



# OUR TOWN

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE TOWN OF LOS ALTOS HILLS

SEPTEMBER 2016



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## NOTABLE HISTORIC HOMES IN TOWN

### 1800s

M. L. Koenig residence  
on Old Altos Road

### 1840s

Juana Briones adobe  
home on Old Trace Road

### 1870s

Gardner Bullis residence  
on Manuela Avenue

### 1880s

Thomas Wright home  
(W. D. Frampton) on  
Magdalena Avenue

### 1890s

Captain Merx home on  
Dori Lane and Robleda.

### 1900s

William P. Huth residence  
on Lennox Way and  
Burke Avenue

Willard M. Griffin home  
on El Monte Avenue  
(pictured above)

### 1910s

Percy Morgan Manor on  
Stonebrook Avenue  
(pictured below)



## The Story of Shumate House

Long before Los Altos Hills was incorporated, going back to 1864, large land holdings with single family homes were being established in the area. Some of these homes were stately grand manors, while others were modest. In subsequent years, many of these historic homes were razed or renovated into larger contemporary residences. Fortunately, there are several grand homes that are still standing, largely unchanged from their original appearance. The Shumate house, located on Viscaino Road, is an excellent example of one of these homes, with a fascinating history. [CONTINUED ON PAGE 2]





### Dr. Shumate Settles in Town

Thomas E. Shumate was born in 1871 in St. Louis and later moved to San Jose in 1888 and then to San Francisco where he attended pharmacy and medical school. He opened a chain of pharmacies and was vice president of Saint Francis Hospital. In 1908, Shumate purchased 500 acres in the Concepcion, Fremont, Purissima Roads area for ranching and a summer home. He also owned a ranch in what is now Mountain View, and would drive a herd of American Saddle Bred horses from that ranch to his Los Altos Hills property. Imagine these graceful creatures traveling through the beautiful apricot and walnut orchards that covered much of the ranch land.

### Construction of Shumate House

In 1915, Shumate and his wife, Freda, began building their summer home on the property. The architect was a cousin of Mrs. Shumate and an associate of Bernard Maybeck, a prominent architect of the Arts and Crafts Movement and a professor at UC Berkeley. Popular at this time were the villas of Italy with classical detailing, gardens, fountains, walls and gated entries. The home was also influenced by the Panama-Pacific International Exposition held in San Francisco in 1915, at which both the home's architect and builder had worked. Stucco was used on the exterior to prevent the destruction caused to shingled homes by the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fires.

When completed, the cost of building the original home was reported at \$10,000. The gardens contained plants from the Panama-Pacific Exposi-

tion and the property had a pool that was filled only by rain water. A tennis court and guest cabins completed the resort-like estate. Guests arrived to stay for weeks at a time and supplies for meals and entertainment were brought down from San Francisco on horse-drawn trucks.

### The Estate After Shumate

Shumate passed away in 1952 and the property was sold and subdivided into one-acre parcels. Fifteen acres of land, including the stables and water tower on the ranch, were purchased to create the Fremont Hills Country Club.

The Shumate home itself was purchased by Mrs. Blodgett, a school-teacher. She opened and ran the Happy Hours Nursery for the next 25 years. By the 1980s, the house had fallen into disrepair. It suffered water damage from a leaky roof and a fire.

### New Life for the Shumate House

In 1989, the property was purchased by new owners who remodeled the home extensively, adding modern conveniences, but kept the original Italian Villa features. They also retained the original redwood paneling in the front rooms. Paintings that were found in an old outbuilding now hang in the library.

Outside in the gardens, the original apricot and walnut trees died off, but they have been replaced with other fruit trees, Japanese cherry trees, and colorful rhododendrons, camellias, and wisteria. The base of an old fountain and part of a light fixture were saved and made into a stately urn. Also, the pool and trellis were rebuilt to the original style. Authentically and lovingly restored, the Shumate home stands as a proud representative of the heritage of Los Altos Hills.

## THE MYSTERY OF THE TWO BRICK PILLARS

At the corner of Concepcion and Fremont Roads is a brick pillar (shown below) which bears a weathered rectangular bronze sign that reads "Dr. Thomas E. Shumate." Oddly enough, the matching pillar is located on the opposite side of the street, about 300 feet away. Ever wonder why? You are not alone — this is one of the most common questions that the History Committee hears.



When Shumate was building his home in the 1910s, he wanted the beginning of Concepcion Road to appear as if it were a private road to his estate. Shumate had the first pillar constructed at the intersection of Fremont and Concepcion Road. Shumate planned to build the matching pillar across the street (where the Purissima Water Department stands now); however, Arthur Fowle, the property owner at the time, refused him. Consequently, Shumate had to build the matching pillar 300 feet away, past the Fowle's property line (shown below). These two pillars are still standing, a reminder of Shumate's unrealized dream of a grand entrance to his stately home.

*The Los Altos Hills History Committee welcomes any resident who owns an old home, to share the history of their house. Please send an email to [dpadovan@losaltoshills.ca.gov](mailto:dpadovan@losaltoshills.ca.gov).*



## FROM THE CITY MANAGER

# Budget Highlights on Governmental Funds

On June 16, 2016, the Los Altos Hills City Council approved a \$10.9 million budget for maintenance, operations, and capital investment in fiscal year 2016-17.<sup>1</sup> The 2016-17 budget was developed with the benefit of resident input obtained through the



Carl Cahill

community survey that was conducted in January of this year. In that survey, residents indicated relative satisfaction with town services. Based on those results, certain town services were identified for enhancements including parks and recreation, public works maintenance and law enforcement services.

The 2016-17 personnel budget of \$3 million represents roughly a quarter of the total budget. The most significant change in personnel cost is the addition of two full-time employees to address operational needs, totaling \$137,000. The results of the 2016 Community Survey<sup>2</sup> show that promoting the sense of community through town events and recreation programs is valued by town residents. Town residents also expressed a preference for improved maintenance of pathway, drainage and roadway systems. The addition of a recreation specialist and a maintenance worker will assist the Town in meeting these needs. The remaining \$288,000 is related to increases in medical cost, pension and retiree medical (OPEB) contribution, and changes in employment.

