

VOLLINTINE EVERGREEN

N E W S

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

NOVEMBER 2009

VECA Note Cards by Signature Marketing Solutions

Signature Marketing Solutions provided VECA with ten pieces of VECA artwork pro bono. Now we are printing four of the most attractive on note cards available to you!

Each of the four prints reflects the VECA community with different, unique and colorful designs. They focus on the neighborhood's vibrancy, musical history, geography and context within the greater Memphis community.

The cards can be purchased in sets of 20 cards and envelopes, five of each of the four individual designs. The sets cost \$15 dollars and will be available for purchase in November, in time to buy as Christmas presents. The cards make great presents for your neighbors. Proceeds will go to the VECA Welcome Center.

VECA would like to thank the talented designers at Signature Marketing Solutions for graciously donating their artwork for a good cause. We hope you enjoy!

Signature Marketing Solutions is a full service agency, providing marketing solutions. It is client oriented and personable. They provide digital media, advertising and design, direct mail, among other services. They are among the largest advertising firms in Memphis. The VECA pictures show that they are a highly creative group, with a number of members contributing to these works. Signature is located at 1755 Kirby Parkway and may be contacted at www.signatureadvertising.com.



**Purchase the VECA note card set
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Available at 1680 Jackson

**Fundraiser for VECA Welcome Center
901-276-1782 VECA@VECA.Org**

These cards are a hyper-colored, fanciful representations of Vollintine Evergreen themes. These include our historic houses and churches, the musical depiction of joy among the bungalows, the serenity of our green-spaces near the built environment, and a stunning display of the VECA map.



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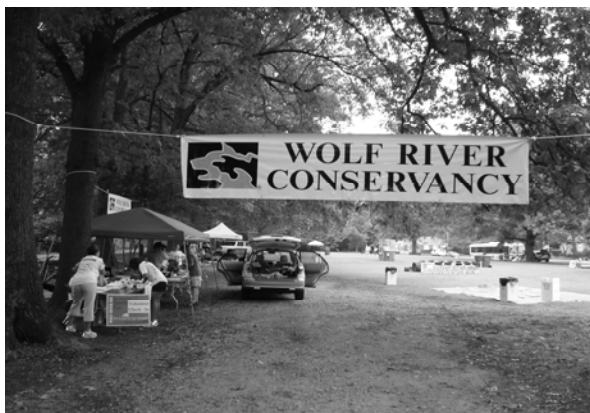
Being Green is Cool

On Saturday, September 12, Wolf River Conservancy and the VECA Forest Faire put on the first ever Wolf River Day, but it felt as busy and fun as an old annual tradition. About 2,000 people came by to explore the ten sites offering music, food, a dunk tank, 65 exhibitors and vendors, and other "hands on" activities located near the V&E Greenline Stationhouse. At other sites people went on canoe and raft rides, helped out at neighborhood cleanups, and learned about different birds. The day went smoothly, thanks in part to beautiful late summer weather, good organization, and 160 volunteers.

In a thank you letter to volunteers, Wolf River Conservancy wrote, "We appreciate the opportunity to work together and build partnerships with the many neighborhoods, businesses, local government agencies, organizations, and user groups concerned with and benefiting from an enhanced Wolf River corridor and watershed."

VECA non-profits and many members of the neighborhood were part of the day's success. VECA sold posters, and the VECA Historic Committee sold ice cream. Neighbors for Trees donated trees to anyone who was interested. Other non-profit organizations and governmental representatives gave presentations in the V&E Greenline Stationhouse.

The Conservancy also wrote, "We are hopeful that Wolf River Day was successful in continuing the process of outreach to the community regarding the benefits and value of the Wolf River corridor, the Conservancy's mission and other interrelated green issues."



Apartments for Rent

The VECA Community Development Corporation has two apartments for rent. Both are located on the second floor of the VECA-owned building at 820 Maury Ave. Each apartment has carpeting with one bedroom, a sunroom, and a front and back entrance. The front porches look onto the beautiful landscape of the historic neighborhood. These apartments are currently available for occupancy. Please call the VECA Welcome Center at 276-1782 for more information or to set up a showing.

