Providing Reliable Waste Service

For the past 11 years, GreenWaste Recovery, Inc. (GWR) has been providing Los Altos Hills with reliable solid waste, recyclables and compostables collection and processing services. On every collection day, beginning at 8:00 am, a fleet of garbage trucks travel up and down the meandering and hilly streets of Los Altos Hills to pick up waste from more than 2,800 properties. GWR has also provided reliable concierge services to town residents by traversing onto private properties, by truck and by foot, to collect waste and haul it away to the company’s processing facilities in San Jose. [CONTINUED ON PAGE 2]
Green Waste Recovery
GWR is a privately-owned and locally-operated recycling and diversion company that specializes in the collection and processing of residential and commercial trash, yard trimmings, curbside recyclables and food waste. GWR has been a pioneer in the recycling industry since its inception in 1991 and has demonstrated leadership in efficient, effective and environmentally-sound collection and processing operations. GWR is based in San Jose and serves communities throughout the greater Bay Area, as well as areas in the Santa Cruz and Monterey regions.

New Contract with Town
GWR’s original contract with the town began in 2008. Under the old contract, residents placed three different-colored carts out for collection (green, gray and blue), and GWR collected that material in a two-compartment vehicle, where the green carts and the gray carts were collected together in one compartment, allowing for efficient collection and processing of material. Along with this innovative collection and processing program, GWR also provided the town with street sweeping services, “community clean-up days,” participation in community events, and dedicated tours of their recycling facility.

Recently, the town council approved a new 15-year agreement with GWR. GWR will continue to be ever-present in the community with its popular “clean up days” and accompanying suite of services, including an expanded on-call clean up offering. Notable alterations associated with the new agreement include discontinued use of personal cans, the requirement that green carts be placed curbside for collection, the migration of food waste from the green cart to the gray cart, and new or altered charges associated with services beyond those included in base services, including additional carts and on-premise service.

The new required service location for green carts arrives as a result of legislation stemming from SB 1385, which prohibits GWR from co-collecting source-separated materials together in one compartment. During the development of the agreement, GWR re-evaluated its collection methodology to ensure compliance once the regulation is in place, resulting in a route performed by a standard, larger collection vehicle that will solely collect source-separated yard trimming material. Therefore, green carts will no longer be serviced in locations that are not accessible by that larger vehicle. However, through a collaborative effort with the town, a gray cart swap program is being offered to residents, by which residents can swap their two provided green carts for one gray cart, affording an opportunity for yard trimmings to be collected in the gray cart at locations not accessible to the larger truck.

Another prominent change with the new agreement is the modified the rate structure. The overall rate increase approved by the town council was nine percent for base services for both residential and non-residential customers. Additionally, the town approved a change to the rate structure that minimizes customer-to-customer subsidies and now only those customers utilizing certain extra services will be charged for those services.

While there are some changes to the way services will be provided, a vital component of the program will stay the same: GWR will continue to process 100% of the materials collected in the town. Under the prior collection program, residents could put food waste into their green compostables container. However, once food waste is mixed with yard trimmings, processing costs nearly double and the markets for the resulting compost are generally limited to landscape applications rather than a higher-grade compost that can be used in agriculture.

In order to maximize the marketability of compost products, comply with state regulations, and keep rates as low as possible, residents will now need to place food waste in their gray carts. This does not alter the fact that GWR is extracting every resource it can from residents’ discards. Emily Hanson, Director of Business Development and Communication at GWR, has reiterated to the community, “Rest assured, we process 100% of the materials Los Altos Hills residents place in Blue, Gray and Green carts.”

The processing of all waste occurs at GWR’s Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) in San Jose. Blue carts are processed on the recyclables line, Gray carts are processed on the municipal solid waste line, and green carts are processed on the yard waste line. From the MRF, compostable fractions of different grades are sent to the Z-Best Composting facility.

To learn more, residents are invited to attend GWR’s regularly provided MRF tours, as listed in the Los Altos Hills Activity Guide.

To Learn More
To learn more about waste recovery services visit www.greenwaste.com/losaltoshills or losaltoshills@greenwaste.com.

