



# OUR TOWN

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE TOWN OF LOS ALTOS HILLS

DECEMBER 2016



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## CRANSTON MILESTONES

**1914**

William and Carol move to what is to become Los Altos Hills

**1943**

R.E. and Jack Fowle move to town

**1947**

Alan and Geneva move to town

**1947, 1951**

Robin and Kim are born

**1956**

Fowles donate land and improvements for original Los Altos Hills Town Hall

**1958**

Alan elected California State Controller

**1968**

Alan elected California U.S. Senator

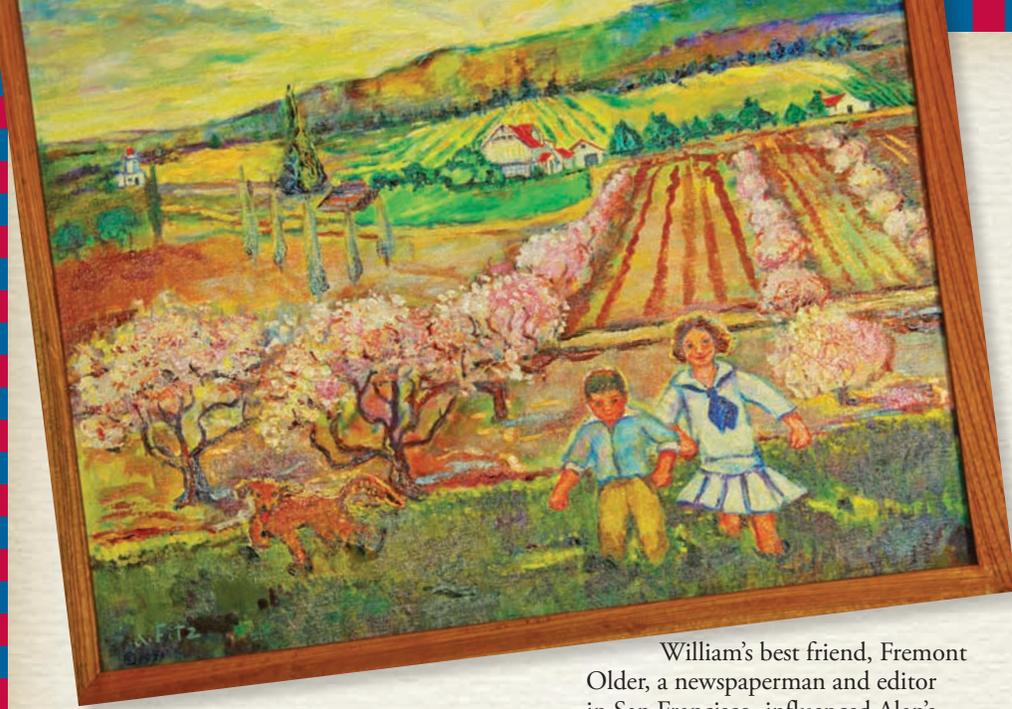
**1994**

Alan, Kim, Colette and Evan move to Los Altos Hills



## Early Families: The Cranstons

**T**he Cranston family history is intricately tied to the town's history — going back as far as 1914, 42 years before Los Altos Hills was incorporated. Three generations of Cranstons have made significant contributions to the local community in leadership roles, as well as donations to help build the original town hall, the Boy Scout hall, and the Los Altos parking plazas. And contributions of one particular Cranston influenced the state, the nation, and the world — including publishing an unauthorized anti-Nazi version of *Mein Kampf* to alert Americans to Hitler's anti-Semitism and plan for world conquest. [CONTINUED ON PAGE 2]



### 1914–58 Cranstons move to Los Altos Hills

William and Carol Cranston moved to what became Los Altos Hills in 1914 and called their home at West Fremont Road and Campo Vista the “Red Barn.” Their daughter, Ruth Eleanor (R.E.), and son, Alan, attended Castilleja. Alan attended Los Altos Grammar School and Mountain View Union High School. In 1922, the family moved to Villa WAREC (William, Alan, R.E., Carol), now on Cypress Court. Local street names derived from the family include WAREC Way and Edith Avenue (Carol’s middle name). William developed buildings on Main Street and was active in community projects, such as building the Boy Scout hall.



Cover: Aerial view of Feather Hill Farm and surroundings circa 1920. Insets – top: William and Carol Cranston. Bottom: Kim, Evan, Colette Cranston (photo by Larsen & Talbert). This page – top: Anna Knapp Fitz painting of Alan, R.E., and their dog Zelma in front of the Red Barn. Courtesy of Anna Knapp Fitz Collection, Los Altos History Museum. Above: Aerial view of Villa WAREC. Right: Alan Cranston’s Anti-Nazi tabloid version of *Mein Kampf*.

William’s best friend, Fremont Older, a newspaperman and editor in San Francisco, influenced Alan’s interest in journalism. Fremont crusaded for people he believed were wrongly convicted. One such person was Tom Mooney, a labor leader convicted of planting a bomb (pardoned in 1936), whom Fremont took Alan to meet in San Quentin.

Alan graduated from Stanford University in 1936. Alan had been a competitive runner since his youth. At Stanford he was a member of the country’s fastest mile-relay team. In 1969, Alan set the world’s record for 55-year-olds in the 100-yard dash.

After college, Alan became an International News Service foreign correspondent, covering England, Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Ethiopia. Alan decided reporting the tragic events in Europe wasn’t enough and returned to the U.S. One day in Macy’s New York, Alan saw an English-language translation of Adolf Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*, sanitized to not alarm Americans. To divulge Hitler’s anti-Semitism and plan for world conquest, Alan published an unauthorized version that sold 500,000 copies in 10 days for 10 cents a copy before Hitler’s publisher successfully sued for copyright infringement. Alan also helped Jewish refugees arriving by ship in New York avoid being repatriated to Europe.

