



Local cities plan for the disaster



SMCU celebrates the 1000th



Free pet services not being used

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East Palo Alto and Belle Haven

June 2012

Vol. 6 No.28

Winners and losers in the primary election

By Henrietta J. Burroughs
East Palo Alto Today

As with any political race, there will be candidates who will be jubilant and others who will be sadly disappointed.

The primary election on June 5 left candidates who fell into both categories.

One of the biggest races in San Mateo County was the race for the District 4 seat on the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors.

The seat is being vacated at the end of the year by Supervisor Rose Jacobs Gibson, who is being termed out of office.

There were originally eight candidates vying for

the opportunity to fill her seat.

East Palo Alto had two candidates for the seat: East Palo Alto City Council members David Woods and Carlos Romero.

Woods was disqualified

from the race in late April, leaving seven candidates: Romero, Menlo Park City Council members Andrew Cohen and Kirsten Keith, Redwood City School Board member Shelly Mazur; San Mateo County Board of Education Trustee Memo Morantes; retired San Mateo County's Chief Elections Officer & County Clerk-Recorder-Assessor Warren Slocum and Vice Chair of the Redwood City Planning Commission Ernesto "Ernie" Schmidt.

When election day was over, the semi official results showed that voters had put two of the candidates well above the rest.

Slocum led the group with 38.47% or 27,130 votes and Masur came in second with 21.49% or 15,447 votes.

Romero, whose candidacy was dealt a blow over charges that he misstated his academic credentials came in fourth with 8.85% or 6,092 votes.

Among other races and issues, many local voters and election night pundits also took special note of the 13th Senate District race which saw four can-

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Celebrating millions of dollars



Photo courtesy of the Ravenswood Family Health Center

In this photo, Congresswoman Anna Eshoo shakes hands with several audience members who attended the community ceremony given by the Ravenswood Family Health Center to announce the 7.3 million dollar award the center received from the federal government. See story titled, Innovation brings Eshoo to Ravenswood on page 2.

San Mateo County youth risk deportation

By Helen Beasley
East Palo Alto Today

Juan, a 14-year-old from East Palo Alto, was arrested for drinking with his friends. While his friends were quickly released to their families, Juan was detained for months, first in San Mateo, then in San Francisco, and then in Vir-

ginia. Why? Because Juan is undocumented, and his probation officer called Immigration & Customs Enforcement ("ICE") to report him. Juan now faces the very real possibility of deportation back to a country he barely remembers, where he has no family and cannot speak the language well enough to continue in school.

He is currently back in East Palo Alto after months away from his family, school, and community, fighting to stay in the only home he knows.

Juan's story is a composite of what is happening to many young people in East Palo Alto and throughout San Mateo County. The probation department in this

county has made the choice to report our young people to ICE, putting them at risk of deportation and separating them from their families. They report youth regardless of the offense they committed, and often the offenses are minor. Youth have been sent to ICE even

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Free financial program for residents

By Keith Ogden and
Joel Valencia Perez
East Palo Alto Today

Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto, Renaissance Mid-Peninsula and Nuestra Casa launched a free financial education program for resi-

dents of East Palo Alto and the Belle Haven neighborhood of Menlo Park in late February 2012. The program is called, Secure Future\$.

Since its launching, Secure Future\$ has served over 60 residents through an introductory program that shows its

participants how to use money wisely and how to increase and maintain their savings.

Client-Centered Program

The Secure Future\$ program focuses on creating practical financial changes through goal setting and tracking. The pro-

gram's participants actively engage in the program by adopting financial management strategies that they think will work for them and then, they monitor their own progress.

During the program's four- continued on page 11

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Innovation brings Eshoo to Ravenswood

By Kathleen Alexander
East Palo Alto Today

Thayli Gonzalez, an 8 year old patient at Ravenswood Family Health Center, stepped up to the microphone, faced an audience of county, city, and community leaders and publicly thanked Congresswoman Anna Eshoo for helping Ravenswood Family Health Center.

Rep. Eshoo came to Ravenswood Family Health Center on May 22nd to officially acknowledge the significance of Ravenswood receiving a Health Care Innovation award, one of 26 in the country out of 3,000 applications. David Sayen, Regional Administrator for the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services which sponsored the award also attended the event. He summed

up the purpose of the award this way. "Much of the time we talk about the challenges in healthcare more than the solutions. . . The point of this grant is to help the people who know how to do things do more and serve as a model for others to follow." The grant award of \$7.3 million will be shared with 4 other partner organizations.

As a community health center, Ravenswood is the first line of offense in the battle to prevent chronic diseases. When a person is diagnosed, RFHC does everything possible to keep that chronic condition from escalating into a catastrophic consequence such as loss of sight or a limb or kidney function associated with advanced diabetes, or a stroke or heart problem associated with high cholesterol and hypertension. Both di-



Photos courtesy of Ravenswood Family Health Center Standing from left at the ceremony to celebrate the \$7.3 million award given to the Ravenswood Family Health Center are Luisa Buada, RFHC's executive director and Congresswoman Anna Eshoo. They are listening to eight year old Thayli Gonzalez.

abetes and hypertension are more common in the multi-ethnic populations of the East Palo Alto area than in the general population of the County.

Ravenswood has evolved an integrated multi-cultural, bilingual model of care for patients with complex health care needs. With this Health Care Innovation grant RFHC will significantly expand the team to include a nurse educator, licensed clinical social worker, and a cohort of panel managers, health coaches/navigators and medical assistants. Several community organizations will provide outreach prevention education, including Nuestra Casa a team of five Promotoras to act as community health navigators who will play a dual role in providing health ed-

ucation and referral for primary care and social services.

When it comes to being healthy, the message is very basic, very simple. Stay active, eat healthy nutritious, non-processed foods and exercise in whatever way best suits you, but exercise and exercise often. The problem is that our stubborn bodies are slow to cooperate. That's where Ravenswood has made an extra effort to make its chronic care model attractive to patients. Once the doctor tells the patient what they will need to do, a health navigator is assigned to coach and encourage the patient to change their behavior and life style and to take advantage of a menu of special classes, nutrition, cooking demonstrations, a lively fitness

class, and an organic gardening class at Ravenswood's onsite garden, and to shop at the weekly Farmer's Market now hosted at Ravenswood's main clinic every Wednesday from noon to 3 pm.

