

VEP MEETING

7:30 P.M. TUESDAY

May 23, 2000

GUNDERSON HIGH SCHOOL

• FORUM •

AGENDA

- Annual VEP Home Improvement Faire •

EVERYONE IS WELCOME—INVITE A NEIGHBOR

Our May meeting

-Greg West, VEP President

Our May meeting is our Annual Home Improvement Fair. John Marks has been working hard to coordinate it this year including spending time at the Santa Clara County Fair Grounds Home Show recruiting exhibitors for us. If you are thinking of doing any remodeling or other home improvements this year, this may be a very beneficial meeting for you to attend!

Contractors are as busy as they have ever been with all of the growth and construction going on in Silicon Valley. This is your opportunity to meet some of them and to discuss your home improvement needs.

Be sure to come to the meeting at 7:30 PM on Tuesday, May 23rd in the Gunderson High School Forum--and bring a neighbor!

Home Improvement Faire

-John Marks

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

Held in the Gunderson High School Forum area, this year's Faire will feature 18-20 contractors and tradesmen who will display their products and functions. Exhibitor services include digital subscriber lines, cracked driveway repair, painters, roofers, plumbers, fence builders, windows and doors, kitchens, water softeners, skylights, and others.

Here's a sampling of the suppliers we expect to show up for our Home Improvement Faire:

Consolidated Plumbing (a VEP Advertiser)
Old Country Roofing
The Boardroom (Interiors)

RE/MAX Realty
Randazzo Water Softeners (a VEP Advertiser)
Leslie's Pools
Orchard Supply
Home Guard Pest Exterminators
A&J Doors
California Contractors Association
Custom Concrete (driveways)
Morazon Roofing
Kitchen Interiors
Sun Tunnel Bay Junction DSL
Pacific Bell DSL
Starving Students Painters
D&D Chem Dry (a VEP Advertiser)
Bathroom Remodeling + Tubs
SC County Composters
Security Systems Brothers Replacement Windows
3D Ceramic Tile

Be there on Tuesday, May 23 at 7:30 pm—and bring your neighbors. You won't be disappointed. We look forward to seeing you.

[Ed. note: John Marks is a past-president of VEP and a regular contributor to these pages. He deserves our thanks for his annual efforts to organize our Home Improvement Faire.]

VEP election results

At our April 18th meeting, the following volunteers were elected unanimously to our 2000-2001 VEP Executive Board:

Greg West, President
Dave Noel, Vice President
Sharon Pardun, Secretary
Brian Bonnifield, Treasurer
Bob Aquino, Newsletter co-Editor
Dave Fadness, Newsletter co-Editor

We thank and congratulate these dedicated neighbors for their leadership and commitment to our community.

Neighborhood developments

Continuation School - As of this writing, the continuation school at Branham and Speak (co-located on the John Muir Middle School Campus) is slated to open for business after Spring Break. The size of the program has been reduced from 350 students to 200 students. The CAIR lawsuit against the School Board is moving forward.

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 - We have no new updates since our last issue of the VEP News.

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 continue to watch this situation diligently and will act on any changes.

President's message

-Greg West, VEP's President

First of all, congratulations and thank you to VEP's new Secretary, **Sharon Pardun**. Sharon is a long-time and active VEP member and has been involved in many VEP activities. We now look forward to her contribution as a board member.

Secondly, with the annual elections in April, we are close to wrapping-up another VEP year. And, although this has been somewhat of an uneventful year as for as neighborhood crisis issues are concerned, we have gotten some very good things done as a neighborhood and community.

We began the year by partnering with the city and the office of our city council member, **Pat Dando**, to have a very successful Neighborhood Clean-up Day. The city brought large dumpsters into our neighborhood and hauled out several hundred cubic yards of trash at no charge to our neighbors. VEP worked with Pat Dando's office to distribute the publicity for the event and you, our members and neighbors, provided the labor to man the dumpster sites.

With this being an election year, VEP has been very active in making our political will on issues known. The VEP membership took a stand against the *Airport Traffic Relief Initiative* after the city council agreed to implement the key elements of the initiative, thereby making the initiative moot. Dave Fadness was a key driver with the *Airport Traffic Relief Alliance* in the initiative's campaign.

We got involved with the *Almaden Valley Community Association* (AVCA) in the formation of a *District 10 City Council Seat Campaign Oversight Committee* that was chartered to help insure that the campaigns stayed focused on issues.

