

Before unveiling a plan, project leaders from the County Roads & Airports Department are meeting with residents in the area to find out where the worst-congested segments along Almaden Expressway are and to take input on desired improvements. So far, residents consistently say the area near Blossom Hill Road has the worst backups.

Construction on upgrading and widening Almaden is expected to begin in 2009, after the county finishes its planning phases of the project, which are currently underway.

For more information, contact Project Manager **Roy Cabaltera** at 573-2484 or roy.cabaltera@rda.sccgov.org.

Branham Lane and Snell Avenue widening

-Dave Fadness

City and County staffs are preparing recommendations that will transfer the necessary right-of-way to the city for the Branham Lane and Snell Avenue widening projects. It is now anticipated that these agreements will go to the San Jose City Council and the County Board of Supervisors for approval in late January, 2008.

The city has already begun to prepare preliminary plans that will serve as a starting point for discussions with VEP soon after the agreements are approved.

VEP Community Calendar

Thu, Nov 22 = Happy Thanksgiving!

Tue, Nov 27 @ 7:30 pm = VEP General Meeting in the Vista Park Community Room. (See agenda on page 1 of this newsletter.)

Tue, Jan 3 @ 7:30 pm = VEP Exec Meeting in the Vista Park Community Room. (Call any VEP officer for agenda details.)

Tue, Jan 8 @ 1 pm = VEP NEWS articles deadline. (Email your articles to Dave Fadness at drfadness@sbcglobal.net)

Tue, Jan 22 @ 7:30 pm = VEP General Meeting in the Vista Park Community Room. (Agenda to be announced.)

Tue, Mar 25 = VEP Home Improvement Faire.

Sat, May 3 = VEP Community Garage Sale.

Mon, May 26 = VEP Memorial Day Parade & Festival.

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Our City Forest events

Our City Forest is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the condition of our urban forest by involving the community. Contact OCF at: 408-99-TREES.

Tree Sale

Saturday, December 1st

9am – 12pm

More than one hundred trees are available (both native and exotic) in 1-gallon, 5-gallon, and 24-inch box sizes. Suggested donations range from \$5 to \$20, and \$120 for three boxed Australian tea trees.

Directions: From the intersection of Phelan and Senter, head east on Phelan and turn left at the parking lot at the end of the road.

Interested in long-term volunteering?

Become a Tree Amigo!

Through this free class students will learn planting techniques, species identification, basic tree care, and how to help organize a community tree planting event. There will be a tree nursery tour, a walking tree tour, and a tree planting project during the 18-hour class intended for anyone interested in becoming an Our City Forest volunteer. We hope to see you there!

Tree Amigo class starts November 28. There are four class sessions and three field sessions, as follow:

~ Classroom(*) and Field Sessions ~

Session 1 – Wednesday Nov 28, 6-8pm: The benefits of trees and the science of trees.

Session 2 – Saturday Dec 1, TBA: Tree Planting Event.

Session 3 – Wednesday Dec 5, 6-8pm: The right tree for the right place.

Session 4 – Saturday Dec 8, TBA : Tree bank tour.

Session 5 - Wednesday Dec 12, 6-8pm: Coordinating a tree planting event.

Session 6 - Saturday Dec 15, TBA: Walking tree tour.

Session 7 - Wednesday Dec 19, 6-8pm: Basic Tree Care.

(*) The Wednesday classroom location is at the (new) Our City Forest office, 151 West Mission Street, San Jose. Field training locations will be announced during the course.

Oakridge Mall events for this autumn

-Jennifer Dacquisto (*)

Earning for Learning (2007-'08 school year): This program encourages families to shop at Westfield Oakridge in order to earn money for their school. Oakridge Concierge will track receipts and schools will be assigned "points" based on dollars spent. At the end of the school year (May '08) \$15,000 in Westfield gift cards will be awarded to top schools. The Earning for Learning Program targets local elementary, junior high, and high schools.

Adopt a School (2007-'08 school year): Throughout the 2007-'08 school year, Westfield Oakridge will lend support to the Carson Elementary community through a variety of programs including providing backpacks and school supplies for Carson students. Additional programs include Westfield employees participating in the *Principle Play Day Lunch* and *Carson Elementary Jump Rope for Heart* fundraiser that benefits the American Heart Association.

~ November ~

Salvation Army Giving Trees: In partnership with the Salvation Army, Westfield will collect gifts for local underprivileged children and teens. In addition, our management team will donate time to help distribute the gifts to families in the program. Westfield (Oakridge and Valley Fair) is the largest donator of toys in Santa Clara County.

~ December ~

Magical Holiday Evening (in development): Carson Elementary School will enjoy a Magical Holiday Evening sponsored by Westfield Oakridge. On this festive evening, Westfield Oakridge hosts an event at the school that includes a free dinner, music and dancing, face painters, tattoo artists, balloon animals, and clowns. All attendees receive a Westfield gift bag filled with branded toys for the kids, and coupons and valet parking passes for the parents. Last year the event was held at Allen at Steinbeck Elementary and over 500 people attended.

[()Ed. Note: Jennifer Dacquisto is Marketing Manager at Westfield's Oakridge Mall.]*

Add Computereze to your lexicon

-John McCulloch, SeniorNet

Are you over 1.58 giga seconds in age (aka 50 years)? Do you want to operate your software as well as the next versions of your family (i.e. kids) do? Avoid obsolescence. Come, join *SeniorNet*.

Our domain name is Willows Senior Center. Our Mapquest address is 2175 Lincoln Avenue (at Curtner Ave.).

SeniorNet Class Registration is Saturday, January 5, 2008, or about 31 years after Apple 1. Register beginning at 9 am, the running time is 1 hour. Put down your tool bar, then cut and run over to sign up. Bring some cache, \$20 for each class (actually we prefer checks).

Network with some of the sharpest interfaces and links in San Jose's netscape. Learn the best netiquette and protocol. Delete that TV habit; switch to Youtube. We will help you log on and you won't have to pick up one piece of wood.

SeniorNet will teach you to plug-in and become an Internet Explorer. You will have a perfect view of E-bay. Then you can Google images of the Amazon. In class you watch the monitor instead of it watching you. None of our cursors use profanity. Our keyboards are for typing instead of piano playing. There will be no servers of things to eat like cookies, spam, or applets, but Java is available in the office for 35-cents.