Ravenswood asked Thayli (pictured above) to present a basket of thank you cards to Congresswoman Eshoo. Thayli represents what happens when wellness becomes a family priority. Her father has diabetes and she and her mother join in the health education classes at Ravenswood so that they too can make the changes that he needs to make. Her enthusiastic participation earned her a certificate of completion from Ravenswood Chronic Care team.

Ravenswood's multi-level, integrated all-out effort to improve the health of people with chronic conditions is expected to lead to significant savings with a decrease in hospitalizations, ER visits and other costly procedures. Ravenswood will know that it's model of care is paying off is by tracking the progress of patients in lowering blood sugar, cholesterol, blood pressure, and in weight loss. The County Health System and the Health Plan of San Mateo, both partners in this 3-year demonstration project, will be able to report back on hospitalizations and ER visits of a baseline of over 6,000 of its Medicare/Medicaid covered patients. It can potentially lead to \$6 million in savings.



Executive Director Luisa Buada speaks during the celebration of Ravenswood Family Health Center \$7.3 million grant award.

Local organizations receive PA Weekly Holiday Fund Grants

By Traci Moore
East Palo Alto Today

On April 30, fifty five local nonprofits walked away from a reception at the Palo Alto Weekly's offices with a total of \$353,000 in grant awards.

The grant money was raised from the 18th annual Holiday Fund drive, which receives donations from local foundations, businesses and individual

donors. The fund grants money to nonprofits that provide services primarily to children, youth and families. The 55 grantees were chosen from 90 applications and they included the following organizations:
10 Books A Home- \$5,000; Able Works - \$5,000; Adolescent Counseling Services - \$10,000; Art in Action- \$5,000 Boys and Girls Club of the

Peninsula - East Palo Alto Summer Journalism Institute, \$7,500; Break Through the Static - \$2,500; Breast Cancer Connections Gabriella Patser Program - \$5,000; Canopy - \$3,000; CASSY - \$15,000; Children's Center of the Stanford Community - \$4,000; Cleo Eulau Center Resilience Consultation Program at Beechwood

School in east Menlo Park - \$5,000; Collective Roots- \$7,500; Downtown Streets Team Peer-to-peer program in conjunction with Opportunity Health Partners - \$15,000; DreamCatchers New "Healthy Eating Program," First year of a three-year grant - \$15,000; East Palo Alto Center for Community Media - \$3,000; East Palo Alto Charter School - \$7,500; East Palo Alto Chil-

dren's Day - \$5,000; East Palo Alto Kids Foundation - \$5,000; East Palo Alto Youth Court - \$3,000; Environmental Volunteers - \$3,000; Family Connections - \$7,500; Foothill College Book Program - \$5,000; Foundation for a College Education - \$7,500; Hidden Villa - \$5,000; InnVision \$7,500; continued on page 16

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www.epatoday.org/treasured_memories/index.html

Community News Briefs



East Palo Alto plans birth-day celebration

Plans are currently under-way for the celebration of East Palo Alto's 29th birthday on June 30. The city intends to celebrate its birthday with a day of festivities that start with a parade and end with fire-works.

The event will feature a health and safety fair, cultural activities and other festivities designed to make the day a time for family fun.

The planned parade will start at 11 a.m. on June 30 at the Costano/49er Academy at 2695 Fordham Street. and wind its way down University Avenue to Bell Street Park.

The park festivities will last from 12 pm. to 4 p.m. The celebration will culminate with a fireworks show, which will be held at the Cesar Chavez Academy School at 2450 Ral-mar. The gates will open at 7:30 p.m. and the show will start at dark.

For more information, con-tact Ana Torres at atorres@city-ofepa.org or call (650)853-3152. Inquiries can also be sent to

Debbie Bickell at dbickell@city-ofepa.org. Her phone number is (650)853-5905.

Meet the East Palo Alto City Manager candidates

The City of East Palo Alto is inviting the community to a "Meet the Candidates Night." The event is being held to allow the city staff and city residents the opportunity to meet the four finalists that the coun-cil selected out of 79 appli-cants who applied for the city manager position.

East Palo Alto's Interim City Manager Ron Davis was not among the applicants who ap-plied for the position.

The recruitment process to fill the city manager position started in February 2012 when ML Gordon announced that he would retire from the position.

The "Meet the Candidates Night" event will take place on Friday, June 15 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the East Palo Alto City Hall, which is located in the Municipal Building at 2415 University Avenue in East Palo Alto.

During the event, each of the candidates will be allowed

to make an introduction and tell why he or she should be selected for the position. Community residents will be given comment cards on which they can share their views about each candidate with council members. opportunity to be given.

Measure C and TOT Grants awarded

On May 15, 2012, the East Palo Alto City Council re-viewed 20 proposals for Meas-ure C funding for its 2012 summer program funding and voted to award \$100,000 in funding allocations to the fol-lowing eight organizations:

Community Legal Services in EPA \$15,000; East Palo Alto Boxing Club \$15,000; East Palo Alto Youth Court \$15,000; Edgewood Center for Children & Families \$15,000; Midpenin-sula Community Media Center - \$5,850; New Creation Home Ministries \$4,150; One East Palo Alto (OEPA) \$15,000 and Youth United for Community Action (YUCA) (HL)\$15,000.

At the same meeting the council reviewed 26 proposals for Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) funding for 2012 sum-mer program funding and voted to award \$100,000 in grant allocations to the follow-

ing seven organizations:

Bayshore Christian Min-istries \$16,000; Boys & Girls Club of the Peninsula \$16,000; Foun- dation for a College Education \$15,557; Girls to Women \$16,000; Music Mural and Art Project (MMAP) \$4,443; St. Francis Assisi Youth Club \$16,000; and Youth Community Ser-vices (YCS) \$16,000.

