

# VEP NEWS

## • VEP COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION •

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

February 2009

If you haven't already, please send your membership renewal now to ensure uninterrupted delivery of the VEP News. The application form is available in this newsletter on Page 11 and on [www.vepca.net](http://www.vepca.net).

### VEP'S MEETING

7:30 p.m. Tuesday  
► February 24, 2009 ◀  
Vista Park Community Room  
475 Hyde Park Drive

### AGENDA

- Property Tax Assessment ◀  
Current Home Values; Requesting a Tax Decrease  
A presentation by Larry Stone  
Santa Clara County Tax Assessor
- VEP Business ◀  
Discuss and Vote on Proposed  
Payment of Application fee for 501(c)(3)  
Tax Status and Possible Modification of Bylaws  
Update on  
Martial Cottle Park Plan
- Announcements ◀  
Call for Community Service Award Applicants  
VEP Memorial Day Parade & Festival  
VEP Membership Drive  
Emergency Preparedness Seminar
- Your Concerns and Ideas ◀  
Your chance to voice your opinion and/or to seek VEP's help.

Everyone is welcome. Invite your neighbors!

### VEP's February Meeting

*by Marilyn Rodgers*

Timely topics and updates are planned for the February general membership meeting:

► **Property Tax Assessment – Current Home Values and Requesting a Tax Decrease** – Santa Clara County Tax Assessor **Larry Stone** will provide timely information for homeowners concerned about current home values, how property taxes are calculated, and how to file for a tax reduction where indicated.

► **VEP Business – Proposal for VEP to apply for 501(c)3 tax status.** VEP members already approved going forward with an application for 501(c)(3) tax status. Members will be asked to approve the \$750 application fee and any necessary amendments to VEP's constitution and bylaws.

► **Update on Martial Cottle Park Plan** – members will be provided with an update of information and the status of the park design since the VEP January general membership meeting.

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

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

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

### VEP Proposal to Apply for 501(c)3 Tax Status

*By Dave Noel*

At the February 2<sup>nd</sup> executive board meeting, the VEP board unanimously voted to recommend to members that we proceed with applying for 501(c)3 non profit organization status, and allocate \$750 from savings to fund the one-time application fee. Members present at the February 24<sup>th</sup> general meeting will be asked to vote on this recommendation. Members will also be asked to pre-approve any minor changes to our Constitution and By-Laws that may be needed to comply with 501(c)3 rules, provided any C&BL changes will be brought to members for affirmation at the next general meeting.

Committee members **Jim Hicks** and **Dave Fadness** investigated the entire application and maintenance process, with assistance from VEP member and CPA **Nicole Letellier** and United Neighborhoods of Santa Clara County. Attaining 501(c)3 status has been a goal of the VEP board for years since it opens many opportunities (especially grants), and facilitates acquiring donations for events such as our annual VEP Memorial Day Parade & Festival.

### Upcoming VEP Board Elections

*by Marilyn Rodgers*

In May, VEP will be electing members to sit on the Board. Changes to the VEP Constitution and Bylaws, recently approved by the membership, increased the number of seats on the Board from five to seven, with **Debra Suydam** and **Helen Castillo** being appointed to fill these new positions. Executive Officers are now selected by members of the Board. With the resignation of **Joe Tajnai**, there currently is an open position on the Board that will be filled by appointment.

Have you considered serving on the VEP Board? It is a great opportunity to serve your community, while learning more about your neighborhood and your city. It is also a fun and rewarding way to meet many of your neighbors. If you have an idea or project that you feel passionate about, or would like to see VEP sponsor, join the Board. For additional information, please contact any board member. Come on, join us, it's fun!

2009 is VEP's 40th year!



**Susan Iverson**  
Independent Consultant  
San Jose, Ca 95136  
(408) 813-0592  
memorieshelpers@sbcglobal.net

March 14 - 10am to Midnight  
March 25 - 6pm to 9pm  
National Scrapbook Day  
coming in April!



## Thank You to Joe Tajnai

by Marilyn Rodgers

We want to thank **Joe Tajnai** for his service to VEP. Joe recently resigned as President. We wish him well in his future endeavors.

## Free Home Repair and Accessibility Modifications

By Tim Lynds (\*)

Rebuilding Together is a non-profit organization that brings together volunteers to provide repair and safety modification work for low-income homeowners, particularly the elderly and disabled. All work is provided at no cost to the applicant.



All repair work focuses on neighborhood revitalization and safety improvements, such as grab bar, railing and ramp installation and minor repairs in plumbing, flooring, electrical & carpentry. Additional work may also include interior or exterior painting and yard clean-up. Applications are accepted year round.

Each year over 2500 local volunteers are involved with Rebuilding Together Silicon Valley. Volunteers assist with our twice a year Rebuilding Day projects as well as office support, language translation, project selection, etc.

We are currently recruiting volunteers for our April 25th Rebuilding Day as well as volunteers who are willing and able to volunteer one day a week on a regular basis to help with year round accessibility modification projects in our Neighbor to Neighbor program. Experience in construction/home repair is helpful but not necessary.

We are also currently looking for homeowners who need warmth, safety, and independence repairs. Applications are accepted year round.

For an application for home repairs, or information on volunteering, please call Rebuilding Together Silicon Valley at (408) 578-9519 or visit us at [www.rtsv.org](http://www.rtsv.org).

[(\*)Ed Note: Tim Lynds is the Community Outreach Coordinator for Rebuilding Together Silicon Valley. He can be contacted at [tlynds@rebuildingtogether-sv.org](mailto:tlynds@rebuildingtogether-sv.org) or (408) 578-9519.]

## City Commissions and Boards Vacancies

By Vice Mayor Judy Chirco

The City of San Jose is grateful for the residents who volunteer to serve on a Commission or Board. Applications are now being accepted for City of San Jose Boards and Commissions: Airport, Arts, Disability Advisory, Early Care and Education, Historic Landmarks, Housing and Community Development, Human Rights, Library, Mobile Home Advisory, Parks & Recreation, Rents Advisory, Senior Citizens, Small Business Development and Traffic Appeals. You must live in the City of San Jose and have a commitment to being active in the community. Applications will be accepted through **5:00 pm, Friday, February 27, 2009**. Applications will remain active and on file for one year from the date received. The process includes a written application and interview with the Diversity Committee for appointments starting July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Application forms and information sheets that describe Commission duties and time commitments are available from the Office of the City Clerk or on the City's Website <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/clerk/Vacancy.asp>.

If you would like additional information about a particular Commission, Board or Committee, please log onto [Boards & Commissions](#), visit or call the City Clerk's Office at (408) 535-1260.

