



East Palo Alto Today

Providing news that is relevant, informative and critical



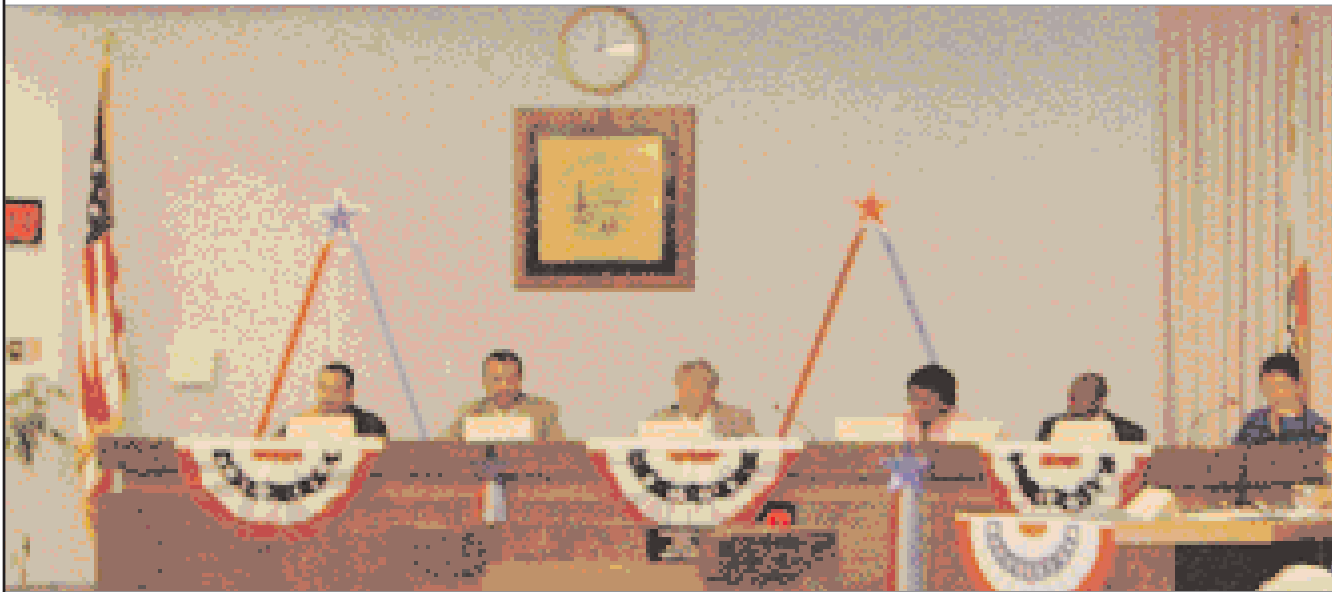
East Palo Alto and Belle Haven

September - October 2006

Vol. 1 No. 6

AS ELECTION DAY NEARS

The Race is on



Candidates for the East Palo Alto City Council from left to right; Bernardo Huerta, Ruben Abrica, David Tschang, Charlie Mae Knight, David Woods, and Marilu Serrano. Photo courtesy of the Media Center



Three of the Ravenswood City School Board candidates sitting left to right: John(Jaribu) Bostic, Heliena Walton and Saree Mading. Others not in the picture include Larry Moody, Terrell Davis and the two incumbents Marcelino Lopez and Todd Gaviglio.

The seven school board candidates are competing for three vacant seats on the Ravenswood City School Board.

A Special Report on The Ravenswood Schools

By Natalie Rios
EPA Today Contributor

Maria Melendez, 15, is an accomplished student. She graduated, with honors, from Edison Ronald McNair Academy in 2006 and served as her class' valedictorian. Despite initial doubts concerning the transition into adolescence and all that it entails, she has also eagerly awaited her first day of class as a high school student at East Palo Alto High School.

"I chose EPA high because it's a small school and I can't imagine being at a school that's big," said Melendez. "For some part, I am [ready for high school] but that's all thanks to the teachers who helped me. But I don't think I'm ready for the environment of high school."

Melendez, who immigrated to the US with her family when she was only three, has dreams of attending a prestigious university and becoming a doctor someday but many residents of East Palo Alto, including parents and teachers, question whether students like Melendez are receiving the kind of education they deserve at the schools belonging to the Ravenswood Board.

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Two Ways to Vote

Voters may vote on the new eSlate Voting System at the polls on Election Day or in the 29 days preceding the election at the Elections Office, located at 40 Tower Road in San Mateo, and in the Clerk-Recorder-Assessor's Office at 555 County Center in Redwood City. The eSlates are easy to use, accessible and provide ballots in three languages (English, Spanish and Chinese).

The eSlate voting system is fully certified and complies with state and federal law. The accessible eSlate units make it possible for voters with disabili-

ties to cast a secret and independent vote, like every American.

An important feature of the eSlate voting system is its "paper trail." By law, electronic voting systems must produce a paper copy of the voter's ballot choices before a voter casts their ballot. Voters have the right and the responsibility to verify their vote before voting. The eSlate prints a paper record summarizing the electronic votes cast by the voter and asks the voter to verify their choices before officially casting their

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The Sentencing: a close look

By Johanna Sophie Santos Bassetti
EPA Today Contributor

The long wait is over for Senetuli Penisoni. Earlier this month, the 26 year old East Palo Alto youth was sentenced to life in prison with an extra 45 years to be served, consecutively, for the murder of 26 year old Ortega Barnes and the injury of Donald Prince. Barnes was killed and Prince injured in a drive-by shooting on Wisteria Street in East Palo Alto in March,

2004.

