

## VEP MEETING

7:30 P.M. TUESDAY  
JANUARY 23, 2001

GUNDERSON HIGH SCHOOL  
\* FACULTY LOUNGE \*

### AGENDA

#### \* San Jose Unified School District \*

Guest speaker to discuss and answer questions about Gunderson and other VEP Area schools.

#### \* VEP's Constitution & By-Laws \*

Discuss proposed changes.

#### \* Your Issues and Concerns \*

Everyone is welcome. Invite your neighbors!

### VEP's January meeting

*-Greg West, VEP President*

Schools are one of the most important assets to any community. In the wake of the tragedy involving Gunderson student John Soriano, we have invited San Jose Unified School District to our January meeting. As a result of this meeting, we expect that: The District will better understand our concerns; we will understand their longer term recovery plans; and we will better understand how we, as a neighborhood, can help.

In addition, because of the late delivery of our November VEP News, we have pushed out a consideration of proposed changes to the VEP Constitution and By-laws. Time permitting, we will begin to take this subject up at our meeting this month.

So, please mark your calendar and plan to our January 23rd meeting--and bring a neighbor!

### It's time to renew your VEP membership!

January is annual renewal month for VEP members. We've enclosed a remit envelope in this newsletter for your convenience. Fill it out, be sure to include your email address if you have one, enclose your check for \$15 made out to VEP, affix postage, and drop it in the mail. Easy as that!

By renewing your membership, you'll remain a part of the finest and most continuously proactive group of neighborhood volunteers in San Jose. You'll also get our monthly newsletter, the best way to keep abreast of our meetings and the events and issues that define our community and VEP's day-to-day involvement.

Importantly, your membership supports the efforts of our volunteer officers in their work to keep our neighborhoods safe and attractive. (None of our officers are paid for their work for VEP.) Part of your dues are used in our *Annual*

*Community Service Award* to graduating seniors at Gunderson and Andrew Hill High Schools, encouraging outstanding young people to establish a life-long pattern of voluntarism in our community. (This year we are rewarding each recipient with a \$1000 grant which they can use for college or occupational training.) The rest is used for mailing this newsletter, paying for insurance (needed in order to hold meetings at Gunderson), and for other minor costs of running VEP.

We need you. We appreciate your support. Fifteen dollars per family per year is a small cost to assure the best neighborhoods in San Jose. Please re-up today!

\* \* \*

**Be sure to fill out the survey questionnaire on page 9 and return it along with your VEP membership renewal.**

## Update to the Gunderson Community

-Bill Erlendson

Since last month's incident, the district has been very proactive in providing student and faculty support services by strengthening existing partnerships with the City of San Jose and local service agencies. Ongoing discussions are continually held to further the work of the partnerships and foster pride in our Gunderson community. Mayor Ron Gonzales and Councilwoman, Pat Dando, have ensured that the light rail stations will receive additional supervision. Over 16 agencies have been active since the incident to provide programs to students and faculty which include counseling, intervention, prevention, mediation and monitoring services. As we move forward in building our partnerships, it is extremely important that we continue to work together to nurture and build support for our schools.

Community support and involvement is the key ingredient to the success of our schools.

*[Ed. Note: Mr. Erlendson is Director of External Programs for the San Jose Unified School District. The "incident" he is referring to here is the recent stabbing death of Gunderson High School student John Soriano.]*

## Neighborhood developments

- Greg West & Dave Fadness

Vistapark @ Branham Lane: Summerhill Homes has purchased the 9.1 acre walnut grove on the southwest corner of Vistapark Drive and Branham Lane. They plan to build either 81 or 83 two-story single-family residences there in a project resembling in density the one recently built by Kaufman & Broad at Pearl and Branham. Summerhill is estimating a price range starting in the low \$700-thousands for homes of 1800 to 2100 square feet.

VEP supported the General Plan change for this property from commercial to medium density residential (8 to 16 units per acre), under the condition that the density not exceed 12 units per acre. The proposed project density will be approximately 8.4 units per gross acre (12 units per net acre). Our surrounding neighborhood density is 6 units per gross acre.

