

VOLLINTINE EVERGREEN

N E W S

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

JULY 2010

My Joy is Gardening

By Phyllis Brown

It's my experience that a "green thumb" is not required to enjoy gardening. However, turning an "eyesore" barren backyard into a flowering sanctuary does take work and time. Over the last seven years of my retirement, I have been glad to have time to plan and create interest in the different areas of the yard.

From the beginning, I knew this had to be the poorest soil. So, since I wanted flower beds everywhere, over time, I began hauling in hundreds of bags of soil. Of course, a truckload would have been cheaper, but I wanted to do everything myself, and bags were what I could manage.

I did discover that curved lines for flower beds were more pleasing than straight lines. It seemed to give a more causal-relaxed feeling to wander through the back yard. Stepping stones through the beds gave the paths more access and interest.

If I had a master plan for plants in the yard, it was trial-and-error. Since the yard offered sun to shade areas, some flower beds were limited to only two hours of sun. My favorite shade-loving plants are hostas, ferns, begonias and impatiens. These plants present lush greens with a splash of color. Every year more perennials are added to fill in voids. Plants that require more sun really add color to the garden. Geraniums, petunias, lobelias, coreopsis, coral bells, delphiniums...OK, I love all of them! Whenever I see new flowers that I can't resist, I just take them home and find a place. Actually, I don't have a problem with moving plants...in fact, several times.

I have two old-fashioned, sentimental favorites: sweet peas and nasturtium. Sweet peas came with the yard 35 years ago, you can't kill 'em. They climb and present beautiful blooms. And nasturtiums – during one winter, my young granddaughter and I read a book about a garden with nasturtiums. So, of course, in the spring, we found a place to plant our first seeds. What a delight to see their brilliant colors. They also remind me of my grandmother's garden.

Probably the biggest disappointment has been not having success with foxglove. After all, Monet had a gardenful. Those big (expensive) bell-shaped blooms didn't work for me. Perhaps the soil wasn't rich enough, not sunny enough, or I watered too much/too little. Maybe I just didn't talk to them enough!

Regardless of any success or failure, my joy is gardening. It is my therapy, my pleasure.

Summer Jubilee and Ice Cream Social, June 27

Photos are on the Vollintine Evergreen Facebook site. Doorprizes winners at the event were Andrew Smith, Emily Harris Halpern, Davis Bailey, Lee Boulie, Barbara Sharp and Shea Fox. Thanks to Safety and Security, Safe Kids, and Garnette Stephens for the great prizes!

VECA Investigating Sewer Problems

A number of residents have reported that both sewage and clear water has backed up through their sanitary sewer drain in their basements after the recent May 1, 2010 flood.

This has happened previously. The City of Memphis has a segregated or dual sewer system. One set of drains is for waste, sanitary sewer lines, and one set is for storm water. These systems are not supposed to mix.

Storm Water is the water produced when it rains and water runs off the surface of the ground into the storm water system. Creeks, streams and rivers are nature's storm water run-off system. As early as the 1880s Memphis separated its sanitary waste water from its storm water. Sanitary sewer lines go to the treatment facilities for the water to be cleaned before it is released back out into the water ways. For Memphis that is the Mississippi River.

Our systems in VECA, however, are 80 to 100 years old and there is evidence of cross contamination or the mixing of storm water and sanitary systems. That is why basements are backing up through sanitary drains in heavy rains. This is a violation of the Federal Clean Water act and a reportable event. Report it to:

City of Memphis Public Works:
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pubworks@memphistn.gov

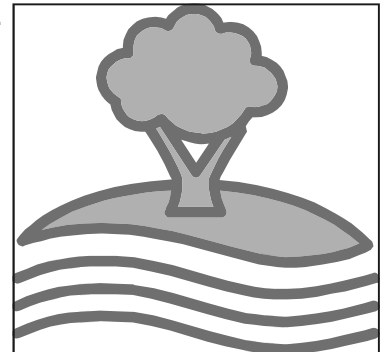
Until 1996, the City of Memphis tracked the backups. The current Memphis NPDES permit does not require the City to report these backups to Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation. The EPA has required this criteria to be changed in the permit renewal process for the City of Memphis. VECA plans to comment on this permitting process and wants to hear from neighbors.

The City of Memphis has ignored VECA's requests to look into this problem and have indicated that they do not have information about these backups.

VECA residents and Rhodes student interns will be interviewing residents. If you have had a backup, please respond to the questionnaire.

If you would like to be interviewed, please call VECA at 276-1782 or email veca@veca.org. VECA intends to share this information with national and state agencies that regulate the storm system.

