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East Palo Alto Today

Providing news that is relevant, informative and critical

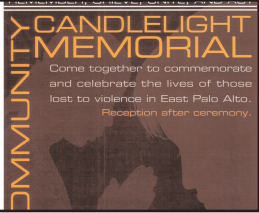


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East Palo Alto and Belle Haven February - March 2008 Vol. 2 No.13

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"Contact your lender immediately. "Contact a HUD-approved Housing Counseling Agency
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Remembering the victims of violence



Photo courtesy of Pamela Reliford

Community residents listen to the presentations at the East Palo Alto Community Candlelighting Memorial service which took place at the St. Francis of Assisi Church at 1425 Bay Road in East Palo Alto.

By **Henrietta J. Burroughs**
East Palo Alto Today

East Palo Alto residents filled the pews of St. Francis of Assisi Church to pay their respects to all who lost their lives from the violence that has affected East Palo Alto over the past few years. It was the city's third Community Candlelighting Memorial

event and it proved to be both a somber and an inspiring occasion.

For the city's Mayor Patricia Foster, the memorial was "especially good because the youth participated and the kids talked about the actions they would take to end the violence."

Pastor Paul Bains called on parents to do a better job of parenting and one young speaker even called

upon her listeners to practice forgiveness and unconditional love.

It was the third year that the commemorative service was held. This year's themes focused on lighting the candles of memory, courage, love and hope. The Eastside College Preparatory School Choir opened the service by singing the moving

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School district faces serious challenges

By **Henrietta J. Burroughs**
EPA Today

Depending on whom you talk with, the Ravenswood City School District failed to meet its goals under the "No Child Left Behind Act" and is in serious trouble.

Recent statistics showed that the students in the district performed so poorly that

the district ranked at the bottom of the list with respect to other California school districts. However the school district's Superintendent Maria de la Vega said that the district ranked in the middle of other school district's with respect to student performance.

She said that if you simply

crunch the numbers, then the district is performing poorly, but if you look at the improvements the district has made then the picture is not as bleak as it appears. The superintendent said that ten members of the San Mateo Office of Education visited the district before the report was released and concluded

that the district had implemented all that it had been charged with doing. "Even they were surprised by the report," she said.

While current statistics show that there is a high turnover of teachers within the school district, Maria de la

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San Mateo merges onto Hydrogen Highway

By Mary Flamer
EPA Today contributor

It was a beautiful sunny, exciting day. It was fun. It was festive with free food and beverages. Kids and adults filled the parking lot and the lobby at 2415 University Avenue, in East Palo Alto.

The residents seemed proud of East Palo Alto's "Ride into the Future" fair which took place in February. Brightly colored balloons beckoned everyone to come to the parking lot where the Community Shuttles were located ready to show off shuttle wraps with the new logos that identified them as East Palo Alto shuttles. The event introduced East Palo Alto's newly expanded, free community shuttle program and it showed off the Ford Motor Company's hydrogen fueled shuttle.

The fair was well attended by approximately 100 participants and officials from East Palo Alto, as well as local officials from Burlingame, Foster City, Woodside, Pacifica, and San Mateo County.

At the start of the event, Public Works Commissioner Bernardo Huerta welcomed everyone while East Palo Alto Mayor Patricia Foster greeted the distinguished dignitaries in attendance. Mayor Foster recognized several. Former Mayor of East Palo Alto, Duane Bay, Richard Cook and Corrine Goodrich of SamTrans, who all led the charge to improve transportation options for East Palo Alto residents. Debbie Schechter and Lily Lee, former employees on loan from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency were among others who were also recognized.

Deborah C. Gordon, Chair of City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County, spoke on the need to continue to explore alternative fuel options, including the use of hydrogen fuel. San Mateo County Supervisor Jerry Hill, who chairs the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and Rosalie O'Mahony, the Vice Chair of San Mateo County Transportation agency also spoke at the event. After the ribbon cutting a raffle drawing ended

the day's activities.

Since May, 2007, plans to upgrade East Palo Alto Free Community Shuttle Program have been in progress. The scope of work for the expansion of the shuttle program included a community Caltrain Shuttle, a Shopper Shuttle, (formerly the Senior Shuttle), and a Late-Night Shuttle. The extension of the Free Youth Jobs Shuttle from a Summer Project to a Year-Round Free Youth Jobs Shuttle add to the changes planned for the Community Free Shuttle Program. A special banner has been designed to publicize the East Palo Alto Free Community Shuttle Program.

One of the objectives of the "Ride into the Future" Fair was to introduce the addition of the Ford V10-E-450 HICE Vehicle that has been in service to the East Palo Alto Community Shuttle Fleet. This Shuttle is fueled with compressed Hydrogen instead of gasoline. The emission from the shuttle is water.

Since early December 2007, a collaborative effort between Ford Motor Company, City and County



Rosalie O'Mahony, Council Member City of Burlingame; Patricia Foster, Mayor of East Palo Alto, Deborah Gordon, Chair of City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo, Supervisor Jerry Hill, County of San Mateo and the Chair of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District.

Association of Governments, (C/CAG), Peninsula Traffic Congestion Relief Alliance, and the City of East Palo Alto, the V-10 Hydrogen Fueled Shuttle has been a part of the daily early morning Community Shuttle to Palo Alto Caltrain station.

A \$250,000 grant through the state's Hydrogen Highway program sponsored the shuttle that East Palo Alto residents will ride to stops between the Palo Alto Caltrain Station and East Palo Alto.

Transportation partners and agencies that supported the "Ride into the Future" included the County Association of Governments, SamTrans, the Alliance, the San Mateo County Transportation Authority, AC Transit, California Air Resources Board, and Ford Motor Company. Prenatal Advantage Black Infant Health program was also represented at the event.

