

VEP NEWS

REPRESENTING THE 2200 HOUSEHOLDS IN VISTAPARK,
ENCORE, ECHO VALLEY, BLOSSOM HEIGHTS, AND PARKVIEW VALLEY

JANUARY, 1978

THIS COMING WEDNESDAY IS THE DATE, 7:30 PM IS THE TIME, GUNDERSON HIGH SCHOOL FACULTY ROOM IS THE PLACE, THE FIRST GENERAL MEETING OF VEP FOR 1978 IS THE REASON, AND YOUR ATTENDANCE WILL HELP VEP START ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR. THE SUBJECT OF MAJOR INTEREST THIS MONTH IS THE MATTER OF REDISTRICTING THE CITY FOR THE PURPOSE OF ESTABLISHING WARDS WITH AREA REPRESENTATIVES TO THE CITY COUNCIL. THIS MATTER MAY VERY WELL APPEAR ON A 1978 CITY BALLOT. ARE YOU INFORMED ENOUGH ABOUT IT TO MAKE AN INTELLIGENT DECISION AND CAST A KNOWLEDGABLE VOTE? YOU CAN CERTAINLY START THE NEW YEAR PROPERLY BY ATTENDING THIS VEP MEETING AND LEARNING ABOUT A SUBJECT THAT WILL AFFECT YOUR CITY GOVERNMENT AND YOUR POCKETBOOK. PLAN TO BE THERE WEDNESDAY AT 7:30 PM, GUNDERSON HIGH.

A G E N D A

- Short Business Meeting
- Special Presentation On Redistricting - Pros and Cons
- Membership Plans

A MESSAGE ABOUT VEP - YOUR ASSOCIATION

Because it is the beginning of a new year, and because it is also time to promote the VEP annual membership drive, it is also time to explain briefly just what VEP is about, for the benefit of residents who may be unfamiliar and for those who are new in the area.

VEP is a volunteer homeowner association. It has annual dues of only \$4.00 per household. It is not a business, and it is not in the business of making money. It is a service organization devoted to improving the area, helping members, dealing with various levels of government. It is one of the oldest, largest, and most effective homeowner groups in the area. The fact that it is still active and growing attests to its effectiveness.

Officers and board members are elected annually and serve without any pay to help on any association endeavor. In addition to working with various agencies to obtain street signs and striping, traffic signals, speed limits, street resurfacing, effective school liaison, student transportation arrangements, block parent representation, and other community improvements, the association has also represented members in law suits, annually sponsors a Fourth of July Parade, an Easter Event, and a Halloween Happening and Parade. These last activities not only provide entertainment for the family, they also afford an opportunity for school organizations to make money for their needs.

Each month, the association delivers the VEP News to over 2,000 homes. This is accomplished by over 75 volunteer block representatives - your neighbors. Each month, the officers and board members devote hundreds of hours to meetings - the city council, the board of supervisors, the planning commission, the general plan meetings, the home and school clubs, the highway commission, the public works department - the list goes on and on. Please support this worthwhile activity with a simple act: join now for 1978 by sending you check for only \$4.00. Your membership will provide several benefits. It will help support the publication of the newsletter. It will provide the funds necessary to continue such neighborhood events as the parades and the other holiday activities, including those which offer an opportunity for school groups to raise money. It will help keep VEP growing, active, and effective. It will help you have a cleaner, safer, nicer, and more attractive neighborhood for your family. It's been said here before, but it deserves to be repeated. A \$4.00 membership in VEP is one of today's better bargains.

Send a check today to VEP Homeowners' Association. A convenient envelope is provided. If it isn't enclosed in your copy, just mail your check to VEP at PO Box 18111, San Jose 95158. Or better yet, come to this Wednesday's meeting about redistricting of the city for council member purposes and bring your \$4 with you. You'll save a stamp, learn a lot, and have an opportunity to let your thoughts be known.

77 BLOCK REPS NOT ENOUGH!

Even though VEP has 77 block representatives delivering this newsletter, about three more are needed. One rep is needed for Coty Way, one is needed for Grandpark Circle North, and one is needed for Bluefield Drive between Parkview School and Rosenbaum Avenue. At this time, one volunteer is handling these blocks as extra homes and would really appreciate your help.

All you are asked to do is deliver the newsletter once each month to your friends and neighbors on your block, and pass on their input to the association. If you live on one of these streets and would enjoy participating, please call Sue Larsen at 578-6292. Thanks for helping, and many thanks to the loyal VEP 77 who are block reps now.

