

## **VEP MEETING**

7:30 P.M. TUESDAY  
**February 28, 2006**

GUNDERSON HIGH SCHOOL  
► Faculty Lounge ◀

### **AGENDA**

#### **★ Trees, Trees, Trees! ★**

A how-to presentation by Ralph Mize, City Arborist  
and  
Christian Bonner, *Our City Forest*  
7:30 to 8:15 p.m.

#### **★ Mr. Roadshow ★**

A presentation by Gary Richards, San Jose Mercury News  
8:15 to 8:50 p.m.

#### **★ VEP Business ★**

Discuss and vote on: Fund allocation for VEP's  
2006 Memorial Day Parade & Festival  
8:50 to 8:55 p.m.

#### **★ Your community concerns ★**

A chance for you to tell us about your concerns  
8:55 to 9 p.m.

Everyone is welcome. Invite your neighbors to attend!

### **Our February meeting**

-*Dave Fadness*

► Our first guest speakers are arborists, experts at trees. Both have dedicated themselves to expanding and nurturing our urban forest.

**Ralph Mize** has been City Arborist for the City of San Jose's Department of Transportation since 2002, with responsibility for administering the street tree ordinance in the San Jose Municipal Code. His career has been centered around trees and landscaping.

Ralph has a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture degree from Utah State University and a Master of Science in Horticulture from Washington State University. His Master's Project was to develop a Master Plan for a Botanical Garden on the WSU campus in Pullman.

Although a native of the Bay Area, he has worked in both the nursery industry and a Landscape Architecture/Planning firm in Bellingham, Washington, as Horticulturist for Cranbrook, a National Historic Landmark with extensive gardens and grounds in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan and as Grounds Superintendent for the University of California, Santa Barbara. In each locale he has learned the species of plants that grow well in those areas, so brings to San Jose an interest in increasing the diversity of trees that are well adapted to our climate here in San Jose.

Ralph enjoys talking with residents about the care of their trees and the important role that trees provide in enhancing the livability and beauty of our city.

**Christian Bonner** has been Project Coordinator/Director of Operations at *Our City Forest* since March, 2001. A Certified Arborist, he received his formal education at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, where he earned a Bachelor of Science: Forestry & Natural Resource Management, with a major concentration in Urban Forestry. Christian is a member of the International Society of Arboriculture.

VEPers who have been involved in beautification projects in our community know Christian and his non-profit employer, *Our City Forest*. He works with us on each of our projects, recommending tree species, getting trees donated to us via *Our City Forest*, helping us plant them, and advising us on watering, pruning, and general care.

Ralph is also an important integral element in VEP's beautification projects, working in the early planning stages with us and Christian to select the species of trees most appropriate for each site. He has also helped immeasurably in site design.

These two gentlemen will team to tell us about trees in San Jose and the guidelines (including the rules and regulations) pertaining to selection, planting, maintaining, and removal of trees along city streets and those in and around your yard. This will be a perfect opportunity to have your questions answered by two experts who love trees and people.

Don't miss it!

► Our second speaker needs no introduction. He's our locally famous transportation guru, **Gary Richards**. Gary's popular *Mister Roadshow* column and frequent articles in the Mercury-News about local transportation issues are widely read and deservedly popular. He's very knowledgeable and an entertaining, down-home speaker. You're certain to enjoy what he has to say.

Gary has been the transportation reporter at the Mercury News since 1991, and before that was a sports editor and assistant city editor. His *Roadshow* column now generates several hundred questions each week and is a six-day a week column

In 1979 he was named top sports writer/columnist in Iowa, and in 1981 his column on the assassination attempt on President Reagan and the NCAA's decision to play the college basketball title game--they should not have played, he said--was cited as a chief reason his newspaper's was named the top sports section in the state.

In 1989, he was an editor on the team that helped the Mercury News win a Pulitzer Prize for its coverage of the Loma Prieta earthquake and, in 1994, he was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize for his coverage of the opening of Highway 85.

Gary is a native of Iowa, graduating from Iowa State University with a degree in political science. He also attended graduate school in journalism. He's worked at the Ames, Iowa Tribune; the Des Moines Register; and the Quad-City Times. He joined the Mercury News in 1984.

Gary and his wife Jan live in San Jose. They have a daughter who is a senior at UC-Berkeley and a 14-year-old son who lives and dies with every Nick Swisher at-bat.

Have questions about streets, roads, rail, or buses? Come, ask Gary—he's got answers (and no baloney!).

► VEP members will be asked to discuss and vote on how much money we will allocate this year for our annual Memorial Day Parade & Festival. Our Executive Committee is recommending an amount not to exceed \$2000. We need your approval, of course.

Approved funds will be used to pay for a variety of required city and school district services, including fees for a police escort for our parade, posting no-parking signs along our parade route, a maintenance person at Parkview School, etc. (See article on page 5.)

► Our meetings always end with an opportunity for you to bring your community concerns 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 February 28<sup>th</sup>. Bring a friend!

## It's time to pay your VEP membership dues

*-Dave Fadness*

VEP's annual membership drive begins in January each year. So, it's time to renew your membership with a check made payable to VEP. We put a remit envelop in last month's newsletter. If you still have it, please be sure to fill in the information requested. If not, use the form below. In either case, enclose your \$20 check, and mail it back to P.O. Box 18111, San Jose 95158. Do it as soon as possible--while it's still fresh in your mind.

Simple as that, you and your household will be members of VEP.

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 lies 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 37<sup>th</sup> 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 "homeowners' 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 officers needed

-*Dave Fadness*

It's your turn. Here's a golden opportunity for caring neighbors who can give back a few hours each month to their community. VEP is looking for a handful of volunteers to lead and shape the objectives of our organization.

VEP's elected officers are president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and newsletter editor. This year, elections and installation of new officers will be held at our April *Annual Meeting*.

- Term of service: One year.
- Pay: Zero.
- Personal rewards: Unlimited.
- Special experience required: None...

We work as a team. All we ask is an interest in and eager dedication to our neighborhoods. You have what it takes!

For a preview of what we do behind the scenes, come to one of our executive meetings. All VEP members are welcome. Dates and times are listed in our calendar of events, call for location.

If you'd like to meet great people, help set VEP's priorities, and make things happen for our community, please consider joining the VEP board. You'll get to meet more of your neighbors, do great things for our community and, best of all, you'll feel good about yourself.

Call any member of our current team of execs with questions or to discuss your interest. Our contact info is listed on the mailing page of this newsletter.

C'mon, make our day! Volunteer to be an officer of VEP.

## VEP's 2006 Home Improvement Faire

-*John Marks*

Our 9<sup>th</sup> annual Home Improvement Faire is scheduled for Tuesday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, and this year we'll repeat our raffle for MONEY. Exhibitors have donated enough for cash prizes of about \$700. You don't have to buy anything, just come, get a ticket stub, then wait to see whether your number is called.

More to the point, this event is designed to give you ideas and contacts for improving your home. Contractors and tradesmen will display the following products and functions: sunrooms, windows, bathroom remodeling, screens, plumbing, composting, doors, floors, kitchens, roofing, hardware, cooking, body & health care, pest control, photography, water softeners, gardening, painters, garage doors, and landscaping. Please make a special

effort to attend, matching the effort of these suppliers to be there for you.

