

VEP MEETING

7:30 P.M. TUESDAY
January 24, 2006

GUNDERSON HIGH SCHOOL
▶ Faculty Lounge ◀

AGENDA

★ Emergency Preparedness ★

A presentation by Earl Stephens,
Director of San Jose's Office of Emergency Services
7:30 to 8:05 p.m.

★ San Jose Water Department ★

A Presentation by Director Larry Wilson
8:05 to 8:35 p.m.

★ VEP Community Room ★

A Presentation by Marie Alberry-Hawkins
8:35 to 8:45 p.m.

★ VEP Business ★

Discuss and vote on: Fund allocation for
2006 Community Service Awards
8:45 to 8:50 p.m.

★ Your community concerns ★

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

Everyone is welcome. Please invite your neighbors!

Our January meeting

-Jeri Arstingstall

▶ Our first guest speaker is Earl Stephens, Director of San Jose's Office of Emergency Services. Earl's presentation will be on the San Jose Prepared program. Recommendations and resources available - how to become better prepared for an emergency/disaster. What to do for ourselves, our families, and our neighbors/neighborhoods.

▶ Our second speaker is **Director Larry Wilson**. He is the 2006 chairman of the Santa Clara Valley Water District Board of Directors. Before winning election to the district board in 1994, Larry served the community for 33 years as a district watermaster, hydrographer, water operations supervisor and groundwater monitoring superintendent. Raised in Pacific Grove, he attended San Jose State University. He represents Santa Clara, Campbell and west San Jose. Larry has represented the district as a director on the San Luis and Delta Mendota Water Authority and has also served on the local governments committee of the Association of California Water Agencies.

Larry will be speaking on flood protection and the activities of the water district for our area

▶ Our third speaker is Recreation Superintendent **Marie Alberry-Hawkins** from the City of San Jose Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department. Marie will give a presentation on the VEP Community Room and how to reserve its use.

▶ VEP members will be asked to discuss and vote on how much money we will allocate this year for our annual VEP *Community Service Awards*. Our Executive Board is recommending up to three awards of \$1500 each, one each for graduating seniors in our Andrew Hill, Gunderson, and At-Large categories.

▶ Our meetings always end with an opportunity for you to tell us your community concerns. Bring them to

VEP's attention so we can work with you on finding and implementing solutions. That's what VEP exists to do. Our ideas and marching orders come from and respond to you.

We look forward to seeing you at our meeting on January 24th. Bring a friend!

VEP Community Service Awards

- Dave Noel

The VEP executive board will seek your funding approval for VEP's *2006 Community Service Awards* at our January 24th general meeting. These 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. This will be VEP's 22nd year of offering these awards.

The VEP board voted unanimously to recommend a repeat of last year's appropriation of up to three awards of \$1500 each; one each for graduating students at Gunderson and Andrew Hill, and one for a graduating At-Large student.

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

If you know a high school senior with an outstanding volunteer record, make sure he or she knows about our award. We encourage Gunderson and Andrew Hill students to contact their administrators to request that they be one of the three students that each school will nominate.

At-Large students must be nominated by a VEP member. Our By-Laws require that we have at least two At-Large candidates in order to grant an At-Large award.

Our 2006 Community Service Award application forms will be available in February. Our At-Large form will be published in the February or March VEP News.

The application deadline is April 25, 2006.

If you have any questions, or would like to volunteer to help our Community Service Awards committee, contact me at 266-7183 or DNoel1234@aol.com.

City Council imposes truck ban on Vistapark

-Dave Fadness

On December 13th, the San Jose City Council unanimously passed an ordinance prohibiting commercial vehicles in excess of five tons on Vistapark Drive, between Capitol Expressway and Branham Lane. This restriction applies 24/7. Signs will be posted before the end of March.

On VEP's request, this action was initiated by the city's Department of Transportation personnel who are aware of the noise, safety, and street maintenance problems posed by heavy commercial trucks using this residential street. We are grateful for the sensitivity and concern shown by DOT and by Councilmember Pyle, who attended our October general meeting at which VEP members voted their unanimous endorsement of this truck ban.

Although the new ordinance aims to divert truck traffic from Vistapark Drive to Snell Avenue, VEP asked and the city agreed to carefully monitor and correct any unintended consequences along Narvaez Avenue. It would be unacceptable to VEP if the problems we now face on Vistapark Drive were simply shifted to our neighbors on Narvaez Avenue. Narvaez is already subject to pavement settling problems that would likely worsen with an increase in commercial trucking, aggravating maintenance and safety.

We are grateful for the thoughtful assistance of Councilwoman Pyle, Department of Transportation Director Jim Helmer, and their staffs for achieving this truck ban on Vistapark Drive.

Trash cans at Chynoweth/Route 87 bike path

- Dave Noel

VEP continues to monitor the trash cans on the Route 87 bike path where it intersects with Chynoweth. Over

the summer, there was a reorganization in the city and it seems the Parks & Rec department overlooked servicing these trash cans. With some prodding from VEP, trash collection resumed. But then, mysteriously, the cans disappeared in November.

*After another a prod from VEP, the trash cans were replaced. However, the previous cans were nicer than the current ones, and we're still prodding the city to find and return the original trash cans. Many thanks to **Art Rosales** and **Sara Hensley** at the department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services for their responsiveness to VEP in "cleaning up" this situation.*

New Wall on Vistapark at Branham Lane

-Dave Fadness

In the wee hours of morning last September 8, 177-feet of the old masonry wall collapsed onto the sidewalk along Vistapark Drive, near Branham Lane. After three months of effort, neighbors on Royal Garden Place whose homes back up onto Vistapark have succeeded in having a new wooden fence/retaining wall built to replace it. The new fencing looks *very nice!*

This complicated project involved coordinating eight homeowners, several city departments, and numerous contractors. Although VEP stepped in to help get this process underway, those eight families deserve all the credit for working together as a team through this often frustrating experience.

Also to these neighbors' credit, they maintained an unselfish concern about appearance of the new fencing to those who see it from Branham Lane and Vistapark Drive, not just the way it looks from their own backyards.

After soliciting and meeting to review bids from dozens of contractors on a variety of wall configurations and materials, they chose wood rather than much more expensive masonry.

First, what remained of the old 632-foot wall had to be demolished and hauled away. No contractor wanted to do the entire job, so they had to hire one company to remove the old wall and another firm to erect the new fence.

VEP is grateful to these neighbors for their work and to San Jose's Transportation, Planning, and Code Enforcement departments for their assistance and cooperation. Neighbor **Roger Mellor** deserves special credit for many, many volunteer hours in reviewing bids, providing contractor oversight, and working with city departments to make sure this job was done correctly. We also appreciate the help of SummerHill Homes in getting quotes from their subcontractors.