Representing 29 percent of the total budget, the contract and professional services budget is \$3.2 million for 2016-17. Almost half of the budget in this category is for law enforcement which is contracted with the Santa Clara County Sheriff.

At the request of the town, the County Sheriff's Office is providing an additional 1,370 hours per year for traffic safety, crime prevention and neighborhood police patrol. This equates to a net budget increase of \$361,000 in 2016-17. Other increases in contract and professional services include building code and ordinance update, (\$90,000); pension prefunding and aircraft noise studies (\$75,000); and a four percent increase in miscellaneous service contracts.

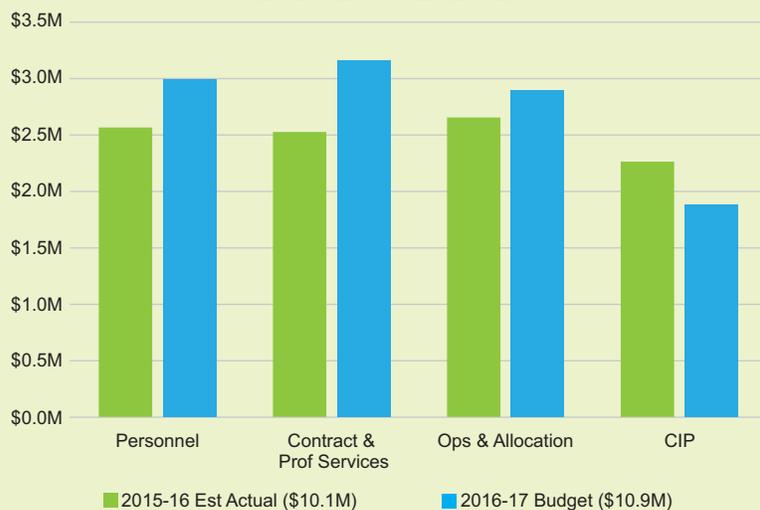
As part of this year's budget, the town committed \$1.8 million on capital improvements. Sixty percent or \$1.1 million is committed to the annual pavement rehabilitation program in order to maintain our current Pavement Condition Index at 77. Other appropriations include \$212,000 for pathway system improvements, \$164,850 for a building permit system upgrade, \$160,000 for drainage improvements, and \$197,000 in miscellaneous projects including open space management, carpet replacement, dump truck replacement, and bicycle

safety improvements at Page Mill and I-280.

The \$10.9 million operating and capital budget is fully supported by the town's taxes, fees, charges and grants. For 2016-17, the projected revenue is \$11.5 million, adding a projected \$598,000 to the town's net position by June 30, 2017 and bringing the projected ending fund balance to \$11.9 million. Having a fund balance equal to budgeted expenditure and having no outstanding loans signify the town is financially strong. The town is in a unique position to assess future financial risk, develop a comprehensive reserve policy, and to invest back into the community with one-time initiatives.

A copy of the town's adopted budget will be available by November 2016 at [www.losaltoshills.ca.gov](http://www.losaltoshills.ca.gov) or at Town Hall administrative services department. The town's proposed budget is currently available on the town's website and the town satisfaction survey is currently available on the website under the March 7, 2016 special City Council meeting.

## EXPENDITURE COMPARISON 2016-17 to 2015-16



<sup>1</sup> The Town also appropriated \$2,296,600 in sewer system operation and maintenance and \$1,545,000 in sewer system improvements. Because the sewer fund is a self-sustaining fund, it will not be discussed in this article. More information on the Sewer Fund will be available as part of the final budget document.

<sup>2</sup> 2016 Community Survey conducted by Godbe Research. Results were presented during the March 7, 2016 City Council Special Meeting.

**Short Term Rentals**

**O**n July 20, the City Council discussed the growing phenomena of short term rentals in Los Altos Hills. Web-based companies such as AirBnB, HomeAway and VRBO have made short-term rentals an increasingly popular alternative to hotels throughout the country. Although not defined in the municipal code, a short-term residential rental is considered to be a rental of all or a portion of a residential unit for periods of less than 30 nights. Although not expressly allowed by the Zoning Ordinance, the Town has traditionally treated short-term rentals the same as long-term rentals. Some residents who attended the council meeting expressed concerns that their neighborhoods would be less secure if short-term rentals were allowed to proliferate. To date, town staff has received several complaints with regard to short-term rentals.

At the conclusion of the discussion, councilmembers decided to review the issue again at a town public meeting early next year. In preparation for that meeting, the planning staff will be conducting further research on best practices for compliance with and enforcement of short-term rental regulations and policy suggestions for consideration by the City Council. Results of the informal, non-scientific town survey on short-term rentals can be viewed on the Town website. To see where current short term rentals may be in your neighborhood, go to [www.rentmix.com](http://www.rentmix.com) which is a site that aggregates short-term rental listings.

**Planning and Building Update**

The planning and building departments are currently experiencing a very high volume of activity. The building department received 113 new permit applications from June 1 through July 20 and the planning department had 31 applications submitted in the same time frame. In

June, building staff conducted 241 inspections and planning staff issued 21 site development approvals.

**New Senior Planner**

Senior Planner Marni Moseley joined the Town staff in July. Marni has more than nine years of planning experience with the Town of Los