Ricardo Arana, a 21 year old from Menlo Park, who was also convicted of Barnes murder, received the same sentence as Penisoni. Both men were required to pay restitution fees to the victims' families, as well as administrative charges for the lengthy trial.

The sentencing of Penisoni and Arana was originally scheduled for July 18, but it was postponed at their defense lawyers' request so that the defense

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SE ACERCA EL DIA DE LAS ELECCIONES

Estamos en la Carrera



Candidatos para el Concilio de la Ciudad de East Palo Alto. de izquierda a derecha Bernardo Huerta, Ruben Abrica, David Tschang, Charlie Mae Knight, David Woods, and Marilu Serrano. Foto por Media Center.



Tres de los candidatos al Directorio Ravenswood City School sentados de izquierda a derecha John (Jaribu) Bostic, Heliena Walton and Saree Mading.

Otros no incluidos en la foto Larry Moody, Terrell Davis Y los otros dos en posesión del cargo Marcelino Lopez y Todd Gaviglio.

Los siete candidatos a los puestos de Directores del Distrito Escolar de la ciudad de Ravenswood compiten por tres vacantes.

Dos maneras de votar La Sentencia: Bajo la Lupa

Vote electrónicamente

Los votantes pueden votar con el nuevo Sistema de Votación eSlate en los lugares de votación el Día de la Elección o durante los 29 días antes de la elección en la Oficina de Elecciones, ubicada en 40 Tower Road en San Mateo o en la Oficina del Secretario-Registrador-Tasador en 555 County Center en Redwood City. Los eSlates son fáciles de usar, accesibles y proporcionan boletas electorales en tres idiomas (inglés, español y chino).

El sistema de votación eSlate es totalmente certificado y cumple con las leyes estatales y federales. Las unidades accesibles eSlate hacen posible que los votantes con discapacidades emitan un voto secreto e independiente, como todo americano.

Una importante característica del sistema de votación eSlate es su "pista

de papel". Por ley, los sistemas de votación electrónica deben producir una copia de papel de las selecciones del votante en la boleta electoral antes de que éste emita su boleta electoral. Los votantes tienen el derecho y la responsabilidad de verificar su voto antes de votar. El eSlate imprime un registro de papel resumiendo los votos electrónicos emitidos por el votante y le pide al votante que verifique sus selecciones antes de emitir oficialmente su boleta electoral. Los votantes "Verifican su Voto" comparando el resumen de sus votos en la pantalla del eSlate con el registro de papel impreso.

Para fijar una demostración o presentación llame a Jackie Coates al (650) 363-1884, envíe una solicitud por email a vote2006@smcare.org o visite el sitio web www.shapethefuture.org/eslate/demo. El personal de

vea Penisoni en la pagina 13

By Johanna Sophie Santos Bassetti
EPA Today Contributor

La larga espera ha terminado para Senetuli Penisoni. El joven de 26 años fue sentenciado el principio del mes pasado a cadena perpetua y una cantidad adicional de 45 años consecutivos en prisión por el asesinato hace dos años de Ortega Barnes, entonces de 26 años de edad, y por la aggresion a Donald Prince. Barnes murió y Prince resultó herido a raíz de una riada de tiroteos "drive-by" en la calle Wisteria de East Palo Alto en Marzo de 2004.

Ricardo Arana, residente en Menlo Park de 21 años de edad, también fue imputado por el asesinato de Barnes, y sentenciado el 7 de Septiembre a la misma pena que Penisoni. A sendos hombres se les requiere el pago de cargos

por restitución a las familias de las víctimas y al Estado por los gastos del largo proceso jurídico.

En un principio, la sentencia de Arana y Penisoni estuvo programada para el 18 de Julio, pero fue postpuesta a raíz de la demanda de la defensa, que pretendía investigar las supuestas irregularidades que surgieron a lo largo del proceso y en especial al finalizar el juicio. Sin embargo, las irregularidades que encontrase la defensa no pudieron alterar la decisión de las cortes.

Tanto Penisoni como Arana fueron sentenciados a cadena perpetua sin posibilidad de salir bajo libertad condicional por el asesinato en primer grado con la especial circunstancia de tiroteo "drive-by" con la "intención de matar", según el juez Mark Forcum. Este dijo que la severidad de la sentencia asignada fue

resultado directo de la "naturaleza insensible" del crimen y de la seriedad de la ofensa.

Penisoni y su abogado tienen planeado apelar la decisión del juez, y llevar el caso a la corte de otro condado dado que en el Condado de San Mateo se percibe una fuerte discriminación histórica en contra de supuestos criminales pertenecientes a minorías étnicas.

A lo largo del juicio, la defensa mantuvo que el crimen fue realizado por Luis Vargas, el único supuesto testigo del crimen, y reconocido miembro de la Sac Street Gang. Otro miembro de la misma banda, Alberto Álvarez, está actualmente en prisión por el asesinato de el oficial Richard May, que fue agente de policía en East Palo Alto hasta recibir un disparo mortal en Enero de

vea Penisoni en la pagina 13

News Briefs

“Community Treasures”



William Webster with the other honorees: Ingrid Menafrá and Charmin Smith.

On Monday of this week, William Webster was one of three Stanford staff members who were honored for their community volunteerism.

The awards ceremony called, “A Community

Treasures’ Brown Bag Lunch” took place in the Tressider Oak room on the Stanford campus.

Webster attended his first community meeting in East Palo Alto at the East Palo Alto Community Law Project, on Saturday, January 14, 1989.

Since that time, he has served with a variety of civic and community organizations.

