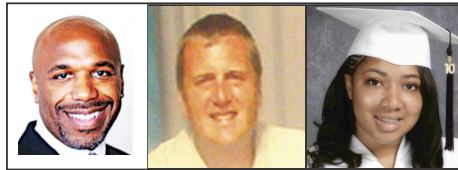


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East Palo Alto Mustangs page 12

East Palo Alto Today

Providing news that is relevant, informative and critical



East Palo Alto and Belle Haven

May - June, 2010

Vol. 5 No.22

EPA searches for city manager

By Henrietta J. Burroughs
East Palo Alto Today

Starting from a large pool of almost 90 applicants, the search for East Palo Alto's next city manager has now been narrowed to 8 candidates.

The East Palo Alto City Council's closed door interviews with the 8 candidates

were held over a three day period on May 13, May 14 and May 20.

The interviews took place in the second floor conference room at the East Palo Alto Municipal Building.

Now that the council has completed its first round of interviews with all of the candidates, the pool will be reduced

again to 3 to 4 finalists.

The names of the finalists be might released at the city council's next meeting on June 1.

Carlos Romero, the city's vice mayor, said that in narrowing the field of candidates even further, the council is looking for a city manager who has specific qualities.

Romero said that he is in-

terested in having a city manager who has management experience in the municipal realm.

He said that the council needs someone who has redevelopment experience and has completed redevelopment projects or has projects in the process of completion.

"I am also interested in having someone who has ex-



EPA Vice Mayor
Carlos Romero

Inside News



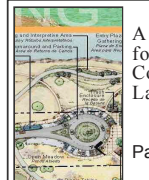
Honoring
EPA's
oldest
resident

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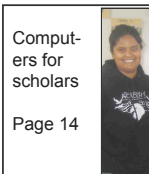
An out-
standing
local
volunteer

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A Vision
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Opening two new centers



Photo courtesy of Kathleen Alexander

This picture shows East Palo Alto Mayor David Wood cutting the ribbon at the opening of the Ravenswood Family Health Center's new Center for Health Promotion and the Ravenswood Family Dentistry clinic. Photo shows Rev. Mary Frazier in black jacket, San Mateo County Supervisor Rose Jacobs Gibson Susan Erlich. MD, MPP - CEO of San Mateo Medical Center and RFHC CEO Luisa Buada. See article in this issue of EPA Today on page 4.

perience assembling and balancing budgets," Romero said

The council is hoping to have the new city manager in the position by the end of July or the beginning of August.

The city manager position became vacant in East Palo Alto when Alvin James, who has served as the city's chief executive since 2003, announced at the city council meeting last September 15 that he could not reach an agreement on renewing his contract and that he had decided to pursue other interests, including the possibility of retirement.

Once the finalists for the position have been selected, 15 city residents will be invited to sit on a community panel to

continued on page 10

Improving the quality of education

By Richard Hackmann
East Palo Alto Today

Stanford University took a major hit in its quest to improve the education of children in East Palo Alto last April 14 when Trustees of the Ravenswood City School District voted to deny a renewal of their charter school application.

Citing concerns over the

academic performance of students, Trustees voted 3-2 amid a packed house of parents and students to deny a new five-year charter to Stanford New Schools, or SNS.

SNS is the Stanford University affiliated non-profit that oversees both its elementary and high schools that are responsible for the education of

some 551 Ravenswood City School District students.

The prevailing reason cited by the Trustees for not renewing the charter application was poor student performance data. However, that interpretation is disputed by both SNS officials and many students, parents, and teachers affiliated with the schools.

The decision not to renew

the charter application came on the heels of a report that placed SNS on California's list of lowest performing schools. A total of three Ravenswood City school District institutions were cited on that list.

Trustees felt that SNS had not met one of the basic re-

continued on page 10

Rolling out the welcome wagon

By Michele Ashley
East Palo Alto Today

San Francisco will be rolling out the welcome mat for the 100 Black Men of America's historic 25th Annual Conference.

The 100, with financial support from host presenting

sponsor Wells Fargo, will lead a five day conference in San Francisco in June 2011, which will include various training workshops and educational sessions on economic development, led by national and international industry experts.

Plans for the 100's 2011 national conference were

made at a press conference in early April at the African American Arts and Cultural Complex, located at 762 Fulton Street in San Francisco. Dozens of local leaders, including the Honorable former Mayor Willie Brown, attended the conference to show their support.

