

VEP NEWS

• VEP COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION •

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

October 2008

VEP MEETING

7:30 p.m. Tuesday
► **October 28, 2008** ◀

Gunderson High School Theater
622 Gaundabert Lane, San Jose

AGENDA

- ★ 2008 General Election Forum ★
 - VTA's Measure B
 - VTA's Measures C & D
 - San Jose's Measures J & K
 - California's Proposition 11

Vote Smart on November 4th

Everyone is welcome. Invite your neighbors!

VEP's October Meeting—Election Forum
by *Dave Fadness*

Our October 28th meeting is an Election Forum co-sponsored by VEP, Almaden Valley Community Association, and the Santa Teresa Foothills Neighborhood Association.



To help you vote smart on November 4th, we selected from the overwhelming array of ballot measures and propositions what we think are subjects that need explanation and clarification. We've invited pro/con speakers to offer their viewpoints and will allow time for you to ask questions of them.

These are our topics and speakers for this event:

~ **7:30 to 7:50 p.m.** ~
Valley Transportation Authority (VTA)

Measure B:

A 1/8-cent sales tax limited to thirty years for BART

Bob Hines, Proponent
Greg Perry, Opponent

Measure B requires a 2/3 vote for approval. It asks voters, "To reduce dependence on foreign oil, help relieve soaring gas prices and combat climate change, shall the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority enact a 1/8 cent sales tax limited to thirty years for BART to operate/ maintain/ improve the 16.1 mile Santa Clara County BART extension, with stations in Milpitas, San Jose, and Santa Clara, connecting with Caltrain from Gilroy to San Francisco and an Airport People Mover, to be collected only if sufficient state/federal funds are secured to

match local construction dollars?"

According to the County Counsel's impartial analysis, the proposed tax would only be collected if sufficient state and federal funds are secured to match local construction dollars. Under the measure, federal funds would be considered secured and matched when the federal government executes a Full Funding Grant Agreement, or its equivalent, in an amount of at least \$750 million. State funds would be considered secured and matched when the California Transportation Commission approves an Allocation Request, or its equivalent, in an amount of at least \$240 million. Collection of the tax would commence only if these two match requirements are met if these two requirements are met, the tax would be collected for a period of 30 years. The tax would expire by operation of law at the end of the 30-year period.

~ **7:55 to 8:15 p.m.** ~

Valley Transportation Authority (VTA)

Measure C:

Endorse transit services as described in the draft Valley Transportation Plan 2035
~ and ~

Measure D:

Replace citizen vote on comprehensive transit program every 6 years with a VTA Committee review every 6 years

Charlotte Powers, Proponent
Greg Perry, Opponent

These measures will be taken together, as they both pertain to long range transportation plans at VTA.

Measure C is advisory only. It asks voters, "Shall the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority continue to plan, design, construct and provide transit services as described in the draft Valley Transportation Plan 2035 (VTP2035) to be adopted by December 2008? Voting for this Measure does not increase taxes."

Per County Counsel's impartial analysis, in 1976, the voters passed a law, subsequently amended in 1990, that requires VTA to submit its comprehensive transit program to County voters for an advisory vote every six years. "Transit" primarily means buses, light rail and trains. Since it has been six years since the last vote, VTA's transit program is due this year for another advisory vote. The VTA transit program that is the subject of this vote is the draft Valley Transportation Plan 2035 (VTP2035) to be adopted by the VTA Board in December 2008.

VTP 2035 calls for VTA to continue planning, designing, constructing and providing transit services, and to the extent financial resources allow, VTP2035 proposes augmenting services

2008 is VEP's 39th year!

by improving bus and light rail vehicles and equipment; completing and enhancing light rail lines; planning for future rapid transit projects; participating in the continuing operation and improvements of Caltrain service, Altamont Commuter Express Services and Capitol Corridor Commuter Rail Services; promoting transit oriented development near major transit facilities; and continuing the development of the Downtown East Valley and the BART to Milpitas, San Jose and Santa Clara projects.

Measure D requires a majority vote. It asks voters, "Shall the following ordinance be enacted? The ordinance adopted by the people of the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority on March 2, 1976 (Measure B) and amended by the voters at the November 6, 1990 election, shall be further amended to read as follows: "It shall be the policy of the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority to submit to the 2000 Measure A Citizen's Watchdog Committee every 6 years a comprehensive transit program for review and comment."

According to County Counsel's impartial analysis, in 1976, voters passed a law, subsequently amended in 1990, that requires the Board of Directors of the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) to submit its comprehensive transit program to County voters for an advisory vote every six years. These advisory votes are not binding on the VTA, but serve to provide the VTA with important information about the voters' preferences on the proposed transit program.

In 2000, voters approved "Measure A," creating a Citizens' Watchdog Committee to review annual reports and ensure VTA was spending the tax authorized by Measure A on the projects included in that measure.

VTA proposes eliminating the requirement that it hold an advisory vote on its comprehensive transit program every six years. In its place, VTA proposes requiring that it submit its comprehensive transit program to the Citizens' Watchdog Committee every six years for review and comment.

~ 8:20 to 8:40 ~
City of San Jose's

Measure J:

Reduction by 10% and Replacement of
9-1-1 System Access Fee
~ and ~

Measure K:

10% Rate Reduction and Update of
Telecommunications Users Tax

Lee Wilcox, Proponent
Brian Darby, Opponent

These measures will be taken together, as they both pertain to fees/taxes collected by the City of San Jose.

