

VOLLINTINE EVERGREEN

N E W S

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

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2012

VECA.ORG

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Award-Winning Gardens

The spring of 2011 was a banner year for the 1400 block of Lyndale. That's the summer a community garden was developed 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 lot littered with trash and debris.

They banded together and cleared the lot of high weeds, grass, privet and trash. They repaired a fence at the back of the property to discourage people from using the garden as a shortcut from Jackson Avenue. To prepare for planting, they tilled the grassy areas and mixed composted leaves into the soil. The lack of a dedicated water line is one of the biggest obstacles, but the next-door neighbor offered the use of her water. The new owner of the lot, an adjacent property owner, agreed to let neighbors and volunteers use the lot as a garden.

That first summer, the garden's crops exceeded the expectations of

the initial planners, and they have been on a roll ever since. The garden produces a myriad of fruits, vegetables and flowers. The residents on the street now take pride and ownership 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. It has been an amazing project for the neighborhood, and now the garden has a new distinction: In September, it was designated as Vegetable Garden of the Year by *The Commercial Appeal*. Congratulations to all the volunteers who make the Lyndale garden a special asset in the Vollintine Evergreen community.

As if that's not enough, kudos to Vollintine Evergreen neighbors Bill and Ann Schultz for being the 2012 winners of *The Commercial Appeal's* Garden of the Year contest in the ornamental garden category (check the VECA website – veca.org – for links to the articles).

If you would like to volunteer at the Lyndale garden or would like additional

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



VECA Fall Fest, October 14, 2012 at Hawthorne Street



Thank you neighbors for hosting block parties for Fall Fest 2012! A special thanks to the VECA Neighborhood Networks committee and the Rhodes interns for their organizational leadership, and to the Rhodes-Plough grant for funding the event.

Volunteer Opportunity, Saturday, November 24th Make your neighborhood More beautiful and healthy by planting trees.

Our Trees for Neighbors Campaign is underway with a revised project plan. Our AmeriCorps team has been dispatched on disaster call, and they will be unable to help with the tree planting on November 24th as originally planned.

Will you help in their place? Whatever amount of time you can donate will be greatly appreciated. Get connected by emailing us (veca@veca.org), calling (276.1782), or stopping by the VECA Welcome Center, 1680 Jackson Avenue.



**We still have trees to give away.
Call or email today to reserve a front yard tree.**

Funding for Trees for Neighbors is made possible by a Rhodes-Plough Grant.

Midtown Skateshop

By Sophie Osella

To the delight of skaters throughout Memphis, Midtown Skateshop has finally opened. The shop is owned and operated by Midtown native Hunter Demster, whose years growing up in the neighborhood shaped his love for skateboarding.

"Growing up in Midtown and watching the older kids at Snowden just really got me into it," says Demster.

After graduating from high school, Demster moved to San Diego and began a small skateboarding company, which he was forced to close soon afterward because of a home burglary. As destiny would have it, Demster moved back to Memphis, where he learned the art of carpentry and eventually started his own construction company.

But years of working construction, three knee surgeries, and a herniated disc took a toll on Demster. After a particularly profitable house renovation, he began brainstorming a new business venture.

"I asked myself, 'What is there a need for in Memphis?' And this [a skateshop] has always been on the top of my list."

Demster also happens to be an award-winning barbecue cook.

"Every time I've entered my hot wings in a contest, I've won first place," he reveals. "So I was torn between opening a skateshop and a barbecue restaurant."

In the end, "it was a no-brainer," says Demster. "When you skate like I did, you're a skater for life. I always knew I'd do something with skating."

The idea for the Midtown Skateshop was just four months old when Demster decided to go through with it; he moved into the long-vacant property at 651 N. McLean. Since then, Demster has been living the dream, stocking his shop with a plethora of brand name and local merchandise.

As we talk, a delivery man brings in two huge boxes, which Demster immediately opens and shows me a stack of new decks.

"It's like Christmas every day," he says, grinning.

But it hasn't been the smoothest ride. Just a week after opening, the skateshop was broken into. A large window was smashed and a handful of merchandise was stolen.

"After the break-in, I had phone calls from neighbors asking if they could come help sweep ... anything they could do to help," says Demster. "The neighborhood was awesome. People would walk by, poke their heads in and introduce themselves."

