

VEP NEWS

• VEP COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION •

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

May 2008

VEP MEETING

7:30 p.m. Tuesday
► **May 27, 2008** ◀

Vista Park Community Room
475 Hyde Park Drive

AGENDA

Vista Park Community Room

★ Landscaping Plan ★

A presentation by Parks Landscape Architect Michael Wharton;
input and vote by VEP members

★ Termites: Types and Treatment ★

Presentations by representatives of Proven Termite Solutions
and Univar-Dow Chemical

VTA Light Rail

★ Station Platform Retrofit Program ★

Brief Update by Ethan Winston of VTA

★ VEP Business ★

Community Service Award

★ Your Concerns and Ideas ★

A chance to voice your opinion and/or to seek VEP's help.

Everyone is welcome. Invite your neighbors!

are used. (For additional information and a recommended web-site, see the article by **Judy Elrite** in this newsletter.)

► VTA Light Rail Platform Retrofit Program Update. **Ethan Winston** of VTA will present a brief update on the light rail station platform retrofit program which is currently beginning at the light rail stations that serve the VEP area. The retrofit program will be completed over the summer. (See Ethan's article in this newsletter for additional information.)

► VEP Business: Our annual presentation of VEP's At-Large Community Service Award. (As of this writing, the Community Service Awards committee is busy reviewing nominations and selecting winners. If there is an At-Large award this year, it will be presented at our meeting on May 27th.)

► Your input. We always leave time to hear from you regarding concerns or issues that we can work together in resolving. This approach continues to keep VEP neighborhoods strong, healthy, and attractive.

We look forward to seeing you, your family, your friends, and your neighbors at our May 27th meeting. Please join us!

Vista Park community room improvement plans

-Dave Fadness

A VEP committee has been working with **Kathy Sutherland** (City Councilwoman Pyle's staff) and a motivated group of San Jose Parks (PRNS) staff on a plan to improve the area around the Vista Park community room (VEP's "home"). We now have a proposal ready for VEP members and park neighbors to review at our meeting on May 27th. We hope to incorporate any suggestions, then bring this matter to a vote that night. If endorsed, work will likely begin this summer.

A full-page flyer in this newsletter briefly describes the work that's being planned. PRNS will do site preparation including grading and flatwork, installing irrigation and drainage, planting turf, refurbishing the parking lot, removing the old transformers, and relocating the trash dumpster and its cage. VEP volunteers will plant trees, shrubs, and other landscaping elements.

More specifically, this is the scope of work:

☺ **DEMOLITION**: Remove transformer and trash enclosure fencing, concrete pad, broken sidewalk panels in front of trash enclosures, one segment of semi-circular seating wall, and abandoned equipment.

☺ **TEMPORARY TRASH ENCLOSURE**: Relocate the trash enclosure to the parking lot, including a temporary slatted fence (smaller than existing).

☺ **CONCRETE**: Replace sidewalk segments that were damaged and lay a new sidewalk through the existing trash enclosure.

VEP's May meeting

-Marilyn Rodgers

An exciting meeting has been planned for May 27th with the following varied topics on our agenda:

► Vista Park Community Room Landscaping Plan. A proposed Community Room Landscaping Plan will be presented by **Michael Wharton**, San Jose City Parks and Recreation Department's Landscape Architect. VEP members will have an opportunity to ask questions, provide input, and vote on it. (An article and full-page flyer on the proposed plan are included in this newsletter.)

► Termites: Types and Treatment. Two guest speakers will present information on the two main types of termites affecting our area and treatment options for eliminating them. **Brendan Souza** of *Proven Termite Solutions* will describe the termites most common in our area and how to detect a possible termite infestation. A representative of *Univar-Dow Chemical* will describe treatment options available including the chemicals that

2008 is VEP's 39th year!

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sure to the semi-circular seating wall.

© IRRIGATION: Extend/relocate irrigation system to include four new trees adjacent to future horseshoe courts, the existing fenced area, and new shrubs in front of the community room. Some limited excavation and removal of weeds and chips. Install growth-inhibiting fabric in the planting area in front of the community room and flag all new sprinkler locations so the community knows where to put the new plants. Cover fabric with chips.

© IRON GATES: Install floor to ceiling wrought iron gates on both sides of community room breezeway.

Although much depends upon PG&E's removal of the old transformers, we expect to have a project schedule ready for our May 27th meeting.

At its meeting earlier this month, VEP's Executive Board unanimously approved these two companion recommendations for consideration by its members:

1. Approve the Vista Park Community Room Area Improvement Plan developed by VEP's committee, San Jose Parks staff, and Councilwoman Nancy Pyle's office, as depicted in plan documents provided by Parks; and
2. VEP will seek donations and/or apply for and use grants funds already on hand to supplement funding of trees and other plants specified on the city-approved Improvement Plan. At the earliest appropriate time consistent with irrigation, drainage, flatwork, and other required city-contracted work, VEP will recruit volunteers to install those plantings where shown on the Plan.

Plan to attend our May 27th meeting. Your input, plan endorsement, and volunteer involvement are crucial to the success of this project.

Special thanks go to PRNS project team members **Mike Wharton** (Landscape Architect), **Evelyn Velez-Rosario**, **Marie Alberry-Hawkins**, and **Art Rosales**. VEP committee members **Joe Tajnai**, **Phil Bejar**, and **Clay Sperry** have brought a wealth of vision and practical experience to the design process; Phil and Clay are Vista Park adopters, the fellows who volunteer to keep this 11-acre park a place we can be proud of.



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Termites

-Judy Elrite

Termites are good for the planet. Their tunnels keep soil porous and healthy enough to support plant growth. They break-down dead wood and put it back into nature's cycle of life. Termites are very important in the Sahara Desert where they help to reclaim soil damaged by the desert heat and wind. So, yes, they are good for the planet, but they are just really bad for our homes. In fact, we would do just about anything to get rid of them.

Drywood and subterranean are the two main types of termites we have in this area. There are several ways to eliminate them, at least for a time.

The treatments are different for the two different types of termites. Some of those ways are toxic to the termites but also to humans, pets, and plants. Others, while not toxic or as toxic, may or may not be as effective. Studies have been done and continue to be done to find alternative, less toxic treatments.

Brendan Sousa from *Proven Termite Solutions* will attend our May 27th meeting to give us some information about these various treatments. Brendan will also give us some tips on the many ways to help to prevent termites from munching their way through out homes and structures.

Proven Termite Solutions, established in 1989 and incorporated in 1994, is currently managed by the original corporate officers. They are strong on educating not only their customers but providing continuous education for their employees as well. While primarily a fumigation company, they are well versed in the studies being done on alternative treatments.

You can visit their website www.proventermitesolutions.com to find information on a study just completed by Dr. **Vernard Lewis** on alternative methods of eliminating termites.

We look forward to seeing you on May 27th.

Light rail station platform retrofit

Ethan Winston, VTA

Platform retrofit work at the Ohlone/Chynoweth, Oakridge, and Almaden light rail stations is expected to be completed by late August, according to the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA).

Currently, the Branham, Capitol, and Curtner stations are now closed for renovation, but are expected to reopen the week of June 16th. At that time, Oakridge and Almaden will close. Ohlone/Chynoweth will remain open until after the Fourth of July; it will be closed during July and August.

Light rail riders who normally use one of the closed stations can catch a "Light Rail Bus Bridge" shuttle at that station and ride to the nearest open station at no cost.



The retrofit work at these stations involves eliminating the eight- to ten-inch step up from the platform into a light rail vehicle. Level boarding will ease access for mobility impaired individuals, as well as commuters with bikes, seniors with collapsible utility carts, and parents with strollers, among others.

