

VEP NEWS

• VEP COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION •

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

April 2008

VEP'S ANNUAL MEETING

7:30 p.m. Tuesday
▶ April 29, 2008 ◀

Vista Park Community Room
475 Hyde Park Drive

AGENDA

★ Solar Energy★

A presentation on solar energy for VEP residents
by Thang Nguyen of *Sun Run*

★ Update on Crime Statistics ★

A presentation by Captain Vaughn Edwards,
San Jose Police Department

★ Annual Reports and Officer Elections ★

Report on VEP's Goals & Objectives, Treasurer's Report, and
election of officers for 2008-2009

★ City Council Candidates ★

District 10 San Jose City Council candidates
Nancy Pyle (incumbent) and Ashraf Madraswala

★ Your Concerns and Ideas ★

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

Everyone is welcome. Invite your neighbors!

slate of officers, approve our annual treasurer's report, and review a report on our accomplishments in achieving the *Goals & Objectives* our members adopted for 2007-08 (see article in this newsletter).

▶ **Candidates Meet and Greet** - District 10 San Jose City Council candidates Nancy Pyle (incumbent) and Ashraf Madraswala will introduce themselves, speak briefly, and stay on after our meeting so you will have an opportunity to talk to them informally. (Candidate bios are included in this newsletter.)

▶ **Your input** - We always leave time to hear from you regarding concerns or issues that we can work together in resolving. This approach continues to make VEP neighborhoods strong, healthy, and attractive.

We look forward to seeing you, your family, your friends, and your neighbors at our April 29th meeting. Please join us!

★★ VEP Community Calendar ★★

Tue, Apr 29 = VEP *Annual Meeting* in the Vista Park Community Room. (See agenda above.)

Thu, May 1 @ 7:30 pm = Memorial Day Parade & Festival Planning Committee in the Vista Park Community Room. (Call Dave Fadness for agenda details.)

Sat, May 3 = VEP Community-Wide Garage Sale.

Sat, May 3, 9am—4pm = VEP-Gunderson e-Waste Drop-Off Event.

Tue, May 6 @ 7:30 pm = VEP Exec meeting in the Vista Park Community Room. (Call for agenda details.)

Tue, May 13 @ 1 pm = VEP NEWS articles deadline. (Email your articles to vepca@vepca.net)

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

Tue, May 27 = VEP General Meeting in the Vista Park Community Room. (Agenda to be announced in May newsletter.)

Tue, June 3 = California Primary Election. **Get out and vote!**

VEP officer elections

-Marilyn Rodgers

April is *Annual Meeting* month for VEP. In addition to annual reports from out-going officers each year, our new officers are also elected and installed during this Annual Meeting.

The following slate of officer candidates will be presented to our members on April 29th. Nominations will remain open and accepted from our members up to the point when elections are held that night.

(Cont'd next page...)

VEP's April meeting

-Marilyn Rodgers & Joe Tajnai

Please notice that this meeting is being held on April 29, one week later than normal, to accommodate our guest speakers. Here's what we have in store for you:

▶ **Solar Energy** - VEP members will have another opportunity to obtain information regarding options for residents who may be interested in pursuing this emerging energy-saving technology. Our speaker, **Thang Nguyen** will be there to represent Sun Run, a solar energy company.

▶ **Captain Vaughn Edwards** is our new Southern Division Commander for the San Jose Police Department. Captain Edwards will present an overview of crime statistics in our neighborhood and tips on how to protect yourself and your neighbors.

▶ **VEP's Annual Meeting** - members will be asked to elect a

2008 is VEP's 39th year!

The slate of officer candidates for this year is as follows:

President = Joe Tajnai
Vice President = Marilyn Rodgers
Secretary = Adina Pierce
Treasurer = Ginger Cardona
VEP News Editor = (Candidate needed.)

Notice that we need an Editor for our newsletter. Dave Fadness will be happy to work with whoever steps up to this board position, sharing software, formats, resources, and his experience in bringing that new volunteer quickly up to speed. True to form, our other officers will help, too.

Please consider offering your services. If interested, call any member of our current board—our contact info is shown on the mailing page of this newsletter.

Solar energy for the VEP community?

-Helen Castillo & Don Ferguson

We've initiated an investigation into residential solar energy for the VEP community, starting a *VEPSolar* yahoo group to connect everyone in the VEP area interested in following this activity.

The current focus of our group is to understand the viability and cost effectiveness of adding a solar electric system to an individual residence. At present it appears the technology and cost per watt for panels is improving and the California rebate per watt is going down. We would like to understand the advantage and liability of installing this system in 2008.

To this objective we are looking to others with solar electric already installed, to industry system providers, and to local government to get the latest information on our options in going green with solar electric.

If you would like to be included in the results of the project, or if you want to assist in gathering this very interesting information, please contact one or both of us by phone or email:

© Don Ferguson = (408) 629-0303 or don@donferguson.net
© Helen Castillo = (408) 981-5902 or hcastillo@vbprop.com

Report: VEP's 2007-08 Goals & Objectives

-Dave Fadness

During the summer months each year, VEP executives prepare a set of Goals & Objectives for the coming year. These



OLSEN'S PRESSURE WASHING

- Driveways
- Sidewalks & Walkways
- Patios
- Concrete & Pavers
- Residential & Commercial
- Bonded & Insured

Gilbert Olsen
(A VEP member)

CA License #868712
wilbertj@hotmail.com

408-608-5881

G&O are presented to our members, debated, amended, and approved by formal vote at our September meeting. Although they can be amended at any regularly scheduled meeting by a vote of members, these G&O set the course for VEP activities until another set is formally adopted.

Some of our G&O are general in nature. So, beyond their simply being a task list, these more general G&O also allow our executives to act in members' behalf when issues arise unexpectedly between monthly meetings.

VEP's G&O have always stretched the limit on what can reasonably be expected from an all-volunteer organization--we aim high. Whereas most organizations, even governments and businesses, have a mere handful of such directives, VEP takes on many (some say, too many). Some are actually multi-year or ongoing objectives.

Keep that in mind as you read through the following evaluation; whereas we failed to take action on or succeed in each and every item, there were many at which we did much better than expected.

All of our G&O are worthwhile, but our success in achieving "a straight-A" report card relies on member involvement. Our small and very busy executive committee cannot do it without a broad network of neighbors who are willing to help. To those of you who helped, we offer our sincere thanks.

If you see something listed that you wish had received more attention, or know of something that should be added, please come to any VEP meeting, bring it to our attention, and volunteer to help. *Together* we can make a big difference, much more so than if "you go it alone".

For your review, here's our self-evaluation [our letter "grade" and comments are shown for each in ***bold italics***]. Please bring your comments and suggestions to our April 29th meeting.

◆ VEP's 2007-08 Goals & Objectives ◆

1. Continue to improve our community and our association.
 - A. *Values: Place first priority on volunteer efforts that reflect member-endorsed improvements in our community. [A]*
 - B. *Leadership: Encourage regular turn-over of VEP Officers to impart broad, area-wide membership representation. [C. With only two exceptions, we will have the same dedicated executive officers in 2008-09.]*
 - C. *Membership: Monitor changes in paid VEP membership. [A]*
 - D. *Meetings: Encourage attendance at VEP meetings and events. [A]*
 - E. *Fiscal Health: Continue to maintain VEP's positive fiscal condition. [A]*
 - F. *Communication:*
 - a) Continue publishing the *VEP NEWS* nine times per year. [A]
 - b) Continue development and encourage usage of VEP Website. [A]
 - c) Utilize e-mail to communicate important VEP business with members. [A]
 - d) Maintain relationships with local media outlets and submit for publication articles about VEP. [A]
 - G. *Strive to increase VEP's public recognition. [A]*



VEP Community Association

Representing More Than 2000 Families in the Blossom Valley Area of South San Jose Since 1969

Be sure to mark your calendars
and invite your friends and neighbors to participate in these VEP events...

Saturday, May 3rd

★ VEP Community-Wide Garage Sale ★

A great opportunity for you to clear out your stuff and make some money.

~ Start as early as 7 am ~

No need to sign-up, just place your items outside your own home.

A Salvation Army truck will be at Gunderson High School from

1 pm to 6 pm to collect your unsold treasures

Contact: Ginger Cardona at (408) 227-0222 or cardona@sbcglobal.net

~ and ~

★ e-Waste Collection Event ★

Safely get rid of unused electronic equipment and benefit Gunderson High School.

