



Los Altos Hills

# TOWN NEWSLETTER

Volume XXXII No. 3 September 2008

## CALENDAR

**October 7 Tues, 7 PM LWV CANDIDATE FORUM,** Town Hall Council Chambers

**October 25 Sat. All Day Halloween Horse Show** Pacific Ridge Pony Club; Westwind Community Barn 27210 Altamont Road, LAH, CA 94022

**Nov. 30 Friday, 7 PM; Festival of the Lights Parade;** Dntwn. Los Altos

**December 7 Sun., 1:00 - 4:00 PM Holiday Barn Lighting Westwind Community Barn;** Santa, crafts, cookies and hot cider Free; Music provided by local schools. Info: 948-8985

**LAH Parks and Rec. New LAH Preschool Playgroup** Meets every Tuesday and Friday; 9:00 - 11:30 AM Shoup Park, Los Altos; Info: 941-7222

**Ongoing Free Mediation Services; Los Altos Mediation Program.** Info: 949-5267

## WESTWIND COMMUNITY BARN

### *New Era – Town Assumes Management of Barn*

A new era for the Town owned Westwind Community Barn is promised to the citizens of Los Altos Hills. Historic community assets, such as Westwind Community Barn and the Folger Barn in Woodside, are part of our rural heritage and treasures that citizens support preserving.

With the Town's vision for its Barn gradually shifting to a public recreation oriented facility, the 30-year-old Barn management organization, Friends of Westwind, Inc., a 501 (c) 7 organization, agreed to dissolve their management agreement with the Town effective July 1, 2008.

After consideration of an exhaustive analysis by the ad hoc Westwind Barn Committee, where various management models were considered, The City Council voted on July 24<sup>th</sup> to have the Town staff provide interim management of the boarding operation as well as the Town sponsored equestrian activities and programs at the historic Westwind Barn, located on Altamont Road. This decision to go with interim Town management was based on the fact that the pending restoration and seismic retrofit of the Barn may impact the boarding operation and cause uncertainty thus making it difficult to enter into a longer term outside management agreement

The Town is quickly learning the ropes of Barn management. The City Council adopted a resolution for amendments to its recently approved 2008-2009 operating budget that sets new boarding and service fees for the facility and establishes the position for a Barn Manager with a job description outlining specific duties and salary schedule. A Barn Manager has since been hired and the Barn has seen many Los Altos Hills & Los Altos children taking part in the expanded Town Parks and Recreation Department equestrian programs.

Additionally, the Town has offered to partner with the Supporters of Westwind Barn, a 501(c) 3 organization to raise funds for the historical building's restoration and seismic retrofit. The estimated cost of this project is approximately \$1.7 million. The Council approved the drafting of an agreement between the Town and Supporters of Westwind, committing up to \$880,000 in 1:1 matching funds to the group's fundraising for facility renovations.

See Insert for Westwind Community Barn User's Report

**PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT  
GREEN BUILDING ORDINANCE**

At the September 11, 2008, the City Council introduced the new Green Building Ordinance. The ordinance will require new residences to incorporate green building features and score a minimum of 50 points (out of a total 266 points) in Build It Green's GreenPoint Rated program. The ordinance will also require all new Town-owned public facilities to achieve USGBC's LEED certification.

According to the EPA, buildings account for 68% of the total electricity consumption and 12% of the total water consumption in the United States. Green building focuses on energy efficiency, water efficiency, conservation of natural resources, and indoor air quality.



*Debbie Pedro,  
Planning Director*

There are real financial benefits from owning a green built home. Green homes uses up to 40% less energy for heating and cooling and 50% less water than standard homes. A green home also provides a healthier and more comfortable living space. The use of toxin-free building materials improve indoor air quality and green building measures such as better insulation reduces drafts and deliver better protection against moisture, pollution and noise. The Green Point System allows the applicant to select the green features that make the most sense in each case.

The City Council will adopt the proposed ordinance at its October '08 meeting and will take effect in November 2008. If you have any questions about the ordinance or green building in general, please contact me at (650) 947-2517 or [dpedro@losaltoshills.ca.gov](mailto:dpedro@losaltoshills.ca.gov). We look forward to receiving your comments and suggestions.

