

VEP MEETING

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

GUNDERSON HIGH SCHOOL
★ **Faculty Lounge** ★

AGENDA

★ **San Jose Environmental Services** ★

A presentation and Q&A on street sweeping, yard waste, garbage, and recycling pick-up services by specialists

Roberta Dunlap and **Michele Young**,
San Jose Department of Environmental Services
7:30 to 8:10 p.m.

★ **Our City Parks** ★

A presentation and Q&A on progress toward developments at Meadows, Parkview I & II, Terrell, Vista and Winfield Parks by

Todd Capurso,
San Jose Department of Parks & Recreation
8:10 to 8:45 p.m.

★ **VEP Exec Holiday Dinner** ★

Discuss & vote on Exec Committee's request for funds for its annual Holiday Dinner.
8:45 to 8:50 p.m.

★ **Your Community Concerns** ★

8:50 to 9:00 p.m.

Everyone is welcome. Invite your neighbors!

Our November meeting

-Dave Noel & Dave Fadness

On November 26th we're featuring a presentation by the City of San Jose on its street sweeping, yard waste, garbage, and recycling pickup, and other city environmental services. Despite its awkward scheduling two nights before Thanksgiving, **we urge you to make a special effort to attend this important meeting.**

Despite general satisfaction with these contractor-provided services, VEP hears ongoing questions and grouching from its members. Major changes have been made by the city recently. This is an opportunity to offer your comments and suggestions for improvements and to get answers to whatever questions you may have from those in charge of San Jose's program. You pay for these services, you deserve to be heard.

City of San Jose Environmental Services Specialists **Roberta Dunlap** and **Michele Young** will be our speakers. Ms. Dunlap is Contract Manager for Norcal Waste Systems of San Jose – Garbage and Recycling Collection. Ms. Young is Contract Manager for Norcal Waste Systems of San Jose – Yard Trimmings and Street Sweeping.

To be sure these ladies come prepared, we assembled the following list of questions and topics of interest and mailed

them in advance. After an introductory presentation, there will be plenty of time for other issues to be discussed in response to **your** comments and questions.

Street Sweeping

1. How can we get street sweeping on portions of arterial streets that don't have houses fronting on them? (Chynoweth Avenue and Branham Lane, for example.)
2. We have had complaints of street sweepers sweeping without water, or with insufficient water, causing dust clouds. Will/can this be remedied?
3. We have had complaints of street sweepers doing a poor job in the ends of cul-de-sacs. It may be necessary for them to jockey around to do a good job, but it appears they simply make the U-Turn and miss debris that they should have cleaned. Will/can this be remedied?

Yard Waste

1. What percentage of people have opted to use the optional (\$1 per month) yard waste bins?
2. What is the process to order a yard waste bin if you didn't select one originally?
3. Since yard waste bins help reduce the costly problem of debris carried to the bay via storm drains, why aren't they mandatory?
4. Why do the yard waste trucks lift the yard waste bins from the street side instead of the curb side, like the garbage/recycling truck?
5. We have complaints of street damage by the "claw", and careless scooping and debris trails that residents have to clean up. Will/can this be remedied?

Garbage and Recycling

1. Have you considered adding signage on the new garbage trucks to show the casual observer that garbage and recycling are not commingled?
2. Is there much contamination of recyclables by residual garbage in the shared hopper?
3. What prevents garbage truck drivers from diverting recyclables to the trash side when the recyclables side is full? Are drivers paid by the route or by the hour? If paid by the route, wouldn't this be an incentive to divert recyclables to the trash side in order to finish their route earlier?
4. Can you bring any photos or diagrams of the recyclables sorting process to the meeting? Can people see the recyclables sorting facility? Who do they contact to arrange a visit?

Other

1. The San Jose "dumpster days" are a big hit, but too infrequent for any given neighborhood. How can we get more of them?
2. Is there anything you want to mention about the proposed rate increase?

3. Explain the process for disposal of large items.
4. Explain the process for disposal of hazardous waste.

Please add your questions to this list and attend our 7:30 pm November 26th meeting to get answers from the professionals in charge of San Jose's Environmental Services program.

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San Jose Parks & Recreation's **Todd Capurso** will also attend our November 26th meeting to update us on Vista Park backstops, Meadows and Parkview I Parks renovations, and the new park now being planned along Winfield Boulevard for the Guadalupe River Trail. He will also give advance news and announce upcoming meetings for Parkview 2 and Terrell Park renovations.

* * *

Each year your VEP Executive Committee volunteers and their spouses have a Holiday Dinner. This is the only real compensation they receive for hundreds of hours of dedicated work for our neighborhoods. This year, we are asking for an amount not to exceed \$300 for this event. (Bear in mind that there are nine couples involved; that equates to a cap of less than \$17 per person.) To save money, VEP Execs typically use two-for-one coupons for this event, often leaving allocations unspent. We want your input--and need your approval.

