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## RWC FORECASTS BUDGET DEFICITS; - HAS PLAN TO ENDURE FINANCIAL SITUATION

Like many, if not most, cities in California, Redwood City's budget has a structural problem - expenditures are increasing faster than revenues. This fiscal year ('03-'04) the City has experienced a \$2.7 million deficit (4.3% of expenses). For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2004, the City projects a substantial deficit of \$7 million (9.9% of expenses), and expects diminishing deficits the following two fiscal years, at \$5.8 million (8.2% of expenses) and \$1.9 million (2.7% of expenses). The reasons for these deficits are noted below - but of principal importance is how the City will deal with this financial situation. Cutting expenditures is the primary way to address the budget deficit. The City will couple the necessary reductions with cautious use of reserves, providing time to adjust expenditures and examine how to gain revenue. Reserves are not intended to fund ongoing operations. With staff salaries and benefits accounting for 71% of all City expenditures, there will potentially be, based on current forecasts, a reduction in the City workforce during each of the next three fiscal years, resulting in less City services to the community.

It's important that the people of Redwood City know that there will be fewer City services, or a lower level of services, due to this ongoing budget problem. In fiscal year '03/'04, the police and fire departments cut 4.5% of their spending, and all other departments cut 7%. The spending cuts for fiscal year '04/'05 will be even higher, and each year's cuts are additive in that the overall budget is reduced, and future cuts are from that lower level.

In broad summary form, here is the current plan for how the deficit will be addressed in coming years, both through the use of reserves, and significant expenditure reductions:

### **Fiscal Year: 2004-2005**

Estimated Deficit: \$7 million (9.9% of expenditures)  
Use of Reserves: \$3.5 million (50% of deficit)  
Expenditure Cuts: \$3.5 million (50% of deficit)

### **Fiscal Year: 2005-2006**

Estimated Deficit: \$5.8 million (8.2% of expenditures)  
Use of Reserves: \$1.9 million (33% of deficit)  
Expenditure Cuts: \$3.9 million (67% of deficit)

### **Fiscal Year: 2006-2007**

Estimated Deficit: \$1.9 million (2.7% of expenditures)  
Use of Reserves: \$0  
Expenditure Cuts : \$1.9 million (100% of deficit)

All projections are as of January 16, 2004. As shown above, the City will depend less on reserves as we move forward, in order to be assured that those reserves are maintained at a prudent level.

The budget deficit has four basic causes: the overall slow economy and its local effects, including loss of sales tax and businesses leaving Redwood City; the trend to sell software electronically (non-taxable); increases in the City's required PERS (Public Employee Retirement System) program contributions; and the continuing State takeaways of local funding.

The economy is something the cities can do little about, except try to attract more businesses. But in a slow economy, not many businesses are in a position to expand or move. As a result, annual sales tax revenue here has dropped significantly from a high of \$20 million down to \$15 million. This drop is largely due to the dot-com bust—there is less “business-to-business” sales activity and therefore less sales tax revenue. Some businesses have downsized, some have moved, while others simply no longer exist. Also related to the economy is the City's property tax revenue, which is currently its largest single source of revenue. It went up significantly during 1999-2000, but has leveled off since then and only a slow increase is projected in upcoming years.

The electronic delivery of software is a trend whereby vendors deliver software in an electronic format, and thus the sale is not subject to sales tax. For large-scale software sales, this has a significant impact on Redwood City's sales tax revenues.

PERS retirement program expenditures are dramatically increasing on an annual basis. As the economy and the stock market went down, the asset value that the City own in PERS also went down. As this occurs, PERS requires the City to put more money in to make up for that reduction in value. Additionally, contract amendments for Redwood City's public safety employees have significantly driven up our PERS rates. This year, our PERS-required employer contribution is \$3.5 million. Next fiscal year it will more than double, to \$7.3 million, and then go up to \$8.6 million the year after that.

