

## VEP MEETING

7:30 P.M. TUESDAY  
**March 23, 2004**

GUNDERSON HIGH SCHOOL  
→ Forum Area ←

### AGENDA

#### ★ Home Faire ★

An annual event designed to help you find qualified services for home and life improvement.  
(See article below.)

Everyone is welcome. Please invite your neighbors!

### Home Faire

*-John Marks*

Special Alert: Our 7<sup>th</sup> annual *Home Faire* is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, and this year we will again have CASH door prizes. Exhibitors have ponied up enough for door prizes totaling about \$700. And you don't have to buy anything, just come and get a ticket stub and wait to see if your number is called.

Our Faire features contractors and tradesmen who will display their products and functions in the Gunderson High School Forum area. Please make a special effort to come and match the effort of these suppliers to be there for you. Exhibitors include sunrooms, windows, bathroom remodeling, screens, plumbing, composting, doors, floors, kitchens, roofing, hardware, cooking, pest control, photography, water softeners, gardening, painters, garage doors, dance instruction, and landscaping.

You won't be disappointed, while you munch on free goodies provided by VEP (brownies & soft drinks!). Mark your calendar for Tuesday, March 23, 7:30 pm in the Forum at Gunderson High School. We look forward to seeing you there.

#### **IS THIS YOUR LAST VEP NEWSLETTER?**

IT COULD BE IF...  
YOU HAVEN'T RENEWED YOUR VEP MEMBERSHIP  
PLEASE DO IT TODAY.

(See article below.)

### Membership drive

*- Dave Noel*

TIME IS RUNNING OUT! Our annual membership drive is coming to a close, and we will have to clean up our mailing list at the end of March. If you haven't renewed by then, you'll be dropped from both our newsletter and email lists.

We'd hate to see you go!

For your convenience, we've printed a copy of the membership form below in case you've misplaced your remit envelop. Please renew now to prevent a lapse in membership.

**\*\* Membership Application \*\***

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

**\*\* Please type or print legibly \*\***

Last name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

First name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Street address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_

Email address(es): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Comments): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Can you give VEP a few volunteer hours? \_\_\_\_\_

Mail your \$20 check to VEP, P.O. Box 18111, San Jose 95158. Thank you!

MANY THANKS to all of you who already have renewed. So far, we have 325 memberships, not including the 78 memberships SummerHill is generously buying for our new neighbors in Las Brisas. But, we're still waiting for 130 of you to renew.

SPECIAL THANKS to those of you who included extra money with your renewal, or who purchased gift memberships for other friends and neighbors. This includes Realtor **Wesley Terrell** who buys memberships for the new owners of homes he sells in our area. We challenge all other realtors in our area to do the same.

And finally, many MANY THANKS to those of you who noted on your renewals that you're willing to volunteer for VEP.

Speaking of membership renewals, on behalf of the VEP executive board and our committee volunteers, thanks so much for these kind words on your remit envelopes:

- You are doing a wonderful job. Thanks.

- I really appreciate the time and effort put in by all to improve and enhance our community. Job well done!
- Great association, great newsletter!
- I would like to volunteer to help elderly/disabled neighbors to take care of their yards.
- This newsletter is very informative. I know what's happening in my area. Thanks so much.
- Thanks for the hard work & hours to benefit our neighborhood.
- Great job, excellent newsletter.
- You guys are awesome!
- Thank you for all the info in the newsletter. I even get my kids to read it!
- I am enjoying the new Guadalupe Trail very much! No more high blood pressure!

## Proposal to re-name Capitol Expressway

- *Dave Fadness*

In response to a request to re-name Capitol Expressway to Martin Luther King Expressway, the County Board of Supervisors has asked the County Roads Commission to first propose a policy on renaming county expressways.

The commission met on March 11<sup>th</sup> and recommended the following two options which will be decided upon by the Board:

Policy Option 1: Expressways shall not be renamed.

Policy Option 2: Consider the renaming of an expressway subject to adoption of the following findings by a unanimous vote of the Board of Supervisors that the proposed name change

1. Has been formally endorsed by resolution of city councils of all affected cities;
2. Reflects greater historical significance and relevance to the County of Santa Clara than its existing name;
3. Has acceptable cost impacts to the County in light of competing funding needs;
4. Will not result in confusion to the traveling public, public or private service providers, and others who need clear and unambiguous address information to reach their destination; and
5. Will not result in undue hardship on affected property owners or tenants.

In the case of renaming Capitol Expressway, County Roads staff estimated their own costs in the range from \$736,000 to \$2-million (if larger signs require new support structures). Most of this involves replacement of signage. Other public-sector costs may also be involved for the cities. They estimated a private-sector cost of ~\$70,500 for

the a41 businesses and 105 residences having a Capitol Expressway address.

I represented VEP at the Roads Commission meeting, asking that they recommend not spending money to re-name Capitol Expressway until after the many improvements we've asked for in recent decades get finished. We're forever told there's no money for traffic mitigation, sound wall improvements, pedestrian walks, landscaping, trash and weed removal, etc. Spending as much as \$2-million to rename the expressway is an absurdity when those needs remain unmet.

If you have strong feelings about this, contact our District 1 County Supervisor Don Gage at 299-4321.

## Chynoweth bridge

- *Dave Noel*

The Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) held a series of meetings on their proposed 25-year plan titled *Valley Transportation Plan 2030* (VTP2030). This plan provides relative priority and anticipated funding sources for a wide variety of projects that might be implemented over the next 25 years. These projects were categorized as improvements to freeways, expressways, roads, bikeways, mass transit, and intelligent transportation systems (items such as signal timing, etc).