Set aside your thumb drive, flash drive, hard drive; mount your trojan horse, scream Yahoo, and come over to our domain--or visit the URL address at www.snicsj.org/willows.

After one course, *SeniorNet* will be your homepage, and we will start your search engine. So pass the word, we have the right classes with the right click at SeniorNet.

No senior should be left behind!

Martial Cottle Park update

- Adina Pierce

On October 16, the first Martial Cottle Task Force meeting was held at the Almaden Winery Community Center. There



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was a good turn-out, and everyone was really excited to be there. Besides the seventeen appointed task-force members, about 30 people from the community also attended.

The following timeline was presented for the planning phase of the park:

Phases & Deliverables	Completion Date
Phase 1: Project Initiation ●Project Committees ●Site Reconnaissance ●Data Collection and Mapping ●Case Studies Report	August, 2007
Phase 2: Understanding the Site and Planning Context ●Draft Resource Inventory – Existing Conditions Report ●Final Draft Resource Inventory – Existing Conditions Report	November, 2007
Phase 3: Defining the Vision ●Operating Costs and Revenues Memorandum ●Issues and Opportunities Analysis ●Draft Vision, Goals and Objectives ●Program Document ●Preliminary Unit Classification Memo/Draft Resource Element ●Unit Classification Issue Paper and Presentation	March, 2008
Phase 4: Design Development	October, 2008
Phase 5: Prepare Master Plan	January, 2009
Phase 6: Environmental Impact Report	March, 2009

The planning staff also presented several photos that were taken at the Martial Cottle property. Gorgeous views, old oak trees, farm equipment, and utility easements were highlighted. One thing to note is that Walter Lester's life estate portion of the Martial Cottle property is not included in this planning process. Visit www.vepca.net/martialcottle.html to view the full presentation including photos.

After the presentation, Task Force members and then the community were able to briefly state their ideas and issues. Some of the topics of interest mentioned were: organic farming, community gardens, wildlife conservation, security and traffic concern for the surrounding neighborhoods, interest in



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equestrian trails, solar energy, fiber optic and/or wireless infrastructure, and the overall concern that we must stick with Walter Lester's vision.

~ VEP's Martial Cottle Committee ~

On October 29, we had our first VEP Martial Cottle Committee meeting. The presentation that was shown at the Task Force meeting was shared. We then we had a good discussion and brainstorming session about wants, ideas, and potential issues that we saw for the park.

Our second meeting was on November 19th. Issues and ideas that were brought up at both meetings will be presented at VEP's general membership meeting on November 27.

To view more information about the Martial Cottle Park project including the donor's vision, deed restrictions, and Task Force meeting updates, visit www.vepca.net/martialcottle.html. If you have any further questions, please contact me at adnap@yahoo.com or Marilyn Rodgers at MRodgersRN@aol.com.

Follow-up on traffic issues at Gunderson

-Marilyn Rodgers

As a result of a complaint initiated by a member living on Gaundabert Lane, VEP President **Joe Tajnai** arranged a meeting of VEP Executive Board Members, Gunderson High School officials, San Jose Unified School District, and Council member Nancy Pyle's office (see article in October VEP News). This meeting took place on October 12th.

An overview of the historical agreements regarding traffic issues between SJUSD and VEP were provided, as were highlights of the current concerns. The focus of the meeting was to move forward toward positive resolution. The following are highlights of commitments made to resolve current traffic concerns:

Ms. Catching committed the schools to paying for a uniformed San Jose Police officer (familiar with Gunderson and the community) to monitor/control traffic on Sundays during the hours of 8:30am to 1pm. The officer will also provide support and training to traffic monitors assigned by the Vietnamese School.

The Vietnamese school will continue to provide traffic monitors to control the flow of traffic, with a particular focus on Gaundabert Lane.

Representatives of the school district will work to improve communications and coordination with Gunderson to preclude event over-scheduling, with a focus on numbers of groups and

participants using the school facilities on weekends.

Ms. Catching will add a link to the Gunderson website which will list the events and groups scheduled to use Gunderson facilities on weekends.

VEP will continue to monitor traffic issues and report progress to the schools.

VEP will contact Gunderson and SJUSD officials of suspected unauthorized groups using Gunderson facilities on weekends.

All agreed this was a very positive and productive meeting. There has been significant improvement in the flow of traffic and a decrease in traffic violations such as illegally parked cars on streets adjacent to Gunderson.

However, we're still monitoring and hope to reduce the large number of cars using Hyde Park and Vista Park Drives. The designated and approved route as for large events held at Gunderson High School is Chynoweth to Pearl.

VEP volunteers plant trees and daffodils

-Dave Fadness

An enthusiastic group of seventeen dedicated volunteers gave a beautiful Saturday morning on November 3rd to make and keep our neighborhoods looking their best. In less than two hours, they planted twelve trees and 100 daffodil bulbs, weeded, picked up trash, and swept the sidewalks at the Branham/Narvaez intersection. They even got rid of that ugly 4x8 sheet of plywood that PG&E left laying there since last January!

VEP thanks the following people for doing this work:

Bob & Francine Olsen (also provide ongoing maintenance)

Joell Gluck & Justin Elmensdorp

Jim Hicks

Marietta Harris

Debra Suydam (also got coffee and daffodil bulbs for us)

Jeff Ismail

Dale Crandall

Brian, Matt, and Ian Ferry

Dave Noel

John Marks

Mohan Gill

Aiko Fadness (also got refreshments for us)



VEP: Working for you!



Next time you pass through Branham/Narvaez, be sure to look around. Think of and take pride in the difference our volunteers have made in the appearance of that intersection over the past few years--it's *phenomenal*.

Hats off to our volunteers for doing a great job for our community. We truly *cannot* appreciate them enough!

A message from our President

-Joe Tajnai, VEP President

I want to take a moment to wish everyone a safe, healthy, and happy holiday season. It is communities like ours that remind us what Thanksgiving is all about. We work together to make this area a nicer and safer place to live and get to know our neighbors in the process. This is evidenced by our daffodil plantings and landscaping efforts, our outpouring of candy on Halloween (there were some very impressive displays this year), and your overwhelming support for our monthly meetings.

I hope everyone can take the time to enjoy your family and friends and no matter whether you eat turkey, ham, crab, chow mien, or hummus, have a happy and safe Thanksgiving holiday.

Edenvale Branch Library is now open

- Dave Noel

As of November 3rd, the brand new Edenvale Branch Library is open for patrons. This spacious and attractive library features brand new books and mementos on display from the Frontier Village amusement park. The new library is located at the corner of Monterey Highway and Branham Lane.

