

THE VEP NEWS



VEP Community Association

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

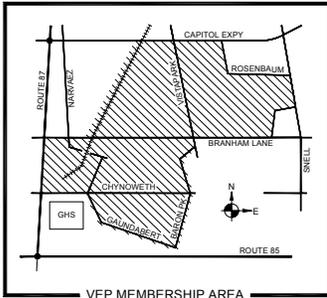
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Published monthly by VEP Community Association, a not-for-profit organization of volunteers established in 1969 to serve and represent more than 2000 homes in the Blossom Valley area of southern San Jose. VEP is dedicated to neighborhood maintenance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

VEP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Marilyn Rodgers	225-7553	mrodgersm@aol.com
Secretary	Adina Pierce	362-0937	adinap@yahoo.com
Treasurer	Ginger Cardona	227-0222	cardona@sbcglobal.net
Director	Helen Castillo		hcastillo@vbprop.com
Director	Debra Sudyam		dsudyam@sbcglobal.net
Director	Katherine Decker		kddedcker@sbcglobal.net
Director	Vacant		
Editor (Non Board)	Susan Iverson	813-0592	vepeditor@sbcglobal.net

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
 February 22nd Meeting

VEP Community Calendar

February / March 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
13	14 	15	16	17	18	19
20	21 	22 VEP Community Meeting— 7:30 PM— Vista Park Community Room 	23	24	25	26
ESUHSD/ OGUSD/SJUSD Off						
27	28	1 VEP Executive Meeting—7:00 PM—Vista Park Community Room	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22 VEP Community Meeting— 7:30 PM— Vista Park Community Room	23	24	25	26

VEP NEWS

• VEP COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION •

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

February 2011

VEP'S MEETING

7:30 p.m. Tuesday
► **February 22, 2011** ◀

Vista Park Community Room
475 Hyde Park Drive

AGENDA

★ Almaden Ranch Project ★

Implications for VEP

Presentation by
Gerry de Young

Engineering Consultant, Ruth & Going, Inc.

★ Traffic Implications ★

Improvements to Almaden Expressway
Proposed Change in Speed Limits
for Capitol and Almaden Expressways

City of San Jose/County of Santa Clara
Department of Transportation/Roads Staff

★ VEP Business Meeting ★

Community Service Awards
Discussion and Approval

Announcements & Updates

Martial Cottle Park
Memorial Day Event
City of San Jose Redistricting
Youth Auxiliary

★ 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

Topics that are planned for the February general membership meeting:

► **Almaden Ranch Development Project - Featured guest speaker Gerry de Young, Engineering Consultant with Ruth**

& Going, Inc. will provide an overview of the development project as currently planned. The project site is located on the east side of Almaden Expressway between Hwy 85 and Cherry-Chynoweth. Mr. de Young will discuss traffic flow implications including the status of a "Chynoweth bridge" which, if built, would direct traffic into ENA and VEP residential neighborhoods. This is an issue that should be of concern to all VEP residents. Take this opportunity to become more informed. See applicable articles elsewhere in this edition of the VEP Newsletter.

► **Traffic Implications - Improvements to Almaden Expressway/Proposal to Change Speed Limits on Capitol and Almaden Expressways.** San Jose City Department of Transportation staff Manuel Pineda and Laura Wells will be joined by Santa Clara County Roads and Infrastructure staff Dan Collen to provide brief presentations on planned improvements coming in March, for Almaden Expressway between Blossom Hill Road and Branham Lane. An additional proposal to change (increase) speed limits on segments of both Capitol and Almaden Expressways will be highlighted.

► **VEP Business Meeting/Announcements.** Members will be asked to approve the plan for Community Service Awards for 2011. (See article describing recommendations listed elsewhere in the newsletter.) Several announcements and updates will be provided.

► **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 22nd** meeting. Please join us!

January General Meeting Synopsis

Adina Pierce

VEP's first meeting of 2011 was held on January 25 at Kids Copia, 4855 Pearl Ave. in San Jose. Thank you to **Kids Copia** for graciously offering their facility at the last minute, since we were locked out of the Vista Park Community Center. The pizza and drinks were also appreciated! Thank you also to the meeting attendees, who joined us for the meeting.

VEP President **Marilyn Rodgers** introduced **Vicki Huang** from **Sino Spa**, a new neighborhood business located at 422 W. Capitol Expressway (cross street Vistapark Dr). They offer various massage services, and are open 7 days a week from 10 am to 10 pm.

Javier Gonzales from the 23rd Assembly District introduced

2011 is VEP's 42nd year!

himself. He represents **Nora Campos's** office.



Next, **Sheela Toor**, CEO and Founder of Kids Copia and **Melissa McFarland Jimenez** – Director, gave a presentation about their new Child Development Center on Pearl Avenue. They offer programs for children aged 6 weeks to 18 years. Offerings include: before & after school program; tutoring; homework center; guitar, drum, and art lessons; and more. Visit their website for more information: <http://www.kidscopia.com/> or call **408-269-2834**.

Marilyn then introduced our main guest speaker, Judge **La-Doris H. Cordell**, Independent Police Auditor. She gave a very interesting and informative presentation about the Office of the Independent Police Auditor.

The mission of the Office of the Independent Police Auditor (IPA) is to provide independent oversight of and instill confidence in the complaint process through objective review of police misconduct investigations. By providing outreach to the San Jose community and making thoughtful policy recommendations to the City Council, the IPA works to promote accountability and to strengthen the relationship between the San Jose Police Department and the community it serves.