You won't be disappointed. Free refreshments (brownies, coffee, soft drinks, etc.) will be provided by VEP. Mark your calendar for Tuesday, March 28<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm. We look forward to seeing you in the Gunderson High School Forum area.

## Call for Civil Grand Jurors

- *Dave Noel (\*)*

In the spring of each year, Santa Clara County Superior Court judges identify qualified citizens who might serve on the Civil Grand Jury.

The civil grand jury is an investigatory body created for the protection of society and the enforcement of the law. The three chief functions of the grand jury are to handle:

- 1) civil watchdog responsibilities;
- 2) citizen complaints; and
- 3) criminal investigations.

Each year, thirty prospective grand jurors from all five county supervisory districts are nominated. Nineteen members will then be chosen by random drawing and impaneled to serve a one-year term beginning on June 29<sup>th</sup>.

Persons selected for grand jury service must make a commitment to serve a minimum of three days per week. Most grand jurors spend at least 20-25 hours per week in serving our community. Grand jurors receive a nominal payment for meetings and free parking, when necessary.

If you would like to complete an application to serve on this year's grand jury, contact Ms. Gloria Chacon, Court Manager, at (408) 882-2721. Applications are due by Friday, February 24<sup>th</sup>.

*[(\*) Ed. Note: This article was reprinted from a posting by Clark Williams to the Willow Glen Neighborhood Association email list.]*

## Make your May 6<sup>th</sup> garage sale a **BIG** success

-*Dave Fadness*

This year, our annual *Community Garage Sale* will be held on Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup>. Make sure to mark it on your calendar now, and start gathering those treasures from your garage, attic, and under the back porch.

The idea is to get everyone in our community to have a garage sale on the same day. The best way to help that priceless old junque find a new home is to increase traffic to your home. So, VEP will advertise this event in local newspapers and by distributing flyers around our neighborhoods.

Your best resource is you--activity attracts more activity. Get your neighbors involved. People will pass by your street unless they think something is happening there. Try to get everyone on your street to join in. You might even pool all your neighbors' goodies into one big second-hand superstore. If your neighbors aren't selling, ask if you can spread out to their driveway.

Plan now to make sure you can be seen from the street. Put up balloons or signs. Have your out-of-area friends bring garage sale items that add to yours--make it a big, fun event on your street or cul-de-sac.

As they say in the business, advertise, advertise, advertise! Make your garage sale visible. Get the word out to your friends and neighbors. A little energy and creativity now will pay off in big dividends, freeing up space in your garage and putting extra money in your pocket.

## ★★ Upcoming Volunteer Events ★★

Unless otherwise specified, be sure to call Maria at 226-4614 to find out specifics and volunteer for these events.

Memorial Day Parade & Festival planning meeting = March 6 at 7:30 pm; call Dave Fadness at 578-6428.

Newsletter Folding and Labeling = March 19 at 11 am.

Home Faire, Garage Sale, Memorial Day events flyer distribution = March 18.

Newsletter Folding and Labeling = April 17 at 6:30 pm.

Garage Sale + Memorial Day events flyer distribution = April 28.

### Now planning: Memorial Day Parade & Festival

-*Dave Fadness*

Our members know that VEP Community Association is an all-volunteer not-for-profit organization that exists for the sole purpose of maintaining and improving its membership area. The overriding purpose of our annual Memorial Day Parade & Festival is to strengthen a sense of community by way of cooperation in organizing an event that involves VEP, parent-teacher-student groups from schools serving our area, Scouts, local businesses, our police officers and firefighters, and our city council office. In this regard, it's a team-builder.

We work together the year around as volunteers for our respective community organizations. This event is also a welcome opportunity for us to play together, to enjoy a day outdoors having fun with our families and friends, new and old. It's also a day that folks who come to our area from other parts of the city can see how beneficial to neighborhoods teamwork between its volunteer groups can be.

Our Memorial Day Parade & Festival blends a parade with an old-fashioned country fair, having costume prizes, field games, exhibitions, performers, and patriotic music in commemoration of an important American holiday.

We begin with a parade, featuring at least one marching band, color guards, and kids (of all ages) in costume. Entrants arrive with decorated bikes, trikes, and coaster wagons. Judges review costumes for awards that are granted at our post-parade Festival. Our parade route starts at Carson Elementary and ends at Parkview Elementary School.

This year's Festival will include music and entertainment by school bands and choral groups, high school spirit and dance squads, demonstrations by San Jose Police K-9 and Equestrian Units, San Jose Firefighters, America Tae Kwon Do, and Hawaiian Dancers, to name a few. We'll also have face-painting and crazy-hair booths, field games, and game booths—with prizes. Participating school groups will serve refreshments at a small fee, to raise funds for worthwhile PTSA projects.

This is a FAMILY event, so we urge everyone to attend on Monday, May 29.

If you are interested in working with our planning committee to make this year's event a *spectacular* success, please call me at 578-6428. Bring your talent and volunteer energy to our next committee meeting at 7:30 pm on March 6<sup>th</sup>.

### Pearl Avenue Library Meeting March 2<sup>nd</sup>

-*Dave Noel & Dave Fadness*

Pearl Avenue Library construction is scheduled to start this coming November and be completed 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.

If you're interested in an architectural update of the new library design, Councilwoman Judy Chirco is holding a meeting from 7 until 8 pm on Thursday, March 2<sup>nd</sup> at the library, 4270 Pearl Avenue. The public is invited to attend and encouraged to comment.

For more information, please call (408) 535-8450 or visit the library website, [www.NewSanJoseLibraries.com](http://www.NewSanJoseLibraries.com).

## Sunday hours at San Jose Public Libraries

- *Dave Noel*

The following libraries are now open from 1 to 5 pm on all Sundays, except those preceding a Monday holiday:

- Berryessa Library, 3355 Noble Avenue
- Dr. Roberto Cruz - Alum Rock, 3090 Alum Rock Avenue
- Rose Garden, 1580 Naglee Avenue
- Santa Teresa, 290 International Circle
- Tully Community, 880 Tully Road
- Vineland, 1450 Blossom Hill Road
- West Valley, 1243 San Tomas Aquino Road

These libraries offer their full complement of services during their Sunday hours. To make this possible, Monday hours at all branches citywide have been changed to 2 to 7 pm, ensuring that libraries are still open during after school hours.

For more information, visit [www.SJLibrary.org](http://www.SJLibrary.org).

## Please slow down on Chynoweth!

- *Dave Fadness*

If you or members of your family drive on Chynoweth Avenue between Gaundabert Lane and Pearl Avenue, PLEASE obey the speed limit; slow down and drive attentively. Remember, there are pedestrians, occasional volunteers working on the palm trees, bicyclists, and other motorists whose lives and safety depend on your using good judgment and sane driving habits.

The life you save may be your own!

In response to two more accidents that damaged four palm trees in the median on there, VEP sent the following letter to Councilwoman Nancy Pyle earlier this month. We're asking that the city analyze potential ways to slow traffic on that busy street. Please watch this newsletter for developments in coming months.