The State has continued to take funds from local governments over the last decade and more. This began with the so-called Educational Revenue Augmentation Fund (ERAF) property tax “shift,” continued with State-mandated programs that the State neglects to fund, and more recently includes the State seizure of local funds, including Redevelopment Agency funds and Vehicle License Fee (VLF) funds. The State has taken an astounding \$35 million from Redwood City taxpayers since 1992 through the property tax “shift.” And each year, the State takes more (\$4.4 million this year alone) right out of your City services. Add to this another \$440,000 that the State is now taking from our Redevelopment Agency, its failure to reimburse us for mandated programs in the amount of at least another \$200,000, and \$1.5 million lost from the reduction in the VLF and the State's failure to keep its promise to fully “backfill” this amount. In summary, for this fiscal year the State has taken over \$6.5 million from the Redwood City community.

This is a difficult time for Redwood City—with staff facing layoffs, budget cuts, and necessary reductions in services to the community. The public should be assured, though, that City staff and the Council are approaching this situation intelligently, cautiously, and creatively, with a great deal of confidence in their ability to successfully meet this challenge.

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# FULLY ALIVE COMMUNITY CHURCH

By Lorene Campbell

## The OFFICIAL CHECK & Moses Gets the Message

An official check showed up on my desk recently. I knew it was “official” because it was printed in bold letters, center top: OFFICIAL CHECK. The other members of the bank deposit team looked somehow ordinaire next to this big, impressive, self-declared giant among checks. And wasn’t there now an implied question of their status? If this big blue one is “official,” what are the rest? Are they strong enough to make it through the system and actually move funds without wobbling under their unofficial status?

And, come to think of it, were these really checks? Only Mr. Big had “check” written on it. Could these others be pretenders, just hoping to get by because they look like checks? But wait, maybe it’s the OFFICIAL CHECK that’s trying to get away with something, like a snake oil salesman calling himself DOCTOR Somebody while touting 40-proof Elixir. Labels. Which ones can you trust?

Do you sometimes feel that LIFE just has a label on it, that you’re going through today without being excited about the people and potential around you? That tomorrow you’ll be just a bit of colored paper heading for the shredder? Ouch! And not so. God has a plan for you, knows your potential, and how you’re going to achieve it.

Take Moses. There was a guy who had OFFICIAL FLOCK-TENDER stamped on him, and was content with that role. But when God heard the plea of the Israelites to take them out of slavery, Moses was the leader He chose.

Not that Moses believed it. Even when God came down for a personal chat and told Moses, “So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt,” Moses was incredulous. “Who am I that I should go to

Pharaoh?” he cringingly replied. God, not being easily dissuaded by a flock-tender, said “I will be with you.” You and God—a pretty great team. But Moses had his arguments ready. First it was “what shall I tell them” when they ask your name? God answers “I AM WHO I AM,” then continues to lay out the entire plan for Moses, with the who, what, where, when, and how all packaged for delivery.

Moses’ next argument is “What if they do not believe me or listen to me?” God responds with three miracles. Still not believing in his own potential (and with God at his side, yet!), Moses comes up with the humble act: “O Lord, I have never been eloquent.”

“Who gave man his mouth? ...go, I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.”

“O Lord, please send someone else to do it.”

Well, that was it: “Then the Lord’s anger burned against Moses.” But He still didn’t let him off the hook. He got Moses’ brother Aaron to be his second-in-command and spokesman. And finally Moses was convinced that God had the right plan for his life. “So Moses took his wife and sons, put them on a donkey and started back to Egypt. And he took the staff of God in his hand.”

