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May  
2024

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## 24909 Miller Hill Road Los Gatos

\$1,750,000 | [24909MillerHillRd.com](http://24909MillerHillRd.com)  
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Nestled on a sprawling 3-acre lot with breathtaking views, this elegant retreat is the great escape from the hustle and bustle, with 1927 sq ft, 3 bedroom, 2 bath home plus a charming, 400 sq ft cottage, swimming pool, and orchard. Spacious living area with stunning views, floor-to-ceiling windows, vaulted ceilings and a fireplace, updated chef's kitchen, and a spacious primary suite!

*Come see a slice of heaven!*



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COMPASS

The May issue of  
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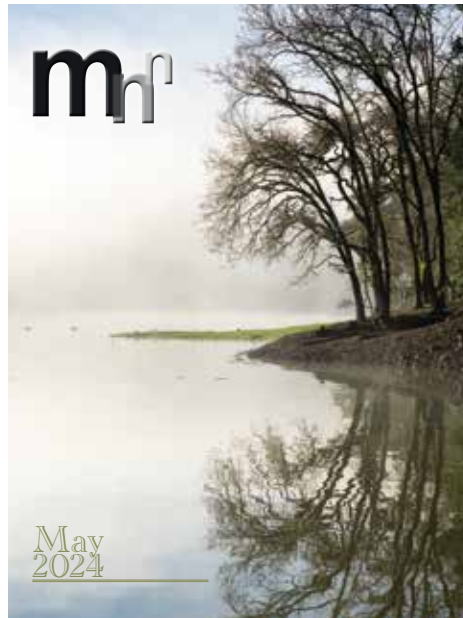
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**Circulation**

More than 4000 homes and businesses  
 in the Santa Cruz Mountains



**Cover Photo**  
**By Mercury Freedom**

Cool fog rolls in,  
 a silent creep,  
 blurring the edge  
 of waters deep.  
 It shifts the shape  
 of Lexington's shore,  
 as over the hilltops  
 it does pour.  
 We thank the rains  
 that came this spring  
 to fill our lake,  
 and make birds sing.

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[mountainnetworknews.com](http://mountainnetworknews.com)

**Subscriptions**

\$36 a year

Call Kathy McKinney at 408-529-1431  
 or email [kathy@paralleldesign.com](mailto:kathy@paralleldesign.com).

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# Storm Clean Up

With the non-stop winter rains, wind and snow fall, the forest is now loaded with fallen debris, thus adding a tremendous fuel load for the upcoming fire season.

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Call for an onsite evaluation and estimate.

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- Standing & fallen tree removal & cleanup
- Culvert & ditch cleaning
- Dumpster service - debris cleanup & hauling
- Defensible space clearing
- Tractor work - loader/ excavator & scraper for road grading & repair
- Community road & neighborhood brush chipping

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# events

## Los Gatos-Saratoga Observation Nursery School May Fair 2024

Los Gatos-Saratoga Observation Nursery School, also known as Mountain School, invites you to their May Fair on **Sunday, May 5**, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the little red school house, 19601 Black Road.

This community event and fundraiser will feature live music, a catered lunch, May pole dancing, carnival games, a farmers' market, and a silent auction. Bring a picnic blanket to sit on the grass and if you'd like, a musical instrument to play along with the teachers around the May pole.

This is a great opportunity to visit Mountain School and learn more about the program. Registration is now open for the 2024-2025

school year. Mountain School offers classes for toddlers through five-year-olds. Parents attend with their child one day per week. For more information, visit [lgsosn.org](http://lgsosn.org) or email [info@lgsosn.org](mailto:info@lgsosn.org).



## Building Blocks Preschool

### Family Fun Day

Nicole Gomez

Building Blocks Preschool's Family Fun Day is on **Sunday, May 19**, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the Loma Prieta Playfield, 23845 Summit Road. Enjoy activities for the entire family, including a petting zoo, face painting, games, arts and crafts, and cotton candy. Have lunch at one of our many food trucks while listening to live music.

Family Fun Day is an essential fundraiser for our scholarship program. The proceeds help us keep high-quality early-childhood education accessible. Keep an eye out for our raffle tables around the community as we lead up to the big day.

## Blood Drive on the Mountain

Julie Bourque

The Stanford Blood Drive is returning to the Loma Prieta community center room, 23845 Summit Road (next to Building Blocks Preschool), on **Saturday, May 4**, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. To make an appointment to donate blood, visit [https://sbcdonor.org/donor/schedules/drive\\_schedule/13573](https://sbcdonor.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/13573).

At our last blood drive in February, 32 people donated blood, impacting the lives of 82 people.

## Homeowners Insurance

Michael Riese

A special presentation on homeowners insurance will be held on **Tuesday, June 4**, from 6 to 8 p.m., in the Loma Prieta community center room, 23845 Summit Road (next to Building Blocks Preschool). This discussion will offer information from insurance agents, brokers, and government representatives about non-traditional insurance options and best practices. To find out more, email [Michael.Riese@cbnrcal.com](mailto:Michael.Riese@cbnrcal.com) or call 408-781-7692.

**Community Music Festival and Picnic  
Mountain Jam Returns**  
Louis Niemann

Save the date! Mountain Jam, the free family music festival and picnic, returns to the Loma Prieta Gazebo and Playfield on **Saturday, September 7.**

This year's musical lineup is shaping up to be the best in Mountain Jam history. There will be lots to see and do, including browsing local vendors, enjoying delicious food, bidding at the silent auction, and more. Children will enjoy the climbing wall, bouncy house, bubble fun, face painting, and hands-on music tent. Don't forget to bring your furry friend and enter the "doggies are welcome" contest.

Since 2013, proceeds from Mountain Jam have contributed significantly to our schools' music programs. We're also bringing back the Mountain Jam Youth Music Scholarship, which provides free music lessons and starter instruments to scholarship winners. Mountain Jam is dedicated to cultivating creativity in our children by promoting music opportunities that build confidence and self-esteem.

Find out more at [SantaCruzMountainJam.org](http://SantaCruzMountainJam.org). If you would like to volunteer, donate, or sponsor our event, use the contact form on the website or call the MJ24 hotline at 408-316-5376.



Photos by Ksenia Kuzmina



**Vasona Lake  
Dam Repairs**  
Kathy McKinney

The Santa Clara Valley Water District drained Vasona Lake in late March, so that crews could make repairs on the dam built in the 1930s. In addition to the repairs, crews removed debris and invasive plants from the reservoir. Vasona is the water district's smallest reservoir, holding just 463 acres feet of water at capacity. It was last drained in 2005.

Some people were concerned about wildlife in the lake. The water district purposely left a small area of water for fish, and biologists were onsite to ensure there were no significant issues for fish or amphibians.

By the time the May issue of *Mountain Network News* is out, the lake should be full again.

*Photos by Mercury Freedom*



**Homeowner's Insurance - Part 4  
State Farm to Non-Renew  
65.2 Percent of Policies in 95033**

Rick Parfitt

In March, State Farm announced it will not renew 1,035 home-insurance policies in the 95033 area. There are approximately 4,135 homes in the 95033. That means one in every four home-insurance policies in the 95033 zip code will not be renewed. This is troubling news. Read more at [newsroom.statefarm.com/update-on-california/](http://newsroom.statefarm.com/update-on-california/).

