

VEP NEWS

• VEP COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION •

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

May 2003

VEP MEETING

7:30 P.M. TUESDAY

May 27, 2003

GUNDERSON HIGH SCHOOL

★ Faculty Lounge ★

~ AGENDA ~

★ **San Jose Vice-Mayor Pat Dando** ★

An update on affairs at City Hall that bear on our VEP membership area.

7:30 to 7:50 p.m.

★ **County Supervisor Don Gage** ★

An update on affairs at County government that bear on our VEP membership area.

7:50 to 8:10 p.m.

★ **VEP's At-Large CSA Award** ★

Presentation of

VEP's Annual Community Service Award to our 2003 At-Large recipient

8:10 to 8:20 p.m.

★ **Pinn Brothers Fine Homes** ★

An update on amenity plans for this project now under construction at Capitol/Vistapark.

8:20 to 8:40 p.m.

★ **SummerHill Homes** ★

An update on amenity plans for this project Now under construction at Branham/Vistapark.

8:40 to 9:00 p.m.

★ **Your Community Concerns** ★

Everyone is welcome. Invite your neighbors!

Our May meeting

-Dave Fadness

We have a winner planned for you this month! Vice-Mayor **Pat Dando** and Santa Clara County Supervisor **Don Gage** will lead-off as guest speakers. These two hard-working elected representatives have been cooperating with VEP over the past year to win important neighborhood amenities associated with housing developments now under construction in our area. In addition to major announcements relating to those amenities, they will briefly update us on govern-

ment actions that generally affect our families and neighborhoods.

Two developer representatives will also appear as guest speakers. SummerHill Homes' Vice President **Joe Head** will update us on construction scheduling for the 78 single-family detached residential units they'll build at Vistapark Drive and Branham Lane. Mr. Head will also discuss SummerHill's plans for neighborhood amenities.

Greg Pinn of Pinn Brothers Fine Homes will update us on construction scheduling and plans for neighborhood amenities that include median landscaping and an improved sound wall on Capitol Expressway. Pinn's apartment/condominium project in the northeast quadrant of Capitol Expressway/Vistapark Drive is rapidly nearing completion. Models will be opened this summer and occupancy will begin shortly thereafter.

Our 2003 *At-Large Community Service Award* winner, **Shannon Drach** will appear to receive VEP's recognition for her years of volunteer service in our community. A graduating Leigh High School senior, Miss Drach was selected for this year's honor from a group of four absolutely outstanding nominees submitted by VEP members. Please join us in congratulating and encouraging this fine young lady.

We encourage you to bring any neighborhood issues or concerns to our attention at the end of the meeting. VEP exists to help you help yourself and our community.

Please be sure to attend at 7:30 pm on May 27th. Bring a friend--bring the whole neighborhood! We look forward to seeing you.

VEP Community Service Awards

-Dave Noel

Our Community Service Award committee is in full swing selecting and notifying winners, preparing the award certificates, and preparing to present the awards at the senior awards nights at Andrew Hill and Gunderson high schools. This is the first year that we will present an At-Large award, and we will do it at our May 27th general meeting.

We received three nominations each from Gunderson and Andrew Hill, and four At-Large nominations from our members. Together these young people have volunteered a staggering amount of community service and have positively impacted our community in countless ways.





Precious Moments In Time

Family and Children Portraits

Weddings and Special Events

Photography by Jeri Arstingstall

(408) 281-3393

Selecting the winners has not been an easy task. I'd like to thank our selection committee members who made these tough decisions: **Walt Arstingstall, Jeri Arstingstall, Ginger Cardona, Phil Bejar, Joe Tajnai, Nancy Tajnai, Dave Fadness, Aiko Fadness, Maureen Noel, and Bob Aquino.**

We'll publish the winners' names in our September VEP News.

VEP officer elections

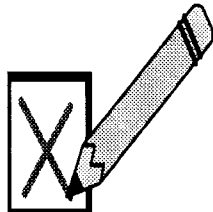
-Dave Noel

The following officers were unanimously re-elected at our April 22nd general meeting:

- President = **David Noel** (his 3rd term)
- Vice President = (see below)
- Secretary = **Ginger Cardona** (her 2nd term)
- Treasurer = **Joe Tajnai** (his 2nd term)
- Editors = **Dave Fadness** and **Bob Aquino** (their "umpteenth" terms)

I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to our dedicated board. They really do a lot of work for all of us and make our community a better place.

It was disheartening that we did not have a candidate for vice president at our April 22nd general meeting. We're sorry to see **Ian Reddy** leave the board, but very thankful for his two years of exemplary service on the board, his ongoing service as coordinator of our annual picnic, and his major contribution to various events throughout the year.

