

VEP NEWS

• VEP COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION •

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

October 2009

VEP'S MEETING

7:30 p.m. Tuesday
► October 27, 2009 ◀

Vista Park Community Room
475 Hyde Park Drive

AGENDA

★ California Consumer Protection ★

How to Protect and Advocate for
Your Rights

A presentation by Michael Lafferty
Manager, California Department of Consumer Affairs
Consumer & Community Empowerment Division

★ Environmental Health ★

A presentation by Ben Gale,
Director of Environmental Health, Santa Clara County

★ VEP Business ★

Advertiser Appreciation
California Bathroom & Kitchen

★ Announcements ★

Blossom Valley Christmas Tree Fund
(Katherine & Dann Decker)
Martial Cottle Park Master Plan
Daffodil & Beautification Update

★ 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 October Meeting

by Marilyn Rodgers

Topics that are planned for the October general membership meeting:

► **California Consumer Protection – How to Protect and Advocate for Your Rights.** Featured guest speaker will be Michael Lafferty, Manager for the Consumer & Community Empowerment Division of the California State Department of Consumer Affairs. He will provide an overview of services and information available to assist California residents on a variety of issues, such as what can be done when credit card companies

send you notification letters saying that your interest rate will double. Other topics will briefly cover senior fraud, and working with banks on mortgage foreclosures.

Environmental Health – featured guest speaker Ben Gale, Director of Environmental Health, Santa Clara County will provide an overview of department services which includes hazardous waste, retail food, and agricultural products. Inspectors respond to concerns regarding dirty restaurants, follow-up on residents' concerns of possible food poisoning from the field to the store/restaurant, and many other issues.

► **VEP Business – Advertiser Appreciation – California Bath and Kitchen.** VEP will be recognizing and thanking them for their many years of advertising support to VEP.

► **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 **October 27th** meeting. Please join us!

VEP Beautification Event on November 7

By Dave Noel and Debra Suydam

Saturday November 7th is Daffodil Day in San Jose. VEP will participate again this year in this annual city-wide event sponsored by *Keep San Jose Beautiful*. We will plant 250 daffodils, and 50 native bulbs.

We will also tackle additional neighborhood beautification and cleanup projects on the same day.

Meet at the Vista Park Community Room at 8:30 a.m. for refreshments and planning. We'll go out into the neighborhood to work at 9:00 a.m., most likely finishing by late morning. If you arrive after 9:00 a.m., look for a note on the community room door to see where we are.

At least some of our crew will be working at the southwest corner of Branham and Narvaez where we will plant eight trees to replace trees that have died.

Please bring sturdy gloves and tools such as picks or shovels for planting daffodils and trees, pruning shears, litter pickers, brooms, etc.

This is a perfect opportunity for high school students to earn community service hours, and we'll be happy to sign their service worksheets.

For more information, and to let us know you'll be able to help, please contact Debra Suydam at 408-972-4231. We look forward to seeing you there!

2009 is VEP's 40th year!

September General Meeting

By Adina Pierce

We had a good turnout for the September General meeting at the Vista Park Community room.

First, VEP honored photographer **Jeri Arstingstall**, of Precious Moments in Time, for being a long-time advertiser in the VEP Newsletter.

Next, **Julie Higashi**, Deputy Health Officer at the Santa Clara County Public Health Department spoke about the H1N1 flu.

Who is at risk?

- Kids under 4 years old
- People over 65
- Pregnant women
- People with chronic lung problems, including asthma
- People with chronic conditions of the heart, liver, blood, or metabolic system, including diabetes
- People with immune compromised systems, because of medications or HIV infection

Symptoms of H1N1: fever, cough, body aches, chills, sore throat, runny/stuffy nose, headache, fatigue, and "feel like you got run over by a truck".

H1N1 is spread like the seasonal flu - not by food. Ways to prevent spreading:

- Stay home when sick; keep sick children at home (for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone)
- When coughing or sneezing, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue, or cough/sneeze into your sleeve (kids know this as the Dracula Sneeze)
- Wash your hands with soap and water often
- Avoid touching eyes nose or mouth
- Stay away from sick people as much as possible
- Keep surfaces clean

For more information, visit the Public Health department website at: <http://www.sccphd.org/> or 'Become a Fan' of their Facebook group: <http://www.facebook.com/sccpublichealth>.

