

VEP NEWS

• VEP COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION •

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

February 2010

VEP'S MEETING

7:30 p.m. Tuesday
► **February 23, 2010** ◀

Vista Park Community Room
475 Hyde Park Drive

AGENDA

★ Guest Speaker Don Gage ★

Presentation on
Current Issues Facing Santa Clara County
by District 1 Supervisor Don Gage

★ City Options for Maintenance of Street Landscaping ★

Presentation by Tom Ferguson, Maintenance Manger
San Jose City Department of Transportation

★ VEP Business/Updates/Announcements ★

Discuss and Approve Option for Street Landscaping
VEP Receives Mayor's Award at State of the City Breakfast
VEP March Faire
Martial Cottle Park Update
Membership Drive Update

Introduction of Candidates for Santa Clara County
Supervisor, District 1 – "Meet and Greet"

★ Your Concerns and Ideas ★

Your chance to voice your opinion and/or to seek VEP's help.
Everyone is welcome. Invite your neighbors!

VEP's February Meeting

by Marilyn Rodgers

Topics that are planned for the February general membership meeting:

► **Guest Speaker Don Gage – Santa Clara County District 1 Supervisor** will present an update on current issues facing the County. The Supervisor, who is always an informative and entertaining speaker, will provide information on the issues that the county, and his successor will be facing.

► **City Options on Maintenance of Street Landscaping – Tom Ferguson**, Maintenance Manager for San Jose Depart-

ment of Transportation will provide an update and overview of the options currently available for street landscaping (common areas). The City, as a result of decreasing revenues, is no longer able to provide the same level of service as in the past. Options include tearing out landscaping, initiating a tax assessment on affected homeowners, or using volunteers. The VEP Board of Directors has made a recommendation for members to consider (see article elsewhere in the VEP News by Dave Fadness).

► VEP Business/Updates/Announcements:

Announcements and Updates of Interest to Members
Introduction of 5 Candidates for Santa Clara County District 1 Supervisor seat, followed by an informal "Meet and Greet". Members will have an opportunity to talk with, and ask questions of each of the candidates. See article elsewhere in VEP News.

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

We look forward to seeing you, your family, your friends, and your neighbors at our **February 23rd** meeting. Please join us!

January General Meeting Synopsis

By Adina Pierce

VEP held its first general meeting of the year on January 26, 2010.

First, **Captain Vaughan Edwards** gave us an update on Branham Lane traffic. The SJPD Motor Unit has been out giving tickets in our neighborhood. Between Snell Ave and Narvaez, 64 speeding citations were issued in November, and 46 citations in December/January.

There is a traffic enforcement website that responds to complaints from citizens. People have to complain to justify resources - if we complain, they can dispatch a unit to the problem area.

https://www.sjpd.org/forms/TEU_Request_Form.asp

Traffic Engineer **Len Ramilo** from the San Jose Department of Transportation (DOT) spoke next.

In the first week of December, DOT deployed a speed display radar trailer on Branham Lane. The plan is to bring out the trailer every three months for a week. The trailer has an effect of slowing down traffic for 3 weeks. They will do this for one year. Note: The trailer does not record speed, and is only for education of the motorist.

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if you have a problem with pot holes or traffic lights, contact DOT Maintenance Dispatch at 277-4373. The department main number is 535-3850.

Our next guest was **Sergeant Manuel Rey**, Chief Investigator for the Santa Clara County Medical Examiner-Coroner's Office. They have three full-time board certified pathologists on staff, who determine the cause of death. There are eight investigators, and eight autopsy technicians. Approximately 1,000 deaths a year become full cases, and they perform 700 autopsies.

Santa Clara County has 10,000 deaths a year. 4,700 of those get reported to their office.

4,000 are natural deaths; 400 are accidental;
106 motor vehicle deaths; 140 suicides
46 homicides; 50 undetermined (i.e. - marathon runners)

There are several types of deaths that have to be reported to them: Hepatitis, HIV, suicides, accidents, people that never see a doctor, death during surgery, solitary deaths, psychiatric facility death, and drug/alcohol related deaths.

How do you identify people? Through loved ones, fingerprints, DNA, military tattoos, pacemakers, knee replacements, hip replacements, or dental records. How do you identify someone with dental records? We find dentist contact information/ in the home, then call the dentist to retrieve records

Dave Noel talked about CSA awards. More details are available in this newsletter.

Adina Pierce gave an update on Martial Cottle Park. The Task Force Meeting was on February 1st. The Draft State Park General Plan/ County Park Master Plan report has been prepared, and was reviewed at the meeting. The draft report will provide the basis for the environmental review and analysis in the preparation of a draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). On February 10, a community workshop was held, where they gave a presentation on the Draft Plan.

Mike Wasserman - Candidate for Santa Clara County Supervisor, District 1 - introduced himself. He will be at VEP's February general meeting as well.

