



*January*  
2026

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COMPASS



**The January issue of  
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We invite individuals and organizations to submit letters and articles. Email [kathy@paralleldesign.com](mailto:kathy@paralleldesign.com). For information, call 408-529-1431. We reserve the right to edit submissions. We assume no responsibility for errors, omissions, or authors' opinions. Deadline: 10th of the preceding month.

#### Advertising

Closing date: 10th of the preceding month. We assume no responsibility for advertisers' submissions.

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Four-color half, third- or quarter-page ad	add \$250
Four-color business card	add \$100
Frequency discounts available.	
Classified and business directory	\$9 per formatted line

#### Circulation

More than 4000 homes and businesses  
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[mountainnetworknews.com](http://mountainnetworknews.com)

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

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#### Our Cover

**Monarch Butterflies**  
Photo by Mercury Freedom

Monarch butterflies arrive at  
Natural Bridges State Beach  
in mid-October,  
during their annual migration.

Their numbers peak  
in November and December,  
and they migrate away  
by late January or early February.  
The Monarch Grove Trail is open  
for self-guided monarch tours  
from 8 a.m. to sunset.

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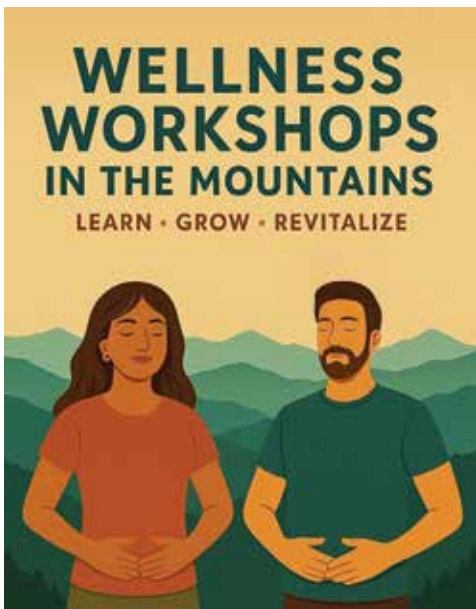
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# events

## Skyland Church Wellness Workshop with Elizabeth Borelli Anne Evans

Skyland Church continues its Way to Wellness workshops with a session offering easy strategies for healthier eating. This free workshop will be held in Whitaker Hall at Skyland Church on **Saturday, January 24**, from 9:30 a.m. to noon. Lunch will be served



after the workshop. Skyland Church is located at 25100 Skyland Road.

Join Elizabeth Borelli from [elizabethborelli.com](http://elizabethborelli.com) to discuss healthy-eating tips, the importance of diet variety to gut health, food-shopping tips, and menu suggestions. This session will feature movement, pertinent nutrition information, and friendly conversation with your neighbors.

Everyone is welcome. Reserve your spot at [skylandchurch.com](http://skylandchurch.com) (click on Way to Wellness) or at the Skyland Church Facebook page. For more information, call 408-353-1310.

Join us as we begin 2026 with easy strategies for healthier eating.

## Loma Prieta Education Fund 95033 Community Night at the Warriors Blyth Strachman

The Loma Public Education Fund is hosting a fundraiser at the Santa Cruz Warriors game on **Sunday, March 8**. A portion of ticket proceeds purchased through LPEF will support essential programs for students at Loma Prieta Elementary and C.T. English Middle schools. Seats in our dedicated section at Kaiser Permanente Arena are on sale through **January 31**.

The Santa Cruz Warriors take on the South Bay Lakers at 5 p.m. Young fans can participate in the player high-5 tunnel or be anthem buddies before the game starts. The first 1,000 people through the doors also get a Warriors hat.

Whether you're part of the school community or just looking for a fun night out, support local education and enjoy some professional basketball. Tickets are available through the special link on the LPEF website at **LPEF.org**.



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# events

## Burrell School Winery and Vineyards January Events Rich Leonetti

Join us for two special events this month. On **Friday, January 16**, enjoy live music by Djangatos in the historical Burrell Schoolhouse.

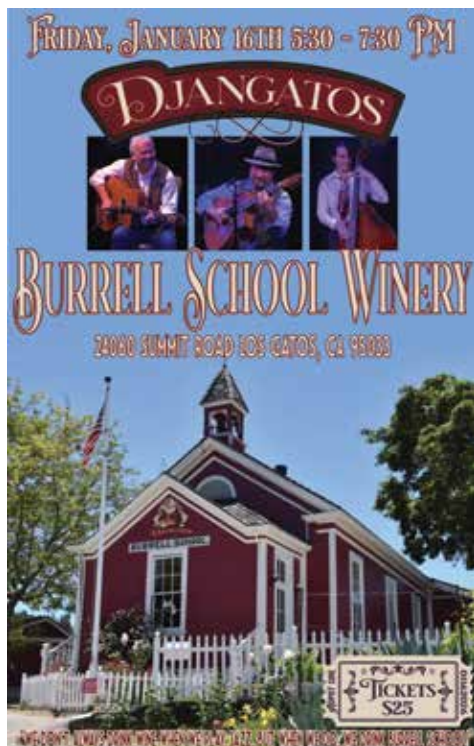
Gypsy jazz trio Djangatos will perform from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., taking you on an ebullient musical journey that will have you tapping your toes and singing along. Come dressed to impress and enjoy delicious wine paired with the perfect musical experience, leaving both your ears and taste buds excited.

On **Saturday and Sunday, January 31 and February 1**, join us for our annual wine and crab feed, from 2 to 5 p.m. This family-style meal will feature fresh, local crab,



homemade clam chowder, fresh sourdough bread, and our popular crab-themed cupcakes. We will pour red and white wine selections to accompany this amazing meal. We'll also offer event-only specials on wine to take home. Space is limited, so get your tickets today.

For more information and tickets, visit [burrellschool.com](http://burrellschool.com).



Get the word out.

Promote your your local event in the Mountain Network News.

Submissions are due the 10th of the month prior to publication.

Email

[kathy@paralleldesign.com](mailto:kathy@paralleldesign.com)

or call

408-529-1431.

## Youth Makers Workshop

Jenn Viane Riese

Local youth are invited to a free makerspace workshop on **Friday, January 23**, from 2:45 to 4:30 p.m., at Mountain Bible Church, 23946 Summit Road, down the road from Loma Prieta Elementary and C.T. English Middle schools.

Registration is required. Visit [www.artbarnontimmus.com](http://www.artbarnontimmus.com) or email [jennviane@gmail.com](mailto:jennviane@gmail.com) for more information.

Stay tuned to the *MNN* for more events for makers of all ages from the Art Barn on Timmus in 2026.



## Stanford Blood Center

### 2026 Blood Drives

Julie Bourque

In 2025, members of our mountain community donated 132 units of whole blood, as well as 11 double-red donations. The Loma Prieta Community Foundation will sponsor Stanford Blood Center for six blood drives in 2026. Mark your calendar for the following Saturdays: **January 31, March 28, May 23, July 25, September 19, and November 21.**

The blood drives will be held in the Community Room in the Mountain Community Complex at 23845 Summit Road.

For more information, email [julieb95033@gmail.com](mailto:julieb95033@gmail.com).



