

# Los Altos Hills Town Newsletter - December 2003

## Table of Contents:

<a href="#">Page 1</a>	Public Education in Los Altos Hills, Bullis Charter School Open Enrollment, Public Education Committee on data gathering mission, Approved new Town Hall design
<a href="#">Page 2</a>	City Manager's Report - Street sweeping schedule - Update on Comcast upgrade - New website features coming, Sheriff's corner - Deputy Pete Evangel, Open Letter from Deputy Peter Evangel
<a href="#">Page 3</a>	Planning Director's Report - Planning Commission met with water district about water conservation and will review definition of Conservation Easement and current Fence Ordinance, Sheriff's Office - Offers Ride-Along Program for those interested in a career, Westwind Pony Club Halloween Horse-Show
<a href="#">Page 4</a>	Adobe Creek Watershed - Neighborhood collaborative formed, Pumpkin Riders (picture), Updating the Master Pathway Map, Profile of Community Relations Committee
<a href="#">Page 5</a>	Certificate of Appreciation for our Firefighter's Local, CERT Partnership for a safer community, Environmental Design and Protection Committee, Caroling in The Hills
<a href="#">Page 6</a>	Why underground our utilities?, Celebrate the Winter Holidays

LOS ALTOS HILLS



CALIFORNIA

Los Altos Hills

# TOWN NEWSLETTER

Volume XXVI No. 4

December 2003

## PUBLIC EDUCATION IN LOS ALTOS HILLS

### CALENDAR

**December 5, Friday, 11:30 AM - Volunteers Service Awards Luncheon**, Hillview Center. \$20 per person. Info. 650-941-1697

**Dec.15 to Jan. 1 Join Your Neighbors, Celebrate Community, Celebrate the Holidays,** Tie an Ornament on the Old Town Hall Oak Tree



**Dec. 16 - Tuesday, 7 - 9PM Caroling Event at Town Hall**, Bring the kids for caroling and pathway stroll. Warm Refreshments.

**January 16-18 Friends of the Library Book Sale at Hillview Community Center**, Los Altos, Friday 7-9 PM Members Only; Sat., 10-3 PM & Sun. 12-3 PM Public Welcome.

**February/March - TBA LAH Volunteers Recognition**

### Bullis Charter School Open Enrollment

**T**he first open enrollment period for Bullis Charter School is from October 15 to December 13. Bullis Charter School is expecting to have 155 students for the fall, 2004, inaugural class. Applications are available at Los Altos Hills Town Hall or from the Bullis Charter School web site: [www.bullischarterschool.com](http://www.bullischarterschool.com).



According to the supporters, Bullis Charter School will operate independently as a public elementary school within the Los Altos School District. A special approach to learning is what sets Bullis Charter School apart: Differentiated learning opportunities, allowing each student to thrive, maximize achievement, and develop a lifelong love of learning; Student-centered, parent-involved collaborative learning environment; Technology fully integrated throughout the curriculum, not just a component; Extra-curricular activities, inspiring students to develop personal interests and talents.

Future events will be announced on the Bullis Charter School web site and posted at Los Altos Hills Town Hall.

### Public Education Committee

#### On A Data Gathering Mission

The Los Altos Hills Public Education Committee (PEC) is currently engaged in studying the Town residents financial contributions to the various school districts and the demographics of the number of our students attending the various district schools and private schools in the area.

The data collected indicates the following: there are 1700 K-12 age children in public and private schools; the total no. of parcels in the LAH sphere of influence is 5612; and the amount of parcel tax and property tax revenue that LAH residents pay to the school districts in the sphere of influence is between \$13 - \$20 million dollars per year.

As soon as the PEC completes its data collection, a complete summary will be provided to the city council and residents.

The ultimate goal of this data collection is to determine the equivalent per pupil funding numbers for the various districts and to understand the financial viability of the various options under study by the committee.

