

# VEP MEETING

7:30 P.M. TUESDAY  
**October 22, 2002**

GUNDERSON HIGH SCHOOL  
★ **Theater** ★

## AGENDA

### ★ **Election Forum** ★

Candidates & Pro/Con Speakers representing:

- Measure J
- San Jose Unified School Board
- Measure B
- 23<sup>rd</sup> State Assembly District

*Everyone* is welcome. Invite your neighbors!

## Our October VEP meeting

*-Dave Fadness*

November 5<sup>th</sup> is Election Day. As responsible citizens of this great democracy of ours, we will be asked to make decisions between candidates and issues in federal, state, and local government. VEP has always dedicated itself to helping its members vote smart. Our October 22<sup>nd</sup> *Election Forum* is designed to do just that.

As usual, we'll take one ballot item at a time. Brief introductory statements will be made by each speaker, and then time is allowed for you to ask questions of them. Both speakers are allowed 1-minute to respond to any question from the audience. Speakers then deliver brief closing remarks before the next group is introduced.

Obviously, there are too many elective offices and ballot measures and too little time to bring speakers on all of them to a 90-minute VEP meeting. So, our execs went over the ballot and selected a few we thought you'd be most interested in. We hope you'll find our line-up enticing and decide to attend. Be sure to bring a friend.

Here's our line-up:

Measure J. East Side Union High School District.

A 2/3-voter approval will allow East Side Union High School District (VEP members who live east of Vistapark Drive) to train faculty and students to use modern technology, to retain and attract quality teachers and counselors, and to increase student safety. ESUHSD would levy an annual tax of \$49.75 per parcel (\$4.15 per month) for six years, provide an exemption for senior citizens (65 and older), provide a ban against using this money for administrative salaries, and institute a citizens' oversight committee.

**Don McKell** will speak in favor of *Measure J*. Speaking in opposition will be **Mark Hinkle**.

San Jose Unified School District Board of Trustees.

**Bill Aaron**, an engineer, is running against incumbent **Vernonica Grijalva Lewis** for this non-partisan seat which

represents all of the VEP area west of Vistapark Drive. Both candidates have agreed to attend our Forum.

Measure B. Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority. Would ease traffic congestion and make critical road repairs without raising any new taxes. If approved by a majority of county voters, this would be done by allocating future State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and discretionary federal funds to improve the county's highest priority highways, expressways, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and local street and road repairs. Transit improvements will still be funded through VTA's 30-year half-cent sales tax approved by voters in November 2000.

Speaking in favor of *Measure B* will be **Laura Stuchinsky**. **Irvin Dawid** will speak in opposition.

23<sup>rd</sup> State Assembly District. Incumbent **Manny Diaz** (D) is facing Attorney **Warner S. Bloomberg** (G) in his bid for re-election to this seat representing VEP members who live north of Branham Lane. Both candidates have agreed to attend.

Remember: We meet in the Gunderson Theater for this event. See you there!

## Vista Park to reopen soon!

*-Ian Reddy*

The wait is almost over ... a VEP neighborhood gem will soon be ready for unveiling. Vista Park, at New Compton and Hyde Park Drives, has been surrounded by construction fencing for over six months now as it receives new playgrounds, benches, picnic tables, pathways, lighting, landscaping and more. There's even a new softball field, brought to us by the volunteer efforts of VEPer **Neil Bray** with *San Jose PAL* and *South San Jose SoftBall*.

The wait goes back much farther than six months. VEP worked hard twenty years ago to save the land from development, and then have it purchased by the city for a park. In the late 1980s we spurred the creation of a master plan comprising several phases, including the most recent improvements.

Last year we came together again. The Vista Park Playground Committee, VEP Executive, and representatives of the city met many times to define the elements and layout for this year's construction. Finally, the fences will come down around the end of October and it will be time for a celebration.

Saturday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, is tentatively planned for the Vista Park reopening event, with a dedication ceremony at 11 am. Look for further information in your e-mail, at our October General Meeting, and/or on a sign at the park. Come meet some of the people who made it happen then and now, check out the new and upgraded facilities, and enjoy the sparkle on the jewel in our midst.