REMEMBER, THE SPEED LIMIT IN VEP COUNTRY IS
25 MPH! PLEASE
GIVE OUR CHILDREN A BRAKE

VEP NEWS, FEBRUARY DEADLINE - JANUARY 22

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DISTRICTING - WHAT IS IT? - WHAT DOES IT MEAN? - HOW DOES IT AFFECT CITY RESIDENTS?

The San Jose city council presently has seven elected member; the mayor and six additional council members. They are elected for staggered four-year terms. In 1978, three of these council slots are going to be open for election, including the mayor's position. During the last election, in 1976, the other four positions were filled. The mayor and council members are the city legislators - - they make the laws. Administration of the city is handled by a salaried profession manager hired by the council.

As it is presently written, the San Jose city charter has the council members elected at large - any eligible citizen of San Jose may run for any seat on the council. There is no geographical representation. It is possible that all seven council members could live on the same block. As far as the voting is concerned, any registered voter in the city can vote for a candidate for each seat, with each seat representing the entire city.

Recent concern about the escalating costs of city-wide campaigns have brought up an old question - Should candidates be selected from specific geographical areas of the city to represent that particular area on the city council. This would identify each council member with a specific area of the city and the population of that area, much the same as county, state, and federal representatives are.

After the last general election in 1976, the city council appointed a Charter Review Committee for the purpose of reviewing the entire city charter, including this issue of council representation. Some of the items of specific attention are the civil service system, pay for the council members on a full-time basis (they now receive \$400 monthly, with the mayor receiving \$600 monthly), the present validity of the city-manager form of government for a city with 600,000 persons, and the question of electing council members on a city-wide basis.

This districting issue seems to have widespread concern among San Jose residents, so the review committee approached it first. After much investigation and debate, the committed decided to support a recommendation for districting. Public hearings were held last October for the purpose of determining the number of districts (and hence the number of council members) and the district boundaries. Many alternatives were presented, but plans for a 10-district or 14-district organization emerged as favorites. The next step, if anything is to be done about districting, is to request that the council place the issue on a ballot, since any charter amendment requires a citizen vote. This matter could conceivably appear on the June ballot, but it is more reasonable to expect to see it on the November ballot.

Districting, or the ward system, is not a new concept of city government. Prior to the spring election of 1916, San Jose had a ward system. Problems often associated with ward politics, however, influenced the framers of the present charter and they abandoned this approach. More recently, in 1972, there was an attempt to restore districting in San Jose, but at the last minute, the city council changed its stance and refused to place the matter on the ballot. This was in spite of demands presented in a popular initiative petition. Present-day advocates of the districting approach assert that they will get an initiative on the ballot if the city council fails to place the issue before the voters.

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Those who favor districting claim that it is a democratic reform. They believe that it will decentralize city government, offer neighborhood representation and subsequent increased grass-roots participation, greater voter registration and turn out, and a larger number of candidates. The cost of campaigning would be reduced, advocates claim, meaning more people could afford to be candidates. Moreover, advocates claim districting would provide more equal and more diverse representation for the geographical, social, economic, and cultural segments of the city. They look to districting to produce more visible and accountable representatives who will be known and responsible to a smaller constituency.

Those opposed to districting claim that it will destroy any chance to unify the city. They are concerned about unbalanced representation caused by unequal growth of districts and the frequent need for reapportionment that could result; the familiar problems of gerrymandering. Every voter should be able to elect and be represented by council members who are accessible and responsible to the entire city, they claim, assuring that the best people in the city lead the city government and are elected by the largest possible number of voters. They fear that a larger body of representatives would find it more difficult to reach decisions which might be more heavily influenced by political trade-offs; "You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours". In response to proponent claims, they say that districts will tend to ghetto-ize socio-economic areas of this city, actually result in higher campaign costs, and, anticipating a larger city council, prohibit paying each member a "full" salary.

What do you think? Will you be ready to vote responsibly when this important and potentially expensive issue appears on the ballot. The VEP meeting this Wednesday evening will feature guest speakers representing both sides of this issue. Hear the experts, ask you question, and voice your concerns. BE THERE.

Dave Fadness
VEP Board Member
Past VEP President

QUOTABLE QUOTES - worth thinking about.

Women want mediocre men and men are working hard to be as mediocre as possible.
Margaret Mead

It is never too late to give up your prejudices.
Henry David Thoreau

Experience is not what happens to you; it is what you do with what happens to you.
Aldous Huxley

Don't compromise yourself, it's all you've got.
Janis Joplin

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PEARL AVENUE DOES IT AGAIN

A well-known quotation indicates that history repeats itself. This is certainly the case at the Easterly bend of Pearl Avenue as it leads toward Blossom Hill Road. On December 27, at approximately 8:40 PM, two drivers and their accompanying automobiles found this bend in the road terribly inconvenient. The two autos touched, and they both stopped off of the road with damage, the possibility of injury, the certainty - of inconvenience - and the first-hand knowledge that the city of San Jose can not provide safe vehicle routes for its tax-paying citizens.

