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East Palo Alto Today

Providing news that is relevant, informative and critical



East Palo Alto and Belle Haven

Week of April 23, 2006

Vol. 1 No. 3

NEWS BRIEFS

More Trees for East Palo Alto

Canopy, a Palo Alto-based non-profit, has announced it is partnering with the City of East Palo Alto to plant 1,000 trees in the city over the next four years.

Canopy is partnering with the City's public works department and local groups to design and coordinate plantings.

The organizations says that it wants to increase the beauty, safety and environmental health of East Palo Alto through its tree planting campaign. See more on the story on page 4.

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Funding Schools

There is a new effort underway to help underfunded school districts in California.

State Senator Joe Simitian, (D-Palo Alto) announced a new measure, SB 158, to help underfunded school districts in California. SB158 is sponsored by the Governor and co-authored by State Senator George Runner (R-Antelope Valley), and would earmark \$200 million a year to help equalize financial resources for K-12 schools statewide.

California's Secretary of Education, Alan Bersin, noted that one-half of the financial differences in California schools could be erased by the measure.

"I'm pleased to see the Governor step forward this year to propose funds for our low-wealth school districts," said Simitian. This is a fundamental issue of fairness. Disparities in funding mean disparities in opportunities for student success. That has to change."

EPA levees to be fixed

By Staff Writer
East Palo Alto Today

For several months, area residents have expressed increasing concerns about major flooding around East Palo Alto if nearby levees,

such as the one on San Francisquito Creek are damaged by the constant rains. Their concerns and fears are now being addressed.

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has agreed to add the levee on San Francisquito

Creek to the other 24 critical erosion sites around the state that are slated to be repaired, and he has also granted the City of East Palo's request for state funding to repair the levee(s) that affect the city.

"I take levee issues with

great seriousness and stand committed to do all that is within my power to prevent any disasters from happening," the Governor said.

Schwarzenegger also promised to use the State Office of Emergency

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Immigration Through East Palo Alto Eyes

by Shana White // Ar
by Carlos Rodriguez

There have been protests across the country against the anti-immigrant proposal -- HR 4437. Some people consider this one of the largest social justice movements since the Civil Rights movements of the 1960's. These protests have been viewed mainly as a Latino issue. So what do residents of a once pre-dominantly African-American city that is quickly becoming a Latino majority, such as East Palo Alto, make of the immigrants rights movement?

Keisha Evans is an active community member, small business owner and also an advisory board member of a local environmental justice organization. She is an African-American community leader who has lived in East Palo Alto for many years and has seen the city's demographics change from a predominantly a black neighbor-



Marchers in immigration protest in San Jose. EPA Today photo by CharisseDomingo.

hood to a very diverse city with Latinos as the largest new population there. She says community leaders, regardless of race, need to be in the frontlines of this protest. She believes if HR 4437 passes, people's lives will become

full of new hardships and families will struggle in East Palo Alto. "If and when this proposal goes into effect, it will be problematic for people because not only will people's families be taken away, but their friends as well." Evans

says. "There are a lot of churches in East Palo Alto, and they are the leaders who need to tackle this issue. Latino people here are the ones keeping the churches funded and attended. They

continued on page 23

EPA Grocery Store In the Works

By Betty Meissner
East Palo Alto Today

Since the closing of East Palo Alto's Safeway over 30 years ago, East Palo residents have had to go outside their city to buy groceries and everyday items, shopping in neighboring cities across the freeway. But the time may be

near when the city's residents can keep their dollars local and strengthen East Palo Alto's tax base.

Various organizations and involved citizens have worked tirelessly for more than a decade to bring a supermarket back to the East Palo Alto community. If plans go as expected, Peninsula Interfaith

Action (PIA), an organization of area churches, will hold another meeting this month to update community residents on the latest plans for the city's grocery store.

PIA held a community meeting last month that was attended by East Palo Alto residents and representatives from nearly a dozen local churches.

At the March 9 meeting, attendees heard about Rancho San Miguel, a Stockton-based enterprise, which is ready to bring in a 50,000 square foot grocery store which will include, according to company literature, a full service meat counter, seafood deli, bakery, and an extensive fresh produce department.

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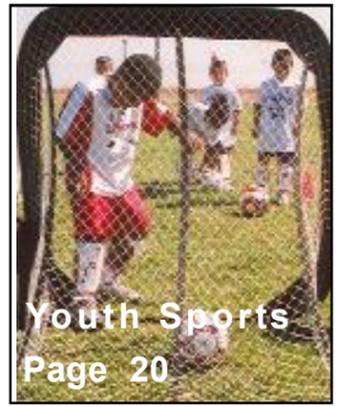
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East Palo Alto and Belle Haven

Semana del 23 de abril del 2006

Vol. 1 No. 3

NOTAS INFORMA- TIVAS

Más Árboles para East Palo Alto

Canopy, un no lucrativo basado en Palo Alto, ha anunciado su asociación con East Palo Alto para plantar 1,000 árboles en la ciudad durante los próximos cuatro años.

Canopy declara en su sitio-web, www.canopy.org. Que quiere aumentar la belleza, seguridad y salud medioambiental de East Palo Alto a través de su campaña de plantar árboles.

Canopy se esta asociando con el Departamento de Trabajos Públicos de EPA y grupos locales para diseñar y coordinar plantaciones.

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Financiamiento las Escuelas

Joe Simitian, Senador Estatal (Contrato de D-Palo) anunció una nueva medida, SB 158, para ayudar a los distritos escolares con bajos financiamientos en California. SB158 se patrocina por el Gobernador y co-sido autor por George Runner, Senador Estatal (R-Antilope Valle), y destinaría \$200 millones por año ayudar igualar los recursos financieros para las escuelas de grados escolares K-12 en todo el estado.

El Ministerio de California de Educación, Alan Bersin, ha notado que la mitad de las diferencias financieras en las escuelas de California podría borrarse por la medida.

