

# Voting rights

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"Laws that directly affect inmates will be decided this November, so please share this information and encourage them to vote," Evans told the women.

"Wait," one woman asked, slowing her pace. "You mean they can vote while they're in jail?"

"Yes they can," said Evans. "It's the law."

While there is a law that allows inmates to vote, it is a law that is hardly clear. After years of disagreement and legal wrangling, authorities at every level still disagree about the voting rights of California's more than 82,000 jail inmates - most of whom are Black or Latino, and have not been convicted of any crime. Less than three months before one of the most historic elections in national history, California is still without a clearly established policy on jail inmate voting - and, depending on whom you ask, the interpretation of "the law" varies.

Ten California counties hold about 70 percent of the state's jail inmates. Calls to the registrars of voters in each of these counties yielded a variety of opinions on whether or not those inmates can vote. Representatives from four counties, including San Diego

and Alameda, stated that inmates cannot vote under any circumstances; four other counties, including Fresno and Sacramento, said inmates with felony convictions were disenfranchised; Orange County's Registrar's office said that jail inmates are eligible to vote as long as they are citizens; and in Los Angeles County-- which holds the nation's largest jail population of 19,000-- a registrar employee admitted to not knowing what voting rights jail inmates held, and suggested calling Secretary of State Deborah Bowen.

"The law is the same in all of California. Registrars are supposed to be the authority and people are going to trust what they tell them. Their answers shouldn't vary by where they are, or who picks up the phone," said Dorsey Nunn, co-director of All of Us or None and its parent organization, Legal Services for Prisoners with Children.

However, in spite of Nunn's definitive statement about the voting rights of inmates, uncertainty has surrounded this issue for years.

In June 2004, San Francisco non-profit Legal Services for Prisoners with Children asked then-Secretary of State Kevin

Shelley to clarify the voting rights of those in jail and on probation, and learned that both groups were eligible to vote. In November 2005, new Attorney General Bill Lockyer officially denounced Shelley's interpretation, and declared that those on probation and in jail for a felony are legally disenfranchised. All of Us or None, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and several other organizations took the debate to court. In December 2006 the California Court of Appeals Court sided with the activists, ordering the Secretary of State to inform Election Officials that "the only persons disqualified from voting are those who have been imprisoned in state prison, or who are on parole as a result of the conviction of a felony."

Following the 2006 decision, the Secretary of State's office complied by informing county registrars that only those "in prison or on parole for a felony" were ineligible to vote - but did not fully explain what that meant for those held in jail, creating a network of state elections officials who disagree amongst themselves.

According to the Secretary of State's lawyers, individuals serving a jail sentence follow-

ing a felony conviction cannot vote, while those in jail for a misdemeanor or awaiting trial can. Organizations like the ACLU, All of Us or None and Berkeley-based Voting Rights for All, and even the county of San Francisco, take a different stance, arguing that the 2006 Court of Appeals Court decision enfranchises even those jail inmates who have a felony conviction.

The confusion may ultimately boil down to the precise meaning of "a felony sentence." According to Peter Sheehan, an attorney with the Social Justice Law Project who served as co-counsel in the 2006 appeals case, the decision holds that someone sentenced to jail for a felony is incarcerated as a condition of felony probation, and not technically serving "a felony sentence." That makes the actual number of disenfranchised jail inmates very small. Or it would, if the average citizen-- or public official-- understood that distinction. "If the Secretary of State is simply saying people in jail for a felony cannot vote, that's a misrepresentation unless they follow up with a detailed explanation of the distinction between felony probation and a felony sentence," Sheehan said.

Ultimately, most jail inmates' rights do not hinge on the outcome of that particular disagreement. According to state data, more than two out of three California jail inmates have not yet been convicted of any crime and would qualify as potential voters even under the Secretary of State's own reading of the law -- though four of the ten county registrars polled believed all jail inmates were ineligible to vote. "If most people in jail haven't been convicted, the state already agrees that most people in jail can vote," said Evans. "So why isn't there some kind of institutionalized procedure to make that easier and to make that known?"

According to a legal representative from the Secretary of State's office, the state is only required to inform counties of the law, while each county registrar is responsible for ensuring that employees correctly follow it. Sheehan believes the state has a duty to do more. "Let's say we were talking about women or Catholics or Blacks, instead of people in jail," he said. "We all know these groups can vote under the law. If some counties wouldn't let them, we'd expect the state to take action, whether it involved making phone calls or holding

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## Stealing a nation

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voting machines that consistently switched votes for the same one candidate to the other, systematic ballot destruction, and investigative reporters sidelined when attempting to report on such irregularities.

Is it possible, this film asks, that an election can actually be stolen, not with guns or tanks, but vote by vote? If so, what does this mean for our democracy, or lack thereof? And most importantly, if we have in fact been misled in the past, is there any good reason that it wouldn't happen again this coming November?

Initial reactions to this film can easily take the form of despondency and even resentment. With only a month left until the election, how could we possibly begin to address the enormity of electoral insecurity? Why even bother to make that trek to the polls if, in fact, the stickers we wear to proudly announce that we voted on November 4th really deserve a question mark on the end? Yet it is

precisely this type of passivity that has allowed corruption to slip by the wayside in the past.