Neighbor **Robert Giannoccaro** will be honored at the Mayor's Breakfast on February 18 as Volunteer of the Year. He has done a lot of work in the VEP community cleaning up graffiti. If you see any graffiti in our neighborhood, don't hesitate to call him at 408-226-7664 or email: robertgiannoccaro@comcast.net

The New and Expanded VEP March Faire

by Debra Suydam, Helen Castillo, and Marilyn Rodgers

For 11 of the past 12 years, VEP has sponsored a home improvement fair. Last year, the fair was cancelled due to an apparent decrease in both vendor and member interest. The Board of Directors received feedback and requests to re-think the possibility of offering a fair. As a result, the Fair is being re-initiated this year. In the past, the focus for invited vendors was to those involved in home repair or remodeling. This year we are expanding the invitation to vendors involved in green or sustainability businesses, health and fitness, and general. As this is a community activity, an invitation is extended to any VEP member or resident who may have their own business. If you have your own business, or have used the services/products of a business, and would like that business recommended to your neighbors, please provide us with the name, type of business, and contact information.

The Fair will be held Tuesday, March 30th, at Gunderson High School. Vendors will be asked to pay a small participation fee of \$25.00. This fee will be used to provide cash raffle prizes to neighbors who attend the fair. The fair is open and free to all residents who live in the VEP area. Please contact Debra Suydam at 972-4231 or dsuydam@sbcglobal.com or Helen Castillo at 981-5902 or hcastillo@vbprop.com.

"Meet and Greet" Candidates for Santa Clara County District 1 Supervisor Seat

by Marilyn Rodgers

Supervisor Don Gage will be ending his term this year as the representative for District 1. VEP is included in District 1 geographic area. The 5 candidates that have announced their intentions of running for this important office have been invited to attend our February 23rd meeting. They will each be given 3 minutes to introduce themselves. Participates at the meeting will then have an opportunity to talk informally and ask questions of concern with each candidate. Their names and websites are included below:

Teresa Alvarado	www.teresaalvarado.com
Peter Arellano	www.arellano4supervisor.com
Rosemary Kamei	www.voterosemarykamei.com
Mike Wasserman	www.mikewasserman.com
Forrest Williams	www.forrestwilliams.com

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VEP Volunteers Plant Thirteen Trees

By Dave Fadness

A bright, sunny day, January 9 found an eager group of volunteers ready to remove litter and plant seven trees at Vista Park and another six along the pedestrian/bike path on the south side of Branham Lane at Narvaez Avenue.



VEP is much indebted to *Our City Forest*, the non-profit that donated all trees, stakes, equipment, and its own expert volunteers. We are also grateful to the following people who gave a Saturday morning to beautify our community for us and for generations to come: (unless otherwise specified, all are VEP members)

Sarah Allen, Our City Forest
 Philip Bejar
 Ginger Cardona
 Diane Chao, Live a Greener Life
 Dianne Conry
 Evan Conry
 Justine Conry, Gunderson High School
 Scott Conry
 Justin Elnensdop
 Aiko Fadness
 Kevin Fasteen
 Juan Gallardo, Gunderson High School
 Joaquin Gallardo, Gunderson High School
 Robert Giannoccaro
 Joell Hanson
 Marietta Harris
 Minh Hiynh, Gunderson High School
 Jeff Ismael
 Austin Krygier, Our City Forest
 Sebastian Liu, Live a Greener Life
 Malaya Malone, Gunderson High School
 John Marks
 David Miller
 Bob Musante
 Duy Nguyen, Gunderson High School
 Luon Nguyen, Gunderson High School
 Than Nguyen, Gunderson High School
 Jason Pang, Live a Greener Life
 Dave Pfaff
 Jan Pfiffner, Our City Forest
 Robert Raymond, Our City Forest
 Daniel Roche
 Marilyn Rodgers

Debra Suydam
 Veronica Torres, Gunderson High School
 Troy Tsui, Live a Greener Life



Kathleen Viana, Gunderson High School
 Evan Wallace, Our City Forest

Over the past fifteen years, VEP volunteers have coordinated with *Our City Forest* to plant more than 300 trees in public places in and around our membership area. VEP volunteers also care for those trees on an ongoing basis.



Hats off to these fine people!



Wesley W. Terrell

★VEP Member & Resident★
 Vista Park Specialist



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Daffodil Time

By John Marks

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 Febr. 28, and the flowers delivered during the week of March 22. Here's how to get involved. Bouquets start at \$10 for 10 flowers. Other special arrangements range from \$55 to \$75. The most popular offering is the Gift of Hope - 10 flowers in a vase delivered anonymously to a cancer patient. Gift of Hope bouquets are \$25. To order daffodils, call 879-1032, then 3 after recording starts, or check out www.cancer.org. Also, you may e-mail to svdaffodildays@cancer.org.

Watering Tips

Keep those 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 the 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 the harmful salts, and will lower the pH of the soil, making it more acidic and keeping it salt-free. Your houseplants will love it. The 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, 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 black berry vines or olallieberry vines, consider planting the thornless blackberries. Plant the Logan variety for early fruiting, and the Arapraho (or any of its kin -- Apache, Chickasaw, Kiowa, Navajo and Shawnee) for a midseason 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.