As part of that effort, we sponsored a successful and well-attended Candidates' Forum, although the weather that evening could not have been worse. We will continue working with AVCA and other community groups on issues of mutual interest, and will probably co-sponsor forums for some statewide elections this fall.

We are finishing the year by awarding two **VEP Community Service Awards** and \$1000 stipends to deserving graduating seniors at Gunderson and Andrew Hill High Schools, by holding our annual **Home Improvement Fair**,

and by holding our 2nd **Annual Neighborhood Garage Sale**. In fact, I am writing this as I tend to my driveway covered with my household's "Antiquity and Selected Junque." (A couple of dozen nice people have dropped by so far, and a few have actually paid *me* to take my junk away! Such a deal!)

And, finally, our neighborhood is changing. As our property values have skyrocketed over the last couple of years, old friends are taking advantage of that and moving away, and new neighbors are moving in. VEP membership this year has held steady. We lost a number of members from last year, but have had as many new members join.

Although we will not have a regular membership meeting again until September, the Board will continue to conduct business as usual over the summer. Our membership asked us to consider revisions to our **Constitution and By-laws** over the summer and to take a formal position on CalPine's **Metcalf Energy Center**.

We will also keep a diligent watch for any neighborhood issues that need to be addressed and will keep you informed as needed through email, direct mail, and leaflets.

I am excited about the things that we have accomplished over the last year, and am looking forward to serving my third (and final) term as president of this outstanding organization.

Computer corner

-Bob Aquino

I thought that I'd dust off an old theme and discuss some issues discussed in a previous column. One of the reasons that *WordPerfect* competed so effectively against Microsoft *Word* for a long time is that WordPerfect had an excellent set of keyboard codes that enabled a skillful typist to perform many tasks other than just entering text into the system. Formatting, correction, and navigation, all could be performed without the typist's fingers ever leaving the keyboard.

When Windows versions of word processors came out, people felt it was necessary to use the mouse to do many of these tasks, primarily because the mouse was now available and this was actually what Windows was all about.

In fact, most Windows programs have a rich set of hot keys that enabled that same skillful typist to perform an even better job, again without fingers having to leave the keyboard.

I stand back in admiration of skillful typists since I'm strictly a two-finger man and I am currently dictating this column into my computer using a voice recognition software package. At any rate, I thought would be interesting to review again the sort of things that can be done with the use of hot keys.

I'll go over some important hot keys in Microsoft *Word*, since it is the most commonly used word processor in the world. Then I'll add a few hot keys for *Excel* for those of you who are spreadsheet fans--and I am.

All this information can be found in the help menu. In fact, you can print out a list of all of the assigned hot keys for any Microsoft applications. Just go to the help menu, open up the index, and type in "hot_key", and press the search button. There are a number of topics listed, and you will find a topic labeled "print a list of shortcut keys". But be warned, with *Excel* it's a 33-page long list! *Word* has a somewhat more manageable list that is only eight pages long.

None of these hot keys represent a unique way of performing a task. Like most Windows applications there are multiple ways of doing same job but, to the efficient typist, speed is critical and keeping fingers on the keyboard is a major concern.

Most Windows users know that the drop-down menus such as *File*, *Edit*, and *View* can be accessed by pressing a cold letter such as F, E, or V. The astute user will also have noticed that when the menus drop-down, adjacent to the commands on the right there are control commands, such as *CTRL+p* for print or *CTRL+s* for save. Getting used to these keys can save considerable time, particularly in complicated editing jobs. It takes a while, but you'll find that many of these codes become second-nature if they are used frequently enough.

Then there are those codes that are used to modify an already understood function. For example, if anywhere in the text, if you press the *Home* key, your cursor will move to the beginning of the line. If however, you press *CTRL+home*, the cursor will move to the beginning of the document. In the same way, pressing *end* brings you to the end of the line, and *CTRL+end* would bring your cursor to the end of the document.

Any navigation key used in association with the *Shift* key will highlight area. For example, if your cursor is in the middle of a document and you press *CTRL+SHIFT+home*, the entire document will be highlighted from its beginning to the position of the cursor when the command was given.

