If you would like to nominate a house for Yard of the Month, please email us at: vehistoric@yahoo.com or call 278-9838.

MAY — 1827 EDWARD

May's yard of the month winner features Tennessee's state flower, the iris. Lottie Lough of 1827 Edward Avenue has been growing irises in this yard for 50 years and she has over 1600 varieties. Each of these 1600 varieties is labeled and dated. An expert gardener, she crosses irises to create new varieties. She is the namesake of the "Lottie Lough Iris". Lottie plants irises in well-drained soil and adds a little lime and bone meal. To keep her yard beautiful after the irises have bloomed, she has added hostas, roses, azaleas, peonies and many others. Lottie has lived in the Vollintine Evergreen neighborhood for 60 years.



JUNE — 1970 SNOWDEN

June's yard of the month winners are "American Gothic" imitators Kenny and Anita Houx of 1970 Snowden Avenue. Their yard was a clean slate when they moved in 20 years ago with no gardening experience. They started with annuals, got hooked on gardening, and have since tried just about everything. They strive to always have something blooming. Currently there are only about 6 weeks of the year without something in bloom. They like to frame different views so that their yard looks very different as you move through it. Their style is informal with abundance. Kenny and Anita feel that keeping the proper scale is important in keeping with the style of their house and the size of their yard. Animals thrive in their yard since they don't use pesticides or herbicides. Their belief is that insects have to eat too so they just plant a little extra.



By Michael McMullan/The Commercial Appeal
(Photo used with permission)

RATS AND MOSQUITOS ARE SUMMER VISITORS

To breed, mosquitoes need standing water like that found in a tin can, an old tire, or a birdbath. Every two days rinse out the birdbath. Place at the curb up to six old tires, without rims. (If you have a major clean up and have more than six tires you may take them for disposal on Wednesdays, Thursdays, or Fridays to the Levey Road station, at 576-6730. Bring this newsletter article with you as proof that you are with a community group.)

Rats need three conditions to thrive: harborage, water, and food. Harborage refers to places like woodpiles, stacks of lumber, old tires, or abandoned cars. Stored materials should be at least 18 inches off the ground to discourage rats from making burrows underneath. Creeks or other water by itself does not necessarily mean rats. If you live near a creek or any source of fresh water, rats will take advantage of the water source only if you also have harborage and food. Dog food, dog feces, and garbage from open trashcans are sources of food for rats. Gardens may a source of food but by themselves will not attract rats.

Cats and dogs can get into poison so be careful if you place poison yourself. Check with a professional company or the Health Department before you bait for rats. And consider humane alternatives.

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- Newsletter Writing
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 - \$35 dues, Gold Star Heritage members receive their choice of bumper sticker and the Historic Designation Plaque.
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VOLLINTINE-EVERGREEN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

VECA is a neighborhood organization made up of volunteers and paying members. The Vollintine-Evergreen News is the way in which VECA communicates with its residents. The Vollintine-Evergreen News contains information about VECA, neighborhood residents, and business and government policies. VECA is bounded by Watkins on the West, Cypress Creek on the North, Springdale on the East and North Parkway on the South. Contact VECA by writing to 1680 Jackson Avenue, Memphis, TN 38107 or call (901) 276-1782.