~ From 9 am until 4 pm ~

Drop off your items at Gunderson High School, 622 Gaundabert Lane.

Contact: Steve Ramona at (408) 943-9943 or stever@earthcarerecycling.com

Monday, May 26th

★ VEP Memorial Day Parade & Festival ★

Parade, Bands, Food, Entertainment, Games, Prizes, and Lots More!

Watch for more information in your next VEP News.

Contact: Dave Fadness @ (408) 578-6428 or drfadness@sbcglobal.net

*** * * ***

Interested in selling your home-made crafts at our Memorial Day Festival?

Contact Ginger Cardona at (408) 227-0222 or cardona@sbcglobal.net

P.O. Box 18111 San Jose, CA 95158

For membership info e-mail: vepca@vepca.net or check our website, www.vepca.net

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sponsiveness and Accountability to VEP Members.

- A. Sponsor Election Forums that heighten our members' awareness of candidates and ballot issues, and encourages their participation as informed voters in all elections. **[Inc.]**
 - B. Work with City/County government and developers to install and/or maintain public landscaping in the VEP membership area. **[B. Response time needs improvement.]**
 - C. Work with the City to provide traffic safety measures on VEP area streets. **[B]**
 - D. Continue to monitor community impacts (including increased traffic and parking) resulting from uses of Gundersen High School and the new Vistapark Community Room. **[A]**
 - E. Encourage, monitor, and react to plans for urban development, transportation, libraries, parks and other public infrastructure changes in and around our membership area. Organize and communicate community priorities and concerns. **[A]**
4. Monitor, Create, and Maintain High-Quality Public Services for VEP Area.
 - A. Promote and participate in planning and development of the Martial-Cottle Regional Park (Lester Property). **[A]**
 - B. Continue VEP member involvement during the design and construction process of widening Branham between Vistapark and Snell Avenue, and other improvements between Vistapark and Narvaez. **[C. Limited activity this past year, as project is still on hold pending property acquisition.]**
 - C. Work with the City to develop and maintain our neighborhood parks. **[A]**
 - D. Work with the City to develop a master plan for the immediate area surrounding the Vista Park Community Room. **[Inc. Planning process just began in March.]**
 - E. Monitor opportunities to build a city park at Capitol/Narvaez. **[B. We included this objective in our criterion for VTA's development of the park-N-ride lot there. Their development proposal is now on indefinite hold. No firm commitment has been achieved.]**
 - F. Work for improvements in traffic level of service at Capitol/Narvaez/northbound 87 onramp. **[B. We were able to get a project proposed for VTA's (yet to be approved) long-range transportation plan, VTP2035. Funding has not been identified. This is a long-term project that will require ongoing effort by VEP.]**
 - G. Work with the City to ensure that impacts of any proposed high-density development along the Guadalupe Corridor are fully mitigated. **[B. We were able to stall VTA's development of the park-N-ride lot at Capitol/Narvaez based upon traffic concerns. That project is now on indefinite hold. No firm commitment has been achieved re traffic mitigation.]**

VEP's Super Saturday, May 3rd

-Dave Noel

>> **GARAGE SALE** <<

VEP's annual community-wide garage sale will be advertised in local newspapers and door-to-door flyers. This is your chance to make Spring cleaning pay off, and/or search for treasures and meet your neighbors.

H. Volunteerism: Increase opportunities for VEP members to volunteer by:

- a) Developing ad hoc committees that will expand leadership opportunities and cultivate new talent for future VEP Executive Board positions. **[A]**
 - b) Maintaining a VEP database of volunteers by activity. **[C. Database needs improvement, annual consolidation, review, and distribution by project. A coordinator is needed. Despite our need for help, concern still exists that members who offer to volunteer are not contacted.]**
 - c) Developing and advertising additional volunteer activities. **[C. We develop good project ideas, but outreach has been an individual responsibility, not an organizational one. Newsletter appeals are not enough.]**
- I. Review and update VEP's Constitution and Bylaws to, as a minimum:
 - a) Consider changes in the composition of our Executive Board that could improve our effectiveness. **[Inc.]**
 - b) Consider a formal structure for both standing and ad hoc committees. **[Inc.]**
 - c) Consider changes to our Community Service Award program. **[Inc.]**
 - d) Formalize a process for filling vacant Executive Board positions. **[Inc.]**
 - e) Consider changing our program/fiscal year. **[Inc.]**
 - f) Consider incorporating VEP as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. **[Inc.]**
 2. Promote Community Interaction, Pride, and Preparedness.
 - A. Encourage member participation in neighborhood safety programs, crime prevention, and disaster/emergency preparedness. **[C. We've had speakers on this subject, but follow-through has been limited due to a lack of membership response.]**
 - B. Organize and encourage participation in pruning, community cleanup, and maintenance projects. **[A]**
 - C. Encourage graffiti removal when/where ever it occurs in and around our area. **[C. VEP has encouraged but not lead this activity. It's done independently by dedicated volunteers.]**
 - D. Continue to sponsor, promote, and underwrite our Home Faire, community-wide Garage Sale, and Memorial Day event. **[A. Promotion should be improved.]**
 3. Work to Assure Local Government and Businesses' Re-

The VEP garage sale area is the entire shaded area on the map (below), plus additional nearby streets.



After your garage sale, bring your leftovers to Gunderson High School where we will have an e-waste recycler and a Salvation Army truck waiting for you.

>> E-WASTE <<

VEP is teaming up with **Gunderson High School** and **Earth-care Recycling** to hold an e-waste pick-up on Saturday May 3rd from 9 am until 4 pm at Gunderson High School.

This will be a win-win event. Here's why:

- You can get rid of your e-waste conveniently and without harming the environment.
- Gunderson High School will receive funds from the recycling value of your e-waste.
- Gunderson students will distribute flyers to publicize these events plus our Memorial Day Parade and Festival. Special thanks to VEP resident and GHS teacher **Rob Iverson** for being our GHS sponsor.

Examples of e-Waste you can drop off May 3rd from 9 am to 4 pm at Gunderson High School

~ Electronics ~

TVs, VCRs, audio equipment, speakers, cameras, phones, copiers, fax machines, wire, power tools, etc.

~ Small appliances ~

Microwave ovens, toasters, blow dryers, curling irons, electric shavers, vacuum cleaners, etc.

~ Computer items ~

Monitors, desktop & laptop computers, internal parts and peripherals, printers & cartridges, scanners, etc.

>> CHARITABLE DONATIONS <<

The **Salvation Army** will have a truck at Gunderson High School on May 3rd from 1 pm until 6 pm to collect your unsold treasures and give you a tax deductible receipt. Many thanks to VEP volunteer **Helen Castillo** for arranging this service.

Vista Park community room plans

-Dave Fadness

After a delayed start, our improvements planning committee for the area around the Vista Park community room is making incredible progress. We now plan to deliver a proposal for

VEP membership to review in late May or early June. If endorsed, work will likely begin this summer.

Thanks to the initiative of **Kathy Sutherland** (City Councilwoman Pyle's staff) and a motivated group of San Jose Parks (PRNS) staff, in *one* meeting on March 17th we quickly identified a set of design objectives for landscaping and utilization of the unfinished areas around the community room. Our second meeting (April 7th) was spent poring over Parks' landscape architect's first set of plans, suggesting refinements, a timeline and list of project responsibilities, and a schedule for VEP member input and a vote of community endorsement.

PRNS will prepare the plans, do site preparation including grading and flatwork, installing irrigation and drainage, planting turf, refurbishing the parking lot, removing the old transformers, and relocating the trash dumpster and its cage. VEP volunteers will plant trees, shrubs, and other landscaping elements.

Special thanks go to PRNS project team members **Mike Wharton** (Landscape Architect), **Evelyn Velez-Rosario**, **Marie Alberry-Hawkins**, and **Art Rosales**. VEP committee members **Joe Tajnai**, **Phil Bejar**, and **Clay Sperry** have brought a wealth of vision and practical experience to the design process; Phil and Clay are Vista Park adopters, the fellows who volunteer to keep this 11-acre park (VEP's "home") a place we can be proud of.

Be sure to watch for announcement of our community meetings in next month's *VEP NEWS*. Plan to attend. Your input, plan endorsement, and volunteer involvement are crucial to the success of this project.