Measure J requires a majority vote. It asks voters, "Shall an ordinance be adopted to eliminate the 911 fee of \$1.75 per telephone line and replace it with a 10% reduced tax of \$1.57 with a corresponding reduction for commercial-type trunk lines, to support essential City services such as police, fire, emergency response, parks, and libraries; to continue exemptions for low-income senior citizens or low-income disabled households, subject to existing audits?"

According to the City Attorney's impartial analysis, the City currently imposes a monthly fee on telephone customers in the amount of \$1.75 per telephone line and \$13.13 per commercial type trunk line. The purpose of this fee is to help pay

for part of the cost of operating the City emergency communications (9-1-1) system.

Measure J, if approved, will eliminate the emergency communications system support fee, and replace it with a tax in an amount that is 10% less than the current fee. The new tax amount will be \$1.57 per telephone line per month and \$11.82 per commercial type trunk line. The tax would be collected from telephone users on their phone bills.

Persons who are exempt from the existing fee, including low income seniors and disabled persons who receive lifeline telephone service, would be exempt from payment of the proposed tax.

Money that the City receives from the current fee can only be used for paying costs associated with the City's 9-1-1 emergency call center. The Municipal Code currently prohibits use of the fee revenue to pay for costs associated with the police and fire department personnel who respond to 9-1-1 calls. If the proposed tax is approved, money that the City would receive would be placed in the General Fund and could be used to support all City services, including police, fire, emergency response, parks, and libraries. The revenues from the proposed tax would be subject to the annual audit performed by the City's independent auditor which is reported in the City's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

The current fee is set to expire on June 30, 2009. Also, the ability to collect this type of fee has been the subject of legal challenges in other jurisdictions. If the proposed tax is approved, the City will cease collecting the fee and begin collecting the tax on April 1, 2009. If the proposed tax is not approved and the fee is not extended by the City Council, the estimated annual revenue loss to the City is \$24 million. If the proposed tax is approved, it is estimated to generate \$22.6 million annually.

Measure K also requires a majority vote. It asks voters, "Shall an ordinance be adopted to reduce the telecommunications users tax rate from 5% to 4.5%; to update the ordinance and apply the tax equally regardless of technology used; in order to support essential City services, such as police, fire, emergency response, street maintenance, parks and libraries; while maintaining current exemptions; subject to existing audits?"

The City Attorney reports, since 1970, the city of San Jose has imposed a telephone utility users tax, which is paid-by telephone customers on their telephone bills. Currently, this tax produces approximately \$26 million annually.

Measure K would reduce the current 5% tax rate to 4.5%; maintain current exemptions; update the definitions; and apply the tax to all intrastate, interstate and international communications services regardless of the technology used to provide such services. As a result, private communication services, voice mail, paging, and text messaging would be treated the same as traditional telephone services. Measure K would continue the existing tax on communication services including landline, wireless, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), and bundled services, where taxable and non-taxable services are bundled together. Under current federal law, the City cannot tax Internet access.

The city's existing tax ordinance, like many similar tax ordinances throughout the state, was written before the introduction of new communications technologies. The tax ordinance was also written before several changes occurred to federal law. Taxes imposed by other California cities that contain lan-

guage similar to that in the City's existing ordinance have been the subject of legal controversy. This measure would remove outdated ordinance language that is the subject of lawsuits in other jurisdictions. If the city's ordinance were challenged, the outdated language could affect the City's ability to collect a portion of the tax.

Like the existing telephone utility users tax, the updated telecommunications users tax would be a general tax, with its proceeds deposited into the city's General Fund. Such funds are available to the City for all of its programs, including parks and libraries, police, fire, and street maintenance, among other services. The measure also clarifies the City's collection procedures and the process for appealing tax calculations. The revenues from the tax imposed by Measure K would be subject to the annual audit performed by the City's independent auditor which is reported in the City's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

The measure has no effect on the existing utility users tax applied to electrical, gas and water services. The measure does not apply to charges for Internet services, including digital downloads, such as books, ringtones, games and similar products.

~ 8:45 to 9:05 ~

State of California's

Proposition 11:

Redistricting. Constitutional Amendment and Statute.

Herb Engstrom, Proponent

Darcie Green, Opponent

Proposition 11 requires a majority vote. It creates a 14-member redistricting commission responsible for drawing new district lines for State Senate, Assembly, and Board of Equalization districts. It requires the State Auditor to randomly select commission members from a voter applicant pool to create a commission with five members from each of the two largest political parties, and four members unaffiliated with either political party. It requires nine votes to approve final district maps. It establishes standards for drawing new lines, including respecting the geographic integrity of neighborhoods and encouraging geographic compactness. It permits the State Legislature to draw lines for congressional districts subject to these standards.

Highlights of the Legislative Analysts' report: Every ten years, the federal census counts the number of people living in California. The California Constitution requires the Legislature after each census to adjust the boundaries of the districts used to elect public officials. This process is called "redistricting." Redistricting affects districts for the state Legislature (Assembly and Senate), State Board of Equalization (BOE), and the U.S. House of Representatives. The primary purpose of redistricting is to establish districts which are "reasonably equal" in population. Typically, redistricting plans are included in legislation and become law after passage of the bill by the Legislature and signature by the Governor.

Proposition 11 would amend the California Constitution to change the redistricting process for the state Legislature, BOE, and California members of the U.S. House of Representatives, beginning with the 2010 census.

The measure would maintain the Legislature's role in drawing districts for the U.S. House of Representatives. The measure imposes additional requirements that the Legislature must consider when drawing these districts. Among the new requirements is that the Legislature maintain neighborhoods

and "communities of interest" within one district to the extent possible. (The term *communities of interest* is not defined by the measure.)