To make a complaint about the police department, visit the website <http://sanjoseca.gov/ipa/> or call 408-794-6226. All complaints are kept confidential.

Next, **Dave Fadness** spoke about the new Youth Auxiliary program. See the article in this issue for more information.

ANNUAL VEP MEMBERSHIP DRIVE CONTINUES.

If you haven't already sent in your membership renewal – do it today! A membership application is included in this newsletter and is also available online at the VEP website – vepca.net.

Congratulations to Bill Johnson – winner of the January 25th drawing for a free VEP membership!

The membership drive continues through March. If you have not already done so, please complete your membership renewal and return it today. For your convenience, there is an application included in this newsletter. The application is also available online at the VEP website www.vepca.net. Complete the information requested on the application, include a check for \$20.00, and mail it to: VEP Community Association, P.O. Box 18111, San Jose, California, 95158.

VEP Community Service Awards

by Marilyn Rodgers and Lu Anne Behringer

VEP members will be asked to discuss and vote on the 2011 VEP Community Service Award program (specifics for this year). The VEP Community Service Award program has been providing Awards to High School Seniors for many years. To qualify for the CSA Award, a high school senior must be very involved in volunteer activities. The VEP Bylaws provide a framework for the program, but includes some flexibility to meet current needs...thus each year the membership votes to approve the program specifics.

In October, the membership approved the organization's budget for the coming year. This year all events and programs were included in one all inclusive budget item amount (rather than designating an amount for each program, as had been the case in previous years). The membership will be asked to approve a specific amount for the CSA program this year. The Board of Directors is making a recommendation to continue to fund the CSA program at the same level as last year – last year's budget was approved for \$1,000.00.

The Board also is recommending that the specific program criteria, which was approved last year for the 2010 program, again be approved for this year. The specifics are as follows:

"Up to 3 awards be granted at the judges' discretion, evenly distributed among selected winners. Nominations to be solicited from AHHS, GHS, and in the VEP newsletter (for Member-at-Large). School administrators will be asked to nominate at least 2 students per school with no upper limit. No more than 1 award per category (AHHS, GHS, At-Large). Ok to grant an award in a category with only 1 nominee. Ok not to grant an award in any category, if judges feel the candidate(s) don't merit an award."

Upon member approval, nominations will be solicited during the months of March and April. Applications are due in late April, with awards granted the middle of May. Applications will be available on the VEP website at www.vepca.net, or by request.

If you know a deserving high school senior who is a very active volunteer, please let them know about our Community Service Awards.

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VEP Monitors Issues of Concern and Takes Action on Members' Behalf

By Marilyn Rodgers

VEP has a long tradition of monitoring possible issues of concern for our members, developing positions approved by the membership, and then advocating on their behalf. Our usual process is to collect extensive background data on an impending issue, then notice members in the newsletter, present information and/or recommendations at a general membership meeting, followed by members voting to approve a position or course of action. However, there are instances when an issue may arise quickly, and faced with tight timelines, adherence to the usual extended deliberative process will not meet the needs of the organization. When such a situation presents itself, the Board of Directors acts on behalf of the membership utilizing the framework or specific goals outlined in our Goals and Objectives. VEP Goals and Objectives are approved annually by the membership.

Recently, VEP was faced with such an issue. Over the holidays, VEP received information that a development project, called the Almaden Ranch, was progressing quickly with a Scoping Meeting planned prior to the next scheduled VEP membership meeting. The Scoping Meeting was to notice the public that a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) would be initiated. Included in the project was a tentative plan for a "Chynoweth Bridge", which would potentially direct traffic onto VEP residential streets. Historically, (dating back to the late 1990's) VEP had taken a position of opposition to such a plan. Utilizing this historical position, and believing that the resurrection of such a plan would not be in the best interest of the VEP community, the Board of Directors collaborated with the new neighboring community association ENA. A letter describing concerns and recommendations was approved by both organizations Boards of Directors, and sent to city staff to be included as part of the SEIR. [See article by Dave Fadness and Dave Noel elsewhere in the Newsletter.](#) Copies of the letter are available on request, and will also be available on the VEP website in the near future.

Martial Cottle Park Update

By Adina Pierce

On Tuesday, February 8, 2011, the Board of Supervisors unanimously certified the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and approved the combined State Park General Plan and County Park Master Plan ("Park Plan") for Martial Cottle Park. VEP President **Marilyn Rodgers** and Secretary **Adina Pierce** attended this meeting on VEP's behalf.

On March 2, 2011, the California State Park and Recreation Commission will hold a meeting to consider approval of the Martial Cottle Park State Park General Plan and County Park Master Plan at 9 a.m. at the Santa Clara County Government Center, 70 West Hedding Street, San Jose.

Comments of Renewing Members

by Adina Pierce and Marilyn Rodgers

One month in to the three month membership drive, memberships are flowing in. We really appreciate your continued support of VEP!! We also enjoy reading the comments many of our members share with us. Here is a sample:

I enjoy and read all of the articles in the newsletter
Thank you for all you do for all of us. It is truly appreciated
Several... thank yous

How to Stop Getting the Yellow Pages

By Lori Bongiorno

More from *The Conscious Consumer* blog

With Internet directories and cell-phone lookups, many people consider the printed yellow pages a relic of the past. But the books keep showing up on their doorsteps, year after year. Finally, there's good news for those who want to prevent stacks of unwanted phone directories from being delivered to their front doors.