"Estoy satisfecho ver que el Gobernador de este paso adelante este año para proponer los fondos para nuestros distritos escolares de riqueza baja" dijo Simitian. "Ésta es una aplicación fundamental de imparcialidad. Disparidades en el financiamiento quiere decir disparidades de oportunidades para el éxito del estudiante. Eso tiene que cambiar."

Los Diques de EPA van a ser reparados

Por Staff Writer
East Palo Alto Today

Buenas noticias para los Diques de EPA, ó los Diques de EPA van a ser reparados. Por muchos meses, los residentes del área han expresado su temor y preocupación

acerca de una posible inundación en East Palo Alto, si un dique de nuestra vecindad tal como el de San Francisquito sufriera algún daño como consecuencia de las constantes lluvias.

El Gobernador Arnold Schwarzenegger estuvo de

acuerdo en agregar el Dique de San Francisquito a otros 24 mas que se encuentran en condiciones de erosión críticas alrededor del estado, y que están programados para ser reparados, y también ha asignado fondos a solicitud de la Ciudad de East Palo para

que el estado repare las zonas afectadas de los diques que afectan a la ciudad.

"Yo he tomado el problemas de los diques muy seriamente y me comprometo a hacer todo lo que este a mi alcance

continuacion de la pag. 24

La Inmigración Por los Ojos De East Palo Alto

Por Shana White
Tran.by Elizabeth Gonzalez

Ha habido protestas por todo el país en contra de la propuesta ley antiinmigrante HR4437. Algunos lo consideran uno de los movimientos para la justicia social más grandes, desde el movimiento para los derechos civiles de los años 60's en este país. Estas protestas se han visto principalmente como un asunto latino. ¿Así que qué hacen los residentes de una ciudad que era en la mayoría afroamericana y ahora rápidamente esta convirtiendose en una mayoría Latina, tal como East Palo Alto, del movimiento para los derechos de inmigrantes?

Keisha Evans es una activa miembro de la comunidad, tiene su propio negocio, y es parte de la mesa directiva de una organización local de justicia ambiental. Ella es una



líder afroamericana de la comunidad que ha vivido en

East Palo Alto por muchos años y ha visto el cambio demográfico de la ciudad que era una ciudad pre-

dominante afroamericana a una ciudad muy diversa con latinos como la nueva población más grande allí.

Ella dice que los líderes de la comunidad, sin

importar su raza, tienen que estar al frente de esta protesta. Ella cree que si pasa HR4437, las vidas de las personas se llenaran de nuevas dificultades

continuacion de la pag.24

Trabajando Para Tener Un Supermercado

Por Betty Meissner
East Palo Alto Today

Desde el cierre de Safeway en East Palo Alto hace mas de 30 años, sus residentes han tenido que ir fuera de su ciudad a comprar comestibles y artículos de uso diario, comprando en ciudades veci-

nas al otro lado de la autopista.

Pero el tiempo podria estar cerca cuando los residentes de esta ciudad puedan mantener sus dólares localmente y consolidar la base de impuesto de East Palo Alto.

Varias organizaciones y ciudadanos inmersos han trabajado incansablemente por

más de una década para traer de nuevo un supermercado a la comunidad de East Palo Alto. Si los planes van según lo esperado, la "Interfaith Península Acción" (PIA), una organización de las iglesias del área, celebraran otra reunion este mes para poner al día a los residentes de la comunidad los últimos planes

para la tienda-almacen de comestibles de la ciudad.

PIA llevó a cabo una reunion comunitaria el mes pasado que fue atendido por los residentes de East Palo Alto y los representantes de casi una docena de iglesias locales.

En esa reunión del marzo 9,

continuacion de la pag.24

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www.epacando.org

A "Canopy" of Trees for East Palo Alto

by Arthur Daniels, Jr.

To celebrate its 10th Anniversary, Canopy, a Palo Alto-based urban forest advocacy organization, is partnering with the City of East Palo Alto (EPA) to plant 1,000 trees by 2010, a project known as "The Trees for East Palo Alto Initiative."

On April 30, 2006, Nobel Laureate Prof. Wangari Maathai, founder of the Green Belt Movement, will formally launch the initiative at a community celebration in East Palo Alto and will also raise funds by delivering the keynote address at a dinner event in Palo Alto.

Congresswoman Anna Eshoo will be the honorary

chairperson of the dinner and State Senator Joe Simitian will be the Emcee.

Prof. Maathai will also plant the first tree under the new initiative at the intersection of Newbridge and Bay roads in East Palo Alto. A native of Kenya, she received the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize "for her contribution to sustainable development, democracy and peace." Her simple act of planting one tree inspired the planting of 30 million in Africa.

Canopy was founded in 1996 to improve the health of Palo Alto's trees, which were in decline due to a succession of droughts, city budget constraints, the lack of tree protection regulations and a lack of awareness.

According to Executive Director Catherine Martineau, "Canopy has developed expertise that benefits Palo Alto and that will allow us to work hand-in-hand with East Palo Alto to bring the benefits of an urban forest to our neighbors."

"The positive impact of trees in urban communities is well documented," said EPA City Council Member Pat Foster. "There are environmental and health benefits such as improved air quality, economic benefits including increased property values and social and aesthetic benefits."

In 2004, Goro Mitchell, Executive Director of the Community Development Institute (CDI), provided documentation at the "Killing Me Softly With Air Pollution Symposium" showing

that EPA "is shouldering transportation and environmental injustices from commuter traffic which causes gridlock, air pollution and safety problems in our community." With these air pollution problems that EPA faces, it seems that the new trees may help alleviate some of these air quality issues.

