

VEP NEWS

VEP COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Representing More Than 2000 Families In The Blossom Valley Area Of South San Jose Since 1969

November 2003

VEP MEETING

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

GUNDERSON HIGH SCHOOL
★ **Faculty Lounge** ★

AGENDA

★ **Martial Cottle Park** ★

An open-forum discussion led by County Supervisor **Don Gage** and County Parks Director **Lisa Killough** on the park to be developed at the Lester Property.
7:30 to 8:40 p.m.

★ **VEP Exec Holiday Dinner** ★

Discuss & vote on Exec Committee's request
For funds for its annual Holiday Dinner.
8:40 to 8:45 p.m.

★ **Your Community Concerns** ★

8:45 to 9:00 p.m.

Everyone is welcome. Please invite your neighbors!

Our November meeting

-*Dave Noel*

You couldn't ask for bigger news than will be discussed at our November 25th general meeting. On October 28th, culminating over 30 years of hard work, Santa Clara County, the State of California, and **Walter Cottle Lester** proudly announced that they had reached an agreement to preserve and develop Mr. Lester's property as an agricultural historical park.

County Supervisor **Don Gage** will lead an open-forum discussion with several guests intimately familiar with the agreement and the future of the park, including Don's aide **Rachel Gibson**, and County Parks manager **Lisa Killough**. Also present and available to answer your questions will be Mr. Lester's personal advisor, **Edward Piggins**, and **Dave Giordano**, who has been farming Mr. Lester's land for many years.

We will learn how we, as community volunteers, can help with the park's master plan, and the park itself. In as soon as five years, the park could be completed with features such as a lake, farm animals, horseback riding trails, and a museum.

Come hear first-hand what the future holds for this wonderful park, and share your ideas.

Each year your VEP Executive Committee volunteers and their spouses have a Holiday Dinner. This is the only real compensation they receive for hundreds of hours of dedicated work for our neighborhoods. This year, we are asking for an amount not to exceed \$325 for this event. (Bear in mind that there are eight couples involved; that equates to a cap of approximately \$20 per person.) To save money, VEP Execs typically use coupons when possible. We want your input--and need your approval.

As usual, we allow time for members to bring their community concerns forward for VEP's consideration. We welcome your doing so, and will always try to help. That's our job.

We're counting on your presence at 7:30 pm on November 25th. Even though it's just before Thanksgiving, let's show our guest speakers we care!

Martial Cottle Park

- *Greg West*

On October 28th, a press conference was held to announce that **Walter Lester** had reached an agreement with Santa Clara County and the State of California to turn his 290-acre farm that fronts Branham Lane and Snell Avenue into a park. Roughly half of the land will go to the State and the other half to the County. In return, Mr. Lester's back taxes were waived, he will live out his years on the property that his family has owned since the mid-1800's, and he will receive a modest sum of cash.



That day was a huge day for the people of California, of Santa Clara County, and for the neighbors in VEP. Helping Mr. Lester achieve his vision for the ultimate use of his family's land has been a focus for many people in the community since well before Mr. Lester shared his vision with us at a VEP Community Association meeting back in November, 1997. The entire VEP community expresses our elation and sincerest eternal gratitude to Mr. Lester for striking this deal. Now it is time for us, as a community, to join with the County and the State to make Mr. Lester's vision a reality.

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Martial Cottle Park

- Edward Piggins, advisor to Walter Lester

I have worked with **Walter Cottle Lester** since 1985. During this time, I have come to know him as an honest, forthright, compassionate and understanding gentleman. He and his family have always had a vision of leaving "something" to the county in remembrance of their work as agriculturists in San Jose. In this case, he has designated 290 acres as a working farm, which will serve as an educational tool for many neighbors.



If you are familiar with the **Ardenwood Regional Park** in Newark, Mr. Lester's vision is to create a park that emulates many of the activities that this park demonstrates. There will be farm animals present. The public

will be taught how to plant and raise crops such as sugar beets and alfalfa. In addition, horse riding trails, a pond, orchards and a museum exhibiting old farm equipment will be included in the park.

The transfer of Mr. Lester's property will occur in January, 2004 when the property will be divided into three parts: (1) the State's portion in which the State will pay 5 million dollars; (2) the County's portion; and (3) Mr. Lester's life estate on which he will be allowed to live for the rest of his life. Grant funding through the State of California and Proposition 40, passed by the voters in 2001, will provide funds to develop of the park.

A Master Plan process will commence to define various phases of park development. In all, it will take approximately two to five years to implement the Master Plan. Phase One will be the most critical part of development since this will include developing park infrastructure, including entrances, parking lots, inner roads, water features, and utilities.

The next two years should prove to be an exciting beginning to a project that Walter Lester has had in mind for many years.

A letter from County Supervisor Don Gage

Dear friends:

It is my pleasure to update you on two recent actions by the Board of Supervisors. The County has negotiated the donation of the Lester Property and approved a contract to improve traffic synchronization on Almaden Expressway.