Mary Flamer is the Mobility Manager for the City of East Palo Alto.

A new gym in the city

By Dana Tom
EPA Today Intern

Pastor Paul Bains is known in the East Palo Alto community for his concern for the community and for many of his volunteer activities. Now he is also known for the role he played in opening a new gym in the city.

The new gym is called the Lord's Gym Community Center, and it is a facility for at-risk teenagers and young adults. The gym opened on October 27 on Bay Road in the People's Plaza.

Bains is also the founder of the nonprofit organization Project WeHope and the pastor at St. Samuel Church of God in Christ which is located at 1199 East Bayshore Road in East Palo Alto. Although the gym community center is still in its "embryo stage,"



Bains has high hopes for the center's future and its positive effect on teens in East Palo Alto.

The community center provides adolescents and young adults, ranging from ages 13 to 30, with nearly \$50,000 dollars worth of donated gym equipment from Bally Total Sports, karate and dance lessons by professionals, and a space to relax with fellow peers and friends off of the streets and in a safe environment.

Bains said that when a young person approached him with the idea of opening a gym for teenagers a couple of years ago, he was inspired to pursue the project. "My heart goes out to the youth and young adults," said Bains. He added that East Palo Alto does not currently offer any other type of community center for youth.

In efforts to improve the crime rates of the city by giving the East Palo Alto youth a place to visit during lunch

hours and after school, Bains rented two warehouse spaces and filled the rooms with ping pong and football tables, weight equipment, and various activities and games.



Pastor Paul Bains

"We have to stop the bleeding in our streets," said Bains. "We need to help ourselves and our community. Our kids need a safe place to go."

However, Bains said that the Lord's Gym Community Center needs to raise \$240,000 dollars, if it is to open during after school hours with more full-time staff members and organized activities. Currently, the gym is only open when Bains and other volunteers can come to supervise the facilities, normally during lunch hours, and when karate or dance lessons are scheduled.

"Right now we've been living hand-to-mouth," said Bains, who has been paying

for renovations and the equipment which has come from private funding, financial aid through Project WeHope and from Bains' own pocket money. The project has raised 30,000 dollars, which is helping pay for the 5,000 dollar per month rent, necessary facility renovations, and gym instructors and staff.

Bains is nevertheless optimistic for the next couple of months when he plans to hold the grand opening of the community center. "God has brought us this far with very little resources. This place is a blessing from God."

Eventually, Bains wants to expand the community center to include a small basketball court, indoor soccer field, photography department, music studio, and a heater for the winter season. Many of the gym members want more open hours, but Bains said that without the funding, the community center may not even be able to maintain both of the warehouse spaces.

Regardless of the current obstacles that the Lord's Gym Community Center faces,

teenagers and young adults are enjoying the available space and the activities that the community center offers. "The kids love it," said Bains.

The community center held a Halloween party on October 31st, organized by many local student volunteers, and over 2,300 teenagers and young adults attended the event.

The party was a huge success, said Bains, and it provided teenagers with an alternative way to celebrate Halloween.

Bains will continue working on fundraising for the community center, in addition to inspiring the youth of the city through his efforts with the Project WeHope organization and Lord's Gym Community Center. "It will be hard," said Bains. "But as my dad always told me, 'Idol minds are the devil's workshop.' This community center is what God put on me, and I have high hopes for its future."

Dana Tom is a student at Menlo High School in Atherton, CA.



ShotSpotter system is tested and working

By Dana Tom
EPA Today Intern

When the East Palo Alto Police Department tested the new ShotSpotter equipment on December 28, hopes were high that the department had a tool in its arsenal that would help it end some of East Palo Alto's violence by quickly finding criminals.

The ShotSpotter is a national shooter detection and location system which has acoustic satellite triangulation sensors.

When the Shotspotter is placed within a designated area, it detects the exact

location and time of a gunshot. The gunshot instantly registers on police dispatcher computers. This instant notification enables the police to arrive at the location of the gunfire within minutes of weapons being fired.

According to Captain John Chalmers of the East Palo Alto Police Department, the initial tests of the ShotSpotter system proved successful. Since those initial tests last December, the police have had various occasions to use the equipment.

Released reports thus far indicate that the SpotSpotter is living up to the high expectations. On New Year's Eve,

the East Palo Alto Police Department recovered two guns within the first 20 minutes that the system was put in use.

On March 10, the East Palo Alto police reported that the ShotSpotter notified them of guns being fired at several locations within the city. This notification enabled the police to recover three firearms.

"The city is fortunate to have the Shotspotter system installed because of the amount of service related calls from the community involving guns being maliciously fired throughout the city," said Chalmers.

The ShotSpotter system is becoming more popular and accessible across the nation as well. The San Francisco Police Department plans to implement the ShotSpotter equipment this month.

Chalmers added, "Whether it is gang related or otherwise, the Shotspotter system will pinpoint the Shotspotter's location making it a tool that law enforcement can utilize to take into custody those that are shooting the guns resulting in a safer community."

Brigade General Mitch Mitchiner, Shotspotter's senior vice president of Military and Defense Programs, said that the Shotspotter is the

most effective technological provider of gunshot detection and location for public safety.

The East Palo Alto Police Department received the funding to purchase the ShotSpotter from grants, which the department will continue to pursue in the near future.

In the March 10 episode, police reported that the ShotSpotter notified the police of the gunshots a minute before the first call from a resident was received. ShotSpotter was also able to pinpoint the exact location of the shots fired where officers recovered the shell casing as evidence.

I Believe I Can...