Affordable Business Site for Rent or Sale


A business site at 1570 Vollintine Ave is available for a very affordable rental rate or sale price, but you will need to do clean up of the site before occupying. This is a great opportunity for someone starting a new business who wants go get into a building for a low cost and expects to be a long time occupant. Contact Mid-South Realty at 761-4444.

Award Nominations Needed

Nominations are needed from VECA residents for awards to be given at the VECA Annual meeting on January 25, 2110.

The **Margaret Ditchel Award** for outstanding service to VECA is given to a resident, business or institution within Vollintine-Evergreen. The **Richard Borys Award** is given to a person, business, institution, or government office that has helped VECA. The **Martha Heinemann Award** is awarded for the outstanding board member. The **Mary Wilder Award** is given for special service—it is given when a person or institution offers exceptional service to VECA.

Nominations are due by December 30, 2009. VECA has outstanding volunteers and community supporters. Let's recognize them with a nomination. Send your nomination to VECA, 1680 Jackson, Memphis, TN 38107.




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VECA Membership Form

Name _____ Address _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Dues enclosed _____ Additional Contribution to VECA Welcome Center _____

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

VECA Poster



A New Beginning Community Org

On September 12th, the Monroe Ballard Education Resource Center was opened at A New Place Apartments, a forty-unit apartment complex, located at 2238 Howell, directly west of Springdale St.

The resource center is a place for elementary through high school students from the community to meet with tutors. Any and all students can get help with homework and prepare for standardized tests. Computers are available to improve general skills and typing. The tutors are supported by Rhodes College Urban Studies. Their hours will initially be from 3:00 until 5:00 on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. You can sign up your child by coming to the center.

The resource center will provide kids with a place to go after libraries close and also help them continue their education outside of school. Sheriff Mark Luttrell, speaking at the dedication, stressed the importance of having a safe environment where kids can continue their learning after school. Much of youths' success is determined by educational factors outside of the classroom, especially during early adolescence. Remember the Monroe Ballard Educational Resource Center if your child needs a place to study or extra help with schoolwork!

A New Beginning Community Organization, affiliated with Cathedral of Faith on Jackson, manages the complex. Velsicol Chemical Company funded the resource center's construction, utilities and computers. Rhodes College fraternities and FedEx employees did the initial rehab.

Purchase the VECA Poster
Historic Houses, Vibrant Colors, Artistic Treasure

\$10 for poster and \$20 for mailed poster
\$20 for signed poster and \$40 for a framed poster
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Available at 1680 Jackson
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Anti-Neglect and Business Property

An unknown, small agency in the Memphis Fire Department, called Anti-Neglect, is a tool that helps VECA deal with some problems with business structures. It can deal with derelict properties and those that need some preventative actions.

It has authority over abandoned business buildings (unoccupied properties with debris or where the owner is not paying taxes), blighted business properties (those with broken windows and vacancies), dangerous business structures (for example a roof problem, decay inside the building, or an open building), and business buildings that are a nuisance (blighting influence on adjacent properties).

A building with these problems is required to register with the agency and pay a quarterly inspection fee of \$500.

The agency can obtain a court order requiring the owner to repair the structure. If the owner is insolvent, the court may order the city to repair or demolish the property. The agency is also required to place a placard on the building if it is dangerous or unsafe. The agency invites complaints to be filed about business structures and it is especially interested in buildings where some work by the owner will prevent long term problems.

The agency is currently examining several business structures to determine if it can take action against the property owners.

January VECA Meeting

The annual VECA Meeting for all residents will be held Monday, January 25th at 7:00 at a site to be announced. There will be a light dinner at 6:00, sponsored by the block clubs—everyone is invited.

The annual meeting will cover the selection of VECA officers and board members, the recognition of the VECA CDC board, the presentation of service awards, and VECA accomplishments.