PLANTING GUIDE FOR VEGETABLES: Plant dormant roots of asparagus, rhubarb, artichokes, horseradish and strawberries, plus potatoes, onions and garlic. Transplant broccoli, cauliflower, leaf lettuce and chard.

Silicon Valley Reads 2010

By Kaye Moore, Librarian



Get in on the excitement of Silicon Valley Reads! This year's book is *In Defense of Food: an Eater's Manifesto* by Michael Pollan. I've heard it said that Pollan's advice could be boiled down to "eat food, many different kinds, mostly vegetables", but his book is readable, interesting, and definitely pertinent to our times. At our website, you can see all the different ways that SJPL is celebrating for Silicon Valley Reads, but here's what is happening at Pearl Avenue.

Saturday, February 20th, we are having the Master Gardeners group come to Pearl to give an exciting and fact-filled presentation on Growing Your Own Food at 1 pm. Having a garden is fun, rewarding, and healthy.

Kids will get a chance to enjoy learning to garden too, with Veggelution's Urban Farming for Kids program. This event is friendly for the whole family, and takes place at 11 am on Saturday, February 27th.

We have great craft programs going on for kids and teens on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons at 3 pm. They can learn how to make duct tape wallets, spice up their old t-shirts, or create art pieces through "playing with their food". Check our calendar for specific dates and times.

Thursdays at 11 am, we have Wii for Adults. All adults can come in and practice their bowling skills or golf screens on Wii Sports.

Camera Cinemas has offered a special promotion for SJPL library card holders. Show your library card at the ticket counter, and you can receive \$3.00 each regular adult admission price. This offer is good through the month of June, 2010. Even better, read the book, and then go see the movie! Examples of books that were made into movies are *Where the Wild Things are*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *The Boy in Striped Pajamas*.

Our Graphic Novel Contest is back again, and artists of all ages are invited to participate. Check out all the rules and details at <http://www.sjlibrary.org/about/events/graphicnovel.htm>.



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VEP Annual Membership Drive

by Marilyn Rodgers and Debra Suydam

In January, VEP initiated its annual membership drive. A membership remit envelope is included in every newsletter mailed to members. In addition, a recruitment letter is mailed to all residents living in the VEP area to invite and encourage them to join us in becoming members. The membership drive continues through the end of March. The response has been very positive, as over 200 people have already turned in their memberships/renewals. **If you have not yet sent in your membership renewal, please do it today. Complete the information requested** (a membership form is included in this newsletter and also is available online at the VEP website – www.vepca.net), mail it with your check for \$20.00 to VEP Community Association, P.O. Box 18111, San Jose, California, 95158.

The weekend of January 17th, 18 enthusiastic VEP volunteers came together to prepare the mailing of newsletters and membership materials. This is always a nice way to network with neighbors while completing an important task for our organization. Special thanks to the following volunteers:

Bob Aquino
Mike and Sandy Bousman
Bryan Castillo
Jaclyn Castillo
Helen Castillo
Chelsea Chandoy
Joyce Chesnos
Sarah Goodrich
Bill Johnson
Don Rodgers
Marilyn Rodgers
Josie Supencheck
Debra Suydam



Additional thanks to Debra Suydam, and Don and Marilyn Rodgers who completed a significant amount of prework, which allowed the project to be completed in record time. Also thanks to Bob Aquino who took this large mailing to the main San Jose Post Office, to Jeri Arstingstall who manages the database and initiated the files for mailing labels for both members and nonmember residents, and to Susan Iverson who printed the mailing labels.

Congratulations to Mike and Sandy Bousman, winners of the raffle at the January 26th Membership meeting – a free membership for 2010!



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Should VEP Maintain Public Spaces?

By Dave Fadness



At our February meeting, San Jose's Department of Transportation (DOT) representative, Tom Ferguson will address the city's plans to remove shrubs and other relatively high-maintenance plantings (but not trees) from public places along our streets. As an example, shrubs have already been removed in the median on Branham Lane, west of Vistapark Drive.

The city council adopted this new tear-out policy based upon escalating operating costs in the face of declining revenue. DOT has reduced its maintenance staff in the past year.

Mr. Ferguson will offer the following range of alternatives for VEP members' consideration:

A) Tear out existing landscaping. We have already heard from members of our community that this is not acceptable. VEP asked the city to temporarily delay any further tear outs here until our members decide what we're willing to do.

B) Employ an assessment district to raise funds (taxes) necessary to allow the city to pay for contract maintenance services in designated areas. This would require a special election of affected homes in our area.

C) VEP volunteers maintain designated landscaped areas as part of DOT's "adopt-a-street" program. This would require scheduled work on an ongoing basis (in the worst case, the city's labor cost escalation and resulting fiscal predicament may never be resolved).

VEP's Board of Directors is recommending alternative "C", the one that uses our volunteers to do this work.

