

VEP MEETING

7:30 P.M. TUESDAY
February 25, 2003

GUNDERSON HIGH SCHOOL
★ **Faculty Lounge** ★

AGENDA

★ **Capitol Expressway** ★

A presentation on Valley Transportation Agency's plans for Light Rail on Capitol Expressway.
7:30 to 8:30 p.m.

★ **Measure A** ★

Pro/con speakers and answers to your questions on this issue which appears on the March 4th San Jose Special Election ballot.
8:30 to 9:00 p.m.

★ **Your Community Concerns** ★

Everyone is welcome. Invite your neighbors!

Our February meeting

- *Dave Fadness*

Valley Transportation Agency (VTA) has been in the news every day lately. VTA is facing serious transportation revenue shortfalls and an unpleasant range of alternatives to remedy them. A cut-back in capital improvement programs is just one of the alternatives under consideration.

Despite these funding issues, planning continues to move forward on the addition of light rail transit in the median of Capitol Expressway.

To bring us up to date with the facts, we have invited long-time transportation planner **Jim Lightbody** to tell us about VTA's plans for Capitol Expressway light rail. Mr. Lightbody will show us what is being proposed, give us an idea regarding their proposed development schedule, and let us know what the impacts may be on our area. (Also see the descriptive article by VTA's **Gail Price** in this newsletter.) Questions will be accepted from the audience, so your participation is encouraged.

Second on our agenda is a pro/con presentation on **Measure A**, an issue we hope you will be voting on in San Jose's Special Election, March 4th. Speaking in favor will be a representative of *San Jose Taxpayers for a Secure Airport*. Speaking against will be **Chip Evans**, Co-Chair of *People Against Airport Traffic Jams*. This will be an opportunity for you to hear the arguments first-hand, get answers to your questions from experts on both sides, and come away prepared to vote smart on March 4th.

As always, we allow time at our meetings for YOU to address YOUR neighborhood concerns. Your input helps us to set our agenda for VEP activities, so we need to hear from you.

Please be sure to attend.

VEP officers needed

-Dave Fadness

It's **your** turn. Here's a golden opportunity for caring neighbors who can give back a few hours each month to their community. VEP is looking for a handful of volunteers to lead and shape the objectives of our organization. Our elected officers are president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and newsletter editor. This year, elections and installation of new officers will be held at our April *Annual Meeting*.

Term of service: one year. Pay: zero. Personal rewards: infinite. Special experience required: none (all we ask is an interest in and eager dedication to our neighborhoods). You have what it takes!

Call any member of our current team of execs with questions or to discuss your interest. Our numbers are listed on the mailing page of this newsletter.

C'mon, make our day! Volunteer to be an officer of VEP.

Capitol Expressway LRT project overview

-Gail Price, VTA

The Capitol Expressway Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project extends 8.2 miles from the end of the Capitol LRT at Alum Rock Station to Eastridge Mall, and continues to the existing Guadalupe LRT line at Highway 87. The line will have ten stations in the vicinity of: Story Road, Ocala Avenue, Eastridge, Nieman Boulevard, Silver Creek (optional), McLaughlin, Senter Road, Monterey Highway, Vistapark Drive, and Highway 87.

LRT will primarily operate in the median of Capitol Expressway. The Capitol Expressway light rail line will operate in exclusive and semi-exclusive rights of way and includes both grade-separated and at-grade crossings at intersections with streets and highways. The crossing of freeways, expressways, and some major arterials will be grade-separated, either elevated or depressed. Transit operations will be given signal priority at intersections, with grade-separation at congested intersections to avoid delay to transit patrons.

Both the light rail project and its urban design features transform the expressway to a multi-modal boulevard providing transit, bicycle and pedestrian, and vehicular circulation. There will be improved landscaping and pedestrian and bicycle linkages along the expressway, with connections to adjacent neighborhoods, trails/paths, and activity centers. In addition, park and ride and vehicle station storage areas are also being proposed as part of the project.

The Capitol Expressway LRT Project is currently in Conceptual Engineering and staff anticipates that the EIS/EIR will be completed by Spring 2004. For additional project information, contact Gail Price, VTA Planning and Programming, at (408) 321-5744.

“At-Large” CSA nomination forms

- David Noel

Nominations for the “At-Large” category of this year’s *VEP Community Service Award* (CSA) are due by our April Annual meeting on Tuesday, April 22, 2003. Nomination forms are being distributed to all VEP members in this issue of the VEP News, and may be downloaded (.pdf format) from the VEP Web Site: www.vepca.org. Completed nomination forms may be mailed to: VEP, P.O. BOX 18111, San Jose, CA, 95158; be returned in person at the April VEP meeting; or be submitted to me (266-7183 or at dnoel1234@aol.com).

The *VEP Community Service Award* is our attempt to reward area high school seniors for exemplary volunteerism during their high school careers and to encourage all students to carry the habit of volunteerism into their adult lives. The award is based only on the student’s volunteer (not academic) record during high school.

Awards are traditionally given to one deserving senior from each of the VEP neighborhood high schools, Henry T. Gunderson High School and Andrew Hill High School. Last year, an “At-Large” award category was added. Members present at our January 28th meeting unanimously approved a budget of \$1500 for each of the three award categories for 2003. This is a \$500 increase from previous years.

Any VEP member may nominate a graduating high school senior that lives in San Jose for the “At-Large” award category. PLEASE NOTE: “At-Large” nomination forms must be signed by a school administrator to verify that the nominated student’s status as a 2003 graduate. A minimum of two nominations must be received in each category in order for an award to be granted in that category.

Nominations for all three categories are due by the end of our April 22nd, 2003 General Meeting. The “At-Large” award nomination form is published in this edition of the VEP News, and can also be found in .pdf format on our web site: www.vepca.org.

Completed nomination forms may be returned at the April VEP meeting; be mailed to: VEP, P.O. Box 18111, San Jose, CA 95158; or given to Dave Noel (266-7183, dnoel1234@aol.com).

