

## PALO ALTO DAILY NEWS

Powered by **topix**

Oct 29, 2007

Local News / Home Page

Region/State News  
World News  
Business News  
Sports - Professional  
Announcements  
Arts & Entertainment  
Columnists  
Letters & Opinion  
Society  
Sports - Local  
Style

Local Classifieds

Daily News Services

Contact Information  
Jobs at the Daily News  
Staff  
Report delivery problems

Do you have a calendar item, brief or newstip? Please contact us.

Daily News Publications

Burlingame Daily News  
East Bay Daily News  
Los Gatos News  
Redwood City Daily News  
San Mateo Daily News

Monday Oct 29



Konstandinos Goumenidis / Daily News

Palo Alto City Attorney Gary Baum explains his experiences from pro bono cases he has handled over the past few years on Friday in Palo Alto.

He said the statistics regarding domestic violence are "mind-boggling."

"The woman tends to return to her abusive partner five times" before seeking help, he said.

"I can't walk in their shoes, but I can try to help," he said.

Baum spends 20 to 100 hours on each case -- all in his spare hours or vacation time and for no compensation. The city of Palo Alto pays for nothing -- not even postage, he said. Baum is currently juggling three different cases, but said he normally tackles them one at a time.

The goal of each case is to secure the victim, normally a battered woman, a permanent restraining order to protect her and her children from an abusive partner. While he has been successful in court, Baum said the challenge often rests in getting the victims to testify about their abuse.

"They have to relive the experience in order to get the restraining order," he said.

In one case, the abusive husband was a sex offender whose wife was severely traumatized and had only recently moved to the area, Baum said.

After a court battle, Baum was able to secure the restraining order that allowed the woman "to move on with her new life," he said.

Sharon Bashan, the domestic violence program's director, said her group nominated Baum for the award both because of his longtime commitment to pro bono work and his skill in dealing with skittish clients.

"He's able to establish a wonderful rapport with clients, who are often fearing for their lives but have total trust in him," Bashan said.

Some law firms pawn off pro bono cases on junior associates, she said, but Baum handles all the work himself, at times writing briefs up to 20 pages long.

"We can always count on him to help out," she said. "We never have to chase him -- he comes to us."

For those who want to learn more about domestic violence or need legal help, the Domestic Violence Information and Resources collaborative will host a free dinner and workshop on Tuesday night at Palo Alto High School.

Organized by Santa Clara County Superior Court Judge Erica Yew, the event will bring together 49 different agencies and social services for both domestic violence victims and their families. Interpreters and free child care will be available.

For more information, e-mail [dvirworkshops@gmail.com](mailto:dvirworkshops@gmail.com) or call the Support Network at 408-541-6100, ext. 122.

E-mail Kristina Peterson at [kpeterson@dailynewsgroup.com](mailto:kpeterson@dailynewsgroup.com).

## City attorney honored for pro bono work

Lawyer lauded for helping domestic violence victims

By Kristina Peterson / Daily News Staff Writer

Palo Alto City Attorney Gary Baum will be honored this week as Santa Clara County's Pro Bono Attorney of the Year for his work helping victims of domestic violence.

Baum will receive the award from the Santa Clara County Bar Association on Tuesday night for his involvement with the Domestic Violence Limited Scope Representation Project, a program he has been involved with since its creation two years ago. He has been working with its umbrella organization, the San Jose-based nonprofit, the Pro Bono Project, for 10 years.

"It's a whole different world from what I do every day," said Baum, who has been the Palo Alto city attorney since July 2004.

### Recent Comments

1 comment in

[Palo Alto City Attorney Gary Baum](#)

"I read about his acts of generosity in your paper today. Thank you, Attorney Baum, for..." — **dot 31**

1066 comments in

[Police: Fake traveler's checks making rounds](#)

3 comments in

[City may name plaza after Kings](#)

"Reminder: we already have a street named after both great Americans, it's called Kings ..." — **Steven**

1 comment in

[Castilleja junior kills the competition](#)

"Taylor is an amazing volleyball player. Basically she is a BAMF" — **Mattie and Sara**

[Start a discussion »](#)

Ads by Google

#### [Build a Buddhist Temple](#)

Stay in this beautiful coastal sanctuary to help build this center  
[www.odijan.org](http://www.odijan.org)

#### [Volunteers Needed Abroad](#)

Compare Programs To Take You Abroad & Save. Experience The World Now!  
[www.StudyAbroad.com](http://www.StudyAbroad.com)

#### [Fellowship in Israel](#)

Make a difference in Israel with friends. Hike, learn and play!  
[www.otzma.org](http://www.otzma.org)

#### [Volunteer with a Purpose](#)

Help runaways and troubled youth by joining a volunteer community  
[www.covenanthouse.org](http://www.covenanthouse.org)

#### [Looking For Someone?](#)

Volunteer To Find Missing People Search for Free!  
[www.Reunion.com](http://www.Reunion.com)

At a glance:

What: Domestic Violence Information & Resources Workshop


Where: The large gym at Palo Alto High School, 50 Embarcadero Road, Palo Alto

When: Tuesday, 6 to 8:30 p.m.

Why: Members of 49 different agencies will be on hand to offer free dinner, help and education about domestic violence.

**Comment on this story**

Type in your comments to post to the forum

<b>Name</b> (appears on your post)	<input type="text"/>
<b>Comments</b>	<input type="text"/>
Type the numbers you see in the image on the right: <input type="text"/>	
<b>Post Comment</b>	

Please note by clicking on "Post Comment" you acknowledge that you have read the [Terms of Service](#) and the comment you are posting is in compliance with such terms. **Be polite.** Inappropriate posts may be removed by the moderator.

© Copyright 2006 . All rights reserved. [RSS](#)