## Thank You to VEP Advertisers

by Marilyn Rodgers

VEP wants to say **thank you to our advertisers**.

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

VEP is in the process of developing additional opportunities to increase our advertisers' visibility with our members. These include providing links to their business from our website at [www.vepca.net](http://www.vepca.net), and spotlighting one business each month at our general membership meeting, and in the VEP News. Watch for more on the "kick-off" planned for March! We currently have space for a few more advertisers. If you own a business, or know of a business that would benefit from advertising in the VEP News, please contact us.



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## Community Service Awards

By Dave Noel

For more than 2 decades, VEP has been rewarding graduating high school seniors for their exceptional volunteer service with stipends for post-secondary or vocational training. If you know a high school senior with an outstanding volunteer record, please make sure he or she knows about our award.



Members present at our January 27<sup>th</sup> general meeting unanimously approved the following proposal as presented in the January VEP News, with a one-word change. The word "may" in bold text was changed from "will".

*Solicit a minimum of two candidates each from Andrew Hill and Gunderson High Schools via designated school administrators. Solicit At-Large candidates via publication in the VEP News and VEP emails.*

*VEP's CSA judges **may** select one winner from each category (Andrew Hill, Gunderson, and At-Large) that has at least one candidate the judges deem worthy of an award. The applicants' names will not be disclosed to the judges. The judges' decisions will be final.*

*If three awards are granted, each will be \$650. If one or two awards are granted, each will be \$1000. If the full amount of this year's appropriation is not awarded, the remaining amount will be returned to VEP's treasury.*

The application forms for Gunderson and Andrew Hill High Schools will be provided to the schools later this month. The At-Large application form is printed in this newsletter. All three applications will be available on our website as well. Our At-Large award is available to students who live in the VEP area, or who are children of VEP members and live in San Jose.

Applications for all three categories are due on April 30<sup>th</sup>. The Andrew Hill and Gunderson awards will be presented at their respective awards nights in late May/early June. If we have an At-Large winner, that award will be presented at our May 26<sup>th</sup> general meeting.

For more information or to serve on the CSA committee, contact me at [DNOEL1234@aol.com](mailto:DNOEL1234@aol.com) or 266-7183.

## Save the Date: Celebrate Cambrian Festival

By Vice Mayor Judy Chirco

On Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup> we will host the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebrate Cambrian Spring Community Festival at the Cambrian Community Center. This year the theme is a country fair. There will be a community resource fair, live entertainment, food, and children activities. If you would like to participate by being a sponsor or volunteer please contact Diana Miller at [diana.miller@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:diana.miller@sanjoseca.gov) or 408-535-4976.



## VEP's January General Meeting

By Adina Pierce and Dave Noel

VEP's January 27<sup>th</sup> general meeting began with a very informative presentation on internet security and identity theft prevention by VEP member and SeniorNet teacher **Don Ferguson** and his son-in-law **Captain Steve Clark** from the Santa Cruz police department. Identity theft is increasing at an alarming rate, and it can take years to recover from identity theft. Don and Steve presented a wealth of ideas to minimize the risk of having your identity stolen and to minimize the damages if it is. Many of the concepts are discussed in the "Identity Theft Prevention" article in this newsletter.

Here are some additional tips:

1. Protect your passwords, and use unique passwords for all on-line accounts. An easy and free way to manage your passwords is store them encrypted on a USB memory stick using **PassKeeper** ([www.passkeeper.com](http://www.passkeeper.com)).
2. Avoid giving out your social security number, even in doctor's offices.
3. Be sure to use a firewall, antivirus and spyware protection. Generally if you have a hardware router and are using Windows XP or Vista, you probably have a decent firewall. Common antivirus applications are **Norton** and **McAfee**, and typical anti-spyware applications are **Spybot** and **Ad-Aware**. Many "malware" items are launched by clicking on ads, so ad blocking software can help prevent them.
4. Be sure to keep up with Microsoft operating system Updates, as well as updates to your antivirus and anti-spyware programs.
5. Use Virtual Visa or Paypal for online purchases.
6. Use encryption on your wireless network so intruders can't access your network and computers.

After Don and Steve's presentation, **Dave Noel** presented a proposal for VEP 2009 Community Service Awards. The proposal listed in the January VEP News was adopted unanimously with one word changed from "will" to "may". See the Community Service Awards article in this newsletter for more information.

Next **Marilyn Rodgers** presented a membership drive update, and then Marilyn and **Adina Pierce** presented an update on the Martial Cottle Park Master Plan. The Master Plan is moving very quickly, and the VEP members on the Master Plan Task Force are very concerned that certain VEP neighborhood concerns are not being adequately addressed in the current "preferred" park layout. Most significantly, the plan currently shows a Branham Lane main entrance (instead of Snell), and a 30 foot buffer zone behind VEP homes (instead of 150 feet).

A promised traffic study had not been completed, and the Safeway shopping center owners and tenants were not aware of the proposed Branham entrance, which could increase congestion in their parking lot. Members were encouraged to attend upcoming community meetings, especially the Martial Cottle Park Community Workshop #3 in the Gunderson High School Forum/ Cafeteria on Tuesday February 10<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. See the Martial Cottle Park article in this newsletter for more information.

## Gunderson High School

By Cary Catching

Welcome back from the winter break! We hope everyone was able to enjoy a restful, stress-free two weeks as students did not have to worry about homework, projects or finals. In the unofficial poll we took at Gunderson, it seems as though both students and parents were pleased with the trial calendar and hoped that future school calendars would also include ending the first semester by the December break.



Construction continues to be something we are working around at the school. The science wing modernization project is in full swing. Concrete has been poured and the walls are being put up. The project is still slated to be completed by mid-March. As a reminder, we are remodeling this entire wing to include larger, enclosed classrooms (in order to accommodate both labs and lectures in the same room), as well as create a more centralized storage area that all teachers can access from their classes. The gym work was completed with the addition of a new scoreboard and new acoustical panels. The large picture windows all around the school are being replaced, especially those that have been damaged by graffiti. Finally, the carpet has been pulled up in the forum. We are exploring several alternative options to replace the carpet including retro-plate concrete and marmoleum to name a few.

The recruitment period has just ended. Over the course of January, we hosted several tours, 8<sup>th</sup> grade shadow days, and a Parent Information Night. All of these events were well received. Gunderson's enrollment is predicted to go up by 80+ students for the 09-10 school year. Our student body, faculty, staff and administration welcome and appreciate this continued support of our school by the community.