All of the committee's meetings are open to the public and residents are invited to attend.

### APPROVED NEW TOWN HALL DESIGN



*The New Town Hall design has been approved by the city council and the timelines are set for*

Dinner

The New Town Hall design has been approved by the city council and the timelines are set for bids to go out in early 2004 with construction to start in May '04 and completion May '05. The New Town Hall will apply green energy concepts in its design such as photovoltaics, day lighting and reduced energy consumption. Renderings of the New Town Hall design are available for viewing in the Town Hall Chambers.

LOS ALTOS HILLS

Page 2

# THE TOWN NEWSLETTER

## CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

### New and Expanded Street Sweeping Schedule

In addition to their refuse collection and recycling services, special on-call pick-ups and Town-wide clean-up program, LAGCo assumed street sweeping services for the Town of Los Altos Hills on October 1, 2003. Twenty-one public streets with curbs will be swept on the last Tuesday of each month. Another thirty streets will be swept the last Wednesday of the month. Regular sweeping not only assures cleaner road edge surfaces, it helps prevent clogged storm drains and potential street flooding.



City Manager Maureen Cassingham

### Update of Comcast Cable Services Upgrade

Town Residents were recently notified by Comcast, the Town's cable services franchisee, of their plans to upgrade local cable services. The upgraded cable network will feature "improved signal quality, enhanced reliability and increased capacity to carry advanced services". Products like digital cable, specialty programming, high-definition television and high-speed Internet service have an anticipated launch date of March/April 2004. Comcast will be serving all residents including a few sparse neighborhoods not previously served that may be asked to cost share in the cable service. Other new products currently under development by Comcast are video on demand and digital video recorders. Comcast is committed to providing the higher quality and faster products that Hills residents want. The Town's Engineering staff will work with Comcast to assure compliance with franchise construction and service requirements and will regularly inspect their upgrade work as it progresses.

### New Website Feature on Its Way

In November, the addition of new pages for each of the Town's eleven standing committees will find its way to the Town of Los Altos Hills official website. These pages will feature information about committee appointments, charges, general powers, duties and procedures, membership, meeting dates/times, news and special events/projects and links. Once online, the City Clerk will work with the Town's Committees to facilitate timely postings of their meeting schedules and activities as well as other noteworthy assignments.

—Maureen Cassingham, City Manager

## SHERIFF'S CORNER

Are you planning a move in the future? If so, there are several things you might want to consider. First, we are sorry to see you leave and second, considering you are following as you plan your move.

When you plan your move, please take into consideration the size of your home and the amount of furnishings to be moved. Many of the moving truck rigs used today are 65 to 75 feet long. They are not very maneuverable and require a larger area to turn. If you know in advance that you have obstacles such as narrow streets, winding roads, possible low clearance, let the moving company know. They can determine if a shuttle service is needed.



We hope your move will go well. We in Los Altos Hills miss you. We ask one favor though. Please advise the people who are moving into your house the type of obstacles their moving company will face. Hopefully their move will be as smooth as your move will be. Please feel free to call the Sheriff's Deputy for advice on where the mover's should go. We are willing to assist whenever needed.

—by Deputy Pete E

## Open Letter to LAH

Dear Friends,

I wish to thank all the fine citizens of Los Altos Hills for the kindness shown me during my stay here. Way back in 1980 I was assigned to the Sheriff's West Valley Patrol Division as a patrol deputy. The first beat assignment I had was here in Los Altos Hills. Many thought this was a boring place to be but not much in the way of exciting crime happens here. Since my early days, I've worked in every area that is served by the Sheriff's Office. I have learned many things and met many different people.

