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East Palo Alto Today

Providing news that is relevant, informative and critical



East Palo Alto and Belle Haven

July- August 2007

Vol. 2 No.10

New owners for University Palms

By Daniella Garcia and
Henrietta J. Burroughs

When East Palo Alto residents exit the 101 freeway in 2009, they can expect to be greeted by a new, revamped University Palms project.

On August 7, Palo Alto developer Owen Byrd as well as his partners, Brock & Company and the Rockefeller Group Development Corporation sold the University Palms property to MacFarlane Partners and TMG Partners, both companies based in San Francisco.

"I am so excited to bring TMG and MacFarlane to town," Byrd said. "They are such a good fit for East Palo Alto. TMG is the largest most successful commercial developer in the Bay Area. MacFarlane is the largest owned minority firm in the United States.

Both have a commitment



A project rendering of the proposed University Palms complex on University Avenue and Donohoe in East Palo Alto

to revitalizing a place like East Palo Alto. I feel a sense of personal accomplishment in bringing them to town." Byrd said.

In speaking for the new

owners, David Cropper, who is the managing director of TMG Partners said, "We do a lot of projects in the Bay Area and we are very excited about this one.. Is is a first

class ..project It is in an incredible location on the Peninsula. The community has already supported it. It offers community benefits and it comes at a time when

the market is strengthening."

Plus, he said that the project "has been on the boards too long."

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Romic is closing

By Henrietta J Burroughs
EPA Today

Did community pressure force Romic to sell its waste facility and all of its assets in East Palo Alto? If you ask members of Youth United for Community Action (YUCA), the answer is yes. But if you ask that question of Chris

Stampolis, the leading spokesperson for Romic in East Palo Alto, the answer is no.

While there is a huge difference in opinion over the reasons for Romic's discontinuing its operations in the city, some facts are clear?

On August 3, Romic com-
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Important commitment

By Silvia Ramirez
EPA Today Contributor

San Mateo County Sheriff Greg Munks made a life changing decision that pleased the assembled group of 400 clergy and community leaders who heard his words. Munks expressed his commitment



Members of the audience

to create and enforce a county-wide policy to ensure that San Mateo County officers would not ask for immi-

gration status or report undocumented immigrants to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) without a warrant.

Munks spoke at the First United Methodist Church in Redwood City on Saturday, July 21. Not only did the

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SEP graduation day arrived

Excitement was high at the Sponsored Employment Program's third graduation.

Fifty eight of East Palo Alto's youth started the summer employment program in June, but by the time it ended, 100 had found jobs through the program, thanks to last minute funding that was received.

The graduation ceremony took place at OICW's offices

on O'Brien Street in Menlo Park on August 6.

As one attendee said, the



SEP intern at graduation

biggest highlight of the ceremony was what the youth themselves had to say.

The speakers were Gabriela Acuna, a senior at Menlo-Atherton High School; Michael Corado, a ninth grader; and Roshonia Cotton, a single mother seeking her GED.

Cotton told the audience, "I thought I was going to be a failure and that my life was

going to be terrible. This is the first time I've been successful at anything, and I appreciate the opportunity you gave me to see what you saw in me. Allan and the counselors at OICW never gave up on me, and now I see how important it is not to give up on myself."

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Inside

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Una promesa importante para la comunidad

By **Silvia Ramirez**
EPA Today Contributor

Greg Munks, Encargado de la policía del condado de San Mateo hizo una decisión que dio gusto al grupo de 400 pastores y líderes comunitarios que escucharon sus palabras.

Munks expresó su compromiso para crear una póliza que asegure que los policías del condado de San Mateo no pueden pedir el estatus migratoria ni reportar un inmigrante indocumentado al departamento de Inmigración (ICE por sus siglas en ingles) sin un orden de arresto.

Munks habló en la iglesia la primera metodistas unidas en Redwood City el sábado 21 de julio. Su compromiso dio gusto a todos los líderes de PIA quien estaban presentes para expresar su preocupación sobre las leyes migratorias en este país, muchos de ellos fueron afectados de los recientes redadas de ICE.

"Mi hija esta pegado a mi cuando la dejen en la escuela. No me quiere dejar por miedo que quizás no vuelvo," explicó Lidia, líder de PIA de la iglesia del Buen Pastor en Redwood City, "el acción por el Sheriff es crucial para proteger las familias en la península."

Otra líder de PIA Maria Teresa dijo, "Seis miembros de mi familia, incluso a mis dos hijos, fueron agarrados por el ICE. Ninguno de ellos tuvieron órdenes de deportación. Tuve que prestar \$16,000 para recuperar mis hijos. El resto de mi familia sigue en detención. Tengo una deuda grande y no se como voy a pagar mi renta este mes."

Debido a que al congreso no logro pasar una ley justa para la reforma migratoria, muchas iglesias de PIA patrocinó la junta de Julio para asegurar que haya pólizas locales que pudiera proteger las familias que siguen aterrorizados por las redadas federales.

Líderes de estas congrega-

ciones creen que es posible que ICE aumenta sus ataques en contra de las familias considerando que el presupuesto para ICE ha doblado en las ultimas dos años y es probable que sigue creciendo.

En Febrero y Marzo de 2007, agentes de ICE, quienes se identificaron como 'policía' esperaba cerca de las escuelas, acercaron los lugares adonde jornaleros buscan trabajo, y pasaron por apartamentos y casas en Redwood City, Palo Alto, East Palo Alto, y San Mateo. De acuerdo a los records de ICE, no más que 44% de los 400,000 deportados en el país, como parte el 'operación devuelve a lo que les mandan', tuvieron una record criminal.

"Las agentes de ICE presentaron como policías locales, fueron puerta a puerta en los vecindarios buscando personas, quedaron afuera de las tiendas y siguieron a los padres que estaban dejando sus niños en la

escuela," dijo Silvia Ramirez, líder de PIA y miembro de la iglesia católica de Mt.Carmel.

Durante la junta adonde habló Munks, el arzobispo de la iglesia Católica Neideraur también habló con la diversa publica presente, "Esto no es la primera asunto en la historia de los EEUU adonde tuvimos que luchar entra la leyes legales y los leyes morales. Nuestra iglesia luchó en contra de las leyes inmorales de la esclavitud y de la segregación. Ahora, luchamos en contra de estas leyes injustas que quiebran a las familias."