The reality of it is that each and every one of us gets to decide whether history is doomed to repeat itself. By showing up at the polls in higher numbers than ever before, we demonstrate that we DO want to have a say in the way this country is run and in the direction of its future.

By facing the ugly truth of fraud and misconduct in elections, we'll know how to recognize it if it happens again. Empowering ourselves with awareness of the shadowy side behind the bright and shiny smiles of politics, the media, and our status as the most powerful nation in the world is the surest route to action when the stories don't match up, when our intuition tells us something has gone terribly wrong.

So go and read the newspapers, but read many. Watch the opin-

ions on TV but then formulate your own.

Show up at the polls and tell the world that you do in fact care who will become the next face of the American people. And be prepared to refuse a spoon fed truth should it smell and taste of foul play.

For more information on "Stealing America: Vote by Vote", visit [www.stealingamerica.com](http://www.stealingamerica.com) or call 650-568-4340.

**Jessica Weiss** is a writer, teacher, and outreach correspondent for progressive organizations and movements in the Bay Area including Concentric Media.

For questions about the film and other related issues, please contact her at [jess.concentric@gmail.com](mailto:jess.concentric@gmail.com).



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# Stealing a nation vote by vote

By Jessica Weiss  
EPA Today Contributor

As one of history's most paramount presidential elections draws near, questions weigh heavy on voters' minds. Which candidate possesses the right combination of experience, intellectual competency, nonpartisan integrity, and trustworthiness to lead this country out of an increasingly bleak economic and environmental future?

Who will provide the right solution to the seemingly endless mess in the Middle East?

How do McCain and Obama fundamentally differ on issues like health care, energy, foreign policy, taxes, and how can we as voters see between the political rhetoric lines to understand which candidate will not only promote, but

stand behind issues most important to us?

Fears of central command falling into the hands of another botched and corrupt regime mean that all eyes are on the debates, the polls, and the campaign mudslinging, breath abated, waiting perhaps for a golden moment of breakthrough when one candidate will rise up and prove himself to be exactly what this country needs right now.

Yet there is another aspect to the upcoming election that is more frightening than one's preferences being severely disappointed. This particular aspect is perhaps the most decisive one, yet it cares nothing for debate victories or poll leads.

It says nothing about the length of McCain's resume or Obama's quick-witted, articulate presence. It doesn't even



Jessica Weiss

give a hoot about who will swing at the last minute. What we're talking about here is an unimaginable threat to our democracy, one that, if founded, could mean the very essence of freedom in America has been taken from our hands; our right to not only vote, but to actually have our vote count in the selection of the next President of the United States of America.

The last two presidential elections came down to such a narrow margin of victory, it

was almost (and still is, in many minds) too close to call. Many eyebrows were raised at hazy messages coming from the media about ballot miscounts, voters standing in line for hours upon hours to cast their ballots, and odd stories from pollworkers who noticed glitches and technical breakdowns in electronic voting machines. It felt to many like one of those horror movies, where the victim can sense an intruder in the house and looks and looks to find his whereabouts, but can't seem to pin down his location until it's too late. The results of the 2000 and 2004 elections provided many with this same sense of shadowy business conducted just out of sight, but the few who even dared to discuss it unfortunately had little more as evidence than a few odd

stories and a bad feeling in their gut.

That's all changed now with the release of a new documentary film, "Stealing America: Vote by Vote." Released on DVD and in screenings across the country this summer, this film shows behind the scenes perspectives on election results since 1996 and sheds light on the mysterious mismatch between votes cast and the votes that were actually counted. "Stealing America" is a frightening revelation of anomalies at every level of the electoral process, from basic voter harassment to senior level complicity on glaring omissions of raw exit poll data. It highlights and weaves together instances of uncounted ballots, technical glitches in electronic

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# Local Rapper Makes Good Deal

By Maria Olivares  
EPA Today Intern

This September, Kontac also known as Stephen Ashford signed a deal with SMC/ Fontana a company that works with over 70 artists to distribute their music. Kontac is a Physical Education teacher at the East Palo Alto Charter School, and he is also a local rapper.

In his music, Kontac is trying to motivate kids to stay in



school. He made a song with Bay Area rappers to show that rap isn't just about money, cars, drugs, women, etc. One day a student pointed out to him that his music

had curse words just like the other rappers. He got inspired by that, and now his songs don't have any curse words or talk about bad things.

Kontac and the producers created a video at the East Palo Alto Charter School to motivate the students about the advantages about being in school. They are using the money from the video "Stay in School" and their disc to send to the schools in the Bay Area.

Kontac's main purpose with the idea of creating a disc with the song "Stay in School" and a video was to get more kids to not drop out. He used kids in the video, and the kids got to interact with the rappers. The rappers involved were E-40, Mugzi, Keak Da Sneak, Battle Looco, Dem Hoodstarz, San Quinn, Mac & A.K., the Jacka, Cellski, and Erase-E.

The radio stations Wild 94.9 and 106 Kmel have the song "Stay in School" in their

song rotation. In his promotional material, Kontac said that he had received attention from television shows, Barack Obama, and The U.S Department of Education. To see the video he made at the East Palo Alto Charter School, go to [www.myspace.com/beats-bythebay](http://www.myspace.com/beats-bythebay) and you tube.

