

VEP NEWS

• VEP COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION •

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

November 2009

VEP'S MEETING

7:30 p.m. Tuesday
▶ November 24, 2009 ◀

Vista Park Community Room
475 Hyde Park Drive

AGENDA

★ Stroke: Signs and Symptoms ★

A presentation by Celeste Lange
Stroke Coordinator for the Stroke Center
Good Samaritan Hospital

★ VEP Updates ★

California High Speed Rail Authority
Branham Lane Accident & Safety Improvements
Martial Cottle Park

★ Announcements ★

Santa In the Park
Blossom Valley Christmas Tree
No Scheduled VEP Meetings in December

★ Your Concerns and Ideas ★

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

Everyone is welcome. Invite your neighbors!

VEP's November Meeting

by Marilyn Rodgers

Topics that are planned for the November general membership meeting:

▶ **Stroke: Signs and Symptoms.** Featured guest speaker will be Celeste Lange, Stroke Coordinator for the Good Samaritan Hospital Stroke Center. Over 700,000 Americans a year suffer a stroke. Good Samaritan Hospital was a pioneer in initiating community education on strokes and in the development of rapid response stroke treatment teams. Ms. Lange will provide information on signs and symptoms of a stroke, the two major types of strokes, why it is important to go to a hospital within two hours of onset of symptoms, and a brief overview of the current treatment, rehabilitation, and education opportunities available for stroke patients and their families.

▶ **VEP Updates** – information will be provided to update members on the status of three important issues: the 85/87 Alternative Route for the California High Speed Rail initiative; the October 22nd fatal traffic accident on Branham Lane; and the Martial Cottle Park Master Plan Design.

▶ **Announcements** – of upcoming events or issues of interest.

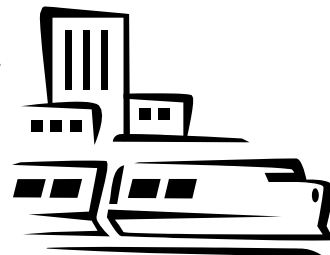
▶ **Your Concerns and Ideas** - We always leave time to hear from you regarding concerns or issues that we can work together in resolving. This approach continues to make VEP neighborhoods strong, healthy, and attractive.

We look forward to seeing you, your family, your friends, and your neighbors at our **November 24th** meeting. Please join us!

** November 18th Informational Meeting **

on the 85/87 Alternative Route
California High Speed Rail Initiative
By Marilyn Rodgers

An informational meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 18th from 7 – 9pm at the Gunderson High School Theatre. The California High Speed Rail Authority presentation team will provide valuable information on the 85/87 alternative route for the high speed



"bullet train" that will travel from Southern California up through the San Joaquin Valley to Merced, crossing over to San Jose, and then up the Peninsula to San Francisco. In this alternative (if implemented), the high speed rail would cross over Gunderson High School and would potentially impact the VEP area, particularly along Gaundabert Lane and the surrounding area.

VEP was originally alerted to this alternative route by our sister association, Pinehurst (see October VEP Newsletter article by Dave Noel for additional information). **VEP, in collaboration with Pinehurst, encourages everyone to attend this informational meeting, ask your friends and neighbors to attend, and bring your questions and comments.** The California High Speed Rail Authority (Ca HSR) is still in the public input/feedback stage, so your questions, and...**your thoughtful suggestions,** are very important. For additional information, go to VEP's website www.vepca.net for a link – the relevant section for VEP and Gunderson is on page 19 – the Monterey Highway Alignments. To contact the Ca HSR Authority, phone at 1-800-881-5799 or e-mail at highspeedrail@circlepoint.com.

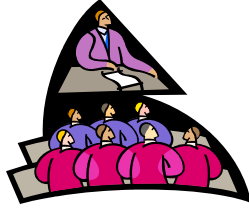
VEP makes good things happen!

2009 is VEP's 40th year!

Our October General Meeting

By Dave Noel

VEP's October 27th general meeting featured speakers on environmental health and consumer protection, and then we covered several items of VEP business and community concerns.



Our first speaker was **Ben Gale**, Director of Environmental Health (DEH) for Santa Clara County. The DEH oversees a variety of programs, from food safety, to public swimming pool safety, hazardous materials compliance, e-waste recycling, household hazardous waste collection, and vector control. For more info, visit www.EHinfo.org.

Our second speaker was **Michael Lafferty**, Manager for the Consumer & Community Empowerment Division of the California State Department of Consumer Affairs. Michael traveled from Sacramento to speak with us. He provided lots of great info to help our members be smarter consumers. A key theme is to **always create time and distance between you and a contractor wanting your business**. Don't sign the dotted line when under pressure. Take time to research the company, ask plenty of questions, and check their contractor's license status. For more info, call (800) 952-5210 or visit www.takechargeca.ca.gov.

Following our featured speakers, we covered several additional topics.

Branham Lane Fatality: In response to the recent fatality of an innocent driver struck as a result of 2 cars racing eastbound on Branham Lane just east of New Compton Drive, VEP president **Marilyn Rodgers** plans to meet with city council member **Nancy Pyle**, and representatives from the San Jose Department of Transportation and the police department.

Walking Dogs while riding bicycles on multi-use trails: Marilyn Rodgers will attend a meeting being held in response to a pedestrian fatality on a multi-use trail in Almaden.

Road updates: **Stephanie Holm** was introduced as VEP's new liaison from **Nancy Pyle's** office. Stephanie provided an update on upcoming road paving and signal light timing planned in city council District 10. VEP members raised issues with area intersections, most notably Capitol Expressway at Narvaez, and Chynoweth at Pearl.