A few items caught my attention relative to our neighborhood:

Chynoweth Bridge: VTA says that the city of San Jose and a team of VTA staff have both placed very high priority on building a bridge over the percolation ponds to extend Chynoweth between Almaden Expressway and Winfield Boulevard, with a traffic light at Chynoweth and Fell Avenue.

VEP executives are very concerned about routing traffic off Almaden Expressway onto our neighborhood streets. The San Jose general plan states that Chynoweth will not be connected across Martial Cottle Park (the Lester Property), so traffic from this bridge would ultimately cut through our neighborhood streets. VEP executives would like to see a solution that that connects Almaden/Chynoweth traffic more directly to Winfield at Thornwood Drive, the street behind Oakridge Mall.

Almaden Plaza Way: VTA gives slightly lower priority to improving Almaden Plaza Way, the street/freeway exit between the Costco parking lot and Almaden Expressway. In our opinion, this project needs very high priority.

Widening Branham and Snell along the Lester Property: Both of these appear on the list with relatively medium priority.

Light rail on Capitol Expressway: Transit improvements still include light rail on Capitol Expressway from Eastridge

mall to Route 87. In order to implement light rail between Vistapark Drive and Route 87, a traffic lane would need to be sacrificed in each direction. This would generate a huge problem, and light rail ridership wouldn't likely offset much of traffic since light rail between Eastridge and Route 87 would not connect housing with jobs.

We feel it would make more sense to connect the East Valley (homes) with Coyote Valley (future jobs), using dedicated rights-of-way that would allow the light rail cars to move at higher speeds as it does in the freeway medians on 85 and 87. We have the opportunity to develop world-class transit, and jobs and housing in the Coyote Valley since we would be starting with a clean slate and building a new community.

## Possible light rail tax

- Janet Darrow (\*)

A new law was passed by the California legislature this past year that allows for a parcel tax on properties located within ½-mile of a light rail station.

While the intent of the bill was to create a benefits assessment district for properties located near future BART stations, this new law could apply to existing light rail stations. The local city council would have to vote on the tax, but only if signatures representing ownership of 25% of the assessed value of the property inside the proposed assessment district were gathered in protest. There would only be a 30-day window to submit the petition.

In Los Angeles, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority created a similar benefits assessment district for its new subway. The fee varied from 17-33 cents per square foot. For a 2000 square foot house the fee would range from \$340-\$660 per year.

The Pinehurst Residents Association board has met with Councilwoman Judy Chirco, and she has not yet heard about any proposal from Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) to enact such a tax, but we want to be prepared. PRA has also contacted County Supervisor Don Gage's office insists that, at the moment, VTA has no plans to act on this.

*[(\*) Ed. Note: Janet Darrow is president of Pinehurst Residents Association, our neighboring association located between Branham, Pearl, Capitol Expressway, and Route 87. This article was reprinted from PRA's February 2004 Newsletter.]*

## Conversion rebates now available

-Ginger Cardona

Santa Clara County currently has an upgrade program designed to promote the elimination of wood-burning appliances. You are eligible for a \$500 rebate if you replace an existing wood-burning stove or fireplace insert with a gas

insert. You may be eligible for a \$300 rebate if you convert your wood-burning fireplace to a gas-burning fireplace.

Go to [www.sparetheair.org](http://www.sparetheair.org) for details about the program. Barbecues Galore in Almaden Fashion Plaza (408) 264-0420 also has information about the program and the necessary rebate forms. Additional retail stores are listed on the web page.

## Parking tickets

- *Dave Noel*

A resident on Holycon Circle called recently to report a very troubling trend. It appears that private companies have been given contracts by the city to issue traffic tickets as a source of revenue to the city. It appears the folks issuing the tickets may be doing a careless job in some cases, perhaps simply to make a quota.

A few months ago, this resident received a parking ticket for parking too far away from the curb. The law allows 18-inches, and his tires were between 12- and 16-inches from the curb. He paid the \$25 ticket, figuring it was too much trouble to fight it, and has been very careful since then about his parking.

Imagine his surprise recently when he received another ticket, at approximately 9 pm. The ticket was for two violations: for parking the wrong direction on the street and for parking too far from the curb. He was parked the right direction, and his tires were 6-inches from the curb.

Luckily, the resident was able to catch up to the person giving tickets while she was still on his street, and have her come back to his car. That person admitted her mistake and tore up the ticket. Meanwhile, about 20-yards away, there was a car parked the wrong direction that she did not ticket.

I've also received complaints about aggressive enforcement on Hastings Park Court. Tickets have apparently been given out in the middle of the night on several different occasions.

If you are having similar experiences, please come to a VEP board meeting and let us know about it. Meanwhile, park close to the curb and don't park the wrong direction!

## VEP community calendar

Tue, Mar 23 @ 7:30 - 9 pm: VEP *Home Faire* in the Gunderson Forum.

Tue, Mar 30 @ 6:30-8 pm: Airport Improvement Meeting at the Vineland Branch Library, 1450 Blossom Hill Road, hosted by Vice Mayor Pat Dando (other meetings dates are available, see article in this newsletter).

Sat, Apr 17: Neighborhood Clean-up "Dumpster" day (see article).

Tue, Apr 27 @ 7:30 - 9 pm: VEP Annual Meeting – VEP officer elections.

Sat, May 1: Neighborhood Garage Sale (see article).

