

VEP NEWS

• VEP COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION •

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

May 2011

VEP'S MEETING

7:30 p.m. Tuesday
► **May 24, 2011** ◀

Vista Park Community Room
475 Hyde Park Drive

AGENDA

★ PART II - ENVISION 2040 PLAN ★

New General Plan for San Jose
Implications for VEP Residents

Presentation by
Dave Fadness
Envision San Jose 2040 Task Force Member

★ **Followup Discussions** ★
Chynoweth Accident: Single Lane Option
Narvaez/Capitol Exp Park 'n Ride
Development

VEP Business Meeting ★
Annual Meeting
Election of Slate - Board of Directors
Review of Goals and Objectives

Announcements & Updates
CSA Awards
Memorial Day

Summer Break

★ **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 May Meeting

by Marilyn Rodgers

Topics that are planned for the April general membership meeting:

► **Envision 2040 Plan – Part II General Plan for San Jose - Envision San Jose 2040, Task Force Member Dave Fadness** will provide a consolidated overview of the plan. The presentation will highlight goals of the plan which include increasing the

number of jobs in San Jose, and reducing energy consumption – in accordance with the City's "green" goals. (Last month's interest and discussion on a portion of the general plan - the proposed village development at the VTA Park 'n Ride lots at Capitol Expressway and Narvaez pre-empted the general plan overview. Part II is being presented in response to members' request.)

► **Followup Discussions – Chynoweth Accident: Proposed Single Lane Option; Position on Development of VTA Park 'n Ride Lots – Narvaez and Capitol Expressway/Hwy 87 On-ramp.** Discussion and decision on these important issues initiated at previous meetings. (See articles elsewhere in newsletter.)

► **VEP Business Meeting/Announcements. Members will vote to approve the slate for Board of Directors.** A brief review of this year's Goals and Objectives will be provided, as well as other update and announcements on areas of interest to members. **May membership meeting is the last meeting of the year, prior to the Summer Break.**

► **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 **May 24th** meeting. Please join us!

April General Meeting Synopsis

By Debra Suydam

VEP's April meeting of 2011 was held on April 26th at the Vista Park Community Room. The main topic of the meeting was a presentation on "Envision San Jose 2040" which is the long term growth and expansion plan as proposed by San Jose. It brought in a full house of member and guests and was very informative, although some of the proposed plans raised concerns for local VEP residents who were in attendance.

Guest speakers **Dave Fadness** and **Shiloh Ballard**, "Envision San Jose" task force members, city planner John Baty, and **Councilwomen Nancy Pyle** were present to answer questions during and after the meeting.

Envision San Jose 2040" plan overviews goals and growth objectives for all of San Jose - including potential growth and expansion in and around our VEP area. For more information on this plan you can visit their website at

http://www.sanjoseca.gov/planning/gp_update/default.asp

Host of the evening **Helen Castillo** wrapped up the evening with reminders of the neighborhood garage sale and CSA applications. For more information on any of these topics please visit our website <http://vepca.net/>.

2011 is VEP's 42nd year!

New Courses Fill SeniorNet Curriculum

By John McCulloch

Slowly Windows 7 classes are filling up our curriculum. Earlier it was Exploring Windows 7, then Intro. to Computer using Windows 7 and this session we offer for the first time, File Management (Where's My Stuff?) using Windows 7.

Due to the high demand, Social Networking 101 is back. Likewise, we are bringing back Making Movies with Premier Elements. And for the first time in many sessions, we are offering a course in Spreadsheet using Excel and Genealogy Information from the Internet.

For those of you who recently acquired a digital camera, we offer Using your Digital Camera as a four week course. This is followed by a second four week course titled Introduction to Digital Photography which introduces the student to Picasa, a free photo software from Google. Then the student may follow this up with another 8 week class on Picasa called More Digital Photography; or the student can learn Adobe Photoshop Elements beginning with the Organizer class followed by the Editor class. We try hard to meet your computer needs.

Check out other classes offered at our website at www.snicsj.org/willows for a more detailed description of the class and the time and day of the class, or call (408) 371-3999 for more information.

Registration for the next session will be held Saturday, May 14 at 1:30 pm for all classes. This takes place at the Willow Glen Community & Senior Center, 2175 Lincoln Av. (at Curtner Av.).

Each class is held once a week for two hours for up to 8 weeks, some are shorter. The price for a typical course is \$20. Each student works from a designated computer following the steps the instructor displays in front of the class. Coaches are available to keep everybody on the same page. There are 5 sessions of classes started during each year; so if you don't get the class you want this time, come back in 10 weeks to sign-up.