A message from VEP's president

-Joe Tajnai

Because San Jose Parks (PNRS) has experienced problems in maintaining the sandbox sand at Vista Park, they asked for our advice on whether there would be any objection to its being replaced with another material. Acting on the request of our executive committee, I asked in our newsletter last month for member input regarding the sandbox play area.

Sadly, not one person responded to our plea for input on whether removing the sand would be objectionable. I guess this was not a big issue for our membership, but I was hoping that at least ONE person would say something.

Brian Bonfield, Real Estate Consultant American Eagle Properties

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We will therefore be recommending to PNRS that the sand be removed and replaced with Fibar (the "tanbark" material used elsewhere in the playlot areas).

As a community association, we want to make sure that the whole community is involved in such decisions. The only way we know if we are doing a good job is by seeking feedback from our members, both positive and negative. When no feedback results from our inquiries, we have to make a judgment based on our own gut instincts.

It just takes a few minutes to make a quick phone call or send an email. We asked for input. No one responded.

Update: Martial Cottle Park Master Plan

- Kimberly Brosseau (*)

On April 2, the Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department presented to the County Parks & Recreation Commission a project overview and Final Draft Program Document for the Martial Cottle Park Master Plan. The Commission meeting was well-attended with members of the Martial Cottle Park Master Plan Task Force Committee, Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Project Team, as well as VEP Community Association members, local residents and concerned citizens.

Highlights of the meeting included public input and a discussion of red foxes and wildlife habitat residing in the park, the needs of *Our City Forest* for a site to develop an educational facility, a proposal for an off-leash dog park, and the future management of the park.

After discussion and public comments, Parks Commissioners unanimously accepted the report. With this formal action, the County Parks Department will be able to proceed with the next phase of the master plan development.

Once staff completes a contract with the new consultant firm, Design, Community and Environment (DC&E), the Parks Department will initiate the development of design alternatives with the community's involvement. Future Task Force and TAC meetings and a community workshop are anticipated for this summer to solicit public and technical agency feedback on the alternatives discussions.

On May 8, the County Parks Department will present a report on the Martial Cottle Park Master Plan project to the Housing, Land Use, Environment & Transportation (HLUET) Committee, a policy subcommittee of the County Board of Supervisors. This meeting is open to the public and additional information will be forwarded to interested community members who have subscribed to the project via e-mail and regular USPS mail. Additional information will also be posted on the County Parks Department's website once the meeting information is finalized.

I am pleased to be a Park Planner on the Martial Cottle Park Master Plan Project Team, providing planning support and assisting with public inquiries on this project.

If you have questions regarding the project, contact either **Jane Mark** at (408) 355-2237 (Jane.Mark@prk.sccgov.org) or me (Kimberly.Brosseau@prk.sccgov.org) at (408) 355-2230. To view the latest information on the Martial Cottle Park project, please visit www.parkhere.org, and click on the link for the Martial Cottle Park Master Plan.

The County Parks Department would like to thank Task Force member **Adina Pierce**, Alternate Task Force member **Marilyn Rodgers**, and the membership of the VEP Community Association for their time and effort in developing the VEP Wish-List and comments responding to the draft program elements for the park. Most importantly, the Department appreciates your continuing support of the master plan project.

[() Ed. Note: Kimberly Brosseau is a Park Planner III with the Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department. She is now a member of their Martial Cottle Park Master Plan Project Team.]*

VEP membership drive comes to a close

-Marilyn Rodgers

VEP's 2008 membership drive came to a close at the end of March. Thank you for renewing your membership and showing your continued support of VEP. If a neighbor or friend has not yet renewed or joined VEP for 2008, please encourage them to do so! Memberships are accepted throughout the year.

For a membership application/ renewal form, visit our website at www.vepca.net.

VEP's 24th annual Community Service Awards

-Dave Noel

For our 24th consecutive year, VEP is offering grants towards higher education or vocational training for up to three graduating high school seniors with exceptional records of volunteerism and community service.

HURRY, APPLICATIONS ARE DUE APRIL 30TH

We will award up to three community service awards of \$700 each for a graduating high school student from Gunderson High School, from Andrew Hill School, and from our "At-Large" category. If we do not have an At-Large winner, then we'll increase the Gunderson and Andrew Hill awards.



Applications were distributed to the administrations at Gunderson and Andrew Hill High schools and are also posted on VEP's website. VEP has asked each school to nominate three students and provide us their

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completed applications by April 30th. If you know a Gunderson or Andrew Hill student deserving consideration for this award, please encourage them to ask their administrator to nominate them:

Andrew Hill = Noemi Ramirez
Gunderson = Jeannette Harding

Our At-Large application form is also available on VEP's web-site. If you do not have web access, call me at the number below. At-Large candidates may attend any high school or be home-schooled, and must live in San Jose. **At-Large applications must be mailed to our PO Box for arrival by April 30th.**

We will present our Gunderson and Andrew Hill awards at each school's respective senior awards night in late May or early June. If we have an At-Large winner, we will present that award at our May 27th general meeting.

If you have any questions, or would like to volunteer to help the Community Service Awards committee, please contact me at (408) 266-7183 or DNoel1234@aol.com.

Home Improvement Faire

-Jim Hicks, VEP Secretary

Instead of our usual monthly meeting, VEP hosted its annual *Home Improvement Faire* at Gunderson High School on March 25. This event featured more than twenty local vendors who displayed their offerings to the VEP community. This is a convenient way for the community to seek out and make appointments with vendors for the home improvement services they need.

One of the highlights of each year's event is a cash raffle. There were a total of 50 tickets given to those visitors in attendance (yes, the tickets were free). Each ticket-holder got a chance to win \$25 in cash. There were twelve winners of cash prizes and one who opted for room cleaning service from one of our vendors.

The evening was filled with many smiles, including those from these lucky winners:

- Stacey Steffens
- Shari Kaplan
- Amber Thomas
- LuAnne Behringer
- Josie Supenchek
- Jim Hicks
- John Leonard
- Stuart & Kathy Scott (won a room cleaning)
- Katy Tajnai
- Frank Kistler
- Don Ferguson
- Sandra Sample
- Anonymous

Watch the *VEP NEWS* for the date of next year's Home Im-

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Wesley W. Terrell

★VEP Member★
Vista Park Specialist



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provement Faire. Be sure to mark your calendars so you, too, can visit with vendors and try your luck for cash prizes.

2008 VEP Home Improvement Faire ★ Exhibitor List ★

A broad variety of contractors and merchants attended our 10th annual Home Improvement Faire on March 25. We are grateful to each of them for attending. Here is the list for your reference: (*VEP NEWS* advertisers are shown in **boldface italics**.)

- All Seasons Remodeling, Mark Miller, 408-378-3030
- Body Nutrition & Massage, Veronica Mitchell, 408-226-8144
- ***California Bathroom & Kitchen Remodeling, Allyn Johnson, 408-360-9700***
- Capitol Automotive, Gary, Rauh, and Ellen, 408-267-2292
- Carpet Cleaners, Larry Ruzzo, 408-448-3636
- Century 21, Realty, Sandra Sample, 408-829-8821
- Composting at Home, Larry Esquivel, 282-3168
- Computer Repair, Don Heinsen, 408-559-4000
- Crime Stoppers, Jim Cogan, 408-535-4901
- Heating & Air Conditioning, Wayne Wood, 829-7635
- Interior Design, Jeff Hellmuth, 408-993-0158
- Isaac Enterprises (Taxes, Acctg, Real Estate), Prabhakar Isaac, 408-229-0969
- ***Olsen's Pressure Washing, Gil Olsen, 608-5881***
- Prudential California Realty, Donna Nardi, 408-313-3169
- Royal Knight Roofing, Marvin Morazan, 408-224-5785
- Serene Home Improvement, Mike Chambers, 449-2714
- ***St. Stephen's School, Lura Detata, 408-365-2927***
- Solar City, Bruce Karney, 650-963-5117
- Tupperware, Lucy Perez, 408-891-6891
- Westfield Mall, Jennifer Dacquisto, 408-578-2912
- VEP Community Association

VEP offers special thanks to VEP Past-President **John Marks** for organizing this event again this year!

We also appreciate the generous donation of coffee and condiments by **Starbucks**, 605 W. Capitol Expressway (next to Home Depot). Try them next time you go out for coffee; extend our thanks—they *always* provide coffee for VEP volunteer events.