Once these stations, plus Blossom Hill, Cottle, Snell, and

Santa Teresa are finished by year's end, every station in VTA's 42-mile light rail system will feature level boarding.

For more information on station closures or for customized trip planning services, call VTA Customer Service at (408) 321-2300.

Solar power

-Don Ferguson & Helen Castillo

Thang Nguyen was a guest speaker on the subject of solar-generated electricity at VEP's April meeting.

His company, SunRun has a unique approach to home solar power system installation. It's what is known as a Power Purchase Agreement, or PPA. This means that for a price they will install one of their solar systems on your home and agree to maintain, repair, and guarantee the system's performance for 18 years. In return, you will pay an initial fee and agree to pay SunRun for the electricity generated buy their system at a rate of 13.5-cents per kwh.



That's the equivalent of the Tier 2 rate for PG&E. SunRun's system should keep you from paying more for electricity than PG&E's tier 2 rate. SunRun's PPA has the best payback for those using greater than \$100/month for PG&E electricity. The higher your bill, the better this method should work for you.

Mr. Nguyen presented the Sun Run approach at our meeting in April and he will continue to assist VEP people in understanding this different approach to solar system installation.

If you have any interest in keeping up with our continuing solar investigation, please contact either of us so we can provide access to our VEPSolar Yahoo group and to the information we have collected so far.

Our VEPSolar group includes links to the companies we have contacted and to proposals for solar system installation. While each proposal and estimate is specific to a residence, location, building orientation, power requirements, and usable roof space, these estimates and information can give some idea of the cost and performance expected.

For more information on this subject from neighbors (not sales reps), contact us:

Don at (408) 629-0303 or don@donferguson.net

Helen at (408) 981-5902 or hcastillo@vbprop.com



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Editor needed—*please* help VEP!

-Dave Fadness

The timing couldn't be more perfect for you to step forward and volunteer to edit our newsletter. We have a long summer break between publications, which means plenty of time to learn how to do what's required—the next newsletter isn't due until September.

What's required to be our editor? First, it'd be best if you own a PC. We use Microsoft *Publisher* for our newsletters. It's quite compatible with *Word*, but not available for Mac computers; most of the input we receive is in Microsoft *Word* format. VEP provides *Publisher* software for our editor.

Second, you need to be able to edit incoming articles which are submitted by a list of contributors I've assembled over the years. What I do is simply email a call for articles a couple of weeks before the due date. (Deadlines are established for the year by VEP officers.) Articles need to be checked for spelling and grammar (I simply use *Word's* spell-and grammar-check software, which catches 99% of any errors). Occasionally, articles also need to be shortened—which is something I typically ask the author to do, then re-submit.



I'm sure by now that you know my limitations in spelling and grammar so don't be intimidated by this requirement. Before publishing, I usually run the newsletter text file past one or two of our VEP officers for a last-minute proof review. This collaborative approach tends to catch errors before they go to press.

The standard newsletter layout you've probably become familiar with is already developed and available for your use. After editing the text file, you simply import or paste it in. I usually move the ads around first, so they don't appear on the same page each month. If time allows, graphics (clipart, photos, etc.) can be added to improve the final product's look and readability.

Because it's in my hands when finished, I usually take the "camera ready" product to have copies run. This can be done by others.

I'd be happy to teach you to do all of this and to help you do your first one or two newsletters. After that, my guess is you'll be 100% up to speed. Count on my help whenever it's needed thereafter.

Please consider applying your skill to this task. Call me (578-6428) or any officer listed on the mailing page of this newsletter. Please do it soon so we can take advantage of the summer months to get you ready for our September 2008 *VEP NEWS*.

VEP Community Calendar

Mon, May 26 = VEP Memorial Day Parade & Festival.

Tue, May 27 = VEP General Meeting in the Vista Park Community Room. (See our agenda on page 1 of this newsletter.)

Tue, June 3 = California Primary Election. **Get out and vote!**

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For you: Crafts and more on Memorial Day

-Ginger Cardona & Maureen Noel

VEP is proud to introduce craft booths at our fourth annual Memorial Day Parade & Festival on May 26th. More than a dozen crafters will be selling hand-made ceramics, jewelry, bookmarks, pictures, paintings, quilts, baby items, home décor, cards, crocheted items, and many other crafts at our festival.



Come by and enjoy our new craft booths and meet the local crafters! Craft booths will be open from 11am to 3pm during the Memorial Day Festival at Parkview School.

Please refer to the full page flyer in this newsletter for more about our big event. Co-sponsored by Carson, Parkview, and Gunderson Schools, we have something fun planned for everyone—be sure to attend!

Camp Vista

-Brandon Kwock (*)

Help us celebrate our second year of summer camp at the Vista Park neighborhood building! Make new friends and cherished memories at *Camp Vista* this summer.

Our veteran staff has gone over and beyond to design a camp that will challenge and entertain your child. Each week will be filled with wacky games, team oriented activities, expressive arts and crafts, and an exciting field trip every Thursday. A newsletter listing the weekly activities and field trip information will be distributed on the first day of each session.

Campers are required to provide their own lunch and water everyday. The registration fee includes supervision (10:1), arts and crafts supplies, field trip admission, bus transportation and one camp T-shirt for the summer. No program on July 4.

| Course # | Days | Date | Times | Age | Cost | Location |
|-----------|------|----------|-----------|------|-------|------------|
| 252.1.915 | M-F | 6/23-7/3 | 9am - 3pm | 6-11 | \$163 | Vista Park |
| 252.1.916 | M-F | 7/7-7/18 | 9am - 3pm | 6-11 | \$183 | |
| 252.1.917 | M-F | 7/21-8/1 | 9am - 3pm | 6-11 | \$183 | |
| 252.1.918 | M-F | 8/4-8/15 | 9am - 3pm | 6-11 | \$183 | |

Note: Program fee includes cost of field trip admission. Individ-

| Camp Vista Field Trips (subject to change) | | |
|--|------|-----------------------------|
| Session 1 | 6/26 | Sky High Sports |
| | 7/3 | Golfland & Waterslides |
| Session 2 | 7/10 | Movie & Ice Skating |
| | 7/17 | Raging Waters |
| Session 3 | 7/24 | Morgan Hill Aquatics Center |
| | 7/31 | Santa Cruz Boardwalk |
| Session 4 | 8/7 | Bowling & Swimming |
| | 8/14 | Great America |

ual or family season passes will not be accepted for ticket or financial reimbursement.

~ Camp Vista-Extended Hour Camp ~

Extended Camp is a great option for working parents. After Camp Vista each day, participants will have time to relax in a supervised comfortable environment. Long-term art projects and low-key recreation activities will be provided.

Extended Camp program consists of a two-week session M-F, for children 6-11 years old that are enrolled in *Camp Vista*. Each child will have to bring a snack unless instructed otherwise. Sessions that do not reach the minimum number of participants are subject to cancellation. No program on July 4.

| Course # | Days | Date | Times | Age | Cost | Location |
|-----------|------|-----------|-------|------|------|------------|
| 252.1.921 | M-F | 6/23 -7/3 | 3-6pm | 6-11 | \$45 | Vista Park |
| 252.1.922 | M-F | 7/7 -7/18 | 3-6pm | 6-11 | \$50 | |
| 252.1.923 | M-F | 7/21 -8/1 | 3-6pm | 6-11 | \$50 | |
| 252.1.924 | M-F | 8/4 -8/15 | 3-6pm | 6-11 | \$50 | |

[(*)Ed. Note: Brandon Kwock is a Youth Recreation Specialist for the City of San Jose's Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department.]

