

Measure C

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those bodies 100% of the taxes it collects for them. If homeowners and other property owners are behind in their tax payments, then the county keeps the interest and penalties imposed.

If the county cannot place liens on property to secure the tax payments and it is limited in the penalties and interest it can impose as it is under Measure C, then Charan said, the County will lose money.

Since Lawson thinks that Measure C was written prop-

erly he has written to the San Mateo County Tax Collector explaining why state law requires the county to collect the taxes Measure C imposes. He said the measure conforms to the State Revenue and Taxation Code and the State Government Code.

He also said that he had sent Measure C and his analysis to outside attorneys for their review and they agree with his analysis. As of yet, Lawson has not received a written response from the

tax collector's office.

As for next steps, Lawson said there would be a joint meeting held with East Palo Alto's Mayor David Woods, the city's Vice Mayor Pat Foster, San Mateo County Supervisor Rose Jacobs Gibson and Lee Buffington, San Mateo County's Tax Controller.

The East Palo Alto City Council will also discuss Measure C at a special meeting on Wednesday, May 31.

"All the work that needs to be done," Lawson said,

"needs to be done now," since in late July the city must make preparations for sending out this November's tax bills.

Charan said the city officials have the power to write ordinances, but measures are passed by voters. Since he thinks Measure C is not currently written to the tax code, Charan said it needs to go back to East Palo Alto's voters for the modifications he thinks would bring it in line with the code.

Having another vote on the

measure "appears logical to me," he said.

But Measure C's supporters might have another chance to celebrate. The City of East Palo has the option to bypass the county and collect the taxes itself.

Still, in spite of the current impasse with the county, Lawson expressed confidence. "I think, we'll work it out," he said.

"It just seems unnecessarily difficult. I question why this needs to be the case with East Palo Alto."

Summer Employment Program

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perhaps you noticed a young person working there. At The Way We Grow, at various churches, at Youth United for Community Action (YUCA) and at many other local organizations, one could find SEP youth.

Last summer, SEP offered more than one hundred East Palo Alto youth opportunities to show their stuff.

Community members worked with these youth to show them how they should look the first day of work, how they should deal with situations encountered in the

workplace, how to talk to their supervisors, how to connect to their community in countless ways.

On pay day, some caring community members asked them about their jobs, while other community members worked with them to help them understand why there were taxes taken from their checks (an unhappy surprise for some) and how they might overcome the obstacles they were encountering.

Maybe they had never had to show up on time every day in the summer before. Maybe

they had never had to be nice to strangers who called them on the telephone. Maybe they had never had to figure out how to schedule their time so they could go to the doctor, take care of their chores, and do their jobs all on the same day.

Many of them developed a new respect for their parents. As one of them said later: "I just thought my mom left the house and stayed gone and then came back later in the day. I didn't know what work really meant."

Ray is back for another

summer. He dropped off his SEP application at OICW weeks ago. This year's program is under way.

On June 18th, SEP youth will begin the third year of the program and, once again, they will prove to the community that all they need is an opportunity and some support.

As the Sponsored Employment Program continues, consider how you might work with area youth to see that they get the chances they deserve. Ray Brown's story is still being written, as

are the stories of all the youth looking for opportunities to grow and serve others in this community. These youth need more than opportunities; they need you.

Allan Johnson is the director of youth programs at OICW in Menlo Park, CA.

To see another SEP student and staff member talk about the SEP program, in a brief video excerpt, go to

www.epatoday.org

and click on

EPA Today's Online Videos

Redevelopment

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been accomplished; however, we are still far (\$72) from the countywide average (\$151), and more progress needs to be made to bring the sales tax revenues in line with other municipalities.

As the City receives more sales tax revenue, the City's General Fund will be strengthened, enabling the City to provide the quality and expanded level of services that other cities enjoy and the citizens of East Palo Alto deserve, need and demand.

The Redevelopment Agency also manages the City's First Source Hiring Program, which requires that businesses within the

Redevelopment Area makes their best good faith effort of hiring at least 30% of their employees from the pool of qualified East Palo Alto candidates. The program has consistently surpassed its 30% goal.

During the third and fourth quarter of 2006 (from August through September and September through December), the percentage of East Palo Alto residents working at the Gateway 101 shopping center has stayed at 36%. Thus, of the 1103 jobs the center has created, about 400 are filled by East Palo Alto residents. Thus, the City and the Redevelopment Agency are

not only increasing revenues to improve services, but also providing jobs for local residents who can literally walk to work.