Our City Forest *Tree Amigo* class

Our spring 2008 Tree Amigo Class starts May 7. Sign up NOW by email at education@ourcityforest.org or by calling (408) 998-7337 extension 123. There are four class sessions and three field sessions (as listed below).

Our City Forest (OCF) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the condition of the urban forest by involving the community. Through this 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. Class is intended for anyone interested in becoming an OCF volunteer.

~ Classroom and Field Sessions (subject to change) ~

- Session 1 = Wednesday May 7, 6 to 8 pm (All about OCF)
- Session 2 = Saturday May 10, 9 am to Noon (Tree Planting Event)
- Session 3 = Wednesday May 14, 6 to 8 pm (Science of Trees, Right Tree for Right Place)
- Session 4 = Saturday May 17, 9 am to Noon (Tree Bank Tour)
- Session 5 = Wednesday May 21, 6 to 8 pm (Common Trees of San Jose)
- Session 6 = Saturday May 24, 9 am to 1 pm (Walking Tree Tour)
- Session 7 = Wednesday May 28, 6 to 8 pm (Coordinating a Tree Planting Event/Graduation)

Wednesday meeting location: The classroom location is in the OCF office at 151 West Mission Street, San Jose. There will be field training as well, with locations to be announced during the course.

San Jose Neighborhoods Commission

-Marilyn Rodgers

San Jose will have a new Neighborhoods Commission by this summer. This commission will advise city council members and the mayor on issues of concern to neighborhoods and to

neighborhood associations.

This commission is unique in that its commissioners will be elected in a caucus format by representatives/delegates from each neighborhood association. Each city council district, including District 10, will elect three commissioners and two alternates to the neighborhood commission. Elections will take place in each council district sometime between May 17th and June 14th. The tentative date for the election caucus for District 10 is June 8th.

Each neighborhood association must first register with the city in order to participate in the council district election caucus (VEP has registered as a neighborhood association), and then designate a delegate and an alternate to represent that neighborhood association in the election caucus. VEP's delegate will be our President Joe Tajnai. As vice president, I will be his alternate.

If you are interested in standing for election as a member of the Neighborhoods Commission, you must file an application with the San Jose City Clerk's office by April 18th. Go to <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/Clerk/commissionboard/NC/NC.asp> for the necessary forms. If you would like additional information or assistance, please contact me at (408) 225-7553 or MRodgersRN@aol.com.

Oak Grove School District news

-Manny Barbara, Superintendent

Our Oak Grove School District priority areas are reflected in what we call our Five-Year Plan. This document is reviewed and developed annually through community and employee input and posted on our District website: www.ogsd.k12.ca.us.

Each spring we begin the process of identifying priority areas for the following year. At the May 22 regular meeting of our Board of Trustees, starting at 7:30 p.m., the public session is devoted to community input to District priorities for the 2008-2009 school year. All community members are invited to attend.

The state budget crisis has provided significant fiscal challenges for the 2008-2009 school year. Like all districts, we need to make significant reductions. However, we will be able to continue to maintain for 2008-2009 our program priorities of:

- ◆ Extended day kindergarten at all schools
- ◆ Class size reduction of 20 to 1 at grades K-3
- ◆ Visual and performing arts at grades 4-6
- ◆ After school sports and counseling at grades 7-8

We are fortunate that we will also have summer school this year, including the very popular language camps (for students at or above standards) and accelerated math classes.

As always, please feel free to contact us on matters pertaining to the Oak Grove School District through our web site at: www.ogsd.k12.ca.us or 227-8300. Our website also includes Board meeting agendas and minutes, Board Policies, and our District priorities, as listed in our Five-Year Plan.

Free after-school concert series

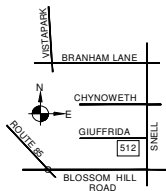
As part of Oak Grove School District's commitment to the arts, the Visual and Performing Arts Department is offering an exciting series of after-school concerts. The concerts are free

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of charge to students and parents. This is a rare opportunity to experience the performing arts.

The concerts are interspersed throughout the schools in your community in order to give equal access to the performances. Students must provide the own transportation to and from the concerts, are not to arrive prior to 2:30 pm, and must be picked up promptly at 3:15 pm, or be given permission to walk home.

Parents, guardians, and siblings are welcome and encouraged to accompany their students. Unless they are accompanied by an adult, no student will be admitted to a concert without a signed permission slip. Permission slips are available at Oak Grove District schools.

After-school performances will be held on Tuesdays, from 2:30 to 3:15 pm, as follows:

● April 22 = "Happy Birds!" at Hayes School

The Happy Birds Performing Parrot Show offers unique entertainment that is enjoyable for the entire family. The star performers include macaws, cockatoos, and amazons. The Happy Birds have been featured on TV including the Tonight Show, The Ellen Show! Animal Planets Amazing Animal Videos, Americas Funniest Home Videos and Evening Magazine.

● May 6 = "Amigos Music" at Christopher School

Amigos Music is a 3-piece American-roots folk and blues band with guitars, harmonica, and vocal harmonies. They also explore non-traditional combinations, using ukulele, flute, quills, accordian, banjo, and percussion. You'll hear elements of calypso, jazz, reggae, afro-cuban, and boss a nova.

● May 13 = "Absolute Accord" at Parkview School

The accordion is a unique instrument because a musician can play melody, harmony and rhythm at the same time. "Absolute Accord" is a musical combo of 5 accordion players, including the little-known bass accordion. They will play a wide variety of musical styles for you on their instruments.

● May 20 = "The Dixie Six" at Edenvale School

Come to a concert of Dixieland music, a unique American style of jazz. Hear the fun sounds and improvisations of trumpet, trombone, clarinet, and rhythm section. "The Dixie Six" will perform for you and teach you about their instruments.

Gunderson High School happenings

-Cary Catching, Principal

Gunderson is currently gearing up for our annual testing cycle. Over the course of the next month, students in grades 9 through 11 will be completing the California Standards Tests (CSTs).

These exams are administered every year in the following subject areas: math, science, social science and language arts. The tests are grade level and course specific. For example, if a student is taking algebra, he/she will take the algebra math test; if a student is taking US history, he/she will take a US history social science test.

The results of these tests factor into the calculations for the school's Academic Performance Index (API). Gunderson's goal for the 2007-2008 school year is 700. Our theme this year is the movie "300" (We are Grizzlies!). There are altered movie posters throughout the school. They have a picture of King Leonidas with a fierce grizzly head in place of his face, and the caption reads, "700 We Are Grizzlies!"

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In addition to the CSTs, students will also be taking their Advanced Placement (AP) Exams in the month of May. Students enrolled in AP courses are required to take these tests. If a student passes the exam, he/she may be able to receive a full year of college credit for the specific class.

Finally, a construction update... Work on the solar panels is nearing completion. The panels have been installed in the rear parking lot by the football stadium and on the roof of the main building. It is anticipated that these panels will be able to supply 50% of the school's energy needs once they are up and running.

We also anticipate the completion of the stadium lights project. The lights have been delivered to the schools and installation is expected to occur over the next several weeks. We are looking forward to hosting night football games next year.

Lastly, there will be a new construction project beginning this summer. Though the timeline is being finalized this week, construction should begin this summer. This project includes the following items: modernization of the science wing, remodeling of the kitchen, and several upgrades to the weight room, forum, gym, ticket booth, snack shacks, and theater paint room. The majority of this work is internal and should not create any inconveniences for our neighbors. Look to this article next month for more details on the scope and length of this project.

The next Principal's Coffee is May 2 at 7:30 a.m. Community members are always welcome.

Thank-you from a 2007 VEP CSA winner

-Dave Noel

Last fall VEP received the following thank you letter from **Amie Fong**, our 2007 *Community Service Award* winner at Gunderson High School:

Dear VEP Community Association,

Thank you very much for awarding me this scholarship. I will be attending UCLA this fall majoring in Molecular, Cell and Developmental Biology to attend medical school and become a doctor.



I have been involved with many organizations for several years serving our county such as VMC, San Jose Public Li-

brary, Emergency Housing Consortium, Cindy Chavez Campaign and much more! Each opportunity provides me with a greater vision for our society, a vision to help improve it. I want to become involved with Doctors Without Borders in the future to expand my horizons beyond the US.

Receiving this scholarship is a great help for me and my family. It is an honor to be awarded not only for my dedication in school but also for my commitment in serving our community. Once again, thank you for awarding me this scholarship and allowing me to strive for my dreams.

