

# VEP NEWS

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March 2003

## VEP MEETING

7:30 P.M. TUESDAY  
**March 25, 2003**

GUNDERSON HIGH SCHOOL

★ **Forum** ★

### AGENDA

#### ★ **Home Improvement Faire** ★

Our sixth annual opportunity for VEP members to shop, meet, and make arrangements with home improvement products and services.

7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

*Everyone* is welcome. Invite your neighbors!

### VEP's Home Improvement Faire March 25<sup>th</sup>

-John Marks

Special Alert: VEP's sixth annual *Home Improvement Faire* is scheduled for Tuesday, May 25th, and this year will include a raffle for MONEY. Exhibitors have ponied up enough for prizes totaling about \$700. You don't have to buy anything, just come, get a ticket stub, and wait to see if your number is called.

Our Faire features the following 33 contractors and tradesmen who will display their products and functions in the Gunderson High School Forum area. Please make a special effort to come and match the effort of these suppliers to be there for you.

- All Seasons Sunrooms, Laura Schmidt, 800-834-4744
- Affordable Sunrooms, Nancy Healy, 296-4218
- Anderson Windows, Rick Hoffman, 800-800-5482 x222
- California Bathroom & Kitchen Remodeling, Allyn Johnson, 360-9700
- California State Contractor's License Board, Alice Reed, 800-321-2752
- California Roll-Out Shelf, Jeff White, 369-8258
- Consolidated Plumbing, Doug Douglass, 446-5665
- Composting Education, Ken Kelly, Sarah, 299-4147
- Gina Ray Realtor, Gina, 445-4135
- Gutter Topper, Joe Lucero, 650-625-8648
- Hardwood Floors, Geno, 371-1370
- Housepainting by Sean, 831-634-0900

- KitchenWorks, Jeanine, 415-256-8819
- Michael's Construction, Craig, 371-3638
- Morazan Roofing, Maravin, 224-5785
- Olson Marble & Stone Care, Scott Thomas, 265-7662
- OSH Hardware, Duke Newton, 267-646018
- Pampered Chef Cooking, Yvonne Reddy, 226-9574
- Pest Control, Keith & Kathy Bowles, 362-9629
- Peters Electrical & Remodeling, Walt Peters, 605-6532
- Precision Flooring & Carpets, Don Gupton, 224-4960
- Precious Moments in Time Photography, Jeri, 281-3393
- Premier Door Services, Len Cox, 281-3219
- Randazzo Water Softeners, Rick, 978-5355
- Renaissance Solartube, Paula Schultz, 408-720-1100
- RoofCo, Phil Ulio, 289-5353
- Silicon Valley Re-Bath, Gerlinde, 238-4506
- Student Painters, Kathy, 800-295-9675
- Stylized Wall Coverings, Robert Stanchfield, 313-6915
- Summer Winds Nursery, Brian Appleby, 866-0970
- The Garage Door Store, Benjamin, 281-7111
- Tupperware, Donna Fountain, 261-3930
- Wayne Thomas Landscaping, 723-3853
- Wooden Floors by Craig Turnbull, 363-0130

This year we'll include a VEP Information Table and refreshments (brownies & soft drinks). Be there! You won't be disappointed on Tuesday, May 25, 7:30 pm. We look forward to seeing you. Please be sure to attend.

### VEP membership drive

- Dave Noel

We're almost done with our membership renewals for this year. If you haven't sent in your renewal yet, please do it now before you forget. If we don't receive your membership renewal, your April edition of the VEP NEWS will be your last. For your convenience, we've printed a copy of the renewal form and instructions in this newsletter.

If you're a new member, let me be the first to welcome you.

One of the most rewarding parts of the renewal process is reading what you have to say in the comments section of your renewal form. We appreciate the compliments, and value your suggestions for future projects and priorities. Here are some of your comments:

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- Keep up the great work!!
- Great newsletter
- A sincere thank you to the man who always trims the palms. They look great!
- Vista Park turned out great! Thanks!
- Thank you--yours is the BEST newsletter. The daffodils are popping up around Erikson Playground!
- We love the daffodils
- Thanks for keeping us informed about our area

A few members pleasantly surprise us each year by donating extra with their membership dues. We want to thank the following members for doing so this year. (If your overpayment was in error, please contact Treasurer **Joe Tajnai**, and we he will refund your overpayment).

- Jim and Ernestine Hicks
- Jeanne Mullins
- Dale Smith
- Clay and Bonnie Sperry
- Chris Mauro

Finally, I'd like to thank all of you who indicated on your membership renewals that you are willing to volunteer for VEP. Our hospitality committee has your contact information and will get in touch with you when we need volunteers for specific tasks. Also, keep an eye in the "volunteers needed" section of each edition of the VEP news.