Have you been arguing with your potential, not believing that God has a plan for you (including all the solutions you’ll need along the way)? Moses’ story is found in the Bible starting in the book of Exodus. Moses met his potential by believing in God (finally!) and being part of a community that followed God across the desert to a new home. Come and explore your potential at Fully Alive: Sunday’s at 9am and 10:30am at the Sandpiper Community Center on Redwood Shores Parkway, [www.fullyalive.com](http://www.fullyalive.com)



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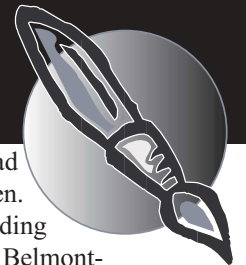
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## Letter To the Editor



Dear Editor,

The children of Redwood Shores deserve to spend less time strapped in cars commuting to distant schools and more time connecting to the community where they live. We must find a way to keep them near home so they can build friendships that will ultimately create a stronger neighborhood bond among the children and parents who live here.

This year, our son, Sam, turned five and we took a number for kindergarten in Sandpiper Elementary School's lottery on March 12. At the district office drawing, we learned 146 Redwood Shores' children had registered, but only 80 spots existed, 40 of which belonged to siblings. This left 40 openings for new students.

Unfortunately, Sam did not get into Sandpiper. He is one of 66 children on the waiting list. And because of fewer and fewer openings at other schools, my husband and I can't count on Sam getting a spot at our second and third choices, either. Chances are that he will have to attend Benjamin Fox Elementary School, nearly one-half hour away from home.

This is not the first time Sandpiper has had a large number registering for kindergarten. Last year, there were 132 children. According to Anne Campbell, Superintendent of the Belmont-Redwood Shores School District in 2003, the majority was placed because the Sandpiper Enrollment Task Force recommended that Sandpiper expand its kindergarten capacity to 120 students. Sadly, this year there are no such plans to remedy our predicament, and the short-term solution of exporting our children to other communities will not solve the long-term problem that we face as a growing community.

I have voiced the problem to the Redwood Shores Community Association (RSCA) Board of Directors, and they have volunteered to write a letter to the new superintendent, John McIntosh. Although this is a start, I worry that a positive result will not come soon enough for Sam, his younger sister, and their friends in the neighborhood. Attending school in our area reinforces "community" in multiple ways. In addition to allowing neighborhood children and parents to build relationships, school attendance in the

*(Continued on page 17)*

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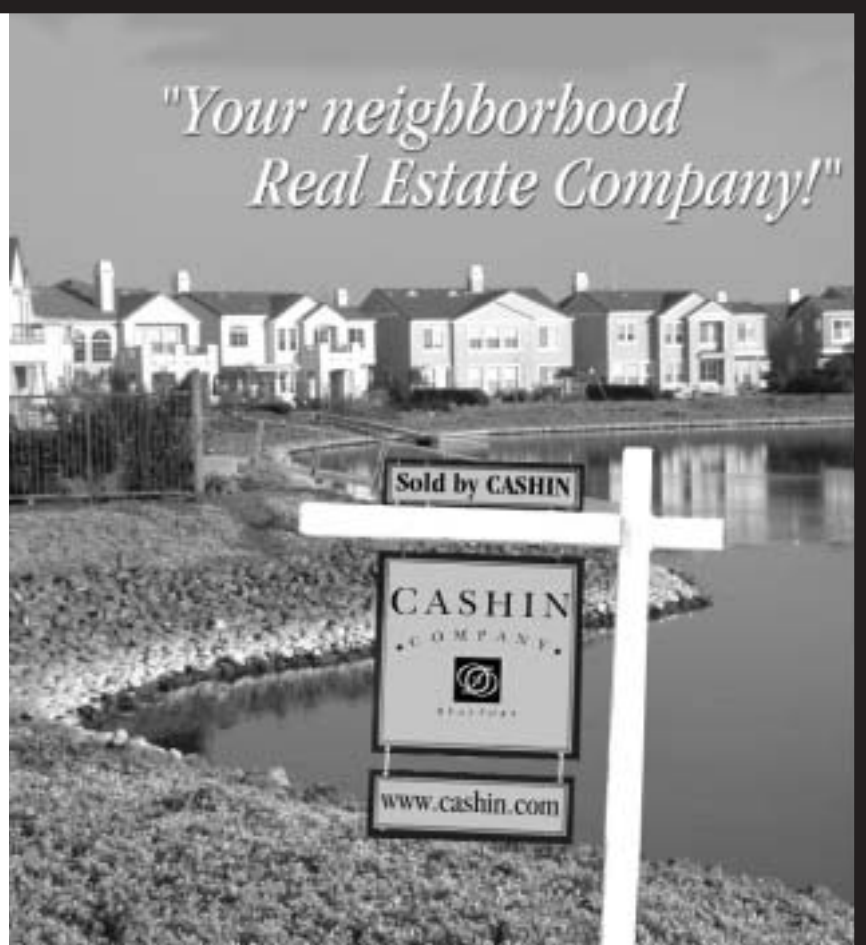
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## Letter To the Editor