Sincerely,
Amie Fong
2007 VEP Community Scholar

Westfield Oakridge welcomes spring!

Westfield Oakridge will be giving out flowers to moms on Mother's Day. Combining this special recognition with our array of fabulous restaurants and great shopping, Westfield Oakridge is *the* perfect place to celebrate Mother's Day!

Oakridge is excited to announce new stores coming soon! This past year were pleased to bring *The Disney Store* and *Brookstone* to our center. The good news does not end there...

This summer, we are welcoming *Coach*, *Sephora*, *Auntie Anne's Pretzels*, and *Swarovski Crystal*. Also, *Express* and *Bath and Body Works* are renovating new spaces and will be moving to new store locations soon. *Anchor Blue* has already moved to a great new location.

Westfield Oakridge is focused on bringing new stores that will make your shopping experience great. For more information, visit <http://westfield.com/oakridge/ourstores/index.html>.

~ First Annual Bowling for Badges ~

The San Jose Police Foundation presents their *First Annual Bowling for Badges*, a gourmet dinner and bowling tournament held on May 8th at *300 San Jose*. Bowling for Badges is going to be a fun, relaxed event for the community.

The San Jose Police Foundation is a non-profit corporation committed to maintaining San Jose's reputation as a big, safe city. All funds will go towards safety and technology equipment for our police and beloved canine unit. What a great cause to get involved with! For more information, visit bowlingforbadges.org.



Precious Moments In Time



Family and Children Portraits



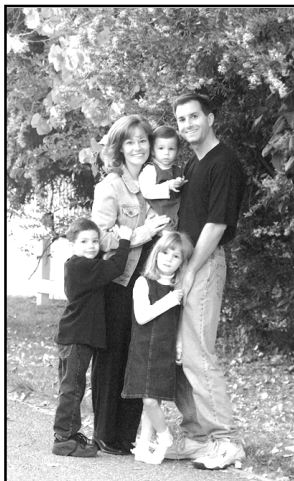
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~ Earning 4 Learning ~

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~ Oakridge Mall Walkers Club ~

There are many benefits to joining the Oakridge Mall Walkers Club. Sign up today. To become an official member, just follow these simple steps:

- Visit the Concierge Booth
- Fill out an official mall walkers registration form
- Start walking!

<http://westfield.com/oakridge/news/MallWalkersClub.html>.

A message from city hall

-City Councilwoman Nancy Pyle

Mayor Chuck Reed and I are very excited to announce the 3rd Annual District 10 Budget/Neighborhood Forum, which will take place on Wednesday, May 7th at 6:30 p.m. at the Almaden Community Center. We have designed the forum for District 10 residents who want to learn about and personally impact the City of San Jose's 2008-2009 Proposed Budget.

Please go to <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/district10/> to participate in a survey that will give us the proper data we need when we resume the budget process with our colleagues on the city council. Results of this survey will be presented at the Forum on May 7th.

As you've certainly noticed, the city finds itself at a critical juncture. We continue to confront the need for significant budget reductions. This year represents the sixth consecutive year the proposed budget contains multi-million dollar reduction proposals in the city's general fund.

As we prepare for the seventh year of budget deficits, it remains an accomplishment that the city has to date avoided more drastic reductions. The cost of continuing the current level of service will not be sustainable in the future absent new sources of revenue and/or a reduction in costs. As a result, the city must confront the need for significant budget reductions.

To date, an extraordinary amount of public input and public hearings have taken place to help shape the city manager's proposed budget. However, our Budget/Neighborhood Forum is designed to provide us with a better understanding of District 10 needs—and for residents to leave with a better understanding of the 2008-2009 Proposed Budget.

On May 7th, City Manager Debra Figone will present the Proposed 2008-2009 Budget. I will also give a presentation on results of the survey, which will better define the needs of District 10 residents.

This dialogue is extremely important to advance the wishes of District 10 residents. Mayor Reed and I look forward to your

input at our Budget/Neighborhood Forum.

Traffic calming update

-Dave Noel

Several months ago San Jose District 6 City Councilmember **Pierluigi Oliverio** led traffic calming meetings in all ten council districts. What follows is a summary of traffic calming policy change recommendations. This report was listed in the agenda for the March 18th city council meeting, and accepted at that meeting.

(a) Direction to the Administration to bring forth to the city council, as part of budget deliberations, the cost of one-time and on-going funding necessary to hire more police officers for enforcement of traffic calming regulations in the neighborhoods.

(b) Direction to the Administration to research the feasibility of "red light running" (RLR) systems for the purpose of possible consideration of a "RLR" pilot program for the City of San Jose.

(c) Direction to the Administration to research the viability of increasing fines for traffic violations.

(d) Direction to the Administration to update the current traffic calming policy with the recommendations proposed from the attached report to include expanding the installation of physical and electronic devices and to update the policy to allow for cumulative impacts of speed, volume, crashes, pedestrian activity and proximity to schools and/or parks to be used when gathering information.

(e) Direction to the Administration to bring recommendations back to the city council that would allow for provisions for neighborhoods to self-fund physical traffic calming devices.

(f) Direction to the Administration to investigate a partnership with the school districts in San José as a way of using bond monies for radar signs and other traffic calming devices near schools.

(g) Direction to the Administration to implement Assembly Bill 321 which allows municipalities to lower speed limits to 15 mph in qualifying school zones after analysis by the City Attorney's Office is completed.

Item (a) will be referred to the budget process for further Council consideration, and items (b) through (g) will be referred back to the Transportation and Environment Committee for discussion at its May 5, 2008 meeting.

Thank you to VEP volunteers

-Marilyn Rodgers

During the month of March, VEP volunteers were active completing several projects. We are very fortunate to have such dedicated volunteers, and wish to thank them for their efforts on behalf of our community.

VEP newsletter – our members tell us how much they appreciate the monthly newsletter. Volunteers who work to assure that the newsletter goes out each month are:

★ **Jeri Arstingstall** who maintains the VEP database, and orders the address labels used for mailing.

★ **Dave Fadness**, our Editor, who expertly develops and edits the newsletter, assuring its continued high quality as well as authoring many articles.

★ **Dave Noel** who writes many articles and proof reads manuscripts after editing.

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★ **Debra Suydum** who recruits volunteers and leads the folding/labeling effort to prepare the newsletter for mailing. In March, Debra was ably assisted by **Linda Sandoval**, and **Mark and Stacie Callaghan**. In March, Debra also delivered the many trays of newsletters to the main San Jose Post Office for mailing. Thanks Debra for filling in for **Bob Aquino**, who was on a well deserved vacation.

★ **Bob Aquino**, our specialist on cost-effective bulk mailing, the person who has for years taken newsletters to the main post office and having them delivered in time to remind our members of monthly meetings.

Membership recruitment – in the final month of our membership drive, VEP sends a "We Miss You Letter" to members who have forgotten to send in their membership renewals. Thank you to **Ginger Cardona** and her crew of volunteers – **Jessica** and **Jason Cardona**, for stuffing/preparing the letters for mailing. Thanks to **Debra Suydum** who delivered the letters to the San Jose Main Post Office for mailing.

VEP event flyers – each Spring, VEP sponsors several free events for the community. Two flyers advertising these events are distributed to all VEP area residents during the months of March and April. Volunteer event flyer walkers hand-deliver these flyers. Thanks to the following volunteers who delivered our first flyer in March:

- **Kristine Alexander**
- **Helen Castillo**
- **Barbara Erling**
- **Linda Sandoval**
- **Kathy & Chean Pang**
- **Pat Souza**
- **Debra Suydum**

Special thanks to the following volunteers to took more than one packet of flyers to deliver:

- **Jim Hicks**
- **Bob Olsen** (who wins the title "Champion Event Flyer Walker")
- **Don & Marilyn Rodgers**
- **Josie Supencheck**

Our second event flyer will be distributed during the last two weeks of April. If you would like to volunteer for this project, please contact me at (408) 225-7553 or MRodgersRN@aol.com. Only about two hours of your time is required. If you enjoy walking on a beautiful sunny day, come



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June 3rd Primary Election

-Dave Noel

With November elections dominating the news, voters may not realize we also have an election coming up on June 3rd. Of local interest to the VEP area is the race for our next San Jose District 10 city council member. Incumbent **Nancy Pyle** is completing her first 4-year term and is running for a second term. She will be running against political newcomer **AshRaf Madraswala**.