## VEP officers needed

*-Dave Fadness*

It's **your** turn. Here's a golden opportunity for caring neighbors who can give back a few hours each month to their community. VEP is looking for a handful of volunteers to lead and shape the objectives of our organization. Our elected officers are president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and newsletter editor. This year, elections and installation of new officers will be held at our April *Annual Meeting*.

Term of service: one year. Pay: zero. Personal rewards: infinite. Special experience required: none (all

we ask is an interest in and eager dedication to our neighborhoods). You definitely have what it takes!

Call any member of our current team of execs with questions or to discuss your interest. Our numbers are listed on the mailing page of this newsletter.

Make our day--volunteer to be an officer of VEP.

## CSA nominations due April 22<sup>nd</sup>

*- Dave Noel*

Each year, VEP grants awards to area graduating high school seniors to reward them for exemplary volunteerism during their high school careers and to encourage all students to carry the habit of volunteerism into their adult lives. These awards are based only on the student's volunteer record during high school.

Awards are traditionally given to one deserving senior from each of the VEP neighborhood high schools, Henry Gunderson High School and Andrew Hill High School. An "At Large" award category was established in 2002, and is again offered this year. Members present at our January 28<sup>th</sup> meeting unanimously approved a budget of \$1500 for each of the three award categories for 2003. This is a \$500 increase from previous years.

Nominations for all three categories are due by the end of our April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2003 Annual Meeting. The "At Large" award nomination form was published in the February edition of the VEP News, and can also be found on our web site ([www.vepca.org](http://www.vepca.org)). If you missed it and are not web-connected, to get one call me or one of the other VEP officers listed on the mailing page of this newsletter.

Completed nomination forms may be returned at our April VEP meeting; be mailed to: VEP, PO Box 18111, San Jose, CA, 95158; or be given to Dave Noel (266-7183 or [dnoel1234@aol.com](mailto:dnoel1234@aol.com)). Please do **NOT** mail or email them to any other VEP officer.

Any VEP member may nominate a graduating high school senior that lives in San Jose for our "At Large" award category. PLEASE NOTE: "At Large" nomination forms must be signed by a school administrator to verify the nominated student's status as a graduating senior in 2003. In order to ensure that VEP makes the final selection, a minimum of two nominations must be received in each category in order for an award to be granted in that category.

## VEP's annual Community Garage Sale

Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup> is the date for our annual, community-wide VEP Garage sale. VEP members or not, tell your neighbors about it now so they'll be ready to join us. Let's make this a real success!

VEP will advertise this event in the San Jose Mercury News and Pennysaver. This is an excellent opportunity for you to take advantage of an increased number of shoppers by offering your unwanted household treasures for sale on the same day as the rest of your neighbors.

Spread the word to your neighbors. Let's make this year's Garage Sale the biggest one yet!

### Volunteers needed

VEP Annual Picnic, May 18<sup>th</sup> at Vista Park. Contact Ian Reddy at (408) 226-9574. Do it today!

### VEP community calendar

Tue. Mar 25, 7:30 - 9 pm: VEP General Meeting at Gunderson High School (Home Improvement Faire).

Wed. Apr 2, 4:30 pm: San Jose Parks and Recreation Commission meeting (2 North 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, 7<sup>th</sup> floor). Naming of new park on Winfield Boulevard.

Wed. Apr 2, 7:30 - 9 pm: VEP Executive meeting (call for location).

Thu. Apr 17, 6:30 pm (tentative): Almaden Lake Park improvements community meeting at the Valley Water District Offices, 5770 Almaden Expressway.

Tue. Apr 22, 7:30 - 9 pm: VEP Annual Meeting at Gunderson High School (VEP elections, County Expressway Study, Branham Lane safety, VEP Annual Report).

Sat. Apr 26, 7 am: VEP Community Garage Sale.

Wed. May 7, 7 - 9 pm: VEP Executive meeting (call for location).

Sun. May 18, Noon - 3 pm: 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual VEP Family Picnic at Vista Park.

Tue. May 27, 7:30 - 9 pm: VEP General Meeting at Gunderson High School (program TBD).

### VEP membership renewal is due NOW

If you haven't sent in your 2003 renewal yet, please do so now to make sure you continue receiving the **VEP NEWS** and keep informed of what's happening in your community.

To renew, write a check for \$15 to VEP and mail it in the remit envelop that was included with your January VEP NEWS--or fill out the form below and mail it to VEP, P.O. Box 18111, San Jose, CA 95158. Easy as that!

We encourage you to include your email address and phone number so we can get you timely information to you between editions of the VEP NEWS. We only use this information for official VEP business.

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Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Can you give VEP a few volunteer hours each month?

\_\_\_\_\_

### President's message

- Dave Noel

I hope you've been enjoying our daffodils and newly landscaped median areas as much as I have! Aren't they spectacular?