VEP Home Improvement Faire

The following vendors are scheduled to exhibit at our annual *Home Improvement Faire*, scheduled for 7:30 pm on March 25th at Gunderson High School:

- Affordable Sunrooms
- Anderson Windows
- California Bathroom Remodeling
- California Role-Out Shelf
- County Composting Education
- Gina Ray Realtor
- Gutter Topper
- Home Pest Control
- Michael's Construction

- Morazan Roofing
- OSH Hardware
- Pampered Chef Cooking
- Peters Electrical and Remodeling
- Precious Moments in Time Photography
- Premier Door Services
- Randazzo Water Softeners
- Renaissance Solartube
- Student Painters
- Summer Winds Nursery
- The Garage Door Store
- Tupperware
- Wayne Thomas Landscaping
- Wooden Floors by Craig

More service providers are currently being invited. We expect to add concrete driveways, painters, and dry wall contractors for your convenience. Plan to attend.

Start cleaning your garage and closets

VEP's Annual Community-Wide Garage Sale is Saturday, April 26th

VEP will advertise this community-wide garage sale event in the San Jose Mercury News and Pennysaver. This is an excellent opportunity for you to take advantage of an increased number of shoppers by offering your unwanted household treasures for sale on the same day as the rest of your neighbors.

Spread the word to your neighbors. Let's make this year's Garage Sale the biggest one yet!

Volunteers needed

VEP Neighborhood Garage Sale, April 26th. Contact Katherine Decker at (408) 972-4098.

VEP Annual Picnic, tentatively set for May 18th at Vista Park. Contact Ian Reddy at (408) 226-9574.

VEP community calendar

Tue, Feb 25: VEP General Meeting at Gunderson (VTA presentation on plans for light rail on Capitol Expressway; *Measure A* on March 4 Special Election), 7:30 – 9:30 pm.

Tue, Feb 25: Community meeting with Vice Mayor Pat Dando to select the public artist and review designs for the new community center and branch library, at the Almaden Community Center, 6445 Camden Ave (call 408-794-1400 for more information), 7 – 9 pm.

Tue, Mar 4: **Special Election**, City of San Jose's *Measure A*; get out and vote! (Voter registration forms are available at all VEP meetings.)

Wed, Mar 5: VEP Executive Board meeting (call for location), 7:30 - 9 pm.

Tue, Mar 25: VEP General Meeting at Gunderson (annual Home Improvement Faire), 7:30 – 9:30 pm

Wed, Apr 2: VEP Executive Board meeting (call for location), 7:30 - 9 pm.

Tue, Apr 22: VEP Annual Meeting at Gunderson (County Expressways; election of VEP officers and annual report), 7:30 - 9 pm.

Sat, Apr 26: VEP's Annual Garage Sale

Sun, May 18: 2nd Annual VEP Community Picnic at Vista Park

Tue, May 27: VEP General Meeting at Gunderson (program TBD), 7:30 - 9 pm.

Membership Drive

- *Dave Noel*

I am thrilled to announce that more than half of you have already sent in your membership renewals. If you haven't renewed yet, please do it now while you're thinking of it. For your convenience, we've printed a copy of the renewal form in this newsletter in case you don't have your remit envelop handy. If you're a new member, let me be the first to welcome you.

One of the most rewarding parts of the renewal process is reading what you have to say in the comments section of your renewal form. We appreciate the compliments, and value your suggestions for future projects and priorities. Here's a sampling of what you've had to say so far:

- Thanks so much to all of you who work so hard to make our area safe & beautiful!
 - Great job! Can we possibly get the fence painted from Vistapark & Branham up to close to Safeway? An eyesore!
 - We appreciate very much all the volunteer hours the board members put in for our neighborhood. Thank you!
 - Thank you for all your good work for our community!
- I enjoy reading the newsletter & all the specifics.
- Your association does such a great job for the neighborhood. Keep it up.
 - The newsletter is great.
 - Thank you very much for your continued dedication to our wonderful VEP community.
 - You are doing an excellent service.
 - You guys are doing a great job. I know how hard it is to find volunteer hours. I appreciate the newsletter and all the work everyone does.
 - Great job on the median on Chynoweth between Pearl and Winfield. It looks great.
 - Keep up the good work and thank you for keeping us informed on what is going on in our neighborhood!
 - Members for 30 years and very appreciative for the excellent work you have done.
 - Enjoy reading VEP News. Keeps me updated with the community.

- Thanks again for all your good work and for Vista Park (Belden) - it is great.
- Great newsletter. Given recent accidents (including fatal one) would like to see if city could study possible traffic calming project.
- Your monthly publication keeps us informed of our own community. Thank You.
- You folks do a great job. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

VEP membership renewal

If you haven't sent in your 2003 renewal yet, please do so now to make sure you continue receiving the **VEP NEWS** and keep informed of what's happening in your community.

To renew, write a check for \$15 to *VEP Community Association* and mail it in the remit envelop included with your January VEP NEWS, or fill out the form below and mail it to VEP Community Association, P.O. Box 18111, San Jose, CA 95158.

We encourage you to include your email address and phone number so we can get you timely information in the event that urgent news happens between editions of the VEP NEWS. We only use this information for official VEP business. We do not sell or share any VEP membership information with any third parties.

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

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

Last Name: _____

First Name(s): _____

Street Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Comments:

Can you give VEP a few volunteer hours each month?

Fatal accident on Branham Lane

-Dave Noel & Dave Fadness

You probably heard about the tragedy in which two young men were killed when their speeding car went out of control and hit a tree in the median of eastbound Branham Lane near Prince Royal Place on January 26th.

In response to community members concerned about safety issues on this section of Branham Lane, Vice Mayor **Pat Dando** asked **Jim Helmer**, Director of the San Jose Department of Transportation to investigate this area for safety enhancements, items to be replaced, and a report back by February 27th.

VEP will naturally be very interested in the results of this study and will get involved where appropriate.

At our January meeting, members also brought to our attention the issue of unstable Eucalyptus trees on Branham Lane. These trees drop heavy branches without warning and present serious safety and property damage concerns. VEP will follow up on this issue as well.

