

VEP MEETING

7:30 P.M. TUESDAY

April 18, 2000

GUNDERSON HIGH SCHOOL

- Faculty Lounge •

AGENDA

- **Parks & Recreation Facilities Needs** •

Presentation by City of San Jose Parks & Recreation.
Discussion of Vista, Meadows, Parkview III,
and other VEP area parks.

- **Graffiti Abatement** •

Presentation by City of San Jose
Graffiti Abatement Program

- **VEP Officer Elections** •

Elections of VEP Officers for 2000-2001

- **Your Neighborhood Concerns** •

EVERYONE IS WELCOME—INVITE A NEIGHBOR

IF YOU HAVEN'T YET PAID YOUR ANNUAL DUES, THIS IS YOUR LAST COPY OF THE VEP NEWS!

Our April 18th VEP Meeting

-Greg West, VEP President

Our April meeting will focus on area parks. The Parks and Recreation Department of the City of San Jose has been busily collecting community input on park needs throughout the city to develop a strategic plan. They want to share their findings and that strategic plan with us, specifically those items related to our city council district.

Although Vista Park may not be the main item of discussion, it will be one of the topics. Suzanne Wolf, from the Parks and Recreation Department, will present the plan and will be on hand to answer questions. Jo Tabar, from Council member Dando's office, will also be on hand.

In addition, Rob Boyles, from the city's Graffiti Abatement Program, will take a few minutes to update us on what the city is doing in our neighborhood and citywide to address this problem.

We will also hold our annual VEP Board elections to select a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Newsletter Editor for the coming year.

Be sure to come to the meeting at 7:30 PM on Tuesday, April 18th (one week early this month because of Gunderson's Spring Break) in the Gunderson High School Faculty and Staff Lounge. Bring a neighbor!

VEP COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE DAY

-Jeri Arstingstall

VEP Homeowners Association is coordinating a **Community Garage Sale Day** which will be advertised in the Pennysaver and the Blossom Valley Times. This is an excellent opportunity for you to take advantage of an increased number of prospective shoppers by offering your unwanted household treasures for sale on the same day as the rest of your neighbors.

Community Garage Sale Day Saturday, April 29, 2000 Morning to 4 pm

Interested participants will just haul their stuff out onto their own driveways and sell as usual. We want to make this annual affair for our neighborhoods a complete success. You can help by taking part in our community-wide event.

So, open your garage doors and make a little extra money. Also, while those doors are open, meet and greet your neighbors. While talking to them, mention VEP and tell them about our annual **Home Improvement Faire** coming up on May 23rd.

2000-01 Slate of officers for VEP

-Dave Fadness

April is the month we elect our VEP officers for the coming year. Our executive board is comprised of a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and newsletter editor.

With one exception, if re-elected our existing executives (see list on mailing page) are willing to continue their volunteer services. Unfortunately, our current secretary Jeri Arstingstall is unable to continue.

So we need you to help us fill out our board. Nominations for any of the board positions will remain open until we take our vote, so don't hesitate to step forward to give our existing officers a break.

No experience is needed, just a sense of community and a dedication to the quality of your neighborhood. Because you're a VEP member, we already know you have those traits.

As such, we would be very grateful to have you step forward as a volunteer. You'll be happy to know that the demands on your time are not great and you'll always have the full support of your colleagues on the board in any task that may arise—we work as a team.

Elections will be held at our April 18th meeting for terms that run through our meeting in April 2001. *You* can start the new millennium as a VEP officer!

If you have questions or want to volunteer, call any of the current officers listed on the mailing page of this newsletter--or just come to our meeting and offer your services.

Simple rules for attractive neighborhoods

To keep our neighborhoods looking their best, it is important to follow a few simple rules. First, be sure to remember the days your weekly garbage/recycling service and monthly street sweeping are done. Then...

- Don't put your garbage and recycling containers or yard waste on the street more than 24-hours before scheduled pick-up. (This is required by city ordinance.)
- Be sure to bring your garbage and recycling containers in by the end of pick-up day. Remember: City ordinance also requires that these items be stored behind your front gate, out of sight from the street.
- Sweep-up any yard waste debris that is left behind and put it in your yard waste container or garbage. Yard waste left on the street is not only unsightly, it also leads to storm sewer blockage, consequent street flooding during the rainy season, and it seriously contaminates our creeks and the Bay.
- Be sure to move your vehicle(s) off the street on street sweeping day. Doing this allows more complete removal of debris that also eventually finds its way into our streams and the Bay, threatening wildlife and water quality.

