

THE EAST PALO ALTO PROGRESS

July 1984

Volume 2, Number 5

Happy Birthday, East Palo Alto!

THE PEOPLE WILL MAKE CHANGE

by Edward R. Becks

The election in November may bring change

The President may change

A few faces may change

The outward process may change

The budget may even change

The surface change does not mean system change

Problems of the aged and the poor

will not change

Racism against Black, Brown, Asian, and Indian residents

will not change

Sexism will not change

Bigotry will not change

There will be no change unless

we go to the poor

There will be no change unless

we go to the minorities

There will be no change unless

we go to the deprived

There will be no change unless

we go to the people

There will be no change unless

we make Jesse's "Rainbow Coalition"

We must and will change

Purified by the struggle

we will change

Guiding and guided by Jesse

we will change

Grouping and regrouping

we will change

Organizing and reorganizing

we will change

Committing and recommitting

we will change

We, all of us, together

WILL MAKE THE CHANGE

Photo courtesy: Tom Upton



Most of the first 1,000 people who came to Garden Oaks School found a seat for the Jesse Jackson Rally. Minutes after this composite picture was taken, the room was jammed to capacity, with the crowd overflowing into the school yard and streets where they listened to Jackson's speech on loudspeakers. Local and national newspapers reported that only 300 people attended.



Like the City of East Palo Alto, Kanika Henderson celebrated her first birthday in July 1984. She is a fitting symbol

for this special issue of the East Palo Alto Progress. Happy Birthday, Kanika.

The City of East Palo Alto is one year old. Despite countless legal maneuvers, harassment tactics, and massive monetary expenditures by the enemies of cityhood, East Palo Alto has survived.

Not only that, the City has in its first year demonstrated the vitality, independence, and strength of its own people. Proof of this came with the referendum on rent control, reinforcement in the courts of the City's right to exist, and adoption of a \$4.2 million budget which provides for the creation of the City's own police force.

The public celebration of the City's

anniversary began early, at the June-teenth festival. In this celebration of the City's ethnic diversity, East Palo Alto showed itself as a fertile ground for Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition. Candidate Jackson understood this, and his decision to visit East Palo Alto on May 31 brought over a thousand enthusiastic supporters to Garden Oaks School (see below).

As our City celebrates life, this special issue of the **Progress** reflects that spirit with examples of poetry, our musical heritage, and the resurgence of a political voice for people who have been unheard too long.

Rainbow Coalition Comes to E.P.A.

Photo courtesy: Tom Upton

REFLECTIONS: By Jane Maxwell

Asked at the Juneteenth Festival in Ravenswood Park, East Palo Alto on June 16, 1984.

Question: What does East Palo Alto represent to you?



Cottrill Dickerson

COTTRILL DICKERSON, resides on Illinois St.

I've lived here for 10 years and I've really seen the community grow and change. It's progressed a lot. It's a growing community. More houses are being built and there's the expressway going in. There's more togetherness too with people really pulling together now. We'll progress even more in the next 10 years.



Margaret Torregano (right)
Margie Daniels (left)

MARGARET TORREGANO, House of Prayer Missionary Church. Resides on Daphne Way.

It's my home so it means a lot to me. But we need to reopen Ravenswood High School. It's a waste of money to close schools. And we need more businesses open to create jobs for people. But we have too many churches here. They take up houses that people could live in. The churches we have should all combine. We don't need any more to open.

MARGIE DANIELS, House of Prayer Missionary Church. Resides on O'Connor St.

I love East Palo Alto. I'm never going to live anywhere else.



Bertha Price

BERTHA PRICE, Health Educator, Drew Medical Center. Resides on Schembri Lane.

I feel real good about East Palo Alto. It's been a rewarding place for me. My family business has succeeded and I've succeeded in my job. It's a privilege to live here.

RUN-RUN-RUN
(Drew Run-For-Your-Life, June 23, 1984)



Winners Sandra Butler of Kavanaugh Dr. and Rudy Cornielle of the Dominican Republic. Mr. Cornielle will represent his country in the 5,000 meter race in the Olympics this summer.



VIOLET PEOPLE PURPLE PLACES

by Keith Archuleta

Forget the Tarzan movies
put that image you've
been given of jungles and
gibberish out of your
mind, remove the false
pictures of Africa to see

the violet people and
purple places and
rainbow colors
that is Africa to me . . .

The Dark Continent shrouded
in mystery so that
connections would not be
made to the Motherland
of so many people

West Africa, the birthplace
of our ancestors, who
were skilled in animal
husbandry, agriculture

and blacksmithing, skills
needed to develop
the New World . . .

Our ancestors exploited
for industrial Revolution
by Imperial Power and
true-believer crusade
Our people scattered over
the earth like seeds blown
by the wind to flower anew . . .

Filling the world with violet
people much darker
than blue, filling the world
with music and movement
and memories of the Motherland

Filling the world with a
common spirit and destiny
allowing us to see

the violet people and
purple places and
rainbow colors
that is Africa to me . . .

VISIBILITY

Those eyes,
How they experience life!
I sometimes think they hear, smell
And yes, certainly touch.