## VEP Hospitality Committee wants *you*

*-Katherine Decker*

The VEP *Hospitality Committee* held its inaugural meeting Sunday, October 6<sup>th</sup>. Many thanks to those who attended

and volunteered their time to help with the social aspects of VEP membership. **Katherine Decker, Jasmine Ocegueda, Jane Burns, Yvonne Reddy, Maureen Noel, Hisa Stewart, Kristine Alexander, Nancy Tajnai,** and **Josie Supencheck** have some great ideas for increasing awareness of VEP and getting people more involved in our community.

A significant undertaking of this years' group is to welcome new residents to this area. We would like to greet each new resident and provide them with a welcome packet that includes information and items specific to our neighborhood. To make this work, we'll need your help.

First, we need to know who our new neighbors are. If you know of someone who has recently moved in, please call Katherine Decker at 972-4098 with the address and name of your new neighbor, if you know it. Katherine will have the VEP Hospitality greeter for the area visit the new residents and leave them a welcome packet.

Second, we are still in need of more volunteers willing to deliver welcome packets for us. If you're interested in getting to better know your neighbors, please call Katherine to have your name added to the greeter's list for your area.

The Hospitality Committee will also be keeping an up-to-date list of volunteers. If you'd like to get added to this list please contact Katherine at the number given above. The more people we have involved the less each person has to take on.

## Beautification projects ratified

*-Dave Fadness*

VEP members at our September 24<sup>th</sup> meeting approved ambitious beautification projects on four sites at the western gateways to our membership area. Funding for these projects will be sought through applications for *San Jose Beautiful* grants; labor will (of course) be provided by VEP volunteers--like you and me.

Although some logistics need to be worked out on a couple of them, the sites we selected are (in no particular order of priority):

1. The median on Chynoweth Avenue immediately west of Pearl Avenue.
2. The triangular parcel separating right turn from through traffic lanes on the southeast corner of Narvaez Avenue and Branham Lane.
3. The larger parcel of land on the northeast corner of Narvaez and Branham.
4. The south side of Branham Lane where SP's Lick Branch railroad line used to cross.

We also agreed to step in and adopt the Chynoweth Avenue right-of-way between New World and Pearl Avenue (but only if students at Gunderson High School decide not to).

VEP will need your help to clean-up and beautify these long-time eyesores at the gateways into our community. Obviously, the more folks who volunteer the less work it

will be for all of us. We'd like to take advantage of seasonal rains to give our plantings a head start. We'll let you know well in advance of our workday schedule.

Please step forward by volunteering a few weekend hours late this fall or early next spring. Call or e-mail me or any VEP officer (our names and numbers are listed on the mailing page of this newsletter). Do it today--we'll be *delighted* to hear from you.

## Daffodil planting November 2<sup>nd</sup>

*-Ian Reddy*

Join your VEP friends and neighbors for a morning of exercising green thumbs and community spirit as we support the eighth annual San Jose Beautiful *Daffodil Planting Day*.

We will have more this year--more bulbs and places to plant, more supporting activities to beautify our neighborhood, more refreshments and, with your help, more volunteers.

A surprise gift is awaiting each volunteer that day as well!

Meet at Katherine Decker's house, 5101 Devon Park Court, at 9 am on Saturday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, and please bring a shovel, gloves, a bucket, and a watering can if you have one.

Suggestions on where to plant the bulbs are always welcome, just keep in mind that they must be planted on public property or school grounds. Please let Ian Reddy know of your suggestions and willingness to help. Call him at (408) 226-9574 or email him at [ncnc750@hotmail.com](mailto:ncnc750@hotmail.com).

Last year we had a great time. We look forward to seeing you this year.

## Neighborhood developments

*-Dave Fadness & Dave Noel*

Vista Park – The fences at Vistapark should be coming down sometime late this month. At the time of this writing, **Neil Bray** and the **PAL soccer league** are coordinating the skinning of ballfield infields. Later, the city will install backstops. Don't miss the dedication ceremony on Saturday November 16<sup>th</sup> at 11 am. VEP will work with the city to make this a very special community event, celebrating years of dedication and work by VEP volunteers that made this day possible.

Guadalupe River Trail & new park on Winfield – Councilmember **Pat Dando** and San Jose Parks & Recreation project manager **Todd Capurso** hosted a public outreach meeting on September 9<sup>th</sup> to solicit community inputs for the design of the Guadalupe River Trail stretch from Blossom Hill Road to Chynoweth Ave, and for a new park which will be located on the west side of Winfield Boulevard between Hwy 85 and Chynoweth Avenue. Their second meeting will be held on Monday, October 21<sup>st</sup>, 6:30 to 8:30 pm in the Gunderson faculty lounge.