Neighbors of the site met with Summerhill on January 9<sup>th</sup> to discuss the builder's plans and to offer their feedback on two preliminary site development plans.

As currently envisioned, new homes will face onto Vistapark and Hyde Park Drives, but will back-up against Branham Lane where a sound wall and landscaping will be installed. Traffic access to homes in the interior of this project will be via streets off Branham and Vistapark. Discussions are ongoing with city traffic engineers as to whether left turns in/out of the site will be allowed on Branham Lane; VEP and neighbors expressed their preference for right-in/right-out only there. Except for driveways to individual homes, there will be no outlet onto Hyde Park Drive.

VEP will continue to work with our neighbors and Summerhill to optimize the interface between this development and existing homes and to minimize traffic impacts. We intend to have Summerhill attend our general meeting in April to summarize their final plans. Zoning and tentative map approvals will be sought this spring. Construction is targeted for early autumn.

Vistapark Drive @ Capitol Expressway: The Vista Oaks Driving Range is closing its doors for good on April 15th to make way for high density housing development.

Neighborhood Parks: At our November meeting, Todd Capurso from Parks and Rec outlined the rough schedule for the development of the next phases of Vista Park. He also gave us the good news that the funding for Vista Park and other neighborhood parks has increased due to the recently passed bond measure, and due to some local development. Todd will be invited back to our March meeting to share specific details and plans with us.

## Steinbeck Tours & Curriculum Information

*-Lynn M. Stacey, Principal*

Now is the time to choose a middle school for your child for the 2001-2002 school year. Steinbeck Middle School, located at 820 Steinbeck Drive, is offering tours for parents and students each Tuesday morning starting at 9:30 a.m. through February 13, 2001. These tours will provide information on Steinbeck's fine programs and school facilities.

A Curriculum Information night will be held on Wednesday, January 31. The evening will start at 6:30 p.m. with a pizza dinner. A presentation by Steinbeck teachers and students will complete the evening.

Please join us for a tour and/or the Curriculum Evening. For questions or directions call us at 535-6395. I look forward to meeting and speaking with you.

## Gunderson Student Recruitment

*-John Schilling*

As part of our recruitment efforts, we are conducting open house tours of the Gunderson High School campus. Interested parents are urged to attend. This is our schedule:

Jan 16<sup>th</sup>, 9:00am-10:30am (Bilingual Tour)

Jan 17<sup>th</sup>, 9:00am- 10:30 am

Jan 18<sup>th</sup>, 7:00pm-9:00pm (Evening Open House)

Jan 22-27<sup>th</sup>, No Tours (finals week)

Jan 31<sup>st</sup>, 9:00am-10:30am

Feb 7<sup>th</sup>, 9:00am-10:30am

Feb 14<sup>th</sup>, 9:00am-10:30am

If you have any questions please contact Mr. Schilling at (408) 535-6340 x141.

*[Ed. Note: John Schilling is in charge of AP Activities at Gunderson High School, 622 Gaundabert Lane, San Jose.]*

## January's chores

*-John Marks, VEP's Green Gardener*

Winter chores are upon us! Clean rain gutters. Leaves and other debris will hamper drainage and may promote rusting and roof damage. Use binoculars to inspect your roof from the ground. Make sure that water flows away from house at down spouts. Trim branches around the roof line to keep squirrels, roof rats (squirrels are just fur-covered rats), and other pesky animals off the roof. Inspect the crawl space under your home for water accumulation or excessive moisture after rain, as well as for indications of water damage on the subfloor and joists beneath your kitchen, laundry, and bathrooms. Clean condenser coils or fins beneath or behind your fridge.

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

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

## Lester property kept whole

*-Dave Fadness*

In case you missed it in our December NEWS, the San Jose City Council has unanimously approved a General Plan change that removes extensions of Vistapark Drive and Chynoweth Avenue across the Lester property. Extending those two streets would have increased traffic through our neighborhoods and divided Lester's property into smaller, less suitable areas for the regional park he hopes some day to have built there. Our Councilwoman **Pat Dando** introduced this change in VEP's behalf, then worked hard to shepherd it through the approval process.