This was a job well done by a fine, caring group of neighbors. Thank you!

Reserving the Vista Park Neighborhood Center

Reserving the building is as easy as calling Almaden Community Center (979-7820). Once you've determined what date you need, staff will check to it's availability. At this point they will give you a rental application. Below are the fees charged to rent the facility. The building may be reserved up to one year in advance. Reservations are taken on a first come first served basis.

Rates (FY 2005-2006)

Application Fee \$ 30

Hourly Rental \$35-\$60 per hour

Package Rate \$420-\$665 (7 hour package, includes application fee)

Cleaning & Damage Deposit \$250.00 (refundable)

President's Message

-Jeri Arstingstall

Happy New Year!

I hope you all had a safe and Happy Holiday season. I know I seem to still be catching up. 2005 just flew by and 2006 is still forming but seems to be flying by as well. VEP has some very aggressive projects on the horizon and we need your help. Please see the information contained in this newsletter. Without your help we would be lost.

Thank you to all the residents on Royal Garden Place who worked together with Dave Fadness to replace the fence on Vistapark Drive. You guys were amazing.

Use of VEP's Likeness

-Jeri Arstingstall

It has come to the attention of VEP executives that our likeness has possibly been misused. If you receive any suspicious fliers that claim to be from VEP, please contact any of the board members listed on the mailing page of this newsletter soon as possible. And of course, please don't use VEP's letterhead for personal uses.

Our executive board takes great pride in being fair to our members, our neighborhood, and the city. If you have a neighborhood concern, please contact us, and we'll do our best to help you.

Red light runners beware!

- Dave Noel

At last year's *State of the City* address, Mayor Ron Gonzales announced a program to crack down on red light runners at 50 intersections in the city. This program is called the Safe Streets Initiative. VEP executives wrote a letter expressing concerns about red light running in our area, particularly at the intersections of Capitol Expressway at Vistapark, Almaden Expressway at Branham, and Almaden Expressway at Blossom Hill.

The program will install "rat boxes" at targeted intersections. Rat boxes are not enforcement cameras. They are indicators that shine a red beam in the opposite direction of the stoplight so a policeman across (downstream of) the intersection can identify exactly when the light turned red and safely nab red light violators without also running the red light.

The city has completed the list and there is good news. They were able to spread the funding to about 175 intersections by only installing rat boxes in the traffic directions with the most offenders at each intersection.

The following intersections in and around the VEP area are included in the 175 intersections that will receive red-light-running indicators:

- Almaden Expressway & Blossom Hill Road
- Almaden Expressway & Branham Lane
- Almaden Expressway & Koch Lane
- Almaden Expressway & Redmond Avenue
- Almaden Expressway & Route 85

- Blossom Hill Road & Plaza Way
- Blossom Hill Road & Cahalan Avenue
- Blossom Hill Road & Route 85 (W)
- Blossom Hill Road & Snell Avenue
- Blossom Hill Road & Winfield Boulevard

- Branham Lane & Meridian Avenue

- Capitol Expressway & Bluefield Drive
- Capitol Expressway & Narvaez Avenue
- Capitol Expressway & Pearl Avenue
- Capitol Expressway & Snell Avenue
- Capitol Expressway & Vistapark Drive

- Cherry Avenue & Hillsdale Avenue

- Chynoweth Avenue & Snell Avenue

- Hillsdale Avenue & Meridian Avenue

- Rosenbaum Avenue & Snell Avenue

- Santa Teresa Boulevard & Thornwood Drive

The Safe Streets Initiative also includes some pedestrian safety improvements. For example, an overhead flashing pedestrian beacon will be installed on Blossom Hill at Vassar, near the Vineland Library. Tragically,

that beacon was already on the list when a fatality occurred there fairly recently.

It's time to pay your VEP membership dues

-Dave Fadness

Annual VEP membership begins in January each year. So, it's time to renew your membership with a check made payable to VEP. You'll find a remit envelop in this newsletter. Please be sure to fill in the information requested, enclose your \$20 check, and mail it back to us as soon as possible--while it's still fresh in your mind. Simple as that!

In a very real sense, renewing membership is your vote of confidence and support for the work we do as VEP volunteers. Yes, we get an occasional "thank you," but proof positive of your appreciation is in your willingness to renew membership each year. We also appreciate the nice comments many of you offer along with your renewal—for that, we offer our thanks!

If you enjoy reading this newsletter and supporting your neighborhood, please join VEP. This is our 37th year, let's break all previous membership records this year--and show the world that our community is the proudest, best organized, and most caring of all.

VEP membership is the best value you'll ever experience. Renew today, and ask your neighbors to join our growing family. Thank you.

What is VEP Community Association?

- VEP is an all-volunteer organization of your neighbors working to improve our neighborhoods; VEP is our community's "homeowner's association".
- VEP volunteers participate in a variety of activities, all of which originate in and benefit our neighborhoods.
- VEP volunteers make our neighborhood's views and needs known to government at all levels.
- Founded in 1969, we are one of the largest, most successful, and most active and enduring grass roots volunteer organizations in Santa Clara County.

Why join VEP?

- To receive our newsletter nine times a year, keeping you up-to-date and informed.
- To participate in and support neighborhood activities and representation.
- To contribute to our annual VEP Community Service Awards for area high school graduates.
- To be part of an outstanding community organization with a long record of success for our neighborhoods.

**** Membership Application ****

Note: none of the following information will be 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!

VEP's Memorial Day Parade & Festival

-Dave Fadness

VEP's 2006 Memorial Day Parade & Festival will be held on May 30th this year. Plan to attend.

As last year, our concept includes a costume parade with prizes for participants in various categories, games and prizes for kids of all ages, door prizes, food, and (of course) lots of family fun for all. Our goal is to include neighborhood schools in organizing, advertising, and providing volunteers to make these festivities a popular success.

We need to get started now. I am the event co-chair. Your help as part of a team of people is needed to share the fun and pride of organizing this picnic and bringing our neighborhoods together. If this sounds like something you'd be interested in, give me a call at (408) 578-6428. Please do it today.