Proposition 11 would shift the responsibility for developing re-districting plans for legislative and BOE districts from the Legislature to a new Citizens Redistricting Commission. It would also impose a number of requirements for the selection of commissioners and their drawing of district boundaries.

For legislative and BOE districts, the measure also forbids the commission from drawing districts for the purpose of favoring or discriminating against political incumbents, candidates, or parties.

In developing a redistricting plan, the commission would have to hold public hearings and accept public comment. To approve a redistricting plan, the commission would need at least nine yes votes, including at least three yes votes each from members registered with the two largest political parties and three yes votes from the other members. Once the commission approves a redistricting plan, it would be used for the next decade. The process would be repeated every ten years, with a new 14-member commission for each future redistricting.

Commission members would receive \$300 per day, plus reimbursed expenses, in return for their work on the commission.

The Legislative Analyst and Director of Finance estimate a potential, although probably insignificant increase in costs once every ten years due to having two entities performing state redistricting.

* * * * *

We look forward to seeing you, your family, your friends, and your neighbors at our October 28th meeting. Please join us!

VEP's 4th Memorial Day Parade & Festival

by Dave Fadness, Event Chairman

VEP's fourth annual *Memorial Day Parade & Festival* was a smashing success. Co-sponsored by VEP, Carson and Parkview Elementary, and Gunderson High Schools, net proceeds from and donations to this all-volunteer event are given to Carson and Parkview Schools. This year, VEP proudly gave each school a check for \$1136.58.

Please consider getting involved in planning and implementing our 2009 Parade & Festival. We have plenty of opportunities for whatever talents you're willing to share. Email me at drfadness@sbcglobal.net or call at 578-6428. Mark your calendars and be sure to attend our event on May 25th next year.



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VEP Constitution and By-Laws Update

by Dave Noel

At our September general meeting, members voted unanimously to approve the vast majority of changes proposed for amendment to our Constitution and By-Laws. Changes to two articles of the By-Laws were not approved and the proposed changes will be revised and brought back for a membership vote at our November general meeting.



The unapproved sections were By-Laws Article XV (Funds), and Article XVII (Annual VEP Community Service Award).

Funds: The proposed text did not include a time limit for submitting and approving reimbursement request forms. Also, the proposed treasurer's records retention period may need to be longer than proposed to meet 501(c)3 non profit organization requirements which we may later be subject to.

Community Service Awards: Members were concerned that the proposed changes may not sufficiently support our local schools and students in our membership area. See the Community Service Awards article in this newsletter for more information.

All other changes were approved as proposed. The updated document is available on our website, www.vepca.net.

See your September VEP News for a detailed summary of the proposed changes. At a very high level, the changes included:

- ☺ Executive Board changed to a seven member elected board that assigns it's own officers, and that can appoint members to fill mid-term vacancies.
- Fiscal year changed from April 1 – March 31 to September 1 – August 31.
- Members must now adopt an annual budget.
- The VEP Membership List may be distributed to trusted non-VEP personnel to print mailing labels for official VEP mailings.
- The new C&BL document includes a large number of detailed changes, miscellaneous clarifications, and has been reorganized and reformatted for clarity.

VEP's September General Meeting

by Adina Pierce

VEP started the 2008-2009 program year with a very productive general meeting on September 23rd.

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Our first speakers were **Evelyn Velez-Rosario** and **Michael Wharton** from the City of San Jose Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services department. Evelyn, a facilities development manager, and Michael, a landscape architect, provided a detailed update of work in progress around the Vista Park Community Room.



As members have probably already noticed, the old PG&E transformers and fencing are now gone. Irrigation is in for the

next phase of planting which will be installed by VEP volunteers and Our City Forest on October 18th. PRNS will ensure the planting areas are soaked down before planting. We'll plant 8 trees, 36 shrubs, 1600 gazanias and 250 daffodils (as our annual Daffodil Day event). We'll then spread cover bark. Evelyn and Michael estimate we'll need 12 to 20 volunteers.

PRNS is designing new front and back gates for the community room breezeway. The gates will go to the ceiling, and the back gate will open to the future horseshoe area. The new deluxe trash enclosure is going to bid in next 10 days. It is already funded. It will be a fancy enclosure and located at the bend in the parking lot. The City will remove a dying tree and ivy in parking lot just west of east driveway and will plant a new tree to match the one on the east side of the driveway.

PRNS will meet with Nancy Pyle in October to set priorities, then go to Public Works to get quotes, and should know in February what can be afforded in fiscal year 2009 (beginning July 2009).

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Our second speaker was Treasurer **Ginger Cordona**, presenting our 2008-2009 Budget as proposed in the September VEP News. The budget was approved unanimously without changes. Due to the economy, we have lost several advertisers and need more. Our new editor **Susan Iverson** distributed advertiser solicitation letters to members. There was some discussion about the Memorial Day festival budget of \$3,000, which exceeds the 2007-2008 budget of \$2,000. The actual cost of the event is higher but offset by donations. Much of the cost goes to permits. This year we plan to increase promotion of the event and that will increase costs.

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Our third speaker was President **Joe Tajnai**, presenting our 2008-2009 Goals and Objectives, also as proposed in the September VEP news. The Goals and Objectives were approved unanimously without changes. A very significant goal was to find a new editor, and Joe introduced **Susan Iverson** as our new editor, who already started with the September VEP News. Joe also expressed that he was looking forward to moving forward with incorporating VEP as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Past President **Greg West** volunteered to help with formation of next year's Goals and Objectives, hoping that we could make them more concise.