SeniorNet is a worldwide organization which today supports over 240 learning centers. It is a non-profit organization founded in 1986. The purpose is to provide computer education and access to people over 50. There is an annual fee of \$40 to join SeniorNet. All the learning centers are run by volunteers



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Follow-up Discussion on Development of VTA Park 'n Ride Lots at Narvaez and Capitol Expressway/Hwy 87 Onramp

by Marilyn Rodgers

Members will be asked to participate in a discussion on the formulation of an updated position statement for the proposed development of the VTA Park 'n Ride Lots at Narvaez and Capitol Expressway which is included in the new general plan for San Jose. For the last 5 years, VEP has had a position of opposition to development of these areas, until a plan was in place to improve the intersection at Capitol Expressway and Narvaez which flows into (and includes) the onramp to Hwy 87 northbound. With the new general plan for San Jose scheduled for approval by the City Council in the Fall of 2011, this position needs review and updated input from members.

Memorial Day Event Cancelled.

Due to procedural changes in insurance requirements the Memorial Day event has been cancelled for this year.

The VEP Board is reviewing the options for insurance to assure that the event may return to the neighborhood next year.

Downtown San Jose Farmers' Market at San Pedro Square 19th Season

The Downtown San Jose Farmers' Market takes place 10 a.m.-2 p.m. every Friday, thru Nov. 18th, 2011, at San Pedro Square (along San Pedro Street between Santa Clara and St. John streets). Call 408-279-1775 or visit www.sjdowntown.com for information.



For the second season, Kaiser Permanente has teamed with the San Jose Downtown Association to present the market and focus on healthful and "green" living. The market does not use plastic bags anymore so customers are encouraged to bring their own reusable bags.

Along with a variety of fresh seasonal produce, handmade goods, and ready-to-eat fare, averaging 35 booths per week, the Farmer's Market features fun activities each month.

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Tomatoes For You

By John Marks

Growing tomato plants is easy, and the rewards are well worth the effort. Nothing beats your own vine-ripened beauties. You'll probably wish you had planted more.



Experiment first with just a few plants; each one can produce 10 to 15 lbs. of fruit. To get the best results with the least effort, purchase seedlings from a local nursery at planting time-after the last expected frost. Choose plants with straight, stocky stems about 6- to 10-in. tall.

Plant tomatoes in well-drained soil where they will receive sun all day long. When planting, work a complete fertilizer, such as 5-10-10 or 5-20-20, into the upper 6 in. of soil, following package directions. Space plants 24 to 36 in. apart. Plan to plant no later than the end of May, and expect the plant to set blossoms only after the night time temperature stays above 55 deg. Remove the plant from its container, pinch off the lower leaves and set it in a deep planting hole so the roots and stem are buried up to the first set of leaves. Roots will form along the buried portion of the stem, resulting in a strong plant.

Stake or cage the plant soon after planting so as not to disturb the developing roots later. Tie plants to their support as they grow. As the plants gain in height, pinch off the lower branches; these are called bleeders because they suck moisture and nutrients from the main plant, but produce nothing. A well-pruned tomatoe plant is stronger and more productive.

Water through the entire growing season to keep the soil moist, and fertilize regularly. Depending on variety, you can expect red, ripe tomatoes as soon as six weeks after planting. You'll be proud.

If you have tomatoes in planters or pots, the vines may begin to die at the bottom about the time the fruit begins to ripen, and soon the whole vine is dead. This is a classic symptom for verticillium wilt (can you pronounce that?), a common soil disease in our area. There is no chemical cure, and this disease is persistent in local soil; once present, it can last for about 20 years, I am told

Real Estate News Update: Making Homes Affordable

By Helen Castillo

These days I am sure you are hearing lots of talk about The Home Affordable Modification Program or (HAMP) is designed to help struggling homeowners avoid foreclosure by modifying loans to a level that is affordable for borrowers now and over the long term. Borrower eligibility is based on specific criteria.



Borrower is delinquent on their mortgage or faces imminent default

1. Property is occupied as borrower's primary residence
2. Mortgage was originated on or before Jan. 1, 2009
3. and the unpaid balance is not greater than \$729,750

After determining a borrower's eligibility, a servicer will take look at what program you may qualify for. The goal is to adjust your monthly mortgage payment, including property taxes and insurance to 31% of your gross income. The servicer may do this by reducing the interest to as low as 2%, extend the term to 40 years or defer the principal until the loan is paid off.