* * *

We're counting on your presence at 7:30 pm on November 26th. Even though it's just before Thanksgiving, let's show our guest speakers we care!

Recycling is now easier!

- *Roberta Dunlap*(*)

San Jose households have done a terrific job of recycling. We divert over 53% of our waste from landfills, exceeding the state goal of 50%. To make it even more convenient for San Jose residents, the City of San Jose launched a new recycling collection program this past July.

New wheeled carts for recyclables were delivered to each of the 195,000 single-family homes in San Jose. You no longer need to sort recyclables such as glass, paper, and plastics--all recyclables now go together into the new recycling cart. Garbage, such as food and bathroom waste, still goes into your garbage cart. Used motor oil and oil filters continue to be collected separately at the curb but must be placed in City-issued plastic jugs and filter bags. These are free and can be ordered by calling Customer Service at (408) 277-2700.

One truck, with two compartments in its body, now collects both garbage and recycling in one stop. This means fewer trucks and less traffic in our neighborhoods. Another plus: these new trucks run on cleaner alternative fuels for better air quality.

For an additional dollar per month, you can choose to have your yard trimmings collected in a cart instead of placing leaves and grass loose in the street. Areas where special circumstances prohibit placing the yard trimmings in the street (such as red zones or bike lanes) have the carts at no additional cost.

In addition, streets are now being swept twice a month on the day after garbage collection. Remember to move your vehicles off the street on sweep day to help the sweepers get to the curb.

Orders for cart exchanges are still being processed. If you requested to change the size of one of your carts or to add a cart for the collection of your yard trimmings and haven't received it yet, the City asks you to please be patient. Cart exchanges and new deliveries should be completed by December. For more information, visit the City's web site at www.sjrecycles.org or call their Customer Service at (408) 277-2700.

[Ed. Note: Roberta Dunlap is an Environmental Services Specialist for the City of San Jose. She will be one of our speakers at VEP's meeting on November 26th.]

Neighborhood Parks

-Dave Noel

San Jose Parks & Recreation project manager **Todd Capurso** will be at our November 26th meeting to review developments at all of our local parks such as Vista Park, Meadows Park and Parkview I Park as well as the parks listed below.

Guadalupe River Trail & Park on Winfield – Councilmember **Pat Dando** and San Jose Parks & Recreation project manager **Todd Capurso** hosted two public outreach meetings on September 9th and October 21st to solicit community inputs for the design of the Guadalupe River Trail stretch from Blossom Hill Road to Chynoweth Ave, and a new park to be located on the west side of Winfield between Hwy 85 and Chynoweth. The park on Winfield must be completed by early 2004. For more information, contact Todd Capurso at (408) 794-1336. (See map.)

The following is excerpted from a letter that Pat Dando sent to all participants of the two meetings:

“Feedback we received on the design and alignment of the trail between Blossom Hill Road and Chynoweth was very constructive. Some residents whose homes back up to the trail expressed concern regarding privacy and safety. In the coming weeks, I will be working with these neighbors and our parks staff to address these concerns.

The highlight of this trail will be the development of a new park on Winfield Boulevard between Chynoweth & Blossom River Way. The Fell Avenue neighborhood, which backs up to the future park, has recommended that a "low impact" recreational area in a natural setting would best serve the area. Evergreen trees, oak trees, and flowering plum trees will provide a buffer between the homes and Winfield Boulevard while creating a pleasant gateway to the Guadalupe River Trail. If you have any suggestions for the name of this new park, please forward them to my office by November 30th. Construction on this park is expected to begin next summer.

Your interest and participation in this project is appreciated. I will keep you informed of future developments. Please feel free to contact me if I can ever be of assistance.”

Parkview II – Todd Capurso from San Jose Parks & Recreation will host a community meeting for improvements on Parkview II on December 11 from 6:30 to 8 pm at Parkview Elementary School.

Terrell Park - Todd Capurso will also hold a community meeting for improvements at Terrell Park on December 4. Contact Todd at (408) 794-1336 for location and time.

VEP thanks *Vista Park* volunteers

-Dave Fadness

There are many folks who worked hard over the years to make Vista Park a reality for our kids and our families. One person who stands out above all is **Neil Bray**.

As a volunteer representative of girls *San Jose Bobbysocks*, Neil first approached VEP in the late 1980s with a proposal to build four softball diamonds on the recently acquired city parkland. We recoiled, then harnessed his able assistance on a committee assigned to work out a master plan for the park that was ultimately adopted by VEP members and the city. That plan fundamentally defined what is being completed today.