Low Cost/No Cost Emergency Preparedness

- Marilyn Rodgers

Plan to attend our January 24th VEP general meeting to hear Earl Stevens of San Jose Prepared explain what we all need to know and do to be better prepared for an emergency. Please refer to articles written by myself and Dave Fadness published in the October and November 2005 VEP newsletters for resources and an extensive list of what you can do prior to or during an emergency or disaster. The following is a list of items you can do for no cost or little cost. Also included is an example of a Car Kit, and a GoKit Document Cache:

1. Get a family out-of-state phone contact and make a wallet card for each family member.
2. Ensure that school emergency contact cards are regularly updated; ensure that each child has at least 2 people listed to pick him/her up if parents are unavailable.
3. Select two family "reunification points" for use if the house is inaccessible. Select one place in the neighborhood, such as a friend's home, food store, or other location well known to all family members. Select another location not in your immediate neighborhood, but easily accessible by all family members, such as your place of worship, a movie theater, or regional mall.
4. Locate your gas meter and learn how to use the gas shut-off valve, and when you should shut off your gas (remember once off, only a licensed plumber or PG&E representative can turn the gas back on).
5. Store heavy objects on low shelves or on closet floors, not on high shelves. Heavy items, such as pots, pans, storage boxes, may fall during earthquakes and injure family members.
6. Remove any heavy objects from overhead shelves in bedrooms. When people are asleep, they cannot protect themselves from falling objects.
7. Water is a most important element. Each person needs one gallon for drinking and food preparation per day (plan for at least 3 days worth). Additional water will be needed for sanitation, clean up and pets. Each dog also needs one gallon per day, and a cat – at least one pint. Concerned about storing water...wash and rinse 2-liter soda or other clear plastic bottles. Fill them with tap water, then add 4drops of liquid Chlorine bleach (such as Clorox – the plain unscented type). Do not use frosted type

plastic jugs (as milk containers) for water storage. They deteriorate too soon for storage use. Keep some coffee filters available for use in filtering any cloudy or murky water you obtain during an emergency. Then treat with 16 drops of chlorine bleach per gallon – mix well, and let stand for at least 30 minutes prior to using. Tang or Kool-aid can be added when drinking to avoid the slight bleach taste.

Car Kit – have some simple things in your car:

1. Water, snack food, any required prescription medication, and any special needs for your children, or older members of your family.
2. Hat, jacket, blanket, or shawl. You may need to keep warm.
3. Shoes you can walk some distance in. Ladies – avoid heels, open toes, sandals.
4. Simple personal hygiene and items for your comfort.
5. Writing paper, several pencils/pens, and flashlights.

GoKit – Document Cache

Consider making copies of important documents and putting them in a container you can grab in an emergency.

1. Copies of your property tax bill, mortgage papers and/or property deed to prove home ownership; copy of a lease to prove legal right to alternate shelter; copy of your homeowner's or renter's insurance policy.
2. Copies of 2 utility bills less than 1 year old to prove residency (both owners and renters)
3. Copies of you credit card list, and emergency numbers to report lost cards
4. Copies of all family members driver's licenses and auto registrations
5. Copies of all Social Security cards
6. A copy of wills of each family member. Also give copies to an out-of-area family member as well as your legal advisor.
7. Copies of healthcare advance directives and copies of funeral arrangements (or last wishes for adults)

Water, food and medication should be changed every couple of weeks. Flashlight batteries should be replaced every few months. Shoes, clothing, blankets need not be new. Old comfortable items will do just fine in an emergency! Don't delay or be overwhelmed by the amount of work needed to prepare. Just start small and build from there. The important thing is to get started now!

Resources for disaster preparedness

-Marilyn Rodgers

The Bay Area is "earthquake country". A free handbook for the San Francisco Bay Region, *Putting Down Roots in Earthquake Country* provides information about the threat posed by earthquakes. It explains how you can prepare for, survive, and recover from these inevitable events. For everyone who works or lives in the region, you need to know why you should be concerned with earthquakes, what you can expect during and after a quake, and what you need to do beforehand to be safe and reduce damage.

You can request a copy of this handbook by telephoning the American Red Cross Bay Area Chapter at (510) 595-4459. To view and download this handbook as a 31-page PDF file (gjp-15.pdf; 5.8MB) go to <http://pubs.usgs.gov/gjp/2005/15/>. It is also available at many home improvement stores such as OSH.

~ Free Home Preparedness Assessment ~

Neighborhood Housing Services Silicon Valley has teamed up with San Jose State University engineering students to help homeowners determine how prepared they really are for the next big natural disaster. Engineering students will inspect homes for free and assess what needs to be done to make the home, and people living inside, able to survive a major earthquake.

The first step is to attend a workshop conducted by a SJSU engineering professor. Participants will receive a copy of "Homeowners Guide to Quake Safety", which is published in English or Spanish. For the workshop schedule and to sign up for a free home assessment, contact Celia Rios at (408) 279-2600 x245.

~ Interested in taking a CPR or First Aid Class? ~

The San Jose local chapter of the American Red Cross offers CPR and/or First Aid classes on an on-going basis. Sessions are held during the day, the evening, or weekends for your convenience. Call (408) 577-

2178 for a class schedule or registration, or contact the main number of the Red Cross at (408) 577-1000.

New advertiser

-Dave Fadness

A former vice president of VEP has opened a new family restaurant in the light rail station complex at the end of Pearl at Chynoweth Avenue. Peter Passaretti was our V.P. in 1985.

A long-time resident of our area, Peter went from high tech to haute cuisine, blending his mother's old-world recipes with his own personal expertise in fine food and wines to launch **Capisce?**, an Italian restaurant.

Peter is offering a 10% discount if you bring a copy of his ad from this newsletter. Give it a try—you'll be glad you did!

Trees planted at Parkview School

-Dave Fadness

On a sunny but cool Saturday morning, December 3rd, sixty-two volunteers from the Parkview School Community Association (PSCA), Parkview teachers and students, Our City Forest, and VEP planted 22 trees and cleaned up on and around the Parkview Elementary School campus. This event was a resounding success, thanks to the hard work and cooperation of each of the involved groups and individuals.

PSCA donated breakfast treats and lunch beverages for all volunteers. **Fred Kimaz**, a Parkview School parent and owner of the Dominos' Pizza store at 1909 Tully Road in San Jose (408-923-3030), generously donated pizzas for lunch, an incredible treat that was well received by our hungry tree planters and clean-up volunteers that day.

Trees were donated by Our City Forest, a non-profit group that has supplied and planted more than 30,000 trees on public property in our county.

