

# VEP NEWS

• VEP COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION •

Representing More Than 2,000 Families In The Blossom Valley Area Of South San Jose Since 1969

APRIL 2014

## VEP'S MEETING

7:30 p.m. Tuesday

▶ April 29th, 2014 ◀

Vista Park Community Room  
475 Hyde Park Drive

### AGENDA

#### ★ Communications Hill Development ★

Update on Proposed Arterial Roads

Vistapark Drive; Curtner; Capitol Expwy/Narvaez/Hwy 87

Presentation by

**Jerry Strangis, Consultant KB Homes**

#### ★ Martial Cottle Update ★

#### ★ VEP Business Meeting ★

#### Announcements & Updates

Great America Litter Pickup  
Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup>

Councilmember Khamis District Office Hours  
Location Change  
City Expresso, 630 Blossom Hill Rd.

VEP Community Service Awards  
Volunteers for Judging Panel

#### VEP Community-Wide Garage Sale

Salvation Army Donation Truck  
(Posted at Dead-End of Chynoweth)  
Saturday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>

VEP Annual Membership Drive Ending

May 28<sup>th</sup> is May Membership Meeting

#### ★ 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 April Meeting

*By Marilyn Rodgers*

Please join us at April's general membership meeting, when presentations will include:

▶ **Overview of proposed Communications Hill development**  
**Mr. Jerry Strangis** with KB Homes will provide an overview of the proposal to build the second phase of the development on Communications Hill. This will include building up to 2200 additional housing units and many amenities. Focus of his presentation for VEP will be on the proposal for improving arterial roads for Communications Hill including Vistapark Drive, Curtner, access to Monterey Road, and Capitol Exp/Narvaez/Hwy 87 onramp. **Martial Cottle Update** – **Alicia Flynn and Eric Goodrich** will return to provide additional information and the status of the Perimeter Trail and Martial Cottle Park.

#### ▶ VEP Business Meeting/Updates/Announcements

Brief introductions, announcements and updates will be included.

#### ▶ Your Concerns and Ideas

We want to hear from you! Together we can work toward positive resolution. This approach continues to make VEP neighborhoods strong, healthy, and attractive.

We look forward to seeing you, your friends and neighbors, on **April 29th**.

## "Mayoral Candidate Forum" Synopsis

*By Marilyn Rodgers / Photograph by Katherine Decker*

The Mayoral Candidates Forum replaced the usual monthly VEP general membership meeting in March. The Forum was held at the Gunderson High School Theater, on Thursday evening, March 27th. Over 150 people attended the event sponsored by three community organizations: VEP Community Association, Almaden Winery Neighborhood Association, and Erikson Neighborhood Association.

President Marilyn Rodgers started the evening with brief announcements, introductions, and thank-yous. Presidents of the two other sponsoring organizations were introduced: Nick Labosky and Dave Noel, respectively. Introductions also included current and former elected officials Linda LeZotte and Nancy Pyle. Thank-you's went to Dave Fadness for coordinating the event, to Gunderson High School for use of their facilities, and to Robert Witmeyer for support and provision of the sound equipment.

**Rachel Wilner**, the Editorial Writer for the San Jose Mercury News was introduced as the Moderator for the evening. Ms. Wilner proceeded to provide an overview of the rules, including time limits, and the process to be utilized for members of the audience

*Continues on the Next Page*

# ◆ 2014 is VEP's 45th Year! ◆

Continued from Previous Page

in asking questions of the candidates. She also introduced VEP's experienced timekeeper Bob Aquino.

The five primary candidates - **Dave Cortese, Rose Herrera, Sam Liccardo, Madison Nguyen, and Pierluigi Oliverio** - each were provided a 5-minute introduction. The audience asked several pertinent questions, and each candidate was given an opportunity to respond. Some of the most zesty questions and answers came during the portion of the forum where each candidate could pose a question to their fellow candidates.



The evening ended with attendees taking advantage of the opportunity to spend a few moments talking individually to the candidates. Feedback on the event was generally positive; including two people who stated this was the best candidate's forum they had attended.

Note: For additional information on the Mayoral Candidates, see the special six-page insert in the March edition of the VEP Newsletter. This insert included twelve questions that VEP submitted to the five primary candidates prior to the forum and each of the candidate's responses to those questions.

An additional opportunity for residents of District 10 to attend a Mayoral Candidates Forum will take place on May 1<sup>st</sup> at the Almaden Community Center. It is being sponsored by the Almaden Valley Community Association and the Senior Association.

### Giammona Appointed New VEP Board Member

By Marilyn Rodgers

At the April VEP Board meeting, the Board appointed Rich Giammona to the Board. (Note: In between election cycles, the Board has authority to appoint a member to fill an open position.)

The VEP neighborhood has been very important to both Rich and his family for many years. Rich spent his childhood in this neighborhood and attended Gunderson High School. As an adult, he and his wife Lisa bought a home in the VEP neighborhood. They now own and run a business here - a child care center.