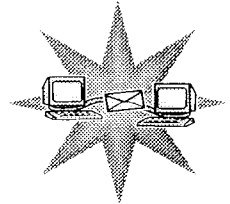


After our April meeting, we were thrilled to learn that **Jeri Arstingstall** was willing serve as vice president. We enthusiastically appointed her to the post at our May 7th executive meeting and welcome her back on the board. Jeri served as our secretary a few years back.

Summer's here--keep in touch by email

-Dave Noel

During our summer hiatus, you won't receive a VEP Newsletter, but we'll be in contact by email to alert you of any breaking news in our area. This might include notice of community meetings, San Jose Police Department email alerts, or any other important announcements.



If you haven't received any VEP email reminders within the last month or so, we may not have your current email address in our records. Please send an email to DNoel1234@aol.com if you need us to add or change your email address (members only, please!)

Be sure to vote on June 3rd

-Greg West

San Jose Unified School District is holding a special election on June 3rd to ask the voters (VEPers who live west of Vista Park Drive) to approve *Measure A*, a 5-year, \$98 parcel tax with a provision for an annual 2% inflation adjustment and an exemption for elderly homeowners.

This measure requires a two-thirds super-majority approval to pass, and thus, would not be subject to citizens' oversight as the 2002 Bond Measure F (requiring a 55% majority) is. The tax spending would be subject to annual audit.

The tax would be used for District operating costs, specifically for text and library books and classroom instructional materials, to attract and retain fully credentialed teachers, to maintain class size reduction, to maintain library staffs, to provide academic specialists in elementary schools, to restore art and music programs, and to restore maintenance and custodial services at school facilities.

Opponents of Measure A state that the amount and timing of the parcel tax is based on a poll of the taxpayers (that is, the District asked the taxpayers what they would be willing to support) instead of performing a District needs assessment. They also claim that many residents would be hurt by the additional tax due to County unemployment. They assert that the efforts of an Education Task Force established by the County Office of Education would be undermined by this measure.

However, in my opinion, there is no question that the state budget cuts are devastating our local schools. Measure A has been placed on the ballot to protect our local quality of education during the state budget crisis. Over the next five years, Measure A funds will stay in our community to benefit our children. Measure A is a good investment for our community. Good schools pro-



tect our property values.

Whether your children are grown and gone or you are a parent of school age children, I hope you will take this opportunity to protect quality education and support our local schools.

Be sure to vote on June 3rd.

Upcoming VEP meetings and events

Tue May 27, 7:30 - 9 pm: General Meeting at Gundersen High School (Pat Dando, Don Gage, Pinn Brothers' Capitol /Vistapark development, and SummerHill's Branham/Vistapark development).

Tue Jun 3, 7 am - 8 pm: **Special Election**--Get out and vote! (See article above.)

Wed Jun 4, 7:30 - 9 pm: VEP exec meeting, call for location.

Wed Jul 16, 7:30 - 9 pm: VEP exec meeting, call for location.

Wed Aug 6, 7:30 - 9 pm: VEP exec meeting, call for location.

Wed Sep 3, 7:30 - 9 pm: VEP exec meeting, call for location.

Tue Sep 23, 7:30 - 9 pm: General Meeting at Gundersen High School. (Agenda to be announced.)

Membership drive

-Dave Noel

Our membership drive is complete, though we always accept new members. Thanks for the wonderful show of support. To date, more than 95% of you have renewed your membership, and renewals continue to trickle in.

If you get a new neighbor over the summer, please encourage them to join VEP. Better yet, consider buying their first year's membership as a welcoming gift.

Free ultra-low flush toilets (ULFTs)

FREE toilets are now available to eligible single-family homeowners. The City of San Jose and the San Jose/Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant are offering up to three free toilets to qualifying homeowners.



Take advantage of this opportunity to get the latest in toilet technology and reduce the amount of treated water sent to the South San Francisco Bay which is the home of two endangered species.

For more information, call the Water Efficiency Program at (408) 277-2600. (Monday - Friday 9 am - 5 pm) or go to: <http://www.slowtheflow.com/ulfts.htm>. This is a



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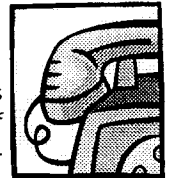
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Pre-register now for *Do Not Call List*

Californians can now pre-register for the nationwide **Do Not Call List** that the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is expected to launch this summer. California is joining in the Do Not Call registry which is free to consumers.



If you sign up now, you can stop unwanted calls beginning in October 2003 under this nationwide program. California's Office of the Attorney General will deliver the pre-registered California telephone numbers to the FTC as soon as the federal agency is ready to receive them, most likely in July 2003.

