

# VOLLINTINE NE EVERGREEN WS

**N E W S**

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

VOLUME XXXIV, NUMBER 2

JULY 2008

## Alex's Tavern Celebrates 55 years

Alex's Tavern receives much deserved attention just in time for its 55th Anniversary, as it is being presented on the Food Network's Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives series in the upcoming months. Alex's Tavern, founded in 1953 by Alex Kasafes and wife, Eugenia, is the oldest family-owned bar in Memphis.

Now owned and managed by Alex's son, Rocky, this hole-in-the-wall bar is best known for its jukebox as well as the Greek burger. However, those who have been to Alex's Tavern know it is much more than that. Alex's has a wealth of history and character that



Alex's Tavern is located on 1445 Jackson Avenue

lures people in. From the bartenders like Sonny Wilson, who worked at the tavern for 47 years, and his famous one-liners, or "Sonnyisms" to the shuffleboard, Alex's keeps people coming back. As Alex himself told his son Rocky, "It is not how many people come that is important, it's how many people come back." And come back they do, once you experience the charm of Alex's you will always find a place in your heart for it. Whether it's the big game that's on, or just another Tuesday, Alex's is always open. As Sonny Wilson says, "If you're here, we're open". A fact that not only college students take to heart, but also a few other unlikely characters have been known to keep the place open until the wee hours of the morning. Rocky recalls the time that he refused to serve none other than Gregg Allman from The Allman Brothers Band. "If your Gregg Allman, than I'm Sam Malone." Rocky told Allman shortly before he realized that the man in front of him was, in fact, Gregg Allman.

Alex's has been a founding element to the character of this city for the last 55 years and will continue to be so in the years to come. "I just want to say thanks to everyone who has been supporting us for all these years," says Rocky Kasafes.

## Project Midtown

For most of us living in the Midtown area, shopping is perceived as an all day affair that consists of driving out to as far as Germantown Road and dealing with gas prices and traffic. To much relief, however, plans are in place to bring many of those same shops that are in the Wolf Creek retail center, here into Midtown.

Tom Marsh, a local developer, along with Florida-based WSG Development Co. are in the process of finalizing plans to redevelop 30 acres of land in the vicinity of Poplar Avenue and Watkins Street.

The area is intended to have a mixed-use retail that also includes condominiums, apartments as well as office buildings. The developers expect to have an estimated economic impact worth about \$150 million.

According to developer Tom Marsh, however, the distinguishing factor of this projects is location. Midtown is in a much better, centrally located area that will attract not only people from Midtown, but also people from downtown.

Further approvals of the revised plan are anticipated in July.

## National Night Out

**Tuesday August 5, 2008**

1680 Jackson

**6:30-7:30pm**

Night Out for Prayer

And

Pot Luck dinner

National Night Out is the time to pray for our neighbors, friends, children, and community. Please come and bring a dish to share with your neighbors.

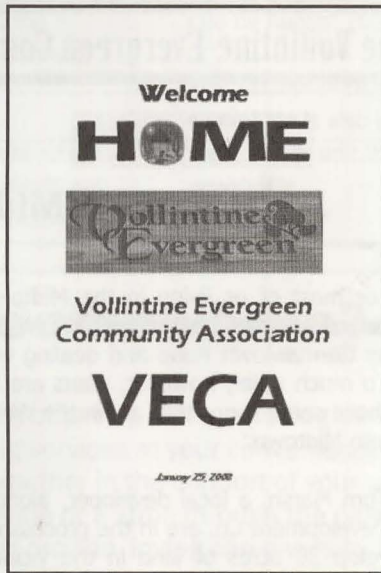


## VECA Brochure

Are you new to the neighborhood? The efforts of block club members, along with Rhodes College students and staff, have resulted in the creation of a 36-page booklet about the Vollintine-Evergreen neighborhood.

Want to know more about VECA organizations? Which churches and schools serve the neighborhood? What are some important code enforcement guidelines for the neighborhood? All of this and more is covered in the brochure.

The brochure will be used to welcome newcomers, but it also contains helpful information of interest to all VECA residents. Copies are available at the VECA office, 1680 Jackson Avenue.



This is your invitation to  
**McLean Baptist Church**  
 815 North McLean at Jackson Ave.

**“The Church On The Corner with a Heart for the Community”**

Sunday Services 10:50a.m.