A few benefits of trees to a community are, as documented by many environmental sources:

1. Trees make effective sound barriers
2. Trees produce oxygen
3. Trees clean the air
4. Trees shade and cool
5. Trees reduce carbon (reducing global warming)
6. Trees act as windbreaks
7. Trees fight soil erosion

8. Trees increase property value and beautification

The "Trees for East Palo Alto Initiative" will:

Plant and install irrigation for 1,000 public trees by the end of 2010; provide three years of follow-up care; engage and educate residents in the planting and care of community trees; assist the City of East Palo Alto in creating a comprehensive municipal urban forestry program including tree protection regulations, planting plans, and inventory and management tools

For more information, Visit the Canopy website (www.Canopy.org) or contact Jana Dilley (650 964-6110, jana@canopy.org).

East Palo Alto

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EPA02

Something positive is happening

By Staff Writer

East Palo Alto Today

A report released by the East Palo Alto Police Department shows that crime in the city has dropped dramatically.

Ron Davis, East Palo Alto's Police Chief said that while "it is too early to celebrate or claim victory... the notable decrease in crime is promising news."

Chief Davis referred to the city's latest crime statistics which showed that compared to the same time last year, violent crimes are down 42% and overall crime is down 36% in the first quarter of 2006.

The report stated that East Palo Alto "experienced such an alarming spike in gang violence in 2005 that the East Palo Alto City Council placed



Neighborhood meeting on March 11 in "Beat Three." EPA Today photo by Dick Waters.

"violence reduction as its top priority and adopted a budget that increased funds to the [police] department."

In response to the upsurge in violent crime, city officials and East Palo Alto residents partnered with county, state and federal law enforcement agencies to implement numerous crime-reduction strate-

gies.

The East Palo Alto Police Department released a list of key strategies that were enacted. They include: the development of the "Violence Reduction and Community Policing Plan; the completion of a five-year analysis of homicides resulting in the strategic deployment of enforcement activities; the

development of the of the police department's internal crime analysis capacity; the identification and removal of gang graffiti from over 90 locations; the formation of the Criminal Investigation Division (CID) to handle all criminal investigations; the formation of the "Metro Team," which is credited with making over 170 arrests and 500 probation and parole searches.

Since Officer Richard May is alleged to have been murdered by a local gang member, the East Palo Alto Police have launched an all out effort "to 'disrupt and dismantle' key gangs in the City."

In the report, Chief Davis said, As a community, we must not only attack crime, but the conditions that allow crime to fester as well. The month of May 2006 has been designated Crime Prevention

Through Environmental Design (CPTED) month. Code

enforcement efforts will focus on removing abandoned vehicles, graffiti and other blight. We need your assistance. Each Block Group is asked to conduct block clean-ups and work in partnership with the police to remove the conditions that contribute to crime, violence and neighborhood apathy....In addition, we need real-time information."

The East Palo Alto Police Department is asking community members to participate in the city's crime prevention programs.

"If you have information," Chief Davis continued, "regarding any homicide or assault, or know of an ex-felon or gang member in possession of a firearm, please call the Crime Stoppers hotline at (408) 947-7867 or call the Police Department at (650) 321-1112. Your call can make a difference. Anonymous calls are accepted.

"Let's work together," Chief Davis said, "to make East Palo Alto the safest city in San Mateo County."

Emergency Plans for East Palo Alto

By Staff Writer

East Palo Alto Today

East Palo Alto City officials have started holding meetings with other local agencies within the city to formulate agreements that would enable joint responses in case of a local disaster.

City staff has had regular emergency preparedness meetings since December, but the city is now beginning to work out agreements that would lead to coordinated efforts with other organizations and agencies in case of a local emergency.

The first such meeting was held at the Municipal Building on Wednesday, April 5. It was convened by East Palo Mayor

Ruben Abrica.

Abrica said that the meeting was held to strengthen local disaster preparedness efforts by putting into place agreements with the Ravenswood City School District, the Sanitary District, the Ravenswood City Health Clinic and other similar organizations.

Some agreements with the police and fire department, for example, already exist.

Lee Hawkins, the general Manager of the East Palo Alto Sanitary District, who attended the April 5 meeting, said, "It just makes sense. We are all dealing with limited resources and we can't afford to make decisions independent of one another.

"We serve the same cus-

tomers and we need to have access to the same information."

In giving an example of how the City and the Sanitary District can work together, Hawkins said, "We can save money if we put in a sewer line the same time the city puts in a street."

Recently Mayor Abrica and Vice-Mayor Peter Evans met with Sanitary District Board Chairperson Joan Sykes-Miessi and Hawkins to explore topics for the Joint Special Meeting between the East Palo Alto City Council and the Sanitary District, which was held on April 18.

It was suggested that the City and the Sanitary District deal with the lack of available sewer line capacity within the District and the District's efforts to control groundwater infiltration.

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 May 2, 9, 23 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

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In Other Local News

MENLO PARK RECEIVES SECOND AWARD

By Jo-Anne Scott
East Palo Alto Today

Two Menlo Park City Departments were jointly honored with an Award of Excellence for their work with at-risk youth.

The award came from the California Parks and Recreation Society to celebrate the success of the city's Juvenile Diversion Program, a three-year collaboration between the Menlo Park Community Services Department and the Menlo Park Police

Department.

The two departments were honored together at the Awards and Volunteer Recognition Banquet, held in Cupertino..

The Juvenile Diversion Program works with 12 to 18 year old youths and their families to create opportunities that strengthen family bonds and assist youth in avoiding unproductive behavior.

The three-part Diversion Program includes: victim-offender mediation, direct intervention

(including participation in recreation provided through the Community Services Department), and counseling (hosted at the Onetta Harris Community Center).

The programs are designed to teach young people about their community, and the consequences of the choices they have made for themselves and for any of their victims.

The sponsors of the program say that the positive recreational activities available to the program participant help them



Partial picture of award

Facility Design award (for its newly opened Skate Park); also the prestigious 2004 Creating Community Award of Distinction (for the Belle Haven Community Summer School), honoring an individual agency for an outstanding contribution to the profession and community.

The 4,200-member California Parks and Recreation Society represents 525 local parks and recreation agencies in the state.