I encourage affected homeowners to look for other insurance companies that are still able or willing to write policies before going to the California FAIR Plan. At the last meeting of the California Assembly Insurance Committee in March, the head of the California FAIR Plan revealed that they are hugely underfunded. For the full details, visit [www.assembly.ca.gov/media/assembly-insurance-committee-20240313](http://www.assembly.ca.gov/media/assembly-insurance-committee-20240313).

Why is State Farm cutting 65 percent of their policy holders in the 95033 zip code? Why have some State Farm Policy holders had their rate for next year doubled and still given a notice that they will not be renewed a year from now? Can we influence our legislature and Department of Insurance to move more quickly to create a workable market for the insurance industry and homeowners?

Find out more about why insurance companies struggling in California at [www.bankrate.com/insurance/homeowners-insurance/carriers-exit-california-homeinsurance/](http://www.bankrate.com/insurance/homeowners-insurance/carriers-exit-california-homeinsurance/).

Where do we go from here? According to Steve Stewart with Central Summit Watershed FireWise, "The insurance industry evaluates the data on wildfire risk and makes decisions based on zone maps. We need to change those maps from high to low risk. Our priority is getting a reasonable number of residents to harden their properties. We also need to work on big-scale solutions like creating fuel breaks between our communities and unmanaged lands."

**95033 Zip Code Facts**

Housing units in 95033 - 4,135  
Current number of State Farm policies  
1,587/4135 = 38 percent  
State Farm policies to be non-renewed  
1035/4135 = 25 percent  
State Farm policies after non renewals  
552/4135 = 13 percent



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**Christ Child Church  
Book Nook  
Greg Illes**

The Christ Child Church Women’s Group is supporting a “teeny library” at the western entrance to the church on Summit Road.

The small green box contains various books, covering a variety of topics. The themes are educational, humorous, spiritual, and generally in the realm of good news.

The Book Nook is not a “take a book-leave a book” library; it’s simply a free book source. Take any book that appeals to you. You don’t need to return it. You’re welcome to pass it along to others if you like.

Books will be replenished, and occasionally new books will be added. Stop by anytime. Good reading to all.

**Heartworm Infection in Cats  
Fahimeh Zibae**

Cats get heartworm, but feline heartworm disease is very different than heartworm disease in dogs. In cats, heartworm infections typically cause lung disease. In dogs, heartworms cause heart disease.

The mosquito plays an essential role in the heartworm life cycle. Adult female heartworms live in an infected dog, fox, coyote, or wolf and produce microscopic baby worms called microfilaria that circulate in the bloodstream. When a mosquito bites an infected animal, it picks up these baby worms, which develop and mature into infective-stage larvae over a period of 10 to 14 days. When the infected mosquito bites another animal, the larvae are deposited on the surface of the animal’s skin and enter the new host through the mosquito’s bite wound. Once inside a new host, it takes approximately six months for the larvae to

mature into adult heartworms. Because of the longevity of these worms, each mosquito season can lead to an increasing number of worms in an infected pet.

In one study, 25 to 30 percent of heartworm-infected cats were indoor cats. Signs of heartworm disease in cats can be subtle or dramatic. It can cause coughing, wheezing, difficulty breathing, vomiting, embolism or abnormal clots, nosebleeds, and neurologic signs such as difficulty walking. Sometimes, fainting or seizures may occur, likely associated with larvae migrating to the brain. Ten to 20 percent of cats experience sudden death, probably associated with the death of adult worms. Many cats never show noticeable symptoms and approximately 80 percent clear the infection on their own.

Heartworm infection in cats is harder to detect than in dogs, because cats are much less likely than dogs to have adult heartworms. The preferred method for screening cats includes the use of both an antigen and an antibody test. The antibody test detects exposure to heartworm larvae. Your veterinarian may also use x-rays or ultrasound to look for heartworm infection. Cats should be tested before being put on preventive medication and re-tested as the veterinarian deems appropriate to document continued exposure and risk.

Prevention is critical, because there is no approved drug therapy for heartworm infection in cats. The heartworm therapy used in dogs is extremely dangerous for cats, and is considered a last resort. Nevertheless, cats with heartworm disease can often be helped with good veterinary care. The goal is to stabilize your cat and determine a long-term management plan.

The American Heartworm Society recommends monthly prevention for all cats living in heartworm-endemic areas. Preventives keep new infections from developing if an infected mosquito bites your cat again.



**Summit Deck Doctor  
Hybrid Semi-transparent Deck Stains  
Rupert Hart**

When your decks are due for a re-stain, consider using a hybrid semi-transparent stain. This type of stain is a mix of oil and water. You’d think it would be like restaurant oil and vinegar for dipping bread, but it’s an homogenous mixture with big advantages.

Our grandfathers and fathers used oil-based stain. It penetrates well, but must be rubbed down four times with a rag to pick up excess wet stain. This leaves a coating only about a molecule thick on the surface. The result looks good, but it’s mostly gone within two years.

Stain manufacturers have developed water-based stains, which can carry a little more pigment to reflect the UV rays and extend the life of the stain. These can fade unevenly with sun and wear, making it hard to do a refresh coat.

More recently, stain manufacturers have developed water-cleanup hybrid stains. These can last several times longer than oil-based stains, are safer, and don’t stay sticky for two weeks. Consider hybrid stains.

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## Obituary

### Bonnie Lynn Pedersen

February 4, 1940 – March 23, 2024

Bonnie was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and moved to Sunnyvale, California, in 1944. Her parents, Robert and Geneva MacArdell, opened a surplus store, White Elephant Sales, in 1945. It later became A Tool Shed Equipment Rentals, currently operated by the family's fourth generation.

Bonnie graduated from Campbell High School and attended U.C., Davis, Kansas State University, and San Jose State University, where she received her bachelor's and master's degrees.

Bonnie and her husband Larry moved to the Santa Cruz Mountains in 1969 with their three children Robert, Eric, and Lars.

Loving horses from an early age, she had at least one in her life at all times. She was the past president of the Summit Riders Horsemen's Association. She won many horse-showmanship awards, and completed several 50-mile endurance rides and the 100-mile, 24-hour Tevis Cup ride twice.

Bonnie raised Appaloosa horses at Appy Horse Hill, their ranch on Morrill Road. Here, many young 4-H members received their introduction to horsemanship. For many years, she and her longtime friend Arlene Kruse ran a summer horse camp for young adults that taught them how to ride and take care of a horse.

Bonnie was a member of the Loma Prieta Club. She enjoyed spending time with the members raising funds for scholarships and other projects that needed support.

She had a keen eye for beauty, finding joy in the simple things in life. She often shared her appreciation for the world around her with others. She was an avid worldwide traveler. Her first international trip was to Europe in 1974, and she was hooked. She traveled the world, rarely visiting the same place twice for the next 50 years.

On a trip to Nepal in 1987, Bonnie and Larry meet a young man named Naveen Chaudhary while on an elephant encounter. After sponsoring him with a student visa, he soon became a member of their family. Over the years, Naveen was able to accompany Bonnie on many worldly travels.

After Larry's death in 2008, Bonnie moved to their home in Poulsbo, Washington. She continued to have horses and turned an old apple orchard and berry farm into a beautiful estate, where she lived until her passing.



## Obituary

### James Barclay "JB" Compton

December 1, 1939 – March 17, 2024

JB Compton was born on December 1, 1939, in Norwalk, Connecticut. He grew up in the eastern United States and Washington, D.C., until his high-school graduation. He was very proud to have won the National Science Contest. He was an Eagle Scout.

JB received a bachelor's degree in engineering physics from the University of Colorado, Boulder, a master's degree in electrical engineering from Arizona State University, and a master's of business administration from Santa Clara University.