**VECA CDC Homes for Sale**

**962 Maury**

**1810 Hunter**

**2113 Brown**

**For information call: 276-1782**

## Springdale Baptist Church celebrates its 80th anniversary

Saturday, May 30th, Springdale Baptist church celebrated 80 years of service to the neighborhood. From 10am until 2pm the church parking lot was the full of fun games and food for the whole family.

From the shoot-of to the cake walk, a little friendly competition never hurt anyone either!

VECA CDC was present at the festival and shared an informational table along with an AID's awareness group. The group also was offering free AID's testing at the church.

VECA would like to congratulate for the 80 years of community and service shown by Springdale Baptist church.

## Join a VECA Committee

Open for all to attend, the Vollintine-Evergreen community has many committees on which residents can serve. The committees listed have a designated meeting time. Other committees, such as the Block Clubs hold meetings periodically.

Call the VECA office at 276-1782 for more information about these committees or check the website for a calendar of events.

Committees usually meet at the VECA office located at 1680 Jackson Ave.

VECA CDC Board	First Monday of the month	6:30 pm
VECA Board	First Monday of the month	7:00 pm
Neighborhood Preservation	Fourth Thursday of the month	6:00 pm
Neighbors for Trees	Third Monday of the month	5:30 pm
V&E Greenline	Monday, September 15th, and October 13 at 1625 Tutwiler Ave	6:30 pm
Safety and Security	First Tuesday of the month at McLean Baptist Church, Crump Ave and McLean Blvd	7:00 pm

[www.veca-neighborhood.org](http://www.veca-neighborhood.org)



## Board approves Plans for Elderly Home in the Area

Thursday, June 12th, Land Use Control Board approved a plan, proposed by Church of God in Christ, to place a home for the aged on 1740 Vollintine, currently a vacant lot.

The revised plan involves 97 living units, 3 stories, a parking lot that faces outward, and a heavily landscaped front yard. The lot is currently in a single family, middle-income, historic area and has neighbors arguing that the plan calls for too many residents in one place and that the building will not fit in with the rest of the area.

Three meetings were held in the community prior to the Land Use Control "Public" hearing. The first meeting the developers held only because their proposal was postponed until they did so. The second meeting was planned by the neighborhood, and a third was also organized by the neighborhood.

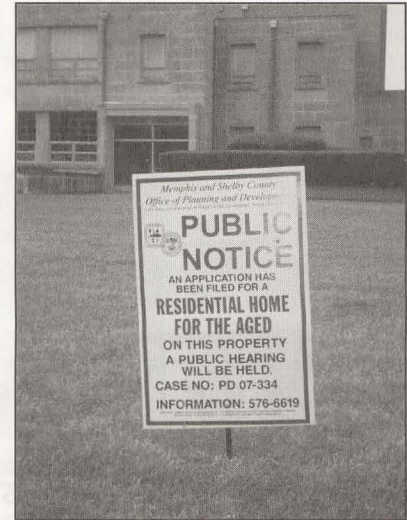
After speaking with residents it is clear that

the majority of the community does not support the plan. The community held another meeting on June 23<sup>rd</sup> and decided to gather petitions and talk to their City Council representative. The Vollintine Hills residents oppose the development. It will increase the density in the area, change the residential nature of the community from single family to multi family, it will increase traffic and with the density possibly will increase crime.

The problem lies not only in the building itself, but with the overall process that comes with rezoning the area, as well as the lack of communication between the neighborhood and the developers. "The Office of Planning and Development, however, did a wonderful job talking to the neighborhood," says Mary Wilder.

The PUD project only calls for 2 public hearings, which consists of one 5 minute meeting at Land Use. The second public meeting is before City Council. The

neighborhood will ask City Council to oppose the Evergreen Senior Living Apartments.



Public Notice Sign in front of Gethsemane Garden Church of God in Christ Located at 1740 Vollintine Avenue

## Have Complaints About Public Services?

The City of Memphis has a one-stop shop to receive complaints or requests about city services known as the Mayor's Citizen Service Center (MCSC). If you have a concern about garbage not being picked up on your street, vacant properties or lots, perpetual yard sales, loose dogs, faulty streetlights, sanitation issues, mosquito and rodent control, this is the place to call.

The center also responds to complaints about rooming houses, zoning violations, and conditions in commercial areas.

The Mayor's Citizen Service Center can be reached at 576-6500. The MCSC does not reveal who has complained, but you can request a letter about the resolution of the complaint.

The MCSC also has a complaint center on the City of Memphis website. Go to [www.memphistn.gov](http://www.memphistn.gov) and select "Online Support Center" under the mayor's picture.