Demster knows his shop will have a large impact on both the VECA community and Memphis as a whole.

"I guarantee you that skateboarding in this area is going to boom, even more than it already has."

The trip to the skateshop for many young Germantown skaters has introduced them to the Vollintine Evergreen neighborhood. Neighborhood kids have been able to connect with other VECA skaters who they might not have met if it weren't for the shop.

"I want the shop to be what Memphis has never had," says Demster.

The shop has a "chill-out" area where kids are welcome to hang out and watch skate videos.

Demster continues to dream big and plans to do as much as he can to positively affect the community.

"I plan on holding events and having skate teams come through to put on demos. I donated a whole bunch of skateboards to a local church. Anything I can do to help the skate community in Memphis."

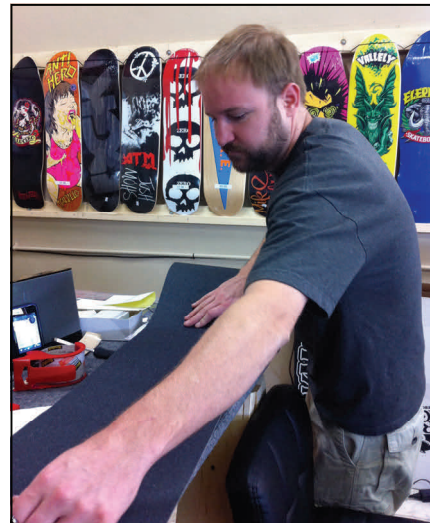
A woman and her son who have journeyed from Germantown come into the store and pick out a new skateboard deck. As they leave, the woman turns around.

"This is just awesome. Thank you for opening the shop," she says. "I got tired of ordering boards online."

Despite the break-in, and whatever the future holds, Demster makes it clear that "the Midtown Skateshop is here to stay."



651 N. McLean
901-552-4547



Midtown Skateshop has persevered through yet another burglary on October 31. Support your local businesses and stop by the shop.



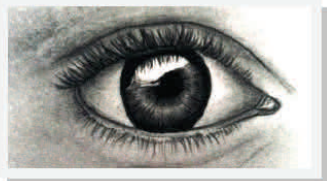
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Neighbor Spotlight

Musical Notes

By Elise Hastings

Long-time VECA resident Richard Wright demonstrates his passion for music by working as the organist at Union Avenue Baptist Church. From an early age Richard has always been fascinated with the organ's variation in sound, and he has played the organ professionally for almost 40 years.

"I've always been interested in pipe organs," he explains. "When I was a kid, every Sunday I would stay after the service and watch the organist."

Wright studied organ at the University of Memphis, and he also received a

bachelor's degree in piano teaching from St. Louis Institute of Music in 1966. He has played the organ at various churches in Memphis while simultaneously teaching music.

Wright's love of music has spread to

a love of all instruments – he also plays the clarinet, saxophone, flute, and guitar. (He teaches private classes in all these instruments.)

However, according to Richard, his favorite instrument continues to be the organ. "It ties together all these musical elements."

At Maxine Moore Music Academy, Wright teaches clarinet, saxophone, flute, organ and piano. He also plays piano at wedding receptions, dinner parties, and myriad other functions. His musical aspirations continue: His next venture is to "someday play the violin."



You are invited:

Karen Peck, featured vocalist, Celebration Choir, Richard Wright, organist
Sunday, December 2, 6 p.m., Union Avenue Baptist Church

Christmas Eve Service

Tuesday, December 24, 5 p.m., Union Avenue Baptist Church

VECA Artist-In-Residence

By Elise Hastings

Local artist Danny Broadway is getting national attention for his colorful, spiritual works. A resident of Vollintine Evergreen for about a decade, Broadway graduated from the University of Memphis with a painting degree, and he then started working as a full-time artist.

Broadway currently juggles various activities: He works in his studio adjacent to his house in Vollintine Evergreen, he teaches painting at St. George's Independent School, and he travels around the country to show his work. "I work hard," he comments. "It helps me to maintain my profession every day."