On Tuesday, October 28th, my Board colleagues and I approved a formal agreement with the California State Parks Department and **Walter Cottle Lester** of the Cottle Ranch family to preserve his 290 acres of land and create a historic agricultural park. Mr. Lester gifted the County 153.3 acres and, in a separate transaction, sold State Parks 136.5 acres at a significant discount. Mr. Lester will reserve a life estate on a 32 acre portion of the property that includes the historic house. The County of Santa Clara will manage the entire property as the **Martial Cottle Park**, in memory of Mr. Lester's grandfather, who originally settled the property in the 1860s.

Discussions of the transfer of property have occurred over the last 30 years. In the last year especially, we have worked hard to secure an agreement acceptable to the County, the State, and Mr. Lester. The terms of the agreement include specific deed restrictions that spell out allowed uses on the property. In implementing Mr. Lester's vision of providing the public with a unique view of farming at the turn of the last century, and illustrating the importance of this legacy to the history of Santa Clara County, our parks department will soon embark on a comprehensive joint planning process with the State, which will include the community. The County will assume the responsibility for establishing a master plan to guide the future maintenance and operation of the entire Martial Cottle park facility, including the State-owned land.

The Board also approved a contract to implement a fiber-optic cable system with video detection and monitoring for **Almaden Expressway**. The system will coordinate traffic along the expressway from the Route 87 junction to Harry Road. The work will be done during non-commute hours.

If there is any County matter where I can be of assistance, please feel free to contact me at (408) 299-5010. I look forward to serving you on November 25th.

Sincerely,

Donald F. Gage
Supervisor, District 1

VEP
A friend in need!

A letter from Vice Mayor Pat Dando

Dear Neighbor:

I am pleased to share with you that construction on **William H. Cilker Park**, located at Winfield Boulevard and Chynoweth Avenue, will begin by year end.

Following several community workshops last fall, improvements to this land are moving forward!! On Tuesday, my colleagues on the City Council joined me in approving the construction of this park.

When complete in May 2004, the park will reflect the historical nature of 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.

In addition, as you may have noticed, the **Guadalupe River Trail** between Blossom Hill Road and Chynoweth Avenue is rapidly moving forward and will be a welcomed asset to your neighborhood when it is finished next spring.

If you have any questions about the park development, trail construction, or would like to receive my neighborhood newsletter please contact me at 408-277-5251 or at pat.dando@sanjoseca.gov.

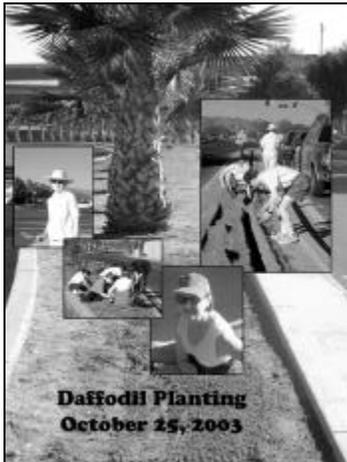
Sincerely,

Pat Dando
Vice Mayor, City of San Jose

Daffodil Days

-Jeri Arstingstall

On Saturday, October 25th VEP members and Gunderson students planted 200 daffodil bulbs. The bulbs were planted on the median at Pearl and Chynoweth. Thank you **Maureen Noel** for this great suggestion. As you are driving west along Chynoweth towards Pearl at the end of the palm trees you will notice a bare dirt median. Next spring look for the beautiful daffodils that were planted by the following VEP members, **Jeri and**



Walt Arstingstall, Dave and Bryan Noel, Josie Supencheck, Robin West, Joyce Chesnos and Joe Tajnai and the following Gunderson High School students, **Victor Paredes, Mariella Talavera, Maria Castillo, Melissa Liggins, Antoinette Zamudio and Chris Garza.** We would also like to thank **Stephanie Ogden**, Vice Principal for her

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support and Phil Bejar for loaning us his orange cones. We also could not have planted these bulbs without the trencher which was graciously donated by VEP members **Fred & Lois Koslowski** who also own the "A Rental Center" in Los Gatos.

Vista Park ball field issue

- Dave Noel

A small committee of neighbors continues to work with Parks and Recreation's **Art Rosales** and **Pat Dando's** office to find a solution to inappropriate use of the west ball field by adults who are hitting balls into the street, sidewalk, and neighbors' homes. This is a potentially dangerous situation, threatening pedestrian and automotive traffic and making it uncomfortable to be in one's own back yard.

The current hope is that we will ultimately be able to relocate the west field. A phased approach may be the key to making this possible. We need to find creative ways to make this affordable. VEP and the city plan to bring to the table any resources we can collectively find that might help.

If you are a contractor or know a contractor involved in landscaping trades that would be willing to help do volunteer work and/or donate materials at Vista Park next spring, PLEASE CONTACT US ASAP. As the plan progresses, we anticipate needing help with irrigation piping, cutting/laying sod, hauling soil and fill materials, concrete flatwork, etc. Donations of materials would also be welcomed.

Neighborhood developments

- Dave Noel

Bella Villagio: Pinn Brothers' huge 357-unit housing project (Capitol Expressway at Vistapark Drive) is moving rapidly toward completion. VEP is still working with Pinn, Councilwoman **Pat Dando**, and County Supervisor **Don Gage** to secure median landscaping and sound wall improvements promised at time of approval by the city council.



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Chynoweth trash cans

- Dave Noel



We have great news to report about the overflowing garbage around two trash cans located on the bike trail where it meets the sidewalk on either side of Chynoweth Avenue along Hwy 87, just west of Gunderson High School.

