

East Palo Alto's crime rate drops

By Ann Gibbons

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EAST PALO ALTO — Reported burglaries and felony crimes such as murder, rape and robbery dropped significantly during the first three months of 1980 compared with the same period last year, according to Lt. Ken Frank, commander of San Mateo County Sheriff's substation here.

Reported felonies dropped from 519 in the first three months of 1979 to 475 during January through March of 1980, Frank told the East Palo Alto Municipal Council Monday night.

This year's burglaries dropped by 28 percent from those reported during the early months of 1979, Frank said.

But while crime has dropped this year when compared with early last year, it has increased when com-

pared with the last three months of 1979. Frank said 374 felonies were reported from October to December, more than 100 fewer than were reported during the first three months of this year.

Frank said a disproportionate number of those crimes were reported from four trouble spots. He identified the hot crime spots as the area along East Bayshore where the "social" clubs are located; the Nairobi Shopping Center; Jack Farrell Park; and an apartment complex at 2000 Cooley Ave.

At Nairobi Shopping Center alone — where only one business, a liquor store, operates — there were 553 police calls. These calls included 13 reported crimes, 387 formal crowd control activities and 43 arrests, Frank said.

"That's an awful lot of manpower and time for one area," Frank said.

He suggested the council take action to close down the liquor store — a move the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors plan to take if the owner of the shopping center does not refurbish it soon.

On the recommendation of the Municipal Council, the supervisors are taking steps to condemn the land and take control of it themselves.

Most of the trouble at the shopping center is caused by people who are not 21 years old, Frank said.

"You can't find someone over 21 there," one nearby resident said. "They have gunshot fights just for the fun of it. They do anything they want just for the fun of it."

The council is also recommending county steps to regulate the "social" clubs on East Bayshore — a move that would decrease their hours of operation and, therefore, the chances for criminal activity.