

# LOCAL NEWS



PAGE 3  
Iconic mural  
in downtown  
Palo Alto gets  
touched up

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## Green jobs effort gets stuck in red tape

### Entrepreneur, San Jose clash over plan to start wood-chipping business

Jim Piazza is one of those guys you root for. The 42-year-old San Josean is a big, brawny man with a quick sense of humor and a quicker antenna for injustice.

He wanted to be a green entrepreneur with the help of the city of San Jose. He might still be a green entrepreneur. But it probably won't be with the help of the city.

His story is a tangled one. But the tale offers insight into the difficulties behind Mayor Chuck Reed's pledge to bring more green jobs to San Jose.

Here's Piazza's story: Young tree



SCOTT HERHOLD  
COLUMNIST

surgeon tires of paying big dumping fees for tree limbs. He sees a business opportunity in a wood-chipping operation. He leases land in North San Jose and gets what he

thinks is a promise of \$330,000 from the city plus a verbal OK for \$220,000 more to create green jobs. Then he's stymied by permit fees, competitors and an arbitrary city decision to cut his grant to \$75,000.

Here's the city's story: Young tree surgeon comes to us for help in opening a green business, which San Jose is eager to promote. We agree to a maximum \$330,000

federally funded loan, which can be forgiven. He was warned the loan was never guaranteed. We try to help him through the process, but he becomes irritated at the cost of permits. Eventually, we find a more pressing need for the money but reserve \$75,000 for him.

It makes me wonder whether entrepreneurship — particularly for a first-timer in a land-use business — meshes with the city's need for careful planning and controls on taxpayer money.

Except for his competitors, almost everyone agrees Piazza's idea was a good one.

The notion was to take in tree limbs from pruners, run them



MASARU OKA/MERCURY NEWS

Jim Piazza says he's "done nothing but jump through hoops" for the past 18 months in his effort to start a wood-chipping operation in North San Jose. The city says he "struggled with the process."

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# Arrest

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said. Within a day of being shot, Young required 60 units of blood to stabilize him, Fremont police reported, prompting huge reported donor turnouts at blood centers across the Bay Area.

The Newark Red Cross said it had 70 donor appointments today. Richmond police officers, found donating blood in Berkeley on Monday, said they were told they could do so while on duty.

Barrientos surrendered Saturday afternoon just feet from the U.S.-Mexico border after a massive manhunt that stretched from Oakland to the Southern California border town of San Ysidro. Police had asked the Border Patrol to close the border while the search for Barrientos continued, Oakland police spokesman Officer Jeff Thomason said. Police said Saturday that they had information that the suspect might be headed to Mexico.

"He probably didn't realize that," Thomason said.

The man arrested with Barrientos, 23-year-old Gustavo Silva, is a suspected Union City gang member with a prior criminal record, officials said. He and Barrientos are expected to be brought back to the Bay Area on Thursday.

Arrested in Union City was resident Antoinette Apodoca, 40, who police said is a known associate and confidant of southern Alameda County gang members.

Thomason credited the successful capture to Oakland investigators and the aid of the Fremont, Hayward, Union City and Newark police departments, the Alameda County Sheriff's Department and District Attorney's Office, as well as the state Department of Justice, the U.S. Secret Service and the Border Patrol.

The shooting happened Friday when Young and another Fremont police officer tried to serve a search warrant on Barrientos. Young, a 39-year-old father of two, was shot twice in the pelvic area and required massive amounts of blood during his first surgery, officers said.

Barrientos had been wanted on suspicion of domestic violence after police say he pointed a gun at his child's mother two weeks earlier.

On Aug. 12 in San Leandro, Barrientos and his girlfriend were arguing in a car with their baby in the back seat when Barrientos drew a gun and pointed it at the woman, trying to get control of the car, Thomason said. Witnesses saw the incident, prompting Barrientos to flee, Thomason added.

Bay Area News Group Staff Writers Angela Woodall and Harry Harris contributed to this story.

# Bookstore

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ets any more than people do," Struble said.

