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East Palo Alto Today



Providing news that is relevant, informative and critical

East Palo Alto and Belle Haven

Week of March 5, 2006

Vol. 1 No. 2

NEWS BRIEFS

The costs of a Zip Code Number?

Palo Alto residents living in the **94303 ZIP code** lost their appeal to the United States Postal Service to have their ZIP code changed. They had argued that the existing ZIP code which is shared with East Palo Alto resulted in higher insurance rates for Palo Alto residents who shared the zip code.

USPS officials argued that it would be "far too costly to adjust postal delivery boundaries for reasons not related to the efficient processing and delivery of mail."

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Getting Lower Rates

In related news California Insurance Commissioner John Garamendi held a town meeting in East Palo Alto on February 22 to discuss the expansion of the **California Low Cost Automobile Insurance Program** and Auto Rating Factors Regulations. The meeting was sponsored by One East Palo Alto.

Commissioner Garamendi is considering expanding the program to San Mateo County. **The program's purpose is to provide low-cost automobile liability insurance to good drivers who demonstrate financial need.** Eligible drivers may be able to get automobile insurance for less than \$400 per year.

For more information contact One East Palo Alto at (650) 330-7462.

Budget Proposals Cause Public Concern

By Betty Meissner
East Palo Alto Today

If a proposed \$2.9 million budget reduction plan is passed by the Menlo Park City Council, then Belle Haven residents might lose some important community services. Planning Commissioner Matt Henry resigned his position to protest the proposed cuts. The current budget proposal would severely impact child-care, after-school programs, and senior services in the Belle Haven community.

The City of Menlo Park admitted in a survey that it recently distributed that "A permanent solution to Menlo Park's budget crisis is needed and will involve many tough choices and trade-offs". When the Menlo Park City Council presented suggested budget cut-backs at its January 10 meeting, approximately 100 Belle Haven residents, including Planning Commissioner Matt Henry, attended to speak against Belle Haven's inclusion in the cuts. Though City Council

members expressed the desire to leave Belle Haven programs intact, it turned down a formal request to remove them from consideration, wanting to allow citizens to give input. This decision prompted Commissioner Henry's resignation.

The City invited interested residents to attend community workshops in Belle Haven, at Burgess Recreation Center and at La Entrada School. At these workshops community members worked in small groups with the task of reviewing possible strategies and choosing those they felt should be used to balance the budget. The budgets developed at these workshops will be presented to the Menlo Park City Council to help them make the final decisions.

Many families consider the Child Development Center vital. According to one of the Center's teachers, "90% of the 3 year-olds entering the program don't speak English. "It's our responsibility," she said, "as a community to offer these youngsters the same opportu-



Children at childcare center

Photo by Dick Waters

nities for quality child care, social services, and enrichment. Without the Belle Haven Child Development Center, they would enter Kindergarten 2 years behind, and the domino effect would continue."

Dina Magana said that her

son liked the Belle Haven Child Development Center (BHDC) where he learned English. She said the center was preparing her preschooler for kindergarten." Magana said that she relies on the School-Age Child Care

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Free At Last Cuts Jobs and Services



By Jennifer Taylor
East Palo Alto Today

To most passerbys, it looks like just another dilapidated East Palo Alto building. But there are extraordinary things happening at 1796 Bay Road—home to Free At Last, a substance abuse recovery center. For over ten years, the group

has helped people stay sober, find jobs and eliminate their dependency on public assistance. But like many nonprofits, Free At Last is taking a major hit due to the sagging economy. In recent months, the groups has eliminated many staff positions and cut essential services and programs.

Growing out of a community response to the high rates of murder and HIV infection that plagued East Palo Alto in the early 1990s, the founders of Free At Last sought to create a "culturally appropriate, community-

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By Jennifer Taylor
East Palo Alto Today

Despite it's position as one of San Mateo counties' smallest cities in terms of population, East Palo Alto is home to a disproportionate number of the county's released prisoners, with a rate of parolee residents roughly ten times that of the state as a whole.

According to an estimate from the Redwood City Parole Office, roughly half of the 2200 parolees living in San Mateo county are supervised out of their branch, and about 75% of that caseload resides in East Palo Alto. The 2000 census found EPA's population to be just under 30,000, and more recent estimates are around 32,000. Together, these figures paint a picture of a city where about 3 in every 100 residents is a parolee — compared to a rate of 3 in

1000 statewide.

According to David Lewis of Free at Last, a community based organization that provides services to parolees in the city, these statistics don't reveal a malicious conspiracy on the part of state or county officials. It is in fact standard policy for parolees to be released to the city and county from which they were committed. However, Lewis believes that other flaws present in the corrections and parole system have a particularly detrimental effect on communities such as East Palo Alto, where parolees are concentrated but, in his opinion, not adequately provided for.

"One of the things that happens in the prison system is, because only 6 percent of the prison population gets any access to education, you have

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Para demandar el Pasado
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EL MURO DE LA INDIGNIDAD

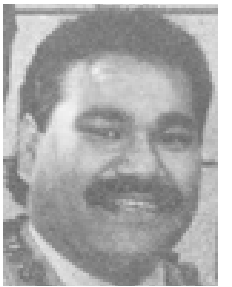
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East Palo Alto Today

Providing news that is relevant, informative and critical



East Palo Alto and Belle Haven

Semana del 5 de Marzo del 2006

Vol. 1 No. 2

NOTAS INFORMATIVAS

¿Qué es el costo de un Número de Código Postal?