Update: Pearl Avenue Branch Library

- Domenic Onorato (*)

The Pearl Library project is currently on time for completion by the end of this month or early June. The contractor is proceeding with final building adjustments touch-ups. Library equipment, furniture, and circulation material will start arriving in June for completion by end of July. Photos of construction activities are available online at www.NewSanJoseLibraries.com.

The finished building is expected to open to the public in early August. Exact date of the Grand Opening celebration will be announced soon.

For additional information regarding the project or site construction, please contact me at 535-8350 or by email domenic.onorato@sanjoseca.gov.

[(*) Ed. Note: Domenic Onorato works for the San Jose Department of Public Works, City Facilities Architectural Services & Branch Library Development Team.]

VEP Executive Board for 2008-2009

-Marilyn Rodgers

At our April meeting, VEP elected new Executive officers.

They will serve the remainder of 2008 and through April 2009. The following is a brief introduction of each member of the Executive Board:

Joe Tajnai, President. Joe started his term last year as Vice President, then graciously stepped up when **Arlene Peterson** resigned. You may remember Joe, his family, and his late grandfather's 1955 Thunderbird from the 2007 Memorial Day Parade & Festival.

Joe, his wife, Nancy, and two daughters Katy and Mindy relocated from Fremont to San Jose in 1999 to be closer to his marketing and engineering job at semiconductor company ICS, on the site of the old Saddle Rack. Since then, Joe's



third (and last) child Joseph was born at home and Joe's company was acquired by IDT. His job then moved to the old Electro Glass building in south San Jose where he still works.

After seeing a VEP meeting sign in front of Gunderson, he began to regularly attend the meetings. When the sign was missing one month, he asked then-President **Greg West** where it was; Joe was immediately drafted into service. Joe still has that sign and puts it out in front of Gunderson for every meeting, rain or shine.

Joe also served a term as VEP treasurer and helped move the organization into the 21st century by starting VEP Email distributions. Joe is a dedicated VEPer with no plans to move. He divides his time between his family, career, VEP, and the father/child organization *YMCA Adventure Guides* (formerly known as *Indian Guides*).

Marilyn Rodgers, Vice President and Immediate Past President. Marilyn served as President for one year, and as Vice President before and after that. A registered nurse, she currently works for the Institute for Business Performance, teaching courses to adults hoping to transition into a second career in healthcare. She also works out of her home consulting in the areas of risk management/legal nurse consulting, and health and wellness.

Marilyn and her husband Don have been VEP residents for more than 30 years, moving to South San Jose after they both graduated from San Jose State University.

She is concerned about traffic and safety, and disaster preparedness. As a homeowner adjacent to the Lester property, she actively participates as VEP's alternate on the Regional Advisory Task Force to Martial Cottle Park Master planning process. Other volunteer activities include Adopt-A-Street (cul du sac on Vista Park Drive), and City of San Jose Anti-Litter Program.

Marilyn also sits on several high school and college/university advisory boards, as well as the boards of state and national healthcare organizations.

Adina Pierce, Secretary. This is Adina's first year serving as VEP's Secretary, and third year serving as our Webmaster. She has lived in the VEP neighborhood since November 2005, but has lived within three miles of this area her entire life.

She met her husband Russ at Pioneer High School and has been married for 11 years. They have two children: Juliana (age 7), and Kevin (age 3). After graduating from San Jose State University, she worked at Hewlett Packard for nine

years. For the past two years she's worked for Cisco as a web developer. In her spare time, Adina enjoys digital photography, scrapbooking, cruising, cooking, and swimming with her kids.

Adina's main interest in the VEP community is the development of Martial Cottle Park. Since her family lives on the edge of the property, she is passionate about providing input and feedback for future plans. She represents VEP as a member of the County's Martial Cottle Park Master Plan Task Force.

Ginger Cardona, Treasurer. This is Ginger's fourth year serving as Treasurer. Prior to that, she served for three years as VEP's Secretary.

Ginger is a third generation San Josean. She and her husband Alan, have three children.



Ginger is employed as a Product Manager for a medical software company. Ginger originally became active in VEP and the Executive Board when high-density development was proposed for the (then) golf driving range on Capitol Expressway and Vista Park Drive, across from where she lives.

She has been a staunch and effective advocate for improvements to sound walls and landscaping there. She also coordinates our annual VEP Neighborhood Garage Sale, and has been a very active volunteer for our annual Memorial Day Parade & Festival.

Jeri Arstingstall, Past President. Jeri served as President of VEP for two years, and as Vice President for one year prior to that. She is a professional photographer who is celebrating her 18th anniversary as owner of *Precious Moments in Time*.

Jeri and her husband Walt met 28 years ago while both were working for the (then) Frontier Village Amusement Park.

Jeri manages VEP's membership database. She is a very energetic and involved community leader who enjoys volunteering and helping others.

Dave Noel, Past President. Dave has served on the VEP Executive Board since 1999. He served first as Vice President for two years, and then as President for three consecutive years.

He remains active as a board member, coordinating our annual Community Service Awards and various other activities

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throughout the year. He also contributes articles for the VEP News each month.

Dave has been a local resident since 1971, taking time off between 1979 and 1983 to study Electrical Engineering at Cal Poly Pomona. He briefly settled in Santa Cruz before returning to the area in 1987.

Dave and his wife Maureen have been married 24 years. They have two sons, both in college.

Dave's "day job" is Customer Service Manager for Aeroflex Cupertino, a manufacturer of electronic test equipment for broadband applications such as satellite communications, military radios, and digital television.

Helen Castillo, Volunteer Coordinator. Helen has lived in our VEP community for more than 30 years, first with her parents, and now with her husband and children.

The Castillos have four children, two in college and two in high school.

Helen is a real estate agent with Ventura Barnett Properties. She hopes to complete work on a book called "Hope's Choices", a motivational book on goal setting. She plans to donate to charities the proceeds from the book in honor of her mother, whose name was Hope.

Helen enjoys being a volunteer and is looking forward to coordinating VEP volunteer activities, including our upcoming Memorial Day Parade & Festival.

We offer our special thanks to retiring board members for their service to VEP. **Jim Hicks** served as Secretary for two years as well as previously serving as Treasurer. He will now work on special projects for VEP and the Executive Board. **Debra Suydam** has served for several years as both Hospitality Coordinator and as Volunteer Coordinator. Debra will continue as a dedicated VEP volunteer providing vital assistance with a number of projects.

A message from VEP's president

-Joe Tajnai

I thought the sandbox at Vista Park was a dead issue due to a lack of response to my recent article, but recently that has changed. Some of you have responded to my plea for input, and the majority of the responses are in strongly favor of keeping the sand, as am I. It is one of the most popular attractions at Vista for small children and I am leery of just giving up on it as we already have plenty of fiber in the play area and nothing else.



One responder summarized it very nicely... "We have many other things that are far worse issues and need attention. (Sand mixed with Fibar) doesn't hurt a thing, it's only visual. When you go to the park, you get dirty--period. A sandbox is a right-of-passage for children! For those of us without the luxury of space in our backyard to build our own, this box provides plenty of fun for the kids. To fill the box with bark would be ridiculous and a waste of time and resources. I, for one, will be very upset if this goes forward."

I tend to agree with this VEP member. I do not believe we are having a broken glass, wasp nesting, or cat problem (please correct me if I am wrong), so that leaves maintenance time and costs. The drinking fountain is the biggest sufferer with

sand and I bet that someone must make a sand-proof version.

One member's suggestion involved some different materials. I had presumed that this is not an option due to costs, but then I realized that don't know what our current costs are. I am in the process of finding out how much it costs to deal with the sand versus taking it out. Are the parks guys actually cleaning this up on a regular basis, spending time at Vista that could be spent elsewhere?

I am looking for options that both keep the sand in-place and possibly save the city \$\$\$.