As a measure of Dando's effectiveness, this important change was approved unanimously by the City Planning Commission. It then appeared on the City Council's con-

sent calendar for routine approval without debate. Hats off to Pat Dando!

In addition to protecting Mr. Lester's property for a future park, our own properties will now be protected against the major flows of traffic that those two thoroughfares would have brought through our neighborhoods.

## President's Corner

*-Greg West, VEP President*

Although the Columbine High School tragedy is probably the most well-known incident of school students tragically taking the lives of class mates, Columbine is not an isolated occurrence. More recent tragedies have happened in West Paduca, KY, Flint, MI, and now in our neighborhood in San Jose.

On November 29th of last year, a Gunderson High School junior, John Soriano, was stabbed to death shortly after school at the Ohlone/Chynoweth light rail station by a group of people including other Gunderson students during a confrontation. The stabbing occurred in broad daylight and in front of witnesses. All but two of the assailants have been captured and will stand trial as adults.

Tragedies like this shock us, cause us to be outraged, and make us seriously question our beliefs in our systems and institutions that are supposed to help us keep our children safe, especially around schools. But, it is clear that something in our society is breaking down, and the schools alone can't fix it.

On March 1, 2000, the San Jose Mercury News reported school crime rate statistics collected by state education officials showing increases in crime state wide in most categories and an increase in the property loss per student as a result of those crimes in 1999. These statistics indicate a higher probability of tragedies like this occurring and show that they can occur anywhere.

We need to understand what lead up to this tragedy involving Gunderson students and what might have prevented it so that we can address how to keep it from ever happening again.

VEP board members have met with the San Jose Unified School District (SJUSD) and the city to express our concerns as a neighborhood and to understand how we can be a part of the longer term solution and recovery plan. We will meet with the Valley Transportation Agency (VTA) as well. In addition, the school district has been invited to our January meeting as a community outreach effort.

But, we also need to understand the actions taken in the immediate aftermath of this tragedy to evaluate our belief in our institutions since the true test of character comes in the face of tragedy.

The Gunderson High School students, staff and administration and SJUSD could have reacted no better in the wake of this tragedy. In a letter dated December 5, 2000 responding to my December 4th letter to the School Board, our representative, Veronica Grijalva Lewis, outlined actions taken by the Gunderson administration and the district to address the immediate situation.

Their actions included the District sending a support team, including several counselors, to Gunderson the day after the tragedy to help students and staff deal with the tragedy. San Jose Police were called in to help SJUSD maintain campus security and student safety in the aftermath of this violent event. Several local agencies were called in to support the students, staff and administration, including the Center for Living with Dying, ACT, the Garder Family Care Corp., and Right Connection.

The students and administration organized and held a candle light vigil in memory of John Soriano two days after his death. Gunderson students, staff and administration, school board members, and top school district administrators, including Superintendent Linda Murray and Assistant Superintendent Jose Torres, attended John's viewing before his funeral to express condolences and support for John's family. Gunderson set up a memorial fund to benefit John's family and to help defray some of the expenses of losing a young family member (again, thanks to those of you that responded to our email calling for contributions to this fund).

As a result of all of these activities, no subsequent violence occurred, although there could have been racial undertones to the tragedy, and Gunderson is well on its way to recovery, at least in the short term. And, this, I believe, is an indication of the truly outstanding character of Gunderson High School.

## Computer corner

*-Bob Aquino, VEP's Computer Guru*

Well, Christmas is over, and it's time to think about what we can do with computers. In my last column, I told you I would keep you up-to-date on my new ISDN modem. Well, it's installed and running but not exactly as advertised.

But first I need to tell you a little tale about the telephone company...

When you install an ISDN, the telephone company has to come out and put in a box at your connection point to accommodate the digital line. The telephone company set up an appointment and I stayed home from work in order to be there when their installer came. The installer came at the appointed time, but it turned out that he didn't have one of the boxes to install in my house. None were available in the city.