"We are extremely excited

to announce San Francisco as the home of our milestone 25th Annual Conference," said Chairman Al Dotson. "Each year, the 100's conference provides an international platform to engage leaders from around the globe on issues concerning education, mentor-

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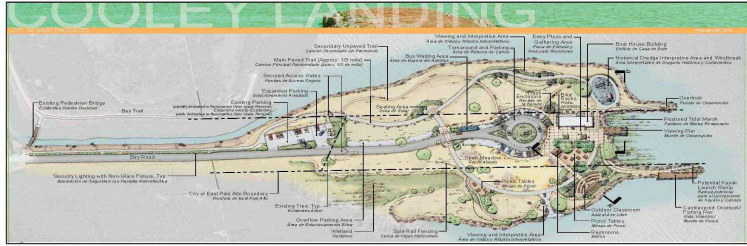
- Editorial
- News Briefs
- Opinions
- TV Listings
- Youth News

A vision for Cooley Landing

By Lily Lee
EPA Today

Cooley Landing is a 9 acre peninsula at the end of Bay Road, surrounded on 3 sides by San Francisco Bay. It contains Carl Schoof's boat repair shop, wetland plants and animals, views of the entire San Francisco Bay, and other surprises. Visitors enjoy the free and open feeling from being out in the Bay surrounded by water – yet still within East Palo Alto city limits. East Palo Alto has long wanted to open Cooley Landing as a public park and nature and history education center.

Thank you to the 45 people who participated in the Cooley Landing community workshop Thursday, April 8, 2010! Community members gave comments on the new Cooley



The above drawing is a depiction of the concept plan for Cooley Landing.

Landing draft plans and shared their ideas about the future park and took tours of the site.

Cooley Landing was on the agendas of four public meetings in May.

Another discussion on Cooley Landing will take place on Monday, June 14, 2010, 7:30 pm, at City Hall, 2415 University Ave. in East Palo Alto. So, please come share

your views at the June 14 meeting.

The public can see the latest version of the draft plan at www.cooleylanding.org or on the wall at City Hall in the Community Room on the first floor.

The draft plan shows a paved loop trail that leads from the existing hiking/biking trail on Bay Road, past the parking lot and into Cooley Landing to

ward the water and back around again. Smaller granite trails let you get closer to the water. An open meadow to the south can be a place to throw down your picnic blanket, kick a soccer ball, or throw a frisbee.

At the waterfront, the two jetties stick out into the water and lead to overlook areas that can have benches. A small outdoor classroom offers

beautiful water views. A roundabout in the middle lets buses and fire trucks turn around. Parking near the building helps seniors, children, and others get safer and easier access. On the southern jetty is a potential kayak/boat launch ramp and potential fishing overlook.

The community also reviewed two side views:

A) Side view of the area going from the parking lot, to the bathrooms, to the picnic tables, to the overlook. As you can see, people of all ages and mobility can easily move on a wheel-chair accessible trail among these parts of the site.

B) Side view as if you were in the water and looking back at the building and the area the dredge used to be. At the bottom right is a

continued on page 11

EPA Library now online

By Patrick Sweeney
East Palo Alto Today

The San Mateo County Library (SMCL) is pleased to announce that the launch of its new redesigned website www.smcl.org occurred on Monday, April 12, in conjunction with National Library Week. The dramatically redesigned eBranch is inviting to all members of the community, easily navigated by adults, teens and children, convey a sense of community, and offer opportunities for social interac-

tion and participation. "The library has created a richly enhanced, highly interactive website. We are thrilled with the new eBranch," said JPA Governing Board Chair Marina Fraser.

New features of the eBranch are: creation of a community of users who exchange information and ideas on SMCL materials, events and services through the use of blogs; more graphically designed promotion of library events, collections, news and services which are easy to

navigate; specific web portals and resources for children, teens, parents and seniors; improved usability of standard library resources such as the catalog, databases, ebooks and other materials. Looking ahead, the eBranch will be available in Chinese and Spanish and an improved user-friendly online catalog will allow users to rate, tag and review items.

Annually, thousands of users visit www.smcl.org to reserve

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Providing compassionate support to help the silently grieving families of murder victims

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Palo Alto, CA 94306

Mothers Against Murder is proud to announce the appointment of Margaret Petros as the Executive Director. Ms. Petros has twenty years of experience in helping Victims and Witness of Violent Crimes; former Manager of the Santa Clara County Victim Assistance Center.

Please call Margaret Petros, experienced Victim Advocate, for assistance, questions or how to get involved with Mothers Against Murder at (650) 248-9529.

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Mothers Against Murder is a charitable 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to helping families of murder victims



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Community News Briefs

Recommending East Palo Alto's chief of police

By Henrietta J. Burroughs
East Palo Alto Today



Community members meet with members of Seattle's police search committee. From left, Heather Starnes, Kate Joncas, Pam Inch, William Webster, Tim Burgess and Carl Marquardt.

Should East Palo Alto's residents give their Chief of Police Ron Davis references to support his application to be the chief of police in another city?

At least 16 people who either live or work in the City of East Palo Alto answered this question in the affirmative when they decided to attend a meeting on Tuesday, May 25 with representatives from the City of Seattle.

The meeting was convened by One East Palo Alto and it was designed to allow four members of Seattle's po-

lice search committee to hear community representatives share "their working relationship with the East Palo Alto Police Department and with Davis."

Davis is currently one of three finalists competing to be Seattle, Washington's new chief of police.