Only California residential and mobile telephone numbers are eligible for this program. Business telephone numbers are excluded. Beginning October 2003, telemarketers must stop calling consumers whose telephone number is on the national *Do Not Call list*.

While most telemarketer calls will be prohibited, there are certain exceptions. For example, charities and companies that have an established relationship with a consumer will still be allowed to make calls.

Signing up through the California Department of Justice website means that your information won't be used for any purpose other than to get onto the FTC **Do Not Call List**. However, don't be fooled by bogus registration sites.

To pre-register for the **Do Not Call List** go to this URL: <http://nocall.doj.state.ca.us>

Telephone scam warning

The Department of Homeland Security recently distributed a *Federal Community Alert* regarding a telephone scam that allows unauthorized individuals to have com-

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plete access to your telephone line. This complete access enables individuals to place long distance calls and have them billed to your telephone number.

This scam evidently has been originating from local jails and prisons.

The scam works like this: an individual identifying himself/herself as an AT&T Service technician will call and explain that he/she is conducting a test on telephone lines. The caller then tells you that to complete the test you should touch nine (9), zero (0), the pound sign (#), and then hang up.

By pushing 9 - 0 - #, you give the requesting individual full access to your telephone line, which enables him or her to place long distance calls billed to your home phone number. UCB, Telecom-Pacific Bell, MCI, Bell Atlantic, GTE, and Verizon have verified this process.

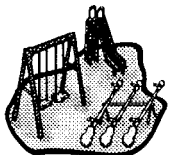
Please beware of this scam and DO NOT press 9 - 0 - # for anyone.

If you feel that you have been a victim of this scam at home, please contact your local law enforcement department and your telephone service provider.

Neighborhood parks

-Dave Noel

Vista Park: Parks manager **Todd Capurso** reports that Port-a-potties will be installed in late May and remain through the summer, so long as vandalism does not become a problem. Vice Mayor **Pat Dando** surprised us with news that the basketball court is expected to be re-surfaced by June. VEP treasurer **Joe Tajnai** led efforts by VEP executives to document the current status on a number of construction and maintenance issues that have been identified since the major reconstruction last fall. VEP's letter to the

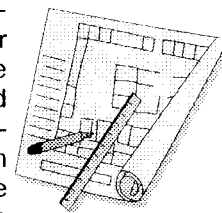


San Jose Parks & Recreation department is posted on our website.

Almaden Lake Park: **Jo Coffaro**, assistant to Vice

Mayor Pat Dando, and Parks Manager **Brian Hartsell** hosted a second community meeting on April 17th to report on improvements that will begin this fall. In the first meeting held on February 26th, community input was collected to prioritize four possible improvements (a new group picnic area, a new marina complex, new Bocce Ball courts, and a new children's play area), and to select among several design options for each improvement. The original plan was to eliminate the lowest priority improvement item, but community voting assigned relatively equal priority for each item. Brian surprised the group by announcing that they have found a way to implement all four improvements, then reviewed further detail on the selected design for each one.

County Parks Strategic Plan: The Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation department has developed a strategic plan to establish a vision for park priorities over the next twenty years. VEP executives reviewed the plan and noticed that it did not include any reference to the **Lester Property**, the large undeveloped piece of land south of Branham Lane and east of Vistapark Drive. VEP executives wrote a letter to the strategic plan steering committee requesting that the Lester property either be added to the plan, or at least that they ensure that the plan does not create any barriers to developing this property as a historic agricultural park according to Mr. Lester's wishes when the land does become available to the county. VEP's letter is posted on our website.



Winfield Park: VEP executives will speak in favor of naming this new park *William H. Cilker Park* at the San Jose City Council's May 27th afternoon meeting. VEP executives formally nominated this name, and spoke in favor of our nominated name at the San Jose Parks and Recreation Commission hearing on April 2nd. The commission voted to recommend naming it *Cilker Park*. The city council makes the final decision. Construction is scheduled to begin this summer.

If you notice problems with parks in the VEP area, please call or email any of the board members listed on the mailing page of this newsletter. If you could help us track park issues and attend our monthly executive meetings, please contact me. VEP would really appreciate your help.

Neighborhood developments

- Dave Fadness and Dave Noel

SummerHill Homes: Our members will have noticed by now that trees have been removed and grading has begun on the 8.8-acre parcel at Vistapark Drive and Branham Lane. This is in preparation for SummerHill Homes' project that will build 78 single-family detached residential units there. SummerHill Vice President Joe Head will attend our May 27 meeting to update VEP members on construction scheduling and plans for neighborhood amenities.