Rich became even more involved in his community as a result of his concern for traffic safety on Bluefield Drive. He and his wife attended the meetings following the tragic death of Aileen, the 7 year old girl who was hit and killed in an accident in front of

Parkview School (on east Bluefield). Rich and Lisa live on west Bluefield Drive. He voiced his concern regarding the fact that west Bluefield also had a problem with speeding drivers. There had been several car accidents and several "near miss" accidents involving adults and children trying to cross the street in front of Meadows Park. With assistance from VEP, Rich and his neighbors continued to work toward improvements on west Bluefield. Over several months, with suggestions from DOT staff and assistance from Councilmember Khamis' office, the results were implementation of additional crosswalks and installation of a 3-way stop at west Bluefield and Edelweiss.

Rich also recently applied for, and was appointed to fill, an open seat representing District 10 on the City's Neighborhoods Commission. Welcome to the VEP Board, Rich!

### VEP Annual Membership Drive Ends Soon!

By Marilyn Rodgers, Ginger Cardona, and Adina Pierce

The annual VEP membership is coming to a close. If you haven't already renewed your membership for the year, please do so today using the Membership application enclosed on page 8 of this Newsletter. Include your check for \$20.00, and mail it to: VEP Community Association, P.O. Box 18111, San Jose, Ca. 95158.

We are always appreciative of our neighbors' continuing support for their community association. Many neighbors have continued to renew their membership year after year - with a significant number letting us know they have been members for 20 or 30 years! We also enjoy reading comments that are included in their membership renewals - here are a few examples:

- You are all so dedicated and hard working on behalf of all of us. Great job and thank you.
- Really enjoy reading the newsletter! - Excellent job!
- Thanks for the stop sign on Bluefield & Edelweiss! - Great job!
- Thank you for keeping our neighborhoods strong and safe.
- Thanks for all you do for all of us. - Thanks for all you do!
- Thank you for all you do for our local community. The Newsletter is outstanding!

We are also appreciative of people who include an additional amount of \$5.00 to \$15.00 to use as needed. Our thanks go to the Danitz's, Jenny Annear & Ron Faulkner, and the Giammona's,

In the past, we have had members send us larger contributions, and, of course we thanked them privately. However, this year, we thought it important to give them a more appropriate public acknowledgement of their concern and gracious financial support of VEP. Thank you to:

- Arul & Retna Edwin \$250.00
- Eric & Cathy Weirshauser \$100.00
- Jim & Linda Dumanowski \$75.00
- Anil & Sheetal Singhal \$60.00
- Scott & Dianne Conry \$50.00

Thanks again for your generous continued support!



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## Volunteers Restore the Vista Park Playlots

By Dave Fadness



Saturday, March 22 was a beautiful day to make the playlots beautiful again at Vista Park. We did.

Ninety-five volunteers turned out to help move 175 cubic yards of fibar (wood chips) and 20 cubic yards of clean sand into the two playlots there. We also whacked and pulled weeds, picked up rubbish, and swept walks and the parking lot. The result is something our community can be proud of and a delight to the kiddies who enjoy this heavily used park-- VEP's "home."

Our friend at Gunderson High School, **Stephanie Heuer** came to our assistance again: of 95 volunteers, 33 were students she recruited for us. San Jose Parks Volunteer Coordinator **Mollie Tobias** and Gardeners **Wendell Cox** and **Andrew Guerreiro** were there to help get the job done right. Parks provided the fibar, sand, and all the tools and wheelbarrows.

Our hard-working adult volunteer "supervisors" included **City Councilman Johnny Khamis, Phil Bejar, Helen Castillo, Aiko Fadness, Bill and Peggy Golden, Jim and Carlton Hicks, Dennis Nitschke, Patricia Lewis, David Pfaff, and Josie Supencheck.**

Plenty of other adults and younger people showed up, many of whom live outside our immediate area. They rallied to Mollie's citywide call for help and an outreach article in Johnny Khamis's newsletter. Our special thanks to these selfless people who go beyond their neighborhoods to offer help.

Our energetic army of helpers started work at 9 am and finished by 11:30 am. We did an amazing job! Filled with new fibar, the playlots look fresh. The sandpit hasn't looked as good in years --it's full of clean, white sand. The weeds and trash are gone. Vista looks like new again.

Many thanks to all those who helped on March 22!

## Street Lights Back On in VEP Neighborhoods

By Marilyn Rodgers

Several members had previously voiced concern about the large number of street lights that had gone dark recently in the VEP neighborhoods. As most of you are aware, when there are more than 3 lights in row that suddenly go dark, it is usually the result of copper wiring theft. This has become a significant problem throughout the City.

Thanks to DOT staff who repair the street lights, as well as assistance from Councilmember Khamis' office, the two areas of most concern in the VEP neighborhood were recently repaired. The areas included: 1) Several (9) lights in a row on the south side of Branham between Vistapark Dr. and New Compton, as well as several lights at the south end of Vistapark; and 2) All of the lights on both sides of Chynoweth (in front of Gunderson H.S.) between New World/Gaundabert to the highway overpass.