Sun, May 16 @ noon – 3:30 pm: VEP Community Picnic at Vista Park (see article).

Tue, May 25 @ 7:30 - 9 pm: VEP General Meeting. A presentation by Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren and our At-Large *Community Service Award* presentation.

## VEP's 7<sup>th</sup> annual *Home Faire*

- *Dave Noel*

Our 7th annual Home Faire is only days away. Please be sure to attend. VEP Past President John Marks invests a great deal of his personal time to make this event the best it can be. He seeks out reputable vendors and craftsmen representing a wide variety of products and skills, many of whom have been recommended to him by VEP members.

Please don't miss this annual event. Look for John and tell him thanks for leading this event for seven years running!

Admission is free, snacks are on us, and cash door prizes will be given out.

## Neighborhood clean-up "Dumpster Day"

- *Dave Noel*

Each year, the city of San Jose holds neighborhood cleanups in approximately one third of its single-family residence neighborhoods. Ideally, each neighborhood receives a cleanup once every three years.

The VEP area is so large that it takes three years to cover all of our homes. This year, we will have a dumpster day on April 17th in the area bounded by Branham, Vistapark, Hwy 85, and Hwy 87. If extra dumpsters are available, the city will try to cover a portion of the homes north of Branham and west of Vistapark.

We erroneously reported that this year's dumpster day would cover the area east of Vistapark Drive. However, when we met with the city's neighborhood cleanup manager on March 4<sup>th</sup>, we learned that the VEP area east of Vistapark had a cleanup on April 5, 2003. The VEP area west of Vistapark and north of Branham had a cleanup on March 9, 2002. The VEP area south of Branham has not had a cleanup since September 25, 1999, so that area will be covered by this year's cleanup.

The city will mail notices to residents in the area to be covered by the cleanup, and only residents with those notices will be allowed to use the dumpsters.

We apologize to members east of Vistapark Drive who may have been expecting a cleanup based on our earlier articles. This misunderstanding points out how badly we need someone from the east side of Vistapark Drive to as-

sist or join our board of directors. Please step up to the plate so we can better represent your neighborhood. Contact me if you are willing to help.

## VEP's annual *Community Garage Sale*

-Ginger Cardona

Saturday, May 1<sup>st</sup> is the date for our annual VEP Community Garage Sale. Whether or not they're VEP members, tell your neighbors about it now so they'll be ready to join us that day. Let's make this a big success that folks will look forward to every year!

VEP will advertise this event in the *Mercury-News* and *PennySaver*. So, you can take advantage of an increased number of shoppers by offering your unwanted household treasures for sale on the same day as the rest of your neighbors throughout our membership area.

To participate simply bring your items out to your front yard on Saturday morning and begin selling. There is no need to sign up. If you would like, you can post signs and display eye-catching balloons. Please remember to remove them after the sale.

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

### **VEP's Annual Garage Sale**

...will take place on Saturday, May 1<sup>st</sup>

It is time to start gathering your items.

Tell your neighbors about this—the more, the merrier!

## VEP's 3<sup>rd</sup> annual *Community Picnic*

-Yvonne Reddy

Gather your kids and grandkids, bring your picnic, blanket and sunscreen, and come join your neighbors at the VEP's 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Community Picnic. There will be fun, games, and prizes.

Where? Vista Park (Hyde Park Drive at New Compton).

When? Sunday, May 16<sup>th</sup> from noon to 3:30 p.m.

Why? Just to have fun with your family and neighbors.

This promises to be a fun-filled afternoon that you won't want to miss. So be sure to invite your friends and neighbors, bring your food and family, and we'll provide fun and friendly activities for the young and young-at-heart--with door prizes and rewards for participation.

Come, meet your neighbors and renew old friendships. Don't forget your sunscreen. We're looking forward to having you join us for a great afternoon together in the park!

to help at the picnic, call Yvonne or Ian @ (408) 226-9574.

## **Volunteers wanted:**

Young-at-heart volunteers to help run games and races at VEP's Community Picnic, Sunday May 16<sup>th</sup>.  
Contact Yvonne or Ian Reddy @ (408) 226-9574  
for more information or to volunteer.

## **San Jose Airport community meetings**

- *Dave Noel*

In March 2003, San Jose voters approved the *Airport Security and Traffic Relief Act* allowing the airport to begin construction of a new facility once roadway projects were within three years of completion. As a result, the design process for the Airport has started.

The airport's outreach team and representatives from the Airport's architecture firm, Gensler, are hosting a series of public meetings throughout the city to solicit feedback on the design of the new and improved airport. For the full list of meetings, and lots more information, visit [www.sjc.org](http://www.sjc.org), or call Adrianna Rivas at (408) 501-7616.

Here is a list of meetings that may be most convenient for VEP members:

Wed, March 17 @ 5:30-6:30 pm; Camden Community Center 3369 Union Avenue, San Jose. Hosted by city councilmember Judy Chirco

Tuesday, March 23 @ 6:30-7:30 pm; West Valley Branch Library, 1234 San Tomas Aquino, San Jose.

Tuesday, March 30 @ 6:30-8 pm; Vineland Branch Library, 1450 Blossom Hill Road, San Jose. Hosted by Vice Mayor Pat Dando.

Tuesday, April 6 @ 6:30-7:30 pm; Shirakawa Community Center, 2072 Lucretia Avenue, San Jose.

Wednesday, April 7 @ 6:30-8 pm; Southside Community Center, 5585 Cottle Road, San Jose.