Be a good neighbor. Following these simple steps can go a long way toward keeping our VEP area one of the most attractive in Santa Clara County.

Neighborhood Developments

-Greg West, VEP President

Continuation School News: Construction of the continuation school on the John Muir campus is nearly complete for a spring opening. According to a recent newsletter from Community Action in Robertsville (CAIR), the color scheme of the school violates the visual impact sections of the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND).

CAIR reports that the color scheme is somewhere between "mooseturd" and "jailhouse jump-suite orange." The District reported that they picked a color scheme to distinguish the continuation school from John Muir and to give it its own identity.

CAIR also claims that during construction of the school, the District has violated the noise mitigations from the MND.

CAIR reports that settlement negotiations with the District have failed and it is pressing ahead with its lawsuit. The suit should go to trial sometime in June.

Our area school board member, Veronica Lewis, did report, however, that the enrollment at the continuation school has been reduced from 350 students to 200 students.

For additional information, see the SJUSD website: <http://www.sjUSD.k12.ca.us/news/tlinfo.html> and the CAIR website: <http://www.robertsvillecommunity.com>

Eden Housing: Eden Housing appears also appears to be nearly complete. We have no new updates.

Oakridge Mall Expansion: Larry Greene and Kim Brewer, representing Westfield Corporation, the owners of Oakridge Mall, attended our March meeting. They presented some details on expansion plans and traffic mitigations, and answered our questions.

An April 4th letter from Larry to VEP recapped the issues and concerns that he and Kim took away from our meeting. In that letter, Larry stated, "Fortunately, Westfield believes in the strength of the community and intends to make the private investment necessary to ensure Oakridge continues to serve the role as the designated regional center, thereby maximizing the public investment in light rail, public transport, infrastructure and regional free-ways and roads."

Chynoweth Ponds: The plans to build a bridge to connect Chynoweth across the Guadalupe River have apparently been shelved for the time being. VEP will watch this situation diligently and will act on any changes.

GARAGE SALE SIGN VIOLATIONS

-Ron Burda

It's that time of year when our neighborhoods sprout colorful signs. Most residents are unaware that using public property for private notices of any kind is illegal.

We all need to be aware of the law: *Title 23 of the City Code*. Paraphrasing, it says that private signs cannot be posted on public right-of-way, with few exceptions.

Public right-of-way is defined by the city as the sidewalks on each side of a street and everything in between them. That includes the sidewalks themselves, the park strip between them and the curb, the center street median and any poles, light standards, traffic signs, trees, foliage, fences or anything else on public property or in intersections.

We all want to be kind and thoughtful neighbors. So, we need to be mindful that, to many neighbors, placing garage sale or other notices around our streets is as unsightly as any other kind of graffiti. Many homeowners object to the mess and complain to the city Code Enforcement Department (277-4528).

There is a \$250 per sign fine for violating the Sign Graffiti law. City property is not to be used for private, commercial, or any other kind of notices.

[Ed. Note: Ron Burda is a long-time resident and member of VEP.]

Jeri's Swan Song

-Jeri Arstingstall, VEP Secretary

It has been a pleasure serving as your secretary over the last two years.

If you have an inkling of serving your community and are afraid to step up to the plate, let me tell you what is involved. You attend executive board meetings, usually the 1st Thursday of each month. Take a few notes, nothing fancy--I keep handwritten notes in a spiral notebook. And you provide some input on what your concerns are regarding our neighborhoods.

I have learned more about our community and the city of San Jose, and have met some very nice people.

If you are interested, please give our nominating committee chair, John Marks a call at 629-6433.

Sewer tax increase sought—again!

-Dave Fadness

One year ago VEP members voted unanimous opposition to an increase in the storm sewer tax charged by San Jose. Our decision was made after a full presentation by Environmental Services Department (ESD) staff and careful consideration of the facts of their arguments. Mayor Ron Gonzales stood with us and convinced a majority of the city council to join him in voting it down.

It's back again! ESD is asking for more money.