VEP executives **Dave Noel**, **Dave Fadness**, and **Greg West** met with **Joshua Howard** from councilmember **Pat**

**Dando's** office and several people from the San Jose Department of Transportation (DOT), including **Henry Servin** and **Tom Ho**, before work on October 10<sup>th</sup> to review traffic and pedestrian safety issues at the corner of Winfield and Chynoweth. These issues were raised at the first Guadalupe River Trail meeting, and the DOT team will present their recommendations at the second meeting.

The park on Winfield must be completed by early 2004, as stipulated by the grant that funded it, so this project will happen relatively quickly. For more information, contact Todd Capurso at (408) 794-1336.

Parkview I and Meadows Parks – The city has completed plans for renovation of these two VEP-area parks. Construction bids are now in process and work is targeted to begin in January, 2003.

Parkview II Park – Todd Capurso from Parks & Recreation will host a 6:30 pm meeting at Parkview School on December 11<sup>th</sup> to take community input on renovation improvements at Parkview II Park.

Giacomazzi Property – 126 senior housing units and 24 single family court-home units are proposed for the remaining 4.18 gross acres of undeveloped land behind Home Expo, at the southeast corner of Russo Drive and Cherryview Lane.

## A financial note...

*-Bob Aquino*

My wife recently applied for a credit card with a new company in her name and was declined for lack of credit records. I was shocked because we have had a credit card for thirty years.

On calling our credit card company, I discovered that they don't issue joint credit cards. One person is the cardholder, and the other is an authorized signature. So she applied for a card with our present company, which was then granted. She now can develop her own credit record.

This is clearly an important thing to do, since in the event that I die, she would have no credit record to fall back on. I'd urge all husbands to check to see if a similar situation exists for their wives and correct it as soon as possible.

## Volunteer group looking for... *volunteers!*

*-Stacie Brown (\*)*

The *Assistance League® of San Jose (ALSJ)* is a chapter of the National Assistance League, a nonprofit, nonpolitical, nonsectarian organization dedicated to helping those within the community to a better, more meaningful life. ALSJ is a 100% volunteer organization helping children and seniors in the San Jose area.

We have these five philanthropic community projects:

Seniors Program - bringing reassurance and comfort to elderly and shut-in persons in the greater San Jose area with the Telecare program and providing recreational activities to residents of senior facilities with the Bingo program.

Operation Hug - in a cooperative program with city and county agencies, our chapter provides toy bears which are used to ease the trauma of accident and abuse to children.

Kids on the Block - a national award winning educational puppet program. The puppets are nearly life-size and used to portray how children deal with such concerns as cultural differences, or learning and physical disabilities. This program is presented in a small classroom environment to children of elementary school age in the greater San Jose area.

Operation School Bell - provides clothing for school children in need. Through referrals from principals, counselors, and social workers in all local school districts, children are outfitted as needed.

Project Heart - volunteering hours of help to the *Center for Living With Dying*, helping people cope in their time of need.

We are a hands-on organization and take pride in what we do for our community. We rely on grants and fund raising efforts to support our projects. Our regular meetings are at noon the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month at the Joint Venture Church on Camden Avenue.

If you are interested in learning more about the Assistance League of San Jose, we will be having an informational coffee at 10 am on Wednesday November 13, 2001 at the Almaden Country Club. Please call Judy Dissly at (408) 268-1833 for more details. We look forward to seeing you!

*[(\* Ed. Note: Stacie Brown is President of ALSJ.)*

## We need feedback from VEP members

*-Dave Fadness*

Ads in our newsletter appear every month, helping us pay for the monthly costs of printing and mailing. As a courtesy to these long-term sponsors, we only ask you to give them a chance to bid on work you may have within their specialties. Because we don't publish daily to tens of thousands of readers, advertising in the VEP NEWS is relatively inexpensive, but not an especially effective medium.

In fact, some of our advertisers have told us that they get very little business directly attributable to their ads in our publication. They've advertised for years as a gesture of support for our organization. Normandin is a case in point--they've been with us practically since VEP started in 1969. Before 1976, Normandin paid 100% of the cost of our newsletter, and they didn't even require an ad!

So, when you contact these merchants, let them know that you saw their name in our newsletter. We feel certain that our members use the services of NEWS advertisers, but probably don't say so. Please do--it adds value to their support for VEP.