Upon investigation, VEP learned that these trash cans fell into a complicated gray area of responsibility between several city departments. VEP persisted with the city and we are happy to report that the Parks & Recreation department has stepped up to the task. Effective the week of October 26th, Almaden Lake Park maintenance staff began emptying these trash cans weekly (twice monthly during the winter).

Light rail bell & horn sounds

- Dave Noel

Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) will hold a meeting to give residents living near light rail stations an opportunity to hear and comment on several alternative bell and horn sounds under consideration for VTA's new low floor light rail vehicles.

Unfortunately, the date of this meeting is not available at the time of this writing, so watch for an email announcement from VEP if VTA schedules this meeting to occur before we publish the January VEP News.

For more information, please contact Gail Collins in VTA's Community Outreach Department at (408) 321-5754, or by email at gail.collins@vta.org.

On-line traffic complaint form

- Dave Noel

If you have traffic problems, report them! The more reports of trouble, the higher the priority assigned for enforcement. Check out the on-line form at:

http://www.sjpd.org/traffic_complaint_form.htm.

Pearl avenue fire station improvements

- Dave Noel

Thanks to the public safety bond measure approved by voters, work has begun to upgrade and renovate our neighborhood fire station on Pearl Avenue just north of Branham Lane. The work should be completed in six months.

Tim McCoullough from San Jose City Council member **Judy Chirco's** office reports that the improvements include:

- 1 Enlarged kitchen, dining room & day room
- 2 Enlarged Captain's Office
- 3 New heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system
- 4 New Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant restroom
- 5 New concrete driveway and parking lot to replace the existing asphalt driveway & parking lot. (Asphalt cannot take the weight of modern fire trucks)
- 6 New telephone system
- 7 New generator to power the building
- 8 Upgraded electrical service
- 9 Abated asbestos floor tiles

Gunderson's neighborhood impacts

-Jeri Arstingstall

As many of you know we enjoy living near the school. On a normal day our streets are clear, however we have noticed that this year the Monday to Friday drop off and pick up has affected our streets. We met with the school district and they are recommending to the city that No U-Turn signs be installed along Gaundabert Lane.

The school district completed a one month study for the use/leasing of the school on Saturdays and Sundays. The study showed that the neighborhood was usually not impacted as much on Saturdays as on Sundays. Saturday was only impacted if the Almaden Youth Soccer was having a tournament. We were told that when AYS was having a tournament they would set up traffic patrols. Unfortunately this did not happen the Saturday of November 8th. On Sunday's the Van Lam School has done a much better job of patrolling their traffic. Veronica Lewis will be helping us set up a meeting with Pat Dando's office to discuss the impacts the school has on our streets to help us find a resolution to the on-going parking situation.

Call VEP
for help with your
community problems

Gunderson's Athletic Fields

-Jeri Arstingstall

The school district has approved the implementation plan for Measure F. The district construction office is moving very quickly to get the projects started. The first phase of construction will be on the athletic fields of the high schools. The school district and Beal's construction showed the community their design for Gunderson's stadium and the athletic fields. The stadium will accommodate both football, soccer and track. The fields will change the baseball field to a different direction. The concerns the community expressed was parking, opening of the restrooms on weekends and trash.

Our October meeting

- Dave Noel

Vice Mayor **Pat Dando** opened our October 28th meeting with the fantastic news that the **Lester Property** had been saved, as announced in a press conference just hours earlier. This set the tone for a great meeting with about 35 attendees.

Pat Dando followed this with more great news. Pat and fellow city council members had just approved a pilot project to fund Sunday hours (1:00 – 5:00 p.m.) at one library in each council district through June 2004, *without* cutting back any other hours. In our district, the new Vineland branch library (near Blossom Hill and Meridian) will be open on Sundays.

Joe Head, Vice president of SummerHill Homes, and **Dave Mitchell**, parks planning manager for the City of San Jose jointly presented the concept design for the Vista Park Community Room which SummerHill will build in lieu of parkland dedication fees for their nearby Las Brisas home development. The concept design features very generous proportions and amenities, including separate restrooms that can be used by park patrons even when the community room is closed. SummerHill plans to begin construction right after the rainy season and complete it next Spring!

VEP committed to form a committee to comment on the concept design, and also offer decorating recommendations. **Joshua Howard** from Pat Dando's office will be the committee's liaison to the city.

Members discussed the adequacy of the sound wall on Branham Lane between Vistapark and Mia Circle. **Pat Dando** said that these sound walls will be addressed when Branham Lane is widened between Vistapark and Snell approximately 5 to 10 years from now. It is not realistic to expect anything sooner, especially with the current budget situation. **Joe Head** said that SummerHill does have some funds set aside to paint these sound walls.

Pat Dando discussed the vacant lot at Branham and Narvaez. The city is currently assessing the under-



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Photography by Jeri Arstingstall

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ground utilities situation. If the lot is build-able, Pat is looking into the possibility of building one or two Habitat For Humanity homes there.

Joe Head summarized the **Las Brisas** project. There will be 78 homes, priced from \$610,000 to \$670,000. The models will open in mid November, and the first new neighbors will arrive in December to January. SummerHill is purchasing the first year's VEP membership for each of their new homeowners.