These are the volunteers who helped that day:

Cub Scout Pack 278

Alison Manning
Dwight Manning
Jeff DeHart
Kirk Nguyen
Andy DeGregario
Jordan Manning
Kate Manley
Richard DeThorpe
Alex Manley
Emily Manley
Zack Meinzinger
Brandon Nguyen
Robert DeGregario
Cameron DeHart

GSSCC Troop 464

Erin Moss
Cindy Bosworth
Shelby Bosworth
Colleen Moss
Katelin Oliver

Parkview School students, parents, staff

Robert Topf, Principal
Nathan Pham (teacher)
Tom Richardson (teacher)
Dana Marshall (teacher)
Rolando Vicerat, Custodian
Jordan Moore
Virginia Ramos
Mary Grace Ramos

Teresa Orozco Peterson
Anthony Peterson
Jinso Ko
Emma Moore
Yoceline Borroyo
Ha An
Thuong An
Georgi Savov, 6th Grade
Cody Tolle, 3rd Grade
Alonzo Ray Remillard, 3rd Grade
James Roth
Alberto Rios, 2nd Grade
Tapi, Nalani, Logan, and Aria Panisi

Parkview School Community Association

Cathy Jones, President
Bob Bosworth, Vice President
Lizzy Oliver
Elena Oliver
Veronica Castro

Oak Grove School District

Danny Koroluck, Groundskeeper

Our City Forest

Asma Malik, Project Coordinator
Louie Urbina, Tree Amigo
Christian Bonner, Arborist

VEP Community Association

Jeri Arstingstall, President
Marilyn Rodgers, Vice President
Dave Noel, Past-President
Debra Suydam
David, Debbie, Gabrielle, and Ethan Danitz
Frank Kistler
Dave & Aiko Fadness

Special credit is deserved by Parkview's Principal **Robert Topf** and Oak Grove School District's Coordinator of Operations, **Bruce Murphy**. Their administrative skills eased the way for us, assuring success in a satisfying project that was safe and fun.

* * *

Note: At the end of the December 3rd event we found a small pair of knit gloves. If these are yours, contact Dave Noel at 266-7183.

* * *

As approximately 150 eager Parkview students looked on, a ceremonial 23rd tree was planted during a school assembly on January 4th. Our City Forest *Tree Amigo* **Martin Renteria** did the honors and answered a steady stream of questions from the excited kids.

Those kids are students of eight classes that have agreed to adopt and water the new trees during this school year. Their teachers are:

Virginia Beaulieu, 1st Grade
Sue Lundgaard, 1st - 2nd Grades
Dana Marshall, 5th Grade
Mary Melnick, 4th Grade
Lois Pearse, 1st - 2nd Grades
Nathan Pham, 3rd Grade
Jacqui Reed, 3rd Grade
Tom Richardson, 5th Grade

Ms. Melnick is also the teacher liaison for Parkview's Student Council; the Council will also participate in the tree adoption program.

We salute these teachers and their students for agreeing to share in the nurturing of these trees into a

priceless asset for future generations.

* * *

VEP bears the primary responsibility for the care of these trees and filing regular reports on their condition throughout the customary 3-year maintenance period. As our co-sponsors, PSCA has offered to share watering and maintenance tasks when school is not in session. Please call me at 578-6428 if you are willing to help with these important (but easy) tasks.





Be An Anti-Litter Volunteer

- Marilyn Rodgers

Have you noticed how much litter seems to collect along our streets and freeways? You may also have noticed men and women in orange vests collecting litter in orange bags. Many of these individuals are not city/county employees or inmates in our local detention centers! No...they are citizen volunteers for San Jose City's Anti-Litter program – part of an innovative and successful Anti-Graffiti and Anti-Litter program.

If you would like to become an “official anti-litter volunteer”, contact Art Ramirez, or any of the program staff at 408/277-3208. You will be given an orange vest, litter pick up stick, and orange collection bags. Be sure to let them know you are a VEP member! You can volunteer whenever is convenient for you, and even just a couple of hours per month will make a big difference.

There are several designated “adopt-a-street” areas within VEP and District 10, and of course many others across the city. Join the more than 2200 volunteers who help make San Jose one of the cleanest cities in America.

If you are not sure that you want to become an official city Anti-Litter volunteer, but would like to help within VEP area, we are planning to have a VEP and Gunderson High School litter pickup on a Saturday morning sometime in January or February. Contact me, Marilyn Rodgers, at (408) 225-7553 for final details.

Do Not Call List

- Dave Noel

If you'd like to cut down on calls from telemarketers, you can register with the national Do Not Call registry. You can list all your phone numbers, including cell phones. Your phone number will remain on the registry for five years from the date you register unless you choose to take it off the registry or your phone number is disconnected. There is no charge for this service.

To sign up, or to check whether you already have, visit www.donotcall.gov or call toll free 1-888-382-1222.

Pruning at area parks

-Dave Fadness

The following volunteers pruned and removed stakes from the many fruit and shade trees at Cilker Park on Saturday, December 10th. Opened on June 26, 2004, Cilker is the newest park in our area; it's located in the southwest quadrant of Chynoweth Avenue and Winfield Boulevard.

We're especially grateful for the expert training and help offered by Our City Forest "Tree Amigos". It was also a pleasure to work side-by-side with **Bill Cilker** himself, the fellow this park was named after.

Joyce Chesnos
Bill Cilker (namesake)
Dave & Aiko Fadness
Frank Kistler
Dave Noel
Marilyn Rodgers
Noel & Franci Card, *Our City Forest*
Pierre Tardif, *Our City Forest*

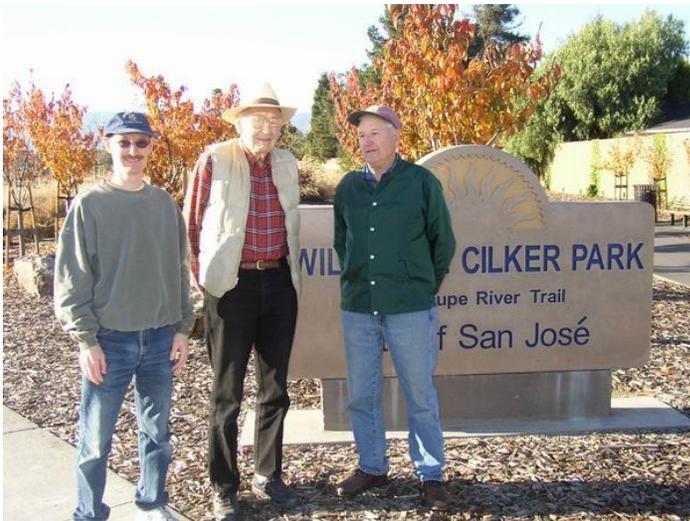
VEP offers its heartfelt thanks to these dedicated individuals who donate their time to keep our neighborhoods looking clean and green.

