

EAST PALO ALTO

Man shot, crashes car near nonprofit

BY VICTOR GONZALES
Daily News Staff Writer

A person shot in East Palo Alto ended up in a car accident in Palo Alto, police said Wednesday.

Palo Alto police first received calls of a car accident on the 2100 block of East Bayshore Road at about 5:30 p.m., Palo Alto police Sgt. Dan Ryan said. Immediately after the first reports, more people called in, saying a man had been shot.

Police found the victim, a man in his early 20s, with gunshot wounds. He was conscious and breathing when paramedics transported him to a local hospital, Ryan said.

The car the victim was in, a dark-colored sedan, swerved into the fence next to Highway 101. The man was able to get out of the car with the help of people nearby, Ryan said. It's unclear if the victim was the driver.

Soon afterward, a second car, unrelated to the shooting, ran into the crashed car. The second car sustained minor damage but was able to be driven away, Palo Alto police Sgt. Steve Herrera said. Its driver had superficial injuries and did not go to the hospital, Herrera said.

While Palo Alto police are dealing with the car accident, East Palo Alto police are investigating the actual shooting in their city, Ryan said.

Across the street from the crash site was BUILD, a nonprofit group that works with the Sequoia Union High School District teaching entrepreneurial skills and preparing students for college.

Palo Alto police officers stood watch in front of the nonprofit as parents picked up their children from the site. A staff member was reassuring parents there that BUILD is a safe place for their children.

E-mail Victor Gonzales at vgonzales@dailynewsgroup.com.

LIGHTS

From page A1

But many neighbors asked the district to move slowly on the project and expressed concern about crime, noise and the possibility of other groups and teams using the field at night.

"The biggest issue we have is: Why would you spend this money until the safety issues have been addressed?" said resident Craig England, who lives on nearby Toyon Road. "The real risk is on the perimeter areas. ... We have a lot of dark areas on the perimeter of that field and they're high-risk areas."

Michele Cappa, who lives on Oak Grove Avenue and sent two daughters to Menlo-Atherton, said she hoped the district would test out temporary lights before installing something permanent.

"If we put permanent lights up before we test it out, I think we're going to open a big can of worms," Cappa said, adding, "The noise level at M-A for just regular games is really off the wall."

The cost of buying and installing four standards, each holding about 11 1,500-watt lights is about \$225,000 to \$250,000, said Donald Gielow, who oversees construction for the district. Running power to the standards would require about \$100,000 to \$150,000 in equipment and work, he said.

In contrast, if the district opted to rent temporary lights of similar quality for a school year, those would cost about \$20,000 to install and \$2,500 a month in rental fees — bringing the total to about \$50,000 for a single school year, not counting power costs, Gielow said.

He added that with the right lights the surrounding neighbors shouldn't be bothered by the glare.

"What impressed me today is how fast they were able to reduce spillage from the edge of the field to about 50 feet out," Gielow said.

E-mail Jessica Bernstein-Wax at jbernstein@dailynewsgroup.com.



Will Oremus / Daily News

An East Palo Alto Public Works Department employee works at a pumping station at San Francisquito Creek in Martin Luther King Jr. Park on Wednesday.

BIG STORM

From page A1

without overflowing. Portions of the Palo Alto Golf Course were swamped, closing the course, and a few trees toppled due to the saturated soil, city spokeswoman Linda Clerkson said.

Residents could pick up sand bags available at the Palo Alto Airport and at Mitchell Park, she noted.

Pacific Gas & Electric Co. reported small power outages throughout the day in cities across the Peninsula. Throughout the Bay Area, more than 36,000 customers had lost power as of 11:30 a.m., spokeswoman Tamar Sarkissian said. As the storm subsided, the number of customers without power had decreased to about 16,000 as of 5 p.m. Crews from other utility companies as far away as Oregon and Washington came to the Bay Area on Wednesday to help PG&E staff.

Some of the Peninsula's worst flooding was in the Redwood City area, which saw 1.43 inches of rain between 5 and 11 a.m., according to National Weather Service estimates. Several streets were blocked off in the low-lying areas just west of Highway 101, including parts of Rolison Road in Redwood City and Taylor Avenue in San Carlos.

Pulgas Creek overflowed its banks and flooded some classrooms at Central Middle School in San Carlos, said Public Works Director Robert Weil.

About a dozen Redwood City public works employees had to move out of their workspace at the Grant Corporation Yard on Chestnut Street between 9 and 10 a.m. as power was turned off due to flooding on the building's flat roof, said Malcolm Smith, spokesman for the city manager's office. Smith said at about noon that the power had been turned back on and employees were moving back in.

Elsewhere in the city, "We've had a fair number of calls, a flurry of calls, but mostly for small things," Smith added.

Also Wednesday morning, Atherton police closed down Marsh Road from Middlefield Road to Fair Oaks Avenue because a creek had begun to flood, dispatchers said.

High waters in Belmont Creek appeared to contribute to flooding in the area of Harbor Boulevard and Industrial Road near the border of Belmont and San Carlos. The water inundated the parking lot at Eurotech Collision Center on Industrial Road, said Tanya Derting, the shop's manager.

A second Eurotech facility on Harbor Boulevard had to be evacuated because the building flooded, she added.

Nearby, at the Harbor Boulevard on-ramp to southbound Highway 101, Caltrans spokeswoman Gidget Navarro reported that drainage culverts underneath the freeway got clogged, sending water across the ramp. Workers cleaned out the debris by late morning, she said.

