

VEP NEWS

• VEP COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION •

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

APRIL  2015

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The "VEP News" is the official publication of the VEP Community Association, published monthly during the months of September through May each year.

We appreciate and will, at the discretion of the VEP Executive Board, attempt to publish any and all articles that will be of general interest to our membership community.

The VEP strongly encourages local schools to submit news articles about events and achievements on their campuses. Articles written by students will be given extra special consideration.

Persons, schools, or organizations who are interested in submitting articles, letters, or information to be included in the VEP News are encouraged to contact the Editor of the "VEP News," Mrs. Rachel Witmeyer. Email: vepeditor@gmail.com // Phone: 408-226-2935

VEP Community Association Membership

Persons who would like to join the VEP Community Association may send their name, address, and \$20 yearly dues to:

VEP Community Association
P.O. BOX 18111; SAN JOSE, CA; 95158.

Please, do not send cash. Make checks payable to "VEP."

VEP Community Association ~ Executive Board of Directors

President - Marilyn Rodgers
Vice President - Katherine Decker
Secretary - Adina Pierce
Treasurer - Ginger Cardona
Director - Helen Castillo
Director - Rich Giammona
Director - Peggy Golden
"VEP News" Editor - Rachel Witmeyer



VEP'S MEETING

7:30 p.m. - Tuesday
▶ **April 28th, 2015** ◀

Vista Park Community Room
475 Hyde Park Dr.

Everyone is welcome. Invite your neighbors!

AGENDA

★ **Crime & Safety Update - SJPD** ★
Information & Statistics for VEP Neighborhoods

Presentation by
Captain Ed Schroder
Commander, SJPD Southern Division

★ **Our City Forest – Martial Cottle Park Partner** ★

Presentation by Rhonda Berry, Founder & CEO

★ **San Jose Public Libraries: Plan to Open 6 Days/Wk** ★
Opportunities for Volunteers

Presentation by Joan Young, Volunteer Coordinator

★ **Updates on Martial Cottle Park and Perimeter Trail** ★

Presentation by Eric Goodrich, Park Manager

★ **VEP Business Meeting** ★

Announcements & Updates

All American Litter Pickup – April 25th
Sign-in & Supply Pickup – Begins at 8:30am
Vista Park Parking Lot, Hyde Park Drive

Annual VEP Community-wide Garage Sale
Saturday, May 2, 2015

VEP Membership Drive – Final Month

Updates from Councilmember Khamis & Staff
District 10 City Budget Meeting, May 5th

VEP's Next Meeting - Tuesday, June 2, 2015

★ **Your Concerns and Ideas** ★

Your chance to voice your opinion and to seek VEP's help.

◆ **2015 is VEP's 46th Year!** ◆

VEP's April Meeting Preview

By Marilyn Rodgers

We look forward to seeing you, your friends and neighbors, on **April 28th**. Please join us at the April VEP Community meeting, featuring:

► **Presentations:** Featured presentations will include **Crime and Safety information for the VEP neighborhoods** presented by the **new Southern Division Commander, Captain Ed Schroder**. **Captain Schroder** will also be providing attendees an opportunity to participate in a Question and Answer session. The second featured speaker is a long time partner with the VEP Community, and now an organizational partner with Martial Cottle Park – **Rhonda Berry, CEO and Founder of Our City Forest**. **Ms. Berry** will provide an overview of the resources and projects that will be housed at Martial Cottle, as well as highlighting volunteer opportunities for the community. The final presenter will be **Joan Young, San Jose Public Libraries Volunteer Coordinator**. **Ms. Young** will provide information on the expanded need for volunteers which will enable the proposed plan to go in providing library services **six days per week** from the current 4 days per week.

► **VEP Business Meeting/Updates/Announcements.**

Announcements and updates will be included. See the Agenda on Page 1 for more details.

► **Your Concerns and Ideas** – We want to hear from you! Together we can work toward positive resolution. This continues to make VEP neighborhoods strong, healthy, and attractive.

We look forward to seeing you, your friends and neighbors, on **April 28th**. Please join us!

March Meeting Synopsis

By Marilyn Rodgers

President Rodgers welcomed everyone to the meeting. She informed those in attendance that a nice way to start the meeting is to give everyone an opportunity to meet someone they did not know. She asked them to turn to someone close by and introduce themselves. Introductions were to also include what street they lived on. She gave everyone approximately 3 minutes of time for this activity. Everyone seems to enjoy this activity and it is difficult to get them to stop and return to a meeting format. Ms. Rodgers said she wanted to introduce the Board members in attendance – first she introduced Josie Supencheck who is not a Board Member but had agreed to assist with the meeting in Katherine Decker's absence. She then introduced Ginger Cardona, Debra Suydam, and Adina Pierce, as well as Past Presidents Jeri Arstingstall, Bob Aquino, and Greg West. Others introduced were Councilmember Johnny Khamis and one of his new staff members Jose Salcido.

Ms. Rodgers informed everyone, who might not be already aware of the **tragedy affecting Vice President Katherine Decker** and her family. Katherine is the mother of SJPD Officer Michael Johnson who had been killed in the line of duty on March 24th. President Rodgers indicated that she had been with Katherine since that evening at about 8pm. Ms. Rodgers had quickly contacted Councilmember Khamis who came to the Decker's home to provide any assistance needed. Mayor Sam Liccardo and the Acting City Manager, Norberto Duenas came to the Decker's home to personally relay their condolences and offer any support or assistance needed. Ms. Rodgers also told the audience that Katherine's family appreciates everyone's concern and support, as well as their consideration for the family's need for privacy at this time. SJPD and POA had also been very helpful and supportive in providing both assistance as well as security for the family. Finally, President Rodgers asked everyone to sign a poster for

Katherine and her family.