* * * *

You may have noticed that, in response to a request by VEP, San Jose Parks planted a larger Valley Oak tree there late last month. We wanted to get a fully mature shade tree moved there, but costs, logistics, and survivability argued against doing so. A 36-inch boxed specimen was planted instead. Look for it in the middle of the large turf area near the center of the park. We look forward to enjoying its shade in a few years, much sooner than the smaller trees nearby.

* * * *

Volunteer pruning efforts are ongoing at Vista Park, Parkview 2 Park, and at Parkview School. The 171 palm trees in the median of Chynoweth Avenue are next on our list—please respond to our call for help in late February.





Give to *Our City Forest*

VEP has worked with *Our City Forest* on a variety of beautification projects in our community. This non-profit group is always there for us, donating trees and providing expert volunteer help whenever we ask. Now it's our turn to help them...

You can support Our City Forest's work with a tax-deductible donation in one or more of these ways:

1. Individual memberships:
 - \$25 - Tree Ambassador
 - \$100 - Redwood Circle
 - \$500 - Majestic Oak
2. Memorial/birthday/special occasion certificates are available for a \$25 donation or more.
3. Corporate memberships: \$250+
4. Group memberships: \$50+
5. Donations of stock shares are welcome!

To join or donate, please send your check to:

Our City Forest
595 Park Ave. Suite 100
San Jose, CA 95110

Thank you for investing in a greener, healthier future for Silicon Valley. Please do it today!

Pearl Avenue Library art

- *Dave Noel*

Pearl Avenue Library construction is scheduled to start this coming November and be ready for use in May 2008. The new library will be about twice as big as the current library, and will be a single story building with "green" design maximizing natural light inside the building with a view out to a garden outside.

The City of San Jose is incorporating art into the design of all its new libraries. On Monday December 12th, the second Pearl Avenue Library artwork selection public meeting was held. Three artist finalists presented proposals to the community. It was very interesting to see how they each incorporated the community's ideas and values as provided in previous public meetings.

The community highlights, goals, and recommendations for the project included:

- Nice people, friendly neighborly;
- Used to be orchards surrounding the area, now gone;

Lots of foot traffic, families & children, schools close by to residences;

Two parks - lots of oak trees;
Small town feel;
Integration of art & architecture (stylistically); and
Landscaping identifies the neighborhoods.

The community selected artist Lynn Goodpasture's proposal called "Illumination". Her artwork will consist of a selection of exterior double-paned windows. The exterior panes will have embedded photovoltaic cells, and the corresponding interior panes will be decorated art glass. The windows will provide electricity to power a light fixture designed by the artist.

Ms. Goodpasture says, "Libraries exist for the purpose of illuminating the minds of all people of all ages, and in this sense a library is one of the true egalitarian institutions developed by humankind. As knowledge illuminates the intellect, and a window illuminates a room, my Art Glass Photovoltaic Window will illuminate my Art Lighting Fixture directly demonstrating the cause and effect of light, a metaphor for the illumination provided by the library. My art glass windows and lighting fixtures will explore the evolution of the alphabet from earliest times. This project is designed to honor the diverse ethnicities that make up the Pearl Avenue Library community, by exploring the evolving alphabet of each native language, each with its own graphic beauty".

Ms. Goodpasture is tentatively scheduled to present her schematic design (further enhancements of what was previously presented) at the February 21st Public Art committee meeting, held at 5:30 in City Hall Room W119. If you're interested, contact Jennifer Easton at (408) 277-5144 or email her at Jennifer.Easton@sanjoseca.gov. Jennifer reports that she will try to arrange a display of the art concept that can be viewed at the library.

For more information on the new San Jose libraries, visit www.NewSanJoseLibraries.com.

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 High School over the next few weeks.

Along with the other middle and high schools in San Jose Unified School District, Gunderson will begin its recruitment activities in January. We will conduct a series of recruitment tours which allow prospective students and their parents the opportunity to visit our campus, observe a variety of classes, and receive information on the many programs and services we have. The tours begin at 9 a.m. on January 11, 18, 25, and February 1.

We will also host a Parent Information Night on February 2 at 6:30 p.m.

Finally, we will be offering a "shadowing" program to allow interested students the ability to go to school with one of our current students. He/she would be able to go to all classes, meet other students and teachers, and get a taste of high school life.

For more information on or to sign up for any of Gunderson's recruitment activities, please contact Phyllis Appleby at 535-6340.

* * *

Construction on the new school building is finally slated to begin. On Monday, January 23 the contractor will begin bringing equipment, a trailer, and other supplies to the site on Guandabert Lane. Construction is expected to last approximately 8-10 months, depending on the weather. We are very excited about this new building, along with the other facility improvements which have occurred over the past two years.

Oak Grove School District

- Manny Barbara, Superintendent

The Oak Grove School District is fortunate to have many partners from both the private and public sectors to help us accomplish our mission "to ensure that every child's potential is achieved." We rely on these partners for both financial and human resources support. Here is a partial listing of some of our key partnerships:

Applied Materials. Thanks to a generous grant, we have been able to implement professional development for staff and improve student performance.

Partners in School Innovation. Part of Americorps, this organization involves recent college graduates who serve at several of our schools, and provides a broad range of support from data analysis to day-to-day operational assistance.

Junior Achievement. This long-time organization provides exposure of the business world to our students.

Springboard Schools. Formerly the Bay Area Schools Reform Collaborative, this organization provides financial and human resources assistance in improving student performance.

Noyce Foundation. Provides professional development to improve our writing program.

Boys and Girls Club. Maintains two centers, one at Davis Intermediate School and the other at Miner Elementary School. Our students have some place to go after school for both recreation and help with schoolwork.

City of San Jose. Provides funding for Homework Centers at each school. Additionally, the City of San Jose has partnered with us to build neighborhood community centers at two school sites.

San Jose State University. Through a unique partnership, we are able to recruit new teachers through this exemplary teacher preparation program. These teacher interns receive advanced training in a classroom with a master teacher before they are hired on a full-time basis. We also have a unique partnership with San Jose State wherein existing staff can obtain advanced degrees through the Masters in Leadership Program.

To all of our partners, we say *thank you* for your support of our students in the Oak Grove School District! These organizations make a difference not only within the school district, but benefit the community at large.

Carson Elementary School news

- Irene Shoberg

All San Jose Unified fifth grade parents will be mailed a "Request for School Assignment" on January 27, 2006. Parents will be asked to list their three choices of middle school in priority order on this form and return it to their student's teacher January 30 through February 15, 2006.