I have helped several borrowers complete modifications on their homes after they had been denied and it has come to my understanding that many homeowners are being denied because of an incomplete package. After submitting your package be sure to call the bank twice a week and ask if they need any updated documents from you. If you have been denied HAMP don't give up. The banks have several in house programs that you may be eligible for. One of the most important things to know is that the bank has a formula when qualifying you for a modification. They qualify you on the front end of your income (gross) and the back end (net) along with expenses. You cannot have more than \$100.00 extra a month after paying expenses or they will disqualify you. If you are approved for the HAMP or an in house program generally the servicer will get this approval from the investor who owns your loan. Once approved you may go on a three month trail period or longer. After this period the servicer will Fed Ex you the new Final Modification paper work to sign. This becomes part of your modified loan. If you have any questions call 408-981-5902

Contact Information to Rent Vista Park Community Room

Yes, the Vista Park Community Room can be rented. Rentals are managed through the City of San Jose, Parks & Recreation department. Specifically, Vista Park Community Room is managed through the Almaden Community Center (on Camden in South San Jose/Almaden Valley), the telephone number is 408/268-1133.

Scheduling staff are available Monday through Friday, but their schedule/hours vary each day. Be sure to let them know (if leaving a message) that it is for the Vista Park Community Room, the date and preferred times/hours, and purpose - ie. birthday party. Also, you are requesting information on rates, and then of course... your contact information.

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Annual Neighborhood Garage Sale

by Helen Castillo, Ginger Cardona, Susan Iverson, Marilyn Rodgers

The first Saturday in May is the VEP Annual Neighborhood Garage Sale. This activity continues to be a popular community



activity. VEP pays for the advertising in both print and electronic media. Neighbors just have to put out their treasures for all to see – and to reap in the fun and profit! Have your neighbors join



in – and put up your own street or cul-du-sac signs to entice garage sale hunters. In addition, the Salvation Army supports the neighborhood by providing trucks and staff making it an easy opportunity to donate! Plan to donate either items not sold at the garage sale, or even if you do not have a garage sale – there may be items that you wish to donate!

If you missed out on participating in this year's VEP Neighborhood Garage Sale.....know that this is an annual event. Plan now to participate next year – **it will always be scheduled for the first Saturday in May**



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Annual Election of VEP Board of Directors

by Jeri Arstingstall and Marilyn Rodgers

May is the annual VEP business meeting which includes the election of a slate of members who will serve as the Board of Directors. The Bylaws require that the names of members included in a slate, be forwarded to the membership for election at the May meeting. The list of members running for the slate for Board of Directors is also provided in advance in the May VEP Newsletter.

Jeri Arstingstall, a VEP Past President, is the Nominating Chairperson this year. The slate of members running for the VEP Board of Directors is as follows:

Ginger Cardona
Helen Castillo
Katherine Decker
Arul Edwin
Adina Pierce
Marilyn Rodgers
Debra Suydam
Susan Iverson will continue as VEP Newsletter Editor

Once the membership elects the Board of Directors, the Board then elects officers, i.e. President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary. The Board also appoints members to fill any open/unfilled position to the Board of Directors.

Welcome New Member to the Board of Directors

by Marilyn Rodgers

The VEP Board of Directors recently appointed **Arul Edwin** to fill an open position on the Board.

Arul is a Civil Engineer by profession, specializing in highway design, transportation planning and traffic engineering. He works as a Senior Project Manager for a private engineering company Hatch Mott MacDonald. He also is an active volunteer and serves as the Vice Chair of the City of San Jose's Traffic Appeals Commission.

Arul, his wife Kala, and son Allen moved to San Jose from Boston in 2000, and felt fortunate to find a home in the VEP area. Wife, Kala, is a former professor of English literature. Son, Allen, attends Gunderson High School, and is an excellent tennis player as well as an accomplished photographer – he particularly enjoys taking pictures of birds and nature.

Arul first began actively volunteering in VEP through the Martial Cottle Park planning committee. He is enthusiastic about the next step as an active volunteer and looks forward to working with other Board members on VEP's behalf. Welcome Arul!