Neighborhood news

[Oops! We credited the wrong person in this article which appeared in our January newsletter. Here's the corrected version:]

You may remember the dirt piles in front of Gunderson after our November 2nd daffodil planting event. Gunderson volunteers found themselves with a lot of displaced dirt after cleaning, adding soil amendments, and planting daffodils and other plants. Perennial VEP volunteer **Frank Kistler** quietly visited Gunderson with his shovel, broom, and wheelbarrow one day and cleaned up the dirt that had become an eyesore after the rains hit.

VEP salutes Frank for the many contributions he makes as a willing volunteer in our community.

VEP area parks

-Dave Noel

Vista Park playground equipment: In our January VEP News, we reported that we'd brought several safety and maintenance issues to the attention of **Joshua Howard** of Vice Mayor **Pat Dando's** office. Some progress has been made to address them, particularly the most serious safety issues. We hope to have more to report to you in our March VEP News.

New park on Winfield Blvd at Chynoweth Avenue: The master plan for this new park was formally adopted by a unanimous vote at the January 14th city council meeting, and construction should begin this summer and be completed in early spring 2004.

The 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.

VEP executives **Dave Noel** and **Dave Fadness** formally nominated the name "William Cilker Park," and will be present at the Parks & Recreation hearing on March 19th to testify in favor of this nomination. Subsequent to this meet-

ing, the new park name will be formally adopted by a vote of the San Jose city council.

City advisory members sought

Below is a list of City of San Jose committees and commissions that are currently looking for volunteers to participate in making recommendations, reviewing services, reviewing grant applications and making funding recommendations, and in general making changes affecting the quality of life of residents living in San Jose.

Applications are being sought to fill vacancies on the following committees and commissions:

- Airport Curfew Monitoring Committee
- Arts Commission
- CDBG Steering Committee
- Early Care and Education Commission
- Human Rights Commission
- Library Commission
- Mobile Home Advisory Commission
- Parks and Recreation Commission
- Senior Citizens Commission
- Small Business Development Commission
- Traffic Appeals Commission

Applications will be accepted until Friday, February 28, 2003, at 5:00 p.m., at the Office of the City Clerk, 801 N. First Street, Room 116, San Jose, California. For information about the number of vacancies on each commission, as well as specific requirements, please log onto http://www.ci.san-jose.ca.us/cty_clk/vacancy.htm or call (408) 277-4424.

President's message

- *Dave Noel, VEP President*

Our planting project on Saturday January 25th was easily the highlight of my two terms as president of VEP. I'd like to personally thank each and every one of you that came to help on that gorgeous day, or who helped us during the project planning and volunteer recruitment phases. The newly landscaped areas look wonderful.

I'm especially happy to see that we were able to achieve our original vision of large trees, bushes and mulch. When we applied for the *San Jose Beautiful* grant, we had to trim our budget by proposing smaller trees and eliminating all bushes. After we were awarded the grant, we worked incredibly hard to find ways to stretch the budget to get larger trees and add the bushes back in.

To make a long story short, we partnered with *Our City Forest*, who provided us trees at wholesale prices allowing us to get 15-gallon trees. BFI donated the beautiful "Pro Chip" mulch material, and that essentially freed up funding for bushes. Other donated materials helped offset costs so we could purchase "Dri-Water" passive irrigation systems which should help nurture our new plants until they get established.

As discussed in Dave Fadness' article elsewhere in this newsletter, our volunteers and benefactors were many.

We couldn't have this tremendous success without all their help. I think you'll agree that San Jose Beautiful spent their limited grant funds wisely by sponsoring this project, just like they did seven years ago when they awarded us a grant to plant the palm trees on Chynoweth Ave.

So, what's our next project going to be? I think we should beautify the sound wall on the north side of Branham Lane, east of Vistapark Drive. What do you think? That's a big project! We'll need *your* energy to make it happen, especially if you live east of Vistapark Drive.

Speaking of needing your energy, we will hold our annual VEP executive officer elections at our April 22nd general meeting. We need to fill one or two positions on the board with new volunteers this year. Of course we welcome all volunteers, but I would like to especially appeal to members who live east of Vistapark Drive. Without any members from that neighborhood on the board, we fear that area may not be as well represented as it could be.

So, what's it like to be on the board? Come find out for yourself. Members are always welcome at our board meetings. We have two executive meetings before the April 22nd election, on March 5th and April 2nd, both at 7:30 pm. Call any of the board members listed on the mailing page of this newsletter for the location or to learn more about us.

VEP has stayed continuously active for more than 33 years by having a succession of enthusiastic volunteers. Now it's your turn to help us achieve another year of great things. Please join us, you'll be glad you did.

We have a great program lined up for our general meeting on February 25th. The timing couldn't be better to learn about of both sides of the important March 4th *Measure A* ballot measure. We'll also learn about advance planning for a possible light rail extension on Capitol expressway adjacent to the VEP area. This is your chance to let VTA know what you think of their plans.

I hope to see you at the meeting and, as always, bring a friend.

Computer corner

-Bob Aquino, VEP's Computer Guru

This month, we need to examine the dark side of computers. Our January VEP meeting featured two officers from the San Jose Police Department assigned to tracking predators on the Internet.

These officers log into chat rooms posing as young girls. They reported that within 10 seconds of connecting, adults looking for sex with young girls could contact them. They cited a case that they had prosecuted where a middle-aged man, who was a colonel in the Army Reserves, contacted them. He had a completely secret life of preying on girls that he met in this way.

While they gave tips for protecting our kids from this type of thing, the most chilling aspect of their presentation was the response to a question from the floor as to how many successful prosecutions they had. They sort of talked around the issue, saying that they could put many away if

they had available time and budget. The bottom line of this is, to really protect their kids, parents need to be aware of what they are doing on the Internet.

Some of the things that you can do to help protect their safety are really common sense. The computer should be located in a public room where a parent can glance at the monitor from time to time to see where their child has been on the net. We all know that our kids are much more computer savvy than we are. If you don't know anything about computers but have one in your house, take a course to learn, so you can communicate with your child about computers.

