

VOLLINTINE EVERGREEN

N E W S

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

MAY / JUNE 2012

**You are Invited
To the Unveiling of the
VECA Strategic Plan!
Sunday, June 24, 2012, 4:00 p.m.
McLean Baptist Church
815 N. McLean (at Jackson)**

The neighborhood meetings have been held, recommendations and reports have been written, the VECA board is inspired and motivated – at long last, it's time for VECA neighbors to hear the new strategic plan.

After a year-long planning initiative, here are the overall themes:

- ◆ Connecting neighbors to neighbors
- ◆ Welcoming new people to the neighborhood
- ◆ Developing activities for our youth
- ◆ Developing and marketing a consistent VECA identity
- ◆ Partnering with other organizations

VECA wants to connect with neighbors in hopes of making our neighborhood a better place to call home. And we believe that connections are made when people support block clubs and have the opportunity for their voices and ideas to be heard.

We also believe it's important to engage young people, for they are the future of what will become of our historic district. They can help with clean-ups, newsletter distribution and more. They can also encourage others to take pride in their neighborhood by becoming vibrant leaders. It's time to encourage our youth and area schools by offering field trips to the V&E Greenline and providing opportunities for students to fulfill their service credit requirements.

VECA wants to work with neighbors, the city and the county to improve and maintain properties in the neighborhood and help our businesses thrive.

This is just the beginning. We hope you will join us for a time of fun and conversation about the future of our neighborhood.

Ice cream will be provided and activities for kids will be available. Don't miss this great opportunity to talk with your neighbors and hear about the next steps of this exciting venture!

**We are VECA!
You are VECA!
VECA is us together!**

V&E Art Walk and The AmeriCorps Team

By AmeriCorps Team Members,
Samantha Crompton and Jamie Litteken

The V&E Art Walk, held Saturday, April 21st, was a community event consisting of local artists, nonprofits, and food vendors whose goal was to help raise needed money for the V&E Greenline. In preparation for this event, 10 young adults from AmeriCorps NCCC traveled to Memphis to work with VECA (photo on page 8).

AmeriCorps NCCC is a full-time, team-based government program dedicated to national service for men and women ages 18 -24. The goal of the program is to build communities and foster leadership through service. Currently, a team from the southern region, located in Vicksburg, Mississippi, is in Memphis working with VECA. Although VECA is the team's primary contact and sponsor, they have been aiding other local non-profits, including Memphis Center for Independent Living, Memphis Heritage, and First Congressional Church and Rhodes. Since their arrival to the city on March 27, the team has helped with MCIL'S spring fling which is a celebration for their consumers and employees. They have also installed block windows, painted railings, and designed/painted a mural for the local fair trade store located at First Congressional Church. Before heading back to their campus in Vicksburg, the team will be assisting Memphis Heritage with their yard sale fundraiser. The majority of NCCC's work, however, has been dedicated to improving and maintaining the V&E Greenline and organizing the first-annual Art Walk.

The Art Walk was located on the V&E Greenline behind the Stationhouse at Tutwiler and Avalon Street – the ideal location to display the Stationhouse and encourage the use of the trail. The event consisted of over 40 vendors selling art ranging from paintings to jewelry. There was also a silent auction, live

entertainment and a kid's zone complete with moon walks and face painting. The V&E Greenline Committee, including Alex Smythe, Dr. Michael Kirby and Michael Castellarin coordinated the event, along with the help of the AmeriCorps team and other VECA supporters. Upon starting their work in Memphis and with VECA, NCCC immediately began planning and coordinating the event with Castellarin.

After clearing the site of debris and leaves, the team measured the plot and created a rough blueprint for the event, which included the layout of vendors, booths, food, and music. AmeriCorps had the opportunity to attend the planning meetings and contribute thoughtful ideas to the planning process. The day of the event, the team arrived early to decorate the area, aid local vendors in setting up their booths, and direct traffic.

The Art Walk drew a lot of positive feedback from attendees and artists alike; people were thrilled with the event. They appreciated the low-key, relaxed and family nature of the event that welcomed everyone, even pet dogs.

Plans are already in progress for next year's second annual Art Walk. To get involved, please contact VECA at 901.276.1782 or veca@veca.org.



Thank You!

Many thanks to volunteers from Berean Christian Church, Stone Mountain, Georgia for their wonderful effort in cleaning up an abandoned house on Willett Street on April 5. The youth worked hard and enthusiastically to pick up debris and branches and to trim the overgrowth, which will help keep out squatters and crime, and in the long term help reclaim this house. The adjacent neighbors are very happy for the help in gaining control of their neighborhood.



