

VEP MEETING

7:30 P.M. TUESDAY
NOVEMBER 28, 2000

GUNDERSON HIGH SCHOOL
* FACULTY LOUNGE *

AGENDA

* VISTA and MEADOWS PARKS *
(San Jose Parks & Recreation presentation.)

* VEP 2001 Membership Dues *

* VEP's Constitution & By-Laws *
(Discuss proposed changes.)

* Executive Board Holiday Dinner *
(Approval of appropriation.)

* *Your* Issues and Concerns *

Everyone is welcome. Invite your neighbors!

VEP's November meeting

-Greg West, VEP President

Our November meeting promises to be interesting and invigorating. **Todd Capurso** from the City of San Jose Parks Department will briefly update us on Meadows Park and progress of the next phase of Vista Park development. He may also be able to tell us something about the impact of *Measure P* on park plans in our community. Todd plans a return visit to review Vista Park plans in detail at a VEP meeting shortly after the first of the year.

In addition, we need to consider dues for the coming year. We will also consider funding the annual Board Holiday Dinner. And, we will begin the discussion of our proposed Constitution and By-laws changes. This discussion has been a long time in coming!

So, please mark your calendar and plan to attend our November 28th meeting—and bring a neighbor!

Neighborhood developments

- Greg West & Dave Fadness

? Lester Property - The San Jose Planning Commission approved a General Plan Transportation Diagram change removing extensions of Vista Park Drive and Chynoweth Avenue through the Lester property. A final decision by the city council is scheduled for November 21st. We will update the GP change status at our November 28th meeting.

? Vista Park Drive and Capitol - The Planning Commission also approved a GP change to allow high-density development on the northeast corner of Vista Park Drive and Capitol (currently a golf driving range).

? Vistapark/Branham Lane – The walnut grove on the corner of Vistapark Drive and Branham Lane will soon be de-

veloped. Its owner is now seeking bids from builders for small-lot, single-family homes there. We anticipate on the order of 80 units in a project that resembles the one recently finished by Kaufman & Broad at Pearl and Branham. VEP looks forward to working with the builder in creating a sensitive interface with existing homes backing up against that property.

Gunderson campus clean-up

VEP thanks the volunteers who worked at Gunderson's *Cleanin' Up the Place Day* on November 18th. We thank VEPers **Jeri** and **Walter Arstingstall**, **Kevin Smith**, **Kamlesh** and **Akshay Amin**, and **Greg** and **Robin West** for their efforts in Gunderson's campus clean up.

Sidewalk repairs

-Bob Aquino

My wife and I walk around our neighborhood a good deal, so we are sensitive to the quality of the sidewalks. I have to say that they have distinctly not been up to par over the years. We have tripped over rising blocks of pavement, and have seen weeds growing in the cracks.

However, the situation has improved markedly over the past couple of years. Part of the trouble was that the city policy formerly made it the homeowner's financial responsibility to repair the public sidewalk in front of his house. That policy has changed. The city will now accept the responsibility to pay for those repairs.

That's good news, but before you start celebrating, read the following carefully.

If there is a problem with the sidewalk in front of your house, you can call the sidewalk repair line at 277-2752. That will cause an inspector to come out and inspect its condition. They are badly backlogged (possibly the result of too-long deferred sidewalk maintenance) so it might take 3 or 4 months. If the inspector certifies that repairs are required, what happens next depends on the nature of the repairs.

For uneven blocks, where it is possible to grind the pavement so that the trip hazard is removed, the city will send out a crew to do the job. However, if repaving is required, the city will give the homeowner a list of contractors who will do the repairs for an agreed-upon price fixed by the city. The homeowner then pays the contractor and informs the city, which sends out an inspector to approve the work done. The homeowner is then reimbursed by the city.

So, as the situation stands, the homeowner fronts the repair money to the city. It sounds workable, but how satisfactory the system is depends on how long it takes to send out a final inspector and a check to the homeowner. Reports we've heard to date are very positive.

Fall fundamentals: Composting

-John Marks, VEP's Green Gardener

What! You still don't have a compost receptacle or pile? You can learn how to compost yard waste and food scraps,

and get a schedule of free how-to composting classes through the Master Composter's program. Just call 299-4147. We'll have some literature on this topic at our November VEP meeting.