Domestic flights at SFO faced delays of anywhere from a few minutes to an hour, airport spokesman Mike McCarron said.

More than 1 million PG&E customers had had their service affected since early Monday, PG&E's Web site said. Sarkissian reminded people to keep battery-powered flashlights on hand and said battery-powered radios can be useful for getting updated news during a storm.

"As much as we try to prepare here at PG&E, we're also trying to emphasize that people should also be prepared at home," she said.

All downed power lines should be treated as if they were live, she added.

The National Weather Service predicted continued showers Wednesday night and more rain today, with winds dying down to about 15 mph along the San Francisco Bay shoreline. The rain could clear by Saturday but is expected to return by Monday as a new front rolls in.

Bay Area News Group staff writers Julia Prodis Sulek and Joshua Melvin contributed to this report. E-mail Will Oremus at woremus@dailynewsgroup.com.

CREEK

From page A1

dropped off."

He was right. The water levels slowly receded, and by late afternoon both channels were below 50 percent capacity.

In the past, Roberts said, it has taken about three to four inches of rainfall on already saturated ground for the creek to overflow. The Palo Alto foothills got about two inches in this storm.

How close a call was it?

Not as close as it might have seemed, said Len Materman, executive director of the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority, which is working on projects to reduce the risk of flooding.

Yes, the water got close to the top of the channel, he said. But the top of the channel isn't

the maximum capacity, since the bridge itself rises several more feet from that point. Not only that, the channel gets wider near the top, so each additional foot of creek level rise requires more water than the last.

Given that, the Pope/Chaucer Bridge was actually at about 60 percent of its capacity Wednesday, while the Bayshore bridge was near 75 percent.

Overall, it was the highest the creek has risen since Jan. 1, 2006, Materman said. Since 1998, the creek's flow has surpassed 3,000 cubic feet per second four times, including on Wednesday.

Still, Materman said, "There's no question we were concerned about it. We were fortunate the rain stopped when it did. It gave a chance for the system to drain a bit,

and averted a problem."

One benefit of Wednesday's storm was that it gave authorities a chance to gather new data about creek flow, Materman added.

In the past they have monitored the flow in the Palo Alto foothills to predict swells downstream, but that's only part of the equation, he said. Many of the creek's tributaries originate farther north in the foothills of San Mateo County. The joint powers authority, working with the county, only recently installed a rain gauge on the San Mateo County side, he said. This storm gave them their first look at how to interpret those measurements.

Soon, Materman said, the joint powers authority will have a Web site up and running that includes all the relevant data on the creek.

IN BRIEF

Junior college may make history with parcel tax

■ Official: Plan a first in Calif.

The Foothill-De Anza Community College District could be asking voters to do something that has never been done in California — approve a parcel tax for a community college.

District officials are investigating the possibility of putting a parcel tax on the ballot to weather a projected \$10.66 million budget shortfall because of state budget cuts.

"In light of all the bleakness around us, this is one area that could give us some control," said Mike Brandy, Foothill-De Anza interim chancellor. A successful parcel tax vote would be a first for a California community college district.

"To our knowledge, there has never been a California community college district that has tried and successfully gotten a parcel tax measure passed," said Terri Carbaugh, vice chancellor of communications for the California Community College Chancellor's Office.

The Foothill-DeAnza board is set to discuss polling strategies and ways to fund a parcel tax campaign on Feb. 1.

District officials estimate polling could cost about \$50,000.

The district, which includes Foothill College in Los Altos Hills and De Anza College in Cupertino, encompasses Cupertino, Sunnyvale, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Mountain View, Palo Alto and parts of San Jose.

De Anza College faces a \$4.82 million deficit, Foothill College has a \$4.47 million shortfall, and the district's central services needs to close a \$1.37 million deficit.

— Matt Wilson, Bay Area News Group

Menlo Park couple arrested on suspicion of selling crack

Menlo Park police said Wednesday they arrested a couple a day earlier on suspicion of selling crack cocaine out of their Willow Road apartment.

The department's Narcotic Enforcement Team had been investigating 26-year-old Marcus Lovelace and 27-year-old Danielle Filice for several weeks after receiving a tip about the drug sales, Menlo Park police Sgt. Eric Cowans said in a statement.

After receiving a search warrant, officers raided the apartment on the 500 block of Willow Road at about 5 p.m. Tuesday. They confiscated a "large quantity" of crack cocaine, an assault rifle, ammunition and tools to cook crack, according to the statement.

The couple was taken into custody without incident.

San Mateo County Chief Deputy District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe said Lovelace and Filice have only one misdemeanor conviction each in the county for possession of less than an ounce of marijuana.

— Jessica Bernstein-Wax, Daily News staff writer

'Zombie Bandit' sentenced to over 17 years in federal prison

A man known as the "Zombie Bandit," suspected of robbing banks in Palo Alto, Santa Rosa and in Oregon, was sentenced to more than 17 years in federal prison Tuesday for a string of heists.

Alan David Hurwitz, 69, committed the spree in December 2008, hitting the Redwood Credit Union in San Rafael and several other cities.

Authorities said Hurwitz, who earned his nickname for his mumbling and blank demeanor, robbed banks to support a drug habit. In the 1990s, Hurwitz, who used to work for the Michigan Board of Education, served federal time for a series of bank heists in Michigan, Illinois, Ohio and Indiana.

Hurwitz was arrested in Wyoming last January. He was sentenced in Oregon.

— Bay Area News Group

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