Before the awards luncheon, he sent an email to his friends and colleagues in which he wrote, “This coming Monday I will be reflecting on the great fact that “no man is an island,” and that

we stand not only on the shoulders of giants, but rely on the support of the many fellow activists both present and past to bring to fruition a common vision of a truly just community, society, and world where compassion and principle “inspire, illumine, designate, and lead the way...”

Ingrid Menafrá and Charmin Smith were the other Stanford honorees who were recognized at the luncheon by LaDoris Cordell, who is Special Counsel to the President for Campus Relations.

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A Message to the Candidates

By Audrey Scott
EPA Today Contributor

Peninsula Interfaith Action (PIA) and The Fellowship of Faith (FOF) joined forces to bring over 130 community residents together to meet with the six candidates running for the East Palo Alto City Council. During the October 10 meeting, the residents let the candidates know that future council members would be expected to bring resources into the city to put an end to youth violence.

PIA and FOF represent over 25 congregations in East Palo Alto. The two organizations are working together to support Measure C because they think once it is enacted, the Measure will put an end to the city's history of violence, since it will be a funding source for violence prevention programs.

During the forum, the candidates told the residents that they would make the commitment, if elected, to

assign an East Palo Alto City staff member to fulfill Measure C's directives if the measure passes. They also committed to working with both PIA and FOF to establish a 15 person oversight committee of East Palo Alto residents to ensure that Measure C funds would be properly distributed.

The forum's attendees also expressed their concerns about the lack of a full-service supermarket in East Palo Alto. Since there has not been a supermarket in the city for over 30 years, residents must spend their grocery money in neighboring cities. “It's an injustice for us not to have a supermarket,” said Sonja Spencer, who is an East Palo Alto resident. “We deserve a full-service supermarket and we should be able to spend our money in our city,” she said.

The site that's been designated for a supermarket is the corner of Bay Rd and University Ave., and the

owner is Barry Swenson Builders. The candidates agreed to make it a priority to bring a full-service supermarket to EPA. They also agreed to work with the FOF & PIA to ensure community benefits are included in the project. Some of these benefits may include jobs for local residents and affordable housing.

EPA residents have fought for years to end the violence in their city and for a full-service supermarket. Those who attended the meeting said that the evening's forum with the candidates was just another step toward meeting those two goals. Some of the residents expressed the view that a violence-free, healthy East Palo Alto is now more within reach.

Audrey Scott is a 30 year resident of EPA & member of Faith Missionary Baptist Church

Still a chance

By Nadine Watson
EPA Today Contributor

Community Interact! (CI) is well on the way to accomplishing its goal of selecting 62 organizations, all of whom will be recipients of a grant award. 62 East of Bayshore nonprofit and faith-based organizations will receive fully subsidized broadband wireless Internet connectivity and assistance using online connectivity tools. To date, Community Interact! has selected 55 organizations.

With the use of online

connectivity tools, CI guarantees will be able to utilize various Internet-enabled resources to help provide broader outreach to prospective clients, increase information dissemination to established clientele, gain greater access to informational resource documents, and realize more effective information-sharing with other social service agencies located throughout the target area and in surrounding communities.

Freda Johnson, the Assistant Director of Daytop, an East Palo Alto nonprofit,

had words of praise for the wireless network. “Community Interact! has been a very big help for our organization by giving the facility a new computer system, a printer, and the speed we needed to process our clients paperwork to the county and other referring sources,” Johnson said.

Community Interact!, whose slogan is: Net-Connected Communication for the Common Good (Community Interact! or CI), is the leading Signature Project of East Palo Alto Digital Village. It is designed to augment and sustain technology access and infrastructure-building to nonprof-

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its and faith-based organizations in East Palo Alto and East Menlo Park/Belle Haven, an area also referred to as East of Bayshore. The project was established in December 2003. It is generously sponsored by a grant from the Cable Co-op Legacy Grant Program and a substantial cash and equipment grant from the Hewlett-Packard Company (HP).

Several selected organizations have already been connected to high speed DSL Internet access through a Covad solution. These include New Creation Home Ministries, St. Mark AME Zion, Lavengamalie Christian Academy, Walls of Faith,

Cummings Park CME, St. Samuel COGIC, and The Girls' Club of Mid-Peninsula.

East of Bayshore nonprofits and faith-based groups still have a chance to be involved with the project. A CI application process must be completed in order to be considered for the program.

To receive an application or for more information contact Nadine Watson, Community Interact! Project Coordinator at 650-330-7429 or email Communityintereact@yahoo.com. Deadline is November 30, 2006.

News Briefs

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Resignation

Pat Foster submitted her resignation as Executive Director of the Girls Club in Menlo Park. She submitted her letter to Roy Clay, who is the President of the Girls Club's Board of Directors.

In the five and a half years that Foster, who is an East Palo Alto City Council member, has served as executive director, she has been instrumental in raising hundreds of thousands of dollars for the organization.

Foster said that she is most proud of the programs at the Girls Club which she feels have provided some of the "best practices" in youth development.

Many community members expressed surprise and shock upon hearing of her resignation.

Breakfast for Measure C



Some of the attendees at the Measure C Breakfast

The supporters for Measure C held a "Yes on Measure C Campaign Breakfast and Precinct Walking" event on October 27. Congregants of the Fellowship of Faith and Peninsula Interfaith Action churches joined with residents to rally and knock on

doors to encourage a yes vote. The breakfast rally was also joined by members of the No on Measure E Coalition.

Pastor Paul Bains from St. Samuels and Pastor John Liotti of COGIC hosted the breakfast which was also attended by East Palo Alto City Council member Pat Foster and the city's Mayor Ruben Abrica.