Carson will continue to have a pre-school next school year. This pre-school is run by Metropolitan Education. More details will be available in February's newsletter.

Free online tutoring service

- Dave Noel

The San Jose Public Library system is now offering free live homework help for students in 4th – 12th grades. For up to 20 minutes of live on-line tutoring, visit www.SJLibrary.org, select **Kids** or **Teens**, and then click on **Live Homework Help**.

Tutoring is available in math, science, social studies and English from 1 p.m. to 10 p.m. daily. Spanish language tutors are available for math and science Sunday – Thursday from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. All tutors are carefully screened by tutor.com to ensure both subject expertise and suitability for working with minors.

For more information, call Youth Services at (408) 808-2183.

New provisional driver's license rules

- Janet Poses (*)

Many teens and their parents are facing new provisional driver's rules that took effect January 1st.

The law states that teens having a driver's license for less than one year cannot have another teen in the car with them, nor can they drive between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m., unless they are with a licensed driver over the age of 25. The previous law stated that teens only had to wait six months before driving with other teens, and teens could drive until midnight. There are similar driving restriction laws in other states as well.

There are two scenarios parents face with these restrictions. The first is how to enforce these laws in your own home if your teen is just now getting his license. The other is how to enforce the law when your son or daughter has already been able to drive with his/her friends, and now they cannot without breaking the law.

The decision-making process evolves as our children become teens. Our teens are no longer making decisions just based on consequences. Instead, they are also concerned with how their friends and peers view them. As a result, oftentimes teens will make a poor decision, one that comes with negative consequences, because they weren't thinking about the consequence at the time of the decision. Rather, they were probably thinking about what their friends thought.

It helps to keep this decision-making process in mind when we look at the teen driving issue. So, what are some of the things you can do?

You could try making a house rule that reinforces the law. Knowing how teens make decisions, it is unlikely that a rule will be followed very closely. Instead, try coming to an agreement with your son (or daughter) about the driving law. Start by having an expectation that is clearly defined.

"Son, my expectation is that you will follow the law concerning your provisional license."

Expectations, when delivered appropriately, naturally lead to a conversation. He is likely to cite all sorts of examples of how nobody else follows the law, the police don't really care about it, it's a stupid law anyway, etc. Listen to each of his points, while making your own points as well. Be careful not to engage in an argument.

You may answer by saying things like, "I understand that many of your friends are not required to follow this law, and that can be hard on you. It stinks when you have a parent that cares so much about you sometimes. But, it's still a law, and we obey laws in our family. This law was put in place to help keep teens safe. It is sad, but a teen is twice as likely to be in a fatal crash if there is another teen with him. I know you are a careful driver, but not everyone is..."

On the point about police not caring about the law you might say, "Perhaps there are police officers who don't care about the law, but what if you were stopped by one of the police officers who did care?"

Then listen to his real concerns. Is this impacting how he gets to school or other activities? Is a friend relying on him for transportation? If logistical issues such as car pools are now a problem, when they weren't before the law was passed, you or another adult may have to participate.

You get the idea. Understand his points, listen to him and then make your point by meeting him on his level of thinking. When you've reached a good point in the discussion, ask him to come to an agreement with you about obeying the driving restrictions law. Once you get to the agreement, reinforce that you trust he will keep his end of the agreement. Most teens work hard to gain our trust. If he understands that breaking the agreement will also lose your trust, there is a greater likelihood that he will keep the agreement.

Goodparents offers classes to parents of teens at various locations in the South Bay. Their class "3 STEPS to parenting teens" is being offered in the Campbell Union High School District office three Wednesday evenings from 7 to 9 p.m. starting January 25th. For more information, visit www.goodparentsinc.com

[() Ed Note: Janet Poses is Director of Marketing for goodparents, inc.]*

Friends of the Guadalupe events

Why not make it one of your New Year's resolutions to start volunteering in the Guadalupe River Park? It's a great way to meet new people, get fresh air and exercise, work with kids, or just give back to your community.

On Tuesday, January 24, Friends of *Guadalupe River Park & Gardens* will be presenting two Volunteer Coffees, informal meetings where you can learn more about the volunteer opportunities we have to offer. There is no obligation to sign up.

Volunteer opportunities in the park and gardens have never been so numerous and varied. Now that our new Visitor & Education Center is open, our programs are expanding and visitors stop by on a regular basis. We are in need of people to staff the front reception desk and help with light office work, assist with the presentation of educational programs for adults and children, garden with a variety of plants, and assist with park maintenance projects and special events. We are looking for people who wish to volunteer on a regular

basis and those whose schedules allow them to only help occasionally.

Volunteer Coffees will be held at 11 am and 7 pm, so choose the one that works best for you. They will take place at the Guadalupe River Park & Gardens Visitor & Education Center, 438 Coleman Avenue. Please let us know you are coming, or get more information, by contacting Lucy Perez, Volunteer Coordinator, at lperez@grpg.org or 408-298-7657.

* * * *

Archeological History of the Ohlone Native Americans

6:30 to 9 pm on Wednesday, January 25

\$5.00 Friends members, \$10.00 for non-members

Presenter: Mark Hylkema, Santa Cruz District Archaeologist, California Department of Parks and Recreation

Back by popular demand! The coastal Native American tribes from Soledad and Monterey to Livermore and San Francisco, collectively called the Ohlone, are a diverse group of people that encompassed more than 50 tribes, each with their own language variations and traditions. Join Mark and the *Friends of Guadalupe River Park & Gardens* for a fascinating presentation about the Ohlone and discover what archeologists have learned about how they lived, traded with each other and utilized the local natural resources.

Weather Happens Everyday!

An after-school workshop

3:30 to 5 pm on Friday, January 27

\$5.00 per child

Ages: 5-10

It's raining, it's pouring...it's weather! Kids, join the Friends of Guadalupe River Park & Gardens in learning about all different types of weather, including flooding and the new flood protection on the Guadalupe River. Each child will also make a weather station to take home to do their own weather predictions.

News from the Pleistocene--

A Presentation on the Guadalupe River Mammoth

1 to 2:30 pm on Saturday, January 28

\$5.00 Friends members, \$10.00 for non-members

Presenter: Mark Goodwin, Vertebrate Paleontologist and assistant director for research & collections, University of California Museum of Paleontology, Berkeley.

In the summer of 2005, the fossilized remains of a Columbian mammoth, that lived here about 12,000 to 13,000 years ago during the Pleistocene era, were discovered along the banks of the Guadalupe. Currently, the remains are being prepared and studied at UC Berkeley under the direction of Mark Goodwin. Mr. Goodwin will join the *Friends of Guadalupe River Park & Gardens* to speak on this summer's excavation, the fossil record of the Bay Area during the Pleistocene era, and show us the most recent photographs of the mammoth--and possibly a fossil or two.

