

VEP MEETING

7:30 P.M. TUESDAY
March 26, 2002

GUNDERSON HIGH SCHOOL
FACULTY LOUNGE

AGENDA

★ **Chynoweth Traffic Calming** ★

A presentation by the
San Jose Department of Transportation

★ **Bella Villagio** ★

A presentation by Pinn Bros. Fine Homes
on their project at Capitol Expressway & Vistapark Drive

★ **VEP Hospitality Committee** ★

Vote on whether to establish a permanent committee

★ **Election of 2002-2003 VEP Officers** ★

★ **Your Community Issues** ★

Everyone is welcome. Invite your neighbors!

Our March 26th meeting

-Dave Fadness

We have another busy agenda, loaded with interesting neighborhood topics. First up is a discussion of potential solutions to traffic problems on busy Chynoweth Avenue. The City of San Jose's Department of Transportation now employs "traffic calming" methods in neighborhoods like ours--and will be at our meeting to tell us how they work and which approach is best suited. Although their immediate objective is slowing traffic on Chynoweth per our request, methods used there may also be applicable on other streets in the VEP area. So, even if you don't live close to Gunderson High School, you may hear and/or bring attention to the need for a solution for other problem streets.

Second on our agenda is a computer simulated walk-through presentation of the approved 357-unit housing project that will replace the golf driving range on Capitol Expressway at Vistapark Drive. **Ryan Bane** will be our speaker, representing Pinn Bros. Fine Homes. Mr. Bane will answer any questions you have about this project and amenities his company has pledged as conditions of city approval.

VEP has had an informal *Hospitality Committee* for a couple of years. We want to formalize this function, making it a standing committee (see related article elsewhere in this newsletter). To do that, our bylaws require membership approval. We need your input and vote on this proposal. We'd also like you to consider volunteering an hour or two each month in greeting new homeowners to our neighborhood if you can.

March is the month we elect our VEP officers; president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and newsletter editor. So, the final item on our formal March 26th agenda is election of officers. We have a slate of candidates (listed in the following article), but we'll remain open to nominations if you're interested in volunteering. It is very important for YOU to be present as a showing of support for these candidates and YOUR organization. We need your vote.

As always, we want to hear from you about issues that need VEP's attention--so bring them with you to our meeting. We look forward to seeing you there!

VEP Elections

- *Dave Noel*

Annual VEP officer elections will be held at our March 26th general meeting. Newly elected officers are installed at our April general meeting, which is our Annual Meeting. Elections for all offices are for one year terms.

Here is our slate of candidates for this year:

- President – **Dave Noel**. I've offered to serve for a second term as president.
- Vice President – **Ian Reddy** has offered to serve for a second term as vice president.
- Secretary – **Sharon Pardun** has offered to serve for a second term as secretary.
- Treasurer – **Joe Tajnai** has offered to join the executive board as treasurer.
- Editors – **Dave Fadness** and **Bob Aquino** have offered to serve co-editors for their "umpteenth" terms.

Nominations will remain open until formally closed at our meeting, so there is still time for you to step forward.

VEP officers hold Executive Board meetings once a month to conduct VEP business, plan the general meetings, plan VEP events, develop responses to neighborhood developments, and so on. VEP members are welcome to attend these meetings and participate in committees that are formed throughout the year for specific activities.

Contact any of the officers listed on the mailing page of this newsletter for more information. We welcome extra help and new ideas, and are always looking for volunteers to become future VEP leaders (no obligation, of course!).

Hospitality Committee

-*Ian Reddy*

A motion will be put forth at VEP's March membership meeting to establish a permanent *Hospitality Committee*. The Hospitality Committee's focus would be welcoming new residents into our community and association, and generally fostering the community spirit of VEP.

The chair of this committee, a VEP member in good standing, would be selected at our annual general meeting each year and would solicit other members to join the Committee. The chair and Committee would then have one month to formulate a list of specific achievable goals for the coming year and present them to the membership. A sum-

mary of the status of those goals would be presented to the membership at VEP's *Annual Meeting* each April.

If you are interested in participating, call me at (408)226-9574 or email at ncnc750@hotmail.com. Please be prepared to discuss this at our March 26th meeting.

VEP community events calendar

Mar 26: VEP General Meeting (see above), 7:30 - 9 pm.

Apr 3: VEP Executive Board Meeting (call for location), 7:30 - 9 pm.

Apr 9: VTA Route 85/87 interchange Community Meeting in the Gunderson media center, 7-9 pm.

Apr 23: VEP's Annual Meeting—Officer installation, annual reports, update on plans for 85/87 interchange landscape and pedestrian access facilities, 7:30 - 9 pm.

May 1: VEP Executive Board Meeting (call for location), 7:30 - 9 pm.

May 4 (tentative): VEP Community-wide Garage Sale.

May 5: VEP *Community Picnic* at Meadows Park (12:30 to 4:30 pm??).

May 28: VEP *Home Improvement Faire*, 7:30 - 9 pm.

Jun 5: VTA 85/87 interchange Community Meeting in the Gunderson media center, 7-9 pm.

Nov 26: VEP General Meeting; Presentation by San Jose Police on internet predators (tentative), 7:30 – 9:30 pm

Neighborhood Developments

-Dave Noel and Ian Reddy

Hillsdale near Vista Park Drive – Developer Eden Garden, LLC is proposing to build 18 single-family attached residences on a 0.9 gross acre property located at the north side of Hillsdale Avenue, approximately 1,000 feet west-erly of Vistapark Drive.