A new, national opt-out Internet site from the Yellow Pages Association and Association of Directory Publishers lets you control which yellow pages (if any) you receive.



In less than five minutes, I opt

ed-out of the 10 phone directories (both white and yellow pages) I was scheduled to receive this year. In the past, you had to contact each phone book publisher directly, and it wasn't always easy to find the publisher's contact information. But this new site lets consumers make all the requests at once. Here's how it works:

1. Go to yellowpagesoptout.com. Enter your ZIP code. You'll see a list of the phone books that you're eligible to receive.
2. Register on the site. You need to include a valid email address and phone number along with your home address.
3. You'll then receive a temporary password via email. Log in, change your password, and then click the "Opt-Out" tab at the top of the page and select which directories you receive. You can opt-out of everything or choose to receive which phone books are useful to you.

The opt-out should last for at least three years.

It's too soon to know if this will really work for every phone book publisher, but given that it only takes a few minutes, this is certainly worth a try for anyone who receives a slew of new phone books they don't need.

Looking to get rid of the piles of yellow pages that have accumulated over the years? If you have curbside recycling and your city takes mixed paper, then phone books can generally be recycled, according to Jennifer Berry at Earth911. You should remove any non-paper elements, such as magnetic inserts, before you toss them into your bin.

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February is Spay & Neuter Month

By Debra Suydam,

These recent wonderful warm days will be bringing us more than early spring flowers; it will also usher in an early kitten season. Kitten season is one of the busiest times at the local shelters and rescue centers. Starting in April and running thru October, a San Jose animal shelter can get as many as 100 kittens a day. During these peak times, it seems to be an endless challenge to find homes for all the adoptable souls.



Other casualties of kitten season are the more mature cats – some who have been waiting months, sometimes years to find a permanent loving home. Beautiful older cats are often overlooked and have extended stays at the shelter during these months.

Unwanted animals also affect your pocketbook! Millions of your tax dollars are spent each year on trying to control the unwanted pet population.

You can help both the unwanted animals and the community by having your animals fixed.

You can find low costs spay and neuter services at San Jose Animal Care and Services Center and the Humane Society Silicon Valley.

They may have a long wait so make your appointment now and make a difference today.

San Jose Animal Care Center
2750 Monterey Rd., San Jose, CA 95111
(408) 794-PAWS (7297)
www.sanjoseanimals.com

HSSV Animal Community Center
Milpitas
901 Ames Avenue
Milpitas, CA 95035
Phone: 408-262-2133
Fax: 408-262-2131

Stopping Nuisance Olives And . Other Annoyances



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

The Floral Fruit Eliminator concentrate is made by Monterey Lawn & Garden Products (\$13.99), available from Orchards. Avoid getting spray on face or hands, and if spray drifts to a car, wash car down afterwards (better to just move the car first). This product will prevent other trees such as crab apple and plumb from bearing as well; ironically, if used on green tomatoes in the Fall, it will hasten ripening but not damage the fruit.

Early Spring Reminders

- * Clean out your garden of any debris that may have collected during the colder months. Using a rake clean off the bed, being careful to not disturb any bulbs you may have planted in the fall.
- * Check your soil. Determine what types of amendments need to be added prior planting. Healthy soil is the key to growing an abundant, healthy garden. Plants need air, water and nutrition to survive and the quality of the soil you plant them in matters!
- * Begin fighting weeds before they appear in your garden beds - stop weeds before they start. Treat your garden with a pre-emergent weed control, such as Miracle-Gro Garden Weed Preventer.
- * Early spring is the time to prune your trees and shrubs before growth begins.
- * The cuts you use to prune will result in different growth patterns. Before leaves and flowers appear on trees, examine the branches and develop a pruning strategy.
- * Begin fighting pests in your garden before they invade your plants, with Ortho Bug-B-Gon Garden and Landscape Ready-to-Spray
- * Don't forget to water and feed your other houseplants. Check to make sure soil is moist and all indoor plants are receiving an adequate amount of sunlight.

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VEP Youth Auxiliary

Dave Fadness

VEP is launching a **Youth Auxiliary** (see description below). This program will, in part, address the need for volunteers to maintain landscaped public spaces in our community—a role the city will no longer fulfill.



I am very proud to say that Gunderson High School is in full support of this program. GHS will serve as our pilot; as this program matures, we intend to reach out to other high schools and students. Our plan is to start with a weekend or after-school project in March and do another one before the end of this current semester.

Adults are needed to help plan maintenance projects and to supervise students who participate in them. Some workdays may involve projects at more than one site, so supervisory assistance will be needed. Adult volunteers (especially more "seasoned" ones like me) won't have to do manual work if they don't want to—just make sure that work is being done safely by students.

If you are willing to help, email (drfadness@sbcglobal.net) or call me (578-6428) at your earliest convenience.

This project can only be the success we hope for with your ideas and your adult supervision.

Thanks!

* * *

VEP Youth Auxiliary Committee

Our VEP *Youth Auxiliary Committee* will organize and assist in overseeing activities carried out by a *VEP Youth Auxiliary* comprising student volunteers at Andrew Hill and Gunderson High Schools (as well as students in our membership area who attend other high schools). These activities will be planned to meet student community-service credit graduation requirements.

VEP's *Youth Auxiliary Committee* will work with our high schools (and directly with students who attend schools other than Andrew Hill and Gunderson) to recruit student volunteers/coordinators, to plan work activities, and to establish workday schedules.

