

Gunderson High School Theater. Plan to attend!

Neighborhood Alert

- Dave Noel & Marilyn Rodgers

There have been several break-ins in the VEP neighborhood (particularly around Holycon/Branham and Bluefield/Rosenbaum areas) consisting of car break-ins, garage break-ins, and at least one home break-in. In addition, other neighboring communities are also reporting similar break-ins. One example was a group that used a con tactic to enter the home of an elderly woman and then robbed her. She lives near Foxworthy and Almaden.



Should someone knock on your door long and loud, and then ask for someone you don't know, call 911. This could mean they are checking the house to see if it is clear to rob. By calling 911, you may help the police solve open robbery cases by getting a name to match fingerprints collected at unsolved thefts.

Please be alert to any suspicious activity in our neighborhood, and report it!

Fraud alert

San Jose Police Department's Burglary Unit is investigating several reports of burglars impersonating Water District employees when contacting senior citizens at their homes. These impersonators say they are with the water district, doing work in the area due to problems with water lines.



Perpetrators say they need to do water tests. Typically, they will ask the victim to perform some task in one part of the house or yard while going to other parts of the house and burglarizing it. The thief then flees after taking money, jewelry, passports, guns, and/or other small items.

Do not allow any unscheduled visitor, repairman, or "company employee" of any type into your home. Call 9-1-1 immediately to report any suspicious person, vehicle, or activity in your neighborhood.

SUSPECT(S) DESCRIPTION: Several people appear to be committing these burglaries. They are usually men, 30-35

years old, 5'-10" to 6'-0" tall, with short brown hair. On occasion, they wear orange work vests.

Anyone with information on these crimes is urged to call the San Jose Police Department Burglary Unit at (408) 277-4401. If you want to remain anonymous, call Crime Stoppers at (408) 947-STOP.

My opinion: Development at Capitol-Narvaez

-Dave Fadness

40,000 riders per day. That's what overly-optimistic transportation planners forecast in 1981 for first-year Guadalupe light rail patronage. It was to be a stunning success, the basis for a new urban way of life in Silicon Valley, an economic and fiscal boon, a beginning to the end of traffic congestion and urban sprawl.

Transit planners designed accordingly, building the Guadalupe system and buying light rail vehicles to support that expected glut of users. Expensive park-n-ride lots were designed to accommodate hundreds who would leave their cars behind as they whisked, free of congestion to work and shopping destinations each day.



More miles have been built and cities have boosted zoning densities wherever possible to "support" our light rail investment. But after eighteen years since the grand opening of service, we're still waiting for anything like the predicted ridership to materialize. Traffic congestion is unabated. Large, mostly empty parking lots sprout weeds and invite leased use for storage by auto dealerships and construction companies.

Reality has re-established itself: Californians *do* love their cars, and are perfectly willing to pay for public transit services they hope other people will use. Despite billions invested, as a percentage, growth in transit ridership hasn't even kept pace with increases in our valley's population.

VTA appears to be admitting this sad turn of events.

VEP members will recall that 535 housing units were built at the Chynoweth-Ohlone Light Rail Station a few years ago. 195 of them replaced much of the park-n-ride lot there. Now, perennially cash-strapped VTA is proposing urban development on the south park-n-ride lot at the Capitol Light Rail Station.

Before Pat Dando left the city council, she approached us with a proposal to build senior housing on the Capitol park-n-ride lot. In exchange for community support, the city would require that a small park be built on the north side of Bridget Drive, between Narvaez and Canoas Creek. Neighbors objected. The idea went silent—or so we thought.

It's now being reconsidered. VTA requested and now has two detailed proposals from developers. Both will use the entire park-n-ride lot south of Capitol Expressway and the adjacent 2-acre county-owned parcel immediately south of it. This is what is being proposed for the combined 8.9-acre site:

Bridge Housing: 23,000 square-feet of retail plus 380 residential units. Their proposal includes the small park on Bridget Drive.

Avalon Bay: 10,000 square-feet of retail plus 628 residential units. No park is included in their proposal.

Residential units would be a mix of rental apartments and owner-occupied condominiums. Buildings will be four stories



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tall. (As proposed, both projects would exceed the scope and density of the 355-unit, 14.9-acre *Bella Villagio* complex on Capitol Expressway at Vistapark Drive.)

All that will remain for those who drive to this transit station is the small lot on the north side of Capitol.

VEP has long-standing, major concerns about the impacts on traffic congestion and safety of *any* development at or near that site. Here's why...

The ramp meter on the northbound Route 87 approach causes a traffic nightmare at Capitol/Narvaez every workday morning. Westbound traffic backs up on Capitol past Home



Depot. Eastbound traffic often backs up across Capitol itself as commuters attempt to turn left onto Narvaez, which is gridlocked in both directions from the freeway approach. More than just inconvenient, the situation there is dangerous.

No one is proposing a solution; the city just keeps adding cars by approving more high-density ("smart-growth") development. In fact, by way of twisted logic, the city's official stance is that the level of service at the ramp meter is "B" (much better than the minimum acceptable "D"). That assertion clears the way for more growth--without any requirement for traffic mitigation. VTA takes the city's word for it. We suffer the consequences.

VEP is not opposed to growth. We are opposed to growth that makes conditions worse in our neighborhoods and city. To reflect that spirit, for several years VEP's member-approved *Goals & Objectives* have included these specific directives:

Monitor opportunities for improvements in traffic level of service at Capitol/Narvaez/northbound 87 onramp.

Work with the City to ensure that impacts of any proposed high-density development along the Guadalupe Corridor are fully mitigated.

Our G&O have been distributed to elected city and county officials, so these concerns should be well-known to key decision-makers. We've also drawn from these points repeatedly in letters and public testimony regarding development proposals in our area. So far, our pleas have gone unanswered.

If VTA removes all but the north parking lot, virtually all options may be foreclosed for traffic relief at the ramp meter—unless they're willing to give-up the north lot, as well. All that could be done otherwise is to move the freeway approach farther north along Narvaez. However, doing that could run afoul of Caltrans' requirement for one-mile separation between freeway approaches; Curtner is only 1.2-miles from the existing onramp.

What we're saying is this: Go ahead with whatever you want to do at the Capitol Light Rail Station, VTA, BUT first show us a plan and secure funding for a solution to the northbound Route 87 freeway approach problem.

After all, improving transportation is what we pay VTA to do.

Blossom Valley Christmas Tree Fund

At our October meeting, VEP members unanimously adopted fundraising efforts for two worthwhile causes in our community. One of these is the *Blossom Valley Christmas Tree*



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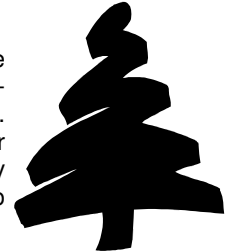
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Fund.

As many of you know, VEP members **Dann** and **Kathy Decker** share their Christmas spirit with Blossom Valley and the City of San Jose by elaborately decorating their 75-foot Cedar tree on Devon Park Court. Barrels are placed around the tree to collect donations for the *Second Harvest Food Bank* and *City Team Ministries*.

This year, the Deckers need help raising the \$7,000 it costs to bring the Christmas tree to life and keep it living during the holiday season. So, they have established the *Blossom Valley Christmas Tree Fund*, a non-profit organization dedicated to raising just enough money to allow them to decorate and maintain the tree, while collecting food and toys for the needy.

