

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a natural landscape. A dirt trail winds through a hillside covered in dry grass and shrubs. Several trees with light-colored, possibly flowering or budding, branches are scattered across the slope. The sky is a clear, bright blue with some light, wispy clouds.

**mr**

**mountain network news**

**April 2021**





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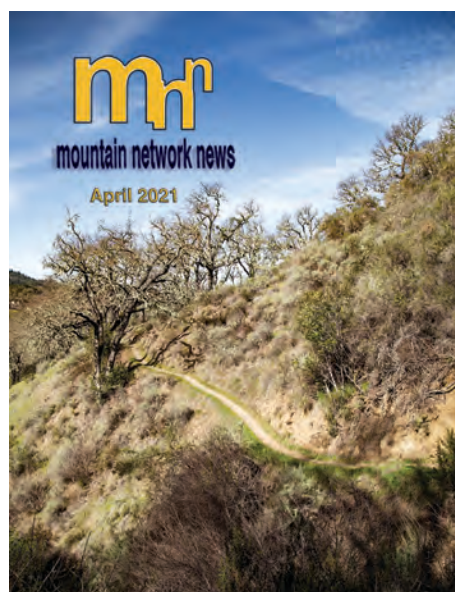
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**Vaccine is available.  
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**Our children  
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**Our finances  
are looking better,  
with bailouts,  
more work,  
and more money.**

**Democracy  
is stressed,  
but working.**

**Get your shots.  
Cut your brush.  
Stay involved.  
Enjoy your life.**

**We are back  
on the trail.**

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Los Gatos Mountains

**\$1,699,000 | 5 Bed | 3 Bath | 3231 Sq Ft**

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## CHIPPING PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST

### DO

- ☐ Maintain Defensible Space
  - Immediate (Zone 1)** 5 ft. non-combustion zone
    - Clear 10 ft. around chimneys
    - Remove limbs overhanging on roofs
  - Intermediate (Zone 2)** 30 ft. clean & green zone
    - Reduce fuel 30 ft. from roads
    - Clear 14 ft. above & 12 ft. wide on driveway
  - Extended (Zone 3)** 100 ft. reduced fuel zone
- ☐ Piles must be located on the uphill side of the road or driveway
- ☐ Piles must be hand stacked & limbs must be under 8 inches thick
- ☐ Pile location must be safely accessible for a large truck & chipper trailer
  - Narrow and/or steep driveways may not be serviceable
- ☐ Piles must be within 5 ft. of the chipper location & less than 4 ft. in height
- ☐ Cut ends must face the same direction and point out toward the chipper location
- ☐ Chips will be blown back onto the property or hauled away at the contractor's discretion
- ☐ Make sure street address is clearly visible from the road (min. 4" high numbers)
- ☐ Notify SCCFSC if you have dogs, loose dogs may prevent chipping



### DO NOT

- ☐ No timber harvest debris, vineyard or orchard waste
- ☐ No poison oak, ivy, or blackberry vines. No broom or acacia with seed pods or other invasive plant materials.
- ☐ No piles of leaves, pine needles or yard clippings; only woody brush/branches
- ☐ No non-compostable materials (painted or preserved lumber, trash, metal, wire, etc.)
- ☐ No palm fronds, roots, stumps, rocks or mud

**Note:** 100 ft. reduced fuel zone required by law in State Responsibility Areas, and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones in Local Responsibility Areas. For details about 30 ft. zones, go to [www.SCCFireSafe.org](http://www.SCCFireSafe.org)



### PG&E Services



When clearing trees, check for power lines on or near your property. PG&E's qualified tree contractors may be able to prune or remove trees near high voltage lines for free.

To request this PG&E service, call: **800.743.5000**

**Note:** Cal/OSHA requires certified line clearance tree workers to perform any tree work within 10 ft. of high voltage power lines.



For more information about Santa Clara County FireSafe Council's Defensible Space Chipping Program, service availability, or for further assistance, please visit: [www.SCCFireSafe.org](http://www.SCCFireSafe.org) or call **408.975.9591**

Rev3.9.21





# 2021 Chipping Program Schedule

## Lexington Basin/Summit and West Valley Communities

The Defensible Space Chipping Program is a **FREE** service provided by the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council



To apply for the chipping program, visit: [www.sccfiresafe.org/prepare/community-chipping-program](http://www.sccfiresafe.org/prepare/community-chipping-program)  
Online applications open on **March 15, 2021** and are processed as received, so please submit applications early.