Ms. Rodgers then invited Councilmember Khamis to address the audience. He also expressed his sadness at the loss of Officer Michael Johnson, and the personal loss he felt on behalf of Katherine, who is not only a constituent but a friend. He also wanted to thank all of the SJPD police officers for their service and the sacrifice they make on a daily basis to the City that we all care about. The Councilmember apologized for not being able to attend all of our meetings, as Tuesday evenings have become almost impossible for him – with the City Council meetings often running late into Tuesday evenings. Councilmember Khamis briefly discussed the Safety Meeting held in Almaden Valley at the Bret Harte School, which had a very large turnout of concerned citizens. This meeting was in response to a large upturn in home burglaries in that area of his district. He was happy to report that several arrests had since been made with the hard work of SJPD and the new Southern Division Commander, Captain Schroder, as well as the involvement and partnership of many of the residents. They have been actively watching out for themselves and their neighbors. A planned follow-up to the above meeting will be a meeting focusing on the impact of Proposition 47 – which mandated releasing non-violent felons from California State Prisons back to the custody and control of the Counties and Cities throughout California. (Note: this was in lieu of increased taxes to build additional new state prisons). He reminded people to take advantage of his community office hours – the newest one now being held on a Saturday morning – the 2nd Saturday of the month, on Blossom Hill Road at City Expresso from 10am – 11:30am. Ms. Rodgers thanked the Councilmember.

President Rodgers then stated she was very appreciative of the willingness of the next speaker, who had made himself available with late notice, to come do a presentation for VEP. There had been some scheduling challenges in confirming speakers, as March 31st is a holiday for both the City of San Jose and the County of Santa Clara (it is Cesar Chavez's birthday). She then introduced **Ron Berube** a volunteer from the AARP's Smart Driver Course. Mr. Berube emphasized the fact that he and his colleagues are all volunteers, not paid staff. They provide these courses because they believe in the value and importance of the course. 400 volunteers teach the class – they teach the courses at Community Centers, Senior Centers, and Hospitals. (Note: They could teach a class at the Vista Park Community Room if there is enough interest.) 15 million seniors have participated in this program since 1979.

Anyone can take the course, but you do have to be 50 years old to obtain an insurance discount. Many insurance companies provide a discount for successful graduates of the program. You will, however need to check with your insurance company to determine if they provide a discount, and how much of a discount. Most insurance companies provide anywhere from 3% to 15% discount on their policies.

The cost of the course is \$15.00 for AARP members, and \$20.00 for non-members. The format of the class can be taken in either two sessions of 4 hours each and/or one session of 8 hours. The course covers a review of issues regarding vehicles, traffic laws, roads, and issues affecting us. As we age, things do start to change, and we have to make accommodations for those things. The first rule is to "take your time," and the second is the "second rule." Another is to make a car "fit you and your needs – looking at things like placement of the rearview mirrors, height and depth of car seat, visibility of side and rear windows, and many other issues are reviewed.

This course has saved participants over 128 million dollars. The website www.safecar.gov is sponsored by the National Safety

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Association. By utilizing the website and putting in your car's VIN number – you will have access to any and all recalls for a given car, as well as safety reports.

To take the class – you have two options: 1) Sign-up sheet (sign) tonight; and 2) Online – go to AARP.org/findaclass – put in your zip code—including how many miles would you be willing to drive to attend the class. For first time attendees – you will need to take the 8hour course. If you are returning for a review, there is a 4hour course that you can take. Note: at age 70 you are required to go into the DMV and take the written exam. A meeting attendee stated that that this course was a good prep review. Mr. Berube also said he provides lots of resources for class participants, and will provide website that will give you 100s of prep questions, should you be someone who fears taking tests. He also provides lots of other resources including a brochure on "When should a mature driver stop driving." Once a driver successfully completes the course, the DMV will provide a Senior ID card that is good for 10years.

Other organizations or groups also provide similar courses, such as the California Highway Patrol. The CHP's course is free, however, these courses are not certified for the insurance discount – only AARP's course is certified for the insurance discount. Ms. Rodgers thanked Mr. Berube for the excellent information.

The next guest to be introduced was **Jose Salcido**, who has recently been hired as a member of Councilmember Khamis' staff. Prior to that he worked for the Mayor's office. He has a law enforcement background (Santa Clara County Sheriff's Department), and then helped to start the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force – which is now a model for the rest of the country. Jose thanked Ms. Rodgers, and expanded on his background. He also acknowledged that he is the "pint person" in Councilmember's office for issues regarding "the homeless," as well as issues involving Public Safety.

President Rodger's continued by introducing the next speaker **Karen Wernerbyce**, who is the Coordinator for the 4-H programs in Santa Clara County. Many of us have some knowledge of 4-H, particularly if we lived in a rural area at some point in our lives. The reporting structure of 4-H is somewhat complex. The oversight for the organization's clubs comes through the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources. The Extension Officers affiliation comes through the University, and dates back to land grants. 4-H Clubs are located throughout Santa Clara County. The hope and goal is to establish a new club for the Martial Cottle area.

The mission for 4-H is "engaging youth to reach their fullest potential while advancing the field of youth development." While 4-H has a rich 101-year old history in agriculture, there are also additional opportunities for youth to develop skills in several areas. 4-H is a non-formal education program for everyone. All young people ages 5 to 19 are welcome to join a 4-H club or program. Santa Clara County projects cover every interest from baking to bee-keeping, fishing to photography, raising rabbits to racing robots. Groups meet on weekends and evenings to build community and to work on projects.

