

VEP NEWS

• VEP COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION •

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

September 2011

VEP's MEETING

7:30 p.m. Tuesday
► **September 27, 2011** ◀

Vista Park Community Room
475 Hyde Park Drive

AGENDA

★ ICE CREAM SOCIAL ★

Come Meet Your Neighbors
FUN! Enjoy Delicious Ice Cream FUN!

★ Brief Informal Presentations ★

★ VEP Business Meeting ★

Approve 2011-2012 Goals and Objectives

Approve 2011-2012 Budget

Announcements & Updates

★ 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 September Meeting

by Marilyn Rodgers

September's general membership meeting:

► **Ice Cream Social** - Come have some fun - meet your neighbors and enjoy a delicious ice cream treat - 2 scoops of ice cream for every one! The first meeting of the year will be an informal get together - an opportunity to meet and talk with your VEP neighbors, ask questions, and provide the VEP Board of Directors with information and feedback on your preferences for this coming year's activities and projects.



► **Brief Discussions** - The VEP Board will provide printed information and/or brief verbal updates on a variety of subjects, including changes in city departments and services, positions the Board took on your behalf during the "summer break", possible upcoming VEP projects and activities, and opportunities for you to be involved.

► **VEP Business Meeting/Announcements.** Members will be asked to approve the proposed Goals and Objectives and the Budget for 2011-2012.

► **Your Concerns and Ideas** - This will be a major focus of the meeting. We want to hear from you! Together we can work toward positive resolution. This approach continues to make VEP neighborhoods strong, healthy, and attractive.

We look forward to seeing you, your friends and neighbors, at the **September 27th** meeting. Please join us

Maintenance Work Completed on Chynoweth

by Marilyn Rodgers

At the May VEP Membership meeting, attendees discussed the proposed option to change Chynoweth to a single lane in each direction. The decision was to keep Chynoweth as two lanes in both directions between Pearl and Gaundabert/New World. The previously scheduled maintenance work - repair, slurry, and restriping took place in August. In addition, the long awaited bike lanes along Chynoweth were put in place.

Yes, We Will Have the Annual Garage Sale in May!

by Marilyn Rodgers

We often receive questions from members concerning our popular events. In particular, members often ask when is the annual Garage Sale. Yes, we will sponsor the very popular annual neighborhood garage sale every year. To help neighbors in their annual planning, it is scheduled for the first Saturday in May. This coming year - it will be.... **Saturday, May 5, 2012!**

We will be initiating a new feature in the VEP News - a **calendar of events for the full year**. The calendar is currently being developed, so watch for it starting in the October newsletter. Plan now to attend the popular and fun holiday celebration - **Santa in the Park**, scheduled for the weekend of Thanksgiving..., Sunday afternoon, November 27, 2011.

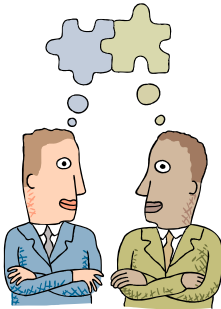
Save the Dates!

2011 is VEP's 42nd year!

Proposed VEP's 2011-2012 Goals and Objectives

1. Continue to improve our community and our association.

- A. Encourage regular turn-over of VEP Board Directors to bring new ideas and energy to our organization and to assure broad membership representation.
- B. Continue to maintain VEP's positive fiscal condition.
- C. Continue to publish the VEP NEWS nine times per year. Improve and increase the use of our website.
- D. Provide a variety of opportunities for volunteer service that reflect member-endorsed projects and improvements within our community.



2. Promote community interaction, pride, and preparedness.

- A. Promote and encourage member participation in neighborhood safety programs, crime prevention, and disaster/emergency preparedness.
- B. Organize and encourage "adoption" and active participation in cleanup and maintenance of public areas within our community.
- C. Sponsor and promote (election, holiday, educational, social) events for our membership area.
- D. Encourage and acknowledge outstanding volunteer service by students and VEP members.

3. Partner with government and local businesses to create and maintain high-quality public services for the VEP area.

- A. Work with government and businesses to improve and maintain public landscaping and city parks.
- B. Work with government to provide traffic safety and uncongested conditions on VEP area streets and roads.
 - a. Work with the city and Erikson Neighborhood Association to formally adopt a Thornwood Drive terminus for any crossing of the Guadalupe River easterly from Almaden Expressway.
 - b. Seek real improvements in traffic level of service at the Capitol/Narvaez/northbound 87 onramp.
 - c. Ensure that impacts of any proposed development along the Guadalupe Corridor are fully mitigated.
 - d. Continue VEP involvement in proposed revisions to the configuration of Branham Lane between Snell and Narvaez.
- C. Participate in and react to any plans for urban development, services, and public infrastructure (Urban Village at Capitol/Narvaez, and Almaden Ranch).
- D. Participate in the planning and development of Martial-Cottle Regional Park (the Lester Property).
- D. Work with City to support interior maintenance of Vista Park Community Room.
- E. Monitor opportunities to build a city park at Capitol/Narvaez.