A lot of you have wondered why we didn't landscape the larger piece of bare land at the northeast corner of Branham Lane and Narvaez Avenue. That land is owned by the city and is under consideration for development of one or two homes. We'd like to see that happen relatively quickly to remove an eyesore and a source of dust that gets picked up by the winds and blown onto the neighbors' homes. Assuming that land is developed, VEP will work with the city and developer to push for landscaping on the Branham/Narvaez frontage, similar to other landscaping in the area.

This is also the time of year that we look for new volun-



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teers to join our executive committee, either as board members, committee chairs, or general helpers. There are always more projects and issues than volunteers. The more volunteers we have, the more we can take on. You're always welcome to attend our executive board meetings. The dates and times are listed in the calendar of events. Call any of the board members listed on the mailing page of this newsletter for locations. I urge you to join us. We especially need more representation from neighborhoods east of Vistapark Drive.

VEP past president **John Marks** has been working very hard to organize our sixth annual *Home Improvement Faire*. This year we moved this great event from our May meeting to our March meeting, to give you extra time to prepare for spring and summer home improvement projects. We'll have even more cash door prizes than last year, not to mention free refreshments. Don't miss this wonderful event!

**Traffic problems on your street?**

-Dave Fadness

If you have traffic problems on your street, be sure to file a Traffic Incident Complaint with the San Jose Police Department. To make this easy for you, we've included a copy of their form on our VEP website. Check it out at [www.vepca.org](http://www.vepca.org).

**Neighborhood parks**

-Dave Noel

Vice Mayor **Pat Dando** and Parks Manager **Brian Hartsell** hosted an extremely well attended community meeting on February 26th to review, prioritize, and select design options for several improvements at Almaden Lake Park. Among the items discussed were a new pedestrian bridge across the lake just north of Coleman, a new group-use picnic area, a new marina complex, new bocce ball courts, and a new east side play area.

A second community meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm. This meeting will be held at the Santa Clara Valley Water District Headquarters, 5770 Almaden Expressway. Contact Brian Hartsell,

Parks Manager, at 408-938-2013 or [brian.hartsell@ci.sj.ca.us](mailto:brian.hartsell@ci.sj.ca.us) to check for possible changes to this meeting.

Construction should begin this summer on a new park on Winfield Boulevard, to be completed in early spring 2004. VEP executives **Dave Noel** and **Dave Fadness** formally nominated the name "William Cilker Park", and will be present at a rescheduled Parks and Recreation Commission hearing on April 2<sup>nd</sup> to testify in favor of this nomination. Subsequent to this meeting, the new park's name will be formally adopted by a vote of the San Jose City Council. One other name has been nominated for this park: Oakridge Park.

In the January VEP News, we reported that we brought several Vista Park playground equipment safety and maintenance issues to the attention of **Joshua Howard** of Vice Mayor Pat Dando's office. Progress was made quickly on several items, particularly the most serious safety issues. Unfortunately progress has been slow on full completion of the repairs. Many thanks to VEP Treasurer **Joe Tajnai** for keeping track of these items and communicating them with Joshua.

Joe also discovered and reported a large water leak at Meadows Park, which has now been repaired.

VEP salutes community volunteers who have formally adopted our area parks through the City of San Jose's Adopt-A-Park program:

- Erikson Park = **Billie & Pat Bishop**
- Meadows Park = (none)
- Parkview I = **Jim & Christie Donaldson**
- Parkview II = **Girl Scout Troop 761** and Families
- Parkview III = **Bill & Bertha Rogers**
- Vista Park = **Gunderson High Youth Corps** (SJCC)

If you'd like to adopt Meadows Park, give me a call and I'll put you in touch with the right people in the city.

Finally, if you notice problems with parks in our area, please call or email any of the board members listed on the mailing page of this newsletter. If you would like to get more involved, please consider attending our executive board meetings. We could use extra help identifying and tracking resolution of neighborhood park issues.

**Almaden Lake Park**

-Vice Mayor Pat Dando

In the midst of a bustling expressway and the residential neighborhoods of Almaden, Blossom Valley, and Santa Teresa is Almaden Lake Park. For over twenty years, it has served as a quiet retreat from the hustle and bustle of our daily lives. It is a place where residents from across San Jose come to have family barbecues complete with swimming, fishing, and sailing. It has also become home to popular summer time campfire and camping programs.

Almaden Lake Park's history is fascinating. The 65-acre site at Almaden Expressway and Coleman Road

was once a privately owned rock quarry. The lake itself is actually man-made and was progressively formed as a result of the quarry operation which began in the late 1940's.

Excavation for the quarry started at the center of Los Alamitos Creek and moved outward, transforming what was once a meadow where dairy cows grazed, into a lake. The park which opened in 1982 is the only park in San Jose featuring a sand beach and swim area supervised by lifeguards.

