

VOLLINTINE EVERGREEN

N E W S

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

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2011

VECA Strategic Plan

VECA has retained the services of Shannon Dixon to help develop a strategic plan focusing on both the Vollintine Evergreen neighborhood and the Vollintine Evergreen Community Association as an organization. The strategic plan will be used by the VECA Board, the VECA members, Vollintine Evergreen residents, government, corporations, foundations and others where appropriate.

The consultant will:

1. Review the existing resident surveys administered in the fall of 2010
2. Conduct four resident meetings in each of the four quadrants of the neighborhood. Meetings will survey residents about their community, their understanding of the organization and their desire to participate in their community.
3. Conduct interviews with neighborhood leaders, businesses and the VECA Board members to gather more in-depth information .
4. Conduct interviews with government leaders, institutional neighbors and funders. The interviews will gauge their knowledge of VECA and the Vollintine Evergreen neighborhood, their assessment of the organization's strength and assets, and their willingness to support VECA as an organization and neighborhood.
5. Lead a Board retreat to present and synthesize the information and finalize the strategic plan with the board.

We need your help and your voice. Please come to the resident meetings. There will be one meeting in each of the four quads. The dates will be announced via yard signs, Facebook, veca.org and through the VECA email system.

Starbucks Coffee Company Partnership

By the V&E Greenline Committee

The Starbucks Community Service Program provided VECA with a \$1,000 grant for the V&E Greenline to use for mobilizing volunteers. Starbucks wrote that it "aims to help recreate thriving neighborhoods wherever we do business. Thriving neighborhoods depend on people lending a hand to their neighbors and working together with shared purpose. We applaud Vollintine Evergreen Community Association to this shared goal."

The starting point of this grant was when Starbucks' employee Claire Rutkauskas contacted the V&E Greenline about doing a service project April 24, 2011. She and eleven other Starbucks' employees joined volunteers from the V&E Greenline to trim overgrown shrubs and branches on the V&E Greenline, near Springdale Avenue. They pruned, did weed eating, trimmed branches, raked, and hauled branches on the trail.

The V&E Greenline is a program of VECA and depends on volunteers to manage and perform maintenance on the popular trail, and the grant will be used to support the work of the volunteers.

Claire reacted to the grant news with exuberance. "That is really exciting! I had no idea the company was going to do a follow up. I am very excited about the check. It was very rewarding for the company to share our success in broader ways for that cause. I love VECA and I hope that it can be used to help strengthen the

community. It makes me happy that my five years with Starbucks Coffee Company has been able to give back to the neighborhood I grew up in. I went to Snowden K-8, went to Evergreen Presbyterian, and my Mom worked at Rhodes, so I really did grow up in VECA."

The closest Starbucks is located at Union Ave and McLean Blvd. It is a fun store to visit and their coffee is great. Please patronize them and thank their employees.



Lick Creek Update

By The VECA Lick Creek Committee

In June, VECA requested the City of Memphis to conduct annual maintenance of Lick Creek from Idlewild to Claybrook as well as repair of the creek walls. In the past, the City of Memphis Engineering Department and Division of Public Works have told the VECA residents in several meetings that in order for Lick Creek to drain properly in heavy rains the walls need to be clear of growth. Storm water flows better if unimpeded. The creek was maintained since 1936 with summer crews cutting and cleaning the bed. In the last issue of the VE News we reported that neighbors did trash pick up two times this spring and will clean again in the fall. Volunteers cannot do the heavy landscaping work

required to clear the walls and beds of growth. This is why VECA asked the City for help. Here is City of Memphis Public Works' response.

This email (*response*) is in reference to your (VECA's) request for routine maintenance and channel repairs to Lick Creek, between Idlewild and Claybrook. In response to your first request to have Lick Creek scheduled for maintenance, Public Works has agreed to perform maintenance on Lick Creek with a planned timeframe to have Drain Maintenance begin work in October.

In discussions with the Director on this subject it was decided that Drain Maintenance's current workload as well as employee safety required us to delay the start of maintenance work until the fall season. There are several main reasons for this scheduling. The maintenance work itself is very labor intensive and there are valid concerns regarding employee safety, including heat stress/temperature related conditions as well as others. Our ongoing channel maintenance plan would then continue to coincide with the annual fall scheduling. And it was decided that Drain Maintenance's current workload as well as employee safety required us to delay the start of maintenance work until the fall season.