\* \* \*

"Honorable Councilwoman Pyle:

*Four palm trees were hit last week in the Chynoweth median. We urgently need your help to slow traffic and improve public safety there.*

*When you drive down Chynoweth Avenue east of Pearl, you'll notice many shorter palm trees among the more mature ones in the median. VEP planted 171 palms there ten years ago. The shorter trees in the stretch from Pearl to Gaundabert are replacements for trees that have been destroyed as the result of several motor vehicle accidents each year. You'll see no such size disparity east of Gaundabert Lane.*

*This disparity in tree size provides clear visual evidence of a serious public safety problem. Were it not for our palm trees, injury or death could already have occurred by way of a high speed cross-over accident. VEP is very concerned that an innocent pedestrian or motorist will be seriously injured or killed on that street if this situation isn't addressed soon.*

*The BIG problem on Chynoweth Avenue is speeding traffic between Gaundabert and Pearl. This situation has been going on for years. Every time cops have set up temporary speed traps on Chynoweth, they've nabbed plenty of violators. Trouble is, cops can't be out there 24/7.*

VEP has requested "traffic calming" and frequent NASCOP surveillance as potential solutions. NASCOP, as you are probably aware, is photo radar that doesn't require our busy police officers to be stationed along the right-of-way. Although it would help to free-up our police officers for other duties, NASCOP would, at best, be a temporary fix. Once would-be violators see that the detector vehicle is gone, speeding will again occur. Also, accidents frequently occur at night, when NASCOP would not be in use.

In response to VEP's request some years ago, traffic calming was done on Chynoweth, east of Gaundabert. Striping there reduced through traffic lanes to one in each direction, and did solve a problem of nightly drag racing in that location. Additional safety measures, such as stop signs, were implemented on adjacent side streets, also with noticeable improvements.

VEP is very grateful for DOT's efforts; however, traffic calming was, and still is, more urgently needed on Chynoweth west of Gaundabert Lane. We were told by DOT that NASCOP cannot be used there.

We ask that a comprehensive traffic calming analysis be done to find a 24/7 deterrent to speeding on that stretch of Chynoweth Avenue. Further, we ask that VEP be involved with DOT in formulating a preferred alternative, bringing a final recommendation to our members for review and comment before it is approved.

Please help us find a permanent, 24/7 solution that will make Chynoweth Avenue safe for pedestrians, motorists, and our palm trees. We look forward to working with you to achieve that urgent goal."

## President's message

-Jeri Arstingstall

It looks like spring has sprung early. Daffodils are blooming and the trees are flowering. This is a great time of year. We are coming out of dormancy. VEP activities are no exception.

The "Bag Ladies" are working with Gunderson High School to clean up along Chynoweth Avenue. February 11<sup>th</sup> was their clean up day. John Marks is going full force organizing our 9<sup>th</sup> annual *Home Faire* for March 28<sup>th</sup>. VEP's Community Garage Sale and our Memorial Day Parade & Festival are planned for May 6 and 29, respectively. (See page 3 of this newsletter.)

Our neighborhood is a very attractive place to live; our activity is one of the main reasons. What makes all this happen is our volunteers. To help you get them on your calendar, a new addition in this newsletter is a column listing volunteer activities and dates.

V.P. **Marilyn Rogers** hosted a volunteer/hospitality training meeting in January with **Ginger Cardona, Maria DiGregorio, Debra Suydam**, and me. We decided that Maria would be VEP's Volunteer Coordinator and Debra would serve as Chair of our Hospitality Committee. As usual, those who helped out in the past stood ready to assist in the future.

VEP's hospitality committee will continue to provide refreshments and snacks at our meetings and will be welcoming new neighbors into our community.

When you see a home sold in our neighborhood, please let us know when the new neighbors begin moving in. Our Hospitality Committee will be there to welcome them and introduce them to VEP.

Enjoy the colors of our world.

Celebrate with the City of San José, SummerHill Homes, and the VEP Community Association at the

## Vista Park Community Room Grand Opening

March 18, 2006  
10:30 a.m.

For more information, please  
call (408) 793-4188.



To arrange accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, please call (408) 793-4188.

## ★★ VEP Community Calendar ★★

Tue, Feb 28 @ 7:30 pm = VEP meeting, Gunderson High School faculty room. (See agenda on page 1 of this newsletter.)

Wed, Mar 1 @ 7:15 pm = VEP Executive Board meeting. (Call any officer for further information.)

Thu, Mar 2 @ 7 pm = Architectural update of new Pearl Avenue Library (See article in this newsletter.)

Mon, Mar 6 @ 7:30 pm = Planning Committee meeting for VEP's Memorial Day Parade & Festival. Call Dave @ 578-6428.

Sat, Mar 18 @ 10:30 am = Vista Park Community Room Grand Opening. (See graphic, above.)

Tue, Mar 28 @ 7:30 pm = VEP's *Home Improvement Faire*, Gunderson High School forum. (See article in this newsletter.)

Wed, Apr 5 @ 7:15 pm = VEP Executive Board meeting. (Call any officer for further information.)

Sat, Apr 8 = Carson's annual *Walkathon*. (More details in next month's NEWS.)

Tue, Apr 25 @ 7:30 pm = VEP *Annual Meeting* at Vista Park community room. (Agenda to be announced.)

Wed, May 3 @ 7:15 pm = VEP Executive Board meeting. (Call any officer for further information.)

Sat, May 6 = VEP's *Community Garage Sale*. (See article in this newsletter.)

Tue, May 23 @ 7:30 pm = VEP meeting at Vista Park community room. (Agenda to be announced.)

Mon, May 29 = VEP's *Memorial Day Parade & Festival*. (See article in this newsletter.)

## VEP Community Service Awards

- *Dave Noel*

At our January general meeting, members unanimously approved the executive board's recommendation to fund up to three Community Service Awards of \$1,500 each for graduating high school students in Gunderson, Andrew Hill, and "At-Large" categories.

For our 21<sup>st</sup> consecutive year, VEP will offer these 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.

Applications are being distributed to the administrations at Gunderson and Andrew Hill High schools this month. We will ask the designated administrator at each school to nominate three students and provide us their completed applications by April 26<sup>th</sup>. If you know a Gunderson or Andrew Hill student deserving consideration for this award, please encourage them to talk to their principal or guidance counselor to find out who will be making the

nominations this year and talk to that administrator to be sure they are considered.

Our At-Large application form appears in this newsletter, and is also available in softcopy on request. Our At-Large category is defined as a graduating high school senior residing in San Jose and nominated by a current VEP member. Our rules state that we require at least two candidates in order to grant an award. The At-Large application deadline is 9 p.m. on April 25<sup>th</sup>, our normal VEP meeting night.

We will present our Gunderson and Andrew Hill awards at each school's respective senior awards night in late May. We will present our At-Large award at our May 23<sup>rd</sup> general meeting.

If you have any questions, or would like to volunteer to help the Community Service Awards committee, please contact me at (408) 266-7183 or DNoel1234@aol.com. Also contact me if you have suggestions for changing the program next year. If there is interest in changing the program, I'll form a committee this Fall to formulate a proposal to present to the membership at a general meeting for approval.

## Webmaster urgently needed by VEP

*-Dave Fadness*

You may have noticed that VEP's website has been down in recent months. Our Secretary, Mark Schoenberg has volunteered to get us back online, but we need someone with experience to help make and reliably keep VEP's site an attractive and current source of information for our members and website visitors.

We'll supply the content. We need YOU to get it set up and organized, then keep it updated monthly with meeting notices, copies of our most recent newsletter, etc. Once you have it set up, this shouldn't take much time on an ongoing basis.

If you have what it takes, we'd love to hear from you. Call Mark, Jeri, or me at your earliest convenience. Our contact info is on the mailing page of this newsletter. PLEASE lend a hand in this important volunteer task!