By Kim Carlton
EPA Today Contributor

"Our lives are not determined by what happens to us but by how we react to what happens, not by what life brings to us, but by the attitude we bring to life. A positive attitude causes a chain reaction of positive thoughts, events, and outcomes. It is a catalyst, a spark that creates extraordinary results." - Anonymous

In January 2008, Start Up began offering free public screenings of the movie, The Secret. If you're familiar with the movie, you might wonder why a nonprofit that trains folks to start and run their own small businesses would host a free public screening of a film about the Law of Attraction and how our thoughts shape our reality. After all, isn't building a business about rolling up your sleeves and doing the real

work of making a product or offering a service that people want and are willing to pay for, finding those people and marketing yourself to them, selling to them and collecting the profits?

Well, yes and no. Yes because, obviously, building a business does entail all of those things and it often requires persistent, dedicated work to develop a thriving and profitable business. But no, because building a business is a lot like building a house in the sense that the final product needs to exist first in someone's imagination before it can take form in reality. If you doubt this, I ask you: would you be willing to live in a house that was built with no blueprint by someone who had never held a hammer before and understood nothing about safety codes?

A business is a complex set of moving pieces that all need to fit together well in order for

it to work properly. In that sense, it's more like a machine than a house (and I don't know anyone who's itching to go out and buy a car that was built without a plan by someone with no engineering expertise, either). So it makes sense that you'd want a plan in hand before starting to build a business. And a business plan is what Start Up program participants have by the end of their training.

At the risk of stating the obvious, let me point out that a plan is nothing more than a written description of an idea, complete with all the details of how it will actually work and often with some explanation of how it will be built. And an idea is, well, a collection of thoughts. The more you think about it, the clearer the image begins to focus in your mind. If you talk about it to other people, their questions can force you to flesh out the

image even more.

There's a process at work here: if you think about something long enough, it becomes very real in your mind. The more real in your mind it becomes, the more likely you are to talk to other people about it. As you talk about it, it becomes even more real to you and you become inspired to take actions in accordance with your thoughts and words. Think ' say ' do = creation. When all three are in alignment, it becomes very powerful.

Start Up helps people clarify their ideas and turn them into plans, because we know that that's the first step in creating a business. And it's often the most difficult. For one thing, the relationship between thought and reality is not always well understood and people often think they'll figure something out as they go along. That can work, if

you're clear at the outset about where you're going. If you don't yet know, however, then you could get carried along to someplace you don't really want to be.

The Secret may not be about business, but understanding the creative power of thought absolutely can support your success in building a business. In fact, understanding the creative power of thought can support your success in any area of your life that is important to you.

Start Up offers free public screenings of The Secret (in English with Spanish subtitles) on the first Friday of every month, beginning at 7 pm at Start Up (1395 Bay Road, East Palo Alto). Seating is limited to 20; first come, first served. For information call (650) 321-2193.

Kim Carlton is the executive director of Start Up.

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An experience of a lifetime

By Henrietta J. Burroughs
EPA Today

It has been said that many are called, but few are chosen. Maria Centeno and Francisco Espinoza were chosen for what some would consider an experience of a lifetime. These two local students had their films screened at the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah this past January.

The film festival was started by actor Robert Redford and it is an annual international event. As participants in the Adobe Youth Voices screening event which took place at the film festival, Centeno and Espinoza had an opportunity to meet other aspiring filmmakers from all over the world.

Sixteen year old Centeno and 18 year old Espinoza are both members of the Boys and Girls Club of the Peninsula in East Palo Alto. They were able to participate

in the film festival because they took part in the Adobe Youth Voices (AYV) program at their club. Their AYV training gave them access to digital tools which enabled them to use video, digital art, web, animation, and audio equipment to design their own multimedia project.

This is the second year for both Maria and Francisco. They were part of the 2007 and now part of the 2008 AYV program. Maria's video was created at the Moldaw Zaffaroni Boys and Girls club located in East Palo Alto and Francisco's movie was created at the Mervin G. Morris Boys and Girls club located in Redwood City.

Through the skills that she developed in the program, Centeno, who is an East Palo Alto resident, created a film titled, "Just Say It." In her film, which is a visual representation of a spoken word poem, she told the story of a young



Francisco Espinoza and Maria Centeno

woman growing up in East Palo Alto who experiences the death of a friend as a result of a mistaken identity. Her friend's death led her to realize that we all have a lasting impact on each other and that we all have something to say.

For Centeno, her film is a real life story. The friend who was killed in her film was someone she knew personally. His name was Jamel Mims. She realized that after he was shot to death, she had to do something positive with her life. Prior to Mims' death, Centeno had been expelled from school. In order to get a passing grade, once she returned to school, she had to do a community service project. So she entered the AYV program at the Boys and Girls Club of the Peninsula. and, through her training there, created her film.

Centeno is now a tenth grade student at East Palo Alto High School. She said that her goal is to attend the New York Film Academy and pursue filmmaking as a career.

Espinoza, who lives in Redwood City, titled the film he created "The Pace Maker." His film tells the story of a 17 year old high school drop out named Steven Santos, who grows up fatherless. Santos attends a variety of different schools from which he drops out or is expelled. He eventually spends time in jail before he sees the light and turns his life around.

Espinoza said he made his film because he wanted to give back to the community and he recognized, when he joined the Boys and Girls Club, that the school drop out rate was a big problem in the community.

Espinoza said he believes that it is always possible to turn one's life around. In his film, Santos does just that. Santos goes back to school, gets his GED and works on his relationship with his father. In the end the two of them own their own business.

Miquel Salinas, the Senior Program Manager for the Adobe Youth Voices program (AYV), which was created by the Adobe Foundation in 2006, said that the program is designed "to empower youth in underserved communities around the globe with real-world experiences and 21st century tools to communicate their ideas, exhibit their potential, and take action in their communities."