Melinda Landau, Manager of Health and Family Support Services for San Jose Unified School District spoke about what the schools are doing regarding the flu. They send kids home with a fever and one other symptom. Here are some guidelines for parents which are also listed on sjusd.org:

- Conduct daily health checks. Before you bring your child to school, check for fever (temperature of 100° F or greater) and any of the following flu symptoms: cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headaches, chills or fatigue.
- If your child has a fever, especially with another symptom, keep them home. If your child just doesn't look or feel well, and has one or more of the flu symptoms, keep them home.
- Stay home. Children and others with flu-like illness should stay home. Stay home for at least 24 hours after fever free without using medicines.
- Get your flu vaccines. If you haven't gotten your child the seasonal flu vaccine – get it now. Once the H1N1 vaccine is available, get that too! Children under 10

years of age will need booster shots.

- Keep up the good health habits. Wash Your Hands, Cover Your Cough and Wash Your Hands Often!

Tony Garcia, Superintendent of Oak Grove School District stopped by to introduce himself to the members. He has worked for the district since 1975. He succeeds Superintendent Manny Barbara.

Kathy Sutherland from Nancy Pyle's office gave an update on District 10 happenings. Nordstrom Rack will be opening at Oakridge Mall sometime in October. The construction of Whole Foods on Almaden and Blossom Hill Road is in progress, and will be completed next summer.

VEP President **Marilyn Rodgers** gave an update on VEP business.

- One board member resigned, and we are looking to fill that position.
- The Goals and Objectives have been updated for the 2009/10 year, and are highlighted in this newsletter.
- A motion to approve the budget for the 2009/2010 fiscal year plus using \$500 from our reserves was approved by the membership.

VEP Board Member Receives Recognition from the City Council and Mayor

By Marilyn Rodgers

Helen Castillo, VEP Board member, was recognized by the San Jose City Council and San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed for her work and dedication in helping individuals and families of San Jose become more informed and prepared in the event of an emergency or disaster. Helen, was one of a group of volunteers who worked with District 10 Councilmember Nancy Pyle to organize the first district wide Disaster and Emergency Preparation Seminar in San Jose. This all day seminar was held in April at Pioneer High School. The seminar was acknowledged as a model which other districts will replicate. (Picture is of Alex Fraser, Instructor and Volunteer for Emergency Preparedness presenting the award to Helen).



Don Ferguson, VEP member and volunteer, was also a member of the group of volunteers that was recognized.

In addition, Helen continues to provide leadership within the VEP neighborhood to offer several sessions of the free 2-hour seminar on Disaster Preparation. She plans to develop a block captain model within the VEP neighborhood to further assist VEP residents toward becoming more aware and prepared. For additional information contact Helen at hcastillo@vbprop.com.

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 developing additional opportunities to increase our advertisers' visibility with our members. These include spotlighting one business each month at our general membership meeting, with an accompanying article in the VEP News.

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 VEP Treasurer Ginger Cardona at cardona@sbcglobal.net or 227-0222, or VEP News Editor Susan Iverson at vepeditor@sbcglobal.net or 408-813-0592, or any board member for additional information.

Homework Center is launched at the Pearl Avenue Branch!

By Kaye Moore

The Pearl Avenue Branch Library finally has a Homework Center! Our free, drop-in center is staffed by a professional tutor, and is appropriate for grades K-8. All that is required is for parents to fill out a brief intake form on the first visit. Our Center runs from 3:30-5:30 Monday-Thursday, excepting school and library holidays. The Center also offers excellent volunteer opportunities for teens ages 15-17. It is low commitment (one or two hours a week) and teens love to teach, and kids like to learn from teens. It's a win-win opportunity. For more information on that, contact Kaye Moore at our library.



Our Book Scouts program for kids grades 1-6 will be expanding to every Monday at 4pm. Children can earn achievement badges for learning about library skills.

On November 4th, bring your children to our Reading to Dogs program at 4pm. These canines are gentle, patient, and affectionate. They have been trained by Canine Companions for Independence. Children that may be shy reading aloud thrive when reading to furry friends.