En sus comentarios durante la junta, Concejal de East Palo Alto Rubén Abrica aconsejó a la alcaldesa de Redwood City que toma acción. Unos meses atrás, el concilio de East Palo Alto paso una resolución que denuncia las redadas.

Esta resolución se prohíbe que los empleados de la ciudad pidan estatus migratorio ni reportan el estatus migratorio de

ninguno a sus residentes al ICE, incluyendo la policía.

La alcaldesa Pierce de Redwood City se comprometió para estudiar la resolución de EPA y considerara tomar acción parecido. Además, la Alcaldesa Pierce se comprometió su apoyo para que la ciudad de Redwood City aprueben fondos para proveer servicios legales de bajo costo a los que necesitan apoyo con casos de inmigración y deportación.

"La península es una comunidad unida para proteger todos nuestras familias y vamos a continuar a luchar para que estos compromisos se llevan a cabo," dijo Richard Antonchuck, líder de PIA de la iglesia metodista.

Silvia Ramirez es una miembro de la iglesia católica de Mt. Carmel en Redwood City y una líder de la Accion Inter-religiosa de la Península (PIA).



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News Briefs

Making history

Bay Area credit unions make California history

Four major credit unions will make state history as they commit to a partnership this week to open a community credit union in East Palo Alto.

The goal of the project is to establish an institution that will contribute to the economic stability in East Palo Alto by providing basic financial services to members of that community.

The doors of the new credit union are scheduled to open for business at 1836 Bay Road in September.

John Liotti, CEO of the Northern California Urban Development Corporation, led the effort and said, "Our

goal is to fight the causes of systemic poverty by building structures that can make people financially independent.

"A credit union that serves the unique needs of the East Palo Alto community fills that role by offering a range of financial services at reasonable terms. Until now, many people in East Palo Alto have had no options other than predatory lending institutions."

Local goalie in World Cup

The next time Larry Jackson blocks a ball hurtling toward the goal, he will be doing it on one of soccer's biggest stages. Jackson, a teenage soccer phenom from East Palo Alto, recently earned a spot on the 21-man



Larry Jackson

squad that will represent the United States at the FIFA Under-17 World Cup. The tournament will take place in South Korea from August 18-September 9.

Soccer stars such as Brazil's Ronaldinho and Italy's Francesco Totti began their professional careers at the same tournament.

Jackson spent the past year training at the IMG Soccer

Academy in Bradenton, Florida. Prior to IMG, he attended Gunn High School and played club soccer with the DeAnza Force as a forward.

He ultimately hopes to make the full Men's National Team and play soccer professionally.

He will train with the rest of the team in Clemson, South Carolina in preparation for the team's first match on August 20th against Tajikistan.

Local fans can watch Jackson and the US team on ESPNU and ESPN2.

Police Department to Publish Operating Policies Online

"No Visible Tattoo Policy First on Website"

Effective August 1, 2007, the East Palo Alto Police Department will publish its operating policies online for public view and access.

By providing unfettered access to policies that govern officers' actions, the department will enhance its professionalism and be more open, accessible and accountable to the community.

"I believe this information will assist the community to better evaluate the department, understand the legal actions of officers, and identify actions that are not in accordance with established policies", according to Chief Davis. The Department will

continued on page 5

Seeking affordable health care

Raylene Scott

EPA Today Contributor

Six hundred members of Peninsula Interfaith Action (PIA) - many from churches in East Palo Alto - met with three county supervisors on June 18 to push for affordable healthcare. Two San Mateo County Supervisors, Adrienne Tissier and Jerry Hill, are leading a "Blue Ribbon Task Force" to create a plan for low-cost health coverage in the county. Santa Clara County Supervisor Liz Kniss is also leading a "Healthcare



Solutions Task Force" in that county. PIA leaders brought their research and testimonies to the supervisors at Woodside High School on June 18 to get them to push

the counties on to the next step - to make sure the plans get funded.

The power of the meeting and the people's testimonies moved the supervisors to

act. They heard stories from people who had gone into the hospital and had treatment done and when they got home they had huge bills that they couldn't afford and they were stunned. PIA members also explained that if they had affordable health coverage, it would be easier for them to go to the doctor on a regular basis, not just wait until they got so sick that the bills got too high to pay.

The supervisors answered "yes" when PIA asked them to help find funds for the new programs. People standing

up for other people - that's power. The community coming together and speaking up about what they need, that's the second step. The final step will be to see the plan through. The county supervisors promised to work together with the community to make affordable health coverage a reality in the two counties.

Raylene Scott is with Faith Missionary Baptist Church, East Palo Alto
650-305-0106
lafayescott@yahoo.com

City, County & State Government Meetings & Contacts

East Palo Alto City Council

The City of Council meets the first and third Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm in the Council Chambers, East Palo Alto City Hall, 2415 University Avenue; (650) 853-3100 or Fax: (650) 853-3115. Website: www.ci.east-palo-alto.ca.us

East Palo Alto City Council Members

David E. Woods- Mayor
(650) 853-1907

Patricia Foster- Vice Mayor
(650) 328-3944

Ruben Abrica
(650) 321-4001

A. Peter Evans -
(650) 321-1009

Donna Rutherford
(650) 327-7926

East Palo Alto Boards, Commissions, Committees

Planning Commission
Second and Fourth Monday

Rent Stabilization Board
Second and Fourth Wednesday

Public Works & Transportation Commission
First and Third Wednesday

Youth Advisory Committee
First Thursday of each month

Senior Advisory Committee
Meets the 1st Wednesday of each month - 6:30p.m. - City Hall.

Menlo Park City Council
The Menlo Park City Council holds meetings every Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. at the City Council Chambers located at 801 Laurel Street. You can subscribe to receive

the agendas and minutes by e-mail when they are published. An agenda is posted in advance of the weekly meeting, and past agendas and minutes are filed by the date they were held. If you have questions about an agenda please call the City Clerk at 650.330.6620.