**CUSTOMER SERVICE SURVEY  
Town Planning, Engineering, & Building  
Receives Positive Service Rating**

This summer, a survey was mailed to 55 property owners who have recently completed major construction projects. The purpose of the survey was to solicit feedback on the quality of service provided by the Planning, Building, and Engineering Departments. 16 surveys were received and an overwhelming majority of the comments were positive. 15 out of 16 homeowners rated the staff's service as excellent or above average and 1 noted that service needed improvement. Staff will continue to improve services to the public based on the valuable suggestions received. The customer service survey is available at the permit counter all year round at Town Hall. If you have any comments or suggestions, please drop us a line! Town Hall: 26379 Fremont Road, Los Altos Hill, CA 94022

**GREENWASTE RECOVERY, Inc.  
NEW SOLID WASTE COLLECTION  
SERVICE PROVIDER**

The Town has entered into a new contract for solid waste collection starting October 1, 2008. The contract with the company, which served Los Altos Hills for many years, (LAGCO - Los Altos Garbage Company, a subsidiary of Norcal) expires on that date and a different service provider, GreenWaste Recovery, Inc. (GW), will take over. You may wonder: Why did the Town change providers when the service was satisfactory? Norcal was requesting a **22% increase** to extend the contract. Faced with such a steep increase, the Council elected to put the contract out to competitive bid. **GreenWaste bid 20% less** than Norcal for the *same* service, or over \$100 per household per year less than Norcal's proposal.



The Town also requested a bid for an enhanced service, which provides for:

- Weekly recyclables collection (instead of every other week)
- Weekly yard waste collection (instead of every other week)
- Free carts for garbage, recyclables and yard waste

For this service level, Norcal bid 55% more than GreenWaste, or \$768,000\* a year-or \$256 per household. Additionally, GW is guaranteeing a much higher recycling and composting rate, (75% vs. 60% currently being accomplished by LAGCO) resulting in less waste going to landfill. Moreover, GW is accepting unlimited amounts of recycling and yard waste.

While the Town could have chosen the existing service level with GW, and kept the rates slightly down, the enhanced service, for a modest cost increase was very compelling.

The City Council only made its final decision to switch garbage companies after careful consideration of substantial public comment received during three City Council meetings.

\* The Town subsequently requested a pay increase to the drivers that added \$114,000 to GW's bid.

**New Garbage Service  
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)**  
If you have questions go to the Town Website:  
[www.losaltoshills.ca.gov](http://www.losaltoshills.ca.gov)

**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 and to facilitate, encourage and improve interaction between the residents and Town government. The 2008 Newsletter will be published quarterly in the months of March, June, September, and December. Deadline for the next issue is October 31, 2008.

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

**About Our Publication**

The Town Newsletter is published with assistance from our Town Volunteer Committees.  
Editor: Dorothy Duffy Price  
Associate Editors: Barbara Waldeck, Linda Seidel, Patty Woolsey  
Photographer: Jitze Couperus

**Los Altos Hills City Council**

Jean Mordo, Mayor • Dean Warshawsky, Vice Mayor  
Craig Jones • Breene Kerr • Mike O'Malley



Recycled Paper

**CITY MANAGER’S REPORT**



*City Manager Carl Cahill*

One of the core functions of local government is to keep public streets in good condition. Street maintenance is one of the Town’s largest annual maintenance expenses. The Town maintains approximately 56 miles of roadway. This year the Town will spend over \$900,000 on pavement rehabilitation. Scheduled street repairs for this year were just completed. The following is a list of streets where major work was performed this summer:



<u>Street Name</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Type of Work</u>
Alta Tierra Road	Robleda Rd.	La Paloma Rd.	2” Overlay
Country Way	Page Mill Rd.	End	2” Overlay
Dianne Drive	O’Keefe Ln.	End	2” Overlay
Estacada Way	Estacada Dr.	End	Remove and Replace 2.5” A.C.
HillPark Lane	Ravensbury Ave.	End	2” Overlay
Kingsley Way	Altadena Dr.	End	2” Overlay
La Paloma Road	New Bridge Dr.	Purissima Rd.	2” Overlay
La Rena Lane	Dianne Dr.	End	Remove and Replace 2.5” A.C.
Ortega Drive	St. Francis Rd.	End	2” Overlay
Torello Lane	Manuella Rd.	End	2” Overlay
Viscaino Court	Viscaino Dr.	End	Remove and Replace 2.5” A.C.
Vista Del Valle Ct.	Taaffe Rd.	End	2” Overlay

A portion of Fremont Road is also scheduled for major rehab work this year. Other streets in Town were subject to minor repairs including the application of crack sealant and slurry seal. The Town utilizes a Pavement Management System to evaluate pavement condition and prioritize street rehabilitation projects. If your street looks like it will need an extreme makeover soon, please contact Assistant Engineer John Chau at Town Hall to find out when your public street is scheduled for future rehabilitation work.