In the Ravenswood Redevelopment area, there are a number of projects already entitled or under review. Entitled projects are 1) the Olson project, (55 Town-homes) on Weeks Street, 2) Byrd-Brock-DKB Homes (52 single family homes + 25K sf of Industrial Condos) on Pulgas Ave., and 3) Tara Road, (50K sf of light industrial).

There is a project undergoing Planning review: 2555 Pulgas (78 live-work units), at the Northern terminus of

Pulgas Avenue. Projects at the conceptual stage are: 1) the "Supermarket" project at Bay and University (a mixed use residential and retail project to be anchored by a full service supermarket, and residential units above). The supermarket operator and number of units are still to be determined. 2) 90K s.f. of industrial condominiums on Pulgas Ave., 3) a Mixed Use project in the "Four Corners" area (including several properties on the south east side of Bay and University), and, 4) Cooley Landing, at the eastern end of Bay Road.

The idea for Cooley Landing is to transform this open space into a nature,

interpretive center for residents to learn about the resources of the Bay, existing endangered species and delicate ecosystem, with the idea in mind of fostering environmental preservation and land stewardship through access to and education about the ecology of the Bay.

Thus, the East Palo Alto Redevelopment Agency continues contributing to the financial stability of the City, the well being of its residents and the progress of the Silicon Valley region.

Carlos Martinez is the Redevelopment Director for the City of East Palo Alto.

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Justice also provided assistance in conducting narcotics investigations. Their work is ongoing. A report outlining their results will be provided in the near future.

Phase 2

The California Highway Patrol deployed 5 officers to the City to enhance traffic enforcement and target those transporting drugs and guns. Their efforts thus far have resulted in:

- 26 arrests (1 felony - 25 misdemeanors)
- 1 firearm
- 314 citations
- 128 verbal warnings
- Total Statistics
- So far the enforcement component of Project Safe Neighborhood has resulted in the following seizures:
- 110 arrests
- 11 firearms recovered
- 4 replica guns recovered
- 3.9 pounds of narcotics seized
- 200 parole and probation searches
- 314 citations - 128 verbal

warnings
60 towed vehicles
Phase 3
The San Mateo County Gang Task Force (GTF) will activate full-deployment beginning the end of May throughout the summer. The GTF will coordinate with the Department to continue its targeting of gangs and those suspected of violence.

During this phase, the Department will also receive support from the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) to further target narcotics dealers.

School Letters

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like two of my siblings did when they attended a large comprehensive school.

Please do not take away our opportunity to go to college. EPA Academy also provides a social and educational environment in which students and teachers are able to connect on a personal level. This school was a second home for me... I was absolutely amazed at the support I received from the staff. Rebecca Altamirano was my advisor throughout

my high school career and has become one of my best friends.

EPA Academy teachers truly invest themselves in their students-this school is an asset to the EPA community and it has even inspired me to come back and teach in East Palo Alto; I too want to make a change where it matters.

Sincerely,
Transito Torres

Community Calendar

Class reunion

The MA class of 97 will have its ten year reunion **June 2 at 4 p.m.** Flood Park - Redwood picnic area. Flood Park is at 215 Bay Road in Menlo Park and the Redwood Picnic area is in the park.

To find a map of the area go to: mapquest and put in the name of the park. <http://www.mapquest.com> For more information, contact Andi Nelson at mareunion97@yahoo.com.

Dumbarton Dialogue June 2

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.

The Power of the Bite:

Saturday, June 2, 2007 at 11 a.m. at the Menlo Park Library, 800 Alma Street, Menlo Park. Impressive Weight Loss, One Bite at a Time by Michael Nierenberg, M.D. Dr. Nierenberg, on Saturday, June 2, 2007 at 11 a.m. at

the Menlo Park Library, 800 Alma Street, Menlo Park. After thirty years of experience working with patients, Dr. Nierenberg will discuss his book which he hopes will contribute to solving the obesity crisis in this country. Free van service is available for Menlo Park seniors and people with disabilities. For more information, Contact: Roberta Roth, Outreach Librarian E-mail: rloth@menlopark.org Phone: (650) 330-2512/330-2525

Pacific Islander Youth Violence Prevention and Intervention When: Wednesday, June 6; 5:30PM - 7:00PM Where: Cultural Center at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 975 Sneath Lane, San Bruno, CA 94066 Special Guest: Featuring an All-Star panelist that aims to steer, motivate and encourage today's youth by sharing their own personal stories, inviting open conversation with the youth audience, and inspiring success. This is a FREE event, open to the

public.

Celebrate completion of the levee repair on June 7, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Community Room East Palo Alto City Hall 2415 University Avenue East Palo Alto

Meet Chandra Adams at East Palo Alto Library on Wednesday, **June 13, 2007** at 7 PM

Chandra Adams will be reading from her book, *Shades of Retribution*. She will be available for book signing after the program. Please join us for this author event for our 2007 Adult Summer Reading Program at EPA Library.