The storm sewer service tax was first imposed by the city in 1991. Rates were increased in 1995. Last year, ESD staff asked for another major increase (23.3%) in its annual appropriation, from \$13.3-million to \$16.4-million. In light of a 2% to 3% inflation rate in recent years, we were shocked at the magnitude of their request.

Our questions went unanswered regarding the possibility of departmental cost reduction through efficiency measures, etc. We suggested more frequent street sweeping or the use of containers for yard waste, instead of dumping it on the street, to save the high ongoing costs of clearing clogged storm sewers. They want more money.

City staff indicated that much of the rapid rise in costs is attributable to increasingly stringent federal and state EPA mandates; we urged the council to go after money from those governments instead of squeezing more from us. The feds and the state have plenty of money and we think they should, at long last, be held financially accountable for the requirements they unfairly pass down to our cities.

As of this writing, the details of proposed rate increases are not known. We urge VEP members to keep their eyes and ears open for any news of a sewer tax increase. We'll apprise you of any late-breaking news at our April meeting (which may be too late, as this topic is scheduled for hearing at the April 18th city council meeting).

Don't hesitate to telephone Mayor Gonzales (277-4237) and Councilwoman Dando (277-5251) to let them know how you feel about this—they are supposed to represent *you*.

As individuals and as an organization, we are supportive of environmental protection. We have not, however, heard a compelling case for paying more money for storm sewer services.

Survive a heart attack—when you're alone

Many people are alone when they suffer a heart attack. Hopefully nobody will need this information, but it may save your life in an emergency.

Let's say it's 6:15 p.m. and you're driving home (alone of course) after an unusually hard day on the job. You're really tired, upset and frustrated. Suddenly you start experiencing severe pain in your chest that starts to radiate out into your arm and up into your jaw. You are only about five miles from the hospital nearest your home; unfortunately, you don't know if you'll be able to make it that far.

What can you do? You've been trained in CPR but the guy that taught the course neglected to tell you how to perform it on yourself. Without help, the person whose heart stops beating properly and who begins to feel faint has only about 10 seconds left before losing consciousness.

However, these victims can help themselves by coughing repeatedly and very vigorously. A deep breath should be taken before each cough, and the cough must be deep and prolonged, as when producing sputum from deep inside the chest. A breath and a cough must be repeated about every two seconds without let up until help arrives, or until the heart is felt to be beating normally again.

Deep breathing gets oxygen into the lungs and coughing movements squeeze the heart and keep the blood circulating. Squeezing pressure on the heart also helps it regain normal rhythm. In this way, heart attack victims can get to a phone and, between breaths, call for help.

Tell as many other people as possible about this. It could save their lives!

(Ed. Note: Reprinted from The Mended Hearts, Inc. publication, Heart Response.)

VEP's Home Improvement Faire

-John Marks

Our fourth **Home Improvement Faire** is scheduled for Tuesday, May 23rd, and this year will include a VEP Information Table and refreshments (brownies & soft drinks).

The Faire features 18-20 contractors and tradesmen who will display their products and functions in the Gunderson High School Forum area. These exhibitors include painters, roofers, plumbers, fence builders, windows and doors, kitchens, water softeners and others. Be there on Tuesday, May 23, 7:30 pm. You won't be disappointed!

We look forward to seeing you.

Computer Corner

-Bob Aquino

In springtime the young (and not so young) computer nerd's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of financial software. As I am writing this article, half of my mind is focused on

my IRS returns. Whether you prepare your own taxes (a la Turbo Tax), or have them done by a professional, there is nothing so helpful as maintaining your household accounts on Quicken, MS Money, or some other software package.

I'm a very big fan of this type of software. I've been using it for fifteen years or so, and I recommend it to anyone who has a computer and wants to understand his personal finances.

In the bad old days, when I went to prepare my taxes, I would have a large envelope full of receipts, cancelled checks, and the like. Now, I can run a report of my deductible expenses and I'm done. The only catch is that you need to be very scrupulous and disciplined in entering the data into the program during the year.

Personally, I find that when I receive my monthly statement from the bank is a good time for me to update my records. By the way, you still need to keep those records since, in the event of an audit; Uncle will need to review them.

Personal Finance (PF) software represents an unusual case in the software world. Microsoft attempted to buy Intuit, the publisher of Quicken, because MS Money was not effectively competing with it. The Department of Justice put the kibosh on the deal because of competitive considerations. MS had committed to *give* MS Money to WordPerfect in order to provide a competitor to the proposed MS Quicken. But DOJ wouldn't buy the deal.