Henry W. Coe State Park Tarantula Festival and Barbeque

Saturday, October 1st, 2011
10 AM to 4 PM
Food served 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM

It's tarantula time! Please join us as we celebrate with interpretive events and walks, demonstrations, children's activities, music, a raffle and delicious food. We'll have fun and food for adults and children alike.

See website for meal selection .

<http://coepark.org/tfest.html>

All meals are served with barbecued beans, tossed salad, garlic bread and watermelon. Bottled water, soft drinks, beer, and wine from a local winery are available for nominal prices.



Parking: \$8.00 (\$7.00 if anyone in your party is 62 or older), payable when you arrive. Parking is limited, so please carpool if at all possible, but buying a meal ticket does guarantee you a parking space.

Directions: Take the East Dunne Avenue exit off Highway 101 in Morgan Hill. The Coe Park Entrance is at the end of East Dunne Avenue, 13 miles east of 101. For more information, see our website at www.coepark.org or call (408) 779-2728

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Our Parks Need Help


By Ginger Cardona

Over the years each of our five local neighborhood parks has been a source of pride for our VEP Community. Even before the City of San Jose reduced services to our parks, our local community reached out to each of our community parks and were adopted by local residents.




We are currently in need of new volunteers to adopt the parks. With the reduction in city services, it is more important now than ever to provide help with our parks, making sure they stay a destination for families and neighborhood recreation. It does not require an excessive commitment just , about a day a month. You simply report the hours worked over a one year time period. Some of the things you can do include replenishing the doggie bags (VEP will continue to provide these), pick up litter, rake leaves, remove graffiti, report park hazards, sweep courts and pathways, pull weeds, care for ecosystems, plant native plants, report homeless encampments, illegal dumping, storm damage, injured or dead animals, mountain lions, and other hazards. The duties and needs will vary slight by park and your own preferences and desires. Training will be provided.

In addition, volunteers are given a certificate of adoption, a t-shirt, and an invitation to an annual recognition event. After sixty hours of volunteer work your name will be placed on a plaque which will be posted at the park. If you are unsure of your time commitment, you can join forces with a neighbor and have a group adopt the park, requiring only a few hours a month per person. Please help our community and volunteer to adopt a park. Contact Ginger Cardona for more information. Contact information is on the back of the newsletter.



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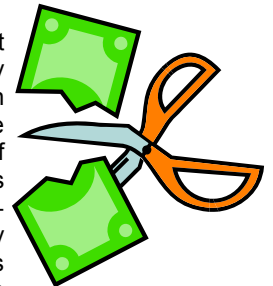


CRIME STOPPERS

The Impact of City Budget Issues on Neighborhood Services

by Marilyn Rodgers

Over the summer, San Jose arrived at a balanced budget (as required by law) for this next fiscal year. Each year, the process is more and more painful, requiring cuts to both staff and services. All employees across the city agreed to at least a 10% decrease in total compensation (salary and benefits), including firefighters and police officers. Additionally, to balance a \$115 million dollar deficit, the City also had to decrease employee positions by approximately 500 (through layoffs and eliminating open positions). Every department has been affected, which translates into changes in services.



Parks & Recreation – sadly many of the parks maintenance staff who have partnered with VEP volunteers for many years, are no longer employed in these positions. The City did listen to priorities and concerns that neighborhood organization leaders verbalized during the budget process. One such concern was the importance of maintaining janitorial service for park restrooms. These services are now provided through outsourcing to a private firm.

Anti-Graffiti Program – another important program that has been a partnership between city staff and neighborhood volunteers. The program now is outsourced to a private firm. (As of this writing, it is our understanding that neighborhood volunteers will continue to play an important role in implementing this function.) *What should you do to report graffiti or tagging?* You can continue to call the previously listed number for the Anti-Graffiti Hotline - 408-277-2758. A recorded message refers the caller to the new number 1-866-249-0543. Many city departments are currently evaluating changes in processes, procedures, or types of service. As that information becomes available, we will provide it to our members.

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Community Service Awards

by Marilyn Rodgers and LuAnne Behringer

For the 27th consecutive year, VEP offered grants toward higher education or vocational training to graduating high school seniors with exceptional records of volunteer community service.

The 2011 award recipient for Gunderson High School was Cindy Hong Thu Nguyen. Ms. Nguyen received \$1,000.00 to use toward her ongoing education.

During the course of her high school career, Cindy volunteered over 450 hours. Every Sunday for four years she was a volunteer teacher to students at the Trung Tam Vietnamese School. She also was a volunteer cabin leader and camp counselor for two years at YMCA Redwoods Camp Campbell. Additionally she mentored incoming freshmen at Gunderson as a Link Crew Leader. Cindy was also honored as her class Valedictorian.



Cindy is now attending the University of California at Davis, where she will major in Biology, to prepare her to go on to medical school to become a Pediatrician.

Thank you to Stephanie Heur who administered the nomination process at Gunderson High School.

No applications were received for the At-Large or Andrew Hill High School awards.

