

VEP NEWS

• VEP COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION •

Representing More Than 2000 Families In The Blossom Valley Area Of South San Jose Since 1969

January 2008

VEP MEETING

7:30 p.m. Tuesday
January 22, 2008

► Vista Park Community Room ◀
475 Hyde Park Drive

AGENDA

★ VEP Wish-List for Martial Cottle Park ★

A presentation by Adina Pierce, VEP's committee chair.

★ "Green" Suggestions for Homeowners ★

A presentation by Lisa Rose, Santa Clara County Coordinator,
Green Business Programs.

★ Going Solar for Homeowners ★

A presentation by Bruce Karney,
Community Programs Manager, SolarCity.

★ VEP Business ★

Discuss and approve allocation for Community Service Award.

★ Your Concerns and Ideas ★

Your chance to voice your opinion/seek VEP's help.

Everyone is welcome. Please invite your neighbors!

regional park. Your input and approval are needed. The resulting list will be presented to the County's Task Force at their February meeting.

Our draft *Wish-List* is printed in its entirety in this newsletter. Please review this proposal and come prepared to participate in refining and approving it.

► **Lisa Rose**, a VEP member and Coordinator for Santa Clara County's Green Business Programs, will present an overview of "green" opportunities available for VEP residents to implement in their homes and small businesses which are both environmentally friendly and provide cost savings. The four focus areas will be energy efficiency, water conservation, pollution prevention, and waste reduction/recycling.

► **Bruce Karney**, Community Programs Manager for SolarCity will present an overview of residential solar programs. His presentation will include a description of solar and how it works, the costs, and federal/state incentives. SolarCity works with community groups, non-profit organizations, and businesses. They have successfully implemented programs in Mountain View and Palo Alto, and with several other community based groups throughout the Bay Area.

► VEP's executive committee recommends a \$2000 funding allocation for our **Community Service Awards** this year. This important proposal will be discussed and must be voted upon by our members. (See Dave Noel's article in this newsletter.)

► VEP always allows time at our meetings for you to voice your opinions and seek VEP's help with neighborhood concerns. This is our "open microphone" opportunity for members. Please let us know what you think needs to be done and how we can help you do it.

We look forward to seeing you, your family, your friends, and your neighbors at our January 22 meeting. Please join us!

It's time to renew your VEP membership

-Dave Fadness and Dave Noel

VEP membership is based on a calendar year, January through December, so it's time to renew your membership. You'll find a remit envelop in this newsletter. Please be sure to fill in the information requested, enclose your \$20 check made payable to VEP, and mail it back to us as soon as possible--while it's still fresh in your mind. That's all there is to it!

In a very real sense, renewing membership is your vote of confidence and support for the work we do as VEP volunteers. Yes, we get an occasional "thank you," but proof positive of your appreciation is your willingness to renew membership each year.

VEP's January meeting

-Joe Tajnai

► **Adina Pierce** represents VEP on the County's Martial Cottle Park Master Plan Task Force. As Chair of VEP's *Martial Cottle Park Committee*, Adina will present a draft "Wish-List" developed by our committee to represent VEP's desires for this new

Where is the Vista Park Community Room?

"Vista Park" is a city park; it's at the intersection of Hyde Park Drive and New Compton Drive, here in our VEP community. We meet in the Community Room which is on the east side of the park, at 475 Hyde Park Drive. It's easy to find...

From its intersection with Branham Lane, take Vistapark Drive south to Hyde Park Drive (that's where Vistapark Drive ends). Turn right on Hyde Park Drive and drive a few blocks to just beyond the bridge over Canoas Creek. The parking lot and Community Room will be on your right. (If you get to the stop sign at New Compton Drive, you've gone too far.) **We look forward to seeing you there!**

2008 is VEP's 39th year!

Invite your neighbors to join VEP

We also appreciate the nice comments many of you offer along with your renewal—for that, we offer our thanks!

VEP membership is the best value you'll ever experience. Renew today and ask your neighbors to join our growing family. Thank you.

** 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 _____

Mail your \$20 check to VEP, P.O. Box 18111, San Jose 95158. Thank you!

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What is VEP Community Association?

- VEP is an all-volunteer organization of your neighbors working to improve our neighborhoods.
- VEP sponsors many projects and events that improve safety, our quality of life, and the appearance of our community.
- VEP volunteers make our neighborhood's needs, views, and concerns known to government at all levels.
- VEP was founded in 1969. We are one of the largest, most successful, and most continuously active and enduring grass roots volunteer organizations in Santa Clara County.

Why join VEP?

- To receive our newsletter nine times a year.
- To receive monthly email alerts.
- To keep our neighborhoods beautiful, safe, strong, and prepared.
- To participate in and support effective neighborhood activities and representation.
- To support VEP's annual *Community Service Awards* for high school graduates.
- To be part of an outstanding volunteer community organization with 39 years of success in our neighborhoods.

VEP's wishes for Martial Cottle Park

-Adina Pierce

Over the past few months, VEP's *Martial Cottle Park Committee* has been working hard on developing a draft wish-list to present to the county for consideration in their master plan for Martial Cottle Park.



This list represents what we believe to be our neighborhoods' desires, concerns, and ideas for this new regional facility. Its main objective is to honor Mr. Lester's vision. As neighbors to the park, we have also included concerns about traffic and security.

Our proposed VEP Wish-List is printed in its entirety below.

We need your input and approval so that this list can be presented to the county at the end of this month. Please review it, and contact me at adinap@yahoo.com with any comments or concerns.

At our January 22nd VEP general meeting, we have allotted time to review the list and discuss any issues you may have. Please come prepared to participate in refining and approving it.

The next County Task Force meeting is *tentatively* set for Wednesday, February 20, from 6 to 8 p.m. in the Library/ Media Room at Gunderson High School. Be sure to check on this schedule at www.vepca.net (or at www.parkhere.org then click on "Martial Cottle Park Master Plan" in the right column.)

★ DRAFT ★

VEP Wish-List for Martial Cottle Park

1. VEP strongly endorses Walter Lester's vision for the park as is depicted in his 1996 design. The scope of facilities and amenities under consideration should not be reduced prior to completion of the public input process. For example, a train used for park transportation should not be ruled out prematurely for financial reasons. (Our preference is first to optimize park design irrespective of financial considerations, then aggressively pursue public funding and/or private grants to

cover any revenue shortfalls.)

2. Encourage the ongoing presence of indigenous wildlife in the park.

3. Create water features (lake, streams) that will attract native species and be integrated with Canoas Creek as part of an overall flood control plan.