Please give us your feedback on the job our advertisers did when they worked for you. It's important for us to know whether our members are satisfied--yes, we want to hear from you even if you're completely happy with the services

provided. It's also important to know if problems are encountered; if there is a pattern of complaints about one of our advertisers, we'll discontinue their ad.

You can also help us (and them) by giving us the name of vendors who are not current advertisers, but who have done exceptionally good work for you. Armed with your recommendations, we can refer other VEP members when they call looking for help. In fact, most of the ads we run are for companies we found through recommendations by our members.

If you have feedback you'd like to share, please contact me (or any other officer of VEP) at the phone or email address shown on the mailing page of this newsletter. We look forward to hearing from you.

## FREE child safety identification cards

*-Meeta Nanavati*

Don't let your child become a statistic, PostalAnnex at Branham and Snell (the Safeway shopping center) is offering one FREE Safety Identification Card per child. The day and timing of this free service may be limited, so please call us to confirm the schedule. We are doing this for free because as the parents of three young girls we are always concerned about their safety.

We are sure that every parent can relate to our concerns and has experienced the panic of not knowing where the child is, even if only for a minute. The FBI estimates that at least 2300 children are reported missing every day; i.e., three kids every two minutes! Even with the best parental care, children wander off in public places.

A prompt recovery of these missing kids in part depends on their parents' ability to immediately provide police with a complete record of identification. We hope you never have to use it, but to prepare you *in case of emergency*, the laminated card will include your child's:

- Name;
- Photo (we will take a picture with a digital camera and print it on photographic paper);
- Right hand thumbprint;
- Date of birth;
- Height/Weight;
- Blood type;
- Eye/hair color;
- Description of identifying/birth marks;
- Address;
- Mother/father's names and telephone numbers;
- Any known allergies or medical conditions;
- Any medication needs;
- Description of disability; and
- A statement of permission for emergency medical treatment with signature and date.

We will also hand out some useful tips and information with the card. Contact: Meeta or Sam Nanavati, Postal Annex #387, 171 Branham Lane, Suite 10, (408)972-9768. All PostalAnnex stores are owned and operated by different franchisees. This free service is available only at our location.

[Ed. Note: PostalAnnex also offers postal services and stamps, FedEx & UPS shipping, packaging supplies, notary service, mailbox rental, color copy, black and white copy, business cards and stationery, binding and lamination, mail fulfillment, passport pictures, keys, money orders, and Western Union Money Transfer.]



## Upcoming VEP community events

- Mon. Oct 21: Guadalupe River Trail Planning Meeting #2, Gunderson faculty lounge, 6:30 – 8 pm.
- Tue. Oct 22: *VEP General Meeting* at Gunderson (Election Forum), 7:30 – 9 pm.
- Fri. Oct 25: *Harvest Festival* at Carson Elementary School, 5 - 8 pm.
- Sat. Nov 2: Daffodil planting, 9 am – 12 noon.
- Tue. Nov 5: *Election day--Get out and VOTE!*
- Wed. Nov 6: *VEP Executive Board* meeting (call for location), 7:30 – 9 pm.
- Sat. Nov 16: Vista Park Dedication Ceremony and VEP family event, Vista Park, 11 am.
- Tue. Nov 26: *VEP General Meeting* at Gunderson (Updates on neighborhood parks, trash and recycling collection, and street sweeping), 7:30 – 9 pm.
- Wed. Dec 11: Parkview II Park renovation meeting at Parkview Elementary School, 6:30 pm.
- Wed. Jan 8: *VEP Executive Board* meeting (call for location), 7:30 – 9 pm.
- Tue. Jan 28: *VEP General Meeting* at Gunderson (San Jose Police presentation on Internet predators), 7:30 – 9 pm.

## Harvest Festival at Carson School

- Nancy Tajnai

Like to have fun? Want a safe place to take your kids for an evening? Want to support your community? Come to this year's *Harvest Festival* at Carson Elementary School--you're in for music, games, food, and FUN!

Plan to join us at the *Harvest Festival* on Friday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, from 5 until 8 pm at Carson School, located at 4245 Meg Drive in San Jose.

Volunteers are always welcome! Call Joanne McGuy at 629-3051 for more information.