Working with *South San Jose SoftBall* volunteers, Neil was the catalyst behind installation of skinned infields at Vista Park. Working around finished concrete work surrounding the fields and turf grass plantings so as to avoid damaging the work already done, these volunteers brought in approximately 560 tons of fines. Parts of the infield were dug down to depths exceeding 12 inches by the city's contractor, so Neil's crew had to haul in fill dirt to bring the site to as close to a uniform depth of 4" as possible before spreading the fines. These factors meant that what they thought to be a one-day job turned into four to five days of hauling dirt and fines.

South San Jose SoftBall is a non-profit charitable organization. Their program enables from 350 to 400 girls aged five to 16 to develop their team oriented and softball skills each year. This organization has constructed five softball fields in South San Jose over the past ten years. Vista Park will bring that total to seven, work that represents a gift to the community and a lasting legacy from past volunteers to be enjoyed by future generations of our youth.

Neil worked with **Gary Zatkan**, the city's construction inspector for Vista Park, who was very helpful in facilitating a plan for getting the material onto the fields. He had to orchestrate at least two city departments and their contractor to get permission to proceed.

Thanks to this team effort, the softball fields are now completed. Backstops will be installed by the city shortly after park dedication on November 16th.

Characteristically, Neil gives credit to others. He said recently, *"In addition to **Gary Zatkan**, I want to recognize a few others, without whom this park would not be possible. First my friends **Dave Fadness** and **Dick Teitgens** who worked so hard to get a plan the entire community could support, and now soon enjoy. City Council members **Joe Head** and, most importantly, **Pat Dando** who supported us*

*in the dialog with the City. VEP membership for supporting the master plan. South San Jose SoftBall and over 1,000 players that raised the funds we earmarked to pay for our share of the park improvements. **Augie Barone**, of Barone Trucking for supplying all our trucking requirements at no cost to our organization.”*

VEP thanks Neil, all those mentioned above, and the San Jose Parks & Recreation Department for their work. Three Cheers!

You'll know it's spring when...

-Ian Reddy

You'll know it's spring when twenty-five hundred daffodils grace your neighborhood with their bright yellow faces! On Saturday, November 2nd, volunteers from the VEP membership, Gunderson High School, and the Willow Glen II Homeowners Association came together for a fun and friendly session of daffodil planting.

Half of the bulbs were provided by *San Jose Beautiful*. VEP paid for the other half and reimbursed **Kathy Decker** for refreshments. Kathy set up her front yard as home base for all the volunteers and put together a wonderful spread of refreshments. VEP also paid for renting a trencher, an indispensable tool when planting bulbs in rock-hard soil.

A complimentary ticket to *Westfield Works Wonders* was provided by **Westfield Shopping Centers** (Oakridge Mall) for each volunteer. A mystery donor supplied a ceramic figurine door prize; the winner was two-year old **Joey Tajnai**. Congratulations Joey!

Planting took place along the fenced frontage of Gunderson High School, the median of Chynoweth Avenue, the north side of Chynoweth on each side of Pearl Avenue, and at Vista Park, Meadows Park, Parkview I Park, and Parkview III Park. Wow, it's a good thing we had a power trencher to dig most of the eight hundred holes.

Thanks again to those volunteers who helped to make our neighborhood such a great place for everyone.

[Ed. Note: Ian Reddy is VEP's Vice President. We owe a debt of gratitude to him for the excellent job he did in organizing and implementing this Daffodil Days event. Ian pre-planned all the planting sites and had maps ready for each volunteer. We also appreciate the fine work of Kathy Decker and all our volunteers who helped plant daffodils. Thanks!]

SJUSD revokes soccer league's use permit

- Greg West, VEP Past-President

San Jose Unified School District (SJUSD) revoked the field-use permit for the adult soccer league that has been using Gunderson's soccer fields on Sundays for the last two and a half years. Two years ago, Gunderson's neighbors began complaining to Gunderson's administration and to the School District about the behavior of the group that was using the fields. Neighbors complained about trash left on the fields and in the neighborhood after the games, illegal street parking during the games, players

drinking in the street during and after the games, and a general lack of courtesy for Gunderson's neighbors by players and spectators. In addition, it was noted that players and spectators frequently violated SJUSD's tobacco use ban on school property.

The soccer league reacted to neighborhood complaints by policing the trash on the fields after games, but were not effective at addressing trash in the neighborhood, parking and traffic concerns, or discourteous and rude behavior of participants toward neighbors.

Use of Gunderson's classrooms on Sundays by a Vietnamese cultural school compounded parking and traffic problems there. Competition for street parking space during the half-hour around the end of Sunday classes resulted in people parking in or blocking neighbors' driveways and performing unsafe maneuvers such as illegal U-turns in the street. The Vietnamese school reacted to neighborhood concerns by putting parking control people on the street in front of the school at the end of their class day.