The society aims to provide leadership and resources to promote the role of parks and recreation in creating community through people, parks and programs.

More information about the Menlo Park Juvenile Diversion Program is available through the

Community Services Department at 650-330-2245 or by email at dealvarado@menlopark.org.

####



HOURS:	Monday-Thursday 8:30 am - 7:00 pm	ABIERTO:
	Tuesday 1:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Lunes - Jueves
	Fridays 8:30 am - 5:00 pm	Martes
	Saturdays 8:30 am - 12:00 pm	Viernes
		Sabado

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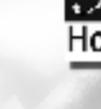
Eric Taylor
Realtor



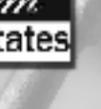
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Keldin Robinson-Woods
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In National and International News

Immigration Protest Against Discriminatory Proposals

By **Marta Alvarez**
East Palo Alto Today

For a few months immigrants from a few U.S. cities have been out on the streets protesting against the immigration reform. The Pro-immigration groups had their first large protest in Washington D.C. against the laws Congress is working on, ready to fight even with civil insubordination.

The protesters gathered through the National Coalition for Immigration, demanded the Congress an integral immigration reform and to stop treating immigrants as "criminals".

Their voice was heard in the U.S. Capital with such a strength, that observers said, they have not seen this in more than 25 years.

"We are not going to allow this" "We are not the U.S.

enemy" they said "We are part of the solution".

The protest, in which complete families with children participated, is taking place at the time the U.S. Senate is debating a variety of proposals to increase guards at the Mexican border. Among the participants there are union leaders, doctors, teachers, social workers that side by side the undocumented, specifically protest against a law proposal by Republican legislator James Sensenbrenner, that makes undocumented immigrants criminals.

Sensenbrenner would also like to sanction each individual or group who offers help. This measure, that also authorizes the construction of wall at the south border, was approved by the House of Representatives on last December 16, however it still has to be approved by the Senate that has a higher sup-

port for the " Guest Workers" program.

This proposed law, if ratified, "will put shackles to all of us who provide community services". The Catholic Church, the unions and business groups came together against Sensenbrenner's measure, considered as one of the strongest punitive laws in the last 70 years, and two cardinals _ in L.A. and In Washington Roger Mahoney y Theodore McCarrick, already expressed their decision to protest against the law.

The protest takes place at the same time there is an intensive campaign that representatives of these groups will do this week at the Senate. The debate will resume.

The Senate Judicial Committee will resume today the debate on a new immigration law, but because it is expected to be a slow process, its president, Senator

Arlen Specter expects to continue the debate on Wednesday 15 and if necessary Thursday 23.

The proposal will pass to the Senate the following week, because the majority leader Bill Frist announced he would like to start the debate in the High House plenary on Tuesday 27.

It is expected today that the senators will start looking at the project's articles promoted by Specter, who has received proposals for six amendments, as well as other projects from interested senators in offering a new legal structure to immigration.

Half a million of undocumented people enter each year in spite of traveling difficulties and tougher control at the borders, more than 500.000 undocumented immigrants arrive to the U.S., based on a study released yesterday and it stays that

Mexico provides 56 percent of that flux.

After Mexicans who represent 6.2 million immigrants, 22 percent or 2 million come from other Latin American, in particular Central America, and 13 percent from Asia, while Europe and Canada combined 6 percent.

The report, density and characteristic of the none authorized immigrant population, in the U.S, estimates 11.5 to 12 million undocumented live currently in the U.S.

Based on the Census offices, in the year 2000 there were 8.4 million "non authorized" in the U.S.

The total number of undocumented immigrants represents the 5 percent of U.S. workforce and based on the Pew Hispanic Center 7.2 million or six of each 10 undocumented is employed.

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

Protesta Contra Las Propuestas Discriminativas

By **Marta Alvarez**
East Palo Alto Today

Desde hace meses los inmigrantes han salido a las calles de varias ciudades estadounidenses para protestar contra la reforma migratoria. Washington. / Los grupos pro inmigrantes llevaron a la calle de Washington su primera gran protesta por las leyes que tramita el Congreso de EE.UU., dispuestos a combatir incluso con la desobediencia civil.

Los manifestantes convocados por la Coalición Nacional sobre Inmigración, exigen al Congreso una reforma migratoria integral y que se deje de tratar a los inmigrantes como "criminales".

Su voz resonó en la capital estadounidense con una fuerza que, en opinión de los observadores, no se registraba desde hace unos 25 años.

"No lo vamos a permitir", "No somos el enemigo de EE.UU. decían, somos parte de la solución".

La protesta, en la que participaron familias completas con niños incluidos, se produce en momentos en que el Senado de EE.UU. debate diversas propuestas para incrementar la vigilancia en la frontera con México.

Entre los manifestantes hay desde sindicalistas a médicos, maestros,

trabajadores sociales que codo a codo con los indocumentados, denuncian en particular el proyecto de ley del legislador republicano James Sensenbrenner, que convierte en criminales a los inmigrantes indocumentados.

Sensenbrenner pretende también sancionar a todo individuo o grupo que les ofrezca ayuda. La medida, que también autoriza la construcción de un muro en la frontera sur, fue aprobada por la Cámara de Representantes el pasado 16 de diciembre pero aún tiene que ser refrendada por el Senado, donde existe un mayor apoyo a un programa de "trabajadores huéspedes".

El proyecto de ley, de ser ratificado, "pondrá grilletes a todos los que prestamos servicios comunitarios". La Iglesia Católica, los sindicatos y grupos empresariales han sumado fuerzas en contra de la medida Sensenbrenner, considerada como una de las más punitivas en el Congreso en casi 70 años, y ya dos cardenales -el de Los Ángeles y el de Washington Roger Mahoney y Theodore McCarrick, respectivamente-, han expresado su decisión de resistirse a la ley.

