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East Palo Alto Today

Providing news that is relevant, informative and critical



East Palo Alto and Belle Haven

Spring - Summer 2015

Vol. 9 No.48

Airplane noise is annoying city residents



Photo courtesy of http://www.skypossepaloalto.org

By Julie Amato
East Palo Alto Today

This spring, local advocacy group Sky Posse addressed the East Palo Alto City Council, asking the city to take a stand against noise pollution from airplanes flying through the city's skies. "We're living under a perfect

storm of aircraft noise," said Sky Posse member Jim Herriot, who is also an executive in an aviation research company. "It's impacting our health, our livability, our sleep, our productivity, for us and our children. And it's getting worse. It can be fixed but we need to address it now."

Marie McKenzie, another Sky Posse member, called on

the city to declare airplane noise a "regional problem", and asked the council to help Sky Posse work with federal representatives and the federal government to achieve solutions.

Sky Posse is a citizens' group working to reduce airplane noise over the mid-peninsula. Members live in East Palo Alto, Palo

Alto, Menlo Park, and Portola Valley.

According to Sky Posse, over half of all air traffic coming into San Francisco Airport flies over East Palo Alto and neighboring cities. This traffic converges, 4,000 feet in the air, on the Menlo Initial Approach Fix, an imaginary point on the mid-peninsula that air-

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Construction of University Square has begun

By Henrietta J. Burroughs
East Palo Alto Today

For more than a decade, an empty lot has sat at the corner of University Avenue and Donohoe Street, next to the Highway 101 overpass that connects East Palo Alto with Palo Alto. The lot was meant to house a large office complex. But, over the years, the vision for the office complex underwent several transformations and different ownership.

But this week, the vision for the office complex, now known as University Square, took a major step towards fruition, with an actual groundbreaking ceremony that attracted East Palo Alto officials, city staff, city resi-

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Photo by HJ Burroughs
Huge cranes point to the sky as the construction of University Square, at the corner of University Avenue and Donohoe Street, proceeds.



East Palo Alto residents fed up with "unfair" garage conversion policies

By Edward Perez
East Palo Alto Today

There are homeowners throughout East Palo Alto, who've converted their garage into a living space that they've rented out to another individual or to a family.

This year, many of the homeowners received letters that contained warnings and fines because of their converted garage.

While the City of East Palo Alto allows for garage conversions, it requires that homeowners follow certain

procedures and requirements before they can legally convert a garage into a living space.

But many city residents feel that these procedures and policies are outdated and unnecessarily restrictive.

East Palo Alto resident and activist Mike Francois said the planning and building departments abuse the garage conversion limitations and target residents. Francois said the city officials poke at little details that supposedly violate garage conversion policies, give homeowners unreasonable deadlines to fix the living



Photo by Edward Perez

This photo shows kitchen facilities inside of a converted garage.

space to meet policy standards and in some cases, demand that a homeowner de-

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Longtime resident fights “illegal” foreclosure



Photos by Edward Perez
Eve Sutton (middle) and supporters display their signs following their protest at the Wells Fargo bank in Palo Alto.

By Edward Perez
East Palo Alto Today

The recent shifts in the national economy have had a huge impact on the small City of East Palo Alto leaving many residents in sketchy scenarios with regards to affordable housing.

During the 1990's dot-com boom, the new Internet economy increased the cost of living in the Silicon Valley, making cities such as Atherton, Menlo Park, and Palo Alto some of the most expensive in the nation to live in.

The area's growing economy also affected the cost of living in East Palo Alto. The prices of houses in East Palo Alto rose dramatically, making it difficult for many city residents to make their home payments.

Robert Jones, executive director of EPA Can DO, an affordable housing development organization, said residents of East Palo Alto took on risky loans when the real estate market in the city began to fail in 2007.

Foreclosures continue to loom in East Palo Alto. Since 2008, about one-third of single-family houses have been lost in foreclosure.

Several members of the community believe that banks take unfair action against homebuyers in East Palo Alto

and deny them the type of assistance they need to fight their foreclosure case. Some find the act of banks declining homeowners any assistance to be neglectful and illegal.

The case of Eve Sutton exemplifies the type of struggle homeowners can have when they try to save their homes from foreclosure. Sutton, a longtime city resident, held a protest in downtown Palo Alto on June 27 against Wells Fargo, which was planning a foreclosure auction of Sutton's home on July 2.

Sutton believes the foreclosure of her home by the bank is illegal. She said that Wells Fargo was unwilling to work with her to renegotiate her loan to an affordable amount, even after she submitted 41 applications for a loan modification.

In an email that she sent to supporters, Sutton wrote, "This is illegal 'dual tracking' -- selling after I submitted a complete loan mod application with a change of circumstance."

She continued, "I verified they received it, including updates yesterday....Real banks meet with real borrowers and get to know them personally."

East Palo activist Michael Francois attended the protest in support of Sutton's case. Francois said that the problem in Sutton's case, and for most foreclosure cases, is that banks, such as Wells Fargo, are selling the loans of homebuyers to second rate trusts, which in turn causes many problems for home buyers.

"The lenders that Wells Fargo is giving [a loan] to or selling it to, are not letting the homeowners read [their origi-

nal contract] or they're giving them the run-around," Francois said. "These lenders make it hard for the homeowners...where you have to go to court basically to see what the new agreement is."

Francois added that Wells Fargo sometimes sells the policies of homeowners without letting them know that they can't be refinanced.

Given the circumstances, Francois advised homebuyers to have a lawyer go through their contract for them in order to have the policies of the contract presented in a direct and clear manner. He added that the cost of the lawyer is outweighed by the time and trouble a homeowner saves by understanding a contract and being familiar with its policies.

"A lot of people unfortunately trust Wells Fargo, you know it's been established and been there forever," Francois said, "People are asking [banks] to just give us a chance to refinance; these guys have no moral value, no spiritual value... if they did have any moral values or spiritual values, they would sit down with people and say 'let's see how we can make this work.' But what it is, is greed."

Sutton said that her situation is a problem that could have been easily solved if Wells Fargo had only repurchased the loan from the trust to which they sold it and give her a loan modification that was reasonable and one she could afford.

Francois said that it's only



Protesters prepare to enter the Wells Fargo branch in downtown Palo Alto, but are turned back by a bank guard.

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Community emergency teams prepare for the next natural disaster



Photo courtesy of the Menlo Park Fire District
One team in the exercise discuss its next steps.

By Julie Amato
East Palo Alto Today

What would you do if a major earthquake or flood hit East Palo Alto like the 4.8 earthquake that just occurred in Piedmont on August 17? Are you ready to take care of your family and help your neighbors?

Volunteers in Community Emergency Response Teams, or "CERT teams", conducted an emergency preparedness exercise in East Palo Alto on April 17 of this year to practice responding to earthquakes like the one in Piedmont or

ones that cause more serious disasters. If a real emergency were to occur in the city, CERT volunteers — local residents who are trained in basic disaster skills and organized into neighborhood teams — are trained to work closely with professional responders to help ensure the safety of the community.

Fifty-three volunteers participated in the April exercise, including five CERT teams. The teams canvassed neighborhoods west of University Avenue, going door-to-door, talking to residents, and handing out informational materials,

practicing what they would do during an actual emergency. The program started and ended at St. Francis of Assisi Parish on Bay Road.

The exercise went very well, said CERT volunteer and Menlo Park resident Cynthia Bosworth. The CERT teams, which included Spanish-speaking volunteers, were able to connect with a large number of people in a short period of time: during a three-hour period, they reached over 2,100 households, and talked to an additional 100 passers-by.

The response from residents was positive, said Bosworth. "Folks were very interested in how to prepare for an emergency. There was lots of enthusiasm."

The exercise was organized and led by CERT volunteers as part of the countywide Silver Dragon Emergency Exercise; similar events were held throughout San Mateo County on the same day. This annual exercise tests the ability of the

San Mateo County Health System to work with other emergency responders.

In East Palo Alto, the Menlo Park Fire Protection District and the City of East Palo Alto also took part in the exercise, coordinating their emergency response procedures with the CERT volunteers and the county. The police department took the lead for the city and had two representatives that took part in the event. East Palo Alto City Councilmember Ruben Abrica participated in the event as well, joining one of the field teams. Emily Pharr, the city's community programs manager and emergency services coordinator, was also a participant.

"CERT volunteers managed the exercise on their own," said Manuel Navarro, division chief with the Menlo Park Fire Protection District, which coordinates the local CERT program. "I'm quite proud that they're able to function well independently."

This self-sufficiency is im-

portant, Navarro said, because the fire district and other professional responders may not be able to respond quickly during a major disaster. CERT volunteers located in the neighborhoods can send information to emergency operations centers. "The eyes out there will be very, very valuable," he said. "If we have an earthquake in the middle of the day, we want to know what's going on as quickly as possible. It's really vital."

During the exercise, the CERT teams deployed a newly equipped command and communications trailer for the first time, and used ham radios to communicate with each other. In addition to transmitting sound, the radios take and send photographs, which is important for sharing information about buildings and other infrastructure that might have been damaged in a disaster. The volunteers

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Community News Briefs

Silicon Valley mayors travel to China

On July 6 -17 Mayor Lisa Yarbrough Gauthier traveled to Beijing, Chongqing, Chendu, Guang-zhou, Jiangmen, Shenzhen and to Hong Kong. The trip was designed to facilitate business development among emerging companies in the U.S. and in Asia, establish relationships between local Asian governments, as well as promote trade exchange between the U.S. and Asia.

Mayor Yarbrough-Gauthier traveled to China with a representative from Governor Brown's office, Brian Peck, who is the director of International Affairs and Business De-



Left to right, standing on the steps of the San Francisco City Hall during the U.S. Conference of Mayors: San Leandro Mayor Pauline Russo-Cutter, Hayward Mayor Barbara Halliday, East Palo Alto Mayor Lisa Yarbrough-Gauthier, Union City Mayor Carol Dutra-Vernaci, Piedmont Mayor Margaret Fujioka, and Alameda Mayor Trish Herrera Spencer.

velopment, with Stephanie Xu, the founder of UA-Asia Innovation Gateway, and with nine other mayors including: Mayor Carol Dutra-Vernaci of

Union City; Mayor Jeff Gee, of Redwood City; Mayor David Haubert of Dublin; Michael Kasperzak, Councilmember of Mountain View,

Mayor Catherine Carlton of Menlo Park; Vice Mayor of Fremont, Suzanne Lee Chan; Mayor Ruth Atkin of Emeryville and Mayor Robert Gottschalk of Millbrae.

While in Asia, Mayor Yarbrough-Gauthier met with various business leaders and government officials, toured several technology, and innovation centers, visited the Imperial Palace (Forbidden City), the Panda Breeding Research Center in Chengdu, signed a Friendly City agreement as a witness, participated in several innovation summits, and was one of three mayors invited to speak at an Innovation Summit sponsored by Galaxy World. She also visited a few cities that were

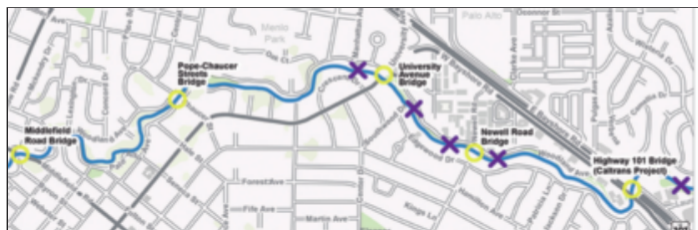
being developed.

Gauthier spoke with potential investors, who were interested in investing in the East Palo Alto's aging infrastructure. The mayor was able to establish a connection with the other U.S. mayors in anticipation of working on regional issues such as job creation, infrastructure needs, the need for an innovation center and the need for water for future development.

No taxpayer dollars were used to send Mayor Yarbrough Gauthier on her trip. The entire expense for the trip was covered by the U.S.-Asia Innovation Gateway and its sponsors.

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San Francisquito Bridge replacement is underway



By Michael Uhila

East Palo Alto Today

Have you noticed Caltrans workers on the northbound side of 101, between Embarcadero and University Avenue, and wondered what's going on? Well, the workers are building the San Francisquito Bridge Replacement Project, which is designed to improve flood control in the San Francisquito Creek.

The project is a collaborative effort involving Caltrans and Joint Powers Authority, which consists of.....

The East Palo Alto City Council heard a presentation about the project at its meeting on June 16. During the meeting the interim Public Works Director, Kamal Fallaha, made a presentation in which he explained to the council that the project was originally scheduled to start in June 2014, but it didn't get started until June 2015

Fallaha told the council that the project construction will last for three years and it will be completed in five phases.

Several council members expressed their displeasure with the fact that Caltrans did not give the city information about the project in advance and did not inform city officials about the extent of the disruption that the project would cause city residents and commuters who use the

city's major thoroughfares.

Councilmember Carlos Romero said "This is completely unacceptable from Caltrans that they did not have the decency to tell this community in advanced what their construction schedule was and what ultimately the delays were going to be for residents in East Palo Alto".

Council members were also displeased with the fact that there was not a representative from CalTrans at the meeting to discuss the project and explain why city officials were informed at the last minute about the project and the extensive disruptions it would bring.

Council Member Reuben Abrica requested that Caltrans send out postcards to residents in the impacted areas of the construction.

The breakdown of the five phases of the project, were explained as follows:
 •Phase 1 would make room in the median of the

freeway to remove the concrete barrier that separates northbound traffic and southbound traffic and reconfigure Highway 101's northbound and southbound lanes toward the east.

•Phase 2 would close West Bayshore and the northbound lanes on East Bayshore Road into a one-way temporary traffic signal(?)

•Phase 3 would install cofferdams (explain also check spelling of the word) in the creek to keep construction areas dry.

•Phase 4 demo and construction of new bridge

•Phase 5 would rebuild

the median barrier and return traffic flow to the way it was prior to the construction.

Fallaha informed the council that community members should expect delays, detours, pile driving noise and dust throughout the length of the project.

The San Francisquito bridge is the dividing line between Santa Clara County and San Mateo County.

For information on the project you can go to the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers authority website at sfjpa.org

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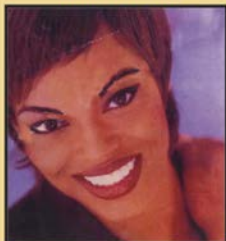
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East Palo Alto students gain coding experience and more



Photos by Henrietta Burroughs
Bob Hoover talking about SWAG

By Elizabeth Real
EPA Today

Just because you were born and raised in East Palo Alto does not mean that you are automatically set up for failure. In fact, some think that the struggles are what makes those who live in East Palo Alto possess even more drive and resilience—you can succeed. The Live in Peace (LIP) Summer Showcase and StreetCode Accelerator Demo Day took place on Friday August 7, 2015. LIP's StreetCode Academy worked with students, including students from East Palo Alto's Students With

Amazing Goals (SWAG) program, to develop mobile applications over the summer.