Emergency Preparedness

In what was the largest meeting to date, city officials and various community organizations met on October 20 to continue discussions about how East Palo Alto can prepare for unforeseen disasters.

Mayor Ruben Abrica has spearheaded the meetings. The next emergency preparedness meeting will take place November 9 at 6 pm in the Community Room of City Hall.

Homes Available

Peninsula Habitat for Humanity in collaboration with the cities of East Palo Alto & Menlo Park is offering affordable home ownership workshops. Members of a low-income household living in the County of San Mateo for at least a year, are invited to attend the orientation. The income requirement for a low income family is \$40K to \$70K a year. a

An orientation will take place in Redwood City on November 15, 2006. For more information call

English (650)568-7325
Spanish (650)568-7338

www.peninsulahabitat.org

Start Up in People Magazine

One of Start Up's clients DeNesha Antrece Fuller was recently featured in the October 30, 2006 issue of People Magazine. The issue ran an article on newly selected Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus.

Yunus won the prize because of his innovative idea to give microcredit loans that allow poor people to establish their own businesses.

According to Julie Weiss, Start Up's work is a local example of microenterprise support, many principles of which were and are championed by Yunus and the Grameen Bank."

Weiss said "Microenterprise support is a widespread and growing activity in not only third world countries, but poorer urban or rural neighborhoods in the United States as well. Working to build a local business fabric has a tangible and profound effect on the reduction of poverty and crime, and improves the overall community outlook and its economic sustainability."

Weiss said that Fuller was a student and a single working mother when she was laid off from her job. After gaining business training from Start Up and a loan from Lenders for Community Development, she opened Taletah Day Care in 2005.

In press information, it was stated that in 2006, Fuller received a \$2,230

equity award from Start Up and the Women and Co. Microenterprise Boost Program which she is now using to expand her capacity and relocate her business to a better location.

There are a number of organizations in the Bay Area who conduct similar work, including the Renaissance Center in San Francisco, the Women's Initiative, and Anew America.

To get more information on Start Up's programs contact:

Jessica Weiss
Executive Assistant
Start Up at
650-321-2193 ext. 16.

A New Executive Director



Akuila Sovatabua

Akuila Sovatabua recently resigned as executive Director of the Pacific Islander Community Center to return to his native Tonga. Sovatabua was the organization's first director and was very active in East Palo Alto. He tutored at Cesar Chavez Elementary School and he served on the Board of Directors of One East Palo Alto. This week Kava Tulua was selected as PICC's new executive Director. Read more about her in this issue of EPA Today's Lifecycles section.

Challenging Romic

Romic can add another challenge to its license.

San Mateo County Supervisor Rose Jacobs Gibson wrote to the state Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC) and requested that the agency "deny Romic's operating permit and expansion plans, and direct their operations to cease, desist and immediately commence with closure."

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and
Belle Haven
communities.

City, County & State Government Meetings & Contacts

East Palo Alto City Council

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

East Palo Alto City Council Members

Ruben Abrica - Mayor
(650) 321-4001

A. Peter Evans - Vice Mayor
(650) 321-1009

Patricia Foster
(650) 328-3944

Donna Rutherford
(650) 327-7926

David E. Woods
(650) 853-1907

East Palo Alto Boards, Commissions, Committees

Planning Commission
Second and Fourth Monday

Rent Stabilization Board
Second and Fourth Wednesday

Public Works & Transportation Commission
First and Third Wednesday

Youth Advisory Committee
First Thursday of each month

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

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

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

Menlo Park City Council Members

Nicholas P. Jellins - Mayor
(650) 329-1300
Kelly J. Fergusson - Vice Mayor
(650) 327-4533

Andrew M. Cohen
(650) 327-5332

Lee B. Duboc
(650) 322-3651

Mickie Winkler
(650) 473-9722

Menlo Park Boards, Commissions, Committees

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

San Mateo County Bd. of Supervisors

Supervisor Rose Jacobs Gibson, Fourth District

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

at: 8a.m. 9a.m. Regular & Consent Agenda Items.

State Officials

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

Assembly Member Ira Ruskin

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

Senator Joseph S. Simitian

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

Free Spay/Neuter Clinics a Big Hit

By Scott Delucchi
EPA Today Contributor

During a four-week span from mid-September through mid-October, the Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA rolled into town four times to provide free "fixes" for East Palo Alto pet owners. Eastside Prep School on Myrtle Ave. played "host," allowing the Society to park their 26-foot long "surgery suite on wheels" in the school's main parking lot.

The Society's staff prepared for a big crowd on the first date, yet just one family, with two pets, arrived despite the fact that volunteers blanketed University Ave. (east of 101), Bay Rd., the library and other key, visible locations in East Palo Alto with bright

orange flyers announcing the free "fix" dates.

One person, a nonpet owner who just happened by our first clinic, told us, "You guys should park in Palo Alto, where people care about their pets.... people here just want them to have litters so they can make money off of pups or kittens."

Now, we knew that East Palo Alto residents are better than this and they proved us right! Our next three clinics were highly successful, thanks, in part, to more promotion by new friends in the community and with the Ecumenical Hunger Program.

As more people learned of the clinic, they would call and ask



The only two "clients" at the first of four free spay/neuter clinics for pets belonging to East Palo Alto residents.

the inevitable: "Is it really free!? The answer was YES. We had a very generous donor, Vanessa Getty (yes, of that Getty family), donate the funds for our beautiful vehicle and all its equipment. She's paid for the gas, the registration, flyers to announce our dates to the public and the salaries of our employ-

ees working inside our custom-painted mobile pet sterilization cruiser.