At the yard waste facility in GWR MRF contents of the green cart are divided by size, where smaller materials are sent to Z-Best to be transformed into an organic compost and larger materials are ground up to create a mulch product or sent to cogeneration plants for fuel.
IN THE DARK

Over the last few years, California has experienced several fire-related disasters. In response to these disasters, PG&E has announced a new program to shut off power to help prevent the possibility of wildland fire caused by sparking power lines. The power could be off for up to several days.

The weather conditions that would trigger a shut off are:
- Temperatures above 80 degrees
- Relative humidity of less than 20%
- Winds above 25 miles per hour

Duration of Power Shut Off
First PG&E will determine that the weather conditions have passed. Then they must inspect every foot of the transmission line that was shut off to look for any damage. They estimate that this could take several days.

PG&E's website asks everyone in their service area to prepare for a shut off — even if you do not live within the elevated and extreme fire danger areas. This is because PG&E will be shutting off transmission lines going through the danger areas and that extend into other urban areas.

PG&E plans to send out notifications to all customers 24 to 48 hours before a shut off, when possible. It’s important that you log into your PG&E account and confirm that your phone numbers and address are correct. Los Altos Hills and Los Altos will also share power shut off notifications via Nixle (sign up by texting your zip code to 888777), Nextdoor.com, City and Town websites and Facebook and Twitter feeds.

Planning for power outages is not new. Earthquake preparedness has always asked the public to prepare to be self-reliant for the first few days following a major disaster. It is estimated that less than 10% of the population has truly prepared — mainly because many don't believe it will happen today and put it off for later.

Learning As We Go
The public safety power shut offs are a wake-up call. Based on past weather patterns, shut offs could occur a couple of times per year. Take some time today to think about the electrical functions you cannot do without. We know there will be unresolved issues the first time it happens.

Dependent on Electricity
Working together with other county jurisdictions, we have identified many areas that will be impacted. A complete list is available on the town’s website. Here are some highlights:
- Personal medical devices, electric wheelchairs and electric cars can’t be charged.
- ATMs and gas stations in the impacted area won’t work.
- Emergency communication through cell phones may not be possible. If cell phones aren’t charged, you may not receive emergency notifications.
- Security and fire systems may be inoperable.
- Refrigeration of medications, infant formula, food will be challenging.

How to Prepare
The good news is that this event will not be county-wide. If you drive to an area that is not impacted, you’ll be able to charge a phone and get fuel, though you should expect long lines and possible shortages. For some, it may be best to stay in a hotel out of the impacted area.

What if your cell phone battery dies and you need to report an emergency? There are several options. Keep a car charger for your cell phone nearby so you can plug it in and call 9-1-1. Check online for solar or battery backup chargers that can recharge your phone several times during an extended outage. Coordinate with neighbors/family so you don’t all have to keep your phones on at the same time. If you have no way to report an emergency, flag down a passerby or go to a neighbor’s house to see if they have a working phone.

Remember that the reason for the outage is wildland fire potential. Any time you hear the National Weather Service announce a “Red Flag Warning,” it’s time to be extremely cautious about using equipment/tools that could cause sparks. Be on the lookout for smoke. Have your emergency "Go Kit" ready. The town’s website has a complete list of actions to take to prepare for wildland fire.

Learn More
Community presentations about public safety power shut offs and the Los Altos Hills plan for wildfire evacuation are scheduled for September 6, 16 and 25th from 7:00-9:00 p.m. and September 14 from 10:00 a.m. to Noon. Register on the town website under Safety Training. Los Altos and Los Altos Hills residents are invited.

As we learn more about the impacts of Public Safety Power Shut Offs, updates will be posted on the town’s website, Nextdoor.com, and social media.

Below are online resources to learn more:
- www.losaltoshills.ca.gov/emergency
- PG&E’s website https://prepareforpowerdown.com
- PG&E notification registry pge.com/mywildfirealerts
- Town Safety Library on Fire, Wildfire and Home Safety
- https://www.losaltoshills.ca.gov/248/Safety-Resources-Library
Increased numbers and severity of wildfires throughout the state since 2010 encouraged strategic approaches to prepare for and combat wildfires at the state and local levels.