La protesta coincide con una intensa campaña de presión que representantes de esos grupos realizan esta semana en el Senado. Se reanuda el debate. El Comité Jurídico del Senado reanudará hoy el debate de una nueva ley de inmigración, pero debido a que se espera un avance lento, su presidente el senador Arlen Specter prevé continuarlo el miércoles 15 y si fuere necesario el jueves 23.

El proyecto deberá pasar al Senado en la semana siguiente, ya que el líder de la mayoría Bill Frist adelantó que deseaba iniciar el debate en el plenario de la Cámara alta el martes 27.

Se espera que hoy los senadores comiencen a ver los artículos del proyecto promovido por Specter, que ya ha recibido propuestas de seis enmiendas, así como otros proyectos de senadores interesados en dar a la inmigración una nueva estructura legal.

Medio millón de indocumentados ingresan al año Pese a las dificultades que implica el viaje y los controles más severos en las fronteras, más de 500 mil inmigrantes indocumentados están ingresando anualmente a Estados Unidos, según un estudio difundido ayer y que señala a México como país origen del 56 por ciento de ese flujo.

Después de los mexicanos, que

representarían 6.2 millones de inmigrantes, 22 por ciento o unos 2 millones provienen de otros países latinoamericanos, particularmente de Centroamérica, y 13 por ciento de Asia, mientras que Europa y Canadá se combinaron para 6 por ciento.

El informe, Densidad y características de la población inmigrante no autorizada en Estados Unidos, estima que viven actualmente en Estados Unidos entre 11.5 y 12 millones de indocumentados.

En el año 2000 había unos 8.4 millones de "no autorizados" en EE.UU., según la Oficina de los Censos. El total de inmigrantes indocumentados representa el cinco por ciento de la fuerza laboral estadounidense y según el Pew Hispanic Center 7.2 millones o seis de cada 10 indocumentados tiene un empleo.

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

Another Look at Immigration Issues

by **Lizzie Brock**
EPA Today Contributor

You know that the majority of those who take care of and even raise the mid-Peninsula's children when their parents are busy are Latina immigrants, that the majority of those who build our houses, office-buildings and schools are Latino immigrants - many of them undocumented and that almost everyone who grows, cares for and picks our food are Latino immigrants - almost all of them undocumented.

And they do it without drivers licenses, health care, living wages or legal recognition as US workers.

Undocumented immigrants also pay taxes. They even pay more local, state (including social security) and federal taxes than they receive back in public services. Unlike many of their neighbors with wealthier Peninsula zip codes - whose children they raise and gardens they tend - they don't know how to find the loopholes.

The US-Mexico border still has a few loopholes, but if the Republicans in the House of Representatives have their way, those, along with the possibilities of a dignified, stable, legal life with their families, may also close around their necks like nooses.

And those immigrants live in East Palo Alto. Everyone in this city knows an immigrant and most of us are ourselves or are related to immigrants. This must be the case because the US Census Bureau estimates that in 2000,

43.8% of East Palo Alto's residents were foreign born and that 64.8% spoke a language other than English in the home. 58.8% of residents were estimated to be Latino. 9.8% were Asian or Pacific Islander.

And all accounts indicate that these numbers have increased in the last six years. While for some people in East Palo Alto this legislation threatens their own status in this country and this city, for all of us, the outcomes of these debates will shape this community as a whole.

What's going on in Washington? The House has already

approved legislation written by Republican James Sensenbrenner that has been described as the most repressive immigration bill in 70 years. House bill 4437 would, among other things, make every undocumented immigrant a felon and make it a crime religious, health care and other social workers to offer help to undocumented immigrants. (Hey, that includes a lot of us!)

The House bill sparked unprecedented mass protests of the Latino community around the United States. The

continued on page 20

Perspectives

From the Editor's Desk

It has been said that America is a land of immigrants. This is certainly true of East Palo Alto and Belle Haven given their current demographics. Immigration is an issue that has people talking: on a national level and on a local level. Voices have been raised, opinions subtly expressed and others not so subtly expressed, as you will see by the two letters to the editor that we've printed in this issue, along with the letter written to the community by William Webster on page 9.



Henrietta J. Burroughs

In their articles and letters, community residents are talking about decisions that will probably affect this community for years to come. In the condo decision as in the immigration issue, our local and national officials need to make decisions that will be in the best interest of all concerned. This entails that they get the facts, look at the ramifications of the various options under consideration and make a decision that will enhance the quality of life for the most number of people.

Complex issues never yield to easy solutions, but the solutions that are reached should come from the best thinking that can be achieved with the maximum good flowing to the greatest number of people. In general terms, the best solution should preclude partisan politics and preferential treatment given to various vested interests. So, whether it is on the subject of immigration or on the issue of condo conversion, we'd like to hear what you think the best solution would be that would bring the maximum good flowing to the greatest number of people. Or is that even the best standard to use? Send us your thoughts. We'd like to hear from you.

Just as immigration has sparked articles in EPA Today's pages, the recent decision by the East Palo Alto City Council on the subject of condo conversion has become another lightning rod that has brought its own share of controversy, with some opin-

Making a difference

While the organized activities of that day are over, the information that came out of the day must be remembered. In underscoring basic steps we can take to preserve the Bay, EPA Today urges its readers to study and save the newsletter enclosed in this issue. It was prepared by the East Palo Alto Sanitary District and it outlines what we can do to protect our health and the Bay. It also shows why the small steps we take now can make an enormous difference later.

South Bay Mayors and various city officials worked together last month to bring attention to the importance of keeping the Bay clean. Their joint efforts were a part of the Clean Bay Campaign. In a day of activities that included presentations at the Palo Alto Baylands Nature Preserve and canoeing in the Preserve, much emphasis was placed on day to day activities that each of us can take to preserve our environment.

