

THE VEP NEWS



VEP Community Association

P.O. Box 18111 San Jose, CA 95158

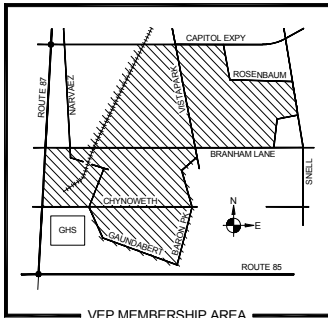
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Published monthly by VEP Community Association, a not-for-profit organization of volunteers established in 1969 to serve and represent more than 2000 homes in the Blossom Valley area of southern San Jose. VEP is dedicated to neighborhood maintenance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

Vista Park

in the

7:30 pm

September 23rd Meeting

Be sure to attend VEP's

VEP NEWS

• VEP COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION •

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

September 2008

VEP MEETING

7:30 p.m. Tuesday
► **September 23, 2008** ◀

Vista Park Community Room
475 Hyde Park Drive

AGENDA

Vista Park Community Room

★ Landscaping Plan★

A presentation by San Jose Parks of
Final Plans and Schedule

★ VEP Business ★

► 2008-09 VEP Goals & Objectives ◀
Member Discussion & Vote

► Proposed VEP 2008-09 Budget ◀
Member Discussion & Vote

Proposed changes to
► VEP Constitution & Bylaws ◀
Member Discussion & Vote

★ Your Concerns and Ideas ★

Voice your opinion and/or seek VEP's help.

Everyone is welcome. Invite your neighbors!

VEP's September meeting

By Dave Fadness

Our September 23rd meeting will include the following topics:

► Vista Park Community Room Landscaping Plan. The final Community Room Landscaping Plan and project schedule will be presented by San Jose City Parks and Recreation Department's **Evelyn Velez-Rosario**. VEP volunteers will be called upon soon to plant trees and shrubs. This meeting will be an excellent opportunity to see what's going to be done and when our help will be needed.

► 2008-09 VEP Goals & Objectives. Our executive officers have put together a set of proposed Goals and Objectives for the coming year (see article in this newsletter). Your input is needed to be sure what's planned reflects VEP member's desires—and that their list is complete. Your input is wanted; your endorsement is required.

► Proposed VEP 2008-09 Budget. VEP's Treasurer **Ginger Cardona** will present our proposed budget for 2008-2009 (see article in this newsletter). We need your vote of approval.

► Proposed changes to VEP Constitution & Bylaws: After decades without major amendment, our executive officers are proposing a set of changes to our charter that will modernize VEP's organization (see article in this newsletter). All changes to our Constitution & Bylaws require member approval.

► 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 keep VEP neighborhoods strong, healthy, and attractive.

We look forward to seeing you, your family, your friends, and your neighbors at our September 23rd meeting. Please join us!

VEP's Goals & Objectives for 2008-09

Each September, VEP members adopt a set of Goals & Objectives (G&O) for the coming year. Adopted G&O serve thereafter as marching orders for VEP executives when acting on behalf of our membership. At the close of our program year next spring, we report and grade ourselves on how well we met them.

We will ask for your input and vote on the following proposed G&O at our September 23rd meeting. If any changes are adopted at that meeting, they will be published in our October newsletter.

VEP Board-Recommended

★ 2008-09 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.
 - B. Leadership: Encourage regular turn-over of VEP Officers to impart broad, area-wide membership representation.
 - C. Membership: Monitor changes in paid VEP membership.
 - D. Meetings: Encourage and monitor attendance at VEP meetings and events.
 - E. Fiscal Health: Continue to maintain VEP's positive fiscal condition.
 - a. Investigate and foster the use of Grants (and any other possible sources) to increase funding available for VEP projects
 - F. Communication:
 - a. Continue publishing the VEP NEWS nine times per year.
 - (1) Immediately identify and groom replacement/assistant Newsletter Editor
 - b. Monitor and increase the usage of the VEP Website.
 - c. Utilize e-mail to communicate important VEP business with members.

2008 is VEP's 39th year!

- d. Maintain relationships with local media outlets and submit for publication articles about VEP.
 - G. Strive to increase VEP's public and social recognition.
 - a. Increase VEP visibility at appropriate events
 - 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.
 - b. Maintaining a VEP database of volunteers by activity (including general meeting attendance) with the intent of using it as a reference for future VEP officer grooming increasing participation in future VEP volunteer activities. The database needs to clearly indicate year(s) the member checked their membership forms.
 - c. Developing and advertising additional volunteer activities, making use of the database mentioned above in item 1.H.b to increase our effectiveness.
 - I. Complete Final Review and update VEP's Constitution and Bylaws to likely:
 - a. Consider changes in the composition of our Executive Board that could improve our effectiveness.
 - b. Consider a formal structure for both standing and ad hoc committees.
 - c. Consider changes to our Community Service Award program.
 - d. Formalize a process for filling vacant Executive Board positions.
 - e. Consider changes to our program/fiscal year.
 - J. Move forward with incorporating VEP as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.
2. Promote Community Interaction, Pride, and Preparedness.
- A. Encourage member participation in neighborhood safety programs, crime prevention, and disaster/emergency preparedness.
 - B. Organize and encourage participation in pruning, community cleanup, and maintenance projects.
 - C. Identify and encourage graffiti removal when/where ever it occurs in and around our area.
 - D. Continue to sponsor, promote, and underwrite our Home Faire, community-wide Garage Sale, and Memorial Day event.
 - a. Put more marketing "spin" on our self-promotion material to increase focus and avoid overly wordy laundry lists
 - E. Develop plans to address the following
 - a. Chynoweth landscaping improvements
 - (1) Specific attention to the North side between New World

- and Pearl.
- b. Vista Park Improvements

3. Work to Assure Local Government and Businesses' Responsiveness 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.
 - B. Work with City/County government and developers to install and/or maintain public landscaping in the VEP membership area.
 - C. Work with the City to provide traffic safety measures on VEP area streets as needed
 - D. Continue to monitor community impacts including increased traffic and parking
 - E. Encourage, monitor, and react to plans for urban development, transportation, libraries, parks and other public infrastructure changes in and around our membership area.
 - a. Organize and communicate community priorities and concerns.
4. Monitor, Create, and Maintain High-Quality Public Services for the VEP Area
- A. Promote and participate in planning and development of the Martial-Cottle Regional Park (Lester Property).
 - 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. Work with the City to develop and maintain our neighborhood parks.
 - D. Work with the City to implement the master plan for the immediate area surrounding the Vista Park Community Room and secure funding for the plans implementation.
 - E. Monitor opportunities to build a city park at Capitol/Narvaez.
 - F. Work for real improvements in traffic level of service at Capitol/Narvaez/northbound 87 onramp.
 - G. Work with the City to ensure that impacts of any proposed development along the Guadalupe Corridor are fully mitigated.