Updates on Vista Park Community Room Projects

by Marilyn Rodgers

I. Vista Park Community Room – Phase III of the Master Plan

If you have been by Vista Park lately, you will have noticed the fencing around the front, side, and back of the Community Room area. The City is completing Phase III of the Master



Plan for the area surrounding the Community Room. The following list identifies work that will be completed as part of Phase III of this project:

- Lay brick pavers to create a patio on the back and side of the building;
- Build concrete curb bands to frame the new patios, basketball court and possible horseshoe area;
- Repair and resurface the basketball court;
- Add 3" mulch on oval gathering area next to the basketball court;
- Repair existing irrigation at the front of the building; and replant shrubs and plants in the front of the building.



II. Vista Park Community Room - Gate Project

When the Vista Park Community Room was originally built, the corridor between the restrooms and the community room

was flanked by two gates – one permanent with no entry access, and the other, a motorized gate that when up and down. Shortly after the Community Room dedication, the motorized gate malfunctioned and was then left open/raised at all times. Both City Parks and Recreation staff and the SJ Police Department were concerned about building safety.



Plans to replace the gate were discussed but continually delayed due to funding issues. Recently, funds were identified in special projects through the Arts Commission. The goal was to not only provide safety/security in the replacement of the gate, but to provide an additional opportunity to use art in a public area such as a park. City staff requested input from the community. Due to a very short timeline, the Board of Directors acted on the community's behalf. First, the Board was given a list of 10 potential artists who had extensive experience in designing/building similar small projects. A letter from each artist described their experience and ideas for the project. Also included were examples of each artist's previous work. In addition to Board Members, an artist from the community and a member of the Arts Commission participated in the final selection. Bill Gould, artist and a San Jose resident, was selected. The second meeting included Parks and Recreation staff members. The purpose of this meeting was to provide information to Mr. Gould regarding the history and usage of the park and the community room. Discussion also included issues such as child safety, and ease in preventing/removing graffiti from the gate(s). It is expected that the final design will be completed in June, and the project completed sometime in late Fall.

III. Vista Park Community Room – Cleaning and Painting

Several members have mentioned concern about the condition of the community room. The Vista Park Community Room was never placed on a scheduled cleaning routine. As a result, it is in need of major cleaning and painting. VEP is in discussions with staff at Almaden Community Center (who also oversee Vista Park Community Room) regarding what options are available. VEP has offered suggestions of volunteer involvement as well as an offer to pay for needed services. Two issues are impacting a speedy decision – 1) financial issues facing the City, and 2) Kids Camp is scheduled in the Community Room all summer (as has been the case the previous 3 years). We hope to have an answer and a plan in place by late August/early September.

Follow-up Discussion on Chynoweth Fatal Accident – Proposed Option to Change Chynoweth to Single Lane

by Marilyn Rodgers

Following a fatal accident on Chynoweth in front of Gunderson High School, members have called for a variety of possible safety improvements along this stretch of Chynoweth. Suggestions include use of bots dots, additional signage, change in striping - to calls for stronger measures such as road/speed bumps ("sleeping policemen"), a median "see through" fence, and finally to changing the two lane road to a single lane in each direction. In the past, the City has conducted studies that indicate Chynoweth does not have the traffic volume to justify/necessitate two lanes in each direction. Additionally, VEP has a long standing position of opposition to the original plan for Chynoweth to be a main two-lane thoroughfare to the south. With the approval of the Martial Cottle Park Master Plan Design, Chynoweth will not go through the property previously known as the Lester property.

Some of the suggested possible improvements can not be accomplished/implemented due to the city's severe budgetary woes (at least for the foreseeable future).

However, one possible option does remain. This summer (starting in June) the City of San Jose, as part of previously scheduled routine maintenance, will be slurring and restriping the section of Chynoweth from Pearl to Gaundabert/New World. Additionally, the restriping will also include the long awaited – initiation of bike lanes along Chynoweth.

The City has also determined that it would be possible to include a conversion of Chynoweth to a single lane as part of the scheduled maintenance and restriping. As a result, City staff are asking that the VEP Community consider this option.

What would a single lane look like? In addition to the new inclusion of bike lanes, narrowing to a single lane would be accomplished through striping.

What won't change...left and right turn lanes in front of Gunderson will remain – as will the additional right lane which leads up to the entry into the Gunderson parking lot (subsequently becoming the right turn lane onto Gaundabert).

Schematics of the roadway will be presented at the May 24th meeting for members' consideration.

It is important that you make your preferences known. We need to hear from you. This decision will be made at the May 24th VEP membership meeting.