During his presentation, Bob Hoover, a longtime East Palo Alto activist and resident, introduced SWAG, a program that helps young students in East Palo Alto with their education. Hoover explained that SWAG came to life after a conversation with the city manager and the superintendent of the Sequoia Union High School District in which they spoke about the quality of education in East Palo Alto and Bellehaven. During the discussion, the superintendent pointed out that 50% of the students from East Palo Alto do not graduate from high school. "That just stunned me," said Hoover. The shocking statistic motivated the three to do something about the dropout rate. So, they worked with the city, county, and school district to apply for a grant.

Hoover proudly said that out of the twenty communities that were awarded the grant money, his collaborative was the only one that focused on educating kids and making them successful. The other communities, according to Hoover, talked about breaking up gangs and putting people in jail. "We have the opportunity

to show that you can do something different and that kids understand the importance of it when they have someone to help them sort through all the garbage that goes around," said Hoover.

The SWAG program did more than just provide a summer of coding for students—it provided support. The program focuses on students who are behind and are lacking the credits to graduate from high school. Hoover explained that the program works on "inspiring young people and motivating them to be high quality students."

Most SWAG staff members grew up in East Palo Alto and can identify with the struggles that the students are going



Erica Hayes spoke about some of her experiences.

through now. Erica Hayes, one

of the program's case managers, said, "For me, [there's] nothing more rewarding [than] to come back and serve my community and help those like they've helped me." Letty Garcia, another case manager, said, "I'm very passionate about community work and basically helping everyone. I'm from here, so I understand the educational turbulence that we all go through." A third case manager, Paul Teu, added, "We used to be part of the problem and now we're part of the solution."

To provide some middle ground, SWAG also has younger staff members known as "Navigators." One of them, Nico, explained that sometimes it's easier for the students to talk to someone closer to their age who can relate to them. Another Navigator, Sia Kailahi, confessed that she used to be a "challenging student," herself. She realized that she needed to make a change and so she helps students facing some of the same challenges that she did.

Many of the students who were present at the event were shy as they came up in front of the audience to say their names and to talk about their goals. Their shyness, however, was met with a



Letty Garcia shared some of her experiences as a SWAG case manager.

sense of accomplishment as the crowd cheered them on. One of the students, named Stacy, talked about the difference that the program has made in her life. "My mind set then and my mind set now, it has improved," she said, "I would just skip class and surround myself with negativity."

After SWAG, Stacy can now talk about her goals for the future. She said that she plans on graduating high school, completing the cosmetology program at the College of San Mateo, and majoring in business and marketing so that

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New FEMA maps expand regulatory floodplain and anticipated flood depths



By Brent Butler
East Palo Alto Today

The East Palo Alto City Council will discuss the new Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM), which expand the City's regulatory floodplain on the September 1, 2015 city council meeting.

On August 13, 2015, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mailed new Flood Insurance Rate Maps and a Flood Insurance Study to the city for review and comment after evaluating the coastal areas for impacts associated with four climatic events: 1) King Tides, commonly known as the annual high tide inundation risk, 2) El Niño winter storms, 3) extreme high tide inundation, and 4) wind wave events.

The evaluation results in an expansion of the City of East Palo Alto's regulatory

floodplain and an increase in the height of flood water along the San Mateo County shoreline expected during the 100 year storm event, which is also known as the one percent chance flood or the base flood.

Properties located in areas inundated by floodwaters in the 100 year storm event are designated as Special Flood Hazard Areas, and Congress mandated federally regulated or insured lenders to require flood insurance on properties that are located in areas at high risk of flooding. Homeowner's property insurance does not insure damage from flooding.

The expansion of the floodplain means that new properties which were never in the flood zone may now be required to purchase insurance, and premium discounts that are only available if the purchase

occurs prior to the validation of the new maps by FEMA.

Additionally, the new maps invalidate some Letters of Map Amendments (LOMA) that were approved in the past, which removed properties once designated as within the Special Flood Hazard Area. You can access these

maps by going to: http://www.floodmaps.fema.gov/fhm/scripts/bfe_main.asp#1

FEMA's public review process includes the issuance of a preliminary official map, and a Map Action Table, which identifies new areas and properties at risk. Thirty days after the issuance of the preliminary map, there will be a formal community meeting to provide information and answer questions.

This meeting will be noticed twice in a local newspaper, and will be followed by a 90 day appeal period. After the appeal period, FEMA will begin an internal production process, which may take as long as six to nine months, and which will be followed by a letter of final determination that will be mailed to the Mayor.

It is critically important that community

members who own properties that are newly designated in the Special Flood Hazard Area purchase a preferred risk policy, which enables them to receive substantially lower insurance premiums because FEMA will

recognize a grandfathering of the prior insurance premium.

Brent A. Butler is the planning and housing manager for the City of East Palo Alto.



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Tackling underage alcohol abuse in East Palo Alto

By Elizabeth Real
EPA Today

The results are in: East Palo Alto has a serious problem with underage alcohol use and abuse. This finding was presented to the East Palo Alto City Council at the special city council meeting that took place on July 28.

During the meeting members of One East Palo Alto Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition (EPASAPC) shared their ongoing research about the underage use and abuse of alcohol in East Palo Alto. The group's research started in 2007 and grew out of a collaborative partnership that involved One East Palo Alto, Free at Last, and El Concilio of San Mateo County.

With the assistance of the East Palo Alto Police Department, Gibson & Associates, and other community groups, EPASAPC began its survey to find out the truth about underage drinking in East Palo Alto.

"We knew we were tackling a big ticket issue," said Dr.



Photo by publicdomainpictures.net

Faye McNair-Knox of EPASAPC.

According to Reverend Mary Frazier, the senior pastor at the Bread of Life Evangelistic Outreach Church, information about alcohol use was gathered from surveys as well as from focus groups and informational conversations with youth.

The survey found that many residents believe there's a direct connection between alcohol abuse and high school dropout rates, violence, unemployment, and socio economic problems.

"Our city cannot have a positive reputation because of this situation," said Reverend

Frazier before highlighting that this "negative reputation overshadows all the beauty that we see in our city and the positive attributes that we see in our city."

Abraham Menor of Health RIGHT 360 presented charts that further demonstrated the results of the surveys conducted. The students were asked to provide their city or zip code in order to pull responses of only East Palo Alto residents. The results helped EPASAPC gain a better understanding of the student's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors related to alcohol.

The first set of results reflected the responses of only East Palo Alto residents from Ravenswood City School District (grade 7) and Sequoia Union High School District (grades 9 and 11) during the 2013-14 school year. Over 25% of East Palo Alto students claimed to have had their first drink in 9th grade—compared to the state of California at 20%. Even more shocking, over 5% of East Palo Alto resi-

dent students claimed to have had their first drink in 7th grade—again, a higher percentage than the state of California.

The second set of results were based on surveys con-

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Homeowners get free solar



Photo courtesy of CALPIRG Energy Service Corps East Palo Alto homeowner, Lea Martinez, left, is shown with Meagan Mujushi, the project manager for Sustainable Silicon Valley.

By Natalia Timakova
East Palo Alto Today

Lea Martinez meets me after work at her mother's house in East Palo Alto and introduces me to her family members one by one, first her mom and then her children, all sitting around a big screen TV set in a dimly lit living room. She has six kids

and two grandchildren, which is not an unusual family size in East Palo Alto.

Martinez is one of the first adopters of the Net Positive Bay Area project launched in East Palo Alto by Sustainable Silicon Valley (SSV), an environmental non-profit organization that has been promoting resource conservation in the Bay Area for 15 years.

As part of the project, SSV will conduct a free energy and water audit in her house; then, GRID Alternatives, an Oakland-based nonprofit solar contractor and SSV partner, will install solar panels on her roof, also, for free.

GRID Alternatives is the statewide program manager for the California Solar Initiative's Single-Family Affordable Solar Homes (SASH) Program, a program that allows low-income families the unique opportunity to install photovoltaic panels at little to no cost.

In the last 11 years, GRID Alternatives has installed 1,160 subsidized PV systems in the Bay Area. To qualify for this program, one needs to be a resident of East Palo Alto, a homeowner

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New bill could change the way East Palo Alto residents vote

By Elizabeth Real
EPA Today

In this age of online shopping and instant results, we really don't have to leave our houses to get many things done anymore. Following this trend of convenience, East Palo Alto residents might no longer have to go very far to vote either. This is because a new bill, called AB 2028, became law in San Mateo County on January 1, 2015.

AB 2028 authorizes San Mateo County to participate in an ongoing pilot project that allows certain elections--up to three--to be conducted entirely by mailed ballots. These three elections include the November 2015 and 2017 Local Consolidated Elections and one Local Special Election.



Photo courtesy of the the Media Center Mark Church and a county associate speak during the East Palo Alto City Council meeting on June 16, 2015.

The 2016 Presidential Election, however, will not be included. But, if this pilot program is a success, the residents of East Palo Alto might be able to vote for a future

president from their homes. AB 2028 will remain in effect through December 31, 2017 and will be repealed on January 1, 2018 unless a statute is enacted before this expiration

date that deletes or extends the program.

So, what should residents do to participate in the pilot program? Nothing, actually. "Every voter will get a ballot in the mail even if the voter has not signed up to vote by mail," explained Chief Elections Officer, Mark Church, during a June 16, 2015 Special City Council meeting in East Palo Alto.

Church said that the mailed ballots will include a return envelope and paid postage.

According to the California Legislative Information website at <http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>, AB 2028 will also require the county to provide at least one polling place and drop off location in each city. The number of residents cannot exceed 100,000 per ballot

drop-off location on the 88th day prior to the day of election.

During Church's presentation, council members expressed their concerns about whether voting by mail would be practical for the city's seniors or for residents with disabilities who might need assistance.

Church told the council that voters would still be able to vote in person if they choose to do so. Those with physical disabilities or those who face language barriers and require assistance while voting might prefer to visit a polling location. So, for these reasons and for similar ones, as in the case of someone who did not receive a ballot or simply lost theirs, a polling location would still be available.

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Nueva ley podría cambiar como votan los residentes de East Palo Alto

Escrito por Elizabeth Real
EPA Today

En esta época de resultados inmediatos y de tener el poder de comprar casi todo por el internet, realmente no tenemos que salir de nuestras casas para conseguir muchas de las cosas que necesitamos. Siguiendo esta tendencia de la conveniencia, los residentes de East Palo Alto tampoco tendrán que ir muy lejos para votar. Esto se debe a un nuevo proyecto de ley, llamado AB 2028, que se convirtió en ley en el condado de San Mateo el 1 de enero de 2015.

AB 2028 autoriza el condado de San Mateo para participar en un proyecto piloto

que permite que ciertas elecciones - un máximo de tres - que se lleven a cabo exclusivamente por los votos enviados por correo. Estas tres elecciones son las Elecciones Locales Consolidadas de Noviembre 2015 y 2017 y una Elección Especial Local.

La elección presidencial del 2016, sin embargo, no se incluirá. Pero, si este programa piloto es un éxito, los residentes de East Palo Alto tal vez podrán tener la oportunidad de votar por un futuro presidente desde sus hogares.

AB 2028 se mantendrá en efecto hasta el 31 de Diciembre 2017 y terminará el 1 de Enero 2018 a no ser que una ley sea promulgada antes de



Foto cortesía de Media Center Mark Church durante la junta del Consejo el 16 de Junio del 2015

esta fecha de caducidad que elimina o extiende el pro-

grama.

Entonces, ¿qué deben hacer los residentes para participar en el programa piloto? Nada. "Cada elector recibirá una boleta por correo, incluso si el votante no ha inscrito para votar por correo", explicó el Director de Elecciones, Mark Church, durante la reunión del Consejo Municipal Especial del 16 de Junio en East Palo Alto.

Church dice que con las boletas por correo se incluirá un sobre de retorno con franqueo pre-pagado.

Según el sitio de Información Legislativa de California en <http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>, AB 2028 también requerirá que el condado tenga al

menos un centro de votación en cada ciudad. El número de residentes no puede exceder de 100,000 por lugar de votación en el día 88 antes del día de la elección.

Durante la presentación de Church, los miembros del Consejo expresaron su preocupación acerca de si el voto por correo sería práctico para las personas mayores de la ciudad o para los residentes con discapacidades que podrían necesitar ayuda.

Church dijo que los votantes todavía podrán votar en persona si deciden hacerlo. Las personas con discapaci-

Continuado en pagina 19

Mayor decries the loss of young residents to street violence

By Elizabeth Real
EPA Today

Why are young lives still being lost due to violence in East Palo Alto? This is the question that Mayor Lisa Yarbrough-Gauthier addressed at the East Palo Alto City Council meeting on Tuesday, July 21.

It was not a question that anyone specif-



Photo by public domainpictures.net

ically asked, but it was a question that was implied in the mayor's remarks and it is a question that always seems to linger after a shooting takes place in East Palo Alto.

During the meeting, Mayor Yarbrough-Gauthier expressed her deep concern and disap-

pointment over the loss of young, city residents to violence. Her comments came after Chief Albert Pardini, East Palo Alto's police chief, reported the homicide this past weekend of 27-year old Mark Jack, an East Palo Alto resident.

Jack was shot multiple times shortly after 10 p.m. on Saturday, July 18. He was found by East Palo Alto police officers, when they responded to 911 calls about a shooting at the Light Tree Apartments, lo-

cated on East Bayshore Road. Jack was treated at the scene and rushed to a local hospital where he later died.

In commenting on Jack's death, Mayor Yarbrough-Gauthier said, "Not only are we losing a resident, we don't know what this young man's potential was, but we'll never know now.... A mother and a father will forever have to deal with a child that left before they did."

The mayor continued, "All lives matter and if I could say

anything to our young people, 'Please stop the violence and stop killing each other.'"

The East Palo Alto Police Department is actively investigating Jack's shooting and the department requests that anyone who witnessed the incident or has any information should call (650) 409-6792 or (650) 853-8477. Anonymous tips can be texted to (650) 409-6792 or emailed to epatipnow.org.

La alcalde ofrece un mensaje para los jóvenes después de un asesinato

Escrito por Elizabeth Real
EPA Today

¿Por qué se siguen perdiendo las vidas jóvenes debido a la violencia en East Palo Alto? Esta es la pregunta que la alcaldesa Lisa Yarbrough-Gauthier abordó en la reunión del Consejo de la Ciudad de East Palo Alto el Martes 21 de Julio.

No era una pregunta que alguien le preguntaba específicamente, pero era una pregunta que fue implicada en las declaraciones del alcalde y es una pregunta que siempre parece persistir después de un

tiroteo en East Palo Alto.

Durante la reunión, la alcaldesa Yarbrough-Gauthier expresó su profunda preocupación por la pérdida de residentes jóvenes a resulta de la violencia. Sus comentarios se produjeron después de que el jefe Albert Pardini, jefe de policía de East Palo Alto, informó del homicidio que sucedió la semana anterior. La víctima fue Mark Jack, un residente de East Palo Alto de 27 años de edad.