Maria Olivares is a sophomore at East Palo Alto Academy High School.

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# Voting rights for inmates

a training. This should be no different."

But it is different. "The misinformation is widespread and goes all the way to the top," said the Co-chair of Voting Rights for All Judy Gerther, who coordinated volunteers to register voters outside of Oakland's county courthouse in 2004. "There were judges we ran into, then, who read our materials on eligibility and said, 'We don't believe you.' This has been the law since 1973, but it's never been publicized or clarified in layperson's language. Lawyers don't know, judges don't know."

Along with this month's Day of Action, grassroots efforts to raise awareness have included a Northern California ACLU billboard campaign and All of Us or None lobbying state officials for better education and enforcement. As in 2004, Voting Rights for All plans to conduct outreach outside several Bay Area courthouses in mid-September. All of Us or None

and the ACLU have sought a meeting with Secretary of State Deborah Bowen for several months, peaking in April when All of Us or None led a protest at the State Capitol. That meeting hasn't happened.

When it comes to inmate voting, jail facilities are no more regulated than county registrars. Don Allen of California's Correctional Standards Authority, the agency responsible for designing state jail and prison policies, admits there are no mandated procedures for providing inmates access to voting information. "We have a broad rule that jails need to have some kind of policy to accommodate inmates' rights to vote," said Allen. "The onus is on the county to design procedures that fulfill that obligation. Some may do the minimum and some may do more."

For some, that minimum is far too low. "Many individuals in jail have no reason to think they can vote, and little chance of receiving accurate



Two women discuss the voting rights of inmates.

information if they ask," said Kathy Kahn, a retired defense attorney and Voting Rights for All co-Chair. "Until we can assure accurate information is available, we don't know how many inmates don't want to vote, and how many are being incorrectly told they can't."

"Even if the law says inmates can vote, they're in jail. They've got bigger problems and priorities," said Michael Robinson, an Alameda resident perplexed by the campaign to secure inmates rights he's not sure they want. "My nephew talks to me about all kinds of stuff when I go see him in jail, but

he's never asked me to help him sign up to vote."

Activists argue that this is not a question of whether or not inmates want to vote, or who they will vote for. "I don't think most people in jail understand the power of their voting. They often think voting won't change anything," said All of Us or None member Elder Freeman. A former Black Panther and state prisoner, Freeman fears many in jail today don't know what voting can accomplish. "Getting them the vote is just the first step," he said. "We need to teach them it's not all about federal elections. State and local elections determine policies in the communities where they live."

Though All of Us or None has sought support for this issue from the state Democratic Party with little success, Nunn emphasizes that defending the voting rights of those in jail is about civil rights, not partisanship.

"Nobody I try to register ever says, 'Oh, I can't vote

because I'm Black," said Nunn, also a former prisoner. "But I get plenty of Black and Brown people who falsely believe they can't vote because they're on probation or have a felony conviction. I know there are plenty of Black and Brown people who are told and believe they can't vote because they're in jail. So the effect is the same."

Whether the question of inmate voting rights will be settled with a conference or require further legal action, organizers and advocates are determined not to see another election pass without a statewide policy protecting incarcerated voters' rights under the law.

"Even with the law on our side, we are being disenfranchised by misinformation," said Nunn. "That is a blow to our communities and to our democracy."

Jennifer Rae Taylor is a journalist and law student originally from Southern California. She can be reached at [jaetay@gmail.com](mailto:jaetay@gmail.com).

# Brunch leads to awards

At its August brunch, the Mothers for Equal Education gave five hundred dollar scholarship awards and one thousand dollar scholarship awards to 24 local college bound recipients.

The following students seen in the picture to the right were scholarship award recipients. They are:



Alvaro Alvarez- Foothill College  
 Jammo Amanuel - DeAnza College, Cupertino  
 Pavlova J. Bigsby- S.J. City College  
 Shaheerah Bradshaw - CA State Univ., East Bay  
 Miriam Cruz - Foothill College  
 Dorian Dawson-Everest College, Hayward, CA  
 Ashley Donnell - Foothill College  
 Chiqueena Lee - Chapel Hill University/Law Department  
 Porchea Fort- CA State Univ., North Ridge  
 Le'CreaSha Grigsby - Johnson C. Smith University  
 Jessica Hawkins - Foothill College

Jason Hinckson - Loyola Marymount University  
 Anthony M. Jones - DeVry University, Fremont  
 Syesha N. Lewis - Hilltop Beauty School, Daly City  
 Raymond McElroy - Santa Monica College  
 Chelsea McLaughlin - Fordham University/Lincoln Center  
 Lori Patton - Foothill College  
 Michelle Phinizee - Foothill College  
 Danny Sparks - California State University, East Bay  
 Nicholas Spears - San Jose State University  
 Nigel Spears - San Jose State University

Rodney Josh Thomas - Golden State Baptist College  
 Justin Tigner - Paine College, Augusta, GA  
 Kenietha William-Turner - San Jose State University  
 Gertrude Wilks is the founder and president of Mothers for Equal Education and serves on the organization's board with the following members: David Rages, vice president; Naja Hendrix, secretary; Clarene Watts, treasurer; board members Inez Taylor and Sandra T. Webster and Martha Hanks, a consultant.