These are the areas we're considering (if we've missed any, please mention them up at our meeting):

1. Trees and shrubs on the Las Brisas corner of Branham at Vistapark;
2. Shrubs on the south side of Branham west of New Compton;
3. Trees and shrubs on the Narvaez median triangle at Branham;
4. Trees on the northeast corner of Branham/Narvaez;
5. Trees along the ped/bike path on the southwest corner of Branham/Narvaez;
6. Trees and shrubs on the Chynoweth median west of Pearl;
7. Trees on the Chynoweth median east of Pearl to Barron Park; and
8. The unplanted area on the north side of Chynoweth between New World and Pearl.

VEP members have already adopted the cul de sac and median trees on Vistapark Drive, and the oleanders on Vistapark Drive at Branham Lane. We've also adopted Vista Park.

Are you okay with the city tearing out landscaping? Are you willing to pay more taxes so the city will do this work? Would you be willing to volunteer on an ongoing basis to keep our public spaces landscaped?

Your input is needed. We need to hear from you at our February 23rd meeting.

How Citizens Can Be A Part Of The City Budget Discussion

By Vice Mayor Judy Chirco

As we all know, the national and world economy are undergoing a massive downturn that affects everyone on an individual level, whether in the form of rethinking a family budget, worrying about being able to find or keep a job, or figuring out how to get by on a fixed income. The downturn also has an affect on our city budget. San Jose will need to make up a \$96 million shortfall to balance the budget for the fiscal year that begins next July.

These are very difficult decisions for San Jose, but I can commit to you that as we begin budget discussions this Spring, and adopt a final budget in June, I will support a thoughtful discussion about our priorities as a city, and careful deliberation about how we can best serve our residents.

It will be more important than ever this year for citizens to participate in these discussions. I invite you to stay engaged. There will be several public hearings over the next months, where citizens can voice their concerns. If you aren't able to attend the public hearings but would still like to provide me with your input, please contact my office by phone at (408) 535-4909 or by email at district9@sanjoseca.gov.

Color Key:	release of budget document	study session	public hearing	budget votes
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March 12	Mayor's March Budget Message: Released	The Mayor's March Budget Message sets out principles and priorities that guide City staff as they prepare the proposed budget.
March 16	Council Study Session: Mayor's March Budget Message	
March 23	Public Hearing: Mayor's March Budget Message Final Approval: Mayor's March Budget Message	
April 19	Proposed Capital Budget: Released	In late April and early May, the City Manager will release her proposed budgets.
May 3	Proposed Operating Budget: Released	
May 7	Proposed Fees & Charges Report: Released	Budget study sessions are an opportunity for councilmembers to discuss the budget and ask questions of City staff in a public forum.
May 5	Planning Commission Study Session: Proposed Capital Budget	
May 10-20	Council Study Sessions: Proposed Capital/Operating Budgets and Fees & Charges Report	
May 18	Initial Public Hearing: Proposed Capital/Operating Budgets and Fees & Charges Report (Held in the Evening)	The Council will hold two evening public hearings to gather citizen input on the proposed budgets. The Mayor's June Budget Message will change the proposed budget based on input from the Council and citizens.
June 4	Mayor's June Budget Message: Released	
June 14	Final Public Hearing: Proposed Capital/Operating Budgets and Fees & Charges Report (Held in the Evening)	The Council will adopt a final budget in June.
June 15	Mayor's June Budget Message Approved by City Council	
June 22	Proposed Capital/Operating Budgets and Fees & Charges Report Adopted by City Council	

VEP Memorial Day Parade & Festival

By Dave Fadness

We need new ideas, new talent, and lots of volunteer help to make our 2010 *Memorial Day Parade & Festival* bigger and better than last year's. You can be a part of this success.

Scheduled for Monday, May 31, this will be our sixth year. Planning is now underway--your involvement is needed and encouraged. Join our steering committee or...

Call me (578-6428) or **Dianne Conry** (224-8456) if you or someone you know can add to the fun.

We need entertainers. If you belong to a service group, are involved with Scouts, a school group, a sports league, a music or dance group, a gymnastics team, a performing arts troupe, or have any special talent you'd like to share, we'd like to have you there with us—especially if you'd be in uniform or in costume. We want to entertain our community by showcasing the many talents we have in our midst.

We need parade participants If you or your neighbor have an antique, classic, or hotrod car, have them give me a call if they're interested in showing it off in our parade. Consistent with safety and its family orientation, we're open to anyone and anything that will add interest and color to our event.

We need crafters. If you are or know someone who makes and sells crafts, please call **Ginger Cardona** (408) 227-0222 for information on free booth space at our Festival.

We need sponsors and donors. The net proceeds from this event are shared with our school PTAs, so we try our best to keep VEP and event participants' costs low. Donations are what make this possible. Give **Marilyn Rodgers** (225-7553) a call if you have a business or have contacts with businesses that would be willing to make cash, packaged food /drink, or other donations to our event. We will acknowledge all donors in our Memorial Day Program and in our VEP newsletter.

We need a photographer, at least one volunteer who will take lots of digital pictures of our event.

We need lots of hands-on volunteers. Call **Helen Castillo** (981-5902) if you are available...

To help with ideas for event games and attractions.

To pick up and return equipment the day before and after.

To post parade route "NO PARKING" signs the day before.