Thank you to the VEP judging committee members:

Jeri Arstingstall, Ginger Cardona, Aiko and Dave Fadness, Arul Edwin, Stephen Kinsey, Adina Pierce, and Debra Suydam. A special thank you to LuAnne Behringer who also co-chaired the committee and represented VEP at the Gunderson's Award Ceremony.

Jeri Arstingstall, Ginger Cardona, Aiko and Dave Fadness, Arul Edwin, Stephen Kinsey, Adina Pierce, and Debra Suydam. A special thank you to LuAnne Behringer who also co-chaired the committee and represented VEP at the Gunderson's Award Ceremony.

Fall Plantings

By John Marks



September is a good month for planting cool season veggies. including beets, carrots, lettuce, parsnips, certain types of peas, and Swiss chard. Broccoli, cauliflower, kohlrabi, rutabaga and turnips also do well.

Leaves, stems, flower heads and roots are the edible portions of these versatile vegetables, depending on the species.

Anything grown from seed (most of the above) can usually be started in August or September. Those bought as nursery-grown seedlings are usually better transplanted in September, since the same warm weather that stimulates fast seen germination can cause tender, thirsty seedlings to wilt or burn.

Root crops, such as carrots and parsnips require full sun, sandy or loamy soil, and regular irrigation. When sowing carrot seeds keep the soil moist and never let a crust form on top, or the seeds have difficulty sprouting (start indoors?). Unfortunately, parsnips never get as much good P.R. as their orange cousins. Parsnips' creamy white to yellow roots have a unique, mild flavor and can be baked, fried, mashed, or cooked in soups or stews. Cold weather makes them sweeter.

Another favorite is the humble beet. For absolute cut beauty and flavor, go for the Chioggia, also called Bull's Eye, an unusual Italian heirloom beet with concentric white and red rings inside. Albina Verduna is a sweet white beet that grows well here, and Sangria is a classic deep red, like the wine. Because it develops its shape early, Sangrea also makes a good "baby beet" when pulled early.

Swiss chard, a leafy vegetable, is actually a type of beet without the tasty bulbous root, and is beautiful on the dinner table served raw, steamed, or stir-fried. It's also an attention getting ornamental in the garden, when you're touring with friends. The Bright Lights variety is especially attractive, showing up with crimson, yellow and white stems.

The obvious leafy vegetable choice is lettuce, which comes in four varieties: crisphead, like iceberg and butterhead, Bibb loose leaf, Oak Leaf, and Romaine, which grows in vertical stocks.

I trust you've been pulling the heads off those dandelions all summer. If not, you should have. Every time you walk to the car to go somewhere and you see a yellow dandelion blossom, don't think, "I'll have to dig that up when I get home." It'll never happen. Prevent that plant from multiplying by going over and plucking the blossom; if it's already progressed to the fuzzy ball, all the more important to trot over and close it into your hand and throw away, before the wind spreads the spores.

DO NOT TOP TREES: Topping trees is very harmful to proper tree growth and appearance. When a tree is topped, it is shocked into producing fast growth to the sides of the topped branches. The new growth will look very unnatural as it matures over time, and will also be weaker than normal growth. For full details, see your April 2006 VEP News (available at www.vepca.net).

SeniorNet provides a 4 week class

Where's My Stuff? class offered utilizing Windows 7

If you can't find a document, do you squint and scan all your folders? There's a better way and that is to use the Search function. Better yet, have a file management system that you set up in your computer customized for your way of doing things.



The File Management software offered by your computer is really a boon to productivity. Instead of a clunky metal cabinet, some hanging files, plastic tabs and a neat pen to write the titles of your files, all you need is your computer, a few clicks of the mouse and a keyboard to type the file name. No trips to Office Depot, no lost plastic tabs and you don't need to put together that bunch of tubing used to hang the files.

Need to make a copy of something? You don't need a Xerox machine, just right click on it and click copy and then paste it where you want it. Maybe you organize stuff chronologically, easy to do. Want the most recent date at the top or the bottom, you choose. If you would rather organize by modification date instead of origination date, you can do that too. Or you can just arrange files alphabetically.

You may have a file called Correspondence, and it is be filled with an array of letters. You could organize them by high school friends, college friends, work friends and SeniorNet friends. But in order to do this, you need to learn how to nest files or make sub-folders.

Want to delete files? You don't need to bother with your shredder and a trip to the trash can. Just delete files with a mouse click.

If you are not using these and other functions of the File Management, you are not taking advantage of one of the miracles of a paperless system. Once you convert, you won't go back.

To learn how to use these and other features, take our SeniorNet class called Where's My Stuff? aka File Management. Instructors of more advanced classes have found that a student's ability to navigate through the files is a basic key to success in mastering other software.

To sign up for this or any of the other classes we offer next session (Oct.- Dec.) come to our SeniorNet class sign-up on Saturday, Oct. 1 at 1:30 pm at the Willows Community Center, 2175 Lincoln Ave., San Jose, CA 95125. Each class is \$20 after an annual fee of \$40 to our national organization. See our website at www.snicsj.org. Our classes are for adults 50 years and above, but we won't card you.