Vista Park - Vista Park should be 80% fenced any day now and is expected to stay that way for 3 months during construction.

VEP community picnic

-Ian Reddy

The VEP *Community Picnic* is now being planned for the afternoon of Sunday, May 5th, at Meadows Park (on Blue-field Drive and Bliss Court). Please mark your calendar and plan to bring the family.

While we are in the planning stage, and further details will be forthcoming, we do know that volunteers are needed! If you can supply a folding table, sun shelter, contact with the generosity of local businesses, ideas, supplies, or

leadership for fun activities for kids and adults, please call at (408)226-9574 or email me at ncnc750@hotmail.com.

We're looking forward to a great day in the park together. Start dusting off those picnic baskets and sun hats!

VEP Community Garage Sale

- *Dave Noel*

Back by popular demand, VEP will hold a community-wide garage sale on Saturday May 4th. Watch your April VEP News for more details. VEP will advertise the garage sale in local newspapers.

Many thanks to former VEP Secretary **Jeri Arstingstall** for volunteering to coordinate this event, and VEP member **Sylvia Corpuz** for volunteering to assist. After participating in the garage sale on Saturday May 4th, come enjoy our *Community Picnic* on the afternoon of Sunday May 5th.

Dumpster Day a neighborhood success

- *Greg West*

The ever popular City of San Jose *Neighborhoods First!* Neighborhood Clean-Up day, more commonly known as *Dumpster Day* returned to the VEP neighborhood Saturday, March 9th. Twenty city provided dumpsters were placed at seven sites in the VEP neighborhood north of Branham Lane.

VEP neighborhood households used this opportunity to get rid of more than 700 cubic yards (enough to completely pack an average VEP neighborhood house from floor to ceiling!) of trash, debris, tires, scrap metal, and used appliances cluttering their homes and yards. Three of the trash dumpsters (40 cubic yards each) were completely filled by 8:30 am.

About twenty VEP neighbors and volunteers from the Restorative Justice Program (see related article in this issue) worked side by side with about fifteen City of San Jose employees to man the dumpsters sites. Volunteers helped with traffic flow around the sites, monitored the trash being dumped, and helped neighbors unload their vehicles.

VEP wishes to thank the City of San Jose, Councilwoman Pat Dando's office, and the following volunteers for their efforts in once again making Dumpster Day a success: **Candra Bailey, Jane (Grandma Gunderson) Burns, Barbara and Chuck Lucchesi, Dave and Bryan Noel, Sharon, Kitra, and Parry Pardun, Anthony Ponder, Bill Rogers, Dale Smith, Debra Suydam, Jose Trujillo, and Robin, Garret and Greg West.**

Our new look

-*Dave Fadness*

We'd like your feedback on the new look of our newsletter. For many years, we've used a "book" format, printed on 11x17" sheets.

That approach meant that each sheet needed to be folded in half; folded sheets were then collated to assemble each set, and folded again before applying mailing labels.

You've probably noticed that our newsletters are averaging 12 to 16 pages lately. And, we're now doing 500 newsletters each month! This was a huge, time consuming job--done by hand by our indomitable volunteers, **Bob** and **Barbara Aquino**.

This work was done by hand simply in order to save money. In fact, until this month, we avoided machine collating because it would cost VEP members at least \$100 more per month (depending on number of pages). Now **Kinko's** has agreed to print, machine collate and staple our newsletter for the same discounted price we'd been paying for the book format. Their generous offer will save much work for Bob and Barbara.

Our primary focus will continue to be on timely, informative, and interesting content, and news you can use. We hope you'll like our stapled 8-1/2 x 11" approach.

Neighborhood Action

Neighborhood Action is a program offered in the City of San Jose by a trained coalition of San Jose Police Department members, other city personnel, and residents. It is designed to abate drug, gang, public nuisance properties and problem businesses. The program's step-by-step approach teaches residents how to channel their strengths into an effective action plan in order to reclaim their neighborhoods. Complaining residents mediate a solution with the property owner through designated city personnel.

A two-hour San Jose *Neighborhood Action* workshop will teach you how to:

- Identify and recognize a public nuisance and business of drugs;
- Organize a neighborhood;
- Document a public nuisance, drug/gang related nuisance, and blighted property;
- File and proceed in small claims court if necessary; and
- Collect a judgment.

To learn more about *Neighborhood Action* call the San Jose Police Department's Community Services Division at (408) 277-4133.

[Ed. Note: This is the fourth in a series of articles describing crime prevention programs sponsored by the San Jose Police Department. We urge you to get involved. If you'd like to coordinate one of these programs in our neighborhoods, VEP will help you. Call Dave Fadness @ 578-6428 if you are interested.]

Computer corner

-Bob Aquino, VEP's Computer Guru

There are times that I am proud to say that I work in the computer industry. There are also times when I am embarrassed by some of the sleaze ball tactics of some industry members. Case in point...

I've written before about my wife's cousin. She's a very intelligent woman, a retired college teacher, but not computer oriented. She used a Mac for years, but has devel-

oped a physical problem that makes it difficult for her to type at great length. When her old Mac finally gave up the ghost, she looked for a computer that would enable her to dictate rather than type. Unfortunately, there is no Voice Recognition software for Macs. She asked me for advice, and we settled on a Compaq laptop, which she bought about nine months ago.