Gunderson's neighbors have displayed saintly patience over this more than two year period. In efforts to allow the soccer league to continue using Gunderson fields, VEP Community Association negotiated in good faith with the school and the District to come to a compromise short of pulling the field use permit. These efforts included alternative parking arrangements and limiting the number of games on the fields at any given time.

Neighbors also gave the group a chance to "clean up their act" and show some courtesy. The decision to pull the permit was ultimately that of the school district. Gunderson's neighbors can feel good about this outcome.

As an unfortunate and unintended consequence of the permit being pulled, Gunderson's soccer program lost \$1,500 in funding generated by the soccer league's use of the fields. Several of Gunderson's neighbors and VEP members responded to an email challenge from a VEP member to make up some of this lost funding. To date, these volunteers have pledged \$50 and \$100 donations to make up about half of the lost funding. Money collected will be given to Gunderson's soccer team through Gunderson's Booster club. No VEP funds are being contributed to the soccer program.

[Ed. note: If you appreciate the absence of the Sunday adult soccer league and would like to help Gunderson's soccer team make up lost funding, please contact Greg West at 629-1938 or at greg.west@prodigy.net.]

VEP community calendar

Tue. Nov 26: VEP General Meeting - Updates on neighborhood parks, trash and recycling collection, and street sweeping, 7:30 – 9:30 pm.

Wed. Dec 4: Community meeting on Terrell Park (call for location and time.)

Wed. Dec 11: Community meeting on Parkview II at Parkview Elementary School, 6:30 – 8:30 pm

Wed. Jan 8: VEP Executive Board meeting (call for location), 7:30 – 9:00 pm

Tue. Jan 28: VEP General Meeting - Presentations by San Jose Police on Internet predators and Demerris Brooks, Gunderson High School's new principal, 7:30 – 9:30 pm.

Neighborhood developments

-Dave Noel and Dave Fadness

Branham Lane at Vistapark Drive – Summerhill homes has obtained all necessary permits and is now targeting an April 2003 start for construction of their 78 single-family homes on this 8.8 acre parcel. Work is still proceeding with the city on landscaping plans for the adjacent termination of Vistapark Drive.

Capitol Ford – The owners of Capitol Ford have applied for a conditional use permit to allow demolition of their existing building and construction of an approximately 65,200 square-foot facility for automobile sales and service.

Monterey Expressway and Branham Lane – A proposal is in the works for 175 affordable, attached residential units and associated improvements on 5.05 gross acres at the northeast corner of Monterey Expressway and Branham Lane.

Branham Lane and Cherry Ave – The owner of the parcel at Branham Lane and Cherry Avenue is proposing to subdivide that lot into 6 lots to allow development of five single-family detached homes and an open space area.

Communications Hill – K&B Homes is proposing to build 90 single family attached residential units on Hillsdale Avenue approximately 1,000 feet north of the northern terminus of Vistapark Drive.

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

Hacienda Gardens – The owner of the Hacienda Gardens shopping center is proposing to redevelop the shopping center at Hillsdale and Meridian Avenues to allow up to 179,000 square feet of retail commercial uses and 299 multi-family attached residential units.

Ohlone/Chynoweth Light Rail Station Grocery Store – **Chris Hemingway**, chief of staff to San Jose's District 9 City Councilmember **John DeQuisto** alerted VEP that the mini-market at the Ohlone/Chynoweth light rail station is applying for a permit to sell beer and wine.

Gardening tips and November reminders

-John Marks, VEP's Green Gardener()*

Sprinkle some color into your winter garden if you're not growing vegetables this year. Sow wildflower seeds and the winter rains will water them for you. You could also

plant winter flowers, such as pansies, stock, snapdragons, and primrose. I've got some cosmos that keep re-seeding themselves in a neglected former tree hole in the driveway; they grow tall and beautiful, a thing of beauty to behold every day when I leave and return.

For veggies, plant snow peas, broccoli, chard, etc. Garlic planted now can be harvested in May; set cloves (pointed end up) in soil that has good drainage. Plant about one inch deep, three- to six-inches apart.

Also, get ready to spray fruit trees; after leaves have fallen, spray peach trees and nectarine trees with lime sulfur to control peach leaf curl. Spray apricot trees with a fixed-copper spray, coating the stems and trunk thoroughly.

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

Bulbs go in NOW

There is still time to plant spring-flowering bulbs. Most nurseries and garden centers remain well-stocked with dozens of colorful selections. To help you plan your garden, check out www.bulb.com for a wealth of information and tips about how to choose, plant and otherwise care for your bulbs. The site is maintained by the *Netherlands Flower Bulb Info Center* (where else?). Once you get bulbs in the ground, give yourself a little instant gratification by planting winter-color annuals on top. Good choices for sunny spots include pansies, violas, primrose and Iceland Poppies. For shady or dappled spots, try cineraria and cyclamen.