So he checked out the lines and told me that they would have to schedule another date after they received the box. Several weeks passed until I got a response from the phone company telling me that the box was in. We scheduled a return time for the installer. At that time I was also told that, because they were not fully prepared on their original attempt, there would be no charge for installation. Since the charge for installation was \$150, that sound like a pretty good deal to me.

I had to be out-of-town on the date that they scheduled. However, the installation went according to plan and, when I returned to my house, the box was there and the line had been installed. With no small amount of fussing, fuming and an occasional expletive, I was up and running on ISDN

and had signed up for service (my existing ISP did not provide ISDN support).

Fast forward to December 26<sup>th</sup>. A colossal telephone bill is delivered to my mailbox. Perusing the bill, I note installation judges amounting to \$150. Calling the telephone company, I explained that my understanding that I would not be charged for installation because of the delay. Their customer service rep went off-line and came back confirming that I would not be charged; the \$150 installation fee would be credited on my next bill.

Next, I asked him about a charge of \$15 for voicemail, a service that I had never requested. He said that that service was requested by the long-distance carrier on my line. I would have to take it up with them. Four hours of busy signals later, I called a customer service representative at Pac Bell again and requested that the charge be taken off my bill, since I could not contact the long-distance carrier. This representative accommodated me and told me that I would have to tell the long-distance carrier what I had done to clear the records.

When I finally did get in touch with the long-distance carrier they referred me to yet another company for whom the billing was done. I got in touch of the voicemail company and they told me that the person who previously had the number had had voicemail service and they automatically billed it to the number. So, all told, they had extracted almost \$170 for the telephone bill in unwarranted charges. The moral of the story is to read your bills and follow-up to disagree with them.

Back to the ISDN modem: I have it running and I'm very pleased with the results relative to my old 56K modem. There are, however, a couple of wrinkles. First of all, the modem occasionally and spontaneously comes on. I have to keep an eye on the LEDs to make sure that I'm not running up the telephone bill. (Just as I typed that, the modem played its trick again!) Right now it's a minor irritation and I'm sure I'll figure out how to stop it, but it's not running perfectly right yet.

Also, the modem has a built-in LAN hub, which I have not been able to get to work properly. Altogether, although I can deal with these issues, I certainly wouldn't recommend this sort of equipment to the casual user. However, I think a pure ISDN modem with no fancy features might not be bad if an experienced person installed it and got it running. I'll keep you posted in future columns on future developments in the modem world as they occur.

By the way, I'm still using Dragon NaturallySpeaking to produce this column. More on that in future issues. In the meantime, happy computing!

## Chynoweth palm trees

Hats off to VEP volunteers **Ken Enney** and our mystery tree trimmer for pruning the palm trees in the median of Chynoweth Avenue. We also thank **Greg West** for watering trees recently planted to replace those damaged in automobile accidents. The trees look great and pedestrian visibility is much improved.

If you haven't seen the palm trees lately, go over there and take a look. It won't be long before Chynoweth will be one of the most stately streets in San Jose, thanks to VEP volunteers.

## Neighborhood Update

*-San Jose City Council Member Pat Dando*

I would like to take this opportunity to bring you up to date on activities and events in District 10.

### Neighborhood Traffic Calming Update

Neighborhood traffic is a huge concern of many District 10 residents and is my top priority. Recently, the Department of Streets and Traffic reorganized their department to become more proactive in handling neighborhood traffic issues.

As part of my commitment to traffic calming, I have begun a series of meetings with our community traffic engineer to address the needs and priorities of District 10. Three neighborhoods have been identified to participate in the initial community-wide traffic-calming program. I will schedule community meetings with these neighborhoods in the New Year.

I am pleased to announce that we have had great success in changing the process in which neighborhoods request and get stop signs. Our goal is to develop a new city-wide policy that creates a more flexible standard for installing residential stop signs. The Traffic Appeals Commission, to which I am the liaison, will be working on drafting this new policy with the intention of bringing it before the City Council for approval in early spring.