The four representatives

from Seattle included the city's Dir. of Employment Services Pam Inch, Counsel to the Mayor Carl Marquardt, Seattle Council member Tim Burgess and Kate Joncas, the president of the Downtown Seattle Association.

The community members from East Palo Alto included representatives from the

Ravenswood City School District, OEPA, church leaders local business owners and the executive directors from various city nonprofit agencies. The meeting was held in the California Room of the Ravenswood Family Health Center where OEPA's office is located.

Those who could not attend the meeting sent personal letters of recommendation for Davis.

Of course, it might not be clear, to anyone looking at the issue objectively, why people who publicly professed their respect, appreciation and admiration for the city's chief of police would give the repre-

sentatives of another city, which might hire him, glowing recommendations about him, especially when they said how much they wanted him to stay in East Palo Alto.

To underscore this point Heather Starnes, the executive director of For Youth By Youth (FYBY), a nonprofit agency located in East Palo Alto, said the staff at FYBY gave her a list of 30 negative things to say to dissuade the representatives from hiring Davis.

But she said, to the assembled group's laughter, "We're all

continued on page 12

Census 2010 is winding down

Census 2010 is winding down the mail participation phase and moving into the door-to-door enumeration phase. With East Palo Alto currently at 63 % mail participation rate, many households can expect a visit from a Census Taker as early as Saturday, May 1st.

Census is a count of the entire population in United States. The data collected is used to distribute federal funding and resources to communities. The Brookings Institute reports that for every person who completes their Census

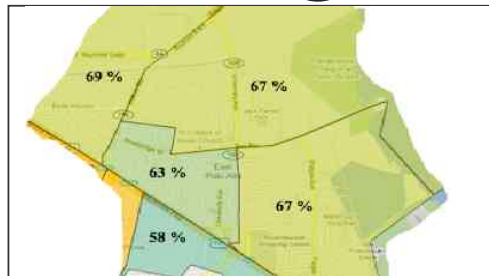
Questionnaire in California, the community will receive up to \$16,000 per person over 10 years.

Participating in the Census is equivalent to making a donation to your community to improve schools, roads, emergency services, hospital, and public transportation.

There is still time to participate in the 2010 Census!

If you have not answered the official 10 questions on the Census Form, a Census Taker will visit your household. It is important to remember that Census Takers:

- Will have a census badge
- May have a census bag



East Palo Alto neighborhood mail participation rates as of April

- Will not ask to come in your house
 - Will only ask questions that appear on the census form
- Census Takers will never

ask for social security numbers, financial information, or donations of any kind.

If you prefer to answer the questions over the phone,

there are a toll-free telephone number you can call 7 days a week, 8 a.m. – 9 p.m. local time:

- English: 1-866-872-6868
 - Spanish: 1-866-928-2010
 - Chinese: 1-866-935-2010
 - Korean: 1-866-955-2010
 - Russian: 1-866-965-2010
 - Vietnamese: 1-866-945-2010
- TDD (Telephone Display Device for the hearing impaired): 1-866-783-2010
Be a community hero and be counted!

Margot Grant is the census coordinator for the County of San Mateo.

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

David E. Woods
Mayor
(650) 853-1907

Carlos Romero
Vice Mayor
(650)328-4363

A. Peter Evans
(650) 321-1009

Ruben Abrica-
(650) 321-4001

Laura Martinez
(650)714-5337

East Palo Alto Agencies, 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 first Monday of each month 6:30p.m. - City Hall.

East Palo Alto Sanitary District

Open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 12 noon and re-opens from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

901 Weeks Street
East Palo Alto, CA 94303-1310 (650) 325-9021

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. Call the City Clerk at 650.330.6620.

Menlo Park City Council Members

Richard Cline
Mayor
(650) 228-5166

John C. Boyle
Vice Mayor
(650)906-7163

Kelly J. Fergusson
(650) 327-4533

Heyward Robinson
(650) 208-1512

Andrew M. Cohen
(650)327-5332

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 March 3, 17, 31, & April 14, 28 2009 in the County of San Mateo Hall of Justice & Records 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063. Roll call at 8 a.m. 9 a.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

Celebration of two grand openings

By Kathleen Alexander
East Palo Alto Today

It was a time for fanfare and celebration as Mayor David Woods cut the ribbon, formally opening Ravenswood Family Health Center's new Center for Health Promotion and the Ravenswood Family Dentistry.

The two facilities, located across from Ravenswood's main clinic on Bay Road in East Palo Alto, are next door to each other and share a common reception area.

Community residents who attended the opening celebration on April 29, were amazed to see that what looks ordinary from the outside is extraordinary within, beautifully de-



Photo courtesy of Kathleen Alexander
The above photo shows a patient at the Ravenswood Family Health Center's dental clinic.

signed and state-of-the-art.

Center for Health Promotion
One of Ravenswood's board members, Gordon Russell, who came up with the idea of building a Center for Health Promotion to accommodate RFHC's expanding services, committed a major gift for its construction.