In other Town public works news the City Council awarded a \$1,023,616.00 contract to Con-Quest Contractors, Inc for the Pine Lane Lift Station Sewer Diversion Project. This project is for the installation of approximately 2300 linear feet of new sanitary sewer gravity line mostly within the Foothill Expressway right of way. The new line will divert a portion of the Town sewer system directly to the Palo Alto system. The benefit of the project is that the Town will no longer need to contribute to the costly upgrade and repair of the Los Altos owned Pine Lane sewer pump station. The project will also free up additional pipe flow capacity in the Los Altos Sewer basin. The project required the review and or approval of 3 other local agencies and has been years in the making. Construction is expected to start in the early fall.

**Remove Stinkweed from Your Property**

Stinkweed (*Dittrichia graveolens*) is again popping up along roadsides and in sunny spots on many properties in LAH. Stinkweed resembles a small Christmas tree and has sticky, gray-green leaves that smell strongly of camphor. Because stinkweed is a particularly troublesome invasive weed with potential to spread widely, it is recommended that property owners remove it if possible. Property owners are responsible for maintenance of trees, shrubs, and plants in the road right-of-way abutting their property. Recommended methods for controlling stinkweed are hand pulling (bag for disposal) or application of herbicide (e.g., Round-Up). To minimize the amount of herbicide used, plants can be cut at the base and bagged for disposal and herbicide applied to the remaining cut stem. Because stinkweed can irritate your skin, always wear gloves when handling. For help identifying stinkweed, contact the LAH Open Space Committee (650) 815-8286 or lahweeds@earthlink.net



—*Sue Welch, Open Space Committee*

*For Council Agenda and Minutes,  
See our Website:  
www.losaltoshills.ca.gov*

**Crystal Petralli**  
**New Barn Manager for Westwind Community Barn**

Since attending the Virginia Intermont College in Bristol, Virginia, which specializes in equestrian programs, Crystal has been following her passion as a horse trainer and equestrian facility manager for the past 6 years.



Crystal is an accomplished equestrian having competed in horse shows herself and has trained riders who have won a number of prestigious awards. Before accepting the position at Westwind she managed a private barn preparing riders and horses for competitions at prominent venues such as Pebble Beach, Menlo, and Woodside. Her riders were regularly ranked in the Top 20 for our Zone.

Now that the Westwind Community Barn is under new management by the Town's Parks and Recreation Department, she looks forward to contributing to the revitalization of the Westwind Community Barn with public equestrian programs oriented towards youth and adult riders.

"Westwind is a great boarding and riding facility that will offer a wide variety of horsemanship opportunities for the community – from the diverse selection of private trainers based out of the facility, to the Pony Club, Year Round Riding Program for youth, the trail riding program for adults, and the wonderful 4H Handicapped Riding Program for children with special needs," states Crystal. "Westwind has something for everyone."

Crystal's equestrian training and experience, organizational abilities and enthusiasm are just what the Barn needs to make it a long term success. If you are interested in boarding your horse at Westwind or riding instruction please contact Crystal at cpetralli@losaltoshills.ca.gov for reservation information. Town residents receive waitlist priority and discount rates on classes.

**Green Corner**  
**Green Ideas from Around Town**

Looking for ways to conserve? Reduce your carbon footprint? Save money on utility bills? If so, check out the LAH-resident-supported collection of ideas at [www.LAHgreen.org](http://www.LAHgreen.org)

If you have your own ideas and some hard data to back them up, add them.



**Our Carbon Footprint**

One effort of the Environmental Initiatives Committee is to help the town understand the CO2 emissions we are responsible for. To that end, in March the town joined a group called ICLEI: the International Council on Local Environmental Initiatives. To date, over 875 cities and towns around the world have joined this group.

With ICLEI's help we have begun to analyze the town's Greenhouse Gas Emissions for 2005, our chosen "base year". The first task is to analyze emissions from government operations (see the attached chart for some initial results). Once this is finalized we'll move onto emissions from the entire town.

Once we have accurate inventories for our base year emissions, we can set targets for future reductions (e.g. 2% per year, or 10% reduction by 2012), implement programs to reduce those emissions (install more solar, reward town staff for car pooling, help residents conserve electricity and natural gas, etc), and afterward measure our actual progress and the effectiveness of various efforts.

Without knowing our historical emissions we can't know which areas to focus on, nor accurately measure improvements. So this first step is critical.

For more information on this process see [www.ICLEI-USA.org](http://www.ICLEI-USA.org) or join us at the next EIC meeting!