## Local INCH scholarship winners

By David Tenisi  
 EPA Today Intern

The Interfaith Network for Community Help (INCH) is a nonprofit organization that has operated since 1983. Its mission is to link the needs of the community with the resources that it obtains.

For the past 17 years, INCH has awarded \$1,000 scholarships to

worthy students. If a scholarship was not claimed in the fall of 2007 or later, then the scholarship award increased to \$2,500 due to the increased cost of education and increasing contributions. INCH scholarships are awarded to qualified eighth graders who attend schools in the Ravenswood City School District. Over 100 INCH

scholars have graduated from high school and entered college. When they are still in high school, scholarship recipients are provided a mentor who oversees their high school career. Students apply for the scholarship in the spring of their eighth grade. If selected for the award, students only receive the actual scholarship when they complete

high school and enroll in college, where the scholarship is used during their freshman year. Lester Ezrati, Senior Vice President Director, Tax of Hewlett-Packard Company in Palo Alto said, "We are also trying to raise funds to extend the scholarship to cover each scholars sophomore year as well." INCH raises its scholarship money through

various congregations, through an annual spring gospel festival, and through individual contributions. This year's recipients are Marco Ayala and Jose Cruz from Beechwood; Cassandra Morales and Victor Alvarez from Belle Haven; Jessica Torres-Vasquez and Camry Davenport from East Palo Alto Charter

School; Silvia Vasquez and Wendy Vargas from Eastside College Preparatory School; Joanna Maldonado from James Flood, and Laura Ambriz-Magana from San Francisco 49ers Academy. For more information, see INCH on the web at: <http://www.inch-elp.org/> David Tenisi was a summer intern at East Palo Alto Today.



Joanna Maldonado

Joanna Maldonado will be a freshman at Carlmont High School in the fall. She wants to major in psychology with the hope that she can one day help children who have lost their parents as she had at the age of seven.



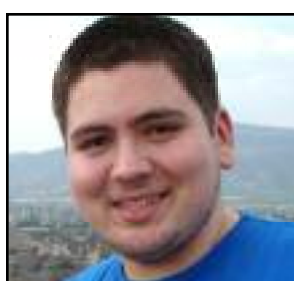
Victoria Vargas

Victoria Vargas will be a senior at Eastside College Preparatory School in the fall. She wants to give back to the Eastside and East Palo Alto communities in some way. "I was one of few students in my graduating class that showed an interest in wanting to do well in school."



Laura Nunez

Laura Nunez will be a sophomore at Stanford University in the fall. She is currently working at College Track and wants to help the youth in East Palo Alto after college. When asked why she thinks she was chosen, Laura replied "I have no idea. I wasn't the smartest, but I guess maybe they saw that I had potential."



Luis Torres

Luis Torres will be a junior at MIT in the fall. Sparked by his passion for his family, his Mexican heritage, and the City of East Palo Alto, he is a role model to the youth that wish to take a similar route. Currently majoring in Nuclear Engineering, he wants to work for an energy company to help alleviate the energy crisis in the world.



Francisco Tamayo

Francisco Tamayo will be a senior at Eastside College Preparatory School in the fall. He plans to major in Mechanical Engineering and wants to help others in his community succeed. "The INCH Scholarship Foundation does not award scholarships only to those students who have straight A's or are great athletes, but if you show that you are trying your best, and that your goal is to further your education, then they will consider you."



Silvia Vasquez

Silvia Vasquez will be a freshman at Eastside College Preparatory School in the fall. She wants to major in Engineering and plans on giving back to her parents for all their support. "I just really want to live my own life for who I am and not for what others want me to be. I've chosen my own way to make my family proud of me and even though everyone makes mistakes, I'd like to make as little as possible."

## Crossing paths

who will integrate the newsrooms of America. Each time I hear of the death of someone I knew from that early period it feels like a personal loss - personal because our paths crossed and we set out together, trained to write and deliver the news to present the truth and also to broaden the public's

perceptions, especially when it came to racial differences. The goal my colleagues and I were trained and, in some cases, hired to achieve has not been completed, certainly not with the polls showing that many will not vote for Sen. Barack Obama because of his race and the negative images that they have of African

Americans. While we still have a long way to go, with Sen. Obama's nomination as the presidential candidate elect of the Democratic Party, we've, obviously, come a long way. Nancy Maynard's passing brings back many personal memories and reminds me of the work that still needs to be

done in the media and by the media. I've been fortunate to be able to cross paths with some remarkable people. Nancy Hicks Maynard and her husband Robert are in the top-section of that list. It's so sad to have to say goodbye. But there are times when life gives us no other

choice. Goodbye Nancy. Many of us will still work to bring about the changes for which we were trained. Your deeds and accomplishments will make you a lasting role model for all who are interested in making a positive difference in the world around us.