I recently talked to her, and she was having some problems. She got an email notice to update some software, which she did. When the update was complete, the computer rebooted (a not unusual circumstance) but instead of her usual desktop, she was greeted by a Compaq logo screen, and basically no way to get into her system. She called up Compaq support, and they told her that she would have to pay \$39 for a onetime service call.

It boggles my mind that one can pay the price that one does for a laptop and not get telephone support for a year. When I bought a Toshiba laptop a year and a half ago, I had a year of free support calls. Although she demurred on paying, the Compaq tech talked her into paying \$10 dollars for a recovery disk!

When I talked to her on the phone, she was at a loss as to what to do. I'd never heard of this kind of failure before, but my approach to problems is that whatever happens I always try the simplest solution. I told her to press Ctrl-Alt-Del. (You can imagine my surprise when she said that she had never heard of doing something like that.) However, when she did it, shut down the computer properly, and rebooted, all was well. She asked me what the magic was with that particular key combination. The only thing that I could tell her is that it reset the computer to a known state.

I realize that companies have to economize to stay profitable, but it seems to me that since much of what the user does in computers is non-intuitive, the manufacturers have to be sensitive to the needs of their less technically inclined customers.

New *Service Award* category added

- Greg West

After much discussion and consideration over the last several months, at our January meeting VEP members approved expanding our *Community Service Award (CSA)* by adding an "At Large" category. The members also approved a \$3000 budget (\$1000 per category) for the 2002 award. This award must be used for post-secondary education or vocational training.

The Community Service Award is VEP's attempt to reward area high school seniors for exemplary volunteerism during their high school careers and to encourage all students to carry the habit of volunteerism into their adult lives. Our award is based only on the student's volunteer record during high school. Awards are given to one deserving senior from each of the VEP neighborhood high schools, Henry T. Gunderson High School and Andrew Hill High School, and to one At Large awardee.

Any graduating high school senior that lives in San Jose may be nominated by a VEP member for the At Large award. Gunderson and Hill nominees are made by the

school administrations. Nomination forms for the At Large award are available in this issue of the VEP News, online after March 15th at www.vepca.org, and from any VEP Board member.

At Large nomination forms must be signed by a school administrator to verify the nominated student's status as a graduating senior in 2002. Nomination forms must be completed and returned to VEP by April 23rd. (Save a stamp, bring them to our meeting that night!)

A message from VEP's President

- *Dave Noel, VEP's President*

VEP is here to help with your concerns. One common issue that's been brought up periodically is speeding, drag racing, and "donuts" on Chynoweth Ave. Several times our mature Palm trees have been hit and even knocked over by speeders. While we are naturally quite disappointed to see our trees hurt, we realize our trees may have saved lives from potential cross-over accidents.

Council member **Pat Dando's** office has taken our concerns very seriously, and as a result we are proud to have the San Jose Department of Transportation "traffic calming" folks coming to our March 26th general meeting to present possible solutions to these problems.

We also will have **Ryan Bane** of Pinn Bros.. Fine Homes at our meeting to show us their housing project that was recently approved to replace the driving range at the northeast quadrant of Capitol and Vista Park. You may recall that VEP protested this 357-unit project. Our issues were with the city and traffic issues, *not* with this developer. Pinn Bros. has been very responsive and accommodating to VEP's concerns, and we believe their project will be a quality project and a good neighbor. Mr. Bane plans to present a virtual walk-through computer presentation of the project – it's a very impressive presentation.

I want to thank all the volunteers who helped with the City of San Jose *Neighborhood Cleanup* (dumpster day) in the VEP area on Saturday March 9th. About 700 cubic yards of trash, recyclable metal, and broken computer monitors and TVs were cleaned up from our area.

The VEP executives hope you've all been enjoying the daffodils that VEP volunteers planted last fall as much as we have--aren't they great! We'll do it again next year for sure.

I'd like to leave you with a cute line I read earlier today: *If your dog is fat, you're not getting enough exercise!*

Well, hope to see you all at our March 26th meeting...bring a friend.

Magnet programs at Steinbeck

-*Thanh (Tang) Le (*)*

We are off to a successful start here at Steinbeck as we implement the first year of our magnet grant in Arts, Sciences and Telecommunications. Many changes and additions have been made to our program, curriculum and school wide events.

We have expanded our elective offerings to include magnet themes. Current elective course offerings include: an exploratory wheel for the sixth grade with four rotations (Music, Art, Spanish, and Keyboarding/Computers), Leadership, Junior Engineering 1 and 2, Audio Visual Production, Spanish, Band, Drama, World Cultures Art, and Advanced Drawing, Painting & Design. There are many exciting opportunities here for students to explore and find interest in.

The Science Department has enjoyed an influx of support and resources and is a tightly organized department that meets twice weekly to plan and discuss. They have purchased many high quality materials to support and enhance the curriculum. In addition, a Science Expo is currently being planned and will take place here in April. This will be an exciting showcase event for our students, teachers, and families.

Enrichment activities are plentiful and popular. This list is extensive with the following offerings available before or after school: Celebration Singers Choir, Sharks and Parks Street Hockey, Martial Arts, Guitar Class, Theater Production, Y Achievers Group, Intramurals: (Flag Football, Soccer, Volleyball), Basketball Team, Chess Club, and a Chess and Game Club.