Over twenty-five years ago, the City worked with the local community to develop the *Almaden Lake Park Master Plan*. Its goal was to establish a vision for a recreational facility that would serve as a gathering point for South San Jose residents. A park that offered water sport activities, picnic facilities, playgrounds for young children, a marina complex, and hiking trails with native plants were among the community's main objectives.

That vision has become a success. Driving past Almaden Lake Park on any given day we see children splashing in the water or enjoying the playground, teens learning how to navigate a sailboat, families picnicking, and hikers, walkers, and bicyclists trekking along the Los Alamitos Creek Trail. However, over the past 22 years, the community's needs have diversified.

Parents who helped develop the master plan in the in the mid-1970's now bring their grandchildren to the park. Our growing population places more demand on the park's facilities and an ever-expanding network of pedestrian and bicycle trails are spurring-off from Almaden Lake. Over the past several months, I have been working with the community to refine this master plan.

To meet these new needs and serve more residents, the community has suggested several changes, renovations, and upgrades to Almaden Lake Park. The proposed changes include recreational amenities for senior citizens, a bridge connection to the Guadalupe Creek Trail, upgrades to the marina stations, and enhancements to the picnic area.

A recent city survey revealed that our senior population has one of the highest levels of park use in San Jose. However, there are few, if any, elements at our parks that senior citizens use. Recognizing this need, I have proposed that Almaden Lake Park be equipped with features such as bocce ball courts, horse shoe stations, or lawn bowling. At our first community workshop, many residents applauded the addition of bocce ball to the park.

While elements targeted at our older residents will help Almaden Lake Park meet the needs of our changing community, several other enhancements will make the park more enjoyable for youth and adults. These include:

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- A bridge connecting the Los Alamitos Creek trail to the Guadalupe Creek Trail, giving pedestrians and bicyclists an off-street route between South Almaden, Almaden Quicksilver Park, Branham Lane, and the Almaden Light Rail Station.
- New picnic areas with better shade, serving counters, tables, and BBQ pits. Large groups will be able to reserve certain areas in advance for private parties or family gatherings.
- Renovating and expanding the marina area to accommodate boat rentals, a snack bar, and increased water sports opportunities.

Your input is vital to ensuring that this park meets the changing needs of our community. I will be hosting another community workshop to discuss its improvements is tentatively scheduled for April 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm at the Santa Clara Valley Water District Headquarters (5770 Almaden Expressway). Contact Brian Hartsell, Parks Manager, at 408-938-2013 or [brian.hartsell@ci.sj.ca.us](mailto:brian.hartsell@ci.sj.ca.us) to confirm. I encourage you to attend and learn about the exciting changes that are in store.

If you have any questions about this project or would like additional information, please contact me at (408) 277-5251 or via e-mail at [pat.dando@ci.sj.ca.us](mailto:pat.dando@ci.sj.ca.us).

## Fatal accident on Branham Lane

-Dave Noel

In response to the fatal accident on Branham Lane near Fort Royal Place on January 26<sup>th</sup>, Vice Mayor **Pat Dando** asked **Jim Helmer**, Director of the San Jose Department of Transportation (DOT) to investigate this area for possible safety enhancements, and to report back by February 27<sup>th</sup>. As of this writing, we have not seen DOT's report; however, **Joshua Howard** in Dando's office is arranging to have a DOT speaker at our April 22<sup>nd</sup> general meeting to address these issues.

## Computer disposal

- John Marks

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county recycle service at 1(800)533-8414 and get a list of recyclers. *Allcomputer Resources* will accept your computer and old telephones too for a \$10 fee. Just take them to 499 Reynold Circle, San Jose (near Old Bay Shore & Zanker Drive). They're open 9-3 pm, Monday thru Friday. Telephone: 288-6097.

Alternatively, you can take recyclables to *Auction BBI* at 600 Trimble Rd. (Montague & Trimble), which will take them at no cost. Telephone: 955-7908, or 1(800) 564-3200.

Questions? Call me at 629-6433.

### Day of visioning at Gunderson

*-Jeri Arstingstall*

Gunderson High School held a *Day of Visioning* which included their teachers, staff, students, parents, alumni, and VEP and community members. (The VEP members were **Greg and Robin West, Jane Burns, Veronica Lewis, Bill Johnson, Jeri Arstingstall, Mark Schoenberg**, and students from our area. There were a few teachers who are alumni and live in our community.)

The day started off with a presentation by **Norris Hill** revisiting Gunderson's roots. This presentation showed the attendees that Gunderson had a vision prior to the school door's opening in 1975. Gunderson was and is a pride of the community. Its history over the years was fascinating as it showed how the initial vision faded over the years with Prop 13, a teacher's strike, and budget cuts which changed the structure of the school from 3 grades to 4 grades, resulting in a change of staff by 1/4.