Getting to Know VECA

By Angiline Powell

The Mid Town Mini Mart is located on the corner of McLean and Tutwiler. Like many parts of our historic district, it is a celebration of diversity. Owner, Maher Ahmad has been there since 1991 and loves the neighborhood as well his customers.

Ahmad is originally from Jerusalem, a city renowned for its religious diversity and its historical significance to three major religions. He moved to the United States after attending college at the University of Jerusalem, where he majored in business. Ahmad's brother lived in Memphis, so naturally he chose this city when he decided to leave his homeland in search of employment opportunities.

Initially he took over the meat market near Dino's, another neighborhood icon. When I interviewed Ahmad, he said that the meat market was not profitable, but the convenience store is successful and has enabled him to stay in Memphis and raise his children. He and his wife have four children (one boy and three girls). He is proud of his children; two are in college and two in high school.

He says the best part about owning the store is being his own boss. "I love my customers. They are more educated than the average person. They don't mind foreigners being around them. Believe me, when September 11th happened a lot of my customers came and told me, 'Why don't you come stay with us? It is safer.' I got an open invitation to any house in the neighborhood."

When I asked Ahmad what would make people stop by Mid Town Mini Mart, he said the store had everything anyone would need!

Please Report All Criminal Activity

From the Memphis Police Department's Website
(www.memphispolice.org):

You make the CALL! Be our EYES and Ears!

The most important thing you can do is call the police to report a crime or any suspicious activity. You have to be the eyes of your neighborhood. And remember, you can always remain a pair of anonymous eyes.
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You Can Make a Difference!

Be a part of the VECA Volunteer Movement! Here are just a few ways where you can help?

Homes for Neighbors manage VECA's two apartment buildings and 5 rental houses which are an important source of income. Volunteers work hard to make sure that the units are rented and maintained.

The Cleanup Committee uses community service workers on the second Saturday of each month to cleanup gateway streets such as Watkins and Springdale Street and several commercial areas. Volunteers are needed to help supervise the workers so all the litter is picked up.

The V&E Greenline Committee will be focusing on fundraising from the record number of trail users, and will also create a sustainability committee to work on the long term continuation of the trail as a community amenity.

The Neighborhood Network Committee plans to conduct a National Night Out event and Fall Fest for which residents hold individual block parties.

Safety and Security Committee volunteers continue providing information through the newsletter and website on making homes more secure.

The Neighborhood Preservation Committee helps with filing code enforcement complaints for dilapidated properties, but will also educate residents on how they can also file complaints.

The Business Districts Committee works to improve conditions by bringing together merchants, residents, and Rhodes. We are seeking members to work directly with area business owners. Business experience is helpful but not required to help on this committee.

The Membership Committee works hard to increase contributions to VECA. Membership contributions pay for the many grassroots services that are enjoyed by the neighborhood.

The Communications Committee publishes 6 newsletters with increasing numbers of articles written by neighborhood residents.

Volunteers help distribute the newsletter through the neighborhood.

Lick Creek volunteers continue working with the City of Memphis to alleviate flooding during storms. This will include both helping with creek maintenance and encouraging the Public Works Division to trim the saplings on the creek walls.

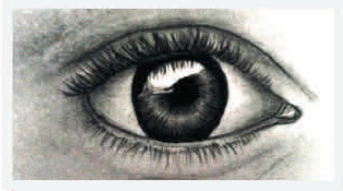
The Historic Committee markets house histories as a fundraiser and will put historic materials and maps on the VECA website. It also needs volunteers to help with organizing the documents and photos from the organization's history.

Contact VECA at 901.276.1784 or veca@veca.org to talk about getting involved!



Jared Powelson, O.D. Mike Gerstner, O.D.

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The Campaign to End Blight

By: The VECA Neighborhood Preservation Committee
 Mayor A C Wharton continues his campaign to end blight with an announcement that the Memphis City Attorney's office was filing lawsuits in civil court against 86 owners of blighted properties under the Neighborhood Preservation Act. This is the second wave of lawsuits filed, with the first occurring in 2010.

According to the City of Memphis website: "Each of the property owners who are being sued will come before the Shelby County Environmental Court, and the Memphis City Attorney's office will seek to force – by court order or by consent – the demolition, full rehabilitation, or divestiture of title of each vacant property targeted."

Vollintine Evergreen did not have any properties included in the first round of lawsuits, but we are very excited to announce that the

most recent suits includes six properties from our neighborhood: 995 Avalon, 910 Dickinson, 1438 Faxon, 2163 Piedmont, 877/879 Watkins and 883/885 Watkins.