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# Summer Interns make a contribution

## About Rubye

By David Tenisi  
EPA Today Intern



Rubye Price, 15

Daughter of Jeannie and Deloyd "Jr." Price, Rubye Price is the youngest of five children. Rubye's favorite colors are apple green and lime green. She currently attends Carlmont High School and dances with a group of friends in a dance group called "Get'em Gurlz" in her spare time. She enjoys reading Forged by Fire by Sharon M. Draper and when asked to say three words that would best describe herself, she responds, "Intelligent, confident, and joyful".

Outside of her academics, she likes watching Fresh Prince of Bel-Air and her

favorite movie is Lion King. She loves listening to any song with Chris Brown in it and her favorite dish is her mom's homemade macaroni and cheese.

She plans on attending Harvard or Princeton in order to study to become an OB Technician as well as opening a beauty salon in the near future. She wants to give back to East Palo Alto and admires Sharifa Wilson, Executive Director of East Palo Alto's College Track.

When asked about her most memorable childhood memory, she responded, "The Peace March from Home Depot to Jack Farrell Park because everyone came together as a family." The march was held on February 3, 2007 and consisted of over two thousand people who marched in order to stop the violence in East Palo Alto.

## About David

By Rubye Price  
EPA Today Intern

Eighteen year old David Tenisi, son of Mele and Aloisio Tenisi, was both born in



David Tenisi, 18

Tonga. David has five sisters and is the third oldest He was born in East Palo Alto.

He attended elementary school at Brentwood and went to middle school at McNair. He is now attending college at UC Merced, majoring in science and engineering.

David loves playing sports, drawing, and sleeping in his spare time. His favorite TV show is George Lopez and his favorite movie is "A Walk to Remember."

His favorite color is regular blue and his favorite shoe brand is Nike. He enjoys listening to any type of love song and has a favorite book called All the Pretty Horses.

David said the most memorable moment in his childhood came when his girl friend said

she'd go out with him.

A goal in life that he would like to achieve is build his future wife the dream house she has always wanted.

As a child and now as a young man his idol has been Robert "Bob" Hoover who use to be his golf coach and who now works at free at last.

A few words to describe David and his Personality would be prideful, patient, and generous.

## About Roniesha

By Rubye Price  
EPA Today Intern



Roniesha Meacham, 20

Roniesha Meacham is twenty years old and lives in Menlo

Park. She has ten siblings - five brothers and five sisters.

Her mother was born in Louisiana, her father born in L.A. and she was born and raised in East Palo Alto,

Roniesha attended Menlo Oaks Middle school and several high schools, with Redwood being her last high school.

She enjoys Mexican Foods and likes watching reality t.v. Her favorite color is yellow and her favorite shoes are her pointy toed hills.

Her hobbies are shopping, spending time with family, and going out to movies, restaurant, clubs, and malls. She also enjoys reading. Her favorite book is The Crucible. Her favorite childhood memory is going swimming at the pool on hot summer days.

She plans on attending the College of San Mateo and majoring in media. Her major goals in life are to have a stable career, buy a house, travel the world at least once, and get married.

She said that the three words that describe her and her personality the best are: beautiful, smart, and outgoing.

## Point, click

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guages, the latest news and information about childhood

These websites are the great work of the Get Healthy San Mateo Task Force. The Task Force's stated mission is "to work collaboratively with all stakeholders to develop strategies that will reduce and prevent obesity and other health risks of unhealthy eating and lack of

physical activity among all children in San Mateo County." It has done a phenomenal job uniting people within our communities to address obesity and health disparities within our County.


This is exactly the type of work that I envisioned when I convened the Healthy Communities Summit in 2004, and I urge you to log

on and enjoy the fruit of the Task Force's labor.

I firmly believe that everyone in our community can learn something valuable about nutrition and wellness while visiting these websites.

Visit [www.yspacesmc.org](http://www.yspacesmc.org) with your kids and grandkids, and click on [www.gethealthysmc.org](http://www.gethealthysmc.org) yourself. The information will help you and your family grow happier and healthier together.

**Rose Jacobs Gibson** is a San Mateo County Supervisor who represents Menlo Park, East Palo Alto, Redwood City, and the unincorporated area of North Fair Oaks.



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# Know the signs of gang involvement

**By Tim Gatto**  
EPA Today Contributor

Gangs are in the news everywhere these days, from the world wide headlines reporting on Mara Salvatrucha or some other transnational gang killing witnesses, or taking over a prison, to stories of the growing population of gang members in Colorado now reaching over 12,000.

Stories abound of Crips and Gangster Disciples operating in multiple states to a new gang forming comprised of "drop outs" from the gang life in California.

It's all too easy to hear about gang fights, assaults, armed robberies and murders right here in the Bay Area.

Stories of gang violence and crime which used to be an occasional occurrence are now commonplace in reports

on TV, the radio and the internet.

Our cities and communities are launching gang task forces and using gang injunctions to curtail the illicit activities of gang members.

Yet with all this negative publicity regarding gangs, they continue to grow. San Mateo County has experienced nearly a 50% increase in gang membership over the past dozen years.

Youth are attracted to gangs for a variety of reasons, including: the excitement, (or as one gang member states "the adrenaline rush I get;") money; women; fear protection (due to intimidation from gang members).