To help with set-up/tear-down the day of the event.

To help with booth duty, ticket sales, and event games.

To help clean-up during and after the event.

Your help in taking care of one or more of these details will lighten our load and make this event successful for kids of all ages in our community. Remember, none of us gets paid--everyone works as a volunteer in VEP activities.

Call (578-6428) or email me at drfadness@sbcglobal.net if you're willing to help even in a small way. **Don't wait because you think someone else will step forward** or because Memorial Day is long from now; we need your ideas and to know now whether your help will be available.

Above all, please be sure to mark your calendars, spread the word, and plan to attend with your family and friends on Monday, May 31st.

Concerned About Cars Speeding on Your Street?

by Marilyn Rodgers

At the January 26th membership meeting, attendees were provided with an update on interventions to decrease speeding/racing on Branham Lane. Information was provided by both the San Jose Police Department and Department of Transportation.



During the discussion, members brought up concerns regarding speeding on their neighborhood streets. The San Jose Police Department will respond to these concerns, (and other traffic enforcement issues) if residents will complete a complaint online at the Traffic Enforcement Unit's website. Go to the San Jose Police Department (TEU) website at – https://www.sjpd.org/_forms/TEU_Request_Form.asp

Helpful Phone Numbers:

By Dave Noel



Abandoned Shopping Carts	(408) 535-3500
Abandoned Vehicle on street	(408) 277-5305
Barking, Injured or Stray Dogs	(408) 578-7297
Blighted Properties	(408) 277-4528
Graffiti 24-hour Hotline	(408) 277-2758
Household Hazardous Waste Disposal	(408) 299-7300
Inoperable Vehicle on Private Property	(408) 277-5305
Potholes	(408) 277-4373
Recyclables Scavenging	(408) 277-4528
San Jose City Hall Customer Service	(408) 535-3500
Street Light Repair	(408) 277-5517
Vista Park Community Room Reservations	(408) 268-2053

VEP Memorial Day Parade & Festival

Co-sponsored by Gunderson, Carson, and Parkview Schools

Mark your calendars and
be sure to join our Parade & Festival fun!

Monday, May 31st

- Parade leaves Vista Park at 11 am ◀
- Festival follows at Parkview School ◀

Bring your friends and entire family

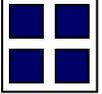
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Where's My Stuff ?

Organize files on your computer!

By John McCulloch

How many times have you created a file on your computer and when you went back to find it, it was gone. Not because you deleted it, but because you could not find it. When you set up a filing system on your computer, you don't need manila folders or hanging files. Just a click on your mouse will do it. And when you go to title each folder, there is no need for a pen and plastic tabs; all you need to do is right click on the new folder and type in the name of your addition, be it Finances, Letters, Genealogy, Health, Your Music, Your Pictures, Health, Jokes, and anything else you have on your machine.



In our upcoming session of SeniorNet at Willows, we will have two classes on File Management, one using Windows Vista and one using Windows XP. And after you are done you won't have any problem keeping pictures of your kids separate from those of your dog.

Registration for these and other SeniorNet classes is scheduled for Saturday, March 6 at 1 p.m. Introductory classes register at 2:30 p.m. at the Willow Glen Community & Sr. Center, 2175 Lincoln Ave.(at Curtner Ave.) in the Willow Glen area of San Jose.

Other classes available are: Digital Photography (3 different classes), Word Processing, Greeting Cards, Best of the Internet, Computer Security, Google, Windows XP or Windows Vista, Introduction to Computers and More. Check out website at www.snicsj.org/willows to see more of our classes. SeniorNet classes are open to anyone over 50 years of age.

Each class is held once a week for two hours for up to 8 weeks; some are shorter. The price for a typical class is \$20. Each student works from a designated computer following the steps the Instructor displays in front of the class. Coaches are available to keep everybody on the same page.

To place your name on SeniorNet's mailing list, phone the Willows SeniorNet liaison at (408) 371-3999, or log on to the website at www.SNLCSJ.ORG/willows.

SeniorNet is a worldwide organization which 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 50. There is an annual fee of \$40 to join SeniorNet. It is primarily run by volunteers. If you would like to volunteer, please join us.

Ways you can stash cash in 2010

Consider these easy ways to save money this year:

Property Tax Adjustment (*Lower home values mean lower taxes; also check to make sure you are not over-insured*) ≈ \$147 per year

Bundle home and auto insurance (*Save big by using the same provider for home, auto and life insurance*) ≈ \$400 per year

Select a higher deductible for auto and home insurance (*Lower your premiums by choosing a higher deductible*) ≈ \$150 per year

Bundle cable, phone, and Internet (*Get more services from one company and save; but only get what you need*) ≈ \$240 per year

Reevaluate your mobile phone plan (*Check your bill for the past few months to see if you can drop down a level*) ≈ \$240 per year

Maintain bank account and avoid fees (*Paying your bills online increases awareness of your account activity*) ≈ \$84 per year

Put money into savings (*Set aside \$50 each month; you'll be surprised at how quickly it adds up*) ≈ \$600 per year