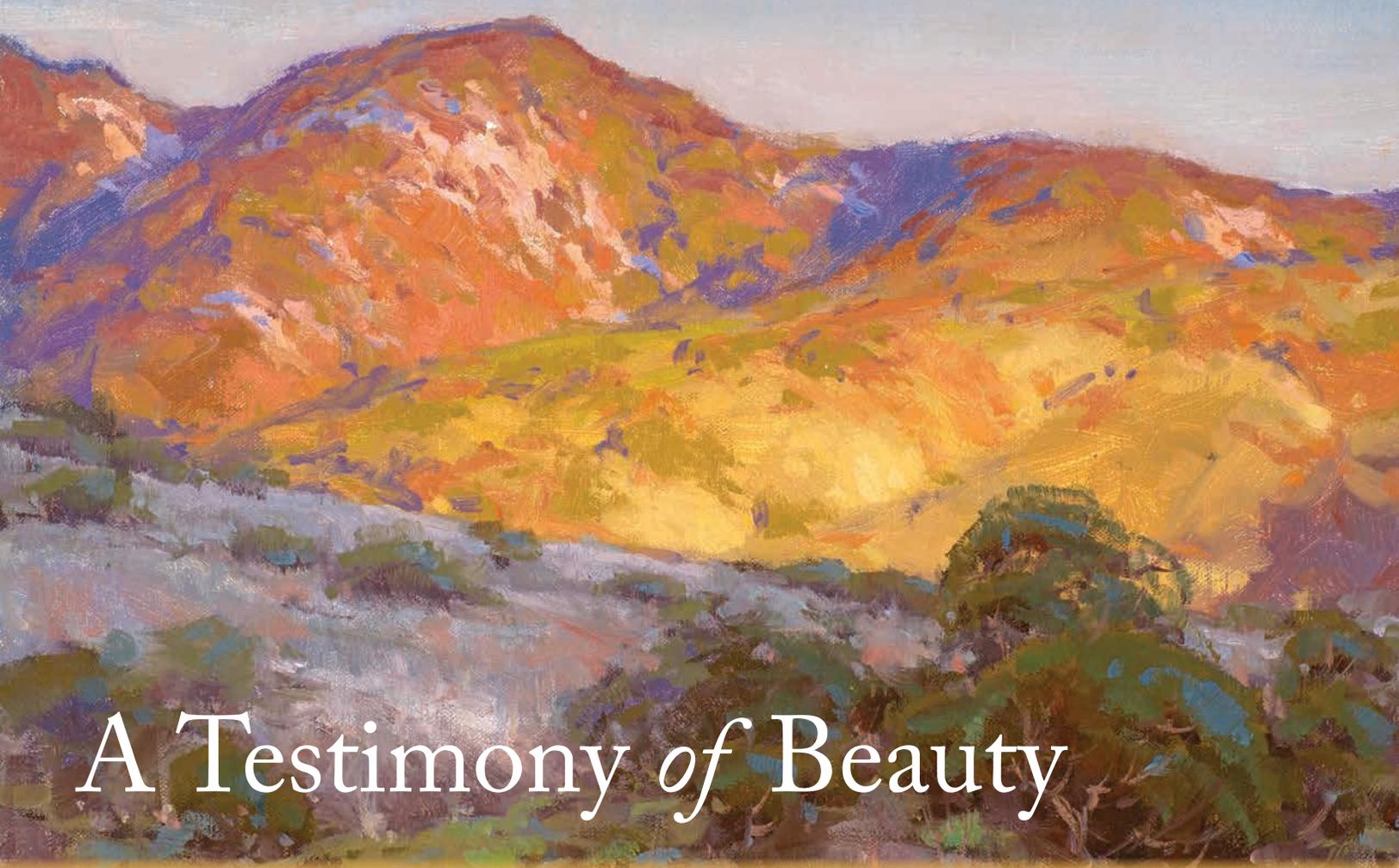


Gatos and previously worked for the City of Laurel, Maryland. She has a degree in Public Administration with an emphasis in city planning from San Diego

State University and is a certified planner. Marni is a native Californian who grew up in San Jose. She and her husband recently bought a new home in San Jose where they reside with their two daughters.

*Suzanne Avila, AICP, Planning Director*





# A Testimony of Beauty

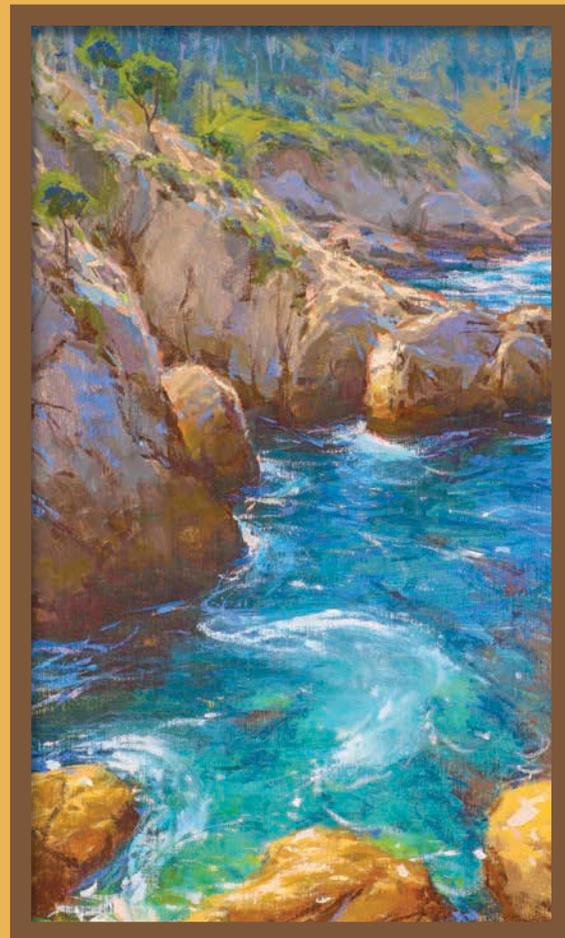
The art exhibit “A Testimony of Beauty” will be on display at Town Hall from September 16, 2016, to March 2017. The exhibit will be the first showing of nationally-acclaimed artist John Burton’s work. Burton, who grew up in Los Altos, has travelled around the world creating, exhibiting and sharing his knowledge of painting.

Residents are invited to attend the artist’s reception on Saturday, September 24, from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm at Town Hall. The reception will feature live music, refreshments and wine. At some point during the exhibition period, Burton will conduct an art walk and talk tour; the date will be posted on the town’s website.

Burton is an award-winning oil painter best known for his vivid depictions of the transitory beauty of the natural world; his ability of capturing the profound spirituality and majesty of his surroundings is uniquely revealed in his paintings. He is influenced by Western and Russian painters of the early twentieth century. Although Burton has traveled and painted around the globe, he has always maintained his home and artistic center in the American West. The natural character of his art permeates from his deep American roots, communicating with pigment and brushes — telling a story that goes well beyond words. “Nature is my point of departure,” explains Burton. “I spend so much of my life walking the coast, hiking the mountains, or traveling the valleys of our great state, looking for scenes to set up my easel and try to capture the fleeting moment of light. These days a common phrase for what I do is *plein air*, which is a French term for painting in the open air. I have been doing it for longer than the time the term has been adopted in America. It is the only way I know to truthfully capture a landscape.”