Neighborhood Preservation Act

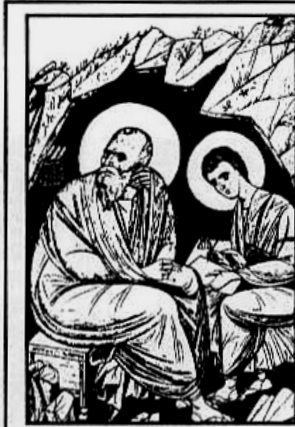
by Meredith Cavin

The way a neighborhood looks affects the way it feels. It also often affects home values. When the owner of a vacant residence fails to maintain the exterior of her property (failing to mow the lawn for several months or repair broken windows, for example), she decreases the value of her neighbors' homes; in a sense, she steals potential money from her neighbors. To discourage this, Tennessee legislators created a statute called the Neighborhood Preservation Act. VECA residents can use this act to deal with problem properties.

The Act states that, "The owner of residential rental property or an unoccupied residence shall be required to maintain the exterior of such property and the lot on which the residential rental property or unoccupied residence is located at a level which is no less than the community standards of the residential property in the area."

According to the Act, if the owner of a residential rental property or unoccupied residence is cited for three or more violations of local building and construction codes or property standards within a one-year period, without bringing the house up to code, then the owner risks being sued by affected neighbors, for the difference in their home values due to the owner's negligence (for plaintiffs to prove their home values, they must provide two independent appraisals). An affected neighbor can either sue directly or enlist the help of a third-party nonprofit like VECA. This is expected to be a popular route for neighborhood improvement, VECA may recruit an attorney to help with the legal process.

Amendments to the act provide for attorney fees.



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VECA has a new email and website address

VECA.ORG
VECA@VECA.ORG

The Story of a House—910 Barksdale

Molly Miller—In Memoriam

The *Vollintine-Evergreen News* is going to profile stories of houses in the neighborhood. This will be done to explain what happens to homes in our neighborhood for better or worse. This history will also help residents learn about the different government agencies that have jurisdiction regarding the care of the homes in our neighborhood.

I am 910 Barksdale. I am a handsome 1930's Tudor. I was owned for most of my life by one family. In 1980 I was bought by a homeowner and in 1986 I was sold to the current owner (called CO in this article). CO still owns me but I am not being taken care of and no one lives in me.

The City of Memphis has had to mow my yard several times for fees of \$1,104. My City taxes haven't been paid since 2002. CO owes \$11,096.64. CO pays my county taxes for which she only owes \$1,927. Is there a difference between City and county tax collection?

My neighbors aren't very happy my lawn doesn't get mowed and my bushes aren't cut. I look empty and uncared for because I am.

Neighbors called the Mayor's Citizen Service Center, at 576-6500. The City of Memphis sent a code inspector out. The code inspector issued a courtesy citation asking CO to take care of me but she didn't. Courtesy citations have no enforcement unless the Memphis Code officer builds a case of violations and goes to Environmental Court. Building a case and communicating to the owner might have solved my problems but it wasn't done.

The Code Officer could have taken my violations to Environmental Court, Judge Larry Potter, but he didn't. If my violations had been taken to court, CO could have been fined or jailed for not taking care of me. She might have agreed to sell or fix me up.

But for some reason, maybe because Memphis City Code Enforcement can do it, I was condemned for demolition. I am a perfectly good home you could buy, if I was for sale. The City could put me up for sale because of the back taxes that have not been paid by CO.

I can be lived in with some cleaning, painting, and trimming.

The VECA Neighborhood Preservation Committee has turned complaints in to the City along with my neighbors, but instead of wanting to save me so a nice family can live here and my home street looks good, the City wants to tear me down.

If my lawn was mowed and bushes cut, no one would know I was empty. If I looked cared for, I could stay empty until my owner decided what she wanted to do. I don't understand and I feel lonely and ashamed of how I look. I don't want to be torn down. I like being a house in Vollintine Evergreen.


Editor's note: See the picture of the house to the right. The city is proposing to demolish this fine house using city of Memphis public funds from tax dollars, when there is a responsible owner who could be brought to court to repair and maintain this structure. The name of the actual owner, back taxes, and code enforcement information are available on line from the Assessor, Trustee, City Treasurer, and the Housing Inspection and Tracking System.