In 1939, Alan met his wife, Geneva McMath, on a blind date. She was an activist who worked for Orson Welles and the Citizen’s Committee to Repeal Chinese Exclusion.

Alan became Chief, Foreign Language Division, Office of War Information, Executive Office of the President, and worked in 1942 with Eleanor Roosevelt to try to prevent the creation of relocation camps for Japanese Americans. He later visited Los Altos friends interned at Tule Lake, California and Heart Mountain, Wyoming.

In 1945, Alan published *The Killing of the Peace*, a chronicle of how a few senators opposing U.S. entry into the League of Nations thwarted the will of the people after World War I.

Alan and Geneva returned to Los Altos in 1947 to a home Alan and friends built on Hilltop Drive. They had two sons, Robin and Kim. The boys attended the Peninsula School and Hillview School.

Robin attended Foothill College, was an entrepreneur, and coproduced a 1977 Broadway show that starred Canadian cousin Toller Cranston, who won the Bronze Medal in figure skating in the 1976 Winter Olympics. Robin was tragically killed in a car accident in 1980.

Alan’s older sister, R.E., married Jack Fowle in 1929 and they purchased Feather Hill Farm from Rudolf and Gerda Isenberg, who bought the property from one of Juana Briones’ many daughters and sold the rest of their property to Esther Clark (much of the land is now Esther Clark Park).

R.E. was politically active and president of the Foothill-De Anza Community Foundation; served on the Stanford University Founding Grant Society board of directors; and was a trustee of The Trust for Hidden Villa. R.E.’s best friend was Mary Stegner. R.E. studied writing with

long-time town resident and Pulitzer Prize winning author Wallace Stegner and published a biography of Alan in 1984.

Jack’s father, Arthur Fowle, was elected the first mayor of Los Altos Hills but his health prevented him from serving. Jack was on the first Los Altos Hills City Council, served as mayor, and was a leader in the Committee for Green Foothills. The Fowles

donated land and improvements for the original Los Altos Hills Town Hall.

In 1947, Alan became a partner with William in The Cranston Co. — the family real estate business. Alan was national president of the United World





Federalists from 1949–52, through which he sought to strengthen the United Nations. He founded the California Democratic Council in 1949, and was its president from 1953–58. Closer to home, Alan and other property owners led the effort to create the parking plazas so Los Altos could compete with the new Stanford Shopping Center.

**1959–93: California State Controller and U.S. Senator Alan Cranston**

In 1958, Alan was elected California state controller, and the family moved to Sacramento in 1959. In 1968, Alan was elected to the U.S. Senate and served four terms. Early in his first term, Alan received the following letter:

Dear Senator:  
I was one of your strongest supporters and one who believed in your integrity — perhaps even manhood. I sent you a check for \$25 for your campaign.

Inasmuch as you are now safely ensconced in office I think you would be doing a handsome deed by returning my \$25. However, if you insist upon running again at some future date, just send me

the money and I will hold it in escrow until I find out definitely what your plans are for the future.

Sincerely, Groucho Marx

Alan replied to the famous comedian and film star:

Dear Groucho:  
I was relieved to learn that you believe in my integrity and my manhood, just as you will be relieved to learn that your \$25 check, which I promptly cashed, was good. So much for my integrity, my manhood, and your twenty-five bucks.  
Gratefully, Alan Cranston

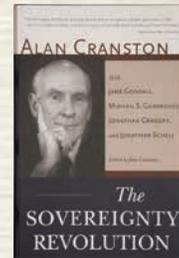
In 1984, Alan ran for president, a campaign that helped make nuclear disarmament a significant national issue. Alan's many accomplishments in the U.S. Senate included advancing peace, environmental protection, personal freedom and individual rights, education, and care for veterans, children, and others. Alan and his granddaughter, Evan, were walking in Los Altos when Alan pointed to a curb cut and said, "Do you see that dent in the sidewalk? I put that there." He then explained the "dent" resulted from the Americans with Disabilities Act he helped become law to advance ending discrimination against the disabled.

*Top to bottom: Cranston celebrates his victory in the 1968 U.S. Senate campaign. Alan Cranston and Eleanor Roosevelt (circa 1942). Alan Cranston and Mikhail Gorbachev meet in Washington, D.C. in 1992.*

**1993–Present: Cranstons return to Los Altos Hills**

Alan retired from the senate in 1993 and returned to Los Altos Hills in 1994 (the year Kim, Colette, and Evan moved here). He became chairman of the Gorbachev Foundation USA, chairman of the State of the World Forum, and founding president of the Global Security Institute, which is focused on nuclear arms control, non-proliferation, and disarmament.

Shortly before his death at the age of 86 on December 31, 2000, Alan finished writing *The Sovereignty Revolution*, on how global challenges, from international terrorism to climate change, can only be resolved at the global level. The book identified Osama Bin Laden as a major terrorist threat and the danger of U.S. cities being attacked with weapons of mass destruction.



Since the 1990s, Colette and Kim have been active in a range of community projects.

*Kim Cranston is chair of the Global Security Institute, president and co-founder of Los Altos Property Owners Downtown, co-founder of Los Altos Forward, and on the steering committee of the Los Altos Community Coalition.*

**HISTORY PRESENTATIONS**

For the last four years, the Los Altos Hills History Committee (LAHHC) has hosted a presentation focused on residents of Los Altos Hills, all of whom have helped shape Silicon Valley to become the 21st century information and engineering capital of the world.