If you would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to the Blossom Valley Christmas Tree Fund, please send it to: P.O. Box 18053, San Jose, CA 95158-8053; or deposit it directly to the "Blossom Valley Christmas Tree Fund" at any Wells Fargo Bank.



If the Blossom Valley Christmas Tree Fund fails to collect sufficient funds to decorate the Decker's tree, donations will be sent directly to Second Harvest Food Bank and City Team Ministries. Your donations will be put to good use.

If you have any questions regarding the Christmas Tree Fund, please email them to: bvchristmastreefund@hotmail.com.

VEP, the Deckers, Second Harvest Food Bank, and City Team Ministries sincerely thank you for your help and wish you a warm and happy holiday season!

[Ed. Note: A Christmas tree lighting ceremony is planned for Sunday, November 26 @ 6 pm Chynoweth Avenue at Devon Park Court. Please be there. It's not required, but bring a donation if you can.]

Martial Cottle Park development update

- Greg West

The following is an update of the progress and plans for development of Martial Cottle Park as reported by the County Parks Department to the County Parks & Recreation Com-

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VEP is Working for you

- ✓Volunteers are needed to plan, organize, and/or participate in our 2007 Memorial Day Parade & Festival. Contact Dave Fadness at 578-6428 if you are willing to help.
- ✓VEP newsletter preparation and mailing for January-- volunteers needed to help with annual membership drive to 2200 homes.

Beautification planned for Branham-Narvaez

-Dave Fadness

VEP applied for a San Jose Beautiful grant to round-out the funding we need to install irrigation, plant 33 trees, and apply mulch on the empty, barren lot at the corner of Branham Lane and Narvaez Avenue.

This will be a volunteer project, so your help will be needed.

We've had great success so far. The city prepared the landscape plan, selected the tree species, and agreed to install water service for us. *Our City Forest* is donating the trees. Browning-Ferris Industries is donating and delivering 165 cubic yards of wood-chip mulch. With a grant from San Jose Beautiful, all the pieces will be in place...



The rest is up to us.

Proposed dates for this project are two Saturdays and Sundays, January 20 & 21 and/or January 27 & 28. If we get plenty of volunteers, this big job will be quick and easy for all of us. You don't have to be there both days or both weekends, and we'll be happy to have you join us even if it's for only a few hours. Please set aside some time for one or both of those weekends—and let me know which will work best for you.

We'd like to have at least sixty volunteers. Please call me at 578-6428 or email me at drfadness@sbcglobal.net for more information or to volunteer. Be there for our community.

Help needed--VEP Hospitality Coordinator

- Marilyn Rodgers

How about becoming more involved in your community association? One opportunity that is open right now is for the office of Hospitality Coordinator.

What does this person do, you may be asking? This person helps make new residents and new members feel more welcome to our community, and to our meetings and events. Responsibilities currently include making sure that we have drinks and supplies available at our meetings.

In your role as Hospitality Coordinator, you will receive lots of support from the current members of the Executive Board. A brief orientation will also be provided by our past Hospitality Coordinator.

This is also an opportunity to be creative and to have your ideas about hospitality heard and implemented. Please notify me or any board member of your interest.

mission at its November 1st meeting.

- County and State Parks & Recreation staffs met on September 12 to discuss environmental reports and documents required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), project coordination and management, and their respective general plans for Martial Cottle Park development.

- A request for proposal soliciting master planning consultants closed on October 20. A total of seven consultants bid on the project. The RFP process included a tour of the property by prospective consultants in mid-September. Interviews of consultants that submitted RFPs are scheduled for mid-November. County Parks plans to forward a contract for a planning consultant to the Board of Supervisors for approval in early 2007. Master Planning is slated to start in early spring 2007 and be completed by March, 2009.

- The County and San Jose's Department of Public Works are still negotiating the right-of-way needed for Branham Lane widening. County Parks very recently received a draft agreement from the city.

- The County is working with San Jose Parks, Recreation, & Neighborhood Services staff on the planning of a community gardens (and access to the property for that purpose). Consultant selection for the production of design and development documents for the gardens should be done by the end of November, with a project start in early spring 2007. The community gardens development will happen well in advance of master plan completion.

- Martial Cottle Park planning is budgeted (through the Park Charter Fund and a grant from the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority) and is moving ahead, despite the County's projected \$200-million general budget shortfall.

Upcoming Volunteer Events

Unless otherwise specified, be sure to call Maria at 226-4614 to find out specifics and volunteer for these events.

- ✓Improve the vacant property on the northeast corner of Branham and Narvaez. Install irrigation, plant trees, and spread mulch. Two days, tentatively late-January, 2007. Volunteers are also needed for subsequent ongoing maintenance (tree watering and litter control).

Volunteer now for 2007 Memorial Day event

-Dave Fadness

Planning has already begun for next year's *Memorial Day Parade & Festival* to be held on May 28, 2007. Our aim is to make this event bigger and better every year, and you can be part of that winning effort. Your early involvement is encouraged.

We need help finding a marching band, family entertainment of all kinds, sponsors, and donors. We need new ideas and



volunteers to assist with the zillions of details necessary to make this event successful for kids of all ages in our community. Let me know if you or someone you know can add to the fun.

If you or a neighbor have an antique, classic, or hotrod car, have them give me a call if they're interested in showing it off in our parade. If you belong to a service group or other organization, we'd like to have you there with us—especially if you'd be in costume--anything from square dancing or scouts to... well, you name it.

Call me at 578-6428 or email me at drfadness@sbcglobal.net if you'd like to help with our third-annual Memorial Day event.

Above all, please be sure to mark your calendars and plan to attend with your family and friends on Monday, May 28, 2007.

VEP Community Service Awards

- Dave Noel

More than 20 years ago, VEP began rewarding graduating high school seniors with exceptional volunteer service stipends for post-secondary or vocational training.

If you know a high school senior with an outstanding volunteer record, make sure he or she knows about our award. If they attend Gunderson or Andrew Hill, they can be nominated by their administrators. If they attend another school, you can nominate them for our At-Large award, which is granted to a graduating senior from any school who lives in San Jose and is nominated by a VEP member.

Our 2007 Community Service Award application forms will be published in the February VEP News, and also on our website. The application deadline will be April 24, 2007.

I plan to form a committee to propose some changes to the Community Service Award program. Please contact me at (408) 266-7183 or DNoel1234@aol.com if you are willing to join this committee and/or would like to help select our 2007 award winners.

Your expertise needed—a VEP Foundation?

-Marilyn Rodgers

One of VEP's goals this year is to explore the positive and negative aspects of pursuing non-profit status. We need assistance in determining which IRS code is most appropriate for our organization and its goals. In addition, we are considering the possibility of setting up a VEP Foundation. This would allow us access to additional funding for projects important to the VEP community.

If you have experience/expertise in this area, or can highly

recommend someone who does, please contact me, or one of our executive board members.

Unclaimed property may be yours

- Dave Noel

The California State Controller's office maintains a list of unclaimed property. Check to see whether any of it is yours by visiting <http://scoweb.sco.ca.gov/UCP/>

VEP President's message

-Marilyn Rodgers

November elections have come and gone, and the holidays are upon us! As usual, the VEP Executive Board continues to work on your behalf, with lots of exciting upcoming activities and events.

As you receive this newsletter, you will be celebrating Thanksgiving. We can all be thankful for our loved ones, our wonderful community of VEP, the exciting city of San Jose that we are a part of, and for the opportunity to live in a free country!