The vision for Gunderson is a technological collaborative, college-preparatory community that achieves academic excellence, celebrates individuality, and respects diversity.

An action plan was also developed to help achieve this vision. The departments of Gunderson High School presented ways that each department can work together and incorporate their current goals to help achieve the vision. GHS students presented a plan that

would be incorporated during spirit week to encourage students and teachers to show different aspects of the school which would encourage people to experience something new.

VEP representatives presented the following, pending VEP board approval: A community representative to help one-on-one with administration and the school site council. This individual would help improve communication by sharing newsletters, sharing web links, encourage mentoring, and Increase awareness of students to our annual *VEP Community Service Awards*. Our community representative would also publicize positive awareness of GHS and help Gunderson in involving the entire community.

In summary, the day went well and achieved a Vision Statement with a plan of action.

As a VEP member we were impressed and thankful that **Demerris Brooks** has included the community in this process. We are proud to support Gunderson High School and help them achieve their goals and to help them be a pride of the community.

### Got critters?

*-Dave Fadness*

For information on pest control measures, call the Santa Clara County Vector Control District at (408) 792-5010 or visit their website at [www.sccvector.org](http://www.sccvector.org). For your convenience, VEP has posted their mosquito and West Niles virus brochures on our website at [www.vepca.org](http://www.vepca.org).

### Neighborhood developments

*-Dave Noel*

A 3,784 square-foot drive-through McDonalds restaurant is proposed for the east side of Almaden Expressway 500-feet northerly of Chynoweth Avenue (at 4950 Almaden Expressway), roughly in front of the Safeway store there.

### Crabgrass controls: beat this annual weed

*-John Marks, VEP's Green Gardener*

The best way to control crabgrass--that familiar annual weed with blue-green leaves and spreading stems--is to maintain a dense, healthy lawn that will out-compete it and prevent it from establishing. Mow at a height of 2-1/2 to 3-1/2 inches, and cut your grass frequently so as not to remove more than one-third of the leaf blade at one time. Also, water deeply and infrequently, and fertilize to encourage a vigorous lawn.

Weed killers are another option. The most effective among them are pre-emergent types that kill weed seeds as they sprout. It's essential to apply the herbicide before crabgrass emerges from the soil. This happens in spring when soil temperatures are greater than

55° to 60°F for seven to ten consecutive days. Check with your local extension service for timing, or monitor the soil temperature yourself using a soil thermometer inserted at an angle just below the surface. But don't apply weed killers prior to seeding or in an area that's just been seeded.

#### Spike Balls and Nuisance Fruits

You can spray trees such as olive and liquid amber (thorny balls) to prevent them from bearing by spraying in the Spring, just after blossoms form and before fruit sets. You'll need two products: a hose sprayer bottle and a floral fruit eliminator concentrate. Ortho makes a *Tree & Shrub Spray-ette*, available from Payless Rockery or Summer Winds Nursery for \$13.95; it shoots 25 feet up into the tree, and higher if you have a step ladder.

*Floral Fruit Eliminator* concentrate is made by Monterey Lawn & Garden Products (\$13.99), available from Orchard Supply. Avoid getting spray on your face or hands and, if spray drifts onto a car, wash it down afterwards (better to move the car first).

This product will prevent other trees such as crab apple and plumb from bearing as well; ironically, if used on green tomatoes in the Fall, it will hasten ripening but not damage the fruit.

Spray it on your trees when they are full bloom, this month at the latest, to eliminate seedpods. Liquid-ambers have insignificant blossoms, in small cluster, yellow in color.

#### Brown Grass and Toadstools

At this time of year when your lawn is coming back (some). You may notice fungus spots and brown areas that aren't greening up well. Cure both problems by fertilizing with a heavy application of sulfate of ammonia now; about six pounds per thousand square feet is not too much, but water first, and water afterward. You'll be pleasantly surprised at its low price in the store.

Mushrooms and toadstools are the fruiting bodies of soil-inhabiting fungi. They assist in the decomposition of organic matter. Life could not exist without them. If you find them unsightly, knock them over with the back of a rake; they will melt and disappear.

And haven't you noticed at this time of year, weeds come slithering out of the soil with the slightest tug. Now's the time to scout around, pulling up those milk weeds and others you can spot.

Cold, damp weather will bring out snails and slugs in droves. They will feast on the tender new growth of bulbs and winter plants. Hand pick, or use a bait, but don't let them go unchecked because they will mow down your garden.

You can prune now, also, especially roses and fruit trees.

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#### Free Lillies

Red Cana Lillies that grow 4-feet tall are free for the asking. Just transferred into 2-quart pots, they are ready for planting. Plants take full sun and spread like Iris. Call John Marks at 629-6433.