Dear Editor

Looking back, 2 years ago, Safewater Coalition started with a war. It was a war declared between the Safewater Coalition and Redwood City. Today, we trust each other. Trust is finally there.

First, I congratulate the task force for finding a solution that keeps recycled sewer water away from schoolyards and playgrounds. I appreciate the time and thought and effort you have contributed and I know that the mothers and fathers of the community will appreciate your work too.

I thank the Council for responding to Safewater's concerns although it took some time to get your attention. But looking back, this battle was 2 years long. And if I could start all over again, I would try to involve the Council more so to bring our community closer together.

At the beginning our numbers were few but once the problem was defined and publicized, large numbers of my fellow-citizens quickly rallied. The end result after 2 interesting years is that no Homeowner Association has had recycled sewer water FORCED upon them and I know that our efforts and Council's cooperation have reached a fair and democratic goal.

I am NOT sharing this with you so to take any credit due to each of you also deserve this credit. I am ONLY sharing this with you due to Dr. Cecil Reeves who was the facilitator for the RWC Council, has been a very special person to my life. For those of you who don't know him, he is the FACILITATOR appointed by RWC City Council to Chair the Recycled Water Task Force meeting for these past 7 months. I thank him deeply for his kind words and his FAITH in me.

Again, thank you to all those who helped.

*Christina Lai, Safewater Coalition*

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### ***(Letter - Continued from page 15)***

immediate vicinity increases the likelihood of parental involvement in school activities. Being able to get to school quickly impacts parents' ability to attend functions and help with projects and fundraisers. It is my hope as a Redwood Shores resident that we can work together to figure out a solution. Getting in touch with the school board seems to be the right approach. The next RSCA meeting is scheduled for April 15, 2004, 7:30 p.m., at the Sandpiper Community Center.

*Susan Chinn*





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**Letter To the Editor**



As another clergyperson, I am disappointed by last month's article "Why I Won't See The Passion of Christ." The purpose of the movie is to depict the last 12 hours of the life of Jesus Christ, which was a time of deep suffering for our Savior. In the Christian story, this was the culmination and main purpose of his coming! And yes, it involved a lot of blood and pain. For Christians, the violence that Jesus endured (the price of our sins) has meaning and a purpose, which is different from the angry and senseless violence around us.

As with many things, the media has spent much effort shaping our perceptions of this movie. What has not come across as strongly is that it is a moving film, particularly for Christians. The Passion is a reminder of how each of us is guilty for every drop of blood, every insult, every moment of agony that our Savior endured and how his sacrifice was not easy, simple or something to be glossed over. The price paid to forgive us of our sins was costly.

At some point for every Christian, we realize we are sinners. Then in gratitude, we receive what we have done nothing to earn—the forgiveness available to all through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Yes, the film has stirred much controversy, but so did Jesus. That is what compelled people to crucify him in the first place. The Passion is a reminder of how we continue to need that sacrifice 2,000 years later, and it is a valuable opportunity for us to reflect upon God's gracious gift of a forgiven life as we prepare to celebrate Easter.

*Rev. Sue Kim-Ahn, Pastor in the Presbyterian Church (USA)*



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By Lisa Frerichs

Another month has come and gone here at Sandpiper. Spring has arrived and with it a blossoming of activities. The family dinner dance in March was a rousing success and a wonderful time was had by all. Parents danced with kids; kids danced with neighbors. Everyone brought a dessert to share and fellowshiped for the evening. The event sold out weeks in advance of its being held, so you know it is a fun event!