Thanks to President

Barack Obama and Congresswoman Anna Eshoo, additional funding was provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

The Center has room for the entire Ravenswood Health Education team, including a classroom and space for retinopathy screening for diabetic patients. Another section of the Center accommodates insurance enrollment specialists who meet with uninsured people who want to find out if they are eligible for public health coverage.

Also, thanks to Stanford Hospital & Clinics, the Center also has a branch of the Stanford Health Library. With the assistance of a bilingual medical librarian, any one in the

community who wants to find out about some health issue is welcome to come. The health library is open Monday-Friday 9am to Noon; 1pm to 5pm.

Next to the Center is the Ravenswood Family Dentistry. This state-of-the art dental clinic has 10 dental chairs, a special pediatric unit, a surgery unit, and the most advanced digital dental technology. There has been an overwhelming need for accessible, low-cost dental care.

Ravenswood's CEO Luisa Buada said, "Dental disease is the most common health problem we see among children and adults and untreated it can have real health risks. Ignoring the need has never been an option. We've known

from the day we opened RFHC in 2001 that we had to find a way to address dental health problems." Ravenswood stepped up to the challenge of building the dental clinic, receiving a significant grant from David and Lucile Packard Foundation and other funders

RFHC's Dental Director Jack Luomanen, DMD who has set up many community dentistry clinics over the past 30 years, is incorporating best practices for early detection and prevention into RFHC's dental program including a method designed at UCSF to detect bacterial condition in the month in young children under the age of three, treat it and thereby reduce/prevent

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Observing Family Service Day

By Sandra Y. Casillas
East Palo Alto Today

Youth Community Service (YCS) held its 7th Annual Family Service Day and Community Fair in East Palo Alto at Cesar Chavez Academy on Saturday, April 24th.

Family Service Day is a day that is service oriented and thus focused on giving the community opportunities to give back in their



own neighborhood.

This year's focus was on health and education and provided many service-learning opportunities that reflected those themes.

The day consisted of service-learning arts and crafts projects for younger kids as well as service projects for teenagers and adults. Volunteers of all ages gardened, cared for trees, helped sort and

price items for a fundraising garage sale to benefit the Ravenswood Education Foundation, and helped prepare classrooms for STAR testing, among several other service opportunities!

In the afternoon, the community fair took place and allowed

continued on page 15




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Support the East Palo Alto Today newspaper

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



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Organization: _____ Email Address _____

Street Address: _____ City _____ State _____

Yes, I am interested in becoming a partner with the East Palo Alto Center for Community Media. Please accept my tax-deductible donation as a personal contribution _____ or as a contribution on behalf of my organization _____.

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_____ Please check back with me about becoming a donor.

*The East Palo Alto Center for Community Media is a tax-exempt nonprofit corporation.

Please check the appropriate box: if you would like to volunteer at the center, if you would like to advertise in East Palo Alto Today, if you are interested in writing an article, opinion piece or letter to the editor. Also let us know if your agency or business would like to be a distribution site for East Palo Alto Today. Call (650)327-5846, ext. 311 or send us an email at epamedia@aol.com.

Local students take top honors

By Bettylu Smith
East Palo Alto Today

Budding entrepreneurs across the Sequoia Union High School District put the finishing touches on their products and business plans for presentation to entrepreneur heavyweights such as Jack Dorsey, founder and chairman of Twitter.

The 11th Annual Youth Business Plan Competition, took place on May 8, at the Graduate School of Business at Stanford University. The competition is sponsored by BUILD, a four-year entrepreneurial program that helps underserved youth start their own businesses, graduate from high school and get accepted to college.

Competing in this year's



From left, Elisha Mitchell, Itzel Alvarez, Jose Jimenez Gomez, Jose Jimenez and Stephanie Garcia

competition were 24 teams made up of approximately 100 freshmen from East Palo Alto Phoenix Academy, a charter high school operated by Aspire Public Schools in East Palo Alto; Carlmont High School, Belmont; Sequoia High School, Redwood City; and Woodside High School, Woodside.

The businesses that were

pitched this year ranged from Fantastic Five's sweet sushi and Classy's custom candy bar wrappers for events and special occasions to Bazaar's safe teen dance party package and Achievers' temporary, safe alternative to permanent tattoos.

Several of the teams have focused on eco-friendly products, like Diverse Cultures' en-

vironmentally-friendly portable shoe cleaner, SYPs' green-friendly iPhone case and Organique's eco-friendly yoga mats.

Students invested 7 to 10 hours per week since the fall learning business and communications fundamentals and developing their businesses in preparation for the competition, where they presented their business plans and financial statements in two rounds of competition.

The winning team took home a \$500 prize and was automatically accepted into BUILD's Youth Business Incubator where the students will receive seed funding and mentorship to launch their

business.

This year's competition judges included Patrick Chung, partner at NEA; Natasha Deganello Giraudie, founder and CEO of MicroDocumentaries; Jack Dorsey, founder and chairman of Twitter; Kai Huang, founder and CEO of Guitar Hero; Neeru Khosla, founder and CEO of CK-12 Foundation; Wing Lam, cofounder of Wahoo's Fish Tacos; Jim Lussier, managing partner of NorWest Venture Partners; Milbrey McLaughlin, Stanford University business school professor.