4. Security

a. Design to maximize park and neighborhood security, especially at night. Consider installing locking automobile/pedestrian gates that would prevent access when the park is closed, especially at the neighborhood entrances. Provide adequate patrols and appropriate law enforcement to ensure safety of the park, the agriculture, and the community.

b. Consider using horse-mounted law enforcement units for daytime park security.

c. To facilitate security and privacy, provide a patrol-able buffer zone where the park abuts residences. Keep trails, train tracks, and other user facilities a minimum of 100 yards away from homes.

d. Do not allow public access along the Santa Clara County Water District easement along Canoas Creek between Martial Cottle Park and City of San Jose's Vista Park on Hyde Park Drive.

5. Provide for dust mitigation in the park design and operational stipulations/contracts. For example, avoid disking the dirt during windy times, and plant tall trees downwind of prevailing winds.

6. In the perimeter design, consistent with Mr. Lester's vision, consider the desire of pedestrians, motorists, and homeowners to have views into the park and to the mountains beyond.

7. Traffic/Parking Concerns

a. Minimize traffic and parking impacts on neighborhood streets. Avoid entrances that would route motorists onto Branham Lane. As part of the park master plan, include a traffic/parking plan that encourages regional patrons to arrive via Route 85, LRT, and local arterial roads such as Blossom Hill Road and Snell Avenue.



b. Plan for sufficient onsite, unpaved overflow parking for major events from the onset of park design.

c. We strongly desire free public parking to encourage people to park onsite instead of in the neighborhoods.

d. Divide Chynoweth Avenue (on the east side of the park), using the northern half right-of-way as the main entrance to the park, and the southern half as a two lane street giving access to/from the neighborhood.

e. Alternatively, consider a main entrance utilizing the existing (currently unused) Vista Park/Cahalan connection under Route 85.

f. Provide neighborhood pedestrian and bike access via neighborhood streets without causing major traffic, parking or security issues. Do not locate high-use activity areas near neighborhood entrances.

g. We do not want vehicular access other than emergency vehicles at Vistapark Drive, Gaundabert Lane, Wellington Park Drive, and Branham Lane. No public through-traffic should ever be allowed between the two segments of Chynoweth Avenue. Gated access for park vehicles would be acceptable on Chynoweth Avenue, provided no park vehicles are ever stored in residential portions of Chynoweth.

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Park Features

8. Trails/Transportation

a. Provide trail access for pedestrians, dogs on leash, bikes, roller skates, and rollerblades. Pedestrian trail should be suitable for all-weather walking and not hard on knees.

b. Provide quiet, non-polluting interior transportation consistent with Mr. Lester's design intent and the park's historical agricultural vision. On-site transportation is an essential element for access by people of all ages, to all areas of this large park, and should connect parking areas and VTA Light Rail with other major park destinations. Mr. Lester's original concept of a miniature-train is our preference. Other historically-compatible forms of transportation may also be acceptable such as a tram pulled by a tractor (the Maui Plantation tram in Hawaii is a good example of this).



c. Minimize the use of asphalt and concrete in order to preserve the historic farm ambiance. Where hard paving is needed, run conduits underneath to accommodate future infrastructure needs.

9. Farming/Landscaping

a. Plant perimeter trees early in the process (can fast-track before EIR?).

b. Consider setting aside a nursery/tree storage area for *Our City Forest* appropriately sited and with sufficient space for a potential future educational facility.

c. Minimize the use of pesticides and get certified organic.

d. Plant more orchards consistent with the history of our valley.

e. Set aside a portion of the land for community gardens.

Involve other agricultural groups such as FFA, 4H, and the UC Extension Agricultural Program.

f. Include demonstration facilities for small and medium scale composting.

10. Equestrian Facility

a. Limit equestrian facilities to programs consistent with the historical objectives of the park, and for security.

b. Feature horses that can demonstrate how they were used to work the land.

c. Do not use the park for large scale equestrian events such as rodeos or horse racing.

d. Consider providing facilities for regional horse-mounted law enforcement units (SJPD, Sheriff, Park Ranger).

e. Do not provide stables for public boarding.

f. Considering prevailing winds, plan facilities to minimize



Wesley W. Terrell

★ VEP Member ★
Vista Park Specialist



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equestrian-related smell, dust, and flies on adjacent residences. Building a berm around the equestrian facility would help.

11. The building designated as a "community center" should instead be designated as an "educational center". It should be limited to providing historic agriculture education. It should be built in the style of the existing farm buildings and could, for example, be or include a barn. It should not be designed or used as a general purpose community center.

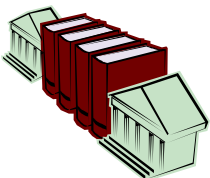
12. Infrastructure

- a. Install underground utilities in the beginning, so no rework is necessary in the future.
- b. Install wireless access points, so the internet could be accessed throughout the park for educational purposes.
- c. Consider a solar energy use demonstration area. Potentially use solar energy to provide the electric needs of the entire park.
- d. Use windmills to generate power and/or to pump water.
- e. Go "Green" and aggressively pursue grants for required funds.
- f. Encourage and aggressively pursue public/private partnerships for funding, operating, and maintaining onsite amenities and facilities (e.g., the rail/train, equestrian facilities, educational facilities).

13. If an off-leash dog park is included in the design, consider its historical appropriateness and the desire to maintain wildlife in the park.

Park Rules and Regulations

14. Management should ensure that concurrent events at the park should be limited to available onsite parking consistent with minimizing neighborhood impacts (see item 7 above) Management should ensure that attendance from cumulative park facilities bookings do not exceed available onsite parking capacity. Facilities use contracts should include appropriate restrictions to manage park attendance.



15. Events held at the park should be consistent with Mr. Lester's vision and be permissible only if they fit within usage limitations.

16. Amplified sound must be consistent with city/county noise standards and prohibited without a permit.

17. General use camping should not be allowed. However, overnight stays associated with historical agricultural education may be acceptable so long as evening activities and sleeping

facilities/locations are far enough away from neighboring residences to minimize noise, light and security issues.

18. Prohibit consumption of alcoholic beverages without a permit.

Education Use Guidelines

19. Provide picnic area and restroom facilities for student use, close to parking lot.

[End.]

Going "Green" in VEP

-Marilyn Rodgers

In recent months, there has been more and more attention by the media on "going green" or "green initiatives"--encouraging all of us to utilize opportunities to save money through energy savings tips and to do our part to help the environment.



