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COMPASS

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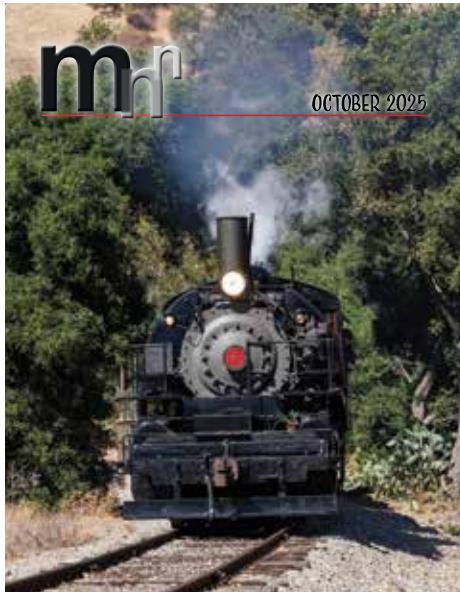
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The train follows the original  
Transcontinental Railroad route  
completed in the 1860s.

We climbed aboard for a  
90-minute ride through the canyon for  
this month's adventure article.

As the train curved through the canyon,  
the rhythmic clatter of wheels over  
track seemed to sync with the pulse of  
the past.

The train is run and managed by  
volunteers with the  
Pacific Locomotive Association,  
that started offering trips on this  
historic rail line in 1988.

Find out more about the  
Niles Canyon Railway on page 20,  
and maybe plan your own adventure.

# events

## Skyland Church Way to Wellness: Movement, Sleep, and Food

Anne Evans

Skyland Church invites the community to three free workshops in Whitaker Hall, at 25100 Skyland Road. These sessions are about pre-holiday self-care, focusing on movement, sleep, and nutrition to help us live a healthy, balanced life. Each workshop features movement, pertinent information, and conversations with your neighbors.

The workshops will be from 9:30 a.m. to noon. Lunch will be served after each workshop.

On **Saturday, October 18**, Jaime Domond from [cupsofyoga.com](http://cupsofyoga.com) will lead gentle movement and breath work to help you relax and feel restored.

On **Saturday, October 25**, Dr. Dennis Evans, a psychiatrist and neurologist, will discuss the links between sleep and well-being.

On **Saturday, November 1**, Elizabeth Borelli from [elizabethborelli.com](http://elizabethborelli.com) will talk about mindful eating, the Mediterranean diet, and easy home cooking.

You can join the workshops in person or on Zoom. To reserve your spot, visit [skylandchurch.com](http://skylandchurch.com), or visit our Facebook page (Skyland Community Church). For more information, call 408-353-1310.

## WELLNESS WORKSHOPS IN THE MOUNTAINS

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Lakeside School Community Foundation

## Harvest Festival

Kathy McKinney

The Lakeside School Community Foundation invites you to the annual Harvest Festival on **Sunday, October 26**, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Lakeside School, 19621 Black Road. Enjoy a scarecrow and a costume competition, cake walk, bake sale, bouncy house, carnival games, pumpkin patch, dunk tank, music, delicious tacos available to purchase, and more. We hope to see you there!



**Lakeside Harvest Festival**

**October 26th, 2025.**  
**11 AM - 3 PM**

**Scarecrow Competition**

**Bounce Houses**

**Carnival Games**

**Tacos**

**Pumpkin Patch**

**Dunk Tank and More!**

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A cartoon raccoon is sitting inside a large orange pumpkin. The pumpkin has "LAKESIDE HARVEST FESTIVAL 2025" written on it. The background of the poster is a warm autumn color with falling leaves.



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A man is mowing a lawn with a green lawnmower.

# events

## Burrell School Vineyards and Winery

### October Events

Rich Leonetti

Join us on **Saturday, October 4**, from 5 to 8 p.m., for Taste of the Mountains: The Pinot Salon. This event will be at the David Bruce Winery, 21439 Bear Creek Road. It will feature Pinot Noir and Chardonnay exclusively from Santa Cruz Mountains wineries. Burrell School Vineyards will be pouring our best vintages. Enjoy seasonal appetizers by Chef Nick Sherman of Trestles. More information and tickets are at [winesofthesantacruzmountains.com](http://winesofthesantacruzmountains.com).

We also will offer a "Sip, Paint, and Taste" event on **Sunday, October 12**, from noon to 3 p.m., at the Painted Cork, located at 2100 Delaware Avenue, Suite B, in Santa Cruz. Enjoy a guided wine-tasting while a professional artist guides you step-by-step to create your own work of art. No experience



is necessary, and all supplies are included. Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned painter, you'll leave with a beautiful masterpiece and great memories. Find out more at [paintedcork.com](http://paintedcork.com).

*Taste of the Mountains*  
THE PINOT SALON



Burrell School  
Vineyards & Winery

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#### Tasting Room Hours

Friday-Sunday 12pm-6pm

24060 Summit Road  
Los Gatos, CA 95033

(408) 353-6290  
[burrellschool.com](http://burrellschool.com)

## Skyland Church

### Celebrating Local Artists

Nancy Jo Lopp

Skyland Community Church provides a welcoming space for mountain artists to share their creativity with the community. For generations, our church has been a place where neighbors gather not only in worship and service, but also in celebration of the many talents that enrich our mountain life.

Throughout the month of October, we welcome you to the Whitaker Hall Gallery at Skyland Church to view Untethered Horizons: Contemporary Painting and Photography. This exhibit features the contemporary work of visual artists Elyse Fairweather and Lesley Louden. The exhibition can be viewed on **Sundays throughout October**, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., or by special request.

Elyse is an abstract realist painter. She explores themes of connection, belonging, and transcendence through her intuitive process of blending spontaneous brushwork with layered textures to evoke authenticity and a sense of freedom. Find out more [elysefairweather.com](http://elysefairweather.com).

Lesley's photographic series examines the relationship between humans and nature,



*Paintings by Elyse Fairweather*

capturing sensory connections to landscapes, wildlife, and seasonal and personal changes while highlighting themes of fragility, resilience, and interdependence. Her website is at [lesleyloudenphotography.com](http://lesleyloudenphotography.com).

Together, their work invites viewers to reflect on the wildness and beauty of rural spaces, emphasizing mindfulness and our shared experience of a powerful connection to the natural world—an act that feels increasingly rare in today's tech-tethered and manufactured world.

Skyland Church remains committed to supporting the arts as a vital part of community life, giving our mountain artists a stage where their work can shine. By opening our doors to art shows and exhibits, Skyland Church honors the beauty, spirit, and history of the Santa Cruz Mountains, expressed through the eyes and hands of those who call this place home. We invite everyone to enjoy the colors, stories, and inspiration that our local artists bring to light.



Photos by Lesley Louden

### **Loma Prieta Museum History Event Soquel Demonstration State Forest**

#### **Roger Mason**

The Loma Prieta Museum welcomes you to learn about the history of the Soquel Demonstration State Forest at a free community history event on **Thursday, October 23**, from 7 to 9 p.m., at the Loma Prieta Elementary School forum. Former SDSF Forest Manager Thomas Sutfin will share the interesting and educational history of this state forest with a picture presentation.

Thomas is a California-licensed registered professional forester. He earned a bachelor's degree in forest management from the University of California, Berkeley, and a master of forestry degree from Oregon State University. Thomas was the first forest manager of the Soquel Demonstration State Forest from 1990 to 2009. Previously, he worked on the Jackson Demonstration State Forest as a timber-sale officer from 1983 to 1985, and as assistant forest manager from 1985 to 1990. In 2009, he retired from CalFire after 30 years of service.

#### **Local history in the New Community Center.** Our team is planning and creating wall displays about local history for the new community center

next to Building Blocks Preschool. These displays will be interesting and educational for students and the community. Our fundraising events will support the display.

If you're looking for local history books, you can purchase a new printing of *A Howling Wilderness* for \$25, and *Harvest of Change* for \$35.



Both books were written by local historian Dr. Stephen Payne. For more information, email [LomaPrietaMuseum@gmail.com](mailto:LomaPrietaMuseum@gmail.com), or call 408-529-0254.

If you would like us to continue offering free community history events, let us know by volunteering or making a tax-deductible donation. For more information or to donate, visit [www.LomaPrietaMuseum.org](http://www.LomaPrietaMuseum.org).