This is important; contact VECA if you have had sewer water in your basement or crawl space.





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VECA Health Fair

By Morgan Hanna

The VECA Health Fair held Saturday, June 5 at the VECA Welcome Center proved to be a huge success. Supporting the effort were local healthcare businesses, faithful volunteers and residents of the Vollintine Evergreen Community.

Participants obtained vital healthcare information as well as shots, eye tests and health screenings. On a lighter side, attendees received door prizes, goody bags and burger coupons.

The focus of the health fair was to encourage healthier lifestyles for families throughout the community. Participating groups included Southern College of Optometry, Walgreen's, Concorde, Life Blood, Trustee's Office, Health Springs, UT Agricultural Department, SRVS, Methodist Hospital, and The Shot Nurse.

Special thanks goes to Lilly Gilkey for coordinating the event. Other members of the block club committee who helped make this event possible were Janis Cannon, Barbara Coleman, Gloria Singleton and Garnette Stephens.



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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 activities 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
(901) 276-1782 Website: veca.org; email: veca@veca.org




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Overton Park Pizze Stone, Your Neighborhood Pizza Joint

By Jeff Hulett

My wife, Annie, and I recently decided to give Overton Park Pizze Stone a try for lunch. We tried their take-out pizzas when they first moved to the neighborhood last summer but we had never dined in. We try to bring our lunches to work to save money and eat healthy but the Friday before a three day Memorial Day weekend sounded like the right time to splurge.

We met at Overton Park Pizze Stone, 1545 Overton Park Ave., at 1 p.m. to find the place relatively quiet with several tables finishing up their meal and a few more tables coming in to enjoy a late lunch and an early afternoon drink. The restaurant doesn't have a designated lunch menu so you can enjoy all their offerings, anytime. The menu had a surprising number of options including soups, salads, pizzas, pasta and sandwiches.

Annie decided on the beet salad which featured candied walnuts, arugula, goat cheese, walnut vinaigrette and, of course, beets. The portion size was a little small for the price but the quality ingredients really made it worthwhile. I wasn't excited about this selection at first but once it arrived and I saw how appetizing it looked I couldn't help myself. The appealing presentation and mixture of flavors proved to be a winning combination.

For my selection, I ordered the 9" Quattro or four cheese pizza featuring ricotta, handmade mozzarella, pecorino and fontina. Warning: Don't order this pie unless you're prepared for a cheese overload! Personally, I was up for the challenge and while my wife couldn't eat more than a slice and a half or so she agreed that the four cheese Quattro was a great selection.

I don't know about you, but I'm a crust guy. Pizze Stone's crust is thin, crispy and cooked to perfection. And it's made fresh daily. I shouldn't leave out their tomato sauce which was surprisingly flavorful as well. I also hear that their pesto and olive oil pies are just as delicious. In the past we've tried the Fat Skunk, Margherita and the Napoli and were pleased with all three.

The restaurant's focus on quality and specialty ingredients that you don't typically find at other pizzerias really makes it stand out. The staff was friendly and the service was efficient with our drinks and food being delivered relatively quickly after ordering. If you only have an hour for lunch and you live in Midtown, Pizze Stone is a great option.

We live close to the V&E Greenline and I have to say that Overton Park Pizze Stone is a perfect addition to the neighborhood. It's a great place to walk or ride your bike to as parking appeared to be somewhat limited. This quiet part of Overton Park is the ideal setting for this friendly and welcoming addition to Midtown.

Overton Park Pizze Stone is at 1545 Overton Park Avenue. To see their full menu, visit www.pizzestone.com.

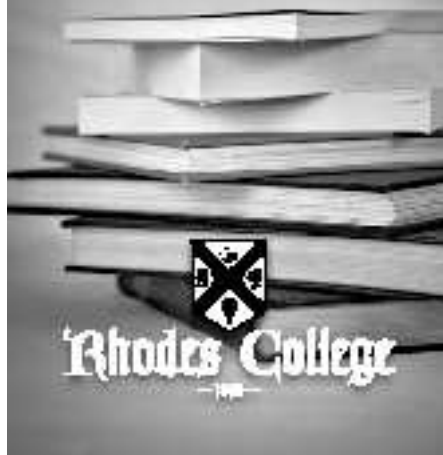
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VECA Poster



Artist Anthony D. Lee's design, *Candied Trees*, was the 2009 winner of the Art for Communities Poster Contest. Each year, proceeds from the sale of the poster will go to a community association. This year, all of the proceeds from sales of this poster go to the Vollintine-Evergreen Community Association. The Art for Communities Poster Contest is sponsored by: CODA at Rhodes College and the Rhodes College Urban Studies Program, but would not be successful without support from Memphians like you.