The *Youth Auxiliary Committee's* objectives will be to establish a habit of voluntarism in and a constructive outlet for the energy of our young people, to assist in identifying deserving nominees for *At-Large Community Service Awards* and, ultimately, to realize improvements in the appearance, quality, and sense of pride in our neighborhoods. *Youth Auxiliary* work could include maintenance of public areas (streets, parks, schools, etc.) as well as the property of consenting elderly or disabled persons within our membership area.

Youth Auxiliary Committee work plans and any need for funding will be reviewed in advance and subject to approval by the VEP Executive Board

VEP Gives Memorial Day Event Proceeds to Partnering Community Schools

by Marilyn Rodgers

During the first two weeks of January, VEP presented checks to representatives of partnering community schools. The checks were the proceeds, after expenses, from the Memorial Day Parade and Festival. The intent of the Memorial Day event has been to provide a low cost, old fashioned fun community event, not to be a fund raiser. However, as has been VEP's practice in recent years, partnering schools for the event have received a check to be used by the school's PTA or representative group.

Previously agreed upon criteria for funds disbursement include participation in the advanced planning committee, the number of volunteers participating on the day of the event, and provision of facilities or supplies. This year, the three partnering community schools were Carson Elementary, Parkview Elementary, and Gunderson High School. VEP representatives who enjoyed the opportunity to present checks to the schools were Memorial Day Parade and Festival Chairperson Dave Fadness, VEP Volunteer Coordinator and Board Member Helen Castillo, and President Marilyn Rodgers.



Memorial Day Event Chairperson Dave Fadness presents check to Gunderson High School Principal Dominic Bejarano and Teacher Trish Buttrill.

President Marilyn Rodgers presents a check to Carson Elementary PTA President Cherry Sanders and Principal Betsy Doss, with enthusiastic PTA members who volunteered for Memorial Day Event surrounding them.



VEP Memorial Day Event Chairperson Dave Fadness, President Marilyn Rodgers, VEP Volunteer Coordinator Helen Castillo present a check to

Parkview Elementary PSCA President Diana Johnson and Principal Debbie Roach.

Thank you to Our Volunteers – VEP Membership Drive

by Debra Suydam and Marilyn Rodgers

January is the month that VEP kicks off its annual membership drive. Current members receive a remit envelope in the printed edition of the January VEP Newsletter. VEP also mails an “invitation to join” recruitment letter to all non-members residing in the VEP geographic area. VEP volunteers responded to a request to participate in the “Mailing preparation” party, which took place the weekend of January 15th. Volunteers enjoyed snacks and networking with friends and neighbors while they folded, stapled, stuffed and sealed envelopes. The final step was to place an address mailing label on each newsletter or recruitment letter.

We would like to thank the following enthusiastic group of volunteers:

Parveen Gill
Emily Chen
Albert Chen
Barbara Erling
Bob Aquino
Barbara Aquino
John Marks
Frank Kistler
Roohi Eskandarian
Irene Shoberg
Debra Suydam
Josie Supencheck



Additional thanks to:

- ☺ Debra Suydam for coordinating this important project for VEP
- ☺ Bob Aquino for taking this large mailing to the main San Jose
- ☺ Post Office (including completion of required post office paperwork)
- ☺ Adina Pierce who has assumed the role of database coordinator
- ☺ Susan Iverson and Adina Pierce for printing out the large number of required address mailing labels

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Big Plans Coming for Our Area

Dave Fadness, Envision San Jose 2040 Task Force member

San Jose is in the final process of updating its blueprint for growth through the year 2040. Called *Envision San Jose 2040*, this plan proposes to add 470,000 jobs 120,000 residences in the coming 29 years. It essentially ends outward expansion in favor of increased density of development within our existing urban area. Public transit, bicycling, and walking will be given preference over cars.

Many changes are planned for our city—many of them are in and around our VEP membership area. Here are a few nearby examples:

- ★Capitol Expy/Monterey Rd: + 870 jobs
- ★Capitol Expy/Vistapark Dr: + 680 jobs + 540 dwellings.
- ★Capitol Expy/Route 87: + 1,650 jobs + 1,195 dwellings.
- ★Oakridge Mall vicinity: + 9,870 jobs + 7,500 dwellings.
- ★Blossom Hill Rd/Cahalan Ave: + 810 jobs + 600 dwellings.
- ★Blossom Hill Rd/Snell Ave: + 1,480 jobs + 1,108 dwellings.

A bit farther from our membership area:

- ★Communications Hill: + 1,700 jobs +2,772 dwellings
- ★Downtown San Jose: + 48,500 jobs + 10,360 dwellings
- ★New Edenvale: + 16,000 jobs
- ★Old Edenvale (Bernal): + 31,000 jobs
- ★North Coyote Valley: + 50,000 jobs
- ★North San Jose: + 97,000 jobs + 25,380 dwellings
- ★Blossom Hill/Hitachi: + 2,930 dwellings
- ★ Blossom Hill/Monterey Rd: + 1,940 jobs

A central goal of our new General Plan is to reverse a pattern of growth that has San Jose providing housing for those who have jobs in other cities; our city has been Santa Clara County's bedroom community. San Jose's ability to provide services is diminished by the resulting poor tax base. We currently have 0.8 jobs per employed resident; our goal is to achieve 1.3 jobs per employed resident by 2040.

In short, we aim to make San Jose a fiscally, economically, and environmentally sustainable city.

After nearly four years of work and more than forty public meetings with a citizen Task Force, the San Jose Planning Department is now taking our *Envision San Jose 2040 General Plan* into the community for review.