So, Intuit remained independent and is still dominating the market. (We will all pause here to weep bitter salt tears for Microsoft.)

In any case, in addition to the quality of its software, one of the reasons that Quicken remains in this position is that there is a great deal of inertia in the market. Many people who buy PF software are upgrading an existing package. If you have been on one package for years, there are a lot of reasons not to change vendors. Your records might not update with a new vendor's package, you'd have to get used to a new interface, etc.

You'll notice that all PF software has an annual update. About three years after buying a package, a user finds that the latest version has some features that he believes he must have. You will also notice that successive versions are completely incremental in character; they're always evolutionary, never revolutionary.

Gunderson's Annual Golf Tournament

The Gunderson High School Athletic Booster Club is hosting their **6th Annual Golf Tournament** at the beautiful Boulder Creek Golf & Country Club on Sunday, May 7th. Individual golfers will draw for team awards in this 4 person scramble format. Individual prizes will be awarded for low score (1st, 2nd, and 3rd), closest to the pin, and longest drive. There will also be four hole-in-one prizes including one \$10,000 hole.

The entry fee for golf and dinner is \$100 for adults, and \$85 for students 18 and under. Non-golfer dinner is \$30. Tax-deductible corporate sponsorships are available. Entry form and fees are due by April 24. This event begins at 10 a.m. Dinner will be served at approximately 5 p.m.

Proceeds from this golf tournament will be used to support the Athletic Department and the seventeen different sports played at Gunderson High School.

For further information about the tournament, corporate sponsorships, or to get an entry form, please contact Trudy O'Neill (287-0191), Kanika Ahyo (224-0336) or Louie Aldama (972-1725).

Gumby-Mumby

-John Marks, VEP's Green Gardener

Remember those twistable Gumby toys that you or your children used to play with? Well, now they're quite the rage as attractive twist ties to stake or tie plant stems together. They're more colorful than the little green twisties you normally use to stake plants, and represent different animals.

Along with Twisty Flamingo and Twisty Frog, there's Twisty Duck, which your children or grandchildren will delight in seeing. They're made of soft vinyl similar to the famous Gumby toy, and can be reused many times. They're available in the garden department at Wal-Mart stores for \$1.49 for a set of three. Probably Orchard Supply and Woolworth's Gardening Center will have them too.

Crabgrass Controls: How to beat this annual weed

The best way to control crabgrass—that familiar annual weed with blue-green leaves and spreading stems—is to maintain a dense, healthy lawn that will out-compete it and prevent it from establishing. Mow at a height of 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 inches, and cut the grass frequently so as not to remove more than one-third of the leaf blade at one time. Also, water deeply and infrequently, and fertilize to encourage a vigorous lawn.

Weed killers are another option. The most effective among them are pre-emergent types that kill weed seeds as they sprout. It's essential to apply herbicide before the crabgrass emerges from the soil. This happens in spring when soil temperatures are greater than 55° to 60°F for 7- to 10-consecutive days. Check with your local extension service for timing, or monitor the soil temperature yourself using a soil thermometer inserted at an angle just below the surface. But don't apply weed killers prior to seeding or in an area that's just been seeded.

Pull Those Dandelion Blossoms!

As you head out the driveway on your way to work or shopping, you've probably noticed a yellow dandelion blossom or two. Make a note to at least pull the blossom off before it goes to seed, preventing it from spreading all across your lawn. If you have a dandelion stub, dig up the whole plant, or hit it with RoundUp.

More Hints & Tips

You've probably wondered where I get all the material you see in this column. Well, I keep my eyes open and read a

lot. Many items are extracted from the Living section of the Mercury News on Friday morning. You can also access todayshomeowner.com on the web and get helpful hints about home repair as well as gardening.

Next month I'll talk about how to get the best tomatoes from your garden.

President's Corner

-Greg West, VEP President

VEP Executive Board elections for the coming year will be held at our meeting this month. We are fortunate that most of the Board is willing to return for one more term if it pleases our membership.

We are, however, losing Jeri Arstingstall as our Secretary. As many of you know, Jeri launched a photography business a couple of years ago and is dealing with the growing pains associated with a successful business.

As some of you may remember, Jeri volunteered to fill the Secretary post at our April meeting two years ago. Jeri was elected to the office at, I think, the second or third meeting that she attended.