4-H emphasizes youth leadership and youth-adult partnerships. Youth members take on key leadership roles from club president to project leader, and develop strong positive relationships with caring adult volunteers from all walks of life. Youth members and adult volunteers can join any time. Membership costs approximately \$35.00 per year.

Currently there are 4 Community Ranches – Martial Cottle Ranch will be #5. Currently 4-H for Martial Cottle is in a "holding

pattern" until the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is signed. Currently the MOU is at the State level going through this process. Once it is signed, the goal is to establish a "livestock advisory" – with a focus on "pastured sheep." As soon as the MOU is signed, the plan is move sheep on to the park property to eat the spring grass. The next County Fair is held in August.

To sign up and/or for additional information, contact Karen at (408) 282-3116 or e-mail: kwernerbyce@ucanr.edu. For additional information go to website: scc4h.org.

The final speaker that Ms. Rodgers introduced was **Francisco De La Torre** of TAPS Security and Alarm, to provide us with information on Residential Mobile Security Patrols. She thanked Francisco for his patience and willingness to be the last speaker for the evening. Francisco quickly went through what the TAPS residential security patrols have to offer to our neighborhoods. They provide random 24-hour/7-days per week patrol services (these random patrols depend on priority hours of day and night – and on the number of subscribers on a given street). They also respond to alarms (police are unable to do this, unless alarms are "verified" – TAPS is authorized to verify Alarms), **direct phone or text access to the agent on duty**, vacation checks of your residence, marked patrol cars, prevention/deterrent to criminal activity, immediate response to calls for non-emergency services (such as "suspicious activity" and disturbances – i.e. Loud parties, dogs barking, etc.), and newsletter via e-mail. The current cost is \$17.50 per month – which is paid in 3 month increments. Service can be cancelled at any time.

Several members in attendance are subscribers of this service, and spoke in support of it – strongly encouraging others to consider becoming subscribers. Note: this service is by individual household and voluntary. It is one more level of security for our individual homes and for our neighborhoods.

President Rodgers reminded everyone of the announcements listed in the March edition of the VEP newsletter, particularly the April 25th All American Litter Pickup and the May 2nd VEP Neighborhood-wide Garage Sale – plan now to participate in both! Next meeting is April 28th and Happy Easter!

Please Note:
The scheduled meeting for May 26th has been moved forward one week. The NEW meeting date is Tuesday, June 2nd!

Final Month of Annual VEP Membership Drive *By Adina Pierce, Ginger Cardona, and Marilyn Rodgers*

The annual VEP Membership drive is winding down in the final month. To prevent you from missing even a single monthly newsletter or e-mails, be sure to send in your membership renewal, if you have not already done so!

Please find a copy of the membership application on page 10 of this edition of the VEP News.

Of course, VEP memberships are accepted all during the year, so should a neighbor forget to renew, or is interested in becoming a first-time member – be sure to encourage them to do so!

Great American Litter Pickup, Sat. April 25th

By Marilyn Rodgers

The annual city-wide litter pickup is once again scheduled for Saturday, April 25th!

For the VEP area, the **staging area this year** will be held at the **Vista Park Parking Lot** – 475 Hyde Park Drive.

So what is the “staging area”? That is where you come to sign in, pickup supplies, enjoy breakfast snacks, and then return for Lunch! The staging area – sign-in etc will begin at 8:30am. (Be sure to sign in – we like to be able to thank all of our volunteers in the VEP newsletter!!)

A reminder – if you know of a High School Senior who needs or would like to have qualifying high school graduation-required community service (volunteer) hours – you can get them with this activity!

See you Saturday morning!

(Please note: If you would like to volunteer, but are not interested in picking up Litter – here is another opportunity. Special volunteer (s) are needed to “man” the Staging Areas in the District 10 area. Contact District 10 Council Aid Rayshelle Edmunds at 408-535-4910 or rayshelle.edmunds@sanjosca.gov)

Annual City of San Jose Budget Meetings District 10 Meeting: Tuesday, May 5th!

By Marilyn Rodgers

For the last several years, the Mayor, City Council, and the City Manager’s office have provided public meetings in each of the City Council Districts on the upcoming annual City Budget. These meetings provide an overview of the budget.

It is a good opportunity for individual residents to become better informed on the proposed budget for the City, to ask questions, and most importantly....to voice your opinions and concerns as to the budget priorities!!

Several of you have recently voiced concerns about available city services (or the lack thereof), such as lack of maintenance for our local city/neighborhood **parks**, and the dismal conditions of our local neighborhood **streets** and major traffic arteries.

Of course VEP will be attending these meetings to represent VEP neighborhood interests, but I cannot stress the importance of individuals attending these meetings and voicing your concerns and opinions! **So please plan to join us on Tuesday, May 5th from 6pm to 8pm. Meeting will be held in the Board Room of the Santa Clara Valley Water District, 5750 Almaden Expressway, San Jose, Ca. 95118.**

4th of July Fireworks Festival at Almaden Lake

By Marilyn Rodgers Enterprises

This will be the 2nd Annual 4th of July Fireworks Festival at Almaden Lake sponsored by District 10 and Councilmember Johnny Khamis. Plan now to bring your whole family and attend the fun and festivities!

If you have a business (or work for a business) that would like to be a sponsor of this family oriented event, there are many opportunities.

If you are a food vendor, or you have a favorite food vendor, please recommend them. Food is always a highlight of any fun Festival.

For additional information for businesses or food vendors, please contact Denelle Fedor at denellefedor@sanjosca.gov or Rayshelle Edmunds at rayshelle.edmunds@sanjosca.gov or call 408-535-4910.