These sites have been long-term problems, and the neighborhood appreciates Mayor Wharton's including them as part of the litigation. This is really important for our neighborhood and we should all be very proud of the VECA volunteers including residents, the Neighborhood Preservation committee and the VECA Board, whose hard work and dedication were needed to get these properties included.

For more information on the Campaign to End Blight and the Neighborhood Preservation Act, please see: www.memphistn.gov/blight.html.



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**Don't Miss out:
Apply for Plough Funding for Your Street**

The Plough Grant began in August 2010 and will conclude in May 2013. Plough Grants usually range from \$250-\$1000. Here are some things neighbors can do together with Plough funding:

- ♦ Have a block picnic or other social events on the block
- ♦ Plant visible trees and flower gardens
- ♦ Adopt a vacant house or lot (purchase a mower or weed eater)
- ♦ Plant a community garden on a lot
- ♦ Clean vacant houses and lots
- ♦ Trim and maintain over-grown trees and shrubs

Proposal forms can be found on the VECA website (veca.org). For information, call 901.276.1782 (VECA) or 901.843.3226 (Rhodes).

Connection = Protection: A Simple Formula for a Safer Neighborhood

By: The VECA Safety and Security Committee

Would you know how to contact your neighbors if you needed to? How many neighbors do you know on your street? Do you have a block captain?



These questions provide a good starting point for creating a network for your block – a network that can do everything from recommending a good contractor to fighting crime.



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Sunday Gathering, 5PM, Café Eclectic
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www.mercyhillmemphis.org

Join us each month as we partner with VECA to serve our neighborhood and make it a cleaner, nicer place to call home (all tools and resources supplied – just show up at the VECA Welcome Center 2nd Sat each month @ 9:30am).

Mail: P.O. Box 41463, Memphis, TN 38174-1463 | Phn. 901.300.0664
Eml. info@mercyhillmemphis.org | www.facebook.com/mercyhillmemphis

One block in our neighborhood has successfully connected most neighbors by using phone, email and even Facebook, giving power to these residents that they didn't have before. These neighbors have found that "Connection = Protection"; by combining swift communication with the power of action, these residents can now effectively work toward maintaining a safe and secure environment in which to live and play.

Would you like your block to be as connected? It's very simple but requires some footwork. The simplest way is to go door to door gathering email addresses, introducing yourself, and telling each resident what you are trying to achieve. Once you have gathered those addresses, you can email everyone and let them know that all of you are now connected.

Don't be discouraged if you have only a few participants; things of this nature sometimes have to grow over time. But trust me, one neighbor will talk to another, and then another, and then another and before you know it, your whole block will be connected.

If you need help in creating your block network, please email me: Rick Maxwell, VECA Safety and Security Committee. jrmxrayteck@gmail.com

Randall Wilder



Thank you for letting me serve you in Midtown for over 18 years

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10:30 A. M.

The Changing of the Guard

By Marci Hendrix

Len Cobb has called VECA home since 1986, when he and his former wife moved from Lexington, Kentucky, to Memphis for her teaching job at Rhodes. He hasn't looked back until now, as he considers the next chapter in his life – retirement, and a move back home to Kentucky.

As he looks toward retirement, Cobb reflects on his rewarding career in Memphis. With a background in journalism, he was able to parlay a contract job into full-time employment at FedEx Express Air Operations, where he has been doing technical writing since 1989. His work group, Regulatory Publications, does revision service for all the policy and procedure manuals which FedEx uses to comply with FAA regulations. Cobb has enjoyed working at FedEx, calling it a "great place to work, with great people – just the best."

Outside of work, Cobb's life in Memphis has been very full. His interests have ranged from working with the Guardian Angel Pet Rescue group to playing volleyball in the neighborhood for several years to actively supporting the Boy Scouts in a leadership role.

He got in on the ground floor, so to speak, with the V&E Greenline Committee. The committee started loosely with a call to interested neighbors to take a walk on the old railroad line. This was in the mid-1990s when the area was overgrown, littered, used as a dumping ground, and very much in need of a vision. Cobb decided to go on that fateful walk; to make access easier for everyone, he mowed a narrow path through the Cut section of the Greenline (between McLean and University). A volunteer career in mowing was born. Cobb has been mowing the Cut ever since and has a blast riding the big mower.

Cobb never dreamed the V&E Greenline would evolve to what it is today. "No other association has anything like this," He says. It's obvious how proud Cobb is of the accomplishments of the Greenline committee and the neighborhood; it didn't happen overnight and it took a lot of hard work and money to make the Greenline what it is today. Much of this is due to Cobb's tenacity. As fellow volunteer Mike Kirby warmly observes, "The V&E Greenline could not have developed without his efforts."