JB worked in the semiconductor industry for more than 40 years. He developed

custom-designed integrated circuits and assembly lines for processing integrated circuits. In 1983, with business partner Kip Brown, he formed The Engineering Consortium (TEC). TEC was the first fabless semiconductor company in the Bay Area. The company designed state-of-the-art custom integrated circuits and advanced analog and digital hearing-aid chips. JB was awarded multiple patents for innovation in chip design during his semiconductor career.

After retiring from TEC, JB started a new career as a consultant engineer for the Internal Revenue Service. He taught many classes to audit agents at the IRS.

JB was one of the pioneers in the development of Las Cumbres. When Las Cumbres celebrated its 50-year anniversary, JB and many of the old-timers were in attendance to share stories about the early years. He served as treasurer on the first board of directors. His house was the second home completed in the new community, on a lovely site overlooking city lights and beautiful forests. He lived in his new home with his young family for about five years, then purchased a property on Skyline Boulevard, between Black and Gist roads.

JB, his wife Janice, and their blended family lived in a cabin on that property for several years, before building a new home on the site. JB was one of the first homeowners to install a large array of solar panels with back-up batteries. He also installed solar hot water.

After a long illness, JB peacefully passed with family by his side on March 17, 2024. JB will always be remembered as a loving husband, father, and friend to many. He was always available to give advice and share his vast expertise on many topics.

We miss you JB. A celebration of life will be at the Las Cumbres Community Center on **Saturday, June 29**, at 2 pm.





The Redwood Estates "eclipse" club  
Photos by Amy Sirota

### Commissioned Art Tamzen Fox


I grew up in the Santa Cruz Mountains and attended Building Blocks, Loma Prieta, and C.T. English middle schools.



Since then, I have nurtured my love for painting through classes at Los Gatos High School and my undergraduate program at Cal Poly Humboldt, where I received the Glen Berry Painting Award and started painting murals locally. Since graduating and completing several murals for local businesses, I also found a love for commissioned works, which offer a collaborative process while celebrating a loved one or creative vision.

I have created pet portraits, family portraits, single portraits, and even a sign for an indie music studio, The Night Shift. I find portrait painting to be deeply therapeutic for me and for my clients. Having a customized piece of artwork can offer self actualization, commemorate someone we have lost, or celebrate the love that we have in our lives.

If you would like a custom piece of work, or have questions about the process, email me at [tamzenfoxart@gmail.com](mailto:tamzenfoxart@gmail.com).

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## Otters and Cormorants

Bruce Sudweeks

I recently hosted a visitor from Florida. It was my task to show him a good time, so naturally I took him diving in Monterey Bay. His desire was to dive with sea lions, since that is not an option in Florida. I told him that I knew just the spot.

We hopped in the water at San Carlos Beach in Monterey, and started swimming towards the sea lion congregation area. In the past, I have seen as many as 30 sea lions performing an underwater version of Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake ballet. On the swim out, we were encouraged because we spotted a few sea lions heading towards the congregation site. We were distracted when we saw diving cormorants, so we decided to change our game plan.

We submerged and swam with the birds. While we were being entertained by goofy cormorant birds "flying" underwater we were visited by a pair of sea otters. Normally sea otters do not interact with divers. They tend to be focused on finding food while underwater. These sea otters appeared to be teenagers and were very curious about our underwater cameras. They hugged our strobe lights and gently nibbled on our gear. It was a truly magical experience that my friend from Florida and I will never forget.



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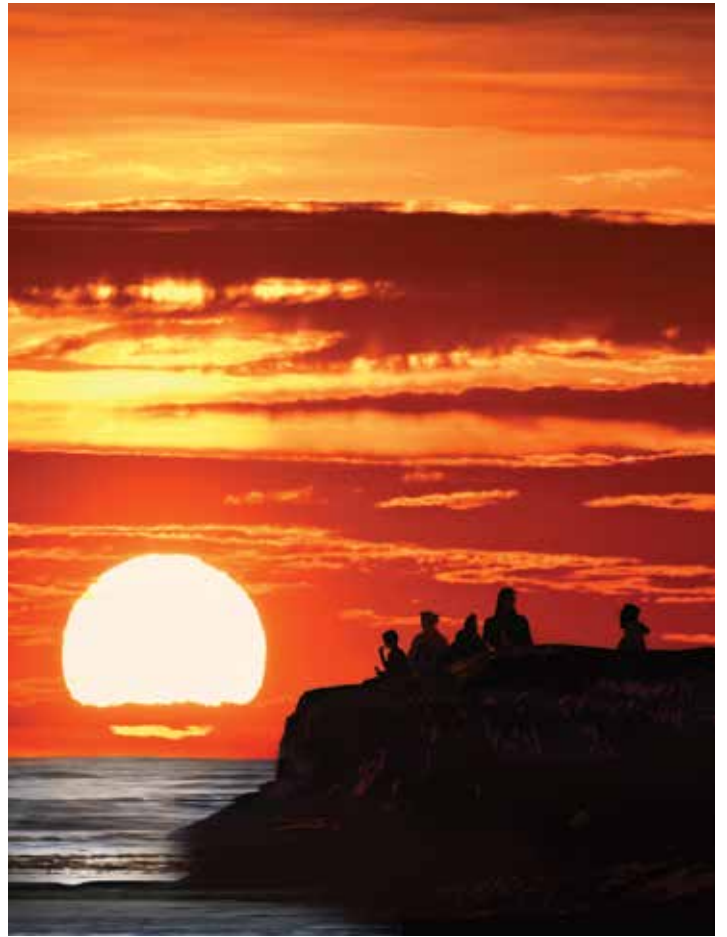
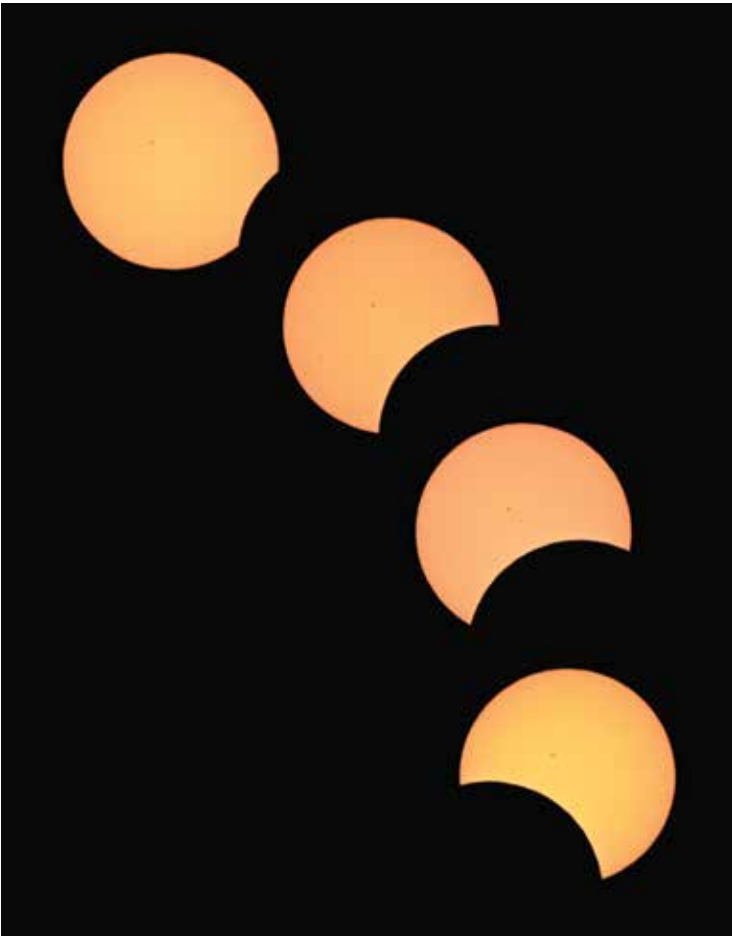


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*Moon and sunset  
Photos by Bruce Fournier*



*Lexington Reservoir  
Photo by Adrienne Medalie*

# calendar

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### Saturday, May 4

Stanford blood drive is at the Loma Prieta Community Center room on the north campus, 23845 Summit Road, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. To register to donate blood, visit stanfordbloodcenter.org, or call 888-723-7831.