In many ways, Centeno and Espinoza's films tell a story of hope, of dreams come true and of positive possibilities. One can use the same words that describe their films to characterize both Centeno and Espinoza, themselves, since their participation in AYV and their trip to the Sundance Film Festival tell a story of hope, of dreams come true and of positive possibilities. tell a story of hope, of dreams come true and of endless possibilities.

To see Maria Centeno and Francisco Espinoza's films, go to <http://www.adobe.com/about/adobe/philanthropy/youthvoices/>



Marching with Dr. King

By Loretta Green
EPA Today Contributor

The Annual Dr Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebration this year (Sunday, Jan. 20) at the First United Methodist Church in Palo Alto, featured as keynote speaker, a man who had marched in Selma, AL with the revered civil rights leader.

The Rev. Robert Olmstead was a college student when he first heard the young Martin Luther King, Jr. speak. Dr. King had already been through the Montgomery bus boycott as a result of Rosa Parks' arrest for refusing to give her seat to a white passenger.

Then in 1995, Olmstead heard about what came to be known as "Bloody Sunday," in Alabama when King and others were beaten back as they attempted a peaceful march across the Edmund



Rev. Robert Olmstead

Pettus Bridge. He packed his bags and headed for Selma.

Olmstead told the audience at the multi-racial, inter-faith birthday celebration about frightening times there. Another white minister named James Reeb, had, like him, traveled to Selma and been killed by a mob of angry white men. Wearing his clergy collar, Rev. Olmstead joined the gathering of civil rights supporters.

"The folks from outside our circle pressed so close I could smell their breath and feel their spit," he told a rapt audience. "They shouted vile sexual insinuations. They called out the names of the

black youths they recognized and said, 'We'll get you later.' Someone stuck his mouth close to my ear and said, 'Rev. Reeb got what he deserved and we mean to do the same to you.'"

The program was attended by nearly 300 people. It is presented annually by a small committee made up of the Peninsula Bay Chapter of the Links, Inc., Jerusalem Baptist Church, First United Methodist Church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and The Community Activities Committee.

The Hon. LaDoris Cordell, retired judge of the Superior Court, emceed the program and dedicated it to committee member, Patsy Moore, who died late last year after a fall in Palo Alto.

Rev. Olmstead, now Senior Pastor Emeritus of First United Methodist, had been her pastor. He noted that he,

like Moore, is white.

"So we stand symbolically for the principle point, I hope to make this afternoon - that Martin Luther King, Jr., is not an African-American hero and pioneer - he is an American hero and pioneer who was dedicated not just to freeing blacks from the bonds of segregation and injustice, but who was also dedicated to freeing whites from the bonds of bigotry and hate," he said.

Along with the traditional singing of the "Negro National Anthem:" and "We Shall Overcome," Rhonda and Grady Harris of Jerusalem Baptist performed "Precious Lord, Take My Hand" said to have been requested by Dr. King on the night before he died.

Second grade girls from Costano School delighted the crowd with their spirited recitation of "The Dreamer Sleeps" by Linda Copp. They

were Brianna Boyd, Isabel Esquivias, Angelica Burleson and Leslie Mejia. Afterward the Peninsula Bay Links presented youth awards for an artwork competition dedicated to Dr. King.

The art, in the form of puffy clouds had King's "Dream" speech quotes imprinted on them and were on display in the church's Fellowship Hall during a reception hosted by the Links. The children had added their own dreams beneath King's words:

The world will relax and stop fighting - Breanna
The world will be free of prejudice - La Shelle

The people will stop the war and get along. - Jason

The world can be color smart. - Noa

Loretta Green is an award winning columnist who is now enjoying her retirement.

Community Newsbriefs

Wells Fargo Makes \$10k Donation to Aid Vandalized Schools

On behalf of Wells Fargo, Peninsula Regional President Bob Ceglio presented \$10,000 to the Ravenswood School District in East Palo Alto after two schools were vandalized in January.

The damage was so extensive that one of the schools cancelled classes on the first day of the spring semester. District officials recently reported that both schools are getting back on their feet and following Wells Fargo's contribution, another \$15,000 in donations was contributed by the local community.

Superintendent Maria De La Vega said, "We are so



Photo courtesy of Michele Ashley
 Left to right: back row, Annette Shelby-Todd, Ravenswood Education Foundation; Michele Sharkey, Ravenswood Education Foundation; Edwin Ng, South Peninsula District Manager; Jen Novak, Ravenswood Education Foundation, Michael Ormonde, South Peninsula, District Manager, Charley Scandlyn, Ravenswood Education Foundation; Denise Miles, Community Development Officer; Maria De La Vega, Superintendent; and Bob Ceglio, Peninsula Regional President

appreciative of Wells Fargo's generosity in helping us in a great time of need. The bank

inspired the community to contribute what they could to help us recover quickly."

Election Update

Fifty volunteers worked over a two day period this past February to make phone calls and walk 11 precincts in East Palo Alto to encourage 2,000 registered voters to cast their votes. The volunteer event was headquartered at Doctors Café on University Avenue in East Palo Alto.

Elizabeth Jackson, a precinct captain who sponsored the two day event said, "The activities were very successful. People picked up information and signs which they took with them to pass out."

Other precinct workers who participated included Sharifa

Wilson and Glenda Savage-Johnson. They were joined by Rosemary Steele, Sandra Webster, Lorraine Holmes. Mayor Pat Foster, William Webster and Steward Hyland were a few of those who brought or encouraged groups to volunteer.

As of March 4, the official San Mateo County election results show that 78% of voters or 3,278 people voted for Measure M, the school parcel tax. A count of 11 East Palo Alto precincts show Obama won over Clinton at almost two to one with 1,739 votes to her 928 votes. Measure J, the School Bond measure won with 65.5% of the votes. It needed 55% of the votes to pass.