[() Ed. Note: Thanh (Tang) Le is the Instructional Technology Resource teacher at Steinbeck Middle School.]*

Crabgrass controls: beat this annual weed

-John Marks, VEP's Green Gardener

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

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

Brown Grass and Toadstools

At this time of year, when your lawn is coming back (some), you may notice fungus spots and brown areas that aren't greening up well. You can cure both problems by fertilizing with a heavy application of sulfate of ammonia now; about six pounds per thousand square feet is not too much, but water first, and water afterward. You'll be pleasantly surprised at its low price in the store.

Mushrooms and toadstools are the fruiting bodies of soil-inhabiting fungi. They assist in the decomposition of or-

ganic matter. Life could not exist without them. If you find them unsightly, knock them over with the back of a rake; they will melt and disappear.

Weeds

And haven't you noticed that at this time of year, weeds come slithering out of the soil with the slightest tug. Now's the time to scout around and pull up those milk weeds and others you can spot. Be especially watchful for dandelions- -pull them up as soon as you see them, don't wait!

Snails

Cold, damp weather will bring out snails and slugs in droves. They will feast on the tender new growth of bulbs and winter plants. Hand pick or use a bait, but don't let them go unchecked because they will mow down your garden.

Pruning

You can prune now, also; especially roses and fruit trees.

Spike Balls and Nuisance Fruits

My liquidambar tree produces so many spike balls that I'm going to spray the tree this year with a product called Florel. Cherry and olive trees can also be prevented from bearing fruit with the same product.

Spray it on the trees when they are full bloom, probably in April, to eliminate the seedpods. Liquidambar has insignificant blossoms, in small clusters that are yellow in color.

Unfortunately, my liquidambar is about forty feet tall, so I'll have to get up on a ladder. If you have a hose-end sprayer that reaches the top, you're all set.

News from Grizzly Country

-Linda D. Shipes ()*

You may have noticed the neighborhood is looking a little cleaner. The Gunderson High School Associated Student Body has sponsored several Clean Up Saturdays. Most recently, on March 16th, students met at the school for an on site clean up. Trash was picked up, an old shop area was cleared out and bark was spread in planting beds in the parking lot.

Past efforts have included cleaning up at the Light Rail station and the street between the school and there. We have had a park clean up and barbecue at Vista Park with plans for more neighborhood clean ups.

These clean up days give the students an opportunity to meet their community service hours requirements while enjoying spending time with their friends. In some cases, it has also given students an opportunity to fulfill their Saturday School obligation.

Our students are always looking for community service opportunities. If you have a task that one or more of our students might be able to accomplish, please contact the school at 535-6340.

[() Ed. Note: Linda D. Shipes is the Program Specialist/Computer Instruction at Gunderson High School.]*

Chip sealing our city streets

- Pat Dando

I know that you and your neighbors did not have a good experience when your streets were chip sealed. Many community members expressed it was very messy, damaged their cars, and injured several children riding bikes.

To improve our neighborhoods, I have asked the City to look at a policy for using slurry seal on neighborhood streets. Slurry seal provides a smooth driving and biking surface, is darker in color and more aesthetic, and seals water from intruding into the structural base of the roadway. When this issue came before the *Finance & Infrastructure Committee* on Wednesday February 27th, I was the only committee member that did not support the continued use of chip seal on residential streets.

I need the support of you and your neighbors to stop the use of chip seal on neighborhood streets. It is important that you write to the mayor and other city council members expressing your support for the use of slurry seal on neighborhood streets. Please feel free to contact me at (408)277-5251 for further information or if I can ever be of assistance.

[() Ed. Note: Pat Dando is our representative on the San Jose City Council.]*

Probation volunteers needed

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world, indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." –Margaret Mead.

Do you want to make a difference in your community? Well, now you can, serving as a volunteer on the *Neighborhood Accountability Board (NAB)* through the Restorative Justice Program of the Santa Clara County Juvenile Probation Department.

The Restorative Justice Program is a part of Santa Clara County's action plan to develop a balanced and restorative juvenile justice system to respond to and reduce juvenile crime and violence. The focus of this program is to partner with community members, such as yourselves, to create safer neighborhoods and engage your participation in holding offenders accountable.

Our goal is to have a non-punitive, victim focused intervention with juvenile offenders. NAB aims to aid these offenders in not only restoring the harm of their offense both to the victim and to the community, but also to hold the offenders accountable for their actions. The program has been in existence for just over four years and has expanded countywide this year. Santa Clara now has one of the largest Restorative Justice Programs in the country and we are looked upon as the model for new programs.

The Neighborhood Accountability Board (NAB) serves as the cornerstone of the Restorative Justice Program and is made up members of the community serving as probation volunteers. The goals of the NAB are to create opportunities for the victim and the community to state how the

crimes have affected their lives, to get all parties to agree on a contract that serves to help the youth repair the harm caused by his or her behaviors, and to help the youth offender take personal responsibility for his or her actions while reestablishing a sense of community values.

As a probation volunteer with Restorative Justice, you will receive training and a small stipend. We only ask five hours of your time per month as a minimum. You must be 18 years or older, attend mandatory training, and undergo a background check and fingerprinting process.

Empower your community; assist youths to make a positive change in their lives. Become a probation volunteer and help reduce and prevent crime in your community. Serve the victim, the community, and its youth!

For more information or to set up an appointment, please contact Eric Martinez, Probation Community Coordinator, at (408)629-1539.