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California High Speed Rail (HSR): A meeting will be held on November 18th to discuss an alternate route being considered for the HSR that would follow Highways 85 and 87, with a sweeping curve aligning with Gaundabert Lane.

Martial Cottle Park: The draft environmental impact (EIR) report is currently expected to be released in November or December (delayed from September). VEP needs to be ready to review and comment on the draft EIR on short notice, and potentially during the holiday season.

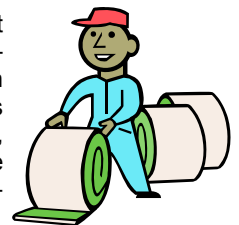
Blossom Valley Christmas Tree: VEP member **Katherine Decker** updated members on the status of lighting the very large cedar tree in front of her house. Without additional funding to offset the costs of putting the lights up and taking them down, it may not be possible to light the tree this year.

Beautification Event: VEP board member **Debra Suydam** discussed the upcoming November 7th daffodil and tree planting event and encouraged members to participate.

Landscaping Rebates

By Dave Noel

The Santa Clara Valley Water District is offering a landscaping rebate program to aid in replacing lawns with drought tolerant gardens. The rebates amount to \$75 per 100 square feet, with a maximum rebate of \$2,000. The work must be pre-approved to be eligible.



For more info on this and other water saving rebates, visit www.valleywater.org then browse to Programs > Water Conservation > Rebates.

**VEP helps you solve
community problems**

Thanks for Volunteering

By Debra Suydam and Dave Noel

On Saturday November 7th, VEP volunteers came together again to beautify our community. As part of the **Keep San Jose Beautiful** annual Daffodil Day event, we planted 250 daffodils and 50 native species bulbs - all generously provided by the city of San Jose. The majority of these bulbs were planted along the Vista Park fence line bordering New Compton Drive to replace daffodils recently displaced when the city relocated the Vista Park lawn sprinklers from outside the fence to inside the fence.



Volunteers also planted four trees provided by **Our City Forest** to replace the trees that died along the bike path in the southwest quadrant of the Branham Lane and Narvaez Avenue intersection.

We later continued our beautification projects by picking up litter in and around the Gunderson High School campus and neighboring streets.

A heartfelt THANK YOU to everyone who gave up their weekend to participate!



***** THANK YOU *****

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| *Brent Castillo | *Jacklin Castillo |
| *Helen Castillo | *Peggy Golden |
| *Fernando Galariz | *Andie Marrujo |
| *Jim Skoog | *Carol Skoog |
| *Marilyn Rodgers | *Liliana Hernandez |
| *Josie Supencheck | *Dennis Nitschke |
| *Dave Fadness | *Debra Suydam |
| *Kyle Jorgensen | *Angel Duran |
| *Chereen Abushaaban | *Rita Barnfeild |
| *Carol Arnoldy | |

A special thank you goes to past president **Dave Fadness** for acquiring the trees donated by Our City Forest and leading their planting. He nurtures all the trees VEP has planted over the years, watering, pruning and re-staking them as needed and replacing trees that don't survive to maturity.

Also a big thank you to board member **Helen Castillo** who recruited and coordinated all the volunteers for this event.

And of course, thank you **Debra Suydam** for leading this event and acquiring the bulbs from **Keep San Jose Beautiful**.



2009 VEP Community Association Accomplishments

By Marilyn Rodgers

Recently VEP was contacted by Councilmember Nancy Pyle's staff requesting information on VEP's accomplishments for this year. The Councilmember was in the process of compiling her 2009 year-end report, and wanted to include accomplishments from each of the neighborhood associations in District 10.

The VEP Board applauds the Councilmember's efforts to highlight and share the valuable contribution that neighborhood associations make to both their immediate neighborhoods and to the larger community of San Jose. We look forward to seeing the exciting work being done by our sister associations.

Each year, VEP initiates (with member input and approval) Goals and Objectives. As we so often feel much more needs to be done with, and for, our community, it is rewarding to pause and reflect on all that has been done. Councilmember Pyle may only be able to share one or two accomplishments for each neighborhood association, due to limited space restrictions, so we decided to share our list with you. We cannot help but feel pride and appreciation for all of our members' efforts and accomplishments, and we especially wanted to take this opportunity - one more time - to **thank all of you - the members and volunteers of VEP.** It is you that help make the VEP area an attractive and enjoyable place to live!

VEP Community Association Accomplishments:

Vista Park Community Room – VEP worked with city staff to develop a master plan for the area immediately surrounding the Vista Park Community Room. Our volunteers then installed landscaping, including trees, shrubs, and decorative plants.

Disaster/Emergency Preparedness – VEP initiated or participated in efforts to increase awareness and preparedness for our neighborhoods, as follows: a) task force participation in development of a District 10 Emergency Preparedness day-long seminar; b) distributed publicity for District 10 seminar, resulting in increased resident participation; c) included a presentation on disaster/emergency prep at a general membership meeting; d) sponsored four 2-hour Disaster Prep classes; and e) have initiated a Block Captain program.

Ongoing project accomplishments by VEP that positively affect the larger San Jose community:

Marital Cottle Regional Park Master Design Task Force
Several VEP members actively participate as Task Force members in the development of a master plan for this future 300+ acre regional park.

VEP Memorial Day Parade & Festival – VEP organizes and underwrites the cost of this annual community event, donating net proceeds to co-sponsoring area public school PTAs. In 2009, our fifth annual event attracted well over 3,000 participants.

VEP Community Service Awards – VEP typically grants \$1,000.00 awards for post-secondary education to at least two graduating high school seniors. These awards acknowledge outstanding volunteerism by students in the San Jose community.