To get more information about BUILD and the competition, visit www.build.org.

Rolling out the welcome



Phil Bracken, Executive V. P. Wells Fargo, Industry Relations; Brenda Wright, Senior V.P., Wells Fargo California Community Development Director; Honorable Mayor Willie Brown; Laraine L. Davis, V.P./Industry Relations Wells Fargo 100 Black Men Chairman Al Dotson

ing and economic development in the African-American community. Our 2011 conference will uniquely address the critical need for economic opportunities for minorities and underserved communities."

The organization expects nearly 3,000 conference participants, which includes 500 youth ranging in ages from 8-18. The convention will also be a big economic boost to San Francisco since it is ex-

continued from page 1

pected to yield \$4.6 million to the city.

"Wells Fargo is proud to support an organization dedicated to strengthening our community and we are also thrilled the convention is coming right here to our headquarters," said Brenda Wright, senior vice president, Wells Fargo California Community Development Director. "The vision of Wells Fargo and 100 Black Men together create a

powerful force that truly makes a difference."

"Wells Fargo looks forward to continuing our work with the leaders of the 100 Black Men to provide financial education to help our communities," said Phil Bracken, executive vice president Wells Fargo, Industry Relations, Home and Consumer Finance Group.

Michelle Ashley Wells Fargo Regional Banking Communications

Vote June 8—Vote on Measure H

East Palo Alto first adopted rent control in 1984 to protect residents against unjust rental practices by those who cared most about profit, not community. When put to a popular vote in 1986 and 1989, voters overwhelmingly approved the Rent Stabilization and Eviction for Good Cause Ordinance (RSO).

Since then, state laws have changed and now the RSO must change, too.

The EPA City Council has led an open and public process to draft a revised RSO, and has unanimously endorsed that revision, **Measure H**.

Measure H modernizes the RSO while discouraging irresponsible property speculation, continuing tenant protection from unjust eviction, and assuring landlords the right to a fair return.

EPA voters must now decide the future of rent control.

Please Vote June 8 on Measure H.

From the Editor's Desk

Change is in the air

Many changes are taking place in East Palo Alto and this time there might be no turning back.

Of course, there are changes takes place every minute of every day. But some changes not only affect a few individuals within the community but they also envelop the whole community.

Many might not realize it, but it takes the smallest of changes to make a tremendous difference.

Malcolm Gladstone makes this point well in his book, *How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*.

Following this line of thinking, it's easy to ask, "To what level must change occur to put a community at the tipping point, where broad based changes result in a fundamental shift in people's perspectives, behavior and living conditions."

At what point, do the small changes which occur take root and cause major shifts within the community?

Of course, the question now becomes how many little things and what kind of little things must there be to bring about significant differences that people can see and feel in their daily lives?

One can look at some of the big events that changed history, like the Civil War that freed America's slaves. In the 1950's the world saw the rise of nationalism that brought some measure of political independence to countries in Africa and Asia, which threw off the yoke of colonialism.

In the 1960's, there were the freedom rides, the March on Washington and the national disturbances in America's cities that led to the Civil Rights legislation that broke down many areas of segregation in this country.

The 1990's saw the fall of the Berlin Wall and the ending of apartheid in South Africa.

Of course, all of the tremendous changes just cited were not the result of little things, although they started with little things, perhaps an accumulation of little things that became big things which ended up galvanizing thousands of people and leading to broad based movements which changed attitudes, behaviors, relationships and governments.

How many people does it take to make a movement? How many groups must be involved in the coalition building that must take place to spur change?

So, how much momentum must be gained and sustained to create that tipping point wherein fundamental shifts take place to cause enough people to rally around a cause. Does this type of change take one leader who inspires a community or several leaders?

Every movement and every country has its leaders and every movement -- big or small -- has at least one person or a group to

whom people can point.

The questions are endless, but one thing seems obvious.

There is a movement afoot in East Palo Alto to bring substantial changes that could potentially transform the city.

Most prominent is the movement to make East Palo Alto a



Henrietta J. Burroughs

Promised Neighborhood, like the area in New York City which has produced significant increases in the educational achievement levels of many of the

city's children.

The Promised Neighborhood concept is just one idea that has inspired many within the community. If those who are working to bring it to East Palo Alto are successful, then they will, indeed, be positioned to transform East Palo Alto and the lives of the city's youth.

The Promised Neighborhood is just one part of the transformation that is underway. There are other activities that are important components of the broad based change that many within the community are working to create. One can cite the work being done to create summer jobs and ongoing programs to engage and employ the city's youth.

The work being done by the East Palo Alto Police Department to stem the crime rate, engage and employ the city's parolees and present training programs that foster improved relations between the police and the East Palo Alto community.