#### • Frostbitten plants come back slowly •

Plants that bloom too early can be victims of frost bite this time of year, particularly jade plants. If that happens to you, don't throw them away just because they aren't flowering any more. It takes two or more years for them to recover enough to initiate flowers again.

When we had the big freeze in '89, some plants were just mush afterward. It took three years before they bloomed again. If you cover them with a blanket, the new flowers can be bent over, and they never straighten out.

Some gardeners construct a frame and cover frost-sensitive plants with clear plastic or cloth. Some place an extension cord with a light inside, turning it on at night when temperatures drop below freezing. You can have your own greenhouse that way.

#### Capitol Expressway Light Rail Project

-Gail Price, VTA

The proposed Capitol Expressway Light Rail Project will extend 8.2 miles from the end of the Capitol LRT at Alum Rock Station (currently under construction) to Eastridge Mall and then continue to the existing Guadalupe LRT line at Highway 87. This line will include ten stations and will primarily operate in the median of Capitol Expressway with both grade separated (elevated and depressed) and at-grade crossings at various intersections. A multi-use path for pedestrians and bikes and landscaping are incorporated into the project.

#### WHAT?

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) has scheduled an informational open house about the conceptual engineering for the Capitol Expressway Light Rail Project.



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#### WHY?

This informational open house has been scheduled to:

- Provide the community with the project overview and plans, including options for station designs and locations, urban design features, Eastridge Transit Center Plan, light rail vehicle storage, and park and ride facilities.
- Offer the public an opportunity to get specific answers to their questions about this project.

#### WHO?

You can speak one-on-one with project team members, including VTA staff from the following departments:

- Planning and Programming
- Environmental
- Real Estate
- Community Outreach
- Customer Service

#### WHEN?

Wednesday, April 9, 2003 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

#### WHERE?

Ocala Middle School  
2800 Ocala Avenue, San Jose  
(This location is served by VTA Bus Line 39.)

#### INFORMATION:

If you are unable to attend, you can request a project information packet by contacting the VTA Planning & Programming Department at (408) 321-5744. TDD for the hearing impaired: (408) 321-2330 for specific route and service information. Project information is also available on the VTA website at [www.dtev-vta.org](http://www.dtev-vta.org). Call VTA Customer Service at (408) 321-2300 for specific route and service information.

Language Assistance: To request an interpreter at the Open House, call (408) 321-5744 five days before the meeting date.

**\* VEP \***  
**It's working for you!** 8

## Our February meeting: Capitol light rail

-Dave Fadness

VTA representative Jim Lightbody presented plans for light rail in the median of Capitol Expressway at our February meeting. Although this was VEP's first formal indication that such plans were underway, we were told that the alternatives have already been selected and an environmental impact report (EIR) is being prepared.

In other words, it's too late for VEP and its members to weigh-in on the routes and technologies employed (busway, light rail, road only, commuter lanes, etc.)--except to react to the choices already selected for our expressway.

What is being considered is an extension of trolley service from what is now referred to as the Capitol Avenue Light Rail Transit (LRT) Line. Now under construction, that project will extend LRT along Capitol Avenue, from the Tasman/Milpitas corridor to Alum Rock Avenue. The Capitol Expressway LRT Project would pick up at that point and continue within the expressway median, ultimately extending all the way to Route 87.

Stations are proposed at Story Road, Ocala/Cunningham Avenue, an Eastridge Transit Center, Nieman Boulevard, Silver Creek Road, McLaughlin Avenue, Senter Road, Monterey Road, Vistapark Drive, and Route 87, where it would terminate at the existing LRT facility. Another project currently being proposed would run trolleys from Capitol Expressway along Alum Rock/Santa Clara Street into downtown San Jose.

With few exceptions, the LRT would run "at-grade," meaning that it will be at ground level, sharing the expressway right-of-way and passing through already busy intersections. At its north end, the Capitol Expressway LRT Project will remove two lanes from the expressway. Those lanes are currently the most heavily used commuter (HOV) lanes in our county.

The potential adverse impacts of removing expressway lanes and having at-grade LRT crossings will hopefully be covered realistically in the EIR. Preliminary studies have shown severe degradation of traffic levels of service at numerous signalized intersections, resulting in congestion that violates adopted city and county standards.

In response to VEP member questions regarding the lack of space for a double-track LRT facility and attendant stations in our portion of Capitol Expressway, we were told that, although three travel lanes will remain in each direction, they will be narrowed. Acceleration, deceleration, and right turn lanes will need to be eliminated also. Despite the apparent lack of space, we were told that pedestrians and bicycles would still somehow be accommodated, and that sound walls and landscaping will also be included.