## Community Center Facility Re-Use Strategy

*- Dave Noel*

The City of San Jose is stuck between a rock and a hard place. Thanks to the voter's approval of *Measure P* in November 2000, the city's Department of Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) has embarked on 190 capital projects including ten new recreational facilities. At the same time, PRNS's operating budget has been reduced by 25%, so they can't afford to operate all the old and new facilities.

PRNS recently completed a series of public meetings to discuss their plan to "re-use" 34 sites that they can't afford to run. Re-Use sites near VEP include "The Spot" youth center (at Bret Harte Middle school) and the Hoffman/Via Monte Neighborhood Center (near Pioneer High School). PRNS plans to look for new operators in this order of priority:

- Alternate City operations
- Conversion to parkland (demolish)
- Alternative public-entity
- Non-profit partnership
- For-profit enterprise
- Closure

PRNS is soliciting community inputs for desired uses of each facility, then will solicit proposals from potential operators starting this March, for beneficial use starting this October.

VEP executives **Dave Fadness, Jeri Arstingstall, Marilyn Rodgers**, and **Dave Noel** met with PRNS Deputy Director Cyn-

**this Bojorquez** on February 3<sup>rd</sup> to learn more about this program and determine whether it would make sense for VEP to ask that our brand new Vista Park community room be added to the reuse list.

Although VEP already has reservations to use the Vista Park community room as our new home, it's clear the city can't afford to run recreational programs there for at least five years. We wondered if another group might be able to operate the facility and offer services of benefit to our community, such as after-school daycare, senior activities, etc. As of this writing, we are still gathering information.

The Vista Park community room grand opening is set for 10:30 am Saturday March 18<sup>th</sup>. That event will be the realization of a long-time goal for VEP. Now that we have the building, we need to advocate for uses that benefit our community.

VEP Executives welcome your ideas on what types of uses would be most beneficial. Also, if you have any ideas on organizations that might be able to run it, please let us know. In essence, the operator must pay for routine maintenance, and must pay rent to the city, with a rent offset credit given for the value of services provided to the community.

## Reserving the Vista Park community room

- *Dave Noel*

**Marie Alberry-Hawkins** from the City of San Jose Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department explained to VEP members at our January 24<sup>th</sup> general meeting how to reserve our new community room. With its grand opening tentatively scheduled for 10:30 am on Saturday March 18<sup>th</sup>, folks will soon wonder if they can use it.

To reserve the use of the "Vista Park Neighborhood Center", call (408) 979-7820. Here is a summary of the fees:

### Hourly Rates (two hour minimum):

- Resident \$60
- Non Resident \$95

### Application Fees:

- Resident \$50
- Non Resident \$100

### Package Rate 7 hours (application fee included):

- Resident \$420
- Non Resident \$665

Cleaning and Damage Deposit: \$250

A tri-fold brochure is available with more details.

## Beware: new car theft scheme

- *Gary Richards, Mr. Roadshow (\*)*

(Q) This is an interesting e-mail I received from a friend about a new auto theft scheme. Here's the scenario:

You walk across the parking lot, unlock your car and get inside. You lock your doors, start the engine and shift into reverse. You back out and notice a piece of paper stuck to the rear window. You shift into park, unlock your doors, get out and remove the paper. When you reach the back of your car, carjackers appear out of nowhere, jump into your car and take off! Your engine is running and they practically mow you down as they speed off.

Guess what? I'll bet your purse or other valuables are still in the car. You may want to share this warning with friends and family; especially women. -- *Sandra Moll, San Jose*

(A) My first thought was that this was another urban legend. But then I dialed Mike-The-CHP Man and:

"No legend here. I have heard of this a few times, and it is true. What makes it popular among car thieves is that it's non-confrontational (no gun or threat needed) which equals a lesser fine or sentence if they're caught. And it's a lot easier than traditional methods. Your readers should definitely heed this advice to drive away."

"Parking lots are famous for many types of criminal activity. Get in your car and get out of the lot as quickly as practical. Parking lots attract many predators that prey on non-suspecting shoppers with hands full of bags, strollers and what not. Be careful. Always be aware of your surroundings."

As for this scam: Drivers should stay in their car and remove the paper stuck to the back window after leaving the parking lot.

*[(\*) Ed. Note: Reprinted without permission from the 1/25/06 San Jose Mercury News. Mr. Roadshow will be a guest speaker at VEP's February 28<sup>th</sup> meeting.]*

## Carson School update

- Irene Shoberg (\*)

The first year of Carson's pre-school is a success and there will be a pre-school at Carson next school year. This is a pre-kindergarten program with developmentally appropriate curriculum. It is a parent cooperative with parents working in the classroom one day a week. Parents are also enrolled in parent education classes as part of the program. The pre-school runs from 8:30 to 11:30 on Mondays through Fridays. The tuition is currently \$150 per month; this may change slightly next year.

Please call Shelly Gonzales at (408) 723-8189 if you have any questions. Better yet, come to an Open House from 9 am to 11 am on March 21<sup>st</sup> in Room G-27 on Carson's campus.

Also, mark your calendar and come and join the fun for Carson's annual Walkathon on April 8<sup>th</sup>. More details will follow in the next VEP newsletter.

*[(\*)Irene Shoberg is the Categorical Program and Library Assistant at Carson Elementary School. She's a long-time resident and member of VEP.]*

## Gunderson High 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.

Gunderson recently completed its recruitment activities. In addition to several tours, prospective families also participated in Shadow Days and a Parent Information Night. We are pleased to announce that, as a result of these efforts, we more than surpassed the numbers from last year of students and families that attended our recruitment activities, and thus learned more about Gunderson. We will not hear what our incoming student numbers are until late March, but we are hopeful for a large freshmen class.

Construction, or at least the movement of construction equipment and supplies, has begun at the site of our new classroom building. It is anticipated that this site will become more active over the next few weeks, culminating sometime in November (depending on the weather).

The baseball and softball complexes are also proceeding nicely. Our teams will be able to host games on the competition fields (the fields closest to the freeway) next month. The practice fields and large multi-purpose area are still a few weeks away, with re-

gard to our ability to play on them. This mostly has to do with insuring that the grass has taken root firmly and securely.

Just a reminder: Gunderson's Winter Break is fast approaching. There will be no school from February 20 through February 24. In addition, Spring Break will follow two months later, April 14 through April 21.

Finally, we want to invite the community to attend my Principal's Coffees (March 10, April 7, May 5, and June 2). This event is an opportunity for parents and interested community members to join me for an informal conversation about Gunderson events and activities, concerns, and kudos. These Coffees begin at 7:30 a.m. in the Conference Room.

## News from Oak Grove School District

*-Manny Barbara, Superintendent*

The Oak Grove School District values and supports a variety of educational choice opportunities. I am pleased that following a request from parents last year, an exciting educational program is now available for our students.

The Indigo Program, housed at Frost Elementary School, is a choice for families who want a different kind of learning environment for their child. Indigo's mission is "to provide a safe, nurturing, and cooperative community where learning experiences meet children's diverse individual and collective needs."

Currently, Indigo has services for grades K-3. For the '06-'07 school year, the program will be accepting K through 4<sup>th</sup> grade students. Our goal is to add one grade each year to complete a K-6 program.

