MEMPHIS SCHOOLS are probably no more out-dated than the schools in other cities of comparable size. The physical layout of our schools, class size, methods of instruction, even the concept of the "school marm", all are essentially the same as they might have been in Dodge City a hundred years ago. The most apparent difference, it seems, is one of size and twentieth-century conveniences, which does not necessarily constitute an improvement. Some of our schools have over two thousand students and are so ugly that, even with their laboratories, cafeterias, and gymnasiums, they resemble penal institutions rather than centers for the cultivation of free spirits. The average teacher, though more erudite than the teacher of a hundred years ago, is, at least in elementary schools, still a woman. None of these factors make a modern school necessarily a worse place to send a child for an education than a school of yesteryear. A bright child with a middle class background will do well regardless of the physical facilities and the sex of its teacher. The same assertion unfortunately cannot be made of the culturally deprived child who reaches school age in a city ghetto, with little or no contact with adult males.

It seems indeed unfair to compare our modern schools with those of the horse and buggy days, for in many ways they prepared the children better to live a full life, such as life was, and they did so in an attractive manner: the principle of the multi-class system in one huge room of a clapboard structure with a bell tower comes close to today's concept of the "open space" school, a structure that allows for a minimum of confining and separating walls, rigid methods, and paddling.

In Memphis, only three of the 160 public schools are open space schools: Sheffield, Balmoral and Ridgeway, all elementary schools miles from the Vollintine-Evergreen Community.

The prime concern of our neighborhood, however, is at present less the methodology of teaching than the racial and social-class composition of the students in our schools. It has been well documented that students of different social backgrounds within a school may affect the achievement of the entire student body. According to studies by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, this holds true for Negro areas as well as White, although for Negro areas the effects may be more severe. A quotation from a 1967 report by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights may illustrate this assertion: "...racial isolation, whether or not sanctioned by law, damages Negro students by adversely affecting both their attitudes and achievement. Negro pupils attending predominantly Negro schools tend to have lower educational aspirations, feel more frequently that they are unable to control their own destinies, have a poorer self-image, and have teachers with lower expectations than similarly situated Negro students attending predominantly white schools. These differences in part are associated with differences in the comparative social class levels of the average predominantly Negro and the average predominantly White school -- differences which, given the relatively small Negro middle class, cannot be erased without school integration."

A detailed and documented study for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights by James
SCHOOLS continued

5. Coleman reveals that the achievement of white students in predominantly white elementary schools has been strongly affected by the social-class composition of the school, but the degree of racial integration of a school has no effect upon the achievement of white students in "modally middle class" schools. There seems to be unanimous agreement that the "apparent" beneficial effect of a student body with a high proportion of white students comes not from racial composition per se, but from the better home background and higher educational aspirations that are, on the average, found among white students. 

Other studies of a similar nature also come to the conclusion that the achievement of white students in integrated schools equals that of students in predominantly white schools. In other words, even if we surmise that this is not true, and that black students score higher in integrated schools than in predominantly black schools, apparently regardless of social-class background. 

The obvious need is integrated schools, preferably with a higher percentage of white students than black students. However, this need seems to be difficult to fill. As soon as a school is on the verge of racial balance, various forces conspire to destroy it. It is hoped that with several Memphis schools, with some in our own community, and it is happening again at present. As little as four years ago, Vollentine Elementary School was only in this situation. An example of integrated excellence. It seems that we Memphians, who support nearly as many public schools in our city as gas stations and drive more cars displaying flag decals than safety stickers, have little regard for the ethical and constitutional laws of our country when the education of our children is involved. It must be pointed out, though, that meaningful education of the very young is one of the prerequisites means to moderate extremism and to turn future social liabilities into social assets.

Dr. Joe Westbrook, the new Central Area Assistant Superintendent with the Board of Education, said in his talk at the February VECMA meeting that it is hoped the decentralization of schools will arrive at a formula that is more sensitive to the needs of individual schools. He further stated that desegregation may or may not be a necessary step to arrive at such a formula for the Board to be more sensitive to the needs of individual schools. He further stated that desegregation may or may not be a necessary step to arrive at such a formula. Dr. Westbrook is an expert in the field of education in Memphis, and we in the Vollentine-Evergreen Community must consider ourselves fortunate in having a person of his experience to help us solve our school problems. With enough public interest in our schools, exciting projects such as the pairing of schools or even the construction of school parks might be started, and before we know it, our schools will be the envy of the neighborhood, at least to the age of the horseless carriage.