Photo by Mercury Freedom

### **95033 Flea Market**

#### **Carol Gibbons**

The 95033 Flea Market will be on **Sunday, October 12**, at the Building Blocks Preschool parking lot, 23845 Summit Road, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Join us to shop for bargains, vintage items, crafts, and more.

Reserve a selling space for \$25. For more information, email [cmvgibbo@gmail.com](mailto:cmvgibbo@gmail.com). All reservations and payments must be made in advance.

See you at the Flea.

# events

## Las Cumbres Holiday Bazaar

Vicki Perkins

The Las Cumbres Holiday Bazaar returns on **Sunday, November 16**, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Las Cumbres Community Center, 18260 Las Cumbres Road. The bazaar benefits South Skyline Firefighters (Company 29) and the South Skyline FireSafe Council, two local volunteer-based organizations dedicated to wildfire safety in the mountains.

Get a start on your holiday shopping while supporting wildfire safety and local artists. You will find high-quality handmade items, including jewelry, wearable art, purses, all-natural soaps and lotions, wooden bread boards, paintings, pottery, local honey, kitchen accessories, and more.

Enjoy complementary wine tasting from local favorites: Muns and Baccarossa Vineyards. Café Las Cumbres will serve breakfast and lunch along with coffee and tea. The Las Cumbres Pantry features local jam, home-made candy, fudge and other goodies. Children can explore the children's book and game corner, where gently used books, games, and puzzles are available for a voluntary donation.

Returning this year is our online bake sale. Purchase delicious pies, cakes, cookies and other homemade treats on our website, [www.lcbazaar.org](http://www.lcbazaar.org), and pick them up at the bazaar. Check the website often, as new items will be posted in the weeks leading up to the bazaar.

If you would like to volunteer or donate pantry items (homemade jam, honey, etc.), baked goods, or gently-used children's books, games or puzzles, email us at [bazaar@lascumbres.org](mailto:bazaar@lascumbres.org). Thank you for your support.



Earrings by Daya Designs



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## Lago Lomita Vineyards

### Harvest 2025

Robin Porter

The first days of the 2025 harvest have begun. If you've ever driven south to Paso Robles, you've seen thousands of acres of wine grapes growing on flat terrain. They use million-dollar tractors to bring in the grapes. These massive machines have wheels that sit on each side of the vineyard row, or cordon. The operator sits straddling each cordon, 10 feet above the vines.

Here in the Santa Cruz Mountains, the slopes of our vineyards would send that operator on a one-way, quick trip to the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk. Instead, we harvest our vineyards by hand.

Harvest work starts weeks before the grapes are picked. We test the grapes with a kitchen-table chemistry set, logging key parameters like sugar content and acid levels into spreadsheets, which we send to our winemakers. Each winemaker tells us when to harvest their blocks. The conversation usually goes something like, "that block is at least a couple of weeks out," or "start bringing the crew together, it's in the next couple of days." We harvest our five vineyards from late August until late October.

The type of grape also dictates when to harvest. Our Italian varietals are first to bud break but the last to harvest, while our French winegrapes, such as Pinot Noir and Cab Franc, have a shorter growing season. They are often the last to bud break but the first to harvest.

Once the harvest date arrives for each block, we head to the vineyard the night before, walking up and down the rows to open the bird netting. The netting is held in place with 17,500 popsicle sticks. We pull each stick to expose the "fruiting zone." It is not possible to take the netting off completely, as the vines have grown into it. This will be done after the completion of harvest.

The crews arrive at 4 a.m. We head into the vineyards in the dark of night, wearing headlamps and carrying pruners and five-gallon buckets. We usually harvest from 4 to 10 a.m. Grape quality is better if they aren't cooked in the August heat. It's better if the crew isn't cooked in the August heat, as well.

Once harvested, we load the grapes into bins that each hold 1,000 pounds of grapes. Mark uses the track loader to lift these into the back of our pickup. The bins are strapped into the truck, and it's off to each winery to offload and weigh them.

Be careful when driving in the mountains during harvest. There are a lot of farmers up here bringing in tons of fruit, and we could be around any corner.

After harvesting grapes for 18 hours straight, we are exhausted. And yet, this is just the beginning of our two-month harvest. Savor this the next time you take a sip of Santa Cruz Mountain wine.



Photo by Mark Porter

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Emily Asheghian

Tech & Teens is a new mountain program launched by the C.T. English LEOs Club to provide technology assistance to seniors. If you are a senior citizen looking for help with your phone or computer, our volunteers will be in Room 21 at C.T. English Middle School, 23800 Summit Road, from 2 to 3 p.m., on the following Wednesdays: **October 1, 15, and 29, November 12, and December 3.** Refreshments will also be provided.



### Santa Cruz Public Libraries

The Santa Cruz Public Libraries are conducting a survey to gather community feedback on their services, programs, and opportunities. If you are a library user and/or a supporter, your input is vital to this process. The survey will be open through **Sunday, October 12**. To participate, scan this QR code.



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October 2025

### Mr. T's Miracle: **The Cat Who Refused to Give Up**

Summit Veterinary Hospital

In veterinary medicine, we often say that healing takes both science and heart. Every now and then, a patient comes along who reminds us just how powerful hope, compassion, and second chances can be.

Meet Mr. T, a young, vibrant cat whose journey has inspired everyone in our clinic. Mr. T's story began with a tragic accident: he was hit by a car and rushed to an emergency-veterinary clinic. The damage to one of his hind legs was severe. Faced with difficult choices, the emergency team gave the owner two options: amputate the leg or consider humane euthanasia.

It was a heartbreak moment. Mr. T's owner was devastated. It felt too soon to say goodbye to this young cat full of life, but the cost of surgery and the uncertainty of the outcome were overwhelming. Amputation felt like the only way forward, but something in her heart told her there had to be another way.

Desperate for hope, she sought a second opinion. That's how Mr. T found his way to our clinic and into the care of Dr. Fahimeh Zibaee.

After a thorough examination and review of Mr. T's injuries, Dr. Z saw a possibility that had been overlooked. The leg was badly injured, but it wasn't beyond saving. With a less invasive surgery and intensive supportive care, there was a real chance Mr. T could keep all four paws firmly on the ground.

We began treatment immediately. For two weeks, Mr. T became part of our clinic family. He received daily bandage changes, round-the-clock monitoring, pain management, and more cuddles than we could count. Despite the trauma he'd endured, his spirit never wavered. He purred through treatments, batted at toys from his kennel, and charmed every team member he met. His determination was palpable.



And then came the day we'd all been hoping for: Mr. T stood on all four legs — and walked.

The moment was nothing short of magical. Against all odds, Mr. T went home on all four paws, his leg saved, his spark intact, and his bond with his owner stronger than ever.

His story is a testament to the power of second opinions, the importance of compassionate care, and the unbreakable spirit of our animal companions. Mr. T reminded us that sometimes, hope is the best medicine of all.

At Summit Veterinary Hospital and Kennels, we believe every pet deserves a chance — and every family deserves support in making the best decision for their beloved companion. Mr. T's journey isn't just his own; it's a reminder to all of us that with a little creativity, a lot of care, and a whole lot of heart, miracles really can happen.

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Dr. Zibaee, DVM

## Possible Changes to Capital-Gains Tax on Home Sales

Keith Kanady

The “No Tax on Home Sales Act,” recently introduced in Congress by Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene, has the real-estate world on alert—for good reason. If passed, it could reshape the housing landscape, particularly in high-cost states like California.

Currently, homeowners who sell their primary residence can exclude up to \$250,000 in capital gains if filing as a single individual, or up to \$500,000 if married. While these thresholds once covered most sales, home values in many areas have far outpaced them, leaving some longtime owners facing thousands of dollars in tax liability when they sell.

In Los Gatos, for example, a home purchased for \$300,000 in 2000 may now be worth \$1 million. That’s a \$700,000 increase in value, and under today’s rules, at least \$200,000 of that could be subject to capital-gains tax. For older homeowners looking to downsize, relocate, or simply cash out their equity, this tax burden can be a serious barrier to making a move.



It’s not just about taxes. It’s about inventory. The real-estate industry has long argued that outdated capital-gains exclusions are keeping high-equity homeowners “stuck” in homes they no longer want or need. In tight markets like California, where demand outpaces supply, freeing up this housing stock could add much-needed inventory. But the implications are broader: unlocking these homes could also increase mobility, reduce reliance on home-equity loans, and help retirees transition more easily.