I routinely throw grapefruit and orange peelings, coffee grounds, onion tops, wilted greens, banana peels, apple cores, carrot peelings, over-ripe fruit, radish tops, celery tops, and trimmings from most meal preparations into a plastic corner box that sits in our sink. That gets carried to the compost in the yard, which is no more than 18-in. square and 2-ft tall with a lid. You can get attractive compost boxes from Orchards. Give it some thought!

The National Gardening Association web site, www.garden.org is full of general information for gardeners. One of its most useful features is a localized report. There are also how-to basics, on-line courses, a horticultural dictionary and plant name finder, events calendar, message board, seed swap and links to a children's gardening site. You can search the site's library for articles.

Yes, it's time to get the ladders out and peer into the rain gutters. There, you'll find stray tennis balls, toys, and worst of all, a bunch of rotting leaves. Not only will they rust out the gutters, but also render the down spouts useless. So plan to get up there on a sunny Saturday and clear them out.

The leaves that fall on the ground can be tossed into the compost pile, too. Or you can use the lazy gardener's method by raking them into garden beds and use them to cover exposed soil. The leaves will break down over the winter and turn into rich garden humus by spring.

Cool-season vegetables to plant included broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, peas, radishes, green onions, beets and lettuce. Plant spring-flowering bulbs, including daffodils, tulips, hyacinths and crocus now.

If the recent heat wave sizzled your bougainvillea, don't over-react and take it out. The branches and roots are still healthy and will have new growth, more leaves, and dazzling flowers next spring.

Rose Lovers Take Note: Barbara Milo Ohrbach's 16th book on roses, "Roses for the Scented Room: Beautiful Ideas for Entertaining, Gift-Giving and the Home" (Clarkson Potter, \$25) is now available. This lavishly photographed book covers everything from the history of the rose to selecting the best varieties and decorating with roses.

Among her helpful suggestions in buying, gathering, conditioning and arranging roses include: Pick roses from the garden in the early morning when their scent is strongest; revive drooping roses by inserting a straight pin in the stem to perk up droopy rose heads.

Interesting recipes include rose-petal vinegar, jasmine rose tea, rose cuticle cream and rose-petal splash and fabric wash. There is also a source list for books, suppliers, catalogs, organizations and associations.

Here's a cool website: Log-on to www.garden.com to buy seeds, plants, tools and other products at bargain prices. You can ask questions of the garden doctor, design a gar-

den with a landscape planner, or chat with other gardeners, 24-hours a day. You can also send an orchid to your mom (or wife), use the plant finder to identify or locate a plant, tour the test gardens, find out what climatic zone you live in, and keep an online garden notebook. Give it a try!

November Reminders

Sprinkle some color into your winter garden, if you're not growing vegetables this year. Sow wildflower seeds, and the winter rains will water them for you. You could also plant winter flowers, such as pansies, stock, snapdragons, and primrose. I've got some cosmos that keep re-seeding themselves in a neglected former tree hole in the driveway; they grow tall and beautiful, a thing of beauty to behold every day when I leave and return.

As for veggies, plant those snow peas, broccoli, chard, etc.

Continue to clip spent roses off the plants. You can expect more roses through December, even if the weather is frosty. But hold off on serious rose pruning until January.

President's Corner

-Greg West, VEP President

As we survive a constitutional crisis brought on by the recent Presidential elections, we are about to consider our first changes to the VEP Constitution and By-laws (C&BLs) in more than 15 years. This is something that has been a goal for the organization for the last couple of years, and we are finally getting to it.

First I would like to quickly explain the process that we are going through to affect the changes. And then I would like to explain the reasoning for some of the changes that the Executive Board is recommending.

According to our current C&BLs, the process for amending the Constitution is different from that of the By-laws. The Constitution may be amended by a majority vote of members present at a regular meeting, provided that the amendment has been approved by a two-thirds majority of the executive board. A By-laws amendment, on the other hand, must be approved by two-thirds of the members present at a regular meeting. As always, members must be notified at least two days before the regular meeting in both cases.