VEP is Accepting Local Advertisers

The VEP Community Association is currently accepting advertisers for their monthly newsletter. The VEP News is currently mail to 500 local members 9 times a year. In addition, the newsletter is also available on the VEP website (vepca.net).

Advertisers are the main funding source for the distribution of the VEP Newsletter. VEP members are encouraged to consider the support of advertisers when selecting business to provide services.

The VEP News limits advertisements to 2.5" x 3.75" ads, two per page. Only 2 ads for any type of business are allowed per publications (e.g. two realtors, two landscapers, etc.) Coupons or discounts are allowed and encouraged. Ad text and format may be changed twice per year.

For additional assistance and information and rates, contact Susan Iverson@vepeditor@sbcglobal.net.

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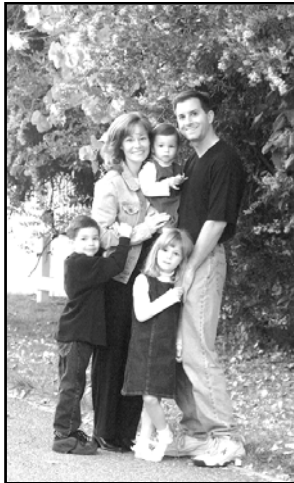
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VEP's proposed 2008-09 Budget

By Ginger Cardona, Treasurer

It's time to adopt our operating budget. We do this in September each year. VEP members are welcome to comment, request changes, add or subtract items, then vote on the resulting document at our regular meeting on 9/23. Be sure to participate.

Based on past experience and our proposed *2008-09 Goals & Objectives* (see article in this newsletter), this is our proposed budget recommended by VEP officers:

Description	2007-08 Budget	2007-08 Actual	2008-09 Proposed Budget
INCOME			
Advertising	3,120	3,055	3,120
Interest	24	33	20
Membership Dues	8,500	7,152	8,500
TOTAL INCOME =	11,644	10,240	12,130
EXPENSES			
Beautification Projects	200	104	350
Community Service Awards	2,000	1,000	2,000
Dining - Exec Dinner	450	430	450
Dues and Subscriptions	50	0	50
Education	45	0	45
Garage Sale	120	75	100
Memorial Day Festival	2,000	2,000	3,000
Gifts	100	97	100
Insurance	500	500	500
Meeting Refreshments	250	210	250
Office	100	327	250
PO Box Rent	38	56	55
Bulk Mail	1,500	1,675	1,100
Stamps	60	49	100
Flyers - Printing	150	218	250
Membership Drive	450	442	450
Newsletter	3,075	2,582	2,750
TOTAL EXPENSES =	11,088	9,765	11,800
OVERALL TOTAL =	556	475	330

VEP Constitution and By-Laws Update

By Dave Noel

After over a year of committee work, our executive board is ready to present a proposed major update to our Constitution and By-Laws (C&BL) for your consideration at our September 23rd general meeting

An amendment to our constitution can be enacted by a simple majority vote; a bylaws amendment requires a two-thirds majority vote of the members present at a general membership meeting, provided that the members are notified in writing at least 48-hours before the meeting. This article serves as your notification.

Our last major C&BL update was adopted in November 2001. The main change addressed in that update was the addition of the "At Large" category to our annual Community Service Awards.

In the current proposal, we are proposing several significant changes. This article provides a summary of those changes. The full text of the current and proposed C&BL documents are available for review on our website at www.vepca.net. If you lack computer access, contact me at 266-7183 for hardcopies.

Executive Board and Executive Committee: Our current Executive Board and Executive Committee would be replaced with a 7-member Board of Directors. VEP members would annually elect a Board of Directors, and then the board would elect its own officers to include a President, Vice President, Treasurer, and any other officers deemed necessary. Board director duties would be reallocated. A Board quorum would consist of 4 members. The Board would be authorized to appoint, or schedule a membership vote to elect, a replacement for a vacated Board position.

The primary objective of this new structure is to create general leadership positions that enable new members to join the board and "learn the ropes" before stepping up to higher office. This should facilitate recruiting and training new leadership.

Our current Executive Committee consists of the following elected positions: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Editor. Our current Executive Board consists of our Executive Committee and all Past Presidents in good standing. The proposed C&BL changes empower only the seven elected directors to vote on Board business, thus removing voting privileges of Past Presidents who are not current Directors.

Fiscal Year, Elections, and Annual Meeting: VEP's fiscal year would change from April 1 – March 31 to September 1 – August 31. Board directors would be elected at May general meeting instead of the March general meeting. VEP's Annual Meeting, at which the outgoing board reports on the previous year and the incoming board is installed and board officers are announced, would change from the April general meeting to the September general meeting. These changes would provide board continuity through the busy Spring season, and provide the new Board the full summer to learn their posts and plan the upcoming program year. These changes would also simplify financial planning and reporting.

Community Service Awards: Rather than allocating separate awards for Gunderson High School, Andrew Hill High School and "At-Large", VEP would collect nominations from multiple sources, and then grant one or more awards to the best candidate(s) from the resulting pool of applicants. Nominees would be solicited from VEP members, local high schools, and/or non-

profit service organizations in our area. Each year the Board would propose for membership approval an award budget, the number of awards to grant, and any specific selection criteria.

Budget: The Board of Directors would be required to propose, and members required to approve, an Operating Budget for the coming year along with the Goals & Objectives.

Membership List: VEP mailing lists would be allowed to be distributed to trusted non-VEP personnel for the purpose of printing labels for official VEP mailings.

Funds: Banks holding VEP funds would be required to be federally insured. Checks would require one signature instead of two, but each expenditure would require an Authorization Form, which must be signed by two Directors within 30 days of the expenditure. (Authorization forms are already in use.)

Records Retention: Treasurer's records would be required to be retained for at least three years after approval of the Termination (financial) Audit for the years in which the records were created.

General Business: In order to act on *non-agendized* business matters at a general meeting, a resolution of emergency would first need to be approved by 2/3 of the members in good standing present.

Nominating Committee: The committee that nominates Board of Director candidates would be appointed by the Board and require VEP membership approval at the April general meeting.

Recall of Directors: Recall petitions would require signatures from at least 20 members in good standing from separate households, instead of the current 15% of total membership.

Amendments: Amendments to the Constitution will continue to require a majority vote of members present at a general membership meeting, providing the proposed amendments have first been approved by a two-thirds majority of the Board of Directors, or a majority (*currently two-thirds majority*) of members present at a general membership meeting.

Document clarification: The proposed new C&BL document includes a large number of miscellaneous clarifications, and much of the content has been reorganized and reformatted for clarity.

Where are they now?

By Dave Noel

For those of you who remember **Demerris Brooks** as Principal of Gunderson High School in 2002-2003, she has been working at San Jose State University. She was recently named university ombudsman. Prior to this assignment, she was an administrative and project specialist for the Division of Student Affairs.