Pearl Avenue Branch Library—coming soon!

- Dave Fadness

Our new library is rapidly taking shape—be sure to drive by and take a look. Completion is scheduled for early next summer.

Donations are still being sought by the non-profit San Jose Public Library Foundation for furnishings, computers, extended library collections and a host of other items that cannot be bought with bond money. This is an excellent year-end gift that will provide a tax deduction and could get your name on the library's Donor Wall. (See ad in this newsletter.)



Community Service Awards

- Dave Noel

22 years ago, VEP began rewarding graduating high school seniors for exceptional volunteer community service. Our annual awardees receive stipends for post-secondary or vocational training.

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

As we do each year, the VEP executive board will propose a funding appropriation for approval at the January general membership meeting, which will be on January 22nd.

The executive board is considering some Constitution & By-Laws changes, some of which could affect the Community Service Award program. Any such proposed changes would be published in the VEP News and voted on by members at a

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general membership meeting.

If you are interested in participating in the Constitution & By-Laws review and proposing changes to our Community Service Award program, please contact me at DNoel1234@aol.com or 408-266-7183, or Ginger Cardona (contact information on back cover of this newsletter).

We typically publish the Community Service Award application form in the February VEP News and on our website. The applications are due in late April, and the awards are typically bestowed in late May.

87/Capitol/Narvaez interchange area

-Dave Fadness

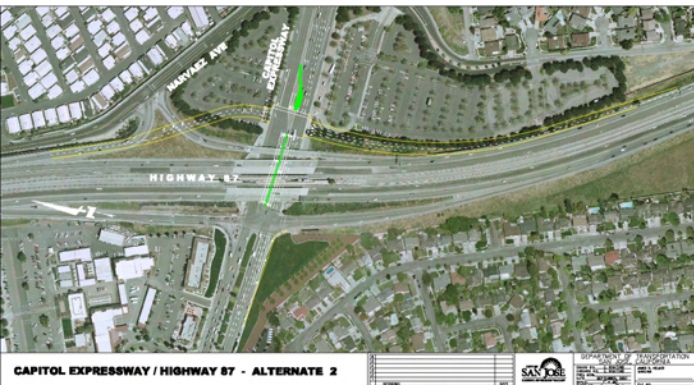
City, county, and VTA representatives addressed our October meeting in a panel discussion on possible solutions for traffic congestion in the Route 87/Capitol Expressway interchange area. Notorious morning tie-ups on the Narvaez Avenue northbound freeway onramp are a key ongoing issue there.

San Jose's Department of Transportation (DOT) Deputy Director **Hans Larsen** presented three specific interchange re-configuration proposals. DOT's interchange proposals were different than those included in VTA's traffic study released last March. Recognizing that all concepts introduced to date are preliminary, Mr. Larsen announced DOT's commitment to work with the county, VTA, and VEP to arrive at a preferred alternative.

These are the three DOT alternatives:



Alternative 1: Use part of the VTA light rail park-n-ride lot to re-align Narvaez Avenue with the current Route 87 on-ramp, eliminating the current left turn on northbound Narvaez. Estimated cost = \$5M.



Alternative 2: Replace the existing on/off ramps. Build new direct northbound 87-to-Capitol off-ramp and northbound 87

on-ramps directly off Capitol, which do not employ Narvaez Avenue. This will eliminate the traffic congestion at Capitol and Narvaez but adds a traffic signal near 87. Estimated cost = \$15M.



Alternative 3: A loop ramp configuration adding alternatives to the existing 87 onramp on Narvaez. For eastbound Capital traffic, the Route 87 on-ramp loop would be a free right turn near existing westbound Narvaez. Northbound 87 traffic could exit directly to Capitol via loops to Narvaez on both sides of the interchange. Estimated cost = \$25M.

In summary, these are the highlights of the city's commitment and next steps as discussed at the meeting:

- ★ DOT will continue to work with VTA, Caltrans, and the VEP community on development of a preferred design concept;
- ★ DOT will recommend adding project to VTA's regional transportation master plan (VTP 2035);
- ★ DOT will have traffic impacts at interchange fully assessed and meaningfully disclosed as part of traffic operations analysis for future projects;
- ★ DOT will work with future development projects in the area to seek interchange project funding or a fair share contribution (expected developments include Communications Hill and VTA's park-n-ride lot); and
- ★ DOT will work with VTA, Caltrans, and the County to seek near-term operational improvements such as retiming ramp metering rates, peak hour turn restrictions at Capitol/Narvaez (as suggested at community meeting), and moving ramp meter signals farther north on Route 87.

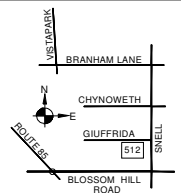
These promises represent *major* achievements for VEP. We are grateful to Councilwoman **Nancy Pyle**, County Supervisor **Don Gage**, VTA Deputy Director **John Ristow**, and

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DOT's **Hans Larsen** for their contribution as panelists. We look forward to continued work with them (and Caltrans) to find a solution to traffic congestion at 87/Capitol/Narvaez.

Neighborhood issues

-Marilyn Rodgers

As *your* community organization, VEP encourages members to report issues of concern and will work with you to provide resources and possible options for their resolution. A recent example is complaints reported by two VEP residents.

Their concern was aimed at a realty firm, new to the VEP area, that had posted too many signs advertising the sale of a home. The complaints were: 1) too many signs posted by the realtor, one posted in a yard without the owner's permission, and 2) damage to a yard plant caused by a realtor's sign.

Subsequent investigation supported the fact that the realtor had placed an unusually large number of signs in our neighborhood – more than 52 signs in a small geographic area.

VEP contacted the realty firm about those complaints. The majority of realtor signs were removed and the impacted VEP residents were provided with apologies and restitution.

Dogs off-leash

-Jeannette Moghrabi

Dogs must always be on a leash when in public places. I cannot count the times I have walked my dog to Vista Park then had to quickly turn around and go home because an owner had their dog off-leash there.

My dog was attacked from the rear as a puppy. Now, whenever another dog approaches her from the rear, my dog is going to protect itself. I don't want their dog injured, nor mine. Please read posted park rules; keep your dog on a leash.

~ Wellington Park Drive ~

While trick-or-treating on Wellington Park Drive, I was amazed at the beautifully landscaped yards and updated homes there. The neighbors are also very friendly. Thanks for keeping our neighborhood beautiful.