According to Cotality, nearly 30 percent of California home sales in recent years exceeded the \$500,000 capital-gains threshold, compared to less than five percent in 18 other states. The National

Association of Realtors estimates about 10 percent of homeowners across the U.S. are affected. That number is rising in step with home values.

The bigger question may be: is it time to modernize the tax code? The \$500,000 capital-gains exclusion for married couples hasn’t changed since 1997. If it had been indexed to inflation, it would be over \$1.13 million today.

Whether the exemption is eliminated or simply raised, change seems inevitable. And with it, we could witness a dramatic shift. Older homeowners might sell long-held properties, empty nesters could downsize without undue tax burdens, and more inventory could become available in a market that desperately needs it.

If the bill gains traction, California and similar states could experience a wave of listings from longtime homeowners who’ve been waiting for the right moment to move. For professionals and policymakers alike, understanding these trends will be crucial in preparing for what could be a major reshuffling of the housing market.

This could be a game changer, especially for retirees.

**Keith Kanady is**  
a licensed real-estate broker  
with Compass  
(DRE 00953975)





## Los Gatos Creek Watershed Collaboration Project Updates

### Santa Clara County FireSafe Council

Several years ago, the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council partnered with the San Jose Water Company, Santa Clara County Parks, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District and smaller, private landowners, to form the Los Gatos Creek Watershed Collaboration. CalFire has awarded this group two forest health grants, totaling more than \$14 million, to enhance the forest's resilience to wildfires in proximity to homes in the Los Gatos Creek watershed. The goal of these grant projects is to selectively thin dense tree stands and underlying brush to lessen the risk of wildfire, remove diseased trees to improve growing conditions, and expand existing shaded-fuel breaks.

The first grant provided funding to treat 938 acres, work that concluded in March. The second grant is being used to treat an additional 840 acres, with work scheduled to be completed in 2027.

**West Branch Project.** Work is continuing



off Montevina Road for the west branch of the forest health grant collaboration. Hard-fought ground on the El Sereno Trail, with a 100-year history of no fire, has made the work slow and tedious, but the end result is turning out nicely. We face a similar situation on the Serenity Trail off the El Sereno Trail in Los Gatos, which has a very heavy fuel load. We are currently treating an average of 20 to 25 acres per month.

**South Branch Project.** We began work on the south branch of the collaboration area last month. We started at San Jose Water property off Sears Road and Wrights Station Road. This work is in steep terrain and is being completed with a combination of BurnBot machines and manual labor by subcontracted tree service companies.

For more information, visit [scffiresafe.org/projects/lgwatershedhealth](http://scffiresafe.org/projects/lgwatershedhealth).



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# people

75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

## Andrew and Geneva Radonich

Jesse Kimbrel

A lot can happen in 75 years. And it has, especially for Andrew (Andy) and Geneva (Jo) Radonich, who recently celebrated their 75th wedding anniversary on August 20, 2025.

The lifelong Los Gatos and Santa Cruz Mountain residents originally tied the knot at the First Presbyterian Church, followed by a reception at the Little Village Inn in Los Gatos on August, 20, 1950. Andrew was 23 years old, and Geneva was 19. Following their walk down the aisle, the couple escaped to Lake Tahoe for their honeymoon, a place they would visit many times over the next 75 years.

While they've always enjoyed each other's company, Andrew and Geneva didn't occupy a quiet house long after their summer wedding. In 1951, their first child Sandi joined the fun, followed by Scott in 1952. Andrea was born in 1956, and then finally Nada in 1960, putting a bow on their first decade of marriage.

Life moves pretty fast with four children, and fortunately the infrastructure around town was working hard to keep up with Jo and Andy's blossoming household. In 1957, the Highway 17 bypass through Los Gatos was completed, making traffic through town more manageable, especially during the summer months when beach traffic was at its worst. Does that sound familiar? At the time, the construction of Highway 17 couldn't



Andrew and Geneva on their wedding day



Jo and Andy as a young couple

come fast enough, as the option for a train ride from Los Gatos to Santa Cruz was abandoned ten years before the couple got married.

If you're wondering why traffic still seems to be an issue when navigating through Los Gatos on the weekends, it's because in the decades that followed, Jo and Andy's four children started having families of their own. Jo and Andy now have 10 grandchildren, 23 great-grandchildren, and two great-great grandchildren. This was a well thought-out plan. Now, at ages 98 and 95, they have no shortage of rides to the beach, even though they only live a few miles away.

After 75 years of marriage, how do two people go about celebrating their diamond anniversary? Jo and Andy enjoyed the company of their children who delivered lunch, champagne, chocolates, and cake. What type of cake, you ask? As tempting as it was to see if they still had a slice of their six-tiered wedding cake in the freezer, Icing on the Cake in Los Gatos did the trick.



Jo and Andy on their 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary



Enjoying a tropical vacation

## Geneva Helgoe Married To Andrew Radonich

Geneva M. Helgoe was escorted to the flower bedecked altar of the First Presbyterian church by her brother, Al Helgoe, to become the bride of Andrew J. Radonich yesterday afternoon.

The Rev. Nottley Hammack officiated at the 5 o'clock ceremonies. The bride wore an ivory satin and chantilly lace gown styled with long fitted sleeves, a scalloped neckline and a full skirt.

Her sole jewelry was a string of pearls. The fingertip length ivory net veil was secured by a crown of orange blossoms and lace. The bride carried a bouquet of white orchids and bouvardia.

Nona Helgoe, the bride's sister, was maid of honor. Her forest green gown was accented by a spray of yellow daisies in her hair and another in her hand.

Bridesmaids Jo Ann Rapcock and Audrey Helm wore gowns of apple green. They also carried yellow daisies and wore them in their hair.

Little Candice Blatnick completed the ensemble. Acting as flower girl, she wore a pale yellow gown styled like the bridesmaids'.

Peter Radonich, the benedict's brother, was best man. Ushers were Steve Seku, the bridegroom's cousin, and Bill Radonich, the bridegroom's brother.

Gladioli wired to magnolia branches formed the altar decorations. Gladioli tied with white

ribbon adorned each pew.

Mrs. Geneva Helgoe attended her daughter's wedding attired in a pale yellow crepe formal with cocoa accessories. She wore an orchid corsage. The bridegroom's mother, Mrs. William Radonich, wore a forest green formal, also with cocoa accessories and an orchid corsage.

Following the ceremony, a reception was held at the Little Village inn, which was filled with yellow and white Esther Reid daisies. A miniature bride and bridegroom stepped from a bell atop the six-tiered cake.

The new Mrs. Radonich wore a forest green faille suit with white accessories to go away in. The couple chose Lake Tahoe for their honeymoon.

Upon their return the newlyweds will be at home at N. Santa Cruz avenue.

The bride is the daughter of Mrs. Geneva Helgoe of 36 Bruce avenue, Los Gatos. The former Miss Helgoe has one brother, Ashfield Helgoe, and a sister, Nona Helgoe.

She is a graduate of local schools and is employed by the First National Bank of Los Gatos.

Andrew Radonich is the son of Mr. and Mrs. William Radonich of Montgomery road, Los Gatos. His sister is Nancy Radonich. He too is the product of Los Gatos schools and works with the Bush Trucking company in San Jose.

**Loma Prieta Club**  
**Four Scholarships Awarded**  
**Patti Hughes**

Thanks to everyone in our community who supported the annual Loma Prieta Club Picnic and fundraiser. With your support, the Loma Prieta Club was able to award four scholarships to graduating mountain students this year. We appreciate everyone who bought raffle or luncheon tickets, made personal donations, or contributed volunteer time.

Let me tell you about these four extraordinary students whom we added to our list of 45 previous scholarship recipients.

Caitriona Sullivan is a super-sharp debater, and an awesome volleyball player and coach. You may have seen her this past summer working at the drive-thru window at McDonald's, along with everything else



**Caitriona Sullivan and Patti Hughes**



**Alberto Rios Sandoval**

she had going. Caitriona is interested in economics, politics, and business management. She plans to attend the University of Surrey in England in September.

Alberto Rios Sandoval will be starting at West Valley College to complete his first two years of requirements before he transfers to a California State University. An alumnus of Lakeside Elementary School, Alberto won a special award when he graduated from C.T. English, and now leaves LGHS with a second one. He is interested in history, business and psychology as possible majors, and he may consider a future in teaching.

