



East Palo Altans among honorees at Peninsula Links fundraiser

By Loretta Green
EPA Today Contributor

More than 300 turned out for the The Links Inc, Peninsula Bay Chapter's "An Affair to Remember" which many guests remarked was indeed unforgettable with its elegant dress, community awards and it's signature tasting of wines by African-American vintners.

Guests sipped tasted chardonnays, zinfandel, Syrah, pinot noirs, Riesling, Fleur Blanche, cabernet sauvignon, merlot and sauvignon blanc at the Westin Hotel, San Francisco Airport, sniffing wine bouquets rising from the crystal bowls of engraved souvenir Links stemware and discussing wine attributes such "fruitiness," "oak" and "finish."

The evening began with the wine-tasting which featured productions from black owned and operated wineries in Sonoma and Napa coun-

ties from renowned Brown Estates Vineyard, Esterlina Winery, Vision Cellars and Rideau.

At the elegant sit-down dinner which featured white-jacketed chairs, one-of-a-kind hand-blown vases for auction from a Heyward glassblower and a colorful stage backdrop loaned by the Lorraine Hansberry Theatre in San Francisco, guests were entertained by music from the popular E.C. Scott and her Band Smoke.



Patricia Foster

Three well-known citizens received the Peninsula Bay Links 2007 Community Service Awards presented to them by member and retired Menlo-Atherton High School administrator, Sara Boyd, of Palo Alto.

Patricia Foster, former

director of the Girls Club of the Mid-Peninsula was recognized for her groundbreaking work at the club and particularly her determined efforts to raise girls' academic abilities through after-school club activities in the computer room as well as with Links mentors. Peninsula Links went weekly to assist with homework and to serve as role models.

Popular local funeral director since the mid-70s, Charles Jones, received his service award for his sterling community record and humane services such as providing complete services for couples who suffer the incalculable loss of an infant younger than a month old. When families were without means, Jones also buried a large number of young people who were murdered in his city during a particularly violent period. Stanford



Charles Jones

University Hospital also established a top recognition in his honor.

Honoree Donald Dorsey, Foothill College Dean of Student Affairs and Activities, provided the leadership for the college's first Black Studies AA degree. He founded the

Bridge Program and in 1977 the FESTAC'77 Travel Study Program of West African History and Culture - Foothill's first international study program. Dorsey annually assists the Peninsula Bay Links in the logistics of sponsoring the attendance of young people and their families from East Palo Alto and East Menlo Park.

The event was chaired by San Francisco dentist, Dr. Brenda Thomas. Proceeds benefit the Peninsula Bay Links community projects and particularly the group's annual scholarships to college-bound African-American High School seniors.



Donald Dorsey

The Peninsula Bay Links are headed by president, Marthelia Hargrove, a retired Ravenswood School District educator. Nationally, The Links, Inc. is a 60-year-old organization of African-American women headquartered in the nation's capital, who are linked in friendship, recognize the importance of connection and are committed to public service.

Worldwide, there are hundreds of chapters and thousands of members in the United States as well as in the Caribbean, Africa and Bermuda.

Along with the Peninsula, Peninsula, in the Bay Area, there also are Links chapters in San Jose, Alameda-Contra Costa, Oakland and San Francisco.

Loretta Green is a well-known bay area journalist, who is now retired.

Celebrating women with a sense of sisterhood

By Mavis Knox
EPA Today Contributor

On a lovely Sunday afternoon in March, seventy loyal and dedicated community citizens - women and men - came together at the Girls Club of the Mid-Peninsula to celebrate women and introduce Beverly Beasley Johnson, J.D. to the community.

The first part of the evening was informal as women from throughout San Mateo and Santa Clara counties gathered to renew friendships, revisit past victories and wonder aloud, "why haven't we done this before now?" In attendance were many Sheroes - women who were the first in their profession as artist, doctor, educator, media personality and politician in San Mateo & Santa Clara counties. Also in attendance were the men in their lives who continue to support and celebrate them as they have throughout their careers.