Be safe while you shop

- Dave Noel

When shopping, stay aware of the personal belongings in your shopping cart. For example, it only takes a moment for someone to snatch your wallet from inside your purse if you look away.

When you purchase gift cards, select those that have unblemished scratch-off coatings over the card number. If the card does not come with a scratch-off coating over the number, select one from behind the counter instead of one in plain sight.

Crooks can write down the card's number, and then use it on the store's website after an unsuspecting user has activated the card.

Computer corner

-Bob Aquino

It's been a long time since I wrote this column, mainly because it was hard for me to come up with a topic that wasn't



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hopelessly "techie." But I have come up with two brief items that are of general interest.

~ Telephones ~

On a walk this morning, I noticed a repairman working on a new box on New Compton Drive. I struck up a conversation and discovered that, at long last, AT&T (nee SBC, nee Pac-Bell) has laid fiber connections to the office. They will not extend to the curb of your house, but to the distribution points in the neighborhood. Good news for folks with DSL, this move makes it look to your modem like the office is at the distribution point rather than at the office itself, hence you probably will see somewhat faster connections. I assume some premium services (TV?) will ensue. No official date for change-over.

~ File types ~

If you have the new version of MS Office and you want to send Excel files out over e-mail, be advised that the default format for spreadsheets is not readable by earlier versions of Excel without a downloadable add-in. If the folks you are communicating with don't have the same version, save the file as an earlier revision of Excel—or—better yet, save them as a web page. That way, even folks with Macs or Unix can read them using their browser. You do that by doing a Save As and using the drop down menu to select the appropriate file type.

Well, that's it until I find another item of interest.

Planting and caring for hydrangeas

-John Marks

Hydrangeas are an attractive perennial that call for little care. Few insects or diseases affect hydrangeas. But planting them requires some care. After you obtain a starter, dig a hole larger than the container it came in. Place the plant in a hole where it will get a northern exposure, ensuring that the crown of the plant is slightly above the level of the native soil. Back-fill the hole with a mix of soil having a lot of compost, using excess soil to build a watering basin. Fill the basin with water, checking to see that there is little or no settling of the plant.

Hydrangeas thrive on ample water. Feed the plant when it leafs out in the spring and every other month during the growing season; use about one-quarter cup of sulfate of ammonia, and spread it in a wide circle under the hydrangea and water in afterward.

In hot spells, may show signs of wilting, only to recover when

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the sun goes down. This is a natural occurrence called "incipient wilting." It happens even if the soil is very wet.

Hydrangeas bloom on the shoots produced in the previous year. Cut off the blossoms after the flowers have faded. Prune them just above the second set of buds from the bottom of the stem. The new shoots that grow from these buds will bloom in the following year. It is hard to kill a hydrangea.

After the plant is several years old, you may need to thin out the multitude of stems, removing any crossing, dead, or diseased stems. The older stems will be a darker color, with brown or gray scaly bark. These may no longer be productive and need to be pruned back to a set of buds near the base of the plant. New stems will emerge to replace the old.

Upcoming gardening tasks...

~ NOVEMBER ~

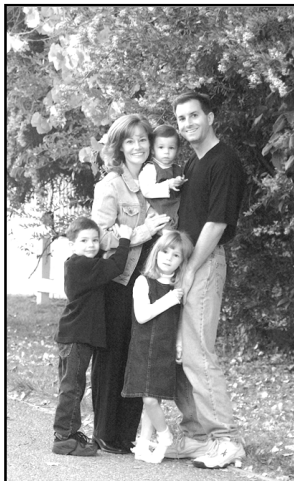
SNAPSHOT: Typically, this is when we get the first hint of winter chill, with frosty nights, wind and rain. Smart buys: left-over garden stock, especially citrus and avocado trees.

FLOWERS: Cold-season annuals such as calendulas, Iceland poppies, fairy primroses, pansies, snapdragons and violas, along with winter sweet peas, will give you color through the spring. Go for the four-inch pots; tiny plants from six-packs may just sulk. For a memorable spring bloom, try mass plantings of color-jolted tulips and daffodils.

VEGETABLES: Sow seeds of fava beans, chard, peas, radishes, and spinach. Plant garlic, onions, and shallots.

TO-DO LIST: Give your tools a good cleaning. Don't forget to turn off your automatic sprinklers if we get regular rains. Feed compost pile with fallen leaves. Remove weakened tree branches likely to fall in high winds. Move container plants under cover or close to the house.

[Ed. Note: The foregoing "To-Do Lists" are taken from the January 6, 2007 San Jose Mercury-News.]



Precious Moments In Time



Family and Children Portraits



Weddings and Special Events



Photography by Jeri Arstingstall

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No Topping

DO NOT TOP TREES: 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 normal growth. For full details, see your April 2006 VEP News (available at www.vepca.net).

Pumpkin--good as a vegetable too

-Marilyn Rodgers

An American tradition for fall, pumpkin pie is especially enjoyed during the Thanksgiving holiday. Pumpkin is often used in cookies and bread as well. However, it is a very nutritious vegetable and can be enjoyed many months of the year.

According to Jonny Bowden, nutritional expert and author of *150 Healthiest Foods on Earth*, pumpkin is a nutritional bonanza. It is low in calories and one cup contains more than 2 grams of fiber. It is also high in potassium, with 564mg, 25% more than a banana.

Its deep orange hue indicates another one of pumpkin's health benefits--carotenoids. A cup of cooked pumpkin contains more than 2400mcg of the carotenoids lutein and zeaxanthin--important for eye health. Emerging research indicates that these carotenoids help to protect against age-related macular degeneration, a leading cause of vision loss in people over the age of 60.

Pumpkin also contains 3,500mcg of beta-cryptoxanthin, a member of the carotenoid family that seems to reduce the risk of lung cancer.

Convinced that you should eat more pumpkin, but wonder how you can eat it (other than in those great desserts)? You can take mashed pumpkin, heat it in a pan, and spice it up with cinnamon and nutmeg. If you like, add a teaspoon of organic butter, olive oil, or some flaxseed oil and sea salt. This should remind you of summer squash, and makes an excellent side dish. If that is still a little bland, try sweetening it with a small amount of brown sugar or raw, cold-processed honey. This should add up to only about 49 calories per cup, and makes it a nutritional bargain.

