

VEP MEETING

7:30 P.M. TUESDAY
September 27, 2005

GUNDERSON HIGH SCHOOL
622 Gaundabert Lane
→ Faculty Lounge ←

AGENDA

★ **Vector Control & West Nile Virus** ★

Presentation by Kriss Costa,
Santa Clara County Department of Health.
7:30 to 8:10 p.m.

★ **John Muir Middle School** ★

A presentation by Shannon McGee, Principal.
8:10 to 8:30 p.m.

★ **Gunderson High School Construction** ★

An update by Cary Catching, Principal
8:30 to 8:40 p.m.

★ **VEP's 2005-06 Goals & Objectives** ★

Discuss and vote on VEP's proposed plans
for the coming year.
8:40 to 8:50 pm

★ **Your Community Concerns** ★

A chance for you to tell us about your neighborhood concerns.
8:50 to 9 p.m.

Our September 27 meeting

-Dave Fadness

What is a "vector"? What is "Vector Control"? Find out the answers to these and many other questions you didn't know you had at our September 27 meeting.

Kriss Costa, Community Resource Specialist for the Santa Clara County Vector Control District will explain what a "vector" is and how the Vector Control District helps protect your health. Kriss will also bring us up to date regarding the West Nile virus and give us some background on this very newsworthy issue.

Ms. Costa has been with the Santa Clara County Vector Control District for more than 16 years. She holds a degree in Agricultural Business and is certified by the State of California in the areas of Vector control, including vertebrate and non-vertebrate vectors, and pesticide usage.

After several years as a field technician, Kriss became the first full time Vector Control community resource specialist in California. As such, her responsibilities include: working with the media; giving presentations and classes, working with other vector control districts, state personnel, biologist, and entomologists in the area of vector control and vector-borne disease surveillance and writing informational brochures on various vectors and vector-borne diseases.

A native to Silicon Valley, Kriss remembers when San Jose was known for its prunes and apricots. Now Kriss and her husband live in Hollister, her mother's hometown.

In her time away from Vector Control, Kriss works as a "Communication Therapist" for horses and their owners, specializing in "crisis intervention".

* * *

Shannon McGee, Principal of John Muir Middle School and **Cary Catching**, Principal of Gunderson High School will update us on items of interest in this coming school year.

Shannon McGee started out in San Jose Unified at Gunderson High School as a Special Education teacher and basketball coach. She moved into administration at Gunderson for four years before moving to John Muir Middle School and is currently in her fourth year as principal there.

John Muir now serves as the middle school for kids in our area that would otherwise have attended Steinbeck. This will be our first opportunity to meet Ms. McGee.

Ms. Catching will focus on construction projects now underway at Gunderson (see her article, *Gunderson High School happenings* in this newsletter).

* * *

Each September, the VEP Executive Board presents to members a set of goals and objectives for the coming year. Our proposed list is presented in full below. We ask that you consider each item, make sure we haven't missed something that should be done for our organization or in our community, and be prepared to add/subtract/modify and vote on this important roadmap for VEP's 2005-06 year.

We look forward to seeing you at our September 27 meeting. VEP is YOUR organization, please be there to keep it effective.

VEP's 2005-06 Goals & Objectives

-Dave Fadness

This is our list of proposed goals and objectives for the coming year. Once approved by our members (you), these items generally define what our volunteer organization will do through September 2006.

Please read through this list. If additions, deletions, or other changes occur to you, please bring them up for consideration at our September 27 meeting. We will vote that night to adopt the following list, with any amendments approved by members:

VEP Community Association
★ Proposed ★
Goals and Objectives
2005-2006

1. Continue to improve our community association.

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

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

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

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

E. Volunteerism:

a. Support our VEP volunteer coordinator.

b. Develop functional committees that afford structured volunteer opportunities for VEP members and groom future VEP leadership.

c. Continue our VEP Community Service Award program; increase student, faculty, and community awareness of awards.

F. Communication: Support VEP's Hospitality Committee; update meeting announcement street signs (new meeting place); improve VEP's website and access; keep VEP's website up to date.

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

H. Review our Constitution & Bylaws with a special emphasis on our existing Executive Committee structure and on developing a formal policy for record-keeping.

2. Promote community interaction, pride, and preparedness.

A. Organize a Memorial Day Parade & Festival and at least one other community event.

B. Participate as volunteers in the San Jose Beautiful daffodil planting event and at least one other beautification project among the following choices:

- Clean-up and remove old fencing on Branham Lane between Vistapark and Snell;
- Plant shade trees at Parkview School;
- Landscape the Community Room at Vista Park;
- Landscape the parcel at Branham Lane/Narvaez (“VEP Park”);
- Replace bushes on west side of Vistapark Drive at Branham Lane;
- Landscape the median triangle on Rosenbaum at Capitol Expressway;
- Apply chipped-wood mulch under the palm trees in the median of Chynoweth Avenue; and
- Landscape the north side of Chynoweth between Route 87 and Pearl.

C. Maintain our plantings on Chynoweth and Narvaez medians and at Vista Park.

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

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

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

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

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

D. Work with developers and city/county government to install/maintain landscaping and sound walls in our membership area.

E. Monitor the community impacts (including traffic, parking, etc.) imposed by uses at Gunderson High School.

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

A. Promote planning and related efforts to build Martial-Cottle Park.

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

C. Work with the city to develop, renovate, and maintain our neighborhood parks.

D. Lobby to build a city park at Capitol/Narvaez.

E. Monitor the city’s Adopt-A-Park Program within our traditional membership area to assure that each park is adopted and volunteer efforts are being sustained.

F. Lobby for improvements in traffic level of service at Capitol/Narvaez/northbound 87 onramp.

G. Monitor traffic problems along Branham Lane and continue VEP member involvement during the design process for its widening between Vistapark and Snell Avenue and other improvements between Narvaez and Vistapark.

H. Lobby for measures aimed at eliminating red-light running on Capitol Expressway.

I. Work for improved street conditions and strict enforcement of traffic laws in and around our area. Emphasize the need for VEP members to observe and comply with traffic laws, doing our part to improve neighborhood safety.

J. Work with the City to ensure that impacts of any proposed high-density development along the Guadalupe Corridor are fully mitigated.

K. Participate in and notify our members about key meetings relating to the design of improvements at the new Pearl Avenue Library. Communicate our views to city government.

★ VEP community calendar ★

Sun, Sep 25 @ 10 am to 6 pm = 29th Annual Almaden Valley Art & Wine Festival at Almaden Lake Park. Free admission.

Tue, Sep 27 @ 7:30 pm = VEP meeting, Gunderson High School faculty room (see agenda on page 1).

Sat, Oct 1 @ 9:30 am to noon = Scarecrow making workshop at the new Guadalupe River Park & Gardens Visitor & Education Center (see *Scarecrow making workshop* in this newsletter.)

Sat, Oct 1 @ 10 am to 4 pm = *Day in the Park--A Multicultural Festival* at Lake Cunningham Park, 2305 S. White Road, between Tully and Cunningham. Free admission.

Wed, Oct 5 @ 6:30 pm = Coyote Valley Specific Plan presentation at the Almaden Winery Neighborhood Center.

Thu, Oct 6 @ 7:15 pm = VEP Executive Board meeting (call for further information).

Fri, Oct 7 @ 7:30 am = *Principal's Coffee* in the Gunderson High School Art Gallery.