Unless citizens file complaints about problem services, public

Designs by Gloria

Gloria Fulton Singleton  
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P.901.272.3845  
C.901.288.3819

**Upcoming Events:**  
 August 27th: Classes Begin  
 Sept. 5th: Opening Reception for Memphis World Show  
 Sept. 11th: BET Personality, Jeff Johnson Lecture

For more information visit:  
<http://www.rhodes.edu>



## Youth Volunteers help Cleanup the Greenline

The Vollintine-Evergreen Greenline was filled with young volunteers, Thursday, June 5th. The volunteers came from Power Summer Camp sponsored by the Liberation Community Church located on 694 S. Belvedere.

Ranging from 5-12 years old, about 20 young campers came out to the Greenline to help the community by picking up twigs and leaves. The dedicated workers learned about the history of the Greenline and its importance to the neighborhood.

Filling about 15 bags full of leaves, twigs, and branches, the kids left tired but not worn out. Cynthia Johnson, the summer camp coordinator, sees cleaning up the Greenline as something the camp will continue to do as a way of allowing the kids to help out in the community, but also keeping them safe.



Youth Volunteers from Liberation Community Church help out at the V&E Greenline

### University Avenue Tree Planting

Neighbors for Trees has been awarded a Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement grant to plant 35 Valley Forge American Elms along the median of University Street from North Parkway to Jackson Avenue. The trees will be incorporated with healthy existing crepe myrtles. The planting will be in the fall. Interested neighbors are invited to attend an informational meeting.

**Monday, August 11, 6:30 p.m.,  
Evergreen Presbyterian Church, 613 University  
Millard Hall (lower level).**

## Volunteers Clean Up Apartments

VECA CDC is the nonprofit organization for the Vollintine-Evergreen area and its two apartment buildings on Maury St are being managed by a volunteer committee.

Recently, neighborhood residents volunteered to help clean up the site and more specifically to assist in the demolition of a dilapidated garage. Chuck Fox, Paul Davis, Jim Doyle, Mickey Spence, Steve Gadbois, Mike Kirby, and Dale Baker volunteered two hours to clean the site.

Dale Baker is a Rhodes student working with VECA CDC during the summer. His work is funded by the City of Memphis, Division of Housing and Development.

This is still another example of the importance of volunteers to a variety of projects.

If you are interested in serving on the committee, leave a message at the VECA office at 276-1782,

## Your Division of Housing and Community Development Interns

Rhodes students, Dale Baker and Maura Weber, are working this summer as division of housing and community development interns, through a grant paid for by the City of Memphis.

Dale Baker '10, is a economics major and is a local, from Germantown. He has spent the majority of the summer fixing up VECA CDC apartments on Maury Avenue, from hiring contractors to the manual labor.

Maura Weber '11, is a political science major from Saint Louis, MO. She has spent most of her time putting together the July issue of the VE News.

Baker and Weber also work together on taking field surveys of areas that are of concern to the community including vacant houses and lots. They will continue to work throughout the summer, helping out the community.

Jared Powelson, OD      Mike Gersner, OD

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## Good For the Heart, Good for the Soul: Melanie's Soul Food Restaurant by: Maura Weber

The verdict is in and the judges agree that Melanie's Soul Food scores a 10. Well, at least Dale and I agree. Recently, fellow intern, Dale Baker, and myself went to Melanie's to experience the authentic southern cuisine.

It was my first soul food experience and I was to be honest, a bit hesitant, but when I was quickly greeted with a friendly face and a joke, I knew I would like this place.

From the neck bones and corn bread to oxtail and yams Melanie's home style cooking tastes just like grandma's, maybe even better!

Although Melanie's is not a quiet place come lunchtime, the wait is short and the people are warm. So, whether you're dining in or on the run, Melanie's is the perfect place for some good ole' soul food.

Melanie's Soul Food Restaurant, pictured right, is located on 1017 N. Watkins Street



## City of Memphis helps Neighborhood Preservation Committee

Through an in-depth review of condemned properties in the neighborhood, the Neighborhood Preservation Committee identified thirteen properties that it believed should be saved.

The committee worked with Janet Hooks, Deputy Director of Community Enhancement, to address concerns with the properties. Due to the collaborative effort, several properties have since been removed from condemnation.


This type of partnership is essential in building a strong neighborhood for the future.

Please contact Chris Floyd at 491-6320 or [cakirby72@yahoo.com](mailto:cakirby72@yahoo.com) for additional information.