After listening to various speakers at its May 29 meet-ing, The city council agreed to allot One East Palo Alto (OEPA) and additional \$45,000 for its Summer Em-ployment Program.

Workshop on Proposed Pedestrian and Bicycle Overpass on Highway 101

City residents were invited to



an open house and public workshop to share their ideas and learn more about the plans for a new pedestrian and bicycle only bridge over High-way 101.

The workshop was spon-sored by the City of East Palo Alto and the San Mateo County Transportation Author-ity and it was held on Thurs-day, June 7 at the Senior

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- Vacunas gratis, pero **solo para los animales domésticos siendo esterilizados/castrados.**
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- Su mascota no debe comer ningún alimento desde la medianoche del día anterior (está bien darle agua).

Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA

Questions? Call 650/340.7022 x387

This wonderful program has been made possible by the San Francisco Bay Humane Friends, animal welfare advocates who support Peninsula Humane Society's life saving programs.

Supporting students long-term

By Alison Upton Lopez
East Palo Alto Today

If you happen to walk in to 1848C Bay Road when Melvin Sharma is around, you will receive a warm welcome and a hearty handshake from this self-assured 6th grade student.

Melvin is one of the forty-five students part of Building Futures Now (BFN). He has been a part of the program since the summer after third grade. Like all of the students, Melvin has spent every summer with BFN, and during 4th and 5th grade came to the after-school program every day.

This year Melvin was accepted to Eastside College Preparatory School and is now required to be at school until 5PM. He still comes to BFN on Mondays for extra homework help and also credits Building Futures Now with this accomplishment of being accepted by Eastside.

"BFN helped me a lot. If I wasn't able to belong to BFN then I wouldn't be in Eastside." Melvin deserves much of this credit himself for staying focused on his future. Although Melvin is busy at Eastside this year he frequently comes back to visit and receive homework help because in his words, "Once you get to know the teachers at BFN you won't want to



"I Have a Dream" student Lolo Miessi and Eastside College 6th Grader Melvin Sharma

leave them!"

This sentiment is exactly what we try to instill in our students and families. Because BFN supports students long-term from the summer after third grade through high school, we work hard to create a sense of an extended family. Melvin's little brother, Alvin, also started BFN this year, bringing his BFN family and his biological family together!

With a focus on academic enrichment, BFN has many activities that help students like Melvin and Alvin develop their skills in various areas. On any given day you will find groups of students excitedly discussing "Hunger Games" as part of their book club or flying paper airplanes across the room as they chart the affects changing different variables have on flight



A photo of some of the students in the Building Futures Now program.

distance.

During the summer these students are here all day, every day for five weeks every summer until they enter high school. Our students and families are committed to getting the best education possible, which is why they come year-round to Building Futures Now.

Soon our family will be growing to more than sixty students as we just accepted another cohort of students. By having a variety of year-round programs, from after-school homework help to a five-week academic program to monthly family potlucks to scholarships for summer camps to free swimming lessons we try to support students and families holistically.

One mother, Pam Breckenridge, explains, "Building Futures

Now, and its staff care about my daughter as a person. My daughter has been able to go on some amazing field trips, had a year of swim lessons, and has been able to go to Hidden Villa Summer Camp for the past two summers all because of Building Futures Now." We know that it's important to support all areas of a child's development for them to be successful, which is why we also partner with other programs and organizations.

Our program emerged from what we learned over 18 years working with low-income

youth through the East Palo Alto chapter of the "I Have a Dream"® Foundation. Every spring Building Futures Now accepts a new cohort of 3rd grade students and will put older students on our waiting list. To learn more about the program please call 650-380-9038 or visit our website, www.buildingfuturesnow.org.

Alison Upton Lopez is the executive director of Building Futures Now. She can be contacted at:

alopez@buildingfuturesnow.org



Photos courtesy of Building Futures Now
From left, Noa Capulong, Ileana Aleman, Melvin Sharma, Lolo Miessi ("I Have a Dream"), Elena Cervantes (Eastside Prep Graduate), Brianna Boyd, Nia Combs and Vanessa Gurrula (front row).

Local cities plan for the disaster

By Ryan Zollicoffer
East Palo Alto Today

On Thursday, May 24, around 8:30 a.m. the City of East Palo Alto participated in the Countywide Disaster Exercise.

The exercise was facilitated by Division Chief Frank Fraone Menlo Park Fire and Commander Lacey Burt Menlo Park Police Department.

The scenario was a 6.3 earthquake that hit the Hayward Fault. City staff had the opportunity to activate their emergency operation plan and work with the Town of Atherton and City of Menlo Park, within their Multi-Agency Coordination Center (MACC).

Each city and town has an agreement within their emergency operation plan that during large scale disasters they work together in a MACC to coordinate and prioritize resources based on life, property, and economic sustainability.

The City of East Palo Alto



Photos courtesy of Ryan Zollicoffer
Police and fire officials during the Countywide Disaster Exercise on May 24, 2012

continues to test its emergency readiness yearly and work with its local partners to provide the highest level of emergency services during times of a disaster.

The City of East Palo Alto's Police Chief worked in a unified command system in collaboration with the other municipalities assigned to certain roles within the incident command system.

The city staff assisted the

Operations Chief in the Incident Command System, with tracking and managing personnel and equipment resources as to what was available or assigned to an incident.

Team members were also engaged in identify logistical needs of the city (food, water, shelter, donation management, community evacuation etc)

All of the residents must



Staff participants at the emergency center during the May emergency drill.

continue to work with their local CERT Teams in exer-



Local fire officials go over their plans during the emergency operations that took place during the simulated countywide emergency in May.

cising community readiness plans.

Commander Lacey Burt of the Menlo Park Police Department celebrated her last official disaster exercise before retiring this coming December, with all three municipalities and "likes it".

Ryan Zollicoffer is the emergency service coordinator for the Menlo Park Fire Protection District in Menlo Park, CA.

Offer of free pet services not being used

By Scott Delucchi
East Palo Alto Today



I'd much rather cover our organization's successes, but sometimes feel the need to write about a failure.