I forwarded a request for information to Councilwoman **Nancy Pyle's** office. **Art Rosales** of the Parks department responded quickly to say that his department is in the process of converting sand features to fiber at a "handful" of parks each year. In other words, this is a resource that is slowly going the way of the Dodo bird if nothing is done. Art said he will investigate the costs associated with sand and report back to the VEP by May 23.

CALL FOR ACTION: Email or call me and let me know your feelings on the sand issue BEFORE May 23 so we can use your input to make Vista Park a reflection of your needs and desires.

Thank you to our May 3rd event volunteers!

-Marilyn Rodgers

On May 3rd, VEP sponsored our annual *Community-Wide Garage Sale*. One of two new features this year was having a Salvation Army truck available for donations at the close of the garage sale. In conjunction with Gunderson High School, VEP also co-sponsored an E-waste drive, with all proceeds going to Gunderson.

To assure that all VEP residents are aware of our community events, volunteers donate their time to hand deliver event flyers to all homes in the area. Thanks to the following volunteers:

Mike & Sandy Bousman
Joyce Chesnos
Peggy Golden
Bill Johnson
Matt and Elaine Miller
Karen Mullaly
Diana Muzyka



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**Bob Olsen
Martin & Marina Rocha
Josie Supencheck**



Jim Hicks



Justin Cardona



Bob Olsen

Additional thank-yous go to the following volunteers who delivered two or more packets of flyers:

**Justin Cardona
Jim Hicks
Don & Marilyn Rodgers**

A special thank you to Gunderson High School teacher, **Rob Iverson**, who coordinated the Gunderson activities. Thank you to Gunderson High School students **Alexis, Janine, Lucy, Mary, Martha, Luwam, Shawndell, and Lakneesha**, who delivered neighborhood event flyers.

Thanks also go to these "behind the scenes" volunteers:

Ginger Cardona who coordinated advertising in both newspapers and electronic media
Helen Castillo who coordinated arrangements for the Salvation Army donation truck
Dave Fadness who developed VEP's event flyer
Dave Noel who coordinated activities with Gunderson High School and Earthcare Recycling
Marilyn Rodgers who recruited and coordinated volunteers and developed individual flyer packets with maps and instructions

Thanks to all for a successful community event!

Oak Grove School District news

-Manny Barbara, Superintendent

Each year our Board of Trustees devotes the second meeting in May for public input to the 2008-2009 school year priorities. This year the date of this meeting will be Thursday, May 22, at 7:30 p.m. at the Oak Grove School District Office. The public is welcome to attend and participate in the discussion.

Kindergarten registration for the 2008-2009 school year is well underway. We encourage parents to register early to ensure a spot at their neighborhood school.

Our Junior Kindergarten Program, for parents wishing to allow their children an extra year before starting regular kindergarten, is accepting registrations as well. Only students eligible for kindergarten in the fall, with August-December birthdays, may be registered for the Junior Kindergarten Program. The current Junior Kindergarten Program, currently housed at Frost School, will move to Santa Teresa School for the 2008-2009 school year.

As you might have heard from the media, California is facing a critical funding shortage. The education community is fighting to maintain the minimum funding provisions of Proposition 98, passed by the voters in 1988. California ranks high among states in the standards students are expected to

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achieve, but is among the lowest in funding.

At the April 24 regular meeting of the Board of Trustees, our Board approved a "no tax rate increase" bond measure for the November 2008 election. Unfortunately, bond funds cannot be used to address the state budget crisis and the impact of funding on schools.



A bond measure provides funding which can only be used for facilities and some technology. These facility areas are clearly identified in advance. The Oak Grove School District has benefited greatly from the original \$75-million bond measure passed in 1994. Schools have been renovated with new playgrounds, bathrooms, library and media centers, new roofs, painting, and safety retrofitting, among other projects.

However, facility needs remain as sites age and need to be upgraded. The proposed bond measure would generate as much as \$125-million without a tax rate increase.

As always, please feel free to contact me through the regular channels: by email at superintendent@ogsd.k12.ca.us or by Telephone at (408) 227-8300 ext. 202.

Gunderson High School happenings

-Cary Catching, Principal

It's hard to believe that the 2007-2008 school year is almost at a close. Overall, it has been a successful year for Gunderson. Some of the highlights include:

- Our API increased 21 points last year (the largest growth for any high school in San Jose Unified School District);
- We achieved a 97% pass rate on the district's Foreign Language Challenge Exam;
- We continue to offer two SAT prep classes each year;
- Our incoming student enrollment for the 2008-09 school year is up 15% from 2007-08, most of which can be attributed to a large freshmen class; and
- A new electronic marquee, stadium lights, and state-of-the-art solar paneling have been installed.

This has been an exciting year at Gunderson. We have seen a marked increase in school spirit as demonstrated by some very exciting rallies, increased attendance at all school activities, and a new line of "Grizzly Gear".

We are looking forward to next year as well. For the first time in many years, we will not be hiring any new teachers at Gun-

derson. In addition, one of our assistant principals, **Stephanie Ogden**, is being promoted to the position of Principal at Broadway High School.

Thank you for the continued support of our school. The relationship we have with the VEP community is much appreciated.

San Jose Unified School District update

-*Veronica Grijalva Lewis, Trustee Area #4*

Last November the Hawaii Department of Education sent some delegates interested in classroom technology implementation to San Jose to visit John Muir. Our program there made such a lasting impression that the Hawaii DOE arranged for another area superintendent, nine principals and two SRS's to see the technology infusion efforts at Muir.



Muir's Laptop Cart Program began in August of 2005 with 24 Apple laptop carts. Students have access to computers before, during, and after school through a variety of clubs, activities, and homework center. The program is designed to meet the needs of individual students through the use of innovative technology and teaching strategies.

When visiting a classroom, it is very rewarding to see our students truly engaged in learning and using technology to enhance their learning.

The Gunderson High School StRUT (Students Recycling Used Technology) Team earned a gold medal in the 8th Annual Silicon Valley StRUT competition, held at Mission College on April 5th. There were 40 teams from 14 schools from San Francisco to Pajaro Dunes that competed this year.

Competition included the disassembly and assembly of a computer, and doing a *PowerPoint* presentation to the judges. The students also took a written test on computer software and hardware that included Basic Electricity, Numbering Systems, Networking, WEB, and Email.

Congratulations to **Henry Lee** and **Aldo Cardoso** for their gold medal performance at the 2008 Silicon Valley StRUT Competition and for their positive representation of Gunderson High School. Congratulations to **Adrian Reyes** for winning a bronze medal along with the CCOC Team members **Johnny Cordova**, a Junior at Liberty High, and **Kevin Camozzi**, a senior at Leigh High, who both had the highest

scores overall, earning them each a laptop and a gold medal.

I use these two examples of our students' use of technology to bring awareness to the community that good things are happening in our schools and students are being given many opportunities to achieve life-long learning skills. We're teaching them to become effective communicators, informed thinkers, self-directed learners, collaborative workers, informed processors, and responsible members of society.

Our state budget is still a very big concern for all districts. Many meetings and discussion are taking place to make our legislatures and our governor aware of the impact to our schools. San Jose Unified held a rally on May 1st to bring awareness to the impact of the budget on our schools.

We ask for all district employees, parents, students and community members to show their support in opposition to the governor's proposed cuts to education. Prop 98 is a voter approved proposition that guarantees the minimum school funding; to suspend it would give schools less than the voters approved.