The *Backspace* and *Delete* functions are also modified by the use of the *Control* key. The *Backspace* key will delete the character immediately to the right of the cursor. *CTRL+backspace* delete the word to the right of the cursor. Similarly, the *Delete* key and *CTRL+delete* will remove the letter or the word to the left of the cursor respectively.

Highlighting lines and words is facilitated by the use of the arrow keys along with the *Shift* key. *SHIFT+up* arrow will highlight the line above the cursor. *CTRL+SHIFT+arrow* will highlight all the material from the cursor to the beginning of the paragraph.

If you want to change the font size in existing highlighted text, simply use *CTRL+SHIFT+<* to make a text smaller, or *CTRL+SHIFT+>* to make it larger. *CTRL+SHIFT+a* will change the case of the letters from lowercase to uppercase. *CTRL+u* will cause text be underlined, and pretty obviously *CTRL+b* will cause text be bold.

Many of the keys in *Excel* have to do with navigation around a spreadsheet, since this is a much more complicated task than getting around in a word processor. For example, the *End* key, when associated with the arrow keys, will move to the end of a block of data.

These moves are somewhat different than the moves we've already talked about. The procedure here is to press the end key and then an arrow. For example, if you are on the top of a column of numbers and press *End* and then the down arrow, the cursor will move to the first blank cell in the column. If there is more data somewhere below that cell and you again press *End* and then down arrow, the cursor will move to the first cell containing data. Pressing *CTRL+PgDn* will cause the cursor to move to the next sheet in your work book. Similarly, *CTRL+PgUp* will go to the previous page. Curiously, *ALT+PgDn* moves the screen one screen to the right and *ALT+PgUp* moves one screen to the left.

You can even create your own customized hot keys for repetitive tasks that you might find yourself doing. It's fairly simple and instructions can be found in the help menu, again under hot keys.

If you spend a lot of time in front of a computer, you'll find that the use of hot keys is well worth the effort expended in learning them.

Channel 5 interference problem

-Greg West

We have a VEP member and neighbor on Churchill Park Drive that steadfastly refuses to be extorted by the cable company for TV reception. Her problem is that anywhere from 3 days to a week once every few weeks somebody in her neighborhood is interfering with the signal for Channel 5.

An engineer at Channel 5 suggested that the interference probably has to do with a grounding problem in a piece of electronic equipment somewhere in the neighborhood. The frequency and duration of the problem suggests that it may be the home burglar alarm of someone that travels frequently. The last occurrence began on April 27 and has been going on for 5 days as of this writing.

Please be aware that poorly grounded electronic equipment can emit high frequency signals that can interfere with TV and radio reception. And, if you live in the neighborhood around Churchill Park Drive and travel frequently,

please double check the connections of your home alarm system.

Tomatoes you'll be proud of

-John Marks, VEP's Green Gardener

Growing tomato plants is easy, and the rewards are well worth the effort. Nothing beats your own vine-ripened beauties. You'll probably wish you had planted more.

Experiment first with just a few plants; each one can produce 10 to 15 pounds of fruit. To get the best results with the least effort, purchase seedlings from a local nursery at planting time—after the last expected frost. Choose plants with straight, stocky stems about 6- to 10-in. tall.

Plan to plant no later than the end of May, and expect the plant to set blossoms only after the night time temperature stays above 55 degrees. Plant tomatoes in well-drained soil where they will receive sun all day long. When planting, work a complete fertilizer, such as 5-10-10 or 5-20-20, into the upper 6 inches of soil, following package directions. Space plants 24 to 36 inches apart. Remove the plant from its container, pinch off the lower leaves and set it in a deep planting hole so the roots and stem are buried up to the first set of leaves. Roots will form along the buried portion of the stem, resulting in a strong plant.

Stake or cage the plant soon after planting so as not to disturb the developing roots later. Tie plants to their support as they grow. As the plants gain in height, pinch off the lower branches; these are called bleeders because they suck moisture and nutrients from the main plant, but produce nothing. A well-pruned tomato plant will be stronger and more productive.

Water through the entire growing season to keep the soil moist. Fertilize regularly. Depending on variety, you can expect red, ripe tomatoes as soon as six weeks after planting.

****Composting Classes****

The county of Santa Clara offers free composting classes. Their schedule for San Jose is: May 13 and June 10, 10am to noon. To register and get directions, call 299-4147, or go to www.reducewaste.org.

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.

A place called home: Meaning changed?