Menlo Park City Council Members

Kelly J. Fergusson -Mayor
(650) 327-4533

Andrew M. Cohen - Mayor Pro Tem
(650)327-5332

John C. Boyle
(650)323-5438

Richard Kline
(650) 228-5166

Heyward Robinson
(650) 330-6631

Menlo Park Boards, Commissions, Committees

Arts Commission
Bicycle Commission
Environmental Quality Commission
Housing Commission
Las Pulgas Committee
Library Commission
Parks and Recreation Commission
Planning Commission
Transportation Commission

San Mateo County Bd. of Supervisors

Supervisor Rose Jacobs Gibson, Fourth District

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors meets on February 7, 28 March 7, 14, 28, 2006 in the County Government Center: Hall of Justice & Records 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063. Roll call at: 8a.m. 9a.m.

Regular & Consent Agenda Items.

State Officials

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: 916-445-2841
Fax: 916-445-4633
Email: governor@governor.ca.gov

Assembly Member Ira Ruskin

District Address
5050 El Camino Real
Ste.117
Los Altos, CA 94022
650 691-2121

Senator Joseph S. Simitian

District Address
160 Town & Country Village
Palo Alto, CA 94301
(650) 688-6384

EPA parents visit lawmakers

By Mateo Jaffe
EPA Today Contributor



Left to right, Ester Contreras, Patricia Chavez, Patricia Artia, Ernestina Flores, Mateo Jaffe, and Juana Rosales.

With voting and budget negotiations on the forefront of lawmakers' minds at the state capitol, a group of concerned parents from East Palo Alto did their part to let their local representatives know where their priorities stand for this year's upcoming state budget.

The group which included Juana Rosales, Patricia Chavez, Ernestina Flores, and Ester Contreras made a visit to the local offices of Assemblyman Ira Ruskin (District 21) and Gene Mullin (District 19).

They visited Ruskin and Mullin to let them know about their complex and challenging experiences as parents committed to supporting their children's education in East Palo Alto.

While speaking to the staff at the offices, they also presented a platform asking the

state legislature to pay more attention to certain issues, which they hoped would not be left out of the state's budget.

They spoke about four main topics: educational equity, parent representation, childcare, and economic justice.

They also brought a host of suggestions and recommendations on: how to increase parent access to schools through translation and childcare services and how the schools can provide resources to better prepare

youth to go to college.

Prior to their visit, the parents had worked intensively to research the issues and prepare their testimonies as participants in the Parents as Leaders program offered by Nuestra Casa, a community-based nonprofit in East Palo Alto. The program at Nuestra Casa seeks to support parents who want to work together to improve the quality of education for all students in East Palo Alto.

"It's important to have more contact with the people

who are making the decisions that affect us," said Juana Rosales, a parent-leader.

"I thought I was going to be really nervous," Ernestina Flores said. "But after preparing what I wanted to say, and seeing that the representative was interested in my story, I relaxed and had a good time." Flores, who raised three daughters in East Palo Alto, is currently concerned about the schools her grandchildren now attend.

Currently, 71% of the students from the Ravenswood School District are not completing high school. 65% of them are Latino.

Nuestra Casa's Parents as Leaders program also offers in-depth training for parents to learn about the ins and outs of the educational system, while preparing them to take action to improve education in the community.

In the program, parents receive training and practice in how to communicate with their children more effectively to advance their emotional development and support their studies while they are at home. In the upcoming school year, this training will be offered in schools and community spaces throughout East Palo Alto. The training is open to any and all interested community members.

Ester Contreras, who is a parent-leader in the Nuestra Casa program, said she believed, "The most important thing is that we parents work together to create change for the benefit of our children, who are the owners of our future."

For more information about the Parents as Leaders program and a current training schedule, please call Mateo Jaffe at (650)330-7472.

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A native son comes home

By Daniella Garcia and Maricela Torres
EPA Today Interns



Adam Escoto

The new assistant superintendent for the Ravenswood City School District, Adam Escoto, described himself as a person who wants to help the East Palo Alto community.

Escoto moved to East Palo Alto when he was 2 years old. He attended many schools in the Ravenswood School District while living in East Palo Alto.

As a teenager, he attended seven different high schools. "My family was constantly looking for affordable housing and decent wages, so we moved wherever that was," said Escoto.

He found it difficult to catch up in terms of his work while going to elementary and high school since he would move from school to school.

"As a child, I remember

you," said Escoto. He, himself, thought it was more of a cultural issue.

He said that he decided to work for the Ravenswood City School District because he had a sense of what was happening in the East Palo Alto community.

"I felt I was ready to go to the next level of service in education," Escoto said. "This opportunity came. I knew people who worked here, and I felt I wanted to be a part of East Palo Alto."

Escoto graduated from San Jose State University in 1971. While going to college he wanted to be a biology teacher. Escoto earned three masters degrees: in Education, in Social Work, and in Administration and Supervision.

His career started when he became a high school counselor at the Old Mountain View High School. He served there about four years. Then, for five years he served as Assistant

Director of the Mexican American Community Service Agency (MACSA),, which is a non-profit organization in San Jose for youths and seniors.

In 1985, he worked as a member of a school desegregation team in San Jose that formed to respond to a lawsuit that charged the district with segregating Latinos. Escoto then served two years as the assistant principal at Hoover Middle School in San Jose.

For the past 11 years, Escoto worked as a principal at Horace Mann Elementary School in San Jose.

He said his years as a principal were the most significant years for him because those years shaped him as a leader, allowed him to focus on collaboration, and helped him find out about the needs of people in the community.

Escoto's short-term goals are to learn more about facilities and operations in the

East Palo Alto community. His long-term goals are to help teachers, parents, and students get involved in the community.

He would also like to provide a high level of "customer service" to those involved with the schools: the principals, teachers, parents, and students.

"I'm looking forward to not only getting to know them, but to becoming a member of the community," Escoto said.

Escoto ultimately hopes to change the image of the Ravenswood City School District. "I'm hoping sometime in the not too distant future, when people reference Ravenswood, they won't have to reference IKEA," said Escoto. "

People will know that this is a school district that's very successful in educating kids and supporting kids and families and is an organization that is well run and efficient.."

Sometimes wishes really do come true

By Michele Ashley
EPA Today Contributor

Wishes do come true. Just ask the students and teachers of Green Oaks Academy in East Palo Alto.

After the school created a long "wish list" to help improve its classrooms, local accounting firm, Armanino McKenna LLP, announced plans to purchase every item listed.