Now I am at the end of a 29-1/2 year career and find I am saying good-bye to many friends and families. I am retiring at the end of December. I wanted to end my career in the West Valley Patrol Division right where it started. Since 1980 many things have changed. There are more streets and more houses than there were before. Traffic has more than doubled. Two things haven't changed. One, there is still a lack of "exciting crimes" here! And I love it that way. And two, the people here are still the friendliest I have ever had the pleasure to serve. Our "new" city manager and town council have accepted me as a regular employee of the town, one of "the family." This is what I think I will miss most. I hope and pray that each of you will be well in the future. I ask that you accept my replacement will be the same way you have accepted me.



Deputy Pete Evans

For Council Agenda and Minutes,  
See our Website.

SEE OUR WEBSITE:  
[www.losaltoshills.ca.gov](http://www.losaltoshills.ca.gov)

Thank you one and all. I will miss you and this fine com

—Deputy Pete Evang

**PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**T**own Planning Department approvals for new development since August 26, 2003 through November 9, 2003 include the following: two new residences approved through the Fast Track review process, two new additions, four pool and landscape screening plans.

The Planning Commission reviewed the following: one conditional use permit for a new cellular antenna, a conditional use permit review for the Westwind Barn, two site development permit modification requests and an off-road pathway relocation request.



*Planning Director Carl Cahill*

Planning Commissioners Eric Clow and Janet Vitu also met with board members from the Purissima Hills Water District to discuss water conservation issues in Town. The District reported that Town water consumption rates are high because of landscape irrigation. The City Council has asked the Planning Commission to further study the matter of water conservation and landscaping.

This winter, the Commission will review an amended open space conservation easement definition prepared by the Town's Open Space Committee. Open space easements are generally required as a condition of approval at the time of new development. They are intended to protect areas of land that have certain physical characteristics including steep slopes and watercourses by preserving them in a private open space condition.

The Commission will also review the Town's current fence ordinance and forward recommendations to the City Council.

*—Carl Cahill, Planning Director*

*Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office*  
**Ride-Along Program**

**W**hether you are interested in a Law Enforcement career or want to be more aware of what is occurring in your community, the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office Ride-Along Program provides the opportunity to observe what a patrol deputy encounters during their ten-hour shift.



The Sheriff's Office currently consists of four major divisions: Patrol, Court Services, Investigations, and Civil. The main office is located at 55 West Younger Avenue in San Jose. There are two Substations located at 14374 Saratoga Avenue in Saratoga, and 80 West Highland in San Martin. There are approximately 190 deputies assigned to Patrol and all report to the station closest to the area they work.

The Sheriff's Office provides full police services to Cupertino, Saratoga and Los Altos Hills. We also serve the unincorporated areas within the County. With the exception of the three cities mentioned, the Sheriff's Office does not actively work traffic enforcement as this is the responsibility of the California Highway Patrol.

Those participating in the Ride-Along program will be asked to adhere to a dress code and be provided an orientation. At the orientation, a deputy will advise you of the patrol procedures regarding the Ride-Along program. Feel free to ask any questions you might have. This is an exciting opportunity to experience being "out on patrol" from a deputy's perspective. If you would like to register for a ride-along or have any questions, please contact the Crime Prevention Unit at (408) 808-4575.

**WESTWIND PONY CLUB HALLOWEEN HORSE SHOW**



*"Here Come the Clowns" — Rachel Kawasaki, 10 y/o riding "Spot on Tony," a seven year old Leopard Appaloosa at the*



**Town Newsletter - Statement of Purpose**

To communicate current issues, services, and activities in Los Altos Hills to the residents of the Town and to facilitate, encourage and improve interaction between the residents and Town government. The 2004 Newsletter will be published quarterly in the months of March, June, September, and December. Deadline for the next issue is January 31, 2004.

**Internet Address:** [www.losaltoshills.ca.gov](http://www.losaltoshills.ca.gov)

**About Our Publication**

The Town Newsletter is published with assistance from our Town Volunteer Committees.