**Election Day -- Tuesday**  
**November 4, 2008**

**DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!**

- **Vote by Mail Ballot Return:** This year the Registrar of Voters is placing a ballot box at Town Hall where you can drop off your ballot on Election Day.
- Only Vote by Mail Ballots (VBMBs) issued from Santa Clara County can be received.
- Ballots must be returned by the end of the Election Day.

**Hours Open:** 7:30 AM- 12 Noon and 1 PM – 5:30 PM  
**Info:** (650) 941-7222

## ART INVITATION

You are cordially invited to attend the

**Opening Art Show Reception**  
for

**Anne Trainer**

**Sunday, October 5, 2008**  
**2-5 PM**

Los Altos Hills Town Hall  
26379 Fremont Road  
Los Altos Hills, CA 94022  
(650) 941-7222

**The Trainer show will be displayed from**  
**October 2008 – March 2009**

*Anne Trainer started her career as a fashion designer after receiving her degree from the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York. She worked as a designer in New York City and then in Los Angeles. Her fine arts training began in UCLA and continued locally at Canada and DeAnza colleges after moving to the bay area. She was a member of the Cubberley Artist Group for thirteen years. Anne has always been a collector of objects that interest her. This interest shows in her paintings, be it flowers, work gloves, sheep, blocks of wood, or a lonely tree in Napa. Anne's early work was realistic, but lately she has progressed into minimalist abstraction where her objects become collections of multi colored shapes.*

*(Note: Michael Wang's exhibition—starts in mid-March 2009)*

### Historical Society

#### “Ohlone Lifeways” at October 26th Meeting

California State Parks Archaeologist Mark Hylkema will outline the archaeological record of the Ohlone people, providing insights into their lifeways and reflecting on what life was like not too many years ago, when grizzly bears and the Ohlone people dwelled here. In 1769, when the first Spanish expedition reached the San Francisco Bay area they encountered numerous tribal communities that lived in a bountiful landscape. Over a period of 10,000 years, tribal communities had adapted to several major environmental transitions, and archaeological research has found that tribes spread along the

San Mateo and Santa Cruz County coast developed an early focus on marine resources, while neighboring tribes of the Santa Clara Valley and San Francisco Bay shore eventually transformed into more complex levels of social organization. This discussion will provide an outline of the archaeological record and provide insights into the native lifeway of our neighborhoods, and we will reflect on what it was like not too many years ago when grizzly bears and the Ohlone people dwelled here. Mr. Hylkema will speak at the October 26, 2008 meeting of the Los Altos Hills Historical Society, 3\_5 pm in Town Hall. Mark Hylkema is currently the Santa Cruz District Archaeologist for California State Parks, and manages cultural resources within 32 parks in an area ranging from San Francisco to the Pajaro River. A

discussion and refreshment period follows the formal part of the meeting. For information about the Historical Society, please call 650-961-8859.



-- Les Earnest, History Committee

## Summary of Fiscal Year 2009 Budget

The Town's general fund continues to operate with a surplus that is subsequently appropriated to discretionary programs and capital improvements that are designed to enhance the community's quality of life. In preparation of the Town's budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009, the following principles guided management:

- Develop operational and capital programs that enhance the Town's parks and recreation assets;
- Adequately maintain other Town infrastructure including streets, sewers and storm drains;
- Identify opportunities to streamline processes and utilize technology to enhance service delivery without increasing personnel headcount; and
- Continue to deliver core services with an operating surplus.

Some key assumptions and projections factored into this year's fiscal plan:

### Major Revenues

- Property Taxes – Growth in Town's property tax receipts is forecasted to slow as compared to prior years. The budget anticipates an increase in property tax receipts of 3.8% which results primarily from the County Assessor's annual adjustment in assessed value and the reassessment of recently sold properties.
- State funds - The fiscal condition of the State of California and its potential impact of the Town's grants and other pass-through funds received from the State continues to be an unresolved matter. For contingency purposes, the budget provides for a \$100,000 reduction in State controlled funds paid to the Town.
- Interest Earnings on Cash Reserves – The Town's investment philosophy to preserve capital and maintain liquidity has limited the Town's investment portfolio to money markets, US Treasury Notes, and US Agency Notes. In fiscal year 2009, the Town's conservative investment strategy is anticipated to result in a \$98,000 decrease in investment earnings.