The City of San Jose is providing leadership and has initiated these steps for the city to "go green" by:

- The Mayor signed the US Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement several months ago (a pledge by mayors of cities with populations of over 100,000, to reduce global warming pollution in their cities by 7% below 1990 levels). California, particularly Bay Area cities and counties, has been very active in the Cool Cities initiative--a grassroots movement to encourage government organizations to Go Green (see additional information at website www.coolcities.us.com).
- In June, the city council unanimously passed greenhouse gas reduction goals for city operations that are the most ambitious for any city in the country, beginning with 25% below 1990 levels by 2012.
- In October, the city council adopted the Mayor's Green Vision, a 10-point plan that lays the groundwork for San Jose's future with clean energy and a healthy economy (see www.sanjoseca.gov/clerk/Agenda/103007).

These initiatives start a process that potentially will provide significant savings to city taxpayers in the future, as well as indicating that the city is interested in being environmentally responsible.

In addition to the city's efforts, as individual residents and VEP members, we can also initiate activities that will save us money and be beneficial to the environment. These activities range from the simple (inexpensive to initiate) to the more complex (requires a financial investment up front).

Examples to start with might include:

- Exchange incandescent lights in our homes to compact fluorescent lights (CFLs)--one CFL can save approximately \$30 over the life of the bulb, use 75% less energy, and last ten times longer than an incandescent bulb (for additional information and resources, go to www.energystar.gov).
- Turn off lights in rooms when not in use; turn off and unplug appliances (particularly electronics) when not at home/not in use.
- Turn down the thermostat in winter to 68 degrees, and up in summer to 78 degrees. Use a programmable thermostat--lower the temperature for nighttime and while you are away from home for more than four hours.
- Repair or install weather stripping around doors and windows.
- Adjust hydrostat on water heater down to 120 degrees or lower.
- Check faucets and toilets for leaks or continuous dripping--

and repair them.

- Don't let water run continuously while rinsing dishes, or when brushing your teeth.
- Don't wash your car at home.
- Have timers on lawn irrigation systems, and check irrigation systems often to reduce leaks and/or broken sprinkler lines and heads.

Examples when purchasing appliances or making home improvements:

- Buy energy saving appliances (see PG&E website at www.pge.com/yourhome for rebates/incentives).
- Install additional insulation in your home.
- When installing new windows/doors, purchase dual pane or twin pane type options.
- When purchasing a new water heater, buy a waterless tank type (for additional home improvement information, see website www.energystar.gov)

Examples of more complex opportunities for energy savings:

- When buying a new vehicle, consider a hybrid.
- Consider initiating solar or other alternative energy sources to power your home.

The following websites provide helpful educational material and links to additional resources:

- www.pge.com/yourhome
- www.energystar.com
- www.gosolarcalifornia.ca.gov (California Solar Initiative)
- www.coolcities.us
- www.sanjoseca.gov

Guest speakers at this month's VEP meeting will cover many of the items listed above in more detail and will provide additional information and ideas on how to save money while helping the environment.

In March, VEP will again sponsor its annual Home Improvement Faire. If you have recently purchased energy efficient appliances or implemented energy efficient home improvements and have recommendations to share with your neighbors, please:

1. Provide vendor/contractor contact information to John Marks (see related article in this newsletter), and/or
2. Consider writing an article for the *VEP News* to share helpful hints with our members.

Community Service Awards

- Dave Noel

24 years ago, VEP began awarding stipends for post-secondary or vocational training to graduating high school seniors having exceptional volunteer service. It is now time to launch our 2008 Community Service Awards (CSA).

**VEP
Community
Service
Awards**

The VEP executive board is recommending that members present at our January 22nd general meeting approve a funding allocation of \$2,000 for our 2008 CSA, contingent upon finalization of a program review to be presented and approved at our February 26th general meeting.

We traditionally grant up to three awards: one each for graduating students at Gunderson and Andrew Hill High Schools, and one for an At-Large student graduating from any high school. At-Large candidates must be residents of San Jose

and nominated by a VEP member.

We have several concerns about our Community Service Award program. While awarding students at Gunderson and Andrew Hill is relatively simple to administer, we wonder how many VEP area residents attend these schools. Our At-Large category was designed to address that, but is harder to administer since we cannot predict how many candidates, if any, we will have in any year.

We also question whether the same funding might have greater impact if used for an alternate program, such as funding a community service internship. Of course, launching and administering a new program presents a number of new challenges and demands on our volunteer time.

If you have ideas, we would like to hear them now while we perform our program review. We plan to have our recommendations ready by February 12th in order to publish them in the February VEP News and present them to our membership for a vote on February 26th.

If you are willing to help in our CSA program review, please contact me at DNoel1234@aol.com or 408-266-7183 as soon as possible.

Please trim shrubs—and stow trash cans!

-Dave Fadness

A long-time VEP member asked me to remind residents who live at street corners to trim any shrubs that block the visibility of motorists and/or pedestrians. This is a serious safety issue: Shrubs needn't be removed, just kept trimmed shorter so pedestrians and oncoming cars are visible. His point is a very good one.



When driving, if you are approaching a corner where visibility is obstructed, please slow down and proceed carefully. Take it easy! Pedestrians should *always* be cautious, but especially so when visibility is limited at street crossings. Always look both ways when driving or walking.

The same member commented that more and more folks are leaving their garbage and recycling cans either on the streets or on their driveways all week, making some neighborhoods look third-world. This practice not only degrades the appearance of our neighborhoods, it can also add to the problem of

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motorist and pedestrian visibility.

Please remember, city code requires that you store your trash and recycling containers behind your "front setback" (it's best to keep them inside your front gate), out of sight from the street. This should be done the day your trash is picked up.

Please help to make and keep our community safe and attractive.

Eliminate unwanted catalogs

- Dave Noel

Here's a website that may help save a tree and reduce your junk mail. Visit www.catalogchoice.org to opt out from receiving unwanted catalogs. Catalog Choice is a free service that lets you decline paper catalogs you no longer wish to receive.

VEP Community Calendar

Tue, Jan 22 @ 7:30 pm = VEP General Meeting in the Vista Park Community Room. (See Agenda on page 1.)

Sat, Jan 26 @ 9 am to 4 pm = Electronic Waste Collection by the Almaden Valley Counseling Service in the Office Max/Rite Aid parking lot, 1130 Blossom Hill Road.

Mon, Feb 4 @ 7:30 pm = Memorial Day Parade & Festival planning committee meeting in the Vista Park Community Room. (Call Dave Fadness for details.)

Tue, Feb 5 @ 7:30 pm = VEP Exec Meeting in the Vista Park Community Room. (Call any VEP officer for agenda details.)