This exhibit will feature iconic and cherished California landscapes and seascapes in the tradition of the early California Impressionists, who are revered for capturing so much of the Golden State’s untainted beauty — long before the imprint of dense population.

Over the years, Burton’s art has been featured in many exhibitions, and he is represented by some of the most reputable galleries across the nation. He has achieved an impressive amount of awards and honors, and has been featured in many well-known national art magazines. Most recently, his work was featured in the summer 2016 issue of *Fine Art Connoisseur Magazine*.



# Meadow Life

Imagine a meadow with low growing native bunch grasses forming a soft carpet in winter, offering dazzling wildflowers from March through June, then flowering perennials that peak in July and August. Imagine this meadow being visited by hummingbirds, butterflies and other pollinators. Imagine not having to use chemicals, watering only once or twice a month, and mowing once a year in the late winter. Imagine the sound of songbirds rather than the jarring noise of lawn mowers, leaf-blowers and sprinklers.

## Meadow, the Original Lawn

Traditional lawns are being replaced in urban landscapes as homeowners appreciate the value and the aesthetics of climate-suitable meadows, a choice more in harmony with our natural surroundings. It is easy to transition a lawn as companies are now growing native sod that can be

*“In the three-county Los Angeles Basin alone, mowers, blowers, and edgers create 22 tons of air pollution a day. Worst of all are the chemicals used by well-intentioned gardeners in their quest for a “healthy” green sward. The amount of fertilizers, weed killers, and insecticides put on the average lawn is staggering. These chemicals are poisoning our environment at an unprecedented rate. There is a better way. Every region in this great county of ours has its own native sod.”*

*– John Greenlee, *The American Meadow Garden**

installed for an instant meadow. Native grasses are also available as plugs or seeds and can be interspersed with wild flowers, annuals and perennials for vibrant year-round beauty.

Benefits of a meadow over a traditional lawn

- Meadows require much less supplemental water than lawns, on average about 75-100% less depending on plant selection.
- Meadows do not need fertilizers, herbicides or pesticides thereby substantially improving

water quality in our creeks and bay.

- Meadows need about 95% less mowing, sharply reducing air pollution, noise pollution, fossil fuel consumption, greenhouse gases and traffic.
- Less methane-producing garden waste ends up being hauled away.
- Meadows provide habitat value for local wildlife, especially birds, pollinators and beneficial insects.
- Landscape costs are reduced

with less water and less maintenance.

- Children and pets enjoy the seasonality and variability of a biologically diverse habitat.
- Meadows hold up better to romping pets and children and munching deer.

## Plant in the Fall

Fall is the time to plant a new meadow. If you are interested in saving money, creating a beautiful yard and making your home more sustainable, consider transitioning your lawn to a native meadow. Embrace the new by resurrecting some of what has been lost.

## Lawn Replacement Rebate

Santa Clara Valley Water District offers a rebate to homeowners, businesses and schools for replacing turf grass lawns with climate suitable plants. Find out more about the Landscape Rebate Program from Santa Clara Valley Water District at: <http://>

# ATTEND THE SEMINAR AMERICAN MEADOW THE ORIGINAL LAWN

[www.scvwd.org/Programs/LandscapeRebateProgram.aspx](http://www.scvwd.org/Programs/LandscapeRebateProgram.aspx).

## Savannah Effect

Humans evolved in savannah biome, the oldest biome for human settlements. This fact has led some researchers to speculate that our primordial brain is most calm when viewing grassland landscapes.

## Meadow History

Two hundred years ago rich, diverse Oak savannah grasslands and chaparral biomes blanketed Los Altos Hills providing food and shelter for a plethora of native species. Controlled burns of grasslands by Native Americans increased diversity, productivity and range. Grazing is integral to grassland management and Tule elk were once the dominant grazers in our area. In areas where Tule elk still exist, grasslands have more diversity and fewer pest invasive plants.

Most of the open areas in Los Altos Hills are now covered with non-native annual grasses such as ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), soft chess brome (*Bromus hordeaceus*), perennial rye grass (*Lolium perenne*) and wild oats (*Avena fatua* and *Avena sativa*). These oat and rye species, brought

Homeowners throughout our area are discovering the many benefits of meadow landscaping. Fill your yard with color, texture, movement and wildlife. Low maintenance meadows provide year round enjoyment for the family and sustenance for beneficial species in our environment. Songbirds, butterflies, pollinators and other beneficial species rely on native plants for their survival.

The seminar's speaker is John Greenlee, an expert in grass ecology and champion of sustainable design. Greenlee is the author of *The American Meadow Garden* and *The Encyclopedia of Ornamental Grasses*. For more information please contact Kit at [kitgordon@me.com](mailto:kitgordon@me.com)

**October 27, 2016**

**7:00 pm – 8:30 pm**

**Los Altos Library**

**13 S. San Antonio Road, Los Altos**

The seminar is sponsored by GreenTown Los Altos, Purissima Hills Water District, Open Space Committee of Los Altos Hills, California Water Service, Santa Clara Valley Water District in Partnership with Grassroots Ecology

by Europeans in the nineteenth century to feed their livestock, have replaced most of our native grasses making grasslands in California among the most endangered ecosystems in the United States.

## Field View

Fields of invasive grasses and weeds can be transformed into native meadows full

of life. A spectacular example can be seen off of Viscaino Drive. In sixteen months and with some professional help, neighbors Raj Reddy and Kim Scott converted a weedy 1.5-acre hillside into a flourishing wild-flower meadow. With patience and a bit of work, native meadows can be created on a small budget. The cost to replace weeds with natives can be less than the annual cutting of weeds.

## Mow, Don't Disk Open Fields

Tilling land was once considered the proper annual maintenance for fields, including weedy grass fields in Los Altos Hills.

However, soil biologists now understand this practice is detrimental to our environment. Repeated disking will lead to hardpan layer preventing water infiltration, limiting aquifer recharge, increasing winter runoff and limiting plant growth. Annual disking damages biological soil structure and limits the diversity of organisms in the soil.

