

# VEP MEETING

7:30 P.M. TUESDAY  
**September 23, 2003**

GUNDERSON HIGH SCHOOL  
★ **Faculty Lounge** ★

## AGENDA

### ★ **Principal Demerris Brooks** ★

An update on what's happening at  
Gunderson High School this year.  
7:30 to 7:45 p.m.

### ★ **Stadium Lights at Gunderson?** ★

A presentation by students, faculty, and  
district officials on sports field upgrades at GHS.  
7:45 to 8:30 p.m.

### ★ **VEP Beautification Projects for 2003-04** ★

Member input on plans for beautification  
projects in our area for 2003-04.  
8:30 to 8:45 p.m.

### ★ **VEP Goals & Objectives for 2003-04** ★

Member input & approval of recommendations  
for the coming year.  
8:45 to 9 p.m.

### ★ **Your Community Concerns** ★

Everyone is welcome. Invite your neighbors!

## Our September meeting

-Greg West

We have several exciting topics planned for our September meeting. Gunderson High School Principal **Demerris Brooks** will be on hand to talk about new developments at the school this year, including the school's Laptop Computer project. In addition, Gunderson teacher, **Rob Iverson** will talk about the *Environmental and Spatial Technology* (EAST) service learning program, now in its second year at the school.

Last year, EAST students took on a project to redesign the sports fields and football stadium at Gunderson, including lights for the football field. Some of those students will attend our meeting to present the work that they did last year. EAST students presented their project to San Jose Unified's Board of Education last year. Gunderson's Athletic Director **Chuck Ball**, will talk about sports field improvements as well.

In March 2002, San Jose Unified voters approved *Measure F*. Significant sports field upgrades and improvements at Gunderson are planned as part of that bond program. To answer any funding and/or scheduling questions you may have, we've also invited the District's Director of Construction **Ty Williams** to our meeting.

\* \* \*

This is also the time of the year that the VEP executive committee asks the membership to approve our goals and objectives for the coming year. This year's goals and objectives (printed elsewhere in this issue) are grouped under four headings: Continue to improve our community association; Promote community interaction, pride, and preparedness; Work to make local government and businesses responsive and accountable to VEP members; and, Create and maintain high-quality public services in our area. The executive committee will be looking forward to your input on and approval of these goals and objectives, and for your help in accomplishing them over the coming year!

\* \* \*

Finally, we will be soliciting ideas for a neighborhood beautification project along one of the very visible entry corridors into the neighborhood—Branham Lane between Vista Park Drive and Snell Avenue, adjacent to the Lester Property. We are considering such projects as painting the visible side of the sound wall and/or doing some plantings there. Any other ideas would be greatly appreciated! Please come with your ideas for discussion.

And, of course, we will have time for discussion of any of your issues and concerns about our neighborhood. VEP exists to help you help yourself help our neighborhood!

Please be sure to attend at 7:30 pm on Tuesday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>. Bring a friend--bring the whole neighborhood! We look forward to seeing you.

## Beautification projects for '03-04: any ideas?

*-Dave Fadness*

Come to our September 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting and get your ideas considered for VEP-area beautification projects. There *must* be an eyesore that ranks as your worst-hated, one that gets you so irritated that you'd be willing to work with other volunteers to clean it up. If so, we're willing to bet that other folks feel the same way you do about it.

That's a winning combination. Let's get together and tackle these eyesores one at a time until our neighborhoods are back looking their best again. It's amazing how easy it can be when you have a bunch of eager, motivated volunteers out to get a job done--sounds corny, but it's fun, too!

VEP volunteers landscaped two traffic islands last January--have you noticed? One is the small triangle on the southeast corner of Branham at Narvaez. The other is the median on Chynoweth, just west of Pearl. Take a look next time you drive by, I think you'll be impressed! Those places looked like weed strewn moonscapes before we rolled up our sleeves.

We'd really like to focus our efforts this year on Branham Lane, east of Vistapark Drive. That old grapestake fence looks really tacky and the sound wall needs painting and replacement landscaping. What d'ya think? There are probably other sites you know about, too, so we'd like to hear from you.

We're ready to accept any ideas you have--they don't have to be in areas east of Vistapark Drive. It may be another

year before you have this chance. Come to our meeting. Bring your friends. Be heard.

## *VEP's Goals & Objectives for 2003-04*

Following is our VEP Exec Committee's proposed list of Goals & Objectives for the coming year. Fundamentally, this defines our scope of work. We will discuss these at our September 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting, ask for your input, then call for a vote of member approval. Please participate in this process--and volunteer when called upon to help us accomplish 100% success in meeting these Goals & Objectives.

### **1. Continue to improve our community association.**

A. Values: Place first priority on volunteer efforts that reflect member-endorsed improvements in our community.

B. Leadership: Encourage regular turn-over of VEP officers to impart broader membership area representation, fresh ideas, new perspectives, and peak energy in our organization.

C. Membership: Increase membership and attendance at VEP meetings and events.

D. Fiscal Health: Maintain excellence in VEP's fiscal condition.

E. Volunteerism:

- a. Support our VEP volunteer coordinator.
- b. Develop functional committees that afford structured volunteer opportunities for VEP members and groom future VEP leadership.
- c. Continue our VEP Community Service Award program; consider/recommend revisions to At-Large nominee qualifications; revise/update nomination forms; increase student awareness of awards.

F. Communication: Support VEP's Hospitality Committee; repair/replace meeting announcement street signs; improve electronic communication with and among our members; improve website access.

G. Visibility: Strive for positive public recognition through targeted communication and signage; contribute articles to other publications in our community.

### **2. Promote community interaction, pride, and preparedness.**

A. Organize at least two community events.

B. Participate as volunteers in the San Jose Beautiful daffodil planting event and at least one other beautification project (e.g. a Dumpster Day, neighborhood clean-up days, etc.). Target Branham Lane (Between Vistapark and Snell) and the remaining parcel at Branham Lane/Narvaez.

C. Maintain our median plantings on Chynoweth (new + palm trees) and on Narvaez.

D. Encourage member participation in crime prevention, safety, and emergency preparedness programs in our neighborhoods.

**3. Work to make local government and businesses responsive and accountable to VEP members.**

A. Sponsor election forums that heighten our members' awareness of candidates and ballot issues and encourage their participation as voters in all elections.