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Our fourth speaker was Past President **Dave Noel**, presenting proposed changes our Constitution and By-Laws, as summarized in the September VEP News, with the full document available on the VEP website. Hardcopies of the previous and proposed new documents were provided to all attendees. The proposed new Constitution and By-Laws document, minus two sections, was accepted unanimously. The two sections not approved were "Funds" and "Community Service Awards". Dave will call a committee meeting to work out the differences and then bring revised sections to the November general meeting for a new vote. See other articles in this newsletter for more details.

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Finally, **Kathy Sutherland** from city councilmember **Nancy Pyle's** office announced a Disaster Preparedness steering committee meeting to be held on Sept 25th, and distributed a flyer announcing the District 10 Youth Advisory Council.

**VEP, truly
a friend in need!**

Oak Grove School District

By Manny Barbara, Superintendent



Over the years, we have enjoyed a positive partnership with the City of San Jose and various other agencies to support not only our school community but the greater Oak Grove community as well. Examples of this have been the establishment of the Edenvale Community Center on the Edenvale School campus and the Boys and Girls Club on the Caroline Davis Intermediate School campus. On Saturday, September 27, a ground breaking ceremony was held on the Caroline Davis Intermediate School site to begin the construction of the new Edenvale Community Center. The ceremony marked several years in collaborative planning between the Oak Grove School District and the City of San Jose. Our school district will contribute the land for the center, while the City will provide the funding to build the facility. The community center will contain both gymnasium and theater facilities. Students will be able to use the facility during school hours, with the community accessing the center at other times. A special thank you to City Councilmember Forrest Williams who was the driving force behind the community center. We have appreciated Councilmember Williams's representation of the community during his tenure on City Council. We expect the community center to be completed in approximately 18 months. Along with the newly built library on the corner of Monterrey and Branham, the community and students will have access to more services.

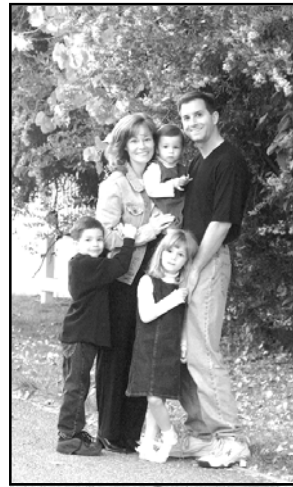
Oak Grove schools benefitted greatly from the bond measure passed in 1995. Major modernization was needed to upgrade school facilities, improve safety features (e.g. earthquake retrofitting), remodel bathrooms, replace roofs, upgrade playgrounds and bring our buildings up to the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. Our school buildings were built in the 1960's and 1970's and much work still needs to be completed. For that reason, our Board of Trustees approved a no tax rate increase bond measure for the November election. If you are interested in learning about the specific projects planned for the \$125 million bond measure, please feel free to contact my office or access our website at: www.ogsd.k12.ca.us.

Our District test results improved in 2007-2008. Our Academic Performance Index (API) scores increased to 788, our highest score ever, and reflected the hard work of staff and students. We continue to have impressive results in grade 8 geometry with over 120 students successfully completing high school level geometry at grade 8.

The state budget has finally been approved and schools have taken a real financial reduction. We are still analyzing details of the latest budget and the impact on school programs. Each June, we pass a balanced budget on time, even if the state does not pass their own budget. If necessary, as we did this year, we make the necessary reductions to balance the budget. Like you and other families, we have to live within our means. Community support has made a huge difference over the years and helped us to maintain important school programs like our extended day kindergarten, class size reduction, visual performance arts programs, and counseling and after school sports. Thank you!

As always, please feel free to contact me through the regular channels:

Email: superintendent@ogsd.k12.ca.us
Phone: (408) 227-8300 ext. 202



Precious Moments In Time

Family and Children Portraits

Weddings and Special Events

Photography by Jeri Arstingstall

★ VEP MEMBER ★

(408) 281-3393

San Jose Unified School District News

By Veronica Lewis, Board Trustee Area #4

As I stated in my last article, the Board adopted Vision and Mission, is "To inspire and prepare all students to succeed in a global economy in a safe learning environment; with this in mind our district has achieved the following:

Collaboration

The Heart of America and Target renovates the Washington Elementary School Library

A partnership between Willow Glen High School and the Children's Musical Theater, which allows our performing arts students to present a professional quality musical. They presented "Leader of the Pack" to sold out audiences

Leland Sports Field Complex consisting of three artificial turf fields opened for community use I partnership with the City of San Jose

Modernization

The passage of Bond Measure C & F, along with State matching money San Jose Unified has been able to do a tremendous amount of work to improve our school facilities some examples are:

Ann Darling Elementary will soon open as a completely remodeled school

Willow Glen Elementary opened its newly constructed classroom building

New Science buildings and classrooms at all of our High Schools are underway

All High School sports fields have been improved

Career-technical Education Plan

Over the years the ability for San Jose Unified to offer Career-Tech (formerly Vocational) Education has declined. Although some career-the classes have been available in all high schools only one comprehensive CTE Program of Study is currently being offered at San Jose High Academy. This is a pilot program that serves as a model for other high schools to develop their own programs. Site teams have worked to develop high-quality CTE Programs of Study that align with both industry needs and their teachers' strengths. As a result, SJUSD will offer from one to three career pathways at each of the comprehensive high schools in 2008-2009. One example of this is **Gunderson** has

Chosen Information Technology Sector/Media Support and Services Pathway.