These events will be held at the new Guadalupe River Park & Gardens Visitor & Education Center, located at 438 Coleman Avenue, San Jose. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Reservations are required. Space is limited, so reserve your spot early by contacting **Kary Wilson** at education@grpg.org or (408) 298-7657 or 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. Refunds for program will only be made if a program is cancelled or if there is a waiting list.

The view from city hall

- San Jose Councilmember Nancy Pyle

Happy New Year! This January marks the beginning of my second year as your representative on the San Jose City Council and I am grateful for all the ceaseless support and insightful input I have received from so many of our District 10 community members.

I am also tremendously pleased with the progress our District has made over the past year. My office has strengthened communication with District 10 residents through a monthly newsletter, continued collaboration with local media, and our frequently updated District 10 website. I've also hosted a number of informative and successful District 10 forums, which I plan to continue with bold new topics in the coming year.

I've worked to achieve a strong sense of fiscal responsibility, working within District 10 budget constraints and searching for new potential streams of revenue. Through my staff we have pushed to strengthen outreach to neighborhood groups, including the Hoffman/Via Monte which is part of the Strong

Neighborhood initiative. In addition, I've awarded numerous commendations to local residents and groups and have worked to strengthen ties between the City and local schools in District 10.

Your input is extremely important to me, so please keep it coming.

I encourage you to read my *End of the Year Report* on the D-10 website, www.sanjoseca.gov/district10. This 11-page report provides some notable details about the goals that I accomplished in District 10 in 2005. It has been my pleasure to represent you and I hope this report reflects my high level of commitment to every resident of District 10.

My staff and I hope that each of you have a very happy and prosperous New Year. Our office is committed to making 2006 a productive, innovative, and prosperous year for all residents in Blossom and Almaden Valleys. I look forward to working as a community to ensure that we move forward in the spirit of excellence which continues to define District 10.

* * * *

San Jose's Public Library Department has received ongoing funding from the California State Library to implement Live Homework Help. This program allows access for students from 4th grade through 2nd year college to real-time, on-line tutoring services from 1 to 10 pm every day. Between September 1st and mid-October, 2005 the service was used by approximately 2,500 people.

* * * *

San Jose schools have improved their graduation rates by 4% since 2001, and a total of 10% since 1998. San Jose students completing the minimum requirements to attend University of California and the California State University systems have grown by 6% since 2001, and a total of 16% since 1998.

* * * *

The rate of violent juvenile crime in San Jose has declined 26% since 2001, and a total of 53% since 1994.

* * * *

Mayor Ron Gonzales will be giving his State of the City Address on Wednesday, February 8th at 5:30 p.m. in the New City Hall Rotunda.

* * * *

The grand opening of our new Almaden Library & Community Center will be held on April 29, 2006.

* * * *

You can still tour the new City Hall facility. Self-guided tours can be taken on Monday through Friday; docent-led tours are available on Tuesdays at noon. Call 277-4000 for more information.

* * * *

To contact me, call (408) 535-4910, or fax at (408) 292-6478, or email me at district10@sanjoseca.gov. My District 10 website is www.sanjoseca.gov/district10. My staff: Leland Wilcox, Chief of Staff; Linda Alexander, Executive Assistant; Daniella Polar, Community Relations Coordinator; and Eric Crane, Communications Aide.

Sacramento's busy: *Look out!*

Now pending in the California Legislature, Senate Bill 521 would authorize redevelopment agencies (RDAs) to include areas within ¼-mile around any rail transit station (a "transit village") by characterizing existing, low-density housing patterns as "blighted." Controversy around this proposed legislation centers on (1) an RDA's power to use eminent domain to seize private property, and (2) its new definition of "blight."

Three other proposed state bills (SB832, AB1378, and SB948) seek to seriously undermine environmental protections for so-called "infill" residential projects. SB 832 would reduce environmental procedures for infill projects of up to ten acres, a much larger parcel than most would think of as an infill project. AB 1378 would remove the need to make findings regarding traffic congestion for infill projects. SB 948 would allow a "short form environmental impact report" that shortcuts ordinary California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) protections.

[Ed. Note: This article was taken from the *Save Open Spaces In North San Jose e-news*. Contact sos@dalewarner.com]

Dumping leaves in your garden

-John Marks, VEP's Green Gardener

Those leaves that you pile into the garden hoping for the lazy man's composting to occur won't cut it. A lot of nitrogen is lost when raw organic matter lays on the top of the soil or is tilled into it. The bacteria that do

the decomposing use up lots of nitrogen when they work, leaving little for the plants. That is why leaves should be composted BEFORE they are added to the soil. Though the addition of organic matter is commendable, you have to supplement the soil with nitrogen when using undecomposed matter such as leaves.

Use sulfate of ammonia every other month at the rate of five pounds per thousand square feet and water it immediately afterward. This high-nitrogen fertilizer will help your vegetables thrive by offsetting the loss of nitrogen used up by the bacteria. You'll like the price, too (\$3 per 20-lb bag) and the ease of application. It's available at OSH and nurseries.

Winter Chores

Checklist: Clean rain gutters. Leaves and other debris will hamper drainage and may promote rusting and roof damage. Use binoculars to inspect roof from the ground. Make sure that water flows away from house at down spouts. Trim branches around the roof line to keep squirrels, roof rats (squirrels are just fur-covered rats) and other pesky animals off the roof. Inspect crawl space after rain for water accumulation as indications of water damage on the subfloor and joists beneath the kitchen, laundry, and bathrooms. Clean condenser coils or fins beneath or behind the fridge.

Turning Over Weeds

Some people think the easiest way to assassinate a bed of weeds is to turn the soil over. You're just sowing weeds seeds for the future. When tilling the soil, you will turn up weed seeds that have been dormant in the soil since your grandmother did the same thing. They sprout when exposed to light and moisture.

Pre-emergent herbicides are the real answer. When applied to the surface of the soil after removing all the weeds, the chemicals provide a layer that kills the emerging sprouts of nearly all weeds. The pre-emergents are easy to spread, but must be done before the summer or winter weeds sprout to ensure complete control. Products are called Preen, Amaze, and Preclude and are sold locally. Applying twice yearly, February and August-September means no more tilling and no more weeds!

(The above items were extracted from the 1/10/03 Murky News.)

Coffee Grounds Good for Plants?