Wesley W. Terrell

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Introducing the Class of 2012

By Dave Noel

Each summer **Beloit College** in Wisconsin issues their Mindset List. A creation of Beloit's Keefer Professor of the Humanities **Tom McBride** and Public Affairs Director **Ron Nief**, it looks at the cultural touchstones that have shaped the lives of today's first-year students, most of whom were born in 1990. Below is a sampling of this year's list. For the whole list, visit www.beloit.edu/mindset.

1. Harry Potter could be a classmate, playing on their Quidditch team.
4. GPS satellite navigation systems have always been available.
5. Coke and Pepsi have always used recycled plastic bottles.
7. Gas stations have never fixed flats, but most serve cappuccino.
9. Electronic filing of tax returns has always been an option.
13. Universal Studios has always offered an alternative to Mickey in Orlando.
15. Martha Stewart Living has always been setting the style.
17. Club Med resorts have always been places to take the whole family.
18. WWW has never stood for World Wide Wrestling.
22. Clarence Thomas has always sat on the Supreme Court.
24. We have always known that "All I Ever Really Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten."
28. IBM has never made typewriters.
30. McDonald's and Burger King have always used vegetable oil for cooking french fries.
31. They have never been able to color a tree using a raw umber Crayola.
33. The Tonight Show has always been hosted by Jay Leno and started at 11:35 EST.
36. They may have been given a Nintendo Game Boy to play with in the crib.
38. Lenin's name has never been on a major city in Russia.
39. Employers have always been able to do credit checks on employees.
43. Personal privacy has always been threatened.
44. Caller ID has always been available on phones.
46. The Green Bay Packers (almost) always had the same starting quarterback.
47. They never heard an attendant ask "Want me to check under the hood?"
48. Iced tea has always come in cans and bottles.
49. Soft drink refills have always been free.
50. They have never known life without Seinfeld references from a show about "nothing."
51. Windows 3.0 operating system made IBM PCs user-friendly the year they were born.

Oak Grove School District News

By Manny Barbara, Superintendent

Welcome to the 2008-2009 school year. School started on Monday, August 25 with approximately 11,700 students ready for the first day of school. Please be especially careful driving around schools during early morning and after school dismissal.

During the summer, approximately 1,731 students attended several summer school programs. Students requiring additional help with reading and math, along with students in special education, attended classes designed to meet their needs. High achieving students benefited from special foreign language classes and advanced math instruction. The latter program was part of our partnership with the Silicon Valley Education Foundation called "Stepping Up to Algebra."

As of this writing, we still do not have a state budget. Based on the current budget assumptions, our Board of Trustees adopted a budget for the 2008-2009 school year, with \$1.5 million in reduced funding for the coming year. School districts are required to adopt a balanced budget by July 1 of each year.

After making the necessary program reductions, we are still offering what we consider key programs for our students: extended day kindergarten at all our schools (kindergarten students receive at least 60 minutes of additional instruction daily than required by law); small class size of 20 to 1 student-teacher ratio at grades K-3; a Visual and Performing Arts Program for students at grades 4-6; and counseling and after school sports at grades 7-8. One of the reasons we can maintain these key programs is that we were able to sell one of our closed school sites to the East Side Union High School District. We intend to deposit the proceeds from the sale and use the interest to help maintain these key programs. Furthermore, we are especially grateful to the community for the support of the \$68 parcel tax renewal in 2006. Without the parcel tax, we would not be able to maintain programs that make such a difference for our students. Thank you!

In November we are asking the community to support a \$125 million bond measure to continue to modernize our schools. These funds can only be used for facilities and not everyday operational expenses such as salaries and programs. The original bond was passed in 1995. Schools have received much needed facilities improvements, such as playgrounds, roofs, bathrooms, media centers, heating and air conditioning, and safety retrofitting. Those funds have now been expended, but much more work still needs to be done now and in the future. Many of our schools have outdated parking areas which need to be redesigned for increased traffic safety; bathrooms; roofs; and heating and air conditioning units have suffered from the normal wear and tear. Our grounds, used not only by students, but by the community at large, need significant attention, and further retrofitting of facilities to meet new seismic and fire code standards will be needed in the future. Our media centers, as well as our visual and performing arts and physical sports facilities, need to be upgraded as well. Our students deserve safe, clean schools.

Anyone interested in seeing in detail all proposed projects approved by our Board of Trustees can contact my office directly or soon view them online on our web site: www.ogsd.k12.ca.us.

Student test results increased in the 2007-2008 school year. Recently released results show that our District Academic Performance Index increased to 788 (from 772 in the prior year). We met the state's higher performance targets for the various required sub groups of students with the exception of special education.

As always, please feel free to contact me through the regular channels: Email: superintendent@ogsd.k12.ca.us Phone: (408) 227-8300 ext. 202

Operation Safe Passage

Excerpt from Mayor Chuck Reeds E-Newsletter

With San Jose students heading back to school, it's a good time to remind drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists to slow down and pay more attention in school zones. Mayor **Chuck Reed** joined Councilmember **Pierluigi Oliverio**, Police Chief **Rob Davis**, Transportation Director **Jim Helmer**, and San Jose Unified officials at Hoover Middle School to announce Operation Safe Passage and the expansion of the School Area Parking Patrol Team.

Operation Safe Passage is a program led by the San Jose Police Department and California Highway Patrol to alert and educate the community about traffic safety. Enforcement teams will concentrate their efforts near school zones, encouraging motorists to slow down while enforcing hazardous violations. The School Area Parking Patrol Team is an effort from the Department of Transportation to increase parking compliance in school areas citywide. Providing ongoing coverage of school zones during drop-off and pick-up times, the Patrol Team will also distribute educational material on safe driving, cycling, and walking.

Neighborhood Beautification Grants Available to Neighborhoods and Schools

By Councilmember Judy Chirco

Each year *Keep San Jose Beautiful* awards grants to neighborhood organizations and school groups for beautification projects throughout San Jose. Grant amounts range from \$500 to \$3,500 for plants and materials. The grants must be matched by other contributions and/or volunteer hours. There will be a grant application workshop on Saturday, September 20th at 10 am for first time applicants. For further information contact www.sjbeautiful.org or call the office of *Keep San Jose Beautiful* at (408) 723-1574.

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The Parkview Elementary Walkathon is Coming!

By Dana Johnson

Parkview Elementary will be having their annual walkathon on Saturday, October 11 from 9:30am to 3:00pm.

The Parkview School Community Association (PSCA) is once again holding the Parkview Walkathon. The children that attend the school walk for pledges all day to support Parkview's music program, run by **Mr. John Hess**; hands-on science projects, presented by Schmahl Science; and other educational enhancement programs, such as field trips, in-school assemblies, campus beautification, and additional school supplies and equipment.