VEP volunteers have planted approximately 300 trees, thousands of daffodils, and installed extensive landscaping in parks, school yards, and other public spaces in and around our membership area. We perform rou-

fine public landscape maintenance and organize neighborhood cleanups on an ongoing basis, year after year.

VEP holds monthly meetings and publishes the VEP

Newsletter nine times each year with the goal of keeping our members informed of current events, to bring them together with public officials, to encourage and help them in being informed voters, to keep our neighborhoods safe and attractive, and to maintain a proud, diligent member community. 2009 marks VEP's 40th year of continuous, active volunteer community involvement.

What is VEP Community Association?

- VEP is an all-volunteer organization of your neighbors working to improve our neighborhoods; VEP is our community's "homeowner's association".
- VEP volunteers participate in a variety of activities, all of which originate in and benefit our neighborhoods.
- VEP volunteers make our neighborhood's views and needs known to government at all levels.
- Founded in 1969, we are one of the largest, most successful, and most active and enduring grass roots volunteer organizations in Santa Clara County.

Why join VEP?

- To receive our newsletter nine times a year, keeping you up-to-date and informed.
- To participate in and support neighborhood activities and representation.
- To contribute to our annual VEP Community Service Awards for area high school graduates.
- To be part of an outstanding community organization with a long record of success for our neighborhoods.

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VEP Memorial Day Parade & Festival

By Dave Fadness

Our 2010 *Memorial Day Parade & Festival* will be held on Monday, May 31. Last year, more than 3000 people attended. This year it'll be even bigger and better--the addition of new ideas and new talent is what makes that happen.

This year, our sixth, you can be a part of this success. Planning is now getting underway--your involvement is needed and encouraged. Join our steering committee or...

Call me (578-6428) or **Dianne Conry** (224-8456) if you or someone you know can add to the fun.

We need entertainers. If you belong to a service group, are involved with Scouts, a school group, a sports league, a music or dance group, a gymnastics team, a performing arts troupe, or have any special talent you'd like to share, we'd like to have you there with us--especially if you'd be in uniform or in costume. We want to entertain our community by showcasing the many talents we have in our midst.

We need parade participants If you or your neighbor have an antique, classic, or hotrod car, have them give me a call if they're interested in showing it off in our parade. Consistent with safety and its family nature, we're open to anyone and anything that will add interest and color to our event.

We need crafters. If you are or know someone who makes and sells crafts, please call **Ginger Cardona** (408) 227-0222 for information on free booth space at our Festival.

We need sponsors and donors. The net proceeds from this event are shared with our school PTAs, so we try our best to keep VEP and event participants' costs low. Donations are what make this possible. Give **Marilyn Rodgers** (225-7553) a call if you have a business or have contacts with businesses that would be willing to make cash, packaged food /drink, or other donations to our event. We will acknowledge all donors in our Memorial Day Program and in our VEP newsletter.

We need a photographer, at least one volunteer who will take lots of digital pictures of our event.

Needless to say, we need lots of hands-on volunteers. Call **Helen Castillo** (981-5902) if you are available...

To help with ideas for event games and attractions.
To pick up and return equipment the day before and after.
To post parade route "NO PARKING" signs the day before.
To help with set-up/tear-down the day of the event.
To help with booth duty, ticket sales, and event games.
To help clean-up during and after the event.

Your help in taking care of one or two of these details will lighten our load and make this event successful for kids of all ages in our community. Remember, none of us gets paid--everyone works as a volunteer in VEP activities.

Call (578-6428) or email me at drfadness@sbcglobal.net if you're willing to help even in a small way. **Don't wait because you think someone else will step forward** or because Memorial Day is long from now; we need your ideas and to know now whether your help will be available.

Above all, please be sure to mark your calendars, spread the word, and plan to attend with your family and friends on Monday, May 31st.



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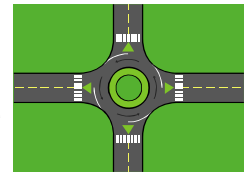
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City Repairs Roadways and Improves Traffic Flow in the VEP Community

Office of Councilmember Pyle

The City of San Jose began work on the annual street resurfacing project last month. This year, the City is able to resurface more streets than usual thanks to supplemental funding from State Proposition IB and the Federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The total project budget is \$2,283,920.



The project will prep approximately 68 miles of arterial streets throughout the City for final sealing application during the spring of 2010. During the preparation phase, asphalt will be remove and leveled. The street will remain in this condition during the winter months and will be finished with a chip and slurry seal this spring. All repaving projects include pedestrian and accessibility enhancements such as curb cuts to allow wheel chairs and strollers to safely cross intersections.

Projects in the VEP community and surrounding areas include:

- Narvaez from Capitol Expressway to Branham Lane
- Snell Avenue from Blossom Hill Road to Branham Lane
- Winfield Boulevard from Blossom Hill Road to Chynoweth Avenue

Prop 1B funds and City funding have been allocated to retime 109 traffic signals to improve traffic flow conditions on 21 miles of San Jose roadways.

Roads that will be retimed in VEP and surrounding areas include:

- Blossom Hill Road from Entrada Cedros to Poughkeepsie Rd
- Branham Lane from Pearl to Monterey Road

The City will also place a new layer of asphalt on several residential streets in need of minor repairs. Crews are currently surveying all roadways in the city to determine which streets are most in need. These streets will be resurfaced in the summer of 2010.

As always, the City has crews on hand year round to fix potholes and other pressing maintenance needs. If you know of a pothole, please report it to the Department of Transportation by calling (408) 361-0172 or email potholes@sanjoseca.gov.