With regards to your second request, Public Works in collaboration with Engineering is willing to meet with TDEC and VECA representatives to discuss channel repairs. We recognize that this issue has been discussed previously and that the matter has not been satisfactorily resolved to interests of all the parties concerned. It is our hope that such a resolution can be reached as we move forward with a comprehensive plan to address challenges unique to the Lick Creek Drainage Basin. *In a subsequent email, Public Works responded:* As to the matter of channel repairs, the City plans to have a preliminary meeting involving only City and State officials, which will serve as grounds for future discussions. We do not plan to make any further commitments at this time only establish an initial dialogue on the topic.

This information from the City means that Lick Creek will be cleaned in October after the growing season and will be better able to handle the spring rains. The City Public Works and Engineering will meet with Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, TDEC, to begin discussions on repair of the creek walls. VECA has requested to be a part of these initial discussions.

VECA Wants You!



We are organizing a neighborhood-wide block party event and we want you to get your street involved!

Enjoy wonderful potluck goodies at a celebration right in your own front yard, and find out what is going on in your neighborhood. Learn about block grants funded by Rhodes through the Plough Foundation, and get help requesting money for your own pesky neighborhood problems!

For more information visit veca.org or call 276.1782 to register your street!

The first 12 groups to register their street will receive a handy dandy tool kit including items such as beverages, paper products, and flyers to help kick off the planning for your celebration!

When: 3:00 P.M. Sunday, October 16

Where: Your street and all streets in the VECA neighborhood



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Community Gardens are Valuable to Neighborhoods

By The VECA Neighborhood Preservation Committee
Have you noticed that community gardens are popping up all over the place? They are designed to improve communities. The many benefits of community gardens include:

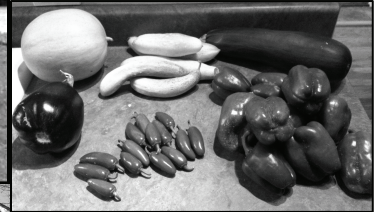
- ◆ Increasing the sense of community ownership
- ◆ Bringing people together from many different backgrounds and cultures
- ◆ Reducing crime by providing opportunities to meet neighbors
- ◆ Providing opportunities for recreation and exercise
- ◆ Producing nutritionally rich foods at lower cost
- ◆ Beautifying neighborhoods
- ◆ Improving the environment

A community garden was developed on the 1400 block of Lyndale through a collaborative effort with VECA and residents. The residents on Lyndale became involved in VECA due to concerns with problem properties, such as dilapidated houses and neglected vacant lots. The garden was

originally the site of a dilapidated home that was damaged in 2003 during "Hurricane Elvis". The home was demolished and the neighbors were left with an overgrown and vacant lot littered with trash and debris.

This year residents and volunteers planted tomatoes, cucumbers, bell peppers, jalapenos, zucchini, squash, eggplant, okra, beans, honeydew melons, cantaloupe, and watermelon. The success of the garden has far exceeded the expectations of the initial planners. All of the vegetables planted have produced significant crops.

The community garden has been an amazing project for the neighborhood. The residents on the street now take pride and ownership



Before Clean-Up

in the community garden and their entire block. The community garden looks beautiful and has encouraged other neighbors to make an effort to improve their properties.

If you would like to volunteer or to request additional

information, please contact Chris Floyd at cakirby72@yahoo.com or (901) 491-6320.

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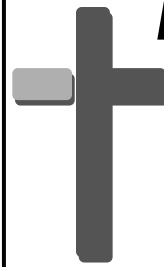
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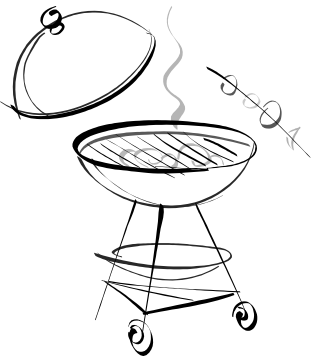
Pastor: Glenn Hales, Jr.
mcleanbaptistchurch.org

Safety First

By The Neighborhood
Preservation Committee

Barbeque season continues in VECA. Please be mindful of the hazards to your home. While everything has risks, backyard barbeques can be especially hazardous. When cooking outdoors, whether hot and fast grilling, or low and slow barbecue there are a few things you need to know to make sure nothing goes wrong and how to get the most out of your cooking.