### Major Operating Expenditures

- Employee Salaries and Benefits - The budget programs a cost-of-living adjustment to employee salaries and medical insurance of 2.8% for the fiscal year. The Town's cost pension costs for fiscal year 2009 are down by 0.155% compared to prior fiscal year.
- Westwind Barn – On July 1, 2008 the Town assumed management of the boarding operations at Westwind Barn for an interim period to assess the long-term operational options to retain the Town-owned barn as an equine boarding facility. The budget includes funds to:
  - Hire a barn manager to serve as the Town's on-site representative; and
  - Retain a company to manage the stall cleaning services required in the barn; and
  - A transfer from the general fund of \$11,000 to offset the difference between boarding fees and expenses for the six month period ending December 31, 2008.

As the Town obtains its own expense and revenue data over the next several months, a balanced budget will be presented to the City Council for their consideration for the period of January 1 to June 30, 2009.

*Continue on page 7*

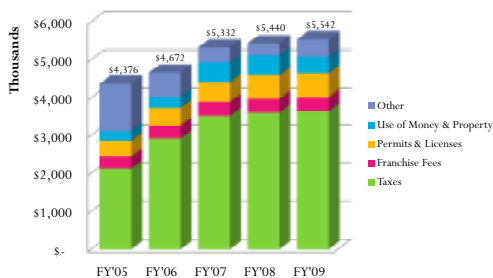
# THE TOWN NEWSLETTER

In fiscal year 2009, the Town will invest approximately \$6.5 million in the Town's infrastructure assets as highlighted below. Such a significant investment in capital is possible due to prudent operational and financial decisions executed by the City Council in prior years. Major capital programs and projects included in this year's budget:

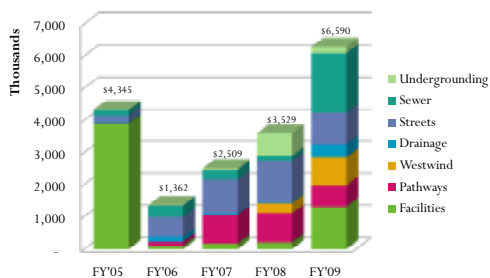
- Parks and Recreation Capital Improvement Program:
  - \$1,200,000 for improvements to the Town-owned Little League Fields
  - \$880,000 for collapse prevention improvement at Westwind Barn, subject to a dollar for dollar match by private funds
  - \$440,000 for the Old Altos Triangle and Taaffe Road pathway projects
- El Monte/Moody Road Pathway, Segment 3 Project for \$740,000. \$440,000 of this project is funded with grant monies from the Valley Transportation Authority.
- A \$1,000,000 street resurfacing program
- Storm drainage annual improvement program for \$395,000
- Improvements to the existing sewer infrastructure for \$440,000, funded by recipients of sewer services.

Overall, the Town's financial condition remains strong in fiscal year 2009. The financial plan contains conservative revenue growth projections, the possibility that the State will adversely impact the Town's funds in an effort to balance its budget, and a realistic expenditure budget.

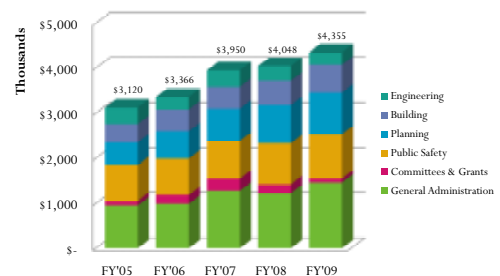
General Fund Revenues  
by Major Category



Capital Program Expenditures



General Fund Expenditures  
by Operating Department



## Tour of Green Waste's New Recycle Processing Line

Members of the Environmental Initiatives Committee recently toured the new Green Waste Recovery, Inc. recycling processing facilities in San Jose. This line is probably the most advanced recycling line in the country. Beginning this October, Green Waste will be taking over the collection of recyclables and garbage for Los Altos Hills. Everything collected by Green Waste will be processed through this plant. 400 tons per day of garbage, general trash and yard trimmings will be combined together and processed through a special municipal solid waste (MSW) line recycling 75 to 80%. 280 tons of single stream recycled waste will be processed through a second line recycling about 95%. When touring the lines, it is truly amazing to see cardboard, steel, aluminum cans, bottles, newspaper, soiled paper, etc., being separated by the latest state-of-the-art machines all connected on endless conveyor belts. The plant even incorporates a special screen that can sort out 2-dimensional items from 3-dimensional ones. Another machine separates out bottles by type on the “fly” based on the opacity of the plastic. A third machine called a Nihot separation unit separates light from heavy weight material. However, regardless of the advanced machinery in this processing facility, manual labor is still employed for final sorting. Unfortunately, plastic bags are the biggest problem requiring personnel to extract them manually. Residents should stuff them in another clear plastic bag and tie the end in a knot. Shredded paper creates another serious problem – it is best to put shreds in a tied clear plastic bag.