## **Carson Elementary School news**

-*Irene Shoberg (\*)*

Carson's PTA has started *Family Night-Out* at local restaurants/business this school year. The restaurants give a percentage of their profit back to the PTA; those proceeds will be used toward PTA-sponsored programs at Carson. Fresh Choice, Chevy's, Armadillo Willy's, and Barnes & Noble have been the participating restaurants and businesses locally. One more of these events is scheduled.

If you would like to support this program, come by Carson and pick up a flyer after March 30<sup>th</sup>, then present it to the cashier when you eat at Fresh Choice on March 31<sup>st</sup>.

On March 9<sup>th</sup> a *Family Math Night* was held at Carson. Students attended with their families and played challenging games that sharpened their problem-solving skills. Imagine: math for the fun of it!

Carson's *Open House* will be held on May 11<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 to 8 p.m. There will be a *Scholastic Book Faire* which will be open from May 10<sup>th</sup> thru May 14<sup>th</sup> during school hours and it will also be open the evening of Open House. A large variety of books is always available, so if you'd like to stop over and buy some for gifts, grandchildren, or even yourself--and support our school at the same time--come on by!

Carson's annual *Walk-a-thon* will be held May 15<sup>th</sup>. This has become a Carson tradition and a fun day for families. Stop on over and cheer our students on as they walk around the field.

[(\*) *Ed. Note: Irene Shoberg is a long-time member of VEP and our official Liaison at Rachel Carson Elementary School.*]

## Crabgrass controls: beat this annual weed

-John Marks, VEP's Garden Editor

The best way to control crabgrass--that familiar annual weed with blue-green leaves and spreading stem--is to maintain a dense, healthy lawn that will out-compete it and prevent it from getting established. Mow at a height of 2-1/2 to 3-1/2 inches, and cut your grass frequently so as not to remove more than one-third of the leaf blade at one time. Also, water deeply and infrequently and fertilize to encourage a vigorous lawn.

Weed killers are another option. The most effective among them are pre-emergent types that kill weed seeds as they sprout. It's essential to apply the herbicide *before* crabgrass emerges from the soil. This happens in spring when soil temperatures are greater than 55° to 60°F for seven to ten consecutive days. Check with your local extension service for timing, or monitor the soil temperature yourself using a soil thermometer inserted at an angle just below the surface. Don't apply weed killers prior to seeding or in an area that's just been seeded.

### Spike balls and nuisance fruits

- Stopping nuisance olives and other annoyances -

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

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

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

This product will prevent other trees such as crabapple and plumb from bearing as well; ironically, if used on green tomatoes in the autumn, it will hasten ripening but won't damage the fruit.

Spray it on trees when they are full bloom, this month at the latest, to eliminate seedpods. Liquid ambers have insignificant blossoms, in small cluster, yellow in color.

I used this product last year and it worked!

- Brown grass and toadstools -

This is the time of year when your lawn is coming back (some). You may notice brown areas that aren't greening up well, and fungus spots. You can cure both problems by fertilizing with a heavy application of sulfate of ammonia now; about six pounds per thousand square feet is not too much, but water before and after applying. You'll be pleasantly surprised at it's low price.

Mushrooms and toadstools are the fruiting bodies of soil-inhabiting fungi. They assist in the decomposition of organic matter. Life could not exist without them. If you find them unsightly, knock them over with the back of a rake; they will melt and disappear.

You've probably noticed at this time of year that weeds come slithering out of the soil with the slightest tug. Now's the time to scout around, pulling up those milk weeds and others you can spot.

Cold, damp weather will bring out snails and slugs in droves. They will feast on the tender new growth of bulbs and winter plants. Hand pick, or use bait, but don't let snails and slugs go unchecked because they will mow down your garden.

You can prune now, especially roses and fruit trees.

**★ Free Lilies ★**

Red Cana lilies that grow 4-feet tall are free for the asking. Just transferred into 2-quart pots, they are ready for planting. Plants take full sun and spread like Iris. Call John Marks at 629-6433.

**Free trees**

Neighborhood groups and public schools in San Jose are being invited to request free, 15-gallon shade trees as part of *Our City Forest's Green Neighborhoods* program.

Groups and schools with ten or more eligible tree sites will be put at the top of the list. An eligible site is a parking strip--that space between the street and the sidewalk (not private property)--or school grounds.

Our City Forest will help with species selection, planting permits, site preparation, planting assistance and tree-care planning. Where necessary, auguring and cement-cutting also will be provided.

Those requesting trees must submit a one-page grant application that includes a section where a commitment is made to provide ongoing care for the new trees. Able-bodied applicants will be expected to help with the actual planting. Think of it as a little party for your neighborhood or school.

For details: [www.ourcityforest.org](http://www.ourcityforest.org) or call (408) 998-7337.

*[Ed. Note: This article was taken from the San Jose Mercury News Green Stuff by Holly Hayes.]*

## Parks and trails

- Dave Noel

Guadalupe River Trail: Vice Mayor **Pat Dando** held the official grand opening of this new section of trail on Saturday February 28<sup>th</sup>. I had the honor of speaking at the ceremony representing VEP and the immediate neighborhood. Ironically, a section of this trail was temporarily closed about a week after the ceremony in order to connect this trail with the patch currently under construction in the new Cilker Park.

Cilker Park: The new park on Winfield Boulevard between Chynoweth and the light rail tracks is under construction and scheduled for completion in early June. Watch for an upcoming announcement of the grand opening ceremony from Vice Mayor Pat Dando.