Software filters are somewhat effective in screening out trash. Although I can't speak from personal experience, they spoke highly of AOL's blocking system. Another good source of internet safety information is www.getnetsmart.com. They have downloadable filters, and lots of good advice on the Internet in general. If you have a filter installed, be sure that your kids DON'T know the password. If you think that they might, change it.

The Internet has its own language. Particularly, there are abbreviations to facilitate typing. Some of these are innocuous: ASAP, FYI, BTW (by the way). Some are not so: A/S/L? (age, sex, location) POS (parent over shoulder). You can find lists of these on the Web.

You can check the most recently visited web sites by dropping down the menu on the address bar. If it's empty, that's a real red flag. Someone has cleared the history file. Find out who did it and why.

Check for files with the suffixes jpg, gif, tif, bmp, or pcx. These are picture formats. To find them, use the search function and, depending on your OS, search for Pictures or look for files using *.xxx, where xxx is the particular suffix. There are a good number that will be there from the software that you have installed.

If your kids go into chat rooms, talk to them about what rooms they use. Talk to them about Internet safety in general. Don't put any personal information such as address, phone number, or age in an Internet profile where it could be used by a predator.

It's a cliché when discussing raising children, but nevertheless true: keep the lines of communications open.

Stop nuisance olives & other annoyances

-John Marks, VEP's Green Gardener

You can spray trees such as olive and liquid amber (thorny balls) to prevent them from bearing by spraying in the Spring just after blossoms form and before fruit sets. You'll need two products: a hose sprayer bottle and a floral fruit eliminator concentrate.

Ortho makes a Tree & Shrub Spray-ette, available from Payless Rockery or Summer Winds Nursery for \$13.95; it shoots 25 feet up into the tree, and higher if you have a step ladder.

Floral Fruit Eliminator concentrate is made by Monterey Lawn & Garden Products (\$13.99), available from Orchard Supply. Avoid getting spray on your face or hands and, if spray drifts onto a car, wash the car down afterwards (it's better to move the car *before* spraying).

This product will prevent other trees such as crab apple and plumb from bearing as well; ironically, if used on green tomatoes in the Fall, it will hasten ripening but not damage the fruit.

VEP's January general meeting notes

-Ginger Cardona, VEP Secretary

Gene Batti brought three concerns to our meeting:

1. First is untrimmed street trees. A tree branch fell and totaled a woman's car on Branham Lane.
2. Second is the resurfacing of Prince Royal Court. City engineers have responded to complaints by coming out to inspect it, but nothing has ever been done.
3. His third issue was the recent accident on eastbound Branham Lane, just east of New Compton Drive, which took the lives of two people. There is a lot of concern about the speed of cars driving down Branham Lane. The road is also uneven possibly adding to loss of control. A few houses have already been hit by speeding cars.

Jeri Valdez who lives on Fort Royale Court spoke about her concerns over Branham Lane and her fears of a car going through her bedrooms where her children sleep. She would like to see the city do something to slow down the cars late in the evening. This is a time period she said that the cars seem to speed excessively.

Pat Dando has responded to the accident on Branham by asking DOT for an investigation. The results of this investigation should be ready within one month.

VEP's Community Service Awards were reviewed. VEP officers had recommended that the award amount be increased from \$1000 per category to \$1500 per category this year. That recommendation was passed unanimously by members in attendance.

VEP's landscape planting day

-Dave Fadness

On January 25, VEP sponsored an incredibly successful volunteer event at two gateway locations into our membership area. Funded by a grant from *San Jose Beautiful* for landscaping on public property, this was truly a team effort that combined the energy and talent of City of San Jose's *Department of Transportation*, non-profit *Our City Forest*, and volunteers from our own membership.

Our volunteers did landscaping on two sites. On the triangular street median at the southeast corner of Narvaez Avenue/Branham Lane, we planted six Western Redbud and three Deodar Cedar trees, and eighteen Pink Dancer and six rose bushes. In the median island on Chynoweth Avenue, between Pearl Avenue and Winfield Boulevard, we planted three Incense Cedar and two Bur Oak trees, and nineteen Pink Dancer bushes. We also installed a new kind of passive watering device for each plant and moved

forty cubic yards of top-cover mulch, about half at each site, giving the medians a finished, professional look.

VEP is very grateful to these folks who generously donated materials and labor:

- **San Jose Beautiful** (VEP received a \$3500 grant for planting and three-year maintenance materials).
- **City of San Jose Arborist (Ralph Mize)** donated a professional redesign of our original landscape plans and helped us during advance planning and selection of planting materials).
- **City of San Jose Department of Transportation** (soil preparation, perimeter trenching, rose bushes, street barricading, use of shovels, rakes, brooms, gloves, and safety vests). Our special thanks to the city's project coordinator **Spiros Kolomvotos**, his boss **Frank Bowman**, and their extraordinary crew. Our task would have been much more arduous, and downright dangerous without the help of these fine people.
- **Our City Forest** (sold 15-gallon trees and 5-gallon bushes to us at an unbeatable discount price; donated tree stakes, fertilizer, and invaluable "Tree Amigo" volunteer help on planting day). Our special thanks to **Christian Bonner**, OCF's Operations manager, who was there with us during planning, selection of planting materials, and pitching-in on planting day.
- **Browning-Ferris Industries** (donated 40-cubic yards of their ProChip top-covering mulch, saving VEP \$1460).
- **Starbuck's Coffee** (donated coffee and supplies for our planting day tail-gate breakfast and lunch).
- **A Rental Center, Los Gatos** (Owners and VEP members **Fred** and **Lois Koslowski** offered to donate a dump truck for hauling top-covering material).

In all, sixty-six volunteers signed in that day. Our eager group ranged in age from high school students to octogenarians. We had students from Bellarmine, Gunderson, Oak Grove, and Pioneer. Six *Interact* students showed up unannounced from Santa Teresa High School! Needless to say, we were very happy to have this kind of turn-out, which made our job fun and less strenuous for each of us. We logged a total of almost 280 volunteer hours.