Finally, our testing period is just around the corner with the California High School Exit Exam in March, the California Standards Tests in April and Advanced Placement Exams in May. We encourage you to remind your students that **ALL** of these tests are important. Students should give them their best effort and prepare for them accordingly. We will be providing numerous preparation opportunities over the next several weeks.

We welcome your comments, questions and concerns. Feel free to contact me or any other administrator at the school. I can be reached at 535-6340 or e-mail [cary\\_catching@sjusd.org](mailto:cary_catching@sjusd.org)



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## San Jose Unified School District Update

By Veronica Grijalva Lewis,  
Board of Education, Vice President

### News Release: San Jose Unified School District, Chevron Energy Solutions, and Bank of America, Announce Completion of Largest K-12 Solar and Energy Efficient Project in U.S.

February 5, 2009 we announced the completion of what is believed to be the largest K-12 solar and energy project in the United States. This project, which includes a total of 5.5 megawatts of solar power at 14 district sites, is expected to reduce the district's energy costs, with a savings of more than \$25 Million over the 25-year life of the project. The partnership with Chevron Energy Solutions and Bank of America did not require the district to provide any capital investment from their general fund.



This project will reduce the district's purchase of utility power, which is expected to reduce carbon emissions by more than 100,000 metric tons, equivalent to planting more than 1,400 acres of trees. Our students will have the opportunity to learn first hand about energy use and the solar power that will be generated on their campus. Each of the sites will have an interactive kiosk that will provide them with information about how the solar energy generates and provides power.

"San Jose Unified School District remains on the "Cutting" edge of change, whether it is bringing state of the art technology to our classrooms, best practices for teaching and learning to our staff and students, or in this case, a solar energy efficiency program that not only has a positive impact on our environment but also a positive impact on our budget." said SJUSD Superintendent, Don Iglesias, "We will continue to seek our partnerships such as these, that are a win-win for the community and benefit San Jose Unified School District".

As your School Board Trustee, I took an active part in this project; I made several visits to other sites that had the parking lot structures to see what they would look like. I gave my strong opinion about the appearance and the quality of the solar panels to be used. The end result is a collaboration of our District, Chevron Energy Solutions & Bank of America that resulted in a great project for our district and community.

### State Budget Crisis

Our Board of Education approved a MOU with San Jose Teachers Assoc., San Jose Administrators Assoc., Trades Union, CSEA, AFSCME, Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents and CBO. This was an agreement for our employees to take two days, non-paid for most employees, with a savings of approximately \$1.5 million. Known positives for SJUSD are: Started the year with a 9% reserve- \$27 M. We set aside \$5.4 M in state revenue-7% Categorical and saved \$4.0 M by freezing expenditures and saved \$1.5 from work furloughs. These actions will get us through 2008-09. **We need legislative action, soon! Contact your legislators and encourage them to pass a budget and spare massive cuts to education.**

Add VEP's website [www.vepca.net](http://www.vepca.net)  
to your "favorites"





## VEP Community Association

Representing More Than 2000 Families in the Blossom Valley Area of South San Jose Since 1969

### ★ 2009 Community Service Award - "At Large" Nomination Form ★

VEP's annual *Community Service Award* is an attempt by VEP to encourage and reward high school students who have begun what we hope will be a lifelong pattern of volunteer community service. Awards will be granted exclusively on the basis of a graduating high school senior's voluntary community service accomplishments during his or her high school years.

To be considered for this award, a nominee must:

- A. Live in the VEP area (see [www.vepca.net](http://www.vepca.net) for a map), or be the son or daughter of a VEP member and live in San Jose.
- B. Mail an original signed hardcopy to VEP at the address shown below to be received by April 30, 2009;
- C. Be certified to be a graduating high school senior by:
  - 1. An administrator from the nominee's school;
  - 2. If home schooled, by a state-credentialed tutor;
  - 3. If an independent study student, by an administrator from the school where enrolled in independent studies;
- D. Not also be a nominee in the Andrew Hill or Gunderson High School categories.

This form may be downloaded and printed from VEP's website, [www.vepca.net](http://www.vepca.net).

A cover letter and/or letter(s) of recommendation may be submitted with this application. Please limit to one page each.

For any questions, see the **VEP News**, visit [www.vepca.net](http://www.vepca.net), or email David Noel at [DNoel1234@aol.com](mailto:DNoel1234@aol.com).

Please print legibly and fit your answers in the space provided. You may cut and paste typed text onto the form.

#### ★ PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE ★

|  |   |                         |
|--|---|-------------------------|
| Nominee's name:  |   | Date:                   |
| Nominee's address:   |   | Email address: _____    |
|  |   | Telephone Number: _____ |
| Name and address of nominee's high school:   |   | Month/Year Graduating:  |
| Number of community service hours required for graduation: _____   | Number of community service hours required for any other purpose: _____ | Please explain:         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I live in the VEP area (see <a href="http://www.vepca.net">www.vepca.net</a> for a map); and/or   |   |                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am the son or daughter of a VEP member – List VEP member info below:  |   |                         |
| Name: _____  |   | Address: _____          |
| Phone: _____   |   | Email address: _____    |
| I certify that my community service record reported on this application is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.  |   |                         |
| Nominee's signature: _____   |   | Date: _____             |
| I certify that the nominee has senior class standing at the above named high school, is expected to graduate in the month and year indicated above, and that the nominee's community service record reported on this application is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. |   |                         |
| High school administrator's signature: _____   |   | Date: _____             |
| Print high school administrator's name: _____  |   |                         |

►► Be sure to include information requested on the next page. ◀◀



## **VEP Community Association**

Representing More Than 2000 Families in the Blossom Valley Area of South San Jose Since 1969

### ★ Community Service Record Form ★

★ PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE ★

Nominee's name:

Please describe in detail below the nominee's high school community service record. Use additional sheets if necessary.

Name of volunteer organization:

Dates involved (example: 1/03 – 5/03):

Total volunteer  
hours:

Describe activities and accomplishments:

Name of volunteer organization:

Dates involved (example: 1/03 – 5/03):

Total volunteer  
hours:

Describe activities and accomplishments:

Name of volunteer organization:

Dates involved (example: 1/03 – 5/03):

Total volunteer  
hours:

Describe activities and accomplishments:

Name of volunteer organization:

Dates involved (example: 1/03 – 5/03):

Total volunteer  
hours:

Describe activities and accomplishments:

(Use additional sheets if necessary.)

(Optional) List any other information our judges should know about the nominee and his or her volunteer community service record:

## 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Memorial Day Event: Please Help!

By Dave Fadness

Planning is already underway for this year's *Memorial Day Parade & Festival* to be held on May 25. This event is getting bigger and better every year. With your help, we can continue this positive trend. Your early involvement is encouraged.