Vista Park: After being removed due to missing parts shortly after installation in late 2002, the yellow motorcycle spring toy has finally been re-installed!

## Super Spring cleaning

Warm weather invites us into basements, garages and closets which have been closed all winter. During your spring cleaning, consider reusing or recycling before you throw an item away. Call the recycling hotline at 1-800-533-8414 or visit [www.recyclestuff.org](http://www.recyclestuff.org) for a list of local agencies which can help you to reduce, reuse, and recycle as you clean.

### Reuse

Many non-profit agencies can benefit from your discards. Local thrift stores, churches, and homeless shelters would appreciate many items such as clothing, furniture, and small working appliances. Please check with these non-profit agencies to make sure they can accept your donation.

### Hazardous Waste

Spring is a perfect time to clean clutter from your garage or tool shed. Many are filled with items that require special

handling and disposal to ensure health and safety. To get information on safe handling and free drop off of hazardous materials, call the *County Household Hazardous Waste Program* at (408) 299-7300 or visit [www.hhw.org](http://www.hhw.org).

Don't let common household hazardous waste items such as leftover cleaners, paints, automotive solvents, and fertilizers sit and collect dust. Take them to the County's free drop-off center. Call (408) 299-7300 for a free appointment.

The Hazardous Waste Program accepts most of the common hazardous waste found around the home, including batteries, fluorescent light bulbs, pool chemicals, and hypodermic needles.

They also have a special "freebie shed" to share supplies like fertilizers, pesticides, and cleaners dropped off by others. So, if you are in a need of a particular household chemical for your spring cleaning, this facility can save you money and a special trip to the hardware store.

#### Large Items

Residents in single-family homes can have three large items such as couches, refrigerators, or mattresses collected at the curb for just \$21.25. Call Recycle Plus Customer Service at (408) 277-2700 to schedule a curbside pick-up appointment. (Remember: you can split this cost if you and your neighbors come up with a total of three items.)

#### Yard Clean Up

Spring is a perfect time for sprucing up a garden. When setting out your spring prunings at the curb, please keep piles no larger than 5-feet wide by 5-feet high, with no branches larger than 6-inches in diameter. Piles must be at least 2-feet away from cars and carts. Even if you use a yard trimmings cart, you can still set out 5 x 5-foot piles in neighborhoods where loose collection is acceptable.

#### Extra Garbage

If, after reusing and recycling, you have some additional garbage that will not fit in your cart, you will need an extra garbage sticker to attach to a 32-gallon garbage bag. Stickers can be purchased for \$4.20 at all San Jose libraries and participating Safeway, Albertsons, and 7-11 stores.

## Community Service Awards

- *Dave Noel*

At our February general meeting, VEP members approved funding up to \$4,500 for VEP's 2004 Community Service Awards. These community service awards are grants towards higher education or vocational training for graduating high school seniors who have demonstrated exceptional records of volunteerism and community service during their high school careers.

Up to three \$1,500 awards will be awarded; one each for graduating students at Gunderson and Andrew Hill, and

one for a graduating At-Large student. Our At-Large category is currently defined as a graduating high school senior residing in San Jose and nominated by a VEP member.

If you know a deserving graduating senior at Gunderson or Andrew Hill High Schools, encourage him or her to talk to the administrator below to request that he or she be nominated as one of the three candidates they will submit to VEP (due from the schools by April 27<sup>th</sup>).

Andrew Hill High School = Joe Ortega  
Gunderson High School = Rosa Nieto

If you know a deserving graduating senior at any other school (or home school), please nominate that student for our At-Large award.

**VEP's AT-LARGE  
COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS  
APPLICATION PROCESS STARTS NOW!**

APPLICATIONS ARE AVAILABLE AT:  
WWW.VEPCA.ORG  
or by phoning a VEP officer.

APPLICATIONS ARE DUE BY:  
9 PM TUESDAY APRIL 27<sup>TH</sup>.

Gunderson and Andrew Hill students who are not being nominated by their school administrator may be considered for our At-Large award.

Our policy is that we must have at least two applicants for any category in order for us to make an award. Thus, if we receive only one At-Large applicant, we will be unable to issue an At-Large award this year.

VEP's At-Large award winner will be invited to our May 25<sup>th</sup> general meeting in order to accept his or her award.

I'd like to thank our Community Service Awards Committee members **Dave Fadness**, **Steve Kinsey**, and **Greg West** for working with me as we planned for this year's awards. We will need additional help judging applications in late April or early May. If you can help, please contact me—it will only take an hour or so of your time.

I'd also like to thank our Gunderson liaison **Laura Probert** for promoting our award within Gunderson, and past-president **John Marks** for promoting our award within Andrew Hill.

## VEP's February general meeting

*-Ginger Cardona, VEP Secretary*

Here's a run-down on what happened at our February 25<sup>th</sup> meeting:

The San Jose Mercury-News has introduced a new weekly section called *The Guide*. **HongDao Nguyen** is a reporter for the version that focuses on our area of Santa Clara County. She attended and has agreed to include information about VEP activities. Watch for it.

\* \* \*

VTA's **Tiffany Thomas** and **Ven Prasad** introduced two projects for highway 87. Both projects will add commuter lanes (HOVLs): The first is an HOV lane between 280 and Julian; the second will be the HOV lane between Branham and 280. They also plan to smooth out the dips caused by settling and some other repairs.