Contact me if you belong to a community, professional, or social organization that is interested in a presentation (phone 578-6428 or email at drfadness@sbcglobal.net). Daytime or evening presentations can be arranged. Do this before June 30th.

Almaden/Chynoweth Retail Center

By Dave Fadness & Dave Noel

Arcadia Development Company is again proposing a project for the 43-acre site on the east side of Almaden Expressway, between Route 85 and Chynoweth-Cherry. They want to build 400,000 square feet of commercial space there. Our city is now saying that Arcadia will not have to build a bridge across the Guadalupe River to provide traffic relief; all that will be required is to connect Chynoweth-Cherry to Sanchez Drive, which ends at Blossom Hill Road (next to Denny's)

VEP teamed with the Erikson Neighborhood Association (ENA) in submitting concerns that should be considered in a report (an EIR) that will examine this project's potential environmental impacts. What follows is excerpted from our letter:

Our historic and ongoing concern over the development of this large parcel is its contribution to congestion in an area already overwhelmed by traffic. Some of the intersections we're concerned with are beyond issues of inconvenience and environmental degradation. Traffic backing-up onto Route 85 and from Route 85 entrance ramps onto Almaden Expressway is downright dangerous. There currently exists no plan to remedy freeway interchange deficiencies. A County Roads project scheduled to begin in March 2011 to improve conditions on Almaden Expressway will, we fear, be negated by the addition of traffic from large-scale projects like this.

When a project was last proposed on this site in 1998, the City of San Jose required the developer to contribute financially to building a bridge extending Chynoweth Avenue easterly across the Guadalupe River. Said to be needed to provide traffic relief, that bridge was our foremost concern as it was shown by traffic studies to impose serious impacts on our neighborhood streets east of the Guadalupe River.

We requested that the City instead align the river crossing with Thornwood Avenue, a wide, largely commercial east-west street just south of Route 85. Planners agreed that this alignment made sense, especially because Chynoweth Avenue now dead-ends at the Martial-Cottle Park, within residential neighborhoods in the VEP membership area. Except for our neighborhood collector streets, Pearl Avenue and Winfield Boulevard are the only arterial traffic outlets along Chynoweth Avenue east of the river.

Thornwood provides easy access to Oakridge Mall shopping attractions, Winfield Boulevard, Santa Teresa Boulevard, Blossom Hill Road, Route 85, Route 87, and the Almaden Spur Guadalupe light rail line. For this reason, San Jose DOT agreed to include a Thornwood alternative in its General Plan Transportation Diagram. However, in the 12/15/10 Notice, only the Chynoweth Avenue connection is shown on Exhibit C of the Almaden/Chynoweth Retail Center General Development Plan.

Since 1998, more commercial development has occurred, adding significantly to congestion along Almaden Expressway without any commensurate improvement in traffic capacity. We are now told that the City will not require the developer to contribute to the cost of building a bridge over the Guadalupe River. If a bridge is needed to relieve traffic congestion from this project, we want to know—and want to have the developer contribute to building it.

Board Directors of VEP Community Association and Erikson

Neighborhood Association have monitored this development

since it was originally proposed and the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared and approved in 1998-1999. Having heard our community's needs and concerns, we ask that the following list of items be analyzed in the Supplemental EIR for this current project.

1. Identify traffic (and related air quality, noise, and pedestrian/motorist safety) impacts and required mitigation measures at intersections along Almaden Expressway at Branham Lane, Chynoweth-Cherry, Route 85, Almaden Plaza Way, and Blossom Hill Road.

2. Identify traffic (and related air quality, noise, and pedestrian/motorist safety) impacts and required mitigation measures at and in the vicinity of Route 85 approach and exit ramps.

3. Analyze whether the project design will accommodate future Route 85/Almaden Expressway interchange improvements which may require land from the project site.

4. Compare traffic (and related air quality, noise, and pedestrian/motorist safety) conditions on Almaden Expressway with and without a bridge over the Guadalupe River to test the recent assumption that one will not be needed to relieve impacts generated by this project. Perform this comparison for both proposed alternative bridge connections (the one at Thornwood and the one at Chynoweth).

5. If a bridge will be required, determine the traffic impacts that would result on all streets included in the 1999 EIR for both alternative bridges. Identify which alternative offers better traffic relief with the least impact on residential neighborhoods. The conclusion drawn in this SEIR should provide sufficient grounds for naming only that alignment on San Jose's General Plan Transportation Diagram.

6. If a bridge will be required, state whether it be built in time to mitigate project traffic impacts, and how and by whom it will be paid for.

7. If it is determined that a bridge will not be required, this SEIR should provide sufficient grounds for permanently removing it (both proposed alignments) from our General Plan Transportation Diagram.

8. Analyze the proposed project map for compatibility with current and future trail connections along and potentially across the Guadalupe River. The Guadalupe River trail from Chynoweth to Branham Lane is currently planned to be sited on the east side of the river. In many places there is currently insufficient room. Will this project allow a future trail along the west side of the Guadalupe River in that reach?

9. Analyze cumulative noise impacts on homes surrounding the project. Noise originating from existing commercial uses at the northeast corner of Almaden Expressway and Cherry is already experienced by residents in ENA neighborhoods.

10. Analyze cumulative lighting impacts on homes surrounding the project, as well as to regional light pollution.

11. Analyze cumulative heating impacts on neighborhoods surrounding the project due to paving. Ensure mitigation measures such as trees will be used to minimize this.