You can meet both both candidates at VEP's April 29th Annual Meeting in the Vista Park Community Room. VEP has provided a list of questions to both candidates to answer by April 29th. Their answers will be published in the May VEP News.

Bio: Council Candidate **AshRaf Madraswala**

Thirty one years ago I came to San Jose, California with the vision and enthusiasm of success. Fortunately I achieve my goals with hard work. I was less fortunate by not having my parents by my side to guide me through and help me out morally and monetarily.



When I was a little child my parents always used to tell me that "Education is a key to success". After finishing my education I realized the facts my parents were right I was on track to pursue my goals.

I have local roots; I graduated from San Jose State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in I.T and with a minor in Business Administration. I also have an A.A in Electronics degree from West Valley College.

I have been married for last 24 years. I have two children, a boy 18 years old, and a girl 16 years old.

I was a soccer coach for a total five years for Central Valley, and head coach for Christian Valley Association coaching little children after school.

I bring the experience of the last 30 years from the corporate

world and holding different position from Manager to President of the corporation. I am a seasoned and accomplished business veteran that wants to bring a common sense business approach to City hall, and take leadership in application of best commercial business practices to the City Governments.

I intend to help in building the city's infrastructure, bring added diversity and representation to the City and encourage the business leaders to be more involved in the City to increase revenue base.

Lately, I have been very concerned about our community. The impending recession, flight of jobs, loss of manufacturing, and the housing debacle coupled with massive budget deficits needs better seasoned business veterans that bring better fiscal conservativeness to the people. We just cannot afford to spend our way out of the problems and keep raising the taxes, fees on our constituents who are over burdened already.

I intend to help in building the city's infrastructure, bring added diversity and representation to the City and encourage the business leaders to be more involved in the City.

The time to bring the change is now.

We need a new Fresh approach. We need to think outside the box. We need to run this community and city as our own and ensure that the generations to follow are left with a Great, progressive City.

Our people are our best resources and assets. My vision is to bring the job to our city and local community and for our future generations

We need to have a system that streamlines the process of constituent concerns or issues which enables the Council Members to compare and analyze constituent issues within and across districts so that can improve the Council's response to community needs and be able assist to develop a legislative agenda and budget priorities.

[Ed. Note: The foregoing bio was consolidated from a biography and an introductory letter from Mr. Madraswala.]

Bio: Council Candidate **Nancy Pyle**

Nancy Pyle's life has been characterized by hard work and independence. Raised on a farm she began working at age 6 to help her parents make ends meet. She used her grit and determination to put herself through college, and today she is bringing that same work ethic and common sense to City Hall.



In 2005, Nancy began her first term on the San Jose City Council as the representative for District 10. A retired teacher of 25 years and a former Community College Board Trustee, Nancy represents more than 89,000 residents from Almaden and Blossom Valleys.

Deeply connected to her community, Nancy has served on the San Jose Small Business Commission, and the boards for Notre Dame High School, the YWCA, the Almaden Valley Community Association, and the District 10 Councilmember

for the last three years.

As our City Councilmember, Nancy has brought her innovative approach to solving today's challenges through creativity and collaboration. She has focused city government on the basics, maintaining our streets and parks, keeping our neighborhoods safe, investing resources in youth and senior programs and making city government more accountable.

Councilmember Nancy Pyle is the Chair of the Community and Economic Development Committee and former Chair of the Santa Clara County Emergency Preparedness Council. She also serves on the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee and is the liaison to the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Disability Advisory Commission.

Nancy Pyle is a graduate of LeMoyne College in Syracuse, New York, and earned a Masters Degree in Educational Administration from the US International University in San Diego. She has two adult children. Nancy and her husband Roger have lived in Almaden and Blossom Valley for 25 years.

Nancy Pyle is pleased to have received the endorsement for her re-election of Mayor Chuck Reed, Supervisor Don Gage, the San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce, and former VEP President Dave Fadness.

For more information regarding Nancy Pyle and her candidacy please visit www.nancypyle.com.

VEP grills city council candidates

-Dave Fadness

The two candidates are vying for the District 10 San Jose City Council seat in the upcoming June 3rd Primary Election. Incumbent **Nancy Pyle** and opponent **Ashraf Madraswala** have been invited to speak briefly at our April 29 general membership meeting, then stay after to talk with you informally. This will give you an opportunity to meet them and hear their reasons for running and objectives if elected. We urge you to attend.

Earlier this month, VEP execs sent both candidates the following list of questions. We asked that they respond no later than our April meeting date (so they won't be able to share answers). We intend to print their responses side-by-side in our May newsletter.

These are our questions:

1. How will you address the decaying infrastructure and declining urban services needs of our city? What will your top three priorities be?
2. What specific measures do you propose to keep our streets and highways free of graffiti and trash? What importance do you place on this issue?
3. What specific policies do you think the city government should adopt to keep the San Jose and Silicon Valley economy moving forward?
4. What role do you think neighborhood organizations like VEP should have in highlighting and resolving neighborhood and city-wide issues?
5. How will you communicate with and respond to the needs of your constituents and neighborhood organizations?
6. How will you insure that tax money spent on city projects is

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7. In light of our city's perennial revenue shortfalls,
 - A. What are your fiscal priorities?
 - B. What specific cuts in spending would you propose to balance our city budget?
 - C. Would you propose new taxes to balance our budget? If so, what new taxes?
 - D. Other than new taxes, are there alternative revenue resources you'd pursue?
 - E. How will you reconcile the inflationary demands of organized labor?
 - F. What steps would you take to address San Jose's ongoing "structural" deficit?
8. As a city council member, would you support the expenditure of city funds to build a bridge over the Guadalupe River to connect Cherry Avenue to Chynoweth Avenue? Would you consider an alternative to connecting at Chynoweth Avenue?
9. What will you do to expedite a traffic mitigation project and its funding for the Route 87/Capitol Expressway/Narvaez interchange area?
10. What is your position on converting vacant industrial and commercial land for residential use?
11. What specific policies would you propose to balance jobs and housing in San Jose?
12. What is your position on high-density, transit-oriented "smart" growth in San Jose?

Blossom Valley Times

-Dave Noel

Due to a slump in advertising revenues, the *Blossom Valley Times* (BVT) newspaper has announced that it must change from monthly to quarterly distribution. The next edition will be published in mid-June.

The *Times Newspaper Group* has been very supportive of VEP by publishing our monthly calendar of events, attending many of our functions, and featuring VEP in several BVT lead stories.

If you know of any advertisers who may be interested in advertising in the Blossom Valley Times, please contact Times Newspaper Group publisher and CEO William Bellou at (408) 494-7000.

VEP makes good things happen!

Becoming injured or ill in a shopping mall

-Marilyn Rodgers

Recently, I participated in a well organized and well attended Senior Fair at one of our large local shopping malls. Toward the end of the event, an older gentleman tripped and fell, injuring himself right in front of me. As a nurse, I was very comfortable assisting the injured man and seeing to it that he was transported by ambulance to a local hospital for additional care and follow-up.

This was definitely a "team" effort, with several other people providing information and/or possible resources for us to use. Several bystanders later said to me that it was nice to have a nurse there because they would not have known what to do.

As many of us spend a significant amount of time in shopping malls, I thought it might be helpful to share a few tips on what to do if you, or someone you are with, suddenly becomes ill or is injured while shopping or visiting a mall.

General safety awareness:

- Where did you enter the mall – are you in or near a large store, e.g. Macy's, Sears, Target? (These landmarks are easy to locate for mall staff and/or emergency personnel who may be coming in from outside.)
- Be knowledgeable about the locations of places to sit, drinking fountains, fire extinguishers, and emergency exits. Look for mall staff – security personnel, janitors, store clerks.
- If you become ill or injured, stay in the mall. If you try to walk out to your car, it will be more difficult for you to summon help.

What to do if you are ill or injured:

- If you can get to a place (a bench, etc.) to sit down, do so. If not, lean up against a wall, and slide slowly to the floor.
- Let someone around you know that you may need help. Too often we delay, hoping we will be fine and not wanting to cause a scene.
- Contact mall security – any store clerk or mall staff (e.g., janitors) can call security for you.
- Mall security will assist you – with first aid and/or by contacting emergency personnel if needed.