Since the changes that the board is forwarding to the membership are far-reaching, we want to make sure that they are well considered. The board began the process of reviewing the C&BLs in June. We published an article, "Review of VEP Constitution and By-laws" in the June issue of the VEP News and invited our membership to participate in the review process. The current C&BLs were posted on our web site along with a working copy of C&BL revisions (<http://sites.netscape.net/vephoa>) for membership review and comment. We notified our email distribution list of the postings. We have gotten some good feedback.

Even as this is being written, board members are fine tuning the wording of the proposal that we will bring to you at this month's meeting to begin discussions of the proposal.

We plan to continue the discussion and vote on the changes at our January, 2001 meeting.

Dave Noel summarized the changes (see Dave's article in this issue), but I would like to touch on a couple of the major changes.

The most notable change is in our organization's name. We are proposing that we change our name from VEP Homeowners' Association to VEP *Community* Association. We have been more commonly known as VEP for more than 30 years, and the term "VEP" is our organization's brand name. However, we are really not a "homeowners' association" although most, if not all, of our members are homeowners. Since we call ourselves a "homeowners' association", people outside of our organization think that membership in our organization is mandatory, that we extract hundreds of dollars per year in dues from each members under threat of property lien, that we have codes, covenants and restrictions over neighborhood properties, and that we have common property, such as a club house or a pool.

As you know, none of these things are true of VEP. We are, more accurately, a community association in that we are a group of people with common interests, voluntarily banded together in association for the good of our community.

Although we have a well-defined membership area, we are proposing that we change the membership requirements to allow all those that have an interest in issues affecting our neighborhoods. This change recognizes our common practice of being lax in strict adherence to our membership requirements. We currently have many members from outside our membership area. We have even had presidents from outside of our defined membership area, as is our current Vice President.

We are also better defining and clarifying the purpose of the organization. We are including terms like physical and social improvement, volunteerism, civic involvement, and community preservation in the statement of our purpose.

A distinction is being drawn between members on our executive board--between the current elected officers, and the past presidents, who remain board members for as long as they maintain membership in VEP.

Some new wording and procedures are being proposed to ensure that the currently elected officers have the responsibility and authority to attend to the business of the organization, with the past presidents in a strong advise and consent role.

We are clarifying the process for recall of an officer, and closing a loophole that, in effect, allows the recall of an officer only by another officer.

In financial matters, we are clarifying the process by which dues are set and eliminating the proration of dues. Also proposed is an increase in the spending authority of the President (up from \$50 to \$200) and the Executive Board (up from \$100 to \$500) without prior approval of the membership, as long as no executive board member directly benefits from the spending. Original amounts were estab-

lished in our charter in 1969, so these changes simply recognize today's increased costs.

Although the rules for nominating candidates for our annual *VEP Community Service Award* have been brought up for discussion from time to time at our meetings, the Board discussed this issue at length and is not recommending any substantial change.

Copies of the C&BLs and proposed changes are available to any member for the asking. Please contact any officer to get a copy, or download the documents from our web site. I look forward to discussing these changes with you at our November and January meetings.

Seasonal housework: A winter checklist

-Brian Bonnifield

You're probably thinking that home maintenance takes a vacation in winter, right? Wrong!

For the privilege of owning your own home, one of your rewards is the need for continual vigilance over its condition. In return, you'll keep warm and dry this winter, and be ahead of the game if you're thinking about putting your home on the market in the spring.

Here are a few items that could be included on any winter maintenance checklist:

Prepare for rain: Make sure that your home is watertight around windows, doors, on the roof and under the house around the foundation.

Make sure that any underground drainage system or sump pump operates properly; repair or replace it if necessary. If you have any roof leaks, hire a professional to handle the work unless you are an experienced do-it-yourselfer.

Check for water leaks: Check all visible pipes and plumbing fixtures, the dishwasher and the clothes washer for any leaks.

Check for air leaks: Caulk or install weather-stripping around doors and windows if they become the source of cold drafts.

Check smoke and carbon monoxide detectors: Replace batteries or entire units if needed. If you don't have a fire extinguisher, get one. Make sure any fire extinguisher in the house is fully charged.

Clear drains and vents: Use a commercial drain-cleaning product or make your own from baking soda, white vinegar and boiling water and pour it down your drains. Change filters and check registers, ducts and vents for blockages and remove them.