Teachers and students requested various items, ranging from DVD players to ink cartridges, glue sticks, and hula hoops.

The firm's generous contribution was the largest donation to a single school in the history of the community effort.

Through the "Adopt-A-School" community initiative,

Wells Fargo Bank pledged \$100 for Bay Area public schools every time outfielder Randy Winn and his teammates score during KNBR-Am (680) baseball broadcasts.

To date, 277 runs have already been scored and at least \$27,700 will be received by local schools. Of that amount, five adopted schools, including Green Oaks Academy, will receive financial support.

"This amazing donation from Armanino McKenna is a great example of how the community can work together to help our local schools," commented Bob Ceglie, Wells Fargo's Peninsula Market Regional President.

Armanino McKenna, the largest California-based accounting and consulting firm, made the donation as



Green Oaks Elementary School first graders stand with Paloma Salazar a paraeducator. Others in the picture include Jeannette Martinez standing on the left. Wells Fargo Community Development Officer Denise Miles sitting in the middle of the first row beside KNBR Radio Personality Dan Dibley, with other guests including Marco Chavez from Ravenswood City School District, sitting at the end.

part of a 15-week firm wide charitable initiative called "Armanino McKenna Gives Back."

The firm split its 260 employees into 21 teams and

each was seeded with \$1,500 for charitable giving. The teams were also encouraged to leverage community and client contacts to raise additional funds beyond the initial

\$31,500 seed money for Bay Area community organizations.

Michele Ashley is a Wells Fargo Communications Consultant.

News Briefs

continued from page 3

Sessions resume in September

The East Palo Alto City Council took a summer vacation after its last session on July 17.

Regular meetings will resume on September 4, when the city council members will return to their regular twice monthly meeting dates on the first and third Tuesday of every month.

See regular meeting schedules for city, state and county government on page 3 of this issue.

start the program by posting a new policy that prohibits officers from visibly displaying tattoos and body art while in uniform.

Future postings include a policy that governs the Department's acceptance, processing and investigation of citizen complaints, and a policy that prohibits racial profiling and requires data collection for all stops made by officers.

The Department recently had all of its policies reviewed and updated by a legal expert. These

policies are under final review by the Chief of Police and will be posted on the website after they have been finalized and published.

City of East Palo Alto
Police Department
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Chief of Police
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Knocking out adversity

By Daniella Garcia
East Palo Alto Today Intern

As he goes on his morning run from East Palo Alto to Menlo Park and back again, Johnnie Gray hurls his fists at the air in front of him.

"Everybody think I'm crazy because I be throwing punches," he says. "They see me and they be like 'ooh, here comes the boxing man.'"

In East Palo Alto, Gray, 49, is more than just "the boxing man." He's the man who established the East Palo Alto Boxing Club in 2003 and the man who created controversy in city hall by accusing East Palo Alto Mayor David Woods of stealing money from the boxing club.

Amid the quest for a new gym and the accusations of political corruption, the man at the center of it all is simply trying to do one thing: Run his program his way.

"This is my program. I'm the president. I'm the CEO," says Gray.

Like many of his students, Gray grew up in a single

parent home in East Palo Alto.

He didn't seriously pursue boxing until he was 18. He recalls walking into a gym at what was then Ravenswood High School and immediately getting thrown into the ring.

"Back in the day, all those coaches and trainers wanted to see was a fight," he says. "They didn't care. I don't train like that."

Gray prefers to use a military strategy when training his students.

Every Wednesday, he can be seen running with them from East Palo Alto to Menlo Park in a single file line. Along the way, they shout slogans such as "We represent EPA. We work hard everyday. They may say we're crazy, but we not lazy."

He strives to instill discipline in his students not just through physical training, but also through lifestyle choices.

When students complain about their parents nagging them, Gray offers the following advice: "Get up in the morning, make your bed, clean your room, clean your-



Johnnie Gray

self up. Don't leave no mess. Do that kind of stuff everyday and see what happens."

Gray's approach to training his students in boxing and in life has been successful. The EPA Boxing Club boasts more than 30 students, including four who recently graduated from local high schools.

His club has generated such a positive response from the community that he plans on expanding it to include an elementary school division.

However, where his boldness and no-nonsense attitude have succeeded with students, they have sometimes failed with local leaders. As a result, Gray experi-

enced difficulty securing a location and funding for his program.

Gray turned down offers to house his program at the YMCA and the Lord's Gym, a new recreation center run by his former landlord Paul Bains. His primary reason for doing so was the desire to control the management of his program.

"We can work together," says Gray. "But you're not going to be my boss with something that I brought to the table."

He recounts an incident in which a representative from the Lord's Gym entered his gym and informed him that he could make \$40,000 if he agreed to a collaboration. Instead of simply saying no, Gray responded more emphatically.

"I looked at that guy and I said 'I like chicken. You starting to look like chicken.' I ran him out of there. Haven't seen him since," he says.

Perhaps Gray is so protective of his program because it goes beyond just a love of boxing. It's about a

love of his community.

"It's about changing this city. It's changing young people's minds about how to think, about how we can work together," says Gray. "This is how we clean up East Palo Alto."

Since receiving \$45,000 from the East Palo Alto City Council on July 10th, the future of the EPA Boxing Club is much more stable. Gray plans to move into a new building on Pulgas Street in August and eventually turn the management of the club over to his current students.

"I'll still be a part of it, but they're the future leaders," says Gray. "I'm creating them. That's our future right there. I'm just trying to guide them in the right way."

Donations to the East Palo Alto Boxing Club may be sent to P.O. Box 51622, East Palo Alto, CA 94303.

Daniella Garcia is a Stanford graduate and is working at EPA Today as part of Stanford's Rebele Internship Program.

A Community Investment EPA leaders and parents create committee to establish parks & recreation department.

By Daniella Garcia
East Palo Alto Today Intern

Jack Farrell Park is a little cleaner and a lot safer thanks to Marcia Perez.

Perez wrote an opinion piece for East Palo Alto Today that criticized the lack of maintenance in the park and alerted citizens about safety hazards regarding playground equipment. After her article appeared, the city repaired the equipment and picked up garbage in the park.

But Perez is still not satisfied.