This is one of those occasions. We've tried, but cannot give away spay and neuter surgeries in East Palo Alto!

We bring our mobile spay/neuter clinic – our custom-painted, 25-foot long "surgery suite on wheels" to a busy town hub (Bell Street Park on University Avenue). We make the surgeries free and we allow people to drop off their pets without an appointment from 8-9 am. We even throw in free vaccinations.

We've had great success in other Peninsula communities since the program's inception six years ago, but we can't get a full clinic in East Palo Alto.

On average, we take the clinic out 5-6 times per month, targeting communities where we see a higher number of homeless animals and believe that hurdles of cost and transportation are keeping

some (many?) residents from fixing their pets.

We visit San Francisco twice per month and have to give out rain checks due to reaching capacity. We visit the Fair Oaks community in Redwood City – same deal. A full boat each time.

We're a hit everywhere but EPA.

We kicked off a second series of clinics for EPA residents on May 9, and will continue visiting on the second Wednesday of each month, indefinitely. For that May 9 event, we had a modest turn-out: Six pets (15 is about the maximum).

A few years ago, when we made our first effort to reach this community with our vital service, we had clinics with just three and four pets!

This was disheartening, since

we know this community needs our service; we need only look at the high number of stray and unwanted Pit Bulls, Chihuahuas and other dogs and cats coming to us from EPA to know people could use a no-cost, easy way to prevent unwanted litters.

Location, as they say, is key, and we have a great one for our EPA clinics.

The price can't be beat. Promotion is a factor. In every other community we've targeted, we've had great success with volunteers blanketing the community with bilingual fliers announcing our clinics. Flier distribution in spots with high foot traffic – churches, libraries, town centers, delis, coffee shops – usually does the trick.

We also send email blasts to city

groups and leaders, pursue local cable TV spots and a few other avenues. The key is getting the message to the community we're targeting; a widespread message reaches a larger audience and tempts "outsiders" with no moral compass to take advantage of a great deal. In every community, people love deals.

We're going to stick with EPA since it's the right thing for us to do as a humane society concerned with overpopulation. This time around, we recruited another animal welfare organization. The Palo Alto Humane Society doesn't shelter or adopt animals; their mission is to keep animals from entering shelters in the first place, and getting pets fixed, as we all know, is the best way to do this. We're hopeful their involvement on the promotion/education front will boost attendance.

We've come to believe that East Palo Alto is the one community where we simply need to work

harder, and that's OK.

Maybe local residents think the deal is too good to be true. Or maybe they want to keep pets intact so they can sell the puppies and kittens. A free fix doesn't mean much to the person selling puppies for \$150!

If you know someone in this community who can benefit from this service, please spread the word.

Our next three clinics are on June 13, July 11 and August 8. We admit dogs and cats, no appointment needed, between 8-9 a.m. and only ask that they fast from midnight on the night before. Water after midnight is ok. We instruct owners to return the same day, late afternoon, to pick-up their pets and give them recovery instructions for home.

Oh, and if you're in the area on the second Wednesday of the month, look for the vehicle emblazoned with "Go Nuts!" across the back end. It's a serious business,

Community News Briefs

Center on Bell Street and University Avenue.

The pedestrian/bicycle overpass is mandated under the East Palo Alto Bicycle Transportation Plan which was adopted in March of 2011.

The city's project team overseeing the overpass has identified two sites for the possible location of the overpass. One site is located at Clarke Avenue and Newell Avenue. The second site is located at Euclid Avenue.

But, since there are also other potential sites for the construction of the overpass, city officials and staff would like to get as much input as possible from city residents.

During the June 7 event, attendees were shown displays boards of the project and broke up into breakout sessions to share their ideas.

The results of the workshop will be posted on the East Palo Alto 101 project website,

which can be found at <http://eastpaloalto101.org>.

Residents are also being encouraged to use the website's contact page at <http://eastpaloalto101.org/contact-us/> to share their suggestions and feedback.

A new bagel shop

East Palo Alto has a new store on University Avenue. Izzy's Brooklyn Bagels opened its doors at 2220-B University Avenue on Friday, June 1.

The store currently has a location in Palo Alto on California Avenue. The owner of Izzy's Brooklyn Bagels, Israel Rind said, "We decided to open a store in East Palo Alto to see how a non-bagel eating community, who would not associate with bagels would respond."

Rind also said the rent in East Palo Alto is cheaper. The store already has its fans Rebooting History had a staff

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Photo by Dallas Te'o
A photo taken inside the East Palo Alto Izzy's store.

meeting there shortly after it opened, and the responses were very favorable.

Filmmaker Michael Levin said "it's nice to have another place and nice to be able to get some hot fresh bagels in EPA!"

Izzy's will have its grand opening on the Fourth of July and will offer free bagels to the public.

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From the Editor's Desk

Insuring our human and civil rights: How much do you care?

The June 5, 2012 election is over. Needless to say, the low turnout, while expected, was still appalling.

Even before the election, a Field Poll predicted that only "35 percent of registered voters and just more than 25 percent of all Californians who are eligible to vote" would actually vote.

Even in the 2008 presidential primary, it was estimated that 58% of registered voters cast ballots.

The final numbers regarding voter turnout for this past election have not yet been released. But it's been said that if the turnout is below 40% then it would really be a new low for this country.

I was absolutely shocked to hear some of the remarks from radio interviews of people on the street in San Jose.

When several people were asked if they were going to vote, they said that they weren't familiar with any of the issues.

Well, I know this country has been in a difficult financial state for some time, with a high number of foreclosures taking place and a high unemployment rate, putting millions of people on public assistance.

So, it's understandable that many people are simply trying to survive. But given what's at stake and the sharp political divisions we have in this country, being apathetic is a luxury that even the poor cannot afford.

It might be true that one percent of the people in America hold the power. But can you imagine what would happen if a large number of the so-called 99% could combine forces, target specific issues to work on and vote as a bloc? Then there might be possibilities for real change to take place.

People voting in large numbers as a bloc have political clout.

It is predicted that one of the fastest growing groups in this country, which is having a tremendous impact in changing America's ethnic makeup has the lowest voter turnout.