The volunteers fought it as long as they could, but finally Sisterspirit finds itself in the same spot as many small independent bookstores. Officially the lights will be turned out Sept. 15, though there is little left to do but sort through and pack up 26 years of memories, leftover T-shirts — from "My Mommies rule" in a size 2 to an infant's bib that says "My Daddies rock" — rainbow buttons and unsold books.

"The community has changed, and how people buy books has dramatically changed," Struble said.

When Sisterspirit moved into the Billy DeFrank center, the women had three bookcases, an old cash register and a small inventory of books in cardboard boxes. In the 1990s, the bookstore carried as many as 5,000 titles.

There were readers groups, a writers group and a softball team called the Sisterspirit Hardbacks.

Coffee houses were held three times a month, with baked goods made by the all-volunteer staff. Concerts featured some of the top names in women's music, including Ferron, Cris Williamson and Margie Adam. And former Mormon Sonia Johnson, who wrote "From Housewife to Heretic," was just one of the provocative speakers to pass through Sisterspirit's doors.



Sisterspirit volunteers Tamara Brown, left, and Tere Hayes check out a softball signed by members of the Sisterspirit Hardbacks, which played in a local softball league.

"It was a big part of my life in the late '80s," said Gloria Collins, of San Jose. "I was just coming out and looking for a community."

Looking back, she said, "It was incredible. We had a brick-and-mortar book store that was all volunteer and we had a group of women from 20 years old to 65 years old, from different educational and socioeconomic backgrounds all working together."

Struble and others started winding down the place a few weeks ago and sold a lot of memorabilia at the San Jose Pride Festival on Aug. 21-22. The paperwork is being boxed up, the book shelves

emptied one by one, and everything from a clothes rack, in parts on the floor, to several bookcases, small display racks and an odd collection of baskets is for sale.

"There's no better way to meet like-minded people than to volunteer for something you care about," said Tere Hayes, 44, of San Jose, who has been a Sisterspirit volunteer for 10 years and helped Struble sort through stuff last week.

The women are proud they had a few men who were loyal volunteers as well.

"But as the economy changed, it got harder and harder to get volunteers,"

Struble said. "People are working two to three jobs and going to school."

And, many of the lesbian and gay books that seemed so precious to buy 20 to 30 years ago at Sisterspirit can now be bought online or at chain bookstores.

"I have felt from time to time it was time to close," Struble said. Now that it's here, "I will miss it a lot."

For more information about the items for sale at Sisterspirit, leave a message at 408-293-9372.

Contact Linda Goldston at 408-920-5862.

# Herhold

Continued from Page 1

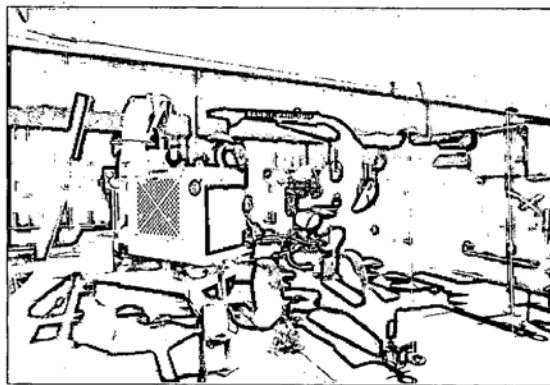
through a grinder, and produce wood chips used for energy by PG&E or other energy providers. The concept was doubly environmental because it employed solar energy and a water filtration system at a site on Kings Row, not far from the county buildings on Berger Drive.

"I want to be the greenest company from here to New York City," says Piazza, who says he wants to employ 30 to 40 people at his site. "I never expected to get into the business to fight World War III. I thought, gee, the backbone of America is small business."

But if the backbone of America is small business, the backbone of government is paperwork, particularly in a process-oriented city.

**The process**

Piazza needed to get a special use permit. He needed a business license. He had to get a sewer line approved. And he had to fight a rear-guard environmental battle against his competitors at GreenWaste Recovery, which runs the Zanker landfill. He says he spent \$41,000 in permitting fees, part of \$400,000 he has put in so far. (He initially estimated the cost of beginning the business at more than twice that.)