The March VECMA meeting will be held at McLean Baptist Church, March 15th at 8:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. No special guest is featured this month, but the committee chairmen will report on their activities. Coffee will be served at the close of the meeting.

table: VOLLENTINE OVERCROWDING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>White Students</th>
<th>Black Students</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1968-1969</td>
<td>195 (46%)</td>
<td>229 (54%)</td>
<td>424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969-1970</td>
<td>150 (35%)</td>
<td>279 (65%)</td>
<td>429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-1971</td>
<td>126 (40%)</td>
<td>422 (70%)</td>
<td>648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-1971*</td>
<td>135 (32%)</td>
<td>288 (68%)</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Address correspondence to: John Bruhwiler, 883 University St., Memphis, Tenn. 38107. For ads call Golden Shumaker, 276-6553.
NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

----- Northside High School dance sponsored by WDIA has been tentatively scheduled for this weekend. The dance was won in a School Spirit Contest sponsored by the radio station.

----- Girl Scout Sunday at Evergreen Presbyterian Church on March 7. All girls participating in scouting programs will be recognized.

----- Old Time Movies will be sponsored by the Senior High Group of Sprinkle Methodist Church on Sunday, March 7. Charlie Chaplin and Laurel and Hardy films will be shown starting at 2:30 P.M. at the church. Admission is 50¢.

----- Festival of award-winning short films at Southwestern on March 8. A total of seven films, amyndowith animation and experimental techniques, will be shown. Show time is 8:00 P.M. and admission is by contribution.

----- Snowden Junior High will hold its regular PTA meeting on March 9.

----- Piano concert by Joseph Kalichstein at 8:00 P.M. at Little Flower School. For further information call Mark Born, 272-1493.

----- Revival at McLean Baptist Church, March 28 - April 4. Dr. Roy McClain will speak nightly at 7:30 as part of their Outreach Emphasis program.

----- Little Flower Catholic Youth Organization sponsors a tutoring program for fifth and sixth grade students who need extra help in math, reading and English grammar. Classes are held every Wednesday evening from 7:00 - 8:00 P.M. at Little Flower School.

----- Puppet Show at Snowden Junior High on Friday, March 26. The Harleton Players will present "Circus" to the elementary school students at 2:00 P.M. in the auditorium.

----- Application by William Loeb to rezone the northwest corner of Jackson and North Auburndale from R-3 (duplex) to C-2 (commercial) will be on the April 1 agenda of the Memphis and Shelby County Planning Commission.

----- The application, submitted by William W. Farris, Mr. Loeb's attorney, does not state the specific use intended for the property if the request gains Planning Commission and City Council approval. C-2 is a less restrictive zoning than C-1.

----- Owners of property within a 500-foot radius of the property registered in the name of Lebora Ciociania are being notified of the public hearing on the proposed rezoning. The notification area is bounded roughly by Belvedere on the west, the south side of Crump on the south, Hawthorne on the east and the southeast corner of Vollentine on the north.

----- If the application is approved, all the property on the north side of Jackson from Auburndale to Belvedere would be zoned commercial. There's a service station on the southeast corner of Jackson and Evergreen, and commercial zoning from there west to Belvedere.

NEIGHBORHOOD continued

----- The Bishop College Recruiting Band will hold its recruiting at Northside High School on Monday, March 15, at the school.

----- Missionary Conference at Open Door Bible Church, March 24-28. Dr. Alden A. Gannott, the main speaker, is Fuller president of Southeastern Bible College.

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HEARING ANNOUNCED

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VECAA NEWS

LOUIS SILVER REPORTS FOR THE REAL ESTATE COMMITTEE

The Real Estate Committee explored the question of how to "stabilize" the real estate market in the Vollentine-Evergreen community and came up with the suggestion, "Let's take VECAA to the people."

This means setting up neighborhood meetings to discuss problems under trained leadership. In other words, residents on one block may have something concerning them that might not occur to someone living a few blocks away. Or it might be something considered too localized to warrant discussion at a VECAA membership meeting.

Work has already begun to find neighborhood representatives to convene neighborhood meetings. They may be scheduled in schools or churches for large groups. Or attendance as small as a few couples could be handled in somebody's living room.

The Real Estate Committee also favors focusing THE EVERGREEN NEWS spotlight on the men and women operating businesses in our community. More about them later.

REPORT FROM THE TREASURER

Although the operating expenses of VECAA are quite low at present, a certain amount of funds are required to cover costs related to printing and mailing. Approximately 45 family memberships have been issued at $2.50 a piece and an upcoming membership drive will hopefully attract additional supporters. Anyone wishing to join may send a check for $2.50 to John Appling, 2116 University Circle.