Save your loose change (*Average 50¢ per day; it's likely you won't miss it anyway*) ≈ \$180 per year

Use a Flexible Spending Account (*Many employers offer this benefit to prepay for out-of-pocket medical expenses before tax*) ≈ \$250 per year

Bring lunch to work (*It costs \$3/day or less to bring food from home vs \$6/day or more for takeout*) ≈ \$780 per year

Eat out two fewer times/month (*Make dinner at home instead of eating out, and watch the savings add up*) ≈ \$360 per year

Pass on the beverages while dining out (*Some restaurants sell wine at a 575% markup and more for soft drinks, juices and coffee*) ≈ \$100 per year

Bottle your own water (*Be kind to the earth and save up to \$2/day; get a Bisphenol A (BPA)-free water bottle and a filtration system*) ≈ \$730 per year

Brew coffee at home vs: stopping at a coffee shop (*The ambiance of java retailers can be very costly*) ≈ \$1,156 per year

Buy what's on sale at the grocery store (*Check weekly ads for specials and seasonal discounts*) ≈ \$1,000 per year

Use coupons for groceries and dining out (*Take a few moments to check publications and websites for cash-saving coupons*) ≈ \$2,000 per year

Buy at the dollar store instead of the local drug or convenience store (*Best buys at the dollar store are cleaning supplies, gift wrap, snacks and shampoo*) ≈ \$200 per year

Carpool to work (*Reduce fuel costs, wear and tear, and traffic congestion, help the environment and enjoy the company of others*) ≈ \$520 per year

Slow down and save gas (*Speeds above 55 mph reduce gas mileage by 20%; you lose another 10% when driving with your windows rolled down*) ≈ \$200 per year

Change your own car oil (*Cut costs, control the quality of oil, and use the opportunity to do a quick check of your car*) ≈ \$100 per year
Air dry clothes instead of using a dryer (*It costs \$1 for every hour your dryer is on*) ≈ \$312 per year

Lower the temperature on your water heater (*Switch from 140 to 120 degrees, and you'll get a reward with little sacrifice*) ≈ \$50 per year

Lower/raise your thermostat (*Adjust the temperature by 10% while you are at work, and save while you are sleeping*) ≈ \$260 per year

Save water by turning off the tap (*Turn off the tap while doing dishes and brushing your teeth*) ≈ \$50 per year

Skip the pet groomer: save money and bond with Fido! (*Teeth brushing costs \$11 /mo; ear cleaning, \$9/mo; nail trimming, \$9/mo; bath; \$10/mo; trim/haircut, \$25/mo*) ≈ \$768 per year

Buy generic vs brand name pet food (*Often you will find an option with the same nutrients and ingredients as the premium brands*) ≈ \$360 per year

Hold off on the newest released flicks (*Save about \$8/movie when they are released at a discount theater or on DVD*) ≈ \$96 per year

Skip popcorn at the movies (*If you do go to the theater, eat first so you don't spend on expensive treats*) ≈ \$72 per year

Exercise at home or outside instead of at a gym (*Save yourself the hassle of waiting in line at the gym, while saving money*) ≈ \$360 per year

Mani/pedi at home vs a salon (*Make a small investment for your own supply and pamper yourself anytime you want*) ≈ \$300 per year

Extend hair salon visits to every eight vs six weeks (*By pushing your appointments out by just two weeks, you'll reap big rewards, Women: cut and color ≈ \$260 per year; Men: cut ≈ \$80 per year*)

Cancel magazine subscriptions (*If you still desire to read them, see if they are available at the local library*) ≈ \$25 per year

Negotiate the price on a car (*Get a great deal by considering a pre-owned car, and shop around for the best price*) ≈ \$500 per year

Sell unused household items (*If you haven't used it in two years, you can do without it; sell unused items online or have a garage sale*) ≈ \$800 per year

Donate household items (*Donate anything that doesn't sell, and take the charitable tax deduction*) ≈ \$500 per year

Maximize all tax deductions (*Paying a professional to make sure you take advantage of all eligible deductions can make a huge impact*) ≈ \$1,300 per year

Find unclaimed money (*Visit www.missingmoney.com to check for unclaimed money in each state you've lived*) ≈ \$150 per year

Total potential savings ≈ \$15,600 per year!

\$ CASH REWARDS \$

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CRIME STOPPERS

Gunderson High School Happenings

As the newsletter goes to press, the Gunderson Mock Trial team is going strong. The team lost their first competition by one point to Mitty High, but had a strong win over Monte Vista High School. Coached by teacher Sonia Rebelo, the team has several more competitions at Superior Court. Stay tuned!

A small group of Gunderson students are spending the winter break in France on an educational tour with French teacher, Anne Barbu. The students will visit Paris, Normandy with the D-Day landing places and other historic cities.

Senior Women, a campus club advised by teacher Sonia Rebelo, is having a dress drive for the Princess Project Silicon Valley. These students are collecting prom dresses and other accessories that will be donated to the Princess Project, an organization that provides free prom dresses and accessories to girls who might not otherwise attend prom because of the expense. The deadline for collecting is March 31; so if you have some formal wear that you'd like to donate, bring it on by!