A message from city hall

-*City Councilwoman Nancy Pyle*

In light of San Jose's current structural budget deficit and the goal to fix it in three years, Councilmember Pete Constant and I felt that some action was needed to remedy this annual loss of critical revenue for our City. So, late last month, he and I sent a memo regarding a new sales tax leakage initiative to our council colleagues. In it, we addressed four interrelated factors which significantly influence the levels of sales tax generation: 1) city population, 2) income levels, 3) land-use decisions, and 4) sales tax leakage. Sales tax leakage refers to the loss of sales tax revenue to cities outside of our own.

D-10

All residents of San Jose can participate in growing our General Fund revenues by spending their hard-earned money in San Jose. I can't emphasize this enough: *Buy San Jose!*

Did you know that for every \$100 purchase made in San Jose, \$1 in sales tax stays in San Jose to help pay for parks, street maintenance, library books, police officers, and more? It seems like a simple concept, but you might be shocked to hear that San Jose residents are currently helping boost the general funds of Palo Alto, Gilroy, Milpitas, and Santa Clara to higher levels than our own city's.

Looking at the numbers, San Jose generates \$83 in consumer sales tax per capita, in comparison to \$225 for Palo Alto, \$201 for Gilroy, and \$254 for the City of Santa Clara. Hard to believe isn't it?

In all retail categories, San Jose currently ranks below the county average for per capita taxable sales. While it may not be realistic for us to be the leader in this category, if San Jose were to merely meet the county average in per capita consumer sales tax for 2007, we would have an additional \$15.6-million for our General Fund. This could have funded an additional 150 police officer positions or paved 450 miles of residential streets.

In 2007 my office conducted a District 10 retail survey, asking you what is missing from our local retail scene. After receiving over 700 responses to the survey and hosting an Economic



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Development forum, I knew there was still much to be done. A change in buying habits cannot and will not happen overnight, but through education and awareness we can empower San Jose residents to buy local and save big.

Similar initiatives have successfully taken place in places like Boulder, Colorado with their "Put Your Money Where Your House Is" campaign. While there is no single uniform approach to this issue, making an effort to "Buy San Jose" will make a true impact on the funding we have to bring you the city services you want and need.

I look forward to sharing updates on this exciting new initiative as it moves towards council approval in the coming months. If you would like to read more about the importance of buying in San Jose, be sure to check out my recent article in the Mercury News at www.mercurynews.com/ci_9103955.

Please remember to **Buy San Jose!**

Branham Lane resurfacing

-Dave Fadness

San Jose's Department of Transportation (DOT) resurfaced Branham Lane last month.

Several years ago, VEP worked with DOT and Public Works in developing a comprehensive wish-list for planned widening of Branham to four lanes from Snell to Vistapark Drive. That project has been delayed pending right-of-way land negotiations.



In response to VEP's President Joe Tajnai's inquiry whether the newly resurfaced stretch west of Vistapark could be re-stripped for four lanes, as desired in our wish-list, DOT answered as follows:

"Branham Lane is currently designated in the General Plan as a six lane street due to the fact that it was envisioned as a major arterial connector with an interchange planned at Hwy 101. The interchange is no longer planned, so the City concurs that Branham should be downgraded and intends to do so.

To accomplish this, the General Plan will need to be updated, requiring an environmental report, council approval, etc. It is intended that this occur as part of the broader General Plan update occurring over the next couple of years.

Although we recognize that the repaving offers a good opportunity for re-stripping and it would be ideal if we could align all of these issues and handle them at once, it just isn't feasible given the scope of work and our resources and other demands. At this time, the striping will be returned to its previous configuration.

In terms of what was previously communicated to the community, ...we did discuss addressing the striping during a future paving project, but no firm commitments were made that it would occur because of the issues above."

It's always something!

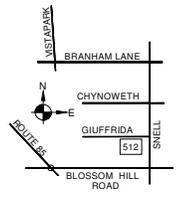
We're still waiting for news of an approved land acquisition contract so this widening project can resume. Please stay tuned...

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Neighborhood scuttlebutt

-Dave Noel

The **Whole Foods** store planned for the old Rite Aid location on Blossom Hill Road at Almaden Expressway was approved by the San Jose City Council on April 8th. The city council had to make a "Determination of Public Convenience or Necessity" and declare that there is a "significant overriding public benefit served by the proposed off-sale of alcohol".



Because this project includes the sale of alcohol within 500 feet of a school, and within 150 feet of a residence, the City Planning Commission was forced to recommend that the city council deny the project, even though they were in favor of it. The city's proximity rules, created to reduce liquor stores and liquor sales at gas stations, had the unintended consequence of hindering this upscale grocery store, which had no significant opposition.

June 3rd Election... Get out and VOTE!

Update: Taxpayer lawsuit against OSA

-Dave Fadness

In our January 2006 newsletter, Attorney **Tony Tanke** wrote about a lawsuit alleging that Santa Clara County Open Space Authority's (OSA) property assessment taxes are unconstitutional. A form was offered to VEP members for use in claiming a refund of those assessments if his case before the California Supreme Court was successful. Escalating assessments have been collected by OSA since 2002.

That case was heard by the California Supreme Court on May 6. A written decision will follow within 90 days. Watch for news in this newsletter and in the media.

SeniorNet Web Page Design class

Once a year, SeniorNet Willows offers a class in Web Page Design. Registration for the next class will be May 17.

Web Pages can be used to share pictures of your grandkids, show off some of those paintings you have been drawing, post pictures from your travels, or deliver videos of your dog at agility trials. Maybe you just want a place to express your two cents about Little Saigon, the needs of education, the war in Iraq or share your favorite jokes. You may even want to use your web page as a scrapbook and use the space on your family room shelf for that knick knack you bought in Acapulco.

Have you considered opening your business using a web page; you could test your taste in retail clothes before paying for a bricks and mortar space. In addition, you could describe all the services provided by your pet sitting business. As you already know, cyberspace is filled with countless web pages, and one of them could be yours.



The instructor will lead you through procuring a web page name on Yahoo Geocities for free. You will use Yahoo's software to create pages, complete with page effects, background music, stock prices, the time and date, maps, bouncing pictures, a guest book, the latest headlines, and many other features. In addition, you will learn how to size pictures properly to post them and place links to other web pages.

Other classes to be offered next session include Digital Photography, Word Processing, Searching the Internet, Computer Maintenance, Windows XP, Introduction to Computers and much more.

Each student works from a designated computer following the steps the instructor displays in front of the class. Coaches are present to keep everybody on the same page.

Our next registration will be Saturday, May 17 at 9 a.m. for intermediate and advanced classes. Sign-up for Introduction to Computers classes starts at 10:30 a.m. Registration is held at the Willows Senior Center, 2175 Lincoln Avenue (at Curtner Avenue). Most classes cost \$20 for an 8-week course. Often a manual is provided with the class. For more information, call 371-3999 or go to our web site at www.snlcsj.org and click on Willows.

SeniorNet is a worldwide organization which today supports over 240 learning centers. It is a non-profit organization founded in 1986. The purpose is to provide computer education and access to people over fifty. There is an annual fee of \$40 to join SeniorNet. All the learning centers are run by volunteers.

VEP Community Service Awards

- Dave Noel and Marilyn Rodgers

At this writing, the VEP Community Service Awards selection committee is busily reviewing applications and selecting winners. Gunderson and Andrew Hill administrators submitted three candidates per school. VEP President **Joe Tajnai** will present awards to one deserving student from each school at their respective senior awards nights (May 28th for Andrew Hill, and June 5th for Gunderson).

**VEP
Community
Service
Awards**

We received one At-Large application this year. Our selection committee will apply the same selection criteria used for our Andrew Hill and Gunderson applicants to determine whether to grant the At-Large candidate an award. If so, VEP President JoeTajnai will present our At-Large award at our May 27th general meeting.