For folks who missed all four free clinics in East Palo Alto, we urge you not to forget about providing this simple surgery for your pet. It will prevent unwanted litters, it will mean fewer aggressive dogs in this community and fewer dog bites. An altered (spayed or neutered) pet can no longer get certain forms of cancer, will not have messy heat cycles, and will be much less likely to act aggressively.

National statistics show that in more than 90% of dog attacks, the attacking dog is a male who has not been "fixed."

Residents who want

to do the right thing and have their dog or cat fixed -- which we highly recommend -- have three options: (1) wait until we visit the community again with our mobile clinic which will likely happen before June 2007; (2) schedule an appointment at a private veterinary office; or (3) call our low-cost clinic in San Mateo for an appointment today. This option isn't free, but is significantly reduced from private veterinary practice rates.

To schedule a low-cost surgery for your pet today, please call 650/340-7025.






Scott Delucchi is the Senior Vice President of Community Relations for the Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA email him at delucchi@PeninsulaHumaneSociety.org.

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I Will Survive - Health Forum

By Tiombe Jama
EPA Today Contributor

With the flair and style of the African American experience, Drew Health Foundation sponsored a Breast and Prostate Health Fancy Hat Brunch on Saturday, October 14.

What a time! The ambiance of Michael's at Shoreline was greatly enhanced by the Masters of Ceremony, Isaac Stevenson; and the motivating and invigorating singing of Gloria Scott had everyone standing and dancing to I Will Survive by Mitzi Gaynor. While the poetry of Yalande Barial moved one's heart and spirit.

With over 26 years of health information and service to the East Palo Alto and Menlo Park community, Drew received a San Mateo 'Commendation and a Resolution from the City of

East Palo Alto.

Drew collaborated with the American Cancer Society's long time volunteer Evelyn Long and Dr. Gail Stevenson who provided valuable and crucial health information regarding breast and prostate cancer.

The cancer survivors were honored for their strength and courage and presented as beacons for others suffering with cancer and for the newly diagnosed. Dr. Norma Mayfield informed us of the need for the love and support of family. When her beautiful hair fell out, her family gave her a mink hat.

The men and women were surrounded by the beautiful hats and baskets donated by many top name designers and companies.

Our illustrious former S.F. mayor, Willie Brown donated one of his hats and the fury was intense for the auction

bidding, which was won by our previous Mayor and present City councilman, David Woods.

Guests left filled with the scrumptious cuisine of Michaels, the beauty and spirit of the attendees and beautiful gift bags put together by Ora of OraDivaDesigns and Mardia Martin plus a photograph by Brother Jaye Photography.

The next free health forums are "Taking Charge of Your Diabetes" on November 13, 6:30 pm at the East Palo Alto Community Room and Developing Community Sensitive Health Professionals is on December 13th.

Call Drew Health Foundation at 650-328-1619 for further information. Volunteers and donations are welcome.

Learn franchise pros and cons

During the past several decades, franchising has become not only a uniquely American institution, but also one of the leading doorways into small business ownership in America. Every year, thousands of individuals choose to get into business ownership via the franchise route.

But is going the franchise route really a better choice than starting your own business? That's something you'll need to answer for yourself. But it's worth the time and effort to find out. To make the right choice for your own situation between starting a business and buying a franchise, as well as

which franchise to buy, requires careful research. It's a big investment on your part, and you must investigate before you put up the money.

According to the International Finance Association (IFA), franchised businesses are growing at a rapid pace. Some 400,000 franchised businesses now employ nearly 10 million people with a payroll of \$230 billion. There's always a hot new franchise on the scene. Curves, for example, a network of franchised women-only fitness centers, grew nearly 38 percent in a single recent year.

If your appetite for risk

is low, a franchise may be your best choice. A franchise lowers the risk because someone else has already pioneered the concept, tested the ideas and found out what works and what doesn't. If you want to do all of those things with your own idea, then start a business yourself. If not, choose a franchise.

As you research franchises, ask about the required experience, if any, as well as the expected hours and personal commitment necessary to run the business. You also should learn about the franchisor's background. For example, what is the company's track

record and how are other franchisees in the system doing? The upfront cost of buying the franchise is crucial, of course, but also how much you'll pay for the continuing right to operate the business and what products or services you will be required to buy from the franchisor.

You'll also need to know about options for financing your investment. The U.S. Small business Administration (SBA) can help. If you are considering a franchise purchase and you may want an SBA-backed loan, check the SBA-sponsored Franchise Registry. If the franchise is enrolled in

this program, you could receive expedited loan processing through the SBA.

Visit www.franchiseregistry.com.

The International Franchise Association (IFA) offers information on how franchising works and has a searchable database of over 800 franchise opportunities. Visit www.franchise.org.

To learn more about starting and growing a small business, contact SCORE "Counselors to America's Small Business. You may receive counseling by appointment at Start Up in East Palo Alto 650 321 2193, or at our center in San Jose; call 408 288 8479, see our web site at www.svscore.org or find a counselor online at www.score.org.

A Big Day for Volunteering

By Michael Cook
EPA Today Contributor

"Volunteers truly are a godsend!" said Robert Jones, the executive director of EPA CAN DO, at the launch of Hands On Bay Area Day 2006 in East Palo Alto last Saturday. The event was one of four simultaneous kick-offs for the annual volunteer mobilization event, which also took place in Berkeley, San Francisco and San Jose.

Hands On Bay Area, a local nonprofit that creates, manages and leads volunteer projects for individuals and corporations, estimates that over 2,000 volunteers came out on October 14 to



Volunteers work at EPACANDO in EPA

sort food, paint schools, spruce up parks, and more at 65 different projects.