If you have any questions, comments or ideas for future articles I would like to hear from you; I can be contacted at Veronica.Lewis@sjusd.org
veronicaglewis@yahoo.com

Gunderson High School Happenings

By Cary Catching

I am pleased to share with our community some of the exciting events that are happening at Gunderson High School over the next few weeks.

Gunderson started the school year with an increase in enrollment (approximately 65 students more than last year). Many of these students are from our surrounding neighborhood. Currently, our enrollment is just over 1200 students. In addition, we have not had near as many students requesting transfers to other high schools as in the past. We are thrilled that our community is starting to look at Gunderson with an objective eye and realize what a fine school it is.

Increased enrollment means increased staffing. As a result, we have been able to add two new teachers, as well as welcome two new ones to fill openings. In addition, we have a new Assistant Principal. Nabil Shahin has joined us to replace Stephanie Ogden, who became the new Principal at Broadway High School. Nabil is coming over from Hoover Middle School where he served as a technology resource teacher.

With this stability, comes increased school stability, increases in academic performance and school pride. To this end, I am thrilled to say that Gunderson increased its API by 15 points; the third highest increase of any high school in San Jose Unified School District.

Besides this monthly article, another way to keep on top of activities at the school is Gunderson's quarterly newsletters. These newsletters are chock-full of information about our school, including activities, curricular information, outreach services information, etc. If you would like to be put on the mailing list, please contact Principal Cary Catching. In addition, you may come by the school and pick up the current issue on the front counter.

Finally, we will continue to hold monthly Principal's Coffees. These are an opportunity for parents and community members to meet with the Principal and discuss school activities, upcoming events, concerns, etc. The next "Coffee" is slated for Friday, November 7 at 7:30 a.m. in the Conference Room. We invite you to attend...



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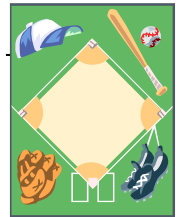
By Dave Noel

Abandoned Shopping Carts	(408) 535-3500
Abandoned Vehicle on street	(408) 277-5305
Barking, Injured or Stray Dogs	(408) 578-7297
Blighted Properties	(408) 277-4528
Graffiti 24-hour Hotline	(408) 277-2758
Household Hazardous Waste Disposal	(408) 299-7300
Inoperable Vehicle on Private Property	(408) 277-5305
Potholes	(408) 277-4373
Recyclables Scavenging	(408) 277-4528
Street Light Repair	(408) 277-5517

Vista Park Sport Fields to be temporarily Closed

**October 11, 2008 to— March 1, 2009
for Turf Renovation.**

**We apologize for any inconvenience
Call (408) 277-5434 if you have any questions.**



Car Dealerships give back

by Irene Shoberg



Last school year, Capitol Expressway Auto Dealers Charitable Foundation donated \$50,000 to 12 San Jose Unified elementary schools to support 38 third grade libraries. A local vendor, Hicklebees, was used to purchase these books and one of the owners, Valeria Lewis, did a book talk featuring these books.

Rachel Carson Elementary was one of the schools selected to receive these libraries. The books were received earlier this year at Carson and the third grade teachers were so excited to have this fabulous collection of brand new books for their students to use for years to come. I spoke to some of the students who have been using these books and they were so eager to tell me about the ones they have read and what they liked about them.

We are so fortunate to have such generous auto dealers in our neighborhood who give back to our community.

Community Service Awards

By Dave Noel

Since 1975, VEP has been rewarding graduating high school seniors for their exceptional volunteer service with stipends for post-secondary or vocational training.



This fall the process starts over again. We begin with outreach to the schools, then we appropriate funds in January/February, we solicit nominations in February/March, applications are due in late April, and we grant our awards in late May/early June.

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

à *We are considering significant changes to the CSA program this year.*

We currently solicit nominees in three categories: Andrew Hill High School, Gunderson High School, and "At-Large". The At-Large category is for any student who lives in San Jose and is nominated by a VEP member. Each category is judged separately.

Changes proposed to VEP members at our September general meeting as part of the Constitution and By-Laws update were not approved. We plan to convene a committee meeting to formulate an updated proposal, and then present that to the membership for a vote at the November general meeting.

à *The committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday November 5th from 7:30 to 9:00 pm at the Vista Park Community Room. For more info and possible meeting updates, contact me at DNOEL1234@aol.com or 266-7183.*

The changes proposed at the September general meeting would allow us to solicit nominees from additional sources such as additional schools and/or non-profit service organizations. All nominations would be consolidated into a single pool, and there would be no guarantee that each category would have a winner. There would be flexibility in the number of awards and cash amount of each award. With a typical budget of \$2,000, we'd likely grant two \$1,000 awards to the two best applicants.

Members present at the September general meeting were concerned that the proposal didn't ensure we support our local schools, as well as students in our membership area. (See also the Constitution and By-Laws article in this newsletter.)

Time to get your Flu Shot!



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VEP Volunteer Opportunity

By Helen Castillo



VEP is always looking for a way to improve our neighborhood. We would really like to meet more of you and build relationships in our community. Our goal is to have every one of you be a participant in helping our neighborhood be all that it can be. The only way this can happen is with your support. Please remember it's not how little time you have to contribute, what matters is that because of all of you it's a more comfortable place to live. So stuffing envelopes or passing out flyers is just as important as those of us who have more time to contribute. As your neighborhood volunteer coordinator I have come up with some ideas that I would like to see take place. If you have any ideas or would like to participate in volunteering for our neighborhood please call or e-mail me. I would like to hold a meeting to discuss all the possibilities at my home on a monthly basis.

BE ON THE LOOK OUT NEXT MONTH IN THE VEP NEWSLETTER FOR VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR UPCOMING EVENTS

Looking forward to meeting all of you!!