"The city did the minimum," said Perez. "Basically they protected themselves from liability."

She claimed that the city has yet to clean the bathrooms or mow the grass. For Perez, all of these smaller issues stem from a larger issue that she feels the city has failed to address: the lack of an active Parks and Recreation Department.

In order to address this issue, Perez and Meda Okelo, Community Services Director for the City of East Palo Alto, have spearheaded the establishment of an ad hoc committee composed of parents and the East Palo

Alto Community Services Department.

"This committee is going to be comprised of users of services," said Okelo. "We're going to establish new standards."

Perez, who serves as a manager for the Babe Ruth baseball team in East Palo Alto, stated that the city should allocate more of its budget toward collaborating with community organizations that offer sports and recreational activities.

By doing so, she said the city's responsibilities would be minimal, namely providing space and assisting with registration.

Okelo responded that the process is not that simple.

"The issue is bigger," said Okelo. "Every organization has a reputation... some good, some bad. Even if you have centralized registration, if the organization is bad you won't have takers."

Okelo stated that the city would need to gain access to more facilities and establish protocol for its role in the registration process in order for a collaboration to work.

Perez claimed that another factor inhibiting this process is the lack of communication

between the Community Services Department and East Palo Alto residents.

"East Palo Alto has no communication system" she said. "If it's not on the fence on a banner at Cesar Chavez (school), you don't know about it."

Perez thinks that sending activity guides to East Palo Alto residents could easily remedy the communication issue.

Okelo asserted that at this time, the city lacks the resources to fund such an endeavor.

He added that the failure of organizations to communicate with the Community Services Department also impedes the department's ability to communicate with East Palo Alto residents.

"Organizations don't give us information," said Okelo. "If you don't get information, you don't have anything to publish."

Although there are many barriers to overcome in order to improve the state of recreation in East Palo Alto, both Perez and Okelo said they're committed to working together to make a fully functioning parks and



Children playing in Jack Farrell Park



Playground at Jack Farrell Park

recreation department a reality.

They said that the primary focus of the committee will be facilities and programming. The committee will seek to gain access to new facilities and maximize the efficiency of the existing facilities. Additionally the committee will work to overcome the barriers preventing collaboration with outside organizations.

Perez stated that the committee is still in the organization process, but once it's fully formed, there will be efforts to seek support from the larger community.

"Of all places, East Palo Alto will have the hugest need to keep young people engaged," said Perez. "We're just trying to lay the foundation."

Enjoying the trails by the Bay

By Sean Charpentier
EPA Today Contributor

If you like the wide open vistas of the San Francisco Bay (Bay), you will be pleased to know that on June 5, 2007, the East Palo Alto City Council unanimously approved the EPA Bay Access Master Plan (BAMP).

The BAMP creates a vision for public Bay access that will benefit the residents, employers, and people who work in East Palo Alto.

The BAMP proposes approximately 4 miles of trails and 10 pocket parks in the Ravenswood Business District (RBD) and along the San Francisquito Creek corridor.

Over the next 20 years, the RBD is anticipated to transition from an industrial area into a community with office, R&D, retail, and residential uses.

As the changes in the RBD occur, the City has an opportunity and an obligation to expand public access to the Bay.

The San Francisquito Creek corridor was included because it is a natural pathway for Bay access and the Woodland neighborhood does not have a single park.

There are five major themes that influence the BAMP. The first theme is to increase public access to the Bay in East Palo Alto. The second theme is to provide open space for families and

East Palo Alto residents.

East Palo Alto has many large families with children and a severe shortfall of parkland.

The third theme is to protect the environment. Increasing access to the Bay will help more people understand the importance of a healthy Bay ecosystem.

The fourth theme is to expand East Palo Alto residents' access to regional recreational opportunities along the San Francisco Bay Trail.

The fifth theme is to encourage economic development in the RBD. Open space is an amenity that increases the attractiveness of commercial and residential projects.

The BAMP creates a comprehensive vision of how East Palo Alto will access the Bay to benefit existing and future residents and employers.

The vision consists of 10 proposed pocket parks (including Cooley Landing) connected to each other by 8 trail segments totaling approximately 4 miles of trail. The goal is to establish Cooley Landing as the future centerpiece.

Sean Charpentier serves as the Redevelopment Coordinator for the Redevelopment Agency in the City of East Palo Alto.

Map 1: Comprehensive Trail and Park Network



DESCRIPTION	LEGEND
Existing Bay Trail	
Proposed Trail	
Bay Trail Alignment approved in 2004 by East Palo Alto City Council	
Proposed Parks	

Romic

continued from page 1

pleted the sale of its assets in East Palo Alto to Clean Harbor, an environmental and hazardous waste management company which is headquartered in Norwell, Massachusetts.

On Thursday, August 9, YUCA and many of its followers held a victory celebration near Romic on Bay Road to celebrate the fact that Romic's East Alto plant is closing. For more than a decade, YUCA and its supporters lobbied to get the plant out of East Palo Alto charging that its operations were hazardous to the well being of the community. The group claimed that Romic mishandled waste products in its plant, was cited for numerous violations and was, among other things, guilty of endangering its employees.

On May 30, the DTSC ruled in YUCA's favor and, according to one report gave Romic 30 days to cease handling hazardous waste in the city.

The sale of Romic to Clean Harbor came nearly three months after the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) ordered Romic to start shutting down its East Palo Alto operations.

Romic appealed the decision, which according to Stampolis, stayed the DTSC's order.

In other words, according to Stampolis,

as long as Romic's appeal was pending the company could have continued its operations.

So why did Romic choose this time to sell its assets and leave the city? "The sale to Clean Harbor was strictly a business decision," Stampolis said.

"Romic had been in discussion with Clean Harbor and other suitors for some years. The offer to sell was deemed to be good," he said.

Larissa Flores, a 14 year old who has been a member of YUCA for two and a half years doesn't agree with Stampolis' logic. The fact that Romic is leaving has another meaning for her.

"It just shows that if you put a lot of time and work into something, you can get things done," she said.

During its victory celebration, YUCA held an award ceremony for those whom, they thought, were most influential in shutting Romic down. The nominees were: the DTSC, Romic, Silicon Valley, City Council member Ruben Abrica and the East Palo Alto community. Flores said that the community received the award because of the constant pressure it brought on the company and for its ongoing support for Romic's closing.