Various local and national Latino organizations are conducting voter drives to encourage eligible voters within the Latino population to register to

vote.

One new law would allow eligible residents to register on election day.

Voting is so important that all kinds of obstructions, like literacy requirements and poll taxes, were once used to keep African Americans from voting.



Henrietta J. Burroughs

Many believe that proposed ID cards would disenfranchise millions, especially those who might vote for those in the

Democratic Party.

So, if voting is so important, why are voting turnouts so low?

Until this question can be definitely answered, it might not make sense to ask, "What can be done to encourage more people to vote?"

Even without having any definitive answers, we've posed the question, to several East Palo Alto residents.

Even as they gave their answers, which you will find on EPA Today's Opinion section on page 7, several attempted to explain the lack of voter interest.

It's a question we'll continue to ask, since we have a major election looming in November. Certainly, the upcoming election may well be a defining moment for our nation.

Paraphrasing a well-known Chinese proverb, we do, indeed, live in interesting times and the issues we face locally, nationally and worldwide could hardly be more pressing.

I agree with those who say that we all need to be aware and involved with the issues taking place around us.

We all need to care. We all need to take a stand regarding the things that we care about and we need to act, especially, where and when we feel that we can make a difference.

Perhaps, therein, lies the key to low voter turnout. Could it be that more and more people don't care and they don't think that casting their individual vote will make a difference?

Those who care enough, take action. So, I'll ask you, how much do you care and how much are you willing to take action?

That is what voting is all about.



Photo by Henrietta J Burroughs

A Mariachi band plays during East Palo Alto's celebration of Cinco de Mayo on May 6, 2012. The festivities were held on the Cesar Chavez school grounds. The occasion was celebrated with a parade and multiple presentations.

Letters in East Palo Alto Today

Immigrants Are the Lifeblood of U.S. Startups

Dear Editor,

In a rare moment of genuinely bipartisan lawmaking, the president recently signed the JOBS Act into law. Short for "Jumpstart Our Business Startups," JOBS will roll back some of the regulatory barriers that small and mid-sized entrepreneurial ventures face in their efforts to grow and go public.

This is a great victory for the American start-up community. Now, policymakers need to turn their attention to the hurdles in the way of talent acquisition.

No talent channel is more bogged down with needless and costly rules than the visa system for highly skilled immigrants. Every year, thousands of foreign citizens with advanced degrees in science and engineering apply to become permanent residents in the United States. They want to work and contribute and have valuable ideas for new businesses.

Despite these undeniable facts, many educated and motivated foreigners are turned away or granted only temporary permission to live and work here. This bureaucratic quagmire is robbing American start-ups of talent, which is severely undercutting economic growth.

A December study from the National Foundation for American Policy found that almost half of the top 50 venture-funded firms in America were founded or co-founded by an immigrant. Out of these firms, 37 had at least one immigrant in a high-level management position.

Silicon Valley is filled with hot startups founded by foreigners.

The textbook-rental service Chegg was created by Indian Aayush Phumbhra and Briton Osman Rashid. Etsy – the incredibly successful online craft marketplace – is the brainchild of Swiss entrepreneur Haim Schoppik. The

giant web publisher Glam Media was founded by Indians Samir Arora and Raj Narayan.

The idea that these immigrants are "stealing" jobs from Americans is pure nonsense. The opposite is true. That same study found that top 50 immigrant-started companies created an average of 150 new jobs per company.

Likewise, researchers from the American Enterprise Institute found that between 2000 and 2007, for every additional 100 foreign workers coming into this country with an advanced "STEM" degree – science, technology, engineering, or math – an average of 262 new jobs were created for native-born U.S. citizens.

It's no surprise that talented immigrants play such a vital role in the creation and expansion of American companies and the culture of entrepreneurialism that batters start-ups. They have a fresh perspective. They're well positioned to find new ways to solve economic problems and create value.

But America is choking off the spigot of immigrant talent. The channel for them to enter this country legally is over-regulated, overly expensive, unpredictable, and deeply time-consuming.

H-1B visas, the type designated for highly skilled workers, expire after just three years. They're only renewable once. The total number of H-1Bs allowed every year is capped at 66,000 (with very limited exemptions for foreigners who received a degree from an American graduate program). Moreover, the H-1B fee was recently raised by over 600 percent – from \$320 to \$2,000.

Visa restrictions are leading to reverse brain drain. Smart, ambitious foreigners come and study at America's world-class institutions of higher education. After they graduate, they're eager to work in this country, but they can't get a perma-

nent residence or a worker visa. Eventually, they give up and go elsewhere, taking their talents, training, ideas, and education with them.

Cristobal Conde is a Chile-born entrepreneur and former CEO of SunGard, a Fortune 500 software company. He's said, "If I were to try to come to America today, the likelihood is I would be turned away."

We need visa reform for highly skilled workers – and fast. Republican Representative Jeff Flake just reintroduced the STAPLE Act, (H.R. 399), which would exempt foreign students with an American Ph.D. degree in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics and a job offer in the United States from visa quotas. Passing this legislation is smart policy.

Policymakers should also strengthen and expand the H-1B program; create a special "Startup Visa" for immigrants looking to create new companies in the United States, and increase the number of green cards for workers with advanced degrees.

Policymakers should also extend the EB-5 Visa program (currently set to expire in September) which provides green cards to foreign nationals who invest significant money in the United States. Jared Polis (D-Colo.) has taken the lead on this important bipartisan initiative.

The JOBS Act will boost the American start-up sector. However, it's just the first step. Now, lawmakers need to fix the country's talent retention problem. That process starts by reforming the immigration system for highly skilled foreigners.

Yuri Vanetik is a private investor and philanthropist. He is the principal of Vanetik International, LLC and a national board member of Gen Next (www.gen-next.org).

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Opinion

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Becoming a first class citizen

By J. Samuel Diaz
East Palo Alto Today

There is one aspect of U.S. citizenship that still evades comprehension: Voting and the responsibilities that go along with it. Whole books can be written about the long and painful history of obtaining the right to vote for all U.S. citizens.