A Year of Cakes

By Kathy Wood, Baker

Deflate the beach balls and put away the lawn furniture-here comes Autumn! Jacket-wearing mornings and evenings with plenty of toasty sunshine sandwiched in between; Fall is my favorite season of the year.



Once a week, usually Saturday or Sunday, I have proceeded baking a different cake recipe. Some have been incredibly delicious (especially the chocolate ones) and some were just so-so. For Father's Day I made my husband a Cheeseburger Cake (for a picture and the recipe go to ayearofcakes.blogspot.com). This was probably my favorite as far as presentation.

The recipe presented here involves your favorite brand of cola and is quite tasty.

Cola Cake: Ingredients: 2 cups all-purpose flour, 2 cups granulated sugar, 1 cup butter, 3 tablespoons cocoa, 1 cup cola soda, ½ cup buttermilk, 2 beaten eggs, 1 teaspoon baking soda, 1 teaspoon vanilla, 1 ½ cup mini marshmallows. Icing: 1 cup butter, 3 tablespoons cocoa, 6 tablespoons cola, 4 cups confectioners' sugar, 1 cup pecans or walnuts.

Instructions: Combine flour and sugar in mixing bowl. Heat butter, cocoa and cola to boiling and pour over flour/sugar mixture, mixing thoroughly. Mix buttermilk, eggs, baking soda, vanilla and marshmallows. Add to first mixture and stir well. Batter will be thin. Bake in a 13x9x2-inch baking pan for 30-35 minutes.

Icing: Combine butter, cocoa and cola. Heat to boiling and pour over sugar, beating well. Add nuts and spread on the hot cake. Allow to cool before cutting into slices and serving with a scoop of ice cream.

Check out ayearofcakes.blogspot.com for other cakes.

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Sunflower Farmers Market Coming to San Jose!

Reporter Carol Rosen contributed to this story

Sunflower Farmers Market offers natural and organic groceries at the lowest possible prices, will really resonate with health-conscious shoppers. Our customers are looking for affordable, high-quality, healthy options for their families, and friendly, helpful service. That's what we're all about at Sunflower," said CEO Chris Sherrell.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF SUNFLOWER FARMERS MARKET

Sunflower will offer natural meats and seafood, from T-bone steaks and specialty burgers to wild caught salmon fillets and gulf shrimp, plus a variety of handmade sausages made fresh daily.

Sunflower bakery will serve up freshly baked breads, desserts, an array of deli offerings, floral department and natural living health and wellness products from vitamins to skincare. It will also feature health, wellness and cooking events. "We support people living a healthy lifestyle at or below conventional grocery store prices," Sherrell said.

Although new to San Jose, Sunflower has 35 stores in Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas and Utah.

Sunflower has signed a 10- to 15-year lease with three five-year options to take over 36,560 square feet of space from the former Orchard Supply Hardware store at Branham Square in San Jose. Once building permits have been received from the city, the Branham store will begin to take shape. Sherrell expects the San Jose store to open Summer 2012.

For more information on Sunflower Farmers Market, visit www.sunflowermarkets.com



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GUNDERSON NEWS

The school year has started and Gunderson has hit the ground running! Everyone is looking forward to a fun and productive year.

Prior to the newsletter going to press, Gunderson held several events. On September 10, the school's Hip-Hop club sponsored a Hip Hop Festival with many venues to explore hip-hop culture. Gunderson also held its annual Club Day on the 15th. Students were encouraged to check out what each club has to offer and to get involved.

Principal Dominic Bejarano will be holding a "Chat with the Principal" on the first Thursday of every month, starting at 6pm. He encourages parents and the community at large to attend these discussions.

An informative "Senior College Night" will be held on September 22 from 6:30-8pm in the GHS Media Center. Information and resources on colleges and application procedures will be covered.

Over 20 non-profit organizations will participate in this year's Community Service Fair to be held on Friday, September 23. Groups will have sign-ups and information to get students involved in their programs.

Drama students will be attending San Jose Repertory Theater again this year. The Rep on Tour group will perform one of the productions, *Of Mice and Men*, on our very own Gunderson stage.

Gunderson's Mock Trial team is off to a great start and very excited about competing this year. To prepare for their trial, the students will be visiting the Santa Clara University School of Law to meet with professors, lawyers and students.

September 26 through the 30th is Homecoming Week. The week will be filled with all kinds of lunchtime activities, a rally and school-wide contests promoting Grizzly Pride. The week ends with the Homecoming Football game on Friday the 30th, and the Homecoming Dance on October 1st.

San Jose Unified School District is promoting a district-wide college day on the September 30th. Schools, teachers and administrators are encouraged to talk about their "education journey" with young people. Gunderson will also be dedicating an entire week to college awareness, October 10 - 14.

GRIZZLY PRIDE!

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Updates on Two Important Projects

Envision 2040 San Jose

Almaden Ranch

by Marilyn Rodgers

As has been VEP's practice for several years, the organization takes a "summer break" during the months of June through August. The Board of Directors continues to meet during this time, and often takes positions on behalf of the membership on issues which the Board believes is of importance to our neighborhood, our organization and its members. Several meetings and deadlines for written input (such as responses to Environmental Impact Reports – EIRs) occurred during the summer recess. Below are updates on two such projects.