Jack fue encontrado por agentes de policía de East Palo Alto poco después de las 10 de la noche del sábado 18

de Julio. Los policías respondieron a llamadas sobre varios disparos en los Light Tree Apartments, ubicado en East Bayshore Road. Jack fue atendido en el edificio de apartamentos antes de ser llevado a un hospital local, donde murió.

Al comentar sobre la muerte de Jack, dijo el alcalde



Foto cortesía de el Media Center y un padre

Yarbrough-Gauthier, "No sólo estamos perdiendo un residente, no sabemos cuál era la potencial de este joven, pero nunca vamos a saber ahora.... Una madre siempre tendrán que batallar con la idea de que su niño se les fue antes de ellos mismos."

La alcaldesa continuó: "Todas las vidas son importantes y si

yo pudiera decirle algo a nuestros jóvenes, 'Por favor dejen la violencia y dejen de matarse unos a otros.'"

El Departamento de Policía de East Palo Alto está investigando el asesinato de Jack y el departamento solicita que cualquier persona que presencié el incidente o tiene cualquier información debe llamar al (650) 409-6792 o (650) 853-8477.

Los que quieren permanecer anónimos pueden mandar un mensaje de texto al (650) 409-6792 o por correo electrónico a epatipnow.org.

Exploring Cooley Landing with Linda Gass



Photo courtesy of the Palo Alto Art Center
Linda Gass leading an activity at Cooley Landing.

By Elizabeth Real
East Palo Alto Today

Artist Linda Gass hosted a free hands-on art and science event at Cooley Landing this past Saturday in the last day of her "In the Field Residency."

During the event, adults and children were given the opportunity to participate in various activities that included drawing sketches of the landscape, looking at live creatures through microscopes and par-

ticipating in a land art project.

In one station, participants—both adults and children—tried to observe small crabs and insects under a microscope. There was lots of laughter as some struggled to see the small creatures in a Petri dish. The small crab ran around, expertly dodging the lens.

"Oh, I see it!" exclaimed those who were finally able to catch a glimpse of its fascinating translucent outer shell.

Gass first presented the idea

for her project to the East Palo Alto City Council at the council's meeting earlier this year on June 2.

Her interest in studying the impact that human activity has had on the land led her to examine various locations, the most recent being East Palo Alto's Cooley Landing.

Why Cooley Landing? Gass responded, "The rich history of Cooley Landing is all about human marks."

The participants gathered around Gass. She held up pictures of maps to show to the crowd as she gave a brief history lesson about Cooley Landing.

"The San Francisco Bay was surrounded by lush green wetlands," she said. "The historic map shows all the beautiful wetlands that used to be around the bay." Noting that it was unfortunate, she told her listeners, "A lot of the wetlands have disappeared."

Gass, then, invited all, who were present in the park, to join her in creating land art—a

creative project that consists of making temporary physical installations in the land to create art while conveying important messages about ecology.

Participants were given



Photo by Elizabeth Real
Blue survey whiskers are installed as part of Linda Gass' project.

hammers, nails, and "blue survey whiskers" to install in the ground. "This is a land art installation about the changes to the shoreline of the bay," she explained.

Adults and children, includ-

ing council member Ruben Abrica, grabbed tools and were more than happy to assist with the project.

The next phase of Gass' ongoing project will be the "In-the-Gallery Residency" that will be held at the Palo Alto Art Center on five Fridays.

These include Friday, September 11 and 25 from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.; on Friday, October 9 and 23, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. and on Friday, September 18 from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. Visitors can also see Gass' project on four Saturdays: Saturday, September 12 and 26 and on Saturday, October 10 and 24, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

(This article was originally posted onto the EPA Today website at www.epatoday.org with the title, "Art and science are mixed in East Palo Alto's Cooley Landing.")

Elizabeth Real is an East Palo Alto Today summer intern. She was raised in East Palo Alto.

Read her article sharing some of her childhood memories on page 17 in this issue of East Palo Alto Today.

Former East Palo Alto resident writes book

By Jane Theresa Jones
East Palo Alto Today

Something to write home to mother about:

Former East Palo Alto resident, George Swearington, Ravenswood high school class of 1975, has published a new book entitled Side Sleeper Syndrome.

Side Sleeper Syndrome, is a must read. Mr. Swearington of-



fers an informative read, as he provides us with a common sense approach to natural remedies to resolve medical issues that are caused by unsuspecting

bad habits, and lifestyle patterns that may compromise physical wellness.

After reading this book you will become aware of your daily routines that has triggered an illness or pain in the past. This book is a life changer!

For more details visit: <http://www.amazon.com/Side-Sleeper-Syndrome-George-Swearington/dp/1617392928>

Ms. Swearington still lives in East Palo Alto. Dr. Swearington's clinical trials are being researched on the East Coast.

Jane Theresa Thompson is an East Palo Alto resident and a board member of several East Palo Alto nonprofits.

East Palo Alto students



Demetric Sanders

she can ultimately open her own shop. The program made her realize "I do actually give an 'f' about stuff."

The LIP event continued with a guest speaker, Demetric Sanders, who delivered a motivating speech about his own struggles and accomplishments. An East Palo Alto native, Sanders revealed that he "was born into a family that was plagued with drug abuse." "I know what it's like to come from a place where people tell you you're not going to make it," he said.

Despite his troubling home life, Sanders earned his Bachelor's and Master's Degree from

Stanford and is now part of the booming tech industry.

In order to get this far, Sanders said that he had to work hard. When he was six years old, one of his privileged friends had learned how to build a website from his father. "I was pretty upset because I didn't have a father that could teach me how to build a website," he said, "Heck, I didn't even have a computer at home." Of course, this didn't stop Sanders from learning code. He checked out a book from the library to learn HTML on his own. Since he didn't have a computer, he simply wrote down code in his notebook.



Photo by HJ Burroughs
Standing with Detric Sanders, Gary Gates show how the impossible can become possible

continued from page 4

Sanders' anecdote illuminated his incredible drive to succeed—incredible drive that can hopefully be passed on to the students of East Palo Alto. "It's important to turn our adversities into advantages," he said, "You have to realize that the color of your skin, your adversities, your experiences don't make you less of an employee or less of a person or make your skills less important, but instead, they make your skills better."

Stanford graduate Olatunde Sobomehin asked students and staff members to come forward after the moving speech where they were met by cheers and applause from the audience.

To conclude the event, Hoover said: "The most important thing I see happening here is young people blossoming into incredible human beings. There's no better feeling and no better place to be than an environment where that is happening."

National Minority Donor Awareness Week
August 1st – 7th 2015

ONE LOVE ONE HEART

Register today to be an organ and tissue donor

DONOR NETWORK WEST.org

From the Editor's Desk

Strengthening local media in East Palo Alto

If you've missed seeing copies of East Palo Alto Today over the past few months, as some of you reported, then, do know the paper is back after a short publication break. During the time the paper was not published over the past few months, the focus was on raising money to support EPA Today's summer internship program.



Henrietta J. Burroughs

As many of you might know, EPA Today is published by the East Palo Alto Center for Community Media, the nonprofit that was started in 2003 to create media outlets in East Palo Alto. The center launched East Palo Alto Today in January 2006 to provide the East Palo Alto community with the type of critical and relevant information that readers might not find in other media.

When EPA Today was started, it was East Palo Alto's first locally published newspaper in 20 years.

As a result of the center's fund raising efforts this year, we were able to provide our internship program and we'd like to thank the City of East Palo Alto and the Philanthropic Ventures Foundation for the grants received, which supported the paper's summer interns.

Several of the paper's interns have returned to college. We are gratified that you will be able to read in this issue the articles that they worked on during the summer - articles on issues that East Palo Alto City Council members discussed when they came back in September from their summer recess.

You'll get much information in this issue about the steps being taken to combat airplane noise and the preparations being made to get ready for natural disasters and other emergencies that might affect East Palo Alto.

If you've been delayed by the construction on Highway 101, then you definitely be interested in CalTrans' construction plans that are currently underway and how

impending construction will affect city residents. You'll also read about the city's new flood maps that show the areas of the city that will be most affected by any heavy flooding that results from the El Niño that some weather forecasters are predicting.

Yes, this issue is jam packed with important information and we hope you will read it closely. We look forward to providing a regular schedule of issues in the months to come.

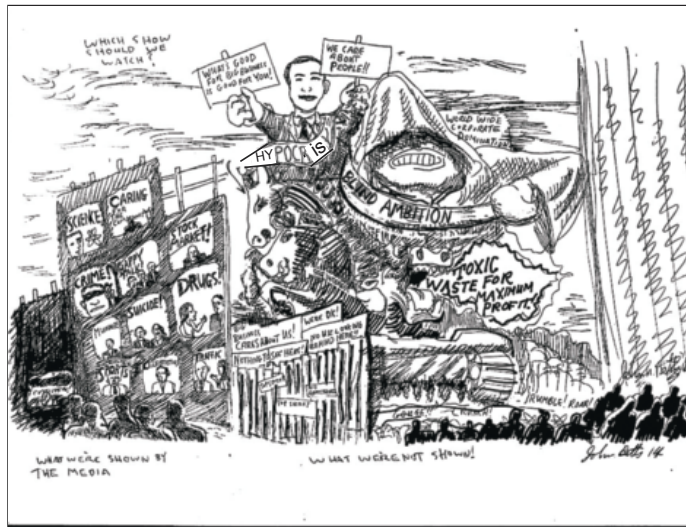
We're also getting ready to celebrate East Palo Alto Today's tenth anniversary in the coming year.

We will be holding "Media Day 2016" to recognize EPA Today's survival and the impact the paper and its contributors have made in being a local voice for the community.

We would love to have you join us in planning our 2016 birthday celebration. We've talked with several organizations about collaborating with the center in setting up media workshops and involving school children and other local writers, who would receive awards for their artistic submissions to our media day event. We'd like to partner with interested nonprofits and other local organizations to make Media Day 2016 a memorable celebration that will result in strengthening community media in East Palo Alto. Please call the East Palo Alto Today office at (650) 289-9699 if you're interested in partnering with the center and assisting us plan the day.

East Palo Alto deserves to have strong media representation and the articles in this issue show the type of media contributions East Palo Alto's own residents can make as they report the critical issues that affect this community.

As the legendary Billie Holiday so well recognized as she famously sang, "God bless the child that's got his own."



Letters in East Palo Alto Today

National Night Out

Dear Editor:



Photo courtesy Dan Pittman Residents at the Light Tree Apts

Thanks for having someone come by the event the other day at Light Tree. Hope they got a good idea of what it was all about.

The event was attended by more than 60 residents of the 94-unit complex. The enjoyed food, games and getting to know one another better. The city's mayor and police officers also attended. The Mission of nonprofit Project Access is to be the leading provider of vital on-site health, education and employment services to low-income families, children and seniors.

Their goal is to help keep family members employed, children in school, and seniors active. Services are provided free of charge to Light Tree residents. <http://www.project-access.org>

"This event is for residents to get out and get to know each other," said Project Access staffer Rebecca Robles, the complex's resident services coordinator, who estimated about 50 children under the age of 5 live at the complex. "This is a place for hard-working families and we want this to be a good place for kids."

Dan Pittman
For Project Access

San Mateo County Awards \$1,000,000 Grant to Mid-

peninsula Regional Open Space District

Dear Editor:

On September 1, at its board meeting in Redwood City, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors awarded Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen) a \$1,000,000 Measure A grant to design, engineer, obtain permits and build a critical 0.6-mile section of the San Francisco Bay Trail in the next two years.

When completed, San Mateo County residents will have access to 80 miles of continuous multi-use trail where bicyclists and pedestrians will be able to enjoy the shoreline, commute to school and work, and exercise outdoors with friends and family. In addition, the trail will provide residents of East Palo Alto and the Belle Haven section of Menlo Park access to Ravenswood Open Space Preserve and East Palo Alto's Cooley Landing.

"We're very pleased that in a few short years, we'll be able to offer residents of the southern part of the County direct access to one of the nation's premier trail systems and a wonderful nature destination right in their backyard," said Steve Abbers, Midpen General Manager.

The project area is located between Midpen's Ravenswood Open Space Preserve and University Avenue, along the boundary between the cities of East Palo Alto and Menlo Park.

The County, Midpen, and the cities of East Palo Alto and Menlo Park have been working diligently to fill this gap for the last ten years. Some of the challenges have been a nearby railroad line that could

be activated in the future, salt pond restoration projects, Hetch Hetchy water pipes, multiple jurisdictions and property owners, wetlands and habitat protections, and the required clean up of a former gun club. To complete the project, the Board of Supervisors authorized the use of up to \$1 million in the County's Measure A funds.

While matching funds were not a grant requirement, at its July 22, 2015 meeting, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's board of directors agreed to leverage Measure AA funds toward this project and unanimously voted for a resolution to enter into this funding agreement. The Ravenswood Bay Trail was part of its project list when the voters approved Midpen's Measure AA in 2014. In addition the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors had previously allocated \$400,000 from the Santa Clara County Stanford Mitigation Fund. Preliminary cost estimates for this connection project are between \$2.4 and \$3.15 million.

The San Francisco Bay Trail is a regional trail whose completion relies on the continued collaboration among shoreline property owners, cities, local governments, nonprofits, advocates and regional, state and federal agencies with jurisdiction over the trail alignment.

Today, the trail is approximately 338 miles long and passes through 47 cities. When complete, it will be 500-miles long and will encircle the San Francisco and San Pablo Bays.

Amanda Kim
Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

East Palo Alto Today

Publisher: East Palo Alto Center for Community Media
Editor-in-chief: Henrietta J. Burroughs

East Palo Alto Today is published bimonthly;
Address all letters to: East Palo Alto Today
2111 University Avenue #160, East Palo Alto, CA 94303
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www.epamedia.org and www.epatoday.org

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 or staff

A young leader takes another giant step

By Isabel Annie Loya
Dear Ally,

In 1996, a young boy electrocuted with 10,000 volts fell to his death after climbing a PG&E electrical tower located in East Palo Alto, my hometown. A week later, YUCA and community members organized a press conference demanding that PG&E remove the towers altogether or install safety mechanisms to prevent such tragedies. With this event, I wrote my first speech. I was in the sixth grade and John Penisoni was a peer in my community. I thought; where was the accountability for this young boy's death?

My older cousin introduced me to YUCA. She was a founding member of YUCA's Higher Learning Pro-



Isabel Annie Loya
in 1996

gram and me, her curious, tag-along little cousin. Higher Learning transformed YUCA. Higher Learning created a space that college and high school students could be critical, it was a place of healing that looked to address the injustices surrounding us: institutions that didn't protect young, low-income, people of color but preyed upon them. Higher Learning uncovered

my voice, uplifted my ideas and encouraged my critique. Seventeen years later I transitioned from a youth participant to its program coordinator - in the meanwhile, Shutting Romic Down! - and at 24, became Executive Director. It has been a whirlwind!