25 GHS kids to get special driver training

-Ron Jacobs ()*

In no time at all, a young driver can go from learning to use cruise control to being a cruise missile. All they have to do is pass a written test, parallel park without assaulting the curb, spend a bunch of hours driving with a parent and, before a teenager can spell DMV, a valid California driver's license is tucked into their wallet and forgotten until a flashing light bar appears in their rear view mirror.

AAA (*American Automobile Association*), and the *Insurance Institute for Highway Safety* have found that the average high school has a student killed in an auto accident every 36 months and motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of injury and death for ages 16-25.

Despite this sobering information, most drivers never learn the basics of accident avoidance and car control. Driver training in high school is minimal and is being reduced in almost every state due to budgetary constraints. When an emergency strikes, the average driver has less than a second to learn what to do. Unfortunately, for most people this trial and error type of learning is tragically ineffective.

Recognizing the need to improve the driving skills of eager but inexperienced drivers, AAA formed a partnership with *Sears Point Raceway*, *Jim Russell Racing Drivers School*, and the *California Highway Patrol*. Eight years ago they created the Road to Sears Point Raceway Traffic Safety Challenge for high school students. It is the only program in the United States designed specifically to improve the driving skills of high school students.

"Teenagers tend not to have a strong sense of their own mortality and when you combine that with their relative lack of experience behind the wheel it's a huge concern, both for young drivers and those who share the road with them," said Steve Page, President and General Manager at Sears Point Raceway. "This program offers tremendous benefits, not only in basic driving skills, but also in developing respect for the power of an automobile and how easy it is to lose control."

Every year AAA sends their Traffic Safety Challenge to every high school in the nine Bay Area counties, Sacramento and San Joaquin County. Each year over 200 high schools compete for the coveted eight invitations to participate in the Jim Russell Racing Drivers School's Highway Survival Driver Training for high school students.

Gunderson earned its first trip to Sears Point Raceway in February 2000 and this year it accepted its second invitation. On the morning of February 28, a group of 25 students and seven chaperones boarded a chartered bus and took a two-hour ride to the famous Sonoma County race-track where Jim Russell Racing Drivers School instructors encouraged the students to speed, slam on the brakes, skid out of control, and learn some lifesaving driving techniques during the High School Safe Driver Program.

The Highway Survival Driver Training was designed to teach students enhanced braking, skid and control skills, and accident avoidance techniques within the safe confines of Sears Point Raceway. Students received classroom instruction on vehicle dynamics from professional driving instructors and after completing the program, the professional race car drivers took the students on thrilling "hot laps" around the racetrack.

[(Ed. Note: Ron Jacobs is an Art teacher at Gunderson High School.)]*

85/87 Interchange design improvements

- Dave Noel

VEP is working with the *Valley Transportation Agency (VTA)* and the *San Jose Department of Transportation (DOT)* to provide community input on the most appropriate ways to spend *Community Oriented Design Enhancements (CODE)* funding to improve landscaping, pedestrian facilities, and design aesthetics in the Hwy 85/87 interchange area. At our January 22nd general meeting, guests **Gail Collins, Stuart Bussian, Tiffany Thomas, and Ray Salvano** discussed the CODE program, which is funded at 2% of the total Hwy 85/87 interchange budget.

As announced in an email message to VEP members, VEP is meeting with VTA and DOT on Tuesday March 19th and Thursday March 28th from 7:30 to 8:45 at the Oakridge Community Policing Center next to Michaels at Westfield Shoppingtown Oakridge. Many thanks to **Dianna Butcher** of DOT for being VEP's point of contact for providing community input for this important project.

The objective of these initial meetings is to get our ideas on the list of general design improvements in the CODE preliminary master plan. Costs of all items on the preliminary master plan will be estimated by VTA consultants, and the master plan will be updated in coming months. Most CODE improvements will be implemented in a separate contract that will commence after completion of interchange construction, which is scheduled for summer of 2003.

VTA has several concurrent projects in work along Hwy 87. They plan to pool much of these CODE funds to upgrade landscaping along the entire length of Hwy 87, consistent and at a superior level similar to the landscaping on

Hwy 85. This work could consume most of the CODE funds from the Hwy 85/87 interchange project, so VEP will keep a watchful eye on this.

Thanks to members **Dave Noel**, **Joe Tajnai**, **Dave Fadness**, and **Dave Heinrichsen** for volunteering to participate in this activity. If you can join us, please contact Dave Noel or Dave Fadness by phone or email (see mailing page of this newsletter), even if you missed both the March meetings.

We anticipate inviting VTA to present the CODE master plan at our April 23rd VEP general meeting.

Annual Gunderson golf tournament

-Candra Bailly (*)

Gunderson High School's *8th Annual Golf Tournament* will be held on Wednesday, June 26, 2002 at the Spring Valley Golf Course located in Milpitas at 3441 E. Calaveras Blvd. First tee off will be at 10 am and dinner will be served following the round of golf. There will be a raffle and silent auction at the dinner.

For more information contact Louie Aldama at 972-1725 (e-mail at Laldama340@cs.com) or Linda Lee at Gunderson High School 535-6340 ext 123.

[(*) Ed. Note: Candra Bailly is a Secretary at Gunderson High School.]