Sat, Oct 8 @ 9am to 3pm = 15th Annual *Walkathon* at Parkview School (see *Walkathon at Parkview School* in this newsletter).

Tue, Oct 11 @ 1 pm = deadline for receipt of VEP NEWS articles (call Jeri Arstingstall or Dave Fadness for information).

Fri, Oct 14 @ 5 to 8 pm = *Harvest Festival* at Carson School (see *News from Carson School* in this newsletter).

Sat, Oct 15 = Grand Opening festivities for San Jose's new city hall, 200 East Santa Clara Street.

Tue, Oct 25 @ 7:30 pm = VEP meeting, Gunderson High School faculty room. (Maybe at the new Vista Park community room? Our focus will be on area transportation.)

Sun, Oct 30 = 2005 Silicon Valley Marathon (For more information, visit www.svmarathon.com).

Thu, Nov 3 @ 7:15 pm = VEP Executive Board meeting (call for further information).

Tue, Nov 8 @ 1 pm = deadline for receipt of VEP NEWS articles (call Jeri Arstingstall or Dave Fadness for information).

Tue, Nov 8 = California Special Election. **Get out and vote!**

Tue, Nov 22 @ 7:30 pm = VEP meeting, Gunderson High School faculty room.

Find out what's going on in San Jose

- Dave Noel

Looking for something to do? Have friends or family visiting? The San Jose Convention and Visitors Bureau has a calendar filled with San Jose activities at: www.sanjose.org/events.

Another great website is www.artsopolis.com. Artsopolis is packed with info on the Silicon Valley arts scene. While you are visiting their website, click on "Half-Price Tickets" to sign up for

free weekly emails with 50% off specials on plays and other events in the coming week.

President's message

-Jeri Arstingstall, VEP's President

WOW! In one word, that is how VEP's summer can be summed up.

VEP has had a *very* busy summer, starting with our Memorial Day Parade & Festival. I still get goose bumps thinking about it.

VEP then had a tree planting at Vista Park. We worked closely with Code Enforcement to resolve a number of issues and complaints arising from neighbors. We're working very closely with the Department of Transportation and Public Works and the City Council Office on the Branham Lane widening project.

VEP volunteers pruned the palm trees along Chynoweth Avenue, cleaned up our parks and neighborhood litter, and continue to maintain beautification projects we installed so everyone can continue to enjoy our beautiful neighborhoods.

I am so excited about our increased number of volunteers. Without volunteers VEP would not be the neighborhood it is.

VEP has also been working very closely with the city council office and the parks department to finalize the agreements for our new community room at Vista Park. We've attended meetings for the new Pearl Avenue Library and for the West Niles Virus Spraying. (all details of these activities can be found in the newsletter).

Because we've experienced recent vandalism in our parks, VEP asked Captain **Jack Farmer** and his San Jose police officers to step-up patrolling in our area.

If you see any ongoing activity that looks suspicious,
do not assume someone else has called...
please call 911
to report it.

As a good example of what can be done, **Kate Strauch** organized a *Neighborhood Watch* meeting in her area. Police presence was stepped up significantly and, within a couple of weeks, the problems in her neighborhood stopped.

VEP recently got word that our Vice President **Dana Belstler** and her husband, **Chris** will be leaving the San Jose area. We sent out an email recruiting a new vice president. I would like to personally thank all of you that responded. Three potential VP candidates showed up at our August exec board meeting!

Those three candidates agreed to help in the following ways:

- **Maria Digregorio** will serve as our Volunteer Chairperson.
- **Arlene Peterson**, President of Rancho Narvaez Neighborhood Association, will be participating more actively on our executive board starting in November.
- **Marilyn Rodgers** is VEP's new vice president.

From what I see so far, Marilyn Rodgers will bring forward her passion to our neighborhoods. Marilyn is a registered nurse. She and her husband Don have lived here for more than 30 years. Please give your support to Marilyn.

So, I conclude my message by saying **Thank You**--to ALL of you!

VEP Community Service Awards

- Dave Noel

In late May and early June, VEP president Jeri Arstingstall and past President John Marks awarded our 21st annual Community Service Awards to three outstanding graduating high school seniors. Each received our \$1,500 grant towards their post-secondary education.

We are now proud to announce and congratulate our 2005 Community Service Award winners:

ANDREW HILL HIGH SCHOOL: Ally Ha

Ally writes: "I would like to thank you all for the 2005 Community Service Award! It is a great honor to be the recipient and having Mr. John Marks at the Senior Awards night on Tuesday was very thoughtful! I did not get to speak to Mr. Marks for very long, but I would like him to know that I appreciate the time he took to be there. Once again, thank you all for helping me in furthering my education at Stanford University!"

GUNDERSON HIGH SCHOOL: Jorge Rivas

Jorge writes: "I would like to take this opportunity to ... thank you for making possible my dream of pursuing higher education ...[at] San Jose State University, the university I will be attending in the Fall of 2005. ... Once again thank you and the organization which you represent for helping me so much."

AT-LARGE: Kimberly Carpenter, Santa Teresa High School

Kimberly was selected from a record-breaking seven At-Large candidates. She writes: "Thank you very much for the scholarship. It is a huge honor for me to have been awarded the scholarship. Thanks again very much for the scholarship."

* * *

This fall VEP's awards process starts all over again. We begin with student outreach, then we appropriate funds with a vote of the membership in January/February. We call for nominations in February/March. Applications are due in late April. We select our winners and grant our awards in May/June.

If you would like to propose any changes to our award categories, selection criteria, funding amounts, or any other rules, now is the time to bring those ideas forward. That will enable us time to convene a committee to discuss them and present a proposal to our membership for a vote at our October, November or January general meetings.

I'd like to again thank our 2005 Community Service Award Selection Committee: **Jeri Arstingstall, Phil Bejar, Dana Belstler, Ginger Cardona, Dave Fadness, Maureen Noel, Mark Schoenberg, and Joe Tajnai.**

If you know a high school senior with an outstanding volunteer record, make sure they know about our award. If they attend Gunderson or Andrew Hill, they can be nominated by their administrators. Our At-Large award is granted to a graduating senior from any school who lives in San Jose and is nominated by a VEP member.

Branham Lane widening project

-Dave Fadness

VEP's *Branham Lane Committee* met through the summer months to develop and negotiate with the city a "wish-list" for design of the Branham Lane widening project. This project will widen Branham to four lanes between Vistapark and Snell. Construction will likely begin this fiscal year, which ends next June 30. Although the city is still negotiating for purchase of necessary right-of-way, VEP wants its desires known and to reach accord on a consensus position before engineering finally begins.

Because **Dana Belstler** is leaving the VEP area, chairmanship of the *Branham Lane Committee* was assigned to me. Except for Jeri Arstingstall, Dave Noel, and me, committee members all live

in homes that are directly impacted by this project. These are our members:

Debbie Andrews
Jeri Arstingstall
Marylou Avanzino
Dave Fadness
Don & Linda Ferguson
John Foley
Bob Kenton
Dave Noel
Pam Rodriguez
Martin Schlissel & Peg Jennings.

San Jose Department of Transportation's **Rene Cordero** and Public Works' **Timm Borden** have continuously updated committee members on the city's budget and widening design timetable, their progress to date toward right-of-way acquisition, the environmental review process required for this project, and the current thinking on a sound study and sound wall work. Mssrs. Borden and Cordero are working with us on refinement of our wish-list.