Broadway's paintings are vibrant and thought-provoking and reveal a soulful Southern


vision. "I receive inspiration from the world around me, like a song or a person," he says. In the past he has done commission painting for civil rights-related work, so he pulls that subject into his other paintings. He also believes that "being in the South in general reflects in my work," and his landscapes reflect his Southern heritage.

You can find Broadway's paintings all around Memphis, and you can contact him through his website, dannybroadway.com.



Enjoy the neighborhood holiday lights on Kensington, Barksdale and Sheridan during the month of December. Tell us where other decorations are in the neighborhood and we will share the information on the VECA Facebook page. (veca@veca.org)

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mcleanbaptistchurch.org

Meet VECA's New Volunteer Liaison

By Katie Dunlap

I'm excited to introduce myself as VECA's new volunteer liaison, and I'd like to tell you a little bit about myself and my goals for working with VECA. My husband, three boys, and I moved to the Vollintine Evergreen community in August 2011 from Nashville. We're Midtowners at heart and thoroughly enjoy living in this unique, eclectic neighborhood. We enjoy being outdoors and being active where we live, so there's a good chance you've seen me running on the V&E Greenline, sipping coffee at Café Eclectic, or walking my kids to and from Snowden School.

Several weeks ago I decided to apply for the volunteer liaison position advertised in the VECA ENews because I've enjoyed being a volunteer myself, and I want to be part of enabling others to get involved. I enjoy meeting people, discovering their interests and natural

abilities, and then seeing them use what they're already good at to benefit the community. I'm excited to be working with VECA to make sure volunteer opportunities are communicated well and people get connected to those opportunities.

I agree with Bill Clinton: "Citizen service is the very American idea that we meet our challenges not as isolated individuals but as members of a true community, with all of us working together. Our mission is nothing less than to spark a renewed sense of obligation, a new sense of duty, a new season of service. Though government has an important role to play in meeting the many challenges that remain before us, we are coming to understand that no organization, including government, will fully succeed without the active participation of each of us. Volunteers are vital to enabling this country to live up to the true promise of its heritage."



Vollintine Evergreen has a strong history of being a united community of individuals working together. VECA relies greatly upon residents who generously give their time and abilities toward making it a wonderful place to call home. Whether you've lived in the neighborhood for years or are a newer resident like myself, I'd love to help you find your niche and enable you to give back to the community.

In the coming weeks, I'll be communicating volunteer opportunities via the VECA Facebook page, veca.org and the ENews. If you see something you're interested in, please be sure to let me know. If you have creative ideas for investing in the neighborhood, I'd love to hear from you. Feel free to contact me anytime at kgdunlap@gmail.com. I hope to meet you soon!



mercy hill church

Sunday Gathering, 5PM, Café Eclectic
603 N McLean Blvd

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).

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Rummage Sale, September 29, 8:30 am

AmeriCorps Teams Make a Difference



The River 5 AmeriCorps team contributed much to VECA during their one-month stay in Memphis this September. Their typical day included cleaning up neighborhood properties overgrown with tall grass, weeds and trash. From 30 vacant sites, they collected tires that were later picked up by the city, and they addressed

other problem properties in the area. In one exceptional day they cleaned up nine houses plus a vacant lot along the Watkins corridor and McNeil. Neighbors expressed their gratitude to the team members for helping to make their streets nicer. The team also took part in the September 11th clean-up of the Sears Crosstown area.

The team helped significantly with a neighborhood photography project for the VECA Historic Committee. Working in two-person teams with six community volunteers on September 22nd, they took digital photographs of 2,100 homes, buildings and lots. The digital photos will be used for a historic mapping project. A future AmeriCorps team will finish the photo survey, focusing on a remaining 500 structures in three historic districts north of Vollintine.

VECA extends a special thanks to the outstanding members of the River 5 AmeriCorps team: Max Nager (team leader), David Staley,



River 5 AmeriCorps Team Members

Antionette McRae, Alexander Black, Elisabeth Elliott, Kevin Slowe, Heidi Loftus, Julia Land, Jessie Gade, and Kimberly Cole. Thanks also to VECA's Rhodes Community Development Liaisons Adam Alsamadisi and Phylicia Douglas, and to VECA volunteers Andrée Glenn, Mike Kirby, and Cathy Marcinko who helped make the AmeriCorps team's experience meaningful while helping our neighborhood.