► Please join your neighbors in celebrating the start of the Christmas and holiday season by coming to the Blossom Valley Tree Lighting Ceremony sponsored by the **Dann & Katherine Decker** at 6 pm on Sunday, November 26th. This event is held on the corner of Chynoweth Avenue and Devon Park Court (just a couple of blocks east of Gunderson High School). If you haven't as yet donated to the Blossom Valley Christmas Tree Fund, and would like to, see details in the article included in this newsletter.

► Plan to attend VEP's General Meeting on Tuesday, November 28th at 7:30 pm in the Vista Park Community Center. It will be a very exciting meeting.

► As we begin the rainy season, the condition of our streets worsens--and potholes seem to be everywhere. We know this is a big concern to all in VEP, so see the article in this newsletter by Dave Fadness on what you can do to help.

► VTA is proposing to develop housing and commercial uses in place of the park-n-ride lot at the corner of Capital Expressway and Narvaez. The VEP Executive Board is now gathering information and discussing concerns with elected officials. We will keep you informed as more information becomes

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► Beautification project at Branham and Narvaez. In January, VEP plans to develop the vacant area at the corner of Branham and Narvaez. Dave Fadness is coordinating this effort and will be providing a brief overview at our November meeting. This is an exciting opportunity to make a dramatic improvement in our community. Your volunteer help will be required.

► There is no VEP newsletter in December. We will be communicating by e-mail alerts during this time. If you have not already provided us your e-mail address, and would like to receive these communications from VEP, please send me your e-mail address.

► January will be a very special VEP meeting. John Ottman will be our special guest speaker—a Gunderson High graduate who has become a success at scoring and editing Hollywood films and TV—one of San Jose's own.

This event celebrates education and how important it is for everyone to stay in school to achieve their goals. We'll also celebrate, thank, and acknowledge the many volunteers we have in our community. To accommodate the turn-out we expect, this event will be held at the Gunderson High School Theater on January 30th. Plan to attend.

Happy Thanksgiving!

The view from Council District 6

-San Jose Councilmember Ken Yeager

~ Remove blight, recycle automobiles ~

As part their towing service contract, tow company operators have agreed to assist the City and the public with the voluntary surrender of unwanted vehicles. The contracted tow



companies have agreed to remove and dispose of relinquished vehicles at no cost to the registered owner or the City. This is an opportunity for homeowners who have an unwanted vehicle in their front yards or on the street to have that vehicle removed.

For more information, call Code Enforcement Division at (408) 277-4528 and ask for the "Voluntary Tow Program". The vehicle must be free of all liens and loans and you must have the pink slip.

~ Should high rises be built in our neighborhoods? ~

At a recent city council meeting, I was the sole council member to vote against a proposal to expand the current downtown design guidelines to allow 120-foot high rises throughout the City of San Jose. I voted against this proposal because I believe that a larger community discussion is needed regarding the potential impact of building high rises over 100-feet tall outside the Downtown core and in North San Jose.

To view the video clip of this discussion, please visit <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/district6/>. This clip is located on the homepage of my website and is posted just after my welcome letter.

[Ed. Note: This announcement appeared in Ken Yeager's 11/1/06 Newsletter.]

San Jose City Hall Customer Service

- Dave Noel

The city of San Jose has a handy phone number for information on just about anything related to city government: (408) 535-3500.

VEP Daffodil Days: another success

-Dave Fadness

Under the capable leadership of **Debra Suydam**, VEP volunteers did double duty on Saturday, November 4th. Representing *VEP Community Association*, and starting at the entrance to Meadows Park, they planted 240 daffodils and 25 each Ithurriel's Spear and One-Leaved Onion, two beautiful native bulb varieties.

Representing *Friends of Guadalupe River*, our volunteers then planted 160 daffodils along the Guadalupe River trail, where Chynoweth Avenue dead-ends at the percolation pond.

Bulbs were provided by *San Jose Beautiful* as part of their city-wide Daffodil Days. This being VEP's sixth consecutive year of participation in SJB's annual event, we have planted thousands of bulbs in our community.

After winter rains soften the ground, forty Naked Lady bulbs will be planted at the Vistapark Drive cul-de-sac near Hyde Park Drive. Those bulbs were donated by a VEP member.

Special thanks go to **Jeff Ismail, Dave Noel, Michael Strauss, Josie Supencheck, and Debra Suydam** for the key roles they played in the success of this project. Area residents are sure to be pleased when hundreds of happy blooms brighten their days early next spring.



Meadows Park (on Bluefield Drive, near Vistapark Drive)

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VEP's Team Leader, Debra Suydam at Meadows Park



VEP volunteers at Meadows Park



Josie Supencheck at the Guadalupe River trail.



VEP volunteer, Jeff Ismail at the Guadalupe River trail.



VEP volunteer, Dave Noel at the Guadalupe River trail.

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VEP endorses fundraising for Pearl Library

-Dave Fadness

At our October meeting, VEP members unanimously adopted fundraising efforts for Pearl Avenue Library enhancements.

Groundbreaking occurred September 30 on our new 14,000 square foot facility, expected to be completed in May, 2008. Although its construction is paid for by a general obligation bond voters passed in 2000, that source of funding cannot legally be used to buy interior fixtures, furniture, or equipment. City revenue for those purposes is being used, but there isn't enough to supply the full needs of an ambitious program that will build twenty branch libraries city-wide.



A non-profit citizen group, the *San Jose Public Library Foundation* is asking the community served by each new branch library to help raise funds to fill the unmet needs for its own library. To get the job done right, to make your own branch library the best it can be, they're appealing for tax-deductible donations from citizens like us.

Donation funds are carefully managed by the Foundation (not the city) and earmarked for use only at the library a donor specifies with their gift. The Foundation designates what will be bought, then uses special discounts available to the city to make purchases. In this way, our donations buy what's needed at the best available price.

Patrons of the new Almaden Branch Library raised \$245,000. The results are impressive in the range of furnishings, extended collections, computers, and other features that would not have been possible there without broad and generous community support.

Our community can (and should) do at least as well for the Pearl Avenue Library.

Please make a tax-deductible investment—small or large—in your library's future. You can even arrange to donate in small, periodic installments. Here is how...

- ★ Donate online at www.sanjoselibraryfoundation.org.
- ★ Print donation form from www.sanjoselibraryfoundation.org.
- ★ Write a check payable to "San Jose Public Library Foundation." Mail it to 150 E. San Fernando Street, San Jose, CA 95112-3580.
- ★ Call or email me and I'll get the form and mailing envelope to you right away (578-6428 or drfadness@sbcglobal.net).

Be sure to specify that your gift is for the Pearl Avenue Branch Library.

This is a chance for you to leave a legacy for future generations to enjoy. Donations of \$100 to \$999 will be acknowledged on the library's *Community Donor Wall*. Gifts of \$1000 or more will be recognized on the library's *Legacy Donor Wall*. Special recognition (naming of rooms or features in the library) will be given for donations of \$5000 or more. Call or email for details.

To help with or learn more about this library funding campaign, call me at (408) 578-6428 (drfadness@sbcglobal.net); call Mary McLane at (408) 808-2174; or visit The Library Foundation's website at www.sanjoselibraryfoundation.org.

Please help make our Pearl Avenue Library the best that it can be. Donate *today!*

What's happening at the Pearl Library?

The Pearl Avenue Branch Library Project was recently awarded to Bogard Construction Company by the San Jose City Council. Bogard is currently moving equipment onto the site, coordinating among various subcontractors, and coordinating with utility companies for disconnection of the utility lines.