## Advertise With Us!

Want to reach 3,000 VECA residents? Why not advertise in *the Vollintine-Evergreen News*? Local businesses like yours can receive community support by appearing in our pages. Just \$75 buys three prominent ads in our 2008 newsletters. Don't wait! Call our advertising manager at 276-1782.

If You're Looking For That Favorite Little Neighborhood Bar—Stop By And See Us At



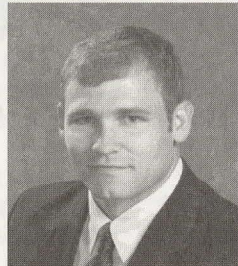
# Alex's Tavern

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[John.ponnath@edwardjones.com](mailto:John.ponnath@edwardjones.com)





## Neighbors for Trees

Neighbors for Trees" is a Vollintine Evergreen committee working to increase awareness of the environmental value of trees in our urban Midtown setting. The committee was established primarily to counteract the damages caused by the 2003 wind storm, "Hurricane Elvis", that ripped out numerous older trees in the area. The committee also has had the opportunity to plant trees in the neighborhood.

Neighbors for Trees uses funding awarded from city and state grants, as well as private donations, to purchase and maintain trees that they plant. Most recently, Neighbors for Trees coordinated the planting of young trees along the Tutwiler median, from University to Dickinson. The committee has been involved in tree plantings on University Circle, Jackson Avenue, and Overton Park,

among other areas.

Although currently the committee has been involved with plantings on public areas, the committee's ultimate goal is to work with homeowners to plant trees on private properties. The hope is that trees planted now will become the canopy of the neighborhood as the older trees reach the end of their natural life.

The committee holds an annual festival, the Forest Faire, to provide informative presentations in a fun and relaxed setting. The Faire has expanded throughout the years to include 20 vendors with representation from groups such as the Sierra Club to Share a Ride. This year's Forest Faire will be held on October 25<sup>th</sup>.

The committee welcomes and encourages neighbors to join their efforts.

Call the VECA office for the next meeting of the committee—276-1782.



The arboretum that lines on Tutwiler Avenue



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## Neighborhood E-mail

VECA is currently looking into alternative ways to contact neighbors about the events and emergencies in the community.

Brad Heinz, a resident in the area, presented to the VECA board meeting on June 2, a possible solution, an e-mail broadcast system. This broadcast system would be added to the VECA website and be available to all members. A member simply register his or her e-mail address and then will be added to one collection email list. In the event of an emergency, an "amber alert" type e-mail will be sent to all members so that immediate action can be taken.

The e-mail broadcast system may also be used for monthly updates in addition to the newsletter. Members will be given information on upcoming events, safety tips, and important numbers in case of an emergency. If the board decides to go in this direction of a "cyber watch" members will be able to choose what type of e-mail he or she wants to receive, as to avoid overcrowding e-mails and decreasing the value of the system. All plans are still in the process of discussion and no decisions have been made.



**St. John the Evangelist  
Orthodox Church**

Sunday  
Orthros at 9am • Liturgy at 10am

Weekdays  
Wednesday Vespers at 6:50pm  
Saturday Great Vespers at 5:50pm

1663 Tutwiler Avenue at Dickinson  
(901) 274-4119



## Speed Bumps on Your Street? By Leslie Terrell

The good news about speed bumps in Vollintine Evergreen is that your street may meet the criteria required by the city. The bad news is that my street, Auburndale Street (between Tutwiler and Jackson), does not meet those criteria.


After hearing concerned neighbors discuss the problem of traffic speeding down our street as a cut-through to Evergreen or Lyndale, with beloved pets falling victim to hit-and-run accidents, I contacted Ronda Curry, of the Memphis Maintenance Department. With the optimistic title of Traffic Calming Coordinator, Ms. Curry filled me in on the details of getting speed bumps.

To be eligible, a street must meet criteria for traffic volume and speed, as well as garner residential approval. Specifically, at least 75 percent of my neighbors must approve, traffic must speed in excess of five miles per hour and volume must either exceed 600 vehicles in a 24-hour period or 60 vehicles in a single hour.

I asked Ms. Curry if the city would consider *quality* of speeders rather than quantity – the speeding cars that zoom down Auburndale catch Greenline walkers unaware, traumatize young children learning to ride their bikes and leave those on our quiet street confused and puzzled as to the thoughtlessness of fellow drivers.