We need volunteers...

To find entertainers and parade participants.

To develop event games and attractions.

To find event sponsors and donors.

To pick up and return equipment the day before and after.

To post parade route "NO PARKING" signs the day before.

To help with set-up the morning of the event.

To help with booth duty and event games.

To help clean-up after the event.

Your help in taking care of one or two of these details will make this event successful for kids of all ages in our community. Let me know if you or someone you know will add to the fun.

If you or a neighbor have an antique, classic, or hotrod car, have them give me a call if they're interested in showing it off in our parade. If you belong to a service group or other organization, we'd like to have you there with us—especially if you'd be in costume—anything from square dancing or scouts to...well, you name it. We also need trucks to move items to and from our Festival site.

Call me at 578-6428 or email me at [drfadness@sbcglobal.net](mailto:drfadness@sbcglobal.net) if you're willing to help even in a small way with our fifth-annual *Memorial Day Parade & Festival*. Don't wait because you think someone else will step forward or because it's long from now; we need your ideas now and to know now whether your help will be available.

Above all, please be sure to mark your calendars, spread the word, and plan to attend with your family and friends on Monday, May 25, 2009.

## Crafters Wanted

By Ginger Cardona

VEP Memorial Day Festival will have an area to sell crafts. We are looking for people interested in creating and selling items. Please contact me if you are interested. (Information on the back of the newsletter.)



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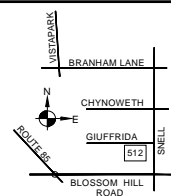
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## Appointment As New Chair Of The Housing Trust Of Santa Clara County

By Supervisor Ken Yeager

I am proud to announce that I have been appointed as the chair of the Board of Directors of the Housing Trust of Santa Clara County. The Housing Trust is an innovative organization that funds housing programs ranging from down payment assistance to financing supportive housing and affordable rental units.

Now is a great time for first time homebuyers to enter the market because of drastically reduced housing prices. However, new regulations require substantial down payments, and coming up with the initial costs is now the stumbling block. Through its down payment assistance programs, the value of the Housing Trust is more relevant than ever.

The Housing Trust of Santa Clara County is one of the most effective and innovative housing trusts in the nation. Since its inception in 1999, the Housing Trust has attracted nearly \$30 million in voluntary contributions from government, employers, foundations and private citizens.

The Housing Trust of Santa Clara County has helped more than 2000 working families and individuals purchase their first home through closing cost and mortgage assistance loans. It has enabled the development of 1500 units of affordable rental housing, and it helped create thousands more opportunities for supportive and special needs housing.

I have been a long-time advocate for creating affordable housing and first-time homebuyer programs. This goes back to my time on the San José City Council where I championed the Teacher Homebuyer Program.

Through my work on regional and statewide bodies such as the Association of Bay Area Governments, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, and the California Air Resources Board, I also know how having affordable housing opportunities in close proximity to jobs reduces traffic congestion and cuts greenhouse gas emissions.

As always, I encourage you to contact my office if you have any concerns or are interested in additional information. You can reach me at 299-5040 or via e-mail at [Supervisor.Yeager@bos.sccgov.org](mailto:Supervisor.Yeager@bos.sccgov.org).

## San Jose Parks & Rec Pricing and Revenue Plan

By Dave Noel

The City of San Jose Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department will be hosting a series of community meetings throughout the month of February to solicit input on their 5-year pricing and revenue plan. To continue to provide services to San Jose residents, PRNS is endeavoring to develop a pricing and revenue strategy that is sustainable, fair and serves the public need.

Each meeting will discuss:

- Project overview
- Costs and pricing methods for PRNS services
- Alternative methods to increase revenue
- Strategies to ensure fairness and equity

There will be a total of eleven meetings. Below are the meetings most convenient to the VEP community. For the full list, visit [www.sanjoseca.gov](http://www.sanjoseca.gov), and click on "Pricing & Revenue Calendar".

### District 9 and Aquatics

Monday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 7 - 9 pm  
Camden Community Center, Multi-Purpose Room  
3369 Union Avenue, San José 95124  
(408) 559-8553

### District 10

Tuesday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 7-9 pm  
The Almaden Winery  
5730 Chambertin Drive, San José 95118  
(408) 268-1133

*Note: this meeting is at the same time as VEP's general meeting.*

### Districts 2 & 7

Wednesday February 25<sup>th</sup>, 7-9 pm  
George Shirakawa Community Center  
2072 Lucretia Ave, San José 95122  
(408) 277-3317

### Senior Centers Region 3 & 4

Thursday February 26<sup>th</sup>, 1-2 pm  
Willows Senior Center  
2175 Lincoln Ave, San José 95112  
(408) 448-6400

For more information, please contact Torie O'Reilly at (408) 268-1133 or [Torie.O'Reilly@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:Torie.O'Reilly@sanjoseca.gov).

## SeniorNet Offers More Introductory Classes

### *Class Registration is Saturday, March 7*

SeniorNet at Willows now offers 3 classes in Introduction to Computers:

Intro. to Computers I is a 4 week classes that instructs the student how to turn on and off the computer, what is hardware and software and gives mouse exercises.

Intro. to Computers II is an 8 week class that teaches how to create files, name them, save them, open them and close them. In addition we will do teach some editing functions in a document such as cut, copy and paste. We will also learn how to create folders, files and save them using Windows XP.

Intro. to Computers III. This class reviews in 4 weeks what we covered in Intro I and II just in case you forgot a few steps between then and now.

If you would like to take these or any of the 12 classes offered by SeniorNet Willows, come to our class registration on Saturday, March 7 at 9 a.m. The sign-up for the Introduction to Computers classes is at 10:30 a.m. The registration is held at the Willows Senior Center, 2175 Lincoln Ave. (at Curtner Ave.). Most classes cost \$20, and there is an annual SeniorNet fee of \$40. SeniorNet is open to anyone 50 years young and over. For more information, call (408) 371-3999 or go to our web site at [www.snicsj.org](http://www.snicsj.org) and click on Willows.

## Kirk Senior Center Moves to Camden Community Center During Remodel

By Vice Mayor Judy Chirco

The Kirk Senior Center will begin offering programs at the Camden Community Center on Monday, February 9<sup>th</sup> while the Kirk Senior Center is closed for renovations. The senior nutrition lunch program will operate from Monday to Fridays in the multipurpose room at the Camden Community Center, 3369 Union Ave between Camden Ave. and Foxworthy. Please contact Melissa Monsees at 408- for further information.