Los residentes de Palo Alto que viven en el código postal 94303 perdieron su petición al Servicio Postal de Los Estados Unidos para hacer cambiar su código postal. Ellos habían discutido que el código postal existente que se comparte con East Palo Alto causó precios de seguros más altos para residentes de Palo Alto que comparten el código postal.

Los funcionarios de USPS discutieron que serían "demasiado costoso ajustar límites de entrega postales por motivos no relacionados con el procesamiento eficiente y la entrega del correo."

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Conseguir Tarifas Más Bajas

En noticias relacionadas el Comisario de Seguros de California John Garamendi tuvo una reunión de pueblo en East Palo Alto el 22 de Febrero para hablar de la extensión del **Programa del Seguro de Automóvil del Bajo Costo de California y Regulaciones Auto de los Factores del Grado**. La reunión fue patrocinada por One East Palo Alto.

El Comisario Garamendi piensa extender el programa al Condado de San Mateo. El propósito del programa es **proporcionar seguro de automóvil económico a conductores buenos que demuestran necesidad financiera**. Los conductores elegibles pueden poder conseguir el seguro de automóvil por menos de \$400 por año.

Para más información contacte a One East Palo Alto al (650) 330-7462

El Público Está Preocupado por las Propuestas de Presupuesto

By Betty Meisner
East Palo Alto Today

Si 2.9 millones de dolares son reducidos del plan de presupuestos y son aprobados por el Consejo de Menlo Park, los residentes de Belle Haven pueden perder servicios comunitarios importantes. Comisario de Planificación Matt Henry ha renunciado su posición para protestar los recortes que fueron propuestos. Las ultimas proposiciones de presupuestos impactarán severamente cuidado de niños, programas despues de escuela, y servicios para las personas mayores en la comunidad de Belle Haven.

"La solución del crisis del presupuesto de Menlo Park es necesario y va a incluir muchas decisiones difíciles" reconoció La Ciudad de Menlo Park. Cuando el Consejo de Menlo Park presentó y sugirió recortes del presupuesto en la junta de Enero 10, aproximadamente los 100 residentes de Belle Haven, incluyendo el

Comisario de Planificación Matt Henry, atendieron para hablar contra la inclusión de Belle Haven en los recortes. Aunque los miembros del Consejo de la Ciudad expresaron sus deseos de conservar los programas de Belle Haven, rechazaron los recortes para moverlos de consideración, porque quisieran dar oportunidad para recibir los opiniones de los ciudadanos. Esta decisión provocó la resignación del Comisario Henry.

La ciudad invitó a los residentes interesados para atender los talleres de la comunidad en Belle Haven, en Burgess Recreation Center y también en La Escuela Entrada. En estos talleres los miembros de la comunidad trabajarán en grupos pequeños con el trabajo de revisar a los posibles estrategias y escoger los que se debería usar para balancear el presupuesto. Los presupuestos desarrollados en estos talleres van a estar presentado en el Consejo de la Ciudad de Menlo Park para ayudarle a ellos a que hagan



Los niños en centro del cuidado de niño. foto de Dick Waters

la decisión final.

Muchas familias piensan que el Centro de Desarrollo de Niños es vital. De acuerdo a un maestro del centro, "90% de los niños de 3 años que entran al programa no hablan ingles."

Es nuestra responsabilidad," dijo ella, "como una comunidad de ofrecer a estos niños las mismas oportunidades de guarderías de niños de alta calidad, servi-

cios sociales, y enriquecimiento. Sin el Centro de Desarrollo de Niños de Belle Haven, ellos podrán entrar al kindergarden dos años retrasados, y el efecto domino continuaría."

Dina Magaña dijo que a su hijo le gustó el Centro de Desarrollo de Niños de Belle Haven (BHCDC) donde aprendió ingles.

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Free At Last recorta empleos y servicios



Visitors listening to a presentation at the agency

Por Jennyfer Rae Taylor
East Palo Alto Today

- Para muchos peatones podría lucir como solo un edificio mas en ruinas en East Palo Alto, pero están sucediendo cosas muy importantes en Bay Road - Hogar de Free At Last, un centro de recuperación de sustancias y abuso de drogas. Por más de diez años, el grupo ha ayuda-

do a la gente a mantenerse sobria, encontrar trabajos y eliminar la dependencia de la asistencia pública. Pero al igual que muchas entidades sin fines de lucro, Free At Last esta recibiendo un duro golpe en su economía debido a la inestabilidad económica.. En los últimos meses (¿o semanas?) Este grupo ha prescindido de empleados y cortado servicios esenciales Tales Como?

Desarrollar una comunidad responsable, en respuesta al alto nivel de crímenes, é infectados de Sida, durante los años 1990, los fundadores de Free At Last pensaron fomentar un

continucion de la pag. 17

Por Jennifer Rae Taylor

A pesar de su posición como una de las ciudades más pequeñas en cuanto a su población se refiere, East Palo Alto es el hogar de un número desproporcionado de exconvictos en el condado, con un índice de individuos bajo libertad condicional aproximadamente diez veces más que el estado en su totalidad.

De acuerdo a un estimado de la oficina de

Libertad bajo Palabra de Redwood City, aproximadamente la mitad de los 2200 individuos con libertad condicional o bajo palabra viviendo en el condado de San Mateo son supervisados desde la oficina y aproximadamente el 75 por ciento reside en East Palo Alto. El censo del 200 en EPA refleja una población de 30,000 y más recientemente el censo reflejó 32,000. En conjunto estos números pintan un cuadro de una ciudad en donde 3 de cada 100 residentes

continucion de la pag.17

Community Policing Gets High Marks

By Staff Writer

East Palo Alto Today

East Palo Alto Police Chief Ron Davis is continuing his high profile approach to community policing. Earlier this month, he met with community members at the East Palo Alto Senior Center.