Our committee and Mssrs. Borden and Cordero will meet with Councilwoman **Nancy Pyle** on October 3rd to discuss remaining wish-list issues, hopefully arriving at a consensus position in time for our October 25 VEP general membership meeting. At the October 25th meeting, we will present the outcome of our negotiations and an update on project status. Be sure to attend.

To make sure homeowners are aware of our committee and the status of this project, on the last weekend of August we distributed flyers to 330 homes along and one block north of Branham Lane, Vistapark to Snell.

* * *

Last month, the city cleaned the existing wall along Branham Lane and prepared it for painting. Following up on what they promised VEP a couple of years ago, **Summerhill Homes** will paint it soon. It's important to note that this work will NOT alter the city's responsibility to prepare an independent sound analysis and, if found necessary, replace the wall when Branham is widened.

Guest writers--*you!*

- *Dave Noel*

We often receive notes from VEP members, especially realtors, who want to get more involved in our local community. Do you want to get your name or topic of interest out to our community? Here's an idea, submit an article to the VEP News.

You can do it. You don't have to be a great writer or speller; we can polish your article. All we ask is that your article be of general interest to our members and less than 400 words. We publish our full newsletter in January, February, March, April, May, September, October and November. Our newsletter article deadline is generally the 2nd Tuesday of the month. Our newsletter arrives in mailboxes about ten days later.

If writing isn't your cup of tea, we have many other ways to get you involved in our community. Just contact any of the board members listed on the mailing page of this newsletter or send an email to vep@vepca.org. We'd love to hear from you!

Michael Bejar receives service award

-*Jeri Arstingstall*

Michael Bejar has won the *Linda Pennington Service Award* from Holy Family Education Center; a much-deserved tribute to his selfless community spirit.

Michael Bejar is one of VEP's most reliable young volunteers. He has been a volunteer in our community for more than five years. His energy and enthusiasm is contagious. It is a joy when he calls to ask what he can do.

Michael has come to accept the responsibility of keeping our neighborhood clean. If you happen to drive by the median island on Chynoweth Avenue between Pearl and Winfield, you can thank him for helping maintain the plants, pull weeds, and clean up trash. Michael can also be thanked for taking down the garage sales signs that litter our neighborhood. Michael is also a consistent volunteer at Vista Park.

This young man consistently serves 4- to 5-hours each month throughout the year. He performs this service with maturity and in good nature. Michael has helped. Michael is willing to share his experience to help others, recruiting his friends into service and he is able to train them on performing the tasks.

One of Michael's friends commented that the neighborhood doesn't need as much cleaning as it used to. I responded by saying that the cleaner we keep the neighborhood the cleaner the neighborhood will be.

The VEP community is a much better place to live because of Michael's willingness to help others.

County Park Fund extension on June '06 ballot

-Greg West ()*

On August 23rd, the County Board of Supervisors accepted the recommendation of its Finance and Government Operation Committee, unanimously passing a resolution directing staff to place an extension of the County Park Charter Fund on the June 2006 ballot.

The Park Charter Fund, first passed by the Santa Clara County voters in 1972, and renewed by voters five times since, has provided a long term and stable source of funding for the acquisition and operations of county parks. As a result, the county parks system now stands at roughly 45,000 acres (70 square miles) contained within 28 parks. The majority of the county parks, including Martial Cottle Park (formerly the Lester property) are in supervisorial district 1, of which VEP is a part.

The Park Charter Fund is not a tax, but a direction to the county executive to set aside a portion of the county budget for parks acquisition and operation. If this ballot measure were defeated at the ballot box, taxes would not be reduced. The county executive would find another place to spend the money.

The current Park Charter Fund directs the county executive to budget 1.425 cents per \$100 of County assessed valuation for parkland acquisition and parks operation. That equates to roughly \$28-million annually, less than 1.5% of the county budget. Of that money, 20% must be used for land acquisition.

On September 7th, the County Parks and Recreation Commission (of which I am a member), endorsed, by a 5-2 vote, renewal of the Fund at the current rate for a 12-year period, but reducing the acquisition percentage to 15%, and requiring that 5% be used for the development and improvement of parks such as Martial Cottle Park. Dissenting commissioners did not object to the renewal of the fund, but to the reduction of parkland acquisition in favor of park development.

As a Parks and Recreation Commissioner, I would be happy to answer any questions that I can or to take your comments about the Park Charter Fund renewal. You can contact me by email at greg@westfamilyweb.net or by phone at 629-1938 or 829-4686.

*[(*Ed. Note: Greg West is a past president of VEP who currently serves on the County Parks Commission.)]*

Membership update

VEP is at an all-time high in paid memberships. If you are not yet a member, please join now—and urge your neighbors to, as well.

Use the following form to join VEP:

★ 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.

Keep wildlife from moving in with you

Developed from a farming community into 15 large cities and unincorporated areas, Santa Clara County is home to many types of wildlife. These animals, which include rodents, squirrels, opossums, raccoons, foxes, skunks, coyotes, deer, bobcats and mountain lions may prowl your neighborhood both day and night in search of food and harborage (shelter). "Urbanized" forms of wildlife have modified their behavior, becoming less "wild". This change increases the chances of interaction with humans and pets, thus raising the potential for danger and problems. The abundance of food (garbage, pet food, even PETS) and shelter (homes, decks, out-buildings) in urban areas, has reduced the animals' normally large home-range area. These "urbanized" animals have learned to depend on man for food and shelter and often pass this behavior on to their young.

As beautiful and fascinating as wildlife may be in their natural environment or when they pass through our yards, it is important to remember they are wild. It is unfair to create conditions that encourage them to stay/live with us. Fear of humans is their most important survival tool. Loss of this fear, or a tolerance of humans and their pets, can and does create damaging and dangerous situations; not only for us and our pets, but the wildlife themselves.

The following information, which focuses on prevention, will help you to discourage rodents, squirrels, opossums, raccoons, skunks, deer, coyotes, bobcats and mountain lions from depend-

ing on you for survival and from moving into your house or yard.

Rodent and wildlife facts

1. Rodents need only a ½-inch opening to gain access into your home.
2. Animals such as skunks, opossum, and raccoons only require a hole large enough to get their head through to gain access into your home, garage, shed or decks.
3. Electrical fires, damage to central heating systems, structural damage, flooding and other plumbing problems are often caused by rodents (squirrels & rats) and wildlife such as opossums, and raccoons.
4. Diseases carried by wildlife and rodents can be transmitted through feces, urine, and ectoparasites (fleas, ticks, mites, etc.) as well as direct contact.

Maintain your yard and garden

Ripe and overly ripe fruit, vegetables, and nuts are strong attractants and a favorite food source to wildlife. To minimize the likelihood that wildlife will consider your yard or home as a permanent place to live, harvest all nuts, vegetables, fruit, and citrus when ripe. Do not forget to pick up the produce that falls and/or rots on the ground.

Other yard and garden maintenance tips:

- Circle gardens and fish ponds with an electric dog fence to deter rodents and wildlife from raiding your garden area and fish pond.
- Remove the dead growth from yucca plants and palm trees to keep rodents and wildlife from nesting in them. Trim and maintain woody ground cover such as ivy.
- Keep trees cut back 3- to 5-feet from your roof and 3-feet below eaves to prevent rodents and other climbing animals from using them as a ladder to access your roof and attic area.