Maintain appliances: Give these workhorses some well-deserved attention. Vacuum dust off your refrigerator's condenser coil and clean its drain pan. Give the interior of the refrigerator, including bins and shelves, a good cleaning with a light solution of soap and water (remember to turn off the refrigerator first).

Clean the food filters in your dishwasher and make sure that the spray arm is operating properly. Clean cook tops and ovens thoroughly. If you have a kitchen exhaust fan, remove the filter and clean it according to manufacturer's instructions. In the laundry room, make sure the dryer vent is clear.

Repair and refinish: Spend time indoors on such inside projects as refinishing furniture or repairing woodwork. Do any such work only in well-ventilated areas and away from furnace or water-heater pilot lights.

Plan spring projects: Now's the time to draw out a garden plan. Plan your budget and your timetable, and then call a few contractors to arrange for bids, work out the details, and schedule the projects for spring.

Time To Update VEP Constitution & By-Laws

-David Noel, VEP Vice-President

The VEP executive committee is recommending several amendments to the VEP Constitution and By-Laws to bring them up to date. Our charter documents were last amended in 1988. See the VEP website or contact a VEP officer for the full text of these documents with the proposed changes clearly marked. We will discuss these changes in our November meeting with the goal of adopting a final version at our January 2001 meeting.

To facilitate the discussion and review process, I have summarized the proposed changes below.

1. Change our name from VEP Homeowners Association to VEP *Community* Association. This would differentiate our organization from other homeowners associations, such as condominium homeowners associations, that have Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CC&Rs), shared property, and legal restrictions on property improvements.
2. Augment our purpose statement to emphasize our desires to promote volunteerism, civic involvement, and neighborhood preservation.
3. Expand membership eligibility to include households sharing a common interest with homes in our defined boundaries. Include a map of our boundaries to supplement the list of eligible housing sub-divisions.
4. Clarify the officer recall procedure. Allow distribution of our confidential membership list to a member initiating the recall of an officer, for the purposes of collecting signatures (15% of membership is required), and to a disinterested party for the purpose of certifying those signatures. This closes a loophole that effectively allows the recall of an officer only by another officer.
5. Establish a minimum requirement of six general membership meetings per year during which business of the organization may be conducted. Clarify that only general membership meetings (not executive board meetings) require pre-announcement to the membership.

6. Specify that the membership adopt a set of goals *and a budget* for the next year *within the first two general membership meetings after our Annual Meeting* in April.
7. Empower the executive board to act on behalf of the membership only if their actions are based upon, and consistent with the approved goals, purposes, and budget of the organization.
8. Eliminate the requirement for secret ballot elections for *uncontested* offices during yearly officer elections, and clarify that the term of office is one year.
9. Precisely define the role of past presidents as voting members of the Executive Board along with the current elected officers. A majority vote of the Executive Board would be required to approve an action, and at least three of the affirmative votes must be from currently elected officers. This would prevent past presidents from initiating an action against the will of the current elected officers, but it would give them the power to vote down an action proposed by the current elected officers that is inconsistent with the long-term good of the organization.
10. Officially allow officers to assist other officers with their specified duties.
11. Eliminate pro-rating of dues for members who join mid-year and, instead, consider new members that join and pay their dues on or after October 1st to be paid through the end of the next year.
12. Precisely define the responsibilities of the nominating committee: to identify qualified and interested members to serve on the executive committee for the following year.
13. Increase the out-of-budget spending authority of the president from \$50 to \$100, and the spending authority of the executive board to from \$100 to \$500.
14. In the event that the Association is dissolved, donate all net funds to a *non-sectarian, community services* non-profit charity, *designated at that time by the executive board*.
15. Require that the funding source for the annual community service award be specified in the annual proposal to the membership.

Computer corner

-Bob Aquino, VEP's Computer Guru

I was going to fill everyone in on my new high speed Internet connection for this issue, but it didn't happen. Pac Bell told me that it would be installed last Tuesday, but lo and behold, an essential component was not available. Hence, I have no column material. Oh well, better luck next time.