A short program was held with Mavis Knox formally welcoming the audience to the celebration, deliberately and passionately recounting how the evening was conceived



This picture shows some of the women who attended the celebration.

Photo courtesy of Mavis Knox

and the energy and joy with which it was designed. The event was sponsored by Women Supporting Women a group formed, in part, to recapture the days when women in the community celebrated one another; when leaders consciously role-modeled for young women and girls through commitment and hard work to prepare a better tomorrow for the community.

Marty Hargrove paid special tribute to the elders in attendance, reminding the attendees that these women are the standard bearers and upon whose shoulders we stand. Each elder was given a crystal vase of red & white

roses. Of the elders in attendance one from Santa Clara County was 101 years old. These remarkable women were joined at their specially designated tables by several young women from Youth United for Community Action (YUCA), Anna Turner, Sarait Escorza, Re'Anita Burns, & Rosa Solarzano. The rich and meaningful gathering of these past and future pioneers was purposeful and inspiring.

Sandra Webster introduced Beverly Beasley Johnson, the new Director of Human Services, for San Mateo County. Ms. Johnson stated "I am honored to have been appointed Director and I

realize that I too stand on the shoulders of amazing African-American women - Mavis Knox, Charlotte Brinsont Brown and Evelyn Neely, three women who have made a tremendous contribution to the families and children of San Mateo County." Mrs. Johnson said that she believes that the mission of the Human Services Agency is to work along side of the community to strengthen where we all live. Her priorities are safe neighborhoods, stable families, and healthy children and youth. Mrs. Johnson stated that she intends to be very accessible and visible to the East Palo Alto Community.

Ella Beecher closed the program by reminding the group of the importance of continuing to celebrate and honor one another. She challenged them to continue their work to mentor and encourage the next generation of young women - robust, intelligent and full of amazing ideas - to continue in their footsteps by working diligently and in partnership to insure a better tomorrow.

The entire afternoon had the feel of a family reunion; many of the women had not seen one another for years. The takeaway was truly inspirational and the sense of sisterhood was obvious to everyone in attendance.

A local barber wins the prize

By Bakari Thompson

East Palo Alto native, Omar Bashir took first place at the 2007 Josden International Beauty Expo Barber Competition, which was held on May 6 in Oakland, CA.

Although Omar is a native of East Palo Alto, he attended the Atlas Barber School for one year in New York City, where he endured many trials and tribulations to become a licensed barber

in the state and to gain respect from his east coast counterparts.

Bashir wanted to establish himself as one of the best barbers in the Bay Area, so after graduating from the Atlas Barber School, he felt the need to return to East Palo Alto to use the skills he learned while in New York.

He is currently a student at Gump's Barber and Cosmetology School in Hayward California. He will graduate on May 21, and he



Barber Omar Bashir cuts the hair of Chuck Burnett.

looks forward to receiving his California barbers license.

As a proud barber at Mark Styles Barbershop and Book Store in Menlo Park, California, Bashir continues to change the landscape of the barber industry by providing quality service and respect to Mark Styles valued customers.

When asked what he would say to a couple of his high school teachers who assumed he would fail, he responded by saying "I

guess all that cutting up I did in school finally paid off.

Look at me now, alive, free, and in the paper." Omar would like to thank his family, friends, and the city of East Palo Alto for all their love and continued support.

Bakari Thompson is an East Palo Alto resident. He says, "All of Omar's satisfied customers owe him a great deal of gratitude because, as for haircuts, I was Omar's test dummy from the 4th to 8th grade."

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Lifecycles

Nevida Butler



Photo courtesy Loraine Holmes
Nevida Butler shows the award she received from the East Palo Alto City Council.

Nevida Butler, former Executive Director with the Ecumenical Hunger Program (EHP), retired in April 2007. EHP provides emergency, clothing, case management and household essentials to families in need in East Palo Alto, Menlo Park and Palo Alto. Over her 25 years as Executive Director, Ms.