Avoiding foreclosure

If you are unable to make your mortgage payment:

1. Don't ignore the problem. The further behind you become, the harder it will be to reinstate your loan and the more likely that you will lose your house.

2. Contact your lender as soon as you realize that you have a problem.

Lenders do not want your house. They have options to help borrowers through difficult financial times.

3. Open and respond to all mail from your lender.

The first notices you receive will offer good information about foreclosure prevention options that can help you weather financial problems. Later mail may include important notice of pending legal action. Your failure to open the mail will not be an excuse

in foreclosure court.

4. Know your mortgage rights.

Find your loan documents and read them so you know what your lender may do if you can't make your payments. Learn about the foreclosure laws and timeframes in your state (as every state is different) by contacting the State Government Housing Office.

5. Understand foreclosure prevention options.

Valuable information about foreclosure prevention (also called loss mitigation) options can be found on the internet at www.fha.gov/foreclosure/index.cfm.

6. Contact a HUD-approved housing counselor.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funds

free or very low cost housing counseling nationwide. Housing counselors can help you understand the law and your options, organize your finances and represent you in negotiations with your lender if you need this assistance. Find a HUD-approved housing counselor near you or call (800) 569-4287 or TTY (800) 877-8339.

7. Prioritize your spending. After healthcare, keeping your house should be your first priority. Review your finances and see where you can cut spending in order to make your mortgage payment. Look for optional expenses-cable TV, memberships, entertainment-that you can eliminate. Delay payments on credit cards and other "unsecured" debt until you have paid your mortgage.

8. Use your assets.

Do you have assets-a second car, jewelry, a whole life insurance policy-that you can sell for cash to help reinstate your loan? Can anyone in your household get an extra job to bring in additional income? Even if these efforts don't significantly increase your available cash or your income, they demonstrate to your lender that you are willing to make sacrifices to keep your home.

9. Avoid foreclosure prevention companies.

You don't need to pay fees for foreclosure prevention help-use that money to pay the mortgage instead. Many for-profit companies will contact you promising to negotiate with your lender. While these may be legitimate businesses, they will charge you a hefty fee (often two or three

continued from page 1

month's mortgage payment) for information and services your lender or a HUD approved housing counselor will provide free if you contact them.

10. Don't lose your house to foreclosure recovery scams!

If any firm claims they can stop your foreclosure immediately if you sign a document appointing them to act on your behalf, you may well be signing over the title to your property and becoming a renter in your own home! Never sign a legal document without reading and understanding all the terms and getting professional advice from an attorney, a trusted real estate professional, or a HUD approved housing counselor.

<http://www.hud.gov/foreclosure/index.cfm>

Cómo evitar la ejecución hipotecaria

continued from page 1

credicia.

"Póngase en contacto con su prestamista inmediatamente." Comuníquese con una agencia de asesoría de vivienda aprobada por HUD

"Línea telefónica gratuita (800) 569-4287

"TDD (800) 877-8339

Si no puede cumplir con los pagos de su hipoteca tome los siguientes pasos:

1. No ignore el problema.

Mientras más se atrasa, más difícil le será restituir su préstamo y las probabilidades de perder su vivienda aumentan.

2. Tan pronto se de cuenta de que tiene problemas para realizar los pagos de su hipoteca, llame o escriba de inmediato a su entidad crediticia.

Las entidades crediticias no desean su vivienda y disponen de opciones para ayudar a los prestatarios durante momentos de dificultades financieras.

3. Lea y conteste toda la correspondencia que reciba de su agencia crediticia.

Las primeras notificaciones que reciba le ofrecerán información beneficiosa acerca de las opciones disponibles para evitar una ejecución, que le pueden ayudar a superar los problemas financieros. Sucesiva correspondencia puede incluir importantes avisos de una acción legal pendiente. No abrir su correspondencia no servirá de excusa ante un juicio por deficiencia o ejecu-

ción hipotecaria.

4. Conozca sus derechos hipotecarios.

Busque sus documentos de préstamo y léalos, así estará al tanto de las medidas que puede tomar su agencia crediticia si usted no puede realizar sus pagos. Aprenda sobre las leyes de ejecución y póngase en contacto con la Oficina de Vivienda de Gobierno Estatal para saber el plazo de tiempo que dispone en su estado (ya que cada estado es diferente).

5. Estudie las opciones para prevenir la ejecución hipotecaria.

El portal de la Administración de Vivienda Federal dispone de valiosa información sobre opciones para prevenir la eje-

cución (conocidas también como mitigación de pérdidas o alternativas de pago).

6. Consulte a un asesor de vivienda aprobado por HUD. El Departamento de Vivienda y Desarrollo Urbano de EE.UU. (HUD, por sus siglas en inglés) suministra fondos para servicios de asesoría de vivienda gratuitos o de muy bajo costo en todo el país. Los asesores de vivienda pueden ayudarle a entender la ley y las opciones disponibles; también pueden ofrecerle asesoría en cómo organizar sus finanzas y representarle en negociaciones con su agencia crediticia, en caso de usted necesitar esta ayuda. Consulte a una agencia de asesoría de vivienda

aprobada por HUD en su zona. Llame al (800) 569-4287 o contáctenos por TDD al (800) 877-8339 para obtener información sobre la agencia de asesoría de vivienda de su zona.

7. Prioritize sus gastos.

Después de atención de la salud, conservar su vivienda debería ser su primera prioridad. Examine sus finanzas y vea donde puede recortar gastos a fin de que pueda hacer su pago hipotecario. Busque gastos opcionales tales como televisión por cable, membresías, entretenimiento que pueda eliminar. Pague primero su hipoteca

continuacion de la pagina 11

From the Editor's Desk

We are one

In January, our nation celebrated Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday. This past February, we celebrated Black History Month. This month, we'd like to celebrate our common humanity.