## Electronic communications

- Dave Noel

Would you like an e-mail reminder for our monthly VEP meetings? We plan to send a reminder to the e-mail list approximately the Thursday or Friday preceding our Tues-

day monthly meetings. If you want to be added to our e-mail list for meeting reminders and occasional notices of breaking news, please send a note to me at [DNoel1234@aol.com](mailto:DNoel1234@aol.com), and I'll get you on the list.

Privacy policy: Rest assured that we will continue to protect your privacy by being very careful not to reveal your e-mail address (or name, address and phone number) to anyone outside of the VEP executive committee or a trusted individual working on behalf of VEP for official VEP business only.

You may have noticed our September VEP News arrived in your mail boxes well in advance of the meeting. Even though it is mailed as bulk mail, it hit mail boxes the day after we mailed them, rather than the usual 3-5 days (or worse). It turns out that our new 8.5 x 11 inch format, with no vertical folds, is considered machine readable by the post office, unlike our previous 11 x 17 inch format. This might have made the difference. Let's keep our fingers crossed that we'll continue to get our newsletters early.

## 4<sup>th</sup> annual *Westfield Works Wonders*

-Linette Leong (\*)

You are cordially invited to attend the 4<sup>th</sup> annual *Westfield Works Wonders* event (a private evening of shopping, exclusive store discounts, and entertainment) from 7 to 10 pm on Sunday, November 10<sup>th</sup> at Westfield Shoppingtown's Oakridge and Valley Fair malls.

Join us for this private shopping event with exclusive store discounts, festive holiday entertainment, complementary gift-wrapping, and hundreds of door prizes as we kick off the holiday shopping season!

*Westfield Works Wonders* supports the non-profit community with a fun and easy fundraiser. Hundreds of local non-profit organizations (schools, hospitals, churches, etc.) sell \$5 *Westfield Works Wonders* tickets and retain 100% of the proceeds for their individual charities. In 2001, more than 161 non-profit organizations collectively raised an impressive \$117,000 between Oakridge and Valley Fair!

For your convenience, customer service can provide tickets and fundraising information. Tickets will also be available at all center entrances the evening of *Westfield Works Wonders*.

[(\*) Ed. Note: Ms. Leong is Marketing Coordinator for *Westfield Shoppingtown Oakridge*. She can be reached at 578-2912 during business hours.]

## *Measure B* means funds for roads

Voters in Santa Clara County will be asked to approve an unusual transportation measure on November 5<sup>th</sup>, one that will not raise taxes but would commit nearly every penny of federal and state aid to road projects over the next 30 years.

Placed on our ballot as ***Measure B*** by the Valley Transportation Agency (VTA), this measure will if passed put into law a promise made by elected officials two years ago

during the Measure A sales tax campaign to bring BART to San Jose and expand light rail and other transit. VTA said then that if voters approved Measure A, a 30-year tax devoted entirely to transit, they'd promise to spend uncommitted dollars from Washington and Sacramento for highways, expressways, and city streets.

But promises can be broken, especially by future transportation leaders who a decade from now might not feel bound by a promise from predecessors long gone.

"That's exactly why we're putting this up to a vote," said County Supervisor Don Gage, who along with Supervisor Pete McHugh and the Silicon Valley Manufacturing Group is working for passage of the ballot measure. "We feel strongly that this needs to be done. Otherwise, the transit program could gobble up all the money. Then you would have failed roads and a transit system people can't get to." Measure A funds can only be spent on transit.

But about \$2 billion in federal and state aid is expected to flow into Santa Clara County over the next three decades, money not specifically tied to any form of transportation. That's enough cash to ensure completion of dozens of road projects in the county's long-term plans, such as converting Highway 101 to a freeway in the Gilroy area, building new interchanges at 101-Tully Road and 101-Capitol Expressway, widening Highway 85 north of I-280, and widening Highway 237 east of 85. Funds could also be spent on repairing potholes and rundown roads, something extremely popular with motorists.

A poll of voters last spring showed overwhelming (68%) support for the **Measure B** plan; only 15% said they would oppose the measure and 17% were undecided. If only half of the undecided vote swings in favor of *Measure B*, it could garner 76% voter approval.

The same survey showed that voters are unaware that the entire \$6-billion expected to be raised by Measure A is earmarked for transit. Around 35% thought money from this tax would go for both roads and rail projects, 13% thought transit only, and 6% thought it was all for road work. Almost one in three, 33%, didn't recall how the money was going to be spent.