For adults: We are also launching Tai Chi classes on Monday and Thursday nights, and don't forget that we offer Zumba most Wednesday evenings too!

Thanks to our community for coming out to our Friends of the Library book sale. Pearl Avenue Friends reported that this was the most successful book sale yet, and the proceeds go directly to support programming and collections at Pearl. If you are interested in joining Pearl's Friends group, email PearlAvenueFriends@gmail.com.

Pearl Library Unveils Donor Wall

By Marilyn Rodgers

In a ceremony held on Sunday, August 30th, the Pearl Library unveiled the Donor Wall which acknowledges individuals and organizations that made a financial contribution to the Pearl Library. Councilmember Judy Chirco and Co-Chair of Fundraising Campaign Dave Fadness were among the speakers who thanked the library's donors. The VEP Community Association made a donation to the library, and is listed on the donor wall as a Legacy donor. Many VEP members and residents also made individual donations to the library. Dave Fadness asked the children present to assist with the unveiling of the wall. Everyone enjoyed the opportunity to see how their contributions have made a positive impact in their community library. Contributions are still being accepted. For additional information, please contact Dave Fadness at drfadness@sbcglobal.net



Low Income Home Repair Assistance

By Dave Noel

The City of San Jose's Housing Rehabilitation Program offers technical and financial assistance to lower-income property owners for the correction of critical health and safety repairs, such as roof replacement, plumbing and electrical repairs. The assistance is provided through grants and low or no-interest loans to the property owner.

For more information, call (408) 975-4440, or visit: www.sjhousing.org/program/repairs.html



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Pearl Library Fundraising a Great Success

By Dave Fadness

Local businesses and residents donated more than \$282,000 to pay for collections, equipment, and furnishings at our new Pearl Avenue Branch Library. Despite a down economy, the success of this community effort surpassed all expectations. We have much to be proud of--and a beautiful, fully functional library as a result.

In an August 30th ceremony sponsored by the San Jose Public Library Foundation and San Jose City Councilwoman **Judy Chirco**, wall-mounted plaques listing the names of those who donated \$100 or more were formally unveiled at Pearl. VEP and many of its members were among those gratefully honored at this event.

Be sure to visit the Pearl Avenue Branch Library if you haven't done so already. It's located at 4270 Pearl Avenue, next to the fire station just north of Branham Lane. You'll be delighted with its appearance, its features, and the range of available materials and services. Those who used the old library on that site will be especially impressed.

The needs of our library are ongoing; due to heavy daily use by patrons, expensive books, equipment, and furniture must be replaced regularly. As such, the need for funding is ongoing, as well.

You can help to keep our library at its best by sending a tax-deductible donation to the San Jose Public Library Foundation, 150 E. San Fernando Street, San Jose 95112-3580. Visit their website at www.sjplf.org. Be sure to specify that your donation is for the Pearl Avenue Branch Library. Thanks!

AskSJ - Text Message a Question to a Librarian!

By Dave Noel

Need an answer to a simple question? Now you can send your query to a San Jose librarian via text message. Send your question any time, and a librarian will respond between the hours of 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Just send a text message to 66746 and start your question with "AskSJ;" e.g. "AskSJ What's the current exchange rate for the Euro?"



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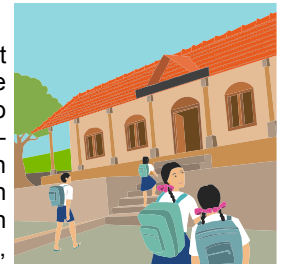
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Gunderson High School

By Cary Catching, Principal

Well it seems as though summer just started and now it's over. We have already been in school close to two months! Though it was a short summer, it seemed as though much work got done. Construction cleaned up some punch list items in the newly renovated science wing, forum, cafeteria and gym. We also hosted the Breakthrough Program at Gunderson – a district program which serves middle school students in San Jose Unified School District. Finally, we successfully oriented to Gunderson several hundred new 9th grade students and their families.