The City does rely on residents to report outages of street pole lights. Please continue to call when you see that a street light has gone dark. It also is helpful when more than one neighbor reports the outage. **The number is: 408/794-1903.**

## Fatal Accidents on Branham Lane in February

By Marilyn Rodgers

Sadly, two additional vehicle accidents on Branham Lane during the month of February increased the number of fatalities along Branham by three in less than a year. The two accidents, each involving a single car, happened late on Saturday nights one week apart. The first accident occurred just east of Vistapark Dr. on Branham, close to Royal Gate. This accident was the result of speed and alcohol. The second accident occurred one week later close to the intersection of Branham and Snell, on the street side next to McDonald's. Speed and alcohol also contributed to this accident which resulted in two fatalities -- one at scene of the accident, the other at the hospital. The driver of this vehicle was arrested on charges of DUI and possible manslaughter.

The accident close to Vistapark and Branham increases the number of fatalities in this specific area to 4, with 2 additional accidents having resulted in critical injuries. All of these accidents have occurred in less than one year's timeframe. Following this most recent accident, VEP once again voiced concern about the need for traffic calming and increased law enforcement intervention. SJPD initiated increased monitoring of the intersection and stretch of Branham Lane between Kingspark and Royal Gate over the next several days. Several tickets were given to speeding drivers. Note: The speed limit in front of Carlton Plaza is zoned for 25 miles/hour in both directions on Vistapark Drive south of Branham, and when travelling in either direction on Branham Lane. This is because Carlton Plaza is an Assisted Living Facility.

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## Crime and Safety in the VEP Neighborhoods

By Marilyn Rodgers

### Pedestrian Attacked on Branham & Kingspark Sidewalk

On Thursday evening, April 10<sup>th</sup> at about 5pm, a small older woman was attacked and beaten in an attempt to steal her purse. The attacker was a young very large man. The attack took place on the sidewalk close to Kingspark on Branham Lane (across from Martial Cottle Park Trail). Fortunately, several neighbors immediately came to her aid. One neighbor driving by in his truck saw what was happening and drove his truck up onto the sidewalk to stop the attack and scare the perpetrator away. Other witnesses called the police. SJPD responded, found and arrested the suspect a few blocks away at Parkview basketball courts. Many thanks for the quick thinking and quick action by our neighbors!

### Home Burglary on Hyde Park Drive

In March, a neighbor on Hyde Park (close to Wellington Park Drive) had his home burglarized. This happened at approximately 9:30am on a weekday morning. He left home at approximately 9am and returned just after 10am. Apparently someone went through the unlocked side gate, and entered the home through the back. A gun and \$500.00 was stolen. SJPD was notified and responded immediately. Both the homeowner and another neighbor had seen someone systematically approaching houses along the street prior to the incident. The neighbor had a sense that all was not right, and took a picture of this person on her cell phone. The police were appreciative of being provided with this additional information as well as the picture of a potential suspect. No further information was available at this writing.

### Vehicle Break-ins – Thefts of Tools

During March and April, neighbors in the Parkview area reported at least two incidences involving thefts of equipment and/or valuable tools (in toolboxes) stolen from the backs of trucks parked in residents' driveways.

The purpose of reporting these incidents is to alert residents in the neighborhood to continue to be vigilant, to be aware and careful of their surroundings, to inform their neighbors of incidents, and to encourage reporting of any and all suspicious behavior to SJPD. For those who may be interested, an additional option for security is TAPS Private Security Patrols – see article on page 6 of this newsletter.

### Traffic Safety Tips<sup>(\*)</sup>

If you want to make San José streets safer, it's just a matter of being smart!

The behavior of drivers, cyclists and pedestrians play a huge role in keeping our streets safe. Follow the tips below to help ensure your safety and the safety of others.



#### Pedestrians

Cross at intersections or crosswalks, not in the middle of the road or between parked cars.

Before stepping off the curb, look left, right, and left again for traffic; and be aware of turning vehicles.

Make eye contact with drivers to be sure you are seen.

Watch for traffic the entire time while crossing a street.

If one car stops, don't assume that other motorists have seen or and will stop, especially on multi-lane streets.

Avoid wearing headphones or using your phone when crossing the street.

Wear bright colors or reflective clothing if walking at night. Consider carrying a flashlight.

#### Bicyclists

Obey traffic signs and signals--bicycles must follow the rules of the road like other vehicles.

Never ride against traffic--motorists aren't looking for cyclists on the wrong side of the road.

Use hand signals for turning or stopping.

When turning left at an intersections, either: (1) continue across the intersection and use the crosswalk when it's safe and legal to do so (similar to a pedestrian), or (2) signal and move into the left side of the travel lane (or left turn lane) as a vehicle.

Watch out for road hazards like sewer grates, tracks, potholes, or debris.

Avoid the door zone--exercise care not to ride too close to parked cars.

Respect the right-of-way of others, including pedestrians.

Wear a snug fitting helmet to protect your head, and never ride with headphones.

Wear bright, light colored clothing if biking at night; and always use a headlight, taillight or rear reflectors.

#### Motorists

Don't be a distracted driver. Attention should be on the road at all times.