### Sunday, May 5

Los Gatos-Saratoga Observation Nursery School invites you to their May Fair, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the little red school house, 19601 Black Road. Enjoy live music, a catered lunch, may-pole dancing, carnival games, a farmer's market, and a silent auction. For more information, visit lgsons.org.

### Thursday, May 9

The Bookmobile visits the mountains:  
**Lakeside School**, 9:45 to 11:45 a.m.  
**Building Blocks Preschool**, 12:15 to 12:45 p.m. and 2:30 to 3:45 p.m.  
**Redwood Estates Pavilion**, 4:15 to 5:15 p.m.



### Sunday, May 19

Building Blocks Preschool hosts a family fun day, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the Loma Prieta Playfield, 23845 Summit Road.

### Wednesday, May 22

Dine out at Sushi Confidential to benefit the Lakeside School Community Foundation. Print out a flyer at lakesidescf.org/events/dine-outs.

### Thursday, May 23

The Bookmobile visits the mountains:  
**Lakeside School**, 9:45 to 11:45 a.m.  
**Building Blocks Preschool**, 12:15 to 12:45 p.m. and 2:30 to 3:45 p.m.  
**Redwood Estates Pavilion**, 4:15 to 5:15 p.m.

### Tuesday, June 4

A presentation on homeowners insurance will be from 6 to 8 p.m., in the Loma Prieta community center room, 23845 Summit Road. To find out more, email Michael.Riese@cbnocal.com or call 408-781-7692.

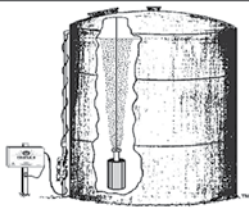
### Saturday, June 29

A celebration of life for longtime mountain resident JB Barclay will be at the Las Cumbres Community Center, at 2 p.m.

### Saturday, September 7

Save the date for Mountain Jam at the Loma Prieta Gazebo and Playfield. This year's musical lineup is shaping up to be the best in Mountain Jam History. More information is at www.SantaCruzMountainJam.org.

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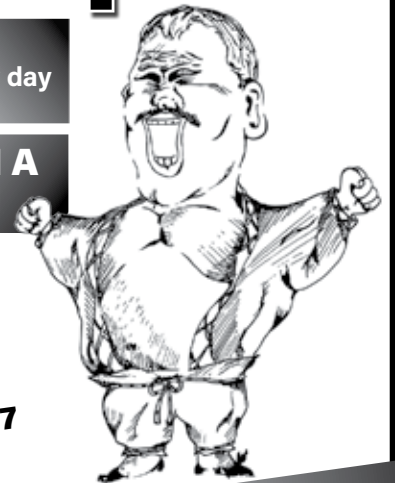
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**ON-GOING CLASSES AND MEETINGS**

**Mondays**

Alcoholics Anonymous meets at Skyland Church, 8 p.m.

**Tuesdays**

Business networking meeting from 9 to 10:30 a.m. Email [angiewuerz@mac.com](mailto:angiewuerz@mac.com) or call 408-771-5219 for information and location.

Vinyasa Flow yoga class, 9 to 10 a.m. Book at [www.cupsofyoga.com](http://www.cupsofyoga.com) or call Jaime at 831-200-8802.

Qigong class on Zoom from 9 to 10:30 a.m. Email [Amandaring@gmail.com](mailto:Amandaring@gmail.com) for information and Zoom URL.

Pilates mat class, 7 to 8 p.m., via Zoom. Email [altesta@gmail.com](mailto:altesta@gmail.com) or text 650-465-8513.

Town walking group meets at 9:30 a.m. at the Adult Recreation Center, 208 Main Street in Los Gatos.

**Wednesdays**

Vinyasa Flow yoga class, 9 to 10 a.m. Book at [www.cupsofyoga.com](http://www.cupsofyoga.com), or call Jaime at 831-200-8802.

**Thursdays**

Lunchtime webinars for stress relief from noon to 12:45 p.m. on Zoom. Email [angiewuerz@mac.com](mailto:angiewuerz@mac.com), or call 408-771-5219 for the link.

Yoga at the Redwood Estates Pavilion, 10:15 to 11:30 a.m. In person (outside when possible) and via Zoom. Visit [anoukyoga.com](http://anoukyoga.com) or email [anouk@anoukyoga.com](mailto:anouk@anoukyoga.com)

Gentle Flow yoga class, 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. Book at [www.cupsofyoga.com](http://www.cupsofyoga.com), or call Jaime at 831-200-8802.

Loma Prieta Amateur Radio Club meets the first Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. in the Burrell CDF station on Highland Way.

Pilates mat class, 7 to 8 p.m., via Zoom. Email [altesta@gmail.com](mailto:altesta@gmail.com) or text 650-465-8513.

Integral yoga at Lakeside School (held online currently), 6:30 to 8 p.m. Visit [www.lgsrecreation.org](http://www.lgsrecreation.org).

Alcoholics Anonymous, Redwood Estates Pavilion, 7:30 p.m.

**Fridays**

Power Vinyasa yoga class, noon to 1 p.m. Book at [www.cupsofyoga.com](http://www.cupsofyoga.com), or call Jaime at 831-200-8802.

**Saturdays**

Summit Speakers is a casual, friendly group that works together to improve our speaking skills. We meet on Zoom from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. For more information, call 408-497-5102 or email [smbeauchamp885@gmail.com](mailto:smbeauchamp885@gmail.com).

Summit Ultimate Frisbee is from 9 to 11 a.m. at the Loma Prieta Elementary School field, 23800 Summit Road. Visit [summitfrisbee.org](http://summitfrisbee.org) to sign up for their email list.

**Sundays**

Summit Ultimate Frisbee is from 9 to 11 a.m. at the Loma Prieta Elementary School field, 23800 Summit Road. Visit [summitfrisbee.org](http://summitfrisbee.org) to sign up for their email list.

Gentle Flow yoga class, 9 to 10 a.m. Book at [www.cupsofyoga.com](http://www.cupsofyoga.com), or call Jaime at 831-200-8802.

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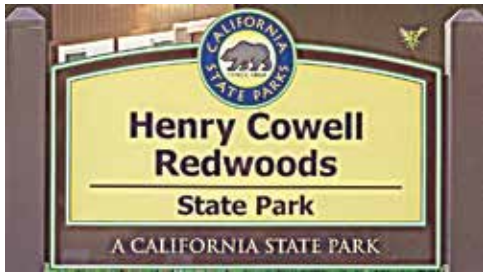
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**Where to bring friends and relatives**  
**Henry Cowell Redwoods**  
 Neil Wiley

When visitors from out-of-state want to see local California nature, you can direct them to Henry Cowell Redwoods.