Due Date	Community	Project Type
April 12	Summit Road / Melody Lane & Mountain Charlie Road	At Home
April 12	Montevina Road / Brush Road / Hillside Drive	At Home
April 17	Redwood Estates	Drive-Up
April 18	Beardsley Road / Black Road / Thompson Road / Gist Road	At Home
April 18	Aldercroft Heights / Lupin Lodge / Soda Springs Road	At Home
April 18	Chemeketa Park	At Home
April 25	Bear Creek Road / Bear Creek Stables	At Home
April 25	Summit Road — Near Loma Prieta School / Roads between LDS & Catholic Churches	At Home
April 25	Saratoga & Cupertino	At Home
May 2	Loma Prieta Road / Casa Loma / Loma Chiquita Road	At Home
May 16	Idylwild /Oakmont /Wright Drive / OSCH— between Holy City & Highway 17	At Home & Community Pile
June 6	Los Gatos Foothills / South Monte Sereno	At Home
June 6	Monte Sereno / Greenwood Lane / Mountain Way / Bainter Avenue / Overlook Road	At Home

### Project Types

**Drive-up:** Bring cut fuel to a designated location and chipping is done on the spot.

**At Home:** Chipping is done house to house. Chipping application must be submitted & piles must be ready by the due date. Chipping will occur within 3 weeks of the due date; **do not** place additional material in piles after the due date.

The chipping program is subject to availability. If chipping program reaches capacity, a waitlist will be established.

All hazardous fuel reduction programs are supported by local donations, which are greatly appreciated!

Donations are accepted @ [www.SCCFireSafe.org](http://www.SCCFireSafe.org) or by mail:

Santa Clara County FireSafe Council 14380 Saratoga Avenue, Saratoga CA 95070



# resources

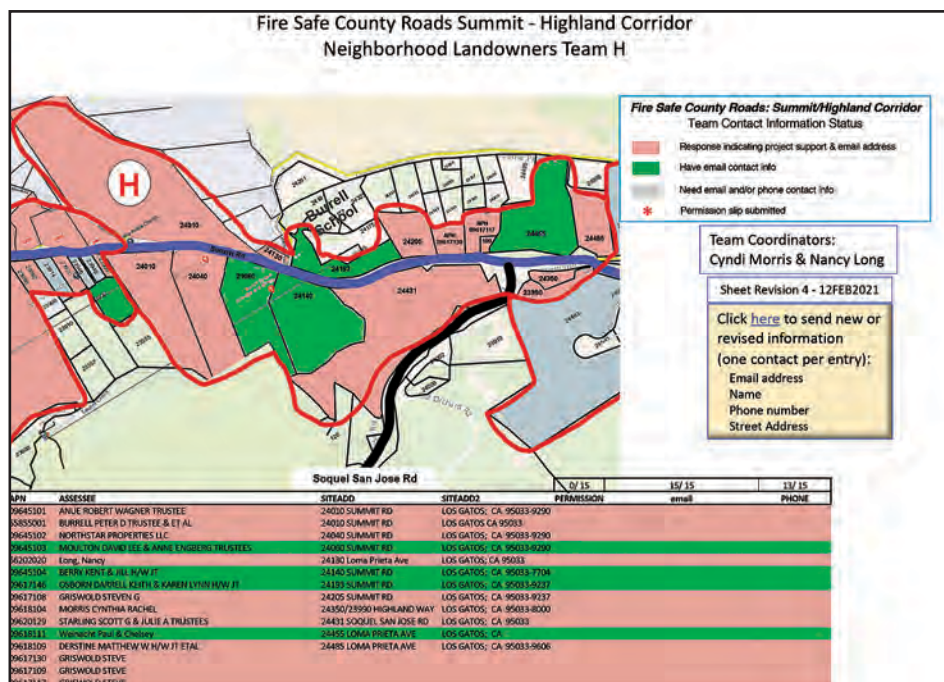
## Fire Safe County Roads Project

Larry Lopp

The risk of fire in our beautiful forested coastal mountains is familiar to all of us. Climate change has brought multiple years of drought, unseasonable high winds, lightning storms, and tree diseases. The result is a dangerous buildup in our forests and along roadways that feeds fires. Many residents of Paradise, California, died trying to escape a fire in a failed evacuation.