There will also be opportunities for non-profits who may want to have a booth at the festival.

Volunteers are needed. If you are involved with a volunteer group, through community, schools, or churches, there are many opportunities with a variety of tasks that will require volunteers.

Last year, this festival included, food, activities for the children, a variety of booths, and topped off with a fantastic fireworks display. It was spectacular! This year, let’s make it even more fun and more special! Join in – be a sponsor or a volunteer!

Our City Forest: Full-Time AmeriCorps Jobs

By Marilyn Rodgers

For several years, the VEP Community Association has been pleased to partner with Our City Forest (under the able direction of both long time VEP volunteer Dave Fadness and the CEO of Our City Forest – Rhonda Berry). If you are (or know someone who is) 18 years old or older, enjoys working in an outdoor community environment, and interested in a paid position while also having the opportunity to continue learning – this may be an opportunity for you!

(Please note – the following information is being reprinted from Councilmember Johnny Khamis’ newsletter)

Our City Forest is a non-profit urban forestry and environmental action organization. The focus of this program is to organize neighborhood and school tree care and tree planting projects, promote environmental education, and recruit and train volunteers through our AmeriCorps program. We are reaching out to you today to enlist your help in filling our last few slots before the new, shorter term starts in a couple of weeks.

During this year of service, AmeriCorps members will directly contribute to the mission of creating a greener and healthier community through their service with Our City Forest in the role of Urban Forestry Outreach Specialist.

Required Qualifications: * Minimum age: 18

- * Interest in affecting change through community organizing
- * Ability to work well with diverse groups of people
- * Must be available to work full-time Tuesday-Saturday, 8am-5pm
- * Must be a U.S. Citizen or legal resident, with a high school Diploma or equivalent

Desired Qualifications – one or more of the following:

- *Bilingual in English and Spanish, Vietnamese, or other Strong Written & oral communication skills
- * Valid Ca driver’s license
- * Proficient in driving manual transmission, towing small trailers
- * Current Commercial drivers license (to drive Tree Mobile for Community events)
- * Familiar with ornamental and native tree species ID
- * FileMaker Pro & Adobe software knowledge
- * College degree is highly desirable

To Apply: Visit our web site www.ourcityforest.org, click on —About OCF,” then click on —AmeriCorps Program.” Complete applications must include: 1) resume,2) cover letter, and 3) contact information for three professional references – at least one reference must be a supervisor, 4) Questionnaire (click on Green link that says Questionnaire 1/3 way down page on left).

To learn more, e-mail Leslie at: lomalley@ourcityforest.org

VEP Community Service Awards 2015

By Helen Castillo and Marilyn Rodgers

Once again, VEP Community Association will provide an opportunity for up to three high school seniors to be awarded a Community Service Award (scholarship) for recognition of volunteerism in their community. This is the 31st consecutive year that VEP has proudly awarded scholarships to local graduating high school seniors in recognition of their outstanding volunteer service to their community. A panel of judges, who are also volunteers in our community, will determine the winner(s), based on predetermined criteria, after reviewing submitted applications. As in previous years, applications will be solicited from Gunderson High School, from Andrew Hill High School, and through the VEP newsletter and website for the "At-Large category." The "At-Large category" is available for students who attend any other high school in San Jose, but must live in the geographical boundaries of the VEP Community.

Both the criteria and the budgeted amount for the scholarships will continue as has been approved for the last several years. \$1,000.00 has been automatically included in this year's budget. The program criteria which has been approved for the last several years, is as follows:

"Up to 3 awards to be granted at the judges' discretion, evenly distributed among selected winners. Nominations to be solicited from AHHS, GHS, and in the VEP newsletter (for Member-at-Large). 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."

Applications will be available by April 1st at each high school, and on the VEP website and/or by request for the At-Large applications. At Gunderson High School, the administrator to contact for an application is Ms. Stephanie Heuer, and at Andrew Hill High School, the administrator to contact for an application is Ms. Marquez. For the At-Large Application, contact one of the VEP Coordinators – Helen Castillo or Marilyn Rodgers. Please note: the At-Large student applicants will need to provide contact information to VEP for an administrator at their high school (for verification purposes).

If you know a deserving high school senior, who is a **very active volunteer**, please let them know about our Community Service Awards.

VEP Membership Drive: Member Comments

By Marilyn Rodgers, Ginger Cardona, and Adina Pierce

As membership renewals come in, we are very appreciative of continuing members support, and look forward to other residents in our neighborhoods joining us! It is through **your continuing support** that VEP is able to advocate for keeping our neighborhoods safe and attractive!!

We also appreciate and enjoy reading the comments you include on the membership envelopes. Here are a few additional examples that were not printed last month:

I have been a member for a long time; lived in this area since „71!

We are so lucky to have such an organization group in our area. Thank you for another great year!

Sorry we are unable to come to meetings, but we do enjoy the monthly updates – newsletter is worth the dues!

Thanks for all that you do! Thank you! Thanks!

I am so pleased. We have lived in this area for many years; raised our children here, and now they are returning as adults – they just bought a house in this neighborhood! Thank you all for making this a neighborhood that our children want to return to raise their children in!

Keep up the good work! Keep up the good work – thanks!

Best neighborhood... lived here in the same house since 1973.

My husband and I bought our first (and only) home here in 1975! Thanks to everyone who works to keep our VEP such a desirable area to live in!

We do so enjoy the newsletter – read it cover to cover every month! It just keeps getting better and better.

We appreciate all of our new and renewing members!