Landscape Tips for Fall and Winter


By Wesley Wright, Owner, Wright Landscapings

Many people who care for their lawn and landscape make great efforts in the spring and summer, but the most important time of the year to make a big impact is in the late fall and winter. This lays a foundation for the spring and summer, when your landscape is on glorious display. Here are some basic recommendations:

- ◇ If water pools up in your lawn, it's time to aerate, consider a dry well, or a French drain.
- ◇ Feed your lawn by applying a high-phosphorus (12-25-12) mix to lawns in the fall. This encourages roots and the turf will turn green earlier in spring.
- ◇ Cut your lawn low in November so the leaves will blow across easier and disease is less likely.
- ◇ Leaves are rich with nutrients. "Be green" and use them as mulch in the flower beds instead of bagging them for disposal.
- ◇ Plant shrubs and trees now. This is easier on the plants and on

- your water bill. Use composted leaves with the dirt for planting.
- ◇ Trim dead limbs and prune shrubs to the height you want in the spring.
- ◇ Cut back perennials now, not when it's hot or about to get hot.
- ◇ Add light mulch or leaves around young plants before the frost comes.
- ◇ Winterize irrigation and drip systems; freezes can damage them.
- ◇ Cut monkey grass between November and February to expedite final leaf removal. Add mulch right after that so it will look great in the spring.
- ◇ During the fall and winter it's risky to plant sod because the roots won't take and foot traffic may ruin what was planted.

Please contact us for any recommendations or consultation.
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JOEY HAGAN, AIA

Seniors Strides

By Sophie Osella

Chances are if you've ever walked the V&E Greenline early in the morning, you've seen a particularly handsome group of senior citizens walking with bamboo sticks in hand.

"Someone asked us why we always carry these sticks," Granderson "Granny" Walton explains, smirking. "It's to beat off the women."

Almost every morning, Glenmary residents, Granny Walton, Bill Ralph, and Arthur "Dale" Blanchard walk the V&E Greenline, saying hello to neighbors, picking up trash, and handing out poop bags for dog-walkers who might have forgotten theirs.

"Somebody has to do it," says Dale.

We take the long way this morning, walking all the way down to the Sears Tower and the Big Kids sculptures, staffs in hand.

Granny has lived at the Glenmary Retirement Home since December 2010, while Dale and Bill have been there a little over a year.

"When I first got here I wanted to do something," says Granny. "They [the Glenmary staff] said, 'Okay, if you want to walk on the V&E Greenline we'll give you a key to the back gate and you can easily get out there.' At one time I had four people walking, including two ladies, but they said the ground was a little rough, so I ended up with these two guys" He motions at Bill and Dale.

"When we get a new person, we bring them out," Granny says. "I'll walk with him and stay at his pace."

One of the members has heart problems; when he first began walking, he could only walk for ten minutes. However, with practice and determination, he was able to



Bill Ralph and Dale Blanchard

walk from one end of the V&E Greenline to the other, and all the way back home.

When we pass a V&E Greenline walker, a chorus of "hellos!" is sung out in synchrony. Every runner or biker flashes us a smile and says hello as they zoom past us — it is apparent that they are used to seeing the Glenmary walkers.

Granny tells me of the various volunteer groups that keep the V&E Greenline in good condition.

"I keep the area directly behind the Glenmary weed-eated, but we have a lot of volunteers," Granny tells me.

The men strongly advocate all Greenliners to be mindful about their use and encourage everyone to volunteer as much as possible.

It could be said that the Glenmary walkers exemplify what a model V&E Greenline user should be:

appreciative of the space, mindful of their use, and excited to be out there.



Granny Walton and Dale Blanchard




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Sting Like a Bee

By Sophie Osella

While most folks would try their hardest to get away from bees, Steve Greer not only invites bees into his own backyard, he provides food and shelter as well. After noticing that the summer of 2007 had been particularly bee-less, Greer decided to take up beekeeping in hopes of attracting more bees to the VECA neighborhood.

"Since I'm a big gardener, I'm in favor of as many bees as possible," Greer says.

He has been beekeeping for the past three years. This year, he produced enough honey to keep his bees fed naturally on their own supply and start bottling his own honey.

