

VEP NEWS

• VEP COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION •

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

January 2012

VEP'S MEETING

7:30 p.m. Tuesday
► January 31, 2012 ◀

Vista Park Community Room
475 Hyde Park Drive

AGENDA

★ Gang Activity Prevention ★

a presentation by

Captain David Honda
Southern Division Commander
San Jose Police Department

and

Hewitt Joyner
CEO, Joyner/Payne Youth Services Agency

★ VEP Business Meeting ★

Announcements & Updates
CPR Classes
VEP Donates Doggie Bags for Area Parks
Membership Drive Begins in January
Free Membership Raffle
Community Service Awards

★ 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 January Meeting

by Marilyn Rodgers

January's general membership meeting:

► **Gang Activity Prevention** - featured guest speakers Captain David Honda, Southern Division Commander, San Jose Police Department and Hewitt Joyner, CEO Joyner/Payne Youth Services Agency will provide an overview of both gang activity in San Jose, and gang prevention strategies. San Jose's program on gang activity prevention has been very successful - and is recognized as a national model. The presenta-

**VEP Membership Drive
Begins in January**
(See information and
application on page 7)

tion will feature information on identifying potential, or real, gang activity within the city, while highlighting specifics for VEP neighborhoods – including graffiti/tagging by habitual taggers affiliated with gangs vs. "want-to-be's". There will be an opportunity for questions and answers.

► VEP Business Meeting/Updates/Announcements.

► **Your Concerns and Ideas** – 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 January 31st meeting. Please join us!

What is VEP Community Association?

- VEP is an all-volunteer organization of your neighbors working to improve our neighborhoods; VEP is our community's "homeowner's association".
- VEP volunteers participate in a variety of activities, all of which originate in and benefit our neighborhoods.
- VEP volunteers make our neighborhood's views and needs known to government at all levels.
- Founded in 1969, we are one of the largest, most successful, and most active and enduring grass roots volunteer organizations in Santa Clara County.

Why join VEP?

- To receive our newsletter nine times a year, keeping you up-to-date and informed.
- To participate in and support neighborhood activities and representation.
- To contribute to our annual VEP Community Service Awards for area high school graduates.
- To be part of an outstanding community organization with a long record of success for our neighborhoods.

2012 is VEP's 43rd year!

VEP Neighborhood Cleanup

by Ginger Cardona, Debra Suydam, and Marilyn Rodgers

On Saturday, November 19th, a enthusiastic group of VEP volunteers met at the Vista Park Community Center for refreshments and networking with neighbors, prior to 3 hours of activities to improve the attractiveness of the neighborhood. Two areas were identified as needing special attention.



One group went to the northwest corner

of Vistapark Drive and Branham Lane. They pruned trees/bushes hanging over the fence, and removed leaves and debris from around oleander bushes, which VEP volunteers previously planted. The second group tackled a major litter cleanup along both sides of Chynoweth from Gunderson High School, continuing under the freeway overpass, to Pearl. They also did pruning and debris clean-up along the wall on the east side of Chynoweth between New World/Gaundabert and the freeway overpass. Over 60 illegal signs taped to poles were removed. All in all, a very productive morning!



Join us in thanking the following volunteers:

Ginger Cardona
Dave and Aiko Fadness
Ellen Finch
Marianne Damon
Dave Pfaff
Dan Nguyen
Thao Doan
Josie Supencheck
Debra Suydam
Marilyn Rodgers

A special thank you to Ginger Cardona for coordinating the event, and to Debra Suydam for arranging for coffee and refreshments.

VEP Christmas Decorations Contest

by Marilyn Rodgers and Katherine Decker

This year the VEP Board of Directors initiated a new event – one that hopefully will become an ongoing annual happening, or possibly a new “VEP tradition”! Over the last few years, Board members had noticed that many VEP members and residents took special interest and pride in decorating the exterior of their houses and yards for the holidays. Thus, the idea for a contest. Of course everyone wanted to know what prize(s) would be offered. This year’s prizes were: “Bragging rights” (very important of course), a display sign acknowledging the best house/yard decorations as the “VEP Christmas Decorations Winner for 2011”. The winner would also receive a gift certificate and a VEP membership for 2012. Pictures and an article on the winner(s) would be included in the January 2012 VEP Newsletter. (See article on this year’s winner elsewhere in the newsletter). The VEP Board would determine the winner(s) on the weekend of December 17th. Everyone was encouraged to participate by nominating themselves or a neighbor. Board members began their quest for a winner the weekend of Thanksgiving, and continued each weekend until December 17th. Everyone was pleased with the large number of homes decorated this year – resulting in fierce competition! One more reminder that VEP residents are enthusiastic about the community we live in!