In the last six years, YUCA has:

- Protected rent control in East Palo Alto through the creation of policies and practices designed to empower tenants;

- Increased local control over hazardous waste facilities through the passage of an ordinance requiring formal city council approval of any hazardous waste use in the City of East Palo Alto;

- Won the creation of the

Community Advisory Committee made of community residents and YOUTH in all redevelopment projects within the Ravenswood Business District redevelopment area;

- Won the roll backs of rents for tenants who have been unfairly increased by Page Mill Properties;

- Completed a community planning process that created a vision of the Ravenswood Business District, the area occupied by the now defunct Romic facility. This community planning process resulted in an additional 30 acres of open space, 4.5 miles of trails; a mixed-use area combining housing and small business development; jobs that would triple the amount of jobs

available in East Palo Alto, a proposed 20,000 square foot community center, library expansion, health clinic expansion, and a potential 10,000 square foot recreation center.

- Won seats in local advisory commissions for youth in East Palo Alto and San Mateo County to actively participate in, including the Rent Stabilization Board, Public Works and Transportation Commission, Planning Commission and Youth Commission of San Mateo County

Most importantly, supported many low-income, youth of color in uncovering their voice, uplifting their thoughts and encouraging their critique followed by community action.

The last seventeen years,

continued on page 13

In praise of multicultural donor families: One love

By Ayanna Anderson
East Palo Alto Today

Every August, those of us who work in the field of organ and tissue donation and transplantation take time out during the first week of the month (August 1st – 7th) to honor the thousands of multicultural heroes who have saved and enhanced lives as organ and tissue donors.

As I reflect upon this year's National Minority Donor Awareness Week observance, what comes to



Ayanna Anderson

mind is the prolific song, "One Love," penned by famed reggae music icon, the late Bob Marley. Consider his lyrics:

One love. One heart. Let's get together and feel alright.

For the thousands who desperately await a life-saving and life-enhancing organ and tissue transplant, this very idea that one love (donor) and one heart (the act of giving to others) can potentially lead to their journey back to health and wellness (feel alright) is the essence of what the gift of life is all about.

On behalf of Donor Network West, we salute the many multicultural donors

and their families, who—through their love and selflessness—have forever transformed the lives of countless recipients.

During this observance, you too, can honor these powerful heroes, by making your own donation decision.

If you have registered as a donor at the DMV or online at donornetworkwest.org, be sure to let your family members know about your wish to save and heal lives.

For more information on how you can be a part of our

mission to save and enhance lives, please contact:

Ayanna Anderson: aan-derson@dnwest.org.

Ayanna N.S. Anderson, M.P.S., M.S., is the West Bay Community Development Liaison for the Donor Network West.

She is also the chair, of the Public Relations Committee for the Association of Multicultural Affairs in Transplantation (AMAT) and a board member of the Association of Multicultural Affairs in Transplantation (AMAT)

Has organizational culture contributed to construction delays?

By Steven Kennedy
East Palo Alto Today

The good news about MPFD's new Fire Station on University Avenue is that they have just received a single bid to install solar photovoltaic panels on the roof. This bid was submitted by Suncraft Inc., of Novato. The \$119,299 bid proposes 96 American made, 330 Watt, monocrystalline panels by Suniva. The system will sit on an S-5! racking system and will hook up to one or more Fronius Symo inverters.

This system will produce 31.7 kilowatts at peak production or 43,737 kilowatts per year and will retain at least 80 per cent efficiency after 25 years. As a rule of thumb, this system is 10 times the size and power of a normal residential PV system and about 10 times as expensive, after the homeowner's

Federal tax credits. The panel degradation % is estimated, typical and normal. These panels use the highest yielding class of solar technology available. The environmental benefits of this system will be about ten times the scale of a typical residential solar system, which is the CO2 equivalent of about 6 mature trees.

In 2009, Suncraft completed a solar PV installation on a carport roof at the Windsor Fire Station in the wine country.

The MPFD system will be at least twice the size (and probably four times the complexity) of this prior installation. The Fire District sought solar companies with this type of client and installation experience.

The other piece of good news is that the building project is not over its \$7 million budget (despite recent ru-



Steven Kennedy

mors to the contrary from reliable sources). For now, I'm sticking to the \$15 million estimate headlined in my 2010 article (including contingency fees, bells and whistles) and my description of the building as a castle.

The bad news is that the project is several months behind schedule and they've already underestimated the time required to design, permit and build such a large and complex solar PV sys-

tem. The District's plan checker just took 9 days to inspect plans for a residential solar system to ensure firefighters had enough room to walk around the system without stepping on the overhang.

As the showpiece of a LEEDS Silver building, the solar system and an operating production monitoring kiosk will be sorely missed at the Grand Opening Celebration, apparently slated for this October. Just getting PG&E to approve a completed system and give it PTO (Permission To Operate) usually takes frustrated homeowners 3 to 8 weeks. I suspect either the Project Manager believes in the Steve Jobs "Reality Distortion Field" theory of accelerated development or he has some close personal friends at PG&E and maybe both.

With the racking for up to

96 panels clamped to standing seams on the top of the building, wind, noise and vibration are issues to consider. I'm not saying the building will whistle Dixie in a swelling sea breeze but a low frequency moan could be annoying to the neighbors and the diagnosis and fix could be expensive.

Other issues that seem to have been overlooked in the quest for maximum solar yields are warranties, repairs and cleaning.

Many solar system owners have found to their dismay that the warranty is as important as the efficiency of the panels. Money is lost when time is wasted getting an inverter replaced. With \$119,000 invested in a solar system, the District will find that buying 100% of their power from PG&E gets expensive again.

Inverters have a life expectancy of 10-15 years. continued on page

Lifecycles

The East Palo Alto Council honors Tapu Soolefai and Roderick Norris



Roderick Norris poses with city council members after being recognized for his service to the City of East Palo Alto.

By Michael Uhila
East Palo Alto Today

The East Palo Alto City Council honored Roderick G. Norris and Tapu Soolefai this summer for their service to the city.

Officer Norris served in law enforcement for 30 years and the proclamation that was written in his honor was read by Councilmember Larry Moody at the council's July 7th council meeting.

During his comments Moody kept referring to Norris as the Chief

Moody said that Norris bravely served the City of East Palo Alto for 26 years as a patrol officer, a field training officer, a patrol sergeant, a community policing sergeant,

an internal affairs sergeant, an operations lieutenant, an administrative lieutenant and as the acting chief.

During his career, Norris received a California Highway Patrol award and two community service awards. because of his leadership to ensure that his fellow officers were also involved in community affairs to foster good relationships with the community.

Norris thanked his brother Paul for the inspiration he gave him to become a police officer and he mentioned Chief Dan Nelson who had hired him.

Under the leadership of East Palo Alto's former Police Chief, Wesley Bowling, Norris created the annual Christmas Toy giveaway and contributed to the development of the East Palo Alto Police Department's

community policing plan. Norris worked to unite the community and the police department, which established a citizen police academy that provided another chance for education.

When Norris became the city's acting police chief when Bowling was out ill, he was able to co-create the Explorer Post 812 in the city and he served as a lead advisor.

Norris and other members of the post entered explorer challenge competitions and national conferences and received awards for this efforts.

Norris credited Bowling with giving him an opportunity to move up in the police department and with training him "to do policing in the right way with a good conscience and a good heart."

Norris went on to explain how the Christmas tree giving program started. He said that Larry Triplett the owner of the two local McDonalds restaurants and some of the East Palo Alto police officers would give free McDonalds food and a teddy bear to kids on Christmas morning. Their efforts morphed into foundations donating gifts and toys and the activity grew into the police department's annual Christmas toy drive and giveaway.

A proclamation for Tapu Soolefai was read by Council member Rubin Abrica

Tapu Soolefai was honored for her 15 years of service to the City of East Palo Alto. She started as a temporary secretary in the housing and community department on September 4, 2000.

Six months later, Soolefai was permanently hired as an office manager in the same department.

Throughout her career in every role she served, she was known for being outspoken and for doing her job with the utmost integrity -- protecting what is right and correcting what wrong causing her colleagues to confide in her and gaining the community's trust.

During her comments, Solefai advised the council and the city to be nice to the City Manager, Carlos Martinez, and to the Assistant City Manager, Sean Charpentier and to be nice to my co workers. She asked the city to please give them the 5% raise that they are asking for. "That's my last wish"

She continued, "I'm the mother of a lot of officers here. I love all the officers. Check on them and the Explorer Program. She also thanked East Palo Alto citizens. "Thank you for being nice, also for being really rude. That's a joke," she said.



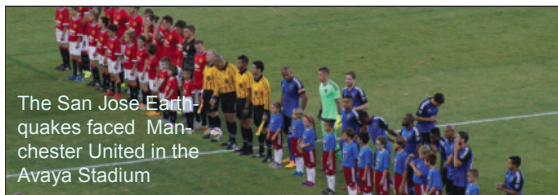
Photos courtesy of the Media Center's livestream webcast. Tapu Soolefai is shown with several members of the East Palo Alto City Council after receiving a proclamation in her honor.

International Champions Cup Gallery



Club America fans cheer loudly in a bunch in the Avaya Stadium in San Jose

Photos by Roberto Perez Soccer teams from across the globe competed in the International Champions cup. The tournament was to be held in different locations around the world but was focused primarily in the United States. Teams such as Club America from Mexico City, MX, FC Barcelona of Spain, and Manchester United of England competed in Bay Area Stadiums such as the Avaya Stadium.



The San Jose Earthquakes faced Manchester United in the Avaya Stadium



Manchester United defeat FC Barcelona in the Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara

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Lifecycles

Estella Mavis Knox

Sunrise: January 15, 1939 - Sunset: August 11, 2015

"She had the earth. Now, she has the heavens" - Rev. Robert Fairley, St. John Baptist Church



Estella Mavis Knox - mother, grandmother, great grandmother, sister, aunt, great aunt, business professional, college administrator, civic leader, community organizer - transitioned from this world on Tuesday, August 11 in East Palo Alto, CA.

"We don't know who will be next. But, the reservation has been made." - Rev. Robert Fairley, during the Eulogy on Friday, August 28, 2015

During the September 1, 2015 City Council meeting, it was mentioned that the oldest East Palo Alto resident, Mrs. Juanita Meadows, died the week of August 30, 2015 at the age of 102. More details will be given in the next issue of East Palo Alto Today.

Anthony Browder impresses his audience in East Palo Alto



Anthony Browder

By Jason Auzene
East Palo Alto Today

On Sunday July 11th, 2015, Anthony Browder, an African-American anthropologist and archeologist was in East Palo Alto to give a lecture on the state of Black America. He spoke about regarding our current condition, catching our breath and finding our voice. Anthony Browder is the author of a few books ex: 22 Essays, Egypt on the Polemic, but one in particular is Nile Valley Contribution to Civilization, (A book every African-American family should have). It corrects many lies and untruths about our (African) history, which is the oldest history in the world.

Anthony Browder is an

Ourstorian not a historian. He explained to an audience of about 30 people, aging from as young as 9 years old to 70 plus that instead of using "I can't breathe" in the New York accident, we as conscious adults should have taken "we can breathe despite of the murder and all the murders of unarmed African-American young men and boys. Air/breath is the essence of life and to say "I can't breathe" is equated to giving up; without air/breath there is no life.

Anthony Browder also spoke on the Selma march across the P. Edmund Bridge. Who is P. Edmund and what is he known for? There was a billboard awaiting them, the African-American president and all that marched in honor of Bloody Sunday. It was a billboard honoring Ku Klux Klan founder Nathan Bedford Forrest with the confederate flag. It was Forrest sitting on a horse, welcoming all to historic Selma on the billboard. Below Forrest it said, "Keep the Skeer on 'em." Have we progressed? Have things really changed?

Anthony Browder also expressed more than once in order to express its impor-

tance to his audience, that no matter what you experience in this world there is no reason why you can't excel in America. America gives all an opportunity, be it fair or unfair. With hard work, determination, and focus you will succeed at your goals/dreams. No one can stop you but yourself.

This event was held at

Rev. Flody Purity Church Faith Missionary Baptist Church at 835 Runnymede. This speaks volumes of Rev. Purity and his pro African revolutionary views. It was brought to us by Pan African City Alive and the UJIMA Collective Committee under the Power Talks Lectures West 2015.

If you missed Browder the first time, then you'll have another chance to see him. He'll speak again in East Palo Alto on August 29

You can read more about Browder online at http://aalbc.com/authors/anthony_browder.html

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Tackling underage drinking

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Photo courtesy of the Media Center Abraham Menor is shown speaking to the East Palo Alto City Council on July 28, 2015

ducted on students attending non-traditional schools that focus on serving students who are challenged academically and/or socially such as Redwood High School, according to Menor. One chart demonstrated that almost 25% of 11th graders had had 1-2 days with one or more drinks in the last 30 days--significantly higher than West Contra Costa County and San Mateo County. In another chart, results demonstrated that almost 30% of East Palo Alto students in non-traditional schools claimed to have had 1-2 days of binge drinking in the last 30 days. Menor defined binge drinking as having had 5 or more drinks in one session. For comparison, San Mateo County's percentage is only a little over 10%.

gering results. Vice Mayor Rutherford said, "I really had an issue with the fact that those types of schools [non-traditional schools] are supposed to be schools that really help with a lot of the problems, but it seems like there's a lot going on and issues aren't being addressed."

Rutherford expressed some concern about the surveys and wondered how accurate the information is. "I want to believe that everybody is honest and I want to believe that the questions are answered honestly," she said.

Question about the surveys

Menor said that the results of the surveys were conducted during a single point in time. In his report, to the council, Menor said, "It is not a good idea to make cast-in-stone decisions based upon these data. The true value of the data will be over time, as we will be able to compare results in two years and see how responses of cohorts of students within EPA change and how that change mirrors or differs from other, similar communities."

Nevertheless, to aid in the elimination of underage drinking in East Palo Alto, EPASAPC has begun working in several different ways, including creating a local youth program that allows students to learn more about the dangers of alcohol abuse and educating

local merchants on the dangers of selling to minors.

Vei Finau, the Youth East Palo Alto Program coordinator, introduced several summer interns to the council members. The program provides substance abuse prevention information once a week at Menlo-Atherton High School and East Palo Alto Academy, teaching students how to make changes using economical strategies.

The interns who attended the meeting put together a video in which they interviewed several East Palo Alto residents. In the video, the students posed questions such as, "Do you think it's easy for young people to access alco-



Photo courtesy of the Media Center Vei Finau is shown as she speaks to East Palo Alto City Council members in July 2015.

hol? What can be done to reduce the sale of alcohol to minors?" The answers given

conveyed that most residents do believe that it's fairly easy for minors to purchase alcohol from local vendors and that penalties should be imposed to those who sell to minors.