L. to R.: EIC members, John Harpootlian, Jay Shideler, Mark Jensen, and G.W. Marketing Manager, Michael Gross

Green Waste is not resting on its laurels. They have recently figured out how to recycle rigid plastics and are working on recycling other materials, which, up to now, always wind up in the landfill. Their trucks have been running on biodiesel for over 5 years now and their proposed reduced garbage truck traffic procedure in LAH will cut exhaust emissions in half. Moreover, they have just signed a contract with SolarCity for an installation of a 250-kilowatt photovoltaic solar system to generate most of the power to run the processing plant.

— Jay Shideler, Chair, Environmental Initiatives Committee



Final manual sorting at the G.W. recycling processing line

## Town Picnic Report

This year's Town Picnic, held on Sunday afternoon June 1 on the Little League fields, drew over 1,400 Town Residents. Everyone who attended had a great afternoon. Our firefighters prepared a great barbecue, the Touch-N-Go band and a fabulous magician provided entertainment, there was a classic car show with over 35 entries, and there were a variety of inflatable games and other attractions.

The Town Picnic has grown over the years into quite an event in Los Altos Hills. The first year of the Picnic, 1998, featured ice cream sundaes, while residents brought their own lunch. A front-page article in the April 1998 Town Newsletter and a flier inside the newsletter invited all Town residents to attend, contrary to a statement in a recent mailing by an organization in Town that only committee members were invited.



*Fire Commission Servers*

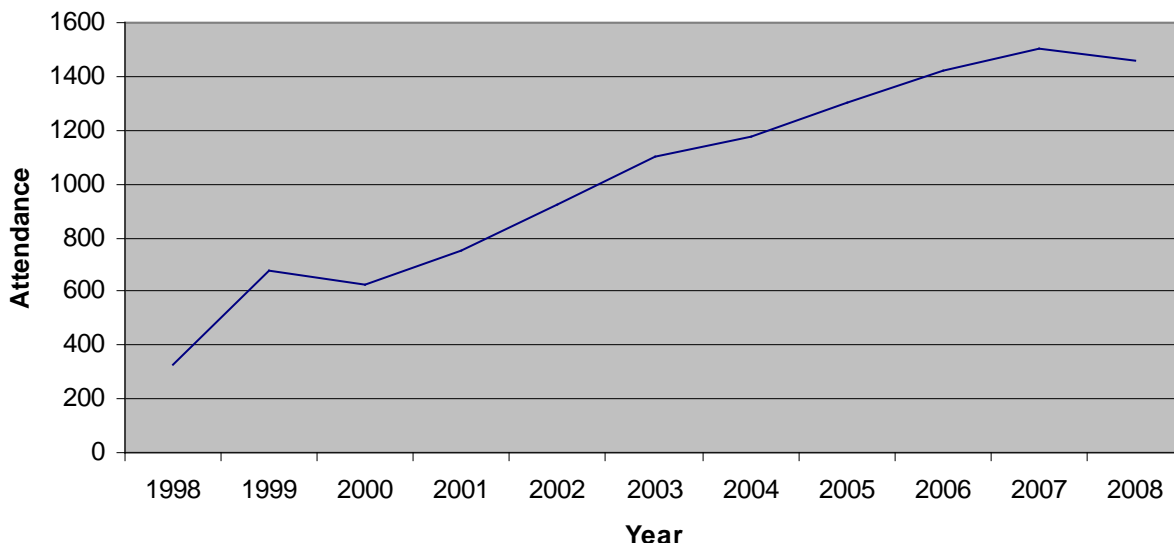
Starting with the second year of the Picnic, 1999, each year featured the firefighter's barbecue at the Picnic, along with an ever-increasing number of attractions. Each year residents have received a special mailing with a reservation coupon to reserve their free barbecue meals, and it has been important for residents to reserve in advance so the proper amount of food could be ordered. As you can see from the graph, picnic attendance has generally increased from one year to the next, and between 1,400 and 1,500 Town residents and Staff have attended the last three Picnics. While this is a large number of residents, it is still less than 20% of the population in Town.

The Picnic is organized by the Community Relations Committee, and many residents have volunteered to help scoop ice cream, serve beverages, coordinate games, staff the registration table, and do all the other tasks necessary for a successful event.