2011 VEP Christmas Decorations Winner Announced

by Marilyn Rodgers and Katherine Decker

The first annual VEP Christmas Decorations winners were **Bob and Francine Olsen**. The Olsen's, who live at 595 Amboy, have been decorating their house and yard for many years – each year becoming more intriguing and beautiful! This year's display included use of over 26,000 lights, a large star on the roof (which was beautifully crafted by Bob), a ballon tree,



artificial snow, two – 12foot soldiers, 13 reindeer – three of which were flying, and a pond of lights where one reindeer is enjoying a refreshing drink.

The Olsen's were thrilled

to be this year's winners, and were most eager to have their display seen and enjoyed by their VEP neighbors. Congratulations again, Bob and Francine!





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GUNDERSON NEWS

The spring semester has begun at Gunderson High School! The semester promises to be a busy one full of activities, athletics, theater, music, art and lots more! You can check out all event details at: <http://gunderson.sjUSD.org/>



Winter Ball was held on January 21. The theme this year was Cirque de la Lune. Prior to the dance, a week of Spirit Activities and a rally got students excited about the dance and engaged in school spirit. Grizzly PRIDE was on full display.

January is recruitment month. Gunderson representatives visited middle schools, 8th graders shadowed Gunderson students and an informative parent night was held on the 19th. Gunderson continues to grow not only in student numbers, but also in our sense of pride and our place in the community.

Gunderson's first ATHLETIC FESTIVAL will take place on January 28 from 1-4pm. The event is free and is being organized by Athletic Director, Chris Corbin. There will be games, food, music, information about Gunderson athletics and all teams from GHS will be represented. The event should be a lot of fun. Come on by and pick up some Grizzly Gear for the New Year!

Be sure to check out the athletics web site at:

<http://www.gundersonathletics.com>

The athletics page is full of information including schedules, profiles of athletes, statistics and so much more. There is a lot of new Grizzly Athletic Gear, with more to come in the near future. Consider REPRESENTING Gunderson Athletics with some GHS swag.

Principal Bejarano holds chats at 6pm on the FIRST Thursday of every month. The next chat will be Thursday, February 2. Stop by, meet Mr. Bejarano and let your voice be heard.

GRIZZLY PRIDE!

Add VEP's website www.vepca.net to your "favorites"

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VEP Community Service Awards

by Marilyn Rodgers and Lu Anne Behringer

VEP members will be asked to discuss and vote on the 2012 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 September, the membership approved the organization's budget for the coming year. All events and programs are now included in one all inclusive budget item amount (same process that were used last year as well). Continuing with the criteria and amount approved last year - the membership will be asked to approve a \$1,000.00 budget.

The recommendation is to continue with the same program criteria approved for use in 2011 for the program in 2012. 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 February, March and first part of April. As school calendars have changed, the application and approval process have been moved forward by a few weeks. Applications will be due between the first and middle of April, with awards granted by the end of April/first part of May. Applications will be available at the above identified schools, 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.

Become a life saver

By Dave Fadness

On Christmas Eve, Frank, a good friend and long-time VEP volunteer died--briefly. His heart stopped. Fortunately, Frank's son was visiting and is familiar with CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation). He kept up his CPR efforts until firefighters and paramedics arrived, thereby saving his father's life.



This story plays out many times every day. Sadly, it doesn't always end well because the victim is either alone or no one nearby knows what to do when a heart attack occurs. Diseases of the heart are leading killers of Americans, young and old. Fortunately, in cases like Frank's, death can be prevented by simply knowing what to do and taking immediate action.

Do you know CPR? I don't, but Frank's story reminds me that it's time I (and we) learned.