Salts in Potting Soil Steal Nutrients

If you've planted strawberries or other crops in a barrel, you may notice the berries getting small, or the leaves turning brown. This may happen even though you water frequently and feed with Miracle-Gro and sulfate of ammonia.

The problem is that many potting soils are high in salts. This causes burning of leaf edges. It will also lock up nutrients, and plants slowly starve, indicated by small berries. Try mixing two- to three-tablespoons of vinegar in two gallons of water and pouring the solution into the barrel. This will counteract salt buildup in the soil. A couple of days later, pour a solution of Miracle-Gro and water into the planter. You will have to live with the burned edges for a while, but if you do this a couple of times each year, whatever you are growing will do better.

Veggies that Lose Moisture

Although your harvest of cucumbers and other fleshy veggies yield large, healthy, and impressive results, they may lose their firmness, becoming limp after six- to ten-hours. Cleaning and storing at refrigerator temperature will not help.

The problem is that all fleshy vegetables lose moisture within a few hours after picking, some faster than others. Commercial growers cover their crops with wax right after picking to retain moisture before sending them to market. You are doing nothing wrong, it's just the nature of the

veggies; just don't pick them unless you intend to eat them soon after.

Trimming Rhododendrons

Rhododendrons that are planted in the yard may become overgrown. They need to be pruned in the winter or early spring. But severe pruning without preparation can destroy blooms next year. To rejuvenate an old, leggy Rhododendron, first feed and water the plant in the summer so that it is strong and healthy, and able to withstand severe pruning. In the winter cut one-third of the old limbs to 8-12 inches from the ground. The following year cut off an additional one-third of the old stems, and a year later cut down the last third. This may take about four years, but you'll retain some flowers every year.

Try to find old growth rings and make your cuts above one of these. New shoots will emerge from these growth rings. If the Rhododendron is too old and growth rings are not visible because of heavy bark, make the cuts 12 inches from the ground and hope that new growth will emerge from the hidden growth rings.

Alternatively, you can severely prune the entire shrub now, but it may be a few years before any flowers are seen.

[()Ed. Note: Mr. Marks credits the 8/30/02 issue of the Mercury-News' Gardening Section as a source for some of these hints.]*

Kudos for a VEP NEWS advertiser

-Bill and Leone Cundall

Thanks, VEP, for your advertising suggestions. We just had *Walt Peters Remodeling & Electrical* replace all our jacks and level our house. Now glassware in the hutch does not rattle every time someone walks down the hall and all the doors open and close properly. It was a fun experience, living in the house through the many "mini-earthquakes" that occur when old jacks are knocked out and new ones are put back and tightened, but we are glad the job was done right.

Thanks, again, for all your services to we who live here in the VEP Area. You are appreciated.

Walt Peters was advised that he was called because he has been a presence in the neighborhood and we saw his ad in the "VEP NEWS". In fact, he made a copy of ours for his own use.

[Ed. Note: The Cundalls are long-time VEP members. This letter was received in response to our request last month that VEP members who use the services of our NEWS advertisers tell them where they saw their ads--and tell us whether they were satisfied.]

Managing anger

- Maria Lloyd

As a family therapist, I'm very familiar with the emotions and feelings that are triggered by family events during the holiday season. A common emotion during this season and one I see in my practice regularly is that of uncontrolled anger. While most of us consciously know the de-

structive power of our anger, we're often unaware of how to change.

What most people don't realize is that anger is a secondary emotion, meaning that there are always other feelings, primary feelings, underneath the anger. For instance, if somebody insults you, the angry feelings are most apparent, but underneath the anger, feelings of sadness or rejection may be present. If you are able to express the primary feelings underneath the anger, the recipient will be more receptive to listening and you will be validating your feelings rather than stuffing your emotions or saying things you may later regret.

To tame anger, the most important immediate response is to take a time-out. Most people need time and space to calm down before they are able to respond in a rational way with kind words. I usually recommend an hour and ask people to initially distract themselves from the angry event. Physical activity or journaling during the hour are the best ways to release the angry feelings and regain the ability to think about the problem more objectively.

Once you are able to think more calmly about the situation, ask yourself these questions:

1. What did this person do or say that triggered my angry feelings?
2. What are the feelings underneath my anger?
3. When have I felt these feelings before? Are they being triggered by something besides this event?
4. What do I really want or need from this person?
5. How can I communicate so that what you need will be heard clearly?

Points to remember:

- The way you express your anger has the power to heal or harm your relationships so choose your words carefully.
- Communicating in an angry state creates more distance and pain, so consider taking a break before resolving.
- To grow closer in your relationships, express the feelings underneath the anger first.