They can drive toward Santa Cruz on Highway 17, exit right on Mt. Hermon Road, and continue through Scotts Valley to the end of the road. Turn right, then a quick left on Highway 9. In about a half mile, they will see the park entrance on the left.

After parking, a short walk leads to the Redwood Grove Loop Trail. They can follow a wide, easy, looping trail 8/10 of a mile to see old-growth redwood trees in a 40-acre natural forest. They can look up to see a 277-foot high, 1,500-year-old tree. Or look down to see a little squirming, yellow banana slug. (A young visitor was surprised when I told him that this little animal was a university mascot.)

Visitors can step inside a tree, relax at a comfortable bench, or think big thoughts as they wander through a grove of the world's tallest trees. They are enjoying one of the most pleasant, peaceful, and easily accessible environments anywhere.

Some will consider this enough, but others can wander over Henry Cowell's 4,650 acres and 35 miles of trails.

**Other trails**

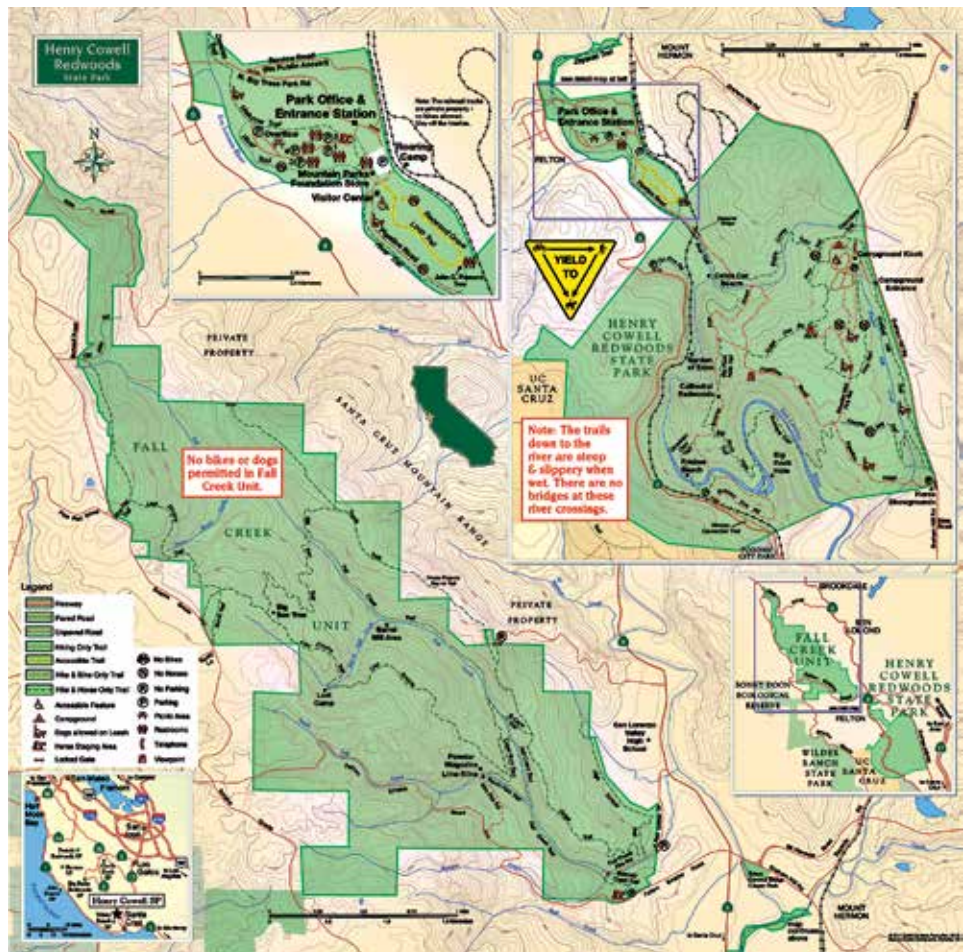
A few steps behind the visitor center, the River Trail winds along the San Lorenzo River to the popular Cable Car Beach. The trail climbs up as a single track with two forks, each leading to the Rincon Fire Road.

Also behind the visitor center is Pipeline



Road. This 3.3-mile paved road carries walkers and bikers up (sometimes steeply) and down through the park to Graham Hill Road.

To visit a nice beach along the creek, they can park on Highway 9 about 1.2 miles south of the main Henry Cowell entrance for a walk on Ox Fire Road and down the Ox Trail. A sign shows how to reach the



popular Garden of Eden beach.

Finding the Big Rock (swimming) Hole is a challenge, especially after a wet winter. Visitors should check with someone at the visitor center, have a map, and plan on getting wet.

A hike with a view, the Pine Trail loops around the Henry Cowell Campground. It's a bit sandy, but it leads through a wooded area, mixed evergreens, a thicket, and up to the Ridge Fire Road Observation Deck. See 360-degree views as far south as Monterey.

More trails are near the entrance, closer to the river, or next to the campground. But there is more!

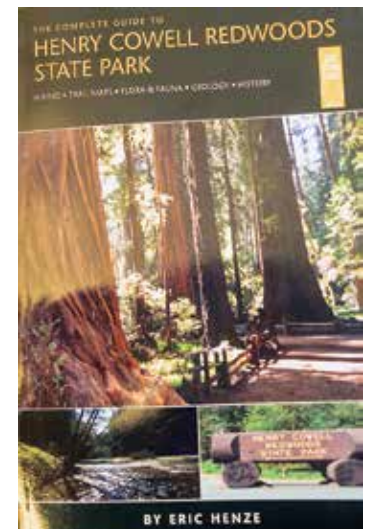
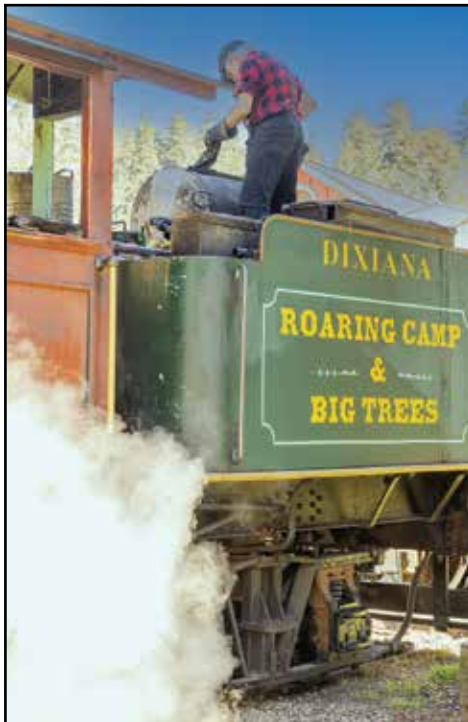
The Fall Creek Unit is a separate property devoted to hikers. Parking is available on the right side of Felton Empire Road. Bennett Creek Trail leads to the 3.6-mile Fall Creek Trail. This is a moderate climb alongside of a small creek to the barrel mill area. The nearby Kiln Fire Road takes hikers to lime kilns and a powder magazine.

#### Camping

Camping at Henry Cowell is available at 107 sites in pine and oak forest off Graham Hill Road in Scotts Valley. For reservations, call 831-438-2396, or visit [www.reservecalifornia.com](http://www.reservecalifornia.com).

#### Trains

How about something for train-lovers and children? Next to the main Henry Cowell parking lot is the Roaring Camp Railroad. Reserve a 75-minute ride up and back from Bear Mountain, or a one-hour trip to the Santa Cruz Beach and Boardwalk. For more information and to book a trip, visit [roaringcamp.com](http://roaringcamp.com).