Overview of VEP's February meeting

- Dave Noel

Our February 26th meeting was perfectly timed in preparation for the March 5th California primary elections. We were pleased to have a very good turn-out at the Gunderson theater. Our audience met board of supervisors candidates and heard debate on four revenue measures.

Many thanks to all our speakers, and especially to **Dave Fadness** for coordinating the election forum and working a myriad of details to line up all our speakers. Thanks also to **Greg West** for coordinating with Gunderson to obtain use of the theater, then moderating the event, and to **Bob Aquino** our speech timer.

News From Andrew Hill

-Bruce Shimizu (*)

As the year 2002 unfolds, I have many pieces of news to share with you.

First, we are excited about the transformational change which will occur to the facilities at *Andrew P. Hill High School* if the Bond Measure (Measure G) passes on March 5. Over the last 6-8 years, *Andrew Hill* has enjoyed many facility improvements such as the modernization of the 200, 300, and 400 wings, the renovation of the locker rooms, air conditioning and security lighting, and of course, the construction of the new Science/Medical Health Professions Complex. However, with the passage of *Measure G*, you and your children could see a new 100 wing on the corner of Senter Road and Singleton, a theater, moderni-

zation of the physical education and sports facilities, and the beautification of the front of the school and student quad area.

Second, our Lap Top computer initiative appears to be progressing quite well. At this writing, plans are being formulated to create and implement a wireless network on campus, to provide Apple I Book lap tops to teachers and 1500 students, to provide training to teachers, students and parents, and to incorporate the use of the lap tops in daily instruction. We are hopeful that the lap tops can be purchased and distributed sometime this spring.

Third, Daniella Punzanlan, a ninth grade Andrew Hill student won the district wide Martin Luther King poster contest with her stipple point pen and ink poster.

Fourth, SAT-9 testing results from spring of 2001 indicated that 135 *Andrew Hill* students earned \$1,000 state sponsored scholarships for either scoring in the top 5% in the state at grade level or in the top 10% of their class at *Andrew Hill*.

Fifth, *Andrew Hill* will be undergoing *Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)* accreditation process beginning March 17. The visiting team will conduct its study from March 17-20.

Sixth, December 2001 student attendance rate improved 3.6% over December of 2000! Great job students and parents!

Lastly, we want to thank parents and students for their continued support of the school. Let's have an academically successful spring semester.

(Ed note: Bruce Shimazu is Principal of Andrew Hill High School. This article was taken from the January edition of his newsletter, A View from the Hill.)

Gear up at Gunderson

- Kalane McDonald

The *Gear Up* program at Gunderson High School matches adult mentors from the business world with high schools students to help guide the students to become successful, responsible, contributing members of our society.

The benefits of this program to students are that they gain an association with and begin to appreciate the wisdom and experiences of a caring adult, they develop essential life skills, they begin to make positive choices, and they see greater possibilities for the future.

The benefits to adult volunteers are that they develop a positive relationship with youth, contribute wisdom and guidance to youth, and gain the satisfaction of seeing positive changes.

Volunteers are requested to attend an orientation meeting, attend monthly meetings with a small group of students at Gunderson High School during the school day, develop a trusting relationship with students, maintain contact between monthly meetings with students by phone and/or

email, and to attend a large group social meeting about three times during the school year.

If you are interested in volunteering for this program, please contact the *Gear Up* project office located on the Gunderson campus at 229-0978. YOU can make a difference in the life of a young adult.

Hardy houseplants

It's not easy being green. Just ask your house plants. Some folks have green thumbs and, when it comes to house plants, some people are all thumbs. House plants add a fresh look to any interior and brighten any space--until they turn brown and die.

You can increase your success with house plants by choosing one of the more hardy ones. These plants can withstand a fair degree of abuse and neglect, and have modest needs that even the more incompetent gardener can manage. Following are eight hale, hardy suggestions for not-likely-to-succumb house plants for you to love.

Aloe (*aloe barbadensis*) is a great plant to keep in the kitchen. Also known as the "medicine plant," the aloe grows long, slender arms that, when cut, exude a sticky juice that's great for burns. Aloe needs good light, but little else. It's a member of the cactus family and requires water only when the surface of the soil is dry.

A *cast iron plant* (*Aspidistra elatior*) is as hardy as its name implies. This plant grows steadily despite its conditions, producing oblong, dark-green leaves that arc outward from the spears that rise directly from the soil. This plant can be pruned to serve as a charming table plant, or encouraged with light fertilizing and increased pot size to become a gargantuan specimen.

The *Chinese evergreen* (*Aglaonema 'silver queen'*) tolerates even dim light and also loves direct sunlight. This plant sprouts silvery green leaves from short stems to create a bushy, shrub-like appearance. Chinese evergreens need to be kept away from drafty areas, and watered when the surface of the soil becomes dry.

Ficus (*Ficus benjamina*) is sometimes called a weeping fig. Ficus plants are often criticized for dropping every single leaf suddenly and without warning. The fact is that ficus is very hardy and will tolerate poor conditions for months before finally running out of reserves and succumbing. With good light, moderate watering when dry, and the occasional fertilizer stake, a ficus will grow steady for years and years. Ficus don't like to be moved, so once you've settled on its placement, let it be.

Golden pothos (*Epipremnum aureum*) is the perfect plant for the forgetful waterer. Pothos offers creamy yellow and green leaves, love to be drenched periodically, and left to dry out completely in between. This plant loves the light, but cannot tolerate direct sunlight. It will grow quickly, and doesn't mind cramped roots. If you repot it occasionally, and keep it pinched back, it will grow lush and full. If a pothos starts getting scraggly or leggy, just cut it way back and it will fill out quickly, healthy and happy in short order.