At the East Palo Alto Charter School, volunteers spent the day restoring the garden, painting the outdoor play area, and organizing classrooms. Chonabot Intakeha was one of the

"I think it is important for companies to offer this to their employees as part of corporate responsibility," stated Chonabot as he painted a multiplication table onto the asphalt of the school playground. "I was also really interested in volunteering because I have a close

friend that teaches at this school." many corporate volunteers working at EPA Charter from Accenture, Hands On Bay Area Day's presenting sponsor.

friend that teaches at this school."

At the EPA CAN DO housing site, volunteers landscaped and revitalized a communal backyard shared by several residents receiving housing assistance from the organization. "If it wasn't for volunteers," stated Executive Director Jones, "All of this would cost our organization an arm and a leg. This allows us to focus money to the areas where it is most vitally needed."

Volunteer project leader Rasa Sidagyte explained, "It is really moving to see people making their communities a better place." Since 2005, Rasa has spent over 230 hours volunteering with Hands On Bay Area at differ-

ent projects across the Peninsula and South Bay.

Hands On Bay Area Day brought out not only the organization's veteran volunteers, like Sidagyte, but also a slew of new people. "We are so proud of our expanded outreach. Over half of the volunteers on Saturday were Hands On first-timers," said Jim Pitofsky, executive director of Hands On Bay Area. "We're working hard to encourage and support even more people who want to create change in their communities."

Benefitting more than 300 nonprofit agencies, Hands On Bay Area coordinates and manages more than 100 monthly community service projects and engages thousands of volunteers each year. For more information, please visit www.handsonbayarea.org.

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GET RID OF UNWANTED FAT

By Julie Weiss
EPA Today Contributor

Wastewater experts say fat and grease builds up in pipes causing messy blockages; know what to do to avoid problems this holiday season

November 1, 2006- With the holiday season fast approaching, regional water quality experts are on the alert for fat. Not the kind that builds up around the waistline, but the kind that can block the sewer line.

Deep-fried turkeys, rich gravies, and other fat laden dishes are an undeniable part of the holiday season.



A peek underneath a manhole cover shows grease and oil build-up inside a sewer line.

Unfortunately, discarding the remains of these culinary delights

down the sink can cause problems for the sanitary sewer system.

What happens is pretty simple: fats, oil, and grease build up in pipes and cause clogging problems which, at their worst, can cause sewer overflows. All year long, people pour byproducts of cooking down their sink drain. During the holiday season, it is expected that larger quantities of these fats will make their way to the sanitary sewer system via the kitchen sink.

Local municipalities deal with residential grease-related clogs on a regular basis and would like residents to properly dispose of cooking byproducts. In

East Palo Alto and surrounding communities combined, disposal of grease and oil down household drains causes about one sewer line back up a day. This can result in a smelly mess on a street, or worse, inside a home or business. Wildlife in creeks and San Francisco Bay are also threatened

when sewer lines overflow into streets and storm drains which direct water to these natural areas.

Residents often pay for these expensive cleanups directly, but even when local cities or sewer agencies provide this service, residents end up paying higher sewer bills via their monthly utility fees.

While the trend toward using turkey fryers makes wastewater officials wince, the truth is all forms of oil and grease are part of the problem. "To the sewer system, all fats are created equal," says Phil Bobel of the Bay Area Clean Water Agencies (BACWA). "When it gets to the pipes, olive oil is no better than butter."

"You never think that the turkey dinner or the batch of French fries you make will affect anything other than your waist line," says Bobel.

"This is a problem homeowners can help to prevent if they take some simple steps to



A manhole oozes grease from a blocked sewer line.
Pictures courtesy of Regional Water Quality Control Plant.

reduce the amount of fats, oil, and grease that enter their pipes," says Bobel. "The holiday season is a good time to start making changes that will carry into the New Year." In other words, the next time you make bacon, please don't throw the grease down the sink!

Here are a few other simple tips from the Bay Area Clean Water Agencies:

Recycle large quantities of cooking oil and other fats (such as from turkey deep fryers), at the Palo Alto Recycling Center located at the east end of Embarcadero Road (open 9am-5pm, every day except holidays).

Don't put dairy products, fats, oil, grease or

greasy foods down the garbage disposal or drain.

Freeze fats and grease in a container with a tight-sealing lid and dispose in trash.

Mix cooking oil with an absorbent material such as coffee grounds or cat litter. Place it in a sealed container and dispose in trash

For more information visit www.cleanbay.org, or call the Regional Water Quality Control Plant (RWQCP) at 650.329.2598.

The RWQCP is owned and operated by the City of Palo Alto and serves the East Palo Alto Sanitary District.



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Perspectives

From the Editor's Desk

Why Vote?

Does your vote count? Yes, it does. In fact, your vote counts a lot. If you miss the opportunity to voice your opinion about what is going on in the community, the county, the state and the nation.



Henrietta J. Burroughs

If you fail to cast your vote and make your opinion count, then you've left it to the other person to make decisions about your future and the future of your family.

Why give someone else that kind of power over your life and that of the community? Why give someone else that much control? So you say, "My vote is just one vote and it might not even get counted at all or make any difference."

Well, if you don't vote, it certainly won't get counted. It's a matter of numbers. The more people who vote, the more votes a candidate receives. It's as simple as that.

In this November's election, there are distinct differences between the candidates. For the city council race in East Palo Alto, the two incumbents offer their track record, their experiences in office and their promises; the three challengers offer their passion, their experiences in various fields and their promises. Whom do you believe?