This past Friday, he fielded questions as a guest on the local public access show 3rd Eye, which ran a live call in television special.

For some East Palo Alto residents Chief Davis' aggressive approach to community policing is already getting positive results.

"I think the community chats that have been initiated by Chief Davis reflect his sincerity, integrity, and desire to implement a level of community policing that addresses, as much as possible, the concerns, needs and desires of the residents of East Palo Alto,"




East Palo Alto Police Chief Ron Davis meets with community residents at the East Palo Alto Senior Center

said Regina Thompson, an East Palo Alto resident. I have a great deal of respect for his level of professionalism and the genuine regard he has demonstrated for the safety and well being of our community."

Deloris Farrell, who is active in a variety of organizations in East Palo Alto said that she is


particularly pleased with the fact that Chief Davis divided East Palo Alto into beats and assigned police officers to different beats. Farrell said that seeing the same police officers in her neighborhood made her feel more comfortable and more connected.

Consuela Huerta welcomes the chief's community efforts and his crack down on gangs



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in the city. But she said eliminating gangs is very hard to do.

"Mothers and fathers might find it had to believe that their children are involved in

gangs," she said."Families have to be aware that their children can be involved in those activities. It's very hard."

But she said that there is a lot that families can do.

LOCAL CABLE SHOW HOSTS "CHAT WITH THE CHIEF"

By Sharifa Wilson

EPA Today Contributor

East Palo Alto Police Chief Ron Davis held his monthly "Chat with the Chief" meeting as a guest on 3rd EYE, a local cable television show. Chief Davis responded to questions from the live audience and phone in calls.

Chief Davis was accompanied by Lt. Tom Alipo who heads the new East Palo Alto investigations unit. Davis provided an update on strategies being used by the police department to reduce crime. He spoke of the continued support the department is receiving from San Mateo County, ATF, and FBI in the effort to eliminate the Sacramento Street Gang, as

well as in other areas.

Chief Davis fielded questions from a live audience that included young people from OICW- SASSY, and College Track. Young people focused their questions on the recently enforced "curfew". Chief Davis explained "the curfew is designed to prevent young people from being exposed to crime and gangs and to increase parental oversight". We don't intend to lock our young folk up in Hillcrest", the Chief reiterated.

Chief Davis expressed condolences to the family of CHP Officer Earl Scott. He expressed gratitude to the community for the strong show of support at the funeral procession of Officer May passed through the city.

One young person asked about the strong response and quick arrest

of the suspect of the killing of Officer Richard May; as compared to the unsolved homicide of his cousin. The Chief assured the young man that every death is one death too many and spoke of the newly formed "Cold Case Unit" that will focus on the past homicides.



Left, Lt. Tom Alipo, Chief Ron Davis and former mayor Sharifa Wilson who was the host of the show.

Chief Davis made a commitment to continue to work with local agencies including One East Palo Alto, Free At Last, the Boys and Girls Club the East Palo Alto YMCA and the Faith Based community efforts in providing summer employment and other activities for youth. He

highlighted some of the partnerships he has formed with local community agencies in

an effort to include prevention and interventions as part of a city - wide strategy.

Lt. Alipio shared information about the Junior Police Academy that was launched recently at Cesar Chavez School. This program works with middle school students providing them with the fundamentals of policing, physical fitness and mentoring activities. Chief Davis continues to support the Explorers and sees both these as opportunities to "grow our own".

Chief Davis is optimistic and has set an overall goal of reducing homicides as well as overall crime for 2006. He is encouraged by the community policing efforts and by the increasing support of the community in solving crime. "Education, prevention and enforcement combined" will be the keys to keeping these numbers down.

City, County & State Government Meetings & Contacts

East Palo Alto City Council

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

East Palo Alto City Council Members

Ruben Abrica - Mayor
(650) 321-4001

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

Patricia Foster
(650) 328-3944

Donna Rutherford
(650) 327-7926

David E. Woods
(650) 853-1907

East Palo Alto Boards, Commissions, Committees

Planning Commission
Second and Fourth Monday

Rent Stabilization Board
Second and Fourth Wednesday

Public Works & Transportation Commission
First and Third Wednesday

Youth Advisory Committee
First Thursday of each month

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

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

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

Menlo Park City Council Members

Nicholas P. Jellins - Mayor
(650) 329-1300

Kelly J. Fergusson - Vice Mayor
(650) 327-4533

Andrew M. Cohen
(650) 327-5332

Lee B. Duboc
(650) 322-3651

Mickie Winkler
(650) 473-9722

Menlo Park Boards, Commissions, Committees

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

San Mateo County Bd. of Supervisors

Supervisor Rose Jacobs Gibson, Fourth District

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

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

State Officials

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

Assembly Member Ira Ruskin

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

Senator Joseph S. Simitian

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

Dealing with Trauma

By Joris Wiggers
EPA Today Contributor

We all felt 9/11. Our country was in shock. Numb. We were traumatized. It left its mark on us. We are now more cautious about strangers, a bit more jumpy at the airport; we might want to avoid the topic of terrorism in conversation because it's upsetting; perhaps, we have bad dreams once in a while about a bombing; the list goes on and on. It is as if we as individuals are all experiencing a nationwide trauma-response a bit like PTSD, a mental illness that happens to some people after a terrible event when they develop all kinds of anxious and

depressed symptoms that can last for years. Yet, we don't have to look beyond our own neighborhoods to find significant trauma. East Palo Alto has violence and stress both on the streets and in the homes. This is deeply troubling the hearts of its residents, for the loss of loved ones to either sickness, accident, or violence is deeply painful. This article is about what families can do in the hours, days, and months after tragic events.