Pinn Brothers Fine Homes: The apartment/condominium project being built by Pinn Brothers in the northeast quadrant of Capitol/Vistapark is rapidly nearing completion. Models will be opened this summer and occupancy will begin shortly thereafter. Greg Pinn will attend our May 27 meeting to update VEP members on construction scheduling and plans for neighborhood amenities that include median landscaping and an improved sound wall on Capitol Expressway.



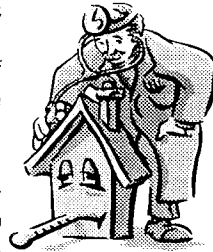
Snell & Branham widening funds deferred: Searching for funds to build an airport-area interchange at 17/ Coleman, the City of San Jose has decided to borrow funds originally designated for widening Branham Lane and Snell Avenue. This decision will delay Branham and Snell improvements until new funding can be identified.

Blossom Hill Road & Cahalan Avenue: William Lyon Company has applied for a permit to build five single family homes on a 1.07 gross acre site at the northeast corner of Blossom Hill Road and Cahalan Avenue.

California Home Performance Program

-Kevin Bayley

You've put a lot of time, money and even love into the home you own. But taking care of your home involves more than just a new paint job. Here in the VEP area, many of our homes were built before energy efficiency standards were created. That means the roofs, windows, and unseen seams in our homes may leak energy, resulting in higher gas and electric bills. And our older homes are also more likely to harbor harmful build-up of carbon monoxide which can be life threatening.



New high-tech equipment and a modern diagnostic approach can help homeowners identify and fix these problems. The new *California Home Performance Program* allows trained diagnosticians to explore every nook and cranny in your home. By conducting an audit of your home, the diagnostician can provide you with a detailed report pinpointing the exact causes of the problems in your home and how to fix them, then make the needed retrofit.

For more information or to schedule an audit, call 1-888-352-2722 or visit <http://www.calhomeperformance.org/>. The program will show you how to achieve direct utility bill savings, long-term home value protection, and peace of mind knowing that you and your family live in healthy, comfortable energy efficient home.

[Ed. Note: This article was submitted by Kevin Bayley of Catapult Strategies on behalf of the California Home Performance Program. This program is funded by California ratepayers under the auspices of the California

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PUC, and tests homes for energy efficiency and the buildup of mold, other allergens, and carbon monoxide. Member contractors perform diagnosis testing for a reduced fee of \$100 (which increases after July 31st based on the size of the house). The testing contractor may apply the diagnosis fee to the cost of any retrofits they perform for you. You are not obligated to use the member contractor for retrofits.]

It's your turn to compost

-Ken Kelly

Turn a mountain of leaves and a bag of grass into a hill of humus. Learn the basics of backyard and worm composting in a fun and informative classroom experience. Be a better recycler, environmentalist, and gardener.

The *Home Composting Education Program for Santa Clara County* in coordination with the city of San Jose sponsors *Composting Basics Workshop*' that are free of charge to all interested adults. Certificated Master Composter Volunteers conduct the classes. No physical effort or prior composting experience is required for the workshop.

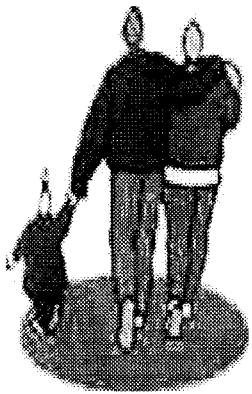


Please choose one class from the following schedule [all classes are held on Saturdays, 10 am to noon, except as noted (*)]:

- May 10, Sep 20, Nov 8: Willows Senior Center.
- Jul 19, Aug 16: Prusch Park.
- Jun 14, Oct 11: Moreland-West San Jose Community Center.
- May 14 (*), Oct 15: Guadalupe River Park & Gardens, 6 to 8 pm.

San Jose residents can purchase a low-cost compost bin at the conclusion of the class, and the first 50 registrants will receive a free gift as well.

For location, directions, and to register (required) for the free workshop call us at (408) 918-4640 or you can email us at compost@pln.co.scl.ca.us For other



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county-wide workshop dates, visit our website www.ReduceWaste.org.

[Ed. Note: Ken Kelly is Director of the Home Composting Education Program for Santa Clara County.]

2nd Annual VEP Community Picnic

-Yvonne Reddy

Would there be enough people? Would there be too many? Would it be sunny? Would it be raining?

At press time, the 2nd Annual VEP Community Picnic had not yet occurred but plans were in full swing for a fun-filled day. Races, crazy hair, door prizes, demonstrations by America Tae Kwon Do Center, San Jose Police K-9 Squad, and the San Jose Fire Department had all been arranged.