These are the folks whose hard work made our project a tremendous success (our apologies to anyone who did not register their name):

Akshay Amin	Ravi Chandran
Bob Aquino	Jim Chapdelaine
Christian Bonner	Jennifer Chapdelaine
Matt Brown	Delorse Carmichael
Anh Bui	Danielle Carmichael
Eric Butler	Joyce Chesnos
Alan & Ginger Cardona	Larry & Darlene Chicos
Norma Castillo	Mike Chicos

Tony Dang	Manpreet Mumman
Katherine Decker	Si & Amy Na
Baophuong Dinh	Nhu Nguyen
Peter Dinh	Dave & Maureen Noel
Loren Dustin	Bryan Noel
Gary Eckley	Dot Oberschulte
Dave & Aiko Fadness	Bob & Francine Olsen
Pierre Faghali	Sharon Pardun
Abby Garston	Jim & Susan Ptak
Marvin & Kathy Griffing	Wyatt Ptak
Mike Grow	Frank Reid
Cody Guerrero	Martin Renteria
Jeremy Herb	David & Bette Sheldon
Loretta Holmes	Mark Schoenberg
Dick & Cheryl Juarez	Josie Supencheck
Barry Larsen	Joe Tajnai
Amy Lund	VickiTindel
John Marks	Marrv Watkin
Jim Martinek	Robin, & Garret West
Mark & Marcy Mossawir	Abby Wilst

We offer a special salute to VEP Hospitality Committee Chair **Katherine Decker** for her work in keeping our workers well fed and refreshed throughout the days' activities, and to **Mark Schoenberg** for snapping dozens of great photos that will help in our formal reports and as a lasting reminder of a happy, fulfilling day when decades from now those trees are mature.

Our volunteer recruitment champions were **Darlene Chicos**, **Ginger Cardona**, **Marcy Mossawir**, **Dave Noel**, and **Dot Oberschulte**. These folks canvassed their respective neighborhoods door-to-door to find willing helpers. We're also grateful to **Alan Cardona**, our water-trailer driver, who was up at the crack of dawn in order to have 500-gallons of water on-site and ready for our newly-planted trees and bushes.

Make it a point to check out our work next time you drive by one of those sites. I think you'll agree that we did a good thing together, something our great grandchildren will enjoy even more than we do already.

VEP thanks to all who participated. Stay tuned, we have other plans that will make--and keep--our neighborhoods among the most attractive in San Jose.

An open letter to VEP friends

-Joyce & Bob Chesnos

Just wanted to say how impressed I was by the turnout of neighbors and other volunteers Saturday January 25th. How wonderful it is that so many people care so much about beautifying even small parcels of land in our neighborhoods that haven't been built on or cemented over. As we will all be able to see over the next few years, small community projects can reap great benefits for our neighborhoods. You helped make the only entrance to our neighborhood look inviting at last!

It was so nice to meet some of our neighbors we never have had an opportunity to meet before, in spite of living together in this neighborhood for years and years.

Thank you all for your efforts, big and small. It looks wonderful!

Advertising & privacy concerns: Part 1

-Al Bender (*)

Do doorknob hangers irritate you? Have you noticed the increased number of them being deposited on your doorstep or draped over your doorknob? Your answer to each question should be: Yes. Having lived in the same home in Vistapark for 20 years, I can personally attest to the latter.

What used to be rare is now commonplace. At times I receive two or three in one week. Why should they irritate you? The primary reason is security. All police agencies recommend that whenever you plan to be absent from your residence for more than a day, you should stop all deliveries. The reason is simple: a home with newspapers stacked up, or mail piled up, is a sure sign that no one is around; to burglars, this is wonderful. They are opportunists who prefer to enter and plunder your residence in your absence. Door hangers provide a similar clue, when left on the doorknob for days.

The distributor for Metro Pizza is the worst culprit in our area, distributing almost every week. However, realtors and others are now also distributing flyers. A recent one was particularly ironic. The realtor's featured article spoke eloquently about the importance of stopping deliveries when you are away from home, in order to deter burglaries. Reaching him by telephone, I affirmed his advice and noted that I can stop all deliveries except his. How can I follow his advice if he prominently posts his advertising material on my door? He apologized and promised to re-evaluate his advertising methods.

Fortunately, you can do something about this problem. First, distribution of any advertising material to any premises in San Jose requires a "handbill" distribution license. Second, the distributor must obtain a permit for each distribution (which can include advertisements for one year). Third, the material must contain, on the first page, reference to the city ordinance and the distributor's license number and permit number.

Your line of defense is as follows:

(1) Pursuant to San Jose Municipal Code Section 6.36.020, file a written objection to delivery of any handbills to your residence. Mail or deliver it to the Director of Finance, City of San Jose, 801 North First Street, 95110. **Delivery to any resident who has filed such objection is prohibited** [Section 6.36.020(A)(2)]. Also, a licensee is required to regularly inspect the register which lists the objecting addresses [S.J.M.C. Section 6.36.050].

(2) If necessary, place a sign of at least eight square inches (2" x 4" or larger) on your door, stating "No Advertising". Delivery to any residence with such a sign is also prohibited [S.J.M.C. Section 6.36.020(A)(1)].

(3) Follow up. Report all violators (retain the evidence for them) to **Linda Maridon**, at 794-1191, and to the police department permit enforcement team at 277-4453. That should at least result in a verbal warning! I have also begun writing letters to violators who ignore my "opt out" and my sign, referencing the fact that they are acting illegally and that continued violations may result in public or private enforcement action. If individual citizens apply some pressure to both City Hall and the violators, it is likely that the amount of advertising stuff left on your doorstep will dramatically decrease.

* * *

By the way, readers might be interested in the *District Attorney's* complaint and mediation service. A complaint form is available online, at www.santaclara-da.org. Callers can obtain assistance with any consumer problem by phoning (408) 792-2880.

[() Ed. Note: Al Bender is a past president and long-time resident of VEP, a Supervising Deputy District Attorney of the Consumer Protection Unit, and is known in the DA's office as "Al the Consumer Pal."]*

Teenagers and credit cards

To the chagrin of most parents everywhere, their teenage children are receiving dozens of unsolicited pre-approved applications for credit cards.