Editor: Dorothy Duffy Price

Associate Editors: Barbara Lamparter, Linda Seidel, Karen Emerzian

*Pony Club Halloween Horse Show on  
October 25th at Westwind Barn.*

**Los Altos Hills City Council**

• Emily Cheng, Mayor • Mike O'Malley, Mayor Pro Tem  
• Robert Fenwick • Breene Kerr • Dean Warshawsky



Recycled Paper

## THE TOWN NEWSLETTER

### Adobe Creek Watershed

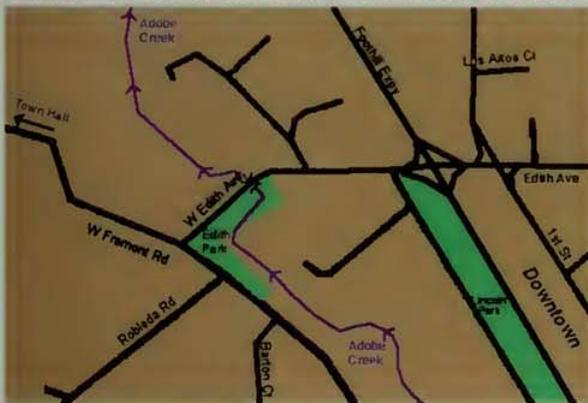
The Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD) and the Adobe Creek Watershed Group (local residents of both Los Altos and Los Altos Hills) have embarked on a collaborative process to address the erosion and flooding problems on Adobe Creek near Edith Avenue and Fremont Road.

The CEO of the SCVWD, staff and other personnel, councilmembers, managers and staff from Los Altos and Los Altos Hills, key representatives from government regulatory and permitting agencies, and members of the Adobe Creek Watershed Group have met together twice since late September to hear the concerns of all the participants. This process will continue over the next six months.

Representatives of the Adobe Creek Watershed Group (ACWG) presented a list of criteria developed by residents in the area and the rationale for a non-standard project - less than 1% (or 100 year) event. The ACWG expressed its confidence that a joint endeavor could work and that a similar project on Soquel Creek could serve as a model. In addition to solving the erosion and backup flooding, the ACWG wants to restore the riparian environment, minimize negative impacts, create minimal disturbance to Edith Park, and create an aesthetically pleasing project that all can be proud of.

Additional meetings are being scheduled and residents who are interested in learning more are invited to contact the ACWG Steering Committee at [adobecreek@hotmail.com](mailto:adobecreek@hotmail.com)

### MAP OF ADOBE CREEK WATERSHED



### PUMPKIN RIDERS

(left to right) Michelle Erndt, Olivia Zunino, Julia Hoekstra and Lauren Spector go for a ride on Olivia's big pumpkin, "Baby Beluga". Baby Beluga took first place at the California State Pumpkin Weigh Off held in Salinas and tipped the scales at 933 pounds. Grown by Olivia's dad, Vince Zunino, in Los Altos

### Updating the Master Pathway Plan



The Pathway Committee is hard at work updating the Master Pathway Plan. Pictured L. to R. clockwise Jorge Fernandez, Nancy Ewald, Ginger Summit, Co-Chair; Bob Stutz(head hidden), Chris Vargas, Co-Chair; Dick Cassan, Nancy Ginzton, Mike Kamangar. ( Not pictured: Fred Fallah, DuBose Montgomery, Charlene Geers).

### PROFILE

#### The Community Relations Committee

The Community Relations Committee is one of eleven volunteer standing committees that the Town has established to assist the City Council. Each standing committee has the general power and duty to render advice and make recommendations to the City Council. City Manager and other Town bodies designated by the City Council on all aspects of its particular sphere of interest. The Committee comprised of eight appointed members and several additional associate members. The following responsibilities are delegated to the Community Relations Committee:

#### Town Newsletter

The Town Newsletter is published quarterly to communicate current issues, services and activities in Town and to facilitate and encourage and improve the interaction between the residents and the Town Government.