EPASAPC believes it has found one solution that could help restrict alcohol access to minors. Flores-Garcia spoke to the city council about EPASAPC's recommendation to implement a Responsible Beverage Service Training Ordinance (RBST) for local alcohol merchants. "RBST is a best practice in environmental prevention initiatives that is strictly voluntary in the state of California," said Flores-Garcia.

Because it's currently voluntary, EPASAPC has urged City Council Members to approve a mandatory ordinance. Flores-Garcia added that mandatory RBST has been linked to declines in access to alcohol for youths and has been found to be more effective in reducing sales to minors.

Flores-Garcia explained that members of EPASAPC took the training before they approached the merchants to better understand what precautions should be taken when selling alcohol. After contacting several merchants, members of EPASAPC, along with East Palo Alto officers conducted a site visit.

"You can imagine the surprise when the group of people showed up to the vendors'

doors with the police officer. They were, of course, quite respectful...but not necessarily always happy when the police officers did come," Flores-Garcia said. One common thing that Flores-Garcia said she heard from vendors was that they have been in business for many years (over 20 years in several cases), so they "already know what they're doing."

The training, however, served as a reminder of the policies. Some of them even missed some questions during the pre-test. "They were embarrassed and wanted to get it right," said Flores-Garcia. She admits that it wasn't easy for the vendors, but they will continue to build their relationships.

McNair-Knox said the group "expect[s] to continue the work because the problem that we have tackled--substance use and abuse in East Palo Alto--is a long standing concern and it's not a problem that will be solved overnight."

The mayor thanked EPASAPC for its report, but said that "tonight we're just listening," before suggesting that they also "tap into this hip hop generation that sensualizes the use of drugs and alcohol."

This fight to decrease underage drinking in East Palo Alto is far from over for EPASAPC. This ongoing issue will most likely have to be revisited in again by the council this fall.

Community News Briefs

East Palo Alto: A city in transition

[Editor's note: On July 20, East Palo Alto's City Manager Carlos Martinez spoke to the Palo Alto Rotary Club. The following is the club's summary of his presentation.] " Mr. Martinez was born in Managua, Nicaragua and is a naturalized American citizen. He attended school in Mexico City and practiced as a licensed architect. He completed his graduate degrees at UC Berkeley where he obtained two Masters; one in architecture and another in city planning. For a time, he was a private entrepreneur running a suc-

cessful small business in the Mission District. Later he worked for Dames & Moore, a large multinational providing consulting and economics services, and for the Mission Economic Development Association, a small non-profit organization. He worked in the public sector for the cities of Hayward and for the East Palo Alto Redevelopment Agency for more than a decade. He was appointed as East Palo Alto Interim City Manager in October 2014 and as East Palo Alto City Manager in March 2015.

Carlos provided an overview of East Palo Alto. It is one of the

youngest cities in San Mateo County with a population of 30,000 people. Sixty percent are Hispanic, 20% African American, 10% Pacific Islander, and 10% other. It is a low income community. It had to go the Supreme Court to obtain permission for incorporation. In the beginning, the mobilizing issue was rent increases from property owners from outside of the town who often left their apartments in poor condition. Undesirable uses were commonly placed in East Palo Alto when it was unincorporated, such as the County dump, which has now

been transformed into a nature preserve and a recycling and toxic recycling centers.

Early on, the City adopted rent control and a general plan to control uses. Many thought it would not be viable. The largest revenue generator was a McDonald's, which does not create enough revenue to run a city. The City created a redevelopment agency which oversaw the University Circle development, including the Four Seasons Hotel in the former Whiskey Gulch. Whiskey Gulch provided very little in revenue, but required quite a bit of police serv-

ices and was a troubled area.

Later, the City developed retail across the freeway at the Gateway/101 redevelopment area. This includes the Home Depot and the Ikea which help create additional revenue for the City. At this point, there is no doubt East Palo Alto will survive as a City. The City still does lack services compared to some of its neighbors.

The City did lose a bit of its identity with the loss of the Whiskey Gulch area. The current plan is to develop a town center along Ravenswood and Bay Road.

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The East Palo Alto Today newspaper is published by the East Palo Alto Center for Community Media, a nonprofit agency that was formed in January 2003 to create media outlets in East Palo Alto and provide the type of positive, relevant information about the community that is not easily found elsewhere. If you like what you see in East Palo Alto Today, then we ask that you enable us to serve the community better. You can do this by completing the partnership card below and mailing it with your tax deductible donation which will go directly to the center's media efforts. You can read more about the East Palo Alto Center for Community Media online at www.epamedia.org. You can also donate to the center at the EPA Today and the EPA Media websites. Please contact us if you have any questions. We look forward to hearing from you.



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A time to shine



Photo by HJ Burroughs
Four East Palo Alto City Council members stand with developer John Sobrato during the July 17 groundbreaking ceremony.

dents and representatives from the company that is developing the site.

For those who attended, the groundbreaking ceremony on July 17, marked a memorial occasion. The expressions of accomplishments and high hopes were as abundant as the food which was provided at the event.

A time to shine

John Sobrato, the founder and chairman of The Sobrato Organization, the Silicon Valley development firm building the complex, opened the groundbreaking ceremony by telling those who had gathered that the \$100 million office complex would be "East Palo Alto's time to shine." "It's time for East Palo Alto to capture its share of what's happening in Silicon Valley," he said.



An artistic rendering of University Square. courtesy of the Sobrato Development Corporation.

A young leader

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YUCA has taught me to build my experience and expertise of East Palo Alto, Community Organizing and Youth Empowerment. YUCA has taught me that I had the power to help lead others and that I could foster an organizational space that exemplifies the power of collective movement, challenging traditional structures of hierarchy and involve youth! YUCA has shown me

that there are no quick fixes, if you want it done right, you take your time and exhaust all of your tools....

There is still work to be done in this great city and I'm honored to have been a part of its rich history. I'm honored to have created great networks and lifelong friends.

I'm honored to stand along Bay Area, state and movement fighters, many of whom I admire and helped me see the

Abrica said, "Mr. Sobrato is the kind of person we envisioned when we became a city that we could partner with developers who had a heart. I think Mr. Sobrato is obviously involved in economic development, but I also see him as a partner in human development and in the development of communities. So, this moment is very, very important. It has crystalized the efforts of so many people over the years. The community has been wanting these type of things to happen. It's like a dream come true....We look forward to a new corner, a new entrance and a great future for East Palo Alto."

Speaking after Abrica, Moody focused most of his remarks on the young people in the East Palo Alto community. He said, "I am just so proud of today. I remember back in 2000 when the council approved this corner lot for development and we have been sharing with our community a promissory note that we are a community on the move."

Many of the children who are going through our public schools who were in elementary school at the time are now high school and college graduates. Now they have an opportunity to come back to their own community and to seek employment opportunities that are going to link them with the region, link them with the efforts and activities of Silicon Valley."

Moody also referred to the groundbreaking as a dream and stressed the opportunities that the thought the complex will bring. "We so look forward to residents walking by and seeing the cranes that are going to be going up in the next couple of weeks and months ... realizing that the dream has come true that, for today, there's going to be opportunities for their sons and daughter right here in their own community."

In spite of all of the enthusiasm expressed by Sobrato and the city's public officials some community members



Photo by HJ Burroughs
Two city council members stand with city manager Carlos Martinez.

saw the groundbreaking and the planned complex with a mixture of sadness.

A bitter sweet experience

James Turner, the owner of the Above All Insurance Agency and a long time business owner in East Palo Alto, said, the groundbreaking was a bittersweet experience.

"There are all indications that things are moving ahead, but I still don't see any grand support for small businesses."

continued from page 1

Turner said that the original representations for the complex indicated that there would be retail space in the ground floor of the complex. "Where did that go?" he asked.

"I'm for progress," Turner said, "but that part hit me. Where did it go?"

Another community member wistfully recalled some of the former businesses at the location, like El Galope and activities that were conducted on the lot, like the former EPA-Has Farmers Market and East Palo Alto's first AIDS march.

Whether one feels the visions for the future expressed at the event or the bittersweet memories the past evokes, all who expressed their opinions seemed to agree that University Square represents change in a changing East Palo Alto.



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Garage conversions

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Photo by HJ Burroughs the street. A street in East Palo Alto that contains more housing units than can be seen from the street.

construct and bring down the converted garage.

East Palo Alto's planning and building departments do fine residents if they don't meet the city's demands by the assigned deadline.

According to several East Palo Alto residents, a code enforcer from the city police department arrived on many occasions to their homes unannounced, with a police escort, to inspect and determine if the resident's garage conversion meets city standards.

At a group meeting held on July 28, residents said that they felt intimidated by the code enforcer, and they shared similar stories in which they told how the code enforcer arrived without a permit or warrant that allows them to inspect the property and pushed past individual property owners to not only examine their garage conversion, but also their entire house.

Carlotta Calvillo, one of the East Palo Alto homeowners who spoke up, expressed her dissatisfaction with the city at the community forum that was held during the city council meeting on July 7.

Calvillo said she felt that the action taken against her modified house was cruel. She said that when she bought her house it didn't meet the city's living requirements long before she purchased the property and now she is being fined for not having modified the property to regulation.

"I went to the planning depart-

ment and told them that I wasn't going to permit that they checked my property ever again because they have already checked it 5 or 6 times," Calvillo said at the July 7 city council meeting. "I told them I haven't fixed anything because we don't have money."

My husband just had his hand operated on again. He is disabled and I don't have a job and I am currently looking for one. [The Planning Department] charges the community a really high price.... We don't have money like the investors do. They should leave a reasonable price for the community in order to solve the problem."

With the intent to draw more attention and find a solution to the city's housing dilemma, community residents took the initiative to hold meetings to discuss the situation. In these meetings, the city's Vice Mayor Donna Rutherford along with the Chair of the Board of Rent Stabilization, Sonja Spencer, and the Chair of the Public Works and Transportation Board, Bernardo Huerta, took part in leading these meetings.

On Monday July 13, an unofficial meeting was held at the Faith Missionary Baptist Church. There, residents discussed the causes of their situation and they identified resources available in assisting them. They concurred that they must reach out to several city council members and ask them to attend upcoming meetings.

The following week, on Monday July 20, residents once more reunited at the Faith Missionary Baptist Church, this time with the presence of Vice Mayor and City Council member Donna Rutherford plus the chair of the Board of Rent Stabilization, Sonja Spencer

Vice Mayor Rutherford suggested the meeting during her response to the garage conversion controversy.

"I heard the concerns on Tuesday and I was quite appalled at the manner in which that individual came to the house," Rutherford said. "I don't understand how someone can walk into someone's house...I know the process was supposed to be, not a warning, but a letter sent out to the individual's home, and then the individual is supposed to reply back in a timely fashion."

Rutherford went on to say that if the individual does not respond to the initial letter, she believed, another letter should go out; then eventually an official is sent out to the site.

"I don't know if that wasn't followed, I don't know if this person didn't identify themselves," Rutherford said, "Personally if someone come to my house and I don't know who they are, they won't get in my door; they're not going to push through either."

Vice Mayor Rutherford addressed the actions taken by code enforcers who arrive with a police escort by saying, "That's their insecurities..."

.They're not confident in who they are; so they're kind of like bullies. They want to bully you."

Rutherford added that no one in the community should be frightened by the actions taken by the city code enforcer, because he is accountable to his staff, his boss, and the city council. She said his job is to enforce the laws and codes but not in a hostile manner.

Bernardo Huerta read the code of ethics that is implemented for code enforcers to follow.

"What they're doing is that they are looking for more work for themselves," Huerta said regarding the code enforcer's actions. "If they're there to check out a water heater, have them check out the water heater not something else. That's the problem...Those kinds of things are frowned on, but people in this community don't know how to protect themselves from those things."

In addressing this issue, Rutherford said paperwork must be completed before and after every inspection undertaken by a code enforcer. Many times, residents continue to be fined for violations they've already repaired.



Photo by City of East Palo Alto Carlotta Calvillo explains her situation to the East Palo Alto City Council on July 7 during its community forum.

Rutherford added that the paperwork must include the findings of the code enforcer and their signature as proof that the residents can later use to prove to the planning and building de-

partment that they've addressed what needed to be fixed on their property.

Huerta stressed that garage conversions are 100% legal in the state of California. He said he brought that ordinance to the attention of the City of East Palo Alto, but the city didn't follow it and the pricing was made very difficult for members of the community.

Teo Hernandez, a member of the Peninsula Interfaith Action organization, said residents of East Palo Alto are being given prices that are identical to those given to owners of commercial buildings.

Rutherford said these findings left her in shock and she refused to believe them.

"I need to see that in black and white, because I don't believe that," she said, "I will ask the city manager to show me that in black and white. I don't want to believe that because it's so unfair that if you're saying that for my property, I have to pay the same amount a commercial property pays, it's not true; my property is not commercial."

All of the residents, who were present at the meeting, responded to Rutherford's disbelief and stated that they were all facing commercial prices for their garage conversions.

"I went to talk to the planning commission and they said everything is the same, and we members of the community want a fair price," Calvillo said.

Near the end of the meeting, everyone came together to create an agenda for their next meeting in which they planned to hear from the city's chief of police, Albert Pardini, to address the issues regarding the actions of the code enforcer.

They also said that they planned to bring in one of the city's code enforcers, and they wanted members of the city staff to help them reach a solution regarding the high prices for garage conversions.

They said it was important to have city officials and staff help the community understand and update the process for garage conversions in East Palo Alto.

Residentes abren las leyes y reglas modernas sobre cocheras convertidas

Por Edward Perez
East Palo Alto Today

Hay residentes en la ciudad de East Palo Alto, que han transformado sus cocheras en cuartos adicionales para rentar a personas individuales o a familias enteras.

Pero este año, algunos de los dueños de las cocheras convertidas recibieron cartas de aviso que sus cochera convertida van contra las reglas y leyes de la ciudad. Las cartas en algunos casos han incluyido multas que la ciudad ha dado a los residentes si no arreglan su cochera convertida para que siga las reglas de la ciudad.

Muchos de los residentes que reciben estas cartas sienten que las multas y reglas no son justas.

Residente de East Palo Alto y activista, Mike Francois dice que oficiales del departamento de Planning y building abusan de las reglas y atacan a los residentes de la ciudad en que buscan maneras en dar multas a los dueños de la propiedad.

Agrega Francois que la ciudad también da a los residentes tiempos irrazonables para pagar las multas y hacer los cambios que piden.

Los residentes de East Palo Alto dicen que hay un oficial del departamento de policía de East

Palo Alto llega a sus casas sin aviso y revisan la propiedad sin permiso, buscando detalles pequeños en que pueden multar al dueño de la casa.

En una junta dirigido por los residentes de East Palo Alto, algunos dieron testimonio en donde cuentan que tienen miedo del oficial que llega sus casas.