When lawns and other vegetation are over-watered, worms and other insects come to the surface. Raccoons, opossums and skunks eat these insects and can cause serious damage to lawns and flowerbeds. Do not water late at night or before 7 a.m. Watering after 8 a.m. will allow the ground to absorb the water and dry, thus not leaving the soil soft and easily torn up by these animals.

Rain gutters and climbing vegetation planted next to your house may provide access to the roof. Be sure to keep vegetation trimmed back or short.

Eliminate food sources

Bird feeders feed more than just the birds and squirrels. Rodents and their predators (e.g., opossums and raccoons) will visit the feeders at night. We strongly recommend removing bird feeders. But if you insist on feeding birds & squirrels, fill feeders with only the amount they can eat in half a day or bring the feeder in at night. Make sure to clean up spilled feed every night.

Skunks, raccoons, and opossums find pet food very appetizing. Do not feed your pets outdoors. If feeding indoors is impossible, feed only the amount the animal can eat at one time. Remove all pet food and dispensers by 4 p.m. Removing pet food eliminates an attractant and helps prevent disease transmission, confrontations, and severe injury between pets and wildlife.

Garbage cans, recycle containers, and compost piles can be a continual source of food for rodents and wildlife. Keep compost piles covered and turn regularly. Remember to keep compost piles as well as garbage cans and recycle containers securely covered and maintained. This may even include locking the lids shut with a chain.

To prevent raccoons from eating expensive fish (Koi, etc.) encircle ponds with an electric pet fence. Be sure to follow manufacturer's directions and precautions.

City and county ordinance leash laws prohibit animals from running at-large off their owner's property. Confining your pets will help prevent them from becoming part of the food chain for larger predators such as coyotes, bobcats, and mountain lions which occurs with greater frequency in our semi-urban communities.

Eliminate potential nesting sites

Remove all harborage such as trash piles and debris in which rodents and other wildlife may nest.

Improperly stacked woodpiles may provide harborage for rodents and wildlife. Stack firewood 18-inches off the ground and a foot away from any structure.

Common entry points and fixes

- Problem = At over-lapping roof-lines (where two roof planes meet or over-lap) an opening of 1/2" x 6" up to 6" x 16" frequently occurs, leading directly into your attic or garage. FIX = Seal area with 1/4-inch mesh hardware cloth and/or stucco. Also seal around metal flashing.

- Problem = Shake, tile, and metal roofs placed over an existing roof. FIX = The 1st choice is not to do this. Old shake roofs tend to curl with age and expose the tarpaper below. Rodents and wildlife will gnaw or tear through the old roof to gain access to the attic. The openings along the ends of a tile provide rodents and wildlife with harborage (shelter) as well as allowing access to your attic. Seal the ends of tile with bird stops, stucco, or cement. A metal roof over an existing roof is a serious problem since it provides a large air space for nesting. It is almost impossible to completely seal since there are so many openings.

- Problem = Chimneys. FIX = To prevent chimneys from being used as nesting areas and entry points, install spark arresters and seal any openings where the chimney passes through the eaves of your roof.

- Problem = Garage and side doors. FIX = Install weather-stripping to garage doors and side doors to prevent rodents from gaining access to your house or garage.

- Problem = Sheds and decks. FIX = Follow foundation recommendations.

- Problem = Patio covers. FIX = To prevent wildlife from nesting between the area where the patio and house roof overlap, close off both ends of the patio cover with 1/4-inch mesh hardware cloth and stucco.

- Problem = Pipe and wire entrances. FIX = Any gaps larger than 1/2- inch (or 1/4" inch to exclude mice) needs to be filled in or covered. This can be done using 16- or 20-gauge 1/4-inch hardware cloth, sheet metal, or cement fill. Your local phone and cable service may be able to install rodent stops to your lines.

- Problem = Attic and crawl space "vents. FIX = Do not allow vegetation or tree limbs to come within 2-3 feet of vents. When possible, don't allow wires, cables, or plumbing to pass through vents. Damaged or cut vents allow wildlife and rodent access into your house, attics, and wall voids. Existing openings around wires or plumbing can be sealed with stucco. Replace standard vents with galvanized louvered vents to prevent skunks, raccoons and opossum from moving in.

- Problem = Crawl space access areas. FIX = Keep these maintained with doors, tightly sealed and secure to prevent rodent and wildlife access.

- Problem = Dryer and stove vents. FIX = Screen ends and/or bottom of vents with 1/4-inch hardware cloth.

- Problem = Foundations. FIX = Remove all soil 6- to 8-inches

below and 18-inches out from the foundation wall. Attach ¼-inch hardware cloth to the side of the foundation wall. Run it down 6- to 8-inches below the soil, form a 90-degree bend in the wire there and extend it 18" out from the foundation. Then replace the soil.

When building a new home or remodeling, please be sure your contractor understands how to make your home rodent/vermin proof. Also have them check to be sure utility hook-ups (i.e., electrical, cable, phone service, etc.) are properly sealed.

IMPORTANT: The Department of Fish & Game prohibits release or relocation of any animal, wild or domestic, into the wild without written permission. (*)

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Santa Clara County Vector Control District (www.sccvector.com), 976 Lenzen Avenue, San Jose 95126; (408)792-5010.

[Ed. Note: The foregoing article was taken from a Santa Clara County Vector Control District brochure. ()We assume that written permission is required from Fish & Game, not the animals.]*

Keeping teens safe and sober

- Joe Connolly

Five years ago, I asked my then 14-year-old what he thought about my drinking. I thought I was being a great role model, drinking an occasional glass of wine and maybe a few beers on a Saturday night or at a party. His response surprised me. His perception was that I needed to drink at home to relax and at parties to have a good time. How's that for role modeling?

My relationship with my teens (19, 16 and 14) is strong. We communicate about most issues, including alcohol and other drugs, freely and without fear.

Recently, Bay Area teens were surveyed. They listed parents and health care providers as the top two most trusted sources of information about alcohol and other drugs. Tragically, in the same survey only 50% of teens said their parents have talked with them over the past year about expectations and values around alcohol and other drugs.

As parents, we should take this information to heart and talk with our teens.

The best way to help our teens make good decisions about alcohol and other drug use is by having open, ongoing and thoughtful conversations with them.

Key points from goodparents' workshop: "Parents, Teens and Drinking":

- Become educated. Be a credible source of information.
- Find opportunities for ongoing quick talks with your teens about alcohol and other drugs, rather than one, difficult, long conversation.
- Ask yourself what behavior you're modeling for your teens and if it's the message you want to send. If you don't know, ask them.
- Teach your teens to have a plan. Ask them what their plan is if offered alcohol or other drugs or if their ride has been drinking.
- SAFETY FIRST. If your teen does use alcohol or other drugs, make sure he or she knows that your primary concern is his or her safety. Teens need to know that home is a safe place.
- If your teen comes home after using alcohol or other drugs, wait 12-18 hours before you converse, until you're both calm and sober.
- Base your consequences for alcohol and other drug use on making a better decision the next time. Teens should learn from their mistakes.

Since that first conversation with my son 5 years ago, I've engaged in hundreds of conversations with my kids about alcohol and other drug use. So far the results have been good.