Gunderson started the school year with an increase in enrollment (approximately 70+ students more than last year). Many of these students are from our surrounding neighborhood. The vast majority of these students come to us from Muir and Castillero, though we also attract students from the other 5 middle schools in our district. We are thrilled that our community is starting to look at Gunderson with an objective eye and realize what a fine school it is.

With the increase in enrollment comes and increase in staffing. In addition to the replacement of three departing teachers, we were able to hire two new teachers (science and PE) and a counselor. We would like to welcome these new folks to Gunderson and hope this is the first of many years with us.

The Gunderson Foundation is currently in the midst of a membership drive. The Foundation is committed to supporting the activities of teachers and students at Gunderson, in the form of scholarships and teacher grants just to name a few. If you would like more information about the Foundation, please contact the school principal, Cary Catching, at 535-6340.

Finally, we have re-instituted the 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 two "Coffees" are slated for Friday, October 2 and Friday, November 6 at 7:30 a.m. in the Conference Room. We invite you to attend...

I would like to welcome both our new and returning students and families to Gunderson High School. I look forward to a fun and exciting year. If there is anything we can do to assist you this year, please do not hesitate to call.

Advertiser Recognition – Precious Moments in Time

By Marilyn Rodgers

Precious Moments in Time Photography specializes in families and children's portraiture. Photography has been Jeri Arstingstall's passion since high school, and she is excited to be celebrating the 20th anniversary of Precious Moments in Time this coming year. Jeri likes creating artwork for families to enjoy for generations – capturing "those precious moments in time". She is very proud of the fact that many VEP area homes already proudly display her photography. Jeri offers a 10% discount to VEP members.

VEP is very appreciative of Jeri's commitment to VEP, both as a continuing long time advertiser, and for her service as a past Board member and President.

Community Service Awards

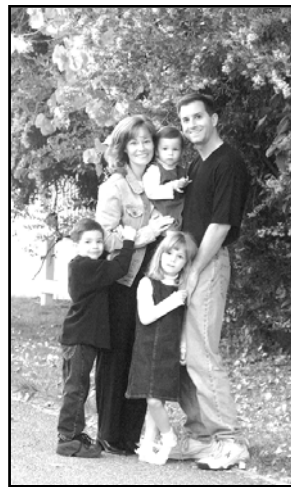
By Dave Noel

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

At the January general meeting, we'll present a proposal for the 2010 awards program to members for discussion and approval. We'll then solicit nominations in February/March, and applications will be due in late April. 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.

The VEP annual budget approved by members at the September general meeting includes \$1,000 for this year's Community Service Awards.



Family and Children Portraits

Weddings and Special Events

Photography by Jeri Arstingstall

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Blossom Valley Christmas Tree

By Marilyn Rodgers

The Blossom Valley Christmas Tree provides additional holiday cheer during the holiday season for all VEP residents. As many of you have witnessed for yourselves, Kathy and Dann Decker love to share their Christmas spirit with Blossom Valley and the City of San Jose by elaborately decorating the 80 (plus) foot cedar tree in their front yard at the corner of Devon Park Court and Chynoweth.



And...if spreading Christmas joy isn't enough, the Deckers have another motive for decorating their tree at Christmas time...to help those in the community who are less fortunate. They accomplish this by collecting donations of food for the Second Harvest Food Bank, and toys for City Team Ministries in collection barrels around the tree.

Unfortunately, the Deckers cannot continue their holiday work without your help!! It costs several thousand dollars each year to decorate and maintain the tree during the holiday season – from Thanksgiving until New Year's. However, the Deckers have established the Blossom Valley Christmas Tree Fund, a non-profit organization dedicated to raising just enough money to maintain the tree while collecting food and toys for the needy. This allows both individuals, and businesses, to make tax-deductible contributions.

The largest cost item is the equipment and crew needed to put up the decorations, and then to remove them. If you know of a company who has the equipment and expertise to do this type of work, please contact the Deckers at 408-972-4098 (an 80 – 120 foot extension is needed for the size of this tree).