City Parks manager **Art Rosales** presented an update on our neighborhood parks and provided the following useful city phone numbers:

- 277-1383 Parks issues, including graffiti. All issues reported to this number are permanently logged, making it easier to track these items to closure
- 277-2758 Anti-graffiti hotline for private property.
- 277-3208 Anti-litter hotline
- 277-4477 Adopt-a-Park
- 277-8900 Same as 311, for police non-emergency

District 10 city council candidates **Nancy Pyle** and **Rich De La Rosa** were each given a couple minutes to introduce themselves to our membership. They will both participate in our candidates' forum on January 27th.

Finally, members present voted unanimously in support of the VEP executive board's recommendation to raise the VEP 2004 dues from \$15 to \$20. This will be our first dues increase in several years, and reflects increases in costs, including printing and postage, as well as increased funds allocated to our annual Community Service Awards.

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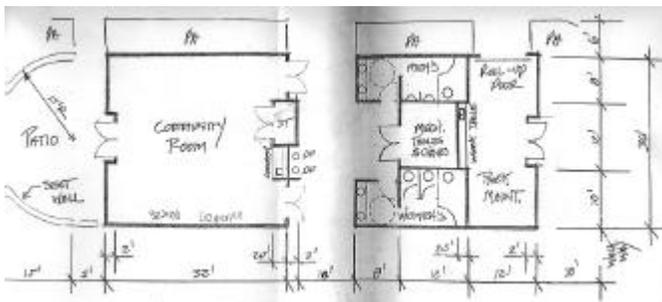
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VEP community room

- Greg West

At our October meeting, SummerHill Homes rolled out the plan for the roughly 900 sq-ft community room and rest room/storage shed building that they propose to build as a turn-key project at Vista Park to offset City parkland dedication fees. The plan was generally favored by the membership at the meeting. VEP President, Dave Noel, called for volunteers to serve on a committee to help finalize the design with the City and SummerHill Homes. It is anticipated that the committee will meet two or three times over the next couple of months. As of writing, the date of the first meeting is being finalized for sometime in mid November, probably a week or so before our general membership meeting.

VEP expresses our thanks to the following members who volunteered to serve on the Vista Park Community Room Committee: **Greg West, David Noel, Jeri Arstingstall, Joe Tajnai, Katherine Decker, Jon Persson, Louise Bertao, Robyn Catelani, Clay Sperry,** and **Phil Bejar.**



Concept Design for Vista Park Community Room

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VEP Community Service Awards

- Dave Noel

We are considering a few minor changes to the community service awards. A committee will recommend changes and present these to the membership for a vote at our January 27th general meeting. At that time we will also propose funding for our 2004 Community Service Awards.

Our Community Service Award committee members are **Dave Noel, Dave Fadness, Greg West** and **Steve Kinsey**. If you are interested in joining us or providing inputs, please contact me as soon as possible.

Greener holidays

- Tamara Gilbert, City of San José, Environmental Services

The holiday season is a perfect time to give a gift to Mother Earth by reducing waste and reusing resources. Here are some tips for greener holidays:

Gifts & Packaging

- 1 Consider non-material gifts of event tickets, memberships, subscriptions, or special time with you.
- 2 Wrap gifts with reusable gift bags, decorated boxes or fabric instead of wrapping paper.
- 3 Avoid using foil wrapping papers since they're not recyclable.



Shopping

- 1 Make shopping lists to consolidate trips.
- 2 Shop at off-peak hours to avoid heavy traffic and crowds.
- 3 Take reusable bags with you whenever you shop.

Parties

- 1 Use fabric napkins, tablecloths or placements, chinaware, glasses, and flatware instead of disposable plates, cups and plasticware.
- 2 Place marked recycling bins near your food service so that people can easily recycle.
- 3 Visit www.reducewaste.org to download fun party recycling signs for your bins.

Recycle Plus holiday schedule

- Tamara Gilbert, City of San José, Environmental Services

Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day are the only days that garbage, recycling, and yard trimmings are not collected in the City of San José. These will be the only times there will be changes to the collection schedule. Normal collection will resume Monday, December 1 and January 5.

Remember that your street sweeping day follows your garbage collection day, and there will be a change to one sweep per month starting on January 5, 2004. If you have further questions, call Recycle Plus Customer Service at (408) 277-2700.

Recycle your Christmas tree from December 26, 2003 to January 30, 2004. Trees will be collected with your yard waste on the same day as your garbage and recycling. Trees DO NOT require an extra garbage sticker, but need to be cut into 5-foot lengths, and be free of tinsel, ornaments and tree stands.

Garden tips



- John Marks

Planting/Caring for Hydrangeas

Hydrangeas are an attractive perennial that call for little care. Few insects or diseases affect hydrangeas. But planting hydrangeas requires some care. After you obtain a starter, dig a hole larger than the container it came in. Place the plant in a hole where it will get a northern exposure,

ensuring that the crown of the plant is slightly above the level of the native soil. Backfill with a mix of soil with a lot of compost, using excess soil to build a watering basin. Fill the basin with water, checking to see that there is little or no settling of the plant.