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A Year of Cakes

By Kathy Wood, Baker

Summer IS just around the corner; really, it is. Cooler temperatures, though, make cake-baking more fun. Just turning on the oven heats up the kitchen and the sweet smells make your tummy growl with anticipation of the first bite of whatever is in there.

Our lemon tree's branches are heavy-laden with an abundant amount of bright yellow lemons. When life hands you lemons, make Glazed Lemon Bundt Cake. This is an easy recipe that keeps well and goes good with a cup of steaming coffee or a refreshing glass of milk.

Glazed Lemon Bundt Cake:

Ingredients: 1 cup butter, softened, 2 cups granulated sugar, 4 eggs, 1 ½ teaspoon lemon extract, 1 ½ teaspoon vanilla, 3 cups all-purpose flour, 2 teaspoons baking powder, ½ teaspoon salt, 1 cup milk, 1 tablespoon grated lemon peel.
 Glaze: ¼ cup fresh lemon juice, 1 tablespoon water, ½ teaspoon lemon extract, ¾ cup granulated sugar.

Instructions: Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour a 10-inch bundt pan (may be made in a 9x13-inch pan also); set aside.

In a large mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar together. Add eggs, one at a time, until thoroughly mixed. Beat in extracts. Combine flour, baking powder and salt in small bowl; add to the creamed mixture alternately with the milk. Stir in the lemon peel. Pour into the prepared pan, spreading evenly.

Bake for 60-70 minutes (less for 9x13 pan) or until a toothpick inserted comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes on wire rack, then invert onto the wire rack. Place a sheet of waxed paper under wire rack and cake to collect extra glaze. Allow cake to cool 10 minutes longer while glaze is made.

Combine all glaze ingredients in small mixing bowl and stir until smooth; drizzle over the warm cake. Allow to set for a minute or two. Remove cake from waxed paper and place on another sheet of waxed paper. Holding one edge of glazed-covered waxed paper, allow glaze to drizzle over the cake, giving it a second coat.

Cool completely before slicing into desired size of slices and serve.

For a picture of this cake and to see other recipes, visit ayearofckaes.blogspot.com.
 "Let's Bake a Cake!"

Review of VEP Goals and Objectives for 2010-2011

by Marilyn Rodgers

Proposed VEP's 2010-2011 Goals & Objectives

1. Continue to improve our community and our association.
 - A. Encourage regular turn-over of VEP Board of Directors to bring new ideas and energy to our organization and to assure broad membership representation.
 - B. Continue to maintain VEP's positive fiscal condition.
 - a. Conclude work toward qualifying VEP as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
 - C. Continue to publish the VEP News nine times per year. Improve and increase the use of our website.
 - D. Provide a variety of opportunities for volunteer service that reflect member-endorsed projects and within our community.
2. Promote community interaction, pride, and preparedness.
 - A. Promote and encourage member participation in neighborhood safety programs, crime prevention, and disaster/ emergency preparedness.
 - B. Organize and encourage "adoption" and active participation in cleanup and maintenance of public areas within our community.
 - C. Sponsor and promote (election, holiday, educational, etc.) events for our membership area.
 - D. Encourage and acknowledge outstanding volunteer service by students and VEP members.
3. Work with government and local businesses to create and maintain high quality public services for the VEP area.
 - A. Work with government and businesses to improve and maintain public landscaping and city parks.
 - B. Work with government to provide traffic safety and uncongested conditions on VEP area streets and roads.
 - a. Work with the City and Erikson Neighborhood Association to formally adopt a Thornwood Drive terminus for any crossing of the Guadalupe River easterly from Almaden Expressway.
 - b. Seek real improvements in traffic level of service at the Capitol/Narvaez/Northbound Hwy 87 onramp.
 - c. Ensure that impact of any proposed development along the Guadalupe Corridor are fully mitigated.
 - d. Continue VEP involvement in proposed revisions to the configuration of Branham Lane between Snell and Narvaez.
 - C. Participate in and react to any plans for urban development, services, and public infrastructure.
 - D. Participate in the planning and development of Martial Cottle Regional Park (the Lester property).
 - E. Continue work to implement the master plan for Vista Park Community Room landscaping.
 - F. Monitor opportunities to build a city park at Capitol and Narvaez.