Protection of site trees to be saved will begin within the next few days. Demolition of the existing building and parking lot will start in December, and grading of the site thereafter.

For additional or future project or site construction information regarding, contact Project Manager **Domenic Onorato** at (408) 535-8350 or domenic.onorato@sanjoseca.gov.

Photos of construction activities will be available online at www.NewSanJoseLibraries.com.

Contact information for Bogard Construction Company will be provided once their trailer telephone is connected. They may be able to address immediate issues or concerns at the project site.

[Ed. Note: City Librarian Jane Light has agreed to submit monthly updates on Pearl Avenue Library construction for publication in our newsletter.]

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Did you get your flu shot?

-Marilyn Rodgers

If you haven't already gotten your flu shot for this year, it isn't too late! This is the single most important action you can take to protect yourself and your family from the flu.

Each year several thousand people die from the flu, so help protect yourself and decrease the spread of the flu to others by getting a flu shot.



If you are in a high risk group, it is even more important for you to get a flu shot. High risk groups include: people over the age of 60, healthcare providers, those of you caring for an elderly or chronically ill individual, and those of who have a chronic illness.

As concern about the potential for a pandemic flu increases, Centers for Disease Control, and other healthcare agencies are highly recommending that all adults and teenagers have yearly flu shots. The usual yearly flu shot will not protect you from a pandemic type flu, but does decrease the likelihood of a flu virus's ability to continue to adapt (particularly the severe type--like Bird flu--and then be able to spread from human being to human being). Of course, as with all healthcare interventions, it is always best to check with your own healthcare provider/physician in determining any special considerations that may apply to you.

This year, ample supplies of the flu vaccine are available. It usually takes 2- to 3-weeks following immunization for your body to develop adequate protection. The recommended timeframe for having a flu shot starts during the first part of October and extends through the first of January--the sooner the better.

Additional recommendations for avoiding flu and colds this season include: get plenty of rest, eat lots of fruits and vegetables, wash your hands often, use tissues for coughs and sneezes (and offer tissues to others), and stay home when you are ill.

Here's to a happy and healthy (flu-free) holiday season!

Editing help wanted

-Dave Fadness

If you have a knack for writing, please step forward to help with an important job for VEP. I've been editing VEP newsletters since 1992. It's time for an infusion of new ideas and the help of a person who can fill in on those occasions when this old hand is away on travel. (I'd even step aside if you want the job!)



We have an excellent and diverse flow of articles each month from many contributors. Some editing is typically required—shortening articles, repairing grammar (my weakness) and spelling, ferreting meaning from tangled sentences, etc. A doctorate in English Grammar is not required, believe me!

Our editor also uses common sense in deciding what will be of general interest to our readers. Most of our contributors understand and write for our audience, so it's rare that we refuse to print an article. We do our best to avoid commercial pitches—even from our advertisers, who have never even tried.

Most articles are submitted in WORD format. Almost all are emailed to us now, so keyboarding skill isn't as much an issue as it once was for two-fingered typists like me. Needless to say, you'll need to have email access. The majority of VEP execs use PCs, so it would be best that whoever takes this on be a PC user, too.

We use Microsoft *Publisher* for our newsletter paste-ups. It's very easy to learn and use, so experience is not required. VEP supplies the software. I will provide all the training you may need.

The newsletter format and ads are set up, waiting for text to be poured in each month. In all, it's a fair amount of work, but very satisfying. We get many compliments on the content and quality of the *NEWS*.

Call me at 578-6428 if you have questions about or an interest in helping. I'd love to hear from you!

Update on Chynoweth traffic calming efforts

-Marilyn Rodgers

Following presentations and discussion on traffic calming at our September VEP meeting, the San Jose Department of Transportation (DOT) agreed to develop conceptual drawings for VEP to see and evaluate. These drawings will focus on possible additional options to decrease speed and increase safety along Chynoweth Avenue, between New World/Gaundabert and Pearl.

These drawings will allow us to visualize one or more configurations of a single lane on that stretch of Chynoweth. Bike lanes will also be included along Chynoweth for both single and double lane options.



Following VEP's October Executive Board meeting, we requested that DOT also complete another traffic monitoring study. Our intent was to measure possible effects of an increased number of drivers (as the original study was done just as school was ending for the Summer at Gunderson), and to determine how effective the newly implemented traffic calming measures have been. DOT agreed to do so.

To date, it appears that overall speed of drivers along this route has decreased. However, many drivers are becoming used to the electronic speed monitoring signs, and are ignoring them. Please continue to be good role models and slow down along this dangerous stretch of road!

After the New Year, information and proposals being developed by DOT will be presented at a VEP meeting for our consideration and approval.

Street Smarts traffic safety

-Carrie Wright (*)

Over half of the children who died last year in Santa Clara County died as a result of traffic-related crashes. Motorist actions such as red-light running, stop sign violations, and speeding are the leading behaviors contributing to this somber statistic.

Drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists all need to be more aware of their behavior and surroundings, and drivers need to pay special attention around schools and in neighborhoods where

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children are present.

We see a rise in the number of pedestrian-related fatalities each year as the days get shorter and it gets dark earlier. It's especially important to make yourself more visible if you are a pedestrian or bicyclist. Wearing bright colors and reflectors is one way to take personal responsibility for your own safety and that of your children.

If we all pay more attention to safety, we can reduce the number of accidents that will occur. For more information about *Street Smarts* traffic safety, contact your neighborhood coordinators, **Cindy Bosworth** or **Dave Fadness**—their contact information is shown on the mailing page of this newsletter.

[(*) Ed. Note: Carrie Wright works on the City of San Jose Department of Transportation's Street Smarts Program.]

Hats off to this volunteer!

-Dave Fadness

Although she has a full-time job, **Garnet Martinez** spends the better part of one full day of her own time each month picking up litter along Branham Lane, between Snell and Vistapark. She does this huge job on her day off, and the street looks great when she's done.

Garnet started doing the street cleanup just over a year ago because she often walks on Branham Lane and was disgusted by all the litter there. So, she signed up to volunteer when the city had a booth at the Community Fest in south San Jose.



She used to clean the entire area up to the fence on the south side of Branham, but had to scale it back to about ten feet off the road since it was taking her five hours just to do that.

Garnet says it's frustrating to have to clean up someone else's trash on her day off, but she gets a real sense of satisfaction while doing this work. It also allows her to enjoy the beauty of the big fields, the wildlife, and the view of the mountains—taking her back to her farm life roots in North Dakota.

VEP thanks Garnet for her dedication to maintaining the appearance of our community.

Potholes have you in a rut?

-Dave Fadness

A recent survey disclosed the fact that San Jose streets and roads are in the worst condition of all U.S. cities studied. That came as no surprise to VEP members. Our streets have crumbled noticeably in recent years and it seems like nothing is being done to correct it.



If anything, the schedule for periodic maintenance is being stretched on the city's 2,260 miles of streets, adding more years between cost-effective surface repairs that prolong pavement life. The result will be disastrous; deferred maintenance will mean

that many streets and roads will fail prematurely, then need to be torn up and reconstructed. Reconstruction is very expensive and money seems always to be in short supply.

The costs of delaying maintenance are borne by taxpayers in more ways than one. Beyond street repair and reconstruction, we also pay on an ongoing basis to repair our cars. Shock absorbers, tires and wheels, front-end alignments, and other auto suspension repairs caused by bad pavement conditions can be very expensive. We also pay in time spent getting those repairs done.

