

VOLLINTINE EVERGREEN

N E W S

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

SEPTEMBER 2009

VECA Poster: A Neighborhood Triumph Press Release by Rhodes College

Local artist Anthony Lee is the winner of the “Art for Communities Poster Contest” presented by Rhodes College’s CODA and Urban Studies programs and the Vollintine-Evergreen Community Association (VECA).

In March artists were asked to submit artwork reflecting the community, and then in June, nine submissions were displayed at a VECA ice cream social where the neighborhood residents voted Lee’s “Candied Trees” the winning entry. He received a \$200 artist fee.

His work has been made into a poster that Rhodes students and VECA board members will sell beginning September 12 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at a Wolf River Days event (620 N. Avalon). Proceeds will benefit the VECA Welcome Center. The goal for the “Art for Communities Poster” initiative is to focus on a different neighborhood each year and to show how art can help communities to express their unique identities as well as benefit them financially.

See a photo of Anthony Lee along with the VECA poster on page 2.

The poster is on display in the window of the VECA Welcome Center at 1680 Jackson.



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Anthony Lee’s poster is a hyper-colored, fanciful representation of the historic 1920s housing of VECA. “It captures the intimacy and friendliness of our neighborhood,” said Vollintine Evergreen resident Mary Wilder. Adds resident Paul Herron, “Our neighborhood faces the ordinary challenges of city life, but our residents work together to make it a happy place.”



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In the photo: Artist Anthony D. Lee displays his winning design "Candied Trees" in front of the homes on Tutwiler Avenue that inspired the art and where Lee also lives. Posters will go on sale beginning September 12 at the Wolf River Days event, and all proceeds go to the Vollintine-Evergreen Community Association. Press release by Rhodes College and photo by Liz Daggett.

How Did the VECA Poster Happen?

For some time, Mike Kirby, Rhodes College Professor has wanted a way to recognize the importance of neighborhoods in Memphis. He collaborated with his colleague, Liz Daggett at Rhodes College, director of the Center for Outreach in the Development of the Arts (CODA). According to the Rhodes website, "CODA promotes leadership to expand the impact of the arts in the lives of members of the Rhodes community, Memphis, and beyond through innovative thinking."

The "Arts for the Community" was identified for a continuing yearly honor for neighborhoods—much like the Memphis in May poster.

VECA was selected as the honored neighborhood. A long time neighborhood organization, VECA is considered an icon of neighborhood organizations in Memphis. Its diversity is a microcosm of Memphis and its people are volunteer driven. VECA has many program including the Welcome Center, the V&E Greenline, Neighbors for Trees, the *Vollintine Evergreen News*, a community development corporation, block clubs, and many other entities—and of course it has the stunning historic houses.

Liz Daggett was a driving force in this project. With her expertise, she was able to quickly recognize the potential of the project and help in the many technical tasks in taking this project to fruition.

This was a competition and all of the posters were displayed at the VECA Ice Cream Social where neighborhood residents were asked to vote on their favorite. They loved all of the posters, but Anthony Lee's posters received the largest number of votes.

The VECA board was an important participant. It was intrigued by the poster project and encouraged its development. This is the second VECA poster—the previous was created in 1972 by former resident Brad McMillan.

The poster will be sold both in VECA and throughout the Memphis community since it is a work of art. VECA residents are encouraged to sell the poster at their place of employment, churches, and schools. Rhodes has printed 500 of the posters.

HallowHim

Halloween Alternative
@ McLean Baptist Church

Saturday, October 31st
3:30 - 6:30pm

Our "HallowHim Alternative" is a Bible themed block party.

There will be games, face painting, moon bounce, and treat bags filled with candy & goodies.

Come dressed in your Halloween costume.

We will be giving away prizes for the best Bible-Themed costumes.


A Bible-Themed costume can be a Biblical Character, animal or anything else related to the Bible.

Staffing by Students

Three Rhodes students spend the summer at VECA working on projects. Eric Dailey, funded by Rhodes as a summer service fellow, worked with the residents of the Northwest Quadrant and VECA Board Member Ben Beard in organizing the highly successful Town Hall meeting in July.

Dale Baker and Lacy Ward were funded by the City of Memphis, Division of Housing and Community Development grant to Rhodes College. Dale Baker focused on the renovation of the Welcome Center and especially the new flooring and kitchen improvements. Lacy Ward was involved in community surveys of code enforcement violations that were reported to the City.