-Dena Amoruso ()*

It's not enough to say that American homebuilders must build better homes and better neighborhoods these days. And it's not enough to churn out floor plans based on the "Beaver Cleaver" concept of a working dad, stay-at-home-mom, and 2.5 kids. Homebuilders are beginning to take the new versions of the American family and study them as never before, in order to determine appeal to a diverse consumer base. One of the most compelling reasons for this may be what, in essence, the American home is now being used for--one, or even two telecommuting parents, a national wellspring of home-based businesses, home schooling, or the proverbial empty nest.

It's safe to say that the tradition of self-determination in this country has produced a challenge not only to the IRS, but also to homebuilders trying to accommodate the new and many uses of the American home. The home merely as the domain for eating, sleeping, family discourse and holiday celebrations is fast becoming an anomaly. Says Sherry Ahrentzen, in a recent BUILDER magazine article, "Technology allows us to shop at home via mail-order catalogs, cable television, and the Web. We watch movies off our satellite dishes and VCRs. And major industries such as health care and insurance are delivering their services into the home."

There has been an undercurrent of new freedoms that has quietly changed the mosaic of American domestic life. The disabled can now exercise their option to live independently, instead of being relegated to care facilities. Kids and parents can break free of the traditional classroom environment by taking part in a revolution of home schooling options, making the "world" their classroom. And the elderly are, as never before, living and dying in their own

homes in greater numbers and with greater dignity, due to the trend towards home health care and a public aversion to institutionalization.

According to 1997 U.S. Department of Labor statistics, 23.3 million persons were engaged in some form of work at home, with 6.5 million of them making their livelihoods there. Women were among the first to exercise this option as women's lib later on found many feeling maternally inadequate while shuffling children into full time day care. Even when earning the bacon at home saw telecommuting females earn as much, if not more than they did in 9-to-5 office cubicles, it took a while for the label tables to turn from "housewife" to "employed" and give them the respect that they deserved for their efforts. Now, entire industries that promote and support home-based businesses have emerged. The Internet has made entrepreneurs of a vast number of individuals, tapping into time-strapped consumer needs to let their fingers do the tapping.

Where does all of this leave the American homebuilder, and are they up to the challenge? Shifts have been made in home design to accommodate the changing meanings of home life, just as the automobile industry has seen its role evolve when designing cars for better comfort, more fuel efficiency, or simply to become rolling "living rooms" (now with back seat TV monitors) for soccer-weary parents.

American homebuilders are recognizing some basic design requirements in all this, offering more high-tech wiring in new homes, reconfiguring the location and layout of the home office. They have determined that the new home office deserves its own private entry, is best located in the front of the home (especially if clients will be entering the home) overlooking entry ways or courtyards for security reasons, and should be designed as to be off-limits to other family members while business is being conducted.

Other new uses are seeing architects go back to the drawing boards as well. For home schooling families, options such as built-in study areas outside of traditional bedroom spaces are becoming popular, with their own networked computers and open, creative environments. Empty nesters are dispensing with formal living rooms and opting instead, for great rooms and spacious kitchens, even in smaller, scaled-down homes. Easy access fixtures, appliances, and cabinetry are available to the disabled or elderly, and builders have been required for some time to offer design-access options, such as wider doorways and hallways, to accommodate the wheelchair-bound.

It is always amazing to note how, even with the incredible technology we have seen enter our lives, we gravitate towards "home" in all we do. Even with the fabric of domestic life changing in so many ways, we tend to want what is simplest after all. We gravitate towards pedestrian style communities, and wish to de-emphasize views of cars and garages. We want more open spaces for our kids and our-

selves to flex minds, bodies, and spirits. We would rather build "around" nature rather than force nature to accommodate to our selfish needs. And we want homebuilders to take the trappings of domestic life and design well-thought-out atmospheres for comfort and growth. Fortunately for us, American homebuilders are up to the task as never before.

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

Neighborhood News

-City Councilmember Pat Dando

I have been working for some time to improve the City's efforts to reduce speeding and traffic in our neighborhoods. The city council just adopted a new *Traffic Calming Policy for Residential Neighborhoods*. This program directs city staff to be proactive in working with residents to determine

the traffic controls needed in their neighborhoods, such as stop signs, crosswalks, photo radar, speed signs, traffic circles, or speed bumps.