Youth are lured into gangs by older gang members who need to fill their ranks as members get locked up for longer terms. Former gang members from right here in our county have shared their

stories about being ordered, upon their release from custody, to set up shop as "recruiters" to bolster the ranks of their respective gangs. What are the signs that one can look for as a parent and as a concerned citizen in the community?

Here are some examples:  
**SIGNS OF GANG INVOLVEMENT**

- Change in attitude about school and hobbies (may include poor school grades and disinterest in school)
- Poor school attendance and grades
- Disrespect of teachers' authority and school rules
- Habitual truancy and cuts classes
- Change in hairstyle/dress (may include special haircuts, eyebrow marking or ball caps)
- New friends with the same hairstyle/dress

- Consistent use of one dominant color (blue, red, black, brown, white etc.)
- Wearing clothing that "represents" a neighborhood, area code, or city (Da Vil; Da Mid; Midtown; Check Mob; G-Town; Menlo-Mid; 650; Rep the Bay
- Wearing altered head wear (gang members often put gang information on the inside of ball caps)
- Use of nicknames, gang terminology or hand signs (unknown jocularly-gangs have many slang words)
- Graffiti writing or doodling on books, papers, personal belongings, folders, desks, walls or buildings
- Having a new nickname
- Unexplained sources of money or property
- Disrespect of parents' authority
- Desire for excessive privacy
- Withdrawal from family

- activities
- Acts of violence
  - Possession of weapons
  - Frequent use of abusive language
  - Secretive behavior about friends and activities and stays out late
  - Suspected drug use indicated by mood changes
  - New fear of the police
- \* Police, parents, and educators need to be aware that it is a combination of warning signs and high factors that may indicate an individual is involved in a gang. Obviously some of the signs are, as we well know, simply teenagers being "teenagers," but consistent behavior as indicated and the combination, as noted above, should serve as a warning.

**Tim Gatto** serves on the Gang Intelligence Unit in the Office of the Sheriff for the County of San Mateo.

## EPA policy a model for other cities

continued from page 1

luncheon, Marie McKenzie, the city's redevelopment project manager, told the group that the First Source Hiring program, which was developed by the city in 1998, was a way of addressing the city's double digit unemployment rate, level of violence and drug sales.

Since it was enacted, the First Source Hiring program has resulted in hundreds of jobs for residents at the Four Seasons, IKEA, Home Depot, Circuit City, Best Buy and at other retailers in the city's major commercial sites.

According to McKenzie, the program has also suc-



A graphic on the East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy website. ceded as a way of educat

ing developers, since they are informed that their developments must provide benefits to the local residents. "Setting policy standards absolutely improved project based outcomes," McKenzie said.

When asked what she would say to local government officials who say that this isn't the time to create more regulations, McKenzie replied that cities must not let their residents down, that they still need to set the standard, since developers will come, and when they do come, they will come to a city with the expectation that they will have to provide benefits for those who live there.

McKenzie told the luncheon attendees that her biggest challenge and what hurts her the most is that there are not enough jobs for all who apply. She said that 1, 586 people applied to

IKEA when it opened, but there were only 200 positions available. "You can see why people feel frustrated," she said. "If they didn't get the job, if their relative didn't get a job, if their friends weren't hired, then it appears to them that no one got hired," she said.

To see the East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy 's report, "Building a Better Bay Area: Community Benefit Tools and Case Studies to Achieve Responsible Development," go to [www.workingeastbay.org/article.php?id=620](http://www.workingeastbay.org/article.php?id=620)




Logo from the East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy website.

**Want to make a Difference about Bay Area Transportation? Then Step Up to the Challenge!**

Apply to serve on one of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) advisory committees — the Advisory Council or the Minority Citizens Advisory Committee — and participate in making decisions about how transportation impacts communities. To find out more and to apply, contact the MTC Public Information Office at 510.817.5757, or click on MTC's Web site at [www.mtc.ca.gov](http://www.mtc.ca.gov) or visit MTC at 101 Eighth Street, Oakland.



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**M. F. CHESTER PALESOO FOR CITY COUNCIL**

"Diversity Council-United We Succeed!"

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**M. F. CHESTER PALESOO**

Greetings! I'm a Human Services Advocate and resident of our community for over 25 plus years and thank you for electing me to serve on our school district Board of Education. My leadership style is to promote efficiency in human services and providing opportunities for people, and is prepared with governance leadership experience to create ways and means of supportive policies within our community government. During my tenure on the school board standardized test scores and graduation rates has risen, our schools have been modernized for improvement, our school district consistently maintained a financial solvency rate determined to be a Triple-A accountable rating, and innovative programs in place for academic improvement for all ethnic students as necessary.

I have progressive governance leadership experience, vision, consensus building ability, team player attitude, know-how skills, and expertise helping ALL ethnicities improving their quality of life within our government. I've provided assistance to help many families and children including youth to have a livable life within their means of support to become safe and healthy in our diverse community. "I'm here as a public servant to serve and not to be served!"