Molly Miller a long time resident of Faxon Ave in the Vollintine-Evergreen Community recently passed. She was a board member of the Vollintine-Evergreen Community Association (VECA) and a committee member of the V&E Greenline, a rails-to-trails project in the neighborhood. In the picture below, Molly Miller (fourth from left) is shown at the founding of the V&E Greenline in 1996 with the signing of the purchase papers with the previous owner of the property, CSX railroad.

Molly was active in the V&E Greenline work—she was an active participant in the work of the committee, helped plan the physical development of the trail, attended spruce up events which cleaned up the trail, worked on the development of the Lick Creek Bridge, and attended a national conference in Florida to help understand more about trail development.



The V&E Greenline board will honor her by placing a marker in the V&E Greenline Memory Garden, located at the corner of Tutwiler Ave and Avalon St.



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I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy loving kindness and for thy truth: for though hast magnified thy word above all thy name. (psalm 138:2)



*Ellen Tammy A. Sullivan
Pastor*

Volunteering

VECA owns some houses and apartments and they are now being managed by volunteers. Board member Chuck Fox is taking the lead on making sure these buildings have tenants.

Recently, the house at 2218 Hunter became vacant. Although a beautiful well designed house, it was dirty and needed touch up. An email went out from Brad Hines through VECA Email asking for volunteers and they showed up to clean, scrub, paint, and weed eat.

Board member Paul Herron came one weekend to clean and another weekend to paint. Board member Lillie Gilkey and neighborhood volunteer Madeleine Edwards helped with cleaning, especially in the kitchen. The new tenants did their part working over the space of several days. Mary Wilder spent time talking to adjacent residents—and she found the street had long time owners and residents who were thrilled by the work at the house. Jim Doyle worked long hours to do the detail work—cleaning under the sink and adding switch plates where needed. Board member Marci Hendrix spent a weekend painting the walls, while her husband Jeff did the plumbing.

Suddenly, the streetscape looked great. It provided income for VECA and provided a new tenant, who made the following comment: "I wish my mother were still alive; she would be very proud that I lived in this house."

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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.org; Email: VECA@veca.org

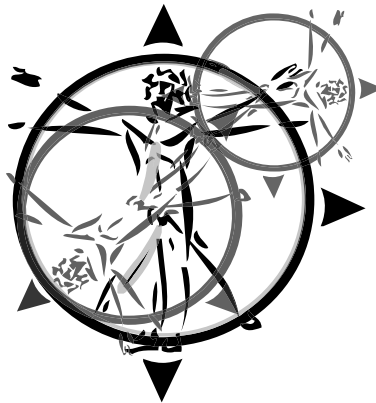
Who is VECA? You are VECA.

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

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.

Just \$150 buys 6 prominent ads in our newsletters. Don't wait! Call our advertising manager at 276-1782. It will help you get customers and help the neighborhood at the same time.



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BP Station

Work crews were seen at the dilapidated and vacant BP station at Evergreen Street and Jackson Ave and they were on site for most of a week. The crews are employed by a company in Kentucky and had an impressive derrick truck that allowed them to take core samples from up to 70 feet in the ground. It is likely that they are testing to see if there is any remaining gasoline contamination from the former gas station.

The site is owned by BP and it is for sale, though the company has not made an effort to market it. VECA will be making further inquiries with the company on its plans for the site.

If anyone knows how to contact the local BP company, please call VECA at 276-1782. See the statement from their website below.

Going Somewhere?



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Elleen Castline

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VECA & VECA CDC Information

Elizabeth Saba, Project Manager, Welcome Center
901-276-1782 and ESaba@VECA.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: TBA

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

VECA Website: www.VECA.org

VECA and VECA CDC Email: VECA@VECA.org

VECA Email Announcements: news@VECA.org

Vollintine-Evergreen News: VECA@VECA.org

V&E Greenline: VEgreenline@gmail.com and www.VEGreenline.org

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