### Neighborhood Park News

Meadows Park: Following years of discussions, Meadows Park is moving forward with improvements. Meadows will receive new trees, lighting, turf installation, minor grading and drainage improvements and the installation of additional benches and picnic tables.

Vista Park: Plans are currently being drawn for the second phase of Vista Park. Once these drawings are completed in January, we will be sharing them with the VEP community.

### District 10 General Plan Changes

Each autumn, the City performs a review of its General Plan, the City's guide to land development to the year 2020. General Plan amendments for District 10 were:

\* Designating 2,365 acres of non-urban hillside south of Calero Park as open space to preserve San Jose's urban growth boundaries.

\* Removing the proposed arterial roadways on Vista Park Drive between Hyde Park Drive and Blossom Hill Road and on Chynoweth Avenue between Barron Park Drive and Colony Field Avenue which cross through 148-acres of open space. This change will aid in maintaining the integrity of the Lester Property which we changed to open space in the 1995 General Plan review. I am currently working to establish a park on this property.



\* Designating of 2.8 acres at Southeast corner of Almaden Expressway and Almaden Road for residential building.

\* Designating the existing Coyote-Alamitos Canal as a public trail.

#### Route 87 Expansion Continues

Construction on the new Highway 87 six-lane freeway from Taylor Street to US 101 continues and completion is scheduled for the end of 2003. This expansion will complete the corridor from South San Jose and ease congestion to and from San Jose Airport. The project will necessitate various road closures and detours.

A hotline has been established to keep commuters informed of any inconveniences this project may cause. Please call (408) 232-0229 for up-to-date information on detours. For more information on the Highway 87 expansion, please visit [www.route87.org](http://www.route87.org).

#### Downtown Update

Over the past three months, many projects have either been proposed or began construction in Downtown. Some of these projects include:

\* Adobe Systems announced plans to construct a third tower which will accommodate between 800 to 900 employees. Groundbreaking is tentatively scheduled for mid-2001 and construction will take approximately 18 months.

\* Groundbreaking for the San Jose Marriott Hotel took place on November 26th. The 506-room full service hotel directly connecting to the McEnery Convention Center is scheduled to open in January 2003.

\* Construction continues on the Fairmont expansion. When completed in 2002, it will include state-of-the art amenities in its 264 new rooms, 20,000 square feet of meeting space and 18,000 square feet for retail shops.

\* House of Blues signed a letter of intent with the Redevelopment Agency to open a nightclub in the former Woolworth Building next summer. The club will be able to serve 1000 people in its music hall and 450 patrons in its restaurant.

#### Your Help is Needed

For years I have worked to ensure the safety of our children as they walk to school. Crossing guards at busy intersections near schools are crucial to our children's safety. San Jose needs more crossing guards. Crossing guards work part-time during the normal school year providing for the safety of elementary and junior high school. Pay is a minimum of \$11.00 per hour plus a uniform allowance.

If you are interested in becoming a crossing guard, please contact Sgt. Bertelsen at (408) 277-4553.

#### Hats Off to Neighborhood Volunteers

I would like to give a special thank you to the volunteers who helped plant 4,800 daffodil bulbs at 14 neighborhood schools, 3 neighborhood parks, and the Almaden Community Center on November 4th. My office worked with San Jose Beautiful to provide the daffodil bulbs that were planted by community members in their respective neigh-

borhoods. Their hard work will pay-off in early spring when the daffodils bloom!

#### Volunteer Opportunity

As I mentioned in my Times article, I try to spend some time with the great volunteers at the Unicorn Thrift Store located at 1181 Redmond Avenue. Proceeds from this shop benefit Eastfield Ming Quong, which provides mental health services for children and their families. I hope you will join me and others who work to keep the store operating year-round. You can help by making donations of your unwanted clothing and household goods or by shopping at their store.

#### Tobacco Settlement Funds

I am very pleased to report that, on December 12th the Council voted unanimously to fund a number of great programs through the Healthy Neighborhoods Venture Fund (HNVF). As you may remember, the City will receive an estimated \$10,000,000 a year over the next 25 years from the national settlement with tobacco companies. There was a great deal of community input regarding the guidelines for appropriating these funds. As a result of four community public hearings, the Council determined three areas of need: Anti-Tobacco/Health, Senior Services and Education/Health.