What can we do? First, promptly report any problems you encounter. If those in charge don't know about a problem, you can bet it won't get fixed. Don't assume they already know about it or that someone else will call. The squeaky wheel principle applies: drawing more attention to a given problem increases the likelihood that action will be taken to correct it.

If there's a pothole or failing street surface in your neighborhood let the city know by calling Central Dispatch at (408) 277-4373 during regular work hours. You can also call the city's customer center anytime day or night at (408) 535-3500. Be ready to identify the address or location of the problem.

According to their website, San Jose has two city-wide pothole patch crews that respond to priority complaints within the next day after they are received. These crews are radio dispatched and carry cell phones.

If the problem is on a county road or expressway, call County Roads at (408) 494-2750. For freeways or state highways, call Caltrans at (408) 436-0930.

Second, after you've called in the problem, let VEP know

about it by calling or emailing me or anyone listed on the mailing page of this newsletter. We'll compile a list and submit it to the department and elected representative(s) of the appropriate jurisdiction.

Finally, if your car is damaged as a result of hitting a pothole, file a damage claim against the agency (city, county, etc.) that's responsible for the street or road. Please note, however, as reported in Dennis Rockstroh's November 5 Mercury-News *Action Line* column, "Jurisdictions are not responsible for damage caused by lack of road repair unless the pothole or other damage had been reported to the [responsible agency]."

Obviously, calling to report a street repair need is important, both to get the problem fixed and to get help fixing your car if it's not.

VEP Community Calendar

Thu, Nov 23 = Happy Thanksgiving!

Sun, Nov 26 @ 6 pm = Christmas Tree lighting ceremony, Chynoweth Avenue at Devon Park Court.

Tue, Nov 28 @ 7:30 pm = VEP meeting at the Vista Park Community Room (on Hyde Park Drive). See page 1 for agenda.

Sat or Sun, Jan 20-21 and 27-28 (tentative) = VEP's Branham-Narvaez beautification project (lots of volunteers needed).

Tue, Jan 30 @ 7:30 pm = VEP Special Event: Hollywood acclaimed TV-film scoring and editing talent, **John Ottman**--plus--VEP volunteer recognition.

John Ottman to speak on January 30th

-Dave Fadness

John Ottman grew up in the Thousand Oaks neighborhood near Terrell School. He attended Terrell Elementary and John Muir Middle Schools before graduating from Gunderson in 1982.

John worked his way through a formal education in his filmmaking art at DeAnza and USC. He now lives and works in the Hollywood area. You can read his biography at www.johnottman.com.

John Ottman has composed, edited, scored, and directed an impressive number of Hollywood films. *Superman Returns* is his second work with **Kevin Spacey**—his first was *The Usual Suspects*. He has also done composing for numerous television commercials.



We're proud to have this energetic and creative product of our community agree to do a special presentation for VEP at 7:30 pm on January 30, 2007.

John will also do presentations that day at the following schools: Willow Glen High School, Leland High School, Gunderson High School, and DeAnza College.

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Neighborhood scuttlebutt

-Dave Fadness

Martial Cottle Park: (See Greg West's article in this newsletter.)

Branham Lane widening project: The City Attorney's Office has finally transmitted a draft right-of-way land transfer agreement to the county. Staffs of both agencies are still working through some of the details—evidently a very complicated task.

After the city and county approve this agreement, environmental and preliminary design processes can begin. City staff assures us that VEP's input will be sought.

If you are interested in joining VEP's Branham Widening Committee, call me at 578-6428. Meetings with city staff will resume soon after the land transfer deal is formally approved.

Snell Avenue widening project: County staff has been speaking to Walter Lester on several issues, including setting a meeting with him and city staff to discuss getting right-of-way now for his Lifetime Estate frontage on Snell.



Median island landscaping on Vistapark Drive: VEP has been working for more than a year to have the landscaping completed on Vistapark Drive, just north of Capitol Expressway. Trees were planted there, but the cobblestone treatment used on other median islands to the north was never completed on this short segment.

San Jose Public Works (PW) is now saying that developers Pinn Brothers Fine Homes and KB Homes have no obligations for any additional work on this median island—and we're told that the city doesn't have the funding to finish this job. PW is working with the Department of Transportation (DOT) to see what is required to give this median a "finished" look. If a solution is available, they promise to let us know.

Chynoweth Avenue traffic calming: Per our request, San Jose's Department of Transportation is now preparing a drawing that will show us what changes might be made if Chynoweth Avenue is reduced to one lane in both directions between Gaundabert/New World and Pearl Avenue. Bike lanes will also be included.

This drawing will be discussed at a scheduled VEP meeting on Chynoweth traffic calming solutions (to be announced).

Neighborhood break-ins: Reports of home break-ins and vandalism continue in our southern San Jose neighborhoods. VEP is having a police department presentation on this subject at our November 28 meeting.

Meanwhile, please keep your doors locked and *always* be on the look-out for and report suspicious activities in your neighborhood. The best 24/7 defense against criminals is an alert and watchful community of caring neighbors who know each other.

San Jose Go-Green mini-grants

Applications are now being accepted for San Jose Go-Green mini-grants. Teachers, principals, environmental or science club advisors, student environmental or other leadership



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clubs or groups, custodians, parents, and PTAs and PTOs of San Jose K-12 schools, public or private, are eligible to apply.

Mini-grants, ranging from \$500 to \$2000, are intended to foster school-wide and in-classroom recycling and other environmental actions and environmental education in San Jose's public and private K-12 schools.

It is intended that these grants help establish, maintain or expand on-campus recycling or composting programs or other sustainable environmental programs. Grants are intended for projects that work directly with and benefit K-12 students. Although creative approaches are welcomed, these are examples of eligible projects:



- Purchase of supplies and equipment to promote recycling and other environmental programs on campus;
- Purchase of supplies and equipment that stress reuse and waste reduction, such as refillable water bottles and reusable lunch containers;
- Purchase of reusable promotional items made of recycled materials including posters, caps, tee-shirts, water bottles, mugs, school supplies, magnets, reusable lunch equipment,
- Purchase of student, teacher, custodian, school administrator and parent award items and award event supplies to recognize individuals or groups who were part of the program's success;
- Payment for environmental field trips, school assemblies, presentations, entertainment;
- Purchase of environmental education books, videos, DVDs, posters and supplies;
- Payment for teacher training;
- Purchase of materials to allow construction, planting and/or maintenance of school gardens including composting, worm bins, tree plantings, and native, drought tolerant, or non-invasive bulbs and plants;
- Purchase of litter pick-up gloves, tools, carts that enhance litter removal campaigns; and
- Other creative ideas, which would promote school recycling and go-green actions.

Mini-grants are funded jointly by San Jose Beautiful and the City of San Jose Go-Green Schools Program of Environmental Services.

Mini-grants are due and must be postmarked or emailed by 5 pm on December 8. Send them to **Deb Bogart** at

City of San Jose Go-Green Schools Program
Environmental Services Department
200 E. Santa Clara Street, Tower 10th Floor
San Jose, CA 95113-1905

(Cont'd next page)

2Deb.Bogart@sanjoseca.gov

Funding will be awarded on January 25, 2007.

More information or an application form can be obtained by calling Ms. Bogart at (408) 975-2533.

Oak Grove School District

-Manny Barbara, Superintendent

This has been a good budget year for education. Our financial fortunes are very much connected to the economic health of our state. If the state economy is positive, education tends to benefit as well. As a result, we will be able to maintain critical District programs through the 2007-2008 school year.