Cobb recalls the thrill of getting the new tractor for the V&E Greenline. With the help of then-State Rep. Carol Chumney, the Greenline received grant funding to purchase the tractor. The group named the tractor after her, calling it the Carol C. He explains, "We decided if people can name their vehicles and boats, why not a tractor?" The tractor 'pulls its weight' when a downed tree needs to be removed or when the bush hog (a mowing device) needs to be towed.

Cobb is also proud of the opportunity to work with the Boy Scouts, specifically Troop 13 at Trinity United Methodist, since 1987. Over the years, he has helped with a variety of Eagle Scout projects on the V&E

Greenline, including tree plantings, installing safety bollards, and most recently, the pet waste stations.


One of Cobb's hopes for the Greenline is that more people will get involved, especially as the old guard like himself retires. He also hopes that neighbors will understand how important their donations are for upkeep and maintenance: "We could not exist without the contributions sent to us."

Retirement beckons him home to his family and friends. He will depart Memphis by the early fall for Taylorsville, Kentucky, in rural Spencer County. There he will spend time with his two daughters and grandchildren.

No doubt Cobb is going to miss Memphis, his friends and the memories he has made. VECA wishes him every happiness in this new chapter of life, and we are grateful for his service to our neighborhood.



At the Art Walk on Saturday, April 21, 2012, the V&E Greenline Committee presented Len Cobb with a stepping stone in honor of dedicated service. In response, he later said, "I'm very grateful for the honor I was presented yesterday. I love the idea of the stone on the walk, which will be there for many years. The next time my family is in town, I intend to take them to the walk and show them how proud I am of it being there. I was certainly surprised since I had no idea that it was happening. You certainly did a great job of keeping it quiet."



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JOEY HAGAN, AIA

National Bike-to-Work Day Friday, May 18, 2012

VECA residents are invited to participate in the National Bike to Work Day on Friday, May 18. There will be **two leisurely-paced practice rides** to downtown and back to VECA the week before. The rides will be slow and peppered with tips on safe riding in traffic and commuting in general. Anyone interested in biking is welcome to participate in the practice rides!

Watch for updates on the VECA Weekly ENews and Facebook or email us with questions at: bikeveca@gmail.com



Practice Rides

Roundtrip From Café Eclectic

Thursday, May 10 6:00 pm Practice ride from Café Eclectic
Saturday, May 12 9:00 am Practice ride from Café Eclectic

Bike-To-Work Departure Times From Café Eclectic

Friday, May 18 7:00 am Cort Percer, Rider Leader
Friday, May 18 7:30 am John Paul Shaffer, Ride Leader
Friday, May 18 8:00 am Bob Rogers, Ride Leader



National Bike-to-Work Day is sponsored in Memphis by the Downtown Memphis Commission (<http://www.downtownmemphis.com/biketowork>).

For a pdf map of bike lanes in VECA, go to: veca.org/biking-in-veca

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Cypress Creek Walls

By Mary Wilder

Recently, City Councilman Myron Lowery, Public Works Director Dwan Gilliom, Deputy Director Robert Knecht and residents Mary Wilder, Delores Keys, Alma Warren, and Lewis and Doris Frieson met to discuss repairs that are needed to the walls of Cypress Creek on Edward Avenue between McLean Boulevard and University Street, specifically, repairs to the concrete channel liner. Approximately 330 feet of the channel wall has moved over time and several adjacent property owners have lost soil because of the wall failure.

The long-standing issue preventing repairs is one of soil contamination from industrial

wastewater. In a recent letter, the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) responded to the City of Memphis's letter requesting permission to begin repairs and said there are no legal restrictions on making repairs; the City has now agreed to make the repairs. VECA residents at the meeting were notified that the Cypress Creek repairs should be finished by October. This schedule is contingent on several factors, including weather, Velsicol Chemical Corporation's recognition of the contaminated soil,* and TDEC approval of repairs.

As of April 17, the City of Memphis has been working to prepare construction plans and

specifications to bid the construction project. The City is negotiating access to the channel across vacant private property. Access is needed to expedite repairs and to maintain the channel. Memphis Public Works will be meeting with TDEC to finalize approval of the work, which can start none too soon for VECA neighbors on Edward Avenue.

*According to *The Commercial Appeal* (01.09.12): "Decades ago, before the revised federal Clean Water Act was enacted, industries in the North Memphis neighborhood dumped wastes into Cypress Creek."