This same corner was the scene of a fatality during the year. It is not the province of this editor to lay responsibility for this fact upon the city - but it is the city's responsibility to utilize citizen-supplied moneys to provide an adequate and safe traffic route between Branham Lane and Blossom Hill Road, not only for those who live in the area and are familiar with the hazard, but also for those who are visiting and do not expect such ridiculous situations to exist in one of the fastest-growing areas in this country.

Wake up Janet, and Suzi, and Larry, and Al, and Dave, and others on the San Jose City Council. Wake up and realize that you need votes. Each day the residents of South San Jose send you \$5.00 per household for the operation of the city. Not to mention the daily receipts for other portions of the city. These bunches of \$5 bills may not seem like much to you, but it means a lot to us! Why not try to eliminate an audio-visual class from a high school and get a flashing red light on the telephone pole on Pearl Avenue? Is that not a fair trade-off of priorities? Why not TELL Bullock's and Macy's (both

multi-million dollar operations) that if they want stores at Oakridge Mall, pay for the required improvements themselves. They wouldn't be interested if they couldn't make money. So let them MAKE it, not GET it!

These stores want San Jose business. They are profit-making organizations. Let THEM get it. They are not running to San Jose because it is a depressed area. They can't wait to get here. A smart San Jose City Council member would simply state - "You pay for what you get" - period!

As far as Pearl Avenue is concerned, this is one of the only routes to this shopping complex. The alternative routes are Almaden Expressway, Snell Avenue, and Blossom Hill Road. Possibilities include Santa Teresa Boulevard, Winfield, Coleman Road, and Chynoweth.

NONE of these roads are adequate for the PRESENT load, and most do not have acceptable plans for "improvement".

Hopefully, these streets will not become scenes of future accidents, injuries, inconveniences, monetary problems, and even fatalities.

Hopefully, those who are in control of San Jose City funds will remember that the residents of this city provided those funds.

Hopefully, those in control will realize that those who provided the funds live in San Jose too!

AND, hopefully, those members of the San Jose City Council who think will realize that there is a reason for the law of percentages!



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DUMPING BELONGS IN THE DUMP

Although they are disappearing fast, there are several undeveloped parcels of property in and around VEP Country. Last year, several of these parcels became somewhat unsightly and unsafe because inconsiderate persons discarded trash and what-have-you on these lots. The eyesores and hazards were removed, at CONSIDERABLE expense to the property owners. In at least one case, this expense was borne by taxpayers, since the property belonged to the city.

It has been suggested that the spotting reports that have been effective with traffic situations be extended to reports of unauthorized dumping. This is perhaps a way that VEP can show appreciation to the private property owners that have spent time and money cooperating with VEP and the city and cleaned up the messes and removed the debris. The dumping has started again, and with Spring cleaning coming, it may get worse. Please help by hauling debris to authorized collection points and reporting violators to VEP News.

BASEHORES WIN CHRISTMAS DECORATION AWARD

The Basehore family of 432 Kensington Park Court was selected as the first place winner in a Christmas decoration contest sponsored by the South San Jose Sun. Their home and landscaping were decorated with lights and Santa Claus and reindeer paraded across the garage door.

Dave and Pat Basehore, VEP members who have been active with the association for several years and are VEP block representatives, explain that the decorating is a family project. Daughters Kiberly and Deborah prepare the strings of lights, Dave outlines the house, and Pat decorates the trees and the shrubs. In spite of appearances, the Basehores have estimated that the lighting only uses about 24¢ worth of electricity on the days that it is on.

Congratulations to the Basehores on their selection as first place winners, and also to the many others who participated.

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TINY ONES PREFERRED ● I like them under one year but others are just as welcome in my home near Gunderson - hourly, daily, or weekly. Call 578-5231 for more information.

LICENSED CHILD CARE ● Ages three and up near Parkview School, lunch & snack provided. Call Norma at 629-0570.

CHILD CARE ● CHILD CARE ● CHILD CARE

ALMADEN PARENT PRE-SCHOOL ● On Cahalan Drive for ages three to kindergarten age. A self-governing, non-profit organization of parents directed by an accredited teacher. For information, call Marcia Mitoma at 225-3886.

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BABYSITTER NEEDED ● Bible Study Group needs babysitter on Thursday mornings from 9:30 to 11:30 AM for seven pre-school children. Your home or ours - \$2.50 per hour. If you can help, call Georgette at 224-0237 or Sandra at 629-8480. Thanks.

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