Yours truly, Helen Castillo

VEP Volunteer Coordinator

408-981-5902

hcastillo@vbpro.com

Get a Free Tree from Our City Forest

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



~ Free shade trees ~

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

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

Police Substation Celebrates Construction Milestone

Office of Councilmember Nancy Pyle



On August 26, placement of the last structural steel beam on the Police Southside Substation was celebrated with a Topping-Off ceremony. In keeping with tradition, the topping off ceremony offered participants an opportunity to sign the final beam before placement but, more importantly, celebrated a safe job site -- the Substation steel frame was constructed without loss of life or serious injury, a testament to the success of the weekly safety meetings and site inspections conducted by the contractor. Upon completion, this \$82 million Public Safety Bond project will not only improve police services to south San Jose but will also add to the City's Green Building inventory and provide additional public meeting space for the community. The Substation is on schedule for completion in November 2009.

VEP Daffodil Day Moved Up

by Dave Noel and Debra Suydam



By the time you read this newsletter, VEP volunteers will have already planted the daffodils we originally intended to plant on Saturday November 1st as part of *Keep San Jose Beautiful's* annual Daffodil Day event.

Here's what happened... We got late news that San Jose Parks & Rec would be ready for VEP volunteers to complete a long-awaited planting project at the Vista Park Community Room on Saturday October 18th. We decided to consolidate the two planting events, and plant the daffodils outside the main entrance of the community room on October 18th.

Watch for an article in the November VEP News with more information and photos from our October 18th planting event.

Since the news came too late to publish in the September VEP News, we announced it to our members via email. If you don't receive VEP email updates, contact Dave Noel at DNOEL1234@aol.com to add your email address to our records.

Fall Fundamentals

By John Marks



What! You still don't have a compost receptacle or pile? You can learn how to compost yard waste and food scraps, and get a schedule of free how-to composting classes through the Master Composters program. Just call 299-4147.

I routinely throw grapefruit and orange peelings, coffee grounds, onion tops, wilted greens, banana peels, apple cores, carrot peelings, over-ripe fruit, radish tops, celery tops, and trimmings from most meal preparations into a plastic corner box that sits in our sink. That gets carried to the compost in the yard, which is no more than 18-in. square and 2-ft tall with a lid. You can get attractive compost boxes from Orchards. Give it some thought!

Yes, it's time to get the ladders out and peer into the rain gutters. There, you'll find stray tennis balls, toys, and worst of all, a bunch of rotting leaves. Not only will they rust out the gutters, but render the downspouts useless. So plan to get up there on a sunny Saturday and clear them out.

The leaves that fall on the ground can be tossed into the compost pile, too. Or you can use the lazy gardener's method by raking them into garden beds and use them to cover exposed soil. The leaves will break down over the winter and turn into rich garden humus by spring.

Cool-season vegetables to plant included broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, peas, radishes, green onions, beets and lettuce, and grapefruit

The National Gardening Association web site, www.garden.org is full of general information for gardeners. One of its most useful features is a localized report. There are also how-to basics, on-line courses, a horticultural dictionary and plant name finder, events calendar, message board, seed swap and links to a children's gardening site. You can search the site's library for articles. Plant spring-flowering bulbs, including daffodils, tulips, hyacinths and crocus now.

If the recent heat wave sizzled your bougainvillea, don't over-react and take it out. The branches and roots are still healthy and will have new growth, more leaves, and dazzling flowers next spring.

Residential Street Sealing Project

Office of Councilmember Nancy Pyle

The Department of Transportation is currently performing the Residential Street Sealing project on 75 miles of residential streets.



The project involves two sealing processes a chip seal and a slurry seal known as a double seal or cape seal. The first chip seal process was started in mid-July and was completed last week. The second and final slurry seal process occurs about four to eight weeks later. While the double seal process impacts residents and neighborhoods more than a traditional single sealing process, it is an innovative approach to maintaining our streets that will provide a much more durable and smoother street.

The project is being performed on streets that were previously designated for more costly resurfacing and would not have been treated otherwise. Staff will be proactively reaching out to schools to coordinate the final sealing process as the school year begins.

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Include Your Name at the Pearl Avenue Library

by Dave Fadness



A gala grand opening ceremony was held on August 9 for our new Pearl Avenue Branch Library. This attractive new 14,000 square foot facility is twice bigger than the library it replaces. Be sure to visit Pearl to see it for yourself. You will be very impressed!

The new Pearl was built using money from a voter-approved bond. Those bond funds couldn't be used for furnishings, collections, and the other amenities that make an empty building into a functioning library. To supplement available city funds in order to buy those things, the non-profit *San Jose Public Library Foundation* turned to donations from citizens and local businesses.

VEP and more than 300 community members have donated generously.

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

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

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

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

Do it as soon as possible—before the Donor Wall plaques are ordered. This is a one-time-only opportunity.

King Library 5th Anniversary Celebration, 5 on Fourth

Office of Councilmember Nancy Pyle

On August 16, 2003, the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library celebrated its grand opening. Since then, the Library has transformed a once quiet city corner into a bustling educational and cultural hub. The past five years have recorded more than 13 million on-site visits and 11 million items checked out. To mark this special anniversary, a month-long celebration titled 5 on Fourth was scheduled for September with a kickoff consisting of a full day of multicultural performances, exhibits, tours, a video game tournament, and other family-oriented activities.