Slow down in neighborhoods and near schools. Watch out for children and pets.

Stop for pedestrians crossing the street.

When making a right turn, check for cyclists or pedestrians that may be crossing the intersection.

Reduce your speed when passing cyclists, especially if the roadway is narrow.

Maintain a consistent speed and keep a buffer zone between you and other vehicles.

Stopping is part of driving. Obey all stop signs and traffic signals.

Obey the posted speed limit.

(\*)Source: City of San Jose / [www.GetStreetSmarts.org](http://www.GetStreetSmarts.org)

### Neighborhood Traffic Safety ► Frequently Requested Numbers ◀

#### Enforcement

Speeding & moving violations: SJPD Traffic Enforcement Unit, 408-277-4341; [www.sjpd.org/TEU/](http://www.sjpd.org/TEU/)

Parking Enforcement: DOT Parking Compliance Unit, 408-534-2900; [parking.compliance@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:parking.compliance@sanjoseca.gov)

Abandoned Vehicles: DOT Parking Compliance Unit, 408-277-5305; [www.sanjoseca.gov/AbandonedVehicles](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/AbandonedVehicles)

#### Education

School Traffic Safety Presentations: DOT Street Smarts Program, 408-975-3269; [www.getstreetsmarts.org/](http://www.getstreetsmarts.org/)

#### Engineering

Traffic Safety: DOT Neighborhood Traffic Program, 408-535-385; [traffic.safety@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:traffic.safety@sanjoseca.gov)

Signal Timing: DOT Signal Operations, 408-975-3700; [traffic.signals@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:traffic.signals@sanjoseca.gov)

#### Maintenance

Faded Signs & Markings: DOT Infrastructure Maintenance, Street Sweeping, Streetlight Repair, Damaged Sidewalk, Potholes, Malfunctioning Signals, 408-277-4373;

[streets.dispatch@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:streets.dispatch@sanjoseca.gov)

ED. NOTE: Thanks to Dave Fadness for Providing this information.

## Despite Recent Rains, Drought Far from Over

By Linda Lezotte, Director - Santa Clara Valley Water District

I recently spoke to the Campbell Chamber of Commerce about the severe drought and the how the Santa Clara Valley Water District is dealing with this situation. I wanted to share that information with you. In late February, as a member of the Board of the Water District, my colleagues and I passed a resolution calling upon retail water agencies, the county and local cities to implement mandatory measures to reach a water use reduction target equal to 20 percent of 2013 water use.

Despite a few recent storms, our water supply conditions still look bleak. Locally, our reservoirs are only at about half of their normal capacity for this time of year.

We called for mandatory conservation due to significant changes between late January and late February. One, a reduction of the amount of water imported from the Sierra Nevada watersheds through the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta to our county. On Jan. 31, the state Department of Water Resources reduced our allocation from 5 percent of the district's contract amount to **zero**. This impacts the district's ability to transfer water that has been stored underground near Bakersfield to supplement our Santa Clara Valley aquifer. Two, on Feb. 21, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation announced that the water district's agricultural allocation would be zero, and our allocation for use by homes and businesses would be reduced to 50 percent of historic use. These reductions will require the District to implement aggressive water management techniques.

A priority of the district is continued delivery of safe, clean water from its drinking water treatment plants to retail water agencies, the county and local cities. Imported water typically provides more than 85 percent of the supply for the water district's three drinking water treatment plants. In dry and critically dry years, when local water is limited, up to 99 percent of treated drinking water is from imported water sources. With less fresh water flowing through the Delta, the district is working with retail water agencies to maintain our normally high drinking water quality.

Because of the lack of local and imported water, nearly all of our groundwater replenishment operations have been cut back to conserve supplies for use this summer. This means most of our groundwater recharge ponds around the county are beginning to dry or are already dry, despite recent rainfall. Additionally, to conserve water the District is modifying operations that will impact creek flows to and through Almaden Lake through 2014. The Lake will see a continual drop in water levels (roughly a 7-foot drop), but it is not expected to dry completely. You can find a Fact Sheet about Almaden Lake and the Drought on the District's website.

We've also begun storing imported water in Anderson Reservoir to help ensure that there is sufficient water to supply treatment plants through the year.

Residents and businesses can expect over the coming weeks, for their local water provider or municipality to begin implementing measures to reach the 20 percent target. The water district, as a wholesale provider, relies on retailer water agencies, local municipalities and the county to enact and implement local ordinances and water use reduction measures. The Board has also established an Ad Hoc Water Conservation Committee to discuss the implementation of actions to achieve the district's water use reduction targets.

We all know that water use efficiency is always the right thing to do. In this drought, immediate conservation will help ensure that our community has enough water to meet essential needs. The water district has developed a one-stop website for information about water supply conditions, conservation programs, water saving tips and drought alerts. Just go to [www.valleywater.org/drought2014/](http://www.valleywater.org/drought2014/) and find out what you can do to save today and tomorrow.

We thank you for your efforts.