I would like to thank Jeri on VEP's behalf for her efforts, and, particularly, for the ideas that she brought to our neighborhood. There are three of her ideas that I would like to highlight as having had the most significant impact.

Jeri championed revitalizing the Neighborhood Welcoming Committee and began its formation a couple of years ago. Since then, **Katherine Decker** has taken on the role as chair of that committee that has successfully recruited many of our newest members. Jeri will continue working with Katherine and the Welcoming Committee to help continue our membership growth.

Jeri suggested the concept of the Neighborhood Garage Sale last year and drove the actions to pull off this successful event. Jeri is organizing this year's event on April 29th as well.

And, finally, Jeri suggested that we might be able to save some money on our insurance coverage and investigated alternatives our carrier. As a result, VEP is saving about 40% on our insurance costs over previous years for identical coverage. Insurance coverage is one of our more significant yearly expenses.

Again, since Jeri is not returning to the post, we will need to find someone to replace her at our April meeting. If you would like to get involved with a great group of people and have an impact on your neighborhood and community as well, please consider volunteering. If you have questions about the duties, please feel free to contact Jeri or any Board member, or our Nominating Committee Chair, John Marks at 629-6433.

"Get the Lead Out" When Buying a Home

-Stuart Lieberman()*

People usually share the nostalgic view that "they don't build homes like they used to." And, when it comes to the

nation's older housing inventory, there is good reason. Older houses were often better built to last longer than contemporary houses. They had "class," "charm," "character," and matured lots. But don't forget something that is *not* so appealing: old houses often have lead.

Lead has been in American Paints Since the 1900s

While paint manufacturers have not been permitted to add lead to their paint since 1980, before then it was a common additive. Adding lead made paints brighter and increased their durability. Experts believe that in some parts of the country, three out of four homes are likely to have some lead paint. Wall paint and pipe solder are probably the most prevalent sources.

Problems with Lead

While experts generally concur that lead is potentially harmful, unfortunately there is little consensus on how much lead is harmful. Children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of lead contamination. Scientists believe that lead may cause serious health problems in children, especially young children. Studies link lead poisoning, which means that a person has a lot of lead in his/her body, with brain damage, nervous system impairment, and learning disabilities. It may also cause problems in pregnancy.

Experts believe that children under six are at greatest risk from exposure. Children who live or play with other children that have been lead poisoned are at greater risk. As are children living in pre-1960s homes and children that do not ingest sufficient levels of iron or calcium.

For good reason, federal health officials recently reminded owners of older homes to ensure that their children are kept away from home improvement projects involving paint scraping or sanding. A recent New York state study of children living in homes where there had been recent removals of leaded paint revealed that nearly ten percent had dangerously high levels of lead in their blood.

Ingestion and inhalation pose an ongoing threat to children in houses with leaded paint. Parents need not just be concerned during renovation projects, either. Small children haven been known to eat paint chips and to even bite contaminated windowsills. Due to the health risk, prudence therefore suggests that all home purchasers determine whether the home they are buying contains lead.

Legal Requirements

Under recent federal laws, buyers of pre-1978 homes must receive a pamphlet that identifies the risks of lead contamination. This pamphlet states that it is assumed that paint in pre-1978 houses is lead based. Buyers are instructed that they have the right to test for lead in the paint, usually at their own expense.

If lead is found, a buyer has the right to cancel the contract. There are two other options as well: (1) the seller may pay for lead paint removal or (2) the buyer may purchase the house "as is."

In addition, landlords are now required to advise tenants of the presence of lead paint once it is detected. If lead is found, a landlord must properly remove the lead containing paint. Landlords must also provide their tenants with information pamphlets concerning lead exposure.

Lead As a Contingency In the Sales Contract

It is very common practice for homes to be sold with "contingencies." The most common contingencies are an acceptable termite inspection and radon inspection (at least on the east coast). But there are few rules in real estate, only customs. Parties are free to adjust their contracts as they deem fit. In the case of an older home purchase, cautious purchasers, especially those with young children, may wish to consider an acceptable lead inspection as one of the purchase contingencies.

Conclusion

In the last ten years, there has been a tremendous amount of litigation nationwide over injuries allegedly attributed to lead contamination. Older paint manufacturers, distributors, and retailers have been included in these large, multi-party cases, and plaintiffs' attorneys have collected a sizable war chest of shared information. Their clients, often people who came into prolonged contact with lead as children, are alleged to be suffering from irreversible brain damage.