Unfortunately, without assistance from the community, the Deckers will not be able to provide this very enjoyable and worthwhile activity this year. If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation, do so by contacting the Deckers at 408-972-4098, or by mailing a contribution to the Blossom Valley Christmas Tree Fund, P.O. Box 18341, San Jose, California 95158-8053. For additional information, please contact the Deckers at 408-972-4098 or bvchristmastree-fund@hotmail.com

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Martial Cottle Park Update

By Adina Pierce

The Consultant Team: Design, Community & Environment, is working on a draft report for review and discussion by the State, the County, Project Committees, including the Project Team, Technical Advisory Committee, Task Force Committee, and the community-at-large. It is anticipated that the County Parks Department will be scheduling the next series of public meetings for the Task Force Committee and public workshop once the draft report is ready. Tentatively, these upcoming public meeting dates are anticipated for early December, and the County Parks Department will release a newsletter with the meeting information and project update.

On September 2, 2009, Martial Cottle Park (Cottle Ranch) was inducted into the California Agricultural Heritage Club for maintaining 125 years of continuous ranching/ farming in California. The donor's representatives, Frank Giordano and Dave Giordano, accepted this special recognition award on behalf of Mr. Lester at the 2009 California State Fair. Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi presented the State's Commendation recognizing Cottle Ranch's distinguished history. State Park and Recreation Commissioner Gail Kautz was also present to congratulate the County Parks Department and the donor's representatives for this special recognition for preserving agriculture in the State. It is anticipated that the State Commendation and Recognition Plaque will be located at Martial Cottle Park when the park facility is developed. The County Parks and Recreation Department would like to acknowledge Park Planner Kimberly Brosseau for preparing the application and documentation for the California Agricultural Heritage Club Committee's consideration of Martial Cottle Park for this recognition.

For more information, please contact Adina Pierce at 408/362-0937 or adinap@yahoo.com or Marilyn Rodgers at 408/225-7553 or MRodgersRN@aol.com.

Kudos for San Jose State

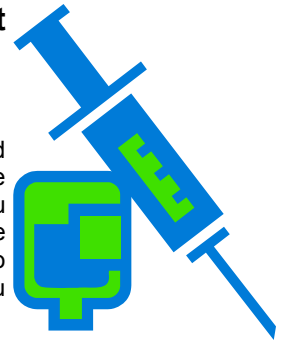
By Dave Noel

U.S. News & World Reports ranked San Jose State 12th overall among the West's top public universities offering bachelor's and master's degrees. For more information, see the 2010 edition of "America's Best Colleges," now available at newsstands and online.

Flu Shots – Why Get Them, and Where to Get Them

By Marilyn Rodgers

If you are young and healthy, and your children are healthy you may be thinking “we don’t need to get flu shots”. This year health officials are stepping up the media campaign to strongly encourage people to get flu shots. Some of the reasons are:



Approximately 39,000 people die every year from complications of seasonal flu – flu shots help decrease the disease from quickly spreading to those that are more at risk – the elderly and those with chronic diseases

The flu shot is safe and effective.

Ample vaccine is able for all those who want it

Some of the reasons you may have for not getting flu shot:

- “I had a flu shot once (or know someone who did) and became ill with the flu soon afterwards”. The flu vaccine is made with dead virus – so you will not contract the flu from the shots. Should you become ill soon afterwards, it is probably due to being previously exposed. It does take 10 days to two weeks following immunization for your immunity to ward off the disease.
- “I am unemployed and can’t afford to pay for a flu shot for myself or my family”. Many healthcare providers have discounted rates available, and/or are providing free vaccinations. One pharmacy chain is advertising that they will provide 100,000 flu shots for free to those that are unemployed – CV Pharmacies. Also many schools and public health departments are providing flu shots – either for free or at discounted rates.
- “I don’t know when the flu shots will be available”. For the seasonal flu – vaccinations are available as of the first of October. Check with your healthcare provider. For Kaiser members – clinics are available through December. During the month of October, extended hours on Saturday mornings and Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Check their website at kp.org.

This year, an additional recommendation encourages having the H1N1 “swine flu” vaccination:

For high risk groups which include:

- Children, teenagers, and young adults.
- While the numbers are still small, there is concern that healthy Children can quickly become seriously ill and die from the H1N1 virus.
- Other high risk groups include pregnant women and those with chronic illnesses.
- Note: The elderly may not need the H1N1 vaccination as it is believed this group has some immunity/protection - a result of having lived through a similar virus in the 1970's.