12. Analyze visual aesthetic impacts on homes surrounding the project as well as from public areas such as Cilker Park.

(continued...)

13. Analyze the project's impact on surface water runoff, local flood control and groundwater replenishment. Will the project's level be higher than the level of surrounding neighborhoods possibly resulting in flooding those neighborhoods in a 100 or 200 year flood?

14. Analyze the project's impact on wildlife, especially, but not limited to, migratory birds (geese, egrets, etc) which frequently visit the Guadalupe River area and the project site.

We appreciate this opportunity to be sure the SEIR addresses our concerns and will be happy to work cooperatively with the project team to find appropriate ways to best meet project objectives while minimizing adverse impacts on our community.

We will follow and report on this project in upcoming newsletters. VEP members are asked to bring concerns about this project or letter to our attention at our February meeting.

VEP NEEDS YOU!!

by Marilyn Rodgers

**VEP needs your ideas, your enthusiasm
..... VEP needs you!**

There are many different types of volunteer opportunities for you through your community association! We are currently developing a list of volunteer activities which will highlight **2-hour** volunteer commitments. The list will include brief descriptions of each activity. One such volunteer offering is the opportunity to "test" the waters...to learn what it might be like to be a board member – with as little as a 2 hour time commitment per month. Volunteer by assisting a very active volunteer - one of our board members. Don't be afraid to ask what it might mean to assist the Webmaster, Newsletter editor, or Volunteer Coordinator. For additional information, or to make suggestions, please contact Helen Castillo, Volunteer Coordinator, at 408/981-5902 or hcastillo@vbprop.com.



Community Association Leaders Participate in City Budget Prioritization Meeting

by Marilyn Rodgers

On Saturday, January 29th, one representative from each community association was invited to participate in the Mayor's Neighborhood Association and Youth Advisory Commission Budget Priority Setting Meeting. Everyone was assigned to a specific table of either 8 or 9 people. Dave Noel, who represented ENA Community Association, and myself just happened to be assigned to the same table. One Youth Commissioner was also assigned to each table.

The Mayor kicked off the event by introducing observing elected officials and key city staff. He then provided an overview of the status of the city's finances, the funding levels of the city's pension plans, and the financial challenges facing us as a city in the coming year. This year the City of San Jose faces a dire situation of an approximate (and growing daily) deficit of \$110 million dollars. Additionally, the city already has to plan for a loss of \$22 million in services that were funded (re-established) for 2010 through one-time concessions from public employee union bargaining units or one-time revenues. The Mayor also provided information about the growth in contributions to the city's two pension plans – the Police and Fire Department Retirement plan, and the one for all other city employees called the Federated City Employees' Retirement plan. Retirement plan contributions overall are expected to grow this year from \$195 million to \$256 million.

Following the Mayor's sobering news on the budget, the group was invited to participate in a real life table game developed and donated by the Innovation Games Company. Their founder and CEO Luke Hohmann introduced the group to the purpose and specifics of the game. The scenario included each table participant having a given amount of play money to "buy" services. There was not enough money to buy any of the sample services without negotiating with other table members. To cut a service, each table had to arrive at consensus, which then would free up additional funds to buy unfunded services. Overall the feedback on this new "game" style format was positive. Members also provided specific feedback on possible improvements. The Mayor and City Council hope to use the results of this game to see the relative priorities of community leaders as they face the real life decisions of making necessary cuts to the City's budget and services.

During the last part of the meeting session, the Mayor presented 10 real budget questions facing the City Council, and asked for the group to vote on each question. Each participant was given an electronic voting device (a clicker) to instantly record each individual vote which then translated into percentage of votes for each category in a specific question. One question asked about what should be the retirement age for public safety (police and fire) employees, which was lowered to age 50 during the past decade. 95% of the group voted to have the age of retirement be at least 55 or older, with 68% responding to another question which indicated the age should be at age 60 or older. Another example of a real-life question, was asked regarding whether the City should look into changing the automatic 3% annual "cost of living" increase for retirees, with a vote of 84% responding – yes.

The Mayor thanked everyone for participating and encouraged community leaders, as well as the communities they represent, to continue to be engaged in the budget process. The City's charter requires that the city pass a balanced budget.

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A Year of Cakes

By Kathy Wood, Baker

February is a month of celebrations and celebrations means CAKE. On my blog-ayearofcakes.blogspot.com-a football cake for Super Bowl Sunday is presented along with a couple of choices for Valentine's Day.

With the beautiful weather we have been enjoying, it's difficult to be stuck in the kitchen. Since darkness still falls early in the evening, maybe whipping up a cake at that time would be easier (midnight snack offerings).

I clip recipes from newspapers, magazines, back of boxes, etc., then tuck them away for future use. The following cake is one of those clippings; I found it in the local newspaper, The Mercury News. It is a simple (piece of cake!) recipe, rich in flavor and extremely moist.