These presentations have shared fascinating stories of the visionaries who settled in this area as early as the 1840s and who made their mark on our town, the wider community, and the environs far beyond what most of us call home.

For future presentations, we would like to feature current town residents who were changemakers in the best sense of the phrase. To help us program our 2017 presentation, the LAHHC would like to assemble a group of residents who are interested in helping us identify those visionaries and invite them to participate in our next presentation. If you are interested, please contact committee chairman John Swan at [john.swan@sbcglobal.net](mailto:john.swan@sbcglobal.net).



## FROM THE CITY MANAGER

The past summer and fall quarters have seen the addition of three new members to the town's staff.

In August, Public Works Director Richard Chiu left to become the deputy public works director for Daly City. Chiu served the town faithfully and capably for nine years. After a thorough candidate search and



interview process, Allen Chen was hired to become the town's new public works director. In addition to his work as a private sector consulting engineer, Chen has 12 years

of government experience, having worked with the cities of Fremont and Santa Rosa. Chen is a graduate of Cal Poly-SLO and is a California licensed civil engineer and traffic engineer.

The city council, as part of the 2016-17 budget adopted in June, authorized the hiring of two new staff members in parks and recreation and public works maintenance. Krystel Malimban was hired as the town's new recreation specialist in September. She will be working closely with community services supervisor Sarah Robustelli to help expand the town's community events and recreational program offerings.

Malimban has a degree in Environmental Studies from the University of San Francisco. In her spare time, Malimban enjoys practicing hand lettering, badminton, and going on hikes throughout the state with her boyfriend. With her

love for the outdoors and the natural environment, Krystel felt that she really landed her dream job with Los Altos Hills and is pleased to have the opportunity to work with residents on fun recreational projects and community events that capitalize on the town's unique semi-rural character.

One of her initial projects was creating the colorful destination marker signpost

in front of the parks and recreation building. After the parks and recreation committee approved the project proposal, Krystel collaborated with her family to create the post. She, along with her parents, brother, and sister, did all the lettering, painting, and carpentry work.

The town's public works department welcomed Alfonso Flores. He will join the four-man maintenance crew that is responsible for maintaining trails, open space, streets, drainage courses, and recreational facilities. The crew also assists with the maintenance of the sewer main and any situations that arise during the evening or during stormy weather.

Flores grew up in San Leandro and is currently attending Laney

College, where he is in the process of earning his associate degree in construction management. In his spare time, Flores enjoys spending time with family and friends, and loves to play and watch all sports. His favorite sports teams are the Golden State Warriors, the San Francisco 49ers, and the San Francisco Giants.

Flores is excited to be working for the town, citing the excellent working conditions, training, and sense of camaraderie amongst the entire town staff.



## FROM THE PLANNING DIRECTOR

Over the past two years the town has been evaluating a number of issues and key projects. In September, the City Council decided not to adopt new regulations for substandard lots, and the Planning Commission recommended against new antenna regulations as summarized below. The master path map update and the Stirling Subdivision are currently in the public hearing process at the Planning Commission level.

**Development Regulations for Substandard Lots**

On September 15, 2016 the City Council considered ordinance amendments for the adoption of a Floor Area Ratio limit and setback variance findings recommended by the Planning Commission. After receiving considerable public testimony from owners of small lots, the Council decided not to adopt the new regulations which would have affected allowable floor area for lots of 0.63 acres or less.

**Antenna Regulations**

The Planning Commission considered a revised draft antenna ordinance at its August 23, 2016 meeting. The Commission tabled the matter and did not forward the new ordinance to the City Council for adoption. The Commission supported a proposal for a fee cap on applications for new antennas. The Planning Commission subcommittee working on the antenna regulations is developing a recommendation for consideration by the City Council. No public hearing date has been set.

**Master Path Map Update**

The Pathways Committee has been working on an update of the master path map, focusing on areas that have been annexed to the town since 2005 and some off road pathway connections that were not completed with the last map update. Following a town-wide notice, the Planning Commission held the first public hearing for the map update on October 26. The Commission will ultimately be making a recommendation to the City Council on the adoption of the new map.

**Annexation**

On August 18, the City Council approved the annexation of six properties on Mora and Mora Glen Drives. The Council directed staff to proceed with annexation of the remainder of the county island that includes properties on Mora Drive, Terry Way, Eastbrook Drive and Court, Partridge Lane, Mora Glen Drive, and Mora Heights Way. On September 15, the Council approved funding for a geotechnical evaluation of Eastbrook Drive. Staff is also working on compiling information on the properties within the annexation area that will be used for the evaluation of service impacts including provision of fire, police, sewer, and garbage services. The Council further discussed the town's annexation plan at its October meeting.



Crimes are frequently solved due to a citizen's involvement in reporting their observations to law enforcement. In a small, rural community like Los Altos Hills, residents serve a critical function in law enforcement — they serve as the extended eyes and ears for the sheriff's department. Consequently, the sheriff's department relies heavily on witness reports regarding suspicious or illegal activity to prevent a crime from taking place. When a resident is a witness or victim of a crime, their observations and recollections can help solve a crime. This ongoing partnership is critical to keeping the community safe.



# How to be a *Good* Witness

Every resident can become a good witness by learning what information is the most critical to law enforcement officers in the moments leading up to and after a crime. Note that being a good witness does not mean having to involve yourself in situations that could place you in danger or at risk of injury. It is important to emphasize that you should never compromise your personal safety.

Being familiar with what type of information law enforcement is looking for can help a resident key in on those details. While the following list is not all inclusive, it contains the types of information law enforcement considers a priority to gather.