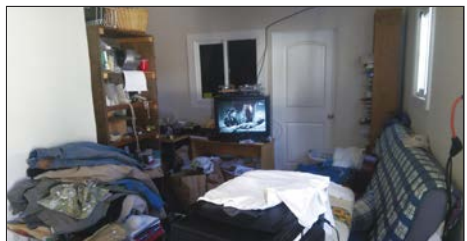
Carlotta Calvillo, cree que las acciones tomado contra por parte de la ciudad ella no son justas porque las modificaciones echo a su casa eran hechas antes de que ella y su esposo compraron la propiedad. La ciudad le ha mandado una multa significa por las modificaciones que la familia Calvillo no hizo.

"Fui allí al planning department y dije que no iba permitir que me chequean otra vez mi

casa porque me lo han chequeado cinco o seis veces," dijo Calvillo en una junta de city council el 7 de Julio. "Y yo les dije que yo no he arreglado nada porque yo no tengo dinero, mi esposo le acaban de operar otra vez la mano y el esta deshabilitado. No tengo trabajo, estoy buscando trabajo...Nos dejaron un precio bien elevado a la comunidad."

Con la intención para encontrar una solución a este problema de cocheras convertidas, los residentes han llamado a directores y oficiales de la ciudad en que vayan a sus juntas para escuchar su dilema y ver si pueden ayudar en cualquier manera.

El lunes 20 de Julio, los residentes



Fotografía de Edward Perez Adentro de una cochera convertida en East Palo Alto

Looking Into the Eyes of East Palo Alto

By Elizabeth Real
East Palo Alto Today

Positivity, wonderful art, and the smell of coffee dominated the atmosphere at Cafe Zoe. The small coffee shop was filled to the brim with supporters of the event. Into the Eyes of East Palo Alto, which took place there on August 28, 2015. The project premiere featured the music, illustrations, photography, and more of eleven of East Palo Alto's very own Youth Action Team.

The MC for the evening was Isaiah Phillips who charmed the audience with his own vocal talent. His positive outlook on life was captivating.



Photo by Elizabeth Real
Isaiah Phillips uses the microphone during the Into the Eyes of East Palo Alto event.

Before singing one of his songs, dedicated to his mother who passed away earlier this year, he asked the audience not say "aww." Instead, he asked that everyone stay positive and happy. Performances included the

works of Freddy Lopez, a local rapper, who had people in the audience bobbing their heads to the rhythm of his music; Mele Teu, a talented singer/songwriter who harmonized elegantly with her sisters on stage; and poetry by

Kalamu Chache, who had everyone chanting her name.

The artists' work was displayed along the walls of the café. Guests were invited to listen to the artists' self-narrated stories that were available via tablets at each station.

Later in the evening, Isaiah Phillips made an important announcement: land has officially been purchased to start building a youth center. The plan is to have it ready in the next three years. The center will provide opportunities for East Palo Alto's youth to explore their own artistic talents.

The artists' audio portraits can be viewed online at

<http://bit.ly/1hP0kiN>. Their art work will continue to be displayed for another month at Café Zoe, which is located at 1929 Menalton Avenue in Menlo Park.

Elizabeth Real is an East Palo Alto Today summer intern. She was raised in East Palo Alto.

See an article about her personal story on page 17 of this issue of East Palo Alto Today.

See the online version of the above article on Into the Eyes of East Palo Alto at: www.epatoday.org/news/2015/september_2015/east_palo_alto_youth_action_team_features_local_artists.2185.html

Longstanding resident

fair that Wells Fargo works with their borrowers.

"You say you want to help people, you want people to come to you for services, make it work for them," Francois said. "You're going to get your money, extend [the policy] 10 more years for some people, extend it five years. They're going to pay more, they get the house, they're happy...give them that once."

Sutton was backed by Keep Your Home California and, even then, Wells Fargo refused up to \$100,000 of aid towards Sutton's cause. Wells Fargo went on to auction Sutton's home.

Sutton held another protest at the auction with the objective of halting it by talking to attending bidders to have them understand the illegal circumstances regarding Wells Fargo's deci-

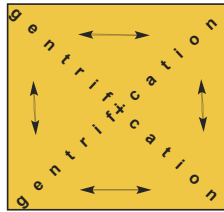
sion to auction her house.

Despite all of her efforts, her house was sold at the auction for the asking price and an added cent for a total of \$300,000.01.

"Far less than the amount advertised for the auction, far less than the loan, but that's how the game is played," Sutton wrote.

Gentrification in the community

The individual who bought Sutton's house at the auction, David Fitzsimmons, was a representative of Eagle Vistas Equities, LLC. Sutton believes the limited liability company is looking to flip her house, a process that leads to gentrification, which involves buying and flipping houses in deteriorated urban areas to those who can pay more for them. This practice improves the value of pur-



chased properties. In the case of East Palo Alto, gentrification is displacing the city's working-class residents and it is eliminating diversity in the community's minority-dominated population.

An investor tactic

"Many see gentrification as a tactic practiced by investors and predatory real estate companies looking to make a profit. East Palo Alto is a lucrative area for these investors and companies

since the city suffers from a foreclosure crisis, where many residents have lost their homes and others are close to losing their homes.

William Webster, a 40-year city resident and the longest serving public official in East Palo Alto's history, is a lead advocate for affordable housing in the area.

Webster views the practice of gentrification as greed and advises homebuyers to avoid doing business with banks that lie outside of East Palo Alto's city limits.

"Don't support criminal institutions that don't give a damn about the American people and about good citizens who are making honest efforts to honor their obligations," Webster said.

"The only god they know is the golden calf. If you want to un-

continued from page 2

derstand these folks, you need to know these three words: follow the money."

As of now, Sutton is still in her home and she is working independently to find a way to purchase her house back from the current owners. She wants to raise awareness of gentrification in the community and plans to hold neighborhood meetings. Sutton wants to bring residents of the community who were targeted by predatory loan services together and help them fight their evictions.

Sutton is also gathering information in preparation for a lawsuit against Eagle Vistas Equities, LLC and against Wells Fargo for illegally selling her house.

Edward Perez was an intern with East Palo Alto Today this summer. He is a sophomore at the University of Dayton.

Homeowners get free solar

(even if the land is leased), have a monthly electric bill of \$30 or more, and a household income less than 80% of the area median. (For example, for a family of four that would be equal to or below \$90,500 a year). If your income is less than 50% of area median, you would qualify for a fully subsidized solar system.

"I think the majority of East Palo Alto residents fall into this 'low-income' category, like I do," Martinez said. "And since this is free, or very close to free, I don't see any reason why East Palo Altans would not want to install solar panels with GRID Alternatives."

Being an Ecumenical Hunger Program officer, Martinez knows better than anyone that environmental problems disproportionately affect low-income families. Most of the high tech innovations which help us maintain sustainability and support the environment — such as electric cars, solar panels, or LED bulbs — require significant investments. Even if they eventually pay off, the up-front costs are prohibitive for disadvantaged families. Pro-



Photo courtesy of Sustainable Silicon Valley
Betsy Yanez is shown standing in front of her house as she celebrated her house being the first East Palo Alto "solar home" within the Net Positive Project.

grams like SASH and PG&E rebates for buyers of energy efficient appliances help fix this imbalance.

GRID Alternatives Bay Area's Outreach Manager Justine Blanchet explains that "GRID leverages multiples funding sources, including state incentives, federal tax credit and philanthropic efforts, to make solar energy affordable for lower income homeowners living in the communities most affected by environmental pollution. Each installation provides volunteers and job trainees an opportunity to get hands on experience in the installation of solar photo-

voltic systems and give them a leg up to find a job in the growing solar industry."

There is no doubt that solar energy will offer Martinez substantial savings, since her monthly PG&E bill is close to \$375, a major portion of which is electricity cost. Even a 50% reduction in this burden will free up funds of a few thousand dollars a year. Plus, understanding her energy use, along with purchasing energy efficient appliances, can save \$50 to \$150 per year. In addition, PG&E offers rebates for energy efficient appliances of \$50 to \$500 per unit.

But savings was not the pri-

mary motivation behind her decision to enroll in the SSV project. "Anything that helps me save my money I appreciate, but it's bigger to me to help the planet," Martinez said.

As a mother of six and a grandmother of two, Martinez is a true environmentalist: "I do look towards the future, and I'm asking myself: what am I leaving to my kids? What do I want to impart them with?" As the atmospheric CO2 emissions continue to grow, threatening the very future of humanity, any effort to cut the use of conventional carbon-intensive energy is extremely valuable.

Interestingly enough, many of the East Palo Alto dwellers grew up in resource mindful communities. Martinez' father was brought up poor in Guatemala and literally "grilled" resource appreciation into his children. "And today, when I am teaching my children to conserve water and electricity, to recycle, I can clearly hear some of the things that my dad told me," Martinez said. "I hear his words coming out of my mouth, and I look over my shoulder and go: 'Ah, you

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taught me that!"

The Net Positive project in East Palo Alto is aimed at completing energy and water audits for ten single-family residences in the city, and installing solar panels where applicable by the end of this year. SSV is committed to providing all East Palo Alto participants with renovated, efficient energy systems that will save them money, by bringing the cost of their electricity bills to zero dollars.

For more information, email epa@sustainablelv.org. To inquire about GRID's solar program for homeowners, call 510-731-1333. For all other questions, visit www.gridalternatives.org.

Natalia Timakova is on the research team for Sustainable Silicon Valley.

[Editor's note: On Friday, August 14 there was a small block party in East Palo Alto to dedicate the first "solar home" within the Net Positive Project; East Palo Alto resident Betsy Yanez was the happy owner of her homes solar panels and she celebrated her new green energy system!].

community emergency teams

continued from page 3

also piloted the use of APRS, a ham radio technology that broadcasts the user's location, allowing CERT volunteers at the command and communications trailer to track and locate volunteers in the field.

East Palo Alto resident and CERT volunteer Dennis Parker was a participant in the Silver Dragon exercise. Parker is a ham radio operator and used his skills to communicate between the command center and the teams in the field, tracking the teams and logging the number of informational packets that they handed out.

Parker encourages East Palo Alto residents to prepare themselves to help their families and neighbors during a major disaster. "We are very good with a mutual aid scenario," he said, but he thinks it is important to understand that in the case of a real emergency, professional responders and volunteers from other

communities may not be able to get to the city to help. "The community needs to be able to make it on their own," he said. "It all comes down to neighbors helping neighbors."

Parker recommends that community members take classes in first aid and CPR, and follow Red Cross guidelines for building an emergency kit, making a plan, and staying informed. "If people were to do that, they'd be in pretty good shape," Parker said.

According to Emily Pharr from the City of East Palo Alto, the city government continues to prepare itself to respond to real emergencies in the future. "The city is committed to working with unifying organizations and businesses in cooperation



Photo courtesy of the Menlo Park Fire District CERT volunteers take time to eat during the emergency preparedness exercise.

with partnering government entities to strengthen our community's ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from any local disaster," she said. The city continues to work with the county and other partners to develop and revise the city's disaster preparedness plan. The city also has a training and education plan for staff and the community, Pharr added.

Volunteer CERT teams are an important part of our community's emergency response system, and may very well be the first responders that you will see during a disaster. The purpose of the CERT program is to help communities be self-sufficient for at least 72 hours during a major emergency.

The Menlo Park Fire Protection District has trained 900 CERT volunteers, including more than 130 from East Palo Alto, and can call on them for assistance when needed. Volunteers are residents of the cities and neighborhoods located in the fire district, including East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Atherton, and some unincorporated parts of San Mateo County. The fire district periodically

trains new CERT volunteers, and also offers basic emergency preparedness classes to the public every month.

"What we're trying to get across to individuals is that they have to be self-prepared," said Navarro. The chief sees self-reliance as an American tradition, and wants people to learn the skills they need to help themselves during a major emergency when public services may not be able to respond quickly. "What happens if 911 can't answer the phone?" Navarro said. "We would like to provide that training to folks. You need to volunteer to come forward. Let us help you be prepared."

Are you ready for an emergency? Prepare yourself!

SMC Alert is San Mateo County's community alert system. Sign up to receive local emergency alerts via text message or e-mail at www.smcalert.info.

The American Red Cross has emergency preparedness guidelines and checklists at www.redcross.org/prepare.

The Menlo Park Fire Protection District offers free classes and trainings to help you prepare for emergencies like earthquakes, floods, power outages, and disease outbreaks.

Get Ready is a two-hour class about how to prepare yourself and your household for a major disaster. Classes are offered every month. The next class will be held on June 9, 2015, at the East Palo Alto City Hall, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Do you want to join a Commu-

nity Emergency Response Team? Trainings for future CERT volunteers are held every four to six months. The courses last two and a half days and are divided into three sessions held over a two-week period. The last training course started on August 26, 2015.

Classes and trainings are open to all East Palo Alto and Menlo Park residents, as well as all other residents of the fire district.

For more information about these classes and trainings, and to sign up to attend one, contact Carole Parker, CERT coordinator for the Menlo Park Fire Protection District, at (650) 688-8415, or visit the CERT page on the MPFD's website: www.menlofire.org.



Photo courtesy of the Menlo Park Fire District East Palo Alto Police Officer Elizabeth Lam, along with Isaac Stevenson can be identified in front of a CERT vehicle during the mock emergency last spring.

Children's Day in East Palo Alto



Photo by Elizabeth Real Children and adults seem to be having fun at the Children's Day event on August 29, 2015 at Bell Street Park in East Palo Alto.

East Palo Alto Today will celebrate its 10th anniversary in 2016!

Join us in planning the celebration of East Palo Alto Today's birthday with a "Media Day" event.

We'll have communications workshops along with awards and prizes for writing entries by children and adults alike.

The East Palo Alto Center for Community Media, which sponsors the East Palo Alto Today newspaper, is looking for partners. So, if you're interested in helping to plan Media Day and in partnering with the center, let us know.

Call (650) 289-9699

Having sleep problems?

If you are 60 years or older, you may be eligible to participate in a study of Non-Drug Treatments for Insomnia sponsored by the National Institutes of Health, and conducted at the Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Medical Center.

Participants will receive extensive sleep evaluation, individual treatment, and reimbursement for participation. **For more information, please call Stephanie at (650) 849-0584.** (For general information about participant rights, contact 866-680-2906.)

Are you pregnant? Do you know someone who is pregnant?

Prenatal Advantage Black Infant Health Project provides services to help African American women improve birth outcomes.

FREE classes starting now!

- ✘ **Prenatal Group (Sessions 1-10)**
Health education and group discussion regarding pregnancy, labor and delivery, women's health, community resources, and infant care. Activities include personal goal setting, stress management and hospital tour (tentative).
- ✘ **Postpartum Group (Sessions 11-20)**
Information and group discussion on postpartum care. Parenting information on infant health, stages of development, SIDS prevention, discipline, and healthy family relationships. Activities include personal goal setting and development of a life plan.