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Dairy Farming in VECA

By Makenzie Martin and the VECA Historic Committee
A charming letter recently arrived at the VECA Welcome Center from Memphian Margaret T. Jordan. Her letter offers a glimpse of the early history of the neighborhood from a time when the area was just beginning to emerge.

Margaret Jordan's grandparents, Robert Allen (R.A.) and Margaret B. Terry moved from Holly Springs, Mississippi to Memphis in 1876. They purchased 20 acres of land on Vollintine Avenue near Evergreen Street, becoming among the earliest settlers in the neighborhood. They started the Chestnut Grove Dairy, which in time grew to 100 head of cattle. As the dairy grew, the family was growing too – the Terry family had nine children.



Makenzie Martin and Margaret Jordan

Twenty other members of the family, including R.A.'s sister Georgianna, moved to the area. Georgianna and her husband, J.B. Vicory worked a small truck farm on Springdale and had a few dairy cows as well.

R. A. Terry continued buying land north of Jackson and west of McLean, using some of this acreage to create 10-acre mini-farms for rent or for sale. Each mini-farm had a small house and a barn. The area became known as Terrytown.

The dairy industry flourished and other dairies were established. Terrytown became known almost exclusively for dairy farming. Other livelihoods in the area included blacksmiths and woodcutters.

In 1890, Terry built Terrytown School, a one-room schoolhouse with grades 1-6. He paid the teacher until the county took over. Terry also regularly shuttled neighbors to Springdale Methodist Church on Trezevant in his surrey and spring wagon.

Progressive Era reform put pressure on farmers to improve conditions and provide pure milk. The Memphis Department of Public Health began inspecting dairies in the 1890s and milk ordinances were passed in 1898.



Springdale Methodist Church

This, along with pressure from real estate developers, was the beginning of the end of the dairy era in Terrytown. Eventually, the dairy farmers sold to the developers of the time.

Although she was a young child during that time, Margaret Jordan has vivid memories thanks in part to a family scrapbook. Jordan recalls favorite memories of drinking chocolate milk on the side porch of her grandparents' home:

I remember visiting the house on Vollintine as a child – usually on Sundays on that side porch. There was still a dairy then – Chestnut Grove Dairy, named for the Chestnut trees the Terrys had planted. There were Terrys' living on that property from 1876 to 1971, almost a hundred years.

When Terry Circle was developed, my parents built a home there. After all, my dad had probably chased squirrels over those same fields.

There are still a few other grandchildren scattered in Memphis. My sister, Clare T. Stallings, who was named for our dad, Clarence O. Terry, lives in Midtown, and I in East Memphis.

R.A. Terry was not a "great" man, simply a young man with a dream and an incredibly strong work-ethic – as were many of the early builders of America.

Born in 1848, Robert Allen Terry died in 1943 at the age of 95. His wife, Margaret, died in 1947 at the age of 92. A Dutch Colonial home they built in 1927 is where they lived the rest of their life, and still proudly stands at 1634 Vollintine.

(The VECA 1980 History Book also provided helpful information for this article.)

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**Thank you, Artists, Neighbors, Volunteers and Sponsors
for Helping to Make the V&E Art Walk a Success!**



This spring VECA is sponsoring an AmeriCorps National Civilian Conservation Corps (NCCC) team. The 10-member team arrived in Memphis at the end of March and will be in Memphis through mid-May working with several co-sponsoring organizations. VECA was recently awarded a second team, which will be arriving towards the end of May and will be working with VECA and its co-sponsors until late-July. The current team members (pictured) have helped VECA with apartment repairs, the V&E Art Walk, and

V&E Greenline maintenance. The mission of the AmeriCorps NCCC program is to "strengthen communities and develop leaders." For their service, they receive a stipend and an education award. For more information about AmeriCorps NCCC or joining this great program, go to: www.americorps.gov/about/programs/nccc.asp

VECA Annual Membership Form - Become a Member

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

Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

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, 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: Cathy Marcinko
Communications: Jeff Hulett
Newsletter Co-Editors: Marci Hendrix
Chris Tague
Neighborhood Network: Gloria Singleton
Email: veca@veca.org

V&E Greenline: Megan Wilkins Reynolds
VECA Businesses: Sarah Beth Larson
Safety and Security: Jill Williams and
Rick Maxwell
Neighborhood Preservation: Chris Floyd
VECA Board and Fundraising: Paul Herron
Website/Calendar: veca.org
1680 Jackson Ave, 901.276.1782

Newsletter Deadlines for the July/Aug Issue

The V&E News is printed bimonthly
Article submissions needed by June 1
Advertising copy needed by June 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/>