The following people from VTA and CalTrans were present at our meeting:

- Tiffany Thomas, Outreach: Tiffany.Thomas@vta.org
- Ven Prasad, Program Manager, 87 North project: Ven.Prasad@vta.org
- Stuart Bussian, Landscaping: Stuart.Bussian@vta.org
- David Dunlap: Environmental: David.Dunlap@vta.org
- Nick Naim Saleh, CalTrans Program Manager, 87 South: Nick\_Saleh@dot.ca.gov
- Luis Garcia, BKF Consultant, 87 South HOV Lanes Project: lgarcia@BKF.com
- Dianna Butcher, City of San Jose: Dianna.Butcher@sanjoseca.gov
- John Ristow, Deputy Director of Program & Highway Administration: John.Ristow@vta.org

The south project will be handled by CalTrans and include adding the HOV lane, fixing settlement problems, and adding a collector/distributor at 87/280. The settlement problems will be fixed by going down 12-feet deep and replacing the soil with denser soils. The broken drainage system will also be fixed.

The HOV lane and collector/distributor will be added by widening the road and bridges up to Almaden. Traffic merging from 280, both southbound and northbound, will not merge onto 87 until just before Almaden. Hopefully, this will reduce the current merging and back-up problems at 87/280.

\* \* \*

Summerhill Homes' **Bob Hencken** reported on plans for the upcoming Vista Park Community Room. Park fees required to be paid to the city by a builder for new development are going to be used to build this facility. The City agreed to let Summerhill's park fees be used directly in our neighborhood instead of being distributed in District 10 and elsewhere.

In an effort to keep costs low, Summerhill graciously agreed to take on the design and building of the facility. Minimizing costs allows us to have a larger, better appointed community room. Under normal conditions, funds would not be available for many years.

Although the design has not been finalized, we expect an 1800-square foot building with restrooms, a snack area, a storage area, and a large community meeting room. The

city parks department will manage this building. It will be available to the neighborhood and to VEP for our general meetings and other events.

VEP's *Community Room* committee has been working with Bob on design considerations including having the bathroom doors be flush with the breezeway wall instead of inset, providing floor-to-ceiling gates for the breezeway, and optimizing the building's location and orientation within the park. We will continue to meet with Bob to give input on interior and exterior design features and color schemes.

\* \* \*

Members unanimously approved a motion to grant up to three service awards for high school students. Each award will be \$1500. One will be awarded to a student from Gunderson and Andrew Hill. The third will be awarded to a student at large. The student-at-large must be nominated by a VEP member. The application for this award can be found on the VEP web page.

## President's message

- *Dave Noel, VEP President*

I hope you've been enjoying all the daffodils as much as I have. I'm proud of all the daffodils that VEP member volunteers planted over the past several years as we participated in San Jose Beautiful's annual fall daffodil day.

In prior years, we held VEP officer elections at our March General Meeting and the new board took over the reigns at our April General (Annual) Meeting. Since we're holding our *Home Faire* in place of our March General Meeting, we have moved elections to April, and the new board will take the reigns immediately.

We need new blood, an infusion of new talent and ideas on the VEP board. We closed 2003 with over 450 members, and yet just *eight* volunteers do the vast majority of VEP's work. Please bring your enthusiasm and your passions, and join us.

I will be graduating to the role of Past-President, remaining on the board, but not in an elected office. I am thrilled that Vice President (and former Secretary) **Jeri Arstingstall** has offered to be a candidate for our next president. Our secretary **Ginger Cardona** has offered to "job share" the secretary's job and to train a new secretary. Her busy travel schedule prevents her from attending some of our meetings, so she needs assistance.

Who will fill Jeri's shoes as Vice President and help as co-Secretary? Maybe you--please step up, we really need your help.

## Donations needed for GHS scholarships

-*Laura Probert*

Each year the Gunderson High School PTSA sets aside \$1000 for scholarships. Normally five students are awarded \$200 each based on their essays on what Gunderson High School has done for them and their success in academics.

This year however, due to strained membership and the loss of several fund-raising programs, we are only able to provide three students with a scholarship. Our PTSA is accepting donations from the community to fund additional scholarships for students.

Mail your tax-deductible donation to:

GHS - PTSA  
622 Gaundabert Lane  
San Jose, CA 95136

All amounts, large or small, will be accepted and greatly appreciated. Donors will receive a receipt on school letterhead within ten days of receipt of check or money orders. Unless otherwise requested, we will also give recognition to donors on our web-page and in the VEP News.

Please help!

## A note from Mayor Ron Gonzales

- Dave Noel

I sent a card to Mayor Ron Gonzales on behalf of my family and VEP following the stroke he suffered during his State of the City address (which my wife and I attended). We recently received the following note from the Mayor:

*Dear Noel family and friends at VEP,*

*Thank you so much for your thoughtful card about my health and your kind wishes for my recovery.*

*The overwhelming response from the people of San Jose has been heartwarming, and reading the hundreds of cards, emails and letters has been "good medicine" for me.*

*Your thoughts and friendship have been very encouraging as I make my way back to work and the job I love. I'll be seeing you as soon as I can.*

*Regards, Ron*

## VEP's history in a nutshell: 1976 – 1978

-Greg West (\*)

Celebrating our 35th anniversary year, what follows is the third in a series of summaries of VEP history taken from our newsletter archives. This summary covers 1976 to 1978. VEP has taken on a project to scan archived newsletters and make them available on line at the [www.vepca.org](http://www.vepca.org) web site.