As a fallback position, I thought I'd talk about the flurry of new processor speeds that are on the market. As you probably know, Intel and AMD have been engaged in a game of one-upsmanship regarding processor speeds. 1 GHz (gigahertz) processors that once had been the Holy Grail are now commonly found. I won't go into the elaborate dances that the vendors have gone through, my only

point here is to examine what it all means for the average home user.

On this score, the news is excellent! It's not that I believe that the average user can utilize, or even see the improvement that the additional speed can bring to the desktop. Far from it. I'd say that since the days of 500 MHz machines, the processor power has exceeded the needs of any of the common home user applications. In games, which are frequently the most demanding applications, the real action is in the video control chip, where the screen image is created.

So why do I say that the new processors are good news? Primarily, because it will drive the price of all other computers down. It's fairly simple. There is a certain price point at which manufacturers can sell a top-of-the-line computer. That's set by the demands of the market. So the new top-performing machine fits into that slot. That drives down the price of the previous king of the hill, which pushes down its predecessor, and so no all the way down to the bottom of the food chain. Of course some models, particularly at the bottom end, disappear off the market, but that's because they are non-competitive.

So, if you are considering a new box, when should you buy? If you can restrain yourself, wait until March or April next year. Intel (disclosure time: I no longer work there, so I have no insider insight) is letting it be known that 1.6 and possibly 2.0 GHz machines will be available after the first of the year. Also, there will be chipsets from third-party vendors for the chips that will use Double Data-rate Ram (DDR) Drams instead of the more expensive, and technically tricky Rambus Drams (RDR).

I hope in my next column to talk about my new connection. Until then, Happy Computing!

Jobs for young adults

-Dave Fadness

The San Jose Conservation Corps (SJCC) is a non-profit program that offers paid vocational training for young men and women between the ages of 18 and 27. SJCC training is available in landscaping, construction trades, recycling, park maintenance, computer skills, and forklift operation. The Corps pays interested participants \$6 to \$8 per hour and provides excellent benefits and educational opportunities. Here's a chance to earn money while learning job skills and earning a diploma.

For information or to apply, call (408) 918-1001. SJCC is located at 2650-A Senter Road in San Jose. Hours are 7:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday.

Bulletin Board Ads

SHAPE-UP FOR THE HOLIDAYS: Exercise equipment greatly "reduced." Health Walker, \$50.00. Cardio Glide, \$25.00. Call Jeanie @ 281-4158.

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.

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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.

The *flip* side...

The Washington Post recently published a contest for its readers in which they were asked to supply alternative meanings for various words. Following are some of the winning entries:

Abdicate (v.), to give up all hope of ever having a flat stomach.

Carcinoma (n.), a valley in California, notable for its heavy smog.

Esplanade (v.), to attempt an explanation while drunk.

Willy-nilly (adj.), impotent.

Flabbergasted (adj.), appalled over how much weight you have gained.

Negligent (adj.), a condition in which you absentmindedly answer the door in your nightie.

Lymph (v.), to walk with a lisp.

Coffee (n.), a person who is coughed upon.

Balderdash (n.), a rapidly receding hairline.

Testicle (n.), a humorous question on an exam.

Rectitude (n.), the formal demeanor assumed by a proctologist immediately before he examines you.

Oyster (n.), a person who sprinkles his conversation with Yiddish statements.

Circumvent(n.),the opening in the front of boxer shorts.

Frisbatarianism (n.), The belief that, when you die, your soul goes up on the roof and gets stuck there.

The Washington Post's Style Invitational also asked readers to take any word from the dictionary, alter it by adding, subtracting or changing one letter, then supply a new definition. Here are some recent winners:

Sarchasm: The gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the reader who doesn't get it.

Reintarnation: Coming back to life as a hillbilly.

Foreploy: Any misrepresentation about yourself for the purpose of obtaining sex.

Inoculate: To take coffee intravenously.

Karmageddon: It's like, when everybody is sending off all these really bad vibes, right? And then, like, the Earth explodes and it's like a serious bummer.

Glibido: All talk and no action.

Dopeler effect: The tendency of stupid ideas to seem smarter when they come at you rapidly.

Intaxication: Euphoria at getting a refund from the IRS, which lasts until you realize it was your money to start with.

And finally,

Ignoranus: A person who's both stupid and an a-hole.