Hydrangeas thrive on ample water. Feed the plant when it leafs out in the spring and every other month during the growing season; use about one-quarter cup of sulfate of ammonia, and spread it in a wide circle under the hydrangea and water in afterward.

In hot spells, hydrangeas may show signs of wilting, only to recover when the sun goes down. This is a natural occurrence called "incipient wilting." It happens even if the soil is very wet.

Hydrangeas bloom on the shoots produced in the previous year. Cut off the blossoms after the flowers have faded. Prune them just above the second set of buds from the bottom of the stem. The new shoots that grow from these buds will bloom in the following year. It is hard to kill a hydrangea.

After the plant is several years old, you may need to thin out the multitude of stems, removing any crossing, dead, or diseased stems. The older stems will be a darker color, with brown or gray scaly bark. These may no longer be productive and need to be pruned back to a set of buds near the base of the plant. New stems will emerge to replace the old.

[Ed. Note: The above article was extracted from the January 17, 2003 San Jose Mercury News gardening section.]

JEFF SPEDDING

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November Reminders

Sprinkle some color into your winter garden, if you're not growing vegetables this year. Sow wildflower seeds, and the winter rains will water them for you. You could also plant winter flowers, such as pansies, stock, snapdragons, and primrose. I've got some cosmos that keep re-seeding themselves in a neglected former tree hole in the driveway; they grow tall and beautiful, a thing of beauty to behold every day when I leave and return.

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

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

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

Bulbs go in NOW

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

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Using Oak Barrels

Half an oak barrel makes a great container for small trees, particularly citrus trees. But what about drainage? You should drill four, half-inch (or so) holes around the perimeter of the bottom. Coat the interior with a roofing compound, such as Black Jack, to prevent rotting.

Bees in the Backyard?

Unless there is a bee's nest in your back yard, you need not worry about killing them. Bees will fly miles to reach a site where food is obtainable. To eliminate the possibility of bees buzzing around, say during your yard party, you would have to spray a circular area miles across, and then only on the day of the party.

Computer corner

-Bob Aquino, VEP's Computer Guru

The buzz today in the computer world has to do with the unwiring of the computer. Every article that you read loudly trumpets the onset of a new age of freedom. Compute anywhere!! Starbucks, most hotel chains, airports, and many schools (Gundersen for instance) are providing wireless connectivity. Intel is pushing wireless as the next big thing. Who am I to quarrel with such a consensus? I'm going to do two articles on wireless. This first one will be generalized and the second will bore down into the nuts and bolts of the IEEE spec 802.11, which is what is driving the present frenzy.

The first wireless links that were utilized used infrared (IR) light. In one respect, light is a better medium than microwaves, because it has a wider bandwidth and in theory can carry data at a faster rate. That is why optical cabling is installed. The disadvantage with light is that it is a line of sight communication. If someone stands between you and the TV when you activate the remote, nothing happens. Nevertheless, IR is used in some remote keyboards and mice. It's also used in printers to replace the printer cable and to communicate between handhelds and between them and base stations.

The next wireless foray into computers was radio frequency (RF) keyboards and pointing devices. Though never wildly successful, they have their niche in the market. Both Logitech and Intel make several models each. The downside of these devices is that they need batteries.

Bluetooth, which I discussed in a previous column, finds its application in the reduction of wire clutter at our desks by making peripheral devices. This is due to their limited range.

The real action on wireless is in the 802.11 arena. This is how you connect to the Internet. Predictably, there is a lot of confusion over which way to go. I'll go into detail in the next article, but the nickel version is this:

802.11.b first shipped as a commercial product in 1999. It is the cheapest to buy, the most commonly found, has the greatest range but has the lowest bandwidth (although it is good enough for any broadband application)

802.11.a started shipping in 2001. It has higher bandwidth, and a shorter range than 802.11.b, but is incompatible with 802.11.b due to the fact that it operates at a different frequency.

802.11.g (please don't ask me about the b, a, g sequence, I don't know) is backwards compatible with 802.11.b, but has a higher bandwidth and shorter range than 802.11.b.

So, to me, the choice is clear. Go with 802.11.b for the typical home application.

Boys & girls club

-Fred McCasland, Unit Director

The Boys & Girls Club of Silicon Valley serves South San Jose with educational & recreational services at our Levin/Southside Clubhouse. It is located on Edenvue Drive next to Caroline Davis Intermediate School. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 2:00 – 7:00 p.m, with homework assistance available from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. The membership Fee is only \$20.00.

We are having our annual Thanksgiving Dinner on Tuesday, November 25th from 6:30 to 8:00. We are also having a Christmas Party on Tuesday, December 23rd. Volunteers are needed for both events.

For more information, please call Fred McCasland at 224-7997, or visit the following websites:
www.bgclub.org www.bgca.org www.careerlaunch.net

*** VEP ***
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Car break-ins

- Dave Noel

A VEP member on Viewpark circle reported that a neighbor distributed flyers on Halloween indicating that their cars were broken into and CD players were stolen during the previous week. To our knowledge this was an isolated incident, but it reminds us all to keep our cars locked and keep valuables from view.

VEP Park liaisons

- Dave Noel

One of my dreams is to create a VEP parks committee. I'd like to have a liaison for each park. That liaison would keep an eye on their park and lead occasional work parties for his or her park. We can draw upon VEP members and high school students to provide workers and refreshments for the work parties.