Purchase the VECA Poster
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nexAir Expands McLean Plant

As you may have noticed, Vollintine-Evergreen corporate neighbor, nexAir, has expanded its McLean plant. In April, the company completed an expansion project, which includes a new hydrogen filling plant. This new plant is fully automated and includes top-of-the-line safety features and back-up systems. Their newest addition will allow nexAir to better serve its customers and provide a convenient and safer distribution point for suppliers throughout the Southeast and beyond.

Specializing in distribution of atmospheric gases and welding supplies, nexAir has been part of the VECA neighborhood since 1984. We're excited to continue to be part of the community and to share the news about this exciting time of growth for our company.

If you're ever interested in learning more about what we do, specifically at the McLean plant, please feel free to call Patrick Galphin at (901) 344-5221 or visit us online at nexAir.com.



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 \$100 buys 4 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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Community Dumpster Day

On Saturday, May 15, VECA helped organize a Community Dumpster Day as a trial run for the new community partnership between Memphis City Beautiful and Allied Waste Services. The partnership's goal is to assure clean and well-maintained neighborhoods in Greater Memphis.

At 6 a.m. on clean-up day, Clay Cox, a member of Allied Waste Services, delivered a bright blue dumpster bearing the Memphis City Beautiful logo to the VECA office parking lot. Mary Wilder, a community member, helped to prepare the Welcome Center for the volunteers to arrive. Volunteers flooded into the VECA office about 8:30 a.m., with all focused on cleaning community streets.

Thanks to Memphis City Beautiful, represented by Eldra White and Cyndy Grivich, the volunteers were provided with gloves, brooms, shovels, and rakes for their tasks. The large number of volunteers were a mixture of community members and volunteers from the BRIDGES program in Memphis. The group was divided into four neighborhood areas: Watkins, Garland, McNeil and Stonewall. Group leaders were Erin Sogal, Janis Cannon, Garnette Stephens, Gloria Singleton, Mary Haynes, Lily Gilkey,

Willitte Gray, Wayne Stanfill, Glen Hayes, Paul Herron, Bessie McBride, James Maxwell, Sham Sogal, Aaron Creek and Chuck Fox. Leaders and volunteers worked from 9 to noon.

Volunteers not only picked up trash but also recorded code violations, with the assistance of Councilman Joe Brown, of Memphis Super District 8. Patrolling the streets during the cleanup were Lt. Ware and his team, including Shameka Love, Kimberly Hearn, Robert Jones, Willie Marerro, Tawama Cheatham and Lashon Brown. We are very thankful for the crew's efforts to look after our volunteers.

Following the work, volunteers returned to the VECA Welcome Center to enjoy a lunch prepared by Barbara Coleman and to celebrate their dedication to keeping the neighborhood clean. Perhaps this event is one of many to come to keep VECA neighborhoods clean. We want to thank everyone for all of their devotion to this project!

For more information about how you can hold an event like this in your neighborhood and/or block, contact Memphis City Beautiful at 522-1135.



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Anybody Home? Keeping Your Home Safe and Secure While on Vacation

Vacation is a time to get away from it all, relax and have fun with family and friends! But, leaving your home for even a week can cause worry, and rightly so as the peak vacation months of July and August are when most residential burglaries occur. Even though the likelihood of being burglarized is just as great whether you are in town or out of town, you still want to leave your home as burglarproof as possible.

Here are 14 steps you can take to protect your home and decrease your chance of being burglarized. Remember: Your goal is to appear as if you are at home.

1. Do not announce your going away. Other than immediate family, very close friends, trusted neighbors, police, alarm monitoring service, and post office, don't discuss your vacation plans. Avoid talking about your plans around the office, your child's daycare, or at social gatherings as ballgames, playground, etc. Someone who would take advantage of your being away may be listening.

2. Let a neighbor know where you are going and how to contact you. A trusted neighbor is truly a treasure. In case of an emergency, leave your contact information and contact information for someone who has a key to your house in case entry is needed. If you are comfortable with this, leave a key with this neighbor. Remember also to give an alarm code if there is an alarm system. Most often systems allow your issuing an alarm code on a temporary basis.