### Suspect Descriptions

- Gender
- Approximate age
- Race
- Hair color
- Clothing description (hat, coat, shirt, pants etc.)
- Eye color and shape (glasses)
- Tattoos, scars, birthmarks or other distinguishing features
- Weapons used (knife, gun, stick etc.)
- Direction of travel and how (foot/vehicle)

### Vehicle Descriptions

When trying to describe a vehicle, use the mnemonic CLAMMS to help identify critical information:

- C: Color of the car
- L: License plate number
- A: Additional distinguished features (rims, body damage, etc.)
- M: Make
- M: Model
- S: State of license plate (if not California). Also, note how many occupants and direction of travel.

### Dialing 911

When a resident calls 911 to report a crime or suspicious activity, what should they expect? How should they react? The most important thing to remember is to stay calm, and to be as direct and as brief as possible while reporting information. Residents should also expect that the 911 operator will ask a number of clarifying questions about the reported incident, since the more information they gather, the better they can dispatch the appropriate resources to the resident's location. The operators are specifically trained to ask these questions to get the most pertinent information to deputies. Residents

should note that as they speak to the operator, no time is lost, since the information is being typed and being routed as they speak.

Let's take a look at what happens during a traffic accident. A citizen calls 911 to report a traffic accident. In most cases, the operator will dispatch a traffic deputy to the scene. The 911 operator asks clarifying questions and elicits additional information, perhaps from a number of different callers, and now assesses that there are injured persons at the scene and there are signs of a fire. The operator would then dispatch a fire engine and ambulance.

### What is Suspicious Activity?

Suspicious activity is anything that is out of the ordinary. Generally, residents know intuitively who does and does not belong in their neighborhood. If any person or situation in your neighborhood makes you feel uncomfortable, then that warrants dialing 911 or the non-emergency sheriff's line (408-299-3233) to provide the relevant information. You may be the critical link in preventing a crime or in the apprehension of a criminal.

Examples of suspicious activities

include, but are not limited to:

- A person who knocks on your neighbor's front door and when no one answers, walks to the rear of the home.
- A person who appears to be moving out household items when no one is at home or when you know the neighbor isn't moving.
- A slow-moving vehicle with unidentified occupants, following an aimless or repetitive course, especially if this occurs in the dark and the car's headlights are turned off.
- An unfamiliar car left running and/or parked on your street.
- The sound of someone screaming or any noise that you cannot explain (such as, alarms or windows being broken).
- A child resisting the advances of an adult.
- Excessive traffic to and from a residence, especially during unusual hours.

If you have any questions please send an email to [WVAdmin@sheriff.sccgov.org](mailto:WVAdmin@sheriff.sccgov.org)

## PART II: THE HISTORY *of*

# Public Education



### **BY THE END OF THE 1980s, BULLIS-PURISSIMA**

School remained as the last in-town public school. Fremont Hills students were assigned to Nixon, Purissima Hills students assigned to Bullis, and Eastbrook students assigned to Loyola. Old school sites were sold to developers or leased to private schools. The

number of students enrolled in the 1980s was half what it was during the 1960s. With the passage of Proposition 13 (Prop 13) in 1978, school district budgets decreased — more so for Los Altos, making it a state-funded school district until 2006. Because additional students provided more funding, Los Altos accepted transfers from Palo Alto into the Bullis-Purissima School.

### **Private Donations Augment Public School Funding**

Community commitment to public education remained high and local public schools continued to excel despite decreased state and federal funding. Local communities passed bond measures to maintain schools. School districts passed parcel taxes to contribute to the yearly operating funds. Parents stepped-up to establish foundations (PiE, LAEF, MVLAF) to facilitate private donations. Parent and teacher organizations at each school collected funds to pay for class supplies, field trips, library books, and more at each school.



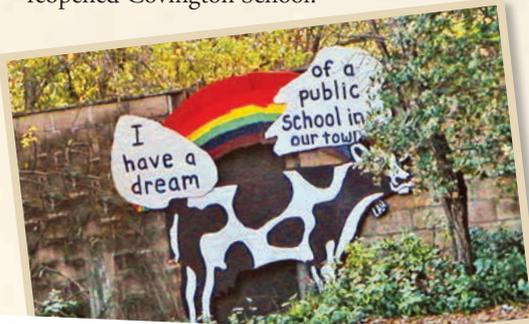
Muriel Smith, Principal of the Bullis and Purissima Hills schools in Los Altos Hills, published in the *Los Altos Town Crier* on March 8, 1972. From the collection of the Los Altos History Museum, copy and reuse restrictions apply.

### School Closing in 2003 Ignites Protest

With state funding continuing to decline and a forecast of fewer students, the Los Altos School District (LASD) made some hard choices. They passed a parcel tax and closed some schools. In the aftermath of the first dot-com boom, the district did not foresee that both enrollments and revenues would rise in the coming years.