Should the Community Relations Committee continue to organize an annual Town Picnic? Or since the attendance has leveled off of late, should the Committee organize some other kind of event next year? Please let Town Hall know of your preferences at 941-7222 or [kjost@losaltoshills.ca.gov](mailto:kjost@losaltoshills.ca.gov). And whatever event you would recommend for next year, please let Town Hall know if you would like to join the Committee to help organize the event!

— Roy Woolsey, Chairman Community Relations Committee

### Picnic Attendance by Year



## Los Altos Hills

### California Poppy Community Planting Project

Dear Los Altos Hills Resident:

The Los Altos Hills Parks and Recreation Committee, Town of Los Altos Hills, Purissima Hills Water District and Cal Water are sponsoring a town wide California Poppy planting project to help beautify our entire town using native, drought tolerant plants. Enclosed with this Los Altos Hills newsletter is your package of poppy seeds and instructions on where and how to best plant to make a splash of color in your yard and throughout the entire Los Altos Hills Community. Other tips on reducing water use and drought-tolerant plantings from the two LAH water districts have been included for your information as well.

We hope you and your family will be part of this town wide planting project and enjoy the splashes of California Poppy color throughout Los Altos Hills. Your native poppy seeds can be planted anytime this fall before the winter rains start.

If you have any questions, please contact LAH Parks and Recreation director Eric Christensen at (650) 941-7222.

Sincerely,  
*Eric Christensen*  
*Los Altos Hills Parks and Recreation Committee*

#### Poppy Planting Instructions:

**Step 1:** The best time to plant the poppy seeds are between the months of September and November (before the winter rains start). Poppy seeds grow best in dry places with soil that drains well. Poppies don't like their roots disturbed; so it's much easier to grow them from seed than to transplant them. It is best to plant the poppy seeds in an area where poppies are not already growing.

**Step 2:** The trick to successfully growing poppies is to put them on an "equal playing field" with surrounding weeds and weed seeds. If other weeds are starting to appear, hoe and dig any existing weeds back and then plant the poppy seeds just below the surface and rake them in. If they are covered too deeply, they may not grow.

**Step 3:** Let the natural fall/winter rains water the poppy seeds. It is possible to keep them flowering for several months by continuing to water them. Let the plant go to seed so the seeds can be dropped and poppies will appear the following year. No additional water should be required.



## Making a Difference in Water Conservation

After the driest spring on record, the Governor's office in June declared the first statewide drought in 17 years. The water service agencies serving the Town of Los Altos Hills responded by requesting homeowners to voluntarily reduce water consumption by 10%.

Two water service agencies supply Los Altos Hills: Purissima Hills Water District, which serves approximately 75% of the town, and the California Water Service Company. If the State slips into a severe drought, both agencies will mandate water use reductions. Mandatory reductions could include prohibited use of water that results in gutter flooding, filling pools and fountains, and irrigation restricted to certain hours of the day. All are enforceable. Noncompliance would result in a flow restrictor on the service line or discontinuance of service.

In Los Altos Hills, the largest savings in water consumption may be obtained by reducing landscape irrigation. From May through October—our dry season—about 70% of a homeowner's water consumption is used for landscape irrigation. Homeowners can expedite water use reduction by fixing inefficient or broken sprinkler heads, and installing smart watering devices that are programmed to irrigate only when needed. The price is as low as \$100 for a simple device that is programmed for plant variety, soil, slope, and local evaporation rates. Landscaping, with generous use of drought tolerant plants, and elimination, or at least minimization, of lawns, will significantly reduce water use. Clustered plantings of the more water needy plants aids irrigation efficiency and facilitates lower water use.

Voluntary reductions in water use are a responsibility we choose. If our drought continues, the State and other wholesale water providers will mandate strict water conservation. What is critical to understand about mandatory reductions is that if the State mandates a 20% reduction in water, the Purissima Hills Water District could be forced to impose severe reductions in excess of the 20% of its water to customers because the District already uses 140% of its allocation.

If we want to make a difference in our water consumption, the simplest and least expensive way to cut water use starts in the home:

- ❖ Install low flow heads for the shower, and kitchen and bathroom sinks.
- ❖ Turn the shower off when lathering up.
- ❖ Install high efficiency toilets (rebates are available).
- ❖ Turn off the faucet when brushing teeth and washing hands.

Habits like these for everyone in the household will make a difference. It's a good practice to reduce our water consumption now. Let's take responsibility for our daily water use habits and make a difference.