In 1760s Boston, those who did not own property could not vote and were also excluded from participating in town hall meetings. So blacks, Indians and women could not vote there.

And during the period after the Civil War, blacks living in the South enjoyed a short renaissance and they helped introduce free education for residents regardless of their race.

They participated in government and showed they could ably perform those duties. In 1875, a Civil Rights Act became law and helped remove forms of segregation in cinemas and other places. Yet it only lasted a few, pal-

try years.

While in the North, a full 19 of the 24 states did not allow blacks to vote following the Civil War.

That short, brief period of awakening was quickly destroyed by the KKK and others who violently promoted white supremacy and Jim Crow laws.

The Women's Suffrage movement gave women the right to vote and in the 1920s they were voting and promoting change. It was a move in the right direction, yet it did not include all women.

In 1954, Gustavo García and Carlos Cadena successfully presented to the U.S. Supreme Court the argument that Pedro Hernández had the right to be tried by a jury of peers.

To put this into context, it meant Mexicans could now be tried by a jury comprised of Mexicans. In



J. Samuel Diaz

Texas, that just did not happen.

It was a time and place where lynchings and violence against blacks and Mexicans was common and no one was ever held accountable.

Many from the South will tell you how blacks and Mexicans could only be tried by Anglo-Saxon juries, were quickly found guilty of the crime charged and given harsher sentences, whereas Anglo-Saxons could get off scott free, especially in cases where they were known to have committed the crimes.

And what about the poorly enforced civil rights laws passed in 1957, 1960 and 1964? For the most part, they were simply ignored by a government that did

not care.

And what of the hundreds who died during the protests demanding equal civil rights for all during the 1960s when, for the most part, the FBI just looked the other way? Who could not remember the historic and peaceful battles that Martin Luther King, Jr. and others fought so that everyone today could exercise some of their civil rights?

Well, whole books could be written about those sad and tragic times. Many people were imprisoned and others outright murdered. They made those sacrifices so that everyone could have the right to vote and to live in an egalitarian, equal society. Even today we are still struggling to achieve that.

Need I mention the two most historic acts that were passed?

Yes, the Civil Rights Act of 1968 that the Reverend King helped push through and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Both were signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

don B. Johnson.

The Voting Rights Act eliminated the voting tax that had prevented many poor citizens from voting and that proved effective in protecting voting rights in the South. (Coincidentally, Ronald Reagan tried to get Congress to eliminate a crucial section of this latter act because it was too effective in protecting people's voting rights!)

Today, we have a different story. Today, U.S. citizens – ALL U.S. CITIZENS – have the right to register to vote and to vote. In many counties, we have the right to vote at voting booths on election day or to vote via absentee ballot.

We also have the right to participate in town hall meetings and in jury duty and allow the accused to be judged by a jury of true peers.

We do not have to live in fear of being murdered just for having registered to vote. No, sir. That is the past and today is a brighter day.

J. Samuel Diaz is a regular contributor to East Palo Alto Today.

In the bold new world where corporations are kings

By Dorsey Nunn
East Palo Alto Today

Do we need a new vision and plan for the 99% ?

Over the course of the last several months I have been really wrestling with how to change the existing paradigm in the world I live. This has forced me to reflect on what does it mean to live in the center of such wealth and to be

fundamentally excluded from participation or forced to participate inadequately.

Recently, I asked what would make Facebook a good neighbor. I think that I should try to answer this question before people think I am just another brother looking for a hand out. If Facebook wants to be a good neighbor and a good friend to the people of East Menlo Park and East Palo Alto, we should ask them



Dorsey Nunn

to join us in opposing the construction of the San Mateo County Jail. Help us bring into

existence a new vision about our future and commit with us to the development and education of our children instead of to their future incarceration.

If jail and prison construction plans are predicated on students failing in the third grade, then let us consider doing something different. Let our new neighbor and our potential best friend demand that San Mateo County not build a jail. We ask Facebook to put

\$150 million dollars into a community fund and to challenge San Mateo County to match its commitment with the proposed \$150 million slated for the construction of a new jail and the forty million a year in maintenance cost.

Use the \$300 million instead to educate the children, support our elderly and to advance social justice in the

continued on page 14

What do your neighbors think about the issues:

East Palo Alto Today's roving reporter asked several East Palo Alto residents:

What would encourage more people to vote in East Palo Alto and in this country?



Dallas Te'o

Ballot measures need to be written succinctly, precisely and in standard English so that voters can understand what they're voting for and gauge the relevancy of the issues to their own lives.

Also, ballots must be translated, especially into Español, Lea Faka-Tonga and Gagana Samoa. When voters see their government caring for them,

voters will more likely reciprocate with civic participation.

And when it comes to candidates, provide voters with trustworthy, empathetic and competent people to choose from, and voters may be more willing to show up at the voting booths.



Shannon Pekary

If they knew just how close local elections are. Many of our city council members and

school board members in the past have been decided by a very narrow marginsometimes just within a few votes



Court Skinner

I used to think that people would vote because they thought it would make a difference. I no longer think so. More people come out to vote when the president is running than when we are electing only county supervisors or city

council members. Yet the latter have a much bigger impact on their lives.

People need to care about who is making decisions and what can change for the better. It's not a process problem, it's an apathy problem. We need candidates that get people excited about voting because they believe in them.



Nozipo Wobogo

Simplify the issues as much as possible. It is always a good idea

for potential voters to know about particular issues that will affect them directly. Local politics does this fairly well....nationally every one should know about the issues that are likely to get ignored as well as those likely to be advocated for by the various candidates and policies being voted on.

Thus it would make sense to deal with reluctant voters by making the issues personal. The ballots work for many voters but for others, involves a lot of information that is sometimes difficult to digest.

We should make unbiased charts and flyers that list issues and advocates in a less lengthy more simple way. Also make it as easy to vote as possible by extending the time ballots can be cast. One day is not enough.