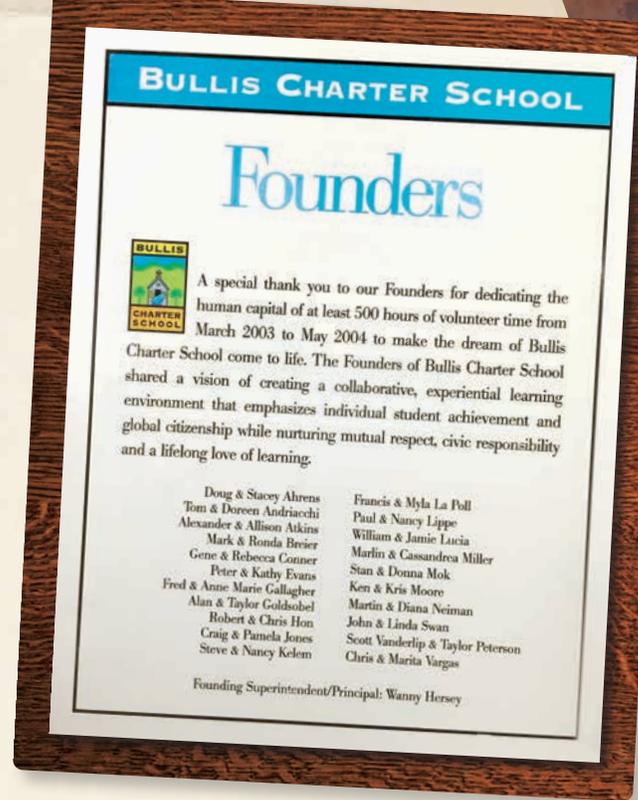
In 1998, local residents passed Measure H, a \$95 million bond to improve LASD facilities. The school board developed a facilities master plan in March 1999 that identified Bullis Purissima as the first school to be renovated with a budget of \$7.05 million. However, LASD did not follow that plan and improved the other six schools instead.

In late 2002, LASD began the process of selecting a school to close, since a demographic report predicted a decline in enrollment. Each school community advocated passionately to remain open. In February 2003, LASD announced the closure of Bullis Purissima, claiming it as surplus property, since it was no longer needed based on a flawed demographic report and the high cost of renovation for such a small population. Town students were assigned to the recently reopened Covington School.



Above: One of the many cows that appeared throughout town. The "Rainbow Cow" appeared on Fremont Road at West Edith Avenue. Directly above: A cow art project reunion was held at the corner of Old Altos Road and Burke Road, site of the "Mother of All Cows." Top right: The plaque, installed at BCS, that recognizes the 21 families and Wanny Hersey, the superintendent/principal, that founded the charter school in 2004.

In reference to the community working to pass the new tax, but seeing the local school closed, Jitze Couperus stood up at a LASD meeting held at the Bullis Purissima multipurpose room and observed that the town was like a cow, and that LASD milked the cow, and shared the milk with Los Altos, but Los Altos Hills never saw a drop.



His statement inspired graphic designer Alexander Atkins to create the "Got Milked?" posters that were posted around town. The posters, in turn, inspired Scott Vanderlip's cow art project. Vanderlip and his team of volunteers projected the cow logo onto plywood, cut them out, and painted them as black and white Holstein cows. The painted plywood cows were placed in yards around town as a tax protest ([www.lahcows.org](http://www.lahcows.org)). The campaign drew extensive local and national news coverage.

### Twenty-One Families Start a Charter School in 2004

With an initial goal of re-opening at the Bullis-Purissima site, 21 local families, led by residents Mark Breier and Craig Jones, who were following a suggestion from a former LASD superintendent, worked for a year from May 2003 to May 2004 to found the Bullis Charter School (BCS) that opened in the fall of 2004. Since LASD twice declined to grant the school a charter, BCS was granted a charter by the Santa Clara County Office of Education. However, Proposition 39 (Prop 39) requires the local school district to provide facilities ("reasonably equivalent space" — a source of contention that initiated almost a decade of litigation between BCS and LASD); consequently, LASD placed the school in portable units on a portion of the Egan Junior High School. Today, BCS is still in this location. It has expanded into a second school site on a portion of the Blach Junior High School. LASD voters passed bond measure N in 2014 to fund permanent facilities for the charter school and improvements for the others.

### Public Education Committee Formed

By 2004, Los Altos Hills elementary students were spread across several schools: Nixon at Stanford, BCS in Los Altos, Covington in Los Altos, and Loyola in Los Altos. Residents appealed to city

council to bring a public elementary school back.

The town council voted to create the Public Education Committee (PEC) to investigate public education options. In fall of 2004, the town authorized a survey by Godbe Research. In the January 2005 cover letter, Godbe stated, "Another conclusion... is that an overwhelming majority of voters in Los Altos Hills supported the town's spending resources to bring public elementary education back to the town."

#### Town Protects its Last Public School Site

During construction of the new town hall complex, the town's manager rented the Bullis school facilities for town offices. Portions of the site were leased to pre-school operators. Later, town council and then BCS offered to purchase the Bullis-Purissima site, but LASD declined offers stating it needed to rent out the site to generate revenue. The town council responded by filing legal action to prevent any private school operators from renting the facilities. Denied rental revenues, LASD placed an experimental full-day kindergarten program on the school site.

#### A School District in Los Altos Hills?

With the quick launch and success of BCS, the PEC investigated creating a townwide school district in 2006. Similar in size to Woodside or Portola Valley, the town had enough students to support a K-8 public school district. However, the Prop 13 tax district areas, now defined at the state level, complicated school finances. Supported

An overwhelming majority of voters in Los Altos Hills supported the town's spending resources to bring public elementary education back to the town.

by the PEC, the town council passed Resolution 42-06 on June 8, 2006. The resolution expressed interest in a K-8 district with all high school students to attend their high schools of residence. The request was denied at the county level. The council then passed Resolution 1-07 to support alternatives to redistricting.

On a separate issue, residents' opinion was split between locating the charter school or a Los Altos school at the Bullis-Purissima site. In the fall of 2006, LASD announced that it would invest \$11 million to rebuild and re-open a public school at the Bullis-Purissima site.

#### Santa Clara County Resolved Prop 13 Tax Transfers

The turmoil in Los Altos Hills over in-town schools reached the Santa Clara County Board of Education. The county worked with the Palo Alto and Los Altos school districts to create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to allow students living in the Palo Alto tax area to attend elementary school in the Los Altos tax area. Because Los Altos was collecting an excess of property tax by 2006, transfers were no longer state-funded. The MOU, still in use today, provided terms for transferring taxes between the two school districts.