Students working at VECA this fall will be Dale Baker (Welcome Center), Meredith Cavin (newsletter), Eloise Schlafly (code enforcement), Eric Daily (block clubs), Jared Ewing (vacant lots), Lacy Ward, Casey Mohan, and Erin Foster (poster).



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Rhodes Students at VECA along with Board Member Mary Wilder and Marcus Falion



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VECA Membership Form

Name _____ Address _____ Zip Code _____

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Dues: \$10 individual; \$20 household; \$35 Gold Star Heritage, choice of bumper sticker or Historic Designation Plaque. Please also donate to the Welcome Center. Only the Welcome Center donation is tax deductible.

United Way

The United Way campaign at your place of employment is an opportunity to direct your contribution to VECA.

United Way makes it possible to use your contribution for a variety of purposes. Many other city organizations received significant funding through this mechanism.

VECA will use these funds to support the VECA Welcome Center, which does not have a funding stream. The VECA Welcome Center at 1680 Jackson Ave is an exciting transformation of what was formerly an office. It is a place for an increasing number of neighborhood activities. Many meetings will take place at the Welcome Center. Residents who want to work on issues will meet at the Center. It is the "crossroads" and "hub" of VECA.

United Way



To donate to VECA, use page 2 of the United Way form—the yellow sheet. The bottom of Item 3 has the following statement: "You may also support another health and human services organization in the United Way of the Mid-South service area."

Enter VECA CDC as the agency name and 5377 as the Donation Number.

Please contact VECA at 276-1782 or veca@veca-neighborhood.org that you made a donation so VECA can acknowledge your donation.

Project Manager

Meet Marcus Falion, the new Project Manager of VECA's Welcome Center. He's a 2008 Rhodes College graduate who spent the last year pursuing his Master's of Science in Organizational Management with a focus on mission-driven organizations.

Marcus now attends frequent community meetings on behalf of VECA and is contacting businesses in the area. He is at the Welcome Center everyday, managing its daily operations and the Rhodes students who work there.

He looks forward to meeting everyone, so feel free to stop by anytime to offer suggestions, ask a question or to just say "hi."

Marcus will be leaving VECA in late October to take on his new assignment with the US State Department.



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Town Hall Meeting A Success By Lacy Ward

The VECA Town Hall Meeting was held on July 25th at the Gifts of Life Church. Members of VECA's Northwest Quadrant and others came to discuss issues related to crime and code enforcement. They were able to meet with government officials.

Colonel Bishop Mayes of the Old Allen Station spoke about crime in Memphis and around the Northwest Quadrant. He indicated that the crime in Memphis is down this year. A VECA study has found moderate levels of crime in the Northwest Quadrant. Colonel Mayes was accompanied by Major Waddell Smith and Lieutenant Steve Ware.

He had a question and answer session. In this session, residents were able to ask Colonel Mayes what to do about specific problems. Colonel Mayes offered ways in which the community could help the police. He said that when reporting crime to be as specific as possible when describing the offender.

A large number of VECA board members attended the session in their support of the event. An ad hoc Northwest Quadrant Committee will follow up on the suggestions from the residents.

The phone numbers for police are: 911 for an emergency
Police dispatch—no caller id 545-2677 and then press operator
Drug Hotline: 525-3673

Phone number for vacant lots and dilapidate houses is: 576-6500

Another guest at the Town Hall Meeting was Earnest Dobbins of City's Division of Community Enhancement. Mr. Dobbins explained his job and department which deals with code enforcement.

Residents (see picture below) were able to engage in a dialogue with Mr. Dobbins about the condition of houses and lots near their homes. Mr. Dobbins assured the residents that he would respond to their problems.



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A Note from Rhodes

Dear Neighbors,

Rhodes College will be starting our academic year the week of August 24th. As in past years, we are very excited about the quality of our students and their commitment to engagement in the community. Again this year we have a number of students that have opted to live in the neighborhoods that surround Rhodes College. We would ask that you welcome these students into your neighborhoods and introduce yourselves; as we have asked the same of our students.

Rhodes College recognizes that from time to time a college student's lifestyle may differ from that of their neighbors. When this happens we would ask that you initially discuss your concerns with the students directly. Should your discussions result in an unacceptable resolution, please feel free to contact either Chad Ahren or John Blaisdell at Rhodes College and we will gladly assist in facilitating what we hope will be a fruitful discussion with you and the students.

Our goal is to begin this kind of dialogue before any potential issues arise, and as a result see fewer issues overall. Please let us know if you have any need for clarification or further assistance. Here's to another great year at Rhodes!