If you and enough other people are interested, VEP will make arrangements for a group lesson. Contact me (drfadness@sbcglobal.net) or Marilyn Rodgers (mroddersrn@aol.com)--do it today, before you forget.

Become a life saver!

VEP Bylaws Review and Update


by Marilyn Rodgers

It is that time again -- every few years, organizations like VEP need to review and update their bylaws. So if you are one of those people who enjoy details and "word smithing", we could use (and appreciate) your skills and talents! Please contact me or any board member for information



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Pie For a Year

By Kathy Wood, Baker

New Year, new beginnings, new resolutions, new blog. Pies are this year's main event-one pie per week for the year 2012.



As many other well-intentioned people, I desire to lose a few pounds (as in a year's worth of cakes!), so my goal is to prepare the pie, cut a slice for its photo shoot, absorb a bite (or two), savor the flavor, then make a quick getaway from the scene. My family (and neighbors or whoever shows up) can consume the remainder.

This well-thought-out plan worked the first week, but this past week, somehow, I kept passing by that piece of pie sitting on the counter and I could swear a little voice was whispering, "just one more bite." Long story short (actually it didn't take that long), I finished the whole piece. Good news-I didn't eat the whole pie! We'll see what next week brings in the form of temptation.

"As American as apple pie" is a famous saying, so recipe #1 is a long-time favorite of mine, "Deep Dish Apple Pie".

Ingredients: Filling: 1 ¼ cups granulated sugar, 6 tablespoons all-purpose flour, 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon, 4-6 apples (I prefer Granny Smith), thinly sliced, ¼ cup butter. Topping: 1 tablespoon milk, 1 tablespoon granulated sugar mixed with ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon.

Instructions: Make pastry (for ingredients and instructions visit blog). Preheat oven to 425 degrees. In a medium mixing bowl mix granulated sugar, flour, and cinnamon until well blended. Stir in thinly sliced apples until coated with mixture. Place half of the apple mixture atop bottom pastry; thinly slice half of butter randomly over apples. Add remaining apples and butter. Top with second crust. Brush top of pie with the milk and sprinkle with the sugar/cinnamon mixture. Cut small slits in top of pie in desired design.

Bake for 15 minutes before lowering temperature to 350 degrees. Continue baking for 35-40 minutes or until apples are tender when pierced. Transfer to wire rack to cool.

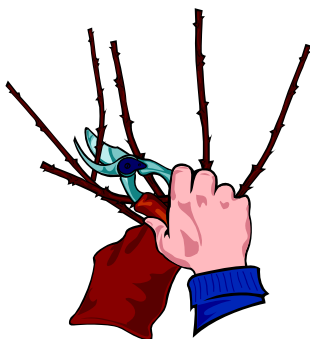
For more complete instructions and a picture, visit pieforayear.blogspot.com.

"As easy as pie!"

Rose Pruning Time

By John Marks

It's Tough-Love time for roses; that means stripping leaves, taking shears to lanky canes, and ripping out suckers. This isn't brain surgery; anybody can do it and should. You don't have to thin out the center of the plant, but you should clip an interior cane that crosses another. And



do remove the leaves, so the rose will think it's going dormant. Cut above the node, where the a new shoot will grow. And if you make a mistake, don't sweat it; roses are pretty good at handling themselves. and feed them compost if you have some. If you're interested in some easy lessons, and tips from the masters, you can get three hours of instruction and practice at San Jose's Heritage Rose Garden at Spring and Taylor (or Coleman and Taylor) from 9 a.m. to noon every Wednesday and Friday. For more info, go to www.heritageroses.us.

Let the aphids come, and then two weeks later, the ladybugs will come and eat the aphids.

Frostbitten Plants Come Back Slowly

Plants that bloom too early can be victims of frost bite this time of year, particularly jade plants. If that happens to you, don't throw them away just because they aren't flowering any more. It takes two or more years for them to recover enough to initiate flowers again. When we had the big freeze in '89, some plants were just mush afterward. It took three years before they bloomed again. If you cover them with a blanket, the new flowers can be bent over, and they never straighten out.