A *mother-in-law's tongue* (*Sansevieria trifasciata*) is virtually indestructible. This plant gets its name from its long, sharp leaves, so it's best to refer to it as a "snake plant" when your mother-in-law is around. Related to the cacti family, this plant prefers fairly dry soil and lots of light. It can survive dim rooms and weeks without water. The stiff leaves grow straight up, and can reach heights of several feet.

A *split-leaf philodendron* (*Philodendron bipennifolium*) looks nothing like its popular relative, the tree philodendron. It does share the latter's tolerance for low light and infrequent waterings, as well as a reputation for toughness. The leaves start out pale and tender, and then turn deep green and leathery, splitting into sections as they grow. When the soil surface is dry, water well. If the plant starts looking bedraggled, cut it back to the soil, give the roots a good soaking, and it will begin anew.

Tree philodendron (*Philodendron bipinnatifidum*) makes a good floor plant with large leaves in a frond- or finger-like pattern. This plant is perfect for a low light area, and will grow very large if you continue to move it to larger containers. The tree philodendron will tolerate forgetful waterers but it likes to dry out between water binges.

[Ed. Note: This article was taken from Brian Bonnifield's website. Brian is a real estate professional and a long-time, active member of VEP. His ads are featured in our newsletter.]

Rachel Carson's Walk-A-Thon

-Irene Shoberg

Come on over to Rachel Carson Elementary School located at 4245 Meg Drive on April 20th from 10 am to 2 pm for our annual *Walk-a-Thon*. Join neighbors and friends in supporting your local school. The proceeds will provide for a variety of academic enrichment programs.

The theme is *All American* and students, staff and parents will be out walking for this annual fundraiser. Hot dogs, apple pie, lemonade, and cotton candy are just some of the great treats you can purchase from 11 am to 2 pm. We will also have a *Silent Auction* and a *Class Basket Auction*.

Perhaps you are a former student or parent and you'd like to come by and just visit. We would love to have you. Especially since a number of Carson teachers are retiring this June and this may be your last chance to say hi and wish them the best. So, mark your calendars for this community event and join in the fun!

Energy Saving tips for your home

Lighting

- Convert incandescent bulbs to fluorescent lamps with screw-in bases. Fluorescent lamps can give the same amount and quality of light as incandescent bulbs, yet use one fourth the amount of energy and last 10 times longer. *Savings: 30-38 percent of lighting costs.*
- One bulb is better than two. Use one higher wattage bulb instead of several with lower wattage. One 100-watt

bulb produces more light than two 60-watt bulbs and uses less power.

Air conditioning and appliances

- Set your thermostat to 78 degrees or more during the summer. *Savings: 10-20 percent of cooling costs.*
- Don't turn your thermostat lower than normal to cool your home faster. *It doesn't work!*
- Select the most energy-efficient model when buying a new ENERGY STAR refrigerator, washer, or other appliance. *Savings: 5-25 percent of operating costs.*
- Open doors on your refrigerator or freezer only when necessary and keep the coils (on the back or the bottom of the appliance) clean. Each time you open the refrigerator door, the compressor will run for 8-10 minutes to restore the original cold temperature inside.
- Unplug small appliances and electronic devices when not in use. Many new TVs, VCRs, computer peripherals and chargers use electricity even when they are switched off.

Water heating

- Keep the tank clean. Periodically drain off the sediment in the bottom of your water heater. Sediment buildup can insulate the water from the heating element. Open the drain valve or faucet at the base of the water tank and drain a gallon or two of water into a container until it runs clean.
- Give your water heater a vacation too. When you leave your home for a weekend or longer, turn your electric water heater off (check your owner's manual for the manufacturer's instructions), or turn your gas water heater to the "pilot" setting. Electric water heaters are most easily shut off using the circuit breaker panel. Turning off a water heater for less than 48-hours is not recommended.
- Install a water heater insulation blanket if your hot water heater doesn't have an "Energy Guide" label indicating it is energy efficient. *Savings: up to 10 percent of water heating costs.*

Hot water usage

- Install flow restrictors or low-flow showerheads and faucets. *Savings: 10-16 percent of water heating costs.*
- Take showers instead of baths, and shorten your shower time. Baths use 4.5 times more hot water than showers. Cutting your shower time in half will reduce water heating costs by 33 percent.
- Check for leaks. In just one month, a leaking hot water faucet can waste hundreds of gallons of hot water.
- Operate your dishwasher only with full loads. And if the manufacturer's instructions permit, open the door of the dishwasher at the end of the last rinse cycle, rather than using the drying cycle. *Savings: 40 percent of dishwashing energy cost.*

- Avoid using the "rinse hold" setting on your dishwasher which uses up to seven more gallons of hot water per use. Use shorter cycles in the dishwasher.
- Wash clothes in cold or warm water. Always rinse in cold water. Wash full loads or adjust the water level to fit the size of your load. Using cold water reduces your washer's energy use by 75 percent.
- Dry two or more loads in a row, taking advantage of the heat still in the dryer from the first load.
- Don't over-dry clothes; it wastes energy, causes shrinkage, and shortens the life of your clothes.

Thanks for the compliments!