To learn more about skills and tools to effectively communicate with your teens, please contact author and goodparents co-founder, Joe Connolly at joeconnolly@goodparentsinc.com or call at (408) 727-KIDS.

Shade trees planted at Vista Park

-Dave Fadness

With the able assistance of **Christian Bonner**, **Carol Arnoldy** and **Anthony Nispel**, all from *Our City Forest*, these VEP volunteers planted trees at Vista Park on Saturday, June 11th:

Walt and Jeri Arstingstall
Phil and Michael Bejar
Tim, Denise and Emily Cole
John Foley
Rich Golden
David Gulizia
Frank Kistler
Dave Noel
Bob and Francine Olsen
David Pfaff
Mary Ann and Andy Schabinger
Stacey Steffens
Rowena Wood

As they relax in the shade of these new trees in a few years, all users of busy Vista Park will benefit from the unselfish work of these fine people.

We are especially indebted to **David Gulizia** for conceiving and spearheading this project for VEP. We're also grateful to David, **Phil Bejar**, **David Pfaff** and **Clay Sperry** for their ongoing work at Vista—a park VEP has taken responsibility for maintaining in the city's *Adopt-A-Park* program.

“VEP” Community Association

What does “VEP” stand for? How did we get that odd name?

Well, “VEP” represents the first three letters of our original subdivision names here in 1969:

V = Vistapark;

E = Encore (and Echo Valley); and

P = Parkview Valley.

That's all there is to it! Of course, we've grown over the years to include the Blossom Heights subdivision and many others. But the original name VEP stuck, and we've been known by it for 35 years. (Some like to think of us as **V**ery **E**nergetic **P**eople.)

[Ed. Note: See the mailing page of this newsletter for a map of our core membership area. We also welcome members from outside these boundaries who share common interests.]

Neighborhood scuttlebutt

-Dave Fadness

- VEP just got good news from Supervisor **Don Gage**'s office that we can remove the old barbed wire fencing and clean-up Branham Lane along what used to be the northern border of Walter Lester's property (Vistapark to Snell). This work will be a volunteer project, so your help will be needed. We'll keep you posted as soon as a work day is selected.

- VEP is still pressing at city and county levels to have a landscaping maintenance agreement approved, allowing Pinn Brothers Housing to complete their landscaping work in the median of Capitol Expressway, Snell to Bluefield. Pinn built the high-density residential units on the northeast corner of Capitol and Vistapark. Before their project was approved by city council in December 2001, VEP asked for and Pinn promised to donate a range of amenities; landscaping the Capitol median was one of them.

We hope an agreement will be concluded soon so that Pinn will be able to plant remaining trees and apply mulch that will make our reach of Capitol one of the most attractive in the County Expressway system.

- VEP's proposal to landscape the median triangle on Rosenbaum Avenue (at Capitol Expressway) has been shot-down—at least temporarily. That parcel and the expressway belong to Santa Clara County. County Roads staff responded to our proposal, saying that *"The proposed landscaping at this triangle can be very problematic for trees, taller plants or other shrubs due to sight distance concerns. Our long standing preference is not to have landscaping at this triangle. If landscaping were allowed, an entity other than our Department will need to maintain the landscaping by executing an agreement with liability insurance... A County encroachment permit will also be required for the landscape installation."* We're asking County Supervisor **Don Gage's** help in allowing us to beautify this site as a volunteer project. Stay tuned...

- VEP is working with the administration and parent groups at Parkview School to plant trees on and around their campus. We hope to have a grant proposal submitted this month—and to have trees planted before the winter rains begin this year. We'll need help for this project, too. Watch for our call for volunteers.

- VEP will also apply for a grant to finish work on Chynoweth Avenue. We plan to apply mulch under our palm trees for the full length of the median. We'll also plant oleanders and apply mulch to the area on the north side of Chynoweth, between Rt. 87 and Pearl Avenue. Please watch for and respond to our call for volunteers.

- VEP had scheduled 9/24/05 to replace the existing bushes along the sound wall on the northwest corner of Vistapark/Branham. On September 8, that sound wall collapsed onto the Vistapark Drive sidewalk. As soon as the wall is replaced, we will reschedule our project to plant 70 miniature oleanders there. Here's yet another opportunity for you to volunteer!

- VEP has offered to landscape the new community room at Vista Park. That room will become our meeting place, hopefully starting with our October 25 general membership meeting. San Jose Parks will install irrigation and collaborate on a landscaping plan. We volunteers will do the planting. Watch this newsletter for updates.

Fall plantings

-John Marks, VEP's Green gardener

September is a good month for planting cool season veggies, including beets, carrots, lettuce, parsnips, certain types of peas, and Swiss chard. Broccoli, cauliflower, kohlrabi, rutabaga and turnips also do well. Leaves, stems, flower heads and roots are the edible portions of these versatile vegetables, depending on the species.

Anything grown from seed (most of the above) can usually be started in August or September. Those bought as nursery-grown seedlings are usually better transplanted in September, since the same warm weather that stimulates fast seed germination can cause tender, thirsty seedlings to wilt or burn.

Root crops, such as carrots and parsnips, require full sun, sandy or loamy soil, and regular irrigation. When sowing carrot seeds, keep the soil moist and never let a crust form on top or the seeds have difficulty sprouting (start indoors?). Unfortunately, parsnips never get as much good P.R. as their orange cousins. Parsnips' creamy white to yellow roots have a unique, mild flavor and can be baked, fried, mashed, or cooked in soups or stews. Cold weather makes them sweeter.

Another favorite is the humble beet. For absolute cut beauty and flavor, go for the Chioggia, also called Bull's Eye, an unusual Italian heirloom beet with concentric white and red rings inside. Albina Verduna is a sweet white beet that grows well here, and Sangria is a classic deep red, like the wine. Because it develops its shape early, Sangria also makes a good "baby beet" when pulled early.

Swiss chard, a leafy vegetable, is actually a type of beet without the tasty bulbous root, and is beautiful on the dinner table served raw, steamed, or stir-fried. It's also an attention getting ornamental in the garden, when you're touring with friends. The Bright Lights variety is especially attractive, showing up with crimson, yellow and white stems.

The obvious leafy vegetable of choice is lettuce, which comes in four varieties: crisphead, like iceberg and butterhead, Bibb loose leaf, Oak Leaf, and Romaine, which grows in vertical stocks.

* * *

I trust you've been pulling the heads off those dandelions all summer. If not, you should have. Every time you walk to the car to go somewhere and you see a yellow dandelion blossom, don't think, "I'll have to dig that up when I get home." It'll never happen. Prevent that plant from multiplying by going over and plucking the blossom; if it's already progressed to the fuzzy ball, all the more important to trot over and close it into your hand and throw away, before the wind spreads the spores.

Memorial Day Parade & Festival a **big** success!

-Dave Fadness

Enough cannot be said to thank the organizers, entertainers, sponsors, city and school officials, volunteers, and participants for a fabulous event on Memorial Day. This collaborative success was built upon unprecedented community-wide cooperation between VEP, our schools, our city, and local businesses.

Special thanks go to **Annamarie McKnight** who stepped forward to chair our event Planning Committee. Annamarie spent many hours in this, her first-ever VEP involvement. What a star she proved herself to be!