At our February general meeting, members allocated up to \$2100 for our 2008 Community Service Awards. If we have an At-Large winner, we'll grant \$700 to each of our three winners. If not, we'll grant \$1000 each to our Andrew Hill and Gunderson winners.

We'll announce our winners and selection committee by name in our September newsletter, and we'll include a summary of our winners' community service and college plans.

Many thanks to **Lara Sandora** at Andrew Hill and **Becky Bruni** at Gunderson for administering the nomination process at their respective schools.

We are considering changes to the VEP Community Service Awards program as part of a Constitution and By-Laws update this coming autumn. Essentially, we are considering soliciting applications from our current sources, and potentially also from additional local schools and/or service organizations. We would then grant one or more awards to the best candidate(s) from the combined pool of applications.

For more information, contact Dave Noel at (408) 266-7183 or DNoel1234@aol.com.

News from *Our City Forest*

You can make a difference in your community while giving back to the environment! Our City Forest is a local nonprofit dedicated to inspiring citizens in the planting, caring for, and appreciation of our urban forest. Join *Our City Forest* for the following community events:

~ Free shade trees ~
(408) 99-TREES

Help save our urban forest. Receive a free tree from Our City Forest and help make Silicon Valley more green. We plant trees in parking strips, schools, parks, neighborhoods, and in other public areas that could use more trees.

~ Free monthly tree tours ~
(available by appointment)

Here's an opportunity to lead or attend a free downtown tour where you'll get to know San Jose's street trees. You'll be amazed at all the trees you'll learn to identify! Open to all--feel free to invite family and friends. For more information contact Erin at (408) 998-7337 x 123.

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~ Volunteer meeting with a guest lecturer ~
(May 22 @ 6 pm)

A guest lecturer from the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society will speak on the use of urban space and backyard landscape as a health habitat for birds. Join OCF for a fun and educational evening. Location: 151 West Mission Street, San Jose.

~ OCF Movie Night ~
(May 29 @ 7 pm)

Come learn the state of the world with hand-picked documentaries from Our City Forest. For the month of March, OCF will be showing the film *The Forest Where We Live*. Learn about the past and present of urban forests in a fascinating and vitally important movie made by Louisiana Public Broadcasting. Location: 151 West Mission Street, San Jose.

For more information on any of these events contact us at (408) 998-7337 or email volunteer@ourcityforest.org.

Pruning citrus trees

You may get delicious fruits from your orange, tangerine, and grapefruit trees, but eventually the trees get out of control and need pruning.



You should remove dead or weak branches first, and thin twiggy growth. It is also possible to rejuvenate older, more established citrus trees which usually respond well to hard pruning.

Start with the dead, injured, diseased and crossing branches, suckers, and branches growing downward. At the next pruning, remove weak branches and over-crowded growth. Never remove more than one-fourth of the tree at one time.

Keep in mind that most citrus trees have a limited supply of carbohydrates in their stem tissues. Excessive pruning at one time may set back growth and fruiting. After the tree is back in good shape (it may take a couple of years), continue to thin as needed.

You can also cut back long branches at the tips to promote shoots nearer the center of the tree. If more than one shoot arises around a cut, choose the one or two best-placed shoots to develop as the main branches.

As far as flavor and sweetness is concerned, many grapefruit trees prefer warmer climates to develop the sweetness you desire. However, we are very fortunate to have some relatively new grapefruit-pummelo crosses that have very good flavor and sweetness in Santa Clara Valley. These include the Oro Blanco and Melogold.

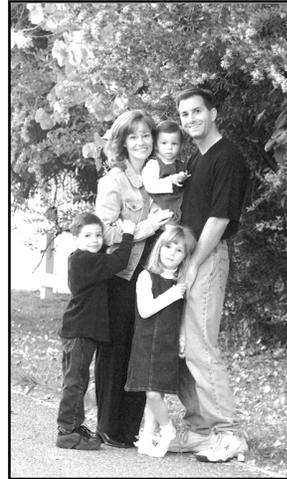
It is possible to top an old citrus (or most trees for that matter) by severely cutting back the tree and grafting on a preferred variety.

[Ed. Note: This article was adapted from the 4/16/04 issue of the San Jose Mercury News.]

Checking for termites and invasive roots

-John Marks

If you seem to be invaded by many flying insects with four wings (3/8- to 1/2-inch long) with 3/16-inch ant-like bodies, you may have subterranean termites. Hundreds from the col-



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ony develop wings, fly, mate, shed their wings and seek new sites to build nests.

They usually leave their nests in October. They look for pieces of wood or roots next to or on the soil and dig tunnels into the wood. If needed, they construct tubes made from soil to get to the wood, protecting them from desiccation and predators.

Termite inspectors look for these distinctive tubes of dried mud leading from the soil to the foundation and into wood frames of homes where they feed. You might consider doing your own inspection. Use a strong flashlight and look at each footing of your foundation for these tubes.

~ Stop invading roots ~

Barriers to our neighbor's vine and/or tree roots may seem needed this time of year, particularly now since everything is growing so well with our recent rains.

Plastic root barriers, impregnated with chemicals, are available in the garden department at Orchard Supply. The usual practice for installing root barriers is to dig a two-foot deep trench alongside your fence. If possible, rent a trenching machine to do the digging. These are available from rental yards, and almost anyone can operate them.

Place the barrier on the fence side of the trench and backfill. Barriers are supposed to stop all roots from going past them, but some aggressive tree roots will go down and under the barrier in a few years.

You can plant shrubs near the barrier, but be aware that the barrier will also prevent the extension of their roots and thus limit their ability to get the nutrients and moisture needed to grow properly.

Barriers are not always a permanent solution, but you may be lucky and stop those roots from coming into your yard.

VEP's Super Saturday a smashing success

-Dave Noel

On May 3rd, VEP held 3 very successful events. We hope you had the opportunity to enjoy some or all of them.

First, we had our annual Community-Wide Garage Sale. Residents all over the VEP area cleaned out their homes and garages, picked up bargains, and met their neighbors.

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Second, we had our first ever E-Waste pickup in conjunction with Gunderson High School and *Earthcare Recycling*, with all proceeds going to Gunderson High School.

At the E-Waste event, we recycled:

- 4101 pounds of CRTs and TVs,
- 3255 pounds of computers, and
- 3880 pounds of scrap electronics.

This netted \$777 for Gunderson, and diverted 5.6 tons of electronic waste from landfills.



Steve Ramona of Earthcare Recycling

Third, VEP arranged to have a Salvation Army truck at Gunderson the afternoon of the garage sale to collect unsold treasures. By the end of the day, three large Salvation Army trucks were filled to the brim (wow!) and VEP residents returned home with tax-deductible receipts and lots of extra space in their garages.



To add to the success, the Gunderson senior class held a car wash at the same time to raise funds for their graduation night trip to Disneyland. They raised an amazing \$600!

VEP thanks Gunderson teacher and VEP resident **Rob Iverson** for coordinating Gunderson student efforts in support of these successful events. Gunderson students helped distribute VEP event flyers in the VEP neighborhood, promoting Super Saturday events and VEP's upcoming Memorial Day Parade & Festival.

VEP also thanks **Steve Ramona** at Earthcare Recycling. If you ever have occasion to run an e-waste collection fundraising event, I highly recommend Steve and Earthcare Recycling. They make the event easy, and are very generous with their proceeds.

Special thanks goes to VEP's Treasurer **Ginger Cardona**, who initiated VEP's annual garage sale several years ago and has coordinated the event ever since. This year she did triple duty answering phone calls with questions about all three of our "Super Saturday" events. Thanks Ginger!

Last but not least, many thanks to **Helen Castillo** for arranging the Salvation Army trucks.