The Santa Clara County Fire Department strategic efforts resulted in the 2016 Santa Clara County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (County-CWPP), a countywide strategic plan with goals for creating a safer wildland urban interface community.

The County-CWPP identifies countywide issues and common strategies and also includes sections of annexes identified for each jurisdiction to address issues and projects specific to each jurisdiction and their strategic goals.

The LAHCFD Board of Commissioners (Board) appointed a subcommittee to study, research and review Annex 4 which was written for the Los Altos Hill County Fire District (LAHCFD) by the County Fire consultants during the 2016 initiative. Annex 4 was revised, an Addendum added, and by action of the Board on June 18, 2019, these documents were adopted as the LAHCFD-CWPP.

The Addendum is written for residents and the community for education on wildfire risks and mitigation efforts. It encourages specific pre-planning actions for resiliency of property in wildfires and for self-reliance of residents and the community in event of disaster. It is hoped the Revised Annex 4 and Addendum will encourage residents to seek additional information and become more aware of the threats of wildfire and utilize mitigation efforts. To this end, residents must prepare for the safety of their families and property as well as be concerned residents of their community. Neither the Revised Annex 4 nor the Addendum are complete or inclusive of all the information, mitigation efforts or strategies to address the threats and realities of wildfires and disasters.

Revised Annex 4 and Addendum are designed to be dynamic documents that will be revisited and revised as fire science and wildfire experiences dictate new approaches and best practices. LAHCFD, in partnership with Santa Clara County Fire, will assess its practices and programs and makes changes in its policies to ensure continuous improvement for wildfire preparedness.

After years of drought, Santa Clara County residents welcomed an abundance of winter and spring rains that revitalized watersheds and promoted the growth of fresh grasses and vegetation. Now, these favorable weather conditions also foreshadow dangers lurking in the summer and fall seasons when grasses, brush and vegetation dry from the heat and in hot and windy weather conditions become the fuel of wildfire dangers.

COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN

A

fter years of drought, Santa Clara County residents welcomed an abundance of winter and spring rains that revitalized watersheds and promoted the growth of fresh grasses and vegetation. Now, these favorable weather conditions also foreshadow dangers lurking in the summer and fall seasons when grasses, brush and vegetation dry from the heat and in hot and windy weather conditions become the fuel of wildfire dangers.
and protection. LAHCFD-CWPP programs will be supported by the LAHCFD's budget and will engage collaboration and partnership with other stakeholders and agencies.

A community wildfire protection plan addresses four key elements: (1) identifies and prioritizes areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments; (2) recommends the types and methods of treatment on that will protect one or more at-risk communities and essential infrastructure; (3) addresses all or some of the following issues: wildfire response, hazard mitigation, community preparedness, and structure protection.

What About the Future?
Wildfire is a significant risk to public health and safety, economies, infrastructure, and irreplaceable cultural and natural resources. Wildfire behavior is itself highly complex, and mitigation of its risk requires careful and coordinated planning be done by all stakeholders.

The SCC-CWPP and the local LAHCFD-CWPP are critically important parts of an ongoing process that will enable the residents of Santa Clara County and residents in the Los Altos Hills County Fire District to address the current and future challenges of wildfire protection and preparedness efforts.

To Learn More
To learn more about wildfire preparation visit the following websites:
- LAHCFD-CWPP https://www.lahcfd.org/
- https://www.sccfd.org/education-and-preparedness-overview/emergency-preparedness
- Report to Board of Supervisors on Wildfire Risk and Response, April 2019
- Register for emergency alerts https://www.losaltoshills.ca.gov/570/Emergency-Alerts-Register

There are four factors that influence the spread of wildfire. Understanding how these factors interact to produce a range of fire behavior is fundamental to determining fire prevention strategies.