Fall Gardening Tips

By John Marks

Salts in Potting Soil Steal Nutrients

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

The problem is that many potting soils are high in salts. This causes burning of leaf edges. It will also lock up nutrients, and plants slowly starve, indicated by small berries. Try mixing two to three tablespoons of vinegar in two gallons of water and pouring the solution into the barrel. This will counteract salt buildup in the soil. A couple of days later, pour a solution of Miracle-Gro and water into the planter. You will have to live the burned edges for a while, but if you do this a couple of times a year, whatever you are growing will do better

Veggies that Lose Moisture

Although your harvest of cucumbers and other fleshy veggies yield large, healthy, and impressive results, they may lose their firmness, becoming limp after six to ten hours. Cleaning and storing at refrigerated temperature will not help. The problem is that all fleshy vegetables lose moisture within a few hours after picking, some faster than others. Commercial growers cover their crops in wax right after picking to retain moisture before sending them to market. You are doing nothing wrong, it's just the nature of the veggies; just don't pick them unless you intend to eat them soon after.

Trimming Rhododendrons

Rhododendrons that are planted in the yard may become overgrown need to be pruned in the winter or early spring. But severe pruning without preparation can destroy blooms next year. To rejuvenate an old, leggy Rhododendron, first feed and water the plant in the summer so that it is strong and healthy, and able to withstand severe pruning. In the winter cut one-third of the old limbs to 8-12 inches from the ground. The following year cut off an additional one-third of the old stems, and a year later cut down the last third. This may take about four years, but you'll retain some flowers every year. Try to find old growth rings and make your cuts above one of these. New shoots will emerge from these growth rings. If the Rhododendron is too old and growth rings are not visible because of the bark, make the cuts 12 inches from the ground and hope that new growth will emerge from the hidden growth rings. Or, you can severely prune the entire shrub now, but it may be a few years before any flowers are seen.

Bulbs go in NOW

There is still time to plant spring-flowering bulbs. Most nurseries and garden centers remain well-stocked with dozens of colorful selections. To help you plan your garden, check out www.bulb.com for a wealth of information and tips about how to choose, plant and otherwise care for your bulbs. The site is maintained by the Netherlands Flower Bulb Info Center (where else?). Once you get those bulbs in the ground, give yourself a little instant gratification by planting winter-color annuals on top. Good choices for sunny spots include pansies, violas, primrose and Iceland Poppies. For shady or dappled spots, try cineraria and cyclamen.



Gunderson High School Happenings

As usual, there is a lot going on at Gunderson High School as we make our way to the end of the semester. For a list of special events and athletic competitions, we want to encourage our neighbors to check out the Gunderson website at: <http://gunderson.sjUSD.org/home/home.html>



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

Gunderson's Homecoming activities were a rousing success! The students did a fabulous job of planning various school-wide activities, including spirit week events, day and evening rallies and a dance. On top of all that, we defeated a strong competitor in Prospect High School. We hope that our VEP neighbors were able to join us and enjoyed the festivities.

Another source of pride this month is that senior student, Chris Eke, was chosen by the San Francisco 49ers and Kelly Moore Paints as the High School Football Player of the week. For having a player named as a 49ers High School Player of the Week, Gunderson High School received a \$500.00 gift certificate from Kelly Moore to help beautify our campus. Chris will receive a 49ers hat and t-shirt, a certificate signed by 49ers head Coach Mike Singletary, two tickets to a 49ers home game and recognition on 49ers.com. At the end of the season, Chris will be invited to the 49ers Training Facility to accept a trophy recognizing his achievement.

Along with his accomplishments on the football field, Eke is a 3.0 student, runs track and has completed numerous hours of service in his community. Congratulations Chris!

The first ever GUNDERSON IDOL competition was held recently in the theater. After 3 nights of competition with 10 finalists, the winner was declared on October 29 with sophomore, ELIZABETH MARQUEZ winning the title of GUNDERSON IDOL. The event was a fundraiser for Girls' Basketball and Drama. Guest judges and teacher performers rounded out the well-attended event.

Gunderson teachers performed "Thriller" in a lunchtime flash mob on October 30 for students in the forum. The students seemed to really enjoy the effort that the teachers made and "fun was had by all". The teachers got together at lunch for a couple of weeks prior to the event and also had a blast planning for the students. There is evidence of this fun event on YouTube.

Finally, as the calendar year draws to a close, we will be gearing up for our recruitment activities for the 2009-2010 school year. Our goal is to continue to increase our enrollment and educate the community about the good works taking place at our school. We will have a more detailed description of these activities next month. However, if you would like to be included on our mailing list, please contact Principal Cary Catching at 535-6340 or e-mail cary_catching@sjUSD.org

Thank you to VEP Advertisers

by Marilyn Rodgers

VEP wants to say **thank you to our advertisers**. Several of our advertisers have been loyal supporters of VEP for many years. Their financial contribution is invaluable to VEP's success and longevity. Please take a minute and browse through the VEP News, with an eye to the variety of businesses represented. Be sure to **contact them first** when you, or your family and friends, have a need for their type of service or product. Also, don't forget to **let them know that you saw their ad in the VEP News**, and how much their support is appreciated!

VEP is developing additional opportunities to increase our advertisers' visibility with our members. These include spotlighting one business each month at our general membership meeting, with an accompanying article in the VEP News.

We currently have space for a few more advertisers. If you own a business, or know of a business that would benefit from advertising in the VEP News, please contact VEP Treasurer Ginger Cardona at cardona@sbcglobal.net or 227-0222, or VEP News Editor Susan Iverson at vepeditor@sbcglobal.net or 813-0592, or any board member for additional information.