Youth Job Fair

Office of Councilmember Nancy Pyle

On Saturday morning, September 20th, Councilmember Pyle and Councilmember Nguyen and Westfield Oakridge hosted a youth job fair at Westfield Oakridge in the Sears Courtyard. More than 150 job seekers attended the 2 hour workshop that was led by Mariah from Center for Training and Careers. The Job Fair included more than 20 different employers who were taking applications and passing out information. If you are interested in more information about job training contact www.work2future.biz or www.ctcsj.org

VEP's Branham Widening Committee Resumes Work

by Dave Fadness



After a three year hiatus, work is again underway on the widening of Branham Lane, Snell Avenue to Vistapark Drive. VEP's Branham Widening Committee met with City of San Jose Public Works and Department of Transportation representatives on September 16 to discuss project status and next steps.

In particular interest was of right-of-way acquisition, *the* biggest single hang-up in delaying this project. City staff now feels confident that sign-off on an agreement between the city and county is near.

We also reviewed project funding, conceptual design, environmental issues, and the city's intentions relating to compliance with a project wish-list VEP submitted in 2005.

Project cost is estimated at \$6.9-million. Design will be done this fiscal year and into 2009-2010. Groundbreaking is targeted for the 2010-2011 fiscal year. The city already did one sound measurement near Mia Circle to determine adequacy of the existing soundwall. At VEP's request, they have agreed to do three more in the backyards of residents whose homes back up onto Branham Lane.

As currently envisioned, Branham will be widened to include four traffic lanes, with a fifth (median) lane for turning movements. Contrary to VEP's request, no landscaped median is planned and no sidewalk will be built along the south side of the widened street--although room will be left for one if called for as part of the Martial Cottle Park development.

The city also plans to widen Snell Avenue, south of Branham Lane. That will be a \$3-million project.

Let me know if you are interested in serving on VEP's committee.

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CRIME STOPPERS

Featured Events at the Library:

By Jane Cronkhite

Families, teens and children are invited to My Dog Said What? on Thursday, October 2 at 3:30 pm. Experts from the Humane Society of Silicon Valley will provide tips on animal body language and care for pets.



Discuss the facts about strokes at Stroke Awareness on Thursday, October 9 at 1 p.m.

Learn how to reduce your own risk for strokes and how to receive treatment to help prevent disabilities.

Halloween Hullabaloo on Saturday, October 25 from 2-3:30 pm is for children in grades K and up. Join us for games, crafts, and silly spooky stories, followed by a costume parade. It will be a spooktacular time for all!

Book Clubs:

■ The Pearl Avenue Book Club will meet Tuesday, October 28 at 6:30 pm to discuss *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* by Mary Ann Shaffer. The club reads a variety of award-winning fiction and non-fiction. Newcomers and visitors are always welcome.

Story Times:

Join us this month for a special healthy toddlers story time on where we'll learn about feeding toddlers on Thursday, October 16 at 10:30 am.

■ Preschool Story time for ages 3-5 is every Wednesday at 11:30 am.

■ Toddler Story Time for ages 18-36 months is every Friday at 10:30 am.

■ Family Story time is held on Saturdays at 10:30 am.

Regular events and workshops:

■ The ESL Conversation Club has a new time on **Mondays at 5 pm**. This one-hour session is a great way to practice your English and to make friends at the library. No pre-registration required.

■ The library now offers Internet Basics training and Internet Básico en Español beginning Tuesday, October 7. Internet Basics is a one-time class at 11 am. Internet Básico is a four week course on Tuesdays at 6 pm. Sign up for either class at the service desk or by calling (408) 808-3053.

Teens, are you looking to volunteer in your neighborhood? Meet other teens, earn community service hours, make a difference in your community, and have fun doing it! Join teens-Reach on Friday, October 3 at 4 p.m. Teens must be 13 years or older to participate.

Friends of the Pearl Avenue Branch Library:

■ Come join the Friends of the Pearl Avenue Library! Join us for a fun time, meet new people in your neighborhood, and support the new Pearl Avenue Library. For more information on the Friends, please contact Therese Wiese at tawiese@yahoo.com. The Friends meet on Tuesday, October 28 at 6 pm.

Please note, San José Public Library branches will observe a holiday closure on October 13, 2008. The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library will remain open, providing full service including telephone reference and online services.

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

Martial Cottle Park project

By Kimberly Brosseau

Over the summer, the Santa Clara County Parks Department began work with the new planning consultant firm of Design, Community and Environment (DC&E) to familiarize them with Martial Cottle Park, the planning project and the collaborative planning process with California State Parks, the Donor's representatives, community and major stakeholders such as the VEP Community Association. In addition, the County Parks Department presented a progress report on the Martial Cottle Park Master Plan project to the County Board of Supervisors and the Board's Policy Committee (Housing, Land Use, Environment and Transportation Committee).

On May 8, 2008, the County Parks Department presented a project update to the Housing, Land Use, Environment and Transportation (HLUET) Committee of the County Board of Supervisors. The HLUET Committee unanimously accepted the report.

On August 12, 2008, the County Parks Department presented a project update to the County Board of Supervisors upon the request of Supervisor Blanca Alvarado. The Board supported the project and directed staff to incorporate acknowledgment of migrant farm workers into the agricultural historical component of the Master Plan and/or planning process.

On September 18, 2008, the County Parks Department held its sixth Project Team meeting where consultants presented preliminary draft Master Plan alternatives for the Park. On October 7, 2008, the County Parks Department held its third Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting to share draft Master Plan alternatives with technical staff from local, state and federal agencies, farm advisors, health care advisors and representatives of non-profit entities.

Upcoming public meetings include Task Force Meeting #4 scheduled for Wednesday October 15, 2008 in the Library/Media room at Gunderson High School and the Community Workshop #2 that has been scheduled for Thursday October 23, 2008, in the Forum room at Gunderson High School.