B. Monitor and react to plans for urban development in and around our membership area.

C. Encourage, monitor, and react to plans for transportation, libraries, parks, and other public infrastructure improvements in and around our membership area. Organize and communicate community priorities.

D. Work with Pinn Brothers Construction and City/County government to satisfactorily complete promised median landscaping and sound wall improvements on Capitol Expressway.

E. Work with SummerHill Homes and City government to satisfactorily complete the promised west interface wall, cul-de-sac and median landscaping on Vistapark Drive, and traffic calming along Hyde Park Drive.

F. Seek acceptable remedies to community impacts (including traffic, parking, etc.) imposed by uses at Gundersen High School.

**4. Create and maintain high-quality public services in our area.**

A. Support preservation of the Lester property and efforts to make it a park.

B. Monitor and provide input to the city's capital improvement plan for neighborhood needs.

C. Work with the city to develop, renovate, and maintain our neighborhood parks and to ensure that all (developer) parkland dedication fees paid in our neighborhoods are used for improvements to parks that serve our neighborhoods. Focus on a Community Room at Vista Park and the completion of new Cilker Park.

D. Work with the City and Councilwoman Dando's office to ensure that impacts of any proposed high-density development along the Guadalupe Corridor are fully mitigated; focus on building a city park at Capitol/Narvaez and improving traffic level of service there.

**Hats off to VEP volunteers!**

*–Dave Fadness*

This summer was a busy time for VEP volunteers. Thanks to their selfless dedication, our neighborhoods were better maintained and the landscaping we installed has survived another hot weather season.

In early July, **Frank Kistler** and **Aiko Fadness** assisted in the twice-annual task of pruning the 170 palm trees in the

median on Chynoweth Avenue. We're also grateful to **Frank Bowman** and his City of San Jose crew for prompt removal of the cut fronds.

**Doug Douglass** has been a hero in our efforts to keep newly-landscaped (Chynoweth/Pearl, Branham/Narvaez) medians watered and maintained. He donates his time, his 300-gallon watering trailer, and the necessary water (about 600-gallons per week) to keep trees and bushes alive. You may have noticed that some of those plantings had become distressed, but now that Doug has gotten involved, we anticipate full recovery.

**Jeri Arstingstall** and **Michael Bejar** have helped at the Chynoweth site by installing replacement DriWater irrigation cartridges. Part of a system installed when we planted the trees and bushes last January, these cartridges provide supplemental moisture and must be replaced every 90-days.

**Quy, Connie,** and **Peter Dinh** have stepped in to relieve Doug Douglass's workload. The Dinhs graciously offered the use of their water outlet and their time to irrigate the Branham/Narvaez site. The results have been predictable: the plantings look happier and there's no unsightly trash. **Marc** and **Marcy Mossawir** and **Jim, Susan,** and **Wyatt Ptak** have offered to serve as back-up for maintaining that median triangle.

Our City Forest's **Christian Bonner** has provided invaluable expert help to us in advising on watering needs and examining our median plantings for disease.

In late August, veteran VEP volunteer **Bob Aquino** spent a morning at Vista Park, pulling weeds. It really made a difference, and we appreciate it.

Hats off to these VEP volunteers! The world's a much better place because of people like them.

## VEP meetings and community events

Mon. Sep 22: **Deadline to register** for the October 7 California Special Election. Call (408) 299-VOTE.

Tue. Sep 23 @ 7:30 - 9 pm: VEP meeting at Gunderson High School (See agenda on page 1).

Tue. Sep 30: **Deadline to apply** for an absentee ballot for the California Special Election.

Wed. Oct 1 @ 6 pm: SummerHill *Las Brisas* meeting, on-site at Branham/Vistapark.

Wed. Oct 1 @ 7:30 pm: VEP Executive Committee Meeting (Call for location.)

Tue. Oct 7: **GET OUT AND VOTE** in the California Special Election!

Tue. Oct 28 @ 7:30 - 9 pm: VEP meeting at Gunderson High School. Update from SummerHill Homes on Las Brisas project and Vista Park community room. Guests include Vice Mayor Pat Dando, Councilwoman Judy Chirco,

Bob Hencken from SummerHill Homes, and Todd Capurso of San Jose Parks and Recreation.

Sat. Oct 25 @ 8:30 - 11 am: Daffodil planting event co-sponsored by *San Jose Beautiful* (Call for location.)

For more information, and for breaking news and events, visit VEP at [www.vepca.org](http://www.vepca.org)

## Daffodil Days

*-Jeri Arstingstall*

Please save Saturday, October 25<sup>th</sup> for our annual planting of Daffodils. VEP has requested 200 bulbs for planting this year. If you have a spot where you would like these yellow beauties planted, please let us know.

We need volunteers to help plant starting at 8:30 am. We expect this to take no longer than 3 hours. Please contact Jeri Arstingstall at (408) 281-1959.

## Scarecrow making workshop

Calling all families, friends, or anyone ready for autumn to join the *Friends of Guadalupe River Park & Gardens*, 9:30 am to noon on Saturday, September 27<sup>th</sup> for cider and scarecrow making! All creations will be taken home to decorate your porch or cornfield. You will also have the chance to enter your masterpiece in the Friend's scarecrow contest during *Pumpkins in the Park* on October 11<sup>th</sup>.

The workshop will be held at the Guadalupe Garden Center, located at 715 Spring Street in San Jose. The fee is \$15.00 per group (one scarecrow allowed per group, maximum of five people per group). Scarecrow building materials are included in the workshop fee. Choose from a variety of shirts, pants, decorations and plenty of stuffing to construct your very own life-sized scarecrow. Children under sixteen years must be accompanied by an adult.

Space is limited, so reserve your spot early by sending a check to: Friends of Guadalupe River Park & Gardens, 50 West San Fernando Street, Suite 1100, San Jose, CA 95113. Visa and MasterCard are also accepted via phone or mail. For more information please call (408)298-7657 or visit [www.grpg.org](http://www.grpg.org).

## Membership drive

*-Dave Noel*

Though our membership drive wrapped up last spring, new memberships have continued to trickle in over the summer. Our membership now stands at 444 families, almost tying our record-breaking 2002-03 membership of 450 families. Thanks everyone, and welcome to our new members!