Planning and organizing all these activities was made possible through the generous support of local businesses and individuals. They provided supplies, prizes, gift certificates, cash donations, volunteer time, and advertising. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them and urge you to support these businesses:

Vista Park & Capitol Expressway:

- Baskin Robbins
- Fun Stuff Comics and Cards
- Oshusi-San
- SubWay

Snell Plaza (Branham & Snell):

- America Tae Kwon Do Center
- BlossomTravel
- Brian's Fish World
- Cool Beans Coffee (opening soon!)
- McDonald's
- Safeway
- Postal Annex
- USA Cellular
- Wells Fargo (Doron Noyman, Rosa Aguirre, James Luu)

Other businesses & individuals:

*VEP
gives special
thanks to
these fine
businesses!*

- FlowerWorks, (by Ohlone/Chynoweth LRT station)
- Carlton Plaza (corner of Branham & Vista Park)
- Wesley Terrell, Century 21 Champion Realty
- Precious Moments in Time Photography
- Yvonne Reddy, Kitchen Consultant w/ The Pampered Chef®
- Loretta Chappelle, Century 21 Alpha
- San Jose Police Dept. K-9 unit
- San Jose Fire Department

City of San Jose:

- Todd Capurso, Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services
- Phil Ringenberg, Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services
- Joshua Howard, Office of Vice-Mayor Pat Dando

Watch the next issue of the VEP News for the names of the many volunteers who helped with this terrific event; coordinating races, "styling" hair, handing out prizes, collecting event donations, and other tasks too numerous to mention.

Finally, on behalf of the VEP Community Association, thanks to all who attended and showed their support for this wonderful community. We look forward to seeing you again next year!

VEP's community garage sale

-Dave Noel

I hope you enjoyed our annual community garage sale on Saturday April 26th. I had fun meeting with neighbors and picked up a few bargains to boot.

The VEP garage sale was one of three events publicized on flyers delivered door-to-door to the vast majority of residents in the VEP area. The other two events were the Home Improvement Faire and our Community Picnic. These flyers were very effective, and we expressed our thanks to the **Hospitality Committee** and their crew of volunteers who created, copied, and distributed the flyers.



This month I'd like to thank **Ginger Cardona** for coordinating the Garage Sale event, and for answering a large number of phone calls about the event in response to the flyers. I'd also like to thank **Jeri and Walt Arstingstall** for scouting around and removing any garage sale signs left up after the event. Jeri reported that our participants did a great job of removing their own signs, so I'd like to thank all of you for doing that.

Book nearly closed on Soriano tragedy

- Greg West

The San Jose Mercury News reported that five men pleaded guilty to manslaughter charges in the stabbing death of Gunderson High School student John Soriano.

16, at the Ohlone/Chynoweth LRT station on the afternoon of November 29, 2000. The defendants thus avoided murder trials.

The SJMN also reported that the accused stabber, Phuoc "Gary" Vong, 19, pleaded guilty to voluntary manslaughter and weapons charges, and faces 28 years in prison. Tue Hyunh, 19, pleaded to similar charges and faces a 25-year sentence. John Soriano was unarmed during the tragedy, which was witnessed by dozens of high school students that use LRT to get to and from school.

Three other men, Duc Nguyen, 19, Hung Duc Le, 19, and Sang Mai, 22, face sentences of 5- to 14-years after pleading to voluntary and involuntary manslaughter charges. Vong and Mai were arrested in Illinois 8 months after the killing.

In 2001, Nguyen's twin bother, Vien Nguyen, pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter charges according to the the SJMN. Sentences were increased because of the defendants' associations with the Viet Warriors and Asian Warriors gangs. All of the men were charged as adults although only Mia was an adult at the time of the killing. The last of the sentencing hearings will begin in July.

For additional information, see "Update to the Community" and "President's Corner" in the January, 2001 VEP News, archived at www.vepca.org.

Crime Stoppers: Did you know...

-Ken Kelly

Crime Stoppers Silicon Valley is a volunteer group of concerned citizens that works with every law-enforcement agency in Santa Clara County, from Palo Alto to Gilroy, to help catch criminals. If you see or hear of criminal activity, report it anonymously to Crime Stoppers @ 947-STOP.



If your tip leads to an arrest, you may be eligible for a Crime Stopper reward of up to \$1,000!

[Ed. Note: Ken Kelly is Vice President, Board of Directors, Crime Stoppers Silicon Valley.]

Computer corner

-Bob Aquino, VEP's Computer Guru

I had a new set of experiences in the computer realm recently. The week after Easter, the majority of the Aquino clan migrated to Idaho for a family reunion. My aunt (age 84) came out from New York, bearing with her some heirloom photographs of my grandparents and all my uncles and aunts. We wanted copies so we went to my brother's computer and scanned them in. He printed them up and they were a good representation of the originals.