It is always important to check with your own healthcare provider to discuss concerns and questions regarding specific health issues for you and your family.

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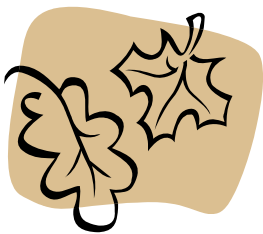
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Fall Fundamentals

By John Marks

What! You don't have a compost bin 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 Composter's 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.

Cleaning up the garden now will help cut down on pests in the spring. Many insects and diseases overwinter in fallen debris. Prune diseased leaves from roses, camellias, rhododendrons and azaleas. Leave leaf litter under oaks, pine and junipers; the leaf duff helps protect the roots. Add a mulch layer to existing garden beds to provide needed nutrients for next year's crops. But don't practice wall-to-wall mulching – it's important to leave areas of exposed native soil for ground-nesting bees.

Chill tulip bulbs now in order to plant before the first frost. Tulip bulbs need six to eight weeks of chilling time (in the fridge, not the freezer) before planting. Avoid storing bulbs near apples; apples emit ethylene, which will cause bulbs to sprout prematurely.

Sow native wildflowers: poppies, clarkias, lupines and blue-eyed Marys are easy to start from seed. Planting just before the winter rains start will prevent the need for regular watering.

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



Wesley W. Terrell

★VEP Member & Resident★
Vista Park Specialist



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Pearl Avenue Branch Library Featured Events

By Meg Omainsky, Senior Librarian

Diwali Festival of Lights

October 17th from 11:00-1:00

This family event will have Indian snacks, a storytime for children, sand painting, and other fun activities. This program is made possible by the generous contributions of the friends of the Pearl Avenue Branch Library.

Happy Birds Show

October 24th from 11:00-12:00

The Happy Birds show includes a colorful group of six performing parrots who show off over 25 tricks! Watch them ride a bike, play basketball and push a shopping cart. Listen to the parrots talk and sing. Learn interesting facts about parrots. This program is made possible by the generous contributions of the friends of the Pearl Avenue Branch Library.

Story Times:

- **Preschool Story time** for ages 3-5 is every **Wednesday at 11:30 am.**
- **Toddler Story Time with Stay and Play** for ages 18-36 months is every **Friday at 10:30 am.**
- **Family Story Time** is held on **Saturdays at 10:30 am.**

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

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.
your volunteer coordinator

**VEP helps you solve
community problems**

Street Trees for San Jose Residents

By Our City Forest

Local non-profit Our City Forest (OCF) has worked to protect San Jose's urban ecosystem through planting and stewarding our city's urban trees since 1994. OCF currently offers street trees to San Jose residents for free or at a reduced cost. Providing these trees is vital to the health of our city and San Jose's green vision to plant 100,000 more in the next 15 years.

Shade trees vastly improve the quality of life in urban areas. One large shade tree can help reduce energy use by 10 to 50 percent. Trees also improve air quality by removing particulate pollution and absorbing excess carbon dioxide. But that's not all city trees also help to reduce noise pollution, screen urban views and protect our watershed by minimizing erosion. One tree can even increase a property's value by 5 to 15 percent!

Trees are not only beneficial but also required in all San Jose park strips the area within 10 feet of the curb whenever space allows. OCF can help acquire the necessary planting permits, select the right species and teach proper planting and care. Our City Forest also assists with large-scale neighborhood, school and park plantings by providing volunteers, tools and tree delivery.

Unfortunately, only one urban tree is planted for every four that are removed. You can help reverse this trend by planting with OCF. To request a tree application for your residence, please call us at (408) 998-7337 x121 or visit www.ourcityforest.org. To organize a neighborhood, school or park planting, contact ext. 124.

Volunteers of all types are integral to Our City Forest's mission. Those interested in more extensive training can become Tree Amigos through OCF's comprehensive 18-hour course. Participants learn about species identification, planting techniques, tree care, pruning and more! After completion, Tree Amigos assist with tree planting and volunteer direction at OCF events. For more information on this program and other volunteer opportunities, contact ext. 123 or volunteer@ourcityforest.org.