Tue, Feb 12 @ 1 pm = VEP NEWS articles deadline. (Email your articles to Dave Fadness at drfadness@sbcglobal.net)

Wed, Feb 20 @ 6 pm = County's Martial Cottle Park Master Plan Task Force meeting in the Library/Media Room at Gunderson High School (tentative--be sure to check on this schedule at www.vepca.net).

Tue, Feb 26 @ 7:30 pm = VEP General Meeting in the Vista Park Community Room. (Agenda to be announced.)

Tue, Mar 4 @ 7:30 pm = VEP Exec Meeting in the Vista Park Community Room. (Call any VEP officer for agenda details.)

Tue, Mar 25 = VEP Home Improvement Faire.

Sat, May 3 = VEP Community Garage Sale.

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

VEP's Home Improvement Faire

- John Marks, Faire Coordinator

VEP's 10th annual *Home Improvement Faire* is set for March 25, replacing our regular general meeting. Plan to attend. You'll see many of your neighbors, wander among exhibits, meet contractors in person, and get ideas for fixing or upgrading your home at affordable prices.



As usual, we will be handing out \$50 cash raffle gifts to half a dozen or so attendees, no purchase required.

This special event is for you. We look forward to seeing you there.

Make your garage sale a **BIG** success

-Dave Fadness and Ginger Cardona

This year, our annual *Community Garage Sale* will be held on Saturday, May 3rd. Make sure to mark it on your calendar now, and start gathering those treasures you no longer use from your garage, attic, and closets.



The idea is to get everyone in our community to have a garage sale on the same day. The best way to help that priceless old junk find a new home is to increase traffic to your home. So, VEP will advertise this event in local newspapers and by distributing flyers around our neighborhoods.

Your best resource is you--activity attracts more activity. Get your neighbors involved. People will pass by your street unless they think something is happening there. Try to get everyone on your street to join in. You might even pool all your neighbors' goodies into one big second-hand superstore. If your neighbors aren't selling, ask if you can spread out to their driveway.

Plan now to make sure you can be seen from the street. Put up balloons or signs. Have your out-of-area friends bring garage sale items that add to yours--make it a big, fun event on your street or cul-de-sac. A little energy and creativity now will pay off in big dividends, freeing up space in your garage and putting extra money in your pocket.

4th annual Memorial Day event: help needed

-Dave Fadness

Planning is already underway for this year's *Memorial Day Parade & Festival* to be held on May 26. With your help, we can make this event bigger and better every year. Your early involvement is encouraged.

We need volunteers...

- To pick up and return equipment the day before and after.
- To post parade route "NO PARKING" signs the day before.
- To help with set-up the morning of the event.
- To help with booth duty and event games.
- To help clean-up after the event.
- To find event sponsors and donors.

Having your help taking care of one or two of these details will make this event successful for kids of all ages in our com-



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munity. Let me know if you or someone you know will 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. We also need trucks to move items to and from our Festival site.



Call me at 578-6428 or email me at drfadness@sbcglobal.net if you're willing to help even in a small way with our fourth-annual *Memorial Day Parade & Festival*. Don't wait because you think someone else will step forward or because it's long from now; we need to know now whether your help will be available.

Above all, please be sure to mark your calendars, spread the word, and plan to attend with your family and friends on Monday, May 26, 2008.

Are you a Crafter? Know someone who is?

- Ginger Cardona

VEP will be holding its annual Parade & Festival on Memorial Day. We invite our members or their friends to set up a table and sell their crafts. More than 2000 people attended our Festival last year. This is a wonderful opportunity for selling your crafts.

Please contact me at 227-0222 or at cardona@sbcglobal.net for more information.

Programs at *Our City Forest*

Our City Forest (OCF) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the condition of our urban forest by involving the community. These volunteer opportunities are now available to make a difference in your community while giving back to the environment:

~ Volunteer Orientation ~
11 am Saturday, January 19

Highly recommended for all new volunteers, this session will cover the history and mission of OCF and provide new volunteers with information about all of our volunteer opportunities.

~ Free Monthly Tree Tours ~
1 pm Saturday, January 19

Here's an opportunity to lead or attend free downtown tour where you'll get to know San Jose's street trees. You'll be amazed at all the trees you'll learn to identify! Open to all; invite your family and friends.

~ Environmental Education ~
2 pm Saturday, January 26

Volunteers are needed to join our "Planet Tree" education program. Lead short presentations in local classrooms with free training in urban forestry and educational presentation techniques.

~ Tree Amigo class ~
Starts Wednesday, February 6

OCF is now accepting reservations for its free winter Tree Amigo course.

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

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tree tour, and a tree planting project during the 18-hour class. Classes are intended for anyone interested in becoming an OCF volunteer.

Classroom and Field Sessions:

- Session 1 = 6 to 8 pm Wed. Feb 6 (All about Our City Forest)
- Session 2 = 9 am to 12 pm Sat. Feb 9 (Tree planting event)
- Session 3 = 6 to 8 pm Wed. Feb 13 (Science of trees)
- Session 4 = 1 to 4 pm Sat. Feb 16 (Walking tree tour)
- Session 5 = 6 to 8 pm Wed. Feb 20 (The right tree for the right place)
- Session 6 = 9 am to 1 pm Sat. Feb 23 (Tree bank tour)
- Session 7 = 6 to 8 pm Wed. Dec 19 (Coordinating a tree planting event/graduation)

Wednesday classroom meetings are held at 151 West Mission Street. Saturday field training locations will be announced during the course.

To enroll in these training classes, call (408)998-7337 x107 or e-mail volunteer@ourcityforest.org.

~ Free Shade Trees ~
(Available year round)

Help save our urban forest and help make Silicon Valley green! Receive a free tree from OCF for parking strips, schools, parks, neighborhoods, and other public areas that could use more trees.

For more information on any of the foregoing opportunities, please contact OCF at volunteer@ourcityforest.org or (408) 99-TREES. Flexible time requirements and short-term involvement accepted. No experience required but please come with a passion for community involvement. Bilingual individuals are encouraged to reply.

San Jose's sewer taxes to rise

-Dave Fadness

On November 20th, the San Jose City Council accepted a staff report on financing alternatives to fund the short-term critical infrastructure needs of our city's sewer collection and treatment system. Staff was instructed at that meeting to proceed with the following Sewer Service & Use Charge five-year rate increases and to prepare for their approval by the city council in Spring 2008:

- 2007-2008 = 9%
- 2008-2009 = 15%
- 2009-2010 = 15%



2010-2011 = 8%
2011-2012 = 8%

If you are in support of or have any concern about these increases, be sure to call our Councilwoman Nancy Pyle's office at 535-4910 for more information and the council's hearing schedule.