Helena Cramer is our first "Above and Beyond" Community Service Award recipient. She not only won the eighth-grade LPC/CTE award for community service in 2020/21, but she also logged more hours of volunteer work as a high-school student than any other applicant that we've ever had apply. She will be

attending U.C. Santa Cruz, majoring in marine science. She and Claire Galbo, a 2024 Scholarship recipient, are both volunteers at the Seymour Marine Discovery Center in Santa Cruz. They will be missed when their college classes begin.

Kyle Eldridge is our first National Merit Finalist applicant. Kyle has a 4.45 GPA, and an all "A" and "A+" transcript with over 12 Honors and AP courses, including five in his senior year. An accomplished software programmer, he wrote most of the vision code for the LGHS Robotics Team's competition last year. What's extraordinarily special — and incredible — is that Kyle is legally blind. To excel as Kyle has done compelled our committee to create a new award for him. He is our first "Scholar of Distinction."

The Loma Prieta Club is proud to support our mountain high school students. Beginning in 1997 with one \$250 scholarship, we have now awarded a total of \$85,250 to 49 graduates. As they say, "It takes a village." Thanks, village!



**From left: Kyle Eldridge, Helena Cramer, Patti Hughes, and Caitriona Sullivan**

**Rick Dentoni  
Cristi Dentoni-Martin**

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**21386 SUNNYSIDE ROAD**  
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3 Beds | 3 Baths  
2,889 SF Living | 11,356 SF Lot



**24035 STAGE STOP WAY**  
Los Gatos | **\$1,588,000**  
3 Beds | 2.5 Baths  
2,889 SF Living | 2.5 Acres



**489 NORTHRIDGE DRIVE**  
Scotts Valley | **\$1,538,000**  
3 Beds | 2.5 Baths  
2,401 SF Living | 0.74 Acres



**24751 HUTCHINSON ROAD**  
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**20080 GIST ROAD**  
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**NEW LISTING**

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# calendar

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### **Wednesday, October 1**

Teen volunteers help seniors with technology issues, from 2 to 3 p.m., in Room 21 at C.T.E. Middle School.

### **Thursday, October 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.

and Firewise Community meeting is at 7 p.m. at Skyland Church.

### **Sunday, October 12**

The 95033 Flea Market will be at Building Blocks Preschool, 23845 Summit Road, from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

### **Wednesday, October 15**

Teen volunteers help seniors with technology issues, from 2 to 3 p.m., in Room 21 at C.T.E. Middle School.

### **Saturday, October 18**

Skyland Church hosts a wellness workshop with Jaime Domond in Whitaker Hall, 25100 Skyland Road, from 9:30 a.m. to noon. For information and to register, visit [skylandchurch.com](http://skylandchurch.com), or call 408-353-1310.

### **Sunday, October 19**

Skyland Firewise Community work day. For more information email [skylandfirewise@gmail.com](mailto:skylandfirewise@gmail.com).

### **Thursday, October 23**

The Loma Prieta Museum presents the history of the Soquel Demonstration State Forest with former forest manager Thomas Sutfin, from 7 to 9 p.m., at the Loma Prieta Elementary School forum.

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.

### **Saturday, October 25**

Skyland Church hosts a wellness workshop with Dr. Dennis Evans in Whitaker Hall, 25100 Skyland Road, from 9:30 a.m. to noon. For information and to register, visit [skylandchurch.com](http://skylandchurch.com) or call 408-353-1310.

### **Sunday, October 26**

The Lakeside School Community Foundation hosts its annual Harvest Festival, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Lakeside School, 19621 Black Road. Enjoy carnival games, a pumpkin patch, music, and food.

### **Wednesday, October 29**

Teen volunteers help seniors with technology issues, from 2 to 3 p.m., in Room 21 at C.T.E. Middle School.

### **Saturday, November 1**

Skyland Church hosts a wellness workshop in Whitaker Hall, 25100 Skyland Road, from 9:30 a.m. to noon. For information and to register, visit [skylandchurch.com](http://skylandchurch.com), or call 408-353-1310.

## ON-GOING CLASSES AND MEETINGS

### **Mondays**

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

Outdoor yoga on the mountain, 10:15 to 11:30 a.m. Email [anouk@anoukyoga.com](mailto:anouk@anoukyoga.com) for information.

### **Tuesdays**

Town walking group meets at 9:30 a.m. at the Adult Recreation Center, 123 Main Street in Los Gatos.

Vinyasa Flow from 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.

### **Wednesdays**

Vinyasa Flow from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Book at [www.cupsofyoga.com](http://www.cupsofyoga.com), or call Jaime at 831-200-8802.

### **Thursdays**

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

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

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

### **Fridays**

Mountain Farmers Market from 2:30 to 6:30 p.m., on the Loma Prieta Playfield.

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

### **Saturdays**

Summit Speakers meets 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 meets from 9 to 11 a.m. at the Loma Prieta Elementary School field. More information at [summitfrisbee.org](http://summitfrisbee.org).

### **Sundays**

Summit Ultimate Frisbee meets from 9 to 11 a.m. at the Loma Prieta Elementary School field. More information at [summitfrisbee.org](http://summitfrisbee.org).

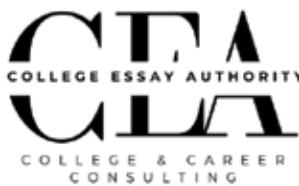
Vinyasa Flow from 9 to 10 a.m., and Gentle Flow 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Book at [www.cupsofyoga.com](http://www.cupsofyoga.com), or call 831-200-8802.

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# exploring

**Views. Trails. Open space.**

## Mount Umunhum

Neil Wiley

Mount Umunhum is 3,486 feet high. It may not be as tall as Loma Prieta, but it is the centerpiece of Midpeninsula Open Space's largest preserve with more than 19,000 acres of grasslands, chaparral, bay and oak forests, deep ravines, and wilderness.

The views from the peak are exceptional. You can see other mountains, including a distant Mount Diablo and our neighbor Loma Prieta. Better yet, the highway to the peak is the easiest and safest one I've ever seen. It is breathtaking but not terrifying, even for bikers.

If you want exercise, you can walk up to the summit from the Bald Mountain parking area. Although it is a 3.5-mile hike with an elevation of more than 1,000 feet, the grades are less than 10 percent and most of the trail is in shade.

For people who like walking down more than up, bring two cars with a partner. Park one car at the lower parking area, drive the other car up to the summit, walk down together, then drive up to get the other car. (I've done it. That's why I can still walk mountains in my eighties.)

Want to walk more trails? For a shorter hike, park in the Bald Mountain parking area. Cross the road to the Mt. Umunhum Trail for a 1.3-mile relatively flat and shady walk to see the views from Guadalupe Creek Overlook.

For more alternatives, take Barlow Road from the Mount Umunhum Trail intersection 3/10 of a mile up-trail from the Bald Mountain parking area. Barlow Road takes you 1.5 miles to the Woods Trail intersection. A right turn on Woods Trail brings you 2.8 miles to the Jacques Ridge parking lot at the bottom of Mount Umunhum Road and Hicks Road. A turn left meets Limekiln and Kennedy trails at 3.6 miles. The Limekiln Trail goes to Lexington Reservoir; the Kennedy Trail takes you to Kennedy Road.

Another option is a short 0.7-mile hike that starts behind the Bald Mountain parking area to Bald Mountain.

The parking lots have bathrooms, but I didn't see any drinking water available. The trail between the Summit parking lot and East Summit is for hikers only.

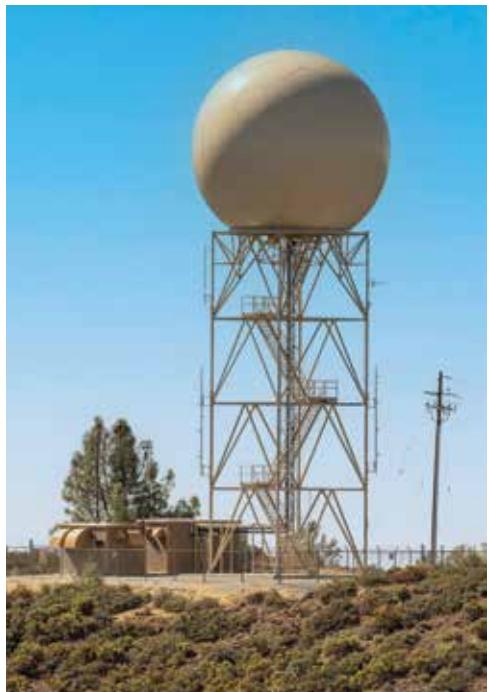
Bikers are allowed on the multi-use trail and the road. Be careful and share the road.