Fire: Fire is the most destructive force in the universe and you are inviting it into your backyard for a little cookout. First thing you need is a fire extinguisher. Next you need to know your fire and know how to control it. Every year grills and smokers cause thousands of fires, hundreds of injuries, dozens of deaths



and millions of dollars in damage. You need to know how to cut fuel supplies, extinguish fires and call the fire department. Always have one person in charge of the fire at all times.

Location: Location is everything when it comes to placing your grill or smoker. Every year hundreds of people cause fires to their houses, garages and patios because they didn't put their grill or smoker in the correct location. So let's keep them off the porch and get them away from the house. We want to keep you and your family safe.

Memphis Fire code Section 308.3.1, Open Flame of the 2003 International Fire Code states that charcoal burners and other open-flame cooking devices shall not be operated on combustible balconies or within 10 feet of combustible construction.

Food Safety: Bacteria are ever present, especially in the mid-south with our warm temperatures. Every kind of food, even

vegetables, is capable of growing dangerous bacteria. It only stops growing at 165 degrees. So, until it goes into your mouth or onto the grill, it needs to be kept cool. The second you are done serving it up, it goes back in the refrigerator. The basic rules are: Suspect Everything; Keep it Covered; Keep it Cool; Get it Hot!; and Use your Head.

Gas Safety: Four out of every five grills involved in home fires (81%) were fueled by gas. Gas grills were involved in an average of 6,200 home fires per year. The number one cause of gas grill fires is an obstruction in the path of the fuel. This largely takes place, behind, underneath or inside your grill where you do not look. Please inspect your gas grill.

Charcoal Safety: Charcoal grills were involved in 1,300 home fires, including 700 structure fires and 600 outside fires. The leading cause of these structure fires was something that could burn being too close to the grill.

Have Fun! Safe Grilling.

Know it When it Happens!

Receiving VECA emails is the best way to stay up-to-date on neighborhood events, meetings and alerts. The VECA Weekly ENews is where neighbors can advertise yard sales, list items for sale or giveaway, or plug upcoming events. Sign-up to receive emails via the website (veca.org).

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Vollentine Elementary School in the Forties

By William B. Moss, M.D.

I was born July 2, 1938 to Chester and Ernestine Moss. My father was the Pathologist at St. Joseph hospital which was located at the present site of St. Jude hospital. We lived on Stonewall Street in a home my father bought for \$5000 in 1935. He died in the home in 1995.

I started to Vollentine School in kindergarten in 1943. From the first grade on I walked one mile to school. All the kids walked. There was one car per household and the father would take it to work. For the most part moms stayed home. World War II was still being fought and often we would bring tin cans and old newspapers for scrap drives. I remember the end of the war with horns honking and church bells ringing.

Vollentine School in the 40s was made up of white Protestant and Jewish kids. Most of the Jewish community lived around Vollentine because of the nearby synagogue. This was before integration and there were no African-American kids in Vollentine Evergreen*. Catholic children went to Little Flower School which is now St. Teresa. Most of the households in the neighborhood were middle to upper middle class. (* African Americans made VECA home starting in the late 1960s.)

School days began at 8:15 am. We had a little recess around 10 o'clock and lunch at noon. Lunch was 25 cents. School was out at 3 o'clock. Often after school, boys would go to the back field, choose up sides and play football or baseball. There were no basketball goals and we played very little soccer. There were no organized sports to speak of until Jr. High School. Behind school there were two tennis courts, a wading pool, a play area with swings, slides, etc. and a lighted soft ball diamond.

By the sixth grade Jerry Peter, now the basketball coach at MUS, and I would do the choosing for ball games. His teams would usually beat mine. Also we would get up teams and play Little Flower. They would invariably beat us.