Share your bounty and get a tax deduction

- Dave Noel

Do you have too much fruit on your backyard tree? Consider donating it to Village Harvest. The fruit will go to people who need it and you'll get a tax deduction.

Can't pick it yourself? Village Harvest's volunteers can pick it for you. For more information, visit www.villageharvest.org or call (888) FRUIT-411.

A message from VEP's president

- Joe Tajnai

Happy New Year VEPers! Welcome to 2008. I hope that you all had a joyous holiday and rode out the recent storms with minimal damage and inconvenience.



I am resolving this year to try to bring at least one person to each of our meetings who normally does not attend. This month it will be my next door neighbor, Helen Castillo. She is a VEP member but has not been able to attend due to her ongoing community involvement and reality business.

Most recently she organized a holiday blanket drive that resulted in over 200 blankets being donated to needy families. I am hoping to harness her energy and smiling face to the community's further benefit.

Who are you going to bring to our meeting?

2007 was a very good year for VEP

-Dave Fadness

The ambitious Goals & Objectives adopted by VEP members spurred another year of outstanding achievement for our volunteer group in calendar 2007. These are the highlights of what we able to accomplish:

January: We installed 960-feet of irrigation lines, planted 32

trees, and spread 162 cubic yards of mulch on the 1/3-acre parcel at Branham/Narvaez. We planted another eight trees across the street, along the ped/bike path leading to Route 87. This beautification project attracted the assistance of an average of 61 volunteers on two weekends.

We voted on traffic calming changes for Chynoweth Avenue, ending months of work with city engineers in the wake of two serious auto accidents. We also launched our 21st annual *VEP Community Service Awards* program, seeking candidates among 2007 high school graduates having outstanding records of volunteer community service.



February: Thirteen volunteers helped as we started our 2007-2008 annual membership drive. We also kicked-off our outreach for candidates for 2007-2008 VEP officers.

March: VEP held its 10th annual Home Improvement Faire. With the help of **Jim Hicks**, our indefatigable Past President **John Marks** organized this popular event for our members. Seventeen VEP volunteers distributed thousands of flyers door-to-door to announce this and upcoming Garage Sale and Memorial Day events.

We formalized with San Jose's *Adopt-A-Street* program our adoption of the Vistapark Drive cul-de-sac, accepting responsibility for ongoing maintenance of landscaping there. This agreement also includes maintaining the trees in the Vistapark median (south of Branham) and the oleanders we planted along the wood fence on the west side Vistapark (north of Branham).

April: Webmaster **Adina Pierce** unveiled VEP's new website, www.vepca.net. VEP volunteers again distributed thousands of flyers door-to-door to announce upcoming Garage Sale and Memorial Day events.

May: This month started with VEP's popular *Community Garage Sale* and ended with a turnout of more than 2000 participants at our *Memorial Day Parade & Festival*. Thanks belong to **Ginger Cardona** for her work in organizing the Garage Sale. We're very grateful for the 287 students who performed and otherwise volunteered on Memorial Day and to school staff, VEP members, and local merchants who gave their time and money to make this third annual event an unprecedented success.

VEP hosted its first forum on finding solutions for traffic congestion at Route 87/Capitol/Narvaez, featuring key decision-makers from the city, county, and VTA. We also elected a slate of officers for 2007-08 and participated in the city's *Great American Litter Pickup* campaign.

One student each from Andrew Hill and Gunderson High Schools were awarded VEP's 2007 *Community Service Awards* and checks of \$1000 to be used for post-secondary education or vocational training.

June/July/August: (No general membership meetings.) VEP officers met through the summer months to develop proposed *Goals & Objectives* for the coming year.

August: Twenty VEPers cleaned-up Chynoweth Avenue and the Route 87 ped/bike path to Route 85. After pruning the 170 palm trees in the median of Chynoweth twice each year since 1995, the city agreed to do that job for us this time. Planning began for next year's *Memorial Day Parade & Festival*.



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September: VEP members approved our Goals & Objectives for 2007-08. They also approved a \$1000 donation for furnishings and equipment at the new Pearl Avenue Branch Library, scheduled for completion in late spring 2008.

VEP presented the net proceeds from our *Memorial Day Parade & Festival* to the parent-teacher groups at Carson and Parkview Schools (\$1100 each).

County Parks announced the selection of seventeen members for its *Martial Cottle Park Master Plan Task Force*. VEP members **Adina Pierce**, **Charlie Fredricks**, and **Greg West** are Task Force members, **Marilyn Rodgers** is an alternate. VEP formed its own *Martial Cottle Park Committee*, chaired by Adina Pierce.

October: VEP hosted a second, very productive forum on finding solutions for traffic congestion at Route 87/Capitol/Narvaez, again featuring key decision-makers from the city, county, and VTA. We initiated a successful effort to relieve after-school and weekend traffic and parking problems that were impacting neighbors of Gunderson High School.

November: Seventeen VEP volunteers planted 100 daffodils and twelve trees in the Branham/Narvaez intersection area.

December: VEP planted another three trees and pruned others at Branham/Narvaez. Our *Martial Cottle Park Committee* met to conclude a wish-list for the park that will be presented to members for discussion/approval at our January 2008 meeting.

We also held nine monthly executive and general membership meetings, published and mailed nine monthly newsletters, managed day-to-day VEP business affairs, and lobbied public officials for the things our community needs and deserves. VEP volunteers paint-out graffiti and perform ongoing maintenance of all community beautification projects we've done in recent years.

Hats off to VEP and its extraordinarily dedicated volunteers!

Gunderson High School happenings

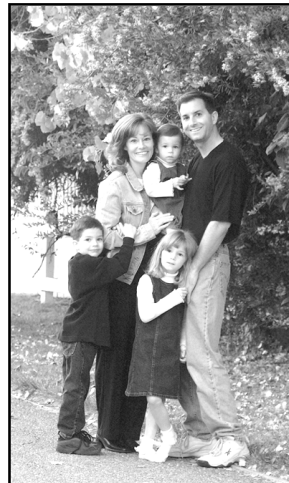
-Cary Catching, Principal

As the first semester of the school year is drawing to a close, we are also gearing up for the recruitment period for incoming 8th graders. Information about Gunderson has been sent out to all 8th grade families who live in our enrollment area. We are inviting them to attend tours of our campus, shadow days, and/or parent information sessions. We have been fortunate to have seen a steady increase in our enrollment over the past few years, and hope this trend continues.