Burrell School  
Vineyards & Winery

## TASTING ROOM / PRIVATE EVENTS

Tasting Room Hours  
Friday-Sunday 12pm-6pm

24060 Summit Road  
Los Gatos, CA 95032

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



**Pizzeria Vittoria**  
**Super Bowl Watch Party**  
**Mike Lerman**

Mark your calendars for a Super Bowl watch party on **Sunday, February 8**. For just \$35 for adults and \$20 for children, enjoy endless pizza, salad, wings, and sausage while you watch the game with your neighbors. Seating is limited, so get your reservations today at [pizzeriavittoria.com](http://pizzeriavittoria.com).

Pizzeria Vittoria will be closed on New Year's Day, but brunch specials return in January every Friday through Sunday, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Enjoy breakfast burritos, breakfast pizzas, micheladas, mimosas, plus coffee and hot chocolate. Brunch specials are available for dine-in, takeout, and delivery.

Our one-year anniversary is coming up in February. Watch for more information about our weekend-long celebration in the February issue of *MNN*.



**Goodwill Donation Drive**

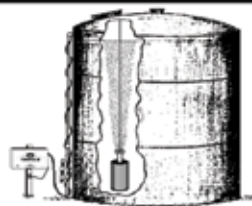
C.T. English Home and School Club

Clean out your closets and mark your calendars for a Goodwill donation drive on **Saturday, January 3**, at C.T. English Middle School, 23800 Summit Road. We will accept donations from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Goodwill Silicon Valley can't accept furniture, mattresses, large appliances, exercise equipment, automobile parts, weapons, household trash, food, carpeting, construction debris, hazardous household chemicals, liquids of any kind, pet-related items, items over 50 pounds, and television sets with over 27-inch screens. They can accept microwaves, VCRs, printers, and vacuums in good working order.



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## community

### Skyland Church

#### Sabbatical Minister

Reverend Melanie Weiner

While I am away on sabbatical from January 5 through April 5, the congregation will have a sabbatical minister, Rev. Michael Patrick Ellard.

Like me, Rev. Mike is a United Church of Christ minister. He has been the minister of several churches, most recently as a sabbatical minister.

In addition to his ministry work, Rev. Mike is an award-winning software developer. He was a software engineer and program manager for Apple until he retired in 2022.

Mike is an amateur musician. He has coordinated musical projects for the Northern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ and for the UCC's Pacific Islander and Asian American ministries. He looks forward to bringing his Sousaphone to church.



### Surfnet

#### Bringing the Santa Cruz Mountains Up to Speed with Fiber Internet

Ken Nye

High-speed internet access in the Santa Cruz Mountains is growing. Surfnet's expansion of fiber-internet service is now in its third year of construction, with the goal of improving connectivity for residents and businesses that have historically had limited options. Our region's topography has constrained internet service to DSL, cable, or wireless connections. In some areas, residents have few or no viable options.

Surfnet pursued state and federal grant funding to support the construction of fiber infrastructure in communities that have long been underserved. Fiber internet is a more reliable alternative. The infrastructure is designed to support higher capacity and long-term demand as internet usage increases across households and businesses.

**Faster Uploads and Downloads.** Fiber internet provides higher download speeds than many legacy services such as DSL or cable. This improves page-load times, video-streaming quality, and overall performance for households that use multiple connected devices at the same time. During peak-usage hours, fiber is less likely to experience slowdowns associated with shared cable or wireless networks.

In today's digital world, upload performance is equally important. Activities such as video conferencing, cloud backups, online transactions, and remote collaboration depend on consistent upload speeds, which fiber supports more effectively than other internet services.

**Reduced Network Congestion.** Internet slowdowns during peak hours are often caused by increased demand on shared networks. This can result in lower video quality, buffering, or dropped connections during critical activities such as video calls or telehealth appointments. Fiber infrastructure is built to handle higher traffic levels and scale with future demand. This reduces the impact of congestion and provides more consistent performance throughout the day.

**Supporting Work and Business Needs.** Reliable upload speeds are increasingly important as more work, commerce, and communication take place online. Businesses that rely on digital transactions, remote systems, and online customer services benefit from lower latency and consistent connectivity. For remote workers, fiber internet supports stable video calls, file sharing, and real-time collaboration. Slower connections can disrupt meetings and reduce productivity. Our fiber infrastructure will remain viable for many years, reducing the need for frequent upgrades and supporting long-term connectivity in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

**Learn More.** Visit [www.Surfnetc.com](http://www.Surfnetc.com) to learn more and to check availability at your address. Call 831-439-7873 ext. 747 for more information.





## New Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps

### Keith Kanady

California's high-fire-zone rezoning has evolved for years, but recent legislative changes have accelerated the impact on homeowners and landowners. With AB 3074 (2020) and SB 63 (2021), the state committed to strengthen wildfire-resilience standards. These laws set the foundation for the 2025 Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) maps. These are the most comprehensive wildfire-risk maps ever released.

For the first time, the 2025 maps include "moderate" and "high" hazard zones within Local Responsibility Areas (LRAs), which were previously under the

exclusive jurisdiction of counties and cities. This expansion means more parcels are now subject to wildfire-risk designations that influence development, insurance, entitlements, and property values.

### Understanding the Rezoning Shift.

Rezoning in high-fire zones isn't just a mapping update, it's a statewide reset of land-use expectations. Local governments must revise zoning ordinances to align with the new state maps. More parcels will require enhanced building standards, fire-resistant materials, and defensible-space compliance. Rural, hillside, and outer-suburban areas may face additional mitigation requirements. It's noteworthy that insurance carriers are increasingly referencing FHSZ maps when determining coverage and premiums.

This shift is reshaping how both residential and land properties are evaluated, purchased, financed, and marketed across California. If you're curious about your property's fire-zone designation, visit [myhazards.caloes.ca.gov](http://myhazards.caloes.ca.gov) and enter your address to see the new 2025 FHSZ map.



**The new 2025 FHSZ map**  
Dark red is very high, dark yellow is high, and pale yellow is moderate-severity zoning.

### Redwood Estates Post Office A Hidden Gem Kathy McKinney

The Redwood Estates Post Office is a hidden gem in the mountains. Just a half-mile off Highway 17 in "downtown" Redwood Estates, you won't find a crowd



here, not even during the busiest mailing months of the year. Postmaster Amy Yang is always helpful, friendly, and efficient.

Have you experienced mail theft from your residential mailbox? You can rent a P.O. box for \$94 for six months, or \$188 for a year. Longer rentals are available. For P.O. box holders, UPS, FedEx, Amazon, and OnTrac parcels are accepted at the post office for safe pick-up during business hours. The P.O. box lobby is always open, including Saturdays and Sundays.

The Redwood Estates Post Office is open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. It is located at 21432 Broadway Road, across from Pizza Vittoria and next to the Redwood Estates Store.





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## Lago Lomita Vineyards

### Fog: Thou Shall Not Pass Robin Porter

Mark and I took a class in *terroir* at the Wine Institute in Bordeaux, France. It was fascinating. It covered how elevation, exposure, climate, and soil affect wine.

The class included tastings that compared wine made from grapes in the same vineyard. One was from a sandy patch of the vineyard, the other from a rocky patch. Everyone in the class was shocked at the difference. Environment matters greatly. The Santa Cruz Mountains is blessed with a temperate climate and great, fertile soil.