Lifecycles

The bio of a local sports star: Micha Auzenne

By Micha Auzenne
East Palo Alto Today

As a toddler I ran everywhere - it seemed as if I did not know how to walk. Because I was so active, my parents put me in many sports. I played basketball and I did competitive gymnastics for eight years.

Finally, in sixth grade I went to my first track practice with the East Palo Alto Greyhounds. With the Greyhounds I learned the basics of track and field and developed a love for the sport.

Running with the Greyhounds I qualified to go to the Junior Nationals and traveled all over California, as well as, North Carolina and New Orleans.

My freshman year in high school at Saint Francis High School



Photo courtesy of the Auzenne Family East Palo Alto business owner, Jason Auzenne, proudly wears the medals won by his daughter Micha Auzenne who stands beside him.

(Mountain View), I was the WCAL champion in the 100 meters and Long Jump. I competed in CCS in both events but only qualified to State in

the 100 meter.

My sophomore year I suffered a hip injury that hurt my entire season. The summer before my junior year I began doing outside training four times a week working on my hurdle technique and my speed.

This strongly impacted my junior year track season because I was stronger than ever before. I set goals for myself at the beginning of the season and by the end I accomplished them all.

I was the WCAL champion in the 100 meter, 100 Hurdles, Long Jump and the 4x100 meter relay. Then came CCS

championships where I was also crowned the champion in the 100 meter, 100 Hurdles and Long Jump.

This is what I had worked so hard for all year - I qualified to the State Championships in all three of my events. Once at State Championships, I qualified for the finals in the 100 Hurdles and missed qualifying for finals in the 100 meter by only .02 seconds.

It was such an honor to be in the presence of so much talent and athletic ability. My season will continue with me competing in the Golden West Invitational and traveling for the USATF Junior Nationals in Bloomington, IN on June 15-17, 2012.

Ultimately, I hope to be able to use my track abilities to gain a good education with an athletic scholarship to a Division

1 school. I have received several letters of interest from various colleges but am still researching what school will be the best fit for me academically and athletically. I hope to major in Kinesiology and become a Sports Therapist.

I will take a few weeks off from training this summer and start again in August four days per week. My goals for next year, in addition to a full track scholarship, include shaving a half second off both my hurdle and 100 meter times. I know that with hard work and perseverance, my goals are very much attainable.

Micha Auzenne attends St. Francis High School in Mountain View, where she will be a senior next year. She turned 17 on June 10.

Obituary – Marguerite Ann Philips May 1940 to Dec. 2011

As an officer of the politically influential East Palo Alto Homeowners Association over many years, Marguerite Ann Philips was widely known in the East Palo Alto community. - William Byron Webster

Marguerite was the only daughter of Elsie and Charles Philips. She was born at the outbreak of World War II in the tiny mining village of Nantyglo, in South Wales. At a very early age her parents moved to the coastal town of Bournemouth in Southern England, but she returned to Nantyglo for many memorable childhood holidays at the home of her grandparents with her first cousin, Andrew. Andrew was just one month older than Marguerite. They would spend many hours picking wild blueberries, and roaming the Welsh mountainside where sheep would graze and coalmines were excavated. Sheep were often found just outside the back door of the tiny cottage cut into the hillside.

Marguerite was brought up and educated at a Church of England school in Bournemouth just a few miles from the sea. She left school at 15 and joined Bath Travel Agency as a travel agent and later gained her qualifications as a Travel Guide. It was at this early stage in her career she began her many exploits and adventures around the globe. She travelled extensively throughout Europe and the UK.

In 1967/8 Marguerite emigrated from Britain to New York and became an expert in European travel. She claimed to have visited every European and Scandinavian coun-

try (about 19 in all). She specialized in personal itineraries to include the many places of interest not normally seen by the average tourist. Her own travels included Egypt, Japan, China, the North and South America, including Peru, Hawaii, Bermuda and Canada.

From New York she moved to Florida and then on to San Francisco. She became an American citizen and retained her dual British and American passports for ease of travelling to the many countries she visited.

In the 1980s Marguerite bought her house in East Palo Alto and eventually settled into the life of an American. She loved her garden, a trait both she and Andrew inherited from their Grandad Bayliss in Wales. They both enjoyed helping Grandad who had a large enviable walled vegetable and flower garden just across the road from the cottage in Nantyglo. She would often consult (by telephone) with Andrew over gardening matters. Marguerite became quite frustrated in later years when she was unable to tend to her garden as she would have liked. Marguerite was a skilled needlewoman and a member of the Quilters Guild.

Many years ago, when her Aunt Nell (Andrew's mother) was becoming quite elderly, Marguerite stitched a beautiful bed quilt for her. Her aunt was very proud of her quilt and on

her death it was inherited by Andrew. The quilt is now regarded as a family heirloom and stars as the main attraction in the spare bedroom.

Marguerite suffered from severe depression after the death of her mother some 12

years ago. She never really came to terms with her grief. She battled valiantly with her health and weight in later years. Her house guests over the years became valued friends and supporters. The family is especially grateful

and sends sincere thanks to Beverly Scott, who was a great source of comfort to Marguerite for many years.

It was with deep sorrow that the family heard of Marguerite's death of a heart attack. She was loved and

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Lifecycles

San Mateo Credit Union celebrates its 1000th member

By **Cynthia Held**
East Palo Alto Today

Just six months after celebrating the grand opening of its East Palo Alto location, San Mateo Credit Union (SMCU) has welcomed its 1,000th member to that branch amid recognition of positive growth and success.

Saturday morning, May 19, Manuel Corral came by the newest SMCU branch, located in the Ravenswood 101 Shopping Center, to open a membership account. He was surprised to find he was the branch's 1,000th member, and the recipient of a prize package consisting of San Francisco Giants memorabilia, including \$200 in gift cards to be used at any Giants Dugout store. The prize highlight was \$1,000 in cash, reflecting the "Batting 1000" theme.

"My mother had been telling me for months to open an account at San Mateo Credit Union," said Corral. "Who would have known all this would happen! I will definitely use some of the money to buy her a great gift."