Now that the sale of Romic is complete, Stampolis said that Romic will not be bringing new waste to the East Palo Alto facility to recycle, but will continue to process the waste that it already has. He said that all of the processing will be completed by the end of the year.

Obtaining a home mortgage

Jackey Wilson
EPA Today Contributor

When shopping for home mortgages, there are some critical things that you should know about.

You would be wise to familiarize yourself with second Liens and types of product offerings.

There are two types:

1) Equity Lines of Credit are referred to as H.E.L.O.C or Home Equity Lines of Credit.

2) Home Equity Loans are commonly called Fixed Rate Second or Stand Alone 2nds.

H.E.L.O.C's are equity lines of credit where the rate can move up or down at anytime. These rates are tied to the prime. For example, the current prime rate is 8.25% and it could increase at the rate of .25% each time a decision by the Feds is announced.

Note: The Federal Reserve meets quarterly and determines if these rates should go up or down. An example of a HELOC is a line of credit for \$160,000 but using \$50,000 obligates you only to pay back on the \$50,000 rather the whole amount of \$160,000.

Another benefit is that you can

draw on this money on an as need basis and the bank will only charge you for what you use.

The next option is a Stand Alone 2nd this loan product is a fixed rate. However, if you take out a stand alone 2nd for \$160,000 you start paying the full amount of the loan of \$160,000 immediately.

Note: The benefit is that fixed rate does not have the fluctuation like the HELOC when prime change your monthly payment remains the same for the life of the loan.

An easy way to remember the difference between the two is the H.E.L.O.C is like a revolving credit card. Each time you use it, your payment will increase.

The Stand Alone 2nd is like a car payment. You have a set term and at the the end of that term, your loan is paid off and you are free and clear of your obligation.

If you have any further questions about second mortgages feel free to give me a call. Enjoy the month of August.

Jackey Wilson is a mortgage broker who lives in East Palo Alto. To get more information from him, see his ad on page 17 in this issue of East Palo Alto Today.

From the Editor's Desk

A worthwhile experience

East Palo Alto Today hosted seven interns in its office for six weeks this summer. Do you have any idea what it was like to suddenly have at least five teenagers show up for work, with four coming on the same day?

Five of the seven were interns from the Sponsored Employment Program (SEP), East Palo Alto's special job employment program for youth and two were interns from Stanford University's Rebele Foundation.

Having seven new people, especially teenagers, join an organization for work within a few days of each other would be a challenging experience for any employer. But, having them come for six weeks was an intense experience.

Most days were great. But, there were those brief moments when I wanted to put my head in my hands and ask, "Why?" But this issue of East Palo Alto Today shows why - why having seven summer interns was a very positive and productive experience. I can say without reservation, that all of the interns were talented, enthusiastic and very focused.

When they first arrived at the paper, the interns had little, if any knowledge, about what it meant to work on a newspaper. With one exception, they had never written a news article and none had any experience laying out articles or pictures in a publication. Their first assignment was to interview each other.

Once they were given the necessary tools, and they learned what to do and how to do it, they arrived to work before me. When I walked through the door, they were busy researching, writing or laying out their articles.

The article in this issue titled, "Summer interns at EPA Today," shows the biographical articles that they

wrote about each other. In this article, you will read about their backgrounds and their short and long term

goals. Given the brief time that they worked at EPA Today, there is every reason to believe that they will reach their stated goals and accomplish much more.

By the time their internship ended all had written articles, taken pictures and laid out their articles in the paper. They worked very well with each other. When one of them learned a new skill, they were called upon to assist the next person thereby showing each other what they had learned.

The articles you see in this issue with their bylines are the product of their handiwork. I have always had high expectations. In many ways, the interns who worked at EPA Today for six weeks this summer exceeded my expectations.

I will always remember this summer and my experiences with them, particularly the time when I gave five of the SEP interns a ride to OICW in Menlo Park so that they could attend their payday workshop (described on page 16).

Upon returning to the office and getting out of my car, I found that one of the interns sitting in the back seat had taken one of the long stemmed artificial roses I had under my back window and hung it out the back passenger window and put the window up.

Can you imagine what it must look like seeing someone driving down the street with a long stemmed rose hanging about a foot out the back passenger window? For all I know, that might have been worthy of a traffic



Henrietta J. Burroughs

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Photo courtesy of Youth United for Community Action
This picture shows members of YUCA (Youth United for Community Action) and other East Palo Alto residents marching on Bay Road during the public celebration that YUCA held to celebrate the fact that Romic is shutting its facility in East Palo Alto.

Letters in East Palo Alto Today

Changing the system

Dear Editor
When the innocent go to prison, the guilty go free. Herman Atkins spent 12 years in prison for a crime he didn't commit—hear his story, then help fix California's criminal justice system.

Three bills in the California Legislature would help prevent the most common causes of wrongful conviction:

- *Senate Bill 511 *(Alquist) will require the electronic recording of police interrogation in cases involving homicides and other violent felonies.
- *Senate Bill 756 *(Ridley-Thomas) will require the appointment of a force to draft guidelines for the conduct of police line-ups and photoarrays to increase the accuracy of eyewitness identifications.
- *Senate Bill 609 *(Romero) will require the corroboration of testimony by jailhouse informants.

TAKE ACTION:
http://action.aclunc.org/site/R?i=2rQcMgxEw_ftDEC1irKvHA. Urge your State Assembly Member to support these bills.

The California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice—a group of law enforcement officers, prosecutors and defense attorneys—has recommended all three reforms. These reforms will help protect the innocent and make sure the guilty are convicted.

Help End Wrongful Convictions!
<http://action.aclunc.org/site/R?i=OASQRtVpUYBbAIDTS9SGIQ..>

Sincerely,
Maya Harris
Executive Director, ACLU of Northern California

[editor's note: Atkins story can be seen on YOUTUbe at http://action.aclunc.org/site/R?i=OqLlo4DCS553EM9_2UldgQ.]

EPA Greyhounds

Dear Editor
We are growing! Instead of the greyhounds track n field club, we will now be the epa greyhounds youth athletic association. We will provide pop warner football, aau basketball, cheerleading and of course track n field. I have been asked by city officials to give it a try.