My Colleagues and I made a promise to the residents of San Jose, that before year end we would distribute this money to help meet the needs of our community. We have kept that promise.

We are providing \$1,004,418 for Anti-Tobacco/Health, \$1,521,232 for Senior Services and \$4,167,544 for Education/Health in the first round of funding. I recommended that we include a yearly review of the programs we funded to insure that they are in fact meeting the needs of the community in an effective manner. This will keep the City accountable for the use of these funds.

Among the exceptional programs we will be funding are:

- \* Children's Health Initiative, which will provide Health Insurance for the children of San Jose.
- \* The Tooth Mobile, which offers free Dental care in the Community.
- \* The Collaborative Anti-tobacco Program, which provides anti-tobacco education to school children.
- \* Respite, Research for Alzheimer's Disease, which combines childcare with Senior activities, the only program of its kind in the County.
- \* Senior Legal Services and Nutrition Programs (District 10 included).
- \* Boys and Girls Club Programs (District 10 included).

Through the funds we have given both new and old programs an opportunity to better address the multiple needs of San Jose's residents.

#### Tune In To City Council Meetings

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 from the City's web page at <http://www.ci.san-jose.ca.us>.

The Council meets every Tuesday at 1:30 PM and on the first and third Tuesday of every month at 7:00 pm. Addi-

tionally, meetings will be rebroadcast at 7:00 PM on Thursdays and again at 10:00 AM on Saturdays.

Channel 37A will also provide viewers with information about meeting schedules, city services, and special events.

If you would like further information on the items discussed in this update or to confirm the dates, times, & locations of the events listed, please contact my office at (408) 277-5251 or e-mail me at [pat.dando@ci.sj.ca.us](mailto:pat.dando@ci.sj.ca.us).

## 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.

## Opinion: Our Sick Power Industry

*-John Marks*

Everybody's up in arms about the cost of power in California, and well they should be. There *is* a shortage of power supply, the private utilities *are* at or near bankruptcy, the state and federal governments *are* at a loss as to what to do, and we consumers *are* going to end up holding the bag (or freezing in the dark!).

How did all this happen? Simple. In 1996, the three major private utilities, San Diego G&E, PG&E, and SoCalEd all agreed to sell all their generation sources in exchange for 1) full deregulation, and 2) the freedom to charge what they could get for power (up to a cap of 10-cents/kilowatt-hour, well above then-current market rates, in order to pay down their debt). But as population and the economy grew in California, demand for power outstripped supply, and the new owners of power plants were able to charge what the market would bear. The utilities found that they had sold their souls to the devil (market forces)! No other state in the union carried deregulation this far, save some minor attempts in the Northeast. Florida is still fully regulated.

If you were in the construction business, would you sell off all your equipment at the beginning of a housing boom just to pay down your debt? If you were in the newspaper business, would you sell off your editorial staff and the printing presses?

Compounding the California utilities' basic miss-calculation of their home market, economic growth in the Pacific Northwest grew even faster than in California, drying up our source of cheap hydroelectric power. Then the last two years of drought in the Northwest and increased demand in the Southwest further exacerbated the situation. In fact,

as you might have heard, Kaiser Aluminum, a major consumer of power in the Northwest, found that they could make millions more per day by selling the power that they had pre-purchased than by using it to refine aluminum. So they've closed their plants and are raking in the dough. Don't think this hasn't made the governor of Washington upset at California for increasing his un-employment rate.

Wait, it gets worse. California is basically an island, with no transmission ties directly to the East because there's a big desert in the way; and construction of transmission lines WITHIN the state has been neglected for years. The congested power flow is worse than traffic flow on our free-ways, except that the power lines burn down if you overload them! With the power suppliers holding a virtual monopoly of power, California's private utilities paid a record \$5 billion in August 2000 for wholesale power, topping by \$1 billion the previous record set in June 2000. Through August, its wholesale power costs totaled \$14.2 billion, compared to \$7.3 billion for all of 1999!