#### Annual Town Picnic

Many of you have attended the Town Picnic, which has become a tradition in Town in the past few years. Approximately 1,100 Town residents attended this year's picnic, which set an attendance record for a Town event.

#### Welcoming of Newcomers

The Committee welcomes new residents to the Town. Each newcomer receives a welcoming letter from the Town which offers the resident a packet of useful information about our community.

#### Town Handbook

The Committee produces the Town Handbook, which is distributed to all new residents.

#### Other Responsibilities

The Committee provides refreshments for Town-sponsored events, such as pathway walks and helps recruit volunteers for other committees.



*Hills, Baby Beluga was the second largest pumpkin grown in California this year.*

*The Committee welcomes participation from any resident to help carry out the mission of the Committee. If you are interested, please contact Roy Woolsey, Chairman or Karen Jost, City Clerk at 941-7222 Ext. 2*

## THE TOWN NEWSLETTER

### CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION FOR OUR FIRE FIGHTERS LOCAL #1165



The LAH City Council awarded a Certificate of Appreciation to our local Santa Clara County Fire Fighters Local #1165 for their contributions to the success of our Annual Town Picnic and for their contributions to the community. We salute their heroism. For the past 6 years the fire fighters have provided the BBQ for the event. The Community Relations Committee organizes the picnic and works closely with the fire fighters to make the event flow smoothly as they serve over 1100 residents.

*Pictured L. to R. are Firefighter Engineer Kendall Burks, Captain Joe Viramontez, CRC representative Roger Burnell, Firefighter Engineer Stephen Massa and Firefighter Paramedic Ky Grant.*



### PARTNERSHIP FOR A SAFER COMMUNITY

**L**ocal government prepares for everyday emergencies. A large-scale disaster will overwhelm the community's emergency responders' capability causing significant delays getting to those who need help. During a major disaster, such as an earthquake or wildland fire, assistance from trained volunteers is crucial.

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) is a group of Los Altos and Los Altos Hills residents who volunteer to give critical support to emergency responders in major emergencies. They offer immediate care for victims, organize spontaneous volunteers at a disaster site and collect information to support first responder efforts. The CERT program creates a partnership between first responders and the community in training citizens to help themselves, their family and their neighbors in emergencies.

The Los Altos Police Department starts another training program beginning February 4, 2004. Members meet once a week for four Wednesday nights from 6 to 9 p.m. and learn essential skills including disaster preparedness, fire suppression, basic medical operations and search and rescue. There is a hands-on session on Saturday, February 21, 2004 from 9 AM to 5 PM that Police Agent John Korges describes as "a lot of fun".

Participants pay \$90 for a CERT backpack, with team vest, helmet, gloves, and basic first aid and disaster response supplies. For more information, please contact Police Agent John Korges at (650) 947-2681 or e-mail [john.korges@ci.los-altos.ca.us](mailto:john.korges@ci.los-altos.ca.us).



*Left to right; Joe Digiovanni, Fiona Sander, Bob Anderson, Dru Anderson, Jim Abraham, Siren Abraham and Lynn McLeod.*

### Environmental Design & Protection Committee

Are you interested in enhancing the rural atmosphere of Los Altos Hills? Do you want to keep it a place where people can raise a family in peace and quiet?

Then join the Environmental Design and Protection Committee and help guide and encourage our future.

#### Job Specifications:

- Visit every proposed building /remodeling site in town and check that it conforms to Town ordinances.

#### Time Involved:

- Six hours/month. This includes one evening meeting per month (1 hour), one morning per month visiting sites (3 hours), one morning Site Development/ Fast Track meeting every 5 weeks (2 hours).

#### Job Satisfaction:

- If where you live is important to you; if you feel that inevitable changes can be made tolerable, then this is the volunteer committee for you.

Can you make a difference? YES YOU CAN!

### Caroling in the Hills

Mark Your Calendars!