If you have new neighbors, please tell them about VEP and encourage them to join. Better yet, offer them their first year's membership as a welcoming gift. For more information, see [www.vepca.org](http://www.vepca.org). If you call, we'll be happy to drop off a packet of VEP information to welcome your new neighbor into our community.

## September 3<sup>rd</sup> SummerHill meeting summary

*-Jeri Arstingstall*

VEP members had a meeting at the SummerHill property site at Vistapark and Branham. The developer reviewed their progress to date. They apologized to the neighbors for the disturbances to the neighborhood which included dust and a generator running on weekends. They have worked diligently to try to keep the neighbors happy.

Interior street curbs were poured the previous week. SummerHill is working with the City of San Jose on painting the sound wall on the north side of Branham Lane, between Vistapark and Snell. They also showed their plans for the sound wall and landscaping on Branham Lane and Vistapark. There was discussion on when Hyde Park will be smoothed out. This will be done during the final stage when SummerHill will resurface Branham, Vistapark, and Hydepark.

SummerHill also discussed the median that they will install on Vistapark. It was pointed out to the developer that Vistapark north of Branham is a one-lane and should continue to be one-lane, which would give the neighborhood a better median along Vistapark.

The stage of development is the streets will be paved by the end of this month within the development, which will help somewhat with dust control. The models will be open starting in October. The ten new homes on Hyde Park will be the first ones sold, with a potential move in around the end of this year.

SummerHill is still working with the city to complete the landscaping at the stub-end of Vistapark. VEP volunteered to provide the maintenance upkeep for this beautification.

Our next meeting will be 6 pm Wednesday, October 1<sup>st</sup> at the property site. Watch for flyers and notices in your email.

## Vista Park Community Room “wish list”

*-Dave Fadness*

SummerHill Homes has generously offered to construct a turn-key Community Room facility at Vista Park. This will be done in lieu of paying parkland dedication fees for their **Las Brisas** home development at Branham/Vistapark. The VEP Executive committee respectfully offers the following list of design features and amenities that we feel will meet the community's needs.

By far, the Community Room is our highest priority for new development at Vista Park. Our concept is to have a multi-purpose facility that can serve as any of the following:

- Restrooms for park visitors, open daily during daylight hours;
- Snack shack for use by groups and/or sports teams (having advance reservations);
- Community meeting room; and/or
- Recreation facility for future city programs.

VEP submitted the following “wish list” of desired design features and amenities to Councilwoman Dando, Sara Hensley, Director of Parks & Recreation, and to Summer-Hill Homes. Although we may not succeed in getting all that we ask for, this list will help you understand the direction we’re heading in. Your input is invited. We’ll agendize this discussion for our October meeting.

\* Wish List \*

1. A meeting room with stacking (or folding) tables and chairs to comfortably accommodate at least 30 to 40 people (seated). (Use Gunderson High School’s Faculty Lounge as a model.) Storage space for the tables and chairs when not in use.
2. An entry foyer (on east wall?), to minimize disturbances by late arrivers at meetings on windy, cold, or rainy days or when there are noisy outdoor events. One separate fire exit door.
3. A chalk (or white) board and a graphics display area (cork board?) with down-lights on a windowless west wall, for presentations at meetings. A pull-down projection screen mounted on the same wall in front of the white board.
4. A screened pass-through window with inside and outside counter space for food preparation/service or recreational equipment distribution use by the P&R Department and/or groups who sponsor organized events. It would also be desirable to have some associated cabinetry, a sink, and (maybe) a refrigerator and microwave oven.
5. HVAC with user adjusted temperature/on/off controls and automatic on/off/setback, overhead lights with zone control, power outlets on each wall and in food service area. Floor mounted (?) power outlet located near the location at which projection equipment would likely be used.
6. Exterior lights with motion-sensing controls to discourage vandalism.
7. Men’s and women’s lavatories with keyed access entries from inside and outside the building.
8. Drinking fountain(s) inside and outside the building.
9. High windows and/or windows with adjustable blinds; Lexan glazing.
10. Sufficient roof overhang (as at most area schools) to afford some shelter from summer sun and winter rain for Community Room users.
11. Graffiti-resistant interior and exterior finishes; an attractive exterior appearance that is visually consistent with and a compliment to our neighborhoods.
12. Overhead interior fire sprinklers.
13. Silent burglar alarm wired to SJPD police station.
14. Good proximity to existing parking lot (to encourage its use instead of street parking).

15. An enclosed, keylocked display cabinet “marquee,” visible outside the building, for announcements, meeting and event schedules, emergency and Parks Department contact/reservation telephone numbers, and for displaying community awards (we have two dedication plaques that are waiting for a display site since the case we built and installed was vandalized years ago).

16. A small storage room for user-group equipment and supplies with keyed access entries from inside and outside the building. Separate storage for Parks Department equipment and supplies. Several indoor padlock-able cabinets for user-groups to store equipment, supplies, or small appliances such as coffee pots, hotdog cookers, etc.

17. A locked desk or cabinet suitable for a future PRNS computer workstation (laptop?), printer and copy machine. Internet and telephone connectivity. Additional cabinetry and power outlets along walls for storage of indoor recreational equipment and supplies, incorporating lockable desks for approximately five general use computers.

## What goes in the garbage cart?

Food waste, pizza boxes, used paper plates and cups, paper towels, disposable diapers, and plastic wrap for packaging items like toilet paper or paper towels should all be thrown out as garbage.

Consider donating things like plastic toys, garden hoses, and shoes that are still in good condition to charitable organizations. Otherwise, these items can go in the garbage cart, too.

Broken hair dryers and other small plastic appliances are also garbage. Small pieces of wood and lumber can go into your garbage cart.

If you have questions about what is garbage and what is recyclable in San Jose’s *Recycle Plus* program, call Customer Service at 277-2700 and ask for a *Recycling Guide*, now available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese versions.

## Highway 85/87 Interchange Grand Opening

*-Dave Noel*

At lunchtime on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, VTA held a grand opening ceremony for the new connector ramps at the 85/87 interchange. The event featured a number of dignitaries and a large public turnout. In her speech, Vice Mayor **Pat Dando** praised VEP for its work with VTA throughout the duration of the project.