This event is free and open to all members of the public. For more information, visit www.eastpaloaltolibrary.org or contact Sereptha Strong at (650) 321-7712, ext. 225. The East Palo Alto Library is located at 2415 University Ave. The library is open Monday through Thursday 10 AM to 8 PM, Friday 10 AM to 6 PM, and Saturday 10 AM to 5 PM. SamTrans routes 281 and

296 serve East Palo Alto (Call 1-800-660-4287 for routes and schedules).

Subject: June Beat Meeting Dates

Beat Two Date: Thursday, June 7th, 2007 Time: 6:30pm - 8pm Location: Ecumenical Hunger Program (2411 Pulgas Avenue)

Beat Four Date: Thursday, June 28th, 2007. The Beat Four meeting will be in the Tan Recreation room at the apartment complex at 55 Newell Road. Time: 6:30pm - 8p

Beat One Date: Friday, June 15th, 2007 Time: 6:30pm - 8pm Location: Community Room at City Hall (2415 University Avenue)

Beat Three Date: Saturday, June 23rd, 2007 Time: 9am - 11am Location: Palo Mobile Estates (1885 East Bayshore Road)

Sidewalk Office Hours State Senator Joe Simitian (D-Palo Alto) announced today that he will hold his

annual "sidewalk office hours" on Saturday, June 2 in Redwood City and Thursday, June 7 in San Carlos. Simitian once again invites community members to visit and voice questions and comments about state legislative issues.

Simitian will host his sidewalk office hours at the following locations: Redwood City Kiwanis Saturday, June 2, 9:30 am - 11:00 am Farmers Market: Downtown in the parking lot at Hamilton and Winslow San Carlos Hot Harvest Nights: Thursday, June 7, 5:00 pm - 6:30 pm, Downtown on the 700 block of Laurel Street For more information, call Simitian's district office at (650) 688-6384 or visit www.senatorsimitian.com.

Eastside Prep Graduation

June 13th at 4:00 pm For the eighth year in a row, every Eastside senior has been accepted to a four-year college or university. 2101 Pulgas Ave East Palo Alto, CA 94303 (650) 688-0850

Local TV Shows at the Media Center

"Your Community Foundation: Catalyzing Change"



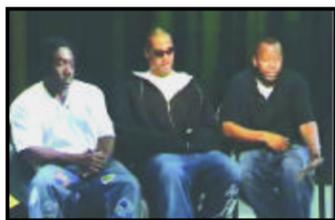
Eleanor Clement Glass, Pat Bresee, Dr. Emmett Carson and Sharifa Wilson discuss the recently merged Silicon Valley Community Foundation Channel 30, June 2 at 4:00 a.m.

"Immigration: Where Are We Going?"



Laura Valdez, Henrietta J. Burroughs, Bernardo Huerta and Julio Garcia discuss "Immigration: Where Are We Going?" This show can be seen Thurs. @ 8 p.m. May 30 and Fri. June 1 @ noon on Channel 27 and at the same time on www.communitymediacenter.net.

"What's Going On"



Doug Fort, right, and two guests

"What's Going On" is a six-episode series that is designed to provide a platform for today's collective voices within a multi-ethnic Urban Youth and Young Adult growing up in the East Palo Alto community. The series aims towards breaking a culture of silence and building bridges of communication among young people; it is a journey towards revitalizing the way we interact and how people view us.

Youth and young adults are engaged as guests on the panel, audience members and invited to perform live in the studio at the closing of the show. This is a contribution to the freedom and independence of a new Urban Youth and the young voices that remain silent throughout the world.

Episode 3 will be a community conversation with teens and young adults about the influence of alcohol and drugs. Doug Fort will host the show and speak with teens who will share their experiences with addictive substances. David Lewis, Co-founder of Free of Last, an alcohol and rehab agency in East Palo Alto, will join Doug and his guests. The show will air Fri, Jun 1st 11:00am 27, Sat, Jun 2nd 10:00am 30. Sat, Jun 2nd 10:30am 28. Check www.communitymediacenter.net for other showings.

If you or a youth group would like to be a member of our studio audience or perform live on our show, please let us know at epa.peace@gmail.com or call us 650.646.3855. Studio Productions are scheduled for the following dates: June 22, July 13 & July 20.

Our Criminal Justice System



Larry Baker, David Lewis, Henrietta J. Burroughs, Jim Fox and Judge William Murray, Jr. discuss why the criminal justice system is broken and how it can be fixed.