The Kirk Senior Center remodeling project will include a new senior lounge, restrooms, and enlarged kitchen to meet the needs of the senior nutrition program. This former school site will also get new wiring for the internet access and integrated telephone systems. The outdoor area will have improved walkways and landscaping. Construction is expected to be completed by January 1010.

## Santa Clara County Assessor On-line

By Dave Noel

Are you curious about the assessed value of your home? What about your neighbor's home? Do you have a renter nearby and want to find the address of the home's owner? To find all this and more for free, visit [www.scc-assessor.org](http://www.scc-assessor.org) then click on "Quick Hits", and then click on "Look up Property Records".



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Family and Children Portraits

Weddings and Special Events

Photography by Jeri Arstingstall

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## February Events at the Pearl Avenue Branch Library

By Jane Cronkhite

Kids and teens 5-18 are invited to perform in our **Talent Show** on **Saturday, February 28 at 2 pm.**

Story Times:

- **NEW Chinese Story time** for all ages is on **Tuesday, February 24 at 7 pm.**
- **Preschool Story time** for ages 3-5 is every **Wednesday at 11:30 am.**
- **Toddler Story Time with Stay and Play** 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** meets on **Mondays at 5 pm.**
- **Survival English for Seniors** is offered every **Tuesday and Thursday from 9-11 am from January 20-June 4, 2009.**
- The library offers **Internet Basics** training and **Internet Básico en Español.** Internet Basics meets **11 am on Wednesdays.** Internet Básico meets at **6 pm on Tuesdays.** Sign up for either class at the service desk or by calling (408) 808-3053.
- **Get That Job!** returns on **Fridays February 13, 20, and 27 at 4 pm.** Sign up at the Customer Service Desk.
- **Wii Gaming for Teens** is every **Thursday at 4 pm.**
- **Wii Fitness** is light exercise for adults and seniors on **Thursdays at 11 am.**
- **Read and Win Game** is for children in grades 4-6 on **Monday, February 23 at 3:30 p.m.**
- The **ESL Book Club** for Non-native teen and adult readers is **Hole in My Life** by Jack Gantos on **Wednesday, February 25 at 6:30 pm.**
- The **Pearl Avenue Book Club** will discuss the novel **Atonement** by Ian McEwan on **Tuesday, February 24 at 6:30 pm.**
- This month's **K-6 Craft** will be origami on **Friday, February 27 at 4 pm.**

Pearl Avenue Branch Library is located at 4270 Pearl Avenue. Our regular hours are: Mon. 2pm-7pm; Tue. – Wed. 11am-8pm; Thu. – Sat. 10am-6pm and Sun. 1-5pm. For questions please call 808-3053 during business hours. Email may be sent at any time: [pa.sjpl@sjlibrary.org](mailto:pa.sjpl@sjlibrary.org). Jane Cronkhite is a librarian at the Pearl Avenue Branch Library.

## Identity Theft Prevention

By Don Ferguson and Dave Noel

The following article is derived from an email you may have seen, reportedly from a corporate attorney to employees in his company. Whether that's true or not, these are all good ideas for preventing identity theft.

1. Do not sign the back of your credit cards. Instead, put 'PHOTO ID REQUIRED.'
2. When you are writing checks to pay on your credit card accounts, DO NOT put the complete account number on the memo line. Instead, just put the last four digits. The credit card company knows the rest of the number, and this prevents others in the check processing chain from having access to it.
3. Put your work phone number on your checks instead of your home phone. If you have a PO Box use that instead of your home address. If you do not have a PO Box, use your work address. Never have your social security number printed on your checks.
4. Place the contents of your wallet on a photocopy machine. Copy both sides of each license, credit card, etc. That way you will know everything you had in your wallet and all have of the account numbers and phone numbers handy if you need to call and cancel them. Keep the photocopy in a safe place. When you travel, carry a photocopy of your passport.
- If your credit cards or other sensitive private information are lost or stolen, do the following:
5. Cancel our credit cards immediately. But the key is having the toll free numbers and your card numbers handy so you know whom to call.
6. File a police report immediately in the jurisdiction where your credit cards, etc., were stolen. This proves to credit providers you were diligent, and this is a first step toward an investigation (if there ever is one).
7. Call the 3 national credit reporting organizations immediately to place a fraud alert on your name and also call the Social Security fraud line number. The alert tells any company that checks your credit that your information was stolen, and that they must contact you by phone to authorize new credit.

Equifax: 1-800-525-6285

Experian (formerly TRW): 1-888-397-3742

Trans Union : 1-800-680-7289

Social Security Admin. fraud line: 1-800-269-0271

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### Membership Drive Volunteers - Thank you!

*by Marilyn Rodgers, Debra Suydam, Helen Castillo*

During the month of January, VEP kicked off its annual membership drive. Many volunteer hours were donated to develop the and prepare the VEP Newsletter for mailing with the inclusion of a VEP Membership Remit Envelope. Separately, a letter was prepared and mailed to all VEP residents, highlighting VEP's accomplishments, and inviting them to join their neighbors as VEP members. Thank you to the following VEP members for donating 2 or 3 (or more) hours:

**Adina, Juliana and Kevin Pierce**  
**Barbara Erling**  
**Diana Muzyka**  
**Dian Syverson**  
**Pat Souza and Dave Lewis**  
**Mike and Sandy Bousman**  
**Rachel, Antonia, and Jaclyn Castillo**  
**Helen Castillo**  
**Debra Suydam**  
**Don and Marilyn Rodgers**



**VEP helps you solve  
community problems**

### Daffodil Time

*By John Marks*



Daffodils are the first flowers of spring. Mine have been blooming since the first of the month. They are also the symbol of hope for cancer patients and their families. Dollars raised by the sale of these flowers during Daffodil Days support research public education and patient services in our community.

Orders for daffodils will be taken through Febr. 28, and the flowers delivered during the week of March 22. Here's how to get involved. Bouquets start at \$10 for 10 flowers. Other special arrangements range from \$55 to \$75. The most popular offering is the Gift of Hope - 10 flowers in a vase delivered anonymously to a cancer patient. Gift of Hope bouquets are \$25.

To order daffodils, call 879-1032, then 3 after recording starts, or check out [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org). Also, you may e-mail to [svdaffodildays@cancer.org](mailto:svdaffodildays@cancer.org).

#### Watering Tips

Keep those indoor plants warm and cozy; never water them with cold water, or allow the watering can to sit overnight first. This also minimizes the amount of chlorine, a chemical harmful to many delicate indoor plants. And, if you use a water softener, remember that the salt you add to soften the water is not good for sensitive houseplants. Use bottled water that you buy at the store.