Free Roof Tiles

Dave Fadness

A neighbor of ours has lots of (Monier brand) red concrete roof tiles left over from an addition to his house. He wants to give them away **free** to the first taker. These tiles are the kind and color used on William Lyon tract homes in our area (see photo below).



If you or anyone you know wants some or all these tiles, give Dennis a call (leave a message) at (408) 833-9823. He'll even help load them for you!

Call him today!

Recycling – Supersize It

By Dave Noel

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

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

Any Knitters out There?

By Kaye Moore, Librarian

If anyone out there loves to knit, and thinks they would like helping others to learn how, volunteer to run an old-fashioned knitting circle here at the library. Right now, we have a knitting group that meets Tuesdays at 3 pm, and a nice sized group attends that. Anyone is welcome to join, at whatever level you are at. We also would like to start an evening program for knitters, but we need an experienced, social, and patient person to run an evening group. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Kaye Moore, at kaye.moore@slibrary.org, or call us at 808-3053.

Our Halloween program was a fabulous success, with nearly 70 parents and kids in attendance. There was pumpkin decorating, and a costume contest. Thanks to any of you that came out and celebrated with us.

Friday, November 20th at 3pm, kids ages 5-12 can come to the library to learn how to Hawaiian dance. Some costumes will be provided. Saturday, November 21st, Magic Mike will be doing his magic show here at Pearl at 11am. He does illusions, juggling, and more!

Tuesday, November 24th at 10 am, we will be hosting representatives from Social Security, who can help you to untangle the steps involved to signing up for disability or filing your retirement claim.

Requests for Traffic Enforcement

Office of Councilmember Pyle

Several members of the VEP Community Association have expressed concern speeding and traffic violations occurring in the area. San Jose Police Department has a Traffic Enforcement Unit whose primary focus is targeting unsafe driving habits with a goal of reducing accidents in the City. The unit targets the 10 most accident prone intersections in the City on a regular basis and responds to neighborhood requests for enforcement.

Intersections are prioritized based on the number of requests the police receive. If you would like to request enforcement in a problem location, please visit the Traffic Enforcement Unit Website https://www.sjpd.org/forms/TEU_Request_Form.asp.

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Growing Up Green: Our City Forest Educates Local Youth

Our City Forest

Non-profit Our City Forest (OCF) strives to educate community members of all ages about the importance of the urban forest. San José's youngest residents are no exception. With several free programs geared toward students grades K-12, youth have many opportunities to learn about the trees in their city.



The Planet Tree program reaches students directly in their classrooms through interactive presentations. Games like *Treeboo*, a modified version of the popular game *Taboo*, teach students how trees grow, the importance of the urban forest and what kids can do to help protect our planet. Large, school-wide assemblies are also available and often feature a visit from OCF's mascot, O₂. To celebrate their new understanding of trees, those in kindergarten through second grade take the "Branch Buddy" oath following the presentation.

In the last year, more than 5,000 K-12 students have been inspired to protect their urban forest. For more information or to schedule a Planet Tree presentation, contact the youth education team at (408) 998-7337 x108 or e-mail education@ourcityforest.org.

For those looking to supplement classroom presentations with hands-on experience, OCF can provide trees and planting assistance to schools in San José for free or at a reduced cost. School plantings provide students the opportunity to learn how to plant a tree and care for it during its first three years in the ground. To request more information or apply for trees at your school, please contact x109 or e-mail jalbin@ourcityforest.org. Applications are also available online at www.ourcityforest.org.

OCF also offers educational opportunities outside the classroom with its Webelos Forester Pin program. Last year, nearly 200 Cub Scouts attended the two-Saturday workshop series to earn their pins while simultaneously supporting a local non-profit. These fun presentations teach scouts about tree anatomy, the benefits of the urban forest, how to identify California-native species and the basics of urban forestry planning. Attendees also get hands-on planting experience at Our City Forest's tree nursery. To sign up for the workshop series, contact x108 or e-mail education@ourcityforest.org.

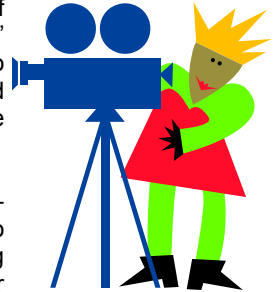
For those seeking an Eagle Scout project, Our City Forest can offer support and guidance. Scouts have the opportunity to organize a neighborhood, school or park planting and are responsible for direct outreach in the community and assistance at the planting event. Contact Nichole at x123 or volunteer@ourcityforest.org for more information on how to get started.

Our City Forest is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that provides trees to San José residents. Since 1994, nearly 50,000 OCF trees have taken root and made our city a more beautiful, healthy place to live.

SeniorNet Posts Videos on Youtube

By John McCulloch

The Willows Learning Center of SeniorNet has posted 4 "How-to" videos on Youtube.com. We try to keep them 5 minutes in length and cover a specific topic which we hope will interest our students.



The first one, "Welcome to SeniorNet" gives a short introduction to our program and what we are trying to accomplish and some of our activities.

Another one titled: "Cut, Copy and Paste" covers just that; how to cut copy and paste using Word, Word Pad, Open Office, even MacWorks. The use of these commands is common among most computer programs.

Another video is titled "File Management: Where's My Stuff?" This video covers how to create folders and sub folders so that you can find those precious documents in the future.

Lastly, we have a video that covers a specific feature of Photoshop Elements. The feature is called Photomerge. Consider that you take a group picture A and one person is scowling at the camera. But you took a second group photo B and 3 other people are frowning in this one. With Photomerge, you can take the good image of the scowling person in B and put it in photo A very easily.

The easiest way to get to these videos is to go to our website, www.snicsj.org and click on Willows. There you will see a menu on the left hand side and near the bottom is a button titled "How-To Videos." Click on it and it will take you to these Youtube links.