We recently purchased a new, electronic marquee for the front of the school. Well, after several months of waiting, the marquee is finally complete and should be installed by month's end. The marquee will be in the front of the school (on the campus), between the theater and the gym. Please drive by and take a look at it and our upcoming events.

Speaking of events, as a result of community input, we will now post on the website the outside events occurring on our campus over the weekend. Please visit our site at <http://gunderson.sjsud.org/>. Once you enter the site, you will see an icon for "weekend events". Simply open this link to find out



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the who, what, and where of activities on our campus that are being put on by non-school groups. If you have any questions about the use of our campus or want to report any misuse, please give me a call.

Finally, a pleasant reminder to our neighbors... The Gunderson property is NOT a dog park. Many of our athletes and coaches (especially those who play soccer) have noticed an increased amount of animal waste on the fields. Dogs, leashed or unleashed, are NOT allowed on our facility. If despite this rule you decide to bring your dog on campus, please be courteous enough to clean up after it. Our students and staff will appreciate it!

The view from city hall

-City Councilwoman Nancy Pyle

Happy New Year! Welcome to 2008, a year that promises to be filled with new challenges and opportunities for all of us in District 10. I look forward to taking on new responsibilities as a representative on the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority Board (VTA) and continuing in my role as Chair of the Community and Economic Development Committee, as well as a member of the Emergency Preparedness Council.

D-10

While I promise to keep you informed on the latest information in these important areas, I felt the need to address the importance of staying prepared during the coming winter months. As our community deals with the threat of flooding and power outages, it is critical that residents have the resources that are necessary to make it safely through what is looking to be a very wet and blustery season.

With the first major winter storms of the season arriving during the first weekend of January, I'm pleased to say the city was on the ball, coordinating with PG&E and the Santa Clara Valley Water District to ensure that our residents remained safe and well served.

Our Department of Transportation was also hard at work, clearing a majority of the city's storm catch basins and continuing to do so until all 28,500 have been cleaned. They're also monitoring water levels at reservoirs and creeks, in coordination with the Water District.

The Water District is hosting numerous sandbag stations throughout Santa Clara County. To protect their property from

minor flooding, District 10 residents can pick up sandbags at the Santa Clara Valley Water District Winfield Warehouse located at 5905 Winfield Boulevard, between Blossom Hill Road and Coleman Avenue.

Blocked drains are actually the greatest cause of minor flooding in residential areas. If you see debris that is impacting a drain or trees that have fallen during a storm, don't hesitate to call the Water District's watershed hotline at 265-2607, extension 2378.



PG&E crews have also been preparing for power line disruptions due to harsh weather conditions expected in the first part of 2008. More than 80 crews from out-of-state have joined hundreds of PG&E crews that have been dispatched to assist in the restoration efforts, including many who are actively working with residents in the City of San Jose. PG&E

is working incredibly hard to ensure that residents throughout San Jose have their power restored quickly during an outage. Residents are encouraged to call 1-800-PGE-5002 to report outages and receive updated information.

As a quick reminder, during a power outage it is important to remain calm, unplug or turn off all major appliances to avoid any overloads or fire hazards, and leave a single light on to alert you when power is restored. Keep a fresh supply of batteries available for your flashlights and emergency radios, which are critical equipment in this day and age. Also remember to use any candles in a safe and responsible manner if flashlights or other light sources are unavailable. Also keep a corded phone on hand if you commonly rely on a cell phone or wireless handset, as these most likely will not work and cannot be recharged during a power outage. Keep a supply of fresh water on hand as well, both in the freezer as well as in the fridge. If the power goes out, use the frozen water to keep food in your refrigerator chilled until power is restored.

Taking the proper precautions and staying prepared can mean the difference between a great 2008 and the unfortunate alternative. For more information about getting prepared for the winter months, visit www.sanjoseca.gov, www.valleywater.org, and www.pge.com.

District 10's first annual *Westfield Oakridge Winter Walk & Resource Fair for Seniors* will be held in the Sears Courtyard on Thursday, January 31st. Here's the program:

- 8:30 am = Registration & Free Breakfast
- 9 to 11 am = Walk & Resource Fair

For more information, call 408-535-4910. Register Online at www.sanjoseca.gov/district10.

As of November, eight Code Enforcement Inspectors have been added. The Department of Planning, Building & Code Enforcement also announced that all "routine" complaints to the Code Enforcement Division will receive field inspection services. These complaints include zoning, illegal signs, inoperable vehicles on private property, lawn parking, overgrown weeds, and other conditions that affect the quality of our neighborhoods and business districts. In the past, only "immediate" and "priority" complaints received field inspection services.

For questions or more information, please contact San Jose's Code Enforcement Office at 277-4528.

VTA bus routes to change

-County Supervisor Don Gage

As part of an effort to improve service to riders, the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority will implement a number of changes to its bus routes beginning January 14.

The revamped bus service includes increasing the frequency of buses on some routes, adding new lines or changing existing ones, and eliminating little-used lines.



Savings from the deleted routes will help improve the service on existing and new routes. Many bus lines will increase their service frequency to every 15 minutes or better, and new Community Buses will provide better service to certain neighborhoods.

I think these changes will be a real benefit to our riders, and will get them where they want to go faster and more efficiently.

To learn more about the changes and see how the lines you use are affected, visit www.vta.org/newbusservice/.

[Ed. Note: Santa Clara County Supervisor Don Gage is also a member of the VTA Board of Directors.]

Phony notices mailed to VEP members

-Dave Fadness

Last month, someone mailed a notice about a barking dog to neighbors in the Vistapark/Victoria Park Drive area. Those notices used VEP's name in an imitation letterhead with our P.O. Box, email, and website addresses, implying that they were from our organization. They were not.

Whether or not it was for a meritorious cause, this unauthorized use of VEP's name was *completely* dishonest and totally irresponsible; doing so selfishly risked our organization's reputation and set a horrible precedent we hope won't ever be followed by others.

VEP has been open to and willing to help resolve neighborhood concerns for 39 years. VEP member or not, those seeking our help approach us directly (we refuse to respond to anonymous requests), and work with us through a methodical, time-tested process that includes fact-finding. Although we're volunteers, because we are known by, have experience with, and have earned respect among officials, in most cases we are completely successful in finding solutions.

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Except for our holiday newsletter, the flyer that you may have received in early December was a fake. If you ever get a flyer that claims to be from us, check to see whether a VEP contact name is given. If not, it's a phony. Even if a contact name is shown, if the notice bothers you in any way, call us to make sure it's authentic.

If you know who mailed those barking dog flyers, please ask them to stop using VEP's name. Ask them to pick up the phone or come to a meeting and ask us for help. That's what we exist to do—help our neighbors.