*For comprehensive park information, get a copy of Eric Henze's The Complete Guide to Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park from Bookshop Santa Cruz with a call to 831-423-0900. The 188-page book has hiking tips for each trail, trail maps, and in-depth content on flora, fauna, geology, and history.*



# history

## History of Santa Cruz Mountain Schools

Debra Staab

Less than two years after California became a state, on May 13, 1852, the state designated 500,000 acres of public land to create a public-school system.

There were restrictions. The land had to be public, could not be part of either a Spanish or Mexican land grant, could not hold any significant mineral value, nor exceed 640 acres. Prices were as low as \$1.25 per acre.

In California, the Land Claims Commission struggled to interpret the parcel boundaries assigned by Spain and Mexico nearly a century earlier. Many pioneers purchased school-land warrants only to later learn that their property was located on a land grant. When this happened, the land owner would be given public land of equal value in a different location, a practice known as floating the warrant. Because there were no requirements to build a school on the property, many purchased the cheap land for speculation purposes and resold it at a profit.

At the base of the Santa Cruz Mountains, in a town called Lexington, Louis Hebard built a one-room schoolhouse in 1859. At the time, it was the first school between San Jose and Santa Cruz. In 1911, when Alma had a larger population than Lexington, the first school was torn down and a new Lexington School was built in Alma. When both Lexington and Alma were abandoned to make way for the Lexington Reservoir in 1952, students attended the Louise Van Meter School in Los Gatos.

The third Lexington School opened on September 14, 1953, with 150 students. The school was rebuilt between 2012 and 2014. It is part of the Los Gatos Union School District.

In the mid-1860s, the Summit School District was created, and a school room was established in a private home at the corner of Summit Road and the Old Santa Cruz Highway, near Schulthies Lagoon. Reports stated that children floated on logs in the lagoon during their lunch hour.

The Summit School later moved to a more permanent location, about a half-mile north on Old Santa Cruz Highway, to a newly constructed facility built by Edward Martin. The old school house is now a private

residence.

In 1877, Lyman Burrell donated land at the Summit for the Burrell School. The building burned to the ground in 1889, but the resilient local community rebuilt it by 1890. This was the first school to have both a flagpole and a bell. The school building is now part of the Burrell Winery.

The railroad town of Wright's erected a school that served that community from the 1880s to 1929. It closed due to a dwindling population. The Laurel School was nothing more than a cottage behind the RR depot where lessons were taught by Miss Rose Merrill. There were no exams, and the students had to supply their own books. When the school closed in 1947, the students were bused to Scotts Valley Union School.

The first classes at Highland School took place in 1881 in a small unused cabin. For the next school year, Judge George Miller donated a small plot of land and a new building was constructed. The 1906 earthquake seriously damaged Highland School. In 1914, a new facility was built next to the old one. That building burned down in 1971. The older structure is now known as Highland Hall.

In 1906, several parents expressed concerns over the mile-and-a-half walk uphill that their children had to endure to get to Highland School. These parents petitioned for a new school district. On September 1, 1906, the Hester Creek School was opened by Miss C. Tempelten.

The lost lumber town of Loma Prieta had its own schoolhouse. It was situated just above the center of their 300-person village. The instructor came up from Santa Cruz. After the lumber business died down, Mr. Albretto Stoodley, who worked at the Loma Prieta Mill, dismantled the schoolhouse in 1904. Along with the wood from other abandoned cottages, he built himself a house at Opal Cliffs in Capitola.

Lakeside Elementary School, located at 19621 Black Road, opened in 1881. The



Lakeside School

original one-room building housed a single instructor and first- through eighth-grades until the mid-1950s. The district eventually grew to encompass neighboring schools Central, Brown, Castle Rock, and Fairview. Most of the buildings on the current campus were constructed in 1967. A kindergarten was added in 1984, and a community center was built in 2004. Lakeside is the only school in the Lakeside Joint School District.

Together, the early small mountain schools educated around 100 to 200 children per year. A single instructor typically taught all grade levels. At that time, an eighth-grade education was deemed sufficient for most children. Children traveled to school by foot, horse, donkey, or buggy.

In 1949, the four summit mountain schools, Summit, Burrell, Highland, and Hester Creek, combined into the Loma Prieta Joint Union School District. A new school at the Summit opened on June 27, 1951. Two members of the Loma Prieta Museum, Roger Mason and Karl von Ahnen, were among the students in the first class. There were two grades per room and the school initially had its own cafeteria.

The number of students in the LPJUSD continued to grow by about 35 to 45 students per year. By the early 1970s, the community began discussing the need for a middle school. It took three attempts to pass a bond measure to fund the new school construction. The new school opened in the fall of 1974. It was named C.T. English, honoring a former superintendent who had died in the late 1960s.

In the 1980s, the growing community recognized the need for a community center. The construction was financed through fundraising, land sales, and a bond measure. The spacious building was used for community events and a gymnasium for the adjacent schools. The grand opening took place in November, 1988 with a festive dinner-dance party.



Hester Creek School

In the 1980s, the state of California offered funds to schools to increase the safety of their buildings. When the Loma Prieta District joined the program, fissures were discovered under several structures. Portables were set up near the old school, and the students moved in. On October 17, 1989, the 6.9 Loma Prieta Earthquake, centered in the Forest of Nisene Marks, struck the area. The remaining Loma Prieta school buildings were damaged and more portables had to be erected.

A new elementary school was built on the south campus. Giving a nod to history, the groundbreaking took place on October 17, 1992. The project was completed on October 17, 1994.

By the late 1990s, the C.T. English buildings were showing their age. Some were still closed from the '89 earthquake. In 2002, the community passed Measure K to fund the construction of a new middle school. The students attended the first classes at the new school on October 17, 2006. In 2015, the community center was gutted in a fire caused by teenagers playing with fire. Laptops, musical instruments, and other valuables were destroyed. Both the elementary and middle school classes were cancelled for a few days.

Once again, the district turned to the public for funding to rebuild. Measure R was passed in 2018 to provide \$10.6



**Burrell School**

million to LPJUSD for reconstruction.

Los Gatos High School serves the 95033 areas as well as the town of Los Gatos. The original grammar school was called Los Gatos Central School, which opened in 1886. It served until a larger school, Los Gatos Union High School, was built in 1908. In 1925, a \$250,000 bond measure allowed a second building to be constructed near the old structure, which remained in use for some time.

The school was renovated in the 1960s. A \$79 million bond measure passed in 2001 that allowed the addition of several more buildings.

Students in the Santa Cruz Mountains continue to have access to an excellent education. The current school districts all offer consistent high-quality learning opportunities to the mountain community.

**Rich History Unveiled  
The Laurel Mill Lodge  
Cassandra Maas**

The Santa Cruz Mountains are rich in history. Much of that history revolves around the plentiful redwood trees that once blanketed the area. This natural resource attracted the attention of many enterprising individuals who sought to make their fortunes from timber harvesting.

Between 1900 and 1906, Santa Cruz County experienced a robust timber industry. This thriving industry gave birth to many of the communities we know today, including the town of Laurel. Although Laurel is no longer a town, vestiges of its past remain, whispering tales of what it once was.

One of the remaining properties that served as a hub for the logging operations in Laurel is the Laurel Mill Lodge. This historic site played a pivotal role in the area's timber industry.