Uncommitted outside aid is usually split 60-40 between transit and road projects. Money from Proposition 42, which passed last spring and requires that California spend its sales tax revenue from the sale of gas and diesel fuel on transportation starting in 2008, would be exempt from the *Measure B*. As such, *Measure B* grants the VTA Board considerable flexibility as it does not affect any new sources of discretionary funding secured after November 2000.

*[Ed. Note: This article is adapted with permission from Gary Richards' Roadshow column originally published June 8, 2002. ]*

## Fall Fundamentals

-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 Composters program. Just call 299-4147. We'll have some literature on this topic at our October 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](http://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 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 your 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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 them.

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.

\* Rocking Away in the Garden \*

If you spend a lot of time crouching and bending in the garden, a *Garden Rocker Seat* would make a nice gift for your aching knees and lower back. The seat's curved base allows a full range of motion, letting you move about your chores while either sitting or kneeling. This ergonomically designed tool has a tractor-like seat that cups your bottom, and a single screw in the base lets you adjust its height.



This seat (\$24.95) is one of the many products designed to make working outdoors easier and less stressful on joints and backs, available through the catalog of Charley's Greenhouse & Garden, based in Mount Vernon, Washington. For a free catalog, call (800) 322-4707, or visit [www.charleysgreenhouse.com](http://www.charleysgreenhouse.com).

## Hwy 85/87 CODE projects

*-Dave Noel*

You may remember that VEP has been working with VTA and the city of San Jose to recommend how best to use the Hwy 85/87 interchange project landscaping and beautification program known as *Community Oriented Design Enhancements* (CODE). 2% of the total interchange cost was initially set aside for these improvements which were to be implemented after the main construction project. Unfortunately, budget shortfalls have essentially eliminated the CODE budget.

Now, about the only new landscaping there will be trees in the Santa Teresa median north of Hwy 85, to be consistent with trees in the median of Santa Teresa south of Hwy 85. A little further north, there will be minimal landscaping at the Hwy 87 bike path trail heads (presumably the ones near Branham).

A couple items important to VEP will still be implemented using funds from the main construction contract instead of CODE funds:

1. Stairs will be installed near the pump house on Chynoweth for pedestrian access to light rail, and
2. Erosion problems on Chynoweth under Hwy 87 will be repaired.

## Computer corner

*-Bob Aquino, VEP's Computer Guru*

I thought I'd talk about features of Windows that makes it different than the Mac operating system. As some of you may know, the Mac mouse has a single button while the Windows mouse can have two or three buttons, and possibly a wheel.

The wheel is frequently used in scrolling in documents without reference to the scroll bar. It's handy for long documents in word processing, but in spreadsheets, I sometimes find it a little difficult to control, particularly in that it tends to run away to the ends of the spreadsheet.

However, if used judiciously and slowly, it saves a lot of hand motion.

The real jewel of the mouse, however, is the right key. The function of the right key is dependant on the software that is being used. In the body of a file there are always Cut, Copy, and Paste. But there are specific functions that are determined by the application.

Take for example *MS Word*. You can use the right key to change fonts, create paragraphs, apply bullets or numbering, insert a hyperlink, or even find a synonym for a word. In *Internet Explorer* you can open a link in a new window, save one as a favorite, or print the target of a link without opening it. In *Outlook*, you can reply to a letter, reply to all, forward, or delete a letter using the right key.

One of the more interesting things that you can do with the right key in many applications is to view the properties of a file. The properties windows contains information on when the file was created, last modified, last accessed, its attributes and many other interesting factoids.

You can even right click on the Windows screen and change its appearance. Computers can be fun, as well as challenging. Play around with the right key in your favorite applications. You'll learn some new ways of doing your job.

## President's corner

- *Dave Noel, VEP's President*

It was great seeing so many of you at VEP's September meeting. Our meeting attendance has been very good and we hope to keep it strong by continuing to have topics and guests of interest to *you*.

Our first guests were **Phillip St. Pierre** and **Linette Leong** who gave us an update on the *Westfield Shoppingtown Oakridge* expansion project. As I'm sure you've seen, their project is well underway. Phillip explained that Westfield's investment in this expansion project is nearly as big as their recent investment in expansion of Valley Fair, which has been hugely successful.

Among the highlights of the Oakridge Mall expansion are the addition of a 20-screen Century theater complex with first-run movies, five new restaurants, a 14-tenant food court, a very large Borders Books, and two parking garage structures. These new developments will be built in front of the existing mall on the Blossom Hill Road side. The existing structure will be refreshed with raised ceilings and lots of skylights.