The complete one hour discussion can be seen beginning on Saturday, June 2 and on Fridays @ noon, Saturdays @ 1:30 p.m., Sundays @ 5 p.m., Mondays @ 8 a.m. and Thursdays @ 8 p.m. from June 2 through June 16 on Channel 27, which airs locally on the San Francisco Midpeninsula. The show can also be seen on the web at the above days and times at www.communitymediacenter.net.

Report

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investment of financial and human resources, however, the NII fell far short of achieving the hoped-for tangible improvements in resident's lives. While some stakeholders view characterizing the NII as a failure as too harsh, it certainly was a great disappointment."

Dr. Faye McNair-Knox, the executive director of OEPA, who was quoted in the newspaper's article, said the article uses Brest's statement to focus exclusively on East Palo Alto and OEPA, since the news article said, "The multi-million-dollar, six year "One East Palo Alto" effort to improve lives in East Palo Alto and two other communities is "a huge disappointment" if not an outright failure..."

McNair-Knox said that the article's total focus on East Palo Alto and OEPA is unfair. Referring to OEPA, she said, "...we, in fact, are only part of a whole experience covered in the ... report and not the subject of sentences from Paul Brest's letter that are quoted in ...the article."

Some think Brest's statement also refers to the whole 10 year venture that the Hewlett Foundation pursued in its efforts to bring about substantial changes in the three selected communities. Those holding this view cite the following section of the report:

"Our report is not an evaluation, nor is it an in-depth account of what happened on the ground in each neighborhood that participated in NII. It is an analytical review of



Several OEPA members during a community program

how the initiative was designed, managed, measured, and supported and what those experiences imply for privately funded community change-during NII, now, and in the future."

McNair-Knox pointed out that Brest had positive statements to make about OEPA, since, in his letter, he said, "While the West Oakland project self-destructed early on, the NII left Mayfair and East Palo Alto better than it had found them, and helped create organizations that continue to serve their residents in youth development, education, public safety, and other areas."

"For all the problems described in the report," Brest said, "we are proud of our partners' and our own work in East San Jose and East Palo Alto - work that continues to bear fruit."

McNair-Knox felt that the news article intentionally omitted Brest's positive statements about East Palo Alto and used only the statements that could be interpreted negatively.

Leif Erickson, the head of a local nonprofit in Palo Alto, agreed. "I have not read the Hewlett Foundation report but was very disappointed in the article In my work as director of Youth Community Service (YCS), I have come to appreciate the professionalism and effectiveness of One EPA's community leadership and program development. Because of OEPA, we have been able to raise the quality and effectiveness of

our programs, and to reach more youth," he said.

In looking at the whole NII program, the Hewlett report

acknowledged that the shift the foundation made in 2003 in changing its requirements and guidelines "became a lightning rod for problems."

At that time, "the dynamics were most intense in East Palo Alto," the report stated. Because of the disagreements the foundation's shift in direction caused, the Peninsula Community Foundation resigned as the Hewlett Foundation's managing partner and many of the residents dropped out of OEPA disillusioned and cynical about the process. Many even said, "I told you so."

The report warns that those who want to get involved in community change need to know that: "Some will find the work too messy, politically charged, and/or hard to assess."

But some might say the same thing about the effort involved in analyzing the final reports that are written after the formal projects have ended and the grants have been disbursed.

To read Brest's letter and the complete report go to <http://www.hewlett.org/AboutUs/News/NII.htm>

[Editors note: EPA Today would like to find out what you think about community change. Does it have to be messy and involve strife, and political infighting? Log onto www.epatoday.org, click on EPA Today's Online Blog and give us your opinion.]

The information below is reproduced from the Hewlett Foundation report titled,

Hard Lessons about Philanthropy & Community Change from the Neighborhood Improvement Initiative

NII'S CORE COMPONENTS

NII began with six goals:

1. Connect fragmented efforts to address poverty-related issues in select communities.
2. Improve the capacity (proficiency and resources) of participating community-based organizations.
3. Improve Bay Area community foundations' capacity to support neighborhood improvement.
4. Develop neighborhood leaders by creating a vehicle for increasing resident involvement in neighborhood planning and improvement strategies.
5. Leverage significant public/private resources to support community improvement.
6. Provide long-term statistical evidence of changes in poverty indicators (e.g., unemployment, welfare dependency, vacant and abandoned structures).