Envision 2040 San Jose

An overview of the recommendations developed by Envision 2040 San Jose commission were presented at two VEP membership meetings during the late Spring. Commissioners Dave Fadness and Shiloh Ballard provided information at the April membership meeting. At this presentation, many members and residents raised concerns about the impact that the proposal for development of several Urban Villages – one of which could be located at the VTA Park 'n Ride Lots at Capitol Expressway and Narvaez, would have negative implications for the surrounding established residential neighborhoods. As time constraints prevented much of the information from being presented, several members requested another opportunity to hear additional information on the overall plan. As a result, Dave Fadness provided a brief presentation during the May membership meeting.

In July, VEP sent a written response to the request for public input on the EIR developed for the Envision San Jose 2040 General Plan. The letter highlighted several of the plan's strong points, such as:

- Continuing to increase the number of jobs within the city of San Jose as a priority in achieving fiscal sustainability;
- Providing for periodic, serious reviews of San Jose's evolution in comparison with the goals of this general plan;
- Continuing support of environmental goals including protection of areas surrounding San Jose, such as the Mid-Coyote Valley and South Almaden Valley Urban Reserves;
- Clearly defining the urban boundaries of San Jose;
- Providing protection and support for established residential neighborhoods while advancing new models for the future;
- Focusing growth into areas where it can be best supported; and
- Utilizing the concept of one or more pilot projects in developing "urban villages", to ensure successful implementation of this new concept in our city.

The new general plan also raises concerns for the future, continues with many former policies, and makes ambitious assumptions concerning the success of mass transit, while downplaying the importance of maintaining the city's network of roads. The following is a brief list of issues raised with recommendations for alternatives:

- Oppose the recommendation to increase the number of new dwelling units; maintain the current 3,000 DU/year growth rate in place for the past decade (every new resi-



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dence is a net financial loss to the city; every new job is a net financial benefit to the city);

- Oppose the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) continued scenario of San Jose providing housing for the Valley – continuing to be the "bedroom community" for the area. Contributes to the City's structural deficits, adds to the "average vehicle miles travelled by residents to work – bad for our roads, air, and quality of life, as well as bad for San Jose's fiscal, economic, and environmental sustainability;
- Re-evaluate the assumptions concerning mass transit success, particularly as regards employment-related traffic. Continue to support mass transit while providing a balanced approach to maintaining the city's important network of roads and streets;
- Include as a priority, support of pilot projects in the development of "urban villages" that have strong surrounding community commitment and involvement.

Of particular concern for VEP, and surrounding communities, is the unresolved issue of problematic traffic flow at the intersection of Capitol Expressway/Narvaez/onramp to Hwy 87. Prior to a proposal for development of the VTA's Park 'n Ride Lots, (ie. development of an "urban village" at this site) a detailed plan, which includes funding sources, and an acknowledgement that a portion of land (now part of the Park 'n Ride Lots) will be required to allow for improvement of both the on-ramp and the intersection.

Almaden Ranch

At the February 2011 VEP Membership Meeting, Gerry de Young, representing Arcadia Development, provided VEP members with an overview of their plan to develop the site on the east side of Almaden Expressway, north of Hwy 85, now known as the Almaden Ranch project. VEP has a long standing position of opposition to any proposal for a bridge over the Guadalupe for the purpose of connecting vehicular traffic on Cherry/Chynoweth from the west to Chynoweth on the east side. The concern has always been the negative impact such a bridge would have – dumping a significant amount of traffic onto small residential streets which go through our neighborhood. The developer did not include a proposal for a bridge in subsequent revisions of the site plan.

In collaboration with Erickson Community Association (ENA), VEP sent a letter to the City of San Jose Planning Department in January 2011. This letter addressed several concerns specific to the development of the Almaden Ranch project – with particular focus on traffic flow. Other questions of concern

addressed noise, light, flood control, etc. (This letter was previously shared with VEP members.) As each of these issues were not specifically addressed in the subsequent draft EIR report, a second revised letter, dated July 6th, was sent to ensure that all issues of concern were included formally as part of the final EIR for the project.

The City of San Jose's Planning Commission meeting scheduled for August 24th had agendaized the SEIR for the Almaden Ranch project. The Planning Commission is authorized to certify environmental impact reports prior to them going to the City Council. In anticipation of this meeting, several community/neighborhood associations decided to meet to discuss concerns and hopes for the project. Representatives from ENA, VEP, AVCA, and Pinehurst developed a "wish list" of design elements that the group wanted the developer to consider for the project. In addition to previously described concerns about traffic and environmental mitigation, the group clearly described design elements that would result in a project that was unique rather than the usual "cookie cutter" shopping mall and "big box" outlet center. The group wanted the project to be a place people would be excited to visit and locals would proudly say, "I live near Almaden Ranch". Some of the issues included in the "wish list":

- Implement traffic calming measures on Sanchez/Cherry to discourage high speed traffic;
- Ensure the development doesn't preclude future improvements to the 85/Almaden Interchange;
- Provide multiple shade and canopy features with generous landscaping and architectural elements;
- Ensure an attractive interface to the neighborhood with attractive buildings and strategically placed landscaping/trees;
- Provide more outdoor, public spaces;
- Use of low rise, shaded lighting;
- Inclusion of upscale, unique restaurants and unique shopping opportunities;
- Ensure the whole site is pedestrian friendly – break up the continuous parking lot with trees and opportunities for quieter "place making";
- Inclusion of a footbridge across the Guadalupe River to provide pedestrian and bicycle access;
- Take advantage of the riverfront space – leverage the natural resources on site.