Our members challenged the possibility that this could



be accomplished without serious threat to motorist safety, citing the fact that there are many businesses having driveways directly onto the expressway, and many intersections where accel/decel lanes now exist to allow safe entry/exit. They also pointed to the fact that, in some areas, pedestrian facilities don't exist now and right-of-way is already very limited.

Those who live adjacent to Capitol expressed concern that bringing travel lanes even closer to the edge of the expressway will increase noise in their back yards. Expressway landscaping is pathetic; LRT will mean even less room for improvement. VEP has been successful recently in negotiating with Pinn Brothers for Capitol Expressway median landscaping from Barone to Copperfield. That landscaping would be removed if LRT was built.

When asked who would ride this LRT line and what purpose it would serve, Mr. Lightbody could only say that it would close a transit loop, tying LRT back to itself at the Gaudalupe Line (Route 87). He could not respond to what kind of ridership is currently experienced on existing bus routes along Capitol Expressway, admitting that it probably isn't very extensive.

One of our members suggested that the light rail system should instead extend into Coyote Valley and complete the loop with a connection at the Santa Teresa corridor instead of Capitol/87. Mr. Lightbody indicated that much earlier proposals had future LRT running farther south, tying into the Route 85 corridor where the median is being reserved for possible transit all the way to Cupertino.

In general, VEP members expressed alarm at the fact that such planning is still going forward despite VTA's serious revenue problems and its own prediction of bankruptcy as early as 2005. Fares are being raised, ridership is off precipitously, bus routes are being dropped, bus and LRT service is being curtailed, and the transit agency is going broke, yet they're aggressively planning to add very expensive and marginally productive new LRT lines.

Mr. Lightbody responded by admitting that the current fiscal situation looks bleak, but that our local economy will hopefully turn around soon and we need to plan for the future.

Asked to guess when construction of the Capitol Expressway LRT Project might begin in our area, Mr. Lightbody conjectured that it might be ten-to-twenty years from now.

Again, as a result of what appears to be a VTA oversight, we were not notified in time to influence the basic alternatives being considered for the Capitol Expressway LRT Project. We will keep VEP members apprised of upcoming opportunities to review and comment on the environmental impacts of those alternatives and the thoroughness and objectivity of VTA's EIR.

## Brian Bonnifield Real Estate Consultant

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### VEP website

-Dave Noel

In response to the popular question, "What does VEP stand for?", VEP's webmaster and past president **Greg West** started a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page on our website. He answers this and many other questions, many with tongue-in-cheek responses. Greg may have a future career as a comedian--all I can say is, take a look! If you have a question that isn't answered, please send an email to [vepca@vepca.org](mailto:vepca@vepca.org), and Greg will answer it and add it to the FAQs.

### Blossom Valley Times

-Dave Noel

After several years absence, free home delivery of the *Blossom Valley Times* is beginning to expand back into the VEP membership area, partly due to urging from VEP officers. The *Blossom Valley Times* is published monthly and is distributed approximately mid-month.

VEP had feature articles in two recent editions of the *Blossom Valley Times*. Our Vista Park Dedication ceremony was featured in the December issue, and our landscaping projects were featured in the February issue. VEP's calendar of events is also now prominently featured in the *Blossom Valley Times* Community Calendar section.

If you don't receive a copy of the Times, you can pick up a copy at the Pearl Avenue Library and at several local businesses. Call the Times at (408) 494-7000 to find out where to pick up a copy, and let them know you want home delivery on your street.

### Homeowner tips

Home Insurance

The *Insurance Information Institute* reports that many American home owners do not know what criteria were used to establish the coverage on their policies. In fact, many not only lack financial protection for the equity in their homes, but for personal property as well.

The last thing you expect after paying homeowners'



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premiums for years is that your insurance coverage is not adequate to rebuild your home in case of a total loss. It usually happens because lenders only require home buyers to carry enough insurance to cover the value of the mortgage. Then, in the event of a catastrophe, the lender's investment is covered. Unfortunately, this required insurance is only for the lender's money; it does not cover the homeowner's personal property or their equity.

When deciding on insurance, home owners should carry enough to cover the replacement value of their home and all its contents. The key word is replacement. As your home appreciates, so will its replacement cost, so it is a good idea to review your policy each year or two, adjusting the amount of coverage as necessary.

A word of caution, however; do not insure for more than the value of your real and personal property, because an insurance company will not reimburse more than the replacement value of the property.

Many home owners tend to underestimate the value of their property. When calculating the replacement cost of your home, you need a professional estimate of what it would take to rebuild it at today's cost for labor and building materials. To be adequately protected, you will want to insure your home to 100% of its replacement cost.

Few home owners think about their policies until disaster strikes. It's wiser to be proactive; get the coverage you need before you need it.

• Patio Heaters •

Spring is just around the corner, so you might be getting anxious for the great outdoors. However, chilly evenings might put a damper on your enthusiasm. What can you do?