Serious illness or injury: If you believe you (or the person you are with) may be having a heart attack, stroke, or are having trouble breathing, or if you have fallen hitting your head, hurt your back, or unable to walk:

- Call for emergency assistance – paramedics/ambulance. To do this in San Jose, call 277-8911 (have it on your cell phone). This is the local emergency dispatcher. Calling 277-8911 expedites your getting emergency help. (If you call 911, you will get the California Highway Patrol for Northern California.)

- Briefly tell them what is wrong – you – for example, "I may be having a heart attack, and I am by myself in XX shopping mall". The dispatcher will ask you a series of questions.

- Be sure they know your exact location/how to find you – for example, "I am sitting on a bench inside the mall next to the entrance to Macy's and I am wearing a plaid shirt".

Information the EMTs/paramedics/police will need: As much general information as possible about yourself or the person who is in need of care, including:

- Name, address, telephone number, person to contact – family member/friend
- Your age, medical information – recent illnesses/surgeries; on-going conditions such as heart disease or diabetes; medications you are currently taking
- Your doctor's name and the hospital that you go to (or would prefer to go to). Note: there are instances when paramedics will not give you a choice. For example, if you have suffered trauma (e.g., gunshot wound, car or motorcycle accident) paramedics must take you to a designated trauma center like Santa Clara County Valley Medical Center, Stanford, or Regional Medical (formerly Alexian Brothers)
- If there is a possibility you are having a stroke, they may suggest you go to a accredited stroke center (e.g., Good Samaritan Hospital, Kaiser Santa Teresa, Kaiser Santa Clara, or Stanford).

Annuals for the summer

-John Marks (*)

By now the perennials and bulbs you planted are in full swing! Continue to care for these plants, providing them proper nutrients, moisture, light, and protection from pests and diseases.

The last step in spring planting is to add annuals and roses to your garden. Consult your garden plan before heading off to pick up these plants. Know what types of annuals and roses will grow healthy and successfully in your garden.

☺ There are so many varieties to choose from, consult a plant encyclopedia to choose the best annual and rose varieties for your garden.

☺ When selecting annuals at the nursery or garden center, review plants to see that they are pest and disease free, with no holes in the leaves or discolored edges: look for healthy leaf color, and see that the roots are not overcrowded.

☺ Once you have your annuals home from the nursery, get them into the ground or container as soon as possible. Planting will allow you to get the annuals the proper nutrients and moisture they need to begin developing roots.

☺ When planting annuals, make sure to properly amend your existing soil. I recommend using *Miracle-Gro Garden Soil for Flowers and Vegetables* to improve soil condition and provide essential nutrients needed by your plants.

☺ To make the most of the annuals you have, plant them in groups or staggered, depending on the size of your garden.

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© If you are planting in containers, try to place the annuals that will grow tallest in the center and from there, plant the remaining plants in descending height toward the edge of the container. This will keep shorter plants from competing for light with the taller plants.

© Before placing annuals into the soil, gently break apart roots that have become overgrown. Removing the matted tangles before planting will allow roots to grow strong once in the ground.

© Keep your annuals growing strong and healthy by using proper nutrients. Feed them every other week with *Miracle-Gro All Purpose Water Soluble Plant Food*.

Another booster for your roses and annuals is a homemade start-up meal. Mix one tablespoon of liquid dish soap, one tablespoon of hydrogen peroxide, one teaspoon of vitamin B-1 starter, and one teaspoon of whiskey in a half gallon of warm water. Treating your plants occasionally will help them perk up and bloom.

~ Black mold on oranges ~

When you go to pick your oranges, you may notice black "dirt" on them as well as the leaves. You may also notice a lot of scale all over the trees. This "dirt" is called sooty mold. Sooty mold grows only on the surface and can be washed off.

It comes from aphids, mealy bugs, and other sap-sucking insects that eat more sap than they can digest and exude the excess. It all falls to the fruit and leaves below, and a fungus grows on this exudate.

This exudate is sweet and serves as a food source for ants. To control the scale, prevent ants from climbing the tree; natural predators will usually take care of the scale.

To stop ants, wrap a three-inch-wide band of masking tape around the trunk and spread sticky goo (tanglefoot) on the tape. Although the ants can't cross the tape, they will look for other ways to get at the food that they scent. You have to remove any branches, twigs or leaves touching any structure or another shrub or tree, as the ants will follow the scent by way of those avenues to their food source.

~ Degenerate tomatoes ~

Tomatoes in our area can be infected by two soil-inhabiting fungi, verticillium wilt and fusarium wilt. Both can cause the fruit to become deformed, stay small, and turn the leaves brown. The most likely culprit is fusarium wilt. These two fungal diseases persist in the soil for up to twenty years and affect many other plants, as well.

Do not plant tomatoes in the same place. If possible, plant only those that are labeled VFN (verticillium-, fusarium-, and nematode-resistant). These will help prevent the spread of the diseases. Rotating the area where tomatoes are to be planted is an old but very effective practice.

[(*) Ed. Note: Mr. Marks condensed the articles above on orange mold and tomato infections from the 3/28/03 San Jose Mercury News.]

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.

Month of the Young Child at Edenvale Library

-Jennifer Luayon, Edenvale Youth Services Librarian

Join us at the Edenvale Branch Library this April as we celebrate Month of the Young Child. Month of the Young Child (MOYC) was created to focus public attention on the needs of children and their families, particularly the need for early childhood education. To celebrate MOYC the library will be hosting a workshop to emphasize the role of music in early childhood development, titled "Making Music with Preschoolers."

Along with the programs offered by the Edenvale Branch Library, the Month of the Young Child is highlighted by the San Jose Children's Faire, a free one day event for children ages 2-12 years and their parents or caregivers. This event is presented by the Early Care and Education Committee and this year the event will be on Saturday April 26th from 11 am to 4 pm at the Discovery Meadow (located in front of the Children's Museum). "Growing Up Green: Healthy Children, Healthy Families, Healthy Community" is the theme for this year's event, which features family-oriented stage entertainment, special attractions, and activity booths offering hands-on activities for children, in addition to information about education, child care, health and safety resources, creative arts and recreational programs.

The City of San Jose's Early Care and Education Commission provides oversight of the early care and education of children ages 0-5. Its mission is to increase access to quality, affordable early childhood care and education for all San Jose children and families, and a vision that all children will enter school with the foundation needed for academic and social success. It accomplishes this goal by offering such programs as Smart Start San Jose, which provides a variety of services for parents, families, childcare providers, early educators and the business community and *Books 4 Little Hands*, which provides professional development activities, workshops and free educational materials for child care providers.

For more information about their programs, call 408-808-2617 (Smart Start) or (408) 808-2621 (Books 4 Little Hands); or go to the Services page at www.sjlibrary.org and click on "Early Care & Education." Their offices are located at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library at 150 East San Fernando Street,



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Lower Level San Jose, or at the following numbers: (408) 808-2617 for Smart Start and (408) 808-2621 for Books 4 Little Hands.

Upcoming events for children:

- Saturday, April 19th at 1 pm = Family Craft Program: Earth Day Crafts
- Thursday, April 24th at 4 pm = Afterschool Craft- Kite Making
- Friday, April 25th at 10:30 am = Month of the Young Child Celebration--Making Music with Preschoolers.

Upcoming events for Adults:

- Tuesdays at 6:30 pm = Internet Classes--learn about fun and useful websites.
- Fridays at 4:30 pm = Conversation Club--adults are invited to join our free ESL Conversation Club to practice their English language skills.
- Saturday, April 19th at 10 am = Friends of the Edenvale Branch Library meeting.

Edenvale Branch Library is located at 101 Branham Lane East at the intersection of Monterey Highway. The library's hours are: Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m.; Monday 2 to 7 p.m.; Tuesday and Wednesday 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.; and Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. For more information, including news and events at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, visit the library's website at www.sjlibrary.org, or call (408) 808-3036 during business hours.

A message from Supervisor Ken Yeager

Although most of Santa Clara County's programs and services are mandated by the State of California, the federal government also requires that the county perform certain functions. In order to ensure that the county has adequate resources from the federal government to fulfill these mandates, the Board of Supervisors comes up with an annual list of federal policy priorities.

Our top federal priority for 2008 is the improvement of Medi-Cal, which is California's version of Medicaid. As you may know, Medi-Cal provides health coverage for vulnerable populations such as seniors, persons with disabilities, families living at or below the poverty line, and children living in low-income families.

When county hospitals such as Valley Medical Center (VMC) provide services to Medi-Cal patients, the federal government only reimburses the county about 50-cents of each dollar it spends on Medi-Cal patients. The county must absorb and pay for the remaining cost, taking money away from other vital county services.