Biological life in the soil along with plant roots keeps soil open allowing rainwater to drain down deep and recharge the aquifers. Disking brings up lots of weed seeds and leaves soil vulnerable for further weedy invasions. Mowing (or weed-whacking) is a better ecological practice and reduces wildfire fuel load. Mowing leaves a natural mulch on top of the soil that provides food for soil organisms and a protective cover that reduces erosion from wind.

*After a productive career as a chemical engineer, Kit Gordon now donates her time with a variety of organizations to improve local watershed health.*

## Landscaping Resources

The following books may provide landscape guidance:

- The American Meadow Garden* by John Greenlee
- California Native Plants for the Garden* by Carol Bornstein, David Fross, and Bart O'Brien
- California Native Gardening* by Helen Popper
- Ecosystems of California* edited by Harold Mooney and Erika Zavaleta
- Grasses* by Nancy J. Ondra

## Native Plants

Try some of these native plants and see your meadow come alive with movement and color.

- California meadow sedge (*Carex pansa*)
- Berkeley sedge (*Carex tumulicola*)
- California fescue (*Festuca californica*)
- Red fescue (*Festuca rubra*)
- Muhly grass (*Muhlenbergia capillaris*)
- Deer grass (*Muhlenbergia rigens*)
- Common rush (*Juncus patens*)
- Purple needle grass (*Stipa pulchra*)
- Blue eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*)
- California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*)
- California fuchsia (*Epilobium canum*)
- Buckwheats (*Eriogonum*)
- Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)
- Monkeyflower (*Mimulus*)
- Hummingbird Sage (*Salvia spathacea*)



# Exploring *Your* Backyard



It has been about 45 years since hundreds of volunteers worked tirelessly to gather 10,000 signatures to put Measure R on the ballot to create the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD). The measure's wording continues to inspire residents: "Open space is our green backdrop of hills. It is rolling grasslands, cool forests in the Coast Range, orchards and vineyards in the sun. It is the patch of grass between communities where children can run. It is uncluttered baylands where water birds wheel and soar, where blowing cordgrass yields its blessings of oxygen, where the din of urban land gives way to the soft sounds of nature. It is the serene, unbuilt, unspoiled earth that awakens all our senses and makes us whole again — it is room to breathe."



Fast forward to today and one can conclude that the residents of the Bay Area peninsula have reaped the fruit of Measure R, with over 62,000 acres and 26 open space preserves in public ownership in perpetuity. The passing of Measure AA in 2014 assured funding for MROSD to continue acquiring open space, restoring watersheds and the environment, and opening up our lands for ecologically sensitive public recreation.

Recently, MROSD has been working on some exciting new projects, creating new opportunities to explore nature in your own backyard.

### Cooley Landing

Cooley Landing is a highlight of the San Francisco Bay, with spectacular jetties jutting out into the water and providing much needed park and open space access to residents near and far. Cooley Landing features a beautiful, sustainably designed education center which will be

open soon for environmental outreach and education to local student and residents. MROSD is also working with partners to open up a key missing part of the Bay Trail just north of Cooley Landing so bicyclists and hikers can enjoy these beautiful new vistas. To get to Cooley Landing, follow Bay Road in East Palo Alto until the very end of the road.

### Mindego Hill

Up in the skyline area, MROSD recently opened the Mindego Hill trail and Mindego Gateway staging area as part of Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve. The

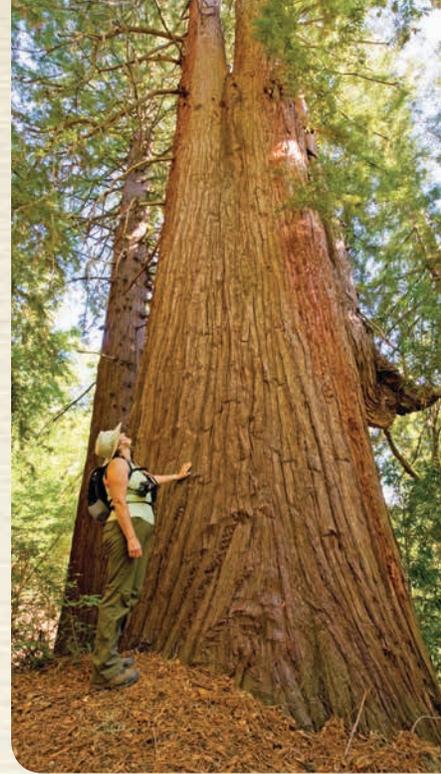
parking lot is four miles on the ocean side of Skyline Boulevard on Alpine Road. A newly constructed restroom is adjacent to the parking lot. A trail leads hikers down a steep ranch road to the starting point of the new Mindego Hill Trail with breathtaking views of Mindego Hill. Hikers can also enjoy scenic loop trails including the Ancient Oaks trail lined with beautiful majestic trees.

### El Corte de Madera

In 2014, MROSD opened the El Corte de Madera staging area with ready access to stunning redwood groves and sweeping coastal views. The historic Methuselah Tree is a popular destination to take out-of-town visitors.