In the event of an emergency, a pad next to the Summit parking area is available for helicopters.

Hopefully, the future may offer trails from Mount Umunhum south through now-closed areas to Lake Elsman, Summit



Road, Wright's Station, and Soda Springs Road. This would give us direct access to the park without going through Los Gatos. Future trails in the southeast section of Sierra Azul could link with Nisene Marks State Park



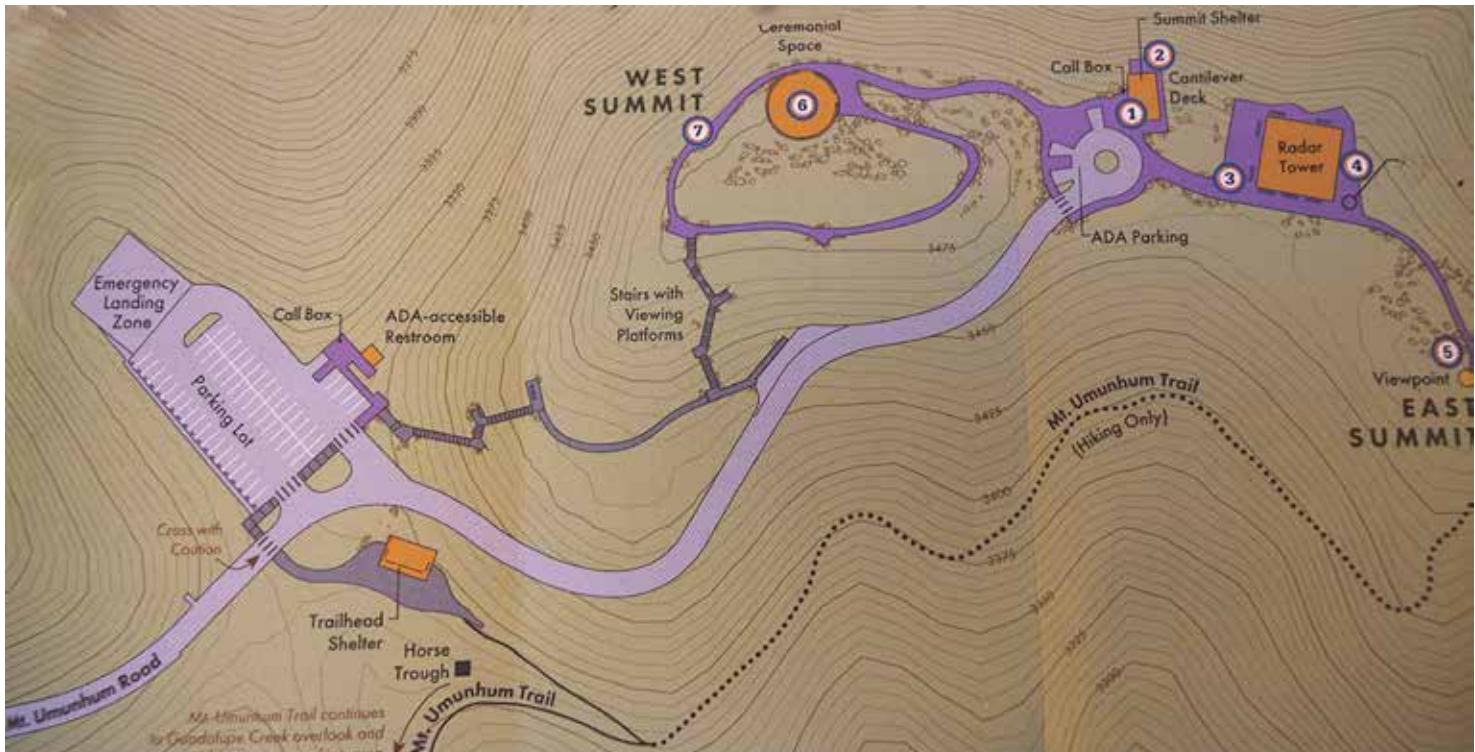


and Monterey Bay.

**Directions.** The destination for your GPS is at the corner of Hicks and 18200 Mt. Umunhum roads. One way is via Highway 85 south from Los Gatos to Camden. Follow Camden for about 1.6 miles. Turn right on Hicks Road. After many curves, you reach Mt. Umunhum Road in about 6.3 miles. Continue up Mt. Umunhum Road for 5.3 miles to the summit parking lot.

If you have handicapped passengers, children, or both, you can deliver them up to a smaller lot for handicapped, then return your car to the main parking lot. Your passengers can wait for you while you climb up 193 stairs. Think of it as good exercise!

Happy trails!



# adventures

## Niles Canyon Railway

Kathy McKinney

For this month's adventure, we climbed aboard the Niles Canyon Railway steam train in Fremont, for a 90-minute train ride through history.

The Niles Canyon Railway is a heritage railway that runs on the first transcontinental railroad alignment. Completed in 1869, this rail line through the Niles Canyon was one of the earliest to be built in California, providing the first rail connection between San Francisco Bay and the rest of the nation.

Operated entirely by volunteers, the train runs between Sunol and the Niles district of Fremont, with future plans (and dreams) to extend the line to Pleasanton. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The non-profit Pacific Locomotive Association leased the right of way from Alameda County and began working to reconstruct the track in 1987. The Niles Canyon Railway ran its first passenger train from Sunol in 1988.

We boarded the train at 10:30 a.m. sharp on a Sunday. You can choose your seat in an historic, 100+ year old enclosed or open-air rail car. (Seating is first-come, first-served, so it's best to arrive early for the most options.)

We left the Sunol station and wound through the Niles Canyon along the Alameda Creek, crossing over two historic bridges. While they have been modernized over the years, the bridges still use the original sandstone piers and abutments built in 1866. Along the track, telegraph poles with glass insulators capping them, like so many blackbirds, still stand every few hundred feet.

Once the train is underway, you can walk the length of the train, purchase drinks, hot dogs, and other snacks, or even bring your own picnic. There are two restrooms on board. This is a popular activity for families.



I think the children on board may have outnumbered the adults.

After about 40 minutes, we arrived at Niles, where the conductor and crew detached the steam engine from one end of the train to transfer it to the other end for the return trip. It gave everyone a chance to walk the length of the train and snap some pictures.

Union Pacific still runs commercial rail operations through Niles Canyon, but they run on a newer line that parallels the Niles Canyon Railway line. That line is also used by the Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) commuter train that runs between San Jose and Stockton. The commuter train sped by while we waited in Niles for the return trip.

After we returned to the Sunol Station, we drove 11 minutes down Niles Canyon Road to visit the Niles Depot Museum. There is currently a large display about the contributions the Chinese made to the Transcontinental Railroad, as well as two large model-railroad layouts. These model railroads recreate the features of communities along the original railroad route, with representations of how the area looked in the 1950s and how it looks today, from Sacramento to the Bay Area.

The historic town of Niles is also worth a wander. There are antique shops, restaurants, and bars, as well as plenty of historic charm.

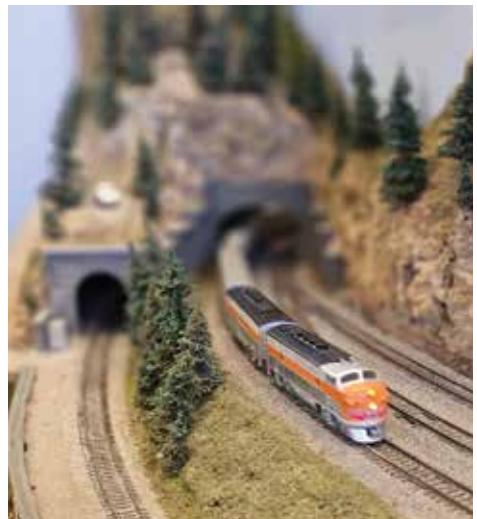
The train runs on the second and third weekends of every month, from March through October. This month, it will be open Saturdays and Sundays, **October 11 and 12**, and **October 18 and 19**.