NII Timeline 2006

EAST PALO ALTO

- 1996** Hewlett selects East Palo Alto as third NII site. Peninsula Community Foundation (PCF) becomes managing partner.
- 2000** Community organizing, public launch, and planning conducted. One East Palo Alto (OEPA) evolves into formal organization.
- 2001** 10 resident workgroups identify multiple issues and projects to pursue.
- 2002** Conflicting interests fracture OEPA's board. PCF resigns as managing partner but remains funding partner. Hewlett begins managing the work directly, streamlines OEPA's priorities around three signature projects (EARN, LEARN, and SAFE). OEPA obtains independent nonprofit status. Hewlett contracts with JMT for outcome evaluation and centralizes technical assistance under the Foundation's management.
- 2003** OEPA's executive director resigns. Evaluation management consultant begins helping OEPA with data.
- 2004** New executive director stabilizes OEPA's structure and relationships.
- 2005** OEPA drops three-program model, ends EARN, and refocuses on youth development.
- 2006** East Palo Alto's NII support sunsets with final one-time grant.

Below are some of the major accomplishments the report attributes to OEPA. The following description does not include the two pages of economic outcomes the report presents

MAJOR OUTCOMES OF ONE EAST PALO ALTO

I. Tangible outcomes that reflect improved life circumstances for neighborhood residents

Improved neighborhood safety-Formed block associations that negotiated agreement with police to meet quarterly with residents, provide annual training for block club members, and use community policing practices. Consequently, the divide between residents and police is less pronounced than in other communities. Advocated for ordinance to drive out tenants who use or sell drugs; subsequently closed at least one "drug house." Doubled the number of juvenile probation officers for the area (from 4 to 8). Increased county's attention to the most violent offenders in area. "OEPA's leadership in the Crime Reduction Task Force... helped make crime in EPA be viewed as countywide rather than a local issue, [which] helped attract substantial federal and state law enforcement resources for a major crackdown on drug activity in EPA in 2005."

Educational improvements-OEPA's "backdoor approach" frames after-school, ESL, and parent leadership training as pathways to improved education. Nuestra Casa now serve 250 parents annually in its ESL program. Among the 101 students who participated in Quest Learning Center's after-school programs in 2005-06, 66% demonstrated an increased level of study skills, and teachers reported that 33% showed improved literacy skills. The New Teacher's Center's work with Ravenswood City School District resulted in 87% of new teachers returning to the classroom in 2005-06, compared to 27% in 2003-04. In 2006 and 2007, final NII grants and additional funding from Hewlett's Education Program built on the foundation laid by OEPA to improve in-school and after-school instruction, increase parent engagement, and provide summer job training for young people. For example:

*Grants to the Ravenswood City School District, New Teacher's Center, and Boys and Girls Club support small-group instruction after school and provide coaching for after-school staff. Hewlett credits the New Teacher's Center's work, in part, with tripling the percentage of new teachers who return to East Palo Alto classrooms from one year to the next.

*Nuestra Casa's efforts to organize and educate new immigrant parents continue to expand, and the parents have launched successful campaigns to improve school grounds and lunch quality.

*A youth employment program co-lead by OEPA and the Opportunity Industrial Center West, and involving more than a dozen service providers, teaches basic job-readiness skills to 100 youth who face significant barriers (e.g., previous incarceration, placement in foster care, school dropout), pays them for their time, and links them with continued education, training, and employment support.

Business Expo

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covers, seat covers, table centerpieces, flower arrangements, and dance floor decorations for quinceañeras, weddings, parties, etc.

She received an equity award to build her business through advertising. Her business goals include increasing revenues and client base through advertising, obtaining a business office and storefront, and securing a company van to transport large goods to and from events.

Henrietta Burroughs, East Palo Alto Today Newspaper Burroughs is the founder and sole employee of EPA Today, East Palo Alto's first newspaper in 20 years. EPA Today is a central communications component of the East Palo Alto Center for Community Media.

She received an equity award to hire an employee to sell advertising for the paper and a grant writer to seek



Picture courtesy of Luis Vizcardo
Standing left to right: Luis Vizcardo, Jessica Weiss, Kimberly Carlton, Terry Clark, Henrietta J. Burroughs, Robert Shoffner, Victoria Estrada, Ines Alvisar, Maria Hernandez and Dee Uhila.

additional funding sources for the paper.

Her business goals include increasing profitability for the paper through advertisements and grants, hiring additional staff, and increasing readership and traction within the community.

Terry Clark, California Alzheimer's Placement Resource Services

Clark owns and operates a placement referral service for the elderly with a focus on

those affected by Alzheimer's disease and dementia. She received an equity award to advertise her business and free office space at Start Up for 6 months.

Clark's business goals include expanding her client base and providing public education about the degenerative effects of the diseases as well as care solutions for those affected by it.

Victoria Estrada, Vision Cleaning Services

Victoria owns and operates a cleaning service that includes a crew of 3 people. She received an equity award that will allow her to purchase equipment to expand her household cleaning company to include janitorial services.