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Marchers at immigration rally in San Jose

photo by Rashid Herd

Letters to East Palo Alto Today

A Terrific Commodity

Dear Editor

I hope you are well. I just accorded myself the luxury of indulging in another edition of *East Palo Alto Today*. What a terrific commodity you have bestowed upon our community - the stories of East Palo Alto, for and about East Palo Altans! Congratulations to you on the success of launching this undertaking. And thanks to you for the pride and dignity you have brought all of us in the community, both collectively and individually...

Keith I. Smith
East Palo Alto Rotary Club

Concerned about the future

Dear Editor:

The recent agreement between Wind River Woodland Creek Partners and the City of East Palo Alto to settle a court case and allow the conversion of 90 units in EPA to condominiums has made me very concerned about the future of affordable rental housing in the city.

As a participant observer of this process, serving on the EPA Planning Commission, I witnessed first hand how political influence and legal maneuvering can suppress self-determination in my

beloved community.

The founding mothers and fathers of the city recognized that affordable housing was paramount to sustaining the EPA community. The first major referendum passed by the residents of the city was the rent stabilization ordinance (April 10, 1984).

Words that continue to reverberate in my mind and underpin my work in EPA were spoken to me by the architect of the incorporation movement, Dr. Omowale Satterwhite, who asserted [paraphrasing], "We incorporated East Palo Alto to get control of our police, land use and tax dollars...to promote self-determination for this people of color community...any action, outcome or public policy that goes against these principles are adverse to our shared community vision."

In honoring the vision, sacrifices and work of our founders, we need to re-engage in our efforts to promote public policy which is conducive to affordable housing and local control. Examples include:

"Advocate for new housing that is truly affordable to low-income EPA residents

"Support efforts to improve the current condo conversion ordi-

nance so that families with children, seniors and the poor are protected and to make funds available so that displaced residents will be able to stay in EPA

"Help to ensure that the Rent Stabilization Board has effective leadership to protect the rights of low-income renters

"Promote community benefits agreements that will garner substantive resources to improve quality of life in EPA

"Advocate to limit growth and development in order to retain the quintessence of the community

Goro Mitchell
Bains St.

Action against People

Dear Editor

The people DISUNITED will always be defeated. Wind River Wins - White domination wins.

The Wind River lawsuit for condo conversion was just another hegemonic action against people of color. When these developers came to the City to increase the rental stock, which was required by state law, they signed up for rental units. 85% of these units are outside of the incomes of regular working East Palo Altans (many of

continued on page 10

EPA Today's Policies & Principles

In order to better serve the communities of East Palo Alto and Belle Haven, East Palo Alto Today has made the commitment to operate with high professional standards and to adhere to a strict code of ethical conduct. The principles and policies stated herein serve as an agreement with our readers, advertisers and

all others within our service area.

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

one over another.

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

East Palo Alto Today

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

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Community Opinions

RAVENSWOOD STAFF RECEIVES RAISES

On March 9, 2006, the Board of Trustees approved to relocate the 49er Academy to the Costaño School campus starting in July 2006 and re-assigned Mr. Phil Duncan as Principal for both sites.

This action was in response to several budget cut proposals presented to the Board on February 9th, which included a school relocation/merger, cuts to our maintenance department, 3% cut across departments and the reallocation of the Vice-Principals' portion of their salary from the general education budget to a categorical fund.



Schl. Supt. Maria de la Vega

The purpose of these proposals was to provide cost savings to increase staff salaries and close the revenue gap for the 2006-07 school year. These proposals were submitted with the understanding that teaching and learning remain a top concern. In order to improve teaching and learning,

we must make the retention of highly qualified teachers a top priority.

Because of the way in which California funds its schools, the Ravenswood City School District continues to face significant fiscal pressure due to increasing costs and declining enrollment that result in reduction of funding from the State. The district's budget is based on the students' Average Daily Attendance (ADA) and the previous school year's enrollment. In addition, the district must make prudent long range plans to support the parcel tax that expires in 2008-09 and adjust the budget to accommodate the federally mandated Ravenswood School

Improvement Plan's (RSIP) declining revenues from the State.

Budget cuts are always difficult decisions. However, the entire community of stakeholders needs to understand that if we are going to retain our staff by providing higher salaries, we must make a reduction in another area.

The cost saving from these budget cuts made it possible to consider raises for staff. Our March 23, 2006 the Ravenswood City School Board of Trustees agreed to give teachers a cumulative 5 percent increase, plus added health benefits. Under the agreement, teachers will get a 2.5 percent raise retroactive to

July 1st, 2005. Starting July 2006, teacher's salaries will increase an additional 2.5 percent. The district also agreed to pay an additional \$755.80 toward health care for single-person coverage. Under the new salary schedule, a beginning teacher will start at \$39,128.

The district's support staff will also receive a 2.5 percent increase, plus added health benefits retroactive to July 1st, 2005.

We appreciate your assistance as we move forward in working together to provide the best quality education for the children of the Ravenswood City School District.

About Bayfront Park

By Elizabeth Lasensky

Bayfront Park is a popular place for people of all walks of life to walk or ride on its many trails, enjoy a family picnic, or take a break in the middle of a busy day. Located where Marsh Road hits the bay, the park's grassy hills were built on top of a landfill.

When Menlo Park acquired the land, the City agreed to develop and maintain the park as regional open space, open to all, rather than developing specialized intensive uses such as ball fields and golf courses.

As with all landfills, Menlo Park must maintain the underground pipes and

pumping systems that collect methane gas and leachate (liquid waste) from the landfill and dispose of them properly. The methane gas is recovered and sold. The City receives revenue from garbage fees to pay for maintaining the landfill part of the park.

A Park Maintenance Fund was created to offset expenses of the park. There is over \$1 million remaining in that fund, which will run out in 6-8 years. If the City reallocates some expenses currently paid out of the Park Maintenance Fund to the landfill side, there could be funding for 10 or more years.



Recent plans to put an executive golf course on the park met with failure. The golf developer withdrew his proposal, but he could have been spared the expense at the beginning. The City had not done its homework.