Because the federal government covers so little of the actual cost of treating Medi-Cal patients, many hospitals are no longer willing to take such a huge monetary loss to treat them. As a public hospital, VMC has a legal and moral obligation to treat all patients regardless of ability to pay. Therefore, VMC ends up treating the vast majority of Medi-Cal patients.

We need the federal government to at least increase the amount of reimbursement if not provide full reimbursement. However, the president's proposed budget for the 2009 fiscal year would slash Medicaid and Medicare programs by \$182-billion, which would devastate the county's funding for Medi-Cal patients. If this budget were approved, VMC would lose \$55-million over five years, with \$5-million lost in the 2008 fis-

cal year alone.

In addition to the already low reimbursement rates, these proposals would cut funding for hospitals that treat a disproportionately high number of low-income patients and funding for hospitals that work with medical schools to provide experience to new doctors and nurses. VMC would lose nearly \$3-million for these vital community services next year and would face continuing losses for years to come.

There is a sign that the county's lobbying efforts are paying off. Last month, two members of Congress introduced a bipartisan bill to halt changes medical regulations that would cause a deep cut of \$20-billion in funding to hospitals over the next five years. Although this is a good start, our federal representatives need to do more to make sure that our vital health services are secure.

In addition to ensuring the vitality of our hospitals, the federal government must make sure the county has the resources it needs in the event of an emergency. One of the county's main functions is to act as the first responder in the event of a natural disaster or pandemic outbreak.

Disaster-response programs need more funding in order to adequately serve the more than 1.8-million people living in our county. Additionally, the county is also pushing the federal government to improve cooperation with our local emergency responders in case of a pandemic flu outbreak, ensuring that vital services will be administered in an efficient and effective manner.

I recently proposed the creation of a "Reverse-911" system that would allow emergency services providers to easily contact residents in case of a disaster or outbreak and give vital instructions. I also proposed updating fire codes in our area to prevent disasters like the recent fires in San Diego County. Without federal funding for basic emergency services, the county may not be able to implement programs like these that could save thousands of lives.

These priorities will serve as a platform to secure vital funding and create needed reforms at a federal level. I look forward to working with our local Congressional representatives to make sure our concerns are heard.

As always, I encourage you to contact my office if you have any concerns. You can reach me at 299-5040 or via e-mail at Ken.Yeager@bos.sccgov.org.

[Ed. Note: Supervisor Ken Yeager represents Santa Clara County's District 4.]

Water awareness

Being aware of your water usage is the first step toward using water wisely. To learn more about your water while having a good time, please join us May 9th for San Jose Water Company's *Water Awareness Night* at the San Jose Giants. (For free tickets, go to the website shown at the end of this article.)

As you see, employing simple conservation practices promotes a future with adequate supplies of this precious resource. It all starts with understanding your water consumption.

~ How to read your meter ~

Most residential water meters are located in a concrete box near the front curb. By knowing how to locate and read your

meter you will be able to monitor your usage and determine if you have a leak.

Nearly all of our meters are straight-read meters. The meter face resembles a car odometer. The digits are read from left to right. Disregard the two numbers to the far right; they measure in units less than 100 cubic feet (ccf) while we bill in increments of 100 cubic feet (= 748 gallons) of water used. The sweep hand represents water being used and is also an indicator for leaks. One revolution of the sweep hand represents 7.48 gallons of water.

By reading your meter, you can determine how much water you have used over a certain period of time. The photo shows a meter reading of 2147 which is the total number of units of water recorded since the meter was installed. If the meter shows 2167 one month later, you used 20 ccf of water during that period. To convert to gallons, multiply the number of ccf by 748 to get the number of gallons used.

Example: 20 x 748 gallons = 14,960 gallons

Meter reading is also helpful in determining how much water a certain task, such as watering your lawn, consumes. Record the reading on the meter before you begin to water, and then record it again at the end of the cycle. The difference between the two readings shows you how much water was used.

~ How to check for leaks ~

Do you suspect a leak at your home or business? If so, try this simple procedure:

- ▶ Turn off all water inside and out; make sure no water is used during the test period.
- ▶ Read the meter (left to right). Mark where the sweep hand is located on the meter. Wait 15 to 20 minutes and see if the hand has moved or the read has changed.
- ▶ If the hand has moved, this is an indication that water is being lost somewhere.

Be advised that leaks that go unattended could be very expensive and could cause property damage.

Note: San Jose Water Company can assist in attempting to locate a leak as part of a complimentary water audit. Contact us at (408) 279-7900 for an appointment.

~ Water audits ~

The purpose of a water audit is to teach customers how to use water wisely and how to make their homes and businesses as water efficient as possible. During the audit a trained water conservation inspector will perform the following tasks:

Indoor

- Identify leaks
- Check for inefficient plumbing fixtures and appliances, as well as leaking toilets and faucets • Adjust the water level in the toilet tank, if necessary
- Install complimentary low-flow showerheads and aerators, if needed (low-flow showerheads and aerators can also be obtained by contacting melania_corbin@sjwater.com.)

Outdoor

- Check hoses, pools, fountains and ponds for leaks
- Review irrigation schedules and make recommendations, if needed
- Check for broken sprinkler heads and excessive runoff

In December 2005, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) adopted a set of measures to encourage customers to conserve water. Among these measures is the establish-

ment of "block rates" or a tiered rate structure, in which rates increase with higher usage. Currently SJWC employs a single rate, but it is now expected that a tiered rate structure for SJWC will become effective sometime in 2008.

SJWC believes conservation is vital in protecting one of our most precious resources. Following the drought of the early 1990s, SJWC was one of the first local utilities to create and successfully implement a comprehensive water conservation program. SJWC continues its efforts to promote water use efficiency by:

- ▶ Providing complimentary water audits and promoting rebates and incentives on water efficient devices.
- ▶ Offering recycled water for use in non-potable applications.
- ▶ Partnering with the California Urban Water Conservation Council to increase efficient water use.
- ▶ Increasing public awareness through enhanced conservation outreach and education.
- ▶ Aggressively repairing leaks in water mains in order to minimize water loss.
- ▶ Replacing older water mains at a rate of 15 miles per year to improve the level of service and to minimize leaks.

Did You Know? SJWC distributes less water today than it did in 1987, despite serving an additional 80,000 residents.

Top ten things you can do to save water and save money:

10. Repair water leaks in your home as quickly as possible, since even a drippy faucet can waste dozens of gallons of water per day.
9. Replace that old toilet, the largest water user inside your home, with a low-flush model to save over 3 gallons per flush.
8. Replace an old clothes washer, the second largest user inside your home, with one that uses up to 50 percent less water and energy.
7. Consider drought resistant plant and shrub varieties in your landscaping.
6. Irrigate between midnight and 6 a.m. to maximize absorption and minimize evaporation.
5. Check your automatic sprinkler system at least once a week, and repair or replace all damaged sprinkle heads.
4. Use only full loads when washing clothes or dishes.
3. Turn off the tap while brushing your teeth or shaving.
2. Drink tap water instead of bottled water. Tap water costs only 1/3 of a penny per gallon.
1. And, the number one thing you can do to show your support of efficient water use is to attend San Jose Water Company's *Water Awareness Night* May 9th.

For information, go to www.sjwater.com or call (408) 279-7900.

[Ed. Note: This article was taken from a San Jose Water Company brochure.]

Light rail platform retrofit

VTA is currently retrofitting its older light rail stations to provide level boarding between station platforms and light rail vehicles. During the next few months, various stations (including Branham, Capitol, and Curtner) will be closed to perform that work. For more information regarding activities at specific stations, check: http://www.vta.org/projects/platform_retrofit/pdf/southline_construction_update.pdf

THE VEP NEWS



VEP Community Association

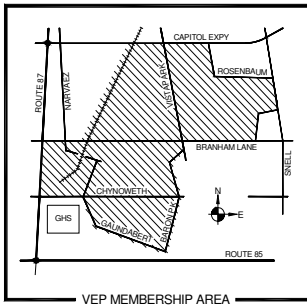
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Published monthly by VEP Community Association, a not-for-profit organization of volunteers established in 1969 to serve and represent more than 2000 homes in the Blossom Valley area of southern San Jose. VEP is dedicated to neighborhood maintenance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

7:30 pm

April 29th Meeting

VEP's

sure to

Be

attend