Her business goals include expanding her service capacity, increasing her client load, and hiring additional employees to increase organizational capacity.

Maria Mazariegos, Hernandez Cleaning Service Mazariegos owns and operates a residential cleaning service and received an equity award to purchase environmentally safe cleaning supplies and to advertise her new products to existing and new clients.

Her business goals include expanding her client base by offering environmentally safe products, advertising her business to increase visibili-

ty, and creating a marketing strategy that includes professionally designed letterhead and business cards.

Dee Uhila, Pacific Tonga - Ma'a - Tonga USA

Uhila owns and operates a handicraft and clothing boutique in East Palo Alto. The store specializes in products from the Pacific Islands, including shells, fabrics, t-shirts, leis, and other crafts.

She received an equity award to purchase new inventory to boost her business and offer new products to meet the demands of clients.

Her business goals include increasing cash flow to the business with new inventory and managing business finances with a professional accounting system.

Raquel Medina is the Redevelopment Agency Coordinator for the City of East Palo Alto.

Open Letter

ounce of prevention equals a pound of cure.

2. LACK OF MAINTENANCE

A. Park is Filthy: The bathrooms smell like septic tanks and urine. There is never any soap in the soap holders and the toilet paper is never replaced. It is a foul place for children to have to use, especially little girl children since they must sit on the urine infested seats. Many of the garbage receptacles never have garbage bags and no one seems to haul any of the garbage away. The receptacles are not solid. They are tall barrel-like containers with open slots on the side and no bottoms. So all the garbage pours right out spilling through the slots and out of the bottom and either blows away or sits and rots for weeks on end. This is a health hazard. Garbage, garbage, garbage, everywhere: sharp pointy beer caps, broken glass, piles of trash (especially blown up against the far fence where it gets trapped by the wind). The playground mats are full of stains and sometimes smell of urine.

B. Grass Needs Cutting: Every baseball season about 100 kids descend upon Jack Farrell for Tee-Ball and Pitching Machine, as well as their younger siblings and other family members who visit the playground. When the ball is hit out into the outfield the grass is so high that it stops or slows down the ball taking the batter's glory away

or it has to be looked for in the grass covered with little white flowers camouflaging the little white ball. Don't we deserve to offer our children in non-City organized sports better than that since the City does not offer any recreation programs?

C. Overall maintenance lacking: (1) The water fountains never work and the fountain bowls are all stopped up with filth. Small children cry for water on hot, hot sunny days. Childhood should not be filled with neglect. (2) The baseball back stop and bleachers are full of graffiti (the City could easily clean with rubbing alcohol.) (3) The paths are full of tan-bark, glass and rubble that prevent skates, scooters and skateboards from passing safely. I have witnessed little children on scooters fall right on their chins because their wheel hit the rubble on the path and they cannot anticipate the wheel will stop and the momentum of the scooter will throw them. You cannot build a park to attract children then neglect the City property. This is an "attractive nuisance" that Mr. Lawson should have schooled you about.

I won't even get started about the daily dice games. Okay, just a little bit. Every single day there are dice games. The other day I saw three at the same time. You decide what message is being sent to the younger ones who are curious about what the older ones are doing and walk right up and watch.

I am not the only one in this City aware that a few years ago dice games were being robbed and the thief was eventually shot and killed by the gamblers. And this is okay for children to be exposed to?

You should be ashamed: ashamed that you don't even care enough to visit and see for yourself. You should be ashamed that we have so few parks for our children that this is the best you can do. You should be ashamed there is a \$120,000 plus budget for "Recreation Services" and no Services to speak of. You should be ashamed because we have no one else to blame but our own politicians. As people of color we should demand higher standards for our children instead of letting them fall through the cracks - literally. I have never seen a survey or flyer mailed to the homes asking the residents what recreational activities we would like as a community or to attend meetings about City sponsored youth activities. No task force. No committee. No attention. Just lip service and dollars thrown around.

And "WOW" you have \$1,630,000 for Maintenance, almost \$1 million of which is for personnel salaries and you can't cut the lousy grass once a year for baseball season. My 14 year old son will do it for \$20. For shame, we live at the threshold of Silicon Valley; possibly the wealthiest venture capital mall in the world and we live like a second-rate City - by choice. It's

definitely not because there is not enough money. There is way too much waste.