Healthful eating

Eating healthful foods can improve your overall health and may even help prevent disease from occurring. But what does this really mean and how do you go about it?

For starters, you could try to eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables every day and limit the amount of fat and sugar you consume. You'll also want to eat a variety of foods throughout the week, and you'll want to limit portion sizes, too.

Of course, for some people with certain conditions (such as diabetes or food allergies), you'll want to speak with a medical professional about your special dietary needs.

~ Benefits of healthful eating ~

Healthy eating will reduce your risk of:

- ◆ heart disease and stroke
- ◆ high blood pressure and diabetes
- ◆ breast, colon, and prostate cancers

Healthy eating will help you:

- ◆ avoid weight gain
- ◆ have more energy
- ◆ feel better now and in the future



~ Getting started ~

Making changes can be difficult. But when it comes to taking care of your-self, it's worth the effort so you can do the things that you want to do.

When you are ready to make some changes, here is how you can start:

- ◆ Make small changes in your eating. Start with one change at a time. Add one serving of fruits or vegetables to any of your meals or as a snack.
- ◆ Choose smaller portions of lean red meat (such as tenderloin or bottom round). Try skinless chicken or fish.
- ◆ Don't shop for groceries when you are hungry. Make a grocery list to help you buy more healthful foods and stay away from junk food.

- ◆ Try switching from whole milk to 2%, 1%, or nonfat milk. Limit use of sugars by limiting the amount of soda you drink or switch to sugar-free soda.
- ◆ Drink plenty of water. It is good for your body and helps you feel full.
- ◆ Try to eat slower. It takes your stomach 20 minutes to tell your brain that it is full.

~ Ideas to improve how you eat ~

- Add one fruit or vegetable to meals or snacks until you have reached five each day. A whole piece of fruit, like a medium sized apple, is one serving.
- Fresh is best, but frozen, dried, and canned fruits and vegetables are all good choices. For canned fruits or vegetables, look for labels that say "in light syrup" or "no added salt."
- Eat less fat. Remove all visible fat (or skin from meat or chicken) before cooking. Broil or bake instead of frying.
- Take healthful snacks with you (fruits, vegetables, pretzels) to avoid hunger later in the day.
- Choose high-fiber foods, such as vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. These help you feel full and most are low-fat.

Remember, be realistic. Make small changes over time in what you eat. Try a small change for one to two weeks then start the next change. That may be easier than changing the way you eat all at once. A drastic change may not be successful in the long run.

~ How to be successful at making changes ~

Be adventurous. Include variety in the food you choose. Besides the nutritional benefits, variety adds interest to meals and snacks. Learn new ways to prepare vegetables and low-fat meals. Try new spices and herbs.

Be sensible. Cut down on guilt. You can enjoy all foods without overdoing it. If there is a high-fat, high-calorie snack you want, you can have it. Just have a small portion and eat it less often. If you eat a piece of birthday cake, all is not lost. You can eat lower calorie foods at your next meal.

Keep a food diary. Write down what you eat and how much you eat. Try keeping a food diary for a week or two. This can help you keep track of your eating patterns.

Be selective when eating out. Look for dishes that are steamed, broiled, baked, grilled, poached, or roasted. If you're not sure about a certain dish, ask your server how it's prepared. It is okay to ask for what you want to help you eat healthfully. Ask for salad dressings, sauces, and gravies on the side so you can decide how much to use. Ask your server to wrap half of your entree to take home as it is being served. Most restaurants serve extra-large portions so there is no need to clean your plate.

~ Ready to change? ~

On a scale of 1 to 10 (where 10 means that you are really ready to make necessary changes to your diet), honestly answer the following question: How ready are you to make changes in your life so that you can eat healthier?

1. If your answer is 3 or less, what would need to happen to make you more ready in the future?
2. If your answer is 4 to 6, what are some of the advantages of staying the same? What are some advantages of changing?
3. If your answer is 7-10, congratulations on your decision to make changes to eat more healthfully. Your commitment to small changes and healthful choices will help you be successful.

[Ed. Note: This article was adapted from Kaiser Permanente's



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During VEP's summer break... think email

-Dave Noel

VEP traditionally takes break from producing a newsletter during the months of June, July, and August. During the summer, our primary method of communicating with you is via e-mail. To make sure we have your current email address on file, send an email to vep@vepca.net now, before you forget.

We typically send only 2-3 brief emails per month, and we don't share your email address.

During the summer, VEP executives plan for the next program year and continue to monitor the pulse of the VEP community. If something comes up, we'll let you know--if we have your email address

Bugs you don't want

-John Marks

Grow plants in your yard and you're bound to have pests. There's no way around that, but how you deal with the critters is changing. A decade ago it was common to reach for potent bug sprays that killed--indiscriminately--as soon as the creepy crawlers were sighted. But with increasing concern over chemicals in the environment, there are now safer ways to manage pests in our yards. Here's some common Bugs You Don't Want and how to get rid of them.

~ Aphids ~

Description: Small, soft-bodied sucking insects; green, pink, yellow, red, brown or black.

Where: They congregate at succulent stem tips and underside of tender leaves. Found throughout North America.

Damage: Curled leaves, yellow foliage, sticky honeydew, transmission of plant diseases.

Controls: Forceful water spray, insecticidal soap, horticultural oil, ladybugs, lacewings.

~ Slugs/Snails ~

Description: Soft-bodied, legless soil dwellers with shells (snails) or without shells (slugs).

Where: Found in moist, shady areas throughout North America. Hostas and fruits are favorite plants.

Damage: Chew holes in leaves; leave slime trails.

Controls: Use drip irrigation to keep garden drier. Also try Sluggo and Escargo baits, copper barriers around individual plants, diatomaceous earth, saucers of beer and trap boards. Toads, snakes, ducks and geese feed on slugs.

~ Lawn Grubs ~

Description: May/June beetle adult is reddish brown to black with hard shell; Northern masked chafer adult is chestnut brown. Larvae of all are 1-inch long, white, C-shaped grubs.

Where: May/June beetle found throughout North America. Larvae live in soil under turfgrass.

Damage: Adults of May/June beetle chew foliage of oak, willow, apple, poplar, and birch trees. Most damage from larvae comes from their chewing on grass roots; turf turns brown from lack of roots in summer.

Controls: Predatory nematodes (Steinernema and Heterorhabditis, Grub Guard, Grub-Away) mixed with water and applied to soil.

~ Spider Mites ~

Description: Reddish-brown or pale, tiny, eight-legged. Often produce webbing more visible than the mites themselves.

Where: In dry areas throughout North America. Common in warm locations; most often on leaf underside. Roses, beans and marigolds are favorites.

Damage: Suck plant juices from leaves. Create silvery stippling on leaf; leaves yellow and brown; webbing.

Controls: Forceful water spray, insecticidal soap, horticultural oil, lacewings, ladybugs, predatory mites (Galandromus, Phytoseiulus), neem, sulfur dust.

~ Gypsy Moth ~

Description: Adult female is a creamy white moth; male brownish moth. Larvae are black hairy caterpillars with five pairs of blue spots and six pairs of red spots on back. Egg masses are buff-colored.

Where: Throughout Northeastern U.S.; isolated elsewhere. Egg cases are laid everywhere. Larvae feed on the foliage of shade trees.

Damage: They defoliate trees by chewing leaves; oaks are a favorite.

Controls: Handpick and destroy egg masses; spray when larvae are young.

~ Japanese Beetle ~

Description: Adults are metallic green with coppery wing covers; larvae are grayish-white grub.

Where: Concentrated in eastern third of U.S.; less common

elsewhere. Adults feed on foliage of more than 300 species of trees, shrubs and flowers; larvae in soil.

Damage: Adults chew leaves and flowers of plants; larvae feed on roots.