The emphasis that is being placed on health programs and health care within the city, as is evidenced by the recent opening of the new dental clinic is such another example that one can cite.

Are these little things that are taking place or are these big things that started with little things. Are these things that constitute a movement or the important components of a movement that has been underway?

The answers to these questions will vary depending on one's perspective.

Movements take commitment, sacrifice, dedication, human and financial resources, and the support of many people. They also take enough people to believe that major shifts are not only needed, but are also possible and important enough to merit the expenditure of their labor and whatever personal resources they can contribute.

The transformative changes many in the community have been seeking are well underway, so much so that the tipping point might very well be near. Many important steps have been taken.

It's been said that if one wants something badly enough and is willing to do the work and keep the goal in mind, then sooner or

Protests against state education cuts



Photos courtesy of Amelia Kolokihakaufisi

Rally participants listen to two speakers at the Save Our Schools protest against Governor Schwarzenegger's proposed budget which would make severe cuts to educational programs in California's public schools. The rally and march were held in East Palo Alto on Wednesday, May 26. The second photo shows Aaron Williamson, the president of the Ravenswood Teachers Association and Edgar Ramirez who is a teacher at the Edison Brentwood Academy in EPA. See Williamson's letter in the letters to the editor section below.

Letters in East Palo Alto Today

On Chief Ron Davis

Dear Editor,
real talk... why? i still can't think of why you would want to leave... do you think your work is finished?

I have my own reasons of why you may be thinking of leaving... when you said 4 more years b4 you retired, i took it that it would be in epa... NOT Washington! then again i don't think you would be retiring if they hired you...

DONT GO... I moved back into the town because of you! Who is going to keep me safe... I feel safe knowing that you are there...

Patricia Finau
East Palo Alto

only paper that utilizes more views from the youth. It's nice to see a platform for these writers.

They might not have journalism experience but they can write. They might not have developed a political agenda yet but they can write. They might not use jargon that spins your head sideways but they can write.

They are practicing their first ammendment right to freedom of speech and the youth are exercising that with EPA Today allowing them to do that.

Thanks,
Michael Uhila
East Palo Alto

Save Our Schools

Dear Editor,
Many of our parents and stu-

dents see business as usual as our school sites because we all try to protect them from the cuts. However, they need to understand the reality in which we are dealing with.

\$17 billion cut to education in the past two years.

\$3 billion more proposed in cuts for next year.

26,000 teachers laid off statewide.

1000's of support staff and administrators released.

Classes closed, classes enlarged.

Enrichment, intervention, sports programs cut.

Summer school shortened and in some places eliminated.

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Photo courtesy of Bridget Matheson

The Soul Line Dancers perform under the leadership of Juanita Croft at the Onetta Harris Community Center on Friday, May 14 during the City of Menlo Park's Second Annual Multi-Cultural Event. The event also included other cultural dances, spoken word performances and various singers representing Gospel, R & B and Reggae. Two hundred attended to enjoy the performances and the variety of foods served.

later, the goal will be achieved.

A core of committed people have been working to bring about substantive, positive changes in the city for years.

But the real tipping point might occur when more people buy into the substantive changes that many have initiated. Getting more people to buy in one by one might be the small thing that will make the desired transformations a reality.

East Palo Alto Today

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

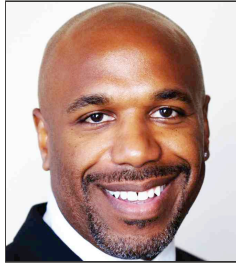
East Palo Alto Today is published bimonthly;
Address all letters to: East Palo Alto Today
321 Bell Street, East Palo Alto, CA 94303
(650)327-5846, ext 311 (phone) (Fax) (650)327-4430
epatoday@epatoday.org; www.epamedia.org and
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Opinion

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

What If? A courageous conversation about race

By Glenn E. Singleton
EPA Today Contributor



Glenn E. Singleton

In 2006, Educational Testing Services (ETS) reported that the U.S. faced a "perfect storm" composed of three devastating factors: an emerging, unstable global economy, rapid demographic shifts, and the PreK-16 achievement gap. ETS summarized that the U.S. must meet the academic needs of black and brown students or risk future economic viability.

For a decade, educators have attempted to determine why the achievement gap persists between students of

color and their white counterparts. Blame has been alternately placed on poverty, lack of family involvement, community pathology, and the atti-

tudes of children themselves toward school. Meanwhile, there has been no real investigation into the impact of race on student achievement. At Pacific Educational Group, we promote "Courageous Conversations About Race," not to position race and racism as the only factors contributing to achievement disparities, but rather to prompt a brand of leadership for racial equity that we believe is the missing factor in our exhaustive attempts to reform schools.

In examining data that summarizes standardized assessments, we first notice that racial disparities exist across

the board. Specifically, black and brown boys are most likely to drop out, be expelled and placed in special education. This same group is least likely to graduate on time, enroll in advanced placement/international baccalaureate coursework, and attend college. The data also indicate that lower income white students consistently outperform higher income black and brown students, and that English-speaking Latinos score lower on average than Latinos who are English language learners. We conclude that poverty, language and environment are not the sole

causes for the racial gap and that racial biases are in fact embedded in our system.