Through the Parkview Walkathon, which not only includes the walking of laps, the PSCA also offers a silent auction, games, activities, food, music, entertainment, and booths for home-based businesses. These activities contribute to the walkathon's success.

The entire VEP community is welcome to join us at this exciting event.

If you would like additional information, please contact **Dana Johnson** at (408) 373-3909 or by email at dj_reads@sbcglobal.net.

Valley Christian Theatre Offers Great Experience

By Cathy McFall

Have you ever wondered what's going on in High School Theatre's these days? Valley Christian High School has a fabulous theatre program directed by **Mr. Matthew DeMeritt**. Valley Christian Theatre department was featured in San Jose Magazine this past year and VCT had the privilege of participating and winning an outstanding award as one of the featured acts in American Musical Theatre's Honor's program 2007-2008.



This year Valley is presenting its fall drama *You Can't Take It With You*, and in the Spring of 2009, Valley will present *Les Miserables*

You Can't Take It With You, is a comedy in three acts, written by **Moss Hart** and **George S. Kaufman**. At first the Sycamores seem mad, but it is not long before you realize that if they are mad, then the rest of the world is madder. In contrast to these delightful people are the unhappy Kirbys. You'll love them all for giving you the swellest time you've ever had!

Show dates are October 16th, 18th, 23rd, 24th, 25th at 7:29 p.m. with a matinee on the 25th at 2pm. Tickets can be purchased from the VCT website, vctheatre.net, beginning September 23rd at 9:00 a.m., or from the theatre box office beginning September 23rd at 9:00 a.m. Ticket prices are Adults \$14.00, Students/Seniors \$12.00 and children 8 yrs and under \$10.00.

For more information contact **Cathy McFall**, 513-2438 cmcfall@vcs.net or www.vctheatre.net

San Jose Unified School District News

By Veronica Lewis, Board Trustee Area #4

The Board adopted District vision and mission, ***to inspire and prepare all students to succeed in a global economy in a safe learning environment, is defined in the accomplishments that were achieved in 2007-08 school year.***

Commendation

- **Lincoln High School** recognized by the Ed Trust West for gains in closing the achievement gap.
- **Carson Elementary School** nominated as a National Blue Ribbon School.
- **Pioneer High School** Service Learning Program recognized as a state model.
- **Broadway High School** recognized as a state model continuation school.
- **San Jose Unified** receives the California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE) award as a model District
- **Horace Mann Elementary** receives architectural award.

Innovation

- **San Jose High Academy** establishes the first Project Lead The Way pre-engineering program in Silicon Valley, and receives a Federal Magnet Schools Assistance Grant to support this program.
- **Bachrodt Academy** becomes the first SJUSD conversion charter school.
- **Gunderson High School** receives a Federal Magnet Schools Assistance Program grant to support development of a Career Technical Strand in Information Technology.
- **Allen @ Steinbeck** converted to a k-8 school, Fall 08.
- **San Jose Unified** is the largest k-12 school district to implement the largest solar power energy efficient solar program in the nation.

Globalization

- **Horace Mann Elementary, Peter Burnett Middle School, San Jose High Academy** receive a Federal Magnet Grant to support the development of the International Baccalaureate Program.
- **Gunderson High School** receives a Federal Magnet Grant to support innovative program development in Information Technology/Media Support.
- **Willow Glen Elementary and Bachrodt Academy** will join **Gardner Academy And River Glen k-8** as Two-Way Bilingual Immersion Schools (Spanish & English) Fall 08.

In my next article I will update you on the **Collaboration, Modernization, Career-Technical Education Plan** for our District. As I conclude this article I leave you with some highlights of our District: we were identified by the Editorial Projects in Education, a national non-profit research group as having the second highest graduation rate among the nation's 50 largest cities. In the 2008 Senior Exit Survey, with a 90% participation rate, 86% reported that they will be going to college.

Our Phase I Solar Panels have been installed at Gunderson, Pioneer, Leland and San Jose High, Phase II has begun. API growth for our district: 74% Elementary schools, 67% Middle Schools and 83% High Schools showed growth. District-wide ELA Proficiency outperformed the State by 5.6% and in Math it outperformed the State by 5.4%. Hammer, River Glen, Terrell, and Pioneer all surpassed the Target API Goal of 800.

Websites Worth A Visit

By Susan Iverson

If you are a little beyond the myspace and facebook generation there are still websites that can be worth visiting. Check out the following websites which really contribute to the value of the world wide web!



www.freemesa.org - If you are looking to clean out the garage and want a more environmental choice than a trip to the dump, this website is for you. This site allows you to post items which you are giving away for free. Other people in there area can find items that they need. This concept is often called *freecycling*.

www.sanjosegasprices.com - With the cost of gas through the roof, it never hurts to see where the lowest prices can be found. This site is updated by other web users with prices at gas stations throughout the city. Two of our local stations frequently top the list, but if you need station near work, this is a great source.

www.myxer.com - A bit on the silly and frivolous side, but if you are jealous of the way all the cool kids can get their phones to play their favorite tunes, this one is for you! Take almost any song and turn it into a ring tone.

VEP has a new Editor!

By Dave Fadness

Susan Iverson is our new Editor for the VEP NEWS and we're thrilled to have her in this vitally important role for our organization. This is her first edition—congratulations!

Please help her by submitting articles you think may be of general interest to our members. Our deadline is published each month in the *VEP Community Calendar* feature of this newsletter. Her email address is shown on the mailing page.

Please be sure to introduce yourself to Susan at our September 23 meeting.

Fall Plantings

By John Marks



September is a good month for planting cool season veggies, including beets, carrots, lettuce, parsnips, certain types of peas, and Swiss chard. Broccoli, cauliflower, kohlrabi, rutabaga and turnips also do well. Leaves, stems, flower heads and roots are the edible portions of these versatile vegetables, depending on the species.

Anything grown from seed (most of the above) can usually be started in August or September. Those bought as nursery-grown seedlings are usually better transplanted in September, since the same warm weather that stimulates fast seed germination can cause tender, thirsty seedlings to wilt or burn.

Root crops, such as carrots and parsnips, require full sun, sandy or loamy soil, and regular irrigation. When sowing carrot seeds keep the soil moist and never let a crust form on top, or the seeds have difficulty sprouting (start indoors?). Unfortunately, parsnips never get as much good P.R. as their orange cousins. Parsnips' creamy white to yellow roots have a unique, mild flavor and can be baked, fried, mashed, or cooked in soups or stews. Cold weather makes them sweeter.

Another favorite is the humble beet. For absolute cut beauty and flavor, go for the Chioggia, also called Bull's Eye, an unusual Italian heirloom beet with concentric white and red rings inside. Albina Verduna is a sweet white beet that grows well here, and Sangria is a classic deep red, like the wine. Because it develops its shape early, Sangrea also makes a good "baby beet" when pulled early.