The 'wish list' was sent to the developer prior to a previously scheduled meeting between the newly formed (informal) "coalition of neighborhood associations" and representatives of the developer. In response, the developer quickly revised their design plans to include many of the concerns and wishes of the group. The meeting signified a good faith effort was being made by the developer, and was thus encouraging. While several of the items on the wish list were not addressed, the group anticipated an opportunity to continue discussions toward resolution with the developer. Following the meeting, the 'wish list' was subsequently revised into three categories:

- Attributes met by the (new) current plan;
- Attributes partially met by the current plan;
- Attributes not met by the current plan.

The revised list was shared with the Planning Commission, both in writing, and in testimony verbally presented at the August 24th Planning Commission hearing. In addition to testimony presented by members of the "neighborhood asso-

ciation coalition", several other public members testified – over 20 people in all.

An additional important factor came into play during the Planning Commission hearing. WalMart had recently submitted a request to occupy the space which formerly was the Home Depot Expo site. This building is located on the west side of Almaden Expressway - directly across from the site where the Almaden Ranch would be developed. Several speakers at the Planning Commission hearing voiced concern about the negative impact that WalMart would have on an already congested traffic area. While the issue of WalMart taking occupancy of a building vacated by another "big box" store, and the new development of Almaden Ranch are two very different and separate issues, the speakers in opposition to WalMart successfully argued that the SEIR done for the Almaden Ranch project was incomplete and inaccurate.

San Jose's Planning Commission, unlike several neighboring cities including Los Gatos and Santa Clara, are not given the authority to address "design elements" of a development project. They are charged with the authority and responsibility of "certifying" the EIR reports prior to them being forwarded to the City Council.

The San Jose Planning Commission, in an unprecedented action, voted 4-2 not to certify the Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) for the Almaden Ranch.

As of this writing, it is our understanding, that the developer for the Almaden Ranch project plans to revise the environmental impact report, and resubmit it.

Note: Copies of the above mentioned VEP documents will be available for members at the September 27th meeting, and/or by request.

City of San Jose Retirement Reform Update

From Mayor Chuck Reed

Throughout July, the City continued negotiations with a number of its employee bargaining units on retirement reform, including discussions on a proposed ballot measure that would set limits on retirement benefits for new employees, current employees and retirees. The City has also made specific proposals regarding the structure of retirement benefits for new employees, "bonus" pension checks, and retiree healthcare. View the latest updates on retirement reform negotiations.

The City continues to meet with its employee groups and has set a goal of placing retirement reforms before the voters during a March special election, which would allow the City to achieve savings during the 2012-13 fiscal year.

Learn more about these issues!

- Read this article written by Councilmember Sam Liccardo dispelling myths being spread about the fiscal reforms that he proposed along with Mayor Reed, Vice Mayor Nguyen and Councilmember Herrera.
- David Crane, an advisor to former Gov. Schwarzenegger, also recently authored an Op-Ed explaining why we can't grow our way out of our pension problems.
- View other related media coverage posted on Mayor Reed's website.

Beloit College Releases the Mindset List for the "Internet Class" of 2015

This year's entering college class of 2015 was born just as the Internet took everyone onto the information highway and as Amazon began its relentless flow of books and everything else into their lives. Members of this year's freshman class, most of them born in 1993, are the first generation to grow up taking the word "online" for granted and for whom crossing the digital divide has redefined research, original sources and access to information, changing the central experiences and methods in their lives. They have come of age as women assumed command of U.S. Navy ships, altar girls served routinely at Catholic Mass, and when everything from parents analyzing childhood maladies to their breaking up with boy-friends and girlfriends, sometimes quite publicly, have been accomplished on the Internet.

The Mindset List for the Class of 2015
(Selected excerpt.)