According to Nellie Mae, a national student-loan financing corporation, 83-percent of undergraduates hold at least one credit card. But the amount of debt they're carrying is very adult. In 2001, the average outstanding credit card balance was over \$2000. 21-percent of undergraduates with cards carry a balance of between \$3000 and \$7000. Even more shocking to parents, is that almost 20-percent of 18-year-olds hold four or more credit cards!

Clearly, credit cards are something parents should discuss with their kids.

A lot of kids think they need several credit cards to develop a credit history. Truth is, they only need one that they pay regularly.

The National Foundation for Credit Counseling suggests that parents teach these basic rules of credit cards to their teens:

- Credit is not extra cash.
- Credit costs money.
- Bad credit follows you everywhere.
- Plan ahead.
- Credit is for necessities only.
- Always stay within the payment grace period.
- Credit cards are not all the same.

If your teen absolutely *has* to have a credit card, there's a new solution: prepaid cards. Prepaid cards look and work like the real thing, except parents control the spending limits. These card can also be used online and at ATM machines. To learn more about them, contact Vlsabuxx.com or Mastercard.com.

Got critters?

-Dave Fadness

One of our VEP officers recently found roaches in his city water supply box, apparently a common problem that Santa Clara County Vector Control will take care of for free.

For information on pest control measures, call the Santa Clara County Vector Control District at (408) 792-5010 or visit their website at www.sccvector.org. For your convenience, VEP has posted their mosquito and West Nile virus brochures on our website at www.vepca.org.

One truck, two jobs

Here's the scene. You've put recyclables in your recycling cart and garbage in your garbage cart. On the night before garbage and recycling day, you've placed both carts at curbside. The next morning, you see the hydraulic arm of a truck lift up your recycling cart and empty the recyclables into the hopper, the chute for transferring materials into the truck. The truck moves forward and the arm lifts up your garbage cart and empties its contents into the same hopper. You do a double take. Aren't recyclables and garbage supposed to be separated? Indeed, they are.

Split body trucks

The new trucks that collect recyclables and garbage at single-family homes in San Jose are split-body trucks. These automated trucks have two compartments which are completely separated by a metal barrier. The hydraulic arm lifts each cart to the same place above the hopper.

Using a joystick inside the truck cab, the driver shifts the door of the hopper that divides the two compartments. Recyclables always drop into the recycling compartment, and garbage always drops into the garbage compartment. These split-body trucks even have a live video camera system onboard to guide the driver's use of the hydraulic arm and the hopper door throughout the collection process.

Materials Recovery Facility

Recyclables and garbage are never mixed. After completing a route, the driver brings the garbage to a landfill and the recyclables to a Materials Recovery Facility. At this state-of-the-art facility, recyclables are sorted into separate streams of materials (newspaper, mixed paper, plastics, metals, different colors of glass, etc.) using an automated system of conveyor belts, blasts of air, and electromagnets. The sorted materials are baled and sold for use as resources for making new products such as newspapers, cardboard, fleece clothing, and plastic "lumber" for backyard decking.

Recycle Plus makes recycling easy

San Jose's automated collection system is very efficient. It enables one driver to collect both the recyclables and garbage in front of your home without leaving the truck. (Except to position extra recyclables or garbage bags labeled

with extra garbage stickers into empty carts for another lift by the hydraulic arm.)

By making recycling easy for you, the *Recycle Plus* program hopes to capture everything that is recyclable from San Jose homes. All you need to do is keep garbage and recyclables separate. Put garbage in your garbage cart and recyclables in your recycling cart. Then place them two feet apart at curbside on your collection day. This distance gives the truck the space it needs to move between the carts.

Thanks to your efforts to reduce, reuse and recycle, San Jose keeps 53% of its waste from landfills.

For a list of what's recyclable in San Jose, visit www.sjrecycles.org or call (408) 277-2700 and ask a *Recycle Plus* Customer Service representative for a free recycling guide.

VEP outreach

-Dave Noel

This month, VEP's landscaping project is expected to be on the front page of the Blossom Valley Times. We've also submitted our calendar of events to the Blossom Valley Times for inclusion in their Community Calendar.

In late January, as we do at the same time every year, VEP sent an appeal to all non-members in our membership area to encourage them to join VEP. If you joined as a result of this appeal, welcome, we're glad you did--and we're sure you will be too.

Homeowner tips

Just as you schedule your yearly checkups with the doctor, it's important to establish a maintenance schedule for your home. When weeds begin to overtake your property, you know it's time for yard work. And when your dust bunnies have names, it's time to haul out the vacuum.

However, changing the furnace filter can get away from you because it's not one of those things that slaps you in the face. It's not that you don't care, but some of the maintenance items only come around once or twice a year and it's so easy to forget.

To get started, make a list of every maintenance item you take care of within a year, whether it's a do-it-yourself job or something for which you call in a specialist. Attach your list to a clipboard and hang it inside a cupboard door, in the laundry room, or near your workspace. Include the items that need attention every couple of weeks or months for things to stay ship-shape.

If you need to remember what those chores are, walk through your property with someone else who lives there. Why? Because, they may be taking care of some of these obligations and it will be easier for them to point them out. That way, everyone knows what needs to be done and when.

Once you've completed your list and placed it in a convenient area, it's time to begin the scheduling. Include enough space for the upcoming year and any adjustments that may be needed. Hang on to your completed sheets, as they could be a valuable tool should you decide to sell your home. A prospective buyer would be quite impressed to know you took so much care in the maintenance of your property.

Each home is different with regard to the mechanicals. For instance, if you live in a condo, you may not be responsible for certain items. But the following list of suggestions is a great place to start on your maintenance schedule. Make notes of other chores that command your attention as well and include them when you update your schedule.