How to deal with *your* barking dog

Dogs bark for many different reasons. It may be genetic, as some breeds of dogs (such as hounds, collies, shelties, cocker spaniels, and beagles) seem to be predisposed to being more vocal than others. Some dogs are more fearful than others and feel they have to alert you to every possible peril. Some breeds are very territorial and feel they must alert you to any possible threat.

Some dogs are just bored. Being kept in the backyard all day fosters boredom; dogs may invent ways like barking to keep themselves busy. Other dogs are stressed by being left alone



outside all day (sometimes called separation anxiety). These dogs exhibit stress by barking, digging, chewing, and general destructiveness, but only when left alone. By making your dog more a part of your family, it will become happier and less prone to these stress behaviors, including unwanted barking.

Outside stimulation such as neighbors working in their yard, being teased by a passerby, meter readers doing their job, etc., can also set your dog off barking each day. By bringing it inside to live, there is less for your dog to bark at.

The key to solving a barking problem is to first find out why your dog is barking. Is it because it is bored, anxious at being left all day (separation anxiety), or because it is being teased by neighbors? Does your dog only bark at a particular time of day or only when in a particular type of situation? Does it bark when you are home? Try some of the general guidelines listed below for a couple of weeks before resorting to any punishment and do some detective work first before picking a specific solution.

~ General guidelines ~

HANDS OFF YOUR DOG WHEN IT IS BEING VOCAL. Any touching or soothing behavior you may try with your dog at this point will only reinforce its barking. Only touch or pet your dog when it is being still and quiet. Consult a behaviorist if you think your dog is barking because of fear or a separation anxiety problem.

DO NOT REWARD BARKING BEHAVIOR by petting or touching your dog, picking it up, feeding it a treat or its dinner, opening the door for it because it's yelling at you, letting it out of his crate, or giving in to something that it may want (its walk, its cookie, its dinner, its car ride, etc.) Wait until your dog is quiet before you give it what it wants.

REWARD SILENCE! This is the most important part of teaching your dog to be quiet. It is important that we reward our dogs for good behavior every single day of their life. Each time your dog is quiet when normally he would bark, make sure you praise it vocally, with a pat or scratch, and with a treat.

MAKE YOUR DOG A PART OF YOUR FAMILY. Unaccept-



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able behavior, like unwanted barking, is NEVER improved by isolating your dog to the backyard. In fact, that may be the reason why your dog is barking all the time; it's unhappy being left outside. Bring your dog inside while you are gone if that is the only time it is barking. Your dog will feel more secure inside the house and less apt to bark. If it is destructive while you are gone, then crate train your dog so it is prevented from being destructive indoors. A dog is a pack animal and needs daily social interaction with its family. As a minimum, your dog should be with you whenever you are home, including sleeping indoors at night. If you have not taken your dog to training class, now is the time to do so. Pack animals need their pack and, for better or for worse, you're it.

PROVIDE PLENTY OF EXERCISE. Before you leave your house for the day, give Fido a good romp with a ball or Frisbee. The general rule of thumb is 20 minutes of aerobic exercise twice a day. Remember, a tired dog is a good dog because then it is sleeping, not barking or being destructive.

GIVE YOUR DOG A SAFE PLACE TO LIVE. If your dog is being teased or upset by your neighbors, build a secure, sight-proof dog run in the middle of your yard, away from your fence. Or, better yet, bring your dog indoors to live with you. Crate train your dog so it can sleep or remain indoors safely when you are gone. Install a doggie door so it has access to the indoors and it can avoid noisy neighbors or teasing cats during the day.

USE TIME-OUTS. Before leaving your dog alone, don't spend so much time with it that when it comes time for you to leave, your dog gets over-anxious. Deliberately ignore your dog for 20 to 30 minutes at least three times a day (pretend it's not there, don't pet, say anything, or make direct eye contact with it, and just move away should it tries to paw you, nudge you, or crawl into your lap). Make sure your whole family participates in the time-out periods or they'll be ineffective. Once your dog accepts these time-outs calmly, go on to time buffers...

USE TIME BUFFERS. Studies have shown that most dogs are at their destructive and vocal worst 20 minutes after you leave in the morning for work and 20 minutes before you come home in the evening. Time buffers teach your dog to settle down for the day and to remain unemotional when you first return home. Fifteen minutes before you need to leave the house in the morning, put your dog in its crate, dog run, or room (wherever it spends the day) and ignore it. When it is time for you to leave, just leave; don't make a big deal out of it. A "Good bye, have a nice day" is enough. What you are teaching your dog is to settle in for the day, not to get emotional when you leave. Now do just the reverse when you

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come home. Leave your dog in its day confinement (or if it is loose in the house, do not touch, make direct eye contact, or talk to it) for fifteen minutes before greeting it. This will teach it that even though you have come home, there is a cooling off period before it can be greeted.

GIVE YOUR DOG SOMETHING TO DO WHILE YOU ARE GONE. If your dog is busy chewing, it's very unlikely it will be barking at the same time. Good chew toys are Kongs stuffed with cheese, biscuits, peanut butter, or any meat leftovers. Stuffing sterilized beef bones with meat also works well. Put several special chew toys down just before you leave for the day and pick them up when you return home. Another good item to keep your dog busy is the Buster Cube. You fill it with your dog's daily ration of kibble and it has to work to receive its meal.

TRY DOGGIE DAY CARE. Keep your dog once or twice a week in a local doggie day care center so it can spend time playing with other friendly dogs and be worried less about you leaving for the day. Or take your dog to a friend's house for the day. A dog that has played all day is going to sleep away the night and most of the following day.

DO NOT HIT, SLAP, PUNCH, KICK, OR HOLD YOUR DOG'S MOUTH SHUT in the hopes that it will stop barking. Punishment teaches your dog nothing except to fear you! Do your detective work to find out why it is barking.

DO NOT USE AN ELECTRONIC SHOCK COLLAR ON YOUR DOG. Studies have shown that dogs that wear "shock" collars are much more likely to develop fear or aggression problems. If you've tried everything listed above for a minimum of two weeks and haven't made a dent in the problem, the **ONLY** humane bark collar recommended is a citronella collar. Consult a behaviorist **BEFORE** using one, however.

If you have any problems, questions, or concerns, please call the Humane Society Silicon Valley's **FREE** Animal Behavior helpline at (408) 727-3383 x 753.

[Ed. Note: The foregoing article was adapted from the Humane Society Silicon Valley's website article, *Singing His Song: The Barking Dog*. If your neighbor has a barking dog, please copy and share this article with them.]