The East Palo Alto branch demonstrates SMCU's continued commitment to the people it serves. Last year, the only financial institution serving the consumers in the city decided to close its doors. Concerned citizens and civic leaders reached out to SMCU to gauge interest in establishing a presence there. For years, SMCU had been watching East Palo Alto so the timing was perfect. Within 60-days of the prior financial institution's closing, SMCU had set up shop.

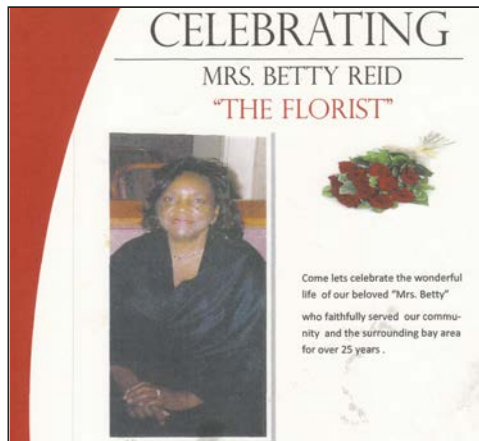
Tim Trainor, assistant manager of SMCU's East Palo Alto branch, reports "We can't express enough how awesome it has been to see our branch grow and increase in

popularity. Every day our members tell us how happy they are that San Mateo Credit Union is now a part of their community."

Cynthia Held is the Marketing Manager for the San Mateo Credit Union.



Photo courtesy of San Mateo Credit Union
Manual Corral holds some of the prize money he won as SMCU's 1000th member. Standing behind him are three San Mateo Credit Union employees: from left, Angelica Luna, Andrea Gonzalez and Tim Trainor.



Betty Reid July 8, 1938 to Jan. 2012

The East Palo Alto City Council presented a proclamation to the Reid family honoring the life of Betty Reid.

The proclamation cited Mrs. Reid's many contributions to the city as a florist and mentioned the other many acts of service she performed for the community during the decades in which she lived in the city.

Mrs. Reid was honored during a public memorial service that was held on Saturday, February 11 at the Lord's Gym which is located at 1858 Bay Road in East Palo Alto.

She was born in Juliette, GA. Her parents, Robert and Helen Blalock, had three other children: Mary Helen Wise, Robert Leonard Blalock and Warrenne Lofton, who is now the only surviving sister.

Mrs. Reid and her siblings grew up in Richmond, CA.

She later married Willie Reid, who died some years ago.

Mrs Reid moved to East Palo Alto more than 30 years ago.

She had seven children: five sons and two daughters: Patricia Reid who lives in East Palo Alto and Paulette Reid, who

lives in Haywood.

Three of her sons, Raymond Reid, Kenneth Reid and Bud Reid are deceased. She is survived by two sons, Leslie Reid lives in East Palo, and Kelvin Reid also lives in the area.

Mrs Reid is also survived by a number of grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Her family is planning a celebration to mark her birthday on July 8.

The celebration will be in the San Francisco Bay Area.

BigFuture™: Families Now Have a Powerful Resource in the College Planning Process

By **María de los Ángeles Corral**

According to a 2009 study by the Pew Hispanic Center, almost 90 percent of Latino youth and older adults agree that a college degree is important for getting ahead in life.

Yet, the gap between aspiration and college success persists. According to the College Board's College Completion Agenda: Latino Edition, 19.2 percent of Latinos between the ages of 25 and 34 had earned a two- or four-year degree, compared with 41 percent nationally.

Closing the gap won't happen overnight, but there is one thing we can and must do now: make it easier for young Latinos to access the college planning process.

On April 10, the College Board took a giant step in that direction by introducing BigFuture™, a college planning website that is student driven, objective, easy to use and free.

The website was created with

input from students, parents and educators, and it represents a new generation of online college planning tools. BigFuture is a big opportunity for any student who wants to go to college but doesn't know where to start.

That includes numerous Latino students who may not have anyone to help them.

At BigFuture's launch, Jim Montoya, vice president of higher education at the College Board and former dean of admission at Stanford University, explained the situation: "We know many Latino students are facing challenging barriers, from parents who lack the experience in the college-going process to overwhelmed counselors, or simply not understanding the opportunities out there to pursue a post-secondary education," he said. "This site gives them a powerful tool they manage on their time with information and guidance they may be lacking in their schools and families."

As a teenager I faced some of those same obstacles. My senior



Photo courtesy The College Board
Students at the computer

class had 1,000 kids, meaning my counselor was spread thin and didn't have time to get to know me and provide all the guidance I needed. I also had an after-school and weekend job, so I used my free periods at school to do homework. That made it even harder to find time to meet with my counselor.

Many Latino kids tell me similar stories. Work, school and family responsibilities often leave them with little time to investigate the steps required to go to college. And their parents usually don't have the funds to hire coaches and consultants to help them.

BigFuture gives students all

the resources they need to manage college planning on their own. Its interactive design makes the process easy to access, even if there's nobody to help.

BigFuture offers the perspectives of real students and expert educators, whose advice is integrated throughout the site in videos and other great tools.

It provides tips for finding financial aid and scholarships and dispels the myth that college is only for those with a lot of money (there's actually a lot more financial aid out there than most families may think).

BigFuture helps students understand how their interests and skills can translate into academic and career paths. And BigFuture helps kids find colleges that are a good fit by integrating intelligent search tools with the ability to compare up to three colleges at once.

Most important of all, BigFuture helps students make a plan for college, starting as early as eighth grade. That includes calculating college costs, figuring

out how to save money for college, identifying classes to take in high school and steps and deadlines for each year of school.

The issue for kids today is not that these types of resources aren't plentiful; it's that they aren't always relevant, reliable, objective, easy to use and free. BigFuture provides clear, thorough and unbiased information from a trusted source — the College Board. It is truly designed for the way students use websites so that each step leads intuitively to the next.

A college degree has never mattered more in our society. As Latinos, it's time that we act on our educational aspirations as individuals, families and communities. I encourage students and their families to take charge of their college planning and use powerful resources like bigfuture.org.

María de los Ángeles Corral, can be contacted at mcorral@collegeboard.org at The College Board.