At the February VECAA meeting, Dr. Joe Westbrook, the new Central Area Assistant Superintendent for the Board of Education, was guest speaker. Dr. Westbrook explained the decentralization process that will take place this summer and how it will affect the neighborhood's schools. He emphasized the School Board's efforts to make the administration more sensitive to the needs of the individual schools. Each student, Dr. Westbrook said, should be given the best education possible and tailoring each school to the needs of the students will be a step in this direction. The School Board will also utilize Community Advisory Committees in this effort.

After Dr. Westbrook's presentation, a lively discussion on the problems of the neighborhood's schools followed.

SPORTS

The end of the basketball season finds all of the teams in the Vollentine/Evergreen community with winning records. Of the four school teams, the Northside High School boys placed a player on the all-conference team. The Southwestern Lynx completed their fifth consecutive winning season, compiling a 14-10 record. In other Junior high play, Snowden compiled a 9-6 record and placed a player on the all-conference team.

Northside High School had a 20-6 record at the end of the regular season and went on to finish third in its district in tournament play. Now 22-6, Northside was eliminated from the regional tournament Monday night.
Few of the remarkable men from Mississippi who made Memphis their home have contributed more to making it the "city of good abode" than Marvin Ratner.

Upon graduation from Central High School, Marvin attended Southern Law University (now Memphis State), then the University of Tennessee where he studied Accounting during the day and Law at night, becoming a C.P.A. at the age of twenty-two. After earning a Master's degree in Tax Accounting at New York University he returned to Memphis, specializing in tax, estate, and corporate work. When he joined the prominent law firm of Heiskell, Donelson, Adams, Williams & Wall as a partner, he seemed to have come a long way from Yazoo City where the bright Jewish student had been barred from a high school fraternity.

However, Mr. Ratner was to go further. Ignoring the advice of his major clients, he formed an integrated law firm, in 1967 the first such firm in the South. Almost immediately, Ratner, Thompson, Sugarmon, Lucas, and Willis were retained by the N.A.A.C.P. in its struggle to gain equal educational opportunities for blacks is northern Mississippi and Memphis. Many of the cases the firm has been retained for, or appointed to by a judge may have been controversial and often less than profitable, but never dull. In order to protect an individual's civil rights the firm has had to do battle with such adversaries as landlords, school boards, police departments, military bases, and our own City Hall.

Civil rights, however, is not the firm's only field. It also specializes in the less spectacular but more lucrative areas of tax, business, and real estate. Mr. Ratner points out with some pride that now similar integrated firms are found in Nashville, Little Rock, and Atlanta, and that the operations of their own firm are not limited to Memphis and the Mid-South but extends to major cities from coast to coast.

Mr. Ratner's devotion to the pursuit of justice, especially in regard to education, carries over into his private life. He is one of the founders of the Day Care Center; he served on the board of the now defunct Day Care Federation; he served two terms as President of the Memphis Better Schools Committee; he is Vice-President of the Tennessee Citizens' Committee for Better Schools; he is very active in the Scout movement, and he is also immediate past President of the Ballet Society of Memphis.

Marvin Ratner has a matter-of-fact, friendly manner, much like his wife Emilie, his son Carl, and his daughters Susan and Yvette, with whom he shares his home at 925 University. Typical of his personal involvement is his latest letter to the Editors of the Commercial Appeal in which he, an active Democrat, praises Mr. Nixon's switch in fiscal policy.

The matter of VollEntine versus Vollintine involves two problems. First, who was this so-called Hiram Volentine the School and the Street are named after. Second, who was responsible for changing the original E, retained in the name of the School, to the I on street signs and city maps.

Extensive research into these problems has established the following findings, which, as it turns out, are closely related: one H. Valentine signed the guest book at the Pink Palace on April 3, 1904. The records of the County Public Works Department which perished in a fire on May 1, 1933, reveal that one H. Valentine became head of County Road Repair on October 31, 1908. There is no conclusive evidence that these two men were the same person. It is interesting though that an entry dated April 7, 1921, in the sales record book of the now defunct West Memphis Walking Horse Stud mentions the purchase of a dapple-grey gelding by an H. Valentine to be shipped to a Mr. R. Valentino in Hollywood, California.

For the evolution of the name Valentine to Volentine to Vollentine to Vollintine, however, the only scientific explanation that can be furnished is spelling incompetence on the part of draftsmen or sign painters or both. Unless, of course, it was done in jest.

Dr. Unsinn is with the State Research Center. He and his dog Merriwether live in a residence on Autumn which has been removed to make room for the Expressway.