#### Public Elementary School Returns to Los Altos Hills in 2008

In 2008, Los Altos re-opened a Los Altos school at the rebuilt Bullis-Purissima site. The name "Gardner Bullis" was agreed on to honor its original namesake as chosen by the students in 1962. By 2016, Gardner Bullis had the largest number of Los Altos Hills students enrolled of any public school.

*Article by Heather Rose, member of the Education Committee. The author would like to acknowledge the research provided by the Public Education Committee. Special thank you to Stefanie Midlock in the Los Altos History Museum for finding the historical photos appearing in this article. To join the Education Committee, fill out an application at Town Hall.*

*For a more detailed history of BCS visit: <http://losaltospolitico.com/bcs-vs-lasd/bullis-charter-school-history-timeline-of-the-genesis/> and [www.losaltosonline.com/news/sections/news/215-news-briefs/29430-j26063](http://www.losaltosonline.com/news/sections/news/215-news-briefs/29430-j26063)*

**Call for photos:** The Education Committee is interested in getting photos of all the five schools. Residents who have photos that can be scanned for archival use, please contact Heather Rose at [hvrose@gmail.com](mailto:hvrose@gmail.com).

#### Find Your Schools of Residence

##### Palo Alto Unified School District (K-12)

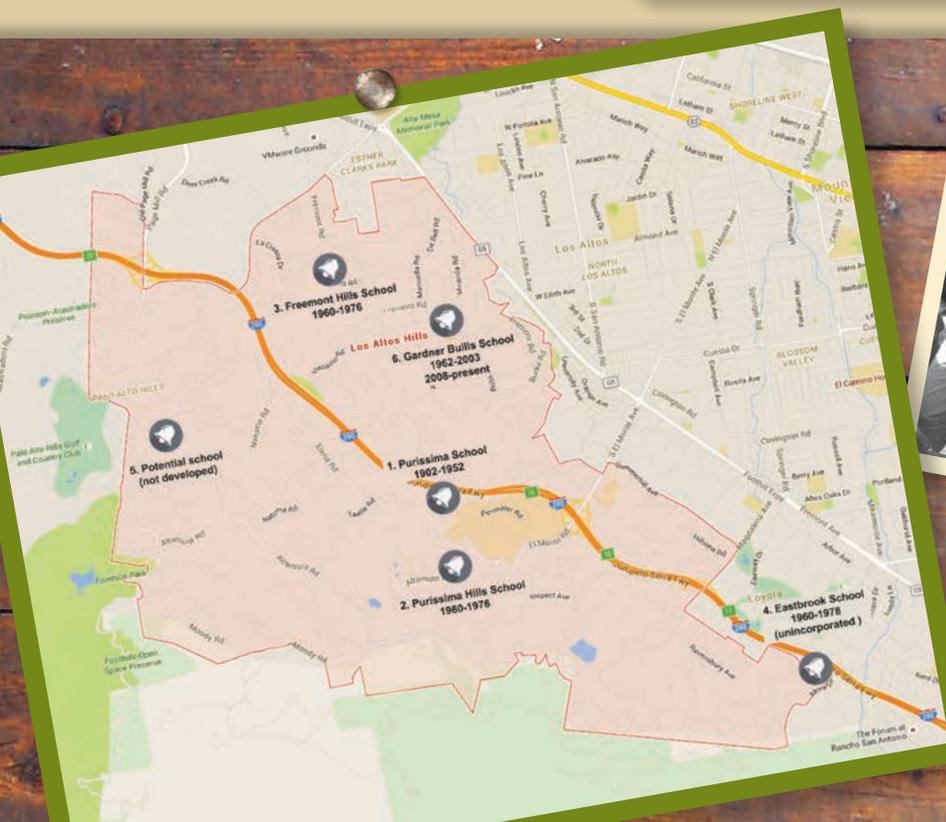
<http://locator.decisioninsite.com/?StudyID=171992>

##### Los Altos School District (K-8)

<http://www.myschoollocation.com/losaltos/>

##### Mountain View Los Altos Unified District (9-12)

<http://locator.decisioninsite.com/?StudyID=187720>



Left: Locations of public elementary school sites and one potential school site in Los Altos Hills city limits and sphere of influence from 1902 to present day. Right: Gardner Bullis visits the school named after him in April, 1982. The photograph was taken by Thomas Ovalle, and is part of the Peninsula Times Tribune collection. From the collection of the Los Altos History Museum, copy and reuse restrictions apply.

# SHARING PATHWAYS: THE EQUESTRIAN LEGACY



On any given day in Los Altos Hills, you can see walkers, hikers, joggers, dogs and their owners, cyclists, and horses using the pathways and trails that connect our community. The pathways are a vital and unique part of our rural legacy allowing us to take in the beautiful surrounding nature. Moreover, the pathway system enables wildlife to move across territories unimpeded, a rarity in Silicon Valley as urbanization encroaches upon habitats. While walking and wildlife corridors are great benefits, it was actually the horse that played a crucial part in the creation of our current pathway system.

In 1956, Irma Goldsmith, a horsewoman and widow of one of the last U.S. Cavalry officers, advocated for a workable system of trails that would be an integral part of the transportation system of the town “to safely accommodate all those who wanted to walk or ride their horses.” Her efforts and those of the Los Altos Trails Club and the Los Altos Hills Horsemen’s Association (LAHHA) ensured that a “living” pathway system — a system that would grow as the community grew — would be incorporated into the town’s general plan.