The golf course proposal would have taken the heart of the park and restricted it to people who paid to play golf. Only the perimeter area would have remained for the rest of the park users.

A different threat to the open space of Bayfront Park remains. The City is considering putting soccer fields onto the park. While there are multiple regulatory

issues pertaining to organized recreational activities on the park, the cost of building and maintaining fields on moving landfill could be prohibitive.

Before spending any more time and money on this, the City should first explore other options, including expanding three existing fields in parks, such as Kelly Park, that would be much cheaper to rebuild and maintain.

Bayfront Park invites and embraces diversity. The vistas, rolling hills, activities, spoken languages, ages, wildlife, group size, solitude and open space all speak to the magic of this park. It is a gem of a place, it is free and it is in our backyard. All of it should remain open to every-

one and the solitude and peace of the park should be protected from further encroachment.

Friends of Bayfront Park came together to fight for the open space of Bayfront Park. We will attend the Menlo Park City Council meeting, likely to be April 25, at which sports fields on the park will be discussed.

Please add your voice of support for open space for everyone at Bayfront Park. Write letters to your paper, attend City Council meetings, or contact me to find out how you can become more involved with saving the park.

Elizabeth Lasensky
650 799-6468

Condo decision - catastrophic news

Dear Friend:

The hopes and prayers, the aspirations of present and future generations of East Palo Alto residents have been shattered by the catastrophic news that the City Council of East Palo Alto has capitulated in the more than two-years-old battle to fight condo conversion. This fight was waged successfully before some 15 years ago between 1991 and 1992. The advocates of a just society, which requires affordable housing, prevailed in that struggle. But in the most recent skirmish to undermine the protections to low and moderate income renters that was initiated in December 2003 when I was first approached as to the wisdom of permitting an exception to our de facto prohibition against condo conversion through the current Condo

Conversion Ordinance adopted when East Palo Alto first became a City on 1 July 1983 by allowing multifamily housing not under rent control to be converted from apartments into condos, the levees have been breached. Mayor Ruben Abrica refers to the settlement with WindRiver, owners of Woodland Creek Apartments, this past Wednesday, 29 March 2006, as "a win-win situation for both sides." Yes, it is true, the City will receive over time possibly \$1.1 million in fees as the apartments are sold in exchange for conceding the right of the developers to convert.

However, what has been lost is the inviolate principle that rental multifamily housing is sacrosanct in the City of East Palo Alto. Never in the history of East Palo Alto both before as well as after incorporation have apartments been converted into ownership units.

There have been ownership units converted into rental units. Such is the case with the Whispering Pines condominium complex on East O'Keefe, built as a condominium complex and the units sold in 1980. Those units eventually came to be entirely rented out, but at the end of 1989 the rental units were once again resold. I know as the owner of one of them.

But condo conversion is something new. Units that were granted a Certificate of Occupancy by the State of California as apartments have for the first time in the history of the community of East Palo Alto been converted into ownership units that are about to be put on the market and sold primarily we hope to the present tenants, assuming they are able to afford the prices, which for the 72 market-rate units range from \$480,000 to

\$600,000.

We are told that the 12 below-market-rate units themselves will be sold from between \$288,000 to \$360,000. It is probably true that as Mayor Abrica says the conversion will promote "home ownership opportunities for local residents," namely the tenants currently occupying the apartments who mostly have an upscale professional income.

It does us as a community no good to deny that a major defeat has been sustained. As in New Orleans, the levees have been breached and it is our business as a community not to speak of "win-win situations," but of a great disaster and seek to repair the damage done so that future disasters can be prevented. What do we as a community who remain committed to truly affordable housing rather than the Big Lie that equates

below-market-rate housing such as the twelve units to be offered for sale between \$288,000 and \$360,000 with "affordability." BMR housing may be relatively affordable, but if families earning ordinary wages and salaries do not have the earning power, BMR housing is only less unaffordable than so-called market-rate housing. It is still unaffordable to the vast majority of East Palo Alto's residents.

Rather than bury our heads in the sand and declare "Peace, Peace, when there is no peace (from Patrick Henry's "Give me Liberty or Give me Death" that helped ignite the American Revolution), we must as a community rally to preserve what is left of our stock of more-or-less truly affordable housing. What can we do to save the remaining 2,588 units of rental housing under the Rent Stabili-

Continued on page 26

Opinions

Letters continued from page 8

whom were forced to move out of the City.). Condo onversion is about putting big money in white developers' pockets. The win-win is the win-win for hegemony. What connection to politicians and judges did they have? "The one with the gold rules." Who is forced to move? Who can afford the condos? What majority benefits?

East Palo Altos: Stop being hopeless. Stop being pitiful. If this was 1954, you would be the people saying we can't do anything about segregation. Stop accepting crumbs. We need results for our people. Organize. Change laws/ordinances to benefit us. What good is it if we have Blacks and Latinos creating and enforcing the same laws which oppress us?

Blacks/Latinos: I say to you: White people don't want you. I'll repeat it. White people don't want you in their neighborhoods. How did we get to be a whole different county? . Short memory: Palo Alto took the golf course and airport. Menlo Park took the Business Park area, and stigmatized Belle Haven/East Menlo Park as the colored area. (How is Belle Haven treated?) White people don't want you. How did the Dumbarton Bridge get to go through the middle of East Palo Alto? They always create a "white area." You few Negro and

Hispanic tokens don't count. In fact, I am sure you don't want us "ethnics" either.

Wind River did not even identify itself as East Palo Alto - until the City forced them to. Having 12 people get condos at the expense of several thousand displacements does not balance. There will be many displacements as the other white owners plot to change to condos. I understand "what's in it for me" concept - basis of capitalism, but our (Blacks and Latina/os) survival is in unity for all of us. Regular working class people will not be able to afford these units. Big money for white men (and a little bit for a few tokens).