Swiss chard, a leafy vegetable, is actually a type of beet without the tasty bulbous root, and is beautiful on the dinner table served raw, steamed, or stir-fried. It's also an attention getting ornamental in the garden, when you're touring with friends. The Bright Lights variety is especially attractive, showing up with crimson, yellow and white stems.

The obvious leafy vegetable choice is lettuce, which comes in four varieties: crisphead, like iceberg and butterhead, Bibb loose leaf, Oak Leaf, and Romaine, which grows in vertical stocks.

I trust you've been pulling the heads off those dandelions all summer. If not, you should have. Every time you walk to the car to go somewhere and you see a yellow dandelion blossom, don't think, "I'll have to dig that up when I get home." It'll never happen. Prevent that plant from multiplying by going over and plucking the blossom; if it's already progressed to the fuzzy ball, all the more important to trot over and close it into your hand and throw away, before the wind spreads the spores.

"Labor Day is a glorious holiday because your child will be going back to school the next day. It would have been called Independence Day, but that name was already taken."

~ Bill Dodds

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Featured Events at Pearl Avenue Branch Library

By Jane Cronkhite, Librarian

Coming in October!

Internet Basics Computer Class! and **My Dog Said What?** Pet Care 101 presented by the Humane Society of Silicon Valley on **Thursday, October 2, 3:30 p.m.**



Book Clubs

The Pearl Avenue Book Club will meet **Tuesday, September 30 at 6:30 pm** to discuss *The Devil in the White City* by Erik Larson. The club reads a variety of award-winning fiction and non-fiction. Newcomers and visitors are always welcome.

Story Times:

Join us this month for a special Green story time where we'll learn about recycling, including a garbage monster craft on **Wednesday September 10 at 11:30 am**.

Storyteller Extraordinaire Margaret Fitch presents a **Puppet Show Story Time** for all ages on **Saturday, September 6 at 10:30 am**.

- Preschool Story time for ages 3-5 is every Wednesday at 11:30 am.
- Toddler Story Time for ages 18-36 months is every Friday at 10:30 am.
- Family Story time is held on Saturdays at 10:30 am.

Regular events and workshops:

- The ESL Conversation Club is held every Friday beginning September 19 at 4 pm. This one-hour session is a great way to practice your English and to make friends at the library. No pre-registration required.
- Monthly Craft for children grades K-6: Friday, September 26 from 4:00-5:00 pm. Celebrate summer with a fun surprise craft! All materials will be provided.

Friends of the Pearl Avenue Branch Library:

- Come join the Friends of the Pearl Avenue Library! Join us for a fun time, meet new people in your neighborhood, and support the new Pearl Avenue Library. For more information on the Friends, please contact Therese Wiese at tawiese@yahoo.com. The Friends meet on **Tuesday, September 30 at 6 pm**.

Elsewhere of Interest

The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library — the first library in the United States to be jointly owned and operated by a major city and university — will mark its fifth anniversary with a day-long celebration on Saturday, September 6, followed by a month of activities focused on lifelong learning. Since August 2003, the successful collaboration between the City of San Jose and San Jose State University has provided a collection of more than a million books, periodicals, CDs, DVDs, computers, and other resources in a visually stunning, eight-story facility designed for the joint use of public and academic customers. King Library has served a dual role as the university library and the main library for the burgeoning branch network of the San Jose Public Library system, allowing materials and electronic resources from both university and public collections to be shared freely.

Please note, San Jose Public Library branches and the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library will observe a holiday closure on September 1, 2008.

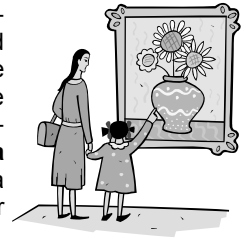
For news of other library activities, including those at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, visit: <http://www.sjlibrary.org/about/events/>

Pearl Avenue Branch Library is located at 4270 Pearl Avenue. Our regular hours are: Mon. 2pm-7pm; Tue. – Wed. 11am-8pm; Thu. – Sat. 10am-6pm and Sun. 1-5pm. For questions please call 808-3053 during business hours. Email may be sent at any time: pa.sjpl@sjlibrary.org. **Jane Cronkhite** is a librarian at the Pearl Avenue Branch Library.

Leonardo: 500 Years Into the Future

Excerpt from Mayor Chuck Reeds E-Newsletter

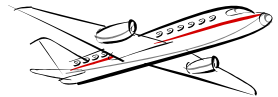
The Tech Museum of Innovation's new exhibition, Leonardo: 500 Years Into the Future, opens on Saturday September 27 and will be the world premiere and exclusive U.S. showing of this comprehensive collection of artifacts and recreations. Bringing together more than one hundred life-size and scale working models based on the drawings and designs of **Leonardo Da Vinci** including the Flying Machine, a 1320-pound Renaissance hang glider with a wing span of nearly forty feet.



The exhibit will also feature hands-on interactive machines, multimedia presentations, and art pieces. A total of 17 freight containers were required to bring the exhibition from Italy to San Jose. Leonardo: 500 Years Into the Future will run through January 4, 2009. www.thetech.org/leonardo

San Jose Airport Update

By Nancy Pyle,
Councilmember, District Ten



Airport Passenger Traffic Declining as Airlines Reduce Capacity

Airport passenger traffic in June declined 6.7 percent compared to June 2007, reflecting higher airline fares, extra fees, and the softening of the economy as well as the continuing reductions in capacity by airlines throughout the nation as a result of the high cost of fuel. For Fiscal Year 2007-08, total traffic at the Airport fell 2.6 percent to 10.4 million enplaned and deplaned passengers compared to the prior year, and airline capacity at San Jose (the number of available airplane seats) declined 1.7 percent in the same period. Looking ahead, based on published schedules for November, Airport staff anticipate further cuts in airline capacity, which likely will be nearly 14 percent lower here than Last November. Projections also indicate that Oakland will lose 25 percent of capacity, SFO will lose 5 percent, and Sacramento will lose 13 percent compared to November 2007 levels.

New Terminal A "Express Checkpoint" now open at International Arrivals Building

Airport staff has worked with the Transportation Security Agency (TSA) to open a new "express security checkpoint" inside the International Arrivals Building next to Terminal A to provide better customer service. The Express Checkpoint is now open from 5:00AM to 11:00AM daily for passengers on Southwest, American, Hawaiian, and Mexicana Airlines who have already printed their boarding passes and do not have bags to check. The new checkpoint helps reduce security waiting times at Terminal A and is serving more than 500 passengers every morning. For more information contact **Bob Swensen** at 277-5347.

The new Pearl Avenue Library is now open

By Dave Fadness

A gala grand opening ceremony was held on August 9 for our new Pearl Avenue Branch Library. Hundreds of eager patrons crowded in—and were not disappointed. It's simply beautiful!