Throughout the world, most anthropologists and geneticists seem to agree that the human race has one common ancestor. The latest genetic research shows we all descended from a single African ancestor who lived some 60,000 years ago. That first ancestor can be traced back to one African woman, whom scientists call the Mitochondrial Eve.

On the surface, we all appear to be very different ethnically, but under the skin, we are much more similar than many would ever think. So, whether individuals have brown eyes, blue eyes, curly hair or straight, dark complexions or light complexions, we all started from one place with the same set of parents. In recognition of our common bonds, we have taken the liberty in this issue of sharing three articles from various authors who write about the similarities in our ethnic identities.

In the modern world, various groups were brought together because of the slave trade. Since the history of our shared cultures and ethnic identities represents such a fascinating story, we decided to share in this issue of EPA Today some of the individual scholarship that three authors have done personally.

In this issue we will focus on some of the common ethnic and cultural bonds that African Americans share with their Latino neighbors. I would wager that it is a history that few in East Palo Alto or even those in the greater community

know about.

As you read this issue, you will see an article by Miriam Jiménez Román, titled "Africa's Legacy in Mexico: What Is a Mexican?" Roman's article was originally a part of an exhibit sponsored by the Schomburg Center in New York. You can see it among other similar articles of collected works on the Migrations in History exhibit on the Smithsonian Institution's website.

The link is:

<http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/migrations/start.html>

You will also find an article by Crispin Rendon, titled "Black History Month Has Special Meaning..." Rendon is on the board of Somos Primos, a magazine in Southern California. In his article, Rendon traces his ancestry back through five generations to the 1700s. We could only reprint in this issue his findings about his first generation of ancestors. The magazine can be found at <http://www.somosprimos.com>. Other interesting articles on the subject can be found at: <http://www.somosprimos.com/blacklatino/bl.htm#Afro-Mexican%20Racial>

Last in our series is an article by Alisa Valdes-Rodriguez, who is a writer and speaker, whom Time magazine called one of the 25 most influential Hispanics in America. Valdes-Rodriguez shows in her writings how passionately she feels about the common bonds we all have.

You can see her blog with many of her articles at her blog site address <http://www.alisavaldesrodriguez.com>.

I am extremely grateful to Román, Rendon, and Valdes-Rodriguez for giving me permission to



Henrietta J. Burroughs



Photo courtesy of Pamela Relliford

Re-entry volunteers serve food at the reception following the candle light memorial service held at St Francis of Assisi church on Wednesday, March 12.

Letters in East Palo Alto Today

Willows Traffic

Dear Editor

On March 11, the Menlo Park City Council begins to discuss their priority list of city projects, taken from lists presented by the City Commissions. The Willows traffic activists have managed to get a virtual repeat of the 1993 debacle on the Transportation Commission's priority list. Staff put it on the list and the Commission ranked it at number seven.

The activists are lobbying ferociously to have it included in the City Council's list. This is the first step toward a repeat of 1993 - 1995. I have no problem with studying traffic, but the project they've proposed includes the desired results - street closures and a "maze-like experience" (see attachment).

Except for John Boyle, the Council seems to favor the activists, but two seats are up for grabs this fall and they might be influenced to back off on the Willows if they perceive the backlash that will surely come from this project - as it did in the '90s.

The target as before is East Palo Alto and the criminals

that our open streets supposedly invite. Whether street closures, "neighborhood modernization" or a "maze-like experience", the "solution" will create total disruption of our traditional traffic patterns. Diversion of traffic from the "problem" steets (mainly Chester and Woodland), which are driving this plan, to other streets is a certainty. Intolerable delays of emergency vehicles is a certainty. Aesthetically dragging some of our beautiful streets to the brink of urban blight is a certainty.

Some letters from the silent majority would be very helpful city.council@menlopark.org. The Willows Area Wide Traffic study should not be elevated to the status of an official City of Menlo Park Priority. Suggested arguments:- a tiny minority is driving this issue - not wasting city resources chasing this AGAIN -reminding the Council that the last time we went through this, we spent 10s of thousands of dollars (more?) and at least as much staff, council, commission, and city time culminating in a Willows vote to get rid of virtually all of the traffic calming

stuff - reminding the Council how divisive an issue this was last time pitting street vs street, racial undertones, and more.

I'm attaching a file of headlines from the '90s as a reminder. Many Council members may not have even been here in the '90s. The message is "This is what happened before, let's not do it again". I'm going to send at least some of the headlines to the Council.

Also attached is a scan of the deceptive flyer from last year that got all this started.

For historical review see <http://www.safeopenstreets.net/bb3/history.html> (What the activists wanted in '93, what the CC approved, what was put in as a Phase I trial, what was left after the residents were finally given the vote, what's been put in bit by bit since then)

Don't wait. Email the Council now. Better yet, speak at the meeting next Tuesday.

Some indignation from EPA would be very helpful.

Eric Doyle
Menlo Park resident

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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 agree-

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

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

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

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

East Palo Alto Today

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Opinion

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

A pressing need for creative solutions

By Court Skinner
EPA Today Contributor



Court Skinner

At the recent East Palo Alto city council meeting (March 3, 2008) some may have seen me address the members with a story intended to produce a little out of the box thinking re the current rent increase crisis that has been precipitated by Page Mill Properties.

The story comes from the introduction of a book by Edward DeBono on the subject of "lateral thinking". The scene is a garden with gravel paths composed white and black stones. The characters are a young woman, her father, and presumably the owner of the garden, a wealthy scoundrel, who has

lent the father money that he cannot hope to repay.

This landowner suggests that the woman take his hand in marriage and he will forgive the father's debt. She has no interest in this, but foolishly agrees to a wager.