In addition to planting trees, Our City Forest also strives to educate community members of all ages about the urban forest. For students grades K-12, OCF's Planet Tree program provides free, interactive presentations in local classrooms. Educational Tree Talks take place at college campuses, community centers and libraries year-round. Community members can also participate in the Green and Healthy Neighborhoods program, OCF's new workshop series that coaches residents through eco-friendly lifestyle changes that are simple, fun and free. To learn more about community education programs, please contact ext. 105 or info@ourcityforest.org.

Help Our City Forest grow a greener San Jose. Get involved today

***Renew your
VEP membership
today!***

Be a VEP volunteer!

VEP Board Vacancy

by Marilyn Rodgers

The VEP Board of Directors has an open position. This position will be filled through an appointment process by the Board of Directors. To be considered for appointment you need to be a member in good standing. The appointee will fill the position through the current term – now until May 2010. If you have been considering serving on the VEP Board, now is the time to voice your interest. Serving as a member of the VEP Board of Directors 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. Whether you are new, or a long time member, we need you - your ideas, energy, and enthusiasm. No experience is required. Continuing and former board members are more than willing to serve as mentors while you get your feet wet! How much time is required? About 3 to 6 hours per month. For additional information, or to be considered for appointment, please contact Marilyn Rodgers, or any board member.

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

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*******BREAKING NEWS*******

California High Speed Rail Could Cut Through VEP

By Dave Noel

You may have heard that there is much debate in progress regarding how to route the California bullet train through the downtown San Jose and Palo Alto areas. However, you probably haven't heard that the bullet train could cut through the VEP neighborhood. Our sister association, Pinhurst Residents Association, is arranging a meeting with the High Speed Rail Authority to be held in the near future. Watch for an email from VEP to announce specifics on this meeting.

In the alternative route that affects VEP, the High Speed Rail (HSR) would come up Highways 85 and 87 instead of following the UPRR/Caltrain tracks up Monterey Highway. With this alignment the HSR would basically follow Highway 85, cut across the Gunderson Campus along Gaundabert Ln on an elevated track, meet Highway 87 near Branham passing ABOVE the Branham overpass, and continue on an elevated track past Capitol where it comes to grade with 87 before the Communication Hill cut.

The CA HSR Authority gave a presentation to Gardner, Willow Glen and Downtown community groups. It covered the entire San Jose to Merced route and can be found on our website at www.vepca.net. The relevant section for VEP and Gunderson is on page 19 - The Monterey Highway Alignments.

The CA HSR Authority is in a period of Comparative Evaluation of Remaining Alternatives. It's looking for public input. I encourage everyone to read through the presentation and comment. For more information, contact the CA HSR Authority at 1-800-881-5799 or highspeedrail@circlepoint.com.



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Hello, VEP Community!

By Helen Castillo

I hope you are all doing well and with that note I would like to help in preparing your life for an emergency or disaster. I am developing a pilot program for our area. So far we have held classes taught by Alex Fraser from the city of San Jose Emergency Services. I want to thank those of you who have attended the 2 hour class. We still have a lot to do to continue our success. I will be walking the neighborhood looking for captains to join in helping our neighborhood be prepared. I would like to hear from anyone interested in discussing ideas, want to sign up to be a captain of your block or wanting to attend a class. I want to thank all of you for your support in keeping us safe and helping the VEP Community be a great place to live. You can e-mail me at hcastillo@vbprop.com or call 408-981-5902



FLU Facts: Seasonal & 2009 H1N1 (*)

These two flus aren't really that different. A lot of what you already know about the seasonal flu applies to the H1N1 flu (swine flu). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), most people recover from the seasonal flu and the H1N1 flu on their own, without medical attention (see info on CDC Website cdc.gov/h1n1flu/qa.htm). Use this handy chart to spot symptoms and find out what you can do to lower your risk of catching either flu.