1. There has always been an Internet ramp onto the information highway.
2. Ferris Bueller and Sloane Peterson could be their parents.
3. States and Velcro parents have always been requiring that they wear their bike helmets.
4. The only significant labor disputes in their lifetimes have been in major league sports.
5. There have always been at least two women on the Supreme Court, and women have always commanded U.S. Navy ships.
9. "Don't touch that dial!"....what dial?
10. American tax forms have always been available in Spanish.
11. More Americans have always traveled to Latin America than to Europe.
12. Amazon has never been just a river in South America.
13. Refer to LBJ, and they might assume you're talking about LeBron James.
17. Japan has always been importing rice.
20. Life has always been like a box of chocolates.
23. There has never been an official Communist Party in Russia.
24. "Yadda, yadda, yadda" has always come in handy to make long stories short.
25. Video games have always had ratings.
26. Chicken soup has always been soul food.
29. Arnold Palmer has always been a drink.
31. Women have always been kissing women on television.
32. Their older siblings have told them about the days when Britney Spears, Justin Timberlake and Christina Aguilera were Mouseketeers.
33. Faux Christmas trees have always outsold real ones.
36. Unlike their older siblings, they spent bedtime on their backs until they learned to roll over.
37. Music has always been available via free downloads.
40. Sears has never sold anything out of a Big Book that could also serve as a doorstep.
42. Electric cars have always been humming in relative silence on the road.
44. They're the first generation to grow up hearing about the dangerous overuse of antibiotics.
45. They pressured their parents to take them to Taco Bell or Burger King to get free pogs.
46. Russian courts have always had juries.
50. Some of them have been inspired to actually cook by watching the Food Channel.
51. Fidel Castro's daughter and granddaughter have always

lived in the United States.

52. Their parents have always been able to create a will and other legal documents online.

55. New kids have always been known as NKOTB.

56. They've always wanted to be like Shaq or Kobe: Michael Who?

57. They've often broken up with their significant others via texting, Facebook, or MySpace.

60. Frasier, Sam, Woody and Rebecca have never Cheerfully frequented a bar in Boston during primetime.

61. Major League Baseball has never had fewer than three divisions and never lacked a wild card entry in the playoffs.

63. They won't go near a retailer that lacks a website.

65. When they were 3, their parents may have battled other parents in toy stores to buy them a Tickle Me Elmo while they lasted.

69. They've grown up hearing about suspiciously vanishing frogs.

72. Women have always been Venusians; men, Martians.

74. "PC" has come to mean Personal Computer, not Political Correctness.

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Valley Christian Theatre Presents: *The Pirates of Penzance.*

Come join Valley Christian Theatre's talented cast of students as they present;
The Pirates of Penzance!!



This production is a hilarious and oh so comedic opera in two acts. The story concerns Frederic, who, having completed his 21st year, is released from his apprenticeship to a band of tender-hearted pirates. He meets Mabel, the daughter of Major-General Stanley, and the two young people fall instantly in love.

Frederic finds out, however, that he was born on 29 February, and so, technically, he only has a birthday each leap year. His apprenticeship indentures state that he remains apprenticed to the pirates until his 21st birthday, and so he must serve for another 63 years. Bound by his own sense of duty, Frederic's only solace is that Mabel agrees to wait for him faithfully.

Show dates are:

Thursday, October 13th,

Friday October 14th,

Saturday October 15th and

Thursday October 20,

NO PERFORMANCE ON FRIDAY THE 21,

with two performances on Saturday, October 22.

All performances begin at 7:30 PM with a matinee on Saturday the 22nd, at 2:00 PM.

Ticket prices are: General Admission \$15.00, Students and Seniors, \$13.00 and Children, under 11 years, \$11.00.

ON LINE TICKETS GO ON SALE at 7:00 AM Monday, September 26th. www.vctheatre.net

Congratulations San Jose Unified School District!

From Councilmember Nancy Pyle

Release of the 2011 California Standards Test (CST) results showed that San Jose Unified School District continues to move students toward higher levels of proficiency. The CST is the core exam used to evaluate student achievement in the state of California, and results for SJUSD showed progress across a range of levels and subgroups.



Seventeen of SJUSD's elementary schools demonstrated accelerated achievement in English-language arts (ELA), 5 of 6 middle schools showed gains, and 3 of 6 high schools. Overall, 7 schools experienced a double-digit surge in math; with 2 schools making similar advances in ELA. District-wide, the percentage of students meeting the state's proficiency goals made slight gains of 0.9% in ELA and 1.4% in math.

San Jose Unified School District's vision is to inspire and prepare all students for success in a global economy. Superintendent Dr. Vincent Matthews has charged all SJUSD employees with making a difference in the lives of their students. He says, "It is every employee's obligation that all of San Jose Unified's students succeed". I applaud and congratulate SJUSD for their commitment and success.

Options to Go GREEN!

From Councilmember Nancy Pyle

Safe Green Halloween

CommUniverCity is starting early this year to collect gently used Halloween costumes for the Safe and Green Halloween event. The goal is to collect 1,000 costumes for redistribution. Donate anytime you'd like but remember that the goal is 1,000 costumes. To follow the progress and get updates, visit www.facebook.com/communivercitysj. For more information, call 408-297-3301



San José Partners with Catalog Choice to Reduce Waste One Mailbox at a Time

Residents and businesses are urged to sign-up with Catalog Choice, a free online service to help San José residents reduce the amount of unwanted junk mail such as catalogs, coupons, credit solicitations, and phone books they receive. Catalog Choice is a non-profit organization and currently has over 1 million registered users.