# 1976

**Dave Fadness** is elected to first term as president. Announcement of heater suit settlement in April, but settlement terms were not disclosed. VEP streets north of Branham and west of Vistapark Drive get chip-sealed. Parkview School Association raises over \$2000 in first year of operation. Work at Belden School begins in May for a September opening. City council candidates visit May VEP meeting. Prop. 15, Nuclear Power is also on the agenda. Blossom Heights joins VEP neighborhood. VEP holds a 2.7-mile Bi-centennial parade ends with a carnival at Parkview School: **John Marks** and **Bob Ward** win Adult Men's Three-legged Race. City Council adopts \$30-million street repair plan proposed by the *Citizen's Committee on Street Financing*. \$13-million slated to be spent in the VEP neighborhood on widening Pearl and Snell and on completion of Branham east of Vistapark Drive. Belden principal **Gail Law** and Gunderson principal **Ralph Sleight** visit June VEP meeting to talk about the September opening of their schools. \$125,000 allocated by Parks and Rec for Parkview I Park improvements. VEP considers joining *Homeowners Acting to Lower Taxes* (HALT). Gunderson High pool built jointly by SJUSD and City Parks and Rec. Priority for pool use set as Gunderson, Parks and Rec, and then San Jose Aquatics Swim Club. VEP meetings move from Normandin to Gunderson High School. Gunderson reported to have been vandalized twelve times in one month before opening. County announces plan to use townhouses on Chynoweth near Snell as a women's residential jail. PUC approves SPRR petition to discontinue use of the Lick Spur. Matter goes before the ICC. Opening of Canoas Creek bridge on Branham delayed until issue is decided. 1000 people participate in VEP's *Halloween Happening*. County proposes light rail on the Lick Spur. Proposal goes to city council in December. City council rejects the proposal after 300 VEP neighbors pack their chambers and express opposition, carrying 1000 petition signatures. SJUSD teachers ask for 10.2% raise.

# 1977

VEP is selected by SJPD for pilot *Neighborhood Watch* program. \$11,000 distributed in furnace law suit settlement. **Dave Fadness** runs for School Board. 8-track car tape player advertised for \$50. **Diane Christensen** becomes first woman VEP President. Gunderson Community Center under City Parks and Rec opens. City cleans up lot used as a dumping ground at Ogan and Chynoweth as a result of Diane Christensen's letter published in the VEP News. Speed limit on Snell increased to 45 as an unintended result of a VEP requested traffic study. Eastside Union School District proposes building a new high school on 48-acres of the Lester property at Branham and Snell. San Jose *Alliance of Homeowners* to which VEP belongs considers de-annexing the Almaden and Coyote planning areas from the City of San Jose. **Dave Fadness** becomes president of the Alliance. VEP asks Planning Commission to ensure adequate traffic improvements concurrent with the expansion of Oakridge Mall from 400,000 sq. ft. to 750,000 sq. ft.: Commission requires widening of Pearl to four lanes. Second VEP Fourth of July parade featuring

Gunderson band is visited by Mayor **Janet Gray Hayes**. July meeting dedicated to a discussion of Gunderson's open campus policy with Principal **Ralph Sleight**. August meeting features Councilman **Al Garza** and several city representatives discussing motorized vehicle use in vacant lots and the apparent reversal of SPRR on the abandonment of the Lick Spur. VEP holds first *Community Service Awards* night in October to recognize community volunteers. A request to the city for parking restrictions on street adjacent to Gunderson goes unanswered. General Plan change is requested to change the zoning to apartment density on the south side of Capitol at Bluefield. VEP expresses concern over impact on schools. Parking and traffic are identified as top priority issues for the Gunderson *Behavior Committee* chaired by Principal Sleight. A motorcyclist and passenger are severely injured at yet unfinished SPRR Lick Spur crossing at Branham.

**1978** City of San Jose returns to council districts for first time since 1916. Mayor **Janet Gray Hayes** addresses VEP at February meeting and states that passage of the *Jarvis Tax Initiative* (Prop 13) would result in a \$6-million to \$17-million cut in the city's \$106-million budget. Branham finally opens across the Lick Spur! VEP implements a 'Traffic Spotters' program and publishes observed traffic violations with vehicle descriptions and plate numbers in the VEP News. Gunderson neighbor complains about schools external speakers broadcasting music to neighborhood homes in the early morning hours. Council member **Al Garza** asks City Manager **Ted Tedesco** to accelerate the traffic improvements required for the Oakridge Mall expansion. VEP petitions against a group-home for wayward teen-aged girls on Arpeggio Way. Prop 13 passes. \$1.7-million shown in city's Capital Improvement Plan for five streets and parks improvement projects in VEP neighborhoods, including \$10,000 for Vista Park, is cut to \$65,000. July meeting held at Oakridge Lanes as Gunderson is closed for the summer. SJUSD eliminates summer school and reports a \$9-million budget shortfall. VEP begins meeting at the *Mercury Savings Bank* because of charges imposed by the School District for the use of Gunderson. Associate State School Superintendent for Elementary Education, Dr. **Charles Knight** featured at September meeting and lobbies VEP members to support State Senate and Assembly school funding bills. Arcadia presents plans for 1900 apartment units on 78-acres between Snell and Monterey Hwy, south of Capital. **Dave Fadness** is chair of Anti-sprawl ballot initiative.

\* \* \*

The following classic article was originally published in the January, 1978 issue of the VEP News:

DISTRICTING: WHAT IS IT? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?  
HOW DOES IT AFFECT CITY RESIDENTS?