[Ed. Note: Maria Lloyd is a family therapist, a VEP member, and a new advertiser beginning in this November issue. Her website is www.sanjosetherapy.org]

President's message

- Dave Noel

Can you believe the holidays are upon us already? While it may seem we've just started our new year, our list of accomplishments this fall proves otherwise. Here are some of the highlights:

- We met with Westfield management to learn about their new Oakridge Mall expansion plans, negotiating a variety of traffic improvements.
- We're meeting with Pinn Brothers (357-units, Capitol at Vistapark Drive), the city, and county to ensure fulfillment of promises for landscaping on Capitol Expressway and the addition of a sound wall behind three homes on Hastings Park Court.

- We worked with Gunderson on weekend facilities usage problems, leading up to the school district pulling the permit of a Sunday adult soccer league.
- We continue to maintain palm trees on Chynoweth.
- We planted 2500 daffodils.
- We prepared and submitted a grant application to San Jose Beautiful to plant trees and bushes in three gateways to our neighborhoods. We also made a major presentation to the grant committee.
- We held an election forum for the November elections.
- We've maintained our excellent meeting attendance, and attracted compelling guests for each meeting.
- We've witnessed and participated in the grand re-opening of Vista Park.
- We've improved electronic communications with our membership.
- We worked with the city on improvements to Meadows and Parkview I parks.
- We worked with the city on a new park to be located along Winfield Boulevard near Chynoweth, as part of the Guadalupe River Trail.
- We've worked with the Department of Transportation to improve safety at the intersection of Winfield and Chynoweth.
- We've kept in touch with city council and planning commission agendas to know what's being proposed in our neighborhoods and kept you posted.

Looking back at this impressive list of accomplishments, yes, I *can* believe the holidays are upon us already!

As returning members already know, we celebrate the December holidays by publishing a Christmas card style newsletter in December, and we don't hold a December general meeting. So your next "newsy" newsletter will come in January.

We've already planned our January meeting. We will have a special presentation by councilmember **Pat Dando** and the **San Jose Police Department** on protecting yourselves and your children from internet predators. This excellent presentation will teach you some internet basics, everything from preventing spam to protecting your identity and preventing kidnaps.

We plan to publish an article advertising this event in the newsletters of each elementary, middle and high school in the area. We can use your help to pass the word to other groups such as cub scouts, girl scouts, sports teams, church groups and so on. We will have an article ready for distribution by December 6th. Contact me for a copy. And don't feel bad if your kids know more about the internet than you do.

We're keeping our fingers crossed that we'll be awarded a grant by San Jose Beautiful in late November for our proposed beautification projects. If so, we'll start planning work days right away so we can get the maximum benefit of the rainy season to help our young trees and bushes get established. We will need your help, and we'll be communicating by email.

If you haven't been receiving VEP meeting and event reminders by email, it's because we don't have your email address. Please contact me to get added to our list. (Your email address will be protected and used for VEP communications only.)

See you at the November meeting, and have a wonderful Thanksgiving and December holiday season.

Homeowner Tips

Money down the drain

Money down the drain is not a good thing. You want your home to be comfortable, but you certainly don't want it to cost you more than necessary. Energy efficiency is good for the environment and it's very good for your bank account. A quick look around your property can help you plug up that money drain.

Older homes that haven't been updated can often be energy hogs. But they don't have to be. Newer homes may be less likely to suffer from escaping energy, but every home needs to be inspected from time to time. Look for obvious problems, such as cracked windows, a door that doesn't close properly, or a split in your foundation. Warm (or cool) air can seep through, costing you valuable money. Hold your hand over door and window frames to see if air is coming through. On windy days, place a feather next to these openings. If the feather moves, you've got a problem.

You will want to get into action. The good side is you have very little to lose and a lot to gain. Caulk around door and window frames. There are inexpensive 'sweepers' you can place at the bottom of your door to help keep down drafts. Weather stripping is usually easy to install and is quite effective in sealing up small areas where air leaks through. Replace any broken window panes. A newer and better sealing door might also be an option.

In the winter, a rug or 'draft stopper' can be placed by the door to block heat from escaping. Let the sunlight work for you by opening drapes when the sun is shining and closing them later in the evening. In fact, fabric is a terrific way to keep a room warm. Remember those beautiful tapestries used in castles? They were for more than looks. Castles were notoriously cold and damp. Hanging tapestries in appropriate places helped make things more comfortable.

Adjusting the thermostat downward only a few degrees can make a tremendous difference in your energy bill. If it feels a little cooler than you would like in the winter, put on a sweater. As long as everyone in the house is healthy, it shouldn't make any difference, except to your bank account.