We have something very unusual at our high-elevation vineyard. We have a huge wall right at the border of our property. Not an actual wall, but a climactic one. Every day, we look out at the Monterey Bay. Some mornings, we wake up to the fog, but it is always below our elevation. Some days it is coastal. Some days it comes up and looks like we can just step out onto it. We quite often feel like we are in an airplane looking down at the clouds below. Occasionally, it builds and builds to an elevation easily a thousand feet higher than us. Yet it never comes over us! It is like someone constructed a huge force field that the fog wall climbs and pushes against but never defeats. We believe we know why.

Our elevation at nearly 2,600 feet is so high that an egg rolls down in every direction. The obvious direction is toward the coast. But we are also at the headwaters of the Los Gatos Creek. The watershed from our property's northern border is the water that fills Williams Reservoir, Lake Elsmán, and Lexington Reservoir. Some day, I want to chuck an empty wine bottle with a note inside over the vineyards' edge and see if someone in Los Gatos finds it.



**Ripe Nebbiolo clusters**

It is this very draw that connects us with the warm weather of the Central Valley. We get a back breeze that forces the fog back toward the coast. It builds a wall of pressure that makes the fog climb and climb instead of rolling over us. This formidable wall allows for full sun on our grapes and warm breezes. A famous wine critic, Mike Dunne,

wrote of our Nebbiolo from here: "...How about Lago Lomita Vineyards, high in the Santa Cruz Mountains? Elevation, exposure, temperature, and all the other elements key to profound wine come together there. And here – a Nebbiolo of extraordinary cherry/ berry fruit, silken texture, peppery spice, and regal bearing." It shows what *terroir* can do!

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## A Fresh Start for Our Beloved Redwood Amphitheater

Miriam Watson

Tucked beneath the redwoods on the north Loma Prieta campus, just beyond the gazebo at the newly-named Mountain Community Complex, lies one of our community's hidden gems: the Redwood Amphitheater. For decades, this open-air space has hosted Theatre in the Mountains summer plays, as well as concerts, preschool promotions, and movie nights. It has created countless memories for our community.

After years of weathering storms and slow deterioration, the amphitheater is finally receiving the care and revitalization it deserves. The first phase of the renovation is now complete, including a brand-new redwood stage, a new backdrop, and a sturdy anchor system for future lighting trusses. These upgrades restore the amphitheater's functionality, and will allow more ambitious, well-lit performances and community gatherings in the years ahead.

This project has been a partnership between the Loma Prieta Joint Union School District and the Loma Prieta Community Foundation. The school district provided funding from Measure R for materials, and LPCF enlisted a dedicated crew of volunteers to contribute the majority of the labor. We are deeply grateful for the time, expertise, and heart of the volunteers who rolled up their sleeves cutting lumber, hauling materials, and driving screws to ensure the finished stage is both beautiful and durable. Special gratitude goes to community member and MD Construction owner Mick Dudas, whose technical expertise and steady leadership guided the project from start to finish. His skill, patience, and problem-solving made



this renovation possible.

The second phase of the project will include trenching for new lighting and sound infrastructure, as well as repairing several of the amphitheater's benches. With continued community support, we hope to welcome everyone back to this special space with a performance as early as this summer.

The Redwood Amphitheater has always been a place where imagination comes alive under the trees. Thanks to this collaborative effort, it's on its way to becoming a vibrant centerpiece of the community once again.



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[www.PizzeriaVittoria.com](http://www.PizzeriaVittoria.com)



# community

## A Bright Night on the Mountain Community Shines at the Annual Tree Lighting

Miriam Watson

Early December brought hundreds of neighbors together at the Mountain Community Complex for our annual holiday tree lighting—a crisp, clear evening filled with live music from the Summit Sisters, tasty food-truck dinners, children’s laughter, and the magical moment when the tree lit up for the season. This year’s display was even more vibrant, thanks to additional lights and countless volunteer hours.

Events like this don’t happen on their own. They grow from the generosity, creativity, and elbow-grease of community members who pitch in wherever needed. From screwing in thousands of lightbulbs, operating lifts, and stringing lights high above the ground, to coordinating music, movies, food trucks, and safety, neighbors contributed time, skills, and heart. The Loma Prieta Community Foundation, the Loma Public Education Fund, the Loma Home and School Club, Loma Prieta Volunteer Fire & Rescue, the Summit Store, Building Blocks Preschool, and many individual volunteers made the night run seamlessly.



A special thanks goes to community member Scott Green, who has devoted hundreds of hours over the past two years and personally covered all expenses to build and expand this tradition. His work, along with the help of many hands, created a joyful gathering that reflects the best of our mountain community.

As the event grows, we want to be transparent about what it takes to bring it to life. Over 2024 and

2025, costs included the initial purchase of 500 yards of commercial-grade lights, new electrical wiring, and the rental of specialized lifts needed to install the display—totalling



## NEW YEAR! Welcome 2026!

The new year is a time to look forward with hope and vision and promise. New possibilities abound with every day, and I can’t wait to see what the new year brings.

*Wishing you the very best in 2026  
Health, Happiness, and Prosperity*

• •  
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Thank you to everyone who made this celebration sparkle. Here's to an even brighter gathering next year. Happy New Year!



*Photos by Kevin Arnold*

close to \$18,000, all paid for by Scott. So far, the community has generously contributed \$6,775 to help offset those expenses. Sharing these figures gives everyone a clear picture of the scale of the effort and offers those who wish to help the chance to do so.

Participation of every kind—showing up, volunteering, spreading cheer, or donating if you can—helps keep this tradition strong. If you'd like to contribute toward this year's costs or pay it forward to next year, donations can be made at [www.lpcf.org](http://www.lpcf.org) or by scanning this QR code. All contributions are tax-deductible.



If you're interested in providing feedback on this year's event, or providing ideas for next year, we'd love your input. Go to [bit.ly/](http://bit.ly/)

### Introducing the Mountain Community Complex: A Community Resource Miriam Watson

Many in our community have visited the north side of the Loma Prieta Joint Union School District campus, but few realize it now has an official name. This area, recently designated as the Mountain Community Complex, is part of a unique partnership between the school district and the Loma Prieta Community Foundation (LPCF), that leases the space with a shared vision: to create a vibrant gathering place for everyone in the mountain community.

The complex already includes several familiar spaces, including Building Blocks Cooperative Preschool, the community room, the Loma Prieta Playfield, the gazebo,

the redwood amphitheater, and the baseball diamond. These amenities have long served as the backdrop for classes, celebrations, performances, and youth programs.

There is more on the way. In collaboration with the school district, plans are underway to revitalize a second community room. When complete, the building will also house a joint county sheriff's station—bringing together both Santa Cruz County and Santa Clara County Sheriff's offices. This addition will expand the complex's capacity to host events and provide essential community services.

The long-term vision for the Mountain Community Complex is simple: To build a welcoming, activity-filled center where residents of all ages can gather, learn, create, and reconnect. Imagine enrichment classes under the redwoods, theater rehearsals in freshly renovated rooms, community meetings, family events, recreation programs, and the kind of everyday moments that strengthen our mountain community.

As this new chapter begins, we look forward to growing the complex into a lively hub that reflects the spirit of our mountain neighborhood: creative, resilient, and deeply connected. Stay tuned for more details, and visit [lpcf.org](http://lpcf.org) to learn more about community events and to book space at the Mountain Community Complex.