Our next registration for classes is 1 pm on January 9, 2010 at the Willow Glen Community Center, 2175 Lincoln Ave. near Curtner Ave. A typical 8 week class is a bargain at \$20. For more information look at the website or call 371-3999. SeniorNet is open to anyone 50 and above, but we won't card you.

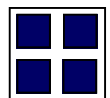
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Fatal Traffic Accident on Branham Lane

By Marilyn Rodgers

On October 22nd at approximately 9:45pm, there was a 3-car accident resulting in the death of Alyson Snow. Ms. Snow was driving her Volkswagen Jetta east on Branham Lane when her car was struck from behind. Two young men, 18 and 21 year-olds from South San Jose, were racing their vehicles on Branham, heading east from Narvaez and Branham toward Vista Park Drive. Just east of New Compton Drive on Branham Lane, they collided with Ms. Snow's vehicle which then collided with a tree. Ms. Snow, who had currently been residing in Fremont, was driving home from an evening visit with her parents in South San Jose. Alyson, who was 20 years old and a graduate of Leland High School, died as a result of injuries sustained in the accident. VEP extends our condolences to her family and friends.

The young men involved in the accident sustained minor injuries. After receiving medical care, they were arrested by San Jose Police on charges of vehicular manslaughter and speed contest. Anyone with information on this case is urged to call Investigator Kevin Cassidy of SJPD Vehicular Crimes Unit at 408-277-4654. Persons wishing to remain anonymous, may call CrimeStoppers at 408-947-STOP (7867).

Unfortunately, this accident was one of three fatal accidents occurring in San Jose that week – all a result of racing incidents. VEP is concerned about safety in our neighborhood, and is initiating a meeting with our Councilmember Nancy Pyle, and key members of the San Jose Police Department, and the Departments of Transportation and Public Works, to determine what increased safety measures can be instituted along Branham Lane.

Several VEP members have voiced concern about what measures can be taken immediately. One action that VEP members can initiate today – utilize the option available to all individual city residents in reporting their concerns/complaints regarding traffic enforcement violations or dangerous traffic situations on any city street. Reporting can be easily accomplished online through the San Jose Police Department Traffic Enforcement Unit's website at https://www.sjpd.org/forms/TEU_Request_Form.asp (note: place underscore_ before forms, after TEU, and after Request)

Year-End Opportunity: Santa Teresa Library

By Dave Fadness

Here's the perfect solution to your search for a worthwhile tax deductible year-end donation: the new Santa Teresa Branch Library. The *San Jose Public Library Foundation* is now raising funds needed to furnish, equip, and provide collections, media, computers and the host of other things that transform a new building into a fully functional, user-friendly library.



You can help to make that happen—and--get permanent recognition in proportion to your generosity.

Why are private donations needed for a public library? Like the Pearl Avenue Branch and others here in San Jose, this branch is being built with money we approved in a general obligation bond passed in 2000 by San Jose voters. State law prohibits spending that bond revenue for furnishings and equipment. Most available library money is used to cover operating costs.

So, each new library relies on donations from citizens and local businesses to supplement city funds. This public/private model has worked with great success at other recently opened San Jose libraries. The Santa Teresa Branch is next. That's our challenge and we hope you will help us succeed.

This perennially busy and overcrowded library was originally built in 1984. It will be replaced on the same site (next to Kaiser Santa Teresa) by a 22,000 square foot state-of-the-art facility, nearly twice bigger than the old one. Its thousands of patrons, children and adults of all ages are very eager for opening day.

The grand opening for the exciting new Santa Teresa Branch Library is scheduled for late January or early February, 2010. It will be on the original site. We want you to be a part of our celebration.

Please accept this opportunity to leave a generous legacy for coming generations of library patrons. Depending upon the size of your gift, a variety of donor recognition possibilities are offered. You can have your name(s) permanently listed on one of our Donor Walls; you could choose to sponsor a room or an area within the library and receive recognition in that space as well.

Donated money will be carefully administered and spent by the 501(c)(3) non-profit *San Jose Public Library Foundation*. Money you give will only be used for furnishings and equipment at the one of our Donor Walls.

To donate, contact Mary McLane at (408) 808-2174 or email mary.mclane@sjplf.org. You can visit the *Foundation* website for more information or to download a pledge form. Alternatively, call me day or evening at (408) 578-6428 (or email at drfadness@sbcglobal.net) and I will get the necessary donor materials to you.

Be sure to specify that your gift is for the Santa Teresa Branch Library. **Thank you!**

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Community Service Awards

By Dave Noel

At the January general meeting, we'll present a proposal for the 2010 awards program to members for discussion and approval. We'll then solicit nominations in February/March, and applications will be due in late April. We grant our awards in late May/early June.

If you know a high school senior with an outstanding volunteer record, please make sure he or she knows about our award.

The VEP annual budget approved by members at the September general meeting includes \$1,000 for this year's Community Service Awards.

Helpful Phone Numbers:

By Dave Noel

Abandoned Shopping Carts	(408) 535-3500
Abandoned Vehicle on street	(408) 277-5305
Barking, Injured or Stray Dogs	(408) 578-7297
Blighted Properties	(408) 277-4528
Graffiti 24-hour Hotline	(408) 277-2758
Household Hazardous Waste Disposal	(408) 299-7300
Inoperable Vehicle on Private Property	(408) 277-5305
Potholes	(408) 277-4373
Recyclables Scavenging	(408) 277-4528
San Jose City Hall Customer Service	(408) 535-3500
Street Light Repair	(408) 277-5517
Vista Park Community Room Reservations	(408) 268-2053

To Report Graffiti...