1. **Fuels**: Fuel reduction mitigation efforts:
   - remove flammable vegetation around buildings to create “defensible space” of 30 – 100 feet and reduce vegetation
   - construct structures from fire-resistant material and design
   Providing defensible space around structures is a mitigation effort of removing or thinning flammable vegetation. Structural mitigations include replacing wooden shake shingle roofs, wooden siding or preventing embers from entering attics through improved vent systems.
   - Most structure ignite from flying embers landing on flammable components of the building and setting the building on fire or embers entering the vent systems
   - Wooden roofs and wooden siding are vulnerable for flying ember caused fires
   - Flammable vegetation ignites structures through direct flame contact
   - Radiant heat from burning vegetation or other burning buildings close to the structure is another cause of fires.

2. **Topography**: Steepness of slope, direction the slope faces, elevation and landscape features can all affect fuels and patterns of wildfire progression.

3. **Weather**: As summer winds and rising temperatures dry fuels, conditions can deteriorate rapidly, creating an environment that is susceptible to wildland fire.

4. **Bio-physical Factors**: These factors relate to flammable vegetation, weather, topography, and road signage.
   - Property hygiene is the presence of clutter, brush and debris piles, firewood stacks, lumber, or other flammables within the 100-foot defensible space zone. Good property hygiene reduces fire spread.
   - Flammable vegetation, ornamental landscape can expose buildings to ignition. Many ornamental plants are very flammable especially when in flower beds with flammable wood chips and mulches which serve as a receptive bed for flying embers. Plants ignite and expose siding and under eave area to direct flame contact.
   - Road Signage: Less expensive road improvements are achieved by simple actions such as posting clear road signs, evacuation routes, and addresses. These solutions can aid fire suppression efforts and reduce injury.

Completion of Master Path Plan Amendments

The town maintains a comprehensive on-road and off-road pathway system that is the envy of other communities. The town’s Master Path Plan (MPP), last amended in 2013, is periodically updated/amended to address recently subdivided properties, annexed areas, and newly created pathways. The town has begun the final phase of its most recent update and is currently holding public meetings on the remaining unresolved areas on the MPP. The upcoming hearings are the culmination of three years of public meetings involving the Pathways Committee, Planning Commission and the City Council.

A summary of the remaining unresolved areas are as follows:
- Mora Drive/West Loyola Drive Annexed areas
- Rhus Ridge to La Loma Drive pathway
- Diane Drive to East Sunset Drive pathway
- Olive Tree Lane Annexed Area
- Story Hill Lane to Page Mill
- Future pathway connectors off existing Laura Court pathways

If you reside within 500 feet of one of the pathway segments to be discussed, you will receive a notice of public hearing for the Planning Commission or the town council encouraging you to attend. Staff is also available to answer any questions you may have regarding the specific pathway segments.

If you have any questions regarding the proposed Master Path Plan amendments, please contact the planning department at (650) 941-7222.

Steve Padovan, interim planning director
Western poison oak (Toxicodendron diversilobum) is one of the most important plants to know about in California. It’s not exactly poisonous, in that it’s not likely to cause death if touched or eaten, but it does contain oils, called urushiol, that cause a very itchy, miserable rash that spreads when scratched. Once you experience this rash you learn to take serious precautions with this plant. Often the rash does not appear until multiple exposures happen, but exposure is not always obvious. The body develops antigens that eventually recognize the oils as an intruder and react. The rash is an immune response, not always a direct result of touching the plant.

The plant is easily recognizable due to its three-leaf structure, evoking the well-known mantra “leaves of three, let it be.” The plant is shiny and distinctive, although the leaves vary in shape and color. Unfortunately, the plant is deciduous, and the oils can also be transmitted from the stems. The best defense is to wear long pants and long sleeves when hiking or out walking in poison oak habitat, to separate and wash those clothes before another use, and to leave your boots out in the sun to dry up the oils. There are products, such as Tecnu, Dawn soap, and even specific sunscreen brands that can be applied before going out, or that are used to wash up after a hike through poison oak habitat.