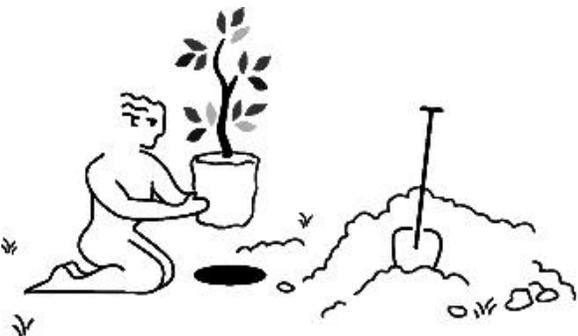
VEP will apply with the City of San Jose Adopt-A-Park program to formally adopt Vista Park. I anticipate Parkview III will also be available for adoption. If you live near Parkview III, we need you! VEP could adopt Vista Park III if we have volunteers to back us up. I'd like at least one of the park liaisons to represent the committee at the monthly VEP executive meetings. That person could be the parks committee chair.

If you are interested in this initiative, please contact me! We need **YOU!**

Support Our City Forest

- Dave Noel

Our City Forest is a wonderful organization in San Jose that helped VEP tremendously both in planting and maintaining the new trees we planted in the medians of Chynoweth and Narvaez earlier this year. If you go to www.ourcityforest.org and then click on the Amazon.com logo, 10% of your Amazon.com purchase will go to Our City Forest.



School liaisons for VEP

- Dave Noel

Do you have a student at Andrew Hill High School? If so, **WE NEED YOU!** VEP is establishing liaisons for our local schools in order to improve our connections with them. We are starting with the high schools, but if you'd like to be a liaison to an elementary or middle



Wesley W. Terrell

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school, we'd welcome that help too.

Laura Probert, a VEP member and Gunderson PTSA president is doing a great job as our Gunderson liaison.

The purpose of our liaisons is to solicit articles from the schools for publication in the VEP News, and to submit articles from VEP to schools' newsletters. At the high schools, our liaisons will also help increase awareness of our annual Community Service Awards. Our liaisons can also help find volunteers from VEP and the schools to help in each others' projects, fundraisers, and initiatives.

President's message

- Dave Noel, VEP President

This year has certainly been great for VEP. We realized two very long-term goals. First, we will finally have a community room and restrooms for Vista Park. This building will also be VEPs new home.

It's hard to imagine news bigger than the community room, but then we learned that Walter Lester's property has been officially preserved for a historic agricultural park showing life as it was at the turn of the 20th century.

Each year one of our very top goals is to "Support preservation of the Lester property and efforts to make it a park." Unfortunately, there hasn't been much we could do since our letter writing campaign a couple years back, in support of a federal estate tax modification that ultimately died in committee. This has suddenly changed. Watch for many exciting developments and volunteer opportunities as this story unfolds. If you're interested in this, please come to our November 25th meeting!

Next month our VEP News will be our annual holiday card, so our next newsy VEP News will be in January. If anything comes up between now and then, we'll communicate by email. If you'd like to be on our email list, send me an email at pres@vepca.org.

Thanks for your continued support as we complete our 34th year, and I look forward to working together as we

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start our momentous 35th year in January!

VEP advertiser adopts Gunderson

- Laura Probert

Condimentz, a local promotional and printing company, and a new VEP advertiser, has adopted Gunderson High School for the 2003 - 2004 school year. Condimentz is donating \$5.00 from every invoice this year to departments or programs selected by the school. Please inquire how your business can also adopt Gunderson or another school for a small donation from your company and/or it's customers.

For more information send email to info@condimentz.com, or visit www.condimentz.com. We take pride in our community.

Gunderson Crab Feast

- Candra Bailly

The Gunderson Athletic Booster Club is sponsoring their 4th Annual Crab Feast on February 21, 2004. This year it will be held off campus at the Italian Heritage Hall on 4th Street. Tickets cost \$35 per person. There will be lots of good food, entertainment, music, a silent auction and a raffle. We hope to see you there.

For tickets, contact Kanika Ah Yo at 224-0336, Candra Bailly at 281-0343 or Coach Ball at 535-6340. When contacting Coach Ball, you may request that the proceeds from your tickets benefit a specific sport. Tickets go on sale December 1, 2003.



Holiday horse & carriage rides

- Dave Noel

The Willow Glen Resident is sponsoring Horse & Carriage rides through the Willow Glen neighborhood on Thursdays & Fridays, 6:30 - 9:30 PM beginning December 4, 2003. Pick up & drop off is at Siena, a Mediterranean Bistro (directions are available at: www.sienabistro.com). Cost is \$12 for adults, \$6 for children under 5 years, and \$60 for a private ride. Advanced reservations are required. For reservations, call Don Skipwith at (408) 666-1990.

Route 87 Carpool Lanes

- Dave Noel

VTA is currently performing environmental planning on a project to open high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes on Route 87 from Chynoweth to Julian. The project also includes improvements on southbound 87 from Hwy 280 to Almaden expressway to help relieve that extraordinary bottleneck. Construction could start as soon as Spring 2004. We have requested that VTA give us a presentation on this project at our February VEP general meeting.