Unfortunately, many other streets in our area face a similar situation. Until the city's criteria for speed bumps changes, they are a no-go on Auburndale Street.

However, if you believe your street meets the qualifications, you can read more about speed bump requests at the following site: [www.memphistn.gov/framework.aspx?page=53](http://www.memphistn.gov/framework.aspx?page=53).



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## Water on the Greenline



**Graham's**  
LIGHTING FIXTURES, INC.

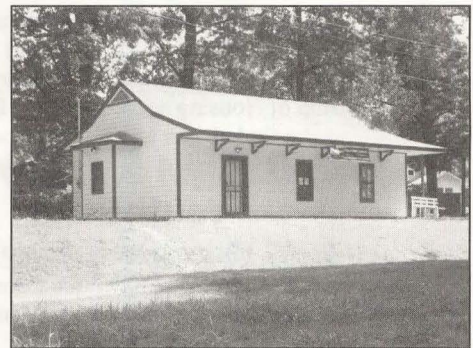
550 SOUTH COOPER  
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE 38104  
901-274-6780

Water is finally available on the Greenline at the stationhouse 1625 Tutwiler Ave. This was a pricy exercise that required MLGW digging into the street to do a water tap and then installing a meter. A plumbing contractor then dug a 200 foot trench and installed a faucet.

This project is being paid for by a grant through the state of Tennessee and Greenline budget. Our gratitude is due to state representative Jeannie Richardson for her support for the state grant. That budget is funded by contributions from VECA residents and users of the V&E Greenline. Because of the cost money is short on the Greenline—so please send in your contributions.

The water has come just in time since the Greenline Committee has planted 20 trees near the stationhouse that need water to survive the hot summer. A special thanks to Katherine Snyder for offering to coordinate the watering this summer.

In addition, there are some plantings of shrubs such as Oak Leaf Hydrangea and azaleas which will beautify the area adjacent to Tutwiler under the large oak trees



Vollintine-Evergreen Greenline Stationhouse is located on 1625 Tutwiler



## We Want Your Input for the Neighborhood Newsletter

This year marks a concerted effort to revitalize the Vollintine-Evergreen News – and we need your help! We are a dynamic, diverse community on the move and our bi-monthly newsletter is a great resource for keeping the neighborhood informed of our many activities.

The *Vollintine-Evergreen News* needs articles and photos from residents and committees that provide interesting

information about our neighborhood. To be included, materials must be submitted by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month for the following month's publication. Articles for the September issue are due by August 10th.

The *Vollintine-Evergreen News* committee is also looking for committee members to edit the final draft of the newsletter.

Additionally, the *Vollintine-Evergreen News* is looking for community members willing to help with newsletter delivery. If your block does not receive the newsletter, please volunteer to be your block's distributor. It takes 20 minutes every two months.

For more information, call the VECA office at 276-1782.

### Going Somewhere?



We offer dog sitting and dog walking services at your convenience. Whether in the comfort of your own home or a stroll through the park, we provide loving caregivers to watch after your beloved pets. References available.

Eileen Castine 725-9216

[www.mrscruff.net](http://www.mrscruff.net)

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

**Volunteers needed to deliver the VE News.**

Vollintine-Evergreen News is a newsletter for the community and needs to be maintained by the community. Help out by signing up for a route to deliver the newsletter. Several routes are open.

**Open routes include areas north of Vollintine Ave.**

For information call 276-1782

### VECA & VECA CDC Staff

Steve Gadbois, Executive Director  
Ruth Gibson, Homeowner Counselor and Office Manager  
([wruth@vecacdc.org](mailto:wruth@vecacdc.org))

Rhodes Community Development Interns funded by City of Memphis  
Division of Housing and Community Development,  
Dale Baker and Maura Weber

### YouthBuild

Vernua Hanrahan, Program Manager ([vh1956@bellsouth.net](mailto:vh1956@bellsouth.net))  
Dana Hendrick, Apprentice Coordinator  
Joe Kerley, Construction Manager

### Vollintine-Evergreen Office

1680 Jackson Avenue ■ Memphis, TN 38107  
276-1782 Phone ■ 276-1784 Fax

### Email

[veca@vecacdc.org](mailto:veca@vecacdc.org)  
[vecacdc@vecacdc.org](mailto:vecacdc@vecacdc.org)

### websites

[www.veca-neighborhood.org](http://www.veca-neighborhood.org)  
[www.vegreenline.org](http://www.vegreenline.org)

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