Experts in the mental health field now describe a vast spectrum of trauma-related mental illnesses. The PTSD-spectrum illnesses range from mild worry and depression to severely complicated emotional and personality

problems requiring professional help. The treatment approach to psychological trauma is evolving. Attitudes are changing. A few years ago, Dr. John Briere of LA County and U.S.C. Medical Center gave a talk on PTSD. He challenged our culture to re-look at how we deal with trauma in our communities. He spoke for many of us who believe in the inherent power of humanity to heal itself. In other words, we feel it is a problem that our frenetic modern society encourages individuals to "just move on" after a tragic event and not slow down enough to heal themselves. There is a powerful pressure in our culture to keep up a good face, keep on working, keep on being

strong, and "just let it pass." However, this really doesn't work well. I have seen time and again in my practice people who tried this and later end up clinically depressed, having panic attacks, or going to the hospital with a "nervous breakdown."

The solution is to process trauma. For countless generations humans have turned to their communities to find a space to talk about their feelings--to retell the story in a safe place over and over again until it no longer hurts and there is deep relief. This emotional processing allows the brain to physically heal itself. Painful memories are integrated into our minds in a manageable way. In our modern society, however, it is difficult to find a safe place and time enough for this kind

of healing to occur. Our communities could provide the right kind of place to heal, but this requires a general change of attitude. More time needs to be set aside. Specific strategies need to be employed.

As soon as possible after the shock has worn off, traumatized individuals need to spend time either talking or journaling about their memories of the traumatic event. They really need to stick to a pace they can tolerate. You can't rush this process.

Families should be encouraged to get together after terrifying things happen in their lives and spend enough time for everyone to tell their stories several times over until the relief comes and the story

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East Palo Alto

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In Other News

East Palo Alto Police Chief's Wife Wins Lawsuit

By Staff Writer
East Palo Alto Today

There must now be jubilation in East Palo Alto Police Chief Ron Davis' household. His wife, Chief Janeith Glenn-Davis, a former Oakland Police lieutenant who said she was passed over for promotion in the Oakland Police Department in 2001, won her lawsuit against the Oakland Police Department.

A federal jury in San Francisco ordered the Oakland Police Department to pay Chief Glenn-Davis, now the Chief of Police at California State University in the East Bay nearly \$2 million

Chief Glenn-Davis, who had served 17 years in the Oakland Department where she became a lieutenant, filed her lawsuit because she believed she had been passed over for promotion as captain in the department because she was pregnant and had small children.

At the time of the incident, Chief Glenn Davis was the highest-ranking woman in the Oakland Police Department.

In a story in the February 25 edition of the Oroville Mercury Register, her lawyer, Oakland attorney, John Burris, is quoted as saying that "he hopes the verdict will send a message that female officers who want to have a family and a career should be treated fairly

by the Oakland Police Department."

"It's a great victory," Burris said in the Oroville Mercury Register article. "It was very painful for Ms. Glenn-Davis to lose her career with the Oakland Police Department." Oakland officials had argued that Chief Glenn Davis had not been promoted because of a hiring freeze.

Oakland City Attorney's are quoted as saying that they will ask U.S. District Court Susan Illston to set the winning verdict aside on March 10. Both Chief Glenn-Davis and her husband East Palo Alto Police Chief Ron Davis worked for the Oakland Police Department.

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In International News

THE BORDER AND THE WALL OF SHAME

By Marta Alvarez
East Palo Alto Today

In the name of immigration reform and border protection, we see that both the Republican and Democratic parties are using the issue of immigration to attract votes. But neither party is committed to passing a law that would be favorable for immigrants.

Under the pretext of national security, a wall of shame is to be erected to impede the passage of people who, because of injustice, necessity, and limitations are forced to seek in this country a better future for their family. In December, the House of Representatives approved an immigration reform plan that will criminalize all undocumented people and plans the construction of a new wall to cover a third of the 3,200 km of land along the Mexico/U.S. border.

Why this wall? It is an attempt against the human

dignity of those who only want to improve their standard of living with clean and honest work—those who will risk their lives in the desert for the possibility of arriving in the United States.

President Bush has justified the wall by saying, "We have the obligation to protect our borders...and end the traffic of all that is illegal." However, this would have more serious repercussions for the United States than for Latin America.

It's obvious that the enormous barrier that already exists between Mexico and the United States has not detained the 8-12 million undocumented immigrants that currently work in the United States. The reality is that secret ways to enter the United States will be discovered, wall or no wall.

The fence that divides Tijuana and the United States, constructed in the nineties, is

formidable and intimidating, and the border patrol awaits in total visibility and comfort those who risk crossing the border. But they don't realize that where the wall ends, the hope of the immigrants begins, because scorpions, snakes, and precipices can't dissuade them from traveling the road to the "American Dream", much less a wall.

Immigration will continue. Many more people will come, even if it be by way of areas that are much more dangerous. A wall will not deter the necessity to seek new alternatives to the poverty that exists in Latin America. Some will arrive and others, perhaps, will die in the intent, as we recently saw in the death of a 19-year-old Mexican who was shot in the back in self defense, according to the border patrol, because he threw rocks at them.