In summer 2019, members of Skyland Community Church, the Santa Cruz Mountain Alliance, and our previous Santa Cruz County supervisor, John Leopold, started a project to address these increasing risks. We created the Fire Safe County Roads project to ensure that escape routes from our community are available in wildfire conditions. Public roads including the Summit-Highland Way corridor and Soquel-San Jose corridor were selected as demonstration programs.

The first project is the Summit-Highland Way corridor, a 5.2-mile section of county road. Three miles of the corridor straddle the boundary between Santa Cruz and Santa Clara counties. Clearing work will begin when funding becomes available.



In addition to planning, funding, and environmental approvals, the 138 landowners along the route must give their permission for the clearing work. Members of Skyland Church and the Santa Cruz Mountain Alliance are working to obtain owners' permissions.

We have submitted a request for a \$100,000 grant to the Santa Cruz County FireSafe Council for the project. It should

be approved soon. When we receive this grant, we will apply this funding to Summit Road from the Summit Store, east along Summit-Highland Way, including a serious choke point at the intersection of Summit and Soquel-San Jose roads. We are working to complete this portion of the project before the next year's fire season.

Our preliminary estimate for the total cost of the Summit corridor is \$1.5 to

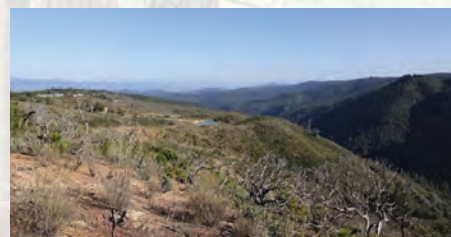
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**OWN YOUR OWN BEAUTIFUL PARK!** Nearly 50 acres of gorgeous acreage on 2 separate parcels, with majestic stands of redwoods, a creek running through it, and several potential building sites. Zoning is TPZ, which allows for a 10-year logging plan, if you desire. Lots of logging roads cut in, which make great hiking trails! Property is bordered by State Park. Absolutely stunning! Located 2.5 miles north of Boulder Creek. A steal at **\$499,000!**



**YOUR OWN PRIVATE GETAWAY!** Looking for land? Nearly 40 acres of spectacular ridgetop property awaiting your imagination! Views to Morgan Hill on the north side (bordered by Open Space), and overlooking Uvas Canyon to the south. Existing workshop with finished second story. Electricity available at street. Private well. Seasonal pond. Acres of usable land. 45 min. to Los Gatos or Santa Cruz. Private but not isolated. Los Gatos schools! **\$599,000**



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\$2 million. The Santa Cruz Resource Conservation District is applying for a CalFire prevention grant. The County Office of Response, Recovery, and Resiliency may also provide a FEMA grant.

For more information, see our website at <https://skylandchurch.com/fire-safe-county-roads>.



### Carrot and Orange Soup

Ellen Bond

*This refreshing, bright orange soup may be served hot or cold,*

*accompanied by thin slices of melba toast*

This is a recipe I came across many years ago at Harrods in London. Since then, it's become our own classic first course for special dinners. Serves four.

- 2½ cups chicken stock
- 1 lb. carrots, finely grated
- Salt and pepper
- Pared strip of orange zest
- ½ teaspoon ground coriander
- 2/3 cup fresh orange juice
- 2/3 cup sour cream
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh mint

Bring the chicken stock to a boil in a large saucepan. Add the carrots, seasoning, orange zest, and coriander. Reduce heat, cover pan, and simmer for 15-20 minutes until the carrots are cooked. Remove the strip of orange zest and purée the soup.

Add the orange juice and return the soup to a boil. Remove from the heat, stir in the sour cream, adjust the seasoning, and pour into bowls. Sprinkle with chopped mint and serve immediately.



Caltrans

### Major Highway 17 Upgrade

Kevin Drabinski

Caltrans has completed a \$19-million project upgrading more than six miles of Highway 17 between Scotts Valley and Summit Road. Almost \$2 million in funding came from Senate Bill (SB 1), the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017. SB 1 provides \$5 billion in transportation funding annually, split between state and local agencies.

"We're excited to finish another major SB 1 project that improves the road for the 65,000 motorists who travel this key route daily between Santa Cruz and Silicon Valley," said Caltrans Director Toks Omishakin. "Through SB 1, we continue to make thousands of transportation improvements in the state—from fixing aging infrastructure to developing convenient, efficient, and accessible pedestrian, bike, and transit options."