It appears likely that we will include additional funds in the next city budget for additional photo radar and traffic enforcement officers.

At my request, San Jose's first high-tech crosswalk was installed across McAbee Road at Golden Oak Way. When someone enters the crosswalk, sensors automatically trigger flashing lights embedded in the road pavement to alert drivers. I believe that this statewide pilot project will prove successful and we will install more high-tech crosswalks throughout San Jose.

Highway 87 Is Moving Forward

The design for the 85/87 interchange is nearly 50% complete and construction is scheduled to begin next summer. Construction is expected to take two years and should be completed by the summer of 2003. A third lane on 87 will be added in each direction between Highway 85 and Interstate 280.

The new Highway 87 six-lane freeway from Coleman to US 101 is now under construction and scheduled for completion at the end of 2003. For more information about the Route 87 project visit www.route87.org.

Community Policing Center

The new Community Policing Center (CPC) has been busy serving the residents of the Almaden, Blossom Valley, and Santa Teresa. Many parents have had their children fingerprinted. Numerous residents have stopped by to view the Meagan's Law sex offender CD-Rom and talk with police officers. The Center also has a conference room available for community use.

Come visit the CPC located at 947 Blossom Hill Road, next to Michaels at Westfield Shoppingtown-Oakridge. It is

open 10am to 3pm Monday, Wednesday and Friday; 4 to 9 pm Tuesday and Thursday; and 10am to 6pm Saturday.

Upcoming Park Improvements for Blossom Valley

I have set aside funds in the parks budget to make improvements at two locations in the VEP Neighborhood. New features and landscaping will be added to Vista Park. New turf and walkways will be added to Meadows Park.

New Teen Center Coming Soon

The Teen Advisory Committee has been working diligently on the New Teen Center. Thanks to their hard work, construction will begin at Bret Harte Middle School this summer. The committee is currently working on program ideas, fundraising, and on ways to market the new center, which will open in fall 2000.

Creek Trail to Extend Farther North

One of my goals has been the completion of the Los Alamitos/Guadalupe Creek Trail system. The trail is now completely paved from Harry Road to Coleman Road. By mid-summer, the trail will be paved from Coleman Road to Blossom Hill Road. Eventually, the creek trail in Almaden will continue through Blossom Valley to downtown and extend 25 miles to the Bay.

Young Child Advisory Committee (YCAC)

YCAC has been meeting for the past two months. Our discussions have focused on how to increase early childhood classes for parents and toddlers in our community. I have asked the community center staff to conduct a search for additional teachers. I am hopeful that we will have two or three new teachers for the fall semester to meet the growing need.

Computer Classes for Seniors

This month the city council will approve a contract between the City of San Jose and Senior Net to provide computer classes at the Almaden and Cypress Community Centers. Senior Net provides teaching materials and training workshops for the volunteer instructors. Most of the classes are focused on the use of the Internet and e-mail. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact Torie at (408) 277-5748.

National River Clean-Up Day

Volunteers are needed to assist with *National River Cleanup Day* from 9am to noon on Saturday May 20. San José will be hosting twelve clean-up sites, two of which are in District 10. Volunteers are asked to meet at the entrance to Almaden Quicksilver Park at Almaden Road and Bertram, or at the Water District Headquarters at 5750 Almaden Expressway. Please wear long pants, sturdy shoes, gloves and sunscreen.

Tune In To City Council Meetings from Home or Work

Live coverage of San José City Council meetings is now available on cable channel 37A. Additionally, web users can listen to the meetings from their desktops via streaming audio on the city's webpage (www.ci.san-jose.ca.us).

The council meets every Tuesday at 1:30pm and at 7pm on the first and third Tuesday of every month. Additionally, meetings will be rebroadcast at 7pm on Thursdays and again at 10am on Saturdays. Channel 37A will also provide viewers with information about meeting schedules, city services, and special events.

If you would like information about any of the events or organizations listed above, or if you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, do not hesitate to contact me at (408) 277-5251. I can also be reached via e-mail at pat.dando@ci.sj.ca.us. Please take some time to visit my website at:

www.ci.sanjose.ca.us/council/dist10/dist10.html.

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

EDGE-TRIMMER for sale: Like new. 1-year old Yard-Man. 3.5 HP gas powered. New belt and blades. \$40, OBO. Call Dave @ 578-6428.

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.

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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.