Another busy year is coming to completion for VEP. This year, we consolidated Goals and Objectives. Specific goals were also maintained even though those individual goals may not be an issue or a priority in any given year. However, the importance in continuing to forward them each year was born out this year – where the Board of Directors was able to act on the Community's behalf when the issue suddenly arose again. Two such issues happened this year – revisiting the issue of the Chynoweth Bridge as a result of the planned development of Almaden Ranch on Almaden Expressway. In collaboration with ENA Neighborhood Association, VEP forwarded a letter of concern which was included in the EIR and resulted in the developer removing it from their development plans. The second issue that suddenly

arose was that of the proposed development of the VTA Park 'n ride lots at Narvaez and Capitol Expressway/Hwy 87 On-ramp through the City of San Jose's new general plan Environment 2040.

VEP's financial stability continues. This year we have a few less members, due most likely to the weakened economy, but have done well with advertisers. Members were very supportive in their comments during the annual membership drive. Many members also included an additional \$5.00 to \$50.00 donation when sending in their membership renewals. VEP is very healthy financially (unusual for a community/ neighborhood organization.) We had intended to continue to pursue our application for 501(c)(3) status. However, IRS regulations have changed making it more difficult/restrictive, and less desirable for us as an organization. Thus, we decided to maintain our status as a "not for profit" organization, which allows us to provide a variety of services and information to our members without restrictions.

We have increased the average meeting attendance this year, again probably as a result of some issues of concern to members. We continue to publish the VEP newsletter nine times per year, and members continue to voice their appreciation. The VEP website has been updated to include more visibility for our advertisers. Electronic communication with and for our members has increased to include visibility through Yahoo groups and Facebook, as well as e-mail alerts. Martial Cottle Park Master Design was approved this year. The next phase will be moving toward initial development of the park. Community plantings and maintenance projects continued with valuable assistance from Our City Forest and collaboration with city staff on "adopt-a-street" or "adopt-an-area" programs. Two projects involving Vista Park – the Phase III of the Master Plan, and the Vista Park Gate project are coming to fruition.

Community activities this year included a very successful "Santa in the Park" the end of November, and the annual Neighborhood Garage sale the first Saturday in May. These activities will continue to be annual events.

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GUNDERSON NEWS

SPRING brings all kinds of activities and events to Henry T. Gunderson High School as the year winds down. Staff and students invite you to visit and attend these events that we all take tremendous PRIDE in.



ONE ACT PLAY FESTIVAL

The annual One Act Play Festival took place May 10 and 11 in the Gunderson theater. All drama students participated in this yearly event. The evenings consisted of 7 short plays.

MULTIMEDIA FESTIVAL

Gunderson filmmakers and photographers will be highlighting their works in the Gunderson Theater on May 19 starting at 6pm. In addition to creating films, the students have produced movie posters.

SPRING CONCERT

On May 25, music will fill the air at the Gunderson Theater at 7pm for the annual spring concert. Tickets will be sold at the door. Choir and band will be performing a wide variety of music.

SCIENCE FAIR

The Science Department of Gunderson High School will be presenting a Science Fair on May 18 in the forum, beginning at 3pm. Stop on by and see what our students have been experimenting on!

ATHLETIC AWARDS

Gunderson High School is hosting an Athletic Awards Ceremony on May 18 in the gym starting at 6pm. These awards will honor the many athletes who have excelled in their various sports during the school year.

SENIOR AWARDS NIGHT

Outstanding seniors will be recognized on May 26 in the Gunderson theater. Scholarships, awards and other accomplishments will be highlighted for these seniors who have distinguished themselves in academics, community service and the arts and sciences.

GRADUATION

Once again, the Rose Garden will be the location of the Gunderson graduation on June 1 at 6pm.



FINALLY....

The Gunderson community would like to thank the VEP residents for a great year and for all of your support as we continue to grow and build upon our GRIZZLY PRIDE. We look forward to continued progress during the coming school year and our partnership with the neighborhood.

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CRIME STOPPERS

VEP NEEDS YOU!!

by Marilyn Rodgers

VEP needs your ideas, your enthusiasm VEP needs you!

There are many different types of volunteer opportunities for you through your community association! We are currently developing a list of volunteer activities which will highlight **2-hour** volunteer commitments. The list will include brief descriptions of each activity. One such volunteer offering is the opportunity to "test" the waters...to learn what it might be like to be a board member – with as little as a 2 hour time commitment per month. Volunteer by assisting a very active volunteer - one of our board members. Don't be afraid to ask what it might mean to assist the Webmaster, Newsletter editor, or Volunteer Coordinator. For additional information, or to make suggestions, please contact Helen Castillo, Volunteer Coordinator, at 408/981-5902 or hcastillo@vbprop.com.