Hidden pesticide risk

According to the San Jose Mercury News (MN), residue left in former farmland under our feet may be mostly undetected. Although officials have spent decades cleaning up toxins from the tech industry, no state or county agency has tried to gauge the scope of an older hazard: agricultural pesticides left by the farms and orchards that once covered Silicon Valley.

Our county has more cleanup sites involving old orchard pesticides than any other county in the state, as well as a significant number of other sites contaminated by other types of farming or pesticide handling, according to the MN's analysis of state records.

Most of those sites have been found, documented, and cleaned up only because developers recently wanted to build on them, not because environmental investigators went searching for them. Given the limits of that approach, the problem is almost certainly more extensive than official records suggest. As a result, tens of thousands of acres have never been scrutinized for lead, arsenic, DDT, or other legacy pesticides, as experts call them. Health investigators have never examined whether these old toxins may have caused health problems over the years, either.

There are three ways to clean up contaminated sites. First is the excavation, removal, and replacement of soil with clean dirt. This is the most thorough, and also the most expensive method. Second is blending, where clean dirt is brought in and mixed, diluting the concentration toxins. This is less costly, but there are no guarantees that the soil will be mixed uniformly, so the process can leave "hot spots" of contamination.

Third is capping, which involves placing a thick layer of clean soil over the area, or sealing it with pavement. This was used at Santana Row. It's cheaper, but again, may leave some areas contaminated. At Santana Row, housing couldn't be built at ground level, and all children's play areas in residential areas had to be completely paved over.

The MN recently conducted its own soil tests in eight public parks, and found that seven of them showed detectable, but not dangerous levels of DDT. The eighth, Heritage Park in Los Altos, had one sample with combined levels of DDT, DDD, and DDE high enough to meet the state designation for hazardous waste. The same park's other samples tested clean.

Arsenic levels in all those parks exceeded state safety standards, but it is not clear whether those levels are the result of legacy pesticides or naturally occurring arsenic found throughout the region. No tests showed lead levels over state safety standards.

In general, forewarned is forearmed.

[Ed. Note: This article was condensed from the October 21, 2007 issue of the San Jose Mercury News.]

Cold & flu medicines

[Notice: The information presented here is not intended to diagnose health problems or take the place of professional medical care. If you have persistent health problems or further questions, please talk with your physician or health care provider.]

Fact: You can help prevent colds and flu. Eat healthy foods, exercise regularly, and get plenty of rest to help your body resist catching a cold or the flu. Wash your hands often to prevent getting or spreading cold and flu germs. Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough. A flu shot is recommended for:

- persons over 50 years of age
- children 6 months of age and older
- pregnant women
- persons with a chronic health problem and those who have contact with them.

Fact: Taking care of yourself when you have a cold or flu can

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help you feel better. Get lots of rest and drink plenty of fluids - eight or more glasses a day. Hot water, herbal tea, or clear broth soup can help relieve congestion. Nonprescription or over-the-counter (OTC) medicines help to relieve uncomfortable symptoms like cough, stuffy or runny nose, aches and pains, or fever. Treat each symptom separately and avoid remedies that combine drugs to treat multiple symptoms unless needed. (See the list of OTC medicines below.)

Fact: Antibiotics are not for colds or flu. There is no cure for colds or flu. These illnesses are caused by viruses. Antibiotics won't help because they kill only bacteria, -not viruses. Taking antibiotics when they are not needed can be harmful and increase your chances of being infected by resistant bacteria that antibiotics cannot kill. As noted by the CDC (US Centers for Disease Control), "...families and entire communities feel the impact when disease-causing germs become resistant to antibiotics." Antibiotics can also cause side effects such as stomach upset, diarrhea, and vaginal infections.

Know when antibiotics work			
Illness	Usual cause		Antibiotic needed?
	Virus	Bacteria	
Cold	X		No
Flu	X		No
Chest Cold (otherwise healthy adults and children)	X		No
Sore Throat (except Strep)	X		No
Runny Nose (green or yellow mucus)	X		No
Middle Ear Fluid (otitis media with effusion)	X		No

Adapted from: CDC/FDA Campaign
"Get Smart: Know When Antibiotics Work"

Fact: Some symptoms can last for two weeks or more following a cold or flu. Fever and sore throat generally improve within 4-5 days, and most people feel better within a week. However, cough and nasal discharge can last two weeks or longer!

Call your physician or health care provider if you have:

- A fever with stiff neck or a severe headache.

- Trouble breathing, wheezing, or tightness in your chest.
- Very sore throat with trouble swallowing.
- A deep cough and a lot of mucus or cough that lasts more than three weeks.
- Fever in adults and children >3 years old: 104° F or higher that doesn't go down after 2 of home treatment, or
- 102°F for two days, or 101°F for three days, or 100°F for four days.
- Fever in children 3 months to 3 years: 104°F or higher; 102° F for more than 12 hours, or 100°F for more than 24 to 48 hours. In infants younger than 3 months: 100.4°F or higher.
- You have sunken eyes, dry mouth, and pass only a little dark urine.
- You cannot keep down fluids or medicines.

~ Tips for OTC cold and flu medicines ~

Many OTC medicines are available to help relieve cold and flu symptoms. These medicines do not cure colds or flu, but they can ease your symptoms and help you feel better. Remember, they are serious medicines:

- Read and follow the directions on the labels carefully. Check age recommendations on children's products.
- Know what's in your OTC medicines. Some ingredients like aspirin, acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol), and ibuprofen (e.g., Advil) are common in many OTC and prescription products, so check the labels and make sure you aren't taking multiple medicines with these ingredients.
- Do not give aspirin or products containing aspirin to persons younger than 20 years of age.

See the table on the right side of this page for details and applicability of OTC medications. Please notice: If you have persistent health problems, reactions to or questions or uncertainty about the use of any of these products, always check with your physician or health care provider.

[Ed. Note: The foregoing article was adapted from Kaiser Permanente's 8/07 brochure, "Cold and Flu Medicines, Get the Facts!"]

Get the skinny on your zip

- Dave Noel

Are you curious about our demographics and how we compare to other areas? Check out <http://zipskinny.com>. Enter your zip code and this website will show you all sorts of information derived from census data.