Some gardeners construct a frame and cover frost-sensitive plants with clear plastic or cloth. Some place an extension cord with a light inside, turning it on at night when temperatures drop below freezing. You can have your own greenhouse that way.

Also, keep the frost protection handy. Plants that are well watered have more frost resistance than those that are starved for water. As overnight temps dip, tropical plants, citrus, avocado, bougainvillea and other sensitive plants will need protection. I know we have a poinsettia that we have covered all this winter, and it's still bright with red blossoms. Compost some of your leaves.

Want color plantings? Winter-bedding plants are a top choice for quick color in the garden. Since the winter season is the time of short days and cold nights, it's best to stick with pansies, viola, primrose, sweet alyssum, stock, snapdragons and English daisies. We have some snapdragons from last year that are still blooming, and will continue into next year. For larger plantings, go for bareroot roses, fruit and nut trees, berry vines and grapes.

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Real Estate Corner

By Helen Castillo



We are still experiencing a lot of the same market. With Home prices and interest rates at a all time low the housing market is really selling homes under \$500,000 quickly. Some homes are having multiple offers, reason being that there is a demand for homes on the lower price range and not enough homes on the market. Realtors who are working with first time home buyers with a minimum down payment of 3 1/2 % are being out bid by all cash buyers. There are still a lot of investors who are aware that this is the time to buy and are moving on investing in Real Estate. Holding on to a property for a number of years and letting someone else pay your home off for you is still a good investment. The rumor is that the banks are going to be releasing a number of foreclosed homes soon and all we can hope for that this will help the first time home buyers to get into a home.

The banks have made more conditions on getting financing but with a good home loan officer it can make all the difference in getting you pre-qualified for a home loan and also closing your transaction on your purchase on time. It is important to shop around for the best loan product that you may qualify for before you write an offer.

If you would like to know what homes have sold in your neighborhood or want a free market analysis of what your home is worth you can e-mail me at hcastillo@vbprop.com.

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Summertime, Summertime

While we're feeling the cold, many of us enjoy thinking forward to the warm rays of the California Summer sun. Summer is best spent outdoors socializing with family and neighbors. For over 35 years, our community has gathered at Encore Pool for restful afternoons of swimming, BBQ, and neighborly chit chat. Summer events include our annual 4th of July celebration, watermelon eating contest, melon toss, diving games, and of course BBQ. Don't miss out on Memorial Day, Movie Nights, neighborhood pot lucks, and of course a refreshing swim to cool down those hot summer days.

For the 2012 season, Encore will once again be offering affordable swim lessons. Sessions tend to sell out quickly, so be sure to reserve your spot. We also have a limited number of associate memberships available for the 2012 season. For more information contact Jackie at (408)226-6445

Check us out on Facebook: "WGHOA Encore Pool"
<http://www.facebook.com/#!/EncorePool>

See you at Encore this Summer. And remember, don't forget your towel.

Does VEP have your current e-mail address?

Unfortunately some of our members did not receive all of their newsletters or e-mails this past year, when they forgot to let us know of the change. You are very important to us, so please put VEP on your notification list when you update or change addresses. E-mail is also the primary communication tool used during months that newsletters are not published.

VEP Is Looking for Board Members and Volunteers!

Maybe you have a neighborhood concern you want to champion, or maybe you just want to get to know your neighbors?

With the election season quickly descending upon us it is good to remember that not only do we need to find great people to run the country, we all so need great people to focus on the neighborhood. If you have a few hours a month and would like to help make sure the VEP continues to make a positive impact. Board Members at Large are non specific roles that provide input and guidance to VEP. If you are interested, please contact Marilyn Rodgers at 408-225-7553 or mrodgersm@aol.com.

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CRIME STOPPERS

November VEP Meeting Synopsis

By Marilyn Rodgers

VEP was pleased to host Santa Clara County Supervisor, Mike Wasserman as the featured guest speaker for November's meeting. This was the Supervisor's first presentation to VEP in his official role since being elected in November 2010.