We would also like to acknowledge our members who included an additional amount above and beyond the membership dues:

**Josie Supencheck, David & Carol Sales,
Richard & Carolyn Smith, Robert & Lynn Hinds**

Opening of Martial Cottle Park: Personal Reflections

(Note: The following is the keynote address provided by Congressman Mike Honda at the Opening Ceremony for the Martial Cottle Park, held on Saturday, December 13, 2014. We thank Congressman Honda for graciously providing his comments for publication in the VEP Newsletter. Marilyn Rodgers, President, VEP.)

It has been almost 25 years since I stood on this property with Walter Lester as he shared his vision for creating a living memorial to Santa Clara County's agricultural past. This 288-acre parcel, a tribute to 4 generations of a farming family dating back to the 1850s, is a jewel of the Santa Clara County Parks department.

Today, both Walter Lester, and his sister Edith Ethel Lester have fulfilled the dream of their mother, Ethel, to honor her father, Martial Cottle by transforming the farm into a public historical agricultural park to "promote, educate, and sustain farming traditions in the Santa Clara Valley."

Over the decades, Walter never strayed from his mother's vision. I remember meeting Walter in the early 1990s in the little white outbuilding on his property. We discussed how to insure that his property would never be sold, or come under control of the City of San Jose. We strategized about how to preserve the estate and protect it from taxes. And later, as a state and federal legislator, I made sure that state park funding supported acquisition and federal estate taxes would not eat away at his donation.

Walter was a patient man. He outlasted four county parks directors during the negotiations. In 1999, upon the death of his sister, the issue of inheritance taxes became a seemingly insurmountable obstacle to his pending donation. By then, as a member of the state assembly, I was able to reconnect with Walter and lend my support to resolving remaining obstacles.

Being from a family who sharecropped nearby, I know how this valley has changed and how children from urban areas have little or no opportunity to experience agriculture. Walter knew that a park comprised of a working farm would not only give children an appreciation for the history of the Valley of the Hearts Delight, but would connect them to the food they consume.

Walter Lester has done for our children what we would have been unable to accomplish on our own. He has given them a permanent connection to the history of this valley and our agricultural roots. He has left behind a precious vehicle for teaching environmental stewardship. And it is our duty to honor his memory and cherish the gift that he has left us."

Michael Johnson

Badge Number 3718

End of Watch March 24, 2015



San Jose Police Officer - Michael Johnson Son of Katherine Decker, VEP Vice President

On the evening of March 24, 2015, the VEP Community heard the heart breaking news along with the rest of the City of San Jose: a San Jose Police Officer had been killed in the line of duty. This news was especially difficult and became even more personal for the VEP Community when the officer's name was released: Officer Michael Johnson.

Officer Johnson's mother is Katherine Decker – a long time VEP resident and active volunteer who currently serves on the Board of Directors as VEP Vice President.

The VEP Board of Directors sent out the following e-mail notice to members:

It is with great sadness that the VEP Board of Directors sends this message to notify members that "one of our own".....VEP Vice President Katherine Decker and her family, have suffered a great loss. Michael Johnson, the SJPD police officer who was shot and killed in the line of duty, on Tuesday evening, was Katherine's son. We wish to send our most profound condolences to Katherine, Dann, Michael's wife Nicole, and the rest of the family.

The family wishes to convey their appreciation of everyone's kind thoughts and prayers. However, at this time, they are requesting your understanding in allowing them privacy, while they deal with the shock and grief."

Over the next several days, the VEP community responded with both personal and neighborhood memorials. (p. 7, top) Individuals put up blue lights to honor Michael, others came together by street or area to provide more elaborate memorials. The City of San Jose came together to honor Michael and his family: informally at a large memorial at the San Jose Police Department, and formally at the SAP Center on April 2nd (p. 7, bottom).

The following obituary was written by the family. Permission has been given by the family to re-print it, in its entirety in the VEP newsletter:

Michael Jeremiah Johnson ("Mike") was born on December 4, 1976. At the time he was born, Mike's dad, Daniel Johnson, was a military police officer in the Army stationed at Herlong, California. After his dad was discharged from the Army, he joined the Calaveras County Sheriff's department, and Mike and his family moved to Wilseyville. He then lived in Vallicito and Angeles Camp, and after his parents' divorce, Michael moved to San Jose with his mom, Katherine Decker, and sister, Jamie Radack, in 1988.

Shortly after they moved to San Jose, Mike got his first job delivering newspapers on his bicycle for the San Jose Mercury News. In 1995, Mike graduated from Gunderson High School and then took classes at West Valley College while working as an audio/visual specialist at Radio Shack, and later The Good Guys.

In 2001, Mike joined the San Jose Police Academy and graduated on June 15, 2001. During his time with the San Jose Police

Department, Mike worked as a Patrolman, Court Liaison, and Prescription Drug Fraud Specialist. At the time of his death, Mike had recently been promoted to Field Training Officer and assigned to Covert Response Unit.

Mike was a member of the Specialist Rifle program and was an expert marksman. Mike proved his expert marksmanship skills each year when he and his father would compete together at the US Police and Fire Games.

Mike and his wife, Nicole ("Nikki"), were married in a civil ceremony on August 3, 2013. They were planning a formal wedding ceremony and reception for August 29, 2015 in Santa Cruz.

Mike is survived by his wife Nikki, his parents Daniel Johnson and Katherine Decker, his step-parents Dann Decker and Penny Johnson, his grandmother Frances Guillemain, his sister Jamie Radack, his brother-in-law Steve Radack, his mother and father-in-law Susan and Antonio Chavez, his sister and brother-in-law Gina and Jameson Stiehr, and brother-in-law Danny Chavez.