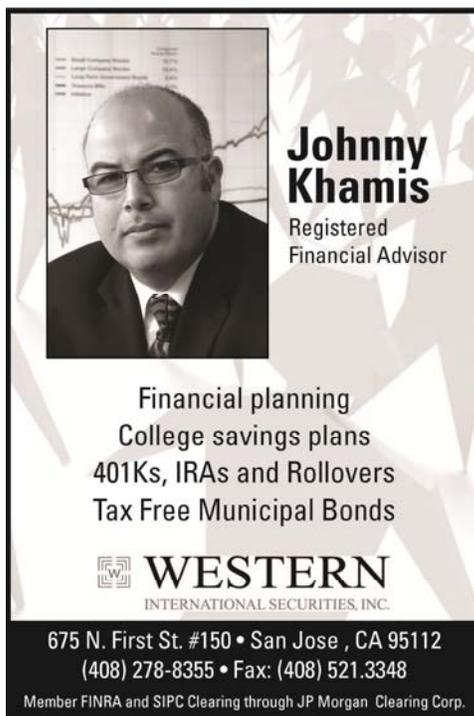
CANDY BAR POKE CAKE. Ingredients: 1 package yellow cake mix, 10 or more "fun size" Milky Way bars, divided use, 14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk, 12-ounce jar chocolate, caramel or mixed ice cream topping, 12-ounce container Cool Whip, thawed (or whipping cream, whipped).

Instructions: Prepare and bake cake, following directions of package, in a greased 9x13-inch baking pan. Chop half the candy bars. Remove cake from oven and immediately sprinkle with chopped candy bars. Cool on wire rack 10 minutes. Poke 20 or more holes in cake with end of a wooden spoon. Pour condensed milk over cake and cool 10 more minutes. Pour ice cream topping over cake and cool completely. Spread Cool Whip (or whipped cream) over cake. Chop remaining candy bars and sprinkle over cake. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

This could be made with other candy bars, too. Experiment!! Serves 12-15. For a picture, surf on over to ayearofcakes.blogspot.com.

"Let's Bake a Cake!"

Kathy Wood, Baker
ayearofcakes.blogspot.com



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Upcoming Activities of Interest:

1. **Our City Forest** has a pilot project open to the VEP neighborhood. For a \$20.00 tax-deductible donation, OCF will prune your street tree and provide some additional services such as stake adjustment or removal, and weeding/organic mulching. Note: the tree must be less than 20 feet tall. The dates for the pilot project currently are scheduled for February 22 – 26, 2011. For additional information, and to request services – contact Brandon Davis at 408-998-337 Ext 114 or at BDavis@ourcityforest.org.

2. **The All-American Litter Pickup** is scheduled for Saturday, March 19th. Registration for District 10 residents starts at 8am at Pioneer High School, 1290 Blossom Hill Road (meet at front of school). For additional information, call 408-277-3208.

Communication with Our Members

by Marilyn Rodgers, Adina Pierce, Susan Iverson

Face to face communication is usually the most meaningful and rewarding. Monthly membership meetings between September and May, special events and projects provide this opportunity. However, we have many non-face to face opportunities as well – they are as follows:

As you are reading this newsletter, you already know about our Number 1 (and most popular) way to communicate with our members – through the **VEP NEWS**. Our members continue to tell us how much they enjoy receiving and reading the newsletter.

We continue to evaluate and utilize electronic means of communicating with our members, particularly in between editions of the newsletter (remember **e-distribution of the newsletter** is available upon request as well).

E-mail alerts – if you have e-mail and would like to receive monthly e-mail Alerts, please be sure we have a current e-mail address. (We usually send one or two e-mails per month, so we will not fill your mailbox with junk e-mails; and e-mail addresses are confidential).

VEP Website – www.vepca.net – find current information, highlights of upcoming events, as well as historical information on the website. Our website is intended for use by both members and non-members. Look for an increasing amount of information to be available on the website in the future.

VEP - Yahoo groups and Facebook – for those members interested in additional electronic access and use "social media" sites, VEP has a **Yahoo group** and is on **Facebook**.

Gunderson Updates

Henry T. Gunderson High School has been involved in the yearly recruitment tours. Many families showed up for the evening tour of the school, and lots of 8th graders have been shadowing some of our students by spending a day on campus. The response has been very positive and we are looking forward to our continued growth as a school community.



The Super Bowl is over, and Gunderson was proud to watch one of its alums, James Jones, play with the Green Bay Packers.

"The Laramie Project" will be presented at 7 p.m. March 2, 3 & 4 in the Gunderson Theater. Tickets are \$5. The play is about the murder/hate crime of gay college student, Matthew Shepard, in Laramie, Wyoming. It is an intense play, and not suitable for youngsters.

Gunderson was pleased to have its first ever, live broadcast of the weekly bulletin, which will continue to be broadcast every Wednesday until the end of the year. This endeavor is a partnership with Gunderson's journalism class and the video production class. With the video studio up and running, Gunderson students are excited about possibly producing other weekly shows.

The next monthly Principal's Meeting will be March 3 at 6:30pm. Please stop by to meet the principal, Dominic Bejarano, and perhaps find a way to get involved with Henry T. Gunderson students.

The Multicultural Festival takes place the week of February 14. Clubs, classes and other campus groups have busied themselves with preparations for the week, which culminates in a school wide event on February 18.

H.T. Gunderson's Boys' and Girls' basketball teams, along with our soccer teams are competing vigorously. You can view their current stats at: <http://www.maxpreps.com>. Additionally, the athletic schedule is available on the school website, so if you have some time, come and check out our talented athletes.

Upcoming events that we'll be reporting on include the yearly Poetry Slam scheduled for the end of March, the March Honor Roll assembly, the Sadies Dance and more!

Don't forget to check out all of the other amazing events that go on at Gunderson by logging on to: <http://gunderson.sjUSD.org/>

GRIZZLY PRIDE!