3. Put your mail and newspaper on hold. Call the Post Office two weeks in advance or visit USPS.gov to place your mail on hold. Mail accumulating in your mailbox or mail slot signals no one is home. Remember too that with decorative doors and windows, mail accumulating on the floor inside from a mail slot may be visible. Call your newspaper office one month in advance. Newspapers accumulating outside alerts a would-be burglar that no one is home.

4. Use timers for a radio and lights. Timers are relatively cheap and come with many programmable features. People make "noise" when they are at home. Put a radio on a timer set to "talk radio", a better station selection than a music station because it makes a more real impression that someone is home. It is best to have a timer on a light in several different rooms and set at variable, appropriate times. Leave the light on over the stove at all times as this is the one room that tends to have a light on the most.

5. Set your answering machine to say "We cannot answer the phone right now." Even when in town, your message should never say you are not at home. Turn down the ringer and set your phone to answer after five rings.

6. Stage your window treatment. Closing all your drapes, blinds and shutters may indicate you are away if you customarily leave them open when you are at home. On the other hand, leaving them open may allow potential burglars an opportunity to see inside. A combination may work –open those that have less to see, as a bathroom, and close those that look into more frequently occupied rooms, as a living room and or bedroom.

7. Notify the police and your monitoring alarm service if you are going to be gone longer than one week. Ask the police to drive by your home on a frequent basis and be sure to tell them if you have an alarm, what cars will be in your driveway and if you will have a house sitter coming and going. Be sure to update the contact information for your alarm service and let them know authorized persons who may enter your home in your absence.

8. Close and lock all windows and doors. Sliding glass doors without a deadbolt may require a metal or wooden rod in the track. Do a walk through to check that all are secured and locked. Often, in a hurry to leave, you may overlook one of these entries. A checklist for "things to do before leaving" – including "check windows, doors and alarm" – is a

good idea.

9. Park a vehicle in your driveway. A vehicle may indicate that someone is home but if it remains in the same place, day after day, it may indicate you are away. Ask a neighbor, who comes and goes, to park in your drive.

10. Lock all gates and storage sheds. Many break-ins are to the exterior of the house where it is hidden by a privacy fence. Make your shed and backyard more inaccessible and more difficult for a burglar to come and go with your valuables. MLGW will average your bill if the reader cannot access your backyard and will adjust your bill the next month accordingly.

11. Arm your alarm. Like windows and doors, this is often a step that is easily forgotten. Be sure it is on your checklist of "things to do before leaving".

12. Store valuables. Put valuables in a small safe, bottom of your closet, in the attic or another place that you consider a "hiding place". The first place robbers often look for valuables is in the bedroom, and moving valuables to another part of the house will help keep them safe. If gone for an extended period of time, you may consider a safety deposit box.

13. Have lawn service. Hire someone to cut your grass and maintain lawn and plant care as watering. Nothing says you are away like an overgrown grass or dying plants.

14. Have a house sitter. While not always possible, the best thing you can do while on vacation is to get a house sitter – someone who will check the house daily and do many of the items previously mentioned. If you are gone for an extended period of time, you may consider having a live-in house sitter. This would be especially helpful if you have a pet.

Celebrate and Pray
for the Community!



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Wolf River Day / Forest Faire Planned for Saturday, Sept 25, 2010

The warmth of a Memphis summer is upon us, but cooler days are around a not-so-distant bend as plans for the 2010 Wolf River Day and Forest Faire get underway. Last September, these two events were combined for the first time and held on the V&E Greenline, drawing an estimated 2,500 people. The joint event was a huge success and helped raise visibility of the V&E Greenline, VECA and Wolf River Conservancy, while promoting "It's Cool to Go Green!" to a diverse and interested audience.

This year, activities are scheduled for Saturday, September 25, and will again be sited in the grassy, tree-shaded open spaces along the V&E Greenline's Stationhouse at Avalon and



Tutwilier. Offered this year will be an expanded group of green vendors and exhibitors, arts and crafts, tasty local foods, children's activities (including a dunking booth and bike parade), wildlife exhibits, a politician's stump, the Ghost River Beer tent and a music stage. Other expected activities include a morning tributaries cleanup, tree sales and a tree planting as well as canoe and raft rides on the Wolf River. The event and all activities are free and open to the public.

More than 100 community and corporate volunteers and sponsors contributed to the success of last year's event. Memphis Leadership Academy, Buckman Laboratories, Baptist Memorial Hospital, International Paper, FedEx, The Daily News, Memphis Animal Clinic, Huey's, Sierra Club, Clean Memphis, VECA, and many other organizations and businesses participated.