After the speeches, four brand new VTA busses took attendees to the top of one of the new ramps for a ribbon cutting ceremony and a bird’s-eye view. After returning the attendees to the east park-n-ride lot for refreshments, VTA opened those new ramps to traffic.

VTA is now completing the final stages of the project, including (minimal) landscape restoration, sidewalk repairs, and so on. VEP continues to work with VTA on items such as the new stairs near the pump house and light rail sta-

tion on Chynoweth, drainage problems under the columns in the Chynoweth median, and problems with the “V-ditch” on the north side of Chynoweth. VTA outreach specialist **Tiffany Thomas** continues to work closely with VEP.



Ribbon-Cutters: VEP President David Noel with San Jose Vice Mayor Pat Dando and Mayor Ron Gonzales

## VEP responds to transportation plans

*–Dave Fadness*

In recent months, two major, interrelated plans have been presented to VEP members. One is the Comprehensive County Expressway Planning Study, conducted by Santa Clara County Roads & Airports. The other is the Capitol Expressway Light Rail Project, undertaken by the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA).

Because proposed features of these two plans impact our members directly, VEP has tried to keep you informed. We had formal presentations at general meetings, ran descriptive articles in this newsletter, and sent copies of planning documents to our members by email. (Do we have your address? If not, send us an email to [vepca@vepca.com](mailto:vepca@vepca.com).)

On April 17, we formally responded to the Capitol Expressway Light Rail Project with a letter detailing our concerns. On May 14, we responded to the Expressway Study. Both of these letters are posted on our website, [www.vepca.org](http://www.vepca.org). If you do not have access to the internet and would like to read our response(s), please call me at 578-6428 and I will get a hard copy to you.

Your feedback on our positions is also welcomed.

## Handy Phone Numbers

*–Dave Noel*

Did you know that cell phone calls to 911 are handled by a call center outside of San Jose? That can delay a response to a local emergency. The city of San Jose has made the following phone numbers available for cell phone users to access the San Jose emergency call center:

For “911” calls (emergency), use (408) 277-8911.

For “311” calls (non-emergency), use (408) 277-8900.

Here’s another handy number: Call (408) 277-4000 to reach a friendly operator who can connect you with the

correct City of San Jose department for just about anything you can think of, from abandoned shopping carts to building permits to household hazardous waste collection.

## Computer corner

*-Bob Aquino, VEP's Computer Guru*

August was an interesting month for computer folks. We had two big assaults on the net. First the MSBlast worm and then the Sobig virus. As you all know, I don't have any particular love for the Great Satan of Redmond, but I had to sympathize with Microsoft. They put out a fix for a hole in the security of Windows in July, and MANY IT professionals did not install it.

So when the worm that exploited that flaw appeared, it moved through the net with record speed. You can quote me on this: Microsoft did the best they could to prevent this from happening. If the field doesn't respond in a more professional fashion to alerts, we will all be stuck with more intrusion by Microsoft into our computers.

The Sobig virus is an example of a virus spread through an attachment to an email. The first lesson here is do not under any circumstances open attachments to unsolicited emails you receive from strangers. Nuke them immediately!

If you are on a lot of email address books, you may have gotten messages from mailer Daemons regarding letters you hadn't sent to people you don't know. You should scan your system if you get one, but there is a good chance that you are not infected. The virus picked your address from the address book of an infected system and claimed to be mailing from your system.

The bottom line of all this is that it is only good *netizenship* to have your system protected with an UP-TO-DATE virus data file. If you don't have one, get one!

I'm writing this column in late August, since I will be out of town on vacation for some time. I look forward with real dread, because Sobig is still active, and I'll probably have 1000 bogus emails when I return.

## President's message

*-Dave Noel, VEP President*

I hope you had a wonderful summer. I know I did. Fortunately, there weren't many new burning issues for VEP to address over the summer, so most of the VEP executive committee was able to relax after an extremely busy winter and spring. While most of us rested, **Dave Fadness** worked tirelessly to maintain progress on many items, including the Capitol Expressway soundwall and Capitol Expressway median island landscaping to name just a couple. Dave also led the efforts to nurture our new trees and bushes that we planted in January through their first summer. Thanks Dave!

This year we are proposing an even more ambitious set of Goals and Objectives than last year. If you noted on your membership renewal that you're willing to volunteer, we'll be contacting you. But don't wait for the call if you want to get involved--please contact any of the executive officers

listed on the mailing page of this newsletter and join us at any of our monthly executive meetings. Every strong organization needs new people working with the current leadership to share the workload and groom for future leadership positions. Please join us, you'll be glad you did...no experience required.

To maintain a balance in the executive committee, we especially need volunteers from homes east of Vistapark Drive. This year we are reaching out to members and residents east of Vistapark by planning our next beautification project in that area. Please come share your ideas for this project at our September 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting. Then we'll be looking for help in any or all aspects of the project, from planning to execution and maintenance.

This will be my third and last year as president. I look forward to a great year, and then continuing to work with the executive committee in the time-honored position of past-president. Please come join us.

## VEP history needed

*-Dave Fadness*

Past-President **Greg West** has been compiling a list of VEP officers, trying to go all the way back to our organization's birth in 1969. Unfortunately, our records only take us back to 1974. We need the help of long-time VEP members to help us find the early pieces of this puzzle.

When I first moved here in 1974, **Carmen Felice** was VEP's president, **Bob Braud** was vice president, **Nancy Alsobrook** was Secretary, and **Neil McCarthy** was our treasurer. I think Carmen and Bob traded office a couple of times in the years before then, but I can't be sure. Before 1974, our records have been lost.

Please help if you can. If you have saved our old newsletters, were a VEP officer in those early years, or simply have a fabulous memory for such things, please give me a call or send me an email. My contact info is on the mailing page of this newsletter. Thanks!

## Tips for Autumn

*-John Marks, VEP's Green Gardener*  
Soil amendments

When you purchase potted plants from a nursery, you should add aluminum sulphate, a product also used to make hydrangea blossoms turn blue. Roses like acidic soil, as do many other plants. Use no more than a scant teaspoonful for roses per container; mix it into the top inch of the soil and water it in thoroughly. Use this amendment once in the spring and once in early fall.