VEP will also be initiating a "hospitality" committee. The purpose of the committee will be to welcome new residents to the community – including encouraging them to join and participate in VEP activities. Other "hospitality" activities will include welcome, refreshments and door prizes at VEP meetings and events. For additional information, or to volunteer, contact Board Member Katherine Decker at 408/972-4098 or kddedcker@sbcglobal.net.

Where is the Vista Park Community Room?

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

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

Please lend a hand!

I am a VEP member

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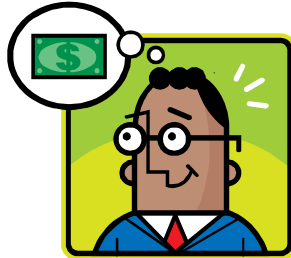
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San Jose City Budget Issues – Impact to VEP Neighborhood

by Marilyn Rodgers

This year the City of San Jose faces a budget deficit of \$115 million dollars. The city continues to struggle with decreased revenues as a result of the weakened economy, and increasing costs. Costs are escalating primarily as a result of employee pension plans. It is estimated that the City's budget deficit by 2015 will be \$450 million without increasing revenues (taxes) and/or decreasing costs (finding acceptable changes/reforms to employee salary and benefits, particularly the pension plan system).



By law, the City must balance its budget each year, no later than June 30th. The Mayor and City Council have called for a 10% reduction from all employees. The majority of employee groups have already agreed to this amount (or more), including for the first time, the public safety employees – fire and police. (The firefighters have agreed; the police will be voting on this recommendation in the near future.) However, even with employee concessions, the city will be faced with layoffs, which translates to reduced services to the residents of San Jose.

Each city department faces cuts, resulting in programs being decreased, consolidated, eliminated, and/or outsourced. The City has had cuts for the past 10 years, with the most significant cuts in 2010. Parks and Recreation faces an additional 30% cut this year (following severe cuts a year ago). Over the years, VEP has had a strong collaborative relationship with parks maintenance staff. While no decision has yet been finalized, we understand there is a strong possibility that the majority of these services will be cut, with the remainder being outsourced.

It is important that our residents be informed about the budget and how the deficits will affect us as individuals and as a neighborhood. Our elected officials and employees need our support and suggestions for positive resolution of these issues. For additional information, go to website www.sanjoseca.gov/budgetinfo.asp.

**VEP helps you solve
community problems**

VEP Takes Summer Break – Do We Have Your E-mail Address?

VEP traditionally takes a summer break during June, July, and August. To be sure you are kept up to date with any important issues – be sure to provide us with your current e-mail address. We will not flood your mailbox with e-mails, and will keep your contact information confidential.



Communication with Our Members

by Marilyn Rodgers, Adina Pierce, Susan Iverson

Face to face communication is usually the most meaningful and rewarding. Monthly membership meetings between September and May, special events and projects provide this opportunity. However, we have many non-face to face opportunities as well – they are as follows:

As you are reading this newsletter, you already know about our Number 1 (and most popular) way to communicate with our members – through the **VEP NEWS**. Our members continue to tell us how much they enjoy receiving and reading the newsletter.

We continue to evaluate and utilize electronic means of communicating with our members, particularly in between editions of the newsletter (remember **e-distribution of the newsletter** is available upon request as well).

E-mail alerts – if you have e-mail and would like to receive monthly e-mail Alerts, please be sure we have a current e-mail address. (We usually send one or two e-mails per month, so we will not fill your mailbox with junk e-mails; and e-mail addresses are confidential).

VEP Website – www.vepca.net – find current information, highlights of upcoming events, as well as historical information on the website. Our website is intended for use by both members and non-members. Look for an increasing amount of information to be available on the website in the future.

VEP - Yahoo groups and Facebook – for those members interested in additional electronic access and use “social media” sites, VEP has a **Yahoo group** and is on **Facebook**.

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South Bay Family Freebies

By Samantha Fein, The Garza Girls

Finding things to do around the Bay Area is easy – there's fun everywhere! But finding freebies for the whole family can be challenging. The South Bay is full of exciting ways to spend little or no money for a full day of fun. The best free kid fun in Santa Clara County are here!

Japanese Friendship Gardens

1300 Senter Rd.
San Jose, CA 95106

You might know the famed Happy Holly Park and Zoo, a super fun kid extravaganza in San Jose. But what you might have missed between carousel rides and lemur exhibits is the gentle, vast park right next door. The Japanese Friendship Gardens, part of San Jose Parks' Kelley Park, is home to one of the greatest spots in the Bay Area. The gardens are filled with ponds and peppered with teahouses modeled after those of San Jose's sister city Okayama, Japan.