The Fifth graders also held their annual Colonial Day festivities. Each year, the 5th graders study the founding of the 13 colonies. They spend weeks preparing a report, and then to celebrate the end of the study, the Community Center is transformed into one of the original 13 colonies. The children dress up in Colonial garb. They learn candlemaking, prepare their own lunch from original "colonial foods" and attend school—including discipline and dunce caps. After lunch, they have an afternoon of colonial recreation - rolling the hoop, penny pitching and relay races. Learning how to make cornhusk dolls was a special treat for all those 5th grade boys!

Our most recent event and biggest fund-raiser of the year was our Spring Gala. A special thanks to Shannon Varunok, Michelle Carroll and Tricia Hegeman for putting together an awesome event and auction. Thank you also to the Pacific Athletic Club for hosting the event this year. The food was fabulous and plentiful, and people ate and danced into the wee hours of the morning. This is always a great event, open to all of our community and friends. We welcome and encourage anyone to attend and get to know us at Sandpiper next year.

Teacher Appreciation Week and Founder's Day are both upcoming. Both of these events pay special tribute to our teachers and those who give of their time year after year to make Sandpiper a better place. We have been blessed with an incredible group of teachers who love our children year in and year out. It is always our honor to appreciate them that week. And, to the volunteers, who make Sandpiper a better place, who donate their time to ensure that our children benefit, we could not make Sandpiper run without you. Thanks to all the Committee Chairs, Yard Duty Volunteers, office staff, maintenance guys and Mrs. Ho for doing such an awesome job. We, along with you, welcome spring and encourage you to get out and enjoy this beautiful weather.

## TREASURE ISLAND, SAN CARLOS CHILDREN'S THEATER



On March 5, 6 and 7, the San Carlos Children's Theatre performed Treasure Island in front of three packed houses at Terra Linda's Auditorium in San Carlos. The story about young Jim and his adventure with Long John Silver featured a cast of 19, including: Haley Brown, Haley Akchurin, Austin Harbert, Carolyn Saund, Kaitlynn Yandell, Lucas Baisch, Jacqueline Concilla, Kevin Harris, Kyle Morrissey, Alex Dreschke, Guilia Herndon, Lauren Kirkpatrick, Mary Seeveld, Brian Quiggle, Sophie Beiers, and Redwood Shores residents Erin Browner, Khail Duggan, Nik Duggan and Chris Gee. "Yo ho, yo ho, a Pirate's life for me....."

## AYSO REGISTRATION



It's that time of year again! Registration for Belmont/Redwood Shores AYSO Fall 2004 leagues will take place at the Belmont Sports Complex on the following dates:

Saturday,	April 24	10am to 2pm
Thursday,	May 6	6pm to 9pm
Sunday,	May 16	10am to 2 pm

If you are registering a new player, please remember to bring a copy of their birth certificate. If you have any questions, please contact 591-KICK or log onto [aysobelmont.org](http://aysobelmont.org).

Dawn Stewart, Registrar  
Belmont/Redwood Shores AYSO Soccer

### Project Read

Additional sessions of five evening meetings (no Saturdays) are scheduled starting April 26th, August 12th and October 14th. A four-meeting program, which includes one Saturday, starts June 17th at the Main Library.

## WHO DECIDED "A-1" MEANS THE VERY BEST

Lloyds of London was the organization that gave us that label. When the insurance consortium was just being organized, as a marine insurance association, it was necessary to take careful note of the condition of the ship and its contents. In any case, any claims were made against either, the ships were awarded a letter grade, with "A" being the highest, while the cargo was given a number with "1" being the best. Thus, a ship in A-1 condition was absolutely perfect. When Lloyd's branched out into other kinds of insurance, the classifications continued and spread into other walks of life.