Butler transformed EHP from a small organization that did not provide direct service to one that directly serves over 23,000 individuals annually. "We have come a long way from that dreary two room building with the make-shift clothes closet and office," she reflects. Though she is looking forward to retirement,

Ms. Butler will not be far from EHP as she will still volunteer and serve as consultant. In a letter announcing her retirement, Ms. Butler writes, " My tenure with EHP has been a miraculous, wonderful and life changing journey. People talk about the difference that I have made in this community and in the

lives of individuals but what is so amazing is the tremendous difference all of you have made in my life. I am truly grateful for the experiences, the tears, the laughter and most of all, for the extended family that I have gained who will forever remain in my heart."

Laura Valdez

As Executive Director of Nuestra Casa, Laura Valdez oversees the organization's strategy, growth and operations. Prior to Nuestra Casa, Ms. Valdez was a National Urban Fellows Scholar, receiving a Masters in Public Administration. She has a long career of activism and social justice work, with over 15 years of leadership in nonprofit sector and community-based organizing. Over the past eleven years, she has served as a board member or active volunteer in over twenty organizations. Her passion for social change has led her to work



Laura Valdez

on issues including youth services, immigration, sexual assault, and educational access. At Nuestra Casa, she continues her work in the struggle towards a just, equitable and sustainable community for people of color.

Jenni Ingram

Jenni Ingram has been working for Northern California Urban Development in East Palo Alto since late February. As the organization's administrative assistant, she works with John Liotti, the organization's executive director, in a variety of projects including fundraising for East Palo Alto's soon to open credit union. Ingram graduated from Hope International University in Southern



Jenni Ingram

California in May 2004, and moved to the bay area to work with Peninsula Covenant Church.

She has worked with young people for the past eight years, and will become NCUD's director of youth programs this fall. Ingram said, "I have enjoyed getting to know and work with new people throughout the community and look forward to meeting more. "I'm encouraged to see how people and organizations work together to help each other out, specifically to help the youth in the community."

Greg Bodin



Greg Bodin was recently hired as Library Branch

Manager for the East Palo Alto Library, part of the San Mateo County Library system. Mr. Bodin has 14 years of professional library experience and is a graduate of Louisiana State University. A recent Bay Area transplant from New Orleans, Mr. Bodin comes to the East Palo Alto Library with experience as a manager of public and medical libraries, as well as experience working with various

technologies to improve access to information. Mr. Bodin's goal is to ensure that the East Palo Alto Library provides free and open access to information in a variety of formats that supports the community's educational and recreational needs. He is particularly interested in providing materials and services to promote lifelong learning and literacy.

Sister-Friend Luncheon

On Friday, May18, Jacqueline Copeland Carson arrived at a local restaurant to meet a few women who were active in the East Palo Alto community. When she arrived, she was surprised to find that more than 20 women had gathered for the lunch to meet her as "Sister-Friends."

Here are a few pictures from the luncheon. The photos were contributed by Mariama Savage-Everett.



Jeanne Cuffey Tatum, Glenda Savage-Johnson, Faye McNair Knox, Jacqueline Copeland Carson and Sharifa Wilson.



Bess Stephens talks with Lakiba Pittman



Joyce Mitchell, Joan Sykes Miessi, Katherine Pough were obviously enjoying several interesting conversations.

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Lifecycles

Tribute to My Grandmother

On Saturday, May 5th Juanita Meadows celebrated her 94th Birthday. East Palo Alto Line Dancers performed in honor of her birthday. The following was written by her granddaughter on her 89th birthday.

by **Golda Thomas**

My grandmother Juanita Meadows was born on May 5 in 1913 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

She started playing the piano when was eight years old. Her dad bought a piano and the first songs she learned was "Just Molly and Me And The Baby Makes Three" and "I'll Hurry To My Blue Heaven."