VEP plans to do it again next year. We'll get started early and will need volunteers (Y-O-U) to help make this a successful annual event, so please get involved—and be sure to spend next Memorial Day with us.

These are the people who made our Memorial Day Parade & Festival a success (there were lots of people involved, so please accept our apology—and let us know—if we somehow left your name off this list):

Parade & Festival Planning Committee:

Annamarie McKnight, Parade & Festival Chairwoman
Jeri Arstingstall, VEP President
Cindy Bosworth, VP, Parkview School Community Association
Dianne Conry, Carson School PTSA
Bart Aiello & Maria Kelley
Dave Fadness
David Noel
Yogendra Singh
Debra Suydam

Rose Valadez

Parade & Festival volunteers:

Walt Arstingstall
Chris & Dana Belstler
Alan & Ginger Cardona
Ann & Patrick Chambers
Bob & Pat Ellis
Aiko Fadness
Jim Hicks
Andy Iskandar
Stephen & Lynne Kinsey
Frank & Betty Kistler
John Marks
Ken McKnight
Jeanne Mullins
Bob & Mari Musante
Maureen Noel
David & Mary Olson
David & Peggy Reid
Lisa Shearer
Bob & Irene Shoberg
Denise Simon
Yogendra & Uma Singh
Pat & Sheridan Smith
Patricia & Dave Souza
Wolfgang & Michael Strauss
Josie Supencheck
Elizabeth Takahashi
Raymond & Rose Valadez
Mike & Amy Worrell

Parade & Festival Entertainers:

American Tae Kwon Do
Andrew Hill High School Color Guard
Carson School face-painting and "Crazy Hair" artists
Cub Scouts & Brownies of America
Parkview School All American Kids Club Choir
Parkview School Community Association booth games
Peek-A-Boo the Clown
San Jose Police Department K-9 Unit
San Jose Police Department Horse-Mounted Unit
Sylvandale Middle School Marching Band
Takahashi Hawaiian Dancers and Music

School Officials and Volunteers:

Manny Barbara, Superintendent, Oak Grove School District
Dr. Alice Campbell, Principal, Sylvandale Middle School
Cary Catching, Principal, Gunderson High School
Hardy Childers, Oak Grove School District
Phil Hophan, Gunderson High School
Cathy Jones, Parkview School Community Association
Barbara Lepiane, Principal, Pioneer High School
Andrew Love, Band Director, Sylvandale Middle School
Katie Milligan, Principal, Carson School
C.L. Rafanelli, Director, Andrew Hill High School Color Guard
Tanya Summers, Dir., Parkview All American Kids Club Choir
Robert Topf, Principal, Parkview School

City of San Jose Officials and Volunteers:

Councilwoman Nancy Pyle—Costume Judge
Lee Wilcox, Nancy Pyle's Chief of Staff
Chief Robert Davis, Police Department
Captain Jack Farmer, Police Department—Costume Judge
Lt. Todd Martin, Police Department
Sgt Lloyd Cardone, Police Department
Sgt Greg Trap, Police Department
Sheri Busansky, Fire Department
Fawna Ferguson, Office of Cultural Affairs

Commercial Sponsors:

Tim & Tammy Thies, Oak Grove Veterinary Hospital
Mark Normandin, Normandin Chrysler Jeep
Fun Stuff Comics and Cards, Rory and Ron Almaraz
Dr. Yun S. Park, Capitol Expressway
Joe Golda, State Farm Insurance
Wesley Terrell, Century 21 Realty—Costume Judge
Bonfare Market, Capitol Expressway
Brian's Fish World, Branham-Snell Center
Emerald Hills Golfland, Blossom Hill Road
Helene's Beauty Shop, Capitol Expressway
Make It Mine Embroidery, Morgan Hill
McDonald's, Branham-Snell Center
Safeway, Branham-Snell Center
Starbucks Coffee, Capitol Expressway
Taqueria Coral, Capitol Expressway

Memorial Day costume award winners

-Jeri Arstingstall

Here by category are the winners of our Memorial Day Parade costume awards:

- Best Family: The **Edwards** Family
- Most Patriotic: (a tie) Parkview Choir and Andrew Hill ROTC
- Funniest: **Irene Shoberg**
- Most Original: **Kyle Calzia**
- Most Beautiful: **Gabrielle Danitz**
- Best Bicycle: **Stacey Steffans and her daughter**
- Best Coaster Wagon: **(need name)**
- Craziest: The **Coyle** Family
- Most Colorful: **Ian and Chloe McKnight**
- Judges' Choice: The Sylvandale Middle School Marching Band

VEP congratulates the talent and creativity of these participants. They're going to be defending their titles in our competition next year, so you'd better get started now on ideas for your costume!

We look forward to seeing you and our 2005 costume awards winners on Memorial Day 2006. Mark your calendars today.

Computer corner

-Bob Aquino, VEP's Computer Guru

As it's been a while since I last wrote this column, I thought I'd forecast what you will see happening in the world of computers over the next year or so.

The big news about Apple is that they will be switching over to Intel for their processors. The stated reason for the change was that they did not see the technological growth in the Power PC chip that they did in Intel's product. I'm inclined to agree with that.

Intel's core business is microprocessors, so they have a vested interest in pushing the envelope technologically. Freescale (the company that was formed by the spinoff of Motorola's semiconductor business) and IBM view the Power PC chip as part of a portfolio of chips. I did see an article that said that Apple was still going to use Power PC chips, so I suspect they are keeping their options open. I think that the good news for Apple users is that there is a possibility of using both Apple and Microsoft software in the native mode of the chip, as opposed to in a slower emulation mode.

Switching over to the PC world, Intel has finally seen the light, and abandoned the quest for higher and higher clock rates for their chips. A friend of mine at Intel had alerted me to this about a year and a half ago, although Intel just admitted it earlier this year.

The problem is fundamental. Power dissipated by the chip goes up by the square of the frequency. The original PC ran at 4 MHz.

Present PCs run at about 3 GHz. That increases the power by a factor of half a million. Through various methods, mainly by getting the chips to operate at lower voltages, they kept that under control but they don't have any more wiggle room.

So the new strategy is to put multiple processors on the same chip, running them at lower clock rates and sharing the computational load. (AMD has been promoting this for some time.) These new chips will be out next year.

The timing of this sort of coincides with Apple's shift to Intel. If Apple designs it right, they could run Windows and their own OS at the same time on the same chip, using the two sub chips independently. It would probably require some re-architecture of the memory bus, but it's a goal to shoot at.

Meanwhile, back at the software front, Microsoft surprised absolutely nobody as they gradually eliminated features from their much trumpeted *Longhorn* (now re-christened *Vista*). The program is based on Windows Server which is more robust than Win XP. They've beefed up security and changed the user interface. However, the long promised file system, *Win FS* will only be in beta when *Vista* is released.

The reports are generally favorable, with the usual caveats about the unfinished nature of beta releases. The software has been released to about 10,000 testers, from software manufacturers to individual programmers to companies who are likely to implement large numbers of the software to their employees. Stay tuned for details.

Hats off to VEP volunteers!