To enhance and support Indigo's mission, the Indigo Program includes parent participation, multi-age classrooms, flexible learning environments, hands-on learning and a cooperative problem-solving model called positive discipline. Families take an active role in everything from supporting the classroom teacher, to planning field trips, and creating unique learning centers such as music, art, science, gardening and drama. The Indigo Program is aligned with the District Five-Year Goals as well as State and Federal standards.

Wendy Chellew, Co-President of the Parent Board for Indigo says, "It is overwhelming to see how much this small group of people has accomplished in such a short amount of time. I am so grateful to be working with such an amazing and inspiring group of families, staff, and children."

Teachers also see students benefiting from this type of learning environment. Betsy Fitch, K-1 teacher at Indigo says, "I appreciate the support the parents provide me, allowing me to further differentiate instruction among the students. I am enjoying the Indigo Program very much, and I truly believe that the students are benefiting from all the support they are receiving from parents, teachers and each other."

The Indigo Program is located on the Frost School Campus at 530 Gettysburg Drive, near the intersection of Highway 85 and Blossom Avenue.

If you are interested, enrollment is through the School of Choice process. The enrollment period has begun and ends on March 31<sup>st</sup> at 5 p.m. Indigo will be hosting several Open Houses for families to learn more about the program, talk to parents currently participating, and tour the classrooms.

Tours may be scheduled by calling Karen Moga at 578-6032. For other information about Indigo, please contact Risa Quon, Director of Student Services, at 227-8300, x266, or Amy Moshin at 365-1706.

## Trees vs sewer pipes: the “root” of problems

Trees are often falsely accused of invading sewer lines and causing home-owners much grief. Normally, it is not the tree that is at fault. Most tree roots grow in the top 24-inches of the soil profile, well away from sewer lines. They like to grow in that upper soil strata because of more favorable moisture, oxygen, and nutrient levels.

Tree roots do not cause a problem until the sewer pipe breaks or its joints leak, oozing nutrients and water into the surrounding soil. Nearby roots then begin to thrive and grow rapidly. They can enter the defective pipe and eventually block the flow of sewage.

As proof of this, consider the fact that tree roots are rarely associated with water line problems, even though trees need water. The reason is because water lines are commonly made of metal or plastic and joined with materials designed not to break or leak.

Sewer lines in older homes and commercial structures are made of clay tiles that are caulked around their joints. This differs greatly from newer construction practices that utilize plastic sewer piping with fluid-tight seams or joints. Clay piping and other like pipe materials are very fragile and eventually crack due to soil settling or earth tremors. When this happens, tree roots may enter the line.

Remember, tree roots generally invade sewer lines that are leaking. Repair of leaky pipes will save you water as well as sewer line damage in the future.

If you would like to obtain more information on living with trees, contact *Our City Forest* at (408)998-7337.

*[Ed. Note: This article was provided by Jake Miller, Director of Communications for Our City Forest.]*

## Give to *Our City Forest*

VEP has worked with *Our City Forest* on several important 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. By way of individual memberships:  
    \$25 - Tree Ambassador  
    \$100 - Redwood Circle  
    \$500 - Majestic Oak
2. By way of memorial/birthday/special occasion certificates, available for a \$25 donation or more.
3. By way of corporate memberships of \$250 or more.
4. By way of group memberships of \$50 or more.
5. By way of donations of stock shares.

For further information, call (408) 99-TREES. 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!

*-Dave Fadness*

VEP plans to plant ~70 miniature oleanders along the front of the new wooden sound wall at Vistapark Drive and Branham Lane. Because the city will own and maintain them, they've chosen this species for their compact growth (less regular pruning) and low watering need. VEP wants something attractive and colorful there, so we've agreed with the city's choice.

We'll need your help. A date has not yet been chosen, but in order to be ready when the shrubs are available, please call me at 578-6428 or email me at [drfadness@earthlink.net](mailto:drfadness@earthlink.net) to be added to our volunteer list for this job. Work will be done on a Saturday morning—and I'll be sure to give you at least a couple of weeks' advance notice.

VEP volunteers will first remove the existing bushes, then plant the new ones. With sufficient volunteers, this landscaping task should only take a couple of hours—we'll be happy to have your help for whatever time you can give us, though.

This project will improve the appearance at a major gateway into our community. It will also save maintenance costs for the city.

Contact me today! Help us help ourselves to a better-looking community.

## News you can use: Gardening

*-John Marks, VEP's Green Gardener*

### Daffodil time

Daffodils are the first flowers of spring. Mine have been blooming since the first of the month.

They are also the symbol of hope for cancer patients and their families. Dollars raised by the sale of these flowers during Daffodil Days support research public education and patient services in our community.

Orders for daffodils will be taken through February 28th. Flowers will be delivered during the week of March 22nd. Here's how to get involved. Bouquets start at \$10 for ten flowers. Other special arrangements range from \$55 to \$75. The most popular offering is the Gift of Hope, ten flowers in a vase delivered anonymously to a cancer patient. Gift of Hope bouquets are \$25.

To order daffodils, call 879-1032, then touch "3" after recording starts, or check out [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org). Also, you may e-mail to [svdaffodildays@cancer.org](mailto:svdaffodildays@cancer.org).

### Watering tips

Keep your indoor plants warm and cozy; never water them with cold water, or allow the watering can to sit overnight first. This also minimizes the amount of chlorine, a chemical harmful to many delicate indoor plants. And, if you use a water softener, remember that the salt you add to soften your water is not good for sensitive houseplants. Use bottled water that you buy at the store.

If your plant's leaves do turn brown, you need to get rid of toxic salts before they kill the plant. Do this by flushing the soil thoroughly. Take it to the sink, or outside. Run water through it twice. If the container is too large to handle, use a turkey baster to remove excess water from the saucer under the container after you flush the soil.

Flush a third time using water to which you have added half a teaspoon of vinegar per quart of water, which will leach out accumulated salts. Then use a vinegar/water solution instead of regular water every other week when watering. The vinegar neutralizes harmful salts and will lower the pH of the soil, making it more acidic and keeping it salt-free. Your houseplants will love it. Their new growth will be lush and green.

You can also over-water, especially bougainvillea vines outside. If they drop their blossoms too soon, you need to use a little benign neglect. Refrain from watering until you feel that it has almost reached the wilting point, then soak the soil to a depth of two- or three-feet. Some gardeners think of these vines as being tender tropicals, but they really are hardy. However, bougainvillea blossoms drop continuously after they start and can be messy.

#### Thorny berry vines

If you're getting scratched too much by thorny blackberry vines or olallieberry vines, consider planting thornless blackberries. Plant the Logan variety for early fruiting, and the Arapaho (or any of its kin--Apache, Chickasaw, Kiowa, Navajo, or Shawnee) for a mid-season crop. The Chester variety produces its berries late in the season. Otherwise, consider converting to harmless vegetables, such as lettuce, cabbage, radishes, beets, spinach, broccoli, and cauliflower.

#### Stopping nuisance olives and other annoyances

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

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

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

This product will prevent other trees such as crab apple and plum from bearing as well; ironically, if used on green tomatoes in the Fall, it will hasten ripening but not damage the fruit.

Thank you, VEP NEWS volunteers!

*-Jeri Arstingstall*

Thank you to the many volunteers who helped with VEP's January newsletter, our annual membership renewal mailing. A group effort goes into getting our monthly newsletters out every month. January's mailing is always the "funest" because of the need to add remit envelopes.