There will be a California State Park and Recreation Commission meeting on Friday, October 31, 2008 for the Commission to consider and take action on the State Parks Department's recommendation to classify the Martial Cottle Project property as a State Recreation Area named Martial Cottle Park. For more information on this meeting, including location and time, please visit the California State Parks' website at: http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=25577.

Over the next three months, the County Parks Department and its Consultants, DC&E, will be working closely with the Donor and his representatives; the Project Committees, including the Project Team, TAC, and Task Force; and members of the community on the refinements to the draft Master Plan alternatives for the Park. It is anticipated that a Preferred Master Plan Alternative would be forwarded to the Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Commission for their review and consideration in early 2009. Once a preferred alternative has been identified, Santa Clara County Parks would initiate environmental review and analysis to evaluate the project's potential environmental impacts.

If you have questions regarding the project, contact Jane Mark at (408) 355-2237 (Jane.Mark@prk.sccgov.org) or Kimberly Brosseau at (408) 355-2230

(Kimberly.Brosseau@prk.sccgov.org). To view the latest information on the Martial Cottle Park project, please visit www.parkhere.org, and click on the link for the Martial Cottle Park Master Plan.

Additional information on upcoming meetings will be forwarded to interested community members who have subscribed to the project via e-mail and regular USPS mail. Additional information will also be posted on the County Parks Department's website once the meeting information is finalized. A copy of the Martial Cottle Park newsletter is also available on the Department's website.

Before we conclude, the County Parks Department would again like to thank the membership of the VEP Community Association for their feedback during the planning process for Martial Cottle Park. Most importantly, the Department appreciates your continual support of the master plan project.

Children's Health Fun Day & Insurance Sign-Up Day – Saturday, Oct. 25

Office of Councilmember Nancy Pyle

The Children's Health Fun Day will be held at Sherman Oaks Elementary School on Saturday, October 25th from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Families can sign up for health insurance and health screenings during the health and safety resource fair. The Westside Schools Children's Health Insurance Collaborative made up of Campbell Union High School, Cambrian, Union, Moreland, Campbell Union Elementary, and Luther Burbank School Districts is coordinating the event.



State-Certified enrollment staff will be at the school to assist parents with the application process to see if their children are eligible for coverage for Medi-cal, Healthy Families and the Healthy Kids health insurance programs. All three programs provide comprehensive medical, dental and vision care. This coverage is free or low cost, and immigration status does not matter.

Medi-Cal and Healthy Families are public insurance programs; Healthy Kids is a locally funded insurance program—the first of its kind in the nation—that covers children who do not qualify for Medi-Cal or Healthy Families.

Sherman Oaks Elementary School is located at 1800 Fruitdale Ave. at Leigh Ave in San Jose. For further information on Children's Health insurance call (408) 961-9893 or 800-260-2055.

District 10 Youth Advisory Council Looking for Youth Volunteers

Office of Councilmember Nancy Pyle

Who: Youth ages 14-20

What: Service organization composed of young people who work with Coucil-member Nancy Pyles Office and the City of San Jose to put together neighborhood improvement projects and community events

When: Meetings occur on Wednesday evenings at 6:00 PM at the Almaden Community Center (6445 Camden Avenue)

Contact: Stephanie Holm in the Council Office

Phone: (408)-535-4982 Email: Stephanie.holm@sanjoseca.gov

Not a VEP member? We welcome anyone who lives in, or shares common interest and purpose with the membership area shown on the mailing page of this newsletter. **New**

** Membership Application **

Note: your personal information will be used for official VEP business only.

**** Please type or print legibly ****

Last name(s):

First name(s):

Street address:

Telephone #

Email address(es):

Comments):

Can you give VEP a few volunteer hours? _____

I am willing to volunteer for:

- Beautification/clean-up projects
- VEP News/mailling prep
- Memorial Day Parade & Festival
- Distribute flyers
- Serve on a committee
- Serve as a VEP officer or committee chair
- Other

Mail your \$20 check to VEP, P.O. Box 18111, San Jose 95158. Thank you!

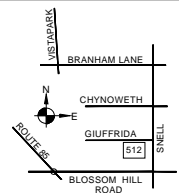
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Happy Thanksgiving!



VEP Community Calendar

October / November 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 Metro Silicon Valley Marathon - 7am www.svmarathon.com	27	28 VEP General Meeting - Gunderson Theatre- 7:30 pm *Election Forum*	29	30	31 Halloween 	1
2 Fall Back! - Set Clocks back 1 hour	3 VEP Executive Board Meeting - Vista Park Community Center - 7:30 pm	4	5 Community Service Awards Committee - Vista Park Community Center - 7:30 to 9:00 pm	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25 VEP General Meeting - Vista Park Community Center - 7:30 pm	26	27 THANKS-GIVING! 	28	29

THE VEP NEWS



VEP Community Association

P.O. Box 18111 San Jose, CA 95158

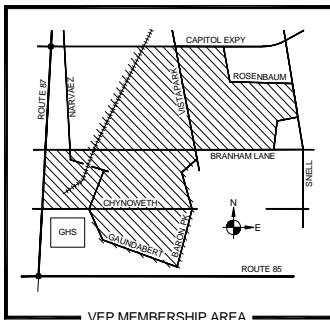
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Editor	Susan Iverson	813-0592	vepeditor@sbcglobal.net



Check our website: www.vepca.net

Gunderson High School Theatre

7:30 pm in the

October 28th Meeting

Be sure to attend VEP's