Whom do you believe will make the decisions and choices that will keep the city moving in a positive direction to improve the quality of life for all of the residents? Who will make the best team member to work with colleagues in a productive, professional spirit to get goals and objectives accomplished.

Who among the candidates has the clearest vision for the city? Which

candidates will best represent the wishes of the community? Who are the candidates working to foster harmony and understanding?

Since East Palo Alto Today operates under the umbrella of the East Palo Alto Center for Community Media, a non-profit agency, the newspaper can not advocate for any person, party or measure on the ballot.

But we can urge you to study the issues carefully, decide what you want for yourself, your family and the community. Ask yourself who will work to make the streets safer, housing more reasonable and in better supply? Who will uphold the rights of home owners and tenants alike? Who will improve the educational standards and the achievement levels in the school district?

It is up to you to decide whose leadership will help you achieve the quality of life you desire for yourself and your family

Which candidate's goals and priorities are in line with your own? Which candidates are making promises that they can keep?

In this column, we can only pose the questions. But, once you've answered the questions, the choices become clearer. If you are to answer the questions honestly, then it's necessary to do the homework.

There is still time to do the research and make the best decision. To each of you, we say, "The power of the vote is in your hands." So vote this Election Day. Use your power and use it wisely. If you don't use it, someone else will.

Please see EPA Today's Special Election Insert in this issue of the paper. We'd like to thank Michael Levin and Dennis Parker for their assistance in obtaining the candidates' statements which are enclosed.

There is a clear choice on Election Day.

Candidates for the East Palo Alto City Council: top left- Ruben Abrica, Charlie Mae Knight, Bernardo Huerta. Below-Marilu Serrano, David Woods and David Tschang.

Letters to East Palo Alto Today

Captain Samuels
Dear Editor

A Daily News article this past October 5 on hiring on the police force certainly generated lots of concern in my mind.

I take it the suppressed premise of the Chief's comments in the article is that EPA gets second raters or rejects (as officers in the department).

Not exactly the kind of impression the community would like to believe. Perhaps, however, the Chief had a strategic and politically based motive for his rhetoric: the passage of certain-ballot measures in the coming election.

Will be interesting to see whether these kinds of tactics work, but I think it is not a good policy to hold the community hostage by implying that we will never get a good police force unless we pass these ballot measures.

But what most disturbed me in the article was your use of "real police work," "bad guys" and "homicides." I

found these words inflammatory, excessive and inaccurate.

If that is the carrot you have to use to get new hires on the force in EPA, it raises in my mind the picture of a Rambo with guns ablaze. Is that hat you mean by "real police work?" I would think that kind of new hire would be best suited for a SWAT team, not a community police force. And members of a SWAT team go through a carefully controlled period of training, don't they?

And further, what exactly is a "bad guy?" One who speeds, one who is undocumented, one who drives under the influence, one who deals drugs, one who batters his wife? I could go on, but I think you see the point. Your choice of words here is, I hope, regrettable because it reveals such a simplistic view of police work.

And finally, it is my understanding that detectives work homicides. New hires do not. And detectives work their way through the ranks to become detectives, don't they?

Hopefully, you will find time to engage the community more directly with your philosophy and practice of "real police work" in EPA.

Yours truly,
John Thompson

Last September, top administration officials compared the war in Iraq to fighting Nazis in World War II. Now, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice takes historical revisionism to a new level by suggesting war opponents are the moral equivalent of those who would tolerate slavery in 19th century America. In the new issue of Essence:

"I'm sure there are people who thought it was a mistake to fight the Civil War to its end and to insist that the emancipation of slaves would hold. I know there were people who said, 'Why don't we get out of this now, take a peace with the South, but leave the South with slaves?'"

Suggesting that anyone who opposes the adminis-

continued on page 10

EPA Today's Policies & Principles

In order to better serve the communities of East Palo Alto and Belle Haven, East Palo Alto Today has made the commitment to operate with high professional standards and to adhere to a strict code of ethical conduct.

The principles and policies stated herein serve as an

agreement with our readers, advertisers and all others within our service area.

East Palo Alto Today is dedicated to conscientious journalism. We maintain this commitment by seeking and reporting the truth, acting with integrity, and serving the public interest. We will report the

news thoroughly and accurately and include multiple perspectives without favoring one over another.

We will hold ourselves accountable to common standards of decency, treating our colleagues, news sources, and the public with respect. We are committed

East Palo Alto Today

Publisher: East Palo Alto Center for Community Media
Editor: Henrietta J. Burroughs
EPA Mentorship Director: Julie Patel

East Palo Alto Today is published twice monthly;
Address all letters to: East Palo Alto Today
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Community Opinions

Will East Palo Alto Be Another Katrina?

By Dennis J. Parker

The rain has returned, and the San Francisquito Creek levee adjacent to East Palo Alto has not been repaired. The mayor declared a local state of emergency last February and funds were recently allocated. But no construction has begun. This means that East Palo Alto residents—especially those in the Gardens neighborhood—are at great risk for a disaster if

the levee breaks from the combination of winter storms and high tides. Please make this an issue when you speak to candidates for City Council, and let it guide you when you vote this November.

Although collaboration discussions are underway with the school district, medical clinic, and local emergency response agencies, there is no published disaster preparedness plan, and the community forums that

were promised have not taken place, to my knowledge. At the Special Joint City Council/Ravenswood School District Meeting last Tuesday, Councilmember Pat Foster asked that the City meet with the Gardens Neighborhood Association within the next three weeks, but it sounded more like a comment than a commitment (the Gardens Neighborhood Association meets on the second Saturday of each month).