I have had to assist in managing and organizing my children's baseball leagues, volunteering to help with soccer teams, and facilitating the partnership with another city to offer EPA kids karate, soccer space and baseball sponsorship because EPA offers nothing to its children it claims to value and wants to keep out of harm's way with youth activities but in reality does nothing. I am glad to do it because I love my children and the children of this community, dearly. But enough is enough. It is bad enough that parents and volunteers do everything to keep the youth involved with no help from the City, but to have to watch workers in EPA get paid and do nothing about the park maintenance or no offerings of recreational opportunities is absolutely astounding. It has the whole community shaking its head asking "What is the \$112,000 recreation budget possibly for?" Give that money to Tee-Ball and Little League, give it RYAA soccer and basketball, give to the YMCA- they all do a much better job of offering youth activities to the community and could use the funding.

Look, I do not know how to make you understand that when you are 2, 4, or 6 years old playing at the park should be fun. It should not hurt to play at public parks when you are just a little kid. Children should not get their little legs

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caught in holes, Children should not be stabbed by nails. Children should not fall on their skates when they are learning to keep their balance because no adult bothered to clean up the beer bottle that broke two months ago. Children should not have to play in filth, and children should not have to bang their heads when they fall because there is no matting. You cannot say you didn't know because (1) you can easily walk through the park and see for yourself, and (2) I have spoken with people who have complained to the City repeatedly about these problems and have been ignored. I am coming at you so hard because City personnel know all of these things, or if doing their job properly, should know. I am upset that everyday when my children play there is something new I discover and watch all the other children getting hurt. Other City's manage to keep their kids safe. You organize a park clean up day and I will be there.

This is only Jack Farrell, I have not even made a cursory inspection of the MLK Park. If you do not feel ashamed by these conditions in which our children are forced to play in, then you should be sued into fixing the problems. If anyone is interested in filing a suit or claim against the City they can call me at (415) 297-6009 and I will network everyone together with attorneys.

- Marcia Perez
Fed up EPA Resident

News Briefs

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open in the fall.

As a participant in Sec. Rice's school tour, Christaan Canter, the director of development for the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Peninsula said, "It was an honor and privilege to have Secretary Rice visit the program that she started more than 15 years ago. Though she is currently embroiled in difficult and controversial political affairs, it is clear that she remembers where she came from and obvious that she really cares about the futures of the young people in our community."

New city appointments

During a special session on May 22, the East Palo Alto City Council appointed nine city residents to five open positions. The following appointments were made:

Senior Advisory Committee

Dorothy Lewis;

Planning Commission:

Attorney Renee Glover Chantler and Carlos

Romero;

Rent Stabilization Board

Mr. Perry Grossman

Ms. Shryee D. Randolph

Mr. Lee Harrison

Public Works and Transportation Commission

Mrs. Nancy Edelson

Mr. Bernardo G. Huerta and

Ms. Lettecia M. Rayson.

Their terms will begin on

June 1, 2007. The interview

process will continue on

June 5 in order to fill the

remaining open seat on the

Planning Commission.

Grant is official

On May 24, Gail Ortega, a

member of the Built to Last

Collaborative, announced

that the California Volunteer

(CV) Commission awarded

the Built to Last Collaborative

a three-year

Americorps grant.

The grant award of

\$313,500 per year will allow

BTL to recruit, train and

deploy forty part-time academic

coaches and hundreds of area

volunteers to

increase the high school completion rate of East Palo Alto and East Menlo Park students who are at risk of dropping out or of failing to meet Sequoia Union High School District graduation requirements.

Other members of the collaborative include: Pat Gemma, Eric Hartwig, Leif Ericson, Larry Moody, and Les Dewitt.

The group must attend a mandatory AmeriCorps conference in San Francisco in late June .

Good news for the City

In his presentation during

the budget study session on

May 30, Michael Lawson,

the city attorney for East

Palo Alto, announced that he

had "good news for the city."

He said that a San Jose jury

had decided 8 to 0 in the

city's favor that East Palo

Alto police and other police

agencies did not use excessive

force in arresting a suspect

who had filed a lawsuit

against the city.

An important decision



Photo courtesy Charisse Domingo Yuca members at March 31 press conference

On Wednesday, May 30, the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) ordered Romic to shut down 70% of its present operations in East Palo Alto.

According to one report, Romic has 30 days to cease handling hazardous waste in the city.

East Palo Alto's Youth United for Community Action, YUCA, has been in the forefront in requesting that the permit be denied and that Romic vacate its East Palo Alto facility.

The group held a May 31

press conference to announce the DTSC's decision. YUCA issued a release that said, "Our efforts have won a partial but significant victory in... rid[ding] EPA of this blight."

New community lending program

EPA CAN DO launched its CAN DO COMMUNITY LENDING program on May 7, 2007 at the East Palo Alto Senior Center. The event was attended by approximately 40 seniors, plus representatives from the San Mateo Housing Authority and Fannie Mae, a federal loan program.