### Leaky whiskey barrels

If you buy whiskey barrels filled with potting soil that appear to leak out water too rapidly, not to worry. Modern, commercially prepared soil mixes are specifically designed to allow rapid drainage, while also holding large amounts of water and nutrients for the plant roots to absorb. More problems are found with containers that do not have enough drain holds. It's hard to get too many holes in these whiskey barrels. Simply wait until the soil is dry to

about an inch or so below the surface, then water enough to wet all the way to the bottom.

#### Powdery mildew on peas

Some sweet pea leaves turn grayish from powdery mildew and fall off the vine. If you have this happening, spray your vines with Funginex, a powerful fungicide, as soon as the mildew shows up, and again later if you see any signs of the powder.

#### Bamboo invasion

If left unchecked, bamboo plants can go from a garden delight to a garden disaster. There are two types of bamboo: running and clumping. Running bamboo can quickly take over your garden, yard, and the yard next door. Clumping bamboo, on the other hand, can grow into enormous and unwieldy clumps.

Smaller running bamboos are easy to pull up, once the soil is moistened. If they are too stout to pull, chopping them out with a mattock--a tool that resembles a pickaxe, but with a flat blade on one or both sides--works well, but is exhausting. Cut off the tops near the ground to prevent the mattock from glancing off the flinty surfaces of the bamboo.

The best way to avoid this labor-intensive task is to plant running bamboo in a container; otherwise, you have to form an underground barrier with 40-mil plastic using clamps.

With regular pruning, clumping bamboo shouldn't pose a problem. But if it's grown too large, you can dig it up and divide it; use an ax to cut into divisions, putting them into bags to give away, or to replant in pots or in the ground. The larger the division, the quicker the recovery; wilting and loss of leaves may occur, but new foliage will emerge soon.

*[Ed. Note: Mr. Marks extracted some of these items from July and August, 2003 issues of the San Jose Mercury-News.]*

## E-mail updates

*-Jeri Arstingstall*

During the summer we have been communicating with VEP members via email. If you haven't received any of our updates, it's because we do not have your email address.

Please send an email to me at [vp@vepca.org](mailto:vp@vepca.org) to have your name added. VEP promises that we'll *never* give or sell your email address to any third party.

## On-line traffic complaint form

*-Dave Noel*

We recently learned about another way to report traffic complaints in San Jose. Check out the on-line form at this address:

[www.sjpd.org/traffic\\_complaint\\_form.htm](http://www.sjpd.org/traffic_complaint_form.htm)

A link to this form is also available on VEP's website:

[www.vepca.org](http://www.vepca.org)

## Are *you* raising mosquitoes in your yard?

Do you have

- An ornamental pond or garden?
- A swimming pool or hot tub?
- A plastic wading pool?
- A boat?
- An animal watering trough or bird bath?
- Rain gutters?
- Any other kinds of containers?
- Standing water anywhere in your yard?

If your answer is yes (or maybe) to any of these, read on...

### **What's the problem?**

Except for the nuisance of having those critters around, why should we care about mosquitoes? Because, under the right conditions, several of the 48 known species that thrive in California can carry disease. When a female mosquito takes an animal blood "meal" which she uses as nourishment for her developing eggs, she may transmit certain disease-causing organisms to humans and other animals.

These organisms are taken with blood from infected humans and other animals. A mosquito completes the cycle when she bites the next susceptible host, causing infection. The two most important diseases affecting humans are encephalitis and malaria. Like those mosquito-borne life-threatening diseases, the West Nile virus is also said to be a threat to California.

### **The facts about mosquitoes**

1. All mosquitoes must have water in which to complete their life cycle.
2. Only seven days are required to complete their life cycle (egg to adult) during warm weather.
3. Mosquitoes do not develop in grass or shrubbery, although flying adults frequently rest in these areas during daylight hours.
4. Only the female mosquito bites to obtain a blood meal. The male mosquito feeds only on plant juices.
5. The female mosquito may live as long as three weeks during the summer or many months over the winter in order to lay her eggs in the following spring.
6. More human deaths are caused by mosquitoes than by any other living creature.

### **Controlling mosquitoes**

As a public entity, the *Santa Clara County Vector Control District's* objective is to abate existing mosquito breeding sources and to prevent new ones in order to permit full use and enjoyment of our backyards and our many recreational facilities, to permit mosquito free agricultural and industrial working conditions, and to protect public health and comfort. (By the way, a "vector" is any insect or other arthropod, rodent, or other animal of public health significance capable of causing human discomfort or injury, or is capable of harboring or transmitting the causative agents of human disease.)

Chronic breeding sources created by standing water in street catch basins, subdivision drains, roadside ditches, flood channels, ravines, and similar places on public rights-of-way are controlled by application of larvicide throughout the year, as necessary. Vector Control works with city, county, state, and federal agencies toward permanent correction of these sources.

Control of mosquitoes on private property is a special issue. The owner of the property on which a breeding source is located is responsible for its abatement and for the prevention of its recurrence. Vector Control informs property owners of a mosquito breeding problem and assists them in working out a satisfactory means of correction. In extreme cases, where the owner does not accept their responsibility to the public, the nuisance may be abated by Vector Control and a lien filed against the property, as allowed by the California State Health and Safety Code.

### **Where to look and what to do**

In general, we have to keep a watchful eye on anything in our yard that can hold water. Some, like fish ponds and swimming pools are fairly obvious. Others, like clogged rain gutters and puddles under dripping faucets, are not. Get rid of all such reservoirs--or--take an active role in preventing stagnation.

Ornamental ponds. Stock these with mosquito fish (see description below). Add goldfish for looks if desired, but avoid spraying with garden insect sprays. Remove leaves and thin out pond lilies. Keep the water level up. Screen inlet of recirculation pump. Chlorine will not kill mosquito larvae but it will kill fish--transfer fish to glass bowl when cleaning pond. If your pond is no longer desired, break holes in its bottom and fill with dirt or sand.

Concrete or plastic swimming pools and hot tubs. Operate filter and skimmer every day to remove mosquito egg rafts and larvae. Provide good drainage for filter and pump sumps. Chlorine will not kill mosquito larvae. If a pool cover is used, keep it tightly sealed. Remove rainwater from top of pool cover. Stock unused or "out-of-order" pools with mosquito fish (see description below).