*As always, I am available for questions or comments as your District 4 representative for the City of Campbell, portions of Willow Glen and the Cambrian, North Almaden and Blossom Hill neighborhoods of San Jose. Feel free to contact me at (408)265.2600.*



**WALK n' ROLL**  
City of San José

## Recommend Local Schools for Walk n'Roll SJ

By Dave Fadness

San Jose's Department of Transportation (DOT) is currently working with 35 elementary schools in San Jose to encourage more children to walk or bike to school, helping reduce congestion in school zones. District 10 schools Sakamoto, Williams, and Del Roble are already participating in the Walk n' Roll program. Now, the city has received grant funds to expand this program to another twenty schools. VEP members with recommendations for any other schools (elementary or middle) that would like to participate, should contact DOT. Find Information and program contacts at:

<http://www.getstreetsmarts.org/walknroll/index.htm>

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## VEP Community-Wide Garage Sale, May 3rd: Salvation Army Donation Truck Will Be Available!

By Ginger Cardona, Helen Castillo, and Rachel Witmeyer

Our annual *Community Garage Sale* will be held on Saturday, May 3rd. Make sure to mark it on your calendar now, and start gathering those treasures you no longer use from your garage, attic, and closets.

We want to get everyone in our community to have a garage sale on the same day. The best way to find a new home for your unused stuff is to increase traffic to your home. So, VEP will advertise this event in local newspapers and by distributing flyers around our neighborhoods.

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

Plan now to make sure you can be seen from the street. Put up balloons or signs. Have your out-of-area friends bring garage sale items that add to yours-make it a big, fun event on your street or cul-de-sac. A little energy and creativity now will pay off in big dividends, freeing up space in your home and putting extra money in your pocket.

A Salvation Army Donation Truck will be available from 10:30am until 5:30pm on Saturday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>. It will be parked at the end of Chynoweth – south of Gunderson High School. This is a convenient opportunity to donate items from home. You can also donate any items that are not sold during the garage sale.

If you will be participating and would like to have your street specifically listed on craigslist, please email just the street name to [vepeditor@gmail.com](mailto:vepeditor@gmail.com).

## VEP Board Elections in May

By Marilyn Rodgers

May is VEP's annual meeting. Included as part of the Business Meeting section of the May meeting are annual reports and election of a slate of board members. The slate of board members will be listed in advance as part of the May VEP newsletter. The membership will be asked to approve the slate at the May membership meeting.

If you would like to submit your name for consideration for a Board seat, please submit it to VEP by email: [vepca@vepca.net](mailto:vepca@vepca.net). Names of interested members are also retained for consideration by the Board should a vacancy on the Board occur between election cycles. The Board has the authority to appoint members in good standing to the Board to fill vacancies. Board Officers – President, Treasurer, Secretary, are elected by the Board Members at the first meeting following the membership approval of the slate of members for the board.



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## TAPS Patrols in VEP

By Bob Glicksman

You may have noticed TAPS patrols coming through our VEP neighborhoods. TAPS is a private security service that offers patrols to residents of VEP on a contracted basis. TAPS service costs \$17.50 per month.

By paying this fee you get:

- Approximately 7 patrols per day, 24 x 7, past your house with specific checks for suspicious activity on each patrol.
- Patrol agents who are trained to observe and report suspicious activity in and around your property and in the neighborhood in general (including parks, schools and other community areas).
- The cell phone number for direct contact with the agent patrolling your area, any time, 24 x 7, if you see suspicious activity.
- Alarm response: TAPS will investigate monitored or reported alarms and provide verification of a break-in or other criminal activity to SJPD. As you probably know, SJPD will not respond to unverified alarms.
- Parcel pickup: TAPS can pick up Fed-x and UPS parcels that are dropped at your door, so that they are not stolen and don't show that the house is unoccupied.
- Neighborhood interventions: barking dogs, noisy parties, etc.
- Vacation checks: You notify TAPS know when you will be away from home and what conditions to look out for (e.g. what car(s) should and should not be in your driveway).
- Routine check-ins with subscribers, and close up inspections of subscriber's property when you are not home. TAPS agents get to know you and what is out of the ordinary for your property.
- Incident reports: Every TAPS patrol files an incident report on a private web site that subscribers have access to.

I have been a TAPS subscriber since last summer and I am pleased with the service. I believe that TAPS provides enhanced security for my family, my property and the neighborhood, in general. The TAPS incident reports document a number of patrol agent encounters with suspicious people in our neighborhoods. In all cases reported, the person confronted by the TAPS agent immediately took off. TAPS patrols are already helping to deter crime in our community.

You may feel that you are getting the benefit of TAPS patrols without having to pay for it. To a limited extent, this is true; if you happen to live along a patrol route that has been set up because some of us are paying for TAPS service. However, you cannot get the full benefits that TAPS offers unless you subscribe, and whatever benefit you get is totally determined by which of your neighbors subscribe. In any event, if too few of us sign up to make VEP neighborhoods cost effective for TAPS, then none of us will be able to avail ourselves of the benefits of a private patrol that augments and integrates with our fine, but understaffed, police department.