The Athletic Department will be holding its first annual golf tournament at Santa Teresa Golf Course on Friday, April 30 starting at 2pm. If you're interested in playing, you can contact Gunderson Athletic Director, Herb Espiritu.

Gunderson's Leadership class, headed by Rob Iverson, organized a very successful blood drive in February. Staff and students donated over 90 pints of blood!

Gunderson students produced and directed a recent episode of local television show, "Bay Area Vistas".

In February, the Gunderson Key Club sponsored a glove and mitten drive for local people in need at the Family Shelter. Jennifer Buelna, GHS science teacher, leads this group that performs community service throughout the year.

Gunderson is hosting The Jefferson Awards Youth Service Initiative on February 24. Students from Gunderson's community service club, Students in Action and other local high schools will present their yearly project and compete for money and possible national recognition. College & Career staff member, Stephanie Heuer, heads this group that has completed several community projects. At present, the group is spearheading a drive to collect money for the Haiti recovery effort. If you'd like to donate, you can contact Ms. Heuer.

The annual Gunderson Poetry Slam is scheduled for the last week of March, with the final competition to be held the evening of Friday, April 2. Students will perform original poetry. Teachers and guests will also perform. This yearly event is always well attended and much loved.

Later in the spring, events will include the Multimedia Festival (April 29), featuring young filmmakers and photographers. In addition, the spring music concert will feature not only the Gunderson choir, but also the newly formed concert band. These students performed at the winter concert. The majority of them had never played an instrument before they enrolled in this class.

The much-anticipated annual One Act Play Festival will hit the stage May 19 and 20 in the theater.

To learn more about Gunderson, visit the new and improved school website at: <http://gunderson.sjusd.org/Home/home.htm>



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VEP Needs You

By Dave Noel

Each volunteer board member brings a unique set of talents and passions to VEP. The diversity of these talents and passions has enabled VEP to thrive and evolve for over 41 years. For example, some of our newest board members initiated our hugely popular annual Santa in the Park event.



While we continue to be strong in many areas, we currently need one or two people willing to lead civic events.

For example, it's election season, and we need someone willing to chair or co-chair election forums. We also need someone to lead the Community Service Awards beginning next year. And we need people willing to eventually serve as president. Many of our current board members have served for years, and are close to facing burn-out.

Until we get more help, some of our traditional civic events will likely go on hiatus.

If you have ever considered joining our board, please contact us now. Now is the perfect to attend some board meetings to see if you'd be interested in running for a board position this spring. We have some At-Large board positions that enable new board members to learn the ropes without taking on higher responsibilities such as President, Vice President, and Treasurer. As always, OJT is available, and no experience is necessary.

We need you now more than ever. Please join us!

**VEP helps you solve
community problems**

Community Service Awards

By Dave Noel

The end of the school year is already in sight, and soon we'll be rewarding one or more outstanding high school seniors for their exemplary volunteer community service.

ATTENTION: AT-LARGE CANDIDATES

MARCH 6: Applications available from www.vepca.net

APRIL 30: Applications due

For questions, contact Dave Noel at dnoel1234@aol.com or (408) 266-7183

Members present at our January 26th general meeting approved the board's recommendation for this year's CSA program, with the exception that members removed a clause stating "if two or more awards are granted, then one of them must be granted to a Gunderson student."

The approved program for 2010 is: *Up to 3 awards at judges' discretion, evenly distributed among selected winners. Nominations solicited from AHHS, GHS and in our newsletter. School administrators will be asked to nominate at least 2 students per school with no upper limit. No more than 1 award per category (AHHS, GHS, At-Large). OK to grant an award in a category with only 1 nominee. OK not to grant an award in any category if judges feel the candidate(s) don't merit an award.*

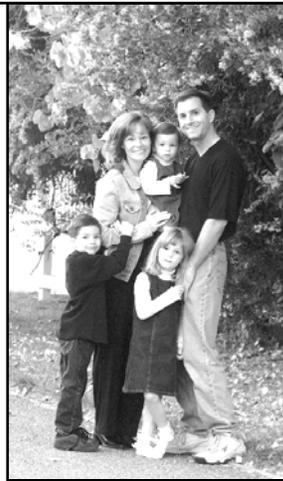
The 2010 CSA budget is \$1,000, down from \$2,000 last year. The approved program provides maximum flexibility for the judging committee to decide how to best award the funds.

Solicitations for nominations from Gunderson and Andrew Hill High Schools will be sent by March 6. We'll present our awards in late May and early June at the winner's school's senior awards program. If we have an At-Large winner, we'll present their award at our May 25th general meeting.

If you know a high school senior with an outstanding volunteer record, please make sure he or she knows about our award.

à VOLUNTEER NEEDED B

This will be my last year as the CSA committee chair. If you want to see this program continue, please consider chairing or co-chairing it. Or, if you'd like to launch a new youth program to replace or supplement the CSA program, we'd love to hear your ideas. For example, we could have a VEP Youth Auxiliary that provides volunteer opportunities and serves the VEP area. Please contact me or any board member, THANKS!!