Boats. Prevent any accumulation of bilge water. Store small boats upside down or cover them to keep out the rain and water from sprinklers.

Animal water troughs and bird baths. Stock large troughs with mosquito fish. Clean and replace water in small troughs and basins at least every week.

Other kinds of containers. Remove and dispose of all unused containers (cans, old tires, jars, buckets, barrels, tubs, flower pot saucers, old toys, etc.) that will collect rain or water from sprinklers. Home gardeners rooting plant cuttings in vases, buckets, etc., should change water every week. Usable containers should always be stored upside down. Repair dripping water faucets.

### **Fish prevent mosquitoes**

*Gambusia affinis*, called "mosquito fish," are indispensable to Vector Control's mosquito control program. These fish

eat mosquito larvae as fast as they hatch. Mosquito fish are supplied free of charge by Vector Control (see phone number below).

You can use mosquito fish may for stocking ornamental ponds, unused or "out-of-order" swimming pools, and animal water troughs. They require no feeding and care is limited to protecting them from garden sprays and from chlorine or other chemicals used to clean the water. To eliminate the need for frequent spraying with a mosquito insecticide, Vector Control also stocks thousands of these fish each year in artificial lakes, reservoirs, waste water disposal lagoons, natural creeks, and drainage channels.

Mosquito fish do not lay eggs, but rather give birth to well developed and very active young. These fish, therefore, require no special environment, as most other fishes do, for depositing and hatching their eggs. They breed throughout the summer. New broods of 50 to 100 young are produced at intervals of about six weeks. The young are approximately ¼-inch in length when born. They are ready to begin the work of destroying mosquito larvae at once. Gambusia grow rapidly, reaching a maximum size of about three inches. The earliest broods of the season, born in April and May, become sexually mature and produce young when six to eight weeks old.

*[Ed. Note: This article was drawn from Santa Clara County Vector Control District brochures. For more information, call (408) 792-5010 or visit their website at [www.sccvector.org](http://www.sccvector.org). For your convenience, VEP has posted their mosquito and West Nile virus brochures on our website at [www.vepca.org](http://www.vepca.org).]*

## VEP Community Service Award winners

-Dave Noel

One of the most rewarding jobs of being the VEP president is the honor of bestowing our annual Community Service Awards to graduating high school seniors who have demonstrated exceptional volunteerism in their high school careers. In May, we awarded \$1,500 each to three graduating high school students, one from Andrew Hill, one from Gunderson, and one At-Large student.

Our Andrew Hill award winner was **Phuong Truong**. In her high school career, Phuong donated nearly 600 hours to Good Samaritan Hospital, the Wellness Village Project, and the CSF club. She also served as president of the CSF club and team captain at Good Samaritan. We don't yet know where Phuong is attending college. Many thanks to VEP past president John Marks for presenting Phuong's award. I was unable to present this award since the Andrew Hill awards ceremony was at the same time as our May VEP General meeting.

Our Gunderson award winner was **Alysia Bosworth**. Alysia served as both secretary and president of the Gunderson Key Club, winning the Outstanding Club President award. Under her leadership, the club served approximately 200 hours each month, making them the top Key Club of sixteen in San Jose. She also volunteered with City Heros, the San Jose Family Shelter, and KTEH Television. Alysia is attending Pomona College in Claremont, Ca. Alysia wrote this to VEP:

*“Thank you so much for awarding me with the 2003 Community Service Award. It was so generous of you, and it will help greatly in paying for my education at Pomona College.*

*I'm excited to leave for college tomorrow! I know I'll be able to continue volunteering there because they have a Circle K Club (the college counterpart of Key Club) as well as a college-run volunteer center. I can hardly wait to see what they have in store for me!*

*It was awesome to be presented with the award by your president David Noel at Gunderson's Awards Night in May. He was very kind and it was interesting to find out that he attended Cal Poly Pomona, which is near where I'll be going.*

*Thank you again for the award, as well as everything you do for the community. People like you really do make the world a better place, one neighborhood at a time.”*

Our At-Large award winner was **Shannon Drach** from Leigh High. In her high school career, Shannon served as a summer band staff volunteer, a district music festival coordinator, an anti-drinking and driving program volunteer, an annual blood drive assistant, a Vice Principal selection committee member, a crab feed fundraiser leader, Captain and fundraiser chairman of the color guard, and editor of her school newspaper. She led and participated in events for the Key Club, the Senior Women Club and the French Club. Shannon also volunteered at the Almaden Health and Rehabilitation Center, Los Gatos Christian Church, and Noddin Elementary School. Shannon is attending Biola University in La Mirada, CA. Shannon wrote this to VEP:

*“I wish to thank all of you for the generous scholarship bestowed on me. I don't believe I can express how grateful I am to you. The help you are giving to my family and myself is tremendous.*

*The [May VEP General] meeting invitation was quite interesting, given the chance to see what amazing services you have given our community. For this as well, I am thankful. Also, to Mr. Noel, thank you for the speech you gave to me. I must confess that I was flattered realizing you were speaking about me.*

*Thanks again for everything. Your efforts are not without gratification.”*

VEP salutes these incredible young people and wishes them every success in their lives. We have no doubt that the habit of voluntarism they've established in their high school years will continue to be rewarding to them and a tremendous inspiration and value to our community.

## Community Service Award changes?

*-Dave Noel*

VEP executive officers are considering proposing some Community Service Award changes to the membership later this year. For example, we'd like to consider making application forms available in the schools' career centers

and not limiting the number of students who can apply. We currently request that the administration from both schools each nominate three students. One result of this is that most students aren't even aware of our award until the awards ceremony itself.

We'd also like to review the mechanics of our At-Large award category. Currently, candidates must be residents of San Jose and be nominated by a VEP member. Should we require that candidates be VEP members?

If you have opinions on these issues, or if you're willing to help with the awards committee this year, please contact me. (See mailing page for contact info.)

If you are a high school student, we encourage you to volunteer for your school and community. If your volunteer activities are exceptional, we encourage you to apply for our community service award in the winter/spring of your senior year.

## Andrew Hill Back-to-School Night

Back-to-School Night is Thursday, September 25. The evening will begin at 5:30 p.m. with a family BBQ in the quad followed at 6:30 p.m. by a general meeting in the large gymnasium. Classroom visits follow.

