

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Now more than ever, conservation center needs a home

**ON BEHALF** of the Peninsula Conservation Center, I would like to thank the hundreds of community members who urged the Palo Alto City Council to permit us to remain at our Park Boulevard headquarters in Palo Alto.

We are deeply disappointed by the City Council's rejection of our request to purchase a portion of property despite this overwhelming community support. The council's decision was *not*, as portrayed by some of its members, a choice of housing or conservation center. Our proposal was to purchase the portion of our property on which our building stands, add the rest (about one-third of our present property) to the adjacent lot recently acquired by the city for housing, and dedicate payment for our site to the project next door.

This plan would have allowed the city to add to the number of units planned

for that site, enhanced the affordability of the housing there, and allowed its residents, as well as those already residing in our neighborhood, to enjoy our facilities and services.

Over the past decade, escalating rents on the Peninsula have already pushed many worthwhile non-profit organizations out of our community. Buying our building would allow us to avoid the threat of future rent hikes.

The City Council's decision to force us from Park Boulevard puts the very existence of the PCC and its member organizations in jeopardy. Two years of concerted searching have turned up no affordable sites to purchase in or near Palo Alto. And most alternative rental sites are already out of reach for non-profit organizations like ours.

In the face of the council's decision, we have redoubled our search for a site

to purchase in the mid-Peninsula area. We are looking for a building with about 5,000 square feet of space that could accommodate our seven resident organizations and nature gift and book store.

We have started a capital campaign to finance our purchase, but we expect that a partial donation (tax deductible) of a given property may be necessary to allow us to buy a local site. If any reader can give, sell, or recommend a property for sale in this area that may be appropriate as a future home for the PCC, please give us a call at 328-5313, or stop by and talk to us about your ideas.

**Jacquelyn Brown**  
Executive Director,

Peninsula Conservation Center Foundation  
PALO ALTO

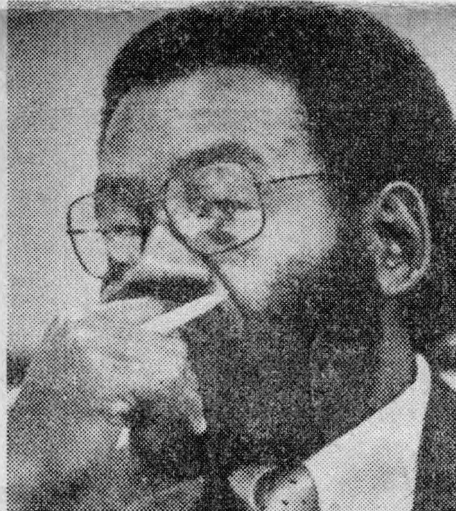
## Good riddance

**IN REGARD** to your editorial in support of former East Palo Alto City Manager Fred Howell, I find your position incredibly inaccurate but clearly reflecting past offensive editorials concerning the city of East Palo Alto.

Your statement that Howell "handled day-to-day matters reasonably and professionally . . . and succeeded in improving recreational and police services" in East Palo Alto is absurd. Howell is guilty of hiring incompetent staff to run our city and has often been accused of being inconsiderate to the needs of the people here. The city has employed a public works director and his assistant who have no experience as public works administrators, a community service director who could not provide a recreation program in Disneyland, and a recently departed community development director who did no development in our community.

Howell's handling of the city's purchase of the Ravenswood High School site was a textbook case of involuntary servitude. Notwithstanding the fact that he deliberately refused to provide information to the general electorate long after an agreement had been reached, he passively ignored the Sequoia district's obligations and responsibilities as the seller of dilapidated, neglected and pillaged property.

Further, his obsession to include a housing element in this agreement was unfortunate and arrogant and in complete contrast to the desires of the majority of the City Council and their directives. This defiance by Howell was even more unforgivable because, as city manager, he was well aware of the citywide deficiency of 56 acres of recreational land here. The Times Tribune's statement that recreational pro-



Fred Howell

grams are improved under Howell is asinine. Our city still does not have a comprehensive recreation program for any age, and Howell has never demonstrated any interest in having one.

Finally, the citizens of East Palo Alto must not rejoice in Howell's removal, but we must remember the 1960s and '70s when these same diversionary tactics were used when we found out that Affirmative Action wasn't working. The directors were fired one after another, but the same old programs and staffs were kept on. The City Council cannot expect us to believe all is well in our city with the firing of its manager and then retaining the incompetent people he hired. The time is long overdue to remove all of the department heads who have become a liability rather than an asset. The council owes it to the citizens to see to it that only top-quality people are department heads in our city. This is not the case now.

**A. Peter Evans**

EAST PALO ALTO

## Defenseless fetus

**REGARDING THE** drug raid at a large apartment complex in East Palo Alto on Dec. 17 in which a woman three months pregnant was apprehended:

I would like to see a law enacted that would incarcerate a woman if convicted of taking dope, drinking or smoking excessively during her pregnancy.

The length of the incarceration should be between 3 to 10 years, depending on the mental and physical damage to the fetus, which should show up after birth. If the baby dies the woman should be tried for second-degree murder.

Food for thought:

How many mothers who are careless with their own health during pregnancies are on welfare? And, if the baby has or develops a mental or physical disability, the cost to support this child could be astronomical.

**Al Williams**

MOUNTAIN VIEW

## Proud of the tradition

**AS A JEW**, I am ashamed and embarrassed by Natalie Bivas' condemnation (Letters, Dec. 24) of circumcision. Bivas finds circumcision barbaric and associates the Jewish practice of circumcising eight-day-old males with female circumcision and the primitive non-Jewish societies.

I have a different set of associations. The biblical commandment for Jews to circumcise their sons is found alongside commandments not to murder or steal or commit adultery or human sacrifice. This "primitive" code of behavior is as distinctive and inspiring today as it was 3,500 years ago. It is a tradition I am proud to be a part of.

**Russell Roberts**

PALO ALTO