Green entrepreneur Jim Piazza hopes to use these wood chippers to create biofuel at his North San Jose facility. But he's having a hard time getting the city's approval.

MASARU OKA/MERCURY NEWS

"That is appalling to me," he told me. "You say you want to create jobs. But the proof is in the pudding. For the last 18 months, I've done nothing but jump through hoops."

Nanci Klein, the manager in the Office of Economic Development who supervised Piazza's application, sees things differently.

"Jim struggled with the process," she told me. "He was of the belief that the city was giving a bye to his company, and asked why he had to go through the process."

Klein says she repeatedly warned Piazza that he had to show evidence that he could properly underwrite his business. As things went along, she says, city officials began to worry whether he could finance his operations. (Piazza, meanwhile, says he was ready to go last Febru-

ary.) "Jim is a great guy," Klein acknowledged. "All of this wasn't what he was used to."

## GreenWaste challenge

Just before Piazza got a special use permit early this year, GreenWaste challenged the operation, saying that it didn't satisfy state environmental standards. While the city denied that complaint on procedural grounds, Piazza sees darker forces at work blocking his deal.

The young entrepreneur, who says he plans to open anyway with help from his mother's 401(k), says Klein told him he ran out of time.

"There's an intent to go through rules and regulations," he says. "But there comes a point where the intent is not to have me in business."

Klein says that's absolutely not the case, and that the city found another use for money. "I had a chance to save a really excellent company from moving out of the area," she said. "We either use that money or we lose it."

Who's right? Well, both are, and yet neither. The city wants to encourage entrepreneurs. But it's more comfortable with people who know the process.

It's a lesson for newcomers like Jim Piazza. A very painful one.

Contact Scott Herhold at sherhold@mercurynews.com or 408-275-0917.

# Obituary Notices

PLEASE VIEW AND SIGN THE ONLINE GUEST BOOK AT [MERCURYNEWS.COM](http://MERCURYNEWS.COM)

**Obit deadline**  
Please submit obituary notices by 12noon Monday-Friday for the next day's editions.

**Friends & Family can express their condolences and sign the guest book at [www.legacy.com](http://www.legacy.com)**

Today's Obituary Notices

- BASS, Lewis
- CAMPBELL, Marie
- COTTER, Gladys
- DOI, Tokihiko
- TAULBEE, Orrin
- ELDER, James
- FOX, Kathleen
- GERACI, Marie
- GIRARD, Mary
- GORDON, Dale
- JACOB, John
- LEDESMA, Ben
- MARTINEZ, Joe
- MENGO, Joann
- MILILVOJEVICH, Donald
- MUTNICK, Morton
- NICKELS, William
- PENCE, Beverly
- PIMENTEL, Joel
- SOHER, Larry

Obituaries do not always appear in alphabetical order.

## Gladys Mae Cotter

Resident of Cupertino  
Entered into rest on August 26, 2010 at age 89. Gladys passed away peacefully from complications of Stroke. Beloved wife of Richard Cotter. Loving mother of Gay Holley and Lillian Cotter-Heslop. Grandmother of 4 and Great Grandmother of 2. Gladys will be remembered by friends and family for the hundreds of Poinsettias she made and gave away each holiday season.

Gladys was a Girl Scout leader, 4H Homemaking Arts Sewing leader and Gramma to all the kids in the neighborhood. Gramma was always there for everyone and will always be remembered for her compassion, loving ways, and positive outlook on life.

All are invited to attend a Memorial Service on Friday September 3, 2010 at 2:00 PM at LIMA & CAMPAGNA SUNNYVALE MORTUARY, 1315 Hollenbeck Ave., Sunnyvale (408)736-1315. In lieu of flowers please make donations to the Heart & Stroke Foundation.

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## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING BY THE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF SAN JOSE ON THE PROPOSED LEASE BY THE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY TO CAMERA 3 ENTERTAINMENT L.P OF