A number of traffic improvements are also in the works, including new lights on Winfield near Sears and on Thornwood near Round Table Pizza. VEP worked closely with Westfield and the City of San Jose to ensure the traffic improvements were well designed. We commend Westfield for their cooperation and significant investment in these improvements.

As you may have heard, the current city-approved development plan for the Oakridge expansion project includes removal of the Oakridge Lanes bowling alley. This is being

done to provide parking for the mall as required to meet minimum parking ratios dictated by the city.

A number of people came to our September meeting to protest this, and there were some heated discussions. Unfortunately, these protests are too late, since the decision to remove the bowling alley was made and approved by the city about a year ago. VEP raised the issue then, but Oakridge Lanes' parent company AMF declined our offer to try to help them. To complicate matters, AMF was in bankruptcy at the time. Now that they are out of bankruptcy, there have been negotiations between AMF and Westfield to save the bowling alley, but realistically, that is not very likely.

Linette Leong gave a presentation on Westfield's hugely popular annual charity called *Westfield Works Wonders* event (see her article elsewhere in this newsletter). This event kicks off the holiday shopping season with a special night of shopping and entertainment. Admission tickets cost \$5. Westfield gives the tickets to charities to sell as fundraisers. A word to the wise: buy your tickets in advance, as there's a huge line at the door on the day of the event.

Phillip and Linette presented VEP with a generous number of these tickets. Rather than sell the tickets, VEP plans to give one to each volunteer who participates in our annual San Jose Beautiful daffodil planting event on Saturday November 2<sup>nd</sup>. This is a small gesture of thanks for your help in beautifying our neighborhoods.

Our second guest was to have been Gunderson's new principal **Demerris Brooks**. Unfortunately, she had a family emergency and was unable to attend. Our plan was to get to know Demerris and learn about her plans for Gunderson.

We forewarned her that there would likely be questions from the audience regarding Gaundabert Lane weekend parking and sports field issues. San Jose Unified school board member **Veronica Lewis** came to our meeting to discuss these issues. Ms. Lewis brought an example of the permit granted by San Jose Unified School District to one of the facility users.

Some of the issues we are facing there may be reduced by changing the terms in the permits. Another excellent suggestion from Ms. Lewis was to see if one of the weekend school programs could use classrooms closer to the main parking lot to encourage those students to park in the main parking lot and thus reduce congestion on Gaundabert.

Former VEP Secretary **Jeri Arstingstall** stepped up to lead VEP's effort to work with SJUSD and city staff as needed to solve the serious weekend traffic, parking, litter and sports field restroom issues that affect the Gaundabert Lane area even after the traffic calming improvements recently implemented. If you want to be invited to the meetings that Jeri sets up, send me your contact info and I'll forward it to her.

We had two items of business to close after this busy evening with our guest speakers. First, our members unanimously approved the Goals and Objectives proposed by

the VEP executive board as published in the September VEP News. Second, members unanimously supported a plan to submit for San Jose Beautiful grants for volunteer planting/beautification projects (see separate article elsewhere in this edition).

Our year is off to a great start. I hope to see you at our October 22<sup>nd</sup> Election Forum. VEP's perennial volunteer and newsletter editor **Dave Fadness** did a great job lining up speakers for this event. If you haven't come to a VEP election forum, you're in for a treat. We will cover four key races in just 90 minutes. We have a set of tried-and-true rules that keep things moving along and gives everyone a fair chance to state their cases. We welcome students to come see and participate in civics in action. Don't miss it.

Finally, I'd love to see a great turnout at the November 2<sup>nd</sup> daffodil planting event. Last year's event was such a hit that we're doing it again. Remember, all participants in this year's daffodil event will receive admission tickets to the *Westfield Works Wonders* event.

## VEP member wins national acclaim

*-Dave Fadness*

Long-time VEP member **Gay Brasher** coaches the Speech and Debate Team at Leland High School. It was just announced last month that her Leland team ranks first in speech and debate activities out of 2700 teams nationwide. Her program also ranked first two years ago.

This recognition was announced by the *National Forensic League* (NFL) based on student participation and excellence in speech activities. Ms. Brasher herself was named in the year 2000 as the National Coach of the Year.