The CAN DO COMMUNITY LENDING program is designed to curb predatory lending in East Palo Alto by providing loan products that are sensitive to the needs of East Palo Alto residents.

The program is jointly sponsored by EPA CAN DO

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Letters

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Report. Since 2005, Romic violated a Consent Order issued by DTSC in April 2005 and had an incident in which worker Froilan Chan-Liongco sustained 2nd and 3rd degree burns in March 2006. Additionally, there was a chemical release in June 2006 of such magnitude that a shelter-in-place was ordered in the community. Most recently, in January 2007, Romic was the subject of an investigation where leaking drums were found on a truck that originated from Romic near Bakersfield.

Residents have been fighting to shut down this facility and have given DTSC all the facts they need to deny Romic's permit. DTSC has the power to deny Romic's permit through the California Health and Safety Code which stated that denial of a permit can be made on any of the following reasons:

1. Non-compliance by the business with any condition

of the permit.

2. Failure, by the business, to disclose all relevant facts or misrepresentation of any relevant facts.

3. Determination that the business activity endangers human health and environment.

We hope DTSC makes the right decision -- SHUT ROMIC DOWN! To get involved with community efforts to fight for environmental justice for our community, please call (650)322-9165 and join the Environmental Justice Group, a group of residents of all ages fighting for our community. Charisse Domingo YUCA

The Girls Club

Dear Editor:

The Girls Club of the Mid-Peninsula is one of the oldest nonprofit organizations serving young girls in our community. Since 1969, the

Girls Club has been here for our girls -nurturing, supporting and challenging them to be the strong women that they were destined to be. Whenever our girls needed a helping hand, a word of advice or a gentle hug, we were there to give encouragement, wipe their tears and show them the way.

In December, 2006, the Board of Directors made the difficult decision to suspend programs at the Girls Club due to staff changes and resource issues that had to be addressed by our organization. Since that time, our board members have been working diligently to address these issues in a professional and timely way. We are now pleased to announce that the Board has developed a re-organization plan that includes the following strategic tasks:

Governance: Expanding the board and forming an Advisory Committee.

Programs: Conducting a needs assessment, developing a program plan and offering new and exciting programs for our girls.

Public Relations: Communicating with the large number of people - board members, staff, families and community members - who have supported the Girls Club over the past 45 years and rallying them to our cause.

Resource Development: Implementing a donor campaign and reaching out to our long-time donors to support us through this transition period.

We want to thank the entire community for your past support and invite you to share your ideas, talent and resources to help us through this transitional period. It is our aim to begin offering limited programs in the Summer of 2007 and return to a full-time program schedule by the end of the

year.

In June, we expect to announce our summer program schedule and will provide additional information on our future plans for the Girls Club. In the meantime, please contact us if you have questions, new ideas or want to make a contribution to the Girls Club.

Sincerely,
Mavis Knox, Chairperson
The Board of Directors,
Girls Club of the Mid-Peninsula

Those interested in writing a letter to the Editor can send their letters to:

epatoday@aol.com or write to: Editor
EPA Today
321 Bell Street
East Palo Alto, CA 94303

EPA Today's web address is: www.epatoday.org
Phone number is: (650)327-5846, ext.311

Mabry

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the position of Below Market Rate Housing Administrator at the Palo Alto Housing Corporation where she began in 2003.

Linda traveled extensively throughout Europe, Africa, and Latin America. Her energy and abiding curiosity of life and people made friends wherever she went, and her infectious smile and laugh will be missed by friends,

clients, colleagues and family.

She will live long in our hearts. In addition to her husband, Dieter Folta, and stepson, Olaf Folta, Linda is survived by her parents, Ralph and Gwendolyn Mabry, brothers Ralph Jr. and William, sister Marguerite and three nephews and three nieces.

In memory of Linda, her

husband Dieter Folta has established the Linda A. Mabry Foundation.

The foundation's goal is to fund projects for African American children and youth in East Palo Alto.

Contributions can be made payable to the Linda A. Mabry Fund c/o Community Development Institute, Post Office Box 50099, East Palo Alto, CA 94303.

Celebrating Victory

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ing them influence decision makers for the good of the community.

We need to let our young people know that we are aware of what they are doing and we are proud of the way they are taking on their roles as future leaders.

With the concerned, active, young people that we have in the community leading the way, the future appears to be

in solid hands.

Now having given you our view, we'd like to get your feedback on a variety of issues affecting the community. You can post your views on our web site. Go to www.epatoday.org, Click on EPA Today's Online Blog and give us your opinion about the issues.