John Blaisdell, Director of Campus Safety 901-843-3899
Chad Ahren, Director of Student Conduct 901-843-3880



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Vollintine Business Owners Marcus Falion & Meredith Cavin

Walking past the shopping center on Vollintine Ave and Avalon St, one sees a pair of vacant units (previously Belinda's Upholstery and Steve's Food), Magic Clippers, another two closed stores (previously a thrift shop and a beauty supply store), Wild Bill's, Marilyn's Hair Gallery, and North Memphis Market.

That's what a passerby sees. They and the remaining business owners also see room for improvement. Store owners on this strip want business development and an improvement in the physical appearance.

The owners recognize that if businesses moved into the four vacant units, the new goods and services could attract more shoppers (both local and from suburbs) to the shopping center as a whole. Marilyn Starks of Marilyn's Hair Gallery notes that many of her customers come from Germantown, East Memphis and even Mississippi. She's been in her location for twenty-five years and wishes the salon had more local business.



Eddie Harper of Magic Clippers has some ideas to pique residents' interests. He says locals want a dry cleaner and they want an in-and-out food joint like Tucker's.

One of the vacant units (formerly Belinda's Upholstery) has a BBQ pit and a back patio, which could be transformed into a restaurant like Fresh Slices where locals could gather. The shopping center was once home to a very nice Italian restaurant. Other uses of the property might include a pizza take out, an office for attorneys, or a tax preparer.

One resident named Leslie says the neighborhood has a demand for these goods and services and that if the shopping center supplies them, shoppers will come.

Business owners have a wish list of physical improvements that need to be made to the properties. They want to see more lights in the parking lot, the blacktop fixed up (currently there are huge pot holes and unclear dividers between parking spaces), landscaping, and new signs.

In particular, Harper suggests a brightly painted sign welcoming shoppers into what he would call "The Valley" since shoppers drive down into the shopping area on Vollintine. All of these changes could make shoppers feel more welcome and more safe, further improving business in the area.

Despite the challenges of bringing in new businesses (or saving old ones), business owners are brainstorming ways to improve the shopping center. They all see that it's important to start small and want to model their development after what was done on Mclean, across from Snowden Elementary.

VECA wants to work with both the shopkeepers and property owners to help rebuild a thriving commercial district right here within VECA. It is a very possible dream, as less than five years ago all of the shops in the strip were open for business.

More Next Month

There are two absentee property owners for the buildings in the Vollintine shopping center.

The next issue of the *Vollintine-Evergreen News* will discuss those owners and their responsibility for the condition of the buildings. It will also discuss the large number of people congregating at the center.

The article will discuss the role of a City agency, the Fire Division's Commercial Anti-Neglect Department and the work of the police in the area.

Newsletter Advertising

Want to reach 3,500 VECA residents and other neighborhood supporters? Why not advertise in the *Vollintine-Evergreen News*? Local businesses can receive community support by appearing in our pages.

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Flooding in VECA by the VECA Board

The Vollintine Evergreen Community Association voted at its last Board meeting, as part of the Lick Creek Storm Water Coalition to request that the City of Memphis undertake a study of the entire Lick Creek Basin. The ultimate goal of the planning process would be a specific plan for both new development as well as redevelopment in the form of an Ordinance which would become an over-layer requirement much like what was done for the Fletcher Creek basin in East Memphis.

VECA has experienced severe flooding in the Tutwiler, Aurburndale and Hawthorne Street areas. Residents and the VECA Board feel that a comprehensive plan and subsequent Flood Zone will be the long term solution to flooding in our area.

Additionally, as most of the development and redevelopment opportunities lie in the upstream portions of the basin, the Coalition is requesting that the City of Memphis place a moratorium on all activity until the study has been completed and an Ordinance put in place. We realize this may be an imposition for some. But in the interests of all within the area of the basin the Coalition feels it is a proper step for the City to take to insure that nothing is done in haste in support of a few that will end up having adverse effects on many others.

The Lick Creek Storm Water Coalition wants to thank City Engineer Wain Gaskins and his staff for the time and energy spent to date in arriving at solutions to the current flooding problems that are occurring within the Belleair Woods, Evergreen Historic and VECA neighborhoods, Overton Park and the Memphis Zoo. Everyone has put forth their best efforts and the solutions presented seem to have all participants now moving in the same direction.

This statement was endorsed by the VECA Board and sent to City Engineer Wain Gaskins. City Council members have also been made aware of VECA's concerns.