Frederick A. Hihn, a German immigrant who arrived in the United States at age 19, was instrumental to the timber industry's success. After several business ventures ended due to natural disasters, Hihn moved to San Francisco to become a pharmacist. Eventually, he settled in Santa Cruz and opened a grocery store in 1851.

*continued on page 22*

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# history

continued from page 21

Enticed by the thriving timber business and his ownership of a large portion of the Rancho Soquel Augmentation, Hihn made a fortune by leasing land to others for timber harvesting in the area now known as Laurel. He worked closely with various railroad organizations from 1861 through 1881, enabling the South Pacific Coast Railroad to build a line through Laurel, transporting timber and other goods to market.

While Hihn's operations in Laurel were significant, he also operated sawmills in Aptos, Valencia, Glenwood, Gold Gulch, Boulder Creek, and Kings Creek.

According to measuringworth.com, the mill at Laurel was built at a cost of \$30,000, equivalent to approximately \$9 million in today's dollars. When it opened, it had a capacity of 25,000 board feet per day. Additionally, a box mill was constructed. It was capable of producing 1,000 fruit boxes and 30,000 shingles daily, as well as grape stakes and other split products.

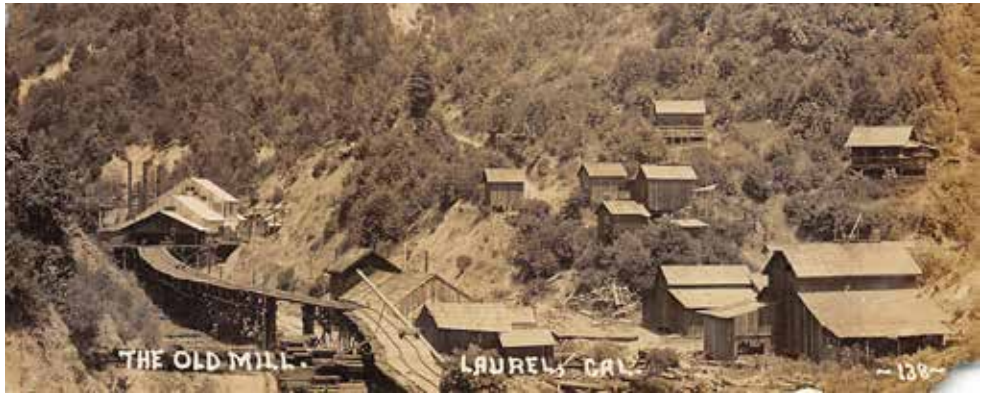
A millpond was built where Laurel and Burns Creek converged. Logs were brought to the pond by manual labor, mules, horses, and a steam-donkey engine that replaced the donkeys pulling logs up the steep incline.

The first worldwide financial crisis, the panic of 1907, depressed lumber sales, leading to the mill's closure. It reopened in May 1908, but closed again about a month later. There are gaps in the history of Laurel Mill, but it is known that the mill was permanently closed when the United States entered World War I in April 1917.

The next chapter in Laurel Mill Lodge's history began in 1943, when Alan Medlen purchased the property and turned it into a foster home for boys. The boys dug and built the swimming pool and campground while the office, cookhouse, and cabins were expanded.



page 22



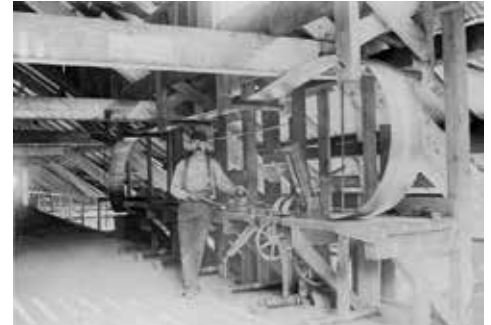
In the 1960s, Laurel Mill Lodge became a small retreat and massage school called Getting in Touch. Their hilarious course descriptions were filled with puns and double entendres. They added a second swimming pool, a jacuzzi large enough for twenty people to enjoy simultaneously, modernized the buildings, and upgraded the property.

Although the 1982 storm is remembered for the damage done to the Soquel Avenue Bridge, 90 percent of the damage occurred in the unincorporated portions of Santa Cruz County. This storm, which happened on January 4, 1982, killed 22 people, injured 50, displaced 400, destroyed 135 homes, and damaged another 300. Laurel Mill Lodge was one of the damaged properties and was forced to shut its doors after the storm.

At some point after this, Nancy Penny decided to develop the lodge into a nudist colony. However, the property was still damaged, and the only way in and out was by ropes and ladders from Redwood Lodge Road. Although the access was restored, the venture ultimately went bankrupt.

In 1991, Esther Leonora Seehof, a clinical psychologist with a Ph.D., purchased Laurel Mill Lodge. Esther owned and operated the Lodge for 28 years. When she first acquired it, the property still suffered from previous storm damage. Esther and her partner, Bob Kundus, worked hard to repair the damage and offered the Lodge for weddings and retreats. They also rented out the cabins to several close friends who lived on the property with them.

Esther put the property on the market for \$3 million in June 2016, as the property was declining, and she and Bob were physically and financially limited in their ability to maintain it. When the storm of 2017 rolled in, the property sustained substantial damage. A tree fell on the lodge and went through the roof just above where Esther had been sitting, narrowly missing her thanks to a large beam in the ceiling. Additional damage included downed trees, crushed cars, and damage



to the road leading to Laurel Mill Lodge. Esther sold the heavily damaged property in October 2017.

The current owners have spent the last few years restoring the lodge. They cleaned the property of accumulated trash and abandoned cars, and made extensive repairs. After substantial cleaning and modernization, the lodge is now a beautiful property, ready for the next owner to transform it into a retreat center, family lodge, or meditation center. While the property has been restored, an old logging cabin remains. If you look into the creek, you will see beams on the bottom that were part of the structure used to move the logs out of the mill. The history of Laurel Mill Lodge continues to be written.

If you would like to read more about the history of the area, Derek R. Whaley's book *Sidetracked: Laurel & Glenwood* is well-written and comprehensive. Use this QR code to buy your copy from Amazon.





# LAUREL MILL LODGE

PRICE UPON REQUEST

This exclusive 24-acre retreat has private campground zoning and is conveniently located just a 35-minute drive from the San Jose Airport. The main Lodge has 4,413 sq ft and includes a caretaker's apt, conference room, and more. The property features eight cabins totaling 1,536 square feet with half baths and six dorm-styled A-frames spanning 768 square feet, allowing for larger gatherings. An amphitheater, meadow, and trails wind through the stunning natural surroundings, bordered by majestic Redwoods and a creek with a small dam and beach area perfect for swimming. High-speed internet ensures connectivity in this idyllic, secluded oasis of beauty and privacy. Call me for a private showing. Visit [LaurelMillLodge.com](http://LaurelMillLodge.com) for more photos.

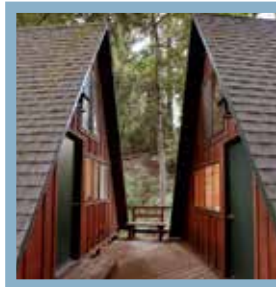
Commercial Kitchen



Conference Room



Cabins



**Cassandra Maas**

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## Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History Kathy McKinney

Last spring, a group of students playing in a creek in the Santa Cruz Mountains found a strange object that they suspected was a bone from a large animal. They brought the suspected bone to the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History, where Wayne Thompson, retired C.T. English science teacher and paleontology collections advisor, recognized it as a fossil arm bone (left radius), likely belonging to an ancient sloth. Fossil experts

confirmed that this bone came from a Jefferson's ground sloth (*Megalonyx jeffersonii*), making this specimen the first reported fossil evidence for this species in Santa Cruz County.