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Then the troubles began. The pictures had some damage and needed to be cleaned up. My brother had no software for processing pictures. I have Photoshop in my computer at home, so I volunteered to do it.

No Problem! I'll mail them to my email address. Wrong! My brother's email rejected them because the attachments were too long. He didn't have any compression utilities, so I was stuck with the file size, which was way too big for floppies. My brother has a 256MB Zip drive. Unfortunately, my Zip drive is a 100MB model. However, I figured that I could find some way to read that disk when I got back to San Jose.



The happy ending of the story is that the high school computer lab in which I volunteer, does have the right Zip drive, and I eventually managed to get the files into my computer.

One photo in particular had been folded, which caused a crack in the emulsion. However, after a massage job in Photoshop, the mar in the picture could be completely erased. I'm working on the other pictures to see what I can do to bring them closer to their original condition.

One thing I have learned from this experience is to pay attention to formats. My brother saved the pictures (they were all 8x10 size) in bitmap (.bmp) format. This is the most verbose format for pictures. Since these pictures were all large format there is no likelihood that I will enlarge them. I have subsequently saved them to jpeg (.jpg) format, and the files were about 20% of the bitmap files.

Gunderson student wins the gold

-Linda Shipes

Last month we reported that Gunderson High School student **Jarrett Labate**, who also attends Central County Occupational Center, received a gold metal in the Skills USA-VICA regional competition in welding.

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Jarrett attended the statewide *SkillsUSA-VICA* competition during April in Riverside. We are pleased to announce that Jarrett has been awarded the highest award in welding, the gold metal, and was awarded miscellaneous welding equipment and tools.



We at Gunderson are proud of Jarrett and his accomplishments.

Honors Night

Held May 8th, our 20th annual *Academic Honors Night* was an extra special evening for parents, family, and students who earned GPAs of 3.0 or higher in recent semesters. Awards were presented in four categories: Superintendent's (81), Principal's (154), Academic Achievement (94), and Academic Recognition (157). Two students achieved a 4.0 GPA for their entire high school career and were presented with special awards. Congratulations **Alysia Bosworth** and **Patrick Dalcanto**.

[Ed. Note: Linda Shipes is Program Specialist/Computer Instruction at Gunderson High School.]

President's message

-Dave Noel, VEP's President

If everything goes according to plan, our May meeting should be one of the best this year. We expect to have representatives from two housing developers building projects in our area, and hope both will make announcements of great news for our area. A great deal of behind-the-scenes work over the past several months has lead up to this. We also expect to have both Vice Mayor **Pat Dando** and County Supervisor **Don Gage** at our meeting.

To top it all off, we will present our \$1,500 At-Large Community Service Award to a deserving graduating high school senior. It's going to be a great meeting, so don't miss it!

VEP has had a tremendous year. We set our goals high in September, and we met them handily. While our executive board will continue to work over the summer,

one of our most important jobs will be to recharge our batteries. Rest will help replenish our energy, but we also need new sources of energy as we go forward.

In other words, **we need YOU!** If you want to know your neighborhood better and do great things, please come to any of our executive board meetings over the summer. That's when we plan what we'll do next year.

Contact any of us listed on the mailing page of this newsletter for location and possible date or time changes from what's listed in our calendar of events.

I wish you all a safe and restful summer, and we'll see you in September!

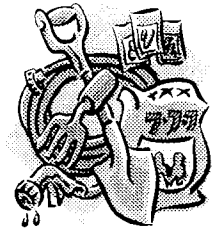
Gardening advice

-John Marks, VEP's Green Gardener

Control ivy without legislation

Recently, Oregon outlawed ivy. Maybe we should. It's such a pain to get rid of. It grows into yards from the neighbors, and there's a rumor that it provides shelter for rats, not to mention squirrels.

You can rid your yard of ivy with a two-step method. In the spring, cut it back as close as you can with a weed mower or rotary mower. When new leaves emerge, have grown to almost full size, and are still bright green, spray with Finale, an herbicide that will kill it, roots and all. Then you can dig it out or rototill it under. (Of course, getting in your neighbor's yard to do this may take a flashlight in the night.)



Rats do love ivy; it provides shelter and is a food source.

[This article was adapted from the 4/18/03 Mercury News.]

Bumblebees in your attic?

You may have seen bumblebees going in and out of a vent hole in your attic. Those "bumblebees" are really carpenter bees. They lay eggs in the wood parts (rafters, beams and studs) of the house and their larvae bore tunnels while eating the wood. They do very little structural damage, if any, but can become a noisy nuisance (have you heard buzzing in your ears?).