He provided meeting attendees with an overview of his first year in office, highlighting activities and accomplishments. One accomplishment the Supervisor shared was the result of a campaign commitment to the wineries in the South County – which was to look at current laws affecting them and to determine what could be improved. One such county requirement exceeded state requirements – requiring wineries to have a 100,000 gallon water storage tank. He facilitated hav-

ing it reduced to 7,500 gallons, thus providing significant savings to the county's wineries. The Supervisor spoke with pride in being able to balance the County budget without using "one-time funds", this happening for the first time this century. He worked to implement



new cost savings ideas at the County including his Comprehensive Attrition Plan (CAP), and all employees (including the Board of Supervisors) received reductions in compensation. A two-tier benefits plan (reducing compensation for new employees) was implemented. He also encouraged promotion of employees from within. To read more in depth information on the Supervisor's goals and accomplishments, go to Santa Clara County website: www.sccgov.org and Supervisor Mike Wasserman.

Meeting announcements - VEP's 1st Annual Christmas Decorations Contest to be held in December. There is no membership meeting in December; the next meeting will be Tuesday, January 31, 2012.

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:

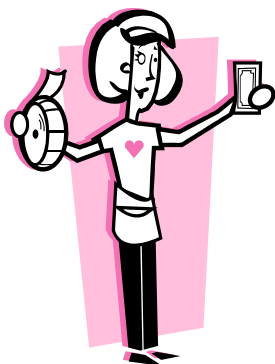
- ☐ Beautification/clean-up projects
- ☐ VEP News/mailling prep
- ☐ Memorial Day Parade & Festival
- ☐ Distribute flyers ☐ Serve on a committee
- ☐ Serve as a VEP officer or committee chair
- ☐ Other _____

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

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

ENTER TO WIN FREE VEP MEMBERSHIP!

Bring your completed Membership Application, with payment, to the VEP General Meeting on Tuesday January 31st, and be entered in a drawing to have your membership fee returned to you! Imagine, all the great benefits of VEP Membership, for free!



***Invite your neighbors
to join VEP***

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Santa in the Park

by Adina Pierce, Helen Castillo, Marilyn Rodgers

The 4th Annual Santa in the Park was once again a big success. 75 participants representing over 25 families was evidence that coming to have a picture taken with Santa continues to be one of VEP's most popular events.



The children (and their parents) enjoyed and appreciated the crafts available for them....even if some of the younger ones weren't too sure about the large man in the red suit and white beard!! Everyone also enjoyed the holiday snacks. Many families come back each year, with several who have attended all four Santa in the Park functions. At least two families have 4 generations represented in their group picture with Santa.

Thank-you to the volunteers who made the event possible. **Adina Pierce** did a wonderful job as photographer, and this year used another talent in developing a new "snowy" backdrop with drapes and lights. **Russ Pierce**, provided behind the scenes assistance and support in setting up the Christmas backdrop for the pictures. **Helen Castillo** was a very effective "photographer's assistant" – distracting the little ones and helping them smile for the camera. Helen also provided the crafts and snacks. Helen made arrangements for Santa's appearance, this year recruiting nephew **Erik Sanchez**. Special kudos to Erik, who was a great Santa!



GRIZZLY ATHLETICS FESTIVAL



SATURDAY JANUARY 28TH

1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

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VEP Community Calendar

January / February 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
22	23	24	25	26	27	28 Gunderson Athletic Fair 1– 4 pm
29	30	31 VEP Community Meeting— 7:30 PM— Vista Park Community Room	1	2 Groundhog Day 	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 Lincoln's Birthday 	13	14 St. Valentine's Day 	15	16	17	18
19	20 President's Day 	21	22 Washington's Birthday 	23	24	25

Dates to Remember!

VEP Community Meetings

January 31, 2012
February 28, 2012
March 28, 2012
April 24, 2012
May 29, 2012

Community Events

Community Garage Sale - Saturday May 5, 2012

THE VEP NEWS



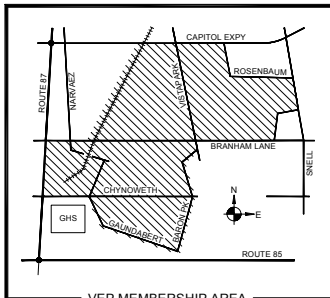
VEP Community Association

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

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

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Check our website: www.vepca.net

Community Room

Vista Park

in the

7:30 pm

January 31st Meeting

VEP's

Be sure to attend