Explore the option of a deck or patio heater. These handy items can extend your enjoyment of your deck or patio and make entertaining on them more comfortable.. Most of these heaters are fueled by propane,

## Call VEP for help with your community problems!

natural gas, or firewood and in most climates can extend the use of your deck to ten months or more.

These heaters use very little energy and are not expensive to operate. They warm you with radiant heat, the same as the sun does, and can make you very comfortable, even on a cold evening.

Most propane models use a standard propane tank like the ones used with gas grills. The tank is hidden in the base and will last about 12 hours when set on the highest setting and used on a 625 sq. ft. deck. For most decks, the heat output will be set much lower. These models are easy to position on the deck and roll around with ease when you want to move them. A natural gas model can cut the cost by about half, but is not portable. The wood burning models are even cheaper, and the smoke keeps insects at bay.

There are several designs from which to choose. If you're heating an entire deck or patio, you should consider the umbrella-style heater. A radiant burner is positioned on a post about eight feet high with a reflector umbrella that is three feet wide. You push a button to start, much like a gas grill, and you get instant heat. The umbrella models come in white and custom colors, and a stainless steel model that is the most durable.

If you have a roof over your deck or patio, you can hang the heater and eliminate the post and set the tank in an out of the way spot. Another design uses a high output gas log pattern for a fire that's quite realistic. You can arrange pavers, bricks or stones around it to create an attractive base.

If you'd like to heat a small area where people are sitting, choose a directional tank-top propane heater. The radiant burner mounts on the top of the tank, which are lightweight and portable. Wood radiant heaters are the least expensive and give you the scent and crackling of the fire that is so appealing. One model is a potbellied shape made of terra cotta pottery. Another model is

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wheel mounted and circular to allow heat to radiate from all sides, and has a slide-down cover to smother the fire when you're ready to go inside.

When you're shopping for a patio or deck heater, discuss your needs at length with the salesperson to make sure you're getting the model that best suits your purposes. That way you'll be toasty, and most important of all, safe.

[Ed. Note: This article was taken from Brian Bonnifield's website. Brian is a long-time VEP member, a real estate professional, and an advertiser in this newsletter.]



# Bulletin Board Ads

**ABC'S & MORE:** Licensed family childcare in the Vistapark neighborhood. Infants and up. 7 am - 6 pm, M-F. Call Kristine at 224-7616 or email at: alexanderkristine@hotmail.com

**NEIGHBORHOOD NOTARY PUBLIC:** Call Peggy at 224-2243 or 250-3236.

**GOING ON VACATION?** Responsible, experienced 13-year old is available for pet, house, and yard care. Call Matt @ 225-5878.

**AFTER SCHOOL & WEEKEND DAY CARE:** On Vistapark Drive, near Rachel Carson and Parkview Elementary Schools. Call Peggy @ 224-2243 or 250-3236.

**MR. FIX-IT** will repair leaks, sticking doors, locks, latches, lights, and life's little ills. No job is too small. Call John @ 629-6433.

\*\*\*

VEP will print free ads for its members for transactions involving less than \$250, for lost-and-found, for announcements of general interest to our community, and for kids under 18 or retirees who are looking for work. Free ads must be submitted monthly for publication.



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Commercial ads cost \$1.00 per line per month, 10 lines maximum, must be prepaid before publication, and may only be run once per calendar quarter. Commercial ads must be submitted quarterly. No graphics allowed. For information on full-sized ads with graphics (camera ready), contact VEP'S Treasurer listed on the mailing page of this newsletter.

One line contains 50 characters, including spaces. Mail to VEP, P.O. Box 18111, San Jose, 95158. Ads must be received no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month for inclusion in that month's newsletter. Use the following form as a guide for submitting an ad:

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE # \_\_\_\_\_

AD WORDING: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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The VEP Executive Board reserves exclusive right to refuse any ad for any reason. VEP does not certify nor is it responsible in any way for the claims, goods, or services of any advertisers.

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**THE VEP NEWS**



**VEP Community Association**

P.O. Box 18111 San Jose, CA 95158

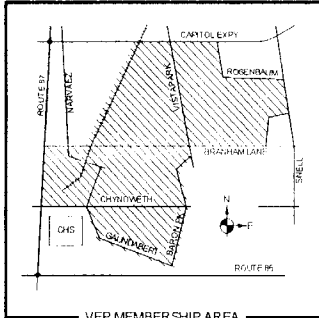
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Published monthly by VEP Community Association, a not-for-profit organization of volunteers established in 1969 to serve and represent more than 2000 homes in the Blossom Valley area of southern San Jose. VEP is dedicated to neighborhood maintenance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

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VEP MEMBERSHIP AREA

**VEP**  
 Meeting 7:30 pm  
 Tuesday, March 25