Blacks and Latina/os - find your courage and fight. You will not win without it. This system was created by white people - they are not even seeing to it that their own children and elders are able to survive. Their own professionals - 2 professionals working cannot purchase their childhood homes. Look around you, the system is not working for the majority of working class people. Even the elders who have homes cannot afford their healthcare and medicine without encumbering their homes.

The crumbs we get will be fleeting. We deserve more than crumbs. We have to fight together.

er. Join EPACT as a first step. We need to get educated to our Housing rights and call a meeting and tell our City Council what we want - we want results - not 12 units for the upper middle class (which we call affordable), but working class housing - for all of us - not just Latina/os, not just Blacks, not just Whites or Asians - all of us.

Tiombe Jama
Tiombay@hotmail.com

Wonderful Community Paper

Dear Editor,
Congratulations on a beautiful paper! We just started a wonderful track program last month. We would love to talk to you about encouraging the youth in track through your paper....Thanks again for a wonderful community paper.

Kristina Thompson
ED-FYBY

Depth and Range

Dear Editor,
It's fantastic to have a newspaper with such a depth and range for our community. Thank you! Keep up the good work.

Verlana Ostrom
East Palo Alto resident

Home Buyers Class

Sponsored By

Kelly Germa	of	Countrywide
	and	
Matt Phaneuf	of	Full Spectrum
	and	
Maria Prieto	of	Coldwell Banker

Please come to the **East Palo Alto Senior Center**, 590 Bell Street (**corner of University and Bell**) on **Thursday, May 11th!** This **FREE** class will be from **7:00pm to 9:00pm**. We will give you the opportunity to learn what your **credit score** is and find out what steps you have to take to **own a home**. We hope to help you!

Please call **(650) 289-4611** to let us know you are coming! Thank you very much for the chance to help you qualify to buy a home.

Sincerely,

Kelly, Matt, and Maria

P. S. We will have coffee and snacks. And Maria can speak Spanish for translation.

Should East Palo Alto be declared a safe haven for undocumented immigrants?

Dear Chief Davis:

A year ago, I would not have dared to make this appeal to you, to the City Council, to the City Manager asking to make East Palo Alto a safe zone from the impounding of the cars of undocumented immigrants living or driving through the City of East Palo Alto and driving without a driver's license, because a year ago I believed that my appeal would have fallen on deaf ears receiving little consideration.

I believe you are a compassionate, practical man who can be reasoned with if a strong and rational argument is made.

I am hoping that my appeal will receive a more compassionate reception since the City Council at the City Council meeting of Tuesday, April 18, 2006 unanimously passed a resolution opposing the House of Representative Resolution 4437 that criminalizes as felons immigrant workers for being in this country without green cards and the employers that hire them.

It should be noted that the actions of those who wrote Resolution 4437 are that much more odious because I believe that being convicted of felony means that you would

do hard time at a penitentiary and not at a City or County jail.

I am writing to appeal to you, to the City Council and to City Manager Alvin James to please consider making the City of East Palo Alto a safe zone against the impounding of cars of undocumented immigrants who are stopped by East Palo Alto Police Department police officers and who are found to be driving without a valid State of California driver's license.

I had an occasion a year ago of seeing an East Palo Alto police officer impound the car of a young Mexican father, an undocumented immigrant who spoke no English. It is because of what that day that I am to write to you this letter, to the City Council and to City Manager.

If a year ago, I observed with care and can write in detail all that I saw that afternoon, it is because I was annoyed and offended by what I saw. Seeing the incident unfold, I had a feeling in my gut that the arrest was principally about an East Palo Alto police officer dealing with an undocumented migrant who was driving without a driver's license.

A year ago, I was standing at the corner of Bay Road and Clark Avenue waiting for the

280 public bus to arrive when I saw across the street from where I was standing waiting for the bus a young Latino man who had been stopped by an East Palo Alto police officer Clark Avenue and was handcuffed, being body searched like a common criminal, a mug shot photo taken of him.

And then I saw the tow truck arrive and tow this Latino man's car away and I followed the tow truck with my eyes and saw that tow truck driver drove down Bay Road and turn into the Bains' property.

After the East Palo Alto police officer let this Latino man go and his car was towed across the street and towards me. As he went by, I stopped him and asked him why had he been stopped and searched and photographed by East Palo Alto police officer and why had his car been towed.

The poor young father - because he was a clean cut, respectable looking, mild-mannered young man of about 30 years old - told me that he had made a stop at a four-way street a block before Bay and Clark and that he and the police officer had arrived at the street corners at the

same time, that the police officer had stopped at the corner street to his left.

He told me that he waited for the police officer to drive through, and waited, and waited but the police officer did not move. He told me that he had become nervous and did not know that to do. Then he told me that he made a mistake and drove through. And that is when the East Palo Alto police officer stopped him for committing a traffic violation.

But of course the East Palo Alto police officer discovered that this man was driving without a driver's license and he had his car impounded. The poor man kept repeating that he was caught because the police officer had made him so nervous he did not know what to do.

He told me that he was mortified because his car had been towed away with his little girl's car seat and he told me he wanted to try to retrieve it. He asked me if I had seen which way the tow truck driver had taken his car. I told him where I had seen the driver drive into.

But at that very moment

he and I saw the tow truck driver coming down Bay on his way to University Avenue. He and I ran across the street and I waved down the driver, calling out to him stop, that we need to talk to him. The tow truck driver was nice enough to stop for us and I asked the driver in English where exactly he had taken this man's car because I told the tow truck driver this man wanted to retrieve his daughter car seat.

I know of another married undocumented immigrant Latino family man with two young children who is a skilled electrician, a trade that he picked up in Mexico, but he is so afraid of being stopped by the police and being deported that he will not drive and he pays to be driven to and from work, and paid to be taken to purchase groceries and any other errands that his family needs.

The family owned a car but others drove the car for them until I taught his wife, who was much less fearful than he was about driving the car to drive it.

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