--- Ray Collins, Sub-committee on Water Conservation, EIC in collaboration with the Purissima Hills Water District

## Emergency Notification System Update

The Emergency Notification System was purchased by the Los Altos Hills County Fire District and the Town of Los Altos Hills for the purpose of providing residents with a telephonic alerting system used in the event of an emergency. In the past 3 months, Santa Clara County Fire Department requested activation of the Emergency Notification System three times, in order to send Town-wide fire safety alerts to residents. The City of Palo Alto Fire Department used our system twice to invite residents living near the Palo Alto Foothills to the Foothills Fire Management Plan Update.



The Emergency Notification System calls only home phone numbers using AT&T's 911 database. Some residents commented that the System calls only their home phone numbers and not their cell phone. This is because cell phones are not part of the 911 database since there are several carriers. However, the System can be programmed to dial cell phones by creating a database separate from the 911 database.

If you wish to receive Town-wide emergency notifications on your cell phone(s), or business phone, please email the number(s), including area code and your first and last name to: [sgarcia@losaltoshills.ca.gov](mailto:sgarcia@losaltoshills.ca.gov) or you may call (650) 947-2508 or fax the information to: (650) 947-0918. All area codes will be accepted. Feel free to call Public Safety Officer Steven Garcia at (650) 947-2508 if you have any questions.

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## WESTWIND COMMUNITY BARN USER'S REPORT

*Westwind Community Barn is a Town asset and an historic barn built in the 1940's when horses covered the rural landscape of Los Altos Hills. Today "the Barn" is used by many members of the community for a wide variety of programs.*

### Users of the Barn

#### **Equine/Boarders:**

The boarders: Approximately 55-60 horses reside on the property; 46 horses belong to boarders who pay essentially the full cost of boarding\*, including feed, cleaning, manure removal, and manpower. Historically, the boarders have been a mix of residents and non-residents. Residents have priority when there is an opening, and pay less than non-residents.

#### **4-H Riding for the Handicapped (8 Horses):**

The non-profit organization, **Westwind Riding Institute**, which owns and cares for the 4-H horses used in the 4-H horse-riding program, pays full cost for services provided. Funds raised by **Westwind 4-H** built and maintain the small 4-stall barn and adjacent stall/paddocks that their horses occupy. They provide riding instruction to physically and developmentally disabled children – a highly therapeutic exercise for the handicapped. This program involves about 45 children and 36 volunteers -- both residents and non-residents. It has operated for 30 years at Westwind Barn and is completely self-sustaining.

#### **Town of Los Altos Hills Parks & Recreation Youth Riding Programs (6 horses):**

Horses are owned by **Excursions Unlimited** and the Town contracts for their exclusive use in lessons, clinics, camps and trail rides for school age beginning riders. Participant's fees now cover the cost of the services. A subsidy, given in the first 3 years of the program to get it established, was gradually whittled down. This popular riding program for youth is projected to break even for the first time this year. The program is now running at about 300 students per year, approximately 40% residents. (A statistic similar to other recreation programs. For example Little League is about 30%-35% residents.) Our children similarly participate in Los Altos recreation programs. Fees: Non-residents pay a small premium over residents.

*(Please turn page over)*

## **Pacific Ridge Pony Club:**

Approximately 23 children participate in this program. The **Pacific Ridge Pony Club** is part of the **U.S. Pony Club**, the world's leading junior equestrian organization. Other programs include the **Spring Horse Show & Halloween Horse Show**.

## **Town & Community Sponsored Events that Bring the Community Together:**

**Earth Day** celebration for children and adults attracts about 500 area residents. The **Annual Pathways Run** brings almost as many for a 5K/10K run/walk of the pathways starting at Westwind barn. **Westwind & Wineries**, which highlights wines from private vintners in Los Altos Hills, is a great attraction every other year for over 300 attendees. The **Hoedown** is a fun dinner and dance fundraiser (250), and the **Holiday Barn Lighting** kicks into gear the Holiday season (250); and the **Annual Hoppin' Hounds** fundraiser for the **Palo Alto Animal Shelter and Services** (our Town animal control provider) which has 150 human participants.



## **Hiking:**

The community at large enjoys hiking at Byrne preserve and access to the natural beauty of the open space and animals that abound.

*\* In 1976 the Town of Los Altos Hills acquired Westwind Barn and 13 ½ acres as a gift from Countess Margit Besseney. The Town took over the management of the Barn as of July 1, 2008. The budget for the first half-year anticipates a small deficit of approximately \$11,000. The Town's objective is to run the barn operations at breakeven within 12 months. The goal of the Town is to support the existing programs in a financially responsible way and to increase access of the facilities to an ever-wider user group.*



*P&R Committee  
September 2008*