If your plant's leaves do turn brown, you need to get rid of toxic salts before they kill the plant. do this by flushing the soil thoroughly. Take it to the sink, or outside. Run water through it twice. If the container is too large to handle, use a turkey baster to remove excess water from the saucer under the container after you flush the soil. Flush a third time using water to which you have added half a teaspoon of vinegar per quart of water, which will leach out accumulated salts. Then use a vinegar/water solution instead of regular water every other week when watering. The vinegar neutralizes the harmful salts, and will lower the pH of the soil, making it more acidic and keeping it salt-free. Your houseplants will love it. The new growth will be lush and green.

You can also over-water, especially bougainvillea vines outside. If they drop their blossoms too soon, you need to use a little benign neglect. Refrain from watering until you feel that it has almost reached the wilting point, then soak the soil to a depth of two or three feet. Some gardeners think of these vines as being tender tropicals, they really are hardy. However, bougainvillea blossoms drop continuously after they start and can be messy.

#### Thorny Berry Vines

If you're getting scratched too much by thorny black berry vines or ollalieberry vines, consider planting the thornless blackberries. Plant the Logan variety for early fruiting, and the Arapraho (or any of its kin -- Apache, Chickasaw, Kiowa, Navajo and Shawnee) for a midseason crop. The Chester variety produces its berries late in the season. Otherwise, consider converting to harmless vegetables, such as lettuce, cabbage, radishes, beets, spinach, broccoli and cauliflower.

## Helpful City of San Jose Phone Numbers

By Dave Noel

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

## VEP Membership Drive

by Jeri Arstingstall and Marilyn Rodgers

The annual membership drive is off to a good start. For all those who have already sent their renewals in - thank you. If you have not done so, please take a moment now, fill in the application and mail it in. Be sure to provide us with your e-mail address, and let us know if you would prefer to now receive the newsletter via e-mail.

Many of our members include comments on their renewals. Here is a sample:

- Thank you for your Great Work and informative newsletter
- A Job well done.
- Big thanks to all the board members and volunteers who work so hard to keep our community safe and beautiful.
- Excellent work
- Happy New Year to all you hard working people
- Keep up the good work (Thank You)
- Prefer newsletter on paper/mailed
- Thank you for giving us a voice!
- Thanks for all you do. The VEP News is always good and informative.
- VEP is the best. The officers especially are so dedicated and caring. Thank you. I think your fee are too low How about \$35/household

## What is VEP Community Association?

VEP is an all-volunteer organization of your neighbors working to improve our neighborhoods; VEP is our community's "homeowner's association".

- VEP volunteers participate in a variety of activities, all of which originate in and benefit our neighborhoods.
- VEP volunteers make our neighborhood's views and needs known to government at all levels.
- Founded in 1969, we are one of the largest, most successful, and most active and enduring grass roots volunteer organizations in Santa Clara County.

## Why join VEP?

To receive our newsletter nine times a year, keeping you up-to-date and informed.

- To participate in and support neighborhood activities and representation.
- To contribute to our annual VEP Community Service Awards for area high school graduates.
- To be part of an outstanding community organization with a long record of success for our neighborhoods.

## It's Time to Renew Your VEP Membership

By Dave Fadness and Dave Noel

VEP membership is based on a calendar year, January through December, so it's time to renew your membership. You'll find a remit envelop in this newsletter. Please be sure to fill in the information requested, enclose your \$20 check made payable to VEP, and mail it back to us as soon as possible--while it's still fresh in your mind. That's all there is to it!

In a very real sense, renewing membership is your vote of confidence and support for the work we do as VEP volunteers. Yes, we get an occasional "thank you," but proof positive of your appreciation is your willingness to renew membership each year. We also appreciate the nice comments many of you offer along with your renewal—for that, we offer our thanks!

VEP membership is the best value you'll ever experience. Renew today and ask your neighbors to join our growing family. Thank you.

## \*\* Membership Application \*\*

Note: none of the following information will be shared with any third party.

**\*\* 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 \_\_\_\_\_

**Please let us know:** ☐ I prefer getting my newsletters by email.

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

Application also available at  
<http://www.vepca.net/membership.htm>



## Disaster And Emergency Preparedness Conference

By Helen Castillo

Disasters or emergencies happen *whether you are ready or not!* Learn how to be prepared for an earthquake, flood or job loss how to prevent fires or crimes how to create a plan what to do if the worst happens Get more information and register to reserve seats for workshops and kids' classes at [www.sjdep.org](http://www.sjdep.org).

- Free Admission - Special Programs For Kids
- Meet District 10 Councilmember Nancy Pyle
- Check out vendors offering equipment and supplies
- Attend workshops and seminars on what you need to know
- Dance to the music of Old School Rock-N-Roll
- Meet representatives of the Red Cross, San Jose Police and Fire Departments, Santa Clara County Sheriff's Department, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts [www.osh.com](http://www.osh.com)

Saturday, April 25  
10:00 AM – 4:00 PM  
Pioneer High School  
1290 Blossom Hill Road

Those who register on-line by March 31st can order a 72 Hour Emergency Kit at a discounted price. Kits are sold only on the web site, while supplies last. Just pick up your order at the conference.

To request an accommodation, please call Stephanie Holm at (408) 535-4982 or 408-294-9337 (TTY)  
Questions – General: [depinfo@gmail.com](mailto:depinfo@gmail.com), Class Registration: [depcclass@gmail.com](mailto:depcclass@gmail.com), Emergency Kits: [depckit@gmail.com](mailto:depckit@gmail.com)  
; we need your ideas now and to know now whether your help will be available.

## Warm and Hearty on a Rainy Day

By Susan Iverson

### Ravioli Soup

1.5 pound Hamburger  
0.25 cup Bread Crumbs  
0.25 cup Grated Parmesan Cheese  
0.75 teaspoon Dry Minced Onion  
2 teaspoon Minced Garlic  
1 tablespoon Olive Oil  
28 ounce Crushed Tomatoes  
6 ounce Tomato Paste  
15 ounce Beef Broth  
1 cup Water  
0.5 teaspoon Sugar  
0.5 teaspoon Basil  
0.25 teaspoon Thyme  
0.25 teaspoon Oregano  
0.25 cup Chopped Parsley  
12 ounce dried Raviolis  
0.5 cup Grated Parmesan Cheese



Brown ground beef. Combine all ingredients besides Ravioli and parmesan cheese. Simmer 10 minutes. Can be frozen for later preparation.