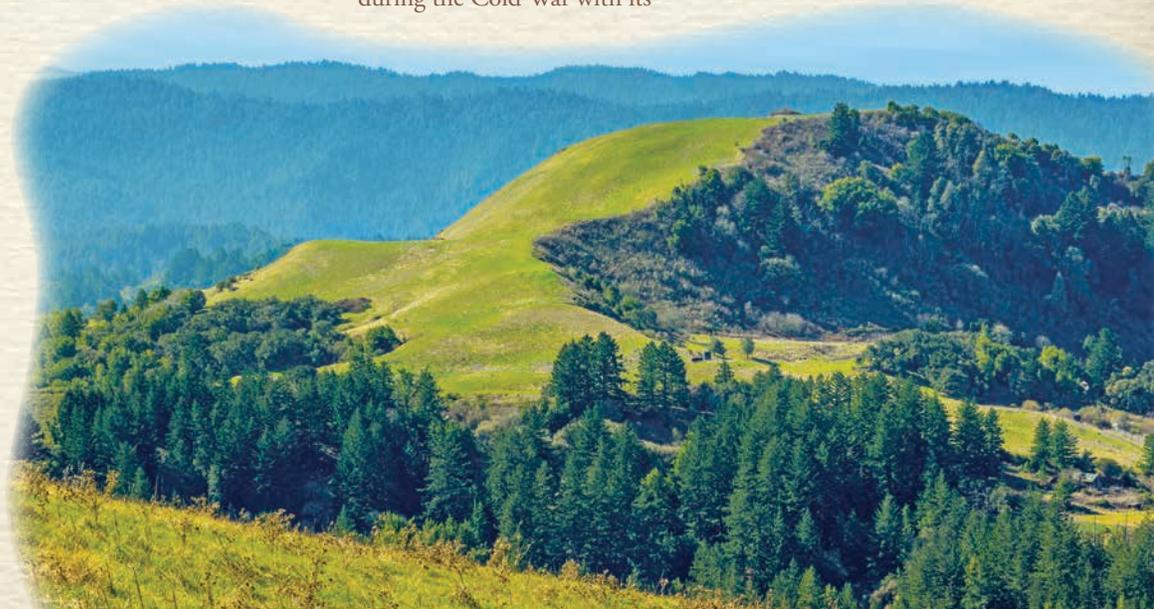
### Mount Umunhum

Mount Umunhum, known simply as Mount Um, is a mountaintop sacred to the local Amah Mutsun tribes, as the site of their creation story. For a few decades, it also played a role during the Cold War with its



radar tower and Air Force base. The Bay Ridge Trail Council allocated substantial funding to help open up a hiking/biking trail to the spectacular vistas from the top – panoramic vistas of Monterey Bay, Coyote Valley, and the Peninsula which will be open sometime in 2017. With funding from Measure AA, MROSD will begin repairing the mountain road to the top and staging area. The project will also include the construction of interpretative trails at the summit, and ceremonial circle for the Native Americans. The hiking trail will be open by early 2017.

*Submitted by Midpeninsula Open Space District.*



*Opposite page: Bear Creek Redwoods by Frances Freyberg. Bottom (l-r): Mindego Hill Poppies by Karl Gohl; Happy Jumps by Pengwen Chen; Bear Creek Redwoods Equestrians by Frances Freyberg. Above (top to bottom): Bear Creek Redwoods, copyright Paolo Vescia; Cooley Landing Education center; Green Mindego Hill by Karl Gohl.*

# THE HISTORY *of* Public Education



## **AFTER THE SUBDIVISION OF THE TAAFFE**

lands started in 1897, more families moved into the beautiful hills above Los Altos generating demand for a local public school. In 1901, the Purissima school district organized a temporary school for six local children and one teacher in Captain Merx's

fruit house, built in the 1890s, located on the corner of Robleda Avenue and Dori Lane. Merx, who lived in San Francisco, used this home on weekends.

On April 2, 1902, the residents formed the Purissima School District with an elected board. In July of that year, the new school board passed a bond for \$2,500 to build a school. Located in the middle of an orchard, Purissima School opened on February 17, 1902 on two acres purchased from the Taaffe ranch for \$50 an acre. Purissima was a one-room schoolhouse for students in grades one to eight, with one teacher. An extension housed a small library. In the middle of the schoolroom was a wood stove to keep the students warm and dry. Purissima School also had a well for water, outhouses, a horse shed, a piano, and a school bell. By 1904, Purissima School had between 50 and 60 students. As part of the Palo Alto school district, Purissima graduates had the option to attend Palo Alto High School in preparation for college. The original Purissima School building still stands today as part of St. Luke's Chapel in the Hills on Duval Way near the 280 Freeway.



Top right: The one-room Purissima School, cloak room, and water tank (circa 1902).  
Top left: The Purissima School (circa 1966).  
Middle: Class picture taken in 1936. The teacher, Elizabeth Jackson Carrington, can be seen in the center of the back row.  
Bottom: Captain Merx's fruit house where classes were held while Purissima School was under construction. This photo, taken in the 1970s, shows the house used as a stable.\*



### THE TOWN'S SCHOOL DISTRICT

*"In a circular of 1904, announcing the subdivision of 735 acres of the Taaffe ranch, the following statement appeared: A school district has been organized with this newly-settled tract as a nucleus and a first class school house built near its geographical center, affording excellent education facilities, second to none in a county noted for its advantages along this line."*

*Elof and Ida Johnson from Sweden later purchased Captain Merx's home and the surrounding 18 acres. "Mrs. Johnson, reminiscing of the period, states: They needed a new piano at the school. Everyone, including the neighbors, was willing to help, so they had a little social and served coffee and doughnuts (made by Mrs. Johnson). Admission was fifty cents and included dancing. Mrs. Wright and Al Bates furnished the music. Soon after that, with the money raised from various other entertainments, Mrs. Johnson and the Wrights went to San Jose and bought a piano for the school and then the fun began."*

*From Los Altos Hills The Colorful Story (1976) by Forence M. Fava, pages 91-92*

### Post World War II "Baby Boom" School Expansion

In 1948, in order to expand its student population, the Los Altos School District purchased the Purissima School, thereby ending the Purissima School District. Los Altos operated the Purissima School for four years and later sold it to St. Luke's in 1952. Once the local school was closed, students were bussed to school in Los Altos. Starting in 1954, students graduating from middle school could attend the newly opened Los Altos High School.

### New Town, More Students, and Five Schools Opened

Once Los Altos Hills incorporated in 1956, the City Council decided not to create a city school district. Families moving from Palo Alto, Los Altos, and other areas built homes in the new rural town featuring large lots, horses, and open spaces. Residents near the school district borders had some choice in which school district to pick, so the school boundaries did not follow city or other established boundaries.

### Fremont Hills Elementary School Opened in 1960

Soon after the Town incorporated, the Palo Alto school district purchased land

and built the Fremont Hills Elementary School (1960-1976) where the Pinewood Upper Campus is located today on Fremont Road.

### Purissima Hills School Opened in 1960

By 1958-59, approximately 600 Los Altos Hills students were bussed to schools in Los Altos, so in-town schools were needed to accommodate increased enrollments. The Los Altos school district purchased land, built and opened the Purissima Hills School (1960-1976) on Elena Road, what is currently the site of homes on Greenhills Court.