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--	---

Product List	Symptoms Treated				
Read and follow label directions carefully. For children's products, observe the age limitations	Stuffy Nose	Runny Nose	Cough	Aches, Fever	Sore Throat
Nasal decongestants and combinations:					
•Pseudoephedrine* Tabs 30 mg, 60 mg (Sudafed)	X				
Children's Liquid 15mg/5ml	X				
•Phenylephrine Tabs 10mg (Sudafed PE)	X				
•Triprolidine/ Pseudoephedrine* Tabs (Actifed)	X	X			
•Children's Dimetapp Cold & Allergy Elixir	X	X			
•Triaminic Day Time Cold & Cough Liquid, Cherry	X		X		
•Saline (Ocean) Nose Spray	X				
•Oxymetazoline (Afrin) Nose Spray 0.05% (do not use more than 3 days in a row)	X				
Cough suppressants and expectorants:					
•Guaifenesin Syrup 100mg/5ml (Robitussin)			X		
Tabs 400 mg (Fenesin IR)			X		
Long-Acting Tabs 600mg (Mucinex)			X		
•Guaifenesin/ Dextromethorphan Syrup (Robitussin DM)			X		
Tabs (Mucinex DM)			X		
•Guaifenesin/ Pseudoephedrine* Tabs (Mucinex D)	X		X		
•Dextromethorphan Syrup-- 12 hr formula (Delsym)			X		
Pain relievers and fever reducers:					
•Acetaminophen (Tylenol) Tabs 325mg, 500mg				X	X
Children's Chews/Melts 80 mg, Jr. Tabs 160mg				X	X
Children's Drops 80mg/0.8 ml, Elixir 160mg/5ml				X	X
•Ibuprofen Tabs 200mg (Advil)				X	X
Children's Liquid 100mg (Children's Advil)				X	X
•Chloraseptic Throat Lozenges, Throat Spray					X
*Ask your pharmacist for assistance with products containing pseudoephedrine.					

Add VEP's website www.vepca.net to your "favorites"

Help homeless cats

-Laura Fulda (*)

Co-Founder of Apple Computer, Steve Wozniak has partnered with Humane Society Silicon Valley (HSSV) to help raise awareness about homeless cats. He introduced a documentary film trailer on YouTube depicting the homeless cat crisis in Santa Clara County and urges viewers to take action.

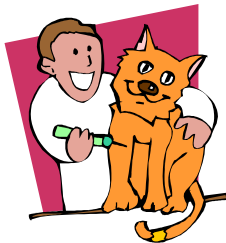


The film clip will debuted on YouTube to mark National Feral Cat Day on October 16, a day started in 2001 by Maryland-based *Alley Cat Allies* to educate the public about stray and feral cats.

"For all the progress we've made in Silicon Valley developing innovative products that changed the world, we still have a long way to go to help animals," Wozniak states on the movie clip. "There are 125,000 homeless cats in my county alone, but the problem isn't just here, it's occurring nationwide."

A 30-minute documentary, "Cats Without a Home" powerfully weaves the plight of homeless cats in Santa Clara County by following six individuals who are committed to reducing the unnecessary euthanasia of homeless cats. This film (at www.hssv.org) endorses trap, neuter, return ("TNR") to manage and reduce homeless cat colonies.

Homeless cats living outdoors are humanely trapped and taken to veterinarians, where they are evaluated, vaccinated, sterilized, ear-notched, and micro-chipped for identification.



Kittens and tame cats are adopted into good homes. Healthy adult cats too wild to be adopted are returned to their outdoor homes under the care of dedicated volunteers. No more kittens are born and the feral cat population naturally declines.

Humane Society Silicon Valley President Christine Benninger hopes Wozniak's appeal on YouTube will raise awareness of the homeless cat problem and inspire people to become involved with saving more cats through TNR. "TNR, when accompanied by ongoing homeless cat management, is the most effective, humane method of reducing homeless cat populations," Benninger says.

Benninger says TNR also saves money, noting that it costs cities approximately \$250 to pickup, house, and euthanize one homeless cat. For the same price, they can spay/neuter five cats. She says HSSV's Medical Center offers affordable spaying/neutering services as well as a \$10 spay/neuter clinic for homeless cats. In Santa Clara County alone, approximately 14,000 of these cats were euthanized in 2006 at a cost of \$2.4 million.

"I'm often asked why the public should care about homeless cats," Benninger says. "My answer is simple: Euthanizing unwanted animals is a community problem, not just a shelter problem. It is a reflection of our society and how some of us treat other living things. We made this film to raise public awareness about the homeless cat problem and get people to care."

To view Wozniak's trailer of the film, order the documentary, or download information about homeless cats, visit: www.hssv.org. Visit www.youtube.com/catsdogs bunnies to

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view the movie trailer on YouTube.

Humane Society Silicon Valley (HSSV) is an independent, non-profit agency offering quality adoptions, medical care, and education programs to enhance the human-animal bond. Established in 1929, HSSV has served Silicon Valley for more than 78 years and cared for nearly 9,000 animals in fiscal year 2006. To date, HSSV has adopted more than 500,000 animals into permanent, loving homes. HSSV is an "open door" shelter and accepts animals 24-hours a day, seven days a week, regardless of any temperament or health related problems. HSSV's medical center offers affordable spaying/neutering, vaccinations and microchips to the public. More information about HSSV can be found at www.hssv.org.

[(*)Ed. Note: Laura Fulda is Marketing & Communications VP for the Silicon Valley Humane Society, (408) 727-3383.]

Carson School update

- Betsy Doss, Principal

Carson students love to read. This year all students in grades 1 through 5 are participating in our "Passport to Success" program. Students read to earn points to travel around the world, motivated to read because they get a prize for each continent they visit and a grand prize when they "read" all the way around the world. We celebrate the student's reading success with an awards assembly each month. If you know a student who attends Carson, encourage them to read "around the world."



Also, a big "Thank You" for supporting Carson by buying items from our fundraisers. The See's Candy fundraiser supports our students going to Science Camp and the Cherrydale fundraiser supports the PTA to pay for student programs.

Oak Grove School District news

-Manny Barbara, Superintendent

At its November 8th regular meeting, our Board of Trustees took action to approve the potential sale of the former Calero School which has been closed since 1985. Demographic enrollment projections indicate that the school will not be needed in the future. Three other closed school sites would be available should it ever be necessary to reopen a school.

With the minimum bid for the Calero site set at \$23-million,

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our District intends to invest proceeds in long-term bonds. At current interest rates, this would generate approximately \$1-million annually to be used in support of student programs. Currently, the Calero site generates approximately \$180,000 in lease revenue.