No one denies the right of this country to protect its borders, but the means that are

used are arbitrary and discriminatory. The United States is tempted by the cheap labor of undocumented immigrants, who represent eight percent of the labor force, yet even so, would criminalize them.

In Latin America, the source of the majority of undocumented immigration to the United States, the first impression of the project is that it is anti-immigrant and a product of racism and xenophobia on the part of congress. The proposal also offends more than 40 million people in the United States, and the Senate is now the only option to impede the construction of this wall.

The solution would be just reform in the immigration laws that would legalize the millions of undocumented immigrants who reside in this country. We need a broad, just, and lasting law that would include the immediate resolution of all pending solicitations for permanent residency and citizen-

ship that would permit the immigrants that have lived in this country for many years to obtain permanent residency.

There should be a system established that would permit the orderly and legal entry of those who come to seek work and find it. The family reunification program should be accelerated and a guest worker program should be proposed that would determine the economic necessities of the country and import temporary labor to satisfy the needs of the national economy.

In East Palo Alto, there is a lack of information about this issue. There should be a space in which to educate the community about the impact and repercussions that these changes will bring about for all of us.

Marta Alvarez is an East Palo Alto resident who works as a Parent Organizer at Nuestra Casa.

LA FRONTERA Y EL MURO DE LA INDIGNIDAD

By Marta Alvarez
East Palo Alto Today

En nombre de una reforma migratoria y de protección fronteriza, vemos que los dos partidos, Republicano y Demócrata, están utilizando el tema migratorio para atraer votos. Pero ninguno se compromete a pasar una ley favorable para los inmigrantes.

Con el pretexto de la seguridad, se ha implementado el muro de la indignidad en la frontera, para impedir el paso a personas que por injusticias, necesidades, y limitaciones se ven obligados a buscar en este país un mejor futuro para su familia. En diciembre la Cámara de Representantes aprobó una reforma migratoria que criminalizara a todos los indocumentados y planea la construcción de otro muro en la tercera parte de los 3,200 km de frontera terrestre que comparte con los Estados Unidos.

¿Por qué el muro de la indignidad? Por que atenta contra la dignidad de personas, seres

humanos que solo quieren mejorar su nivel de vida con un trabajo limpio y honesto. "La barda los orilla a ir por el desierto" o cualquier otro lugar que aunque con riesgo les de la posibilidad de llegar a los Estados Unidos.

El presidente Bush ha justificado lo del muro diciendo: "Tenemos la obligación de proteger nuestras fronteras...y terminar con el trafico de todo lo que sea ilegal". Sin embargo esto tendría más repercusiones para los Estados Unidos que para Latinoamérica.

Es obvio que la enorme barrera que separa a México de Estados Unidos no ha servido para detener a los 8-12 millones de indocumentados que actualmente trabajan acá. La realidad nos muestra que siempre se encontrará pasadizos clandestinos para entrar a los Estados Unidos.

El muro que divide Tijuana y los Estados Unidos, construido a mediados de los años 90, se impone de forma intimidante hacia el este, rumbo a Tecate, y en lo alto de los cerros de lado

estadounidense, la patrulla fronteriza se limita a esperar en total visibilidad y comodidad a los que se arriesgan a pasar la frontera. Pero no se dan cuenta que donde termina el muro comienza la esperanza de los inmigrantes, porque ni alacranes, víboras y barrancos logran disuadirlos de recorrer el camino al sueño americano, mucho menos un muro.

La inmigración continuará, mucha más gente vendrá, aunque sea por áreas más peligrosas e inseguras. Un muro no detendrá la necesidad de buscar nuevas alternativas para mejorar la condición de pobreza que existe en Latinoamérica. Algunos llegarán y otros quizás mueran en el intento como ya lo hemos visto desde hace tiempo. Y para muestra un ejemplo reciente, la muerte del mexicano de 19 años que según la patrulla fronteriza le dispararon por la espalda en "defensa" porque les tiró piedras.

Nadie niega el derecho de este país a proteger sus fronteras pero las medidas que se usan solamente son arbitrarias y discrimi-

nativas. Estados Unidos está engolosinado con la mano de obra barata de los inmigrantes indocumentados, siendo un 8 por ciento de la fuerza laboral, pero aun así los criminaliza.

En América Latina, de donde procede la mayoría de la inmigración indocumentada a los Estados Unidos, la primera impresión del proyecto es que se trata de una legislación antiinmigrante, producto del racismo y la xenofobia de los Representantes. El muro también ofende a la mayor minoría de los Estados Unidos con más de 40 millones de personas, y el Senado es la única opción para impedir la realización de ese muro.

Evidentemente la solución sería una reforma justa e integral en las leyes migratorias que permita legalizar los millones de indocumentados que residen en el país regularizando su situación, con el desarrollo de un programa que permita a los inmigrantes que han vivido en el país por algunos años obtener la residencia permanente y la ciudadanía esta-

dounidense. Se necesita una reforma amplia, justa, y duradera que considere incluir la resolución inmediata de solicitudes pendientes de residencia permanente y ciudadanía, como el procesamiento futuro de todas las solicitudes de beneficio migratorio en un máximo de seis meses.

También establecer un sistema que permita el transito ordenado y legal de los que vienen en busca de trabajo y lo encuentran. Acelerar el programa de reunificación de familias, determinando las necesidades económicas e importar mano de obra temporal justa planteando un programa de trabajadores huéspedes que satisfaga las necesidades de la economía nacional.