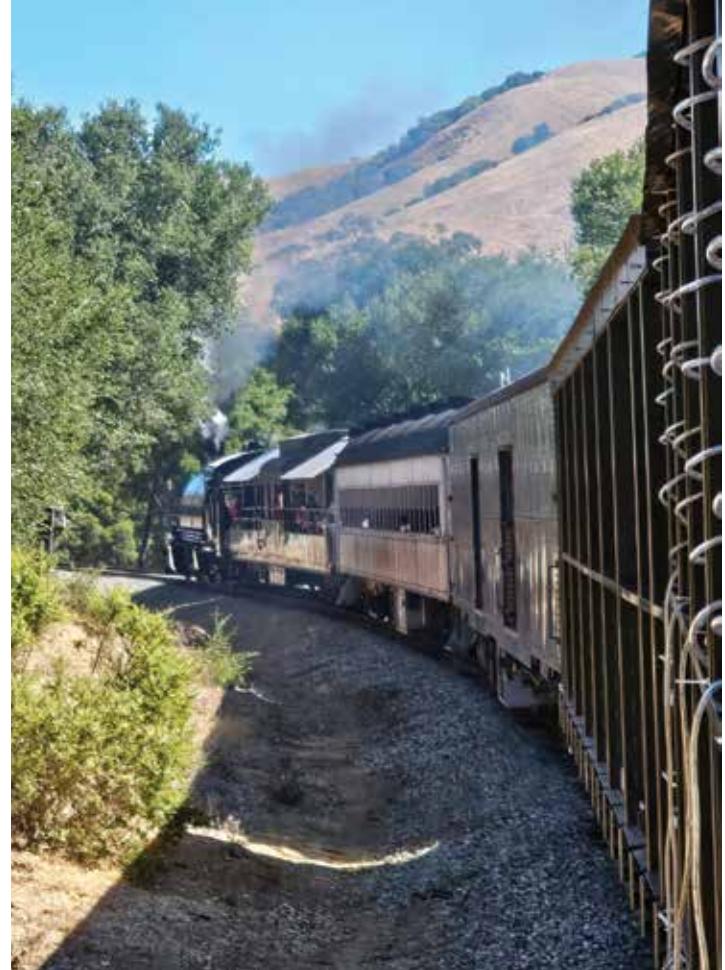
If you want to get a head start on your holiday season activities, they run a popular Train of Lights in November and December. They promise refreshments, music, and plenty of holiday lights, decorations, and cheer. The



catch is that tickets go on sale at 10 a.m. on **Saturday, October 4**, and according to the volunteer we spoke to, they sell out for the entire season within 90 minutes.

The Niles Canyon Railway Sunol Station is located at 6 Kilkare Road in Fremont, about 45 minutes from Summit and Highway 17 (barring traffic). For more information and tickets, visit [www.ncry.org](http://www.ncry.org).





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COMPASS

# history

## The Adams Family

Deb Staab

When most people think of the Adams Family, it conjures up images of Gomez, Morticia, Wednesday, Pugsley, and cousin Itt, the creepy fictional Addams family from television and movie fame. However, the pioneering Adams family of the Summit area was very real and made many contributions to the Santa Cruz Mountain community.

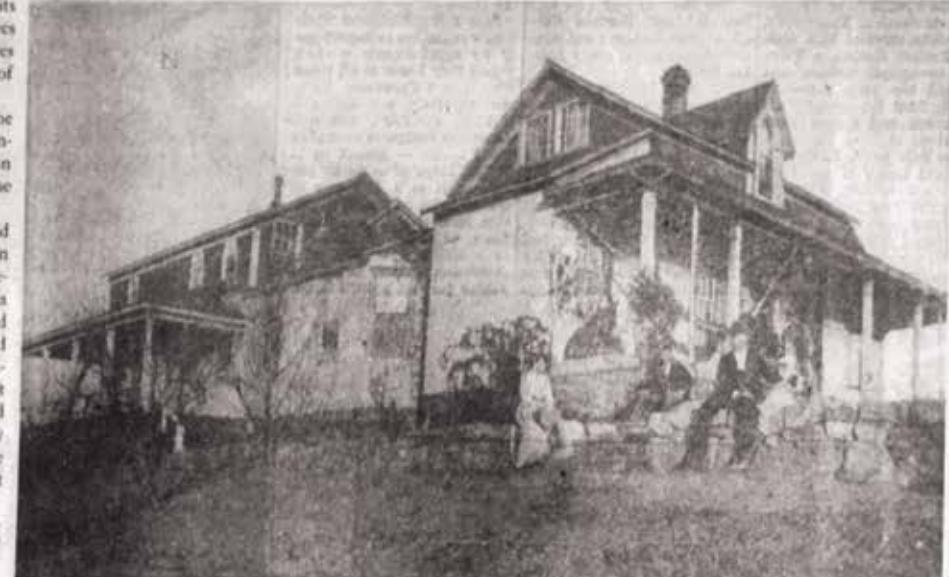
Edward Francis Adams purchased property in the Skyland area around 1880 from Professor Charles H. Allen, principal of the San Jose State Normal School (SJSNS). Another neighbor was H.B. Nortons, the vice-principal of SJSNS. Edward was initially a textbook salesman who spent a lot of time away from home and his family, including his second wife Delia and six children. To ensure that they were well-cared for, Edward outfitted the ranch with two horses, a low-riding buckboard, a Jersey cow, and two dogs. He also planted fruit trees and grapes.

Edward forayed into the political arena long enough to help draft a new California state constitution and to help George C. Perkins win the governorship. By 1892, Edward had retired from politics and quit his sales job, planning to spend more time at home and start his own business. Sadly, the national economic panic of 1893 restricted his ambitions and left the Adams family struggling to weather the hard times.



Edward Adams

## Picture From The Past



**DOUBLE MOUNTAIN RANCH HOUSES** — This photo shows the separately built, back-to-back ranch houses built by Edward Francis Adams, founder of the San Francisco Commonwealth Club and editor of the *Chronicle*, on Adams road near Skyland school. The original home, left, was built in 1880 and the other residence was constructed later with the use of Chinese coolie labor who also played a part in construction of the railway through Santa Cruz mountains and the building of early California. Seated right is Frank Adams, now of Berkeley, son of the ranch's

founder and father of Francis (Fran) Adams, 18154 Bancroft avenue, Monte Sereno, donor of this photo. Rock retaining wall gives a New England appearance. Until recently the ranch was run by the late William Adams, brother of Frank. The original 110 acres is still intact and owned by the Adams family. Many of the original wagons are still there. Fran visited the ranch as a boy from San Francisco and recently wired the home for electricity. Use of old time local photographs is appreciated by the Times-Observer.

The rough economic patch also triggered Edward's pioneering notion to collaborate with other fruit growers in the area, and together they developed the process of cooperative marketing of dried fruit. He helped establish the Santa Clara County Fruit Exchange, and then the local Highland Grange. The Grange was built on Edward's land and provided education and support for farmers in the Summit area. Though the group was short-lived, they exposed the devious works of the middlemen who manipulated prices and misused their power for personal gain. For example, in 1894,

men were caught dumping hundreds of watermelons in the San Francisco Bay to increase prices.

In 1897, Edward took a job as agriculture editor at the *San Francisco Chronicle*, closed the Grange, and moved to San Francisco. A few grange members formed a Farmer's Union. Edward went on to publish several books and to co-found the Commonwealth Club, a civic-minded organization still in operation today. Edward died in 1929 at age 89. Adams Road and Adams Ridge were named after the Edward Francis Adams family.



## Thirty Years Ago in the MNN

Kathy McKinney

Here's what was making news in the Santa Cruz Mountains 30 years ago, at least according to the September/October 1995 issue of *Mountain Network News*.

The county had just approved the pedestrian overpass on Summit Road, near Loma Prieta and C.T. English. Some residents shared that they thought the \$600,000 project was a waste of money, but I think most of us would agree it has improved safety.

A proposed golf course and country club, to be located in what is now the Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve, prompted residents to form the Save Lexington Hillsides public-interest group. The golf course would have used approximately 25 million gallons of water to establish the golf turf, and 400,000 gallons of water a day to maintain it. Concerns about the environmental impact of the golf course in the Los Gatos Creek watershed eventually ended the development.

The Loma Prieta Recreation Department reported that 35 parents attended a meeting to support the creation of Building Blocks Preschool, which started holding classes in October 1995. Building Blocks has grown and evolved, and continues to serve mountain families today.