We wanted to check it out ourselves, so this month's adventure led us to the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History, where the fossil is on display. Some locals call it the "whale museum" due to its life-size whale sculpture



3D scan of the giant sloth fossil found by students in the Santa Cruz Mountains



out front. It was founded in 1905 when Laura Hecox, one of the early keepers of the West Cliff Lighthouse, deeded her extensive collection of historical artifacts and marine specimens to the



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City of Santa Cruz. The building that houses the museum was built in 1915 as a Carnegie Library.

We started the adventure with a delicious and hearty breakfast at the Seabreeze Café, voted the best breakfast in Santa Cruz by readers of *Good Times Santa Cruz*. It's just an 8-minute walk from the café to the museum, which is located across from Twin Lakes/Seabright Beach.

The museum isn't large, but has a lot to offer. Displays at the museum include the bugs, birds, mammals, fossils, and plants found in our region. There are engaging activities for children throughout the museum, including a touch tank with anemones and starfish, a microscope, and interactive displays.



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The museum is open Tuesday through Friday, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$4 for adults, \$2 for college students and seniors over age 60, and free for children under age 18.

After enjoying the exhibits, we walked

across the street for a stroll down the beach, soaking in the sunshine that we've been sorely missing this spring.

The Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History is well worth the visit, offering intrigue and interesting local information for all ages.

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# **schools**

## **Lexington School School News Jason Deppong**

Lexington's annual community read-in featured another fantastic slate of local guests organized by librarian Barbara Lougée.

We welcomed a firefighter, bird fosterer, ambulance nurse, architect, student teacher, park ranger, environmental scientist, and Fisher Middle School's principal, Mary Lonhart. The guests read their favorite books to different classes, and then answered students' questions about their jobs in our community.

Our transitional-kindergarten through third-grade students held a spring music concert led by Los Gatos Union School District music teacher, Ana George. Performances included songs from different parts of the world and instrumental pieces. Parent contributions to the district's One Community LG Foundation make the district's music program outstanding.

Lexington is the only school in LGUSD that follows the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program framework (IB PYP), and integrates California state standards into its curriculum. Staff members typically only meet other IB PYP educators at conferences and online trainings. For the first time, Lexington hosted a regional IB networking event. Educators from IB schools in Monterey, San Jose, Palo Alto, and San Francisco visited Lexington to eat lunch, meet in small groups, network, discuss strategies that support inquiry and concept-based teaching, and build our IB community. The day was a success. We hope to hold a similar event at a different school each year in order to further develop a Bay





International Week's goal is to highlight a few of the many contributions made by different nations and cultures. Students and staff reflect on our diverse planet and celebrate cultures. Each day focused on clothing, food, language, or games such as cricket, bocce, and more. The culmination was Family International Night where families shared about nations or cultures that were important to them. It was an enjoyable and educational event.

If you would like to learn more about Lexington's unique IB PYP, visit our fifth-grade exhibition and open house on **Thursday, May 23**, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. The fifth-graders will have a special presentation at 5:30 p.m. to introduce their yearlong exhibition-inquiry projects. All are welcome.

*Photos by Jason Deppong and Barbara Lougée*



Area IB regional network to support our teachers and students.

Our Home and School Club held its largest fundraiser of the year, the color run. The event takes place close to the Indian celebration, Holi, which is a celebration of spring. Students learned about the holiday during an assembly with student and parent presentations. Since Holi involves the festive throwing of colored chalk powder, parent volunteers sprayed colored chalk at students as they ran around the lower field track. We had a great turn out of parents cheering on the students and helping us meet our fundraising goal.

The Lexington spring evening STEAM fair demonstrated that Lexington has many curious students. Families engaged in different inquiries at home. They shared their results and conclusions at the event, organized by parent volunteers. Investigations included the physics of a cartwheel, paper-plane aerodynamics, why plants have different colors, visions of a futuristic city, the importance of surface

tension in our lives, and more.

As an IB school, teachers integrate global issues and perspectives in their units of inquiry throughout the year to encourage critical thinking and open-mindedness.



# schools

## Building Blocks Preschool Nicole Gomez

Flow is an important part of the play cycle, and there has been a lot of it at Building Blocks lately. Perhaps it's the warmer weather, the familiarity with the concepts the children want to play out, or the cognitive leaps the children are making. They engage more quickly and stay in the flow cycle longer, often reaching what is known as "annihilation," or the completion of the play cycle. When the children are immersed in play, they develop critical-thinking skills that are self-driven and relevant to their own inner world. It is important work, and much more effective than learning something through adult instruction.

My favorite effect of flow is seeing children

experimenting continuously, and tolerating disappointment, until they are done. This builds self-esteem and resilience. It takes a good amount of time to reach this stage in the play cycle, which is why we have long periods of unstructured play time built into our day. Facilitating the time, space, and environment for this is what our work as teachers is all about. The children are capable and amazing.

Building Blocks Preschool follows a child-led, play-based curriculum that helps children learn to be creative, competent,



collaborative, and resilient human beings.

Our enrollment for fall is now open. We are making changes to better meet the needs of our community. If you would like to know more, please go to our website at [www.buildingblockscoop.org](http://www.buildingblockscoop.org), or email [teacher\\_nicole@lpcf.org](mailto:teacher_nicole@lpcf.org) to schedule a tour.

Our Family Fun Day is on **Sunday, May 19**, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the Loma Prieta Playfield, 23845 Summit Road. See more details on page 6.



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**Lakeside School Community Foundation  
Foundation News**

Dara Goodheart

The Lakeside School Community Foundation thanks everyone who helped make this year's auction and gala, *A Night in Monte Carlo*, successful. From decorating and organizing, to budgeting and logistics, many people worked to make our biggest fundraiser of the year a fabulous event.

We thank our sponsors, the businesses that donated items for our silent auction, and all the teachers, community members, and parents who donated their time and some wonderful live auction and raffle offerings. A special thank you to the Lakeside School students who helped create some beautiful pieces for this year's auction.

This month's *Dine Out* fundraiser will be at Sushi Confidential in Campbell on **Wednesday, May 22**. Print out a flyer at [www.lakesidescf.org/events/dine-outs](http://www.lakesidescf.org/events/dine-outs) and present it to your server. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to our school. We hope to see you there.

The treasurer position for the Lakeside School Community Foundation is open. If you would like to join our board or volunteer, email [foundation@lakesidelosgatos.org](mailto:foundation@lakesidelosgatos.org). Help Lakeside School students thrive.



Photos by Rose Hession and Kathy Williams

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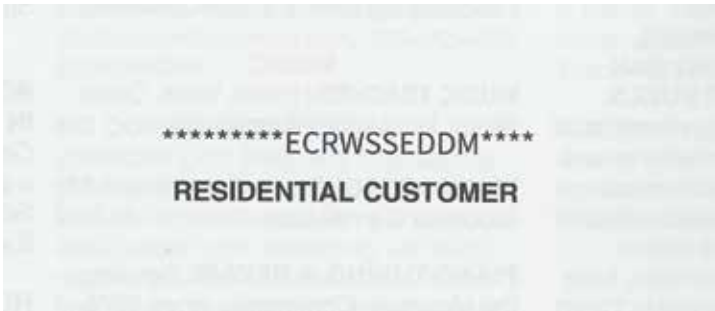
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