Our Oak Grove School District budget priorities have focused on the following:

Maintaining our Class Size Reduction Program at 20-to-1 at grades K-3.

Maintaining our Extended Day Kindergarten Program at all our schools, one of only two districts in this county to do so.

Maintaining our Visual and Performing Arts Program for all students at grades 4-6.

Maintaining our Intermediate School Counseling Program, thanks to additional state funds.

Maintaining our Intermediate School- After School Sports Program.

This year's state budget follows years where school funding had been cut severely, leading to over \$4-million in budget reductions in Oak Grove District alone. We are extremely fortunate that our community has supported us with renewal of our Parcel Tax. Without the additional funds from the Parcel Tax, we could not continue to offer the high quality programs such as the ones just listed. Thank you!

As always, please feel free to contact me any time if you have questions or concerns. Our web site is www.ogsd.k12.ca.us. There, you can access all Board policies, dates, agendas and summaries of all Board meetings, and an assortment of other information about the Oak Grove School District.

Stadium lights at Gunderson?

- Veronica Grijalva Lewis, SJUSD Board Trustee

San Jose Unified School District will be working with our communities in a process to determine if stadium lights will be installed at our high school athletic fields. The opportunity for evening activities can build strong community and school spirit, but we also realize there might be concerns the community wishes to bring forward.



San Jose Unified has a public engagement policy that encourages our stakeholders to have an active voice as the Board of Education attentively listens to your concerns while information is gathered and addressed. We will keep you informed as we move forward with this process.

In compliance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), during November the District will contract to have an environmental impact study conducted on the surrounding communities. Information will be gathered and a formal analysis and report generated.

The District will hold an administrative Kick-Off Meeting in early December to inform site administrators and athletic directors of the process, so they too can help keep the community informed.

Throughout December and into February, each site will hold two meetings with their communities to enlist their support and seek to understand and mitigate any concerns surrounding the installation of stadium lights.

There will be a Public Hearing at a regularly scheduled Board of Education meeting where once again community concerns can be gathered. If the school board approves stadium lights, installation would be completed by August 2007.

My hope is you will join me and others in our community as we begin the process of looking at stadium lighting for Gunderson. As your trustee, I will work with you, the district, and Gunderson's Principal Cary Catching to hear all concerns and ideas during this process. I will be at VEP's November meeting to provide you with updated information. Contact me at veronica_lewis@sjusd.org or veronicaglewis@yahoo.com if you have questions.

Gunderson High School happenings

-Cary Catching, Principal

I am pleased to share with our community some of the exciting events that are happening at Gunderson this year.

Gunderson's Homecoming activities were a rousing success! The students did a fabulous job of planning various school-wide activities, including spirit week events, day and evening rallies, and a dance. On top of all that, we defeated a strong competitor in Evergreen Valley High School. As a result of that victory, Coach **Chuck Ball** was named *Coach of the Week* by High School Sports Focus. In addition, a \$1000 donation was made to the football team on behalf of the Oakland Raiders. We hope that our VEP neighbors were able to join us and enjoyed the festivities.



Another source of pride this month is that senior student, **Julian Pizano**, was named *Student of The Year* by the San Jose Leadership Academy. He was selected for this honor by his peers, because of his diligence in attending the monthly workshops, his willingness to be inclusive of all other students, his natural charm, and charismatic leadership abilities. Congratulations Julian!

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The Gunderson High School Theater Department is proud to present the Broadway musical, "You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown" on December 7, 8, and 9th in the GHS Theatre. Curtain is at 7:30 p.m. Tickets will be available at the door for \$8. Come on by for an evening of fun. Support your local high school theater program.

As you have noticed, our new fifteen-classroom building is nearing completion. It is our hope that we will be able to move in after the holidays. We'll keep you posted as construction comes to a close.

Finally, as the calendar year draws to a close, we will be gearing up for our recruitment activities for the 2006-2007 school year. Our goal is to continue to increase our enrollment and educate the community about the good works taking place at our school. We will have a more detailed description of these activities next month. However, if you would like to be included on our mailing list, please contact me at 535-6340 or cary_catching@sjusd.org.

Carson's principal gets pie in the face

-Irene Shoberg

Principal, **Betsy Doss**, got a "pie in the face" at Carson's Walk-a-thon on October 14th. The Walk-a-thon event was held to raise money for Carson students.

Mrs. Doss initiated this fundraiser and the students lined up to toss whipped cream pies. Staff members **Erin State**, **Susan Seyan**, **Jodi Williamson**, and I got a few pies in our faces, too; all for a good cause.



The Walk-a-thon was headed by **Scott** and **Dianne Conry**. Many other Carson parents helped to make this event a success.

The popular Cake Walk and other games were available. Baskets made up by each grade level were auctioned off along with many other items at a Silent Auction.

Students were entertained by music while they walked and there was plenty of food and drinks for sale throughout this community event. It was not only a beautiful day, weather-wise, but also Carson-Wise.

On November 28th, a family Star Gazing Night is planned from 6:30 to 8 pm on Carson's grounds. Join us.

[Ed. Note: Irene Shoberg is the Categorical Program and Li-



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brary Assistant at Rachel Carson School. She is also a long-time resident and VEP member.]

Parkview School Walkathon was fantastic

-Cindy Bosworth

Parkview Elementary School celebrated its 16th Annual Walkathon on a spectacular, made-to-order Saturday, October 7th. It was a fantastic event and the level of community participation was outstanding.

The event began promptly at 9:30 am with **Cub Scout Troop 234** leading the crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance. Former student **Lindsay Sommers** sang our National Anthem. (How can so much voice come out of such a little person?) Then **Tyler Carver** dressed as our mascot, *Parkview Panther*, and Principal **Robert Topf** led the first lap around the track and our Walkathon began.

It was a full day of walking, eating, playing games, activities (like the teacher-dunking tank), and watching great entertainment. Music and song filled the air all day long, courtesy of our very own DJ, Shirley Smith.



Ms. Bish readies for another dunking!

The Walkathon is Parkview's biggest fundraiser of the year. Money earned at this event is used to pay for programs unique to Parkview School, programs Oak Grove School District and the State can not afford. These programs include: Music appreciation, Hands on Science Workshops, Reading Incentives, field trips, school beautification projects, and more.

This was truly a community event. We owe thanks for much

of its success to our always-dedicated volunteers and to the unselfish generosity of local businesses. Special thanks go to the following: Washington Mutual, Albertson's, Safeway, Brian's Fish World, Curves, Pampered Chef, Creative Memories, Domino's Pizza, Avon, Tupperware, and Lunardi's.

We look forward to seeing you again next autumn—make it a point to join us for a day of fun and good food.

District 9 news

-San Jose City Councilmember Judy Chirco

A groundbreaking for San Jose's newest dog park at Roy M. Butcher Park was held on Saturday, November 4. Roy M. Butcher Park is located on Camden Avenue between Lancaster Drive and Oakwood Avenue.



Construction of the new Butcher Dog Park will complement the growing list of off-leash dog park facilities in other San Jose neighborhoods including: Jeffrey Fontana Park, Miyuki Park, Ryland Park and Los

Gatos Creek Park in Campbell. This dog-friendly park will be in the northwest corner of the 10-acre Roy M. Butcher Park.

Upon completion, canines and their owners will be able to utilize pet-friendly amenities including a double-gated entry, separate large and small dog areas, decomposed granite and artificial turf, benches, a community bulletin board, and a small shed for staff and volunteers to store supplies. The facility is designed to accommodate between 30-50 dogs at one time.