Poison oak grows from British Columbia to Baja California. In this area, poison oak grows primarily in oak woodland and chaparral habitats. It is not commonly found in grassland, and it is not expected in deep evergreen forest containing redwood, fir and other conifers. If you stay on maintained trails you are not likely to come into contact with poison oak, since trail crews carefully trim it back. But, if your dog has run through poison oak on a joyful walk through the neighborhood, be aware that the oils could be transmitted to you when you pet the dog, and you could be exposed repeatedly this way, eventually resulting in a rash even when you were very careful.

“Leaves of three, let it be”. The foliage turns color in the fall and is deciduous. Watch out for leafless stems that still carry the rash-forming oils.

Chalcedon checkerspot butterfly. Poison oak flowers provide nectar for a range of insects.

The black-capped chickadee uses poison oak for cover, it gleans insects from the bark, and may eat the berries.

Poison oak berries provide food for many native animal species.
Black-tailed deer forage on poison oak and may also hide their fawns in dense patches.

The San Francisco dusky-footed woodrat builds its stickhouse in poison oak thickets and adorns its house with fresh poison oak leaves.

Scrub jays also find cover, nesting, and forage habitat in poison oak.

Western poison oak is in a plant family that includes poison ivy, poison sumac, pistachio, mango, and cashew. It grows as a shrub, that can range to be the size of a small tree (like a buckeye), as a ground cover (when it is young), or as a vine that will climb trees to a height of 30 feet. It is widespread in California, but does not grow above 4,000 feet in elevation, in the desert, or in dense forests, such as redwoods.

Western poison oak is a native plant in our region. Many wildlife species have adapted to it and take advantage of its flowers, leaves, berries, and structure. Wildlife does not react to poison oak like we do. This plant often provides protected habitat for nesting birds, such as scrub jay and quail, and nectar for bees and butterflies. It is a blue-capped chaffinch’s favorite spot! Ultimately, we benefit because poison oak supports a wide variety of wildlife that are key to keeping a balance in our Los Altos Hills ecosystems.

Taylor Vanderlip is an environmental consultant specializing in biological issues.

California quail are ground nesters. They use poison oak for cover, nesting, and food.

A female California quail nesting.
Lyme disease, caused by a cork-shaped bacteria called *Borrelia burgdorferi*, was first recognized in Lyme, Connecticut in the 1970s and has been reported in the United States (excluding Hawaii) and in 65 countries. The disease is spread from host animals, such as rodents and squirrels, to ticks, and from ticks to humans. Northeastern America continues to have the highest rates of infection. Lyme disease is much less common in California—only 145 of the 43,000 Lyme disease cases reported to the CDC in 2017 were in California, mostly in the counties along the north coast. Most cases resolve with antibiotic treatment; but the disease can be serious if not recognized and treated.
If one is bitten by a tick, the tick should be removed immediately by pulling the entire body off with tweezers. The longer the tick is attached, the higher the likelihood of transmission of Lyme disease. Place the tick in a plastic bag in the freezer for future testing should Lyme disease symptoms develop. The most common signs of Lyme disease are flu-like symptoms within seven to nine days after a tick bite. An infected bite may show growing red rash or bullseye pattern but not always. Consult a physician if a rash or flu symptoms develop. The chronic form of Lyme disease manifests as pain in joints and tendons months or years after a Lyme disease infected tick bite.

**Lifecyle of Tick**

Dozens of species of ticks live in California, but only the western blacklegged tick, *Ixodes pacificus*, transmits the bacteria responsible for Lyme disease to humans. The lifecycle of the western blacklegged tick is about two years, during which they grow and transition through larva, nymph, and adult stages. Each stage requires a host.

Lyme disease bacteria are most prevalent in the nymphal phase. Nymphs, the size of a poppy seed, require moist environments and are usually found low to the ground in woodland leaf and log litter. Their most common hosts are raccoons, squirrels, rodents and lizards. Adult ticks feed on larger mammals, including deer and humans, and are commonly seen at tips of grasses or vegetation. Western grey squirrels and rodents are the primary carriers of Lyme disease in our area. Squirrels infect about 86% of the ticks that feed on them (Salkeld et al, 2008). Deer are not a common carrier for Lyme disease, infecting only about 1% of the ticks that feed on them (Telford et al, 1988).