Kids enjoy climbing on massive oak and willow trees while parents can feel free to let children wander and discover the gardens; many trimmed and kept in the Japanese style. There are several paths that wind through the park where children can find tadpoles, hidden nooks and little bridges everywhere, all fashioned in the Japanese style. The Koi fish are gone, but hope to return by Spring 2011, but wild geese and little tadpoles keep kids busy for hours.

Visit the gardens on a weekend to catch a glimpse of a wedding or two or walk over to History San Jose for a little ice cream cone at the antique ice cream parlor

NASA Exploration Center

Moffett Field, Hwy 101
Mountain View, CA 94035

Okay, so it's not the Smithsonian Museum, but the NASA Exploration Center is one of the best little-known family freebies in the Bay Area. Although the museum is small and slightly dated, the history is truly incredible. Most of the tour and information are geared toward children between the ages of 5-10, but the excitement of being on the NASA campus is surreal and exciting. Current exhibits include a moon rock retrieved from Apollo 15, the Mercury Redstone capsule from 1960, and a 14-foot immersive theater.



Look for gadgets and artifacts, cool math and science tidbits and lots of historical information. The videos are good, but the most fun information comes from the volunteers themselves who are rich with knowledge of the history of space travel and how our own Moffet field has played a role in our knowledge of space. The tours often feature special speakers and several times dur-

ing the year, NASA hosts a family fun night right inside the Ames facility.

Emma Prusch Farm

647 S King Rd.
San Jose, CA 95116

The biggest wooden barn in all of California lies directly in the heart of San Jose. The Emma Prusch Farm, funded and run pri-



privately, is amongst one of the most beloved nooks hidden just off of King and Story Road. The big barn is home to goats and sheep and pigs, all free roaming. The farm is used as both a community outreach for urban children and as a facility for the education of sustainable farming.

Emma Prusch farm is perfect for young children who are ready to be introduced to animals and farm life – beware of the wild turkeys and geese, they're known for plucking snacks right out of little kids' hands. Plan on being at the farm for a couple of hours, this isn't a daylong destination spot, however, what's there is special..

Find the community garden where local San Jose residents share space and gardens; see if kids can spy "Bella" the 80-year-old working windmill which pumps into the park's ponds and is used for feeding the animals. The park is host to several yearly events including the Tamale Festival, the evenings under-the-stars and the well-known Fall Harvest Festival featuring an old fashioned country fair that takes place each October.

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VEP Community Calendar

May / June 2011

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|---|-------------------------------------|--|--|----------|
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 Downtown San Jose Farmers' Market 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at San Pedro Square | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 VEP Community Meeting—7:30 PM—Vista Park Community Room | 25 Last Day of School ESUHSD | 26 National Hamburger Day  | 27 Downtown San Jose Farmers' Market 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at San Pedro Square | 28 |
| 29 | 30 Memorial Day  | 31 | 1 | 2 Last Day of School SJUSD | 3 Downtown San Jose Farmers' Market 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at San Pedro Square | 4 |
| 5 National Gingerbread Day  | 6 | 7 | 8 Last Day of School OGUSD (7-8) | 9 Last Day of School OGUSD (K-6) | 10 Downtown San Jose Farmers' Market 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at San Pedro Square | 11 |
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 Downtown San Jose Farmers' Market 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at San Pedro Square | 18 |
| 19 Father's Day  | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 Downtown San Jose Farmers' Market 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at San Pedro Square | 25 |

THE VEP NEWS



VEP Community Association

P.O. Box 18111 San Jose, CA 95158
 Email: vepca@vepca.net Website: www.vepca.net

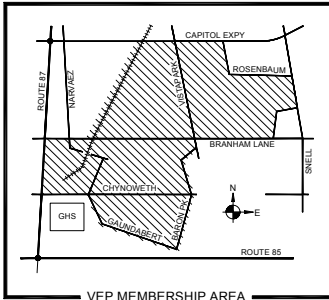
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Published monthly by VEP Community Association, a not-for-profit organization of volunteers established in 1969 to serve and represent more than 2000 homes in the Blossom Valley area of southern San Jose. VEP is dedicated to neighborhood maintenance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

May 24th Meeting

Be sure to attend VEP's