Those eyes,
Looking, searching,
Penetrating like X-rays
Beneath the obscure phony,
Fatty, subcutaneous tissue of life.

Those eyes,
Trusting or wary,
Empathetic or alone,
Being like a heart beat
Expressing in rhythm
You-me, you-me, you-me.

Those eyes,
Focus inward or outward
Sensing, feeling, aware
Of self and the world outside.

Those eyes,
Plaintive, petulant, perceptive,
Angry, sad, excited.
In touch with God
Distant, universal—everywhere
and nowhere.

Those eyes,
Hungry, curious, greedy.
Loving, shifting—dead.
Tender, awesome or
Bright with the light of discovery.

Those eyes,
Strained, worried—pacing
Like a restless panther in a cage.
Confused, wanting, waiting
For clarity of feeling.

Those eyes,
Somehow smell the truth
Of our being,
Those eyes—yours or mine
Are a pipeline to the Universe
When they truly see.

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The East Palo Alto Progress

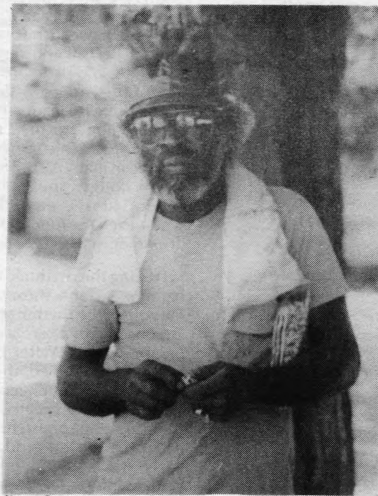
A non-profit monthly community newspaper serving East Palo Alto, California. Persons interested in contributing articles, photography, or poetry may do so by submitting them to The East Palo Alto Progress.

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I. OILPAINTING

by Abena

Artists at work:
 time's suspended in moonlight
 along senna shadows
 a slowdance starts
 stretch your brownframe
 'cross my canvass
 spread color evenly
 cross my meridian
 anoint my eyes a wet
 seagrass kiss
 dip your brush in my
 earthtone palette
 make magical a magenta mood
 your laquered shaft tells
 long stories carefully
 caress cyan hills,
 deep valleys
 stroke a sunset
 sizzle our ocean
 offer up fire love
 plunge turquoise kisses
 splash spume
 wave after wave
 float sacred circles
 round your aqua orifice
 our seabreeze breath
 laps the shore
 ebb and flo the tide
 onto slick beachhead
 higher than the last
 roll another tidal wave
 til tomorrow morning.

II. WATERCOLORS

Anoint my parchment
 with your H₂O brush
 stroking
 seven 'clock a.m.
 between soft sheets
 a pastel sunrise
 melts orange to yellow
 crimson to pink
 blue to powder
 becomes light
 a bird sings
 a rooster crows
 satisfaction
 for art's sake
 eyes awake
 to a new
 masterpiece.

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HIGH HAIKU

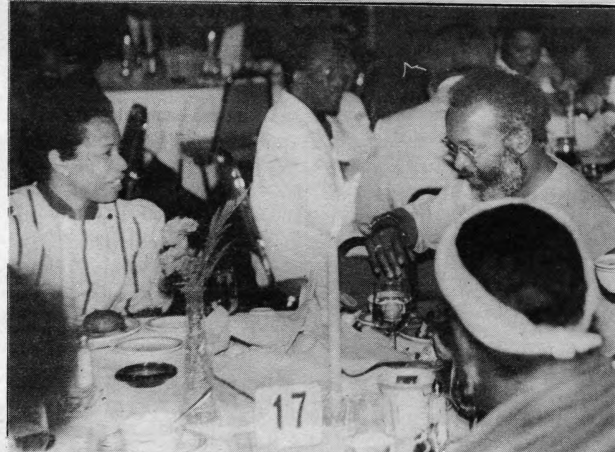
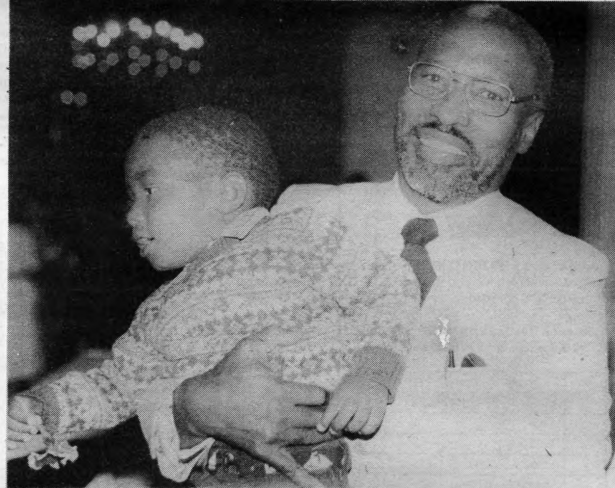
Black crow flying
 Midnight entering
 Behind closed secrets
 Of dusk and dew.