Proposing to sell a school property is a difficult decision in its own right. It becomes especially painful because neighbors in the immediate area perceive a loss of open space and are wary of any proposed development. This is completely understandable.

Subsequently, the Board resolution specifically mentions prevailing upon the city to maintain the current zoning of the Calero site to single family residential dwellings. It should also be noted that it is possible for the site to be sold to a public agency, such as another school district, a private school, or church, which would not necessitate any development at all.

The interest of youth sports leagues will also be addressed by assisting the affected leagues in relocating fields to other District sites.

We are still very early in the process, with our Board of Trustees still needing to approve any final sale. The Oak Grove community will be kept informed through this column and other communication sources on any progress toward an actual sale.

Gunderson High School happenings

-Cary Catching, Principal

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. Though we had hoped to hold the game under the newly installed stadium lights, we were forced to have a Saturday afternoon game as the plans for the lights are still in the state architect's office. Needless to say, though student and staff were disappointed, we still had a great time and look forward to next year. 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 **Misha Balingit** was named *Student of The Year* by the San Jose Leadership Academy. She was selected for this honor by her peers because of her diligence in attending the monthly workshops, her willingness to be inclusive of all other students, her natural charm, and charismatic leadership abilities. Congratulations Misha!

Finally, as the calendar year draws to a close, we will be gearing up for our recruitment activities for the 2007-2008 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

cary_catching@sjusd.org or 535-6340.

A message from County District 4

- Supervisor Ken Yeager

At its November 6th Board of Supervisors meeting, the board approved my recommendation to direct county staff to investigate installing a reverse-911 system that would alert residents in the case of an emergency. I felt the county should consider a system that allows us to quickly contact residents in an emergency, especially after the days-long wildfire evacuations in Southern California and the 5.6-magnitude earthquake that struck northeast of San Jose.

After devastating wildfires consumed numerous houses and thousands of acres in San Diego County in 2003, that county implemented such a reverse-911 system. They needed a way to quickly notify thousands of residents of fire danger, so the local government set up a system that calls residents to give them evacuation warnings and disaster-response information. The system proved it could help save lives during the recent fires that ravaged Southern California.



A system like this would be immensely useful in Santa Clara County. An important aspect of a reverse-911 system is that it allows government to contact residents in multiple ways. With a variety of disasters that could strike the Bay Area, officials can't be sure which communications systems will be disabled. This is why having a redundant system is so important.

Although earthquakes provide the government with no warning of when they will strike, residents could be warned of an earthquake's after effects or any other disaster that the Bay Area might face.

After an earthquake, fires could erupt in neighborhoods. Gas leaks could spring from damaged pipelines. Freeways could collapse. With a reverse-911 system, county officials could make phone calls to landlines or cell phones and send e-mails and text messages to warn residents of these dangers and provide them with safe alternatives.

This technology could also be used to notify residents in the rural areas of the county about fires, such as the fire in early September that burned more than 47,000 acres in Henry Coe

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State Park. A reverse-911 system could also be used in the event of a terrorist attack on the Bay Area or if a major traffic artery breaks down as happened about six months ago near Oakland when a semi-trailer crashed on the MacArthur Maze and shut down the freeway interchange.

The City of Palo Alto has already implemented a useful system to notify residents of emergencies. That city recently used its system to alert residents when a teenage girl was abducted on her way home from school. A system that can notify residents across the entire county instantly would aid law enforcement officials in these situations as well as during disasters.

Although Santa Clara County is still in the preliminary steps of researching and choosing a reverse-911 system, I expect our staff to return with some suggestions at a future board meeting. The Board of Supervisors can then consider how best to alert our residents to save the most lives in the event of an emergency.

As always, please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. You can call me at 299-5040 or e-mail me at Ken.Yeager@bos.sccgov.org.

Home maintenance

[Ed. Note: This is the final monthly reprint taken from "Home Maintenance Calendar 2007" which appeared in the December 30, 2006 San Jose Mercury-News.]

~ November ~

TOP JOB: Inspect crawl space after rain for water accumulation or excessive moisture. Do not block vents to the crawl space in winter.

ALSO: Shut off water to washing machine and re-move water supply hoses. Check washers. Replace hoses that are damaged, including where fittings are badly corroded. Check the owner's manual for any other maintenance recommendations.



~ December ~

SNAPSHOT: Sunny, rainy, calm, windy. This can be the most unpredictable weather month of the year. Protect tropical plants when frost is possible by draping a cotton sheet on four stakes around top and sides of plants, or hang a string of outdoor lights through branches and plug in overnight. Good buys: living Christmas trees.

FLOWERS: Winter standbys such as calendulas, cyclamens, pansies, and primroses--plus some of the hardy ground covers-- can be planted. Plant the last of the bulbs--amaryllis, anemones, callas, and ranunculus.

VEGETABLES: Put in perennials such as artichokes, asparagus and rhubarb.

TO-DO LIST: Feed shrubs and trees that bloom right after New Year's Day. Prune roses (or wait until January). Shape conifers and evergreens; prune fruit trees and vines.

~ Each month ~

Test and inspect smoke, heat, and gas detectors. Check fire extinguishers. Replace or service as needed. Check to be certain nothing flammable is near a source of flame, such as a water heater pilot light, gas range, furnace, etc. Practice your family fire-escape plan and review earthquake preparedness. Inspect electrical cords for damage. Repair or replace if needed.

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Check the operation of all electrical circuit breakers by turning each off and on. Do the same with ground fault circuit interrupters, usually found in bathroom, kitchen, garage, and outdoor outlets. Replace those not working properly.

Always be alert for other safety hazards, such as cracked walkways, hazardous materials that aren't properly stored, or unsecured heavy bookcases or other furniture that could topple during an earthquake.

Check water softener. Add salt if needed.

Clean garbage disposal by grinding up two trays of ice cubes made from a mixture of 1 cup white vinegar in 1 gallon of water. (Be certain to use the disposer cap when grinding.) For a pleasant smell, follow the cleaning by grinding a lemon.

Recycling – supersize it

- Dave Noel

Do you always have more green waste than will fit in your green waste container, or bulky recyclables that won't quite fit in your recycle container? There is no charge to upgrade to a larger size for either of these containers.

Recyclables and green waste containers are available in 32, 64 and 96 gallon sizes. Green waste containers cost \$4 per month regardless of size. For more information, call the number on your garbage bill, or call the city help line at (408) 535-3500.