This attractive new 14,000 square foot facility is twice bigger than the heavily used, but cramped and out-dated library it replaces. The old library was built in 1971 on the same site.



The new, feature-rich Pearl now has a storytelling area, a children's collection, a community meeting room, a teen room, a group study room, a quiet study room, a tech center (with 24 public computers), an Internet Cafe, a community living room, and an adult collection. The entire collection of library materials is brand new.



Library patrons enter directly into what's called the Market Place, where new books and multi-media collections are displayed as they might be at your favorite local book store. Floating canopies beckon entering patrons to an Internet Cafe. Bamboo trellises form a gateway from the Market Place into the children's area under a garden canopy of leaves, flowers, vines, and playful bug-shaped lights. A soaring roof line leads the user through the adult collection to the Living Room, an area that features comfortable seating, newspapers, magazines and periodicals, a fireplace, and a pleasant view of an outdoor garden.

Be sure to visit Pearl to see it for your self. You will be very impressed!

The new Pearl was built using money from a voter-approved bond. Those bond funds cannot be used for furnishings, collec-

tions, and the other amenities that make an empty building into a functioning library. To supplement available city funds in order to buy those things, the non-profit *San Jose Public Library Foundation* turned to donations from citizens and local businesses.



At a special preview reception on August 7, more than 300 donors attended to see the fruits of their generosity. As of that day, \$245,000 had been raised—and more donations are still arriving, as those who visit Pearl become inspired to lend their support.

You can still get your name, your family name, or your business name on Pearl's *Community Donor Wall*; all it takes is a donation of \$100 or more. Gifts of \$1000 to \$4999 are recognized on a *Legacy Donor Wall*; over \$5000 gets *Laureate Donor Wall* listing.

Your tax-deductible donation will be used first to complete the new facility and then for equipment and library materials as they become needed in coming years..

To donate, ask at the library for a donation form. You can also get forms and/or donate directly online at www.sjplf.org. If you don't have internet access, call **Mary McLane** during normal business hours at (408) 808-2174 for a form and answers to any questions. I, too, will be happy to help with anything you need—call me at (408) 578-6428 or email at drfadness@sbcglobal.net.



Donations can be made by check or credit card. They can be one-time, or spread out conveniently over a year or more in the form of a pledge. Be sure to specify that your donation is for the Pearl Avenue Library

VEP's 4th Memorial Day Parade & Festival

By Dave Fadness, Event Chairman

VEP's fourth annual *Memorial Day Parade & Festival* was enjoyed by an estimated 3000 participants on May 26th. Celebrating the Memorial Day tradition of honoring men and women who have given their lives to protect our country and way of life, this family event showcased talented young people who inspired and entertained our Blossom Valley community.

Stepping off on a sunny morning from San Jose's Vista Park, our Memorial Day Parade was led by Lieutenant Colonel **Shari Corbett's** Andrew Hill High School JROTC. Smartly attired in dress uniforms and proudly carrying our country's flag, their Color Guard, Honor Guard, Drill Teams, and Drum Corps were an impressive sight as they marched with local representatives of our Armed Forces.

Adding music, color, and excitement to the parade were Director **Andrew Love's** Sylvandale Jr. High band, Director **Allison Brooks'** Fair Jr. High choir and band, and a choir comprised of Carson and Parkview Elementary School students led by volunteer Directors **Jim Sealy** and **Tanya Summers**. S.J. *Sharkie's* antics thrilled Sharks fans. *Caring Clowns Sunny & Twinkles* and their zany Andrew Hill and Gunderson High School protégés drew applause and approving smiles from observers along the 1.1-mile parade route.

Our City Forest's "O2" mascot, Scout troops, custom and classic cars, and hundreds of colorfully costumed kids of all ages with decorated bikes, trikes, scooters, and coaster wagons joined the parade. A proud contingent of San Jose Fire Station 13 firefighters and San Jose Police Department patrol, motorcycle, and horse-mounted officers heightened spectator interest and ensured everyone's safety.

A Memorial Day Festival followed the parade. It opened at Parkview Elementary School with a patriotic ceremony featuring Andrew Hill's JROTC Color Guard's flag salute and inspiring patriotic music by the Carson-Parkview Choir, Sylvandale and Fair Jr. High School musicians, and a moving *Taps* solo by Fair's **Erik Gonzales**.

The task of selecting parade costume and decoration awards was entrusted to four judges: San Jose Councilwoman **Nancy Pyle**, San Jose Unified School District Trustee **Veronica Lewis**, Parkview Elementary School **Debbie Roach**, and VEP Member **Irene Shoberg**. Councilwoman Pyle granted parade costume awards after our patriotic ceremony ended, beginning the entertainment portion of our Festival.

Delighting the audience with their mellow harmonies, the **Town Square Harmonizers** barbershop quartet performed brilliantly. Master Instructor **Andrew Suh** dazzled the crowd with his *America Tae Kwon Do* students' stunning martial arts routines. An always-popular and fascinating demonstration by the San Jose Police Department's *K-9 Unit* featured Officers **Brett Myers** and **Brian Carmody** with their skilled dogs **Jim** and **Tom**. Between acts, upbeat disc jockey **Mike Lopez** kept the event lively with music and fun.

Display, game, and crafts booths, a gigantic inflated slide, face painting, crazy-hair, old-fashioned field games, *Mojo Burger* food, and refreshments rounded out the offerings for a pleasant day of family fun. In all, 245 entertainers volunteered their talents. Dozens of community members volunteered in planning and implementing this successful event.

VEP extends its gratitude to everyone who volunteered to make this event a success. Special thanks to these Planning Committee members who brought energy and resourcefulness—and dedicated months of work—to assure that all the pieces were in place for a great Memorial Day of fun for our community:

- ★ **Cindy Bosworth**, Food Committee
- ★ **Ginger Cardona**, VEP Treasurer
- ★ **Helen Castillo**, Volunteer Coordinator
- ★ **Roni Castro**, Parkview School Community Association
- ★ **Scott & Dianne Conry**, Carson PTA
- ★ **Aiko Fadness**, Food Committee
- ★ **Jim Hicks**, VEP
- ★ **Dana Johnson**, President, Parkview School Community Association
- ★ **John Marks**, VEP
- ★ **David Noel**, VEP
- ★ **Maureen Noel**, Decorations Coordinator
- ★ **Marilyn Rodgers**, VEP Vice President
- ★ **Debra Suydam**, VEP
- ★ **Joyce Van De Pitte**, Event Health Nurse
- ★ **Joe Tajnai**, VEP President

We also appreciate the generosity of the following for their donations to our event:

- ☺ Safeway, Inc. (Branham Lane Store #316)
- ☺ Westfield Oakridge Mall
- ☺ Mojo Burger (Peter Favre, Owner)
- ☺ Allied Waste Services
- ☺ Helen Castillo, Ventura Barnett
- ☺ Debra Suydam, Assembled Product
- ☺ Wesley Terrell, Century 21 Champion
- ☺ Chesnos Painting
- ☺ Sun Run
- ☺ Calif. Bathroom & Kitchen Remodeling
- ☺ Randazzo's Water Softeners & Filter Systems
- ☺ Brian's Fish World
- ☺ Goffland
- ☺ San Jose Firefighters Union Local 230
- ☺ Sandra Sample, Century 21
- ☺ Keith Bowles Pest Control
- ☺ Nickel City
- ☺ David & Debbie Danitz
- ☺ Dave & Aiko Fadness
- ☺ Jim & Ernestine Hicks
- ☺ Derek Iwamoto
- ☺ Steve Ojeda
- ☺ Don & Marilyn Rodgers
- ☺ VEP Community Association members

Co-sponsored by VEP, Carson and Parkview Elementary, and Gunderson High Schools, net proceeds from and donations to this all-volunteer event benefited Carson and Parkview Schools.

Mark your calendars and be sure to attend our event on May 25th next year.

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Community Service Awards

By Dave Noel

As the 2007-2008 school year came to a close, VEP's president **Joe Tajnai** proudly presented our annual Community Service Awards at the Senior Awards nights of Andrew Hill and Henry Gunderson high schools. This was VEP's 24th year of granting stipends for post-secondary or vocational training to graduating high school seniors with exceptional volunteer service.

Congratulations to our 2008 winners, who each received \$1,000 towards their ongoing education.

Gunderson: Tu Ngoc Nguyen. Tu volunteered nearly 400 hours to groups during her high school career, including the Gunderson Key Club, the Ve Nguon Vietnamese Language School and the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association. Earlier this year, she was also awarded a 2008 Jefferson Award for Public Service. Tu is now attending De Anza College, and will be majoring in Microbiology.

Andrew Hill: Vanessa Banh. Vanessa volunteered well over 1000 hours during her high school career to a number of groups, improving the lives of people ranging from elementary school students, to at-risk teens, the homeless, veterans and senior citizens. Despite major challenges in her own life, she dedicated herself to serving those less fortunate than herself. A natural born leader, Vanessa often initiated new community service projects and improved existing ones. Earlier this year, the Bill Wilson Center also recognized Vanessa with their 2008 Robert Navarro Community Service Award. Vanessa is now attending the University of San Francisco, and plans to major in English with an emphasis in Literature, Psychology or Nursing.

At-Large: We did not grant an At-Large award this year.

I'd like to recognize and thank our 2008 Community Service Award Selection Committee: **Ginger Cardona, Louise, Judy Eirite, Steve Kinsey, and Joe Tajnai.**

I'd also like to thank administrators **Becky Bruni** of Gunderson High School and **Lara Sandora** of Andrew Hill High School for nominating three candidates per school.

If you know a high school senior with an outstanding volunteer record, make sure he or she knows about our award. Application forms are released in late February, applications are due in late April, and awards are presented in late May or early June.

There will be significant CSA program changes this year if members approve the board-recommended Constitution and By-Laws changes at our September general meeting. (See also the Constitution and By-Laws article in this newsletter.)

We are proposing that we solicit nominees from additional schools and/or other non-profit service organizations, as well as from VEP members. We are also proposing that we combine our nominees from all sources into a single pool of candidates and select our winners from that pool.

As always, a specific funding request would be proposed and voted on by the membership each program year. For a typical CSA budget of \$2,000, this would likely mean one \$2,000 award or two \$1,000 awards. There would be no guarantee that each school providing nominees would have a winner.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at (408) 266-7183 or DNoel1234@aol.com.

SeniorNet Willows Offers Beginning Computer Class

By John McCulloch



On Saturday, October 3, when SeniorNet Willows has computer class registration for the upcoming session, it will sign-up its 10,000th student for class. This Learning Center began in March, 1994 and since then has gone on to have 10,000 students take a class from the program.

This has been accomplished through the effort of over 30 instructors and 90 coaches volunteering their services to keep this program thriving.

To celebrate this event, we will give student number 10,000 a free SeniorNet membership and a year's worth of free classes at SeniorNet Willows.

So, if you have been looking for a reason to take a computer class, here is one with much better odds than the Lotto.

SeniorNet offers classes in Introductory computer skills, Word Processing, Digital Photography, E-mail, Google, Best of the Internet, File Management, Genealogy, Windows XP, Computer Maintenance, Digital Music and much more.

To reiterate, come to the Willows Senior Center, 2175 Lincoln Ave. (at Curtner Ave.) in San Jose on Saturday, October 4 at 9 am for intermediate classes or 10:30 am for Introduction to Computer classes.

SeniorNet is a non-profit organization with over 130 learning centers whose mission to provide computer education and access to people 50 years of age and above.

For more information about us, call Libby at (408) 371-3999 or visit our webpage at www.snicsj.org/willows.

VEP Community Service Award Winners



Tu Ngoc Nguyen with Joe Tajnai (left)



Vanessa Banh with Joe Tajnai (right)

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CRIME STOPPERS

Keep San Jose Beautiful Community Improvement Awards Seeks Nominees

By Councilmember Judy Chirco



The Community Improvement Awards are an opportunity to recognize the hard work that volunteers put into improving the appearance of San Jose. *Keep San Jose Beautiful* is looking for projects that transform the community. The categories are new landscaping, beautification projects, home remodel, historic renovation, commercial improvements, and "green" projects. Applications are available on the website and must be received by Friday, October 17th. For further information contact www.sjbeautiful.org or call the office of *Keep San Jose Beautiful* at (408) 723-1574.

Chili Competition & BBQ Hosted by Kiwanis Clubs set for October 18th

By Councilmember Judy Chirco

The three Kiwanis Clubs of Cambrian Park, South San Jose and Willow Glen are sponsoring the 3rd Annual Chili Competition and Tri Tip Barbecue Dinner on Saturday, October 18th from 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm at the Camden Community Center. There will be several teams of Chili Competitors that will be judged by a panel of professionals and all attendees will vote for their favorite Chili Team.



There will be family activities for everyone including a classic car and motorcycle rally, children's activities. Proceeds from the raffle and silent auction will benefit youth programs including those at the Camden Community Center. The Camden Community Center is located at 3369 Union Ave. between Foxworthy and Camden Ave. The Kiwanis are looking for sponsors of this great event. For more information on how to become a sponsor or about the Oct. 18th event please contact **Bill Arlt** at: arltwh@comcast.net.

If you wish to receive periodic emails from my office please visit the District 9 website at www.sanjoseca.gov/district9 and click on "Join Judy's email list". As always, if you have any questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to contact our office at District9@sanjoseca.gov or (408) 535-4909.

VEP works with you!