This evening provides an opportunity for parents and families to tour the campus, visit selected classrooms, review course outlines, and ask questions. Individual student performance will not be discussed during this evening, but parents will have an opportunity to request such information. Translators who speak Spanish and Vietnamese will be available to assist you. Mr. Trinh, our Activities Director, will have Andrew Hill memorabilia for sale in the school bank.

We have very limited parking on campus this year so you are encouraged to explore alternatives. For this evening, parking will be available on the basketball courts behind the large gym.

We look forward to meeting you and we encourage you to arrive early, enjoy the free Barbecue, and meet your student's teachers.

### \* Tutorials \*

This is our third year on the alternate block schedule. One of the primary reasons for changing to this new schedule was to ensure that each student had time to meet with each of their teachers to receive any additional assistance needed. The time between 2:05 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. is designated for an Academic Enrichment/Tutorial period.

On Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday all teachers are available to work with their students on a drop-in basis, and/or teachers may require that students come in for additional work and assistance. If your student is experiencing difficulties in any class, please check to see that he/she is attending tutorials.

All students have the opportunity to work with their teachers until at least 3:00 p.m. Additional tutorial assistance is

available through San Jose Conservation Corps (beginning September 22) and through the Valdes Math Institute.

Questions concerning tutorials may be directed to the Guidance office at 347-4162.

#### \* I.D. Cards \*

Please be advised that, per East Side Union High School District Mandate and Andrew P. Hill High School Policy, all students must wear their personal ID Card and Andrew Hill Lanyard at all times while on campus.

The administration at Andrew P. Hill High School is respectfully asking for parental support in student compliance with this policy. All schools in the East Side Union High School District must adhere to this School Board mandate. The wearing of I.D Cards adds to the safety of our students. We are able to distinguish our students by picture from any outsiders who may enter our campus.

Damaged, lost or stolen I.D. cards must be replaced by purchasing a new card at the school bank. Encourage your student to follow this school policy.

Students who fail to comply with the I.D. card policy will be subject to disciplinary action. For further information, please contact Dr. Beverly Green, Associate Principal of Administrative Services at (408) 347-4120.

#### \* After school programs at Andrew Hill \*

Beginning Wednesday, September 3, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center Academy will meet twice a week, Monday and Wednesday, from 3 to 6 p.m. The academy will be run by certificated staff and college tutors.

The San Jose Conservation Corps will begin on September 22 meeting Monday through Thursday from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. to serve students who meet the criteria set by the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center Grant.

Other programs also available at Andrew Hill to address the academic needs of students are the Andrew Hill Graduation Academy and the Adult Education Program. Beginning Tuesday, September 2, the Graduation Academy will meet twice a week, Tuesday and Thursday, from 3:15 to 5 p.m. The Adult Education Program meets Monday through Thursday, from 3:15 to 6 p.m.

If you have a down credit student who you would like to enroll in one of these programs, please contact the Counseling Office at Andrew P. Hill High School, (408) 347-4100.

## Andrew Hill's Technology Program

Andrew P. Hill High School is moving into its second year as a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Technology School. The school has a campus wide wireless network giving Internet access to 2000 students and 126 teachers. The school currently has nine computer labs and thirteen mobile iBook carts. Each of the certificated staff members has been issued an iBook, completing an intensive technology professional development program focused on the curricular use of computers.

We believe the key to our success in this program is the teachers. "When you invest in teachers, you are investing in your students." Teachers check out carts containing class sets of iBooks and use them with their students in their own classrooms, making access to technology and the Internet readily available.

Teachers report that technology positively affects student attitudes in their classes. Students who were reluctant to participate in class assignments are now actively engaged. Technology has provided students alternative ways of demonstrating their knowledge, thereby supporting the non-traditional learner, by allowing students to use methods in line with their unique learning styles.

One teacher commented, " Getting my students to write was like pulling teeth, but since incorporating the iBooks in my classes, every student writes, and every student turns in essays." Technology has given many lost, unmotivated students, a place in school and a buy-in to their own education.

Teachers and students have access to file servers where they can store digital documents, share curriculum with colleagues, and issue and collect assignments from students. As one student said, "Falcon (student/teacher file-server) makes lost assignments a thing of the past. If I lose an assignment one of my teachers gives me, I just log onto falcon and download a new one." Both students and staff access these file servers at home and at school.

Internet access in the classroom by students and teachers allows current issues and information to be incorporated in the curriculum, eliminating the out-of-date textbook problem. The multimedia capabilities of the iBook allow students to create digital movies, slideshows, WebPages, and presentations, lending a creative flair to traditional curricular assignments. Technology has evened the playing field at Andrew P. Hill High School by giving non-traditional and disadvantaged learners the tools necessary to excel.

## VEP Picnic

*-Dave Noel*

VEP's second annual picnic was held on Sunday May 18<sup>th</sup> at newly completed Vista Park. We couldn't have asked for a nicer day for this wonderful event. **Yvonne** and **Ian Reddy** did a fabulous job arranging all aspects of this event, including reaching out to many local businesses that were very generous with their raffle prize donations.

Among the many highlights of the day were presentations by *America Tae Kwon Do Center* and the *San Jose Police K-9* squad. This year's attendance was much higher than last year's, and we anticipate our third annual picnic on May 16th 2004 will be even bigger. Mark your calendars now!

## 20 sneaky credit card tricks

*[Here are the first 12; we'll print the rest next month.]*

Credit card companies can be as slippery as a handful of greased Jell-O. They have all kinds of tricks to gouge your

wallet and drive up your bill. While arguably unfair, all these tricks are legal, leaving you no alternative but to stay as informed as possible to protect yourself. Read your statement, report any irregularities immediately, and watch for these 20 sneaky credit card company tricks. Start saving on fees now.

**The old bait-and-switch:** So you've got this ingenious plan. You're going to apply for a great credit card that gives you tons of frequent-flier miles, put all your shopping on it, and then head to the Bahamas in February. Stop! The miles you earn, if any, might get you no further than Hope, Arkansas.

When and if you get that card, study the terms carefully. If you don't qualify for the great card, the credit card company can send you a completely different card with different terms. If it's not what you want, don't activate the card. Call the company and cancel the account.