## Obituary

### Gerhard Fritz Schlecht

Gerhard Fritz Schlecht, aged 90, passed away at home October 8, 2025. He was born March 11, 1935 in Kirchheim, Germany. Gerhard spent the first 19 years of his life in Germany, enduring the many hardships of war as a child. These early years instilled in him the value of family, self-reliance, and the freedom to make his own way in life. His early years were also filled with sports and adventure. He played soccer on the local team and made friends for life. He loved the mountains, hiking, and skiing. He built an early rendition of an ebike, a motorcycle you also pedaled, and headed alone at the age of 15 into the Alps looking for adventure and slopes to ski with wooden planks. However, the west was calling and Gerhard immigrated to Canada at age 19, with the hopes of making it into the United States, the land of freedom, adventure, and opportunity.

He often told us about the moment he first stepped off the bus in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. No one knew where he was and his future and fate were in his own hands. That was the freedom he was seeking, and he loved it.

In Canada, Gerhard worked odd jobs and played second-division soccer. This opened doors and provided connections, friends, and work opportunities. He proudly recalled being referred to as "the sizzling left wing" in the local newspaper.

In 1959, he made it to the United States and worked in the tool and die industry in Los Angeles. He played soccer on the Los Angeles all-star team. He recalled the experience of competing with amazing players from around the world with awe.

Soccer wasn't the only allure of Los Angeles. He met his wife Diane at the beach there in 1965. Both were fiercely independent, but there was chemistry and they immediately clicked. Their first date was pastrami sandwiches and beer. Trying to impress her, he took her to dinner at a French restaurant. They drank a bottle of Pommard wine, had their first kiss under a quince tree, and married six months after meeting. They became lifelong partners in business, building houses, family, and everything else. Their only child, Heidi, was born in 1968.

Seeking to leave Los Angeles, Diane and Gerhard traveled throughout California looking for land. They found 10 acres on Miller Hill Road in the Santa Cruz

Mountains, with a pear and plum orchard. It was beautiful, undeveloped, with ocean views and covered in fruit. Perfect! They spent four years building a house on the weekends, buying one lumber load at a time as money allowed. They collected water in metal garbage cans from the creek on Morrill Cut-Off and camped onsite while the building was done. It was an adventure. Diane tiled floors and stained boards, while Gerhard used his meticulous nature and tool-and-die precision to make the house come to life. Gerhard wanted to leave his treasured home feet first, and he did.

While building the house and developing the property, Gerhard and Diane built and ran Heidi's European Deli in San Jose for many years. Here they fed and connected with many Europeans who became lifelong friends. They retired early and traveled extensively.

Gerhard and his daughter Heidi took many trips together as well. They climbed mountains and skied together, enjoying each other's company and many adventures. Heidi's husband Sterling is an accomplished climber and took Gerhard on several climbing experiences as well. Gerhard was a beautiful skier and a natural athlete. Hiking and skiing were not merely athletic goals but a way to experience the beauty and grandeur of the natural world.

Gerhard made the most of his beloved Santa Cruz Mountain property. He planted over 80 fruit trees with the help of his daughter Heidi. He also put in 2.5 acres of pinot noir grapes that he lovingly tended to until he was 85 and watched over until his death. He planted his vegetable garden in perfect rows any machinist would be proud of. He grew the fruit and vegetable varieties he missed from his homeland, including mache lettuce, radishes, and green gage plums. He helped aging neighbor, Mr. Rapp, prune and spray his trees. From him, Gerhard learned the ways and stories of the mountain elders.

Family was central to Gerhard. He maintained close contact with his German relatives throughout his life. He helped and supported Heidi and Sterling in every way, and he loved playing dollhouse and farm with his granddaughter, Shani, dispensing his pearls of wisdom and trying to teach her to ski. He was her Opa, and she has inherited his love of hiking and outdoor adventure.

Gerhard was a social man, making many connections and maintaining them throughout his life. He was also a self-described loner, happy to take the path less traveled. He knew time was the valuable currency, no one gets more no matter how much money they have. He valued his family and was generous with them in all ways. He had an easy smile, a quick wit, and unexpected humor. He was sharp, well-read, a talker, and a storyteller. He was an optimist and also a realist, knowing his time had come and nature would take him. He had 90 wonderful years filled with all the things that make a fantastic life. He will be dearly missed by his wife Diane, daughter Heidi, son-in-law Sterling, granddaughter Shani, and all those who enjoyed his stories, smiles, and laughter.

If you would like to celebrate Gerhard's life, we will gather at Gerhard's home on his birthday, on **Wednesday, March 11, 2026**. If you would like to attend, email Heidi at [plumlinejams@gmail.com](mailto:plumlinejams@gmail.com) and we will share details.





# **Obituary**

## **Sandy Rappaport**

Sandy Rappaport passed away on November 17, 2025, at her home in Chandler, Arizona. She was 82 years old.

Sandy was born in Seattle, Washington, on February 11, 1943. Her parents were Russell and Rachel Weiser. After graduating from high school, Sandy attended the University of Washington, receiving a bachelor's degree in philosophy in 1964.

Sandy married Ronald Boyd shortly thereafter. The couple moved to San Jose, California, and eventually had two sons, Jeffrey and Mark. In the early 1970s, the marriage ended. Sandy moved back to Seattle and enrolled in the University of Washington Law School. She earned her juris doctorate degree in 1979.

Sandy moved back to California and settled into her home on Sunset Drive in the Villa Del Monte neighborhood. In 1983, she married Steve Rappaport. Their romance and profound friendship lasted over 42 years.

Sandy accomplished many things in her life. She was an excellent skier in her teens and twenties. She practiced law in California, specializing in business litigation, for almost 20 years, before retiring in the late 1990s. Sandy was a talented interior decorator. It was a hobby she greatly enjoyed.

Sandy was a member of the Loma Prieta Club, a 120-year-old social club and charitable organization in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Sandy greatly valued her friends in the club and often wrote poems celebrating individual club members.

Sandy loved writing poetry. Her poems were clever and cute. She also wrote beautiful poems for family members. She was a modest person, and did not appreciate her poetic talents as much as others did.

Sandy is survived by her husband Steve Rappaport, son Jeffrey Boyd and his wife Teri, son Mark Boyd, and two granddaughters, Ashlyn and Holly Boyd.