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# Community Calendar

**EPA Rock the Vote Concert**  
**Location: Bell Street Park**  
**University Avenue and Bell Street**  
**East Palo Alto, CA 94303**

**When: 10/18/2008 2:00 PM-5:00 PM PST**  
 EPA Rock the Vote Concert is our creative solution to cultivate local San Francisco Bay Area talents with the use of music and spoken word to engage and incite young people to register to vote. A non-partisan community event sponsored by the City of East Palo Alto's Youth Advisory Council, E-PAY-AC, Peace & Unity, For Youth By Youth, Boys & Girls Club and Job Train's Sassy Youth Advisory Council. BYOP (Bring Your Own Picnic) and Bring a Friend. What Inspires YOU? Check back with us next week for the lists of performers! For more information, contact Marina Latu at eparockthevote@gmail.com.

**Senator Joe Simitian's Town Hall Meetings**  
 Palo Alto – State Senator Joe

Simitian (D-Palo Alto) will hold town hall meetings in Campbell, Cupertino and Willow Glen on Wednesday, October 1, Wednesday, October 15 and Thursday, October 16, respectively. He invites residents of the 11th Senate District to bring their questions, comments, and concerns about state government.

Simitian and his staff will also be on-hand after the meetings to meet informally with the community. Light refreshments will be served. For more information, Contact: Hema Sareen Mohan (650)688-6384 or call Simitian's district office at (408) 277-9460 or visit www.senatorsimitian.com.

**EPA Beat Meetings**

**Beat One Meeting**  
 Date: Thursday, October 23rd, 2008  
 Time: 6:30pm - 8:00pm  
 Location: YMCA, 550 Bell Street, East Palo Alto, CA 94303  
**Beat Two Meeting**  
 Date: Tuesday, October 2nd,

2008  
 Time: 6:30pm - 8:00pm  
 Location: Ecumenical Hunger Program (2411 Pulgas Avenue, East Palo Alto, CA 94303)

**Beat Three Meeting**  
 Date: Thursday, October 9th, 2008

Time: 6:30pm - 8:00pm  
 Location: Palo Mobile Estates (1885 East Bayshore Road, East Palo Alto, CA 94303)

**Beat Four Meeting**  
 Tuesday, October 14, 2008

Time: 6:30pm - 8:00pm  
 Location: Community Room at City Hall (2415 University Avenue, East Palo Alto, CA 94303)

**The Garden's Neighborhood Association Meeting**

Saturday, October 1, 2008  
 Time: 10:00am -noon  
 Location: COGIC Church, 1108 Pulgas Avenue, East Palo Alto, CA 94303

**Public Works E-Cycling Event**

Saturday, October 18, 2008  
 Time: 8:00am - 4:00pm  
 Location: City Corporation Yard (150 Tara Road, East Palo Alto, CA 94303)

Brentwood Court Neighborhood Association Bus Trip on Saturday, October 18, 2008  
 Deadline to register is October 4, 2008 - please call Letha Powell at 650-388-8168 for more information

**Halloween Social for Seniors** Friday, October 31, 2008

Time: 11:30am - 1:00pm  
 Location: East Palo Alto Senior Center, 560 Bell Street, EPA, CA 94303

Tickets are limited - call Bob at 650-688-1824 to reserve your ticket

Every Sunday there is a **Farmer's Market at St. Francis of Assisi Church** (1425 Bay Road) between 3:00pm and 6:00pm.

Please call 650-324-2769 or e-mail farmersmarket@collective-roots.com <mailto:farmers-market@collectiveroots.com>

**Historically Black Colleges and Universities Transfer Day**

Wednesday, October 29, 2008  
 8:30 AM- 3:00 PM  
 For more information contact: THE AFRICAN AMERICAN SCHOLASTIC PROGRAMS 50 PHELAN AVENUE SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94112 Mrs. Felita Jackson-Clark, Coordinator - 415.239.3057; fclark@ccsf.edu Mr. Edward Tang, Management Assistant – 415.452.5953; ehtang@ccsf.edu

## Local election news and coverage

### Talking with Henrietta

#### Another Election to Make a Difference



Saree Mading, Court Skinner, Henrietta J. Burroughs, and Sharifa Wilson on the set of Talking with Henrietta on September 25, 2008.

On this show, Another Election to Make a Difference, three local candidates tell why they think they are the best qualified candidate to serve on the Ravenswood City School District Board of Trustees.

Saree Mading, Court Skinner and Sharifa Wilson discuss their qualifications, their experiences and the goals they would like to achieve if elected.

This edition of Talking with Henrietta can be seen until October 11 on Channel 27 on Fridays @ noon, Saturdays @1:30 p.m., Sundays @5 p.m., Mondays @8 a.m. and Thursdays @8 p.m. on Channel 27, which airs locally. It can also be seen on the web at the above days and times at:

www.communitymediacenter.net.

### Upcoming Candidate Interviews and Forums

Discussion with East Palo Alto City Council Candidates on the Talking with Henrietta television show Thursday, October 9 from 7-8 p.m. at The Media Center 900 San Antonio Road, Palo Alto If attending, please call (650) 327-5846, ext. 311 to reserve a seat. Prepare to arrive by 6:45 p.m.