### Eastbrook Elementary School Opened in 1960

Just outside the south border of town, the Los Altos school district purchased land and opened the Eastbrook Elementary School (1960-1978), where the Waldorf Academy is located today in unincorporated Santa Clara County.

### Bullis School Opened in 1962

The Los Altos school district purchased land off Fremont Road and built the Bullis School (1962-2003, 2008-present) quickly in order to take advantage of an expiring Federal bond. When the school opened in 1962, a student contest was

held to name the new school. It was named "Bullis" to honor Gardner C. Bullis, the city attorney of Los Altos and a leading proponent of incorporation of Los Altos Hills. "The Bear" sculpture by Beniamino "Benny" Bufano was donated in 1963 by parents of Bullis students. The school was completely renovated between 2007 to 2008, and reopened as Gardner Bullis School in the fall of 2008.

#### A School on Page Mill Road

In this timeframe, the Palo Alto school district opened a school on Page Mill Road that later closed. In April 1981, the Los Altos Hills City Council amended the General Plan to allow the Palo Alto school district to educate Los Altos Hills residents without providing for a school site in-town. In exchange, Palo Alto returned the 10-acre school site to the town. Subsequently, the town split the 10 acres among adjoining residential lots with easements selected "to facilitate scenic trails."

#### Post "Baby Boom" School Contraction

As the "Baby Boom" subsided, school enrollments declined. Both Fremont Hills and Purissima Hills schools were closed in 1976. Los Altos sold the Purissima Hills site to developers, then combined the Bullis and Purissima schools into one at the Bullis site and renamed it Bullis-Purissima Elemen-

In the first 30 years, as a town, Los Altos Hills chose not to have its own city school district; consequently it had five schools come and four go as dictated by two school districts from different cities.

tary School in 1977. The Palo Alto school district assigned Los Altos Hills to Nixon Elementary on the Stanford campus and provided bus service for a fee. The Palo Alto school district leased the 5-acre Fremont Hills school site to the Pinewood private school starting in 1977.

Some families assigned to Nixon decided instead to have their children attend Bullis-Purissima school in town. Since Los Altos was a state-funded school district, transfers were readily approved through 2003.

When the Eastbrook School was closed in 1978, Los Altos Hills students were assigned to Loyola Elementary, across the Foothill Expressway built on the old railroad track easements. Los Altos school district sold the Eastbrook playing fields in 1986 to developers who built private homes. In 1995, the

remaining 3 acres were leased with an option to buy a private school, the Waldorf Academy.

In the first 30 years, as a town, Los Altos Hills chose not to have its own city school district; consequently it had five schools come and four go as dictated by two school districts from different cities. Only Bullis-Purissima remained. Students in the north of town were assigned to Nixon, in the middle to Bullis-Purissima, and in the south to Loyola. The original one-room school-house, Purissima School, still stands today as part of the St. Luke's Chapel in the Hills as a reminder of neighbors working together to better their futures.

In the next 30 years, reductions in public school budgets instigated more changes as will be detailed in the next article on the History of Public Education in Los Altos Hills.

*Article by Heather Rose, member of the Los Altos Hills Education Committee. The author would like to acknowledge the research provided by Kathy Evans and the Public Education Committee (2004), the assistance of Mary Ann Malcolm, and the Los Altos Hills History Committee, and the book, Los Altos Hills The Colorful Story by Forence M. Fava (1976). Special thank you to Stefanie Midlock in the Los Altos History Museum for the historical photos appearing in this article. To join the Education Committee, please fill out an application on the town's website.*

**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).



Opposite page, top: Eastbrook School\* (circa 1960) as seen from where Mora Drive now intersects with Freeway 280. Above: Fremont Hills Elementary School\* in 1970. Several of the original Fremont Hills buildings can be seen today as part of Pinewood school. Right: Bullis School,\* with iconic Bufano Bear sculpture, in the 1970s. (\*Photos from the collection of the Los Altos History Museum, copy, and reuse restrictions apply.)



Children are a great source of joy for parents and awaiting the birth of a child is filled with anticipation. However, along with the patter of little feet comes the anxiety of trying to make sure you are doing everything right and caring for your child in the best way possible. Certainly parenting can be stressful. Sometimes, we all need a little help, and we get it through advice from friends, parents, and others. Fortunately, our community is also filled with resources for soon-to-be parents, new parents, and experienced parents to help navigate these often murky waters.

# PARENTING 101

## Soon-to-be Parents

**Blossom Birth Services** provides resources and support for a healthy, informed, and confident pregnancy and parenting journey. For parents with a baby on the way, Blossom Birth Services offer a variety of birth preparation sessions, prenatal yoga classes, and more. Visit [www.blossombirth.org](http://www.blossombirth.org) to learn more.

**El Camino Hospital** offers a safe, nurturing environment for the birth of your baby. Maternal health professionals are dedicated to making the birth experience as comfortable and joyous as possible. In preparation for the arrival of a new baby, El Camino Hospital offers childbirth preparation, breastfeeding, home and car seat safety, baby care, and sibling preparation classes. For a complete list of upcoming classes, visit [www.elcaminohospital.org/maternityclasses](http://www.elcaminohospital.org/maternityclasses).

## New Parents

Between 10 and 20 percent of women experience prenatal or postpartum depression and anxiety. **The Maternal Outreach Mood Services (MOMS) Program at El Camino Hospital** provides education, counseling, and evaluation for expectant and new mothers experiencing depression and anxiety. The MOMS Program offers a day-treatment program that helps women understand that the depression and anxiety aren't their fault, and that many women struggle with similar emotional changes after the birth of a baby. To learn more, visit [www.elcaminohospital.org/maternalmood](http://www.elcaminohospital.org/maternalmood).

**Las Madres Neighborhood Playgroups** is a network of neighborhood playgroups for families with children ages 0-5 born in the same year. Through playgroups, members find friendship, support and helpful information as well as an opportunity for children to make friends their own age. More information is available at [www.lasmadres.org](http://www.lasmadres.org).