The project began in January 2019, and upgraded pavement and guardrails, installed more visible lane markings, widened roadway shoulders, and improved local street and driveway intersections. All these upgrades will improve traffic safety and operations along this busy highway corridor. Caltrans and project contractor Granite Construction of Santa Clara performed the roadwork primarily at night to minimize traffic impact, while the California Highway Patrol helped ensure motorist and worker safety.

"Thanks to SB 1 funding, we are making more upgrades than ever to the state transportation system along the Central Coast, with more than \$650 million in ongoing construction," said District 5 Director Tim Gubbins.

Another notable SB 1-funded project in the county includes \$33 million (nearly \$6 million in SB 1 funds) in preventive maintenance to upgrade seven miles of Highway 1 from Aptos to Santa Cruz. The project is scheduled to be completed this spring. Caltrans estimates that every dollar invested in preventive maintenance saves ten dollars in more costly repairs.

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## resources

### Supporting family

#### Visionary Mentoring and Coaching Christine Sodt, MA

My goal is to help families function in a happy home where each person is loved, valued, and respected as an individual. Working together, we establish that the home is a safe place to make mistakes, grow, and learn.

For example, Marie and James Smith were raising three daughters—Sarah, Jody, and Danniela. Their family was child-centered, and they worked with each child individually, based on age and temperament. Their goal was to raise strong girls, with clear morals and values, who could make good choices and feel confident.

Sarah was 16, and learning to drive. She was responsible, easily followed the rules of the house, and excelled at school.

Danniela was 11. She had more energy than the family knew what to do with, but they had learned to give her the space she needed to be active and positive.

The middle child, Jody, was 14. The parenting techniques that had worked so well with Sarah and Daniella were useless with Jody. They were engaged in a series of power struggles and all three were often frustrated and angry.

James and Marie gave me a long list of issues they were having with Jody. They complained that she always needed attention, she didn't listen or follow the rules, she had poor social skills, and low self-esteem. When I asked them about Jody's strengths, they quickly went back to telling me what she was doing wrong.

I listened and validated their concerns, then asked "Would you say that she's a strong-willed child?" "Yes," they responded, "that's a perfect description."

Each strong-willed child is different, but they share four basic human needs: 1) connection and belonging, 2) safety and security, 3) power and control, and 4) confidence and competence.

Everyone has needs in these areas, but at different levels at various stages of life. In this case, James and Marie admitted that Jody wanted more control over her own life. She often said, "They're always telling me what to do."

They were concerned that Jody didn't feel confident. She seemed secure at home, but stayed in her room most of the time. She avoided negative interactions with the rest

of the family. Neither parent thought Jody could handle the responsibility of attending to her needs.

I encouraged James and Marie to pay attention to building their daughter's self-esteem. This would lead to her feeling stronger and more independent.

Jody's grades had been going down. I worked with both parents to help them become teachers and coaches. They could help her create her own goals, take active steps, and accept support when she made mistakes. They encouraged Jody to take more control of when to do homework.

James and Marie learned how to communicate with Jody—to ask more questions about her choices, and to brainstorm her plans and outcomes. They also gave her more support. As Jody became more competent in her choices, her self-esteem increased. They began to work together as a team. Jody could make more of her own decisions rather than fighting over parental "demands." The power struggles decreased dramatically.

By creating her own goals and action plans, Jody built confidence. She learned to handle mistakes and problems without blaming others.

James and Marie focused on the positives and learned to acknowledge Jody for each success.

### About Christine Sodt

*I have 33 years of experience working with children in preschool and grade school, teenagers, and adults.*

*I directed and taught in my own preschool and childcare in the Santa Cruz Mountains for 18 years, and was a social worker for a non-profit providing Wraparound care for high-risk youth and their families in Santa Clara County for 15 years. In addition, I was adjunct faculty at two local community colleges teaching child development.*

*The mentoring I provide for families helps them develop the team-building skills they need to succeed. Children are individuals and my coaching helps them decrease unproductive behaviors. By building their individual strengths, interests, and confidence we can change the family dynamic, improving the relationship between parent and child.*

*You can call me at 408-839-7488.*



### Santa Cruz County Meet your County Supervisor Manu Koenig

I hope to see you at our Summit town hall meeting, via Zoom, on **Wednesday, April 21**, from 6 to 7 p.m. You can register at our website: District 1 ([santa-cruz.ca.us](https://santa-cruz.ca.us)).