- *Dave Fadness*

(Reprinted from the January, 1978 VEP News)

The San Jose city council presently has seven elected members; the mayor and six additional council members. They are elected for staggered four-year terms. In 1978,

three of these council slots are going to be open for election, including the mayor's position. During the last election, in 1976, the other four positions were filled. The mayor and council members are the city legislators--they make the laws. Administration of the city is handled by a salaried professional manager hired by the council.

As it is presently written, the San Jose city charter has the council members elected at large; any eligible citizen of San Jose may run for any seat on the council. There is no geographical representation. It is possible that all seven council members could live on the same block. As far as the voting is concerned, any registered voter in the city can vote for a candidate for each seat, with each seat representing the entire city.

Recent concerns about the escalating costs of city-wide campaigns have brought up an old question: Should candidates be selected from specific geographical areas of the city to represent that particular area on the city council. Doing so would identify each council member with a specific area of the city and the population of that area, much the same as county, state, and federal representatives are.

After the last general election in 1976, the city council appointed a *Charter Review Committee* for the purpose of reviewing the entire city charter, including this issue of council representation. Some of the items of specific attention are the civil service system, pay for the council members on a full-time basis (they now receive \$400 monthly, with the mayor receiving \$600 monthly), the present validity of the city-manager form of government for a city with 600,000 persons, and the question of electing council members on a city-wide basis.

This districting issue seems to have widespread concern among San Jose residents, so the review committee approached it first. After much investigation and debate, the committee decided to support a recommendation for districting. Public hearings were held last October for the purpose of determining the number of districts (and hence the number of council members) and the district boundaries. Many alternatives were presented, but plans for a 10-district or 14-district organization emerged as favorites.

The next step, if anything is to be done about districting, is to request that the council place the issue on a ballot, since any charter amendment requires a citizen vote. This matter could conceivably appear on the June ballot, but it is more reasonable to expect to see it on the November ballot.

Districting, or the 'ward' system, is not a new concept in city government. Prior to the spring election of 1916, San Jose had a ward system. Problems often associated with ward politics, however, influenced the framers of the present charter and they abandoned this approach. More recently, in 1972, there was an attempt to restore districting in San Jose, but at the last minute, the city council

changed its stance and refused to place the matter on the ballot. This was in spite of demands presented in a popular initiative petition. Present-day advocates of the districting approach assert that they will get an initiative on the ballot if the city council fails to place the issue before the voters.

Those who favor districting claim that it is a democratic reform. They believe that it will decentralize city government, offer neighborhood representation and subsequent increased grassroots participation, result in greater voter registration and turn out, and a larger number of candidates. The cost of campaigning would be reduced, advocates claim, meaning more people could afford to be candidates. Moreover, advocates claim districting would provide more equal and more diverse representation for the geographical, social, economic, and cultural segments of the city. They look to districting to produce more visible and accountable representatives who will be known and responsible to a smaller constituency.

Those opposed to districting claim that it will destroy any chance to unify the city. They are concerned about unbalanced representation caused by unequal growth of districts and the frequent need for reapportionment that could result; the familiar problems of gerrymandering. Every voter should be able to elect and be represented by council members who are accessible and responsible to the entire city, they claim, assuring that the best people in the city lead the city government and are elected by the largest possible number of voters. They fear that a larger body of representatives would find it more difficult to reach decisions which might be more heavily influenced by political trade-offs; "You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours".

In response to proponent claims, they say that districts will tend to ghetto-ize socio-economic areas of this city, actually result in higher campaign costs and, anticipating a larger city council, prohibit paying each member a "full" salary.

What do you think? Will you be ready to vote responsibly when this important and potentially expensive issue appears on the ballot. The VEP meeting this Wednesday evening will feature guest speakers representing both sides of this issue. Hear the experts, ask your questions, and voice your concerns. BE THERE.

*[(\*) Ed. Note: VEP Past-President Greg West has taken on the huge task of scanning and repairing all of our newsletters from the past 35 years. He is posting them on our website, [www.vepca.org](http://www.vepca.org). Check it out.]*

## Bulletin Board Ads

MR. FIX-IT will repair leaks, sticking doors, locks, latches, lights, and life's little ills. No job is too small. Call John @ 629-6433.

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

U.S. MILITARY ITEMS WANTED: Top \$\$ paid. Call Doug at 978-3093 or 629-7436.

\* \* \*

Bulletin Board advertising rules:

1. Bulletin Board ads are limited to four (4) lines of text. One line contains 50 characters, including spaces.
2. VEP will print **free** Bulletin Board ads for its members for one-time transactions involving less than \$400, for lost and found, and for services offered by kids under 18 or retirees over 60 years of age. Free ads may be published in a maximum of three successive issues of the VEP News per submission. After three issues, non-renewed ads will be dropped without notice.
3. VEP will print commercial Bulletin Board ads for its members for \$6 per issue of the VEP News. (A commercial ad is one that offers goods and/or services for a fee. The VEP President and/or Editor has final say in determining whether an ad is commercial.) Ads must be prepaid before publication and be of four (4) lines or less in length (see 1, above). Commercial bulletin board ads may be published indefinitely so long as payment is received in advance of publication. Non-renewed ads will be dropped without notice. No graphics allowed.
4. Bulletin board ads and payment must be received at least 12 days prior to the fourth Tuesday of the month for inclusion in that month's newsletter. Mail to VEP, P.O. Box 18111, San Jose, 95158.

Use the following form as a guide for submitting an ad:

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

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

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

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