Today we have a vibrant, multi-use pathway and trail system, and horses, while not so abundant in residents’ backyards as before, continue to be an intrinsic part of our community. The rich, cultural equestrian history of Los Altos Hills is thriving at Westwind Barn, Fremont Hills Country Club Stables, several private home stables, and through the activities and efforts of LAHHA. And while there may be fewer horses on the trails than in the first four decades of the town’s history, there is certainly an increase of other users. Because of this growing user mix, knowledge of the “rules of the road,” especially when sharing with horses, is important. Here are a few simple tips to help all of us share the pathways safely with horses and with others:

## 1. RIGHT OF WAY

- Bikers should yield to pedestrians.
- Both pedestrians and cyclists should yield to horses.
- Alert horse and rider to your presence when approaching from behind.
- Uphill traffic has the right of way.

## 2. DOGS ON LEASH

- All dogs on pathways must be on leash.
- The Purissima Dog Park allows off-leash dogs.
- Dogs and owners yield to pedestrians and horses.

## 3. CLEAN UP – DOGS AND HORSES

- Dog owners: scoop the poop with a plastic bag.
- Equestrians: when possible, and if safe to do so, please push the manure off the pathway.
- Green Waste Recovery will pick up collected horse manure. It must be in a 64-gallon can and weigh no more than 60 pounds. For more information call 650-947-4994 or email [customerservice@greenwaste.com](mailto:customerservice@greenwaste.com)

The pathways are a wonderful resource given to us by early visionaries and horse lovers; and the system continues to grow in breadth and use. As you jog along, or walk your dog, give a nod of thanks to the horse sharing the trail with you.

*Rebecca Hickman is co-founder of LAH Parks and Recreation Programs and Committee and a long-time horse owner.*

# Opossum

**B**ehold the opossum, a species that has been on earth for more than 60 million years, and is the only marsupial in North America. There are 65 species of opossum worldwide, but only one of them occurs in the United States. Although it originally came to North America from South America, the colonists gave it the name Virginia opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*) because they found it in the Virginia colony and gave it the scientific name. “Opossum” comes from an Algonquian word, “apasum,” meaning “white animal.”

Although this humble creature resembles a large rat, it is completely different, and much safer. First, the young are born about 12 days after conception. They work their way through the mother’s fur to a pouch where they develop for another two to three months. Then they ride their mother’s back for an additional one to two months, learning how to forage for food and find shelter. Like the kangaroo, the adult female is called a jill, the young are called joeys, and the adult male is a jack. Each opossum lives two to four years, which is short for a mammal.

The opossum has a prehensile tail, and an opposable thumb on its hind feet. These features differentiate opossums from other North American mammals. Because of these features the opossum is good at climbing, allowing it to forage both low and high for its favorite food, the snail. The opossum can be seen carrying vegetation curled in its tail, usually on its way back to a den to create a nest. However, it does not hang by its tail, as is sometimes depicted.

This is a gentle, nocturnal creature that is beneficial to humans. Although opossums

invade the garden, their favorite foods include snails, slugs, rodents, and snakes. They also clean up fallen fruit, garbage from overturned containers, and carrion.

Opossums are extremely resilient. They are immune to botulism, honey bee stings, and rattlesnake venom. Because opossums fastidiously clean themselves, they eat or destroy thousands of ticks a week, depending on what gets in their fur. As a result, the opossum is considered by scientists to be an important tool in the prevention of the spread of Lyme Disease, and there are studies underway to understand how the opossum’s immune strategies could benefit humans in the fight against other diseases.

The opossum has 50 tiny teeth, the most of any North American mammal. They bare their teeth with a hiss when frightened. They are slow moving, so looking fierce by baring teeth and hissing is important for survival. However, they are not likely to bite humans because they would faint from fright beforehand. Opossums are well-known for entering a catatonic state when frightened, hence the term “playing opossum.” The evolutionary trick of feigning

death has protected this species from predators (foxes, coyotes, bobcats, dogs, and owls). They even have a gland that releases a foul-smelling goo that mimics the smell of an inedible item so that they are left alone. Unfortunately, the strategy of playing dead does not work well on roadways. Many opossums are killed by cars.

Los Altos Hills provides an ideal habitat for opossums. They forage through our gardens, and will den anywhere that is dry, sheltered, and safe. This could include abandoned animal burrows as well as accessible crawl spaces and other areas around the home. If you are concerned about any animal (opossum, skunk, racoon) taking up residence, be sure to secure access to those areas. If you think an animal is already denning, it is advised that you secure the entrance with a one-way exit door (a dryer vent works well for this), so that no animals are trapped in the den when access is closed off.

*Taylor Vanderlip is an environmental consultant specializing in biological issues.*

**W**hen you get sick, the first place you should turn is your primary care physician. He or she knows you best and is aware of any current medical conditions that might impact how you are feeling, allowing him or her to make the most informed decision about needed tests or treatment. This is truly the best option when you are able to plan ahead or wait until a later time for an appointment. But when something happens in the middle of the night, while traveling, or when symptoms come on suddenly, then what do you do? Is urgent care or emergency care the better option? The answer may be simpler than you think.

## DOCTOR, URGENT CARE, OR EMERGENCY ROOM?

Get the right level of care at the right time

Urgent care is the more cost-effective choice of the two options, and if the condition isn't life-threatening but still requires immediate attention, then finding a nearby urgent care center is likely the best decision. The hours at an urgent care center are normally extended beyond business hours and weekend hours. No appointment is necessary, although some centers will allow you to check wait times and even schedule a specific time, and using urgent care services will save you money in the long run. Urgent care centers are best suited to treat conditions such as:

- Fever, flu, or cold symptoms
- Ear infections
- Animal or insect bites
- Seasonal allergies
- Bronchitis
- Sprains and broken bones
- Cuts and bleeding that require stitches
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Moderate asthma or breathing discomfort
- Urinary tract infections
- Abdominal pain
- Minor neck pain

Emergency rooms are without a doubt, the best option for treating severe and life-threatening conditions. They are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If your condition could permanently impair or endanger your life, it is an emergency. The hospital emergency room is staffed and equipped to handle complex and critical situations, ranging from heart attacks and strokes to traumatic injuries resulting from car crashes and serious accidents.