In the past month, we've talked with constituents about the state's proposed changes affecting rural and mountain residents, and advanced initiatives to facilitate housing and rebuilding after the CZU fires. We've also participated in METRO improvement discussions.

**New State Minimum Fire-Safe Regulations.** Our office is reaching out to constituents who may be affected by the new minimum fire-safe regulations proposed by the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (<https://bof.fire.ca.gov/>). Proposed changes would impact rebuilding and new building on dead-end or one-way roads, as well as roads that are considered to be "substandard." Substandard roads are defined as any road less than 14 feet wide, with less than 13 feet of clearance or a slope steeper than 20 percent.

A 45-day comment period began on March 3. Public comments can be submitted to [publiccomments@bof.ca.gov](mailto:publiccomments@bof.ca.gov).

**Insurance Commissioner Proposes New Transparency Rules.** California Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara is proposing new transparency rules for how insurance companies rate properties for fire risk. The new rules will give homeowners and businesses open access to their properties' wildfire risk scores. Insurance providers will be required to disclose to the public how scores are calculated, and enable consumers to actively improve their scores. This could influence whether they can obtain coverage and the cost of their coverage. Following public workshops on March 30 and April 6, Ricardo will begin a formal regulatory process leading to new rules.

**Tower Battery Backups.** The California Public Utilities Commission adopted a measure in July 2020 requiring California wireless providers to develop resiliency strategies to address



disasters and power outages. Wireless providers will be required to implement a 72-hour backup power solution to maintain minimum service coverage to Tier 2 and Tier 3 high-fire-threat districts (<https://ia.cpuc.ca.gov/firemap/>) during disasters or commercial grid outages. Service must be sufficient to maintain telephone access for all customers to 9-1-1 service and emergency notifications, and internet for emergency notices. Providers are permitted to use gas generators as a primary backup source, but they must continue to explore other renewable options for the power supplies. The deadline for this implementation requirement is July 20, 2021.

#### **Housing and Homelessness Initiatives.**

At the March 9 board of supervisors meeting, I proposed a measure to allow non-profits, religious organizations, and neighborhood groups to create and operate temporary housing accommodations. This proposal is based on ordinances recently passed by Sacramento and other jurisdictions, as well as successful programs like the Community First! Village in Austin, Texas. We continue to identify options and solutions for addressing homelessness in our community.

At the March 9 meeting, I also proposed an initiative intended to help CZU fire victims and others, by making it quicker, easier, and more affordable to build or install an ADU. In partnership with District 5 supervisor Bruce McPherson, we have asked the planning department to create a set of pre-approved ADU plans that would be available on the county's website for the public to download free of charge.

At the last board meeting, we also heard a report from the planning department on the progress of the tiny homes initiative we submitted to the board on January 26. We introduced this initiative in order to increase housing supply and affordable-by-design housing options for the community. We propose to have the planning department incorporate tiny homes, including movable tiny homes, as legal ADUs and primary residences.

Over the coming months, we will work closely with mountain residents on these important topics. As always, we welcome your feedback on issues. Visit District 1 ([santa-cruz.ca.us](https://santa-cruz.ca.us)) for a complete list of upcoming constituent meetings, or email us at [first.district@santacruzcounty.us](mailto:first.district@santacruzcounty.us).



#### **Little Free Food Pantry Shannon Edwards**

The Little Free Food Pantry at Skyland Community Church is growing. We thank our neighbors who brought food to our last community drop-off.

The Little Free Food Pantry is on the front porch of Skyland Community Church at 25100 Skyland Road. It is open 24/7, so please come any time to give or take food. Skyland Community Church collects and distributes food for people or pets. Volunteers replenish the pantry daily. This month, we doubled our space for perishable foods. Peninsula Food Runners donated a new refrigerator/freezer and we added two large coolers to hold perishables.

Suggested donations include staples, perishables, and toiletries. Every Wednesday, we get twenty-five boxes of canned goods and a large bag of fruits and vegetables from Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Cruz County, facilitated by San Agustin Church in Scotts Valley. We get twenty bags of vegetables, fruit, and bread from Grey Bears



on Thursday mornings.

Our food pantry is feeding at least sixty families per week. Substitute drivers and workers are needed, so email [shannonedwards14@gmail.com](mailto:shannonedwards14@gmail.com) if you are interested in helping. We would also appreciate the donation of a small freezer. Working together, we can help those who have struggled during the pandemic. If you want to help our Little Free Food