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**THURSDAY**  
March 20, 2003

**EAST PALO ALTO**

# Cop at work despite fraud charges

■ Facing trial, the officer has been put to work revising the Police Department's policy manual

**By Suzanne Zalev**

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EAST PALO ALTO — A police officer awaiting trial on felony fraud charges is back at work.

Lesa Stone, accused of participating in a telemarketing scam and placed on administrative leave after her arrest last summer, is now on "restricted duty" and working on revising the Police Department's policy manual, Police Chief Wesley Bowling said.

"Since I've got to pay her, I may as well have her doing something productive," Bowling said.

Stone has been doing administrative work assigned by Bowling's office, he said, adding she's been at work for at

least a month.

"It's paperwork. She has no enforcement work whatsoever. She is not in contact with the public," Bowling said.

He said he has no legal grounds to fire Stone, who has been accused but not convicted and is presumed innocent until proven guilty. There's nothing in the city's policy about an officer being fired for being accused of a crime, Bowling said, and if she's acquitted, "she has a legal right to get her job back."

The other officers don't seem bothered by Stone's presence in the department, Bowling said.

"They're all still acting very friendly with her, and they all understand," he said.

A Santa Clara County grand jury indicted Stone and 12 others on fraud, theft and conspiracy charges in connection with a telemarketing scheme that allegedly defrauded would-be donors of more than \$2.5 million. Between 1983

and 2000, the defendants solicited donations for organizations that sounded like law enforcement but had no connection with any agency, such as the "Santa Clara County Deputy Sheriff's Sports Association," prosecutors allege.

Stone had been on the job in East Palo Alto about 10 months when she was placed on administrative leave after her arrest, and Bowling noted she is accused of committing crimes before she worked for the department. When she was hired, nothing came up in her background check, interviews, reference checks and polygraph test, Bowling said.

The telemarketing fraud trial is slated to begin July 21, said Martha Donohoe, deputy district attorney in Santa Clara County.

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