The \$566,333 project was funded by State Proposition 40 grant, Council District 9 Construction and Conveyance Tax Funds, and Park Trust Funds. Construction is scheduled to start in December, with the grand opening scheduled for June 2007.

~ Camden Community Center "Breakfast with Santa" ~

The first ever Cambrian "Breakfast with Santa" will be held on Saturday morning December 9th at 9:30 am till 11:30 am at the Camden Community Center. A holiday activity for the entire family to enjoy, activities include a festive holiday breakfast, a holiday crafts workshop, and a visit from Kris Kringle himself, aka Santa.

Cost of the event is \$8 for adults; \$5 for children 2 – 11 years old; children 18 months or younger, free. Space is limited. To reserve your place, call the Camden Community Center at 559-8553.

~ Winter activity guide ~

The Parks & Recreation winter quarter "Neighborhood City-wide Activity Guide", with classes and activities for young and old, will be available beginning on November 6th. Pick one up at Camden Community Center or go on line a www.sanjoseca.gov/prns. The center will start processing class sign-ups on December 4th until January 7th, the first day of the winter quarter.

~ My office ~

If you wish to receive periodic emails from my office, please visit www.sanjoseca.gov/district9 and click on "Join Judy's email list." As always, if you have any questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to contact our office at District9@sanjoseca.gov or (408) 535-4909.

City of San Jose street tree rules

- Dave Noel

At our February 28th general meeting, members enjoyed excellent presentations by San Jose city arborist **Ralph Mize** and *Our City Forest's* Director of Operations **Christian Bonner**.

Here's a quick reference to the rules regarding street trees:

PERMITS:

You need a permit to plant or trim a street tree

The permit is free

A permit is not required if you use a pre-approved tree service (see website below)

VERTICAL CLEARANCES:

8 feet from sidewalk to canopy

13 feet from street to canopy

PLANTING CLEARANCES:

See City Code #13.28.190, reprinted in the May 2006 VEP News (also available at www.vepca.org).

FOR MORE INFO:

www.sanjoseca.gov/transportation

Ralph Mize, 277-2756, ralph.mize@sanjoseca.gov



Do NOT top trees: The most universally important advice from our February meeting was the fact that topping trees is very harmful to proper tree growth and appearance. When a tree is topped, it is shocked into producing fast growth to the sides of the topped branches. The new growth will look very unnatural as it matures over time, and will also be weaker than slower growth. For a full article, see your April 2006 VEP News (available at www.vepca.org).



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Salts in potting soil steal nutrients

-John Marks

If you have planted strawberries or other crops in a barrel, you may notice the berries getting small, or the leaves turning brown. This may happen even though you water frequently and feed with Miracle-Gro and sulfate of ammonia.



The problem is that many potting soils are high in salts. This causes burning of leaf edges. It will also lock up nutrients, and plants slowly starve, as indicated by small berries.

Try mixing two- to three-tablespoons of vinegar in two gallons of water and pouring the solution into the planter. This will counteract salt buildup in the soil. A couple of days later, pour a solution of Miracle-Gro and water into the planter. You will have to live the burned edges for a while, but if you do this a couple of times a year, whatever you are growing will do better.

~ Veggies that lose moisture ~

Although your harvest of cucumbers and other fleshy veggies yield large, healthy, and impressive results, they may lose their firmness, becoming limp after six- to-ten hours. Cleaning and storing at refrigerated temperature will not help.

The problem is that all fleshy vegetables lose moisture within a few hours after picking, some faster than others. Commercial growers cover their crops in wax right after picking to retain moisture before sending them to market. You are doing nothing wrong, it's just the nature of the veggies; don't pick them unless you intend to eat them soon after.

~ Trimming rhododendrons ~

Rhododendrons planted in your yard may become overgrown and need to be pruned in the winter or early spring. Use care, as severe pruning without preparation can destroy blooms next year.

To rejuvenate an old, leggy Rhododendron, first feed and water the plant in the summer so that it is strong and healthy, and able to withstand severe pruning. In the winter cut one-third of the old limbs to 8- to 12-inches above the ground. The following year cut off an additional one-third of the old stems, and a year later cut down the last third. This may take about four years, but you'll retain some flowers every year.

Try to identify old growth rings and make your cuts above one of them. New shoots will emerge from these growth rings.

If the Rhododendron is too old and growth rings are not visible because of the bark, make the cuts 12-inches from the ground and hope that new growth will emerge from the hidden growth rings. Or, you can severely prune the entire shrub now, but it may be a few years before any flowers are seen.

~ Bulbs go in NOW ~

There is still time to plant spring-flowering bulbs. Most nurseries and garden centers remain well-stocked with dozens of colorful selections.

To help you plan your garden, check out www.bulb.com for a wealth of information and tips about how to choose, plant, and otherwise care for your bulbs. This site is maintained by the Netherlands Flower Bulb Info Center (where else?).

Once you get those bulbs in the ground, give yourself a little instant gratification by planting winter-color annuals on top.

Good choices for sunny spots include pansies, violas, primrose, and Iceland Poppies. For shady or dappled spots, try cineraria and cyclamen.

Gas log and fireplace insert rebates--*hurry!*

- Dave Noel

Rebates are being offered to entice you convert your wood burning fireplace to gas. If you retrofit an existing fireplace with a new gas log set or fireplace insert, you can get \$100. If you replace an existing wood burning stove or fireplace insert (1990 and older) with a new gas appliance, you can get \$300.

Hurry, this program expires November 30, 2006, or when funds are depleted. For more info, call 1-800-HELP-AIR, or visit <http://sparetheair.org/changeout.htm>.

** Membership Application **

Note: none of the following information will be shared with any third party.

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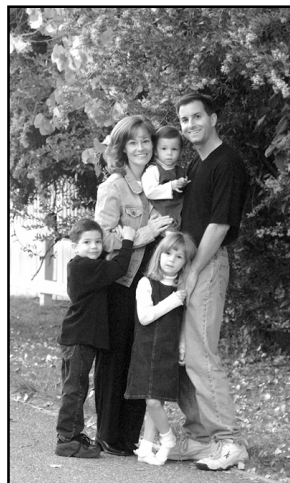
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Email address(es): _____

Comments): _____

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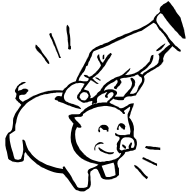
(408) 281-3393

Taxpayers vs Open Space Authority

-Dave Fadness

We still have a couple of weeks to file claims for possible refunds of Santa Clara County Open Space Authority's (OSA) property assessment taxes. Those taxes are shown as "990 Open Space Districts" on your County of Santa Clara Secured Property Tax Bill.

A lawsuit now before the California Supreme Court may find that assessment tax unconstitutional. If so, Silicon Valley Taxpayers' Association (the plaintiff) has asked that refunds be given to property owners and taxpayers, who may then elect to keep them. However, OSA will likely argue it is entitled to keep and spend the taxes--unless individual taxpayers make separate claims for their own refunds.



Taxpayers need to be aware they may lose their rights to refunds if they do not file their own personal refund claims, even if the Supreme Court declares the assessment tax unconstitutional. Taxpayers will have a right to obtain refunds of assessment taxes paid within only four years prior to the date of a refund claim.

This means that, if a taxpayer paid the assessment beginning with OSA's first levy in 2002, his or her refund claim would have to be filed within four years of the date the taxpayer actually made his or her first payment of 2002 taxes, which were due on December 14, 2002 and April 10, 2003.