Medical conditions requiring immediate or advanced treatments, such as surgery, are best

addressed in an emergency room at a hospital. Although there is no definitive list of ailments that must be treated in an emergency room setting, listed below are some common reasons to visit an emergency room rather than an urgent care center:

- Severe chest pain
- Wheezing or shortness of breath
- Paralysis
- Intestinal bleeding
- Severe abdominal pain
- High fevers (over 103) or rash, especially in children
- Uncontrollable vomiting
- Vaginal bleeding during pregnancy
- Poisoning
- Severe head or eye injuries
- Allergic reactions
- Unconsciousness

If the person is showing signs of a life-threatening condition including difficulty breathing, loss of consciousness, or has become nonresponsive, call 911 and have an ambulance take him or her to the emergency room so time-saving medical care can be given in the ambulance while the patient is being transported to the hospital. Precious minutes can mean the difference between life and death.

Remember, emergency rooms treat patients based on the severity of each individual's situation. The average time from arrival to departure is over two hours, while urgent care patients are seen on a first-come, first-serve basis, and most people will be in and out within 30 minutes.

It is a good idea to know where the closest emergency room and urgent care centers are in your neighborhood and the hours for urgent care centers in the area. If your insurance carrier provides a 24-hour nurse line, you should keep that number handy as this resource can help guide you to the right care provider based on your symptoms.

El Camino Hospital is located at 2500 Grant Road in Mountain View. To find a primary care physician affiliated with El Camino Hospital, call 800-216-5556. The entrance to the Emergency Room is on South Drive. If the emergency is life-threatening, call 911 immediately.





**TOWN OF LOS ALTOS HILLS**  
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Los Altos Hills, CA 94022

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Permit No. 306

**Town Newsletter Statement of Purpose**

This is the official town newsletter to communicate current issues, services, and activities in Los Altos Hills to the residents of the town — to facilitate, encourage, and improve interaction between the residents and the town government. The newsletter is published quarterly. **Deadline for the next issue is January 5, 2017.**

Printed with soy-based inks. International Paper, the manufacturer of the paper, has earned Sustainable Forestry Initiative and Forestry Stewardship Council dual certification.

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

**Our Town**

Our Town is published with assistance from the City Clerk, Deborah Padovan, and Town Volunteer Committees.

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**Los Altos Hills City Council**

John Harpootlian, Mayor  
Gary Waldeck, Vice Mayor  
Courtenay Corrigan  
John Radford  
Roger Spreen

**City Manager**

Carl Cahill

**CALENDAR**



**Dec. 4**

**Sunday, 2:00 – 5:00 pm**  
**Holiday Barn Lighting**  
Individuals, community and school groups interested in performing at the barn lighting should contact Sarah Robustelli at [srobustelli@losaltoshills.ca.gov](mailto:srobustelli@losaltoshills.ca.gov).

**10**

**Sat., 7:30 – 9:00 pm**  
**Chamber Music Concert at Town Hall**  
The Telegraph Quartet, an internationally recognized ensemble, is bringing a uniquely intimate and immersive concert experience to Los Altos Hills. It is an event that should not be missed. To purchase tickets,

visit: [www.losaltoshills.ca.gov/201/Parks-and-Recreation](http://www.losaltoshills.ca.gov/201/Parks-and-Recreation)

**22**

**Thurs., 7:30 – 9:00 pm**  
**Caroling in the Hills**  
Join your neighbors in bringing fun and holiday cheer to neighborhoods around Town Hall. Meet at the Parks and Recreation Building for drinks and a treat before heading out to sing. Please dress warmly and bring a flashlight. For more information call Scott Vanderlip at 650-948-6455.

**Jan. 2017 1**

**Sat, Time TBD**  
**New Year's Day Walk**  
Usher in the new year with a walk, hosted by



the Pathways Committee for all ages. For more information please contact 650-948-2518 or [lahseniorprogram@gmail.com](mailto:lahseniorprogram@gmail.com).

**23**

**Monday, 1:30 – 2:15 pm**  
**Preschool Playgroup Adventures: Tour the Library**  
Join us for a unique behind-the-scenes tour of the Los Altos Library. To sign up, email [LAHpreschooltours@gmail.com](mailto:LAHpreschooltours@gmail.com).

**28**

**Saturday, 9:00 – Noon**  
**Technology for Seniors**  
Need help learning how to use your smart phone, email, social media, or apps (rideshare apps like Lyft and Uber)? Community volunteers will help you navigate the digital world. Registration is required 650-934-3556.

**Feb. 10**

**Friday, 9:00 – 10:00 am**  
**Recyclables Processing Tour**  
Tour the new materials recovery facilities at GreenWaste in San Jose. To register please call 650-947-2518 or email [srobustelli@losaltoshills.ca.gov](mailto:srobustelli@losaltoshills.ca.gov).

**25**

**Sat., 10:00 am – Noon**  
**Compost Basics**  
Come learn about the importance of managing organic waste (food scraps and yard trimmings) at home. To sign up, email [kmalimban@losaltoshills.ca.gov](mailto:kmalimban@losaltoshills.ca.gov).

Calendar events are also posted on town's website: [www.losaltoshills.ca.gov](http://www.losaltoshills.ca.gov)