As I have stated before, composting your used coffee grounds, or adding them around plants directly is helpful to plants. You can also get a 10-lb. bag of grounds from Starbucks and put them around plants like pumpkins, tomatoes and peppers this spring.

Coffee grounds are slightly acidic, which helps lower the pH, making it easier for plants to grow and get nutrients from the soil. This should be done in moderation, however, because it takes a long time for coffee grounds to deteriorate. Mix them with other organic materials and use as a mulch.

Gardening Tips:

Watering Toe

To make a great water bubbler for watering your vegetable or flower garden, place one old sock inside another old sock, and then place a piece of brick in the toe. Now wire the socks to the end of a garden hose, and use it in your garden.

More Watering

bury cans, with both ends removed, between your veggies; fill the cans with little rocks. Water directly into the cans, and the water will run through to the roots.

Quick Garden Mulch

Yesterday's news makes an excellent garden mulch. Put down up to three alternating layers of single newspaper sheets, and then lay three inches of grass clippings over the top. Great project for the winter.

House Plant Mulch

a layer of granulated charcoal on top of potting soil in your house plants filters out any unwanted additives in the water.

Homemade Hothouse

You can make a vacation hothouse for your house plants while you're away by loosely draping a plastic dry cleaning bag over a coathanger frame. This will retain soil moisture for up to two weeks.

Rebates on gas logs and fireplace inserts

- Dave Noel

As you may have seen on the insert in your garbage bill, rebates are being offered to entice you convert your wood burning fireplace to gas. If you retrofit an existing fireplace with a new gas log set or fireplace insert, you can get \$100. If you replace an existing wood burning stove or fireplace insert (1990 and older) with a new gas appliance, you can get \$300. For more info, call 1-800-HELP-AIR.

It costs \$\$ to over-heat water

-Dave Fadness

With energy prices in high orbit, and PG&E talking about further rate increases, most of us have gotten serious about ways to cut costs. Here's a suggestion that'll help you trim your PG&E bills.

Heating water takes a lot of power. You may remember from your physics classes that, ounce-to-ounce it takes more heat energy to raise the temperature of water than any other substance. Unless you've studied heat transfer, you may not know that greater temperature differences drive greater heat losses—in other words, the hotter something is, the more energy it loses to the environment.

In this case, it's your water that's hot. It's your money that's paying to heat it. The hotter you keep it, the more heat you lose to the environment. Your water heater is on every hour of every day. The heat it's losing isn't doing anything but costing you money—day in and day out, every day of the year.

So, in addition to wrapping your water heater and insulating hot water pipes, it makes very good sense to lower the temperature setting on your water heater to just that necessary for your daily needs.

Most of us have our water temperature set so high that, to avoid scalding ourselves, we *always* have to mix cold water with hot when we shower. That's typically true when we do laundry, too. Ideally, to save money we'd use hot water straight from the tap, without adding cold. So, why not turn your water heater down to the point where you don't have to mix so much (or any) cold water for it to be comfortable?

Recognizing that there's a lot of water in your water heater, the way to do this is to bump the heat down a little bit every couple of days until you just barely have to add cold water to have it be comfortable when using the hot water tap. (Some in your house may like hotter showers than you do, so use their comfort level as a guide.) Make sure to check the operation of your dishwasher and washing machine, though, as they may require slightly hotter water (you could try different detergents, too, as some work fine with cooler water).

Once you find the right water temperature, use a permanent marker to mark the setting on your water heater's dial. That way you can turn your water heater down when you go on vacation and easily return it to your ideal setting. Always consider setting the water temperature down when you go away for more than a few days—many water heaters even have a "vacation" setting on the temperature dial.

It's easy to adjust your water heater settings, so try it. Every little bit helps. Spend your money on things you need, not on heating the environment.

Note: Although changing water temperature certainly should not cause leaks or other problems, it's best to be watchful: I always change to the "vacation" setting the night before leaving.

COLLECTING MILITARY ITEMS: Uniforms, leather, web gear, bayonets, knives, personal items, photos, etc. Top \$\$\$ paid. Call Doug @ 210-9725 or 629-7436.

HANDY-MAN: *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.

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.

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.

San Jose City Hall customer service

- Dave Noel

You may remember the city of San Jose had a handy phone number you could call for information on just about anything related to city government. With the new city hall comes a new phone number for the city's info line: (408) 535-3500.

The *flip* side...2005 Mensa winners

The *Washington Post's* Mensa Invitational once again asked readers to take any word from the dictionary, alter it by adding, subtracting, or changing one letter, and supply a new definition. Here are this year's winners:

1. Intaxication: Euphoria at getting a tax refund, which lasts until you realize it was your money to start with.
2. Reintarnation: Coming back to life as a hillbilly.
3. Bozone (n.): The substance surrounding stupid people that stops bright ideas from penetrating. The bozone layer, unfortunately, shows little sign of breaking down in the near future.
4. Cashtration (n.): The act of buying a house, which renders the subject financially impotent for an indefinite period.
5. Giraffiti: Vandalism spray painted very, very high.
6. Sarchasm: The gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the person who doesn't get it.
7. Inoculatte: To take coffee intravenously when you are running late.
8. Hipatitis: Terminal coolness.
9. Osteopornosis: A degenerate disease. (This one got extra credit.)
10. Karmageddon: It's like, when everybody is sending off all these really bad vibes, right? And then, like, the Earth explodes and it's like, a serious bummer.
11. Decafalon (n.): The grueling event of getting through the day consuming only things that are good for you.
12. Glibido: All talk and no action.
13. Dopeler effect: The tendency of stupid ideas to seem smarter when they come at you rapidly.
14. Arachnoleptic fit (n.): The frantic dance performed just after you've accidentally walked through a spider web.
15. Beelzebug (n.): Satan in the form of a mosquito, that gets into your bedroom at three in the morning and cannot be cast out.
16. Caterpallor (n.): The color you turn after finding half a worm in the fruit you're eating.

Megan's Law

- Dave Noel

For a map of registered sex offenders, visit the following website: www.meganslaw.ca.gov/

What does "VEP" stand for?

How did we get that odd name?

"VEP" represents the first three letters of our original subdivision names started here in 1969:

V = **V**istapark;
E = **E**ncore (and **E**cho Valley); and
P = **P**arkview Valley.

That's all there is to it!

Of course, we've grown over the years to include the Blossom Heights subdivision and others, including Las Brisas in 2004. But our original **VEP** name stuck, and we've been known by it for 36 years. Some like to think of us as...

Very **E**nergetic **P**eople

See the mailing page of this newsletter for a map of VEP's core membership area. We also welcome members from outside these boundaries who share common interests.