Pinehurst Residents Association wrote a thoughtful letter to VTA asking that they ensure noise levels will be properly mitigated in their neighborhood. They also pointed out that much of the dirt VTA must remove from the middle lanes may have asbestos fibers, which was a significant item of concern during original construction.

I wrote a letter to VTA on behalf of VEP supporting these much-needed improvements, and also endorsing Pinehurst's letter. I expressed emphatic agreement with Pinehurst's assessment of the problems at the Narvaez onramp to northbound Route 87. I also expressed concern about noise in the Gunderson area which are directly exposed to traffic noise from Routes 85 and 87, and their connector ramps. A copy of my letter is on our website, www.vepca.org.

VEP's May meeting

- Dave Noel

[Ed. Note: VEP Members on our email list saw this wonderful news shortly after our May 27th meeting. Unfortunately, we didn't get a chance to publish it in our VEP News until now, so here goes...]

VEP's May 27th meeting was one of the very best in our 34-year history. A record-shattering 65 people attended and were treated to some major announcements. That turn-out really represented VEP well to our elected representatives and the developers building in our neighborhoods. Thanks so much to all of you who showed up that night.

Here are the meeting highlights:

San Jose Vice-Mayor Pat Dando announced:

- A \$7.8-million re-build of Pearl Avenue Library. Community meetings start Oct/Nov '03.
- Council adopted VEP-nominated name for William H. Cilker Park (on Winfield at Chynoweth).
- Work with developers and Don Gage's office on Capitol Expy landscaping and sound wall.
- Work with developers on turn-key Vista Park community room to be built in Summer '04.
- Work with VTA to build a park on Bridget Court at Narvaez (part of a deal to build a deaf seniors.
- housing project on VTA's park-n-ride lot on the south side of Capitol Expy).

Santa Clara County Supervisor Don Gage announced:

- Almaden Expressway traffic signal synchronization is going to bid in July/August '03.
- Work with developers and Pat Dando's office on Capitol Expy landscaping and sound wall.

At-Large VEP Community Service Award presentation:

- VEP members witnessed the granting of our award to Shannon Drach from Leigh High School.

Pinn Brothers (at Capitol Expy/Vistapark Drive):

- 126 condos (1,800 sq ft @ \$480K - \$520K) and 226 apartments (rents not yet established).
- Models open in late November '03.
- Will provide median island landscaping on Capitol Expy, from Baroni to Copperfield Drive.
- Will contribute to a sound wall on Capitol Expy, behind homes on Hastings Park Court.

Summerhill Homes (at Branham Lane/Vistapark Drive):

- 78 single-family homes (1,900 sq ft @ \$610K - \$620K; 2,200 sq ft. @ \$640K - \$650K).
- Move-ins start ~Jan-Feb '04.
- Will contribute the equivalent of \$640,000 in park improvements at Vista Park.
- Will build Vista Park Community Room w/bathrooms (planning starts 10/03. Summer '04 compl).
- Will cul-de-sac and landscape the stub end of Vistapark Drive (just south of Hyde Park Drive).
- Will install a landscaped median island on Vistapark Drive, between Branham and Hyde Park.
- Will work with VEP and the City to calm traffic on Hyde Park Drive in their project's vicinity.
- Will meet with adjoining neighbors to work out interface fencing.
- Will meet monthly during construction with a VEP Neighborhood Construction Committee.
- Will pay first-year VEP memberships for all 78 new homes.

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Water district's solar carports

- Dave Noel

Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD) is installing solar carports at its headquarters parking lot. Not only will they provide shade, solar panels on the carports will generate 200 kilowatts of electricity.

The SCVWD is also installing a 1,000 kilowatt gas-fired cogeneration system and heat recovery system. Heat from the cogeneration system will be used to heat and cool their administration building.

Total project cost is \$4.6-million. It will provide about 85 percent of the electricity needed at the district's Almaden Expressway campus.



Camera 7 hosts "Diaper Days"

- Dave Noel

Camera 7 Cinema at the Pruneyard is the proud host of DIAPER DAYS, a twice-monthly film screening catering exclusively to moms or dads--and their kids. Every first and third Wednesday at 10 am, parents and (possibly crying) babies can see a movie guilt-free!

Tickets are only \$5.75, with kids under 3 admitted FREE. E-mail your "diaper day request" to Diaper-Day@aol.com for news and updates.

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 its emergency call center:

911 calls (emergency) = (408) 277-8911

311 calls (non-emergency) = (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



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Aluminum wiring

[Ed. Note: This article is continued from last month's VEP NEWS. VEP-area homes have been found to have a mix of aluminum and copper wiring.

In last month's installment, we covered the Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC) description of the history of problems with aluminum wiring in homes, how to identify trouble signs, what the homeowner can do, and the recommended approaches to repair (wiring replacement or COPALUM Crimp Connector Repair).

What follows is a description of repair methods sometimes used by the industry, but discouraged by CPSC. The reader is urged to read the full report, "Repairing Aluminum Wiring" (CSPC #516) by visiting the Consumer Product Safety Commission website: www.cpsc.gov.]

"Pigtailing" involves attaching a short piece of copper wire to the aluminum wire with a twist-on connector sometimes called a wire nut; the copper wire is then connected to the switch, wall outlet or other termination device.