Home purchasers never are interested in buying into these kinds of horrifying lawsuits. They might therefore consider confronting this issue *before* the purchase. If you already own a house with this problem, a professional should be consulted to evaluate your particular situation and define your available options.

As explained above, recently enacted federal laws also cover this issue. Sellers need to ensure that their practices conform to federal law. Some states also have their own laws that must also be considered by buyers, sellers, and tenants.

[()Ed. Note: This article was submitted by VEP Treasurer Brian Bonnifield, a real estate professional.]*

Employment opportunities

The Willow Glen II Homeowners Association is looking for energetic people to work as attendants at their swimming pool on Monet Circle, right here in the VEP community. Responsibilities include greeting guests, confirming that their membership is up to date, maintaining pool area cleanliness, ensuring that pool safety rules are being followed, and making sure that everyone is having a good time. Lifeguards are also needed.

If you are interested, call Kevin Moore at 363-0594 or email him at willowglenhoa@lakmail.com.

Bulletin Board Ads

BABY-SITTING WORK WANTED: 17-year old, experienced baby-sitter. References available. Call Becky @ 225-5878.

MR. FIX-IT will repair leaks, sticking doors, locks, latches, lights, and life's little ills. No job is too small. Call John Marks @ 629-6433.

PET-SITTING WORK NEEDED: 15-year old will pet-sit, dog-walk. Is flexible and reliable. References available. Call Alex @ 224-0853.

GARAGE SALE SIGNS: I have "A-frame" garage sale signs that I will loan you for your garage sales. Call me in advance to reserve them. Brian @ 226-6004 or at RE/MAX Valley Properties, @ 978-9000, ext. 228.

* * *

VEP will print free ads for its members for transactions involving less than \$250, for lost-and-found, for announcements of general interest to our community, and for kids under 18 or retirees who are looking for work. Free ads must be submitted monthly for publication.

Commercial ads cost \$1.00 per line per month, 10 lines maximum, must be prepaid before publication, and may only be run once per calendar quarter. Commercial ads must be submitted quarterly. No graphics allowed. For information on full-sized ads with graphics (camera ready), contact VEP'S Treasurer listed on the mailing page of this newsletter.

One line contains 50 characters, including spaces. Mail to VEP, P.O. Box 18111, San Jose, 95158. Ads must be received no later than the 10th of the month for inclusion in that month's newsletter. Use the following form as a guide for submitting an ad:

NAME: _____

PHONE # _____

AD WORDING: _____

The VEP Executive Board reserves exclusive right to refuse any ad for any reason. VEP does not certify nor is it responsible in any way for the claims, goods, or services of any advertisers.

A nice story: Think about it...

The first day of school our professor introduced himself and challenged us to get to know someone we didn't already know. I stood up to look around when a gentle hand touched my shoulder. I turned around to find a wrinkled, little old lady beaming up at me with a smile that lit up her entire being.

She said, "Hi handsome. My name is Rose. I'm eighty-seven years old. Can I give you a hug?"

I laughed and enthusiastically responded, "Of course you may!" and she gave me a giant squeeze. "Why are you in college at such a young, innocent age?" I asked.

She jokingly replied, "I'm here to meet a rich husband, get married, have a couple of children, and then retire and travel."

"No, seriously," I asked. I was curious what may have motivated her to be taking on this challenge at her age.

"I always dreamed of having a college education and now I'm getting one!" she told me.

After class we walked to the student union building and shared a chocolate milkshake. We became instant friends. Every day for the next three months we would leave class together and talk nonstop. I was always mesmerized listening to this "time machine" as she shared her wisdom and experience with me.

Over the course of the year, Rose became a campus icon and easily made friends wherever she went. She loved to dress up and she reveled in the attention bestowed upon her from the other students. She was living it up.

At the end of the semester we invited Rose to speak at our football banquet and I'll never forget what she taught us. She was introduced and stepped up to the podium. As she began to deliver her prepared speech, she dropped her three-by-five cards on the floor. Frustrated and a little embarrassed, she leaned into the microphone and simply said "I'm sorry. I'm so jittery. I gave up beer for Lent and this whiskey is killing me! I'll never get my speech back in order so let me just tell you what I know."