**Mothers Uniting Mothers (MUMs)** is a Los Altos community group that helps moms cope with the stress, routine, and isolation of being a new mom by connecting them to others who understand what they're going through. MUMs offers topics and programs geared towards mothers of young children, but moms of all ages and stages are welcome. To learn more, visit [www.mums.laumc.org](http://www.mums.laumc.org)

**Parents Club of Palo Alto and Menlo Park (PAMP)** offers community, events, classes, resources, knowledge, and support on common interests of families with young children. PAMP's online community features forums for discussing general issues; a dedicated forum for finding and listing nannies/babysitters and other domestic help; a classifieds section where you can find baby and kid items; and sub-groups where you can connect with like-minded parents based on topic. Visit [www.pampclub.org](http://www.pampclub.org) to learn more.

Our community offers a wide range of services and programs for almost every stage of life, often free of charge or for a very minimal fee. Good parenting is easier when you have a little help.





# Spiders

Spiders are in the phylum *Arthropoda*, the group of animals with jointed legs and a hard outer skeleton. They are in the class *Arachnida*; these animals have four pairs of legs, no antennae or wings, and two main body parts – a head/chest combo and an abdomen. Other arachnids besides true spiders include scorpions and mites (including ticks). In addition to eight legs, spiders usually have eight eyes. Some have acute vision (for a spider), and are able to see clearly up to eight inches away.

Studies of spider behavior indicate that spiders engage in courtship:

- Hunting spiders can identify the draglines of females, where the females have hauled prey away, and track the female down.
- Male web spiders can often tell if a mature female is present by touching the web.
- The males of poor-sighted spiders announce themselves by plucking the strands of the female's web. For example, the orb spider does this.
- Spiders with good vision, such as jumping spiders, dance and wave their brightly colored front legs at the females, who wave back, as appropriate, we assume.

Female spiders do not ordinarily eat their mate, as we often hear, but the males often die naturally after mating. Some male and female sheet web spiders live together in the web.

Not all spiders create webs. The classic web portrayed in literature and art is the web of the orb

weaver. In our area this is typically the large yellow and brown spider found in grasslands or the garden. Some webs are woven as funnels around holes in the ground. Others weave sheet webs, and some weave cobwebs. The money spider weaves flat sheets under which the spider hangs. These are most common in the Bay Area in the spring.

Spiders lay their eggs in a silken sac. Some spider species tend the egg sacs. It takes weeks for the spiderlings to hatch, and some overwinter and don't hatch for several months, waiting for the spring. The wolf spider (said to be worthy as a pet) carries the sac around, and when the eggs hatch the spiderlings hang on the mother's abdomen until they are big enough to fend for themselves.

Spiders prey on insects such as flies and other spiders.

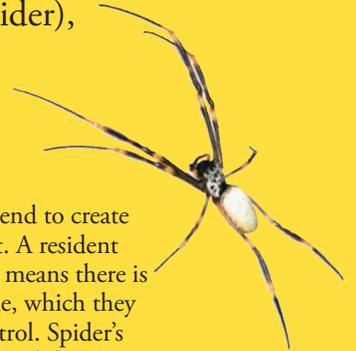
We have been living with spiders

forever, and they generally prefer to avoid humans, although humans tend to create good spider habitat. A resident spider in the home means there is insect food available, which they are working to control. Spider's predators include amphibians, reptiles and birds, and they are regularly cleaned away by humans.

Common spiders in Los Altos Hills include the daddy long-legs, orb spiders, jumping spiders, and the black widow. We also have tarantula spiders, trap-door spiders, and lynx spiders. The black widow is our only venomous spider; the brown recluse is another venomous spider that occurs in the U.S., but it is not common in the Bay Area. Unlike mosquitoes, spiders do not seek out humans as a source of food. Spiders bite in self-defense.

Information regarding spider bite identification can be found online <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/vector/pests/Pages/spiders.aspx>; or consult your doctor.

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





**TOWN OF LOS ALTOS HILLS**  
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### 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 October 3, 2016.**

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[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.

Editor: Alexander Atkins

Associate Editor: Glen Reed

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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



## Sept. 10

**Sat., 3:00 – 8:00 pm**  
**Hoedown**

Held at Westwind Community Barn, the event features Capelo's BBQ Food Truck, live music, dance caller, horse show, and arts & crafts.

## 11

**Sat., 2:30 – 5:30 pm**

**The Cranstons of Los Altos Hills: 1914 – Present**

Resident Kim Cranston, son of the late Senator Alan Cranston, will present a talk on the 102-year history of the Cranstons and the

Fowles in Los Altos Hills. Please RSVP to reserve a seat: Deborah Padovan [dpadovan@losaltoshills.ca.gov](mailto:dpadovan@losaltoshills.ca.gov).

## 24

**Sat., 2:00 – 5:00 pm**

**A Testimony of Beauty**

A public reception featuring fine art, live music, gourmet food and wine. All art is for sale. For more information call 650-941-7222.

## October 13

**Thurs., 2:00 – 4:00 pm**  
**Senior Resources and Facilities Forum**

Are you interested in the services that Avenidas, Avenidas Village, Grant Park, and Los Altos Senior Center offer? Learn more at this forum and enjoy a cold treat while socializing with neighbors. The program will run from

2:00 – 3:30 pm and an ice cream social will follow. You must RSVP to 650-947-2518 or email [lahseniorprogram@gmail.com](mailto:lahseniorprogram@gmail.com) no later than Monday, October 10.

## 21

**Friday, 6:30 – 9:30 pm**  
**Halloween Middle School Lock-In**

The Youth Commission is hosting this middle school event. There will be games, music, a costume contest, movies, snacks, and more Halloween-themed fun available for youths and their friends.



## 22

**Sat., 9:00 am – 3:00 pm**  
**or until bins are full**  
**Neighborhood Clean-up (Dump Day)**

Los Altos Hills cleanup day is limited to residents of Los Altos Hills ONLY. Proof of residency and original copy of the clean-up notice is required. Event takes place, rain or shine, for household use only.

## 29

**Sat., 10:00-10:45 am**  
**Preschool Playgroup Adventures: Tour El Monte Fire Station**

Limited to 30 participants, RSVP to [LAHpreschooltours@gmail.com](mailto:LAHpreschooltours@gmail.com).

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