NFL, the oldest and largest high school speech organization in America, was founded in 1925 to encourage participation in the forensic arts: debate, public speaking and interpretation. It sponsors district tournaments nationwide. The winners from NFL district tournaments meet at the end of each school year for a national tournament. Ms. Brasher's team was the only one to earn all three School of Excellence awards at the national championship tournament in June 2002, at Charlotte, North Carolina.

In addition to NFL competition, speech leagues throughout California sponsor tournaments. The winners from those tournaments meet yearly for state finals. In April, Ms. Brasher's team won this year's sweepstakes award at the state championship tournament in Fresno.

Her 2002-2003 team has 309 members; one sixth of the Leland student body is involved in the program. Many of these students have attended tournaments at U.C. Berkeley; Emory; Harvard; Henry Hudson High School, New York; University of the Pacific; Stanford; Santa Clara University; Wake Forest; St. Mark's High School, Dallas, Texas; USC; and more.

In 1998, Ms. Brasher was honored by her high school faculty and by San Jose Unified School District as Teacher of the Year. (That same year, her daughter **Carole Lynne Heinen** was also honored as Teacher of the Year at her

elementary school, which is also in San Jose Unified School District.)

She recently stepped down after serving 18 years as the area chairperson for the two California High School Speech Association (CHSSA) leagues covering the San Francisco Bay Area. As area chairperson, Ms. Brasher also served on CHSSA's executive board.

VEP proudly offers its congratulations to Gay Brasher for her outstanding achievement and thanks for the inspiration she's provided to students at Leland High School.

## News from *Grizzly Country*

-Linda Shipes(\*)

There are many new faces at Gunderson High School this year. Eighty percent of the administration is new this year. New principal Ms. **Demerris Brooks** heads up the administration team with Mrs. **Tina Nelson**, Assistant Principal of Guidance; Mr. **Brian McGarry**, Assistant Principal of Activities; Mr. **Dominic Bejarano** Assistant Principal of Discipline; and returning Assistant Principal, Mr. **John Schilling** who is moving from Activities to Curriculum. There are also many new teachers who are bringing lots of new ideas and energy to our campus.

If your son or daughter is struggling in any subject, help is available. The Gunderson *Homework Center* is open Monday through Thursday in the Library-Media Center (LMC) from 2:30 till 4:15. There are teachers available to tutor in all subjects. Please encourage your son or daughter to attend when they need extra help or just need a place to do homework.

Computers are also available for students to type assignments or do school related internet research. There is also a Skills Bank available on some of our computers so students can brush up on various skills.

Most teachers expect students to type their assignments. We offer many options to students who may not have access to a computer or printer at home. Computers are available in the Homework Center after school. Students may check out an *eMate*, a small portable word processing computer, in the LMC before school, at lunch, or after school. Having a parents written permission, they may take an *eMate* home for one evening. (Permission forms are available in the LMC). To have their assignment printed, students need to bring the eMate to me in the Research Writing Lab (RWL) before school.

If a student has a computer, but for some reason can not print an assignment, they have a couple of options. If the assignment is done in Microsoft *Word* or Apple *Works*, they may save their assignment to a floppy disk and bring it to me in the RWL before school to have it printed. Or email it as text to [rwlstudent@yahoo.com](mailto:rwlstudent@yahoo.com). I will print it for them and they can pick up the assignment from me. We want all students to succeed and are trying to help them in any way we can.

Gunderson High School will be participating with San Jose Mercury News, Kids in Common, and dozens of bookstores and nonprofit organizations in Silicon Valley in the

*Gift of Reading* program. Between November 10 and December 2, 2002, we hope to gather many new and gently-used books for readers age 2-17.

These books will be distributed through schools, literacy programs, homeless shelters, and other local agencies that help children in need. Our English classes will compete; the class bringing in the most books will win a pizza party provided by Leadership. The two runner-up classes will win a doughnut or brownie/cookie party.

Boxes and posters are already available in our English classrooms. Students may begin to bring in books now. Please encourage your kids to take part in this worthwhile program.

*[(\*) Linda Shipes is Program Specialist/Computer Instruction at Gunderson High School.]*

## Bulletin Board Ads

NEIGHBORHOOD NOTARY PUBLIC: Call Peggy at 224-2243 or 250-3236.

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

ENTERTAINMENT BOOKS: Available now for \$20 from *Telephone Pioneers*. Profits used to help San Jose homeless and working poor. Call Dot @ 227-0871.

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.

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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 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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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.