As we laughed she cleared her throat and began: "We do not stop playing because we are old; we grow old because we stop playing. There are only four secrets to staying young, being happy, and achieving success. You have to laugh and find humor every day. You've got to have a dream. When you lose your dreams, you die. We have so many people walking around who are dead and don't even know it!"

"There is a huge difference between growing older and growing up. If you are nineteen years old and lie in bed for one full year and don't do one productive thing, you will turn twenty years old."

"If I am eighty-seven years old and stay in bed for a year and never do anything I will turn eighty-eight. Anybody can grow older. That doesn't take any talent or ability."

"The idea is to grow up by always finding the opportunity in change."

"Have no regrets. The elderly usually don't have regrets for what we did, but rather for things we did not do. The only people who fear death are those with regrets."

She concluded her speech by courageously singing "The Rose." She challenged each of us to study the lyrics and live them out in our daily lives.

At the year's end, Rose finished the college degree she had begun all those years ago. One week after graduation Rose died peacefully in her sleep.

Over two thousand college students attended her funeral in tribute to the wonderful woman who taught by example that it's never too late to be all you can possibly be.

The Rose

Some say love it is the river
that drowns the tender reed.
Some say love it is the razor
that leaves your soul to bleed.
Some say love it is a hunger
an aching endless need.
I say love it is a flower
and you, it's only seed.

It's the heart afraid of breaking
that never learns to dance.
It's the dream afraid of waking
that never takes a chance.
It's the one who won't be taken
who cannot seem to give,
and the soul afraid of dying
that never learns to live.

When the night has been too lonely
and the road has been too long,
and you think that love is only
for the lucky and the strong,
just remember in the winter
far beneath the bitter snows
lies the seed that with the sun's love
in the spring becomes the Rose.

The *flip* side...

Thoughts for the new century

- 1) It's still hard to trust my bank to be ready for Y2K when they can't even make their time and temperature sign work properly.
- 2) To all the corporations putting us on hold when we call customer service: If your product is so successful that you can't handle the call volume, then why can't you afford to hire more customer reps?
- 3) Maybe we should sell handguns by prescription only and let people buy Prozac at trade shows.
- 4) It's amazing that people moan about ATM fees more than the government taking 40 cents out of every dollar we earn.
- 5) Why is it every time I subscribe to a magazine for two years I get a renewal notice in six months?
- 6) If aliens are smart enough to travel through space, why do they keep abducting the dumbest people on Earth?
- 7) Why is it that when you talk to God, you're praying, but when he talks to you, you're crazy?
- 8) My wife and I always compromise. I admit I'm wrong, and she agrees with me.

9) What ever happened to saying, "I'm sorry, I must have dialed the wrong number" before hanging up?

10) Why is it that all the semi drivers who cut me off, or pull out in front of me, never seem to have that "How's My Driving?" telephone number on the back of their trucks?

12) If money is the root of all evil, why do churches want it so badly?

13) All this talk about how Congress should spend the budget surplus has me wondering... Isn't it my money and if there's any left shouldn't I get a refund?

14) Remember when FM radio meant lots of music and hardly any commercials?

15) Wouldn't it be a great source of entertainment and embarrassment if they put alarm sirens and flashing lights on Supermarket cash registers set up for 10 item or less? Scan the 11th item and we know who flunked math in grade school!

16) How come professional athletes never ask to renegotiate their contracts for LESS money after they have a bad season?

17) When the media does it, it's called "news coverage." When an individual does it, it's called "stalking."

18) Tell me: when did voyeurism, invasion of privacy, and lack of sensitivity become synonymous with journalism?

19) I've decided if I ever get a luxury car, I'm going to spend a little extra money and get the one with the turn signals.

20) Why is it OK to obscure part of the program I'm watching with a weather warning map, but not OK to obscure a commercial?

21) If men can run the world, why can't they stop wearing neckties? How intelligent is it to start the day by tying a little noose around your neck?

22) Rap is to music as etch-a-sketch is to art!

23) Does anyone else think it's funny that Success magazine has filed for bankruptcy?

24) The money from the tobacco settlement should be used to fight illiteracy, since people can't seem to read the Surgeon General's warning.

25) I'm delighted that MCI WorldCom is merging with Sprint. That's one less phone solicitor to harass me at dinnertime.