Controls: For larvae: Milky Spore or nematodes (Grub Guard, Grub-Away). For adults: neem or rotenone; place Japanese beetle pheromone traps outside garden, not near plants attractive to the beetles.

Speaking of bugs...

-Adina Pierce

Have you wondered what those swarming bugs in your yard are? In the evenings every April, I've noticed a large number of winged insects swarming in my backyard. The swarms are approximately four feet wide by six feet high.



I thought they might be subterranean termites. A few weeks ago, a specimen was taken to the vector control lab at the county, and after doing some research, it was identified as a "Trixoscelid fly" (Trixoscelis sp. from the Trixoscelididae family). There are nine species of this fly known to be in western North America, and not much is known about them. Although somewhat of a nuisance, they shouldn't cause any damage.

VEP's April meeting

-James Hicks, Secretary(*)

Solar presentation: Our first speaker was **Thang Nguyen** from *Sun Run*, a solar systems provider for residents and businesses. He focused on the benefits of solar systems and how homeowners can get discounts when purchasing systems as a group. Mr. Nguyen discussed cost comparisons, various rebate programs, electric rate increments, the cost of equipment, and various financing options.

He mentioned that Sun Run's solar systems are installed by one of the best installers in the industry and he suggested that, if interested in more information, homeowners can go to www.recsolar.com or www.sunrunhome.com.

Homeowners wanting more information or to stay in touch with other VEP members interested in solar systems should call **Don Ferguson** at (408) 629-0303 or e-mail don@donferguson.com. (see his solar article in this newsletter).

New Southern Division SJPD captain: VEP's next speaker was our area's new police Captain **Vaughan Edwards**, a 25-year veteran of the San Jose Police Department.

His presentation focused both preventing and reducing crime in the VEP area. When compared to the rest of San Jose, he said that violent and most other crimes are lower in the VEP community. The VEP community's involvement and work with law enforcement has made that possible.

Edwards' team focuses on gang activity in the 16 – 24 age group. SJPD's TABS (Truancy Abatement & Burglary Suppression) program focuses on preventing and capturing school age children involved in daytime burglary. His team works hand-in-hand with the local schools to make sure truants are identified and taken to TABS centers where they must be picked up by their parents, thereby deterring truancy and juvenile criminal activity.

Edwards made it clear that community support is needed to



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reduce all types of crime. He invited members of the VEP community to call him at (408) 277-5530 or e-mail him 1918@sanjoseca.gov when law enforcement issues arise. Anyone who sees or suspects criminal activity or is a victim of crime should immediately call 911 (not 311) to report it. When using a cell phone, instead of calling 911, be sure to call (408) 277-8911 (which gets you directly to San Jose "911" instead of the CHP). He suggested that you program this number in your cell phone speed dial list.

Finally, to monitor reported criminal activity in your area or any area in San Jose, go to www.sjpd.org, click on the "View new Crime Reports..." link at the top and middle of the page, then follow the various screens to enter your address or closest intersection. You will see a map of all filed crime reports with a legend on the LEFT, which defines the report type. An easier way is to go directly to www.crimereports.com.

VEP Goals & Objectives (G&O): President **Joe Tajnai** graded his administration in achieving VEP's 2007-08 G&O. Overall the organization received a score of B+.

District 10 city council candidates: On June 3rd, San Jose District 10's city council seat is up for election. The two candidates are incumbent **Nancy Pyle** and candidate **Ashraf Madraswala**. Both candidates gave a 5-minute summary of their respective platforms. (Verbatim responses to VEP's candidate questionnaire are included in this newsletter.)

VEP Treasurer's report: Our Treasurer, Ginger Cardona presented reported that VEP is solvent and most projects are under-budget. Her report was approved unanimously by a vote of members present.

VEP officer elections: A slate of candidates was presented and elected to VEP's 2008-09 Board for a one-year term. Their names appear on the mailing page of this newsletter.

[()Ed. Note: Jim Hicks has served as our Secretary for several years. He chose not to run again in 2008-09. We owe him a debt of gratitude for many years of dedicated service in a variety of roles on the VEP Board and, of course, for his volunteer service as a leader in our community.]*

Stomp-out West Nile virus—you can help!

- Dave Fadness

Now that our rainy season is finally coming to an end, be sure to drain or treat all stagnant water sources in your yard. This includes such seemingly innocent, but notorious mosquito breeding areas as birdbaths, flower pots, old tires, etc. Even small sources must be drained, changed, or treated weekly. Even one cup of stagnant water can breed thousands of mosquitoes. Report any stagnant water or mosquito activity, neglected or abandoned swimming or wading pools, hot tubs, or fish ponds to the Santa Clara County Vector Control District at (408) 792-5010.



West Nile virus (WNV) is a mosquito-borne disease. It's con-

sidered the fastest-moving "vector"-borne disease the U.S. has ever seen. Vectors transmit pathogens from one host to another; in this case, mosquitoes carry the virus from bird to bird, bird to human, and bird to animals (primarily horses).

Who is affected?

Humans and animals, including birds, may all be affected by WNV. People most at risk are the elderly and those who have compromised or weakened immune systems. There is no human vaccine or treatment.

What are the symptoms?

Most people who are infected with the WNV will not experience any type of illness. Mild symptoms include a few days of fever, headache and body aches, occasionally with a skin rash on the trunk of the body and swollen lymph glands. Severe symptoms include headache, high fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, and paralysis. These may last several weeks, although neurological effects may be permanent. It is estimated that 1 in 150 persons infected with WNV will develop a more severe form of the illness.

How does it spread?

WNV is normally spread through the bite of an infected mosquito.

What can I do to fight West Nile virus?

- **Target the source:** Drain or treat all stagnant water sources (see above).
- **Report dead birds:** If you see recently dead birds--particularly crows, blackbirds, jays, magpies, and raptors such as hawks and owls, report them immediately to (408)792-5010. Do not touch the birds.
- **Contact SCCVCD** at (408)792-5010 if you are experiencing problems with mosquitoes, need a free home and/or yard inspection, or want free mosquito-eating fish for ponds in your yard.
- **Help Educate the Public:** Tell friends and neighbors about this important public health issue and how to avoid it.



To avoid being bitten, wear protective clothing and use an insect repellent containing DEET, particularly at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.

For more information, contact Santa Clara County Vector Control District:

(800) 314-2427 or (408) 792-5010
www.sccvector.org
westnile.ca.gov

Pearl Avenue Library Needs your support

Make a tax-deductible investment (large or small) in your own branch library's future. You can even arrange to donate in multi-year or convenient periodic installments. Here are three ways...

1. Donate online at www.sanjoselibraryfoundation.org.
2. Get a donation form from www.sanjoselibraryfoundation.org and send a check payable to "San Jose Public Library Foundation" to 150 E. San Fernando Street, San Jose, CA 95112-3580.
3. Call or email Dave Fadness to get a donation form and mailing envelope (578-6428 or drfadness@sbcglobal.net).

Be sure to specify that your gift is for the Pearl Avenue Branch Library. Please do it today—our library will be opening soon!

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THE VEP NEWS



VEP Community Association

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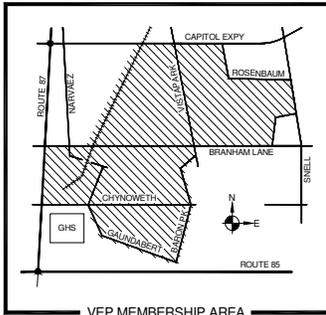
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| | | | |
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| Editor | (Volunteer needed) | | |



Check our website: www.vepca.net

Community Room

Vista Park

in the
7:30 pm

May 27th Meeting

VEP's

Be sure to attend