I can still name all my teachers. They were dedicated ladies who were tough disciplinarians. We would have Bible reading every morning with prayer. The principal was Miss Wells. She struck fear in the hearts of all the kids. She would stare at the

door on rainy days and if you tracked mud in she would whack you with a ruler. Once I was caught throwing rocks at the school bell and was sent to her office. It was like being on death row waiting for her to come out and hit me with that ruler.

Safety patrol was a big deal in these days. Fifth and sixth graders would be issued flags, helmets, belts, etc. and assigned to corners to stop traffic and let kids cross the street. In the fifth grade I had the corner of Dickinson and Vollentine. It was a miserable winter and I probably had five kids come by all year. In the sixth grade I was co-captain and Billy Schotler was captain of the patrol. This was like being captain and co-captain of the football team.

We did not set a very good example for safety as we would walk from post to post we played a game where one of us would close over eyes and the other would guide us verbally. Ralph Grey told on us and we received a lecture from Miss Wells. At least she didn't hit us with her ruler. I reminded Ralph of that event at our 50th high school reunion. Not that I hold a grudge.

I went on to Snowden, Central, Memphis State and University of Internal Medical School. Of all the schools I attended I enjoyed Vollentine the most. I still go to church in the neighborhood at Open Door Bible Church on North Parkway.






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JOEY HAGAN, AIA

Crime and Alleys

By The VECA Communications Committee

In the month of July there was an increase in crime in Memphis and in the Vollintine Evergreen neighborhood as well. In two instances, homes were broken into from overgrown alleys. Alleys that are overgrown create a safe haven for criminals to come and go as well as an environment for snakes and rats. They also give a negative impression of our neighborhood.

With weeds as tall as trees, it is understandable that neighbors perceive that the City is not mowing alleys any longer. Some neighbors have taken matters into their own hands by mowing, weed whacking and cleaning the alleys around their homes.

Mr. Johnie McKay, Director of Community Enhancement, reports that the City of Memphis is still in the business of maintaining alleys. When possible, the City takes a proactive approach and maintains alleys on a schedule. However, caring for alleys is not the priority that it has been in the past. The City's priorities are easements and mowing 30,000 vacant lots, all with a smaller staff due to layoffs.

McKay recommends neighbors report tall weeds in alleys to the City of Memphis Support Center. Call 901.636.6500 or go online to: https://ebusiness.memphistn.gov/OA_HTML/jtlogin.jsp.

The Office of Community Enhancement is in charge of mowing and the Department of Public Works is in charge of clean-ups.

Neighbors may wonder how long the city takes in responding to a service request. The answer seems to depend upon who you ask. The City reports that they quickly respond to requests and consider a few weeks to be reasonable. One VECA neighbor had a different experience. With persistence, patience and phone calls, her alley was finally cut and cleaned after 11 weeks.

In her case, someone had illegally dumped debris in the alley and the Public Works department couldn't get to the debris because of the weeds and the Community Enhancement department couldn't cut the weeds because of the debris. The determination of our neighbor is a good model. When she called the City, she documented the call dates, who she spoke with, and what was key in the conversation. Doggedness in her case paid off.

The bottom line is that the City will cut and clean alleys, but it may be easier to do it yourself.

Second Generation Residents

After a move, when does a neighborhood begin to feel like home? Does it take a month or six months or even a year? Hopefully for many, that at-home feeling comes quickly and memories start forming right away. For some in our neighborhood, the feeling of being at home started as a child and the memory collection bank is full and overflowing. Here is a collection of memories from neighbors who lived in Vollintine Evergreen as youngsters and then as adults they moved back or maybe never even left.

Gail Black

My childhood was spent at 673 Maury between Tutwiler and Jackson. My brother, Jim, and I both attended Snowden, then Northside. In my teen years I babysat frequently in the University Cabanas as well as for a family on Sheridan, and another family on Tutwiler. My brother and I had two paper routes and we delivered the Memphis Press-Scimitar for six years throughout VECA in the late 1960's to 1973 (from Cleveland to Avalon and between Tutwiler and Jackson). Then we both worked at Borg's Pharmacy (at Jackson and Evergreen) and Jim worked at Bosi's Grocery after Borg's.