**Musical address:** Want to play hide-and-seek with your credit card company? No? Too bad.

Credit card companies frequently change their payment P.O. Box. To avoid falling for this trick use the envelope provided in your statement. If you use a different envelope or use online banking, check the mailing address on your statement each month or call the company to verify the address. Always pay early to avoid last-minute mix-ups.

**Late fees in minutes:** If you're five minutes late it could cost you \$29. Even though your due date may be the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, upon further inspection of your statement, you might see it's actually due by 1 p.m. Check your statement to see what time and date your payment is due and send it in early.

**How to avoid credit card late fees:** Being late is going to cost you, big time. Some of the biggest issuers in the credit card business are charging super-punitive fees of \$35 to customers who pay late. Don't let this happen to you. Payment tips and strategies from [www.bankrate.com](http://www.bankrate.com) can help you avoid late fees.

**Mind those payment rules:** One of the most important things you can do is follow your card issuer's payment guidelines precisely. These guidelines are outlined on the back of each credit card bill.

When it comes to processing credit card payments, all these little details are incredibly important. While the Fair Credit Billing Act requires issuers to credit payments the day they are received, each issuer is allowed to set specific payment guidelines. If any of the guidelines are not met, the issuer can take as many as five days to credit the payment. An on-time payment could easily become "late" during that five-day period, so follow those payment guidelines carefully. To ensure your payment gets credited immediately: Use the preprinted envelope provided by the credit card company. Include the billing coupon, and be sure to write the amount being paid in the box provided.

Make sure checks are legible and the payment amount is correct. Sign the check. Write your credit card account number on the check.

Send payment with proper postage to the payment address requested by the issuer. It's a good idea to mail your payment at least one week in advance of the due date. Ten days to two weeks prior to a due date is even better.

**Pay minimum immediately:** The safest strategy for anyone sending a card payment by snail mail is to pay the bill as soon as it arrives, even if you can only make the minimum payment. Giving your issuer the 2 percent minimum payment it wants ASAP is a great way to guard against late fees. And you can always send a bigger payment when you've got more cash.

**Move your due date:** Are your credit card bills due at a time of the month when you're running low on cash? Many card issuers will let you set your own due date--if you ask. Why not time it so your credit card bill arrives right after a paycheck? That way you'll have plenty of cash to pay your bill each month.

**Automatic online, on-time payments:** Paying bills online can be a great buffer against late fees. Most major issuers accept online payments. You can sign up for these services on issuer Web sites.

**Pay by phone:** Paying by phone is a quick and easy way to make a last-minute card payment. Just grab your checkbook and call the toll-free number on the back of your credit card. You'll be asked for a check number and the bank routing number, which is printed at the bottom of every check. After you're done with the call, rip up the check because you won't be able to use it again. Many credit card companies accept payments by phone. Some issuers charge fees, ranging from \$5 to \$15 for this service. Be sure to ask.

**More express options:** If the due date is looming, consider sending a credit card payment by express mail or wiring the payment with Western Union. While costly, these express services are still cheaper than most credit card late fees. Make sure you send your express payment to the proper address. Many issuers have separate payment addresses for express payments.

**No fee if you're "good":** Zapped with a late fee even though you mailed your payment well before the due date? Call and ask your issuer to waive the fee. Many issuers will waive late fees as a courtesy to customers with good payment records. If all these fee-dodging strategies are too much for you, you may want to consider getting a card from a credit union or a local community bank.

**Over-the-limit fees:** This fee is a no-brainer--don't go over. But what you don't know are the little tricks credit card companies use to push you over the limit.

One trick is to get you to pay only the minimum on your account. If your rate is higher than your minimum (It is. The minimum payment is usually 2 percent of your balance. The average APR is more than 14 percent), eventually you will hit the maximum on your card and get socked with over-the-limit fees--even if you pay the minimum every month.

## Bulletin Board ads

-Dave Fadness

If you have been advertising in our newsletter, but find your ad missing in this issue, it's because I'm starting this autumn with a clean slate.

Our rules (always printed with these ads) say that "*Free ads must be submitted monthly for publication.*" What that means is, technically, you should be letting me know each month whether you want to continue advertising. Yes, I've let ads run (for handyman work, babysitters, etc.), but never know whether you want them to appear--or--you just fell off the planet two years ago and I never heard about it.

Please let me know if you'd like to resume. I'll get right on it in our October issue. My contact info is always on the mailing page of this newsletter.

## 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

**U.S. MILITARY ITEMS WANTED:** Top \$\$ paid. Call Doug at 978-3093.

**WAYNE'S LAWN AERATION SERVICE:** Most front & back yards aerated and fertilized for only \$60. Also do sprinklers, dethatching, overseeding, and lawn renovations. Call 265-0165 or [www.wayneslawnaeration.com](http://www.wayneslawnaeration.com).

**PURCHASING OR REFINANCING A HOME?** Take advantage of today's low rates! Up to 100% financing available now! Call Christopher Lee at Innovest Corp. at (408) 828-9084 or 252-5600 ext 29; email [clee@netloans.com](mailto:clee@netloans.com)

**SITTER WANTED:** VEP couple with a well-behaved 2-year old son is looking for a 15-20 year old guy or girl to baby sit a few hours a week, afternoons and evenings. Please contact Maria at [mlloyd123@earthlink.net](mailto:mlloyd123@earthlink.net) or 229-2313.

\* \* \*

VEP will print free ads for its members for transactions involving less than \$250, for lost-and-found, for announcements of general interest to our community, and for kids under 18 or retirees who are looking for work. Free ads must be submitted monthly for publication.

Commercial ads cost \$1.00 per line per month, 10 lines maximum, must be prepaid before publication, and may only be run once per calendar quarter. Commercial ads must be submitted quarterly. No graphics allowed. For information on full-sized ads with graphics (camera ready), contact VEP'S Treasurer listed on the mailing page of this newsletter.

One line contains 50 characters, including spaces. Mail to VEP, P.O. Box 18111, San Jose, 95158. Ads must be received no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month for inclusion in that month's newsletter. Use the following form as a guide for submitting an ad:

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE # \_\_\_\_\_

AD WORDING: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The VEP Executive Board reserves exclusive right to refuse any ad for any reason. VEP does not certify nor is it responsible in any way for the claims, goods, or services of any advertisers.