To get ride of them, plug or cover the entrances/exits you see them using. They are not able to seek new exits, as they are not that intelligent. The larvae will die, and you can unplug the entrance later, but keep a watchful eye for new colonies.

[This article was adapted from the 5/2/03 Mercury News.]

Green thumb tip

Parsley increases roses' fragrance, so plant some around your favorite bushes to enhance their sweet smell of success. Works well for your bad breath, too.

Cutting grass at the right height

Different grasses have different ideal heights, and you should mow to keep the lawn within that optimum range.



Cool-season northern grasses, such as Kentucky bluegrass, fescue and ryegrass, grow upright and should be cut higher than southern grasses, like Bermuda and zoysia, that spread out as they grow. More often than not, homeowners mow too low.

There are three good reasons for mowing higher. First, grass, like all green plants, lives mostly on food manufactured in its leaves. Taller grass produces more food, so it's more vigorous and disease-resistant. Second, the longer the top growth, the deeper the roots. Deep roots are better able to withstand drought and extreme cold. Finally, tall grass shades weed seeds, keeping them from sprouting.

You need to cut cool-season grasses at the top end of the cutting-height range in July and August, because they falter in the heat of summer. Lower the cutting height for these grasses during the cool weather of spring and autumn.

Make the last few cuts of the season at the bottom end of the ideal range. This prevents the grass from matting up over the winter, and also makes fall leaf cleanup easier.

However, forget the "mow high in summer" advice if you have a lawn of warm-season grass, such as Bermuda, St. Augustine or zoysia. These grasses love scorching weather. With them, your task is to mow within the optimum range often enough through summer to keep up with their rapid growth.

Checking the mowing height of your mower is simple: Mow a swath of lawn and then measure the length of the grass blades from the ground up. Compare that measurement to the recommended mowing heights. If your mower cuts too low or too high, adjust it.

Mow when the grass needs it. For northern grasses, this may mean mowing twice a week in the spring, every two weeks in the summer and once a week in the fall. It's different for warm-season grasses. Typically, they require a cutting once every two weeks in spring and fall, and once a week or more in summer.

On the Web

The web site of Gardener's Supply Company, www.gardener.com, features gardening information.

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Adopt-A-Creek partners

-Dave Noel

The Santa Clara Valley Water District has an *Adopt-A-Creek* program that provides volunteer opportunities for community groups, as well as individuals and families. Volunteers clean litter from creeks to prevent pollution and flooding caused by obstructions.

For more information, call Ed Morales at (408) 265-2607, ext. 2880, or visit www.valleywater.org.

Here is a sampling of community groups in or near the VEP area who have adopted a creek near us. If you'd like to lead a VEP group in this program, please let me know and we'll set you up.

<u>Community Group</u>	<u>Adopted Stream</u>
Rachel Carson School	Canoas Creek
Broadway High School	Canoas Creek
Pioneer High School	Guadalupe Creek
Steinbeck Middle School	Guadalupe Recharge Ponds
Girl Scout Troop #124	Guadalupe River
Boy Scout Troop #286	Guadalupe River

Traffic complaints?

For an official on-line traffic complaint form, go to one of these websites:

www.vepca.org

-or-

www.sjpd.org/traffic_complaint_form.htm



If you want to report a traffic complaint but do not have access to the internet, call one of the VEP officers listed on the mailing page of this newsletter. We'll arrange to have a copy of the form delivered to you.

San Jose's Lawn Parking Ordinance

✓ *Why did the City Council enact this Ordinance?*
The City Council enacted the *Lawn Parking Ordinance* in response to complaints from citizens that motor vehi-



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cles parking on lawns created visual blight in their neighborhoods, lowered property values and, in some cases, created a safety concern.

✓ *What exactly does this ordinance prohibit?*

The Lawn Parking Ordinance prohibits parking any motor vehicle (including automobiles, trucks, boats, campers, recreational vehicles, and motorcycles) on any portion of a front yard or corner lot side yard except on an area that is paved.

✓ *What is a "paved surface"?*

A "paved surface" can be cement, brick, asphalt, paver, etc. It should be installed so it does not drain onto neighboring property. It is not a paved surface if only the areas under the tires are paved. In some areas of town there are existing strips of cement leading to a parking area--this is ok, but -will not be acceptable for new installations.

✓ *Where may I park my car?*

Cars may be parked: in the garage; on the driveway, or on any other paved surface except the public sidewalk; in side yards that are not adjacent to a street if no required exits from the house are blocked; in the rear yard if 60% of the yard area remains open space; and on the street as long as they are moved every 72 hours.