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19118 OLD VINEYARD  
LOS GATOS | \$1,699,000



21386 SUNNYSIDE RD  
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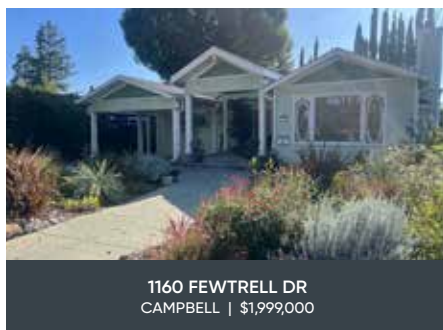




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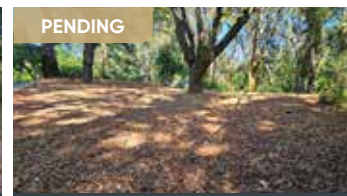
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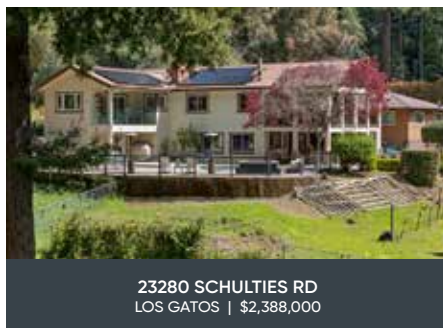
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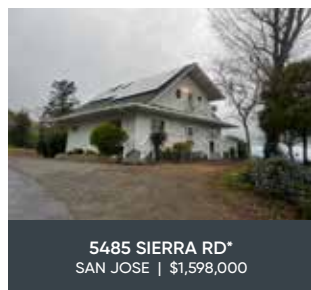
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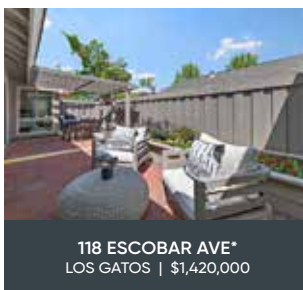
24780 HIGHLAND WAY\*\*  
LOS GATOS | \$1,499,000



103 HOULTON CT\*  
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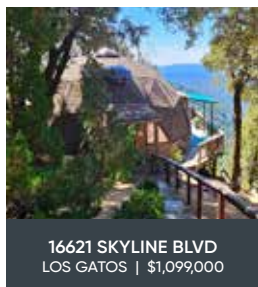
24751 HUTCHINSON RD  
LOS GATOS | \$1,499,000



118 ESCOBAR AVE\*  
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568 MADRONE AVE  
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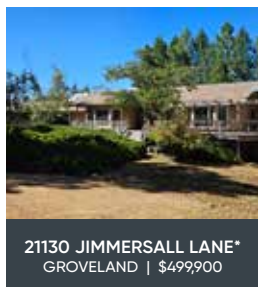
16621 SKYLINE BLVD  
LOS GATOS | \$1,099,000



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# calendar

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### Thursday, January 8

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.

### Friday, January 16

Burrell School Winery and Vineyards invites you to enjoy live music by Djangatos in the historical Burrell Schoolhouse, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. For more information, visit [burrellschool.com](http://burrellschool.com).

### Thursday, January 22

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, January 24

Skyland Church offers a free, healthy-eating workshop with Elizabeth Borelli, from 9:30 a.m. to noon, at 25100 Skyland Road. Reserve your spot at [skylandchurch.com](http://skylandchurch.com) or call 408-353-1310.

### Saturday, January 31

The Lakeside School Community Foundation hosts a Goodwill donation drive in the community center at Lakeside School, 19621 Black Road, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Loma Prieta Community Foundation will sponsor a Stanford Blood Center blood drive at the Loma Prieta Community Room at 23845 Summit Road. For more information, email [julieb95033@gmail.com](mailto:julieb95033@gmail.com).

Burrell School Winery and Vineyards hosts their annual wine and crab fed, from 2 to 5 p.m. Enjoy red and white wine, fresh, local crab, homemade clam chowder, fresh sourdough bread, and more. For more information, visit [burrellschool.com](http://burrellschool.com).

Last day to purchase tickets to the Santa Cruz Warriors game on Sunday, March 8, to benefit the Loma Prieta Education Fund. Purchase your tickets at [LPEF.org](http://LPEF.org).

### Sunday, February 1

Burrell School Winery and Vineyards hosts their annual wine and crab feed, from 2 to 5 p.m. For more information, visit [burrellschool.com](http://burrellschool.com).

## 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.

Gentle Restorative Yoga with Amy Schendel from 6 to 7 p.m. Book at [www.cupsofyoga.com](http://www.cupsofyoga.com), or call Jaime at 831-200-8802.

### Wednesdays

Flow and Unwind yoga with Erin from 5:30 to 6:30 pm. 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

Power-inspired 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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## Last Call for Alcohol

Debra Staab

**Drinks all Around.** The Pacific Coast Railroad brought hundreds of strong-muscled Chinese and caucasian workers to the Santa Cruz Mountains in 1877 to build a railroad tunnel at Wright's. Upon arrival, the remote location sported nothing more than an old woodcutter's shack. Within the first few weeks, the crew felled trees and built themselves bunkhouses, a cookhouse, several tool sheds, and most importantly, a saloon.

The saloon, said to be more like a dugout, was run by the construction foreman, O.B. Castle, who named it "The Tunnel." The Tunnel quickly earned a reputation as the roughest, toughest, rowdiest place in the Santa Cruz Mountains to have a drink. One local described it in these terms, "The Tunnel made the Barbary Coast look like a Sunday School picnic by comparison."

The underlying reason behind the constant drunkenness stemmed from a cocktail invented by Mr. Castle, which he called "Discovery." The recipe was simple: add four tablespoons of water to one gallon of whiskey and down it all in one sitting.

Things changed when women arrived at Wright's. They didn't like the incessant drinking, swearing, and fighting at The Tunnel and soon took matters into their own hands. To combat the debauchery, the women banded together and armed themselves with chairs and brooms,

which they used to swat down the riotous perpetrators. Apparently that worked well, at least until the next night.

The Tunnel may have been the most notorious watering hole in the Santa Cruz Mountains, but it wasn't the only one. Just a few miles north, the logging town of Alma had a dozen saloons, including the Forest House.

On the southwest end of the mountains, the town of Boulder Creek, with a population of 750, featured 16 taverns by the early 1900s. Drunken lumbermen regularly staggered through the streets of Los Gatos and Saratoga (then called McCartysville). It's estimated that in San Francisco there was one saloon for every 96 residents by the mid-1850s.

Alcohol consumption in California was at a high point between 1850 and 1900 largely due to the Gold Rush, that lured around 300,000 get-rich-quick opportunists to the west coast. Records indicate that alcoholic intake averaged 7.1 gallons of hard liquor per person annually. This amount translates to about 2.5 ounces, or close to two shots per day. Whiskey was the favorite but rum, wine, beer, cider, punch, and other alcoholic concoctions were consumed at breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

During this period, saloons and taverns served more than liquor. They provided a location for socializing, networking, and even job hunting. Society recognized the importance of these business owners and placed them at an equal or higher social status as clergy. Reports show that most taverns were quite lucrative with claims of



liquor profits as high as \$1000 per day.

**Historic Alcohol Usage.** Alcohol is a clear, volatile, flammable liquid produced by the natural fermentation of sugars. It is the intoxicating ingredient in wine, beer, and spirits. Alcohol is such a strong liquid that it is also used as an anesthetic, in cleaning solvents, and as fuel.

Evidence shows that fermented beverages existed in China as early as 7000 BCE. and in India and Babylonia around 3000 BCE. The Greeks honored the wine god Dionysus and the Romans worshipped Bacchus. Some pre-Columbian Native American communities developed fermented drinks such as "chicha" made from corn, grapes, or apples.

The use of alcohol for medicinal purposes developed in the 1500s. To expand the grain industry, the British encouraged the distillation of grains during the early eighteenth century. The plan resulted in public consumption of 18 million gallons of gin annually. Alcoholism became widespread.