-Dave Fadness

Our twice-annual Chynoweth Avenue palm tree pruning was done in August. The following dedicated and hard-working volunteers braved the summer heat to neatly prune 171 palm trees:

Aiko Fadness (my sidekick)
Frank Kistler
John Marks
Jim Martinez
Dave Noel
Bob Shoberg

These folks have watered and provided ongoing maintenance of the median plantings we installed in January 2002 on Chynoweth and Narvaez Avenues:

Jeri Arstingstall
Joyce Chesnos
Doug Douglass
Quy & Connie Dinh

On Tuesday mornings during the summer months, these young adult volunteers weeded, picked up trash, took down garage sale signs, and generally cleaned up our neighborhoods:

Leslie, Michael, and Nicole Bejar
Ryan Albin
Matthew Schneider
Lukas & Andrew Hosin
Alex Shaffer

Hats off to each and every one of these caring neighborhood volunteers! We owe all of them a debt of gratitude for making and keeping our community one of the most attractive places in San Jose.

In case of an emergency...

- Dave Noel

Following the London terrorist bombings, an English Ambulance Service launched an international "In Case of Emergency (ICE)" campaign.

It's an elegantly simple idea. Since so many people carry cell phones now, they are asking you to store an emergency phone number in your cell phone's address book using the name "ICE". In the event of an emergency, ambulance, paramedic, police and/or hospital staff will be able to contact your next of kin. For multiple contacts, you can use ICE1, ICE2, ICE3 etc.

News from Oak Grove School District

- Manny Barbara, Superintendent

Welcome to the 2005-2006 school year! Now that school has started, we are all very concerned about traffic safety around schools, especially our local school in the VEP area—Parkview School. We coordinate traffic routes with the San Jose Department of Traffic. We ask your cooperation and patience during the beginning and ending times of school, especially those of you who live near schools and are inconvenienced by the traffic. We do our best to minimize inconvenience while always keeping student safety as our top priority.

Our District performance results continue to improve on the STAR testing. We are accountable to two different systems. One is the federal system called the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). I am pleased that District-wide we met all AYP targets for all required subgroups.

The state's accountability system is called the Academic Performance Index (API). Districts and schools are given an API score to reflect student progress. I am very pleased that our District API score increased to 770 (from 757 in 2003-2004). Parkview School also met all AYP subgroup performance targets and will meet the state target of an API score of 800.

I am very grateful for the support of the Oak Grove school community. Because of local support, through the passage of a bond measure, we have been able to modernize school facilities. Several school sites were upgraded during the summer months, receiving needed paint jobs, carpeting, roofs, and infrastructure support. Furthermore, because of community support of our Parcel Tax, we will be able to continue with critical District services, including library clerks, custodial services, and after-school literacy academies providing extra help for students.

You can access more information about the Oak Grove School District through our website at www.ogsd.k12.ca.us. Through the website you can also access our Five-Year Plan, adopted by our Board of Trustees. The Five-Year Plan delineates in detail our immediate goals and priorities for the 2005-2006 school year and issues we anticipate in years to come.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions, comments, or concerns at superintendent@ogsd.k12.ca.us.

Gunderson High School happenings

-Cary Catching, Principal

I am pleased to share with our community some of the exciting events that are happening at Gunderson over the next few weeks.

Well, it seems as though summer just started and now it's over. It has been a very active break, especially in regard to construction. As you have noticed, the portables along Gaundabert Lane have been demolished. Construction will begin shortly on a new 15-classroom building which is anticipated to be completed next summer.

In addition, much work has been done to the softball and baseball fields. The seed will be laid down later this month. Our hope is that these fields will be done in time for the season this spring.

Finally, workers have also been busy with the final touches to our theater and video production studio. This project should be completed by mid-October.

Gunderson started the school year approximately 60 students more than last year. Many of these students are from our surrounding neighborhood. Although several of them were on waiting lists for other schools, we are happy to say that once they arrived at Gunderson, these students and their families canceled their transfers and have decided to stay. We are thrilled that our community is starting to look at Gunderson with an objective eye and realize what a fine school it is.

We have some new staff this year. We hired 10 new teachers, two of which are brand new positions. Our Assistant Principal of Guidance, **Jason Vilorio** relocated to Southern California. We were fortunate to recruit **Jeannette Harding**, an Assistant Principal from Lincoln High School. Jeannette is a former student and teacher at Gunderson. Needless to say, her commitment and dedication to our school is unwavering. Welcome Jeannette!

Finally, we have instituted monthly Principal's Coffees. These are an opportunity for parents and community members to meet with me to discuss school activities, upcoming events, concerns, etc. My next "Coffee" is slated for Friday, October 7 at 7:30 a.m. in the Art Gallery. You are invited to attend.

Walkathon at Parkview School

-Cindy Bosworth

The Parkview School Community Association will be hosting its 15th Annual Parkview Walkathon on Saturday, October 8th from 9 am to 3 pm. All funds raised will go towards enhancing educational experiences for our kids. There will be lots of good food to eat, fun games to play, and entertainment!

Please join us. Parkview School is located at 330 Bluefield Drive, just a few blocks east of Vistapark Drive.

News from Carson School

-Irene Shoberg ()*

Come join the fun at Carson's Harvest Festival

Bring your friends, family and neighbors to the Carson Elementary Harvest Festival, Friday, October 14, from 5 until 8 pm. We'll have plenty of food for dinner including a BBQ, nachos, pizza, popcorn, cotton candy, and snow cones.

There will be plenty of games for the kids, too. Win a live gold fish or try your luck with Flip a Frog. All players are winners! For the first time, we will have a giant slide, blow up obstacle course, and a sticky wall.

A disc-jockey will be on hand to provide festive music for your enjoyment. Say hello to the San Jose Police Department's Canine and Mounted Units. The San Jose Fire Department is also rumored to make an appearance.

Join us, dance to the music, pick up a pumpkin, play the games, win a cake and go home happy!

For further information, call Jen @ 408-655-1047. Carson Elementary School is located at 4245 Meg Drive. We hope to see you there!

Carson now has a pre-school

A pre-school opened at Carson School as of Tuesday, September 6th. There is open enrollment throughout the school year.

Mrs. Shelley Gonzales is the pre-school teacher. She can be reached at (408) 535-6287 regarding enrollment or any other questions.

On Thursday, August 25th, pre-school parents had their first meeting with the teachers. There will be parent meetings throughout the year on subjects such as age appropriate activities or social/emotional growth activities.

The pre-school's Mission Statement: "Provides a positive and enthusiastic learning environment. Carson Parent Pre-School nurtures a love of learning and provides basic academic and social skills to build a strong foundation for students' continuing school success".

We are looking forward to a successful year.

[(*Ed. Note: Carson's Categorical Program and Library Assistant, Irene Shoberg is a long-time member of VEP.)]

Scarecrow making workshop

Gather up your family, friends, scout group or co-workers for a great morning together making a scarecrow for your porch or garden.

This is a wonderful opportunity to spend time with each other and let your collective creativity flow! Additionally, all scarecrows will be invited to participate in the Friends of Guadalupe River Park & Gardens sponsored *Scarecrow Contest* at *Pumpkins in the Park* on Saturday, October 8.

The workshop will be held on Saturday, October 1st, 9:30 am to noon at the new Guadalupe River Park & Gardens Visitor & Education Center, 438 Coleman Avenue in San Jose. A \$15.00 per group workshop fee covers all materials. One scarecrow allowed per group.

Choose from a variety of shirts, pants, decorations and plenty of stuffing to construct your scarecrow. Children under eighteen years old must be accompanied by an adult.