Her oldest brother would dance while she played those songs. She would go to carnivals and different places and hear songs and come back home and play the songs that she heard on the piano. At the age of 12 she would go to

church and her sister read notes out of the song book, and her cousin, who was the same age that she was, would sang "No hiding place Down Here" and "I Went To The Rocks To Hide My Face and The Rocks Cried Out."

After that she became a young lady and she got married and she took music from different people and she sold milk, butter, turkey, and chickens to pay for her music lessons.

Later, she taught music lessons to maybe three hundred



Juanita Meadows

people. She moved to California in 1968 and she thought she was free at last and would not have to play the piano any more.

She would give programs with her nine children singing and give the money to the church. She was hired to play for McClures funeral home in South Palo and that lasted ten years. She now plays for Jones Mortuary and has been there for twenty-five years.

She has played for Greater Friendship, Unity, and The

House of Prayer. She is now playing for Saint John Baptist Church male Choir at eight o'clock on Sunday Mornings and the Church of the Living God at 11.00 o'clock on Sunday Mornings. I

have to tell you about a scare that we had about 12 1/2 years ago on November 23' 1989. My grandma and I were in the hospital at the same time. I was giving birth to 1 child, a baby girl at Stanford Hospital and she was in the hospital with cancer.

The doctors had given her six weeks to six months to live and when my sister came in my room and told me that my grandma was in the cancer

ward, I could not get out of the hospital fast enough to go get me some blessed oil and go rub her down and pray for her to live.

I thought God was going to give me a child and take her and I could not stand the thought of that, being that she raised me and my brothers and sister after we lost our mother in 1977.

God knew that I needed her to teach me to be a mother. Little did I know that God was only using her so she could be a living testimony. She is still working for the Lord doing her missionary work praying and laying hands and waiting on ill people with herbs.

Obituary: A Singular Person

Linda Mabry

Linda A. Mabry, a writer, teacher, lawyer, community activist and more importantly beloved wife, friend and aunt, passed away peacefully in Palo Alto, California.

Linda was 54 years old and continued to live an active life having survived pancreatic cancer for more than five years. She was a courageous and inspiring person to many people in her life. To have known her was an honor.

Linda devoted her life to community involvement in public and private sectors and pursued what was most meaningful in her life - writing and teaching others about living life with purpose, and advocating for justice and equality in racial issues and political causes.

Linda nurtured her friendships and enjoyed dancing, music, art, travel and being in nature.

Linda enjoyed life with her husband of 16 years Dieter Folta, and their dogs Kai and Dakota.

Linda's death is a loss to her family, friends, community and society as she was a 'truth seeker' in its truest meaning. Linda wrote numerous articles that were published in trade journals, newspapers and magazine, on justice and equality related to the dignity of the



Linda Mabry

human person and her African-American heritage.

Linda's most recent project was writing her unfinished memoir entitled, Falling Up to Grace.

In 2005 she was in residence at Hedgebrook, a retreat for women writers on Whidbey Island in Washington State, where she was awarded the Hochstadt prize for her work-in-progress. Linda was honored to receive this award. Her writing will continue to live on - in and through so many of her fans and loved ones.

Linda was born in New York and raised in Brussels, Belgium and Harlem. Linda excelled in anything she devoted her attention to, including academic pursuits at Mount Holyoke College and Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies and graduating

with a law degree from Georgetown University in International Law. Linda was an attorney-Advisor in the Office of Legal Advisor of the U.S. Department of State from 1978-1981.

She then practiced law between the years of 1981 through 1986 at Hogan & Hartson and Miller & Chevalier in Washington, D.C. Linda arrived in the Bay Area in 1986 and joined the San Francisco law firm of Howard, Rice, Nemerovski, Canady, Robertson & Falk in 1987 and later became a partner in their Corporate Department.

In 1993, she became Associate Professor at Stanford Law School where she remained for five years teaching International Business.