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VECA: Vollintine-Evergreen Community Association

VECA is a neighborhood organization made up of volunteers and paying members. The *Vollintine-Evergreen News*, VECA email, the annual meeting, and committee activity are the ways in which VECA communicates with its residents, businesses, and other stakeholders. The VECA area 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 Ave, Memphis, TN 38107 or call (901) 276-1782. Website: www.veca-neighborhood.org; Email: VECA@veca-neighborhood.org

Who is VECA? You are VECA.

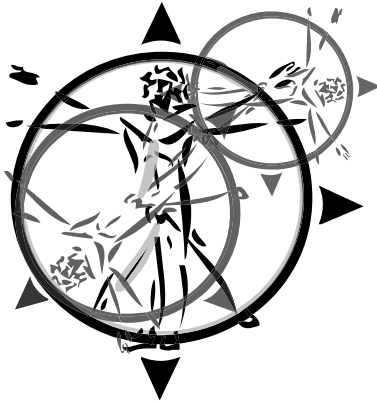
VECA, the Vollintine-Evergreen Community Association, is your neighborhood organization, composed of volunteers and neighbors.

Clanjamfry Evergreen Presbyterian Church

Saturday September 26
10:00 to 5:00
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Event Supports Evergreen Recreation Ministry

Adults \$5.00 Children, Students & Seniors \$3.00
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State Rep Jeanne Richardson By M. Cavin

Jeanne Richardson has been serving as one of VECA's Democratic state representative from House District 89 (Midtown, North of Poplar) since 2007. She lives in VECA. Richardson says she has been interested and involved in politics from a young age, largely inspired by her father who was a labor-union organizer. She has spent most of her adult life doing social work in one arena or another. She has worked twice on the local executive committee for the Shelby County Democratic party and was a Delegate for Presidential nominee John Kerry in 2004.

Rep. Richardson is proud of many developments in Memphis, including the revitalization of Binghampton, the Greenline, and various housing initiatives, but she is passionate about improving other aspects of life for Memphians. Her main vision for Memphis is reduced blight. She would like to see more crime prevention, less crack cocaine distribution, and physical renovations in the city: improved public parks, streets, sidewalks and gutters; and the up-keep of more houses.

Rep. Richardson mentions other common-sense ways to improve Memphis. She fondly recalls the work of the Memphis Park Commission when she was a child. She was dropped off at a community center for free from early in the morning until 5 p.m. The centers taught and supervised the kids to keep them out of trouble. Since her childhood, many more mothers have joined the full-time workforce, and most juvenile delinquency occurs between the time school gets out and the time a parent comes home to supervise. Therefore, Richardson wonders, Why not have a longer school day? According to her, that is a policy many in law enforcement support. She says that frequently, "Our institutions don't keep up with our sociological changes."

As a state representative she serves on committees and sponsors many bills in which she believes. Last year her top legislation included an anti-predatory lending bill, a bill to expand hate-crimes legislation to protect transgender people, and a medical marijuana bill. She informs us with a mild sigh that none of the bills were passed into law, but she is still excited about her challenging, new career, and she hopes to keep at it. She also consults for nonprofits, developing goals, and then writing grants to achieve them. Because she is able to make her values a priority in her work, she says with transcendent contentment, "It's me."

Going Somewhere?



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VECA & VECA CDC Information

Marcus Falion, Project Manager
276-1782 and mfalion@VECA-neighborhood.org

VECA Board: Nedra Bailey
VECA CDC: Paul Davis and Chuck Fox
Vollintine-Evergreen News Advertising: Barbara Gavalas
V&E Greenline: Renate Rosenthal & Len Cobb
Safety and Security Committee: Ben Beard
Neighborhood Preservation Committee: Chris Floyd
Neighbors for Trees: Marci Hendrix and André Glenn
VECA Welcome Center Committee: Mike Kirby
VECA Email and Communication Committee: Brad Heinz
Apartments and Houses: Mary Wilder, Chuck Fox, and Nedra Bailey

Rhodes Community Development Interns funded by City of Memphis, Division of Housing and Community Development

VECA Welcome Center 1680 Jackson Avenue Memphis, TN 38107
Phone: 901-276-1782 Fax: 901-276-1784

VECA Website: www.VECA-neighborhood.org
VECA and VECA CDC Email: VECA@VECA-neighborhood.org
VECA Email Announcements: news@VECA-neighborhood.org
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