There has been a lot of

activity along the levee, and I will give you my detailed observations in another message. In the meantime, be reminded that government agencies from the Federal to the local level have cautioned you that in the event of a widespread disaster—such as an earthquake or a flood,—you are on your own for the first three-to-seven days. On the positive side, emergency preparedness agencies have published a wealth of self-help literature on what to do before, during,

and after a disaster. I'll point you to some of these resources soon, as I did last year.

In the meantime, this would be a good time to refresh your emergency supplies, update your emergency contact list, and review your personal evacuation plan.

Dennis J. Parker
Community Advocate

Advice for East Palo Alto Youth

Sentuli Penisoni

I've been in a "situation" with the jail over my mail correspondence. I can't get an honest answer to why since February of this year mail I send out takes a week or more to get to where its going. Then my mail that's sent to me I receive a week or more late.

Anyway, I'd love to get into details about my case and my trial because I feel it

would definitely benefit my community and society in general, especially the youth. But, I can't until I speak with my lawyer about it being that my case is still on-going even after my trial.

But I do have some advice for the youth in a similar situation to mine.

"Hope for the best - expect the worse." Know your rights. Stay mentally strong. I've been in jail for two and a half years and I'm out of my cell forty minutes a

day - four hours a week.

So if you don't have a high school diploma apply for a G.E.D. I had to constantly remind the jail that it was by law that I am provided an education. But it still took 10 months for me (or for the jail rather) to actually take the test. When I notified the jail I needed help in science I was given a GED book and was told to help myself.

Remember to watch what you say and do in jail.

The jail is the D.A.'s house. All staff are willing to work with the D.A. to convict you. They're not going to help you go home!

Study your case and know everything that's going on in court. A dictionary is very helpful. You'll know why.

You're "guilty til proven innocent" because if you were so "innocent," how come you're in jail? If you go to prison, know that "respect" is key. If you go to prison and you're not in a gang, do

not join a gang. Prison is a whole world of its own. Inmates in prison have guidelines and their purpose is to keep peace amongst the population. Gangs (as people call them) follow these guidelines and have their own rules and policies. It is not a game!

This is basically it - I think. I have so much to say...

Sincerely,
Sentuli Penisoni.

Making Meetings Work

Do you ever go to meetings and see the same people? It could be a meeting about kitty litter, herbal rhetoric, typhoid, earth worms, bubble gum or paranoia: the point is, you see the same kind of people.

There's the person that can turn everything into a racial issue. There's the person who takes everything serious. There's the person who uses his vocabulary to confuse people. There's the person who ends up at the wrong meeting. There's that lady who always brings her baby to the meeting. There's the person who's good at being disruptive.

There's the hater that drinks hater-aid. There's the quiet person who people only see at the meeting. There's the "weirdo". There's the person who looks like he wears the same suit. There's the person who reeks.

There's the person that wants more structure in the meetings. There's that lady with that obtrusive shape to her body. There's the guy with the name that nobody



Michael Uhila

remembers. There's the person that no one can understand what they're saying.

There's the person who always has excuses. There's the technical person who can tell you how many pronouns there are in the agenda. There's the person that complains about the temperature in the room. There's the fake person who nobody trusts.

There's the man that always refers to the by-laws. There's the intellectual woman who's like a walking University. There's the person who shows up for the food. There's the arrogant guy who acts like he knows everything. There's the brown noser.

There's the old lady that's been going to meetings

since the Civil War. There's the radical, the liberal, the conservative, the minimalist, the capitalist, the socialist, the racist, the communist, the idealist, the pessimist, and the occasional crack head that wants to sell you a lawnmower.

Do you go to meetings and see the same people?

I'm writing about the characters of people. You have the right to disagree and you have the right agree. The meetings are where people congregate. They find an issue and say: "let's have a meeting". There are meetings for the business people and they meet so that they know what they want to do.

Generally that's what a meeting is: people coming together. They don't have to be formal or informal. They don't have to be in a boardroom and they don't have to be in front of a liquor store. Meetings can be anywhere. Meetings don't have to have agendas or paperwork.

A meeting is people coming together to talk. Before wars there are meetings and

after wars there are meetings. Before protests there are meetings and after protests there are meetings.

Let's say you were wounded in a car accident. Your hair is on fire, a piece of steel is stuck to your forehead and you go to the hospital. Would you prefer them to sit around and have a meeting about what they should do about this hunk of metal sticking out of your brain?

Do you want them to make a unanimous decision on whether they put some water on your hair to put out the fire? Would you want them to find out the procedures in Roberts Rules of order for steel stuck in your brains? No, you want them to hurry up and do something about it.

Whether it's subjective or objective meetings are designed to get you to go do something about it. Sometimes you have to have ten meetings just to do one thing.

As pathetic as that sounds, it's a valid point and if you disagree than you haven't been to ten meetings. People meet to do something about something

that they deem valuable meeting about.

Tonight's action item is: Biodegradable NOTHING. Governments meet all the time. The United Nations meet on issues like Nuclear proliferation, AIDS and biological genocide. These issues sound serious, but some of the people mentioned above go to those meetings too.

There's the ambassador that eats a lot, the President who stutters, the Prime Minister who corrects your English, the Ayatollah who leaves early, the secretary that sweats profusely, the lawyer that needs a client, the King that nobody bows to, and the occasional crack head that wants to sell you a lawn mower.

I'm not looking at the issues of the meetings because all of them are important. I'm writing about the characters of people. We're different and we're all the same. We're smart and we're dumb. We're bright and we're dim. Before I look at the issues I'll look at the people so I'll see you at the next meeting and remember the action item is: Biodegradable Nothing.