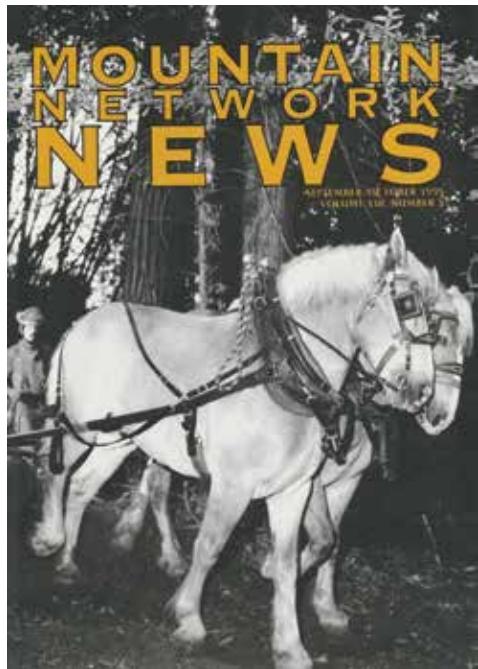
We had a well-organized recreation

department in the mountains 30 years ago. They offered classes and open gym times for aerobics, volleyball, country line dancing, basketball, art, belly dancing, tutoring, soccer, and more.

One article discussed the options for getting television in the mountains. (When we moved here in 1991, we had a rooftop antenna that picked up two very grainy channels when the weather cooperated.) Cable television was being laid in the Villa Del Monte neighborhood and Summit Road, from Old Santa Cruz Highway to Loma Prieta Avenue. The other option was satellite. (There are still a few old satellite dishes standing unused on mountain properties today.)

Another article shared how two loggers from Washington state demonstrated horse logging in the Soquel Demonstration State Forest. In five weeks, they pulled about 70,000 board feet of lumber using 2,000-pound Belgian and Percheron draft horses. Thom Sutfin, who will be sharing the history of the SDSF at a Loma Prieta Museum event this month (see page 7 for more information), organized tours for the media, neighbors, and students to see the advantages and disadvantages of different logging techniques. Neil Wiley, who attended one of the tours, shared that a highlight was watching a three-horse team pull a giant log at a full gallop.

Many of our loyal MNN advertisers were represented in the magazine 30 years ago. They include Dr. Brent Lay, Silver Mountain Vineyards, Summit Veterinary Hospital, Rick Dentoni with Automatic Gate Installations, realtor Nancy Cole, Summit Store, Deb Arneson, and Triple O Systems. We thank them for their continued support of the *Mountain Network News* throughout the years.



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## Steelhead Trout in Zayante Creek

Bruce Sudweeks

I live close to Zayante Creek, and my closest neighbors are steelhead trout. When my wife and I were hunting for property to build a house, I came across a house for sale. I took a 3/4 mile walk past a gate to check out the property. When I got home I told my wife I had found our new home. She asked me about the house and I told her that I stopped walking when I saw the steelhead trout in the stream. Turns out that we liked the house as well.

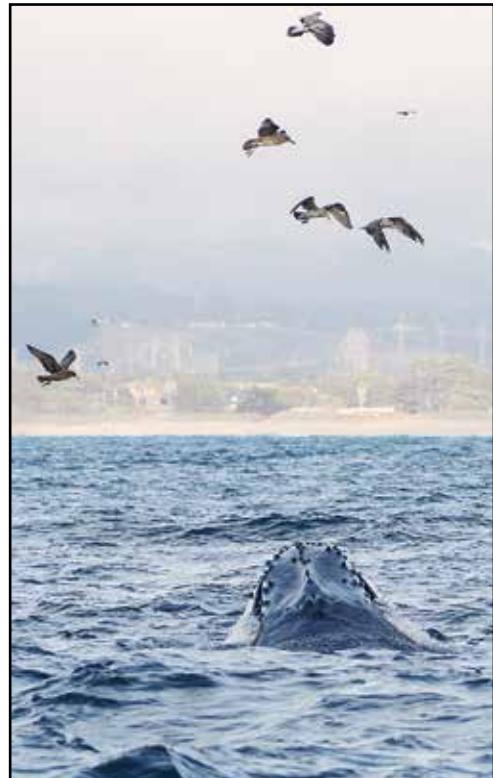
I am amazed by the tenacity of this fish swimming from the ocean up the San Lorenzo River into Zayante Creek. This photo of a steelhead trout surfacing took a fair bit of patience on my part.



## Whales at Moss Landing

Photos by Marina Kudrya

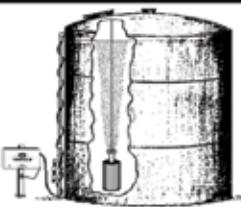
Last month, Marina took a sunset whale-watching tour with a small group of people, led by Monterey-based photographer Joe Platko. They set off from the Moss Landing Harbor and saw a lot of whales, colonies of sea lions chasing fish, and sea birds, sometimes all of them feeding in one place. She described it as a cacophony of sea creatures.



**Avocets at Shoreline**  
Photos by Mercury Freedom



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# Schools



## Loma Prieta Education Fund How KEEP Funding Decisions Really Happen

Blyth Strachman

Have you wondered how LPEF decides what programs to fund? Or what happens when our KEEP campaign falls short? Here's how it unfolded last year.

**Teachers' Wish Lists.** Every spring, Superintendent Kevin Grier asks teachers at Loma Prieta Elementary and C.T. English Middle schools what they need most for next year. Once teachers give their wish lists, Grier goes through any programs LPEF has funded before to see if the district can now cover them with other money.

He shared, "My goal is for LPEF to fund the 'nice to haves' above what we should have (funded by the parcel tax) and must have (from the general fund). We also have other items that fit under specific grants for the coming year."

Last March, Grier brought a list of priorities to the LPEF board. Developmental PE at Loma and K-8 art were top priorities, so tier 1 was set at \$234,050. That covers the cost of salary and benefits for two full-time teachers. Tier 2 was a 12th teacher at Loma, bringing the total need to \$349,000. The table shows the LPEF funding priorities next to the items that were funded by parcel taxes.

**2025-26 Funding Priorities.** At the same time, a few programs shifted because of staffing realities. Spanish was trimmed back to just eighth grade, when our teacher realized that the number of classes wasn't sustainable. Science at Loma changed too, as our pull-out science teacher returned to the regular classroom. The science lab remains for other teachers to use.

Math intervention at C.T. English faced scheduling challenges as a pull-out program, so the administration decided to incorporate

LPEF	Parcel Tax
Art (Loma & CT) PE (Loma) 12th Teacher (Loma)	11th Teacher (Loma) Music Teacher (Loma) Counseling 3 days/week (Loma & CT) Reading Intervention Teacher Leader (CT) Athletic Director Webmaster Yard Duty Library (Loma & CT) Salary Enhancement Curriculum Adoptions Parcel tax gap funding
\$349,000	\$448,500

it into regular math class instead. We'll keep a close eye on how it goes this year.

The LPEF board raised one more issue: social-emotional support. Student behavior and mental health have been growing concerns, so we asked whether counseling or psychology services could be expanded. Kevin explained that our current counselor is only on campus part-time, and while she can't add more hours, the district could explore bringing in a part-time psychologist to supplement that work. We will revisit this soon.

The final step was bringing the priorities to the LPJUSD school board. There was some concern about shifting how we approached math intervention at both schools, but the board ultimately approved these priorities.

**The KEEP Campaign Gets to Work.** With priorities set, LPEF launched the KEEP campaign, our community's annual fundraising effort for all these programs.

Families stepped up, contributing nearly \$80,000. That brought the annual LPEF total, including sponsorships and Gala profits, to about \$280,000. That covered everything in tier 1 but not tier 2. That gap almost had real consequences.

At one point, Loma was looking at a fifth-grade classroom with 32 students. It's legal, but nobody wants that for their child. Fortunately, two more students enrolled over the summer, which gave the district the push it needed to hire a second fifth-grade teacher. Instead of 32 students in one classroom, we

will have two classes of 17. The school found a way to cover the extra cost, but it was challenging.

If those tier 2 funds hadn't been used for an extra teacher, they would have gone into the LPEF reserves. With reserves, LPEF has the flexibility to respond to things that come up mid-year. LPEF board members are always listening when parents raise concerns—whether it's about school lunches, science camp, or whatever else might affect our children. Having that funding cushion means we can act swiftly when issues arise.

**Why This Matters.** The reality is that KEEP isn't a one-and-done fundraiser. While being small is one of the things that makes our mountain schools special and desirable, it also means we don't have the same financial advantages as larger districts, with more homeowners and businesses paying property taxes. Other schools that feed into Los Gatos High School have more money and can spread costs across more students. If we want our students moving on to high school to feel prepared and confident, we need to level the playing field.