	Phone #
Vandalism <i>in progress</i>	9-1-1
Vandalism <i>from a cell phone</i>	277-8911
Vandalism <i>after the fact</i>	3-1-1
On libraries, parks & community centers	277-4741
On painted curbs & on the street	277-3626
On street signs	277-4691
On all expressways	494-1307
On bus stops	321-5800
On light-rail	321-2300
On Highway signs	(510) 536-0413
On Highway roads	436-0930
Taggers <i>anonymously</i>	947-7867
San Jose Information Center	535-3500
Anti-Graffiti Hotline	277-2758

End Overeating: Weight Management (*)

To reinforce your commitment to healthy eating and the goals you have set for yourself, this new social support series offers an opportunity for you to practice, practice, *practice*. On your journey towards ending overeating, join us to practice self-honesty, accountability, and mindfulness with the help of social support.



This series is for anyone involved in or who has completed a weight management program of *any kind* wanting to:

- Reinforce goals set in weight management programs
- Acknowledge triggers & emotions behind overeating
- Change beliefs and habits in relationship to food, eating, planning healthy meals, cooking, etc.
- Learn positive affirmations to promote healthy eating
- Practice behaviors that work by completing homework assignments, sharing with peers, and using mindfulness practices

Session N ^o	Series starting in January	Series starting in March	Series starting in May
1	1/5/10	3/16/10	5/25/10
2	1/12/10	3/23/10	6/1/10
3	1/19/10	3/30/10	6/8/10
4	1/26/10	4/6/10	6/15/10
5	2/2/10	4/13/10	6/22/10
6	2/9/10	4/20/10	6/29/10
7	2/16/10	4/27/10	7/6/10
8	2/23/10	5/4/10	7/13/10

Three support series are scheduled. Each series includes eight sessions, all held from 5:30 until 7 pm on Tuesdays. Participants are encouraged to attend all eight sessions. Join us for as many series as you wish.

This program is offered at:

Kaiser Permanente
San Jose Medical Center
5755 Cottle Road. Building. #3
San Jose

Fee: \$65.00 Kaiser Members, \$85.00 Non-members.

Text included: "The End of Overeating", David Kessler, M.D.

To register & pre-pay: Call Health Education at (408) 972-3340 (you must pre-pay; no payments are accepted at class).

[()Ed. Note: The foregoing article was taken from a Kaiser-Permanente flyer.]*

**Santa is Coming to the Vista Park
Community Room
475 Hyde Park Drive**

**Bring your kids or the whole family
for a free photo with Santa. We will
also have arts and crafts, and light
refreshments.**

**Have a photo taken by photographer
Jeri Arstingstall of
Precious Moments in Time,
or feel free to bring your own
camera.**

**When: Sunday November 29th
Santa hours: 2 pm to 4 pm**

**VEP wants to thank you for your
support**

**Wishing you and your family a
joyous holiday season**



Blossom Valley Christmas Tree

By Marilyn Rodgers

The Blossom Valley Christmas Tree provides wonderful holiday cheer during the holiday season for all VEP residents. As many of you have witnessed for yourselves, Kathy and Dann Decker love to share their Christmas spirit with Blossom Valley and the City of San Jose by elaborately decorating the 80 (plus) foot cedar tree in their front yard at the corner of Devon Park Court and Chynoweth.



And...if spreading Christmas joy isn't enough, the Deckers have another motive for decorating their tree at Christmas time...to help those in the community who are less fortunate. They accomplish this by collecting donations of food for the Second Harvest Food Bank, and toys for City Team Ministries, in collection barrels around the tree.

Unfortunately, the Deckers cannot continue their holiday work without your help!! It costs several thousand dollars each year to decorate and maintain the tree during the holiday season – from Thanksgiving until New Year's. The Deckers have established the Blossom Valley Christmas Tree Fund, a non-profit organization dedicated to raising just enough money to maintain the tree, while collecting food and toys for the needy. This allows both individuals, and businesses, to make tax-deductible contributions.

The largest cost item is the equipment and crew needed to put up the decorations, and then to remove them. If you know of a company who has the equipment and expertise to do this type of work, please contact the Deckers at 408-972-4098 (an 80 – 120 foot extension is needed for the size of this tree).

The Deckers are very appreciative of the VEP community support, as several donations have already been received, however additional assistance will be needed to allow them to provide this very enjoyable and worthwhile activity this year. If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation, do so by contacting the Deckers at 408-972-4098, or by mailing a contribution to the Blossom Valley Christmas Tree Fund, P.O. Box 18341, San Jose, California 95158-8053. For additional information, please contact the Deckers at 408-972-4098 or bvchristmastreefund@hotmail.com



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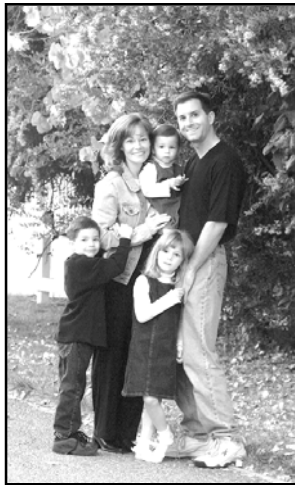
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VEP March Fair – Your Input is Needed

By Marilyn Rodgers

Traditionally the month of March means the VEP Home Fair. Past President John Marks coordinated the Home Fair for many years for the benefit of everyone living in the VEP area. Last year, as both resident and vendor interest seemed to be dwindling, the decision was made to cancel it. During the ensuing months, we did receive several disappointed calls from VEP members, particularly those with their own businesses who had looked forward each year to participating in the VEP March Home Fair. The VEP Board did include a Fair – the theme to be determined – as part of the VEP Goals and Objectives for 2009-2010.