- HVAC System: Filters should be changed monthly, or bi-weekly depending on your particular system, the type of filter used, and whether you have pets and/or smokers in your house. Every few years have the system inspected prior to the winter months. You might consider professional, annual maintenance on your central air conditioning as well. When you have the system inspected, make it a habit to replace the batteries in smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. Ducts should be cleaned every five years or so, and again, sooner if there's a smoker and/or pets.
- Carpets: Have the carpeting shampooed every year or two, depending on traffic and use. And vacuum at least once a week so that dirt and dust isn't ground into the fibers. Your carpet will not only look better, but it will last longer. You may also want to move furniture on occasion in order to prevent worn spots due to traffic patterns.
- Wood floors: Mop every week or two, again depending on the traffic. There are specific cleaners made for wood floors. You'll want to pay attention to whether your floor has a wax or polyurethane finish. Professional striping, sanding and refinishing should be done every five years or so, depending on the use. Don't wait until floors are unsightly or damaged before you bring in the pros!
- Vinyl floors: Every week or so, again depending on use, mop vinyl flooring with water and mild soap. You can deep clean with a stronger product a couple of times a year. After a deep cleaning, you'll want to apply a fresh shine. Make sure to clean and shine according to the guidelines of the manufacturer.
- Ceramic flooring: Mop ceramic tile with water every week or two. Clean the grout as needed.

So long, ironing!

Ironing is usually not on the top on many people's lists of favorite things to do. However, most of us do like our clothes to look well pressed. What can you do to reduce your ironing basket load, or eliminate it altogether?

The whole process begins at the washing cycle. Washables are usually permanent press and will stay looking that way with the proper treatment. Unless there are health issues that require hot water, wash and rinse at cooler temperatures.

Why? When your laundry is going through the spin cycle and it's already warm, you are actually setting wrinkles in the fabric. Cool down the whole process and you'll have fewer wrinkles to deal with at the next level.

Don't load too many items in one washing, either. Clothing needs enough circulation space in order to clean properly, but it is also another element in keeping articles wrinkle free. Fabric softeners actually do help to smooth things out.

Unless you're washing heavy duty blankets or work clothes, use the permanent press cycle and make sure the water level is appropriate for the load you've placed in the washer. Also, it's a good idea to separate those heavy items from lighter ones, such as a blouse or T-shirt.

Dry your clothing at the permanent press cycle or lower. Again, higher temperatures will place creases where you may not want them. And be sure to remove everything from the dryer as soon as it is done. You don't want the weight of items on top of one another pressing in those wrinkles. As you remove each item, give it a good shake and immediately place it on a hangar.

Most manufacturers also recommend you dry one single wash load at a time and if you have only one or two items, toss in a few similar items, or possibly a towel to ensure proper tumbling.

If all goes well, you may never say hello to your iron again!

[Ed. Note: This article was taken from Brian Bonnifield's website. Brian is a long-time VEP member, a real estate professional, and an advertiser in this newsletter.]

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 their 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 the number of complaints filed. Don't file a complaint, don't expect action. Easy, isn't it?

San Jose Special Election: Measure A

-Dave Fadness

The following three articles are intended to assist our members in making an informed decision about the March 4th ballot. There is only one issue involved, a proposed change to the *Airport Traffic Relief Act (ATRA)*.

After expansion plans were approved by the City Council, the original ATRA language was written as the text of an initiative by a citizen group seeking traffic relief at the airport. Sufficient signatures were gathered to qualify this initiative for the March 2000 ballot. Negotiations between Mayor Gonzales and this citizen group resulted in compromise language that won unanimous Council approval in December, 1999.

What follows is the ATRA Ordinance showing existing language, ~~deleted language~~, and proposed added language shown. If Measure A passes on March 4th, these changes will comprise the new law. If Measure A fails, the existing law will remain unchanged.

Airport Traffic Relief Act

25.04.400 Intent

The intent of this Part is to:

A. Guarantee that the traffic and transit projects needed with the expansion of San Jose International Airport are undertaken in a timely manner.

B. Allow construction ~~and expansion~~ of a new Centralized Terminal Facility and existing Airport terminals when: (i) certain designated the traffic and transit improvements specified in Section 25.04.410 below and required as a result of Airport expansion are within ~~three (3)~~ two (2) years of completion; and (ii) when the City Council formally identifies and approves the funding source for a rail line, such as a fixed guideway transit system, connecting the Airport with either the BART station in the City of Santa Clara or the existing light rail system on North First Street, ~~with the Airport.~~

C. Allow all other Airport projects to proceed immediately, including parking improvements, Airport safety projects, terminal renovations, runway improvements and air cargo projects, among others.

D. Ensure that Airport funds are used to pay for the needed transportation improvements to the maximum extent permitted by law, rather than the General Fund of the City of San Jose.

25.04.410 Required Transportation Improvements before Terminal Expansion

The City may allow the construction of a new Centralized Terminal Facility Terminal B or expand the number of air carrier gates in existing terminal buildings beyond the existing thirty-one (31) gates when: the following transportation projects are determined to be within two years of completion by the City Council at a public meeting and all funding has been identified and approved by the funding agency.

A. The Route 87 Freeway project between I-280 and U.S. 101, including the Skyport Drive Interchange and including expansion of the existing Parkway between Julian Street and 101 to six (6) lanes is determined to be within three (3) years of completion by the City Council at a public meeting and all funding has been identified and approved by the funding agency.

B. The City Council at a public meeting formally identifies and approves the funding source for a rail line, such as a fixed guideway transit system, connecting the Airport with the BART station in the City of Santa Clara or with the existing light rail system on North First Street, ~~with the Airport.~~

C. Expansion of the I-880/Coleman Avenue interchange by adding a southbound lane on Coleman Avenue as referenced in the 1997 Airport Environmental Impact Report is determined to be within three (3) years of completion by the City Council at a public meeting and all funding has been identified and approved by the funding agency.

D. Improvements to increase the traffic capacity of the three (3) Airport entrances so that the entrances to Airport Boulevard at Airport Parkway and Skyport Drive are designed and constructed to meet a level of service "D", and that the entrance at Coleman

Avenue is designed and constructed to meet a level of service "E", each based on the peak hourly traffic demand as contained in projections for the 1997 Airport Master Plan are each determined to be within three (3) years of completion by the City Council at a public meeting and all funding has been identified and approved by the funding agency.