Linda's long illustrious accomplishments and credentials pale compared to her unmovable commitment as an active volunteer in community-based non-profit organizations including Project Read an adult literacy project in East Palo Alto and the Oakland-based Savage Jazz Dance Company, where she was a board member.

Linda continued working until March 2007, holding

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PIA Leaders

Episcopal Church in Redwood City.

"Our congregations are committed to protecting those in need, but we should not need to shelter young children who are asking us, "Where is my mother? Where is my father?" Rev. Lange-Soto said. Lange-Soto read from a statement signed by hundreds of clergy across the country whose congregations were affected by the recent rash of immigration raids.

Since June, over 18,000 men and women have been deported as a part of ICE's 'return to sender' operations. Isabel Aguirre, a parishioner of St. Francis of Assisi church and mother of 4 citizen children, was under house arrest for the last month worried about how she'll pay next months rent. She and her husband were snared during a recent ICE raid. Her husband was immediately deported without appeal or legal counsel. Mrs. Aguirre had lived in the Palo Alto area for over 20 years, had a work permit, and was hoping to become a legal resident.

"God calls on us to strengthen families. They are the fabric of our community, yet these raids are devastating the most vulnerable, our children," explained Fr. Goode of St. Francis of Assisi who counseled the family.

During their meeting in Washington, PIA leaders sat face to face with Congresswoman Anna Eshoo, who represents the 14th district which includes East Palo Alto. At the meet-

ing Rep. Eshoo shared her concern about the recent raids and later issued a statement to ICE inquiring into their tactics and expressing the need to respect families. A similar letter of inquiry was also sent by Senator Feinstein, following the PIA visit. Rep. Eshoo agreed with the delegates that the current immigration system needs to be repaired and families need to be protected.

Students are very much affected by the immigration raids. One such student is Luis Mora. "I'm graduating from EPA Charter this summer and have been accepted at Harvard and Yale but I still might not be able to go because of my immigration status," Mora said. "I've worked hard and want to give back to my community, but it's sad to see my friends give up on school because they have no hope for college."

Mora attended the meeting with Rep. Eshoo and he asked her for an update on the DREAM Act. which is legislation that Rep. Eshoo currently sponsors. If the bill passes, it would legalize students who currently are barred from college because of their legal status. During the meeting Eshoo pledged to meet with PIA leaders this summer to continue to keep the community informed about her work toward a just immigration reform. Eshoo also expressed her support for the PICO initiative to pass a budget that would allow states to cover all children with health insurance. At the end of the trip, the PICO network succeeded in securing a

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John Kerry spoke to group.

budget that included \$50,000 billion dollars for children's health insurance.

In East Palo Alto, the city council passed a resolution calling for a halt to the immigration raids. "All of us are affected by the raids. If my house is being robbed, but my neighbor is afraid to call the police because they could be deported, it undermines all the work we've done to make East Palo Alto safer," explains Alvin Spencer, PIA leader who attended the delegation to DC.

As part of a PICO National Assembly this past March 6th-8th, 15 PIA leaders, including members of Faith Missionary Baptist and St. Francis of Assisi churches in East Palo Alto, joined with 400 PICO delegates to fight for healthcare for all children. At the same time, delegates told the story of the immigration raids and learned about opportunities to improve the broken immigration system. They met with representatives of key congressional leaders, many who thought an immigration reform bill could happen in the 2007 congressional session.

To get involved contact PIA at 650-714-5259.

Frequently Asked Questions on Immigration

By Mary Dutcher, Esq.
EPA Contributor

1.) Where can I get good immigration legal advice?

Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto (650) 326-6440 offers free legal immigration advice. CLSEPA also helps with the preparation of certain immigration forms.

2.) How can I obtain legal immigration status?

The most common way is that a family member who has legal status files a petition for the family member who does not.

A United States citizen may file a petition for parents, spouse, married and unmarried children over or under 21 years of age, and siblings. A Lawful Permanent Resident may file a petition for the spouse, children under 21 years of age and single children over 21 years of age.