En East Palo Alto falta información sobre esto. Se necesita hacer un espacio en el cual se eduque sobre el impacto y repercusión que tendrán estos cambios, en toda la comunidad.

Marta Alvarez vive en East Palo Alto y trabaja como Organizadora de Padres de Nuestra Casa.

A Letter to the Mayor and the East Palo Alto City Council by James C. Hill

Dear Mayor, Vice-Mayor and Councilmembers, In the past months, I have written to you on water issues regarding the Urban Water Management Plan, the water supply, and the maintenance of fire hydrants. These problems were coming up as we were all unaware of the big-

ger problem. Attached is an article from Earthwatch, a consumer magazine, regarding private companies running the water assets which says, "enemy number one these days in the public-right-to-water crowd is California American Water, also known as Cal-Am." You

all know that Cal-Am is the company that is managing our water system. Did you know about the strategies that they have used here and in other cities which is described in the attached article as: luring government officials with promises of cost savings and improved compli-

ance with clean water regulations; slippery slope of hidden costs and weak accountability;

ratepayers windup footing the cost of broken promises of focused on smaller cities; personnel, legal and administrative costs can balloon far beyond predictions; spiraling rates and service problems; and many others.

My complaints in the recent months show this is already happening in East Palo Alto. I first brought to your attention

that the hydrant on Buchanan Court did not have water. I also brought to your attention that it took more than a month to request for a flow test and I did not get any responses from Cal-Am. You sat in study sessions where Cal-Am, now called American Waters, but owned by a German company, convinced you that we need to increase the water rates. You approved an Urban Water Management

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Spotlight on the Pacific Islander Community

An Argument for More Human Services

By Chester Palesoo



This article will share an advocacy approach for underserved or not equally served Pacific Islander/Polynesian communities in many areas of human services. Human services are essentially vital services for the development of healthy and safe communities throughout the Bay Area. Considering that the Pacific Islander populations pay taxes, own

their own small businesses and homes, exercise their voting and civil rights, and are entitled to the protection of their constitutional rights, they have the same basic human needs as other ethnic groups living in America.

Due to the lack of appropriated human services in some areas for Pacific Islander communities, several community leaders stepped up to the plate and formed certified non-profit community based organizations to fill the existing gaps in human services for underserved and at-risk Pacific Islander families and children in economically dis-

advantaged communities.

I know it's all about the numbers game, however, Pacific Islanders /Polynesians have the same essential human needs that other human beings in America have. I'm humbly and respectfully requesting an "opportunity" for equality in human services for all ethnic groups including the growing Pacific Islander communities (32%) in the Bay Area. As Pacific Islanders continue to pay tribute to their American dreams and become all that they can be, they will draw upon their cultural values, spiritual beliefs and their love of God and country, as they request fair and equal opportunity for everyone. Seeing their request granted will strengthen our Pacific Islander families and provide them with the will to

become more than just productive citizens. They will go on to make their highest contribution to this society to make it a better America nationwide for every human being.

Needless to say, during the recent Super Sunday at Super Bowl XL, where more than ninety (90) million people watched the game ranking it as the most watched super bowl game in NFL history. Seven (7) Pacific Islanders/Polynesians (5 Samoans, 1 Tongan, and 1 Native Hawaiian) contributed their athletic skills at this NFL historical Super Bowl XL game between Seattle Seahawks and Pittsburgh Steelers. My friend Congressman Eni F.H. Faleomavaega shared his congratulations and recognition of these Pacific Islander

Americans athletes, during his speech on the floor at the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington D.C. during a bill discussion. His office legislative staff members also published and submitted a press release before the super bowl game as follow:

All the Pacific Islander population is respectfully requesting is an opportunity in acquiring equal human services, so that we can ALL develop America as the best country - starting within every community, county, state, and nationwide. As Margaret Mead puts it quite well "the task of each family is also the task of all humanity", considering a diversified America for every human being. Keep in mind," In God We Trust." Have a great day and God Bless!

See remarks of Congressman

Faleomavaega on page 20

Spotlight on the Pacific Islander Community

'Oku fakataumu'a 'ae tohi ko eni ke ne tohoaki'i mai hano tokangaekina 'oe to nounou koia 'i hono fakahoko 'oe ngaahi polokalama tokoni kihe kakai (Human Services) kihe kakai 'oe ngaahi 'Otu Motu 'oe Pasifiki pe koe kau Polinsia.

Koe ngaahi polokalama tokoni ko eni 'oku matu'aki mahu'inga 'aupito ia ki hono fakalalakaka 'oe mo'ui 'ae kakai moe malu 'ae sosaieti 'ihe anga 'oe nofo 'ihe Bay Area. 'Oku tatau pe 'ae kakai Polinsia moe kakai 'oe ngaahi matakali kehe 'oku nau nofo 'i 'Amelika ni. 'Oku nau totongi 'ae ngaahi tukuhau kihe pule'anga, ma'u ha ngaahi 'api nofo'anga pea fakalele foki mo ha'anau ngaahi ngaue pe pisinisi. 'Oku nau faka'aonga'i foki mo ngaue 'aonga'aki 'a 'enau ngaahi totonu fakaetan-gata koia 'oku nau ma'u ke talangofua mo pou-pou kihe ngaahi lao 'oe pule'anga.