I remember delivering the Press Scimitar in a 3-foot snowfall in March of 1968! Then, in 1969 or so, I was delivering the Memphis Press Scimitar one afternoon after school. I was on my bicycle and turned onto Avalon, at Jackson, and smelled smoke in the air. My first house on Avalon to deliver was 790, Mrs. Dino's house. I threw her paper on her porch and pedaled next door to the Vincent's house. As I turned up Mrs. Vincent's driveway, I noticed a flame in Mrs. Dino's window AC unit. I went back to Mrs. Dino's door and knocked, but she wasn't home. So, I went to Mrs. Vincent's, who was home, and showed her the fire in the air conditioner. She called the fire department and they contained the fire to just that window and wall in Mrs. Dino's house. Mrs. Dino later thanked me by giving me a good tip and a nice purse. She said I had saved her house from burning.

When we were kids and the train ran along what is now our greenline, we could hear the train whistle blowing from our house, and we knew the train was coming. My Dad, my brothers and I would run like crazy up to the field at Maury and Tutwiler to get there in time to put pennies on the track and let the train run over them. Daddy would make us stand back while he put the pennies on the rail; sometimes it seemed the train was right up on us and Daddy was still fiddling with those pennies, getting them to stay on the rail, and we would get all excited, hollering, "Get back, get out of the way, Daddy! Here it comes!" After the train had passed, we searched the ground for the pennies that had fallen off the rail. We were fascinated by the flattened pennies.

We're glad to be here in VECA.

Debbie Stevens

I moved to Vollintine Evergreen with my mother when I was only 7 – way back in 1974! Except for a few years living in an apartment on McLean, I have always lived in this house. I actually stayed to take care of the house while my mother was in another state taking care of her family members. Then she moved back and I took care of her when she couldn't take care of herself.

For a long time, I really wanted to move to a larger, newer home in a more centralized neighborhood. Now, though, I am so thankful that I stayed here – I love this area more and more each year. We have great neighbors who look after one another – many on my street have lived here for decades. I really wish I knew them better. They truly embody what a neighbor should be and I hope to do the same for them.

I went to Vollintine, Snowden, and Central. Walking home from school at Snowden, we passed the meat market (at the corner of Tutwiler and McLean), Dino's Southwestern Grill, and a little convenience store. I never had any money but my buddy from school would always buy both of us treats. Until a few years ago, the same

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Second Generation continued

crossing guard who helped me back then was still helping other kids in that busy intersection. She recognized me one day.

I remember when the Greenline was a working train track. The bridge across the creek was just the train track. I remember being scared of walking on it, since I could see the creek through the wooden railroad ties. At night, I could hear the train just two streets away. I remember a snowy day, walking up and down those tracks and playing in the empty lot off of Auburndale.

One of my mother's favorite places to shop was the Sears Crosstown and, across the street, the Sears outlet. When you would first walk in the entrance, you would smell popcorn and see all sorts of lovely chocolate candies. My favorite part of the store was the toy department – Mom would let me walk around there while she did other shopping. I hated the outlet. It always smelled funny – a combination of moth balls and warehouses. (I probably hated it more because it didn't have popcorn, chocolate, or toys.)

While I do hate yardwork, I love that my neighbors are so committed to creating beauty in their own yards, especially along the Greenline. Walking through the neighborhood especially in the spring and fall, is nothing short of inspirational – a true visual feast for the eyes. I love the Greenline as a walking path and it's not nearly as scary as that train track was! I truly appreciate all the work that is involved in keeping it beautiful for all of us. I have attended the same church for most of my life – Open Door Bible Church, on North Parkway. I love that the church and I are both part of the same community. Lastly, I love that I feel safe walking through the neighborhood – something I cannot ever take for granted. When I was in college and told people that I lived in midtown, they would generally reply with questions about safety concerns. Now, when I tell them, they respond, 'Cool! I love midtown!' Funny how things change and don't change – all at the same time. I could go on and on - I am so blessed to live here.

Chris Floyd

I was born in the neighborhood and attended Vollentine and Snowden schools. My parents moved to Memphis a couple of years before I was born so my dad could take a teaching position at Rhodes. They have always lived in VECA and still do.

My childhood memories of VECA:

I vaguely remember the active railroad and then I remember the many years the railroad bed was overgrown with weeds.