Positing that systemic racism is the most devastating factor contributing to the lower achievement of Black and Brown students often causes educators to react as if they are being individually labeled as racist. However, our pressing concern is with the educational system, which categorically refuses to consider the implications of race in instruction, assessment, policy, programs and disciplinary practices. Furthermore, a lack

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Measure H for East Palo Alto voters

By Matthew Fremont
EPA Today Contributor

The June 8th election is fast approaching and for East Palo Alto the future of our rent control law is on the ballot as Measure H. This measure was the result of an open, public process that the City Council initiated more than a year and a half ago to draft a revised Rent Stabilization and Just Cause for Eviction Ordinance (the "RSO"). If approved, it will update our current ordinance to comply with changes in state law and close the loopholes that have become painfully obvious over the past three years. Measure H has been unanimously endorsed by the City Council and many

prominent members of our community. I urge you to vote YES on Measure H. East Palo Alto voters have long been strong supporters of rent control. The need for relief from unaffordable rent increases was a central issue during the struggle for incorporation. The original RSO was then one of the first legislative acts of the City Council and served as a powerful expression of our community's political self-determination. That new law was challenged by out-of-town landlords, but East Palo Alto stood firm, successfully defending it in the courts and then overwhelmingly approving it by popular vote in 1988 and 1989. That support held true again in 2006 when East



Matthew Fremont

Palo Alto voters overwhelmingly defeated the anti-rent-control Measure E. Over the years, the RSO has served us well. It has helped East Palo Alto to remain one of the few communities on the Peninsula where hard-working people of modest means can afford to live. Rent increases are fair

because they are tied to inflation, and tenants are protected from arbitrary, unjust, and retaliatory evictions. At the same time, the RSO protects the right of landlords to earn a fair return on their investment. The weaknesses in what had been a strong law started to show when the secretive Page Mill Properties bought nearly half of the rental housing in East Palo Alto, and almost all of the housing on the West side of the city. Our community was then shocked and bewildered as Page Mill began to impose rent increases that amounted 20%, 30%, 80%, even 100% in a year. As the crisis mounted, their well-funded team of lawyers managed to stymie nearly all of the efforts

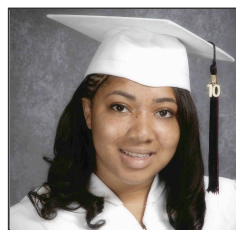
by the City and tenants to challenge these increases and enforce the law. Even though no court has ruled on the legality of the Page Mill rent increases, hundreds of our families, friends and neighbors were evicted, and hundreds more forced to move, when they could not afford to pay the rents that Page Mill demanded. The arguments that Page Mill's lawyers made in justifying the exorbitant rent increases highlight a major problem with the current RSO: our local law was never updated to account for a change in state law known as the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act. The state law permits

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Handling school and handling life

"The way you handle school is the way you're going to handle life. Do you keep your room clean?" – Willie Brown...my daddy

By Mariah Brown
EPA Today Contributor



Mariah Brown

I have heard many times that if I keep a clean room, my life would be more organized. The first time I heard it was during my parent conference. At Eastside College Prep the parent conferences are run by the students. We prepare a presentation of our weaknesses and strengths and provide evidence.

In the parent-teacher conference during my sophomore year, my mom, my teachers and I were all sitting around two tables. The meeting was coming to an end when suddenly my mom blurted out that I needed to keep my room

clean. I turned red with embarrassment while trying to figure out what my messy room had to do with school. Darren, my math and verbal reasoning teacher said that a messy room shows a lack of organization and transpires into school work.

If you keep an unorganized

environment, it is harder to be mentally stable and focused. I realized I was always losing stuff and my mind was always on my weekend plans or the messages I had received on MySpace. I needed that balance that would allow me to keep an organized room and be mentally organized at school.

After that I tried to keep a clean room, but I never seemed to have enough time. Between my job, homework, and babysitting, I never had time to clean my room. To make more of an attempt to keep a clean room, I thought I should at least make my bed. I woke up at 6 am everyday so I should have some time to fit

making my bed in my schedule. Unfortunately I often forgot. When I did remember, I found the covers on the floor any way since my three younger siblings preferred jumping on my bed than their own.

During my junior year I moved into the dorms at my school. I needed a change in my work habits. The dorms were very strict about academics and I wanted a focused environment instead of my usual loud and erratic environment at home with my siblings. I found that I kept my dorm room a lot cleaner than I did my room at home. My bed was made everyday. I swept my dorm room more often

then I vacuumed at home. I could also see the change in my academic life. My desk was organized in the dorm and I started using a planner which in the past years I had lost by semester two.