Space is limited, so reserve your spot early by sending a check to: Friends of Guadalupe River Park & Gardens, 438 Coleman Avenue, San Jose, CA 95110. Visa and MasterCard are also accepted via phone or mail. For more information please visit www.grpg.org or call 408-298-7657.

Recycle your electronics

- *San Jose City Council Member Judy Chirco*

HOPE Services will take your old monitors and televisions at no charge. HOPE has been approved by the State of California to become a "collector" of electronic waste. The items that they will be collecting include computer monitors, televisions, and laptops.

If you or your organization have these things sitting in corners and you want to get rid of them please call HOPE at 408-748-2861 or drop them off Monday-Thursday from 9 am to 6 pm or Friday 9 am to 2 pm at 1777 Agnew Road in Santa Clara, at the salvage door in the front of the building.

The view from city hall

-*Nancy Pyle, District 10 City Councilwoman*

It seems like September came faster than ever this year! I'm sure many of you are going through the excitement of sending your

children back to school and perhaps even just getting back from a fantastic August vacation.

I had the opportunity to meet a number of residents in the Blossom Valley area who were participating in one of the many neighborhood clean-ups that our city coordinates each year. While I was out chatting with local residents, I realized just how passionate our District 10 community is when it comes to taking care of our local neighborhoods. The popularity of these clean-ups is amazing.

Only one week after that cleanup, the same neighborhood was notified that spraying for mosquitoes carrying West Nile Virus would be occurring over a two day period. With West Nile Virus becoming a mounting issue within our area, I wanted to find out as much as I could for both my own benefit, as well as to inform you.

The Santa Clara County Vector Control (www.sccvector.org/) held a meeting within the affected communities. Although that meeting occurred while I was at the city council's night session, I gained a great deal of knowledge about the spraying process, as well as the virus itself.

Amazingly, one of the best steps that people can take is one that many of you conscientious District 10 residents are already taking. By making the effort to keep our neighborhoods clean, we are all helping in the fight against the West Nile virus. In fact, with the primary breeding ground for West Nile carrying mosquitoes being standing pools of water, one of the best ways to halt the spread of West Nile is as simple as removing that water before it becomes a problem.

Now as we move into the autumn months, the threat of West Nile virus will begin to naturally decrease, as many mosquito populations go into hibernation. Even so, it's my aim to provide each of you with the ability to learn more about West Nile Virus, and you can do just that by visiting our new West Nile page on the web at www.sanjoseca.gov/district10/wnv.asp.

Remember that by taking the time to care for our neighborhoods through clean-ups and the vigilance of District 10 residents, we can ensure not only a beautiful atmosphere in our district, but also a safe community where our families can live and thrive.

District 10 Announcements

- Hurricane Katrina Aid Update: To learn how you can help, visit the City of San Jose homepage at <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/>
- All San Jose Public Libraries (excluding King) will open at 1 pm on Friday, October 7th, due to library in-service training from 9 to 11 am.
- The Almaden Valley Womens Club presents the 29th Annual Almaden Valley Art & Wine Festival on Sunday, September 25 from 10 am to 6 pm. This is the second year the festival will be held at the Almaden Lake Park, near the intersection of Almaden Expressway and Coleman Avenue.

This free family oriented festival includes a variety of arts and crafts, premium wine and beer, entertainment on two stages, and a special children's area! All festival proceeds are donated back to the community as contributions to schools, charities, and scholarships for local students. For more information, please visit the festival website at www.almadenartwinefestival.com

- Discussion & Dessert – A Coyote Valley Specific Plan presentation on Wednesday, October 5th at 6:30 pm, at the Almaden Winery Neighborhood Center. Nancy and the City of San Jose's Planning Department will give an overview of plans for Coyote Valley. Through this forum, Councilmember Pyle aims to keep District 10 residents well informed and to address concerns regarding Coyote Valley's transportation impacts on District 10.

- Have you seen San Jose's New City Hall? Join us at 200 East Santa Clara Street on October 15 for a festive public event featuring community and cultural performances, children's activities, information on city services, and refreshments to mark the official completion and opening of the entire new city hall complex, complete with the unveiling of the rotunda, a spectacular backdrop for the day's ceremonies!
- City council meetings convene at 200 East Santa Clara Street every Tuesday at 1:30 pm. On the first and third Tuesday each month, the council meets at 7 pm for public hearings.

Have some free time? Consider volunteering! Check the many opportunities available throughout the city on the Volunteer San José website: <http://www.volunteersanjose.org/> or call (408) 535-3500 for more information.

Looking for even more news? Visit the District 10 website at <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/district10/>. We're constantly upgrading it with new features like our recently added Coyote & Mountain Lion page and D10 news that's important to you. Check it out.

Credit ratings & unsolicited card offers

-Dave Noel

Here are some very good tips on protecting yourself against credit problems and those never-ending credit card offers:

Protect yourself--check your credit history

One of the best ways to protect yourself from identity theft is to monitor your credit history. Thanks to a new federal law, you can now get one free credit report per year from Equifax, Experian and Trans Union. You can choose to receive all three at once, or stagger them throughout the year.

To order your free credit reports, call 877-322-8228 (toll free) or visit www.annualcreditreport.com.

When you get your credit report, look in your *Personal Information* or *Personal Data* section for addresses where you've never lived. Make sure your name and any variations of it, your Social Security number and your employers are correct.

In the *Accounts* sections, look for any accounts you didn't open. Look for balances on your legitimate accounts that are higher than you expect.

Look for *Inquiries or Requests for Your Credit History* that you didn't make, especially for suspicious "regular" or "hard" inquiries resulting from credit applications or when an account is transferred to a collection agency. "Promotional" or "soft" inquiries are not indications of a problem. These include inquiries used for pre-approved credit offers, checks for employment purposes, account monitoring by your existing creditors and your own requests for your report.

If you see anything you believe is incorrect, contact the credit bureau immediately. If you find evidence of identity theft, you'll need to close any fraudulent accounts and file a police report.

Unwanted Credit Card Offers?

Want to significantly reduce unsolicited pre-approved offers of credit and insurance? The four major credit reporting companies, Equifax, Experian, Innovis and TransUnion, have joined together to allow you to go to one place to request that they stop sending these offers.

For more information, visit www.optoutprescreen.com or call 888-567-8688. Also check out www.privacy.ca.gov.

A good arm and shoulder exercise for seniors

Fitness experts stress the importance of upper body strength for seniors. It has been found to be an important element of a healthful life style. Designed to strengthen your arms and shoulders, this exercise is a particularly good one for seniors as it starts at an easy level. It is recommended that you do this exercise at least three days each week.

Begin by standing on a comfortable surface where you have plenty of room at each side. Holding a 5-pound potato sack in each hand, extend your arms straight out from your sides, and hold them there as long as you can. Try to reach the point where you can hold your arms out for a full minute, then relax.

If you keep at it, you'll find that you can hold this position for just a bit longer each day.

After two weeks, move up to 10-pound potato sacks. Follow the same routine, working up to the point where you can hold your arms outstretched for at least one minute.

Then gradually progress to 50-pound sacks. Finally, try to reach a strength level at which you can lift a 100-pound potato sack in each hand and hold your arms straight out for at least one full minute.

When you feel confident at that level, put a potato in each of the sacks and start anew.

Bulletin Board Ads

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

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.

* * *

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: _____

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.