In the summer, ceiling fans can circulate the air, making your home feel cooler without costing much. Even in the winter, you can reverse the blades on the ceiling fan and it will move the warm air around, making the room seem warmer without turning up the thermostat.

A very good idea would be to get an Energy Home Inspection. This valuable information may help you save time, as well as money. Call PG&E to inquire.

Make your home safe and secure

National Crime Prevention Month is officially in October, but home security should always be considered by home owners, no matter what time of year. Keeping yourself and your loved ones safe should be a priority and a quick check of your home will definitely have you sleeping better.

Keyed entryways and deadbolt locks are essential. Just be sure to remember to use them. Leaving your home unlocked is a sure invitation to a burglar that you are open for business.

This is also true for your garage or storage shed. Garage door openers are an added safety feature for any home. A 1992 report indicated most break-ins occur in residential areas and the burglar takes approximately 60 seconds to gain entry. Don't make his job easier.

Perform an outside inspection of your home. If you can find a place to gain entry without a key, so can a burglar. It's even a good idea to lock doors when you are at home. And never leave a key outside under the mat or a rock. Instead, leave an extra key with a trusted neighbor.

If you have a patio or sliding glass door, you will want to install a security bar. There are various types, so investigate which kind provides you with optimum protection. What about your windows? Do they have adequate locks? If not, you can install key locks or 'pin' your windows by drilling a small hole at a 45-degree angle between the inner and outer frames and insert a nail that can be removed.

There are many choices in home security systems. You will definitely want to ask around and do your homework before making a purchase. Options can include surveillance equipment such as video cameras, monitors, and alarms. Alarm systems can usually be installed easily and can be programmed to notify the security company or the homeowner.

Outdoor lighting is essential and motion sensors can often be a deterrent. Some homeowners use the 'barking dog' method as a warning to potential thieves. You'll also want to pay attention to landscaping. Overgrown plants that hide windows or doors are not a good idea. Trim them back.

Important documents or other valuables are best protected in a safety deposit box or fireproof safe. Your bank may provide this inexpensive service offsite (a good idea in case of fire).

Last, but very important, always make sure everyone is schooled on safety. Teach children to never open the door to strangers. Practice escape routes often, in case of fire.

Have a plan on how to handle pets. And make sure fire extinguishers and smoke alarms are up to date and in perfect working order.

[Ed. Note: These homeowner tips were taken from Brian Bonnifield's website. Brian is a long-time VEP member and a real estate professional who advertises in this newsletter.]

Traffic calming

-Dave Noel and Dave Fadness

Winfield at Chynoweth - 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**, the morning of October 10th to review traffic and pedestrian safety issues raised at the corner of Winfield and Chynoweth.

These issues were raised at the first Guadalupe River Trail meeting. The DOT team presented their recommendations at the second Guadalupe River Trail meeting. The following changes will be implemented:

1. Re-stripe the southerly painted median on Winfield Boulevard to allow for a smoother transition from the Chynoweth Avenue left turn pocket.
2. Reconfigure the left turn pockets to establish the inside left turn closer to the existing finger median and re-stripe the number 1 through and left lane to a through lane only. Two left turn lanes will remain in the modified design and two through lanes will continue westbound on Chynoweth Avenue.
3. Coordinate with the Signals Design group to cut in a new loop detector for the inside left turn pocket. Any necessary reconfiguration of the intersection will be undertaken by DOT field personnel.

Pearl Avenue Speeding – San Jose Police Officer Kroft of the Traffic Enforcement Unit contacted VEP President Dave Noel on October 22nd to report that they are continuing to monitor speeding on Pearl Avenue. Police officers issued tickets on Pearl Ave near Terrell School the week of October 14th. They recognize Pearl Ave as a chronic speeding area and continue to monitor it with enforcement at various locations such as near Erikson and Holy Family schools.

Traffic complaints?

-Dave Fadness

If you have problems with speed freaks and other traffic crazies on your street, be sure to file a *Traffic Incident Complaint* with the San Jose Police Department. To make this easy for you, we've included a copy of the form on our VEP website. Check it out at www.vepca.org.

Remember: Our cops won't attend to problems they don't know about. Their work priority is based upon number of complaints filed. Don't file a complaint, don't expect action. Easy, eh?

Update: Gunderson facilities use

-Jeri Arstingstall

Greg West and I had a meeting with the principal, **Demerris Brooks**, School Board Member **Veronica Lewis**, and representatives of the school district to discuss the usage of Gunderson High School. This meeting was very informative. As a neighbor, I walked away from the meeting knowing that the new principal cared about the entire school and not just the walls the students are in.

The school district revoked the permit for the adult soccer league that had use of the fields on Sunday. As Greg has noted in his article (elsewhere in this newsletter), this came about from the users not being courteous.