So....we would like your opinion and input. Would you like VEP to have a Fair again this coming March? We have received several suggestions as to the theme – 1) a continuation of the Home Fair theme, 2) a Sustainability theme – which could include many different ideas under “going green”, 3) a Health & Fitness theme, and 4) a combination of all of the above.

Next, if you have a business and would like to participate, please let us know. Or, maybe you know of a business or vendor that would like to be included – again, please don't hesitate to give us that information.

And,would you be interested in helping to organize such an event? Please call or e-mail me, or any Board member, to discuss your ideas, and to provide information on potential businesses to include.

January VEP Membership Drive

By Marilyn Rodgers

It is almost that time again – the VEP Membership Drive starts in January. This is a reminder that several volunteers will be needed to prepare the January edition of the VEP Newsletter for mailing. The January newsletter mailing includes securing a membership remit envelope inside the newsletter to provide members an easy way of renewing their membership for 2010. In addition, VEP mails out approximately 2500 letters to non-members in our geographic area informing them of the goals and accomplishments of VEP, and asking them to join us as members. If you have been wanting to volunteer for VEP, this is a fun and quick activity, only requiring two to four hours of your time. For additional information, and to volunteer, contact Helen Castillo, VEP Board Member and Volunteer Coordinator at 408-981-5902 or hcastillo@vbprop.com.

Fatality on Almaden Valley Multi-Use Path

By Marilyn Rodgers

In October, District 10 Councilmember Nancy Pyle sponsored a community meeting to obtain input and feedback regarding the accident which led to a pedestrian fatality on a city multi-purpose path. A second objective was to determine if the City needed to initiate legislation, or other measures, to prevent another such occurrence from happening. Mrs. Beverly Head, a pedestrian, and enthusiastic user of the Los Alamos Creek Trail, encountered a bicyclist exercising/running his two tethered dogs on a 20-foot long leash. Mrs. Head became inadvertently entangled in the leash as the bicyclist and dogs passed her on the path. The leash flipped her and she suffered head injuries which resulted in her death.

The community meeting, held at the Almaden Community Center, was well attended with over 150 participants. Advocates for no new legislation were visible, vocal, and passionate. Advocates for some form of additional requirements were also visible, vocal and passionate, resulting in a very spirited and informative discussion. Several participants shared incidents of injuries (or near-miss incidents) incurred as a result of bicyclists encountering those on foot, particularly when the path was narrow, or several pedestrians were inadvertently blocking or spread across the width of the path. There definitely are safety issues and a need for improvement along our multi-use or multi-purpose paths to insure that all users/participants have a safe and enjoyable experience.




Some of the issues and suggestions for improvement included:

- 1) current law requires that dog owners keep their dogs under control, and on a 6-foot (or shorter) leash. However, there currently is no requirement specifically pertaining to bicyclists who run their dogs;
- 2) bicyclists are required to keep their speed under 15 miles/hr while on a path;
- 3) pedestrian/joggers need to stay on the right side of the path unless passing another user;
- 4) pedestrians (such as people walking with strollers) should be aware of the width of the path – and not walk 3 or 4 abreast, blocking the path;
- 5) bicyclists should walk (not ride) across narrow bridges or other narrow areas to prevent possible sudden encounters with those on foot;
- 6) additional information and education is needed – such as signs to remind users to treat other path users with courtesy and politeness; signs to educate/remind users of the “rules of the road” i.e. stay to the right side of the path (particularly important for foreign visitors);
- 7) location and emergency information signs are needed all along paths – should emergency personnel be needed, what is your location, and how do emergency personnel find you quickly;
- 8) additional education needed for cell phone users regarding appropriate emergency number to call (within San Jose – call Emergency Dispatch number – 277-8911 – not the 911 number which reaches the California Highway Patrol in Vallejo and then has to be transferred back to San Jose)

Staff chart-padded all issues and suggestions for improvement. Anyone interested in receiving a printed copy, may request one from Councilmember Pyle's office. Following this initial meeting, additional work will be completed by city staff. Then public meetings will be held to provide information and obtain additional input from city residents. This will take place

VEP Community Calendar

November / December 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
15	16	17	18 November 18th Informational Meeting ** California High Speed Rail Initiative	19	20	21
22	23	24 VEP General Meeting 7:30 p.m.—Vista Park Community Room	25	26 Thanksgiving 	27	28
29 Santa Sunday 2pm to 4pm— Vistapark Community Center	30	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11 Hannukah Begins 	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25 Christmas 	26

THE VEP NEWS



VEP Community Association

P.O. Box 18111 San Jose, CA 95158
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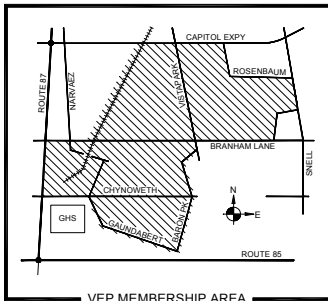
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Published monthly by VEP Community Association, a not-for-profit organization of volunteers established in 1969 to serve and represent more than 2000 homes in the Blossom Valley area of southern San Jose. VEP is dedicated to neighborhood maintenance and improvement in its membership area as well as to active involvement in civic affairs. This newsletter is mailed monthly to all members in good standing, to our advertisers, and to schools and government officials serving our membership area. For membership or paid advertisement information, contact

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Prefer your newsletter via Email?
 Let us know at vep@vepca.net.



Check our website: www.vepca.net

Community Room

Vista Park

in the
 7:30 pm

Be sure to attend
 VEP'S
 November 24th Meeting