Nikki & Michael Johnson



Officer Johnson with his Niece and Nephew



*In Honor of Officer Michael Johnson #3718
End of Watch 3-24-2015
Thank you for Standing Guard and Protecting Us!
"Our Blue Shines On!"*

Officers Stand Watch
Wellington Park Drive and Court
Images by the Welches & Friends



**Memorial Set Up
On Chynoweth**



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

~ Saturday, May 2nd ~

* **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!

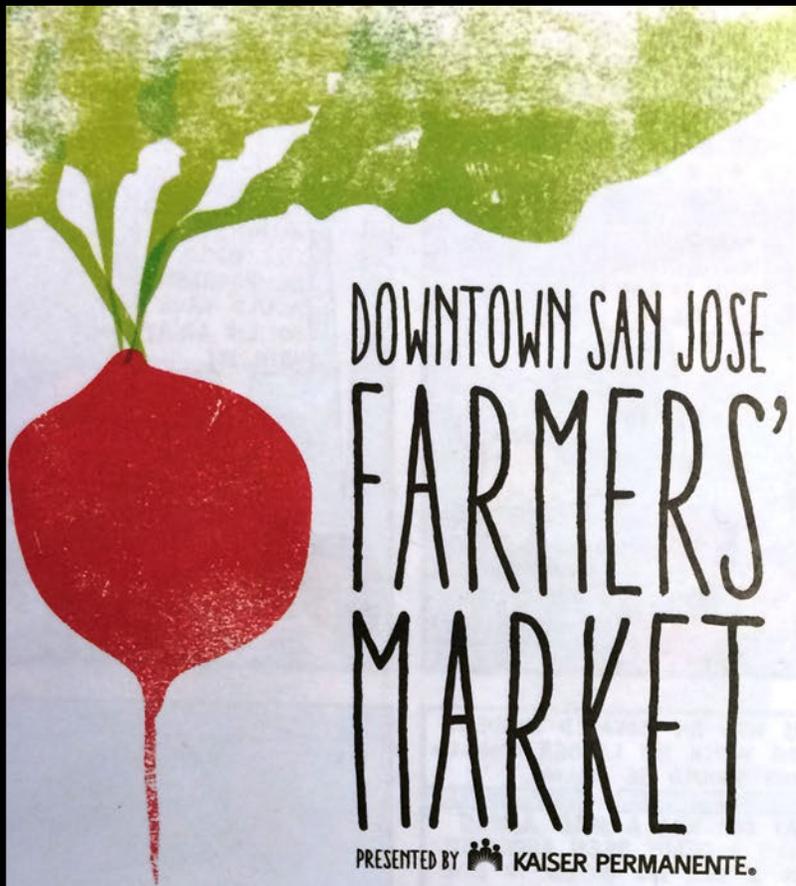
Info: Ginger Cardona @ 408-227-0222
or, email, cardona@sbcglobal.net



If you would like to drop off any items, a **Salvation Army Donation Truck** will be available at the dead end of Chynoweth Ave., south of Gunderson High School.
~ 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. ~

July 4th Fireworks & Festival **at Almaden Lake**

Picture you and your family here!



DOWNTOWN SAN JOSE FARMERS' MARKET

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OPENING DAY

FRIDAY MAY 1, 10-2 AT SAN PEDRO SQUARE

WATCH SEASONAL RECIPES COME TO LIFE
STOP BY THE COOKIN' AT THE MARKET DEMO AND SAMPLE
CREATIVE RECIPES TO TAKE HOME.

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Parkview Elementary School

invites you to attend
our fundraising event at



WHERE?

Blossom Hill
864 Blossom Hill Rd
(408) 226-9100

WHEN?

Wednesday, May 6th
4-9pm

HOW?

All that you have to do is enjoy great food at
PIZZA MY HEART and 30% of your purchase
will be donated to our organization.

There is no need to bring this flyer.
All you have to do is mention you are
supporting our organization.

Dine In, Take Out and Delivery



It's The New Year ...

Time to Renew your VEP Membership!

VEP membership is based on a calendar year, January through December. So if you haven't already - please renew your membership! 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 neighborhood 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.

**** VEP Membership Application ****

Note: None of the your personal information will ever 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/ mailing 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!



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FROM THE OFFICE OF



JOHNNY KHAMIS

SAN JOSE CITY COUNCIL - DISTRICT 10



GREAT AMERICAN LITTER PICK UP

It's that time of year again! Put on your gloves and grab your pick-up sticks for the Great American Litter Pick Up! On Saturday, April 25th, from 8:30AM to 1:00PM, my office will host litter pick up and beautification projects all around District 10. This is a wonderful opportunity to get out and help beautify your neighborhood while meeting neighbors. It is also a great opportunity for students who need community service hours! Each year, we have increased our volunteer numbers from the previous year, and we are hoping for record-breaking numbers of volunteers this April 25th! Below you will find the staging area near you:

Staging Site Number 4 - Vista Park

We will be doing general litter pick up around the park and in surrounding neighborhoods. This is also a great opportunity for students from Gunderson High School to earn community service hours while beautifying the area around their school.

JULY 4TH FAMILY FUN FESTIVAL!

It is my pleasure to announce the 2nd Annual District 10 July 4th Family Fun Festival! As many of you know and remember from last year, this patriotic, exciting, and fun-filled celebration is held at Almaden Lake Park, starting at 2pm. Bob Vonderwerth, a District 10 resident of the Blossom Valley area, will produce the fantastic fireworks display. Given the City's safety-ban on using personal fireworks, this event offers families and people of all ages and backgrounds a safe place to celebrate the birth of our nation.