©Abena 1972

Mother am I to you—
 Touchstone
 and labor of your existence
 Lover am I to you—
 Womb
 of joy and creation
 Sister am I to you—
 Firmament
 From father's peaceful wishes
 Daughter am I to you—
 Deliverer
 of revolutionary energy!

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Salute To A Warrior



Pictures taken at festivities honoring Ed Beck's many years of service to the local and national communities.

JAZZ AND THE COUNT

By Jon Jang

It was at my day gig, sorting mail when I heard the blues on the radio. Count Basie passed away at the age of 79 on April 26th, 1984.

When it was announced that Benny Goodman, Dave Brubeck and Tony Bennett would comment on the loss of the Count, I was outraged. After all, it was Benny Goodman, the "King of Swing" during the Swing Era of the Thirties, who led the white big bands to popular fame and commercial success while conveniently liquidating the fundamental expression and force of the African American musical tradition.

"King" Benny later on hired Teddy Wilson, Lionel Hampton, Charlie Christian and Cootie Williams to form the first "integrated" band in an attempt to "civilize" the black musicians to "civilize" the black music for "civilized" folks.

The weakness that motivated Goodman to hire Fletcher Henderson as an arranger to help "legitimize" his jazz sound combined with Goodman's preoccupation with the "right stiff," on-the-beat rhythms and bookworshipping fanaticism for written music, showed why "King Benny" could never usurp the serious blues leaders. The liquidation of the blues "feeling" revealed the truth about Benny Goodman and the Swing Era: they were part of the anti-jazz force of the monopoly capitalist music industry. The hypocrisy of it all is further enhanced when white critics give praise to white musicians like Goodman, Paul White-

man, Dave Brubeck, Harry James (over Louis Armstrong!), etc. while launching racist attacks against black artists, i.e. John Coltrane and Ornette Coleman with anti-jazz labels. So don't count Basie out.

While the Swing Era was reflecting the conservative trend for the majority of the country during the Depression, Kansas City was enjoying an exciting night life. Gambling and hot jazz bands were kept prosperous by a crime syndicate known as the Pendergast machine. Basie, Benny Moten, Jay McShann and others lived and breathed the music which moved and jumped and reflected the night life.

The emergence of "shout" singers and the saxophone and the redefined role of the rhythm section and the blues "picked-up-to-raise-the-spirit" engendered a unity of spirit and joy: a unity that expanded the blues feeling/content as well as its presentation/form.

Jazz was dominated by brass during the twenties, most notably by Louis Armstrong before Basie and Moten and the other Kansas City bands. It is important to note that Charlie Parker was a Kansas City teenager at that time. The emergence of Lester "Prez" Young, Basie's genius soloist "changed" horns making the saxophone the predominant instrument in jazz.

Prez developed his brilliant solo conception based on the aspect of the rhythm as the "shout" singer—the saxophone as the vocalized shout of the singers. But it was Basie's riff solo structure which provided room for

Basie to develop the modern saxophone language.

Riffs are short melodic phrases repeated again and again, thrown back and forth between the brass and woodwinds. This call and response aspect of the riff solo structure is an adaptation of the African antiphonal music where there is a leader/master-drummer "calling" to the "response" of the chorus. This aspect has been utilized in many Afro-American forms (work songs, spirituals, doo-wop, bebop, funk, etc.). Lester Young symbolized the function of the master drummer in Basie's band.

Freeing the rhythmic feel of the big band was done through redefining the role of the rhythm section. Freddy Green's steady chordal guitar accompaniment and Walter Page's "walking" bass relieved the piano and drums of the timekeeping function. This allowed a greater freedom for them and the soloist. Basie no longer had to use the left hand as much as his early stride piano influence, Fats Waller, did.

On the other hand, Basie's right hand provided strong support for the soloist and the ensemble with horn-like fills and riffs. Drummer Jo Jones's use of the hi-hat (two cymbals operated by a foot pedal) helped maintain the hard-swinging feel, while occasional "bombs" exploding from the foot pedal bass drum created a rhythmic feel more propulsive than the stiff, white swing bands.

This expansion of the blues feel-

ing/content was a by-product of the highly spirited expression. Kansas City blues moved from a rural to a more urban feel with shout singers like Jimmy Rushing and Joe Turner creating excitement that recreated the anticipation present in the call-and-response generated by the sermons of black preachers.

We must reaffirm our understanding of the crucial leadership and significant contributions made collectively by Count Basie and the Kansas City bands. Amiri Baraka presents an important point in "Blues People":

"Basie's music saved the big band as an honest musical form, and the uses of (the) small group provided a form for the young musicians of the Forties."

William "Count" Basie's many years of playing music in the African-American tradition is a powerful and honest statement of resistance against decades of anti-jazz forces (swing, classical-jazz, rock-jazz, fusion, etc.). Although Basie was humble and modest, he represented another example of a black cultural worker who struggled for blues-determination.

Jon Jang (resident of East Palo Alto), a jazz pianist and composer, has recorded two albums, *Jang and Are You Chinese* or *Charlie Chan?*, on RPM Records, an independent company in San Francisco.

This is an edited and shortened version of the article "Count Basie" by Jon Jang printed in *Unity*.

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