You can get more information about TAPS and sign up for service

Online: <http://tapspi.com/residential-patrol-services/>

By E-mail: [main@tapspi.com](mailto:main@tapspi.com)

By Phone: 1-877-982-7774



### Announcements from the Office of Mike Wasserman

- Do you have an opinion about Almaden Expressway? Then we want to hear from you, Santa Clara County is examining the needs of the County Expressway System and we want your input. Please take a minute to fill out a quick and easy survey by visiting [www.expressways.info](http://www.expressways.info) and clicking on the survey link. This survey is the best way to tell us about how you use the expressways and give us your thoughts about expressway system improvements.

- Despite the recent rains, the drought is not over. The Northern Sierra snowpack is our main source of water and it is at 32% of average as of April 1, and our local reservoirs are at just 40% of total capacity. The County of Santa Clara and the Santa Clara Valley Water District are asking residents to reduce water usage by 20%. We are doing our part too: in fact, the County of Santa Clara received the 2013 Silicon Valley Water Conservation Award for ongoing reductions, including saving 20 million gallons annually through turf-replacement projects. For daily water conservation tips, follow [@SaveOurWater](https://twitter.com/SaveOurWater) on Twitter.

- The Santa Clara County Office of Women's Policy and the American Association of University Women of the San Jose branch invite high school girls to attend the free Strong Girls, Strong Women: A Leadership Conference for High School Girls, taking place on May 3, 2014 (8:00am-1:30pm) at the School of Arts and Culture, 700 Alum Rock Ave, San Jose. The event includes a private screening of the award-winning documentary Miss Representation, a resource fair, and Reach for the Stars Leadership Lunch. There will also be five leadership tracks for Strong Girls and five tracks for Strong Women. Moms and adult advocates for girls are encouraged to register and attend, too. Call: 408-299-5152

- This month I am spotlighting amazing work of Vector Control. Vector Control is an agency that falls under the County Agriculture and Environmental Management Department. Vector Control's mission is to detect and minimize vector-borne diseases, to abate mosquitoes, and to assist the public in resolving problems with rodents, wildlife, and insects of medical significance. A vector can be a mosquito, a rat, a flea, a tick, any animal or insect that can transmit diseases or cause harm to a human. This year Vector Control's work is more important than ever because all signs point to an earlier West Nile Virus season due to our unusually warm weather. To help combat this threat Vector Control urges all homeowners to empty, turn over, throw out or cover all containers accessible to mosquitoes, and to take precautions with fish ponds, bird baths and fountains. To help aid in this effort Vector Control gives out free Mosquito Fish for your pond or fountain. For more information about Vector Control or to receive your free Mosquito Fish, visit <http://www.sccgov.org/sites/vector/Pages/vcd.aspx> and be sure to look for our free iPhone app SCCVECTOR.

Time is short to submit your photo....

### 2014 Historic Photo Contest Photo entries are due April 27

The Preservation Action Council of San Jose (PAC\* SJ) and the San Jose Historic Landmarks Commission are hosting the San Jose 2014 Historic Photo Contest.

May is national Historic Preservation Month and this third citywide photo contest will celebrate historic preservation in San Jose. Photographs (in jpg format and taken in 2013-2014) of historic structures or historic artifacts in San Jose can be emailed to: [Contest2014@SJHistoricalPhoto.com](mailto:Contest2014@SJHistoricalPhoto.com). Name, category (student or adult), and a description of the photograph must accompany each photo submission. Deadline for entries is April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014. For additional details and contest rules please visit [www.sjhistoricalphoto.com](http://www.sjhistoricalphoto.com).

Finalists will be notified in early May and their photographs will be displayed for a few weeks. An awards ceremony with prizes will conclude the exhibit on June 5<sup>th</sup>, at Southern Lumber Company, 1402 Monterey Highway, San Jose.

Judges will choose the winners based on the written explanation, photographic technique, photographic creativity and historical significance of each entry.

Donations (tax deductible) are gladly accepted which will go towards the prizes to be awarded the winning photographers. Donations may be made by check payable to PAC\* SJ with a notation on the check that it is for the photo contest. Mail your donation to: Preservation Action Council of San Jose, History Park, 1650 Senter Road, San Jose CA 95112-2599.

For questions or to donate: [2014HistoricPhotoContest@preservation.org](mailto:2014HistoricPhotoContest@preservation.org).

# American & Litter Pick Up

## Saturday, April 26th 8:00 AM - 12:30 PM

### Beautify Your Community - Earn Service Credit Locations

- Pioneer High School - 1290 Blossom Hill Rd
- Del Roble Elementary - 5345 Ave Almadenos
- Almaden Community Center - 6445 Camden Ave
- Ohlone/Chynoweth VTA Station - Pearl & Chynoweth
- Almaden Road Sound Wall - Almaden Rd & Bose Ln
- Playa Del Rey Park - Sunny Oaks Ln & Stardust Ln

For more information contact Rayshelle at [rayshelle.brant@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:rayshelle.brant@sanjoseca.gov) or call 408-535-4982



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# Renew Your VEP Membership!