Koe'uhi koe to nounou 'ihe ngaahi polokalama tokoni ko eni meihe pule'anga kihe kakai, 'oku tu'u hake ai ha ni'ih'i 'oe kau taki 'oe kakai ni, 'o fokotu'u ha ngaahi kautaha 'oku 'ikai fakataumu'a ke kumi ha tupu fakapa'anga, ka ke fakahoko 'ae ngaahi tokoni ko eni kihe kakai 'oku to nounou ai 'ae pule'anga ke fakahoko 'o tautefito kihe fa'ahinga 'oku matu'aki faingatamaki mo toe masivesiva mo fusimo'omo ange 'ihe ngaahi me'a fakapa'anga.

Neongo foki 'oku tokoleka 'aupito 'ae kakai Polinsia 'i hono fakahoa atu kihe ngaahi matakali kehe, ka 'oku 'ikai 'uhinga ia 'e kehe ai 'enau fiema'u 'a kinautolu ia meihe ngaahi matakali kehe. Koia ai 'oku ou fai atu 'ae fakatangi ko eni 'ihe loto faka'apa'apa mo kole ha faingamalie tatau kihe ngaahi polokalama tokoni koia kihe kakai, ke 'inasi ai 'ae matakali Polinsia (32%) 'ihe Bay

Area. "Iha kafataha 'ae ngaahi tokoni ko eni moe ngaahi 'ulungaanga fakafonua, pehee kihe ngaahi tui fakalotu 'ae kakai polinsia, 'e malava ai ke fakamalohi'i, pou-pou'i mo fakaa'u 'ae ngaahi fakamu moe misi 'ae kakai ni 'ihe 'enau tulifua kiha ngaahi ikuna kafakafa 'ihe ngaahi tapa kehekehe 'oe mo'ui ni pea 'ihe fonua ni foki. Te nau lava foki ai ke fai ha tokoni lelei kihe sosaieti pea hoko koha fefine moha tangata'i fonua ma'on-gong'anga ange.

'Ihe tau hau koia 'ihe 'akapulu faka 'Amelika (Super Bowl XL) ne toki 'osi 'ihe Sapate atu 'ihe vaha'a 'oe Seattle Seahawks moe Pittsburgh Steelers, ne laka hake 'ihe kakai 'e toko 90 miliona ne nau mamata'i. Koe toko fitu ai koe kau Polinsia. Tokonima(5) koe kau Ha'amoaa, tokotaha koe Tonga(1), pea tokotaha koe Hawaii (1).

Na'e fakamalo'ia'i 'ehe fakafofonga koia 'oe kakai Ha'amoaa 'Amelika kihe fale alea 'o 'Amelika ni(Congress), Eni F.H. Faleomavaega 'ae kau

polinsia ko eni ne nau va'inga 'ihe ongo timi hau ni, 'i ha lolotonga ha'ane lea kihe kau fakafofonga 'oe kakai 'ihe fale. Na'e pulusi mo tukuatu foki 'ehe 'ofisi 'oe fakafofonga ni 'ae fakamatala ko eni ki mu'a 'i hono fai 'oe tau ni:

'Ihe loto faka'apa'apa mo'oni, 'oku kolea 'ehe kakai Polinsia 'ihe fonua ni ke 'oange mu'a pea ke nau ma'u 'ae faingamalie tatau 'oe ngaahi tokoni koia kihe kakai, koe'uhi ke tau malava kotoa ke tokoni 'i hono ngaahi 'o 'Amelika ni ke hoko koe fonua lelei taha 'o kama-

ta pe meihe ngaahi kolo, vahe fonua, ngaahi siteiti pea kihe fonua hono kotoa foki.

'Oku fakamatala'i lelei 'ae fakakaukau ni 'ihe lea 'a Margaret Mead 'aia na'ane pehee ai, "koe fatongia 'oe ngaahi famili fakafofongia, koe fatongia ai pe ia kia ha'a tangata", 'ihe fonua ko eni ko 'Amelika 'oku tuifio ai 'ae ngaahi matakali kehekehe. 'Oua na'a ngalo, "Ko 'etau falala, 'oku 'ihe 'Otua."

Ke mou ma'u ha 'aho lelei, pea ke fai tapuekina kimoutolu 'ehe 'Otua.

Interested in discussing gentrification, economic development and policing in East Palo Alto?

Then contact Kameelah Rasheed immediately!

Kameelah Rasheed is conducting research on the economic changes East Palo Alto has undergone as well as changes in policing strategies for her senior thesis at Pomona College (Claremont, CA). If you are interested in participating in this research with a 40 minute interview, or in any other way (help with contacting other community members, etc.), please email Kameelah at kameelah.rasheed@gmail.com ASAP.

From the Editor's Desk

For the past five years Senator Joseph Simitian has sponsored a contest called "There Oughta be a Law." The contest encourages citizens to suggest ideas that they would like to see enacted as new state legislation.



This year after reviewing more than 260 entries, Senator Simitian chose three winners. The first winning entry selected came from Shirley Hochhausen, a law professor and a long-time volunteer at the East Palo Alto Community Legal Services Agency.

Having seen many seniors ripped off as they tried to secure a reverse mortgage, which allows a homeowner to turn the value of his or her home into cash without having to pay mortgage payments, Hochhausen proposed a bill that would make it harder for seniors to be tricked. Her proposal is now known as SB1609. If enacted, it would protect seniors against predatory lending.