	Seasonal Flu	2009 H1N1 Flu
What is it?	A contagious respiratory illness caused by the influenza A or B virus. Occurs during the regular flu season, usually in winter.	A contagious respiratory illness caused by a strain of influenza A virus. First detected in the United States in April 2009, it has occurred throughout the summer, and will likely continue throughout this winter.
Similarities		
Symptoms	Fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, runny or stuffy nose, headache, chills, and fatigue, and possible diarrhea and vomiting in children.	Same as seasonal flu, plus some instances of diarrhea and vomiting in adults.
How it spreads	Passes between people through coughing or sneezing, via germs in the air or on infected surfaces.	Same as seasonal flu.
Prevention	Wash your hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand gel. Avoid touching doorknobs, desks, and other surfaces that might be contaminated. Stay away from people who are coughing or sneezing. Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue and throw away the tissue.	Same as seasonal flu.
Treatment	If you're experiencing moderate symptoms, try over-the-counter medications such as Tylenol or Advil, and get plenty of rest and fluids. (Note: Kaiser does not endorse any products mentioned here.)	Same as seasonal flu. If symptoms worsen, contact your personal physician or health care provider.
Differences		
Who's at risk?	Seniors and very young children are most likely to catch the seasonal flu. Pregnant women, seniors, and people with chronic health conditions are at increased risk for complications.	Children and young adults are most likely to catch the H1N1 virus. Pregnant women and people with chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes, and heart or lung disease are most likely to be hospitalized with the flu. People 64 or older appear to have a lower risk of catching H1N1 flu.
Peak season	Usually occurs in late fall and winter. Those affected may spread the virus one day before symptoms develop and up to seven or more days after becoming ill.	Has occurred throughout the summer and will likely continue into the winter.
Vaccines	Physicians recommend that everyone get a seasonal flu vaccination to protect against the regular flu.	A separate H1N1 vaccine is being developed. The vaccine should be available for distribution in October or November. When the vaccine is available, Kaiser Permanente will follow CDC guidelines about which at-risk people to vaccinate first. As vaccine supplies increase, more people will be able to receive the Hi Ni vaccine as per CDC guidelines. Please visit cdc.gov for the most updated information about the availability of the Hi N1 vaccine.

Are you experiencing flu symptoms? If you feel ill, experts recommend you stay home even if your symptoms are mild. By staying home you decrease the risk of infecting others. Treat your symptoms with rest, fluids, and over-the-counter medications. Stay home until you've been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine.

Call your doctor if you have:


- Trouble breathing, wheezing, or tightness in your chest;
- A deep cough with a lot of mucus or a cough lasting more than three weeks;
- A very sore throat and a hard time swallowing;
- Severe ear pain, sudden hearing loss, or discharge from your ear;
- A fever with a stiff neck or a severe headache a high fever; and/or
- Gotten better, then gotten worse again.

If you don't feel ill, there's no reason to be tested for seasonal or H1N1 flu.

(*)Editor's Note: This article was taken from a flyer produced and distributed by Kaiser Permanente Health Plan, Inc.

VEP Community Calendar

October / November 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27 VEP General Meeting - 7:30 pm - Vista Park Community Room	28	29	30	31
1	2	3 Board of Directors Meeting , 7:30pm, Vista Park Community Room	4	5	6	7 Daffodil Day and Beautification Vista Park Community Room - 8:30 a.m.
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24 VEP General Meeting - 7:30 pm - Vista Park Community Room	25	26 Thanksgiving 	27	28

THE VEP NEWS



VEP Community Association

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

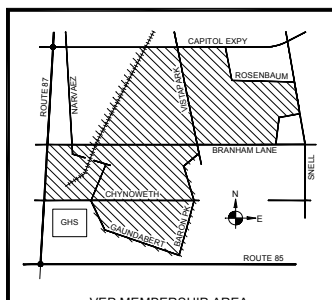
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Published monthly by VEP Community Association, a not-for-profit organization of volunteers established in 1969 to serve and represent more than 2000 homes in the Blossom Valley area of southern San Jose. VEP is dedicated to neighborhood maintenance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

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Director	Debra Sudyam		

Prefer your newsletter via Email?
Let us know at vep@vepca.net.



Check our website: www.vepca.net

Community Room

Vista Park

in the
7:30 pm

Be sure to attend
VEP's
October 27th Meeting