The scoundrel says he will choose three stones, one white and two black, put them in a bag and let the woman

choose one. If she chooses the white one he will forgive the debt without the marriage requirement. If the black she must take his first offer. She watches and observes the scoundrel place three black stones in the bag. This is the sort of fellow he was after all. What to do?

If she exposes him then she is no better off than before. She exercises a bit of lateral thinking and comes up with a solution that turns the scoundrel's advantage to her own. She chooses a stone from the bag, then before anyone can see what it is, clumsily drops it back onto the path among all the other black and white stones, and says, "It is not a problem, for to determine which color was

selected, we have only to look into the bag and see what remains." Now it was the scoundrel's turn to think, but he was no match, and was forced to both forgive the debt and forget about having his way with the woman.

I tell this story to remind the council and other good citizens of East Palo Alto, that with a little lateral thinking, we may best all the scoundrels who come to East Palo Alto, with less than laudable intentions.

One of our citizens has carefully thought through the current situation that we are calling the rent crisis and determined that the ruling by the judge shows that our current rent stabilization ordinance provides us with tools

every bit as effective as dropping that black stone back into the path.

It requires that the rent stabilization board send a letter to the landlords informing them of their duties under the ordinance in order to raise rents, and that the tenants be aware of these requirements as well. It appears that the landlords have been practicing blatant obfuscation to create confusion among the city staff, city attorneys, and certainly the tenants. The current lawsuit appeared to do nothing to address this, but apparently a more careful reading of the judge's ruling proves that no urgency ordinance is really necessary,

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Not in our institutions - Silicon Valley

By Henry Organ
EPA Today Contributor

Several organizations are sponsoring a leadership conference in Palo Alto on March 13th. The conference is entitled: "Beyond Us and Them: Confronting Hidden Bias in Our Community, A Leadership Workshop of Not in Our Town - Silicon Valley." According to promotional materials, invitees are "...to engage in a half-day discussion and workshop that can help launch new efforts to build a strong, more inclusive community." The sponsors are to be applauded for this undertaking.

The promotional materials

include often-used words and phrases: intolerance, more inclusive community, hate (crimes), feeling welcome, inclusion, (hidden) bias, diversity, acceptance, respect.

A different perspective of these complex issues is offered for consideration. Writing for myself, and as a person of color, I do not seek to be tolerated, included, liked, welcomed or accepted by anyone. And, I also acknowledge that individuals are free to have biased attitudes, hidden or exposed. They are not free, however, to allow their biased behavior to interfere with my legal and constitutional rights or the

rights of others.

What becomes important then is the distinction between individual and institutional bias. The latter institutionally manifested bias, is far more pervasive and injurious to individuals. As acknowledged above, individuals are free to have biased attitudes and behavior. They should not be free to use public and private institutions as media for biased behavior for the injury of others. So, greater conference attention might be focused--not on how individuals relate to one another--but how individuals are adversely affected through institutions.

As an example, the public

institution most often cited as a medium for bias is the criminal justice system.

Officer A may have a biased attitude against gays. DA B may have a biased attitude against people of color. Judge C may have a biased attitude against criminal defendants. None of the above is authorized to use the institution of which they are a part to exercise their biases.

This rationale may be applied to any institutional venue in society, be it the workplace, academia, places of worship, social service agencies, etc.

In summary, it is hoped that some attention at the confer-

ence will be addressed to the extent to which public and private institutions in Silicon Valley are used as instruments of bias, whether by commission or omission. Such a focus might provide some actionable, measurable items for annual assessment by the sponsors.

So, the theme of the conference might be slightly altered: "Not in Our Institutions - Silicon Valley."

Again, congratulations and appreciation to the sponsors.

Henry Organ is a retired Stanford University employee who has long been active in the East Palo Alto and Menlo Park communities.

"EXPERIENCED BALL PLAYERS WANTED"

By Maria Perez
EPA Today Contributor

Last Spring something wonderful grew in East Palo Alto. Babe Ruth Baseball which had only been around for a couple of years was about to fade away. Coaches were hard to find, parents were not participating, the kids were leaving the team and it looked as if the whole Babe Ruth organization in EPA would fail.

Then a group of determined parents, with the dedication of coach Evarardo Luna and a generous donation from the Babe Ruth sponsor PAL Market turned that all around.

The parents hustled up



PAL Market EPA MUSTANGS

some more kids and donations, the coach kept practicing with the few kids he had determined to make the team grow and work, and PAL Market bought some incredible first-rate uniforms for the kids that made them look and

feel like professional ball players.

Next the parents incorporated the whole enterprise, established 501(c)(3) non-profit status and created a new baseball establishment. For the first time in recent

EPA memory we now have an East Palo Alto Babe Ruth Baseball Team for young teens.

Babe Ruth should not be confused with Tee-Ball/Pitching Machine which is located Jack Farrell Park and is for the younger children from 4 through 9 years of age, or Little League in MLK park for kids 9 through 12 when they move on from Pitching Machine.

Babe Ruth baseball is for the older kids from 13 - 15 years of age. Since EPA does not have a Babe Ruth size field for games or a league of our own, we play in the Belmont League and practice at Costano

Elementary. We are now proudly the PAL Market EPA MUSTANGS.

Not only is this a challenging age of youth to work with at times, but it is even more difficult trying to get them to participate in large numbers, away from video games and hanging out looking for something to get into.

In the last few years, there seems to be a decrease of young male participation in local soccer, baseball and hockey teams. Statistic also show a huge upswing in video game sales. This is one factor why our youth are

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Lifecycles

Honoring Mrs. Gertrude Wilks

By Henrietta J. Burroughs
EPA Today

Scores of community residents and fellow activists showed up at Bay Café this past Saturday to wish Mrs. Gertrude Wilks a happy birthday. Not only was the event a celebration of her 81 years, it was also a celebration of Mrs. Wilks' dedication to youth education and her dedication to the East Palo Alto community.