Last month, we processed more than 2400 newsletters! This is a well coordinated event that attracts lots of experienced people--and it's always great to see new faces.

I want to thank **Dave Fadness** for being our ever faithful newsletter editor, **Annamarie McKnight** for pinch hitting as editor, **Dave Noel** our immediate Past-President for contributing and helping edit the text, **Bob Aquino** for leading the membership drive effort, and **Debra Suydam** for her faithful commitment to the monthly task of folding and helping organize volunteers to prepare our newsletters for mailing.

These folks show up to fold, staple, and label our newsletters:

Bob Aquino

Lesile and Michael Bejar

Christine Butler

Maria and Luigi Digregorio

Charlie Friedericks

Mary Olson

Jessie Perez

Marilyn Rogers

Pam Rodriguez

Stacey Steffens

Lori Zendejas

As one of our volunteers, Pam Rodriguez, said, "...isn't it amazing. Every month these newsletters arrive in our mail, and we never knew about all of the work that went into them arriving".

On behalf of our community, I offer all of these selfless volunteers a big thank you!

## Protect yourself when selling your home

*-Brian Bonnifield(\*)*

Here are a few guidelines for protecting yourself when you sell your home.

First, pick the right agent. Your listing agent will represent you in interactions with other agents, prospective buyers, lenders, inspectors, and various professionals associated with the real estate business. Be sure to select a trustworthy agent with whom you are compatible, one who will represent you honestly and fairly in your dealings with others during the sale.

Next, be fastidious about preparing your property for sale. This will not only facilitate the sale and bring you a higher price, it could prevent after-closing disputes with the buyers.

Make a list of all the elements of your home that need repair or replacement. Your agent can help you with this. If you're uncertain about the condition of a major system, like the roof or furnace, you might want to hire a professional to inspect it and issue a report.

Determine how much it will cost to repair or replace defective items. If you can't afford to repair everything on the list, ask your agent to help you prioritize. Disclose any defects that you're aware of that you don't fix before selling.

**HOME SELLER TIP:** Sellers often fear that if they disclose defects to buyers it will impede the sale of the property. This rarely happens. In fact, buyers appreciate knowing about property defects before they buy. Problems can develop when buyers discover defects after closing that they know the sellers were aware of, but failed to disclose.

A California home seller answered 'no' when he was asked if he had any drainage or flooding problems. During the first heavy rain after the buyers moved in, the sub-area was flooded with water. The buyers sued the sellers in court and won.

It's natural to feel proud of your home. But, avoid over-selling your home to prospective buyers. Be particularly careful about rooms that were added without required building permits.

Let's say your home has four bedrooms and a room that was added without permits that could also be used as a bedroom. From a marketing and legal standpoint, you'd be better off marketing your home as a four bedroom, not a five bedroom, home. Interested buyers will discover when they look at your home that it has an extra room that could be used for a bedroom. They'll be pleasantly surprised to find more than they anticipated.

If you market the home as having five bedrooms, buyers will be disappointed to find that the fifth bedroom isn't a legal bedroom. If this information isn't discovered until after closing, you could have a legal problem.

Many after-closing claims involve misrepresentation of square footage. When a property is passed from one owner to the next, the square footage is often rounded up to a higher number. For instance, a 1900 square foot home might be represented as ap-

proximately 2000 square feet. The next owner might say the house has about 2100 square feet, perhaps a little more. Never guess about square footage. Square footage claims can involve substantial monetary damages.

Check with your agent or real estate attorney if you have any questions about your disclosure obligations.

*[(\*Ed. Note: Real Estate Consultant Brian Bonnifield is a former officer and long-time resident and member of VEP. His ad appears in this newsletter.]*

## 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.

## How efficient is your water use?

Consider these important facts:

- The average home in Santa Clara County wastes more than 14,000 gallons of water a year because of leaks (mostly from toilets). Be water-wise! Check for and repair all leaks, and replace your old toilets.
- Plants need only one-third as much water in October as they do in July. It's important to adjust your watering schedule at least every other month.
- Broken and misaligned sprinklers often go undetected for months. Make checking your sprinkler system a monthly routine.
- Need a new washing machine? New, water efficient models use about 40% less water and 70% less energy. Call the water district about our washer rebate program and clean up on the savings!

Call today for a free Water-Wise House Call--and start saving water and money!

With a Water-Wise House Call from the Santa Clara Valley Water District, you can get smart on water use and cut your water bills. Our trained technicians will come to your home, assess your water usage and give you customized water-use tips and outdoor watering schedules.

### Who's eligible?

All residents of Santa Clara County are eligible. Residents of single-family homes, condominiums, town houses, apartments and mobile homes are invited to participate.

Previous participants have lowered their water use by an average of 30 gallons per day, or 11,000 gallons per year. That translates into great savings for you!

During the house call, we'll...

- Replace toilet flapper valves if needed and requested.
- Measure your showerhead flow rates and install free showerheads if needed and requested.
- Measure faucet flow rates and provide faucet aerators for kitchens and bathrooms.
- Evaluate the efficiency of your irrigation system.
- Provide you with a personalized irrigation schedule if appropriate.
- Provide water conservation program materials and water-wise landscaping tips.

### Why participate?

In addition to lowering your water bill, you'll have the satisfaction

of knowing you're using a precious resource efficiently. And less water down the drain means less treated wastewater flowing into the bay, where it can harm the salt marsh habitat of wildlife and endangered species.

#### How do you sign up?

Just call 1 (800)548-1882 for more information or to set up an appointment. Please have your water company account number available. San Jose Water Company customers should call (408)279-7900 to schedule an appointment.

Water-Wise House Calls are available weekdays, evenings during daylight hours, and Saturdays to suit your schedule.

## Save energy in your home

-PG&E

The price of natural gas is very high this winter, due to increasing demand and tight supplies.

PG&E is committed to helping consumers manage these rising energy costs this winter. As part of this effort, PG&E has created the 10/20 Winter Gas Savings Program. Under this new program, residential and small business customers who reduce their natural gas usage by at least ten percent from January to March, 2006--as compared to the same three months in 2005--will receive a twenty percent rebate on their PG&E natural gas charges on their April or May bills.

Enrollment is automatic--simply start conserving when you receive your December bill and don't stop until your April bill arrives.

Here are some tips and tools to help you lower your energy usage and reach the 10/20 goal:

### 1. No-cost energy saving tips...

- When using your furnace, health permitting, set your heating thermostat 5-10 degrees below where you typically set it, and further at night or when you're away for more than four hours. Save up to 10-15% of gas used for heating.

- Clean or replace furnace filters monthly during the heating season.

- Open drapes on sunny days to help warm the rooms.

- Do only full loads when using the clothes washer and dryer.

Wash in cold water.

- Lower the water heater temperature to 120 degrees and save up to 5% in heating costs. For a dishwasher, check the manufacturer's manual for the water setting; many have internal heating elements that allow you to set the water heater to a lower temperature. Use the energy-saver, air-dry cycle.

- Do not preheat your oven. Cook complete meals of several dishes simultaneously in the oven. Use the microwave when possible.

### 2. Low-cost home improvement actions...

- Caulk windows, doors, pipes, anywhere air leaks in and out. Save up to 10% in heating costs. Use weather stripping around windows, doors and pipes. To seal ducts, use mastic sealants, not cloth duct tape.