Precious Moments In Time

Family and Children Portraits

Weddings and Special Events

Photography by Jeri Arstingstall

★ VEP MEMBER ★

(408) 281-3393

Do You YAHOO? Join the fun!

By Susan Iverson

Did you know that VEP has an online community too? You can find VEP in Yahoo! Groups. Yahoo! Groups allow members to exchange information quickly and easily, by using a web based forum to distribute email, photos and files. Utilizing the VEP Group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vep/> will allow neighbors to stay informed about what is going on in the neighborhood, exchange information, and generally get to know your neighbors better.

Membership to the group is free of charge, and you can control whether you receive individual email, or a daily digest of emails. The group site will augment, and not replace, established VEP methods of communication, such as the monthly newsletter (which you are reading), email updates, and monthly meetings.

VEP Board Member Trivia Answers — ONLY ON YAHOO!

Join the VEP Yahoo Group to find out which of your Board Members...

- As an 18 year old, volunteered to go on a Search & Rescue mission in the Southern California desert to rescue a rattlesnack bite victim,?

- First spoken language was German?

-Who is afraid of heights, but has bungee jumped from a bridge, and done accelerated free fall skydiving?

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It's Time to Renew Your VEP Membership

By Dave Fadness and Dave Noel

VEP membership is based on a calendar year, January through December, so it's time to renew your membership. You'll find a remit envelop in this newsletter. Please be sure to fill in the information requested, enclose your \$20 check made payable to VEP, and mail it back to us as soon as possible--while it's still fresh in your mind. That's all there is to it!

In a very real sense, renewing membership is your vote of confidence and support for the work we do as VEP volunteers. Yes, we get an occasional "thank you," but proof positive of your appreciation is 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!

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 sponsors many projects and events that improve safety, our quality of life, and the appearance of our community.

VEP volunteers make our neighborhood's needs, views, and concerns known to government at all levels.

VEP was founded in 1969. We are one of the largest, most successful, and most continuously active and enduring grass roots volunteer organizations in Santa Clara County.

Why join VEP?

To receive our newsletter nine times a year.

To receive monthly email alerts.

To keep our neighborhoods beautiful, safe, strong, and prepared.

To participate in and support effective neighborhood activities and representation.

To support VEP's annual *Community Service Awards* for high school graduates.

To be part of an outstanding volunteer community organization with 40 years of success in our neighborhoods.

ENTER TO WIN RAFFLE PRIZE!!

Join us at the VEP General Meeting on Tuesday February 23rd, and be entered in a drawing to win a gift certificate to a local business!

Bring your neighbors and tell your friends!!



**Invite your neighbors
to join VEP**

** 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? _____

I am willing to volunteer for:

- Beautification/clean-up projects
- VEP News/mailling prep
- Memorial Day Parade & Festival
- Distribute flyers Serve on a committee
- Serve as a VEP officer or committee chair
- Other _____

Please let us know: I prefer getting my newsletters by email.

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

"VEP" Community Association

What does "VEP" stand for?

How did we get that odd name?

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

- V = Vistapark;
- E = Encore (and Echo Valley); and
- P = Parkview Valley.

That's all there is to it!

Of course, we've grown over the years to include the Blossom Heights subdivision and others, including Las Brisas in 2004. But our original **VEP** name stuck, and we've been known by it for 41 years. Some like to think of us...

Very Energetic People

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

VEP Community Calendar

February / March 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
21	22	23 VEP General Meeting - 7:30 pm - Vista Park Community Room	24	25	26	27
28	1 MARCH 	2 Board of Directors Meeting, 7:00pm, Vista Park Community Room	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 Pi Day! 	15 Beware the Ides of March!	16	17 St. Patrick's Day 	18	19	20
21	22	23 NO VEP General Meeting	24	25	26	27
28	29	30 VEP March Faire Gunderson High School.	31 			

THE VEP NEWS



VEP Community Association

P.O. Box 18111 San Jose, CA 95158
Email: vepca@vepca.net Website: www.vepca.net

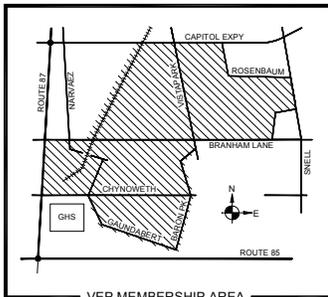
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Published monthly by VEP Community Association, a not-for-profit organization of volunteers established in 1969 to serve and represent more than 2000 homes in the Blossom Valley area of southern San Jose. VEP is dedicated to neighborhood maintenance and improvement in its membership area as well as to active involvement in civic affairs. This newsletter is mailed monthly to all members in good standing, to our advertisers, and to schools and government officials serving our membership area. For membership or paid advertisement information, contact

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Prefer your newsletter via Email?
Let us know at vep@vepca.net.
Join us at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vep/>



Check our website: www.vepca.net

Community Room

Vista Park

in the
7:30 pm

Be sure to attend
VEP's
February 23rd Meeting