Register to vote



If you want to vote in the November 4 Presidential Election, you must be registered. If you already registered but have changed address, even if it was within San Jose, you must register again at your current address. Here are the rules and what you have to do...

To vote in California, you must be:

- At least 18 years old by election day (November 4);
- A U.S. Citizen;
- A California resident;
- Not declared mentally incompetent by court action;
- Not in prison or on parole for a felony; and
- Registered at least 15 days before the election.

To request a registration form, call the Registrar of Voters at (408) 299-8683. A postcard form will be sent to you. Fill it out and mail the postcard back to the Registrar of Voters. Alternatively, postcard registration forms are available at:

- U.S. Post Offices
- Public Libraries
- City and County Offices
- Department of Motor Vehicles
- Registrar of Voters Office:
 - Voter Registration Division
 - 1555 Berger Drive, Building 2
 - San Jose, CA 95108
 - 408-299-VOTE

To register on-line, go to the Secretary of State's website at www.ss.ca.gov.

As required by law, the Santa Clara County Registrar of Voters provides voting materials in the following languages: English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese and Tagalog. For assistance, please call:

- Spanish: (408) 282-3095
- Vietnamese: (408) 282-3097
- Chinese: (408) 282-3086
- Tagalog: (408) 282-3089

Register Today!

2nd Annual Almaden Community Golf Tournament

By Nancy Pyle, Councilmember, District Ten

Hosted in conjunction with the Almaden Valley Advisory Council, the 2nd Annual Almaden Community Center Golf Tournament will be held on Monday, September 22nd, 2008 at the Almaden Golf and Country Club, located at 6663 Hampton Dr. Check-in will begin at 9:30 am and tee off is at 11:30 am. The cost per player is \$175 dollars. The cost includes an official tournament gift bag, 18 holes of golf, use of a golf cart, range balls, lunch, raffle prizes and an awards ceremony. The format of the event will be a shotgun start and four person team scramble. Awards will include longest drive, putting, closest to Hole, Hole-In-One, Worst Score, and Best Score. Proceeds will benefit children affected by Arthritis and rheumatic diseases like that of local Almaden resident Christina Powery, who passed away at 10 years old from Juvenile Dermatosyotitis. Funds will directly aid research for the Childhood Arthritis & Rheumatology Research Alliance (CARRA). If you are interested in being a sponsor or taking part in the tournament, please contact **Lacee Kortsen** at (408) 268-1133 for more information.

San Jose Commission Vacancies

San Jose Neighborhood Development Center

The City of San Jose is currently accepting applications for the **San Jose Elections Commission** and the **Civil Service Commission**. The deadline to apply for either position is Monday, September 29, 2008 by 5:00 pm.

The **San Jose Elections Commission** monitors compliance with all campaign and ethics ordinance in the San Jose Municipal Code. The commission reviews and investigate allegations of violations of the code and makes recommendations for enforcement action when appropriate. The Election Commission also makes recommendations to the council with regard to campaign and ethics regulations and policies.

The **Civil Service Commission** makes recommendations to the City Council and the City Manager and conducts investigations concerning the administration of personnel in the Classified Service. The commission acts as an administrative hearing body for appeals of personnel decisions affecting city employees and applicants. It reviews and recommends changes to Civil Service regulations, and it appoints the members of the City Council Salary Setting Commission.

For more information, contact **Nora Pimentel** at (408) 535-1252.

VEP to Plant Daffodils on November 1

By Dave Noel and Debra Suydam

Saturday November 1st is **Daffodil Day** in San Jose. VEP will participate again this year in this annual city-wide event. We will plant 250 daffodils, and 100 each of approximately two native plant bulb species, all supplied by the City of San Jose's **Keep San Jose Beautiful** program.



We'll meet at the Vista Park Community Room for refreshments at 8:30 am, and begin planting at 9:00 am. Typically the work is all done within 1-2 hours. We'll be happy to sign community service worksheets for students.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Get a free tree from Our City Forest

You can make a difference in your community while giving back to the environment. *Our City Forest* is a local nonprofit dedicated to inspiring citizens to plant, care for, and appreciate our urban forest.



~ Free shade trees ~

Receive a free tree from Our City Forest and help make Silicon Valley more green. We plant trees in park strips, schools, parks, neighborhoods, and in other public areas that could use more trees.

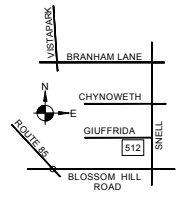
For more information, call OCF at (408) 998-7337.

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VTA Light Rail Platform Retrofit Project

By Ethan Winson, VTA Public Affairs

Platform retrofit work at the Branham, Capitol Curtner, Ohlone/Chynoweth, Oakridge and Almaden light rail stations was completed over the summer by the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA).



VTA is currently retrofitting the Cottle and Blossom Hill light rail stations, and these should reopen by September 27th. Once these stations, plus Snell and Santa Teresa are finished by year's end, every station in VTA's 42-mile light rail system will feature level boarding.

If you are a regular light rail rider, please take a minute to appreciate the long term benefits of this project by watching people board and exit light rail trains at an already retrofitted station. With the vehicle floor level with the station platform, individuals using mobility devices clearly have a much easier time boarding and exiting. As you watch, you'll notice other people also benefit from the level boarding, including cyclists who can roll their bike right on, parents with strollers, travelers with luggage, students with rolling book bags and seniors with folding utility carts.

For more information on station closures or for customized trip planning services, please call VTA Customer Service at (408) 321-2300.

Update: Taxpayer lawsuit against OSA

By Dave Fadness

The *Silicon Valley Taxpayers Association* prevailed in their State Supreme Court appeal against the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority's property assessment taxes. The court ordered OSA to refund all collected assessments to taxpayers. Details of how those refunds will be distributed are now being worked out by the two parties.



Watch your mail for a notice and instructions on how to claim the assessments you have paid with your property tax since 2002.


VEP Community Calendar

September 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23 VEP General Meeting - Vista Park Community Center - 7:30 pm	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

VEP Community Calendar

October 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4 - SeniorNet Registration - Willows Senior Center, 2175 Lincoln Ave. 9:00 am.
5 Rock 'N' Roll 1/2 Marathon - 8 am www.mrsj.com	6 VEP Exec Meeting - 7:30 pm - Vista Park Community Room	7	8	9	10 VEP Article Deadline - submit to vepeditor@sbcglobal.net	11 Parkview Elementary Annual Walkathon - 9:30am to 3:00pm
12	13	14	15	16	17	18 3rd Annual Chili Competition 4pm to 8pm (Camden Community Center) Vista Park Planting Day
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 Metro Silicon Valley Marathon - 7am www.svmarathon.	27	28- VEP General Meeting - Vista Park Community Center - 7:30 pm	29	30	31 - Halloween 	Sat, Nov 1 = 8:30 am VEP Daffodil planting at the Vista Park Community Room.