East Palo Alto City Council Candidates Forum Thu, October 16 at 7:30-9:30 pm East Palo Alto City Hall, 2415 University Ave, East Palo Alto

Ravenswood School District Candidates Forum Tue, Oct 14 at 7:30-9:00 pm Ravenswood District Board Room, 2120 Euclid Ave, East Palo Alto

Menlo Park City Council Candidates Forum Wed, October 8 at 7:30-9:00 pm Menlo Park City Council Chamber, 701 Laurel St., Menlo Park

Forum Explaining the State Ballot Propositions (Pros & Cons) Sat, November 1 at 11:00-12:00 noon Menlo Park Main Library, 800 Alma St, Menlo Park

For more information on any of the above events, contact the League of Women Voters of South San Mateo County at 650-325-5780. View the League's website at www.lwvssmc.org.

The candidates forums (first 3 events listed above) will be taped by the Media Center and rebroadcast on channel 27 multiple times, as well as linked to www.smartvoter.org for on-demand viewing.



**Summer Pipe Rehabilitation Project Finished!**

This August, the East Palo Alto Sanitary District (EPASD), completed their summer Cured-in-Place Pipe Rehabilitation project at Poplar Avenue, Runnymede Street, O'Connor Street, and Woodland Avenue.

The project was constructed by J.F. Pacific Liners, Inc. at an estimated cost of \$409,874. to EPASD.

"A lot of these pipes are just old [which causes them to deteriorate]," said Lee Hawkins, EPASD General Manager. "And, since this is California, the ground is always moving around and shifting and that will cause some of the sewer pipes to crack. We basically have a project like this every year."

The rehabilitation of sewer pipes helps the Sanitary District reduce the cost of sewage treatment. Waste water from East Palo Alto Sanitary District is sent to the Regional Water Quality Control Plant and treated before it can be released into the Bay or reused in irrigation projects.

"The problem is when pipes get old, groundwater or creek water infiltrate the pipes and then water that doesn't need to be treated is sent to the treatment plant," said Hawkins.

The customers of EPASD have to pay for the waste water treatment and it costs about \$1.5 million a year to "clean" the sewer water produced by the Sanitary District. According to District Engineer Rich Laureta, if all of the old and cracked pipes in EPASD were to be fixed, the EPASD could shave off about 10% from its annual water treatment bill. But this is unlikely to happen anytime soon.

Hawkins agreed saying that it's impossible to repair all of the pipes because "just as you finish fixing one, you find that another one has broken." He added that, on average, the EPASD repairs about five sewer mains per year usually because there are not enough funds to complete larger projects.

However, to ensure that the available financial resources go toward actually renovating pipes, said Laureta, the EPASD used the "cured-in-place" method which allows for fixing and replacing pipes without tearing into the pavement, which would be inconvenient and costly once the cost of repaving the streets is factored in.

**Sewer Service Charges and Changes**



In FY 2008-09, the East Palo Alto Sanitary District will increase the sewer service fee to \$415.00 a year per individual household. In an apartment building, each individual apartment is an individual household and residents will be charged accordingly.

For commercial and industrial customers, the fees are determined based on the volume and pollutant strength of the water being treated.

The regional treatment plant, located in Palo Alto, treats about 26 million gallons of wastewater per day to ensure that water discharged into the Bay meets with the strict qualifications of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Revenues to pay for the needed treatment are collected from residents and businesses whose properties are connected to the sewer system. The charges are placed on the San Mateo Property tax statements, for purposes of convenience but are not related to the assessed value of a property.

The most effective way for commercial and industrial customers to reduce the charges for sewer treatment is to conserve water. Since charges are directly tied to volume of water used, installing low-flow toilets and faucets is a great way to reduce your sewer bill.



**The EPASD Summer 2008 Internship Program**

The summer of 2008, the East Palo Alto Sanitary District was happy to receive three college interns from East Palo Alto. Mary Latu, James Edwards, and Natalie Rios were given positions in the District offices where they worked on a variety of projects with Karen Maxey, Director of Administrative Services, as well as the rest of the staff members.

The students were given insight into the kind of work and planning that goes into various District projects and policies.

"There's a lot of stuff that goes on behind closed doors," said Edwards who will begin his first year at Foothill College in September. "As far as grease traps go, there's a lot of work that goes into the maintenance of the receptor tanks."

Students also had a chance to perform office duties and help with clerical work which, Edwards thinks, is probably the most valuable part of the internship since it helped him be "consistent everyday" and make sure that he was getting his work done.

For Mary Latu, who began her first year at Dominican University in August, the most interesting part of the internship experience was working with people of EPA.

"Since we're all living and working in EPA, we can really connect," she said. "It's a laid back [environment] but it's really hands on so you learn stuff here and there."

"Anybody can benefit," said Edwards. "They'll learn a lot of skills that will help them in the future."

The internship program is a collaboration of the EPASD and One East Palo Alto's Sponsored Employment Program which provides jobs and internship opportunities for EPA students every summer.

Summer job openings are filled in June-July and students are encouraged to stay through August

**East Palo Alto Academy**  
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**OPEN HOUSE**

**Sábado, 25 de Octubre de 2008**  
**11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**  
**475 Pope Street**  
**Menlo Park 94025**

**Para más información llame al 650-329-2828**