Our Prenatal and Postpartum Classes provide lots of information, fun and energizing activities, incentives, nutritional refreshments, and peer support.

- ✘ **Social Service Referrals**
- ✘ **Public Health Nursing Support**
- ✘ **Incentives**
First Five Kits, Touchpoints & Raising a Reader Bags, Loved Twice clothing and much more.

Who is eligible?
Pregnant African American women who are 18 and older.

Where: Prenatal Advantage Offices — East Palo Alto and Daly City
When: For exact class schedule and location, call the Prenatal Advantage Office at (650) 363-7850

Prenatal Advantage Black Infant Health Project
2415 University Avenue, 2nd Floor, East Palo Alto, CA
Email: pregnentaladvantage@smcgov.org
Website: www.smchealth.org/bih

Services funded by San Mateo County Health System/Family Health Services, First 5 San Mateo County & California Department of Public Health, Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Program

EPA Today summer interns tell personal stories

By Elizabeth Real
EPA Today

You don't hear about Buddhists starting fights at a bar.

I kept the career, but didn't get the girl," Michael laughs. Sitting in front of me, Michael looks relaxed and at ease with a touch of embarrassment as he makes fun of his past attempts to romance girls with love letters. One of them still has his letter because she just likes to read it—a touching gesture, especially for a writer.

Michael Uhila caught the writing bug when his 5th grade teacher, Ms. Johnson, picked his essay on Frederick Douglas as the best one

in the class. "Maybe I'm onto something," he thought.

Since then, Michael has continued writing essays and poetry. In fact, he self-published a book of poetry.

"It was surreal," he says about the moment when he received his book in the mail. Like many other writers, Michael was under the impression that publishing a book was much more difficult.

To eliminate the pressure, he set a simple goal for himself: write one page every day. Before he knew it, he had compiled about 300 poems.

He also tried not to focus too much on writing an entire book (which can be overwhelming for a writer), but rather on the process—one



Photo by HJ Burroughs
EPA Today's summer interns included, going clockwise upper left: Edward Perez, Michael Uhila, Alamoni Afungia and Elizabeth Real.

poem at a time.

Where do his inspirations come from? "Some of my best stuff comes from just observing," he says. He described a typical scenario: "You're out socializing, but you're not really socializing. You're observing." Any situa-

tion, person, or place can become part of his next piece of writing.

"Writing is a lonely job," he admits, "You like to spend a lot of time by yourself." This, of course, doesn't mean that he's not capable of socializing. "I can socialize," he smiles.

When he's not busy finding material for his next poem or essay, Michael likes to play the drums and most recently started playing the guitar. He even sings. "People buy you drinks if you're good at singing," he laughs. Friday nights are karaoke nights in Redwood City.

To keep himself balanced,

Michael meditates every morning. He is part of meditation groups in Mountain View and Stanford.

"You don't hear about Buddhists starting fights in a bar," Michael points out. After reading more about the religion and attending several retreats, Michael was convinced that this way of peaceful living was the right path for him. He became a Buddhist in 2012.

When asked what advice he has to offer to readers, he responded with these wise words: "Check your motivation. Why are you doing it?"

He also added that "If you don't wanna do anything then just stop. Trust your gut."

Walking down memory lane

By Elizabeth Real
East Palo Alto Today

My mom didn't learn to drive when she was 16 years old, like most people in the United States. She learned to drive well after she had had three children. Even if she had known how to drive, however, in the 1990s, our budget was too tight to afford a second car.

So, for the most part, I remember walking everywhere with her because my dad was busy working during the day. A young woman walking with her three children and no husband was not an ideal scenario during that time. Everyone living in East Palo Alto knew that it was dangerous. Of course, most of us didn't have a choice. We still had to get to doctor's appointments, the grocery store, church, and school. So, we walked—cautiously.

I was constantly reminded that I had to hold my mom's



Elizabeth Real

hand while we walked. My arrogant-know-it-all-five-year-old mind, however, convinced me that I was old enough to walk on my own and that my mom's paranoia was completely unnecessary. One time, I actually said no and rejected her extended hand. I was immediately punished by the universe: I fell and scraped both elbows and both knees. She said I told you so and I grabbed her hand and cried the whole way home. Up until then, this incident was enough to scare me into being by my mother's side at all times.

Of course, it wasn't long

before I strayed again during one of our walks. This time, though, I didn't get punished—my mom did.

I don't remember walking on any sidewalks that day. It was just the side of the street that led to houses. As we walked, I spotted a small vacant lot (possibly someone's driveway). Most of it was broken concrete with some plants around it, but what appealed to me was the almost perfect square-shaped part that was raised off the ground. It had a stage-like element to it and I wanted to get on it to pretend that I was a famous singer or dancer. There was no one around and my mom allowed it. I was skipping around pretending to be someone else on this "stage" when I heard a scream. I twirled around and prepared to run back to my mom, but I stopped. The scream had come from my own mother. A man was trying to steal the necklace off of her neck. I didn't know what



Photo courtesy Elizabeth Real
From left to right: Elizabeth as a young child, her mom, Olga Gutierrez, and her younger sister, Andrea Real at a laundromat.

to do. I had two choices: run up to my mom to try to get this man to go away while possibly making things worse and risking my own safety or stay put and watch my mom get robbed.

I panicked. I was scared and even though I wanted to help my mom, I couldn't. My body froze and I just stood there. After the man had accomplished his goal, he ran off. At that point, I shamefully

walked back to my mom and held her hand. We didn't have cell phones, so we couldn't call anyone for help. So, we continued walking.

My mom didn't say much to me about what had just happened and I didn't ask any questions. I heard her sniffing, but I didn't dare look up at her. So there we were: a mom and her kids, just trying to get to the next appointment without getting robbed along the way. Sometimes, it worked. Sometimes, it didn't.

I later found out that my dad had just given her that golden necklace as a gift. It was her first time wearing it.

Elizabeth Real grew up in East Palo Alto. Her love of writing led her to pursue an English degree and in May 2014, she became the first person in her family to graduate from college. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in English from San José State University.

Writing about the realm of sports

By Edward Perez
East Palo Alto Today

Aspiring to join ESPN's reign on the realm of sports journalism, East Palo Alto resident and Oregon State University junior, Alamoni Afungia, took another leap in her journey with her internship over the summer with the East Palo Alto Today newspaper.

Having moved to East Palo Alto at the age of five from Salt Lake City, Utah, Afungia, now 20, says she had an tolerable transition in the moving process.

Afungia believes that the fact she had family in both

Salt Lake City and East Palo Alto, eased her into this new beginning in her life.

Afungia said her parents, who came to the United States from Tonga, helped give her direction in her life and helped her reach the point where she is today.

She didn't really get to hang out with friends because her life in East Palo Alto followed the routine of going to school, attending homework club, then going straight home, or she took some time to play basketball.

Basketball is one of Afungia's passions and it plays a role in her goals for her future in aspiring to be a sports broadcaster.



Alamoni Afungia

I played from third grade until my junior year," Afungia said. "I stopped playing junior year because junior year is when you really start to look into college, and [my school] didn't get many recruits so I just focused in school and try to get into college."

Afungia said she decided to attend Oregon State University when she witnessed the Stanford men's basketball team face off against the Oregon beavers.

Since then she went into college with a major in new media communications.

She switched to anthropology with a minor to bolster her writing skills because she wasn't a fan of the production classes in the new media communications major.

Upon completing her undergraduate studies, Afungia plans to go into graduate school at either Oklahoma State University or Syracuse University for sports media studies.

I've always wanted to be in the field of media, but I didn't have passion for sports media until I realized I attended every game at Oregon State," Afungia said.

"I love being in the center of media and love sports, so I thought why not put the two together and do that as a career.

Afungia has wanted to go into broadcasting from an early age. She says she was inspired by Oprah's character to go into broadcasting.

She says she can relate to Oprah's ability to be outspoken which ties into her interests in political science and advocating for the minorities of the nation.

EPACS sixth graders learn about emotional intelligence

By **Todd Armstrong**
East Palo Alto Today

"People would listen to each other, be nicer and get along better," said one student, "we'd connect better," said another. Such were the answers given by East Palo Alto Charter School (EPACS) 6th graders in response to "What would the world look like if more people knew their emotions?" Today's lesson was about emotional literacy – noticing, naming and understanding emotions – kicking off several weeks of workshops designed to teach the sixth graders about emotional intelligence.

Beginning with a study of Michelangelo's high renaissance masterpiece, The



Photo courtesy of the East Palo Alto Charter School EPACS students are shown participating in a class exercise.

Creation of Adam, the students learned how the use of line, color, shape and texture produce the painting's powerfully emotive qualities. They were tasked with identifying the emotions displayed by the painting's figures. To sharpen their abilities, they referenced the Plutchik Model of Emotions which describes the eight basic emo-

tions from sadness to joy using color. Putting line, shape, balance and symmetry into action, the students drew faces representing each of these emotions. Emotional intelligence is effectively blending thinking and feeling to make better decisions. The skills are learnable and lead to greater and greater self-awareness,

self-management and self-direction. Research shows improvements in EQ can lead to increased academic performance, better relationships and reduction in risky behaviors. "As our sixth graders transition to middle school, it is essential that they have a solid sense of self and are able to identify their own emotions and those of their peers," explained Jennifer Saul, Dean of EPACS. "This is the first step in being able to navigate themselves, relationships, and their life path. I am extremely grateful for the explicit and engaging lessons that the EQ Vehicle is delivering to our students. In addition, they are training our staff how to teach the lessons on their own."

EPACS has enlisted EQ Vehicle (EQV), a Menlo Park based not-for-profit educational start-up missioned with bringing EQ to as many schools as possible. Based on the Six Seconds model, EQVsteam is a constructivist curriculum designed to teach EQ through the lens of science, technology, engineering, art and math in adherence with common core standards. Cloud delivered and social media enabled, EQVsteam can be delivered to any school, anywhere.

For more information about the EQVsteam and the EQ Vehicle, please go to www.eqvehicle.org

Todd Armstrong is the co-founder of EQ Vehicle.

Residentes abren las leyes

tuvieron otra junta en Faith Missionary Baptist Church, en donde esta vez, llevo la vice alcalde, Donna Rutherford, y directora del departamento de estabilización de renta, Sonja Spencer. También estaba presente un director de Public Work and Transportation Board, Bernardo Huerta.

Rutherford comenzó la junta diciendo, "oí las preocupaciones el martes pasado y estaba muy asombrada con la manera en que el oficial llevo a sus casas. No entiendo como alguien puede no mas entrar en sus casas sin permiso."

Agrego Rutherford que el proceso va en que si una persona no responde a la las cartas, les llega otra. Y si también no responden a la siguiente, ahí es cuando llega un oficial a su casa. Pero tienen reglas para ellos mismos en lo que pueden

hacer cuando van a revisar las casas.

"No se si obedeció sus reglas, no se si el oficial se identifico," dijo Rutherford, "personalmente, si alguien que no conocía llegara a mi casa en esa manera, no hay ninguna manera en que entren a mi casa; y tampoco van a forzarse a dentro."

Rutherford comenta sobre las acciones tomado por el oficial y dice que son parte de su inseguridad. Dice que no tienen confianza en lo que son entonces actúan como peleones. También dice que nadie en la comunidad le debería tener miedo al oficial, el oficial trabaja es la responsabilidad de sus compañeros, su jefe, y también de city council; su único trabajo es esforzando las leyes y reglas pero en manera respetosa.

Bernardo Huerta dice que lo que hacen es buscar mas trabajo para ellos mismos; si vienen a revisar el calentador de agua, que revisen eso y nada mas. Huerta dice que eso es el problema, lo que hacen no es bueno pero la gente de la comunidad no se sabe proteger de esos abusos.

Rutherford dice que necesita ver copias de papeles que confirma los encuentros de oficial durante de una inspección porque muchas veces los residentes son multados por cosas que ya estaban arregladas.

Huerta estresa que conversiones de cocheras son cien por ciento legal en el estado de California. Dice que el ha llamado es a la atención de la ciudad de East Palo Alto, pero la ciudad no graspo el concepto y los precios de fueron hechos

fuera del alcance de los residentes de East Palo Alto. Teo Hernández, que es una miembro del Peninsula Interfaith Action Organización, dice que los cobros dados a los residentes de la ciudad por sus cocheras convertidas son iguales son igual a los cobros dado a propiedad comercial.

"Tengo que ver eso en blanco y negro porque no lo creo," dijo Rutherford en asombro. "Le voy a preguntar al manager de la ciudad que me enseñe eso en blanco y negro. No quiero creer eso porque no es justo si dices que tengo que pagar lo mismo que una propiedad comercial porque mi propiedad no es comercial."

Los miembros presentes en la junta le aseguraron a Rutherford que los precios si son iguales a los precios de una propiedad comercial.

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"Fui hablar con la comisión de planning y dijeron que todo es lo mismo [entre los precios de cocheras convertidas y propiedad comercial]," dijo Calvillo. "Nosotros de la comunidad queremos un precio justo."

Al final de la junta, miembros presentes arreglaron una agenda para la próxima junta que toma lugar el 27 de Julio. En esta Junta, los miembros planean en traer al oficial de departamento de policía, y también a oficiales de City Council para finalizar una solución sobre los precios altos de cocheras convertidas y para ayudar la comunidad entender los peligros asociados con cocheras convertidas.

Edward Perez es un asistente de East Palo Alto Today y es un sophomore en la Universidad de Dayton.

Twenty East Palo Alto track and field stars competed at the Junior Olympics



Photos by Alistair Thompson
In this photo, the Greyhounds team, led by Eric Stuart, is shown this summer prior to its participation in the Junior Olympics.

By **Alistair Thompson**
East Palo Alto Today

The East Palo Alto Greyhounds track and field club returned home from the USA Track and Field Junior Olympics earlier this month with two top ten finishers and a great deal of optimism for

the program's future. Small community aside, the local squad had plans of making waves on the national scene and it did just that.

Salvador Espinoza led the way, finishing fourth in the nation in the 11-12 boys 1500m. Espinoza has been named an all-american four years in a

row now, making him the most decorated athlete in the program.

While Espinoza took the spotlight, Lawan Patterson was not far behind, finishing sixth in the nation in the 9-10 girls 1500m racewalk. Brandon Bains also found his way to the top 25, finishing 16th in

the 15-16 boys 100m and 22nd in the boys 200m. Samvrat Gowda (boys 8 and under 800m), Terrance Matthews Murphy (boys 15-16 discus) and Vanessa Patterson (girls 8 and under javelin) all broke the top 25 as well.

Eric Stuart, head coach and founder of the club, knew these kinds of results were well within reach for the Greyhounds. No longer just a small community team, the Greyhounds are recognized on the national track and field scene.

Based on the efforts of the squad this month, it looks like

the Greyhounds name is only going to grow more familiar.

Alistair Thompson interned at East Palo Alto Today in 2011. This fall he will be working in Turkey for an international organization.