The many downsides of excessive alcohol consumption became much more apparent during the second half of the nineteenth century. Heavy drinking often led to fights, accidents, and threatening behavior. People became addicted and wasted their hard-earned dollars on spirits over their basic needs. All of this contributed to high rates of injury and death. Some took notice of the negative side effects, especially women, who set about to temper this destructive behavior.

**The Temperance Movement.** Early attempts to curb alcohol abuse in California came in the form of state government sales taxes on liquor and licensing fees on proprietors. These measures proved to be largely ineffective, which spurred further action by communities.



Downtown Boulder Creek

continued on next page



The Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) was initially established in Ohio in 1883. Their goal was to bring social reform by linking religious beliefs to secular activities. Because alcohol abuse often hurt women and families through domestic violence related to alcoholism, the women sought to control the availability of liquor. Their movement pushed for "a sober and pure world" through abstinence, purity, and evangelical Christianity. The plan to eliminate alcohol sales became known as Prohibition.

One particularly active member of the WCTU was Carrie Nation, also known as Hatchet Granny. Nation, who often dressed in black and white clothing, was known for bursting into saloons, singing, praying, hurling bible verses at the clientele, and taking her hatchet to all of the bar fixtures and bottles that she could reach. Although she was jailed numerous times, she always paid her fines and continued her mission.

By the late 1880s, the argument over whether to sell alcohol or prohibit it came to a boil. Those in favor of selling liquor were known as "the wets" and included town governments, saloon keepers, and those who liked to drink. On the opposing side, the prohibitionists were referred to as "the dries" and were championed by the WCTU with support from those who did not like drinking. One of the first WCTU groups in our area was in Los Gatos.

In June of 1889, Los Gatos passed an ordinance that made it illegal to serve alcohol, thus making it the first town to go completely "dry." Many were unhappy, and just two months later, another ordinance restored liquor sales at saloons but imposed a high permit fee. The debate raged on for the next 15 years until the issue was finally put to the public vote. In 1906, 54 percent of voters (only men at the time) supported Prohibition, and Los Gatos became the second city (Palo Alto was first) to go "dry" by popular vote. Four years later, the rules were loosened to allow the serving of liquor with a meal.

The Boulder Creek branch of the WCTU was formed in 1892. Their first success at cleaning up the town was to acquire a large reading room to counter the town's lust for liquor. Their anti-saloon agenda included "blue laws" which forbid alcohol on Sundays, quarterly liquor-license fees, and editorials in the *Mountain Echo* newsletter. Over the next decade, these steps reduced



the number of saloons by 50 percent. In 1908, Prohibition was officially approved in Boulder Creek by a vote of 115 to 103. For the drinking crowd, the decision was little more than an inconvenience as they simply traveled a short distance to the next town to imbibe. However, the loss of revenue was great and in 1915, the public voted to end Prohibition. Just five years later, national Prohibition would commence under the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment which prohibited the manufacture, sale, and transportation of alcohol across the United States. Note that it was not illegal to consume liquor, if you could get it.

**Moonshining, Bootlegging, and Rum-running.** Aptos became a dry community in 1912, but not everyone was on board. One elderly saloonkeeper refused to shut down and ended up in a Santa Cruz jail. A local historian reported that Santa Cruz laws around drinking were so lax that the man was allowed to serve his sentence in an unlocked cell while playing cards and drinking whiskey with his friends.

The Los Gatos Soda Works bottling plant was fined \$300 for selling liquor in 1912. There were also unsubstantiated rumors that the company had used their facilities to bottle wine during Prohibition.

After the National Prohibition Act became the law of the land, the California coast quickly turned into a mecca for the transport and sale of illegal booze. Through a sophisticated network of large ships that anchored up to 12 miles offshore, combined with speed boats that easily outran Coast Guard vessels, up to 500 cases of Canadian gin, brandy, Scotch, vermouth, and whiskey could be moved surreptitiously, usually in

the dead of night. There were well-known drop-zones in Capitola, Pleasure Point, the Santa Cruz Wharf, Davenport Landing, and Half Moon Bay. This was big business, and participants could earn up to \$10,000 per night, or \$300,000 per month.

Once on land, contraband was stored in sea-caves, with sympathetic neighbors, and even in the now defunct Cement Ship. Friendly locals would move the goods from the shore to inland locations like San Francisco and San Jose. The whole scheme was referred to as rum-running (the term was originally coined from smuggling rum from the Caribbean to Florida). In general, rum-running referred to moving contraband over the water while bootlegging meant transporting illicit goods over land.

In the more remote Santa Cruz Mountains, small-time moonshiners built stills to manufacture batches of almost pure alcohol, also called grain alcohol or "white lightning." Typically made from corn-mash, sugar, water, and yeast, the output was 190-proof ethyl alcohol. The concoction went into five-gallon cans which bootleggers then distributed around the area, including to hotels in Santa Cruz and Capitola. Local proprietors bribed law enforcement to "play along" and "allowed" the occasional bust so that it all looked legitimate. Shipments also went to the numerous illegal speakeasies that popped up all over the area. The term "speakeasy" derives from "speaking easy" or in hushed tones to avoid attention.

Many moonshiners produced decent quality liquor, but others weren't so careful with their workmanship. With no safety standards in place, some producers cooked up bad-tasting, unhealthy, and even



poisonous products. Some rotgut was made from denatured alcohol by intentionally adding poisons such as gasoline or methanol. You had to really trust your bootlegger.

**Winemaking Woes.** Successful wineries were especially devastated by Prohibition. The new law did permit families to produce up to 200 gallons of wine per year for personal consumption. However, winemaking had become a lucrative business in the Santa Cruz Mountains, and the new restrictions threatened to cripple the industry.

Records show that in 1875 the Santa Cruz Mountains had 262,275 vines (300 acres, 121 hectares) and were producing 70,000 gallons of wine a year. Vineyards included well-known names such as Paul Masson, David Bruce, and Martin Ray. Other local names were Burrell at the Summit, the Jarvis brothers near Scotts Valley, the Burns family in Ben Lomond, Dr. Robert Tripp and Emmitt H. Rixford near Woodside, and Pierre Klein and Osea Perrone at Monte Bello Ridge. The Catholic Church managed a winery at the Novitiate in Los Gatos. Under Prohibition, all of these popular vintners were jeopardized. Thus was born the alternate industry of bootleg wine.

Paul Masson carried on making his “medicinal” Champagne, and the Novitiate continued producing sacramental wine. The Bergetto family in Soquel developed a bootleg winemaking process for Zinfandel and Charbono grapes that eventually became profitable. Small-time farmers sold do-it-yourself kits with grape juice, yeast, and instructions on fermentation.

In the 1890s, the Martinelli family initially focused on Champagne-style hard cider



which won a gold medal at the California State Fair. During Prohibition they took a different approach, and cleverly invented non-alcoholic sparkling cider. By 1944 they were producing 600,000 gallons annually. Even today, you can buy Martinelli's in apple or grape flavors.

**The End of Prohibition.** Reports in the 1909 *Los Gatos Morning Press* stated that because of Prohibition, property values fell to an all-time low. Home sales and rentals were down significantly. People were moving away and few were moving in. The public knew that Prohibition was not working, and they were ready for it all to end.

The law that was meant to curb drinking and crime actually triggered gang wars which killed thousands and created organized crime syndicates. The quality of alcohol decreased but the amount consumed did not.