-Dave Noel

Last month we published some of the comments from your membership renewal envelopes. We enjoy them very much. Here are some more:

- This neighborhood association is constantly doing excellent work for our neighborhood.
- Kathy Decker is an incredible PR person and a delight besides! She's the reason we joined!
- Thank you so very much!
- Thank you for all the useful information in the newsletter.
- Thank you for the newsletter. It keeps me informed about concerns of our community.
- I enjoy your newsletter!
- We appreciate all your work!
- Thank you for all you do for our neighborhood. Dave Fadness - the palm trees look great. I can't believe you do that too!
- Good website!
- I appreciate receiving "alerts" and "updates" via e-mail. Thank you!
- Keep up the good work!
- You are a blessing to this community. Thank you for all you do for us.
- Thank you for your hard work.

San Jose's Vehicle Abatement Program

San Jose's *Vehicle Abatement Program* is responsible for enforcing Municipal Codes relative to vehicles that are abandoned or stored on public streets or illegally parked or stored in front yards.

Vehicle Abatement does this by towing vehicles or issuing Administrative Citations. Vehicles may be towed or issued citations without warning for certain Vehicle Code violations.

How do I report abandoned vehicles left on my street? An inoperable vehicle, truck, trailer or boat left abandoned or stored on the street, sidewalk, or parkway (between sidewalk and curb) is prohibited in the City of San Jose. To report a vehicle that is stored for 72 hours (3 days) or more, unregistered for over six (6) months, or inoperable (missing essential parts like wheels, engine, transmission, or

windshield), call 277-5305. The recorded message will ask you the following questions (you must press the number 8 after each response): the license plate number, the address/location, the closest cross street, the color of the vehicle, and a description of the vehicle.

A Vehicle Abatement Officer will investigate on their next circuit through the district. Due to the volume of complaints about vehicles on the street, the initial response may take up to two weeks.

What about vehicles stored in front yards? Vehicles parked on private property do not need to be currently registered or regularly used. They do need to be operable. An inoperable vehicle, for example, is one which has a flat tire or missing battery, is up on jacks, or is being worked on in excess of 72 hours (3 days). When you call 277-4528, the following information will be requested: the exact address, a cross street, the type of violation, your name and phone number.

An initial warning letter is sent to the property owner informing them of the code requirements and giving them 10 days to remove the vehicle, if it is in violation. If the vehicle is in violation and is not removed, an Administrative Citation of \$250 may be issued. If the vehicle is still not removed, an Abatement Process is initiated. The Abatement Process for vehicles on private property requires that a written 30-day notice, and a follow-up 10-day notice, be given to the property owner and the vehicle's registered owner. The Abatement Process may result in the vehicle being towed from the property and destroyed.

What if I see a NO PARKING sign on a barricade in front of my house? The sign will indicate days when construction, street sweeping, or a special event is in progress. Vehicles parked in violation of these signs may be cited or towed.

Can I park on my front lawn? The Lawn Parking ordinance prohibits parking any motor vehicle (including automobiles, trucks, recreational vehicles, and motorcycles) on any portion of a front yard or corner lot side yard except on an area that is paved. A "paved surface" can be cement, bricks, asphalt, pavers, etc. It is not a paved surface if only the areas under the tires are paved. In some areas of town there are existing strips of cement leading to a parking area--these will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, but will not be acceptable for new installations. To report a Lawn Parking violation call 277-4528. Violations may result in an Administrative Citation of \$75 and each day may be a separate offense.

Storage of boats, RVs, and/or trailers in a front setback, even if on a paved surface, is a zoning violation and may be reported to 277-4528.

What is the "Free Tow" program? The "Free Tow" program from private property is simply that. You can have your vehicle towed off of your property free of charge with the proper paperwork even if it is inoperable or unregistered. You need to schedule an appointment with the Vehicle Abatement Officer to have the vehicle removed. Call 277-4931 for an appointment.

Is it legal to store a Recreational Vehicle in my driveway?

No--the zoning code prohibits storage of all recreational type vehicles on the front setback.

VEP membership renewal

-Dave Noel

Many thanks to the hundreds of you that have already sent in your 2002 VEP membership renewals. If you haven't had a chance, please do so now to make sure you continue receiving the **VEP NEWS** and keep informed of what's happening in your community. To renew, write a check for \$15 to VEP Community Association, fill out the form below and mail to VEP Community Association, P.O. Box 18111, San Jose, CA 95158.

If you don't renew, the April VEP News will be your last.

We encourage you to include your email address and phone number so we can get you timely information in the event that something urgent happens between editions of the VEP NEWS. We do not to sell or otherwise share any VEP membership data, especially phone numbers and email addresses, with any third parties; it is only used for official VEP business.

**** Please Type or Print ****

[None of the following information will be sold to or otherwise shared with any third party.]

Last Name: _____

First Name(s): _____

Street Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Comments: _____

Can you give VEP a few volunteer hours each month?

Bulletin Board Ads

DRAPES, VALANCES, AND RODS: Custom. Fit living room and dining room. Good condition. Call Marge @ 227-7411.

AFTER SCHOOL & WEEKEND DAY CARE: On Vistapark Drive, near Rachel Carson and Parkview Elementary Schools. Call Peggy @ 226-5249 or 250-3236.

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

GOING ON VACATION? Responsible, experienced 13-year old is available for pet, house, and yard care. Call Matt @ 225-5878.

* * *

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.