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 44 years of success in our neighborhoods.

☺ **MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND INVITE A FRIEND OR NEIGHBOR TO JOIN OUR UPCOMING EVENT!** ☺

~ Saturday, May 3rd ~

## \* VEP Neighborhood Garage Sale \*

A great time to clean out cupboards, attics & garages!  
Starting as early as 7:00am.



No sign-up is required!  
Just place your items outside your home!  
VEP Pays for Local Print Advertising!

Info: Ginger Cardona @ 408-227-0222  
or, email, cardona@sbcglobal.net



If you would like to drop off any items, the **Salvation Army** will be available at the dead end of Chynoweth, near the south end of Gunderson High School.  
~ 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. ~

## \*\* 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):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Comment(s):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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, CA 95158.

**Thank you!**



## Gardening with John

By John Marks, Gardening Editor

### Black Mold on Oranges

When you go to pick your oranges, you may notice a black "dirt" on the oranges as well as the leaves. You may also notice a lot of scale all over the trees. The "dirt" is called sooty mold. The scale comes from aphids, mealy bugs and other sap-sucking insects that eat more sap than they can digest and exude the excess. It all falls to the fruit and leaves below, and a fungus grows on this exudate. Sooty mold grows only on the surface and can be washed off. The exudate is sweet and serves as a food source for ants. To control the scale, prevent ants from climbing the tree and natural predators will usually take care of the scale. To stop ants, wrap a three-inch-wide band of masking tape around the trunk and spread sticky goo (tanglefoot) on the tape. Although the ants can't cross the tape, they will look for other ways to get at the food that they scent. You will have to remove any branches, twigs or leaves touching any structure or another plant, as they will climb to follow the scent.

### Degenerate Tomatoes

Tomatoes in our area can be infected by two soil-inhabiting fungi, verticillium wilt and fusarium wilt. Both can cause the fruit to become deformed, stay small, and the leaves turn brown - but the most likely culprit is fusarium wilt. These two fungal disease persist in the soil for up to 20 years and affect many other plants, as well. Do not replant tomatoes in the same place. If possible, plant only those that are labeled VFN (verticillium-, fusarium- and nematode-resistant). These will help prevent the spread of the diseases. Rotating the area where tomatoes are to be planted is an old but effective practice.

### Squirrels II

As you know from previous newsletters, there are no repellents or magic wands to make squirrels go away, but you can discourage them with this free tip! Put walnut-sized rocks on the surface of the soil in your pots and planters. Use colored rocks if possible - red, white, lava or smooth black stones. Don't ask me why it works, but the size is important, and those bushy-tailed rats will leave your containers alone.

### Crab grass Bothering You?

One way to handle crab grass is weed killers. Many types exist. The most effective among them are pre-emergent types that kill weed seeds as they sprout. It's essential to apply the herbicide before the crabgrass emerges from the soil. This happens in spring when soil temperatures are greater than 55° to 60°F for 7 to 10 consecutive days, so you may still have time. Check with your local extension service for timing, or monitor the soil temperature yourself using a soil thermometer inserted at an angle just below the surface. But don't apply weed killers prior to seeding or in an area that's just been seeded.

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## A Year of Salads, Sandwiches, & Soups

Online @ [ayearofsaladssandwichesandsoups.blogspot.com](http://ayearofsaladssandwichesandsoups.blogspot.com)

By Kathy Wood, Baker

How do you get rid of unwanted guests? Every family has one or more...those people who can make your day brighter by appearing on your doorstep with a big smile and lots of news to share. Plans are made to go shopping or enjoy a sporting event, maybe a graduation or even a wedding. But, after a certain amount of time (this ranges with tolerance and annoyance levels) little things pop up that cause the gritting of teeth and biting of lips.

There is a saying that goes something like this "Guests, like fish, begin to smell after 3 days." This would be good to display right under your "Home Sweet Home" sign. Someone has figured out that 3 days is, for most people, a good length of time to be able to spend with someone other than your spouse. Everyone has their routines, their unique way of doing things, different eating times and amount of rest they need-that's what makes us individuals.

So, how to get rid of what started out as "wanted guests" then turned into "unwanted." An ejection bed is a possibility, but then a pop-up ceiling/roof would need to be installed and could become costly. Cooking tasteless food only makes YOU look bad. Putting some nice fresh cow manure on the garden that just so happens to be right by their bedroom window is an option (depending on where they live though, this may be an odor they are used to).

I guess the answer depends on you, your personality, your visitor's personalities, and the activities involved.

If you do have guests, wanted or unwanted, this recipe is good for either a crowd or a few people, and has been my go-to recipe for "Sloppy Joes" for years. It's quick and easy to make and could be put in a slow cooker on low after it's made for people to help themselves.

### Sloppy Joes

Serves 4 people.