Thaw and/or bring to boil. Simmer 30 minutes. Add cooked raviolis.

Serve with warm French bread and salad. Make a great hearty meal!

## Martial Cottle Park Update

By Adina Pierce

On VEP's Martial Cottle Wish-List dated January 2008, we requested that they not include an automotive or other main entrance on Branham Lane. The Preliminary Draft Alternative Design shows the main entrance on Branham across from Safeway/Wells Fargo. VEP member **Mike Bousman** talked to the ~130 neighbors on Mia and Holycon Circles alerting them to the current plan. Everyone agreed that having the entrance there is a bad idea, due to traffic, safety, noise, and parking concerns.



Another area of concern is the trail and buffer zone behind the homes on the western edge of the park. The Preliminary Draft Alternative Design shows only a 45 foot buffer zone, and VEP requested a 50 yard (150 foot) buffer zone to address privacy and security concerns of neighbors. Martial Cottle Task Force and VEP Member **Charlie Friedericks** interviewed and polled most of the 35 residents that reside on the western edge of the park (on Barron Park and Birmingham drives). Most residents had a preference for a 150 foot or more buffer zone, or would prefer no trail behind their homes at all. They are willing to have agriculture (the priority for the park) continue up to their back fences, as it is now. These survey results have been mailed to the County for consideration.

On January 17, members of the task force and the design team had an opportunity to tour the interior of Martial Cottle Park. The Branham entrance and buffer zone were discussed at length.

The Community Workshop #3 was held on Tuesday, February 10. Over 100 people attended, and VEP members were well represented. The Preliminary Draft Alternative Design was presented again, and some minor changes were discussed. After the presentation, everyone was divided into 6 breakout groups. In these groups, people made comments about the main park area and facilities, listed park priorities, and discussed neighborhood partnership opportunities. The issues of location of the park entrance and the buffer zone were deferred to the upcoming Task Force meeting. The results of the community workshop will be provided to the task force members as part of the presentation at the Task Force meeting scheduled for Tuesday, February 17 at 6 PM, Gunderson High School.

Your help is needed now to stop them from putting a major park's main entrance on Branham Lane (in front of Safeway) and a public path close to neighbors' back fences.

Send your feedback and concerns to:

Jane Mark, Senior Planner  
County of Santa Clara  
Park and Recreation Department  
298 Garden Hill Drive  
Los Gatos, CA 95032  
[Jane.Mark@PRK.SCCGOV.ORG](mailto:Jane.Mark@PRK.SCCGOV.ORG)

For more information about Martial Cottle Park, **visit the VEP website** at [www.vepca.net](http://www.vepca.net) or the County website at [parkhere.org](http://parkhere.org). You may also contact Adina Pierce at 408-362-0937/ [adinap@yahoo.com](mailto:adinap@yahoo.com) or Marilyn Rodgers at 408-225-7553/ [MRodgersRN@aol.com](mailto:MRodgersRN@aol.com).

## VEP Goes Green and Saves Some Green!

By Susan Iverson

VEP is now providing the option of receiving the VEP Newsletter as a PDF email attachment. Not only will you receive the newsletter a few days earlier and be able to see it in full color, it will also save the VEP mailing and printing costs, volunteer time for folding and address, it will also reduce the amount of paper used.



To receive the VEP Newsletter via email, simply check the box on your VEP Membership Application "*I prefer getting my newsletters by email*". If you missed this option, you can still convert to e-distribution by sending an email to [vepca@vepca.net](mailto:vepca@vepca.net) and request to be changed to email distribution. Make sure to add "vepca@vepca.net" to your Contacts list to prevent emails from VEP going into your SPAM folder.

The newsletter will be sent out as an Adobe PDF file. Adobe Reader can be downloaded free from <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>.

If you would prefer to continue receiving a hard copy, you don't need to do anything, VEP will continue to mail out the newsletter to all who would prefer a printed copy.

## Community-Wide Garage Sale on May 2nd

By Dave Fadness & Ginger Cardona

Our annual *Community Garage Sale* will be held on Saturday, May 2nd. Make sure to mark it on your calendar now, and start gathering those treasures you no longer use from your garage, attic, and closets.



We want to get everyone in our community to have a garage sale on the same day. The best way to find a new home for your unused stuff is to increase traffic to your home. So, VEP will advertise this event in local newspapers and by distributing flyers around our neighborhoods.

Activity attracts more activity. Your best resource is you--get your neighbors involved. People will pass by your street unless they think something is happening there. Try to get *everyone* on your street to join in. You might even pool all your neighbors' goodies into one big second-hand superstore. If your neighbors aren't selling, ask if you can spread out to their driveway.

Plan now to make sure you can be seen from the street. Put up balloons or signs. Have your out-of-area friends bring garage sale items that add to yours--make it a big, fun event on your street or cul-de-sac. A little energy and creativity now will pay off in big dividends, freeing up space in your home and putting extra money in your pocket.

VEP is working to also have E-Waste Disposal available and a donation pickup at the end of the day. Stay tuned for details!

## \$ CASH REWARDS \$

For Tips On Crime

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**CRIME STOPPERS**

## Vista Park Community Room Usage

By Susan Iverson

The Vista Park Community room, in addition to other community rooms and park rooms throughout the city, is available for rental for various events and activities. The rental and management is handled by the San José Department of Parks and Rec.



Rental rates for the Vista Park room range from Free to \$100/hr depending on whether it is for non-profit use, SJ Residency and the nature of the event. Some events will require cleaning deposits, application fees, equipment fees, and police officers. Questions and request for reservations can be directed to the San José Department of Parks and Rec. at (408) 268-2053.

## Free Volunteer Tax Preparation at the Campbell Library

**What:**

Starting Saturday, February 7 through Saturday, April 11, volunteers will be available to prepare taxes on a first come first served basis.

**When:**

Saturdays, from 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. and Thursdays, from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

**Where:**

Campbell Library, 77 Harrison Ave. , Campbell

**More Information:** Call 866-1991.



## Annual Gunderson High School Blood Drive

By Rob Iverson

Gunderson High School will be holding its annual blood drive March 24th, from 8am until 2pm. The blood drive is being hosted by the Class of 2011, in conjunction with the Stanford Blood Center. We welcome drop in visits, but if you would like, you may contact Rob Iverson to set up a specific appointment time. You may contact Rob at [rob\\_iverson@sjusd.org](mailto:rob_iverson@sjusd.org), or [robiverson@yahoo.com](mailto:robiverson@yahoo.com), or at 408-506-8700.