People shifted moderate drinking patterns with unhealthy binges, and arrests for drunkenness rose. Poisoned alcohol killed 10,000 Americans, mostly in the poor and working-class groups.

In 1930, Prohibition was ruled to be unconstitutional by federal judge William Clark. Nonetheless, President Hoover vowed to make the law permanent during his reelection campaign in 1932. Hoover lost by a landslide and President Franklin D. Roosevelt called an end to Prohibition in 1933. The 21st Amendment formally repealed the 18th Amendment in December, 1933. Although beer, wine, and liquor sales were legal at the national level, it took until 1966 for all states to officially end local-prohibition laws, with Mississippi being the last dry state.

Even today, liquor laws vary from community to community, and moderation is now the social norm. A recent Gallup poll reported that the percentage of Americans who drink alcohol fell from 60 percent in 1997 to just 54 percent in 2025. Young adults now drink less than their elders, and 53 percent of all Americans say that even moderate drinking can be harmful to one's health. Those who do drink are consuming less alcohol less frequently. About ten percent of Americans fight alcoholism, and there are nearly 100,000 annual deaths related to alcohol, with 15,000 of those in California.

In 2013, the UK launched a program called “Dry January” to encourage people to reflect on their use of alcohol, especially after the previous end-of-year festivities. The goal is to avoid all alcohol for the entire month of January to counter the excesses of the holiday season. The idea persists even today.



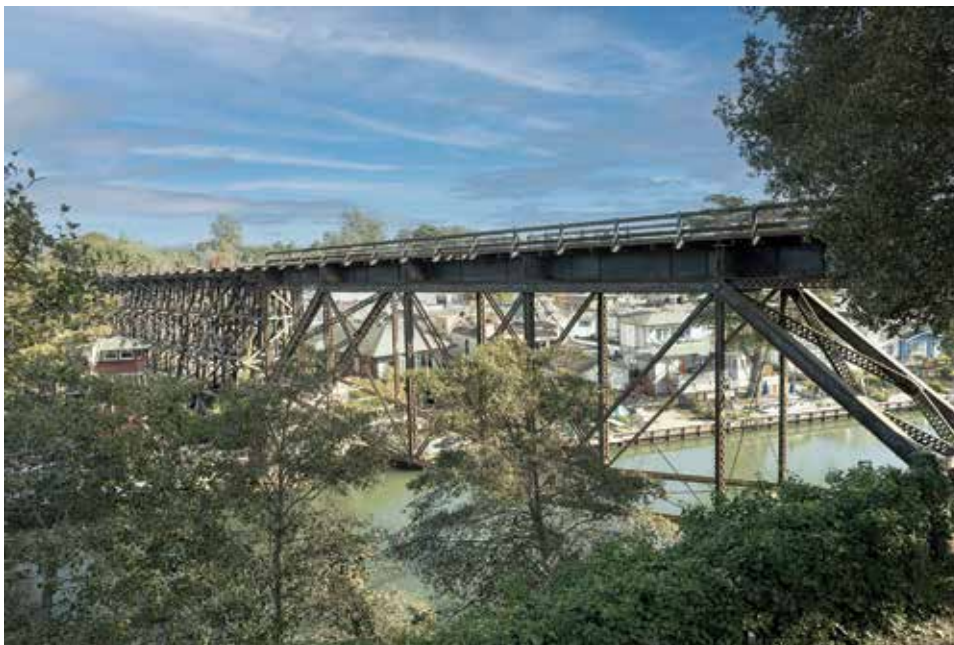


## **Cool when Cold** **Capitola Walk** Neil Wiley

I found a perfect winter hike. One that takes you through interesting environments in cold, wet weather with a minimum of mud, wind, and fatigue. See some interesting, even unique views, without exhausting climbs. Enjoy a short drive, easy parking, and lots of options, including walking, running, picture-taking, shopping, and eating. All in a walk of less than two miles.

A short drive south on Highway 17 or San Jose-Soquel Road takes you to Highway 1 and a turn right to Bay Avenue, then another right at the Nob Hill Foods parking lot. (You can set your GPS to 809 Bay Avenue.) Drive to the back of the spacious parking lot. (It may be the easiest place to park in Capitola or Soquel.)

A short path takes you up to a set of bridge switchbacks that make climbing the forested







hill easy while crossing over Soquel Creek. At the top of the switchbacks, turn left to walk along a street to see old, tall eucalyptus trees, and views of thick forest, the creek, and hillsides of homes surrounded by dense green vegetation. Follow Wharf Road along sidewalks past my favorite restaurant: Shadowbrook. Walk downhill under the old train trestle and emerge on Cliff Drive in the center of Capitola.

Turn left to walk over Soquel Creek on the Stockton Avenue Bridge. You could follow the dirt trail back to your car just past the bridge. You may also be tempted to walk across the street to downtown Capitola to see the colorful cottages, shop for gifts, or walk out on the beach. At the least, you may want to eat at one of the oceanside restaurants. My favorite outdoor eatery is Zelda's.

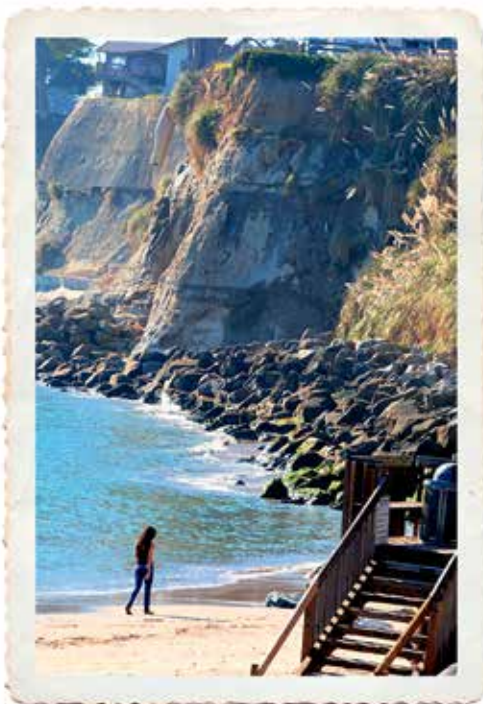
This part of the tour may be a little expensive, but think of the money saved. Your parking is free and easy to find at Nob Hill.

To return to your walk, go back to the Stockton Avenue Bridge. Follow the trail, sometimes dirt, sometimes paved, along the east side of Soquel Creek. You may feel you are intruding on private property, but the neighbors expect tourists and are usually friendly.

The path ends at Riverview Avenue. Follow it to Riverview Drive and up the road. Ignore the no-outlet signs. In a few steps, bridge switchbacks will take you down to your car. Hungry? Grab something at Nob Hill.

This may not be your conventional hike, but it is a comfortable alternative, especially in the winter.

Enjoy!







**Cold Moon**

Photo by Brian Weselby

*Brian awoke at 4 a.m. to capture this image of the last full supermoon of 2025,  
that lit up sky in early December .*

*It was a dazzling spectacle,  
rising brighter and slightly larger than usual.*





*Fungi emerging  
from their  
autumn slumber*

*Photos by Brian Weselby*

### **Plumose Anemone and Chestnut Cowrie**

**Bruce Sudweeks**

The image shows two unique creatures that I don't typically see near each other. Giant plumose anemones are more common in the Monterey Bay, while chestnut cowries are more common in Carmel Bay.