SB 1609 would (a) require independent counseling for all reverse mortgage borrowers, (b) require that a written translation of loan documents for a reverse mortgage be provided in the language the contract was negotiated, and (c) prohibit reverse mortgages from requiring the purchase of an annuity.

As a winner of Sen. Simitian's "There Oughta be a Law" contest, Hochhausen (along with the two other

winners: Margaret Okuzumi, executive director of the Palo Alto-based non-profit Bay Rail Alliance and tow truck driver Daniel Frederick Leon, whose 2005 bill is being reintroduced), will have her bill idea introduced

as legislation, have the opportunity to testify at a committee hearing on their bill, have lunch with Senator Simitian at the State Capitol, and also receive a California State flag that has flown over the Capitol. "This contest is proof positive that one person can make a difference," said Simitian. "But the real prize," he said, "is knowing that your idea has the potential of affecting 37 million Californians."

We can personally attest to Hochhausen's dedication and her contributions to the East Palo Alto community because it was Hochhausen who obtained pro bono legal services for the East Palo Alto Center for Community Media, which is the publisher of this paper. When another local law firm turned the EPA Center down, Hochhausen persisted in securing the legal services that the EPA Center needed to incorporate.

Hochhausen can also take a lot of comfort and satisfaction in knowing that, whether her bill passes or not, she is already making a major contribution to many who live and work in this community. All hats off to Shirley Hochhausen and the East Palo Alto Community Legal Services Agency. Shirley, we commend you.

Two of EPA Today's Letters

We are taking the liberty of writing about two of the letters published in this issue's Letters to the Editor Column.

One letter comes from California Congresswoman Anna Eshoo who has written to East Palo Alto Today to acknowledge the efforts that the East Palo Alto Center for Community Media has taken in launching East Palo Alto Today.

We would like to use this public forum to thank Congresswoman Eshoo for her letter. We would also like for her to know that it is precisely because of the support that she and others have taken the time to give that we

have been encouraged in moving onward in fulfilling the EPA Center's mission of making East Palo Alto Today the reality it has become.

All of us at the East Palo Alto Center for Community Media and at East Palo Alto Today would like to express our sincere appreciation to Congresswoman Eshoo for her letter and her offer of support.

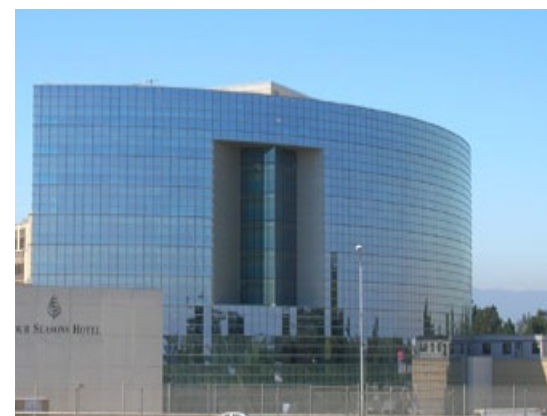
We would also like to publicly thank Chester Palesoo, the author of our second letter and so many of you, who have also made what the EPA Center is doing possible.

Perspectives

Two pictures that represent the changing face of East Palo Alto



Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto opened its doors in September 2002. Since its inception, it has served over 3000 local families in need.



The Four Seasons Hotel opened on January 30, 2006. It has 200 guest rooms, including 27 suites. All rooms offer a flat screen television and the latest in modern technology.

Long-awaited and much-needed

Dear Editor:
Congratulations on launching East Palo Alto's new community newspaper. It has been long-awaited and much-needed for keeping the City's residents informed and connected. I salute you and the East Palo Alto's Center for Community Media for everything you've done to take the idea of a locally produced, free, biweekly newspaper and make it a reality.

I join the entire community in congratulating you, and if there's any way I can ever be of assistance, just let me know.

Sincerely,
Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

Return of a newspaper media

Dear Editor:
As a Pacific Islander Elected Official in San Mateo County,

... I would like, on behalf of the Pacific Islander communities, to extend our regards ...say THANK YOU to Ms. Henrietta Burroughs and the EPA Center for Community Media, for spearheading the return of a newspaper media back into our diversified East Palo Alto community.

M. F. Chester Palesoo
East Palo Alto resident

We are all impacted

Dear Editor:
The recent death in our community of Police Officer Richard May gives me pause for thought, as it does us all. The death of any person is sad and tragic. People are affected by the loss of someone who touched them. A friend, a family member. But we are all impacted by the loss of a person who has chosen to dedicate their life to the community. We are all affected when we lose one

who touched us all.

The audacity of the criminal shows that some may always exist who are blindly dedicated to their own ends without any regard or concern for the welfare of those with whom they share this life. We must all take a moment to honor the sort of people who knowingly face that reality every day. We must be grateful for those who choose to risk their lives to ensure the safety of all of those in the community, even including the few who would be a threat. We must spend a moment reflecting upon how truly fortunate to have these individuals among us.

I can say I have run afoul of the law on occasion during my youth, as most of us have at one time or another, but I have come to fully respect them for what they give to all of us: security

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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 agreement with our readers, advertisers and

all others within our service area.

East Palo Alto Today is dedicated to conscientious journalism. We maintain this commitment by seeking and reporting the truth, acting with integrity, and serving the public interest. We will report the news thoroughly and accurately and include multiple perspectives without favoring

one over another.

We will hold ourselves accountable to common standards of decency, treating our colleagues, news sources, and the public with respect. We are committed to maintaining our independence by avoiding partnerships, investments, or business relationships that will compromise the integrity of our news reports.

East Palo Alto Today

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