[Editor's note: See his first article about the Greyhounds, which appeared on the EPA Today website in August with the title, Twenty East Palo Alto track and field stars will compete at the junior olympics_2181.html.



In the photo on the left, Francisco Sanchez is photographed getting out of the starting-blocks during a pre-game practice session.

East Palo Alto's Junior Giants completes the summer season

By Sandra Webster
East Palo Alto Today

Coach Ray Askew completed East Palo Alto's Junior Giants Summer Baseball with the support of volunteer coaches and parents. June 1, 2015 to August 15, 2015 with a celebration including cotton candy, popcorn, ice cream and delicious food. Name of the 4 teams by "uniforms color". Looking forward to summer of 2016. Below: Shirley Davis, Coach Ray Askew, Ella Mae Williams and Olivia Chavira.



Nueva ley

dades físicas o aquellos que se enfrentan a las barreras del idioma y necesitan ayuda durante la votación podrían preferir a visitar a un centro de votación. Así que, por estas razones y por otras similares, como en el caso de alguien que no recibió una boleta o simplemente perdió el suyo, un lugar de votación aún estaría disponible.

Church hizo dijo que todas las jurisdicciones en el Condado de San Mateo deben participar para que el proyecto piloto pueda avanzar. Si un ayuntamiento decide no participar a pesar de que todas las jurisdicciones vecinas quieren participar, el condado no será capaz de llevar a cabo una elección de voto exclusivamente por correo.

A pesar de esta posibilidad, Church dijo que tomando en cuenta todos los beneficios del

programa, el está confiado en que no sería difícil convencer a todas las jurisdicciones a que participen.

Pero con la tecnología de estos días, la

idea de hacer algo a través de "correo de caracol" es casi tabú, especialmente para los votantes más jóvenes.

Por lo tanto, no es tan sorprendente de saber que la mayoría de los residentes que votan por correo en el condado de San Mateo, son mayores de 66 años, mientras que la minoría de los que votan por correo están entre las edades de 18 y 25.

Los seguidores de AB 2028

tienen la esperanza de que con la eliminación de un viaje al lugar de votación y con el envío de las boletas directamente al domicilio del elector, el proyecto de ley hará que la votación vaya a ser más conveniente para todos y, de hecho, va a animar a más gente a votar.

El proyecto piloto, actualmente autorizado por AB 2028, se enfocara en las personas que en estos momentos no votan por correo. De hecho, el condado ya tiene una campaña de medios que incluye radio, digital, medios impresos y sociales.

"Los beneficios potenciales son significativos," Church dijo, citando el hecho de que AB 2028 tiene el potencial de reducir los costos.

Agregó que si más gente vota por correo, la ciudad necesitará menos personas que trabajen en los centros de votación, menos máquinas de votación, y menos lugares de votación.

Estos componentes combinados podrían resultar en riesgos reducidos de errores hechos por humanos, ya que menos personas manejaran las papeletas, y resultados más rápidos, ya que no habrá papeletas recinto para contar.

Carlos Romero, miembro del Consejo dio su apoyo. "Me encantaría ver cómo, de hecho, adoptamos esto", el dijo.

Dado que el proyecto actual con AB 2028 es un piloto de un, el condado de San Mateo tiene la obligación de presentar un informe a la Secretaría de Estado ya la Asamblea Legislativa del Estado de California. Los resultados del

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informe del condado determinarán la eficacia del programa.

"Espero con interés la revisión de los resultados," dijo Romero.

Lisa Yarbrough Gauthier, la alcaldesa de East Palo Alto, expresó un interés personal en el objetivo del proyecto de ley de aumento de la participación de voto: "Es muy importante para mí como una Afroamericana de asegurarme que sigamos votando," ella dijo "Quiero animar a la gente a votar."

Miembros del consejo de la ciudad no hicieron una decisión sobre el programa de Boleta hasta su reunión el 07 de Julio 2015, cuando pasaron y adoptaron una resolución que East Palo Alto si participaría en el programa piloto.

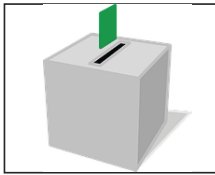


Foto cortesía de pixabay.com

Has organizational culture

pectancy of about 14 years. The bottom line is that an installer's warranty for leased equipment can be a lot better than a manufacturer's warranty. This limited life expectancy of the inverter highlights the need for maintenance contracts.

With thousands of cars passing by each day on the upwind side of the District's solar system, the 5 or 10 per cent of solar yield that can be lost to grime, becomes an issue. Has anyone thought to provide the plumbing for a garden hose for washing down the panels or will the crew of the \$750,000 hook and ladder truck be expected to do the job? I hope they don't plan to use a wet floor mop and buckets of warm soapy water to clean them.

So with the die cast, as much as I appreciate the effort in building an environmentally friendly fire station and locking in the cost of electric power by buying a solar system from a reputable company, the potential is there to fumble away

the public relations opportunity to be had as an early adopter of solar technology and to miss reaping all the financial benefits of solar PV.

As for the construction delays to date, a casual observer would blame a complex design of a wall meant to accomplish too much, ie to be literally bullet proof, to be as beautiful as a cinder block wall can be and to be as flexible as the built in control joints (wobble connections) can make it. Add a sense of complacency by the general contractor tasked with frequently inspecting the work and the potential is there for redoing Humpty Dumpty's wall several times, before getting it right.

For an organization headquartered in a brand new office building, you might expect greater efficiency in over seeing a year long construction project with a lot of moving parts. The Fire District has 4 incredibly detailed contracts in place to manage...A) the Special Inspector (a testing laboratory) B) the Architect C) the Project Management Team and D)



Photo courtesy of the Menlo Park Fire District website
This photo shows the East Palo Alto firehouse that is under construction.

the General Contractor and Superintendants.

Despite this institutional experience as a consumer of construction services, based on my observations from inside and outside of the Fire District, I suspect that the real problem sits with the organizational culture of the whole organization. I know that the MPFD has a reputation for hard nose, aggressive firefighting.

This is a belief system that permeates the entire organization. The Firefighters' Association is always at loggerheads with the Board of Directors over wages and benefits, the rank and file is always butting heads with the officer corps

and lawsuits are never settled amicably out of court. It never ends. I'm sticking to my story and I'm almost relieved that my political career crashed and burned after a single term in office (1999-2003).

An organization that runs around putting out fires is not going to reward anyone for catching small problems before they become major conflagrations. It is just not in their DNA. This peculiar near sightedness only becomes a problem when you are building vertically and you have to live with the foundation you've laid down, or tear it down to the problem brick and start over on your wall. Again. The good

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news is that with any prevailing wage job, there are requirements to hire apprentices. And when rookie mistakes are made, the job foreman can always blame it on an apprentice. And they do.

If rumor is correct, the construction teams are making progress on the project and the permanent station should be in operation soon. Just don't hold your breath. I've installed my share of telecom systems in fire stations in San Jose and I know that during an earthquake, when the whole city of East Palo Alto shakes and shimmies on its bed of alluvial fill, that it's gonna be the web of telephone, data and solar power cable that holds Station II together..... not the I-beams, cinder blocks and rebar which has been supplied and installed by the lowest bidder. The bottom line is that the building will be completed when the construction workers are done with it. Forget about the completion dates on the MPFD's banners and web site. Trust me. I'm a politician. April Fools Day 2016 or bust!

Community Calendar

City Council Meeting Every first and third Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.

City Council returns from recess. Meeting will take place at 2415 University Avenue.

Police Department Beat Three Meeting - Wednesday September 9, 2015 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Meeting will take place in the Community Room at Peninsula Park Apartments located at 1977 Tate Street.

Midpen Media Center Mo- saic Event - Sunday Sep- tember 13, 2015 - 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Come celebrate 25 years of community storytelling at the Midpen Media Center: This is a FREE family friendly event. Location: 900 San Antonio Road.

Planning Commission Meeting - Monday Septem- ber 14 and September 28, 2015- 7:00 p.m.

Meeting will take place in

the City Council Chambers located at 2415 University Avenue.

Regular Public Works and Transportation Commission Meeting - Wednesday Sep- tember 16, 2015- 7:30p.m.

Meeting will take place in the City Hall Council Chambers located at 2415 University Avenue.

Police Department Beat One and Four Meeting Thursday September 17,

2015- 6:30 p.m.-8:00 p.m.

Meeting will be held in the Community Room at City Hall located at 2415 University Avenue.

Dave Newhouse at Little House Tuesday September 22, 2015- 2:00 p.m.

Contact Membership and Guest Services Manager Paige (650) 326-2025 Ext.242 or go to www.penvol.org/littlehouse.

Benefit Luncheon to Honor Local Women Leaders Sep- tember 26, 2015 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Thirteen Bay Area extraordinary women will be honored at a special lunch-

See more community calendar events at the website for the East Palo Alto Today newspaper www.epatoday.org

eon for their leadership and important contribution to society. The event will take place at the Hyatt in Santa Clara. For information or to purchase tickets, please contact: Carolyn Hoskins at 650-921-4191 or carolyn_hoskins56@yahoo.com

New bill could change

Church emphasized that all jurisdictions in San Mateo County must participate in order for the pilot project to move forward. If one city council decides not to participate even though all neighboring jurisdictions want to participate, the county will not be able to conduct an All-Mailed Ballot Election.

In spite of this possibility, Church said that he is confident it would not be difficult to convince all jurisdictions to participate, given the benefits of the program.

Still, with today's technology, the idea of doing anything through "snail mail" is almost taboo, especially for younger voters. So, it is not surprising that the majority of residents, who vote by mail in San Mateo County, are over the age of 66, while the minority of those who vote by mail are between the ages of 18 and 25.

AB 2028's supporters hope that by eliminating a trip to the polling place and sending ballots straight to the voter's home, the bill will make voting more convenient for everyone and, ultimately, will encourage more people to vote.



Photo by pixabay.com

The pilot project, currently authorized by AB 2028, will target those who do not now vote by mail. In fact, the county already has a media campaign that includes radio, digital, print and social media.

"The potential benefits are significant," Church said, citing the fact that AB 2028 has the potential to reduce costs. He added that if more people vote by mail, the city will need fewer election officers, fewer voting machines, and fewer polling locations. These components combined could lead to both reduced risks of human errors, as fewer people will be handling the ballots, and faster

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results, since there will be no precinct ballots to count.

Council member Carlos Romero was supportive. "I would love to see how, indeed, we embrace this," he said.

Since the current project with AB 2028 is a pilot one, San Mateo County is required to provide a report to the Secretary of State and to the California State Legislature. The results of the county's report will determine the effectiveness of the program.

"I look forward to reviewing the results," Romero said.

Lisa Yarbrough Gauthier, the mayor of East Palo Alto, expressed a personal interest in the bill's goal of increasing voting participation: "It's really important to me as an African American to make sure that we continue to vote," she said "I want to encourage people to vote."

City council members did not make a decision on the All-Mailed Ballot program until their July 7, 2015 meeting, when they passed and adopted a resolution that East Palo Alto would participate in the pilot program.

Talking with Henrietta Women's Equality: Where Are We Now



Photo courtesy of Talking with Henrietta

From left, Michelle Mangum, Shaunn Cartwright, show host Henrietta J. Burroughs, and Nicki Manske are shown on the set of the Talking with Henrietta television show after the taping of their discussion on August 27, 2015.

Women have made many forward strides in their efforts to gain equal rights in the United States. But, many -- including the guests on this edition of Talking with Henrietta, think there is still a long way that women in America have to go to gain both equal rights with men and equal opportunities.

For more information about the guests and the

show go online to www.epatoday.org/tv.html#womensequality.

This new edition can be seen online at www.midpenmedia.org and on Channel 30 on Comcast on the Midpeninsula on Sundays at 5 p.m., Tuesdays at 8 p.m., Wednesdays at 3 a.m. and 11 a.m., Thursdays at 8 p.m., and Fridays at 3 a.m. and 11 a.m.

Airplane noise

is running a work zone over us," said Herriot.

This "work zone" is noisy and disruptive, said the group -- planes fly at low altitude, day and night, and there are many of them. One Sky Posse member counted six planes, flying at under 5,000 feet, passing over East Palo Alto between midnight and 6:10 am one night in March. The noise from these planes disturbs our sleep and has health consequences, he noted.

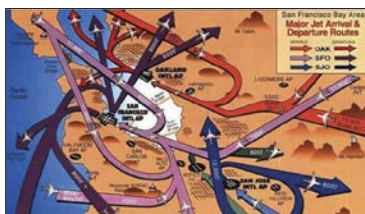
East Palo Alto is also affected by noise from Palo Alto Airport, where small propeller planes take off and land.

If trends continue, aircraft noise will only get worse, Herriot said. The Federal Aviation Administration is changing to a new air traffic control system known as NextGen, running aircraft through narrow air corridors that are like "grooves in the sky". Although traffic com-

ing into San Francisco hasn't increased much recently, flights over East Palo Alto and Palo Alto have increased significantly because more aircraft are flying down the same concentrated pathways, rather than being spread out.

Sky Posse has proposed several solutions to this noise problem. Planes could be routed over San Francisco Bay, where their noise will not disturb people below. Aircraft could be required to fly at higher than 6,000 feet over the mid-peninsula, and there could be a night curfew on flights over the area.

Citizen groups have been effective in getting airplane noise reduced in the past, said Sky Posse member Jennifer



Graphic courtesy of www.change.org

Landesmann. Fifteen years ago, Congresswoman Anna Eshoo helped area residents broker an agreement with San Francisco Airport and the FAA to have planes fly at a higher altitude over the mid-peninsula. This wasn't a written agreement, however, and it is no longer being honored.

Nevertheless, the group is optimistic that future change is possible. Congress "is supportive of our advocacy, but they need us to speak with one voice," said Landesmann.

Sky Posse urged the city to get involved in regional activities to reduce aircraft noise over the mid-peninsula. The City of Palo Alto, for example, may fund a professional study of airplane noise so that it can approach the FAA to seek alternative flight paths, and East Palo Alto can support this work. The group also suggested that the city could seek membership in the SFO Airport/Community Roundtable, which is made up of local officials and dedicated to addressing the impact of airport noise on nearby communities.

Mayor Lisa Yarbrough-Gauthier asked for the Palo Alto Airport's phone number for complaints, and expressed concern about the air pollution caused by planes, in addition

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to the noise pollution. She said that the city wanted to look further into the aircraft noise issue, and that she would like to discuss the topic again at a future meeting.

Councilmember Larry Moody commented on the link between economic growth and increased air traffic. McKenzie said that the traffic at Palo Alto Airport has increased, and that she would like the airport to present the community with a 20-year plan and do noise studies. Landesmann commented that neither the airports nor the FAA have put limits on growth in the number of flights.

In the meantime, the mayor encouraged residents to call airport complaint lines when they were disturbed by airplane noise. "Let's make our voice heard," she said.

An online complaint form can be found and submitted at www.change.org