25.04.420 All Other Airport Projects Not Affected

The transportation improvements identified in Section 25.04.410 shall only affect the construction of a new Centralized Terminal Facility ~~Airport terminal~~ or an increase in the number of air carrier gates in the existing terminals. All other projects, including, but not limited to, parking improvements, terminal remodeling or replacement, air cargo improvements, runway improvements and expansion, a new fuel facility, and any project intended to improve Airport safety may proceed immediately without the required transportation improvements.

25.04.430 Transportation Improvements Funded by the Airport

To the extent permitted by law, Airport Funds shall pay for the transportation improvements identified in Section 25.04.410, rather than the General Fund of the City.

25.04.440 Voter Approval Required for Any Amendment

The City Council shall not amend or modify this Part without first obtaining the majority approval of the voters of the City.

~~25.04.450 Ordinance Ineffective with Public Approval of the Airport Traffic Relief Act~~

~~Should the Airport Traffic Relief Act on the March, 2000 ballot be approved by a majority of the voters of the City, this Part 4 of Chapter 25.04 shall have no further effect and shall be null and void.~~

* * *

Next are the arguments in favor of and opposed to Measure A:

VOTE YES ON MEASURE A

[Submitted by: San Jose Taxpayers for a Secure Airport.]

- Improves airport security as required by the United States Transportation Security Administration.
- No taxes.
- Keeps traffic relief projects on track.

WHAT IS MEASURE A?

Measure A allows the City to comply with federal security mandates by constructing permanent, instead of temporary, facilities to accommodate improvements required by the federal Transportation Security Administration (TSA). This efficient plan will save more than \$120 million.

Measure A directly creates 1,700 new jobs during the construction project.

Measure A continues the important traffic relief projects around the airport, completion of HWY 87 and a full interchange at Coleman Avenue and I-880. These projects to relieve traffic congestion are already underway, on schedule for completion, and will continue simultaneously with the airport terminal expansion.

Measure A creates one centralized SJC terminal.

Measure A provides flexibility to connect the airport to either the current light rail system or BART once funding is identified.

The airport is a self-sufficient enterprise of the city, and improvements will be funded through landing fees, airport generated revenues like parking, lease and private concession payments, and other facility specific charges.

IS THERE A TAX IMPACT?

There is no additional tax burden for San José taxpayers. Expanding the airport can happen without raising taxes and will actually save \$120 million. SJC is self-sufficient and has no impact on the city's general fund budget. This means that revenues created at the airport have to be used at the airport and do not impact city services. Approving Measure A saves the \$120 million cost of building temporary facilities needed to house the newly required safety and explosives screening equipment.

Vote **NO** on Measure A

[Submitted by: People Against Airport Traffic Jams.]

Measure A on San Jose's March 4th ballot is a bad idea and a waste of money.

Measure A delays airport roadway improvements by an additional year and effectively eliminates any connection to mass transit for the foreseeable future. Neither change is a good idea nor in the best interests of airport users.

Measure A amends the existing *Airport Traffic Relief Act* (ATRA) sponsored by over 24,000 San Jose voters, endorsed by the Mayor and adopted unanimously by City Council. ATRA requires that four traffic and transportation improvements be within two years of completion before construction of the new terminal begins, assuring they are ready for use when the new terminal opens. Three requirements are roadways and one is a people-mover connection to San Jose's underutilized light rail system.

Why is Mayor Gonzales now proposing these changes? It allows the massive airport expansion to proceed by relaxing or eliminating traffic and transit improvements he previously committed to the citizens of San Jose. He wants to abandon the people-mover connecting the airport to light rail (only 6/10ths mile from the airport) in favor of a connection to his beloved BART, benefiting out-of-town voters over the citizens of San Jose.

The Mayor has pursued taxpayer funding for the people-mover and come up empty, not surprising given that public agencies funding transit projects rarely see requests for airport-related projects. They say, as does ATRA, that the airport--not local taxpayers--should pay for improvements made necessary by expansion. The Mayor and citizens of San Jose should demand that the airport fund the \$50 million people-mover as part of its \$1.4 billion expansion, not taxpayers.

The Mayor claims delaying the mass transit connection and building the entire airport expansion now saves

money. Don't be fooled! Completely missing from that calculation are the even greater costs and horrendous traffic disruption of tearing up the airport after expanding to add a mass transit connection. Taking this course will waste tens of millions of dollars. This is the same old "build and fix" approach that has plagued our airport for decades. The existing ATRA ordinance and common sense call for building the people-mover as part of airport expansion.

For us, there are strong emotional elements to this campaign. Not only does Measure A represent another broken commitment from this Mayor, the ballot language has been shamefully swathed in the suffering of the 9/11 tragedy. This is misleading, manipulative, and offensive. To have labeled this initiative the "Airport Security and Traffic Relief Act" is just plain slippery politics.

The truth is that Measure A does not change one letter of one word regarding airport security. It is a gross disservice to voters that the short text of this ordinance was not printed in the ballot statements where they would see this for themselves. The Mayor has actually chosen to delay construction of permanent security facilities until this special election and made them dependent on a massive airport expansion. No other U.S. airport has done this. As a result, our Airport will waste millions on *temporary* facilities.

We support the much-needed expansion of San Jose's airport. We know the worst aspect of using the airport is the awful traffic mess in and around it. ATRA traffic and transit improvements must be part of the expansion, not an afterthought.

Don't be fooled! Measure A *delays* traffic improvements. This special election *wastes* \$2.3 million. Tell the Mayor to get busy building permanent security facilities now. Tell the Mayor that, yes, we do want an airport connection to mass transit now, and we don't appreciate him wasting money on this unnecessary special election.

Vote NO on Measure A: *The Airport Security Delay and Traffic Jam Retention Act!*

Bulletin Board Ads

PAMPERED CHEF: Make meal preparation fast and easy with quality kitchen tools from THE PAMPERED CHEF®. Like to host a kitchen show to earn free tools? Or would you like the new 2003 Spring catalog? Contact Kristine at 224-7616 or email happykitchens@yahoo.com

ABC'S & MORE: Licensed family childcare in the Vistapark neighborhood. Infants and up. 7am-6pm, M-F. Call Kristine at 224-7616 or email at: alexanderkristine@hotmail.com

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 @ 224-2243 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.

* * *

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.