The CPSC staff has evaluated the effectiveness of "pigtailing" as a repair. In CPSC-sponsored laboratory testing some brands of twist-on connectors have performed very poorly. Over time, substantial numbers of these connectors have overheated in laboratory tests. Surveys of and statements made by electricians and electrical inspectors confirm the highly variable and often poor performance of these connectors when used with old technology aluminum wire.

It is possible that some pigtail "repairs" made with twist-on connectors may be even more prone to failure than the original aluminum wire connections. Accordingly, the Commission staff believes that pigtailing does not solve the problem of overheating present in aluminum branch circuits.

Another repair recommended by the industry is to use switches and outlets labeled "CO/ALR". Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL) lists these devices especially for use with aluminum wire, although they can be used with copper or copper-clad wire.

CO/ALR devices perform better with aluminum wire when installed carefully and according to best electrical practices than do the types of switches and outlets usually used in the original installations of old technology aluminum branch circuit wiring. However, CO/ALR connectors are not available for all parts of the wiring system (for example, for permanently-wired appliances and ceiling mounted light fixtures).

In the opinion of the CPSC staff CO/ALR devices must be considered to be, at best, an incomplete repair. Further, CO/ALR wiring devices have failed in laboratory tests when connected to aluminum wire typical of that installed in existing homes. The test conditions simulated actual use conditions, no "overstress" type of testing was used.

Exception: If you have an aluminum wire termination in your home which exhibits symptoms of failure, twist-on connector pigtails or CO/ALR devices may be used as an emergency temporary repair for a failed aluminum termination. Should such a repair be performed, the Commission staff recommends that you arrange to have your home rewired or the COPALUM crimp connector repair performed as soon as possible.

It is important to note that there is only one manufacturer of the special connectors and the tools required to make the repairs as recommended by the CPSC staff.

Warning

There are many other brands and types of crimp connectors including those intended to be installed with a pliers type of hand tool which are readily available to consumers at hardware stores, lumber yards, hobby supply stores, automotive supply stores and so forth.

THE COMMISSION STAFF DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THESE COMMON VARIETIES OF CRIMP CONNECTORS CAN BE USED TO RELIABLY REPAIR ALUMINUM WIRING.



Bulletin Board Ads

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

AFTER SCHOOL & WEEKEND DAY CARE: On Vistapark Drive, near Rachel Carson and Parkview Elementary Schools. Call Peggy @ 224-2243 or 250-3236.

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

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

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:

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Westfield Shoppingtown Oakridge

- Dave Noel

If you haven't visited the newly expanded Oakridge Mall, you're in for a big treat. It is now a vibrant marketplace with something for everyone. And be sure to check out the state-of-the art Century theaters. Even if you don't go to see a movie, go up the escalator and check out the beautiful facility and mountain views.

If you are heading to Oakridge, you might be wise to avoid the parking garages during peak traffic periods. One VEP member reported a one hour wait to exit the parking garage near Sears on a recent Saturday. I wrote Oakridge's General Manager Phillip St. Pierre, and he promptly reported two things that should help ease the situation.

First, a stop bar will be placed on ring road to meter traffic that is now effectively blocking traffic exiting the parking garage. Also, Westfield will implement their holiday traffic management plan early, including offsite employee parking with shuttles. If you see problems, or have observations that would be helpful to Westfield in managing their holiday traffic, please call Phillip St. Pierre at 408-578-2912. Feel free to call him with compliments too, as I'm sure he'd love to hear good news during the hectic holiday season.

VEP Community Calendar

Tue, Nov 25 @ 7:30 - 9 pm: VEP General Meeting at Gunderson High School.

December: No VEP General Meeting.

Wed, Jan 7 @ 7:30 - 9 pm: VEP Executive Committee Meeting (call for location.)

Tue, Jan 27 @ 7:30 - 9 pm: Election Forum in the Gunderson Theater (District 10 city council candidates).

Wed, Feb 4 @ 7:30 - 9 pm: VEP Executive Committee Meeting (call for location.)

Check us out at www.vepca.org

7:30 pm at Gunderson

Be sure to attend
 VEP's
 November 25th Meeting

THE VEP NEWS



VEP Community Association

P.O. Box 18111 San Jose, CA 95158

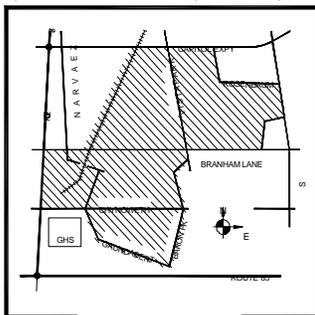
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Published monthly by VEP Community Association, a not-for-profit organization of volunteers established in 1969 to serve and represent more than 2000 homes in the Blossom Valley area of southern San Jose. VEP is dedicated to neighborhood maintenance and improvement in its membership area as well as to active involvement in civic affairs. This newsletter is mailed monthly to all members in good standing, to our advertisers, and to schools and government officials serving our membership area. For membership or paid advertisement information, contact our Treasurer or write to the address listed above.

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VEP MEMBERSHIP AREA

VEP
 Meeting 7:30 pm
 Tuesday, November 25