## Gunderson Theater News

By Trish Buttrill

The GHS Theatre Department just completed a very successful production of *FEIFFER'S PEOPLE*. The show, by Pulitzer Prize winning humorist and cartoonist, Jules Feiffer, is an ensemble sketch comedy show about contemporary life. 13 actors and 8 techies were involved with the production.



GHS Theater is gearing up for the One Act Play Festival in May. All students, both beginning and advanced, will perform in these short plays. The festival is a huge favorite with the GHS student body.

The Gunderson POETRY SLAM is just around the corner. Student writers perform spoken word in the theater at lunch for 5 days, beginning March 30. Finalists are chosen by a panel of judges to perform at an evening event on Friday, April 3 in the theater. This event is enormously popular with students at Gunderson. Material ranges from humorous to deeply thought provoking and moving.

G+ teacher, Kevin Costa, is organizing a band showcase to be held March 26 in the theater. Student bands, along with Mr. Costa's band, will have the stage for the evening to share their music and entertain students.

## Students Helping Others

Trish Buttrill

Students who have a passion for public service have joined together with College & Career coordinator, Stephanie Heuer, for a Community Service Fair to be held March 25 at Gunderson. More than 20 local non-profit agencies will be in attendance to provide students with information and opportunities to perform community service. The planning committee is an off-shoot of the Jefferson Awards for Public Service.

## “VEP” Community Association

What does “VEP” stand for?

How did we get that odd name?

“VEP” represents the first three letters of our original subdivision names started here in 1969:

V = Vistapark;  
E = Encore (and Echo Valley); and  
P = Parkview Valley.

That's all there is to it!

Of course, we've grown over the years to include the Blossom Heights subdivision and others, including Las Brisas in 2004. But our original VEP name stuck, and we've been known by it for 36 years. Some like to think of us as...

Very Energetic People

See the mailing page of this newsletter for a map of VEP's core membership area. We also welcome members from outside these boundaries who share common interests.

## Federal Economic Stimulus Plan Provides Hope For The County's Beleaguered Budget

By Supervisor Ken Yeager

With local revenues down and the State budget in disarray, Santa Clara County will need to make some pretty tough cuts in its budgeting process this year. However, the economic stimulus bill working its way through the Federal government may offer some relief for the County.



In the draft of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 that passed the House of Representatives, California slated to receive more than \$32 billion. The County is likely to benefit both directly and indirectly from the plan.

On an indirect level, the stimulus package has the potential to wipe out nearly a quarter of California's budget shortfall. Many of the County's services are funded through the State. If the State avoids deeper cuts in health and social service programs, we could avoid more drastic reductions in service at the local level.

State budget cuts affect the County's "safety net" services such as Food Stamps, MediCal, and CalWORKs. In an economic downturn, the need for these services is even greater. The County already has higher caseloads for these programs over last year, and applications are up by 35%.

The Federal stimulus package will also focus funds on local infrastructure projects that will get more people working. The County has prepared a list of more than 30 "shovel-ready" capital projects that would qualify for funding under the bill. The list includes retrofits, paving and electrical projects, park improvements, and sewer system upgrades.

Under the plan, the County may be eligible to receive between \$8 million and \$18 million in roads and construction projects. The Santa Clara Valley Health and Hospital System also has a \$12 million project meets the requirements to receive funding for computerizing health records.

I am especially excited that the stimulus package will include funding for energy efficiency and pollution reduction projects. At the local level, this could translate into potentially \$2.5 million for projects such as more efficient heating and cooling systems and retrofitting lighting systems.

## Family Watchdog (Megan's Law)



By Dave Noel

A website has been created to help you find out what sex offenders may live near you. Go to the website [www.12.familywatchdog.us](http://www.12.familywatchdog.us), and enter your address. You'll get a map very much like a Mapquest or Yahoo map, but with colored boxes indicating locations of registered sex offenders. Click on the boxes to get the name, picture, and offenses of the person at that location.

To sign up for free automated email notifications when sex offenders move into your zip code, visit the Safe Community Alert Network at: [www.scanusa.com](http://www.scanusa.com). For a map of registered sex offenders and other related information, visit: [www.meganslaw.ca.gov](http://www.meganslaw.ca.gov).

# VEP Community Calendar

## February / March 2009

| Sunday | Monday   | Tuesday   | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday                             | Saturday |
|--------|--|---|-----------|----------|------------------------------------|----------|
| 15     | 16<br>President's Day<br> | 17<br>Martial Cottle<br>Task Force Meet-<br>ing # 6<br>6 pm to 8 pm<br>@ Gunderson<br>High School                         | 18        | 19       | 20                                 | 21       |
| 22     | 23   | 24<br>VEP General<br>Meeting - Vista<br>Park Community<br>Center - 7:30 pm  | 25        | 26       | 27                                 | 28       |
| 1      | 2<br>VEP Exec Com-<br>mittee Meeting -<br>7:30 pm - Vista<br>Park Community<br>Center                      | 3   | 4         | 5        | 6<br>VEP NEWS<br>Articles Deadline | 7        |
| 8      | 9  | 10  | 11        | 12       | 13                                 | 14       |
| 15     | 16   | 17<br>St. Patrick's Day<br>            | 18        | 19       | 20                                 | 21       |
| 22     | 23   | 24<br>VEP General<br>Meeting - Vista<br>Park Community<br>Center - 7:30 pm<br><br>Gunderson High<br>School Blood<br>Drive | 25        | 26       | 27                                 | 28       |

# THE VEP NEWS



## VEP Community Association

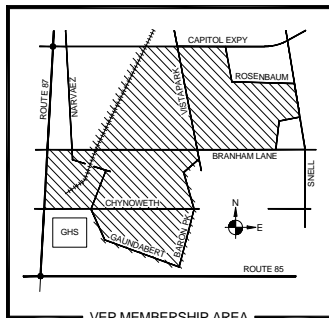
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Published monthly by VEP Community Association, a not-for-profit organization of volunteers established in 1969 to serve and represent more than 2000 homes in the Blossom Valley area of southern San Jose. VEP is dedicated to neighborhood maintenance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

### VEP EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

|                |                 |          |  |
|----------------|-----------------|----------|--|
| President      | Vacant          |          |  |
| Vice President | Marilyn Rodgers | 225-7553 | <a href="mailto:mroddgersm@aol.com">mroddgersm@aol.com</a>           |
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VEP MEMBERSHIP AREA

PRSRT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
SAN JOSE, CA  
PERMIT #5242



Check our website: [www.vepca.net](http://www.vepca.net)

Community Room

Vista Park

in the

7:30 pm

February 24th Meeting

VEP's

Be sure to attend