Problem with a neighbor or their barking dog?

-Dave Fadness

If you have a problem with late-night parties or other disruptive noise issues, call 3-1-1. The dispatcher will determine whether your call is an emergency, then forward it to the appropriate agency. If there is a possibility or threat of danger to people or property, *always* call 9-1-1.

If police are dispatched to the scene but the disturbance resumes or there are threats of retaliation after they leave, don't hesitate to call again. If you don't, the authorities will assume the problem has been satisfactorily resolved.

Be aware that records of complaint calls are kept on file. Work to have your neighbors join you in reporting legitimate complaints; the source and number of calls does matter.

To report barking dogs, call the city's Animal Care & Services at 578-7297 or 361-6600. If it's in the middle of the night, you and/or your family can't sleep, and Animal Care & Services doesn't respond, call 3-1-1.

Always consider talking with your neighbor first. They may be genuinely unaware of the disturbance that's bothering you. Approaching them in a friendly way can end the problem quickly and without any downside. Keep written records of all calls.

To report property problems (building issues, blight, off-street parking violations, etc.) call the San Jose City Code Enforcement Department at (408) 277-4528. For street parking violations, call the city's Department of Transportation at 535-3850.

After you've tried repeatedly and haven't gotten satisfactory results, come to a VEP meeting and let us know about it. You can call me at 578-6428 (but not after midnight, okay?) and I will try to help—no guarantees, though. In most cases, you can work together with VEP and the city to find a solution.

Santa Clara County Assessor info on-line

-Dave Noel

Are you curious about the assessed value of your home? What about your neighbor's home? Do you have a renter nearby and want to find the address of the home's owner? To find all this and more for free, visit www.scc-assessor.org then click on "Quick Hits", and then click on "Look up Property Records".

Frostbitten plants come back slowly

-John Marks

Plants that bloom too early can be victims of frostbite this time of year, particularly jade plants. If that happens to your plants, don't throw them away just because they aren't flower-

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ing any more. It takes two or more years for them to recover enough to initiate flowers again.

As overnight temperatures dip, tropical plants, citrus, avocado, bougainvillea and other sensitive plants will need protection. When we had the big freeze in 1989, some plants were just mush afterward. It took three years before they bloomed again.

If you cover them with a blanket, the new flowers can get bent over, and they never straighten out. Some gardeners construct a frame and cover frost-sensitive plants with clear plastic or cloth. Some also place a light inside, turning it on at night when temperatures drop below freezing. You can have your own greenhouse that way. I have a poinsettia that we have covered all this winter and it's still bright with red blossoms.

Plants that are well watered have more frost resistance than those that are starved for water. Also, keep frost protection handy. Compost some of your leaves.

Want color plantings? Winter-bedding plants are a top choice for quick color in the garden. Since the winter season is the time of short days and cold nights, it's best to stick with pansies, viola, primrose, sweet alyssum, stock, snapdragons, and English daisies. We have some snapdragons from last year that are still blooming, and will continue into next year. For larger plantings, go for bareroot roses, fruit and nut trees, berry vines, and grapes.

No more Bulletin Board ads

-*Dave Fadness*

Bulletin Board Ads will no longer appear in our newsletters. A feature that we've run in our newsletters since VEP's early days, they've become a casualty of an age where such internet sites as *Craig's List* attract broad shopper and advertiser attention. There being little interest in or call for our printed ads recently, we've decided to drop them.

VEP's November meeting

-*Jim Hicks, VEP Secretary*

VEP's Vice President **Marilyn Rodgers** presided, offering a warm welcome to get our meeting started.

Principle **Cary Catching** presented an update on progress in addressing traffic resulting from weekend events (Vietnamese school, swim meets, etc.) at Gunderson High School. Most problems have been solved by a new policy that requires events attracting 400 or more cars to use SJPD for traffic control. In addition, SJPD will monitor Friday event parking at football games. Relationships between the school and neighboring homeowners have greatly improved as a result.



The school website now shows what weekend events are being held. Tennis and track facilities are open on weekends. Tennis wind screens will be installed soon.

Ms. Catching also reported that there is a mitigation plan in place for Gunderson's stadium lights. All curbs and pedestrian crosswalks around the school are being painted.

Ms. Catching mentioned that there are 60 to 80 more students enrolled at GHS this year than last year.

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Dan Collen, Deputy Director of the County Roads Department, and Project Manager **Roy Cabaltera** presented some valuable information about county expressways and improvement plans for Almaden Expressway.

There are over 400 video feeds citywide used for specific traffic monitoring and to fine-tune the timing of traffic signals. Go to www.countyroads.org to see the location of the video feeds and how to make service requests. Capitol/Silver Creek is the most congested expressway intersection in San Jose, followed by Almaden/Blossom Hill Road.

A number of Almaden Expressway traffic concerns were outlined.

- Getting out of Best Buy onto Almaden (no left turn allowed)
- Access into and out of the carwash at Cherry
- The left turn signal on northbound Almaden at Cherry
- No right turns off northbound Almaden at Chynoweth
- The Route 85 off-ramp at Costco (Emporium Way)
- Right turns at Blossom Hill onto northbound Almaden

Improvements in these and other problem areas are being considered. County funding is available. County Roads' presentation to VEP was part of getting public input regarding highest priority concerns.

VEP Treasurer, Ginger Cardona, presented our 2008 budget. A motion was made and seconded. The budget was approved.

Adina Pierce, chair of VEP's *Martial Cottle Park Committee* and a member of the County's Task Force, provided an update of the results of the Task Force meeting held in October. That meeting, attended by 150 people, provided feedback on the project.



VEP's own committee of 25 members is developing a wish-list for the park. Its draft recommendations will be published for member review in the *VEP NEWS* and be discussed at our January meeting.

Our meeting ended with a discussion of future meeting topics. Members suggested these:

- Capital/Narvaez traffic improvement project
- Election forums to increase voter awareness
- Code Enforcement
- City Budget
- Going "green"

THE VEP NEWS



VEP Community Association

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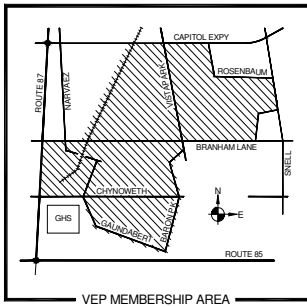
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Editor	Dave Fadness	578-6428	drfadness@sbcglobal.net



Check our website: www.vepca.net

Community Room

Vista Park

7:30 pm in the

Be sure to attend
VEP's
January 22nd Meeting