Refund claims would thus be due in early December 2006 for most taxpayers. Any taxpayer filing a refund claim later than that date would lose all or part of his or her refund.

Taxpayers need to file their signed original claims with the OSA at 6830 Via Del Oro, Suite 200, San Jose, CA 95119, making sure they ask OSA to stamp a copy of the claim form "filed" or "received" on a specific date. Taxpayers should keep a copy for the own records.

As a service to taxpayers, SVTA will supply claim forms prepared by its attorney that can be filled out, signed, and filed. Upon request, SVTA will also file the claims on taxpayers' behalf and keep copies.

SVTA's lawsuit is not about whether open space funding for parks and trails is a good or a bad thing. This lawsuit is about how open space and other government spending must be paid for under the California Constitution as enacted by the voters of our state, whether through general or special taxes approved by voters or through assessments on real estate for special benefits to particular parcels.

If you need a claim form, let me know by calling 578-6428 or emailing drfadness@sbcglobal.net.

Summary: VEP's October 24 meeting

-Jim Hicks, Secretary

VEP President **Marilyn Rodgers** opened the meeting with a warm welcome. The first order of business was a discussion of supporting the charitable *Blossom Valley Christmas Tree Fund* for **Dann** and **Kathy Decker's** Christmas tree decoration project. A motion to endorse/promote this cause was approved (it's not a VEP project, therefore no VEP money is involved). Our community will be asked to make tax-deductible contributions to the Fund to cover decorating, electricity, and

other expenses.

Dave Fadness gave a comprehensive presentation on the need for our community to donate to the Pearl Avenue Library fund-raising efforts to provide all the inside furnishing of the library. He indicated that the city builds the library; however, they do not provide sufficient funds for inside furnishing (furniture, bookshelves, special collections, computers, etc.). The non-profit *San Jose Public Library Foundation* pays for those things using donations from citizens like us. A motion was made and approved to support this fund-raising activity.

There were materials available to assist the public with both fund-raising activities.

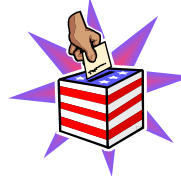


San Jose Police Detective, **Adam Tovar** of the Internet Crime Unit gave a very informative presentation of how crimes are perpetrated against children by online predators. He cited many examples of how these predators get the children to reveal personal information and how that information is used to seduce them into becoming victims of sexual crimes.

With the sophistication of information available on the Internet, and with a small amount of personal information, a predator can easily obtain the child's address, telephone numbers, and other information. The take-away message was, to make sure your children do not get give any personal information to anyone on the Internet.

Detective Tovar encouraged anyone with questions or desires more information, to call him at 408-277-4102 or E-mail him at adam.tovar@sanjosepolice.org.

Ms. Rodgers announced a community project to plant Daffodils in various locations in the VEP community on November 4th.



The final part of our meeting was a Candidate Forum featuring candidates running for the District Attorney's (D.A.) office on November 7th. The two candidates were Chief Assistant D.A. **Karyn Sinunu** and Superior Court Judge **Delores Carr**. Both candidates gave presentations, debated their respective positions, and answered questions from those in attendance.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9 pm. The next VEP



HOLY FAMILY SCHOOL

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community meeting is on November 28, 2006 at 7:30 pm.

Reserving the Vista Park community room

- Dave Noel

As of January 2006, these were the fees for reserving the new "Vista Park Neighborhood Center." Contact **Brandon Kwock** at (408) 268-1133 or brandon.kwock@sanjoseca.gov to reserve the room.

Fees summary:

Hourly Rates (two hour minimum):

Resident = \$60

Non Resident = \$95

Application Fees:

Resident = \$50

Non Resident = \$100

Package Rate for 7 hours (application fee included):

Resident = \$420

Non Resident = \$665

Cleaning and Damage Deposit = \$250



Bulletin Board Ads

HANDY-MAN: *Mr. Fix-it* will repair leaks, sticking doors, locks, latches, lights, and life's little ills. No job is too small. Call John @ 629-6433.

Use the following form as a guide for submitting an ad:

NAME: _____

PHONE# _____

AD WORDING: _____

The VEP Executive Board reserves exclusive right to re-refuse any ad for any reason. VEP does not certify nor is it responsible in any way for the claims, goods, or services of any advertisers.

Bulletin Board advertising rules:

1. Bulletin Board ads are limited to four (4) lines of text. One line contains 50 characters, including spaces.
2. VEP will print free Bulletin Board ads for its members for one-time transactions involving less than \$400, for lost and found, and for services offered by kids under 18 or retirees over 60 years of age. Free ads may be published in a maximum of three successive issues of the VEP News per submission. After three issues, non-renewed ads will be dropped without notice.
3. VEP will print commercial Bulletin Board ads for its members for \$6 per issue of the VEP News. (A commercial ad is one that offers goods and/or services for a fee. The VEP President and/or Editor has final say in determining whether an ad is commercial.) Ads must be prepaid before publication and be of four (4) lines or less in length (see 1, above). Commercial bulletin board ads may be published in-

definitely so long as payment is received in advance of publication. Non-renewed ads will be dropped without notice. No graphics allowed.

4. Bulletin board ads and payment must be received at least 12 days prior to the fourth Tuesday of the month for inclusion in that month's newsletter. Mail to: VEP, P.O. Box 18111, San Jose, 95158.

Hazardous waste disposal

- Dave Noel

It is now illegal to dispose of items classified as Universal Waste in your trash or recycling cart. Here are some items and legal disposal methods:

For household batteries, fluorescent light bulbs and tubes, mercury thermostats and thermometers...

► Call the County's Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program at (408) 299-7300 to find free locations to drop these items off. OSH will accept fluorescent bulbs and Radio Shack will take household rechargeable batteries.

For computer monitors and TVs with cathode ray tubes, flat screen TVs (LCD and plasma)...

► Call Recycle Plus Customer service at (408) 535-3515 for a large item collection appointment. The current cost is \$23 for a full computer system or TV. Other recyclers may take these items without charge.

Another great option for unwanted items that are still useful or repairable is to offer them to the local freecycle email group. To learn more, visit:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sanjosefreecycle/>

"VEP" Community Association

What does "VEP" stand for?

How did we get that odd name?

"VEP" represents the first three letters of our original subdivision names started here in 1969:

V = Vistapark;

E = Encore (and Echo Valley); and

P = Parkview Valley.

That's all there is to it!

Of course, we've grown over the years to include the Blossom Heights subdivision and others, including Las Brisas in 2004. But our original **VEP** name stuck, and we've been known by it for 36 years. Some like to think of us as...

Very Energetic People

See the mailing page of this newsletter for a map of VEP's core membership area. We also welcome members from outside these boundaries who share common interests.

Check our website: www.vepca.org

Community Room

Vista Park

7:30 pm in the

Be sure to attend
VEP's
November 28th Meeting

THE VEP NEWS



VEP Community Association

P.O. Box 18111 San Jose, CA 95158

Email: vepca@vepca.org Website: www.vepca.org

Published monthly by VEP Community Association, a not-for-profit organization of volunteers established in 1969 to serve and represent more than 2000 homes in the Blossom Valley area of southern San Jose. VEP is dedicated to neighborhood maintenance and improvement in its membership area as well as to active involvement in civic affairs. This newsletter is mailed monthly to all members in good standing, to our advertisers, and to schools and government officials serving our membership area. For membership or paid advertisement information, contact our Treasurer or write to the address listed above.

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