There are currently only two valid permits for the field use. They are the *Santa Teresa Youth Football League* and the *Almaden Youth Soccer*. Arlene from the district office told us that no permits will be issued unless the leagues sign in person.

Greg and I reiterated that we would like to look at the permit process and Arlene said she would have the permit packet sent to us for VEP and the neighbors to review. The school and the district are open to rewording and changing the permit to accommodate the neighborhood.

At this time they will not be issuing any permits for Sunday usage of the fields. There were two main reasons for this. First being that the fields will need a rest during the rainy months, as the fields will be used for the Gunderson High School Teams and the two leagues who have permits for Saturday usage. The second reason being that the school will be under construction starting in spring.

The school is also used on the weekends for the *German School* which meets on Saturdays and the *Vietnamese School* which meets on Sundays. There was discussion on the possibly of relocating the German School to the other side of the campus so it would be more convenient for parents to use the parking lot. This item is still unresolved.

We commended the Vietnamese School for their handling of the parking and traffic situation. The school and the school district, however, were not aware of them using the bell and paging system and we were told that they will speak with the Vietnamese School regarding this matter.

Arlene and Demerris also advised us that Westfield Shopping Center will be using the Gunderson High School Parking lot for the employee parking over the Holiday Season while Oakridge Mall is under construction. They promised us that this will not be an impact on the neighborhood. We will wait and see.

As a side note of the meeting, our neighbors will be happy to know that part of the construction project starting in the spring is for the Clock, Bell, and Paging System. Demerris said she would involve the neighbors as more details become known. This should keep the bells from ringing on holidays and be a little quieter on the announcements.

* * *

If you are happy with the school's actions in accommodating our requests, please make a donation to the Gunder-

son High School Soccer Team. They have been affected financially by loss of revenue normally obtained through rental of the school's ball fields.

[Ed. Note: Jeri Arstingstall is a former VEP Secretary who volunteered to coordinate VEP's efforts to find solutions to neighborhood impacts of private use of Gunderson facilities.]

Gunderson High sports & events

Congratulations to Gunderson High's Girls tennis team for making it into CCS; a job well done!

Homecoming was a big success. **Geoff Lovely** put our winning score over the field post with his field goal. Good job Grizzlies for winning Homecoming and making it a great day. Boosters would like to thank all the students, teachers, parents and volunteers that made homecoming a success.

Gunderson's Booster Club is still participating in the Escrip program. This is an easy way for you to help raise funds for our athletes. You simply register your Safeway, PW or Vons club card with Escrip and your athletes get a percentage from your usual grocery shopping.

To register is simple, just e-mail Louie Aldama at Laladama340@cs.com with your name, address, phone number and club card number. You can also register online at www.escrip.com. Enter Gunderson's Id number, 473420, then go to the online registration page. Thereafter, when you shop, use your club card and support our athletes.

We would like to invite you to attend our *3rd Annual Crab Feast*. It will be held on February 1, 2003. We will have Hawaiian Dancers, a live band, a raffle, a silent auction, and a live auction. The crab feast has been a lot of fun in the past and we hope to have you come a join us this year. Tickets are \$30 per person. For more information or anyone wanting to volunteer to help, you can e-mail Kanika Ah Yo at kahyo@ssti.com.

Gunderson will be hosting a Golf Tournament in the spring. Anyone interested in helping with this event, please contact us at Laldama340@cs.com.

Gunderson's autumn stage play

- Greg West, VEP Past-President

You are invited to come watch the Gunderson High School fall play "The Female Odd Couple." Performances will be November 20th through November 23rd. All shows are at 7 pm in the Gunderson Theater. Ticket prices are \$9 for adults, \$5 for students, and \$3 for children under the age of 13.

Guava fruit fly eradication

-Dave Noel

The entire VEP membership area is contained within a larger 19 square mile area being monitored and treated for

an agricultural pest called the *Guava Fruit Fly*. The approximate boundaries of this "eradication area" are Hwy 87, Blossom Hill Road, Hwy 101 and Curtner Ave; plus additional areas extending north to Story Road and east to White Road.

Guava fruit flies were found near the intersections of Monterey Highway and Capitol Expressway, and Tully Road and Hwy 101. The initial "Proclamation of Eradication Project" (PEP) was published in the San Jose Mercury News on September 12. An addendum was published on October 11, enlarging the area from 12 to 19 square miles. For more information, contact **Cliff Ramos**, Program Supervisor at (916) 654-1211.

Bulletin Board Ads

MAKE OFFER: Mini blinds for the kitchen sink window and brand new family room patio screen door for Arcadia Park Royal model. Call Jeri or Walt at (408) 281-1959.

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

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.

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 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.