There used to be a bakery in the business district that houses Cafe Eclectic. My family would often pick up a coffee cake on the weekend.

The neighborhood used to have a little gift shop where the Midtown Mini Mart is now located. My friend and I would buy gifts for our mothers. I do not think it was there very long and I cannot remember the name.

I remember going to the Sears Tower when it was a fully functioning store. I remember getting treats at the candy counter.

I would ride my bike to the 7/Eleven store on Jackson and purchase treats. The VECA Welcome Center is now in the old 7/Eleven building.

Mostly I played on my street with other neighborhood kids. We spent time outdoors running around and riding our bikes, and during the summer, I

spent most of my time at the Rhodes swimming pool. I love the neighborhood. I love the architecture of the old homes. Old homes are really all I know. VECA is a really diverse neighborhood and that is important to me. Family kept me here. I live within three blocks from my parents and my brother's family.

The Greenline is my favorite aspect of the neighborhood probably because I remember the different stages of the railroad bed. My husband and I walk on the Greenline frequently with our dog. We realize each time we are on the Greenline what a great amenity it is for the neighborhood. My husband and I are currently expecting our first child, a baby girl, in October. She will be a third generation VECA resident.

Tom Kirby

I was around 4 when we moved to VECA. I attended Vollentine Elementary, Snowden, Central, Trinity Pre-K, Kindergarten at Idlewild Presbyterian, and McLean Baptist Day Care. This was long before air conditioning was installed at Snowden.

Things I remember about the neighborhood include a grocery store next to Dino's, Karls Baker, a bakery where Café Eclectic is now, and a barber shop across from Snowden. I barely remember hearing the rail line as a child.

What I like about the neighborhood is the friendliness, my family and the good location. I just like living in Midtown; there are very few areas in Memphis I could see myself living in.

Tom and his wife also have a third generation resident – their 6-year old son.

Part Two of the Second Generation article will appear in the November/December issue. Are you a second generation neighbor? We want to share your recollections. Contact us at news@veca.org or call the Welcome Center at 901.276.1782. Thank you to those who have already contributed!



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Jackson Harris and
Emily Harris (mom)

Right of stand:
Sonia Howley (Mom)
Miranda Howley
Nathaniel Garner

Front and Center:
Honey Stephens

An Exercise in Harmony



We look forward to our VECA Diversity Tour
which was planned for October 16 2011 ...

But for now we are postponing the event to be able
to give time and attention to the important VECA
Strategic Planning Project. We hope you will
participate in the Strategic Planning Project and
we look forward to rescheduling our tour date.

VECA Annual Membership Form - Become a Member

Join your neighbors in helping Vollintine Evergreen be the great neighborhood it is! Dues are tax deductible.

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Be one of the following types of team members:

Member \$20 ▪ Neighbor \$30 ▪ Supporter \$50 ▪ Leader \$100 ▪ Champion \$500 ▪ Benefactor \$1000
\$30 or more: Historic Plaque _____ or Poster _____ or Notecards _____ or Bumper Sticker _____



VECA: Vollintine Evergreen Community Association

VECA is a neighborhood organization made up of volunteers and paying members. The newsletter, VECA email, the annual meeting, and committee activities are 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.

VECA Housing: Chuck Fox
Lick Creek: Mary Wilder
Historic Committee: Cathy Marcinko
Communications: Marci Hendrix
Neighborhood Network: Gloria Singleton
V&E Greenline: Len Cobb
VECA Businesses: TBA
Safety and Security: Garnette Stephens
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VECA Board and Fundraising: Paul Herron
Email: veca@veca.org Website and Calendar: veca.org
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Newsletter Deadlines for the Nov/Dec Issue

The V&E News is printed bimonthly
Article submissions needed by Oct 3
Advertising copy needed by Oct 3
Distribution begins November 1
Advertising: \$150 annually; \$50 one-time ads
Please send submissions and questions to news@veca.org

CyberWatch, provides useful information about public safety and additional ways for the public to communicate with police. CyberWatch allows users to select a reporting radius based on either an address or an intersection, and receive a CyberWatch report via daily email.
<https://kiosk.memphispolice.org/cyberwatch/>

