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Bringing you news of the City, my first act is to give honor and glory to God and to state, "Oh God how great thou art that thou would grant us, confused and frustrated beings, another precious day of life, and then make that life worth living!" We certainly give thanks for reaching another milestone. Yes, it's East Palo Alto's second anniversary of its birth. It is very fitting that East Palo Alto celebrates its founding at almost the same time that our nation celebrates its founding. East Palo Alto epitomizes the very best of Americana. Over five long years ago, as the outgrowth of frustrations, anxieties, and desires among residents of the community, a small group of people began a struggle for redress of many grievances: taxation without representation; little or no concern or regard for citizens' need for safety and security from the entity charged with the enforcement of law in the community; impaction from the machinations of the East Palo Alto Municipal Council, the line of demarcation between the haves and the have-nots, which had neither the legal standing or the willingness to protect the rights and properties of community people. They brought the concept of incorporation from just a mere symbol on a sheet of paper to full fruition at the ballot box on 7 June 1983. Uh, yes, God has been good to us.

On June 26, 1985, four members of the City Council adopted a budget for fiscal 1985 -1986 which provides for adequate staffing of City departments; it is aimed at increasing the quality of services delivered to citizens and the maximizing of the potentials for safety and security in our neighborhoods. We have begun a campaign to reclaim our community from the small group of thugs and vermin who have held us captive and have made the lives of community residents a living hell over the past several years. This group, of which we estimate to be less than 200 in number, has been allowed to negatively impact our community because the criminal activity has meant profits, huge profits, in the pockets of some of those who had responsibility for our protection. Yes, WE HAVE STARTED TO TAKE BACK OUR NEIGHBORHOODS! The East Palo Alto Police Department took responsibility for enforcing the law in our City at 12:01 a.m., July first. During the first week we observed the impact a consistent, persistent, visible law enforcement presence had on aberrant activity on the streets; some of our neighborhoods continue to be negatively impacted. We realize that the City will not be able to change, in a relatively

short period of time, the festering in our environment that the San Mateo Sheriff's department, either by commission or omission, allowed to take root and spread. Citizens must also do their part to help make the community safe and secure again. We must not be part of the drug scene either as a buyer, seller, or user. Furthermore, we must not keep burglars in business by buying stolen merchandise. These may seem to be bargains but the reality is that the cost is really prohibitive; by purchasing these "hot" articles, we are selling out ourselves and our community as well. Join the fight; Help take back our neighborhoods!

A long awaited development has been the implementation of the City's Department of Public Works. The new director, Jesse Smith, has the skills and experience essential to accomplish the myriad of tasks needed to clean up, repair, and maintain our streets and facilities. Yes, we really are on our way.

The City signed a lease with the Sequoia Union High School Board for the Ravenswood High School site. We now have access to that space. In the next few weeks we are hoping that members of the community will volunteer their many talents and expertise to help restore the site; it has been badly neglected by the Sequoia District. If you have skills such as just plain muscle power, carpentry, electrical engineering, plumbing, roofing, landscaping, groundskeeping, painting, et cetera, please contact the Community Services Department Director, Robert Hoover, at 853-3100. There are several community work days scheduled in the next few weeks and your help is desperately needed. Help restore our community. Negotiations for the acquisition of the Ravenswood property are progressing nicely.

On the senior front, the City has agreed to assist the board of the EPA Senior Center in trying to secure AB 30 funds for a permanent senior center; it has allocated funds for a consultant to write the proposal.

The City's celebrations during the last week starting with a birthday program on July first and culminating with a picnic in the park on Saturday July sixth were very joyous occasions. Many citizens spoke of beginning to feel more secure in their homes and safer on the streets. Yes, we're beginning to take back our neighborhoods.

The City is most appreciative of the support and commitment it has received over a long period of time from many ministers and religious leaders in the community. The City would not be celebrating another year of life if it had not been for some of these beautiful humans; we have certainly been blessed to count them as part of this community. We need the involvement of all the ministers and religious leaders in the community if we are going to take back:

our neighborhoods. The taking back of our neighborhoods means, of course, the expulsion of the criminal elements but it also means an increase in the awareness among community residents of what the obligations and responsibilities of citizenship are including respect for yourself and for your neighbor; observing and respecting the City's laws the same way you respect the laws of other cities - no parking or blocking driveways or streets; making sure that the empty bottle, paper sack or can is deposited in a garbage can or trash receptacle rather than just discarded wherever you may find yourself; and significant decreases in the noise emanating from those ghetto-blasters (large portable radios carried by many young people) car radios, home stereos, and mopeds.

Finally, at the beginning of the third year of life, the message emanating from the City is crystal clear. To all who would agitate against the life or well-being of this community either by design or deed be aware that you are looking down the long, long barrel of history; get out of the City's way or get destroyed.