This service will help the City achieve its Green Vision Zero Waste goal of diverting 100 percent of waste from landfills. To sign up for Catalog Choice, go to <http://sanjose.catalogchoice.org>. For more information, contact the Environmental Services Department at (408) 535-8550.

Register Now for Free Neighborhood Development Training Conference

Reprinted from <http://www.neighborwebsj.com/>

Registration is now open for the 2011 Neighborhood Development Training Conference, which offers free workshops that focus on neighborhoods issues and the skills and resources residents need to tackle them.

The event will be 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, October 8, at San Jose State University and is open to Santa Clara County residents, SJSU students and others if space is available. Deadline to register is September 30.

NDTC is a collaboration of San José State University, Neighborhood Housing Services Silicon Valley, United Neighborhoods of Santa Clara County and NeighborWorks.

This year's workshops are:

- How to Deal with Problem Properties
- Working with Faith-Based Institutions on Community Issues
- Using the Internet as a Neighborhood Tool
- Community Policing for Neighborhood Safety
- Stabilizing Neighborhoods in Tough Economic Times
- Building Consensus in the Neighborhood
- Adapting to Changing Neighborhood Demographics
- Financial Literacy, Managing Your Money
- Developing Your Leadership Potential
- Team Building: Adults and Youth Working Together
- Growing Smart Neighborhoods
- Preserving Water, Preserving Life

To register, download the [NDTC Registration Form](#) and send by email to rsvp@unsc.org; by fax to 408-279-4100; and by mail to Neighborhood Housing Services Silicon Valley, 1156 North Fourth Street, San Jose, CA 95112.

For questions, call Jaime Angulo at (408) 279-2600, Ext. 1290 or email jangulo@nhssv.org. Information will also be available at www.unsc.org.

Housing Market

By Helen Castillo




There are fewer distressed property sales on the market. Banks seem to be holding back Short Sale and REO properties because of several reasons. When a home is purchased the lender may own the loan or be the service provider. The loan may also be owned by Freddie Mac or Fannie Mae. The problem occurring right now is that banks generally sell off loans to private investors or other banks. The banks and the Fannies and Freddie's do not know who owns the loan and cannot legally sell the property until they get through the massive files to prove ownership. Banks are also holding back homes to not flood the market with REO's or Short Sales. Rumors are out that the banks may be thinking of renting out properties to the sellers. If you plan on purchasing a home There are still some good buys on homes with low interest rates. with the interest rates at a low. In the bay area 26% of sales were all cash. Investors made up 21.2% of the market and FHA loans were 22.4%. There are still investors and first time home buyers out there looking to get a deal.



If you have any questions you can call me at 408-981-5902

VEP Community Calendar

September / October 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
18	19	20	21	22	23 First day of Fall 	24
25	26 	27 VEP Community Meeting (Ice Cream Social) 7:30 PM—Vista Park Community Room	28	29	30 Gunderson Homecoming Game—7pm	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11 National "Ah Nothin.." Day	12	13	14	15
16 	17	18	19	20	21 Gunderson Football Game—7pm	22
23 Avogadro's (Mole) Day 6:02 am—6:02 pm	24	25	26	27	28	29

Dates to Remember!

VEP Community Meetings

September 27, 2011
 October 25, 2011
 November 29, 2011
 January 31, 2012
 February 28, 2012
 March 28, 2012
 April 24, 2012
 May 29, 2012

Community Events

Santa at Vista Park - Sunday, November 27, 2011
 Community Garage Sale - Saturday May 5, 2012

THE VEP NEWS



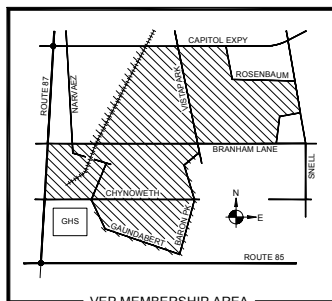
VEP Community Association

P.O. Box 18111 San Jose, CA 95158
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Published monthly by VEP Community Association, a not-for-profit organization of volunteers established in 1969 to serve and represent more than 2000 homes in the Blossom Valley area of southern San Jose. VEP is dedicated to neighborhood maintenance and improvement in its membership area as well as to active involvement in civic affairs. This newsletter is mailed monthly to all members in good standing, to our advertisers, and to schools and government officials serving our membership area. For membership or paid advertisement information, contact our Treasurer or write to the address listed above.

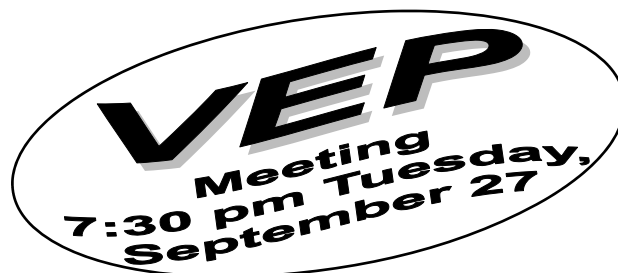
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Let us know at vep@vepca.net.



Check our website: www.vepca.net

Community Room

Vista Park

in the

7:30 pm

September 27th Meeting

VEP's

Be sure to attend