These anemones are distinguished by the fact that they are the tallest anemone in the world. They grow to over three feet tall. They reproduce through cloning and have special fighting tentacles to fight off other anemones that are not clones of itself. Basically, they engage in clone wars.

The chestnut cowrie is the only sea snail found on the California coast. You won't find them north of Monterey Bay.





# schoools

## Building Blocks Preschool

Jessie Thorsen

Building Blocks Preschool continues to make changes to support our children and strengthen our program.

These shifts reflect a renewed commitment to community care. We are actively redefining what co-oping means to support modern-day families on the mountain.

With licensure in 2024, we began to transition many of the jobs and tasks that parents and families historically completed over to our teachers. These jobs included hiring, firing, running payroll, scheduling, enrollment, policy development, and more. This transition is still in progress, but what is unfolding is that the “work” of participating in a cooperative preschool is becoming lighter and more manageable for mountain families.

Our alumni can vouch for how challenging family jobs and managing the day-to-day details for our cooperative preschool has been all these years. We thank them for their service and commitment to Building Blocks over the decades.

Social participation is still core to the health of our co-op and community. When families linger at pickup, share a conversation at a potluck, check in on a parent having a tough morning, or simply say yes to building relationships, they are contributing in a meaningful and essential way.

We invite you to join us at our Raven Party Community Potluck on **Saturday, January 24**, at 3 p.m., in the Building Blocks play yard. This event will be held rain or shine, barring snow or an atmospheric river. This



is our community-wide Phase I Flagship completion celebration. This gathering is a celebration of our community.

Bring a dish to share or just show up to meet with your neighbors. The Raven Party is a reminder that we build this village not just through work, but through presence, joy, and shared moments. There is an open invitation to wear black, dress as any bird, and/or bring non-sentimental trinkets and nature objects to trade or show-and-tell, adults and children alike.

### Thank You to our Donors.

We are deeply grateful to our generous supporters who help our preschool community thrive: Hills Construction, Akova, Prime Tree Care, Mason Tractor, Woodstove and Sun, Paradise Dog Boarding, Masterson Electric, Infantino Dental, Advantage Homes, Dandelion Hair Studio, Brand Vessel, and Barrel Dreams.





## Lakeside School

School spirit was on display at the Los Gatos Children's Holiday Parade in December. Jason Snetsinger pulled the float, our mascot Chester spread cheer, and a whole lot of bubbles thrilled the crowd.

*Photos by Kendall Snetsinger*



## Lakeside School Lakeside in Wonderland Auction

Kathy Williams

Mark your calendars for the Lakeside School Community Foundation's "Lakeside in Wonderland" auction on **Saturday, March 28**. Follow the white rabbit to the party at the Lakeside Community Center, 19621 Black Road. This event supports Lakeside enrichment programs.

A fabulous sit-down dinner and open bar are provided for the bargain ticket price of \$80 for early-birds. We will also hold a silent auction online, from **Tuesday through Saturday, March 24 to 28**.

Are you looking for a local getaway? Bid on a one-night stay at the Madonna Inn, or a one-night weekday stay with breakfast for two at Chaminade Resort and Spa.

If your child has a birthday coming up, you could win a birthday party for 10 children at Los Gatos Elite. Create memories with four passes to Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine Railroad, a private tour and tasting for 12 at Silver Mountain Vineyards, or four passes to the Oakland Zoo. Bid on a photography session with Sarahi Hadden Photography, custom-made fine jewelry, and more.

Get your tickets and find more information at [www.lakesidescf.org](http://www.lakesidescf.org).

## Lakeside School TK and Kindergarten Enrollment Cari Forbord

Enrollment for next year's transitional kindergarten (TK) and kindergarten classes at Lakeside School is now open. TK is for children who turn four on or before September 1, 2026. Kindergarten is for children who turn five on or before September 1, 2025.

Visit [www.lakesidelosgatos.org/services-4-1](http://www.lakesidelosgatos.org/services-4-1), email [ljds@lakesidelosgatos.org](mailto:ljds@lakesidelosgatos.org), or call 408-354-2372 for more information.

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## Lexington School News

Jason Deppong

Happy new year from Lexington School. We were busy in the final weeks of 2025. In November, we celebrated National Drummer Day. Our kindergarten students were exploring the idea that communication creates connection, in a unit of inquiry which fit in very well.

A few students created a drum rhythm which they showed to each class the week before. To celebrate the day, Lexington students and staff brought percussion instruments to school for a community drum circle. The kindergarten students led the group and the whole school connected through drumming as a form of communication. They also demonstrated their rhythms for parents that morning at the home and school club coffee social.

Lexington's Thanksgiving feast tradition was also spectacular. The school gathered in the multi-purpose room and paid respect to the Awaswas Ohlone people, who were the first to live in the Lexington area.

A few fifth-graders read a story of thanks and our school librarian, Mrs. Richardson,



shared a chain of kindness and thanks that was created by all students. Students were invited on stage to deliver messages of appreciation in about 20 different languages.

Finally, our district food-services staff and home-and-school-club volunteers helped with preparations and serving. Our kitchen helpers, Ms. Tina and Mr. Josh, made the best turkey, gravy, vegetables, and mashed potatoes. Everyone enjoyed sharing a feast together before leaving for the holiday.

The holidays are a time of giving. This year, Lexington partnered again with the local organization, Mountain Neighbors helping Neighbors, to support a few families in need. Our home-and-school club organized a food drive with the House of Hope. The Los Gatos Union School District collaborated with the Los Gatos Teacher Association to support five families district-wide who needed assistance over the holidays.

We also finished up our Spanish book

drive for our new partner schools in Guatemala. Last year's Lexington partner-school principal, Olga Martinez Soto, from El Porvenir school made a special appearance, too. She was visiting the United States for her first time and wanted to personally thank Lexington for the books we shipped to her school last spring. It was a very special visit. We gave her some Lexington Wildcat gear before she left. We hope to stay in touch with her school.

Third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade students in the band, orchestra, and choir groups performed for families at our annual music concerts. We appreciate the parent support for One Community Los Gatos, whose donations support our amazing music program and staff. We are very close to meeting our district fundraising goal.







### Los Gatos Saratoga Observation Nursery School Mountain School Open House

Los Gatos-Saratoga Observation Nursery School, also known as Mountain School, will hold their community open house on **Sunday, January 25**, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Learn more about our unique program and play under the trees of our nature classroom at 19601 Black Road in the beautiful Santa Cruz Mountains. Teachers and current parents will be there to answer your questions.

Mountain School celebrates its 70<sup>th</sup> year of serving local families in 2026. Join us to experience the unique and joyful spirit of this play-based nature school.



OCLG supports many programs such as art, counseling, library, physical education, Spanish, and more.

All of our TK students explore different celebrations throughout the year as part of their International Baccalaureate unit of inquiry, Where We Are In Time and Place. Ms. Kajsa's transitional-kindergarten class paraded around Lexington in mid-December wearing white, tinsel, candle crowns, and singing to celebrate Santa Lucia's Day. Kajsa has a Swedish background. She shared her knowledge of this holiday with her students and the school. It was a great way to prepare Lexington for the upcoming holiday festivities.

*Photos by  
Jason Deppong,  
Karen Briones,  
and Jill Mayo*



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