All residents of Los Altos Hills and nearby communities are invited to participate in the 3rd Annual Holiday Caroling Party on Tuesday, December 16, 2003. Members of the Community Relations Committee and Brownie Troop 597 will provide treats in the Town Hall at 7:00



PM, where participants are encouraged to gather and observe the hanging ornaments, which were made by children in a special holiday class sponsored by the Parks and Recreation Committee. Following a brief warm-up of voices and holiday spirit, the carolers will follow paths to many nearby homes for surprise holiday music. The evening will conclude with warm refreshments at Town Hall. Join with your neighbors in bringing fun holiday cheer to the neighborhoods. Carolers should wear warm clothes and bring a flashlight. Kids are welcome! In case of rain, we will simply sing holiday songs at Town Hall only. For more

To obtain an application, contact Karen Jost, City Clerk, Los Altos Hills Town Hall (650-941-7222 ext. 226).

information, please contact Scott Vanderlip at (650) 948-6455.

—Scott Vanderlip

## THE TOWN NEWSLETTER

### Why Underground our Utilities?

While some fear the cost of a town-wide undergrounding project will be prohibitive (and a few others worry our birds will object), few can argue against the benefits. For those unfamiliar with the issues, some background:

- **Public Safety:** Overhead electrical lines can break when overloaded, during unusually hot weather, or when struck by branches. These downed lines are safety hazards, and have caused many fires in our town, including the blaze off 280 at Wright Way last year that required 3 county air crews to contain. Additionally, trees growing into power lines have started fires. Given the recent firestorms down south, we need to take these hazards seriously.
- **Aesthetics:** Do you notice the poles & wires as you drive through our beautiful town? Some don't, because they've grown used to them -- like those of us who are blind to highway billboard signs on our commute. But others & bike & drive through town and imagine how much prettier it would be without the ugly poles and wires. It's no accident that world's most scenic communities have their utilities underground.
- **Community Investment:** Undergrounding utilities is expensive, but communities that have done it contend that the result increase in property values far exceed the cost. This is especially true for high-end residential areas like ours. Real estate agents concur that buyers prefer communities without poles & wires.
- **Electrical Reliability:** PG&E data confirms that overhead lines cause 2.6 times more problems per mile than underground lines. This is a state-wide average, and includes older underground systems which do have reliability problems (advances in methods and equipment over the past 20 years have addressed these issues). PG&E also confirms that wooded areas like Los Altos Hills are even more susceptible to weather related outages. According to data from the Bay Alarm Company (whose centralized security systems track outages in many LAH homes), on average we are resetting our clocks 2-3 extra times per year. In some cases it's much worse: several regions around town have recorded 8 or more sustained outages per year. Is this acceptable to us here in the heart of Silicon Valley?

So the benefits are quite clear, but the big problem is cost. The Undergrounding Committee is hard at work trying to crack this problem, developing creative ways to minimize the financial impacts. The goal is to avoid undergrounding any of our residential finances along with the wires. Please stay tuned.

—Steve Schmidt, Member  
Underground Utilities Committee



Layout & printing by:



Print Innovations, Inc.

Town of Los Altos Hills  
26379 Fremont Road  
Los Altos Hills, California 94022

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### CELEBRATE COMMUNITY CELEBRATE THE WINTER HOLIDAYS

*Tie an Ornament on the Old Town Hall Oak Tree*

*Starting DEC 15, residents are invited to come by and tie an ornament onto the oak tree in front of the Town Hall chambers. Last year the decorated tree brought a fun, festive feel to Town Hall!*

*Ribbons will be tied to the oak tree and a basket of ornaments available for decorating. You can bring your own ornament if you'd like...we encourage children to make their own (paper cut-outs, glitter pine cones etc. be creative!)*

*This event continues until January 1, when the*



*ornaments will be taken down and saved for next year.  
Please come to decorate "our community tree." Spon-  
sored by the Los Altos Hills Parks and Recreation  
Committee*