#### Ingredients:

- 1 pound of hamburger
- ½ cup green pepper, diced
- 1 cup chopped onion
- ¼ cup catsup
- 2 Tbsp. prepared mustard
- 2 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 2 Tbsp. vinegar
- 4 Tbsp. sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup water

#### Optional:

- Dash of cayenne pepper
- A bit of smoked paprika

#### Instructions:

- Fry hamburger, pepper, and onions in large frying pan. Drain grease; add remaining ingredients, stirring well.
- Cook on medium high heat until thick, stirring frequently, about 20-25 minutes.
- Reduce heat to low and simmer until ready to eat (at this point, it could be put in a slow cooker).
- Serve on warm buns with a sprinkling of shredded cheese.



**Don't Forget to Get Kathy's Recipes Online!**

[ayearofsaladssandwichesandsoups.blogspot.com](http://ayearofsaladssandwichesandsoups.blogspot.com)

# VEP Community Schools Calendar

April / May 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
20 	21  Earth Day Event @John Muir MS	22  Earth Day 2014	23	24	25	26
27	28 NJHS Information Meeting ~ 2:30 pm ~ @John Muir MS Room 207	29	30 JMMS: Falcon Feeding Frenzy ~ 4:00-9:00pm ~ @Subway	1	2	3
4	5 John Muir MS Book Fair Week 	6	7  Open House ~ 6:00 pm ~ @John Muir MS	8	9	10 De Anza College New Students & Parents Open House ~ 9 am-1 pm ~ @Gunderson HS
11	12  Teacher Appreciation Week @Carson School	13 SELAC Meeting ~ 6:30-7:30pm ~ @Gunderson	14 PTSA Meeting (Final of 13-14) ~ 6:30 pm ~ @JMMS Library	15 Multimedia & Art Festival ~ 5:30-8:00pm ~ @GHS Forum	16  Gunderson Prom 8:00pm-Midnight @Corinthian Event Center	17
18	19 NJHS Meeting ~ 2:30 pm ~ @John Muir MS Room 207	20 JMMS: Falcon Feeding Frenzy ~ 4:00-9:00pm ~ @Aqui's Cal-Mex	21	22 NJHS Induction ~ 6:00 pm ~ @JMMS Cafeteria	23  Spell-A-Thon @Carson School Minimum Day @John Muir MS	24

## Community Schools Contact Information

**Carson Elementary School ~ Home of the Cougars**

WEB: <http://www.sjUSD.org/carson/> PHONE: (408) 535-6287

**Parkview Elementary School ~ Home of the Panthers**

WEB: <http://parkviewca.com/> PHONE: (408) 226-4655

**John Muir Middle School ~ Home of the Falcons**

WEB: <http://sjUSD.org/john-muir/> PHONE: (408) 535-6281

**Gunderson High School ~ Home of the Grizzlies**

WEB: <http://www.sjUSD.org/gunderson/home/> PHONE: (408) 535-6340



# VEP Community Calendar

April / May 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>20</b> 	21	<b>22</b> 	23	<b>24</b> <b>Application Deadline</b> VEP Community Service Awards	25	<b>26</b>  <b>Great American Litter Pick-Up</b> ~8am-12:30pm~ Chynoweth & Pearl
<b>27</b>  Preservation Action Council of San Jose: <b>Historic Photo Contest Deadline</b> sjhistoricalphoto.com	28	<b>29</b> <b>VEP Community Meeting</b> ~ 7:30 PM ~ @Vista Park Community Room	30	1	2	<b>3</b> <b>VEP Community Garage Sale</b> Starting @7am
4	<b>5</b> San Jose Budget Meeting, District 10 ~ 6:00-8:00pm ~ Location TBA	6	<b>7</b> D10 "Office Hours" Meeting w/Johnny Khamis ~ 8:30-9:30am ~ @Almaden Community Center Community Rm. 6445 Camden Ave	8	9	<b>10</b> 
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	<b>21</b> D10 "Office Hours" Meeting w/Johnny Khamis ~ 5:00-6:30pm ~ City Espresso 630 Blossom Hill Rd	22	23	24

## Important Dates to Remember!

### VEP Community Meetings

April 29, 2014

May 27, 2014

### VEP Community Events

**Community Garage Sale**

Saturday, May 3, 2014

# THE VEP NEWS



## VEP Community Association

P.O. Box 18111 San Jose, CA 95158  
 Email: [vepca@vepca.net](mailto:vepca@vepca.net) Website: [www.vepca.net](http://www.vepca.net)

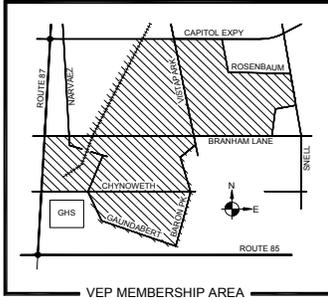
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Published monthly by VEP Community Association, a not-for-profit organization of volunteers established in 1969 to serve and represent more than 2000 homes in the Blossom Valley area of southern San Jose. VEP is dedicated to neighborhood maintenance 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 our Treasurer or write to the address listed above.

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Check our website: [www.vepca.net](http://www.vepca.net)

Community Room

Vista Park

7:30 pm in the

Be sure to attend  
 VEP's Community Meeting  
 Tuesday, April 29th