Those who came to honor Mrs. Wilks saw a special DVD presentation which showed some of the high points of her life along with the contributions that she made to the community during the 56 years that she has lived in East Palo Alto. The DVD documented how she rallied volunteers around her to spearhead important educational programs for the community and its youth.

One of these programs was the Sneak Out Program which placed Palo Alto children in the homes of residents in adjoining communities, such as Palo Alto and



Mrs. Gertrude Wilks

Los Altos so that they could obtain a quality education. She was lauded for founding Mothers for Equal Education and creating the King Project, East Palo Alto's first summer program for teenagers.

David Rages was a student in the Sneak Out Program, a participant in the Teen Summer Project and a teacher in the Nairobi Day School that Mrs. Wilks founded. In telling what Mrs. Wilks meant to him, Rages said that it was important for him, as a young man, to have someone like Mrs. Wilks in a leadership role.

"Mrs. Wilks was always very patient and very steady," Rages said. "You had to be very patient at that time. I'm honored to be able to stand here today and say I was a part of those times. Thank you Mrs. Wilks for all of the

inspiration that you provided."

Other speakers included Clara Fitzgerald, a Los Altos resident whose family hosted a nine year old East Palo Alto child; Ella Beecher, a parent and a recruiter for the Nairobi Day School, Bob Hoover who served on the Alto Park Council and taught at the Nairobi College; Rae Bell, a teacher in the Nairobi High School, Pastor George M. Murray who served as a principal in the Nairobi High School and Clarence Watts, a board Member and accountant for the Mother for Equal Education. Each speaker expressed sentiments that were similar to Rages.

Beecher said, "I honor you Mrs. Wilks because you've been inspirational for all of us."

Bob Hoover under Mrs. Wilks said during the ceremony, "There were two to three people who were my inspiration. Mrs. Wilks was at the head of the list. She was like the Stokely Carmichael of East Palo Alto.

"I learned so much from this lady," Hoover said. She was like a mentor, like a sister to me. We fought so many battles. I am extremely grateful

for having Gertrude in my life," he said.

Donna Rutherford, East Palo Alto's Vice Mayor, read a Proclamation from the City of East Palo Alto which Proclaimed March 8 as Gertrude Wilks Day in the City of East Palo Alto. The proclamation cited Mrs Wilks many contributions including the fact that she served for several years on the East Palo Alto Municipal Council in the late 1970's. It also praised her for founding the city's first black film festival.

Beverly Beasley Johnson, the director of the San Mateo County Human Service Agency, presented Mrs. Wilks with a Proclamation from the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors which honored her for her distinguished work

in creating opportunities for young people to thrive.

After the presentations were over the crowd serenaded Mrs. Wilks by singing Stevie Wonder's version of Happy Birthday to her. Earlier in the program Naja Hendrix gave the welcoming address, while Martha Hanks served as the mistress of ceremonies and Sandra Webster served as the program coordinator.

The finale of all of the presentations was the presentation made by Mrs. Wilks herself. In sharing her experiences, many of which were documented in the DVD that was shown earlier, Mrs. Wilks said, "A lot of people felt that we didn't care about our children. We had to show that that we did care. We tried our best."

But at the end, she said that it was the young people who helped her out, who lifted her up. Don't give up on them. Don't be scared."

Mrs. Wilks told the group that her autobiography is being written. "I didn't want to stop," she said, "until I could tell you about the goodness of people and what people can do for people."



Guests at Mrs. Wilks birthday party

Recognizing another community activist



Marina Latu

By Dana Tom
EPA Today Intern

Marina Latu is an award-winning filmmaker, a Stanford University film student, an aspiring screenwriter and a dedicated volunteer. She has taken some important steps in her crusade to help reduce crime rates in East Palo Alto.

Latu won an award from the Midpeninsula Community Media Center for organizing the Live in Peace March and Rally in 2007. The March & Rally event on February 3 aimed to unite the East Palo Alto community, specifically targeting the youth population, and encourage peace after a dramatic increase in youth violence and homicides during the previous year.

Latu later earned the Community Producer WAVE Award for Best Talk Show Issue 2007 with production collaborators, Doug Fort and Karen Adams, from the Alliance for Community Media in recognition of their work on her short series, called "What's Going On."

The series focuses on social realism and promotes

violence prevention among adolescent and young adult audiences of East Palo Alto. Latu said that the "What's Going On" series currently consists of three episodes, but she is working on the production of three more to complete the series.

As a film student and active filmmaker in the community, Latu said that she believes "the media has a lot of power," which has inspired her to continue with her media activism and other various filmmaking projects.

Latu said that winning the awards has been an "overwhelming" experience. She applauds the community for "striving to change" in recent years. She said that her efforts and leadership skills reflect many of her past expe-

riences growing up in the Bay Area. "Many things from the past inspired me," said Latu, "...My family, community and friends."

However, Latu admitted that the awards are not of primary importance for her future and her aspirations. "I do this work because it makes me feel good and I care about people in East Palo Alto...The awards sort of give me a nudge to want to do more," she said.



A scene from "What's Going On"

Not only does Latu expect to produce three more episodes of her short series, but she also is composing other short documentaries, working to organize several community events in the spring, finishing a feature script, adding to her online blog, and working to receive government grants for her various projects.

"It gives me thrills watching each project develop...This has all been really cool, but I know I can push to do more," said Latu. "I have a lot of big dreams and big goals" - which no doubt the community cannot wait to see unfold.

Dana Tom is an EPA Today intern who attends Menlo High School in Atherton, CA