- Install an ENERGY STAR programmable thermostat to prevent unnecessary heating or cooling.

- Install energy-saving showerheads and faucet aerators in your home. Save 3-5% in heating costs.

- Fix defective plumbing or dripping faucets. Water faucet drips cost energy and water loss up to 212 gallons per month.

- Wrap your older model water heater with a water heater blanket, especially if it's in an unheated area.

### 3. Investments you can make to save energy...

- Replace appliances 13 years or older with new ENERGY STAR® models.

- Insulate ceilings to R-30 standards if your attic is less than R-11. Save up to 25% on heating costs. When changing out old windows, buy-new high-performance ones. Look for the NFRC label and choose a product with U-factor of 0.40 or less and Solar Heat Gain Coefficient of 0.40 or less and Visible Light Transmittance of 0.60 or higher.
- Replace water heaters if 13 years or older. Buy a gas water heater with Energy Factor (EF) of 0.62 or higher. Buy an electric water heater with Energy Factor of 0.93 or higher.

For more information on how you can reduce energy use, the 10/20 program and qualifying for an energy rebate, call Pacific Gas and Electric Company's Smarter Energy Line at 1.800.933.9555 or visit [www.pge.com](http://www.pge.com).

## San Jose Prepared

*-Jeri Arstingstall*

VEP members who were at our January meeting missed a great presentation by Earl Stevens, Director of San Jose's Office of Emergency Services. I know it opened my eyes on how ill prepared we are in the event of an emergency. Some questions you should ask yourself are:

- Do I have enough supplies to last 72 hours?
- Will I be able to help out your neighbor?
- Am I really prepared?

Mr. Stevens has offered to come to us to offer preparedness classes that lead to certification. The CERT program is a 20-hour class that can be held over a series of weeks. The following people have expressed interest:

Jeri Arstingstall  
Katherine Decker  
Dave & Aiko Fadness  
Don & Linda Ferguson  
Bob & Jane Glicksman  
Deborah Hannon  
Gwen Kahoalii  
Shari Kaplan  
John Leonard  
Mike Morales  
Dave Noel  
Bob & Francine Olsen  
Josie Supencheck  
Roland Zechmeister

VEP will keep you posted on when the classes will start and the location. Most have expressed interest in Saturdays or Sundays.

## Disaster preparedness for seniors and disabled

*-Marilyn Rodgers*

Most of us during a disaster or emergency are able to be mobile – to get out of our homes, or out of danger/harm's way. Some of our neighbors in VEP, however, may need some assistance. If you are disabled, or if you are a senior that cannot move well or quickly in an emergency, here are some tips or things for you to think about and plan for...

### Your emergency plan

- First, let your neighbors know that you cannot move quickly in an emergency. Make arrangements for someone to check on you. Develop a personal network of people who will check on you following a disaster (be sure to include at least one person who lives on your street or within a block or so of you). Be sure to share your plan with them regarding your needs in advance of an emergency.
- If you have a personal attendant or home health agency worker, they may have problems related to the disaster, and may not be able to help you. Discuss with your personal attendant their agency's plan for continued client services in an emergency.

- Always maintain a 3-day supply of your prescription medication (2-weeks supply is better). If you use oxygen, keep an extra emergency 3-day supply or more.
- For all medical equipment requiring electrical power, such as breathing equipment and infusion pumps, check with your medical supply company about a backup power source. This could include a battery pack or generator.
- Be sure to notify PG&E that you have special medical needs. This is helpful to them when planning ongoing utility maintenance, as well as during an emergency, and helps to eliminate or reduce interruptions in your service.

#### Your emergency kit

- Include necessary medications, (and a written list of medications that you take).
- Include basic toiletries, any special sanitary aids, and important phone numbers.
- Include family contacts and doctor's name and number, as part of your "go bag".
- Keep extra mobility aids on hand. In an emergency, you may be able to substitute
- Include a car battery for a wheelchair battery. Otherwise, have a manual wheelchair, canes, crutches, and walkers as a backup.
- Keep a whistle nearby in case you need to signal for help.
- Keep bottled water and warm blankets in several locations that are easily accessible to you in your home.

#### Your response to an emergency

- If you are in a wheelchair during an earthquake, stay in it and go into a doorway that doesn't have a door. Lock your wheelchair brakes, cover your head and neck with your hands and arms.
- If you are in bed or otherwise out of a wheelchair, stay put and cover your head.

## February is ***Take Care of Your Heart*** month

*-Marilyn Rodgers*

We all know that February is the month of the heart--Valentine's Day is for romance and love, and the heart is a symbol of love. The American Heart Association wants us to love our hearts by taking better care of them.

Of increasing concern is the number of women who suffer from heart attacks and cardiovascular disease. On February 3<sup>rd</sup>, the American Heart Association kicked off a new campaign called "Go Red for Women--Love Your Heart". The hope is to make women aware of the danger: heart disease is now the Number 1 killer of women.

The key is to stop this disease before it starts. An important part of stopping it is to "know your numbers". Knowing the following important set of numbers will help you and your doctor, or health-care provider, determine your risks, and mark the progress you are making toward a healthier heart.

Review this list and set the goals you need to achieve in reducing your risk for heart disease:

Factor: Total Cholesterol    Goal: Less than 200 mg/dL

Factor: LDL ("bad") Cholesterol LDL; cholesterol goals vary, as follows:

- People who are a low risk for Heart disease; Goal: less than 160 mg/dL
- People at intermediate risk for heart disease; Goal: less than 130 mg/dL
- People with high risk for heart disease including those who have heart disease or diabetes; Goal: less than 100 mg/dL (some high-risk patients will have a goal of less than 70 mg/dL)

Factor: HDL ("good") Cholesterol      Goal: 50 mg/dL or higher  
Factor: TriGlycerides      Goal: Less than 150 mg/dL  
Factor: Blood Pressure      Goal: Less than 120/80 mmHg (depends somewhat on age)  
Factor: Fasting Blood Glucose      Goal: Less than 100 mg/dL  
Factor: Body Mass Index (BMI)      Goal: Less than 25 Kg/m(2)  
Factor: Waist Circumference      Goal: Less than 35 inches  
Factor: Exercise      Goal: Minimum of 30-minutes most, if not all days of the week.

## Heart attack warning signs

*-Marilyn Rodgers*

When a heart attack occurs, it may be of the sudden and intense type, where the person is in immense pain, clutches their chest, and falls unconscious to the floor. This is so dramatic that it is called "the movie heart attack", the one we always see on TV or in the movies.

However, most heart attacks aren't like that. Instead, they start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort. Often it may go away, and then come back. Sometimes people aren't quite sure what is wrong, not imagining that it could be a heart attack and, unfortunately, they wait too long before getting help.

Here are the signs that can mean you are having a heart attack:

- Chest discomfort/pain. Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes. Or, discomfort that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain.
- Discomfort or pain in other areas of the upper body. Symptoms can be pain or discomfort in one or both arms, in the middle/upper back, the neck, the jaw, or the stomach.
- Shortness of breath which may occur with or without chest discomfort.
- Other signs may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea, or light headedness.

As with men, women's most common heart attack symptom is chest pain or discomfort. But women are somewhat more likely than men to experience some of the other symptoms, particularly shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting, back or jaw pain. Women also often complain of feeling "unusually tired" during the days/hours leading up to a heart attack.