We will have many opportunities for volunteers to help out with this wonderful event. We need people who can help with: Advertising, Sponsorships, Event Set-Up, Check-In of Attendees, Parking, and Vendors. To volunteer, please send your contact information to my staff on or before June 20, 2015 (the sooner the better!). Volunteer opportunities are numerous and include event day and day-after activities. My staff will provide information, training, and expectations with regards to the different positions available. For your designated volunteer shift, you will check in and work with one of my staff members. It's an opportunity to help out your city and to promote a great District 10 event. I hope you sign up! You can share the volunteer opportunities we have and everyone is invited!

We hope to hear from you! Please call 408-535-4910, or contact Denelle Fedor at denelle.fedor@sanjoseca.gov, or Rayshelle Edmunds at rayshelle.edmunds@sanjoseca.gov.

FROM THE OFFICE OF



DISTRICT ONE

SUPERVISOR MIKE WASSERMAN

Tragedy hit home recently as San Jose Police Officer Michael Johnson was killed while serving and protecting our community on the evening of March 24, 2015. My thoughts and prayers are with Officer Johnson's family, friends, and the law enforcement community, all of whom feel the enormity of this loss.

In light of this news, the Blue and Gold Service Award Ceremony hosted by the Exchange Club of San Jose was especially somber. This annual event recognizes members of the local law enforcement community who were injured in the line of duty. In addition to this recognition, there was a moment of silence to honor Officer Johnson for making the ultimate sacrifice in service to his community. Each of us must remember the risks those in law enforcement take each day by voluntarily serving on the front lines of public safety.

Last month, I had the opportunity to speak to the Almaden Valley Community Association regarding County services. While most residents are familiar with services provided by cities, very few are aware of the Real. Life. Help. that Santa Clara County provides to our 1.9 million residents every day. County services range from emergency, health, hospital, safety, to roads, airports, recreation, parks, inspecting gas pumps and restaurants, and so much more. If your community group or neighborhood association would like to hear a County update too, please let me know.

The County's Re-Entry Center is a good example of the Real. Life. Help. that the County provides. For over 3 years, the Center has been helping formerly incarcerated individuals integrate back into society. One ex-offender named Henry who received services through the Center spoke to me about his experience: He had been incarcerated for 10 years and was released with \$200, a sweat suit to wear, a little card that said —You are Free." Henry has been out for five months and for the first three months, you could find him every weekday at the Reentry Resource Center. Henry talked of how he used his time in prison taking courses, trying to better himself so he could turn his life around and be a better example for his kids. Today, he is working, paying his own way, living on his own and talks with his children daily. The Re-Entry Center reduces recidivism and has already helped 5,500 criminal justice clients successfully integrate back into society. Supporting people who are committed to changing their lives creates safer communities.

As always, you can reach my office at (408) 299-5010, or you can email me at mike.wasserman@bos.sccgov.org with your comments and concerns.

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Gardening, with John Marks

Black Mold on Oranges

When you go to pick your oranges, you may notice a black ~~—it~~ on the oranges as well as the leaves. You may also notice a lot of scale all over the trees. The ~~—it~~ 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, Part 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.

Random Tidbits, with Kathy Wood



—Flight #2461 is now boarding to San Jose, California” – the sentence confirming the time to go home has arrived. My husband and I recently returned to the land of sunshine and warmer temperatures after a mostly fun-filled visit with our extended families in Michigan (Pure Michigan according to the commercials). With every trip we ponder the question, —~~C~~ould we live here again?”

We have discovered several differences between the two states:

1) Weather.

That white stuff called snow is in abundance up to 6 months out of a year. The first snowfall is pretty and brings excitement to children looking forward to sledding and building snowmen. Anyone who is no longer a child only sees hours of shoveling and time spent on their backsides from slipping on icy streets and sidewalks. Michigan also holds claim to plenty of thunderstorms with monstrous claps of thunder (occupants of Heaven are bowling again) and eye-popping streaks of lightning. Hail falls with some of these storms ranging in size on the —~~h~~ail chart” from peas to baseballs. Humidity arrives in the summer months only to make those who are air conditioner-less miserable. Of course, here in California, an earthquake or two can rock your world.

2) Food.

A visit in Michigan always, and I repeat, always makes us thankful to be residing in an area with expansive food choices. The availability of fresh fruit and vegetables mostly year round is something we take for granted. Plenty of residents in Michigan plant large gardens and preserve their harvest through canning or freezing to enjoy during the winter months. Still, it doesn't compare to fresh.

3) Space.

Most homes in Michigan are surrounded by an actual lawn with green (not brown) grass. It takes more than 2 steps to reach your neighbor's home and no one is peeking into your house from their upstairs window next door. Traveling is measured in miles, not in hours or minutes (depending on the traffic). I don't know how many times I've driven I-75 with no cars either ahead of me or behind me within sight (did the end of the world happen and I missed it?).

4) Water.

Lakes and ponds are in abundance in Michigan, even though some are still wearing a thin coat of ice. Showers flow strong; lawn and gardens can be watered daily, if desired and people wash their cars on any given day. Every time we witnessed one of these beautiful bodies of liquid we pondered how to bottle it up and bring it with us in our suitcases.

Every state has its faults and its assets - choosing what's right for you and your family is an important personal decision (or relocate to one of the other 49).