**The Role of Lizards**

Interestingly, lizards reduce the spread of Lyme disease. Both western fence lizards, *Scoloporus occidentalis*, and alligator lizards, *Elgaria coerulea* and *Elgaria multicarinata*, contain a protein in their blood that kills the bacteria responsible for Lyme disease. If an infected tick bites a lizard, the tick will no longer be able to pass on the infection.

**Tick Precautions**

Everyone should take steps to avoid tick bites and potential infection. The greatest number of Lyme disease infections occur in spring and summer seasons when nymphs are most numerous. Light colored clothing allows greater visibility of hitchhiking ticks. Tuck shirts into pants and pants into socks to reduce skin exposure to ticks. While on your hike, stay on trails and avoid sitting on logs. After a hike inspect for ticks and be sure to wash and dry your clothes which will kill any ticks that made have made it onto your clothes.

Dogs are frequent carriers of ticks into homes. The American dog tick *Dermacentor variabilis* and the brown dog tick *Rhipicephalus sanguineus* do not carry Lyme disease. Brushing or washing dogs before they enter the house can help keep ticks outside.

**Tick Locations**

Santa Clara County Vector Control District samples areas for the presence of ticks. Recently the agency reported locations that tested positive for Lyme disease (the number represents percentage):

- Fremont Older 3.85
- Foothills Open Space Dist. 2.86
- Sierra Azul 2.86
- Sanborn Skyline 2.78
- Alum Rock Park 2.75
- Uvas County Park 2.39
- Duvenek Windmill OSD 2.27
- Villa Montalvo 2.22
- Almaden Quicksilver 1.72
- Los Trancos 1.26

**To Learn More**

There are many books and online resources to learn more about Lyme disease and prevention. Here are some of the most helpful:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. www.cdc.gov/lyme/
- Bay Area Lyme Disease Foundation. www.bayarealyme.org
- Lyme Disease, the Ecology of a Complex System by Richard S. Ostfeld
- Santa Clara County Vector Control.

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

**HOW CAN I REDUCE MY RISK OF GETTING LYME DISEASE?**

Prevention is the best way to protect against tick-borne disease. Make tick protection part of your outdoor routine. CDC recommendations include:

- Wear long pants and long sleeves and tuck pants into socks.
- Wear light colored clothing so ticks are easier to spot.
- Use insect repellent (e.g., DEET) on exposed skin and clothing.
- Shower immediately after coming indoors and check yourself to find any ticks that may have attached; a tick must be attached for 36 hours or more to transmit the disease, so early detection and removal will prevent infection.
- Remove outdoor clothes immediately after coming indoors and toss in a hot dryer to kill any ticks.

Educate yourself about Lyme disease—know the signs of early Lyme disease and consult a physician if you think you may have been infected. The CDC and NIH web sites have excellent information.

Sources:

The Developing Brain
Teens are a particularly vulnerable population with respect to the effects marijuana on the brain. Up until the mid 20’s the brain is still undergoing important development including areas that control judgement and decision making. There is evidence that chronic marijuana use during this period is linked to a decline in IQ as detailed by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). And the deficits don’t improve over time.

Marijuana and Thinking Skills
Marijuana impairs concentration, memory and problem solving skills. Not surprisingly, these are critical skills youth employ while in school and in a learning environment. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, frequent use by adolescents in this age group is linked to a higher likelihood of school dropout compared with peers who do not use.

Cannabis and Driving
The idea that people are safe drivers when they use marijuana is a myth. THC, or tetrahydrocannabinol, (the psychoactive component of marijuana) impairs judgement, coordination, and reaction time according to the NIDA.

During the past three decades, the potency of marijuana has approximately tripled. This change has greatly increased the health risks associated with using it, as well as the potential of becoming addicted.

Recreational cannabis use in California is legal only for people age 21 and older, but many younger people use it as well. That raises questions about how marijuana affects adolescents, and parents are understandably concerned.