We are trying to bring back the after school programs full force to cater to the needs of our youth in the epa community. Join our board or please become an advisory to the board.

Donate to us we are our own non profit and checks can be made out to east palo alto greyhounds and mailed to 36707San pedro drive #102, fremont, cam 94536. Thanks in advance for your consideration.

Eric Stuart/founder
East Palo Alto

Safe Water

Dear Editor,
Mike François has asked the East Palo Alto City Council, numerous times for a copy of the resolution exempting Romic from EPA standards. John Bostic ex-councilman voted for and admitted there was one. Councilman Pete Evans and William Webster claimed there was one on public record. The council can't find it. What happened to the Sunshine Act for transparency in government? Do they need a outside lawyer to help them find the documents?

Mayor Woods missed 3 council meetings that I attended and the May 2007, BAWSCA meeting. BAWSCA water board is where your city gets bond money and your recycled water from the Redwood City plant. There still isn't a allowable parasite count, but I'm sure the politicians will come up with one! Mayor Woods is on that board to get more recycled water for redevelopment. Pete Evans hasn't missed any meetings and the council didn't want him as mayor! Patricia Foster doesn't like to hear the speakers and have complained about it taking too much time. Watch her on TV. Why should she be acting mayor when Woods doesn't show?

Feinstein and Boxer are getting a bill passed to use

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East Palo Alto Today

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EPA Mentorship Director: Julie Patel

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In order to better serve the communities of East Palo Alto and Belle Haven, East Palo Alto Today has made the commitment to operate with high professional standards and to adhere to a strict code of ethical conduct. The principles and policies stated herein serve as an agree-

ment with our readers, advertisers and all others within our service area.
East Palo Alto Today is dedicated to conscientious journalism. We maintain this commitment by seeking and reporting the truth, acting with integrity, and serving the public interest. We will report the

news thoroughly and accurately and include multiple perspectives without favoring one over another.
We will hold ourselves accountable to common standards of decency, treating our colleagues, news sources, and the public with respect.

Opinion

The ideas expressed on this page are solely the views of the individual authors who do not represent East Palo Alto Today's Board, management or staff.

Stopping gentrification

By Kevin Robinson, Jr.

Being from a neighborhood as mine which is now predominantly Latino, I think the city is developing the roots of a gentrified working class small town with future plans of becoming a venture capitalist's dream.

A city which is only 2.5 square miles is now being colonized from a hotbed of history for many blacks, Latinos, and Polynesians alike into a manufactured city.

Destroying the majority of the small businesses in our community to build one hell of a four-star hotel that I am

sure has driven up the property taxes in my area tremendously.

Every time I have returned home from college in Maryland to comeback and find out another one of the few small business owners in my town have been bought out to be replaced with a conglomerate owned chain store.

There was once a auto parts store called Tadlock's in my town. I came back home last summer from college to find that it has now been turned into an Autozone.

I walked into the store to see if anything has been

changed; nothing different about the store other than better lightning and some Autozone promotional items everywhere.

And it just gets worse. I now see that the city has plans to build a marina where there are also many other small businesses that will be no longer very soon.

This marina will have any restaurants, shops, and such that I'm sure will include Starbuck's, Panera Bread, and other various chain restaurants.

Wow, I can only imagine what this will do for the already ridiculously inflated prices of real estate in East Palo Alto, California.

All of the places that were



Kevin Robinson, Jr.

once part of the culture in East Palo Alto and even my side of the neighborhood, Belle Haven in Menlo Park, have been destroyed to build Starbuck's, Ikea, Home Depot, Four Seasons, etc. If at all the peninsula of the San Francisco Bay Area (San Mateo County) wasn't corporate enough, the few neighborhoods such as mine

that had immense roots of culture and tradition have been turned into a cash cow for venture capitalists.

Building plush and lavish manufactured homes and condos to drive up the cost of blue collar citizens' property taxes is putting a strangle hold around our citizens' necks.

Many people cannot afford to live in East Palo Alto any longer, and have moved to areas of the Central Valley such as Stockton and Modesto where the cost of living is much cheaper.

In twenty years, when I bring my kids back to my neighborhood to show them

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Streetwise: community viewpoints

Has crime in East Palo Alto decreased?



"Yeah, I think it has decreased(crime in EPA) because there is a stepped up police force. There are good neighborhood watch groups."

-Roy Cobbs
Resident of EPA since 1963.



"Yes, I do believe crime in EPA has decreased because the zone is quite. On the other hand I would like to see more security."

-Jesus Romero, EPA



"Recently I have not seen any crime. One thing that I would like to see is more protection on University Ave. and Bay Road".

-Resident of EPA



"I do think so, I have lived here since 1956 and I have no problems. Things have been good for my children and I feel there is a lot we can do with our children -- things like activities that will benefit them".

-Ruth Daniel, EPA Resident



" Yeah, it has maybe because I used to hear a lot about crimes and now I do not hear about it".

-Jazmine Ewing
Resident of EPA

Punto de vista de la comunidad: Los crímenes de East Palo Alto an desminuido?

"Si, yo pienso que si han desminuido(los crímenes de EPA) porque hay fuerza de policia... hay buenos grupos de vecinos mirando".

-Roy Cobbs
Residente de EPA desde 1963.

"Ioe, oute manatu ua fa'aitiitia fa'afitauli i totonu o

"Si, yo si creo que el crimen de East Palo Alto a desminuido porque la zona es calmada. Por otro lado quisiera ver mas seguridad

-Jesus Romero
EPA Residen

"Ioe, oute talitonu ua

"Recientemente no he visto ningún crimen. Una cosa que quisiera ver es, mas protección en University Ave. y Bay Road".

-Residente Hispana de East Palo Alto

"Yo pienso que si, yo he vivido aquí(EPA) desde 1956 y no eh tenido problemas. Cosas han sido bien para mis hijos. Yo creo que hay muchas cosas que podemos hacer con nuestros hijos--cosas como actividades que les beneficié".

-Ruth Daniel
Residente de EP

"Si, a la mejor porque antes escuchaba muchos crímenes en las noticias, ahora ya no he escuchado sobre ese tema"

-Jazmine Ewing
Residente de EPA

Samoan Translation: Ua fa'aitiitia ea fa'afitauli i East Palo Alto?