However the cleanliness of my dorm room did not last when the rigor of the work increased. I could feel myself lose control of my academic life. As pre-calculus assignments got tougher, my bed was made with less care because I was always frustrated that I was not learning the math as quickly as I had in the past. Even with a tutor, I con-

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Lifecycles

An outstanding local volunteer

By Kathleen Alexander
East Palo Alto Today

The Nonprofit Board Leader Award is given annually to recognize to the achievements of outstanding nonprofit board members in the Bay Area. This year the award went to Melieni Falemaka Talakai of East Palo Alto and many felt that it could not have gone to a more deserving person.

On Thursday, April 29th at the Volunteer Center's Hats Off event in San Francisco, Talakai was invited by Kate Kelly, CBS reporter, and MC to come up on stage to receive the Nonprofit Board Leader Award. During the presentation of the award to Talakai,

Kelly stated that she had served on the Board of Ravenswood Family Health Center since 1999 when the board was formed to oversee the development of the new community health center. In the fall of 2000, she was asked to assume the role of chair of the board Ten years later, Talakai is serving her second term as board chair. During Talakai's tenure on



Photo courtesy Kathleen Alexander
Melieni Falemaka Talakai

the board, the Ravenswood Family Health Center grew dramatically from a staff of 13 in 2001 to a staff of 115 employees. The center now operates five sites, including the new state-of-the-art dental clinic and the Center for Health Promotion on Bay Road across from the main clinic.

In speaking about Talakai, the center's CEO Luisa Buada observed, "Melieni is a natural

born leader. She sets the tone for our meetings, characterized by warmth and mutual respect, knitting together our diverse multi-ethnic board. She is remarkably committed." Luisa recalled, "When we were planning a silent auction for our 5th Anniversary celebration, Melieni decided to offer to put on a Polynesian Affair as a way of raising money. At her own expense and in the very limited space of her home in East Palo Alto, with one cutting board, she and her 5 children whipped up a huge feast including a dish wrapped in giant banana leaves, fresh fruit, and Ahi tuna. It was a glorious meal for 30 guests and highlighted Polynesian dances

performed by her daughters and sons. The affair raised \$3,000 for RFHC.

In addition to her weekly involvement at RFHC, Melieni is the co-founder of Taulama for Tongans, a volunteer nonprofit that provides health education to the Pacific Islander community. She also hosts a bi-weekly health education program on KEST 14.50 AM. Her impact is widely recognized. As one of her colleagues at Taulama said, "In the Pacific Islander community, Melieni is the face of health services."

Kathleen Alexander is the director of communications and marketing for the Ravenswood Family Health Center.

High expectations seen at forum

East Palo Alto Today

At the Foundation for a College Education's annual Higher Education Forum, the educational success of East Palo Alto students took center stage. Held at Palo Alto's Garden Court Hotel Friday, March 19, the event featured a keynote conversation between Ted

Mitchell, president and CEO of the NewSchools Venture Fund and a leading voice in local and national education reform, in conversation with Carmen Ochoa, an FCE staff member and graduate of the FCE program.

Ochoa, assistant director of FCE's College Success



Carmen Ochoa

Program, graduated magna cum laude from Mount St.

Mary's College with a bachelor's degree in biological sciences and a minor in psychology. She plans to attend medical school this fall and her acceptances to date include the Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California and the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and

Public Health, which has offered her a full tuition scholarship.

Ochoa shared her path to success with a crowd of almost 100 who gathered for an early breakfast. Those guests included former San Jose Mayor Ron Gonzales, who is now president and

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A way to keep your heart healthy

Dr. Virginia Humphrey, DDS
East Palo Alto Today

The old saying, "The way to someone's heart is through their stomach," appears to be

accurate.

Researchers have found that people with periodontal disease are almost twice as likely to suffer from coronary artery disease as those with-

out. Many unexplained heart attacks and strokes can be traced back to oral cavities where gum disease is present.

Several theories exist to explain the pathology link be-

tween these two different areas of the body. For example, when we brush our teeth, bacteria from our mouth get into the blood stream and attach to fatty plaque in the blood vessels.

Coronary artery disease is the thickening of the walls due to a build up of plaque. Therefore gum disease may increase the build up inside the vessels, restricting the flow of nutrients and oxygen to the heart.

Secondly, arterial plaque can break away forming clots which can stop the flow of blood causing an infarction which can lead to heart attacks and strokes.

Alternatively, inflammation caused by periodontal disease may increase plaque build up, which can contribute to swelling of the arteries. Since periodontal disease is an inflammatory process destroy-

ing bone, the same reactive process may occur on the lining of the vessel.

Periodontal disease can also exacerbate pre-existing heart conditions, even for people with artificial heart valves. Patients at risk for infective endocarditis may require antibiotics prior to dental procedures.

Your cardiologist will be able to determine if your heart condition requires the use of antibiotics.

Periodontal disease can be treated, controlled, and even reversed in many cases by seeing a dentist or a periodontist.

Dr. Virginia P. Humphrey, II is a doctor of dental surgery (DDS). She maintains a dental office at the Ravenswood Shopping Center. You can get more information about her from her ad which is directly beside this article.

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