If you or your organization wish to help plan, sponsor, participate or volunteer for the day of the event, or if you are interested in being a vendor or exhibitor, please contact the Wolf River Conservancy at officemanager@wolfriver.org or call 901-452-6500.

University Lane Block Club

By Morgan Hanna

Residents on Edward Street were ecstatic about having a cleanup on Saturday, May 22, to remove tall trees that had overgrown at the end of their street. The University Lane block club met at the VECA Welcome Center a couple of weeks prior to the cleanup to discuss their neighborhood concerns and suggestions with Dr. Mike Kirby and Community Development intern Morgan Hanna. They expressed a strong desire to have a cleanup as soon as possible. A date was set at the meeting, fliers distributed and the block club eagerly anticipated the important day.

On the day of the cleanup, neighbors arrived at the overgrown tree site ready to work. They worked diligently and strenuously despite the scorching Memphis heat. Edward Street resident Doris Frieson came out, saying, "I can't help out physically, but I wanted to stick to my word and show moral support." Her presence and high spirits were greatly appreciated.

Through their actions, neighbors showed their dedication as well as their pride for their neighborhood. They wanted to see change and improvement on their street. Likewise, they knew that in order to get it done, *they* must get together and do it as a *team*.

Thanks to the efforts of faithful Edward Street residents and members of their block club, the troublesome tree site has been cleared. A special thanks goes to Alma Warren who has worked diligently on advertising and helping to make the cleanup a success.

Among those present at the cleanup were Doris Frieson, Pete Frieson, Michael Key and his wife, Alma Warren, Mary White, Ben Wydale.

If your neighborhood block club wants to have a cleanup, or if you want to form a block club, contact VECA Community Development intern Morgan Hanna at the VECA Welcome Center at 901-276-1782.



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Watch Your Weeds

As the April showers continue on through the summer, weed season is at its peak. If grass and weeds are not maintained, they can grow to be a serious obstruction to the neighborhood, not to mention an eyesore. VECA Community Development interns will be surveying the VECA neighborhood as well as surrounding areas to report any weeds or grass higher than 12 inches. If a property has over 12 inches of grass or weeds, it becomes a code violation and will be reported to city. Once a property is reported having over 12 inches of weeds, the owner is given a warning to cut their grass. Thereafter, if the weeds are not cut, the city will fine the owner, and then come out and cut the grass (at the cost of the owner). It is important to report these properties because high weeds collect debris, pests and make properties more vulnerable to illegal activity. Let us all do our part to respect and look after our neighborhood. Any neighbor may report such violations simply by calling the Mayor's Citizen Service at 576-6500. The Mayor's Citizen Service also has a website in which citizens can report any code violation including high weeds, housing, or public health violations. It is a fast and easy way to make our neighborhood an even better place to live.

For more information or to report a violation visit: www.cityofmemphis.org or call 576-6500.



Surveying the Neighborhood

In addition to surveying the neighborhood for weeds, the VECA community development interns are working hard to ensure that your neighborhoods are looking good and staying safe. In particular, there is an ongoing surveying that identifies the vacant houses within the VECA neighborhood as well as in the surrounding areas.

The CD interns review the properties that were marked as vacant, determine who the owner is and if he or she can be contacted. From that point the interns contact the city and report the specific code violations of the particular property.

The work that goes into this process is important to ensuring that your neighborhood remains a safe environment. Vacant houses can attract vagrants and illegal activity as well as other nuisances such as rats and debris. It is important to report to the city any house that appears to be vacant as soon as possible so that it may be boarded up and secured.

The city's Mayor Citizen Service allows citizens to report any code violations such as poor housing conditions, litter, graffiti, vacant housing, vagrants, and other illegal activity. All neighbors are encouraged to use this service as necessary to keep our neighborhoods beautiful and safe.

Violations may be reported by calling 576- 6500 or visiting: www.city of memphis.gov.

VECA Membership and Contribution Form

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VECA Contact Information

901-276-1782 1680 Jackson Ave

Email: veca@veca.org

Website and Calendar: veca.org

Fax: 901-276-1784

VECA Board: Paul Herron

VECA Housing: Chuck Fox

Vollintine-Evergreen News Advertising: TBA

V&E Greenline: Len Cobb

Safety and Security : Garnette Stephens and Erin Hartong

Neighborhood Preservation Committee: Chris Floyd

Neighbors for Trees: Marci Hendrix and Andrée Glenn

VECA Businesses Committee: TBA

VECA Email and Communication Committee: Marci Hendrix

Lick Creek: Mary Wilder

Block Clubs Committee: Gloria Singleton

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