East Palo Alto, ina ua tula'i mai ni vaega o leoleo. Ma o lo'o iai foi ni vaega lelei o tuaoi o va'avaaia ia tulaga".

-Roy Cobbs
Resident of EPA SINCE 1963

fa'aitiitia fa'afitauli i East Palo Alto, aua ua filemu itu uma. O le isi itu, oute fia vaaia ni tele o leoleoga".

-Jesus Romero, EPA

"Talu mai nei lava, oute le'i toe vaaia ni fa'afitauli. Ae tasi lava le mea oute fia vaai ai, o le tele o ni puipuiga i luma o University Avenue ma Bay Road".

-Resident Of EPA

"Ioe oute manatu iai, sa ou nofo inei talu mai le 1965 ae sa leai ma ni fa'aletonu. Sa lelei mea uma mo la'u fanau, ae oute lagona o lo'o tele ni mea e mafai ona tatou faia mo a tatou fanau - o ni mea e fa'afiafia ai, ma o ni penifiti lelei mo'i latou".

-Ruth Daniel
EPA Resident

"Ioe lava, masalo! Aua sa masani ona ou fa'alogo ile tele o fa'afitauli, ae ua ou le toe fa'alogo ai lava".

-Jazmine Ewing
Resident of EPA

Summer interns at EPA Today



LaKia Young

LaKia Young is 16 years old. She attends Palo Alto High School and will be a junior at the beginning of the fall.

LaKia has lived in the city of EPA all her life with her mom and little sister. She has two older brothers.

She likes to play basketball, dance, hang out with family and friends, make money and party.

Some of her goals in life include graduating from high school, attending North Carolina University and majoring in business.

She also wants to be rich so she can support her family. She has been part of the Student Employment Program (SEP) since last summer.

Then she worked at the East Palo Alto YMCA and

had a blast. This summer the SEP placed her at EPA Today where she writes articles on upcoming rap artist from EPA .



Samnit Kumar

Samnit Kumar is also a resident of East Palo Alto. He is 15-years-old. He moved here from Fiji 3 years ago with his older brother and parents.

The hardest thing for him was adapting to a new culture and not knowing many people.

He attends Woodside High School and will be a sophomore in the fall. His goals in life are to graduate from high school and to attend a UC.

Some of his interests are reading, watching tv and sports, specifically football and basketball.

For the past two summers Samnit has been part of the

Sponsored Employment Program (SEP). This summer he got a job working at EPA Today as an intern.

He writes the sports section in the paper and the other interns think that he is doing a very good job at it.



Maricela Torres

Maricela Torres is 19 years old. She graduated at East Palo Alto Academy as the Salutatorian of her class. She will be attending Chico State University this fall.

Maricela was only 2 years old when she and her family migrated to the United States.

Maricela's short-term goal is to finish her freshmen year successfully. One of her long term goals is to get her Masters Degree in Language Arts.

Maricela's hobbies and interests are helping elementary students with reading and math skills. One of her past job experiences included volunteering as a tutor since 7th grade for elementary students.

Maricela joined the SEP program to see how her job experiences might fit her career as far as what she likes to do.

She lives with her single mother, along with her brothers and sisters. She was raised by her mother and older brother. She will be the first generation in her family to go to a four-year college.



Lasara Lacy

Lasara 15, will be a sophomore at Menlo Atherton High School. One of her hobbies is to run Track, being her second year.

Lasara's short term goal is to make it to the Nationals. Her long term goal is to

graduate from high school. After high school she plans to attend the University of Berkeley.



Wilfred Opeta

Wilfred Opeta is 15 years old. He attended East Palo Alto Academy until his sophomore year.

He is about to attend West High School in Tracy.

Opeta's future goal is to attend San Jose State University and become a biology or guitar teacher.

He has been in the SEP Summer Internship since last year.

"I feel that working for the EPA Today newspaper will be a fun and new experience."

One of Wilfred's interests is being part of a Christian Youth Group in Tracy. Wilfred's hobbies are singing and playing guitar.



Daniella Garcia

Daniella is a recent graduate of Stanford University, having completed her degree in the field of communications.

She is an avid sports fan and is currently working towards her master's

degree in Sports Management at the University of San Francisco.

In college, Daniella held internships with both the Oakland A's and the Stanford Athletics Department.

During her senior year at Stanford, Daniella was also marketing director for the 6th Man Committee.

Daniella is the only child of parents originally hailing from Sonora, Mexico.

This summer, she hopes to gain further experience in the field of journalism and contribute to the coverage of sports at East Palo Alto Today.

A worthwhile experience

continued from page 10

citation. But it gave me a laugh.

This summer was a growth experience for all of us, even with its fun moments, and there was lots of laughter. I am immensely proud of what each intern accomplished while working at EPA Today. I trust that you will be proud, too.

You will not see any of the work featured by one of the Stanford interns, Erika Amaya. She worked on sales and marketing materials and spent only two weeks at the paper. But I'd like to give her a personal thanks as well.

Good news

This past June, the East Palo Alto Center for Community Media, the nonprofit organization under which East Palo Alto Today is published, was notified by the IRS that it had been granted

the 501c3 status that it had requested.

So, we would like to let all who have donated to the East Palo Alto Center for Community Media know that their donations are now fully tax deductible, retroactive to June 2004, when the East Palo Alto Center for Community Media became a California nonprofit Corporation.

Now, when you donate to the East Palo Alto Center for Community Media, your donations not only assist us, but also give you an added tax deduction.

If you like to make a financial contribution and we hope you will, please send your donations to the:

East Palo Alto Center for Community Media
321 Bell Street
East Palo Alto, CA 94303
or make your donation

via our web site:

www.epatoday.org.

Board of Contributors

East Palo Alto Today is looking for volunteers who will serve on its Board of Contributors.

No meetings are necessary.

Your service could not be easier. We are looking for individuals who are willing to voice their ideas about the issues affecting the East Palo Alto and Belle Haven communities.

The only requirement is that you express your ideas on East Palo Alto Today's Opinion Page about once a quarter.

For more information, call us at: (650) 327-5846, ext. 311.

We are interested in hearing from you and hearing what you have to say.

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