The next time you hear about KEEP, remember that the district isn't asking for 'nice-to-haves.' These programs help our children succeed when they leave our mountain schools.



## Lexington School

Jason Deppong

Lexington School welcomes our families to the new school year, our 72<sup>nd</sup> year in our location off Old Santa Cruz Highway. Lexington was originally built in 1859 in the town of Lexington, as a one-room school house. It was rebuilt a mile south in Alma in 1911. After the reservoir was filled, Lexington opened at its present location on September 15, 1953. In 2007, we became the first public International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program school in Northern California. In 2014, Lexington was rebuilt for a fourth time. Over this past summer, we repainted our upper playground, resealed our lower field track, and painted doors.

The Los Gatos United School District started the year with a staff breakfast and welcome presentation at Fisher Middle School. Superintendent Paul Johnson shared the district's theme for the year, teamwork, with staff from Louis Van Meter, Daves Avenue, Lexington, Blossom Hill, and Fisher Middle schools. The presentation concluded with everyone singing and dancing to the song *Ain't No Mountain High Enough*. It was a fun start to the year.

We are preparing for our International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program school re-authorization evaluation that happens every five years. The staff will reflect on progress made and identify areas for further improvement. Documentation of Lexington's program will be submitted in the fall and a site visit will be in February.

Our fourth- and fifth-graders participated in the annual Safe Routes To School organization's bike rodeo. Students brought their bikes to school, and parent and Los Gatos Rotary Club volunteers guided students along tricky routes on the playground to learn the rules of the road.

The next day, Lexington hosted the first district STEAM night of the year, where students participated in hands-on activities organized by STEAM teachers. This year's theme was transportation. Activities included tuning up bikes with an expert,



cycling to create energy, designing cars while testing friction concepts, and more. Students from every class collaborated to build a city using boxes and materials from our STEAM lab. This event was supported by the One Community Los Gatos foundation that supports many district programs. As a community-funded district, Lexington receives little state funding, so family contributions allow LGUSD schools to offer programs like art, music, Spanish, library, physical education, and counseling.

Our eight multi-age wildcat dens reunited at the start of the year. Students and staff wore their den colors, met their den friends around campus, and created den cheers. Our Home and School Club created den color packets for each child with headbands, bracelets, hats, and more.



# schools

## Building Blocks Preschool Back to Preschool

Jessie Thorsen

The start of preschool is a big day, not just for our students, but also for caregivers. We welcomed families back in September to start the new school year. There's nothing quite like watching your child walk, skip, or cling to you as they enter the classroom with their tiny backpacks. Our little learners are ready to explore a whole new world of friends, play, and community.

The first days are a mix of excitement and curiosity, as well as fear, worry, and sadness for kids and caregivers. Our wonderful teachers met families with open arms, ready to comfort and process all the feelings. We took the time to learn each child's cues and needs, offering a reassuring hand at drop-off, a gentle reminder of what comes next in the day, or simply a listening ear when the tears come.



In the classroom, teachers create a safe, nurturing space where children know they are seen and valued. We support students by building predictable routines that help children feel secure, while encouraging independence. Teachers notice when a child needs comfort, are ready for a challenge, or simply need time to observe.

From the morning meeting to messy art projects, each moment is an opportunity to foster connection, curiosity, and confidence. Teachers guide children in making friends, navigating conflicts, and celebrating successes big and small. With every hug, smile, and word of encouragement, we remind children that they are not alone, that school is a safe place to grow, and that their feelings matter.

Does your child want to come play in the new yard? Follow us on social media to see when our play yard will be open for community playdates on select Fridays during the Mountain Farmers Market. These events are a chance for you to see the play yard, ask questions about curriculum, routines, and schedules, and connect with other families starting on their preschool journey and beyond. Alumni children and Loma families are welcome to join. Please note that while a teacher will be on site for Community Playdates, this is not a time to leave your child unsupervised while you attend the Mountain Market.



## Digging In Together: Mountain School's New Sandbox

Roycie Nedevschi

At Los Gatos-Saratoga Observation Nursery School, affectionately known as Mountain School, play is at the heart of learning, and nowhere is that more true than in the sandbox. It's where children move from playing side-by-side to building whole worlds together, digging, hauling, and imagining as they go. After decades of love, our old sandbox had given all it could. It was time for a fresh start.

And what a start it was. Families, neighbors, and local businesses all pitched in to get it done before the first day of school. Facilities chair Melanie Smith led the charge on a tight deadline, pulling together help from every corner of our community. Retired software engineer Michael McGee generously donated the plans and design. Paul Greathouse Excavating & Grading took out the old sandbox, equipment and fuel included. Big Creek Lumber in Davenport also stepped in with a generous price on the lumber, to help make the rebuild possible. With the groundwork complete, volunteers gathered the following weekend to set new posts and siding, guided by Ross Poulson



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with help from Brian Demers and Ryan McGrath, who brought his trusty skid steer.

Then came the fun part. Just a week before school began, ten yards of sand landed in the middle of the school grounds, a mountain waiting to be conquered. Melanie called a sand-filling party, and the community answered. Families brought whatever they had: beach buckets, feed buckets, even a wheelbarrow with a flat tire. Parents hauled sand while the youngest Mountain Schoolers worked just as hard with toy dump trucks and pails. Children raced up the pile, rolled down laughing, and dove straight back in. By the end of the weekend, the mountain was gone and the new sandbox was ready for play.

The sandbox rebuild is just the beginning of an exciting year at Mountain School. Upcoming events include our annual Turkey Trot at Oak Meadow Park on **Sunday, November 9**, the Los Gatos Holiday Parade on **Saturday, December 6**, and our open house on **Sunday, January 25**, at the school yard. For more information about our school, visit [lgsons.org](http://lgsons.org) or email [info@lgsons.org](mailto:info@lgsons.org).



## Lakeside School News

Kathy McKinney

Lakeside's kindergarten students have been studying weather. They learned to use thermometers to observe temperature variations in different spots in the school garden. They discovered that the coolest spot was under the picnic table. Later, they built and tested their own shade shelters.



The first- and second-grade class learned about the sun and how it moves and creates shadows. They used flashlights to model the sun's movements, and to make some cool hand shadows, too.

Our students experimented with different building materials and techniques. The younger students read the book *Iggy Peck, Architect*, and then experimented with a variety of building materials. The older students built and tested structures on a motorized shake table to test earthquake resiliency. We thank parent Scott Godfrey for creating a new large-scale construction set from laser-cut cardboard that the students used for our "building" day.



Lakeside's art and science teacher, Elizabeth Greer, will be honored as the district's teacher of the year at a Santa Clara County Office of Education annual recognition ceremony in late October. Elizabeth gives tirelessly of her time, energy, and creativity to provide our students with engaging, meaningful science and art curricula. Congratulations on this well-deserved honor, Elizabeth!

Enrichment programs like science, art, music, and physical education are made possible thanks to the generous support of the Lakeside School Community Foundation. You can support our little mountain school and enjoy some festive fall fun at our annual Harvest Festival on **Sunday, October 26**, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., at 19621 Black Road. More information is on page 5.

*Photos by Elizabeth Greer*

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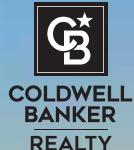
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**19960 SKYLINE BLVD.**  
5 BD | 3.5 BA | 3,717 +/- SQ.FT. | 38 +/- AC  
CUSTOM HOME WITH SWEEPING VALLEY VIEWS  
& A SEPARATE 3 BD GUEST HOUSE.  
OFFERED AT \$3,699,000  
**ACTIVE**



**24614 MILLER HILL ROAD**  
3 BD | 3 BA | 2,882 +/- SQ.FT. | 245 +/- AC  
DRAMATIC MONTEREY BAY VIEWS!  
AMPLE, USABLE LAND.  
OFFERED AT \$1,999,998  
**ACTIVE**



**25400 RADONICH ROAD**  
3 BD | 2.5 BA | 1,991 +/- SQ.FT. | 96 +/- AC  
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OFFERING SPECTACULAR VISTAS  
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**230 BURRELL COURT**  
3 BD | 3 BA | 2,282 +/- SQ.FT. | 139 +/- AC  
SERENE MOUNTAIN RETREAT WITH  
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