VEP's October 23 meeting

- Jim Hicks, VEP Secretary

President **Joe Tajnai** opened our meeting with brief overviews by principals of some of our VEP-area schools.

Gunderson High School Principal **Cary Catching** said she expects approval of stadium lights by year's end. There could be a celebration via a movie after the lights are installed. She also announced that tennis courts are now complete, parking lots are being repaved, and the science wing is being expanded to include lecture halls and labs. New carpeting is being installed in the Forum. A food court is one of the next projects. Traffic congestion resulting from outside groups using the school on weekends is being addressed. Finally, overall enrollment has increased by sixty students and Gunderson's Academic Performance Index (API) scores are up 21 points (the best of all of San Jose Unified schools).

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John Muir Principal **Gloria Marchant** reported an Honors Celebration Night to honor 400 students with GPAs between 3.0 and 4.0. They have an intensive math program to increase student's math scores. She and her staff have established a positive learning environment for all students, including those with disabilities. They have formed many support clubs to give students an opportunity to work together while having fun. Construction projects at Muir include new athletic fields, new carpeting, and upgrades to their gym. Over 90% of her staff has returned and very few have retired. Her school has a new vice principal who is focusing on special education and developing leadership programs.



Parkview Elementary's **Debbie Roach** gave an overview of her school. She has more than 695 students and noted that their recent Walk-A-Thon was an overwhelming success raising funds for their music program.

Next, we had a panel discussion on possible remedies for traffic congestion at Route 87-Capitol-Narvaez. Panelists included VTA's Congestion Management Agency Acting Chief **John Ristow**, San Jose's Department of Transportation Deputy Director **Hans Larsen**, District 10 Council Member **Nancy Pyle**, and County Supervisor Don Gage's Transportation Policy Aide **Colleen Valles**.

Mr. Larsen presented three alternative solutions to gaining access to Highway 87 from the Narvaez/Capitol Ave intersection. (See related story in this newsletter.)

Funding does not exist for any of the proposed alternatives. There might be regional funds available after 2010 or the necessary funds could be provided by private development in the short-term.

Mr. Ristow reported that VTA's high density commercial-residential project slated for development on the VTA parking lot at Capitol and Narvaez is on hold. Currently, there are no plans to revisit the project.



Colleen Valles indicated that Supervisor Gage will look closely at any projects while he is in office, including the 2-acre parcel at the south end of VTA's park-n-ride lot.

As plans for development plans evolve, VEP will be invited to participate.

District 10 Council Member **Nancy Pyle** presented an annual update on District 10 and the City of San Jose. She reported that the city council voted to stop industrial conversion to residential projects. There are foreign firms that want to put headquarters here and the city is working on additional housing and job prospects in the area. The city is working to keep a portion of the sales tax to help with funding issues. The Branham Lane widening status will be provided via her newsletter.

Invite your neighbors to join VEP

** Membership Application **

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

**** Please type or print legibly ****

Last name(s): _____

First name(s): _____

Street address: _____

Telephone # _____

Email address(es): _____

Comments): _____

Can you give VEP a few volunteer hours? _____

I am willing to volunteer for: Beautification/clean-up projects VEP News/ mailing prep Memorial Day Parade & Festival Distribute flyers Serve on a committee
Serve as a VEP officer or committee chair Other _____

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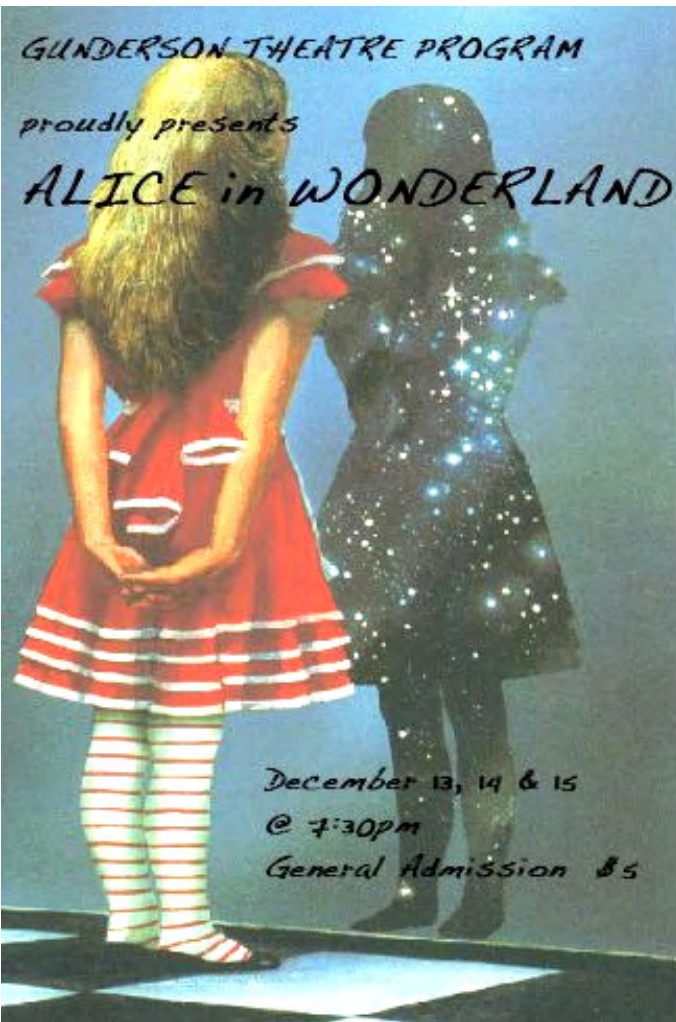
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Bulletin Board advertising rules:

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 indefinitely 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 15 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.

"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.

Here's a great Holiday gift idea (it's tax deductible, too!)...

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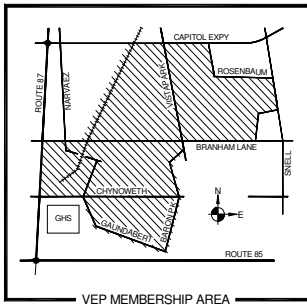
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Published monthly by VEP Community Association, a not-for-profit organization of volunteers established in 1969 to serve and represent more than 2000 homes in the Blossom Valley area of southern San Jose. VEP is dedicated to neighborhood maintenance 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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Check our website: www.vepca.net

Community Room

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7:30 pm in the

November 27th Meeting

Be sure to attend VEP's