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Sharpen your Image at SeniorNet

By John McCulloch

*Digital Photography Class
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So, your kids bought you a digital camera. You took some pictures. Now what do you do? To learn how to transfer this potful of pixels, come join SeniorNet. A class is offered to show you how to save them on the hard drive of your computer. But that's not all. You will learn how to brighten them up, increase the contrast, resize them, improve the focus, crop them, and delete that distracting tree in the background. You will soon discover that you could have a whole new hobby just modifying every photo to your liking. Then you can go back and scan in that scratched black and white picture of your Great Aunt Bertha and make it look like new. In addition to this Digital Photography class utilizing Picasa, we also have classes utilizing Photoshop Elements.

Some other classes SeniorNet offers are Introduction to Computers, Word Processing, E-mail, Fun with Google, Exploring Windows 7, Computer Maintenance, Shopping On-line, and more. SeniorNet is open to anyone over 50 years of age. The registration is at the Willow Glen Community & Senior Center, 2175 Lincoln Avenue, (at Curtner) in San Jose. It will be held Saturday, March 5, at 1:30 P.M.

Each class is held once a week for two hours for up to 8 weeks, some are shorter. The price for a typical class is \$20; that's \$2.50 for a 2 hour class, the best bargain in town. Each student works from a designated computer following the steps the Instructor displays on a screen in the front of the class. Coaches are available to keep everybody on the same page.

To get your name on our mailing list, log on to the website at www.snicsj.org and click on Willows and then Membership or you can call 371-3999. There is no charge to receive snail mail or e-mail from us.

SeniorNet is a worldwide organization which supports over 70 learning centers. It is a non-profit organization founded in 1986. There is an annual fee of \$40 to join SeniorNet. It is primarily run by volunteers.

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Redistricting May Impact VEP

Dave Fadness, Redistricting Commission member

As you know, the federal government conducted its required population census last year. This has been done every ten years since our constitution was adopted. Data that's gathered is used primarily to adjust boundaries on political districts to fulfill the legal requirement for "one person, one vote". To be legal and to provide fair representation, congressional, state assembly, state senate, county supervisorial, city council, etc. districts have to be approximately equal in population. So, at every level, governments are now beginning the process of re-apportionment.

Significant changes have occurred since our city council districts were last redrawn in 2001. Some have grown more than others. San Jose's population is now roughly 1-million. That means each of its ten districts will have to be adjusted to have approximately 100,000 residents.

The requirement to keep San Jose's ten districts roughly equal in population sounds fairly straightforward. The challenge is in drawing district lines so various communities of interest remain intact; to avoid gerrymandering or moving council members out of their districts; and observing physical and man-made boundaries like freeways, city limits, etc. It's a complicated and potentially contentious task.

Special concern arises in areas adjacent to district boundaries--VEP neighborhoods are in this class.

Our city charter requires the city council to appoint a redistricting commission with one citizen representative for each council district plus a chairperson appointed by our mayor. I am honored to represent District 10. Our commission has 120 days (from February 1) to deliver its report to the council for final review. We held our first meeting on February 7. Subsequent meetings are scheduled for 6:30 pm on the second and fourth Monday of each month, starting on March 14.

VEP and its members are urged to pay close attention and to engage early in this process. Doing so is important because the redistricting timeline is extremely tight. If you wait until maps are published it may be too late to have much influence.

I served on the redistricting commission ten years ago. Block-by-block census data didn't become available until April. That left only about two months to draw new maps and give the public an opportunity to be heard. Time will be short again this year and that shortage of time will be exacerbated by the inevitability of dramatic changes in some district boundaries.

San Joseans need to start paying attention now.

To meet their deadline, the 2001 redistricting commission chose to alter existing district boundaries as little as possible. That preserved and nurtured emerging district identities, but required accepting near-maximum constitutional variations in district populations. All VEP neighborhoods were for the first time contained within one council district. The resulting plan passed legal muster and won community approval because it was minimally disruptive.

That won't happen this time. Slower growing districts will have to add residents to adjust for growth elsewhere in our city. That means taking neighborhoods from faster growing districts which will need to shrink in size. As the dominoes fall, neighborhoods will be shifted or even split among districts when familiar boundaries change.

VEP may be moved into a different district—or—be divided again between more than one. Many folks will be unhappy.

Why should you care? First, because who represents you at city hall matters. Second, city budgeting tends to spread resources equally across council districts, but district lines don't necessarily align with community needs. Finally, addressing neighborhood issues can be more daunting if split between two or even three council districts.

To be most effective, early citizen involvement is imperative--and essential to an acceptable outcome for San Jose.

Call (578-6428) or email (drfadness@sbcglobal.net) me if you have questions about or want to get involved in this process.

[Ed. Note: This article was adapted for VEP from a 1/9/11 Mercury-News op-ed written by Terry Christensen and Dave Fadness.]

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It's Time to Renew Your VEP Membership

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.

What is VEP Community Association?

VEP is an all-volunteer organization of your neighbors working to improve our neighborhoods.

VEP sponsors many projects and events that improve safety, our quality of life, and the appearance of our community.

VEP volunteers make our neighborhood's needs, views, and concerns known to government at all levels. VEP was founded in 1969. We are one of the largest, most successful, and most continuously active and enduring grass roots volunteer organizations in Santa Clara County.

Why join VEP?

To receive our newsletter nine times a year.

To receive monthly email alerts.

To keep our neighborhoods beautiful, safe, strong, and prepared.

To participate in and support effective neighborhood activities and representation.

To support VEP's annual *Community Service Awards* for high school graduates.

To be part of an outstanding volunteer community organization with 40 years of success in our neighborhoods.

** 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.

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