VEP Community Schools Calendar

April / May 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
19	20	21	22 -Las Culturaz" ~ 8:45-9:30am ~ @Parkview SELAC Meeting @Gunderson HS	23 SELAC Meeting SSC Meeting @John Muir MS	24  Box Tops Due for April Contest @Carson School	25  Spring Fling ~ 12 - 5 pm ~ @Gunderson HS
26	27	28 PSCA Meeting @Parkview	29 -Las Culturaz" ~ 8:45-9:30am ~ @Parkview	30	1	2
3	4	5  See info. for this event on page 9 of this edition of the VEP newsletter	6 -Las Culturaz" ~ 8:45-9:30am ~ @Parkview Parkview Fundraiser @Pizza My Heart OPEN HOUSE @John Muir MS	7	18	9
10	11 SSC Meeting ~ 2:30pm ~ @Carson School	12 PTA Meeting ~ 7:00pm ~ @Carson School	13 -Las Culturaz" @Parkview PTSA Meeting @John Muir MS PTSA Meeting @Gunderson HS	14	15 Career Day @John Muir MS  GHS PROM 8pm-12am @Hotel Valencia	16  Hip Hop Festival 9am-5pm@GHS
17	18 NO SCHOOL @Parkview	19	20 -Las Culturaz" @Parkview SELAC Meeting Academic Award Night @6pm @Gunderson HS	21 SELAC Meeting SSC Meeting @John Muir MS Multimedia & Art Festival @5pm @Gunderson HS	22 Box Tops Due for May Contest @Carson School  MINIMUM DAY @John Muir MS	23

VEP 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://parkview.ogsd.net/> 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://gunderson.sjUSD.org/> PHONE: (408) 535-6340



VEP Community Calendar

April / May 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
19	20	21	22 @Pearl Library: Jewelry-Making ~ 12:30pm ~ Knit/Crochet Club ~ 3:00pm ~ Earth Day Games ~ 4:00pm ~	23 @Pearl Library: Street Smarts: Bike & Pedestrian Safety ~ 11:00am ~ Line Dancing ~ 1:00pm ~ Knitting for Kids ~ 4:00pm ~	24 Computer Help ~ 11:00am ~ @Edenvale Lib. Legos® Club ~ 4:00pm ~ @Pearl Library	25  Great American Litter Pick-up! ~ 8am - 1pm ~
26 \$5/Bag Book Sale ~ 1:00-5:00pm ~ @Martin Luther King, Jr. Library	27	28 VEP Community Meeting ~ 7:30 PM ~ @Vista Park Community Room	29 Jewelry-Making ~ 12:30pm ~ Knit/Crochet Club ~ 3:00pm ~ @Pearl Library	30 @Pearl Library: Line Dancing ~ 1:00pm ~ Art: Foil Embossing ~ 3:00pm ~ Knitting for Kids ~ 4:00pm ~	1 Downtown SJ Farmer's Market Reopens Today! 10am-2pm @San Pedro Market Square	2 @Pearl Library: Free Comic Book Begins @ 10am Mother's Day Craft ~ 2:00pm ~ Computer Help ~ 3:00pm ~
3 Book Sale ~ 1:00-3:00pm ~ @West Valley Branch Library	4	5 Computer Help ~ 11:00am ~ Street Smarts: Bike & Pedestrian Safety ~ 11:30am ~ @Edenvale Lib.	6 D10 "Office Hours" Meeting w/Johnny Khamis 8:30-9:30am @Almaden Valley Community Center	7 ~ 11:00am ~ 1.) Computer Help 2.) Mother's Day Craft @Edenvale Library Job Interview Prep for Teens - 4:00pm @Pearl Library	8	9 D10 "Office Hours" Meeting w/Johnny Khamis 10:00-11:30am @City Espresso 630 Blossom Hill Rd
10	11 Insect Discovery Lab for Kids ~ 3:30pm ~ @Edenvale Branch Library	12 Music & Movement ~ 11:30am ~ @Edenvale Branch Library	13 Cinco de Mayo Craft for Kids ~ 3:30pm ~ @Edenvale Branch Library	14	15	16 -Wormology" with Science Smarts for Kids ~ 2:00pm ~ Computer Help ~ 3:00pm ~ @Pearl Library
17	11 Magic & Comedy Show w/Germar ~ 3:30pm ~ @Edenvale Branch Library	19	20	21 Computer Help ~ 11:00am ~ Math Fun for Kids ~ 3:30pm ~ @Edenvale Library Math Fun for Kids ~ 3:30pm ~ @Pearl Library	22	23 Music & Magic with Peter Apel ~ 2:00pm ~ Computer Help ~ 3:00pm ~ @Pearl Library

Coming Soon in the VEP:

VEP Community Meetings

Tuesday, April 28th

Tuesday, June 2nd

Summer Break:
June through August

Meetings Resume in September



VEP Community Events

Great American Litter Pick-Up
Saturday, April 25th

**VEP Community-Wide
GARAGE SALE**
Saturday, May 2nd

4th of July Fireworks & Festival
July 4th @Almaden Lake

THE VEP NEWS



VEP Community Association

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

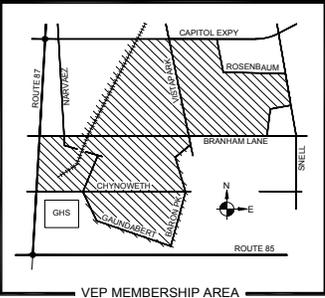
Published monthly by VEP Community Association, a not-for-profit organization of volunteers established in 1969 to serve and represent more than 2000 homes in the Blossom Valley area of southern San Jose. VEP is dedicated to neighborhood maintenance and improvement in its membership area as well as to 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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 Let us know at vep@vepca.net.



Check our website: www.vepca.net

Community Room
 Vista Park

7:30 pm in the



Be sure to attend
 VEP's Community Meeting
 Tuesday, April 28th!