For additional information and resources, check these websites:  
[www.americanheart.com](http://www.americanheart.com) and [www.goredforwomen.com](http://www.goredforwomen.com)

## Kirk Community Center

*- San Jose City Councilwoman Judy Chirco, District Nine*

The Kirk Senior Program offers a **Low Impact Aerobics** exercise program specially designed for the needs of the active seniors. Focus includes cardio, strength training, osteoporosis prevention, muscle toning, balance and conditioning. Instructor **Ceil Mangelli** always has something new and innovative planned. Don't miss out on the fun! Classes are held Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays in the mornings. Call the Kirk Senior Program at 269-0214 for class prices and more information.

Love to Dance? The Kirk Senior Program offers a class in Intermediate Country Line Dancing. Join instructor Bev Terra on Tuesdays from 9:15 to 10:15 a.m. for fun and exercise as you dance to new and old line dancing favorites. Basic Line Dancing experience is required. You are invited to come and visit the class to see if this level is for you. Fee is \$18 for eight meetings.

FREE Tax Assistance. Each year in February, the Kirk Senior Program in conjunction with the RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) offers free tax help to people of all ages who have a low to moderate income. Trained volunteers will be here to help you. Call the Kirk Senior Program at 269-0214 to make an appointment.

Kirk Café. The Kirk Senior Program serves delicious and nutritious senior lunches for a suggested donation of just \$2. Meals are served at noon, Monday through Thursday of each week. Join us for great food, friendship, celebrations and fun. Choose from the daily main entrée, a cheeseburger, or the salad of the week. Call the Kirk Café 24-hour hotline at 448-9591.

A one day notice is requested for main entrée. Two days notice is requested for ordering cheeseburger or salad of the week. (This program is funded through a generous grant from the Healthy Neighborhood Venture Fund.)

## The view from city hall

*-San Jose Councilwoman Nancy Pyle, District Ten*

The San Jose City Council decision to invest in the Grand Prix is a way to make an investment in our great city. Here's why:

1. As a major policy direction that came from "Getting Families back to Work" study sessions for the last three years, the council unanimously agreed to pursue economic development activities in the sports and entertainment fields. We also unanimously approved the Grand Prix last year because of the opportunities it presented to generate income for our city.

2. The 2005 race had spectacular results:

- The three-day event drew over 150,000 spectators to San Jose's downtown.
- Approximately 23,000 grandstand seats were sold before the race.
- 30,000 pieces of race-related merchandise were sold.
- The pre-race *Canary Fund Gala* raised \$700,000 for cancer research.
- VTA ridership on the light rail system was up 47% on Friday (+5,000), 148% on Saturday (+10,000), and 284% on Sunday (+15,000).
- More than 100,000 viewers watched the tape-delayed broadcast on NBC-11, making it the most viewed sporting event that weekend, surpassing both the Giants' and the A's baseball games.
- TV coverage was international, with the event broadcast to 54 countries.
- Hotels experienced an additional 3,000 room nights, with overall occupancy rising from 55% to 77% from the pre-race year.

3. Economic Impact

Direct attendee spending associated from the race is estimated at \$23.1-million. Applying a multiplier effect to represent how this money expands into San Jose's economy brings the total estimated attendee spending to \$41.6-million. Solidly documented estimates include 2005 revenue in four categories: Sales Taxes (\$19,000), Room Taxes (\$72,000), and net parking revenues (\$21,000). The 2006 race will also include \$1 per daily admission (\$150,000). Total revenue from these four sources is conservatively estimated to total approximately \$262,000 per year for the remaining eight years of the agreement. Even if these revenues do not grow in future years, the city's initial investment (excluding city services costs) would be paid back by the 6<sup>th</sup> year of the event.

The investment required under the agreement totals \$1-million in 2006, and \$500,000 in 2007. No further contributions are required after the 2007 race.

Amortized over the nine years of the agreement, City Investment contributions average approximately \$167,000 annually. All of the Investment contributions are to be provided from the General Fund. If all costs for the agreement (including those paid for by the Redevelopment Agency) are included, total costs average \$945,000 per year over the full nine years of the agreement. These costs include city contributions and investments, other financial assistance as noted above, and city services including staff planning, interagency coordination, traffic related expenses, and public safety expenses.

As previously discussed, this approach to cost allocation is more conservative than reported by any other agency. From the nine year investment, over \$400-million is anticipated as income to the local economy, which makes the Grand Prix a sound investment.

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To contact Councilmember Pyle, call (408) 535-4910, FAX (408) 292-6478, or email at [district10@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:district10@sanjoseca.gov). Her website is [www.sanjoseca.gov/district10](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/district10)

## Keeping San Jose the safest large city

*- San Jose City Councilman Ken Yeager, District Six*

San Jose has been voted the safest big city in the United States for the fifth year in a row. This has occurred because of the involvement of community members, the San Jose Police Department, several city departments, local schools, and community organizations.

Despite this good news, there is an ever-present concern about gang activity in San Jose. All parts of the city are affected by this activity. As chair of the All Children Achieve Committee, I share everyone's concern over the increase in gang violence.

For the past 14 years, the mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force (MGPTF) has created citywide relationships to help curb this problem and keep San Jose safe. MGPTF has linked its services with organizations and programs like the Strong Neighborhoods Initiative, California Youth Authority and the National League of Cities. The task force plans to connect with other key organizations like Project Cornerstone.

At a recent presentation to the All Children Achieve Council Committee, the task force shared that there has been a shift in their service delivery. Rather than focusing primarily on gang prevention as in the past, the task force has put 70 percent of its resources in gang intervention.

An example of an intervention program is the Safe School Campus Initiative. This initiative brings together community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, school staff and the police department to respond to issues related to school violence.

In 2005, the City Council approved Reclaiming Our Youth, a plan that focuses on promoting safe and healthy young people. This plan is propelled by five strategic goals that concentrate on connecting the youth to their families, schools, communities and futures. The underlying principle is to focus on youths' assets, rather than their shortcomings or weaknesses. It strives for capacity building.

Preliminary data shows the task force is off to a great start. During San Jose's Bringing Everyone's Strengths Together (BEST) year long funding cycle, nearly 5,000 youth, half of whom are either hard-core gang members or gang supporters, have received a variety of services.

To build on these services and to help attain their strategic goals, MGPTF received a \$246,661 federal grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

To view the Reclaiming Our Youth Work Plan click on:  
[www.sanjoseca.gov/prns/doc/MGTF%20\(rev.11-05\).pdf](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/prns/doc/MGTF%20(rev.11-05).pdf)

## Megan's Law

- *Dave Noel*

For a map of registered sex offenders and other related information, visit: [www.meganslaw.ca.gov](http://www.meganslaw.ca.gov).

To sign up for free automated email notifications when sex offenders move into your zip code, visit the Safe Community Alert Network at: [www.scanusa.com](http://www.scanusa.com).

## ★★ Bulletin Board Ads ★★

FOR SALE: L-shaped computer desk with hutch, wood-grain finish, in excellent condition. \$125 (obo). Inside mount off-white vertical blinds size 70-1/2" x 34", \$25. Call Josie at (408) 629-8126.

WANTED: Webmaster for VEP's website. Call Jeri @ 281-1959 or Mark @ 425-5910.

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

WANTED: Volunteers to serve as 2006-07 VEP officers. Call any current officer listed on the mailing page of this newsletter.

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.