Who's to blame? There's enough to go around for everybody. The utilities, the PUC and the governor (Wilson) all signed off on this in 1996. The California legislature unanimously agreed to this deregulation scheme. The federal government refuses to accept responsibility for protecting the states from rapacious market rates. And for time immemorial, we, the consumers have consistently voted to prevent construction of power plants and transmission lines in our backyard--the NIMBY principle. Witness the trouble Calpine has building the lowest polluting, gas-fired power plant near San Jose. Don't blame the power brokers; they're just doing what anybody would do by charging what the market will bear in a deregulated free market.

What's the solution? Hard to predict, but I suspect that the bond market or the state government will get involved just to keep the utilities afloat. Then there may be some forgiveness on the part of power marketers to ease the pressure on prices. Meanwhile, there'll be a lot of posturing at the federal and state levels. It will take six to nine months for the politicians in Sacramento to finally learn the power business. And our new president may weigh in later. As of this writing (1/12/01), anything can happen. Stay tuned.

*[Ed. Note: John Marks, an electrical engineer with some special insights on the situation, is a retired editorial writer for the electric utility industry trade press.]*

## VEP membership survey

Please complete the following survey and return it with your membership dues in the enclosed envelope. This will help our Board better serve you and our neighborhood. (And remember, watch out for those hanging chads!)

Do you regularly read the VEP News? (YES) (NO)

If yes, how would you describe its content (please mark all that apply):

Keeps me updated on issues that I am concerned about (Feature articles, Neighborhood Developments, President's Corner).

Gives me information that I can use (Computer Corner, Green Gardener).

Reminds me to attend the next VEP meeting (meeting announcement, agenda).

Is entertaining (Flip Side and other filler)

If you don't regularly read the VEP News, why not?

---

---

What other subjects would you like in our newsletter?

---

---

Do you like the VEP News format? (YES) (NO)

How many VEP meetings did you attend in the past year?

---

Please rank your interest in meeting subjects with "1" being the most interesting:

Home Improvement Fair

Candidate forums

Neighborhood development issues

Guest speakers (Local elected representatives, etc.)

Neighborhood infrastructure (Phone, power, cable, streets, sidewalks, streetlights, sewers, etc.)

Neighborhood services (Police, fire, trash, etc.)

Neighborhood parks and libraries

School issues

Other (Please describe):

---

I do not attend fourth-Tuesday monthly VEP Meetings because (please mark all that apply):

Meeting day or time is inconvenient/I have a conflict

Meeting place is inconvenient

I don't find out about the meetings

Meeting subjects are not interesting

I intend to go, but forget to

Other (Please describe):

---

What VEP meeting day and time would be better for you?

---

Have you visited the VEP web site? (YES) (NO)

If yes, why have you visited? (Please check all that apply.)

Just to browse.

To look at back issues of the VEP News.

To find out about the next meeting.

To look at a document referenced in the VEP News.

To find out how to contact an elected official.

To find out how to contact a government service.

Other (Please describe):

---

Please rank order the following neighborhood issues ("1" is of most concern to you):

- \_\_\_ Schools
  - \_\_\_ Neighborhood infrastructure (power, cable, telephone)
  - \_\_\_ Neighborhood services (police, fire, parks, libraries, trash, etc.)
  - \_\_\_ Transportation (Roads, traffic)
  - \_\_\_ Transportation (Public Transit)
  - \_\_\_ Neighborhood Safety and Crime
  - \_\_\_ Neighborhood Events
  - \_\_\_ The Lester Property
  - \_\_\_ Neighborhood Development
  - \_\_\_ Other: (Please describe):
- 

Do you use the services of any of our News advertisers?  
(YES) (NO)

If yes, were you satisfied with the service they provided?  
(YES) (NO)

Any other comments about VEP? (Attach separately.)

---

Thanks for your time!

## Bulletin Board Ads

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.

\* \* \*

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 10<sup>th</sup> 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...