A person whose immigration status depends on that of an abusive spouse may self-petition. Also, victims of certain crimes who have been helpful in the investigation or prosecution of the crime may obtain immigration benefits.

There is also immigration based on employment, but Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto (CLSEPA) does not practice this area of immigration law.

3.) What about the recent sweeps by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)?

Remember that everyone, documented or undocumented, has rights under the United States Constitution: the right to remain silent and the right to be free from unreasonable search and seizure.

Practically, that means that, after giving your name, you may remain silent. CLSEPA has wallet-sized cards that state this right and can be handed to ICE agents.

Do not allow ICE agents to enter your house if they do not have a search warrant.

Everyone, documented or undocumented, should exer-



Mary Dutcher

cise these rights in the face of ICE raids.

Be wary of consulting notarios for immigration advice. They are not attorneys and should not be practicing immigration law.

4.) If I've lived in the United States for 10 years, can I become legal?

Run in the opposite direction if anyone wants to help you "arreglar por el tiempo" or legalize for having lived in the United States for 10 years.

This provision is only a defense to be raised in immigration court if one has been detained by ICE. It is not a reason to put yourself into the hands of immigration officials.

5.) Are there any special educational provisions for immigrants?

The Little Hoover Commission, a bi-partisan state agency whose function is to make policy recommendations to the State Assembly and Governor, studied the topic of immigration some years ago, concluding that immigrants are a great value to the economy and well-being of California and should be treated as residents.

One result of the Little Hoover Commission recommendations is that undocumented immigrants who graduate from a California high school may attend California state universities, colleges and junior colleges at in-state tuition rates, which are much lower than out-state rates.

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Dumbarton Dialogue

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ect, called the Dumbarton Dialogue, was created to bring community members together and empower them to tell transportation planners and elected officials the things that matter the most to the community when alternative transportation solutions are evaluated.

A Unique Aspect of the Project

Since the transportation planning process is slow, the results of the work done today may not be constructed for 10 to 20 years. Typically, public input has only been requested after a project has been identified. Unlike the typical way of doing things, the Dumbarton Dialogue has involved residents early in the process so that they can select viable alternatives that will benefit the entire region. So, residents can now participate in the planning process before final decisions are made.

According to Surlene Grant,

the project manager for the Dumbarton Dialogue. "Residents from East Palo Alto who participate are setting the stage of transportation planning for the next generation. They can impact the future, right now. The input they give ... will have a lasting effect, just like the decisions someone else made 25 years ago are impacting them now."

The Dumbarton Dialogue project has lived up to its original goals, since it has brought the residents of East Palo Alto, Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Redwood City, Mountain View, and Atherton together in a series of meetings, where they are working jointly across jurisdictions and learning about planning projects and the transportation planning process.

The participants have already developed key criteria that they will submit for planners to consider as they prioritize solutions for the traffic approaching the

Dumbarton Bridge and the Highway 101 corridor.

At the next Dumbarton Dialogue meeting on June 2nd, community members will finalize the key criteria that they developed during their meetings and they will present their suggestions to local elected officials and transportation planners at a mock public hearing that will take place in East Palo Alto's City Hall. The criteria that they present at the hearing will address key points such as environmental impacts, social equity, the promotion of alternate means of transportation, and noise, air and safety impacts.

The next meeting of the Dumbarton Dialogue is open to all and will be held on Saturday, June 2 from 9am to 12:30 pm at the East Palo Alto Municipal Building, 2415 University Ave., East Palo Alto. For more information, please call (510) 352-7826 or visit www.dumbartondialogue.org.

Designed to test you cont.from page 9

You name drop about people who don't matter.

You give yourself a doctorate and now you are Dr.Trifling.

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You're a hater and your organization is on that HATERAID!

You've got an uncle who

just sits at the senior center and plays dominoes all day

You're so into getting people rehabilitated from that crack, but you're still smoking it on the side.

You deny that anything is crooked about your organization, but we all know you're full of Sh____!