Greer's set-up is modest but constructed with care. His four hives are placed strategically in the midst of his garden, against the backyard fence. Bees fly over the fence and back, transporting nectar to their queens. When I first arrived at Greer's house, I could hear the buzzing and see the bees coming from the backyard. It's a well-known fact that there's a beekeeper in the neighborhood, but the neighbors only express curiosity.

"Most people are very enthusiastic," says Greer. "When they find out I keep bees, they just want to know about it. Everybody who comes in here is curious. The kids next door are big fans. They always watch when I work."

The idea of keeping bees in an urban environment might seem peculiar, but urban beekeeping holds many advantages to beekeeping in an isolated farm, especially in the VECA neighborhood. Because of the community's dedication to preserving and cultivating the flora and fauna, VECA has helped our neighborhood's ecosystem flourish.

While there is technically no such thing as organic beekeeping since there is no federal standard for honey, Greer attempts to keep it as natural as possible. "I don't treat my bees with anything. No chemicals in the hive, no antibiotics, anything like that," says Greer.

Luckily for him, the VECA neighborhood is a literal feasting ground for honey bees.

"I think VECA is an ideal spot for beekeeping because you have a huge variety of plants and flowers all year long," Greer explains. "You don't get the pesticides that farms use on their crops. Commercial beekeepers have to worry about whether farmers are about to spray pesticides and what

their bees are going to bring back to the hive.

"VECA is a great environment. You can see all the trees that bloom in the spring. You have all the stuff that people plant, and the things that grow wild on the V&E Greenline," says Greer.

Greer encourages anyone with an interest in beekeeping to pursue their curiosity. He believes the hobby can give you a greater insight to the world around you.

"I know a lot more about what's going on in my yard because I'm always paying attention to what the bees are doing," he explains. "It's just very rewarding, watching and understanding what's going on."

Greer hopes to set up an observation hive for his neighbors to get a good look into what has captivated Greer for the past three years.

Of course, Greer has been stung a couple of times, but it is apparent that his passion for beekeeping outweighs a couple of stings here and there.



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If you have been the victim of a crime, or think you have witnessed one, please report it to the Memphis Police Department right away. The MPD uses these reports to track criminal activity and determine if additional patrol units are needed. It does not matter whether it's a stolen vehicle or simply some old gardening tools – take the time and report the crime. Your information could help keep people safe and possibly prevent other crimes. There are two ways to report criminal activity: Call 911 or, for non-emergencies, 545-COPS (2677). Use 911 for a crime in progress or for emergency assistance such as fire or ambulance. For everything else, use the non-emergency number.



Thank you, VECA Volunteers
We could not do this without you! If it weren't for volunteers, our newsletters wouldn't get delivered! Volunteers pitch in for vacant lot cleanups, they help keep Lick Creek clean, and they maintain the V&E Greenline. Thank you! Volunteers attend planning meetings, they organize and help at events, they help with bookkeeping, answer the phones, maintain our rental properties, and a myriad other tasks that make our association stronger and our neighborhood a better place to call home. Thank you for a great 2012! We look forward to working together in 2013!
The world is hugged by the faithful arms of volunteers. ~Terri Guillemets

Save the Date – VECA Annual Meeting
Saturday morning, January 26, 2013 at Evergreen Presbyterian Church
Watch for details in the Weekly ENews and the January newsletter.

MEMFix Cleveland Street
Saturday, November 10, 2012, 10am-10pm
Come see what a revitalized Cleveland Street can look like. There will be food trucks and artisan crafts as well as pop-up retail. The event is modeled after the successful Broad Street event "A New Face for an Old Broad." Held two years ago, that event resulted in increased awareness and interest of the area as well as new businesses on Broad Avenue.

Downtown Electronics Recycling Drive
Thursday, November 15, 2012, 3:00-6:30 pm Central Station Pavilion
Computers TVs Printers Cell Phones VCRs DVD Players. Most items recycled free of charge. Certification of hard drive cleaning available for \$10 Fees applied for the following items: Wood console TVs - \$30; Projection TVs - \$30; Wooden speakers - \$10; TVs or computer monitors with broken glass - \$10; Bare CRT tubes - \$10. For more information, contact Dawn Vinson at 575.0555 or vinson@downtownmemphis.com


VECA Annual Membership Form - Become a Member

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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.

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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
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