Teenagers are natural risk takers, and while parents/guardians keep a close eye on them, they can’t follow teens everywhere to keep them safe. But some risky activities can have lasting consequences, and parents are right to be concerned.

The marijuana products available today, are not the same potency of those developed in years past. According to Dan Becker, MD, medical director of Scrivner Center for Mental Health and Addiction Services at El Camino Health, “During the past three decades, the potency of marijuana has approximately tripled. This change has greatly increased the health risks associated with using it, as well as the potential of becoming addicted.”
Marijuana and Addiction
Legalization of marijuana can influence the impression that the substance is not harmful or potentially risky. According to data from the NIDA, adolescents who use marijuana are four to seven times more likely to develop a marijuana use disorder compared to the likelihood of developing the same disorder as an adult. Dr. Becker states, “It isn’t a myth that marijuana use precedes the use of other drugs. Research has documented that marijuana use in adolescence can influence addictive behaviors later in life.”

Talking with Teens
Now that marijuana use is legal in many states, including California, teens often perceive it as less risky or even safe. With increased exposure to it in the media, advertisements, and through storefronts in the community, parents can begin conversations with their teens.

It can be difficult to start these conversations but the simplest way is to listen. Take something as simple as a car ride as a chance to start a dialogue with a teenager and ask open-ended questions about their day, friends or school. Be curious about what they are doing, in a nonjudgmental way. Ask the teen what they know or have heard about marijuana and offer facts about the risks and consequences to help shape ideas and discussion. Help them think out loud about how it might affect them personally. Good communication is key to opening the door to ongoing conversation about this topic.

Need some additional support? The Partnership for Drug-Free Kids offers a free guide to discussing marijuana with teens. The Marijuana Talk Kit includes facts on marijuana and its effects on teen brain development, common questions posed by teens and suggested responses, along with tips on keeping the conversation productive. Download a copy at drugfree.org/article/how-to-talk-about-marijuana/

If a loved one is showing signs of substance use, depression, anxiety or another mental health condition, the first step is to schedule a free, confidential assessment. For more information contact El Camino Health’s Scrivner Center for Mental Health & Addiction Services at ecaminohealth.org/mentalhealthLAH or 866-789-6089. A Mental Health Resource Coordinator is also available for those who just want to learn more and get connected to additional resources in the community.
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**TOWN OF LOS ALTOS HILLS**
26379 Fremont Road
Los Altos Hills, CA 94022

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**September**

7
Saturday, 3:00-7:00 pm
Hoedown
Live bluegrass music,
BBQ for purchase, square dancing,
old fashioned crafts, and 4:30 horse show.

15
Sunday, 2:00-5:00 pm
Art Reception
“Layers” features members of the Peninsula Chapter of Women’s Caucus for Art. Artists’ Reception at Town Hall featuring live music, refreshments and wine. Free and open to public. For more information call: 650-941-7222.

**October**

10
Thursday, 3:00-4:00 pm
The First 50 Years
Join the History Committee at their upcoming presentation to learn about the first half-century of the major “happenings” in Los Altos Hills.

25
Friday, 2:00-4:00 pm
Trick or Treat and Tour Town Hall
Open to trick-or-treaters of all ages. Staff will have treats along the way. Please RSVP at losaltoshills.ca.gov/HalloweenEvent

**December**

1
Sunday, 6:00-8:00 pm
41st Annual Festival of Lights Parade
Look out for the Los Altos Hills Mother Goose Float

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**Los Altos Hills City Council**
Roger Spreen, Mayor
Michelle Wu, Vice Mayor
Courtenay Corrigan
Kavita Tankha
George Tyson

**City Manager**
Carl Cahill

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**Calendar events are also posted on town’s website:**
www.losaltoshills.ca.gov

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

**Editor:** Alexander Atkins
**Contributing Writers:** Daniela Friedmann, Denise Gluhan, Kit Gordon, Marsha Hovey, Katelyn Lewis, J. Logan, Taylor Vanderlip
**Photography:** Kathy Evans, Chad Steiners, Dave Stewart

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www.losaltoshills.ca.gov