✓ *What about my travel trailer or my kid's bicycle?*

Another ordinance, the *Zoning Code*, prohibits storing your trailer in the front setback of your property. The Lawn Parking Ordinance does not prohibit parking a bicycle or tricycle on your lawn.

✓ *How is the ordinance enforced?*

When Code Enforcement receives a complaint, a letter will be sent to the registered owner of the vehicle and, if different, the owner and occupant of the property. This letter will give the vehicle and/ or property owner ten days to locate an alternative parking space for the motor vehicle.

✓ *Why should the property owner be held responsible if his tenant parks on the lawn?*

Generally, property owners are responsible for any code violation on their property. The property owner also is the only one who can authorize paving for any additional parking.

✓ *What happens if the vehicle is not moved?*

If the vehicle is not moved, an Administrative Citation will be sent to the registered owner of the vehicle and may also be mailed to the property owner. This citation is similar to a parking ticket in that the person receiving the notice may pay the fine without going to court. This is not a criminal citation.

✓ *How much is the fine?*

The fine is \$25, but a new citation may be issued every day that the vehicle is discovered parked on the lawn.

✓ *What if the citations are ignored?*

If the owner ignores the citations and refuses to move the vehicle, the city could issue a Compliance Order which carries fines up to \$2500 per day, plus administrative costs.

✓ *What if I pull my car onto the lawn to wash it? Will I be cited for that?*

No. Neighbors won't complain if this is just a temporary situation or infrequent occurrence. The ordinance is designed to prohibit someone from routinely parking his or her car on the lawn.

✓ *What if my neighbor has an old junk car up on jacks but it's stored on his driveway; not his lawn?*

There is another city ordinance that prohibits storing inoperable vehicles in driveways or front yard. Call the Vehicle Abatement Unit, 277-4528. Be sure you state that the vehicle is on private property. You will need to provide the correct address, a description of the vehicle, and the license plate number, if available. Note: The vehicle has to be inoperable (missing essential parts like the engine, transmission, or wheels); no action can be taken if the vehicle is only unregistered, not used, or just looks ugly.

✓ *What will happen then?*

Eventually the car may be towed, but it is a long process. The city must send a written, 30-day notice to the

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Call me with your Real Estate Questions

registered owner of the vehicle and the owner of the property. This is followed by a 10-day notice.

✓ *What if the car is pushed onto the street?*

To report an inoperable vehicle on the street, call 277-5305. You will hear a recording that will ask you for the license plate number, if any, the address, cross street, color of the vehicle, and description. A Vehicle Abatement Officer will investigate the next time they are in the district.

If you would like to report a violation, please provide the following information:

- your name, address, and daytime telephone number;
- the address where the motor vehicle is parked on the lawn;
- the license plate number of the vehicle;
- the location on the lawn;
- whether the vehicle appears operable or inoperable.

If you have more than three addresses to report, the city asks that you supply the above-requested information by mail or by fax.

Mailing address: Code Enforcement Division, 777 N. First Street, Suite 700, San Jose 95112. Telephone: (408) 277-4528. FAX: (408) 277-3290.

► ► **Bulletin Board Ads** ◀ ◀

U.S. MILITARY ITEMS WANTED: Top \$\$ paid. Call Doug at 978-3093.

WAYNE'S LAWN AERATION SERVICE: Most front & back yards aerated and fertilized for only \$60. Also do sprinklers, dethatching, overseeding, and lawn renovations. Call 265-0165 or www.wayneslawnaeration.com.

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

AFTER SCHOOL & WEEKEND DAY CARE: On Vistapark Drive, near Rachel Carson and Parkview Elementary Schools. Call Peggy @ 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.

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.

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

VEP will print free ads for its members for transactions involving less than \$250, for lost-and-found, for an-

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ouncements 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.

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 10th 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: _____

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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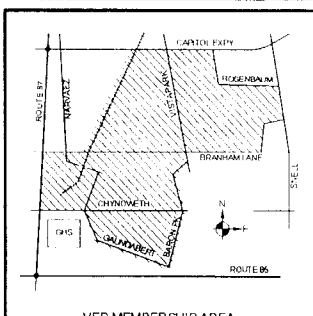
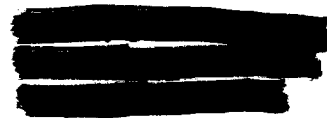
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Published monthly by VEP Community Association, a not-for-profit organization of volunteers established in 1969 to serve and represent more than 2000 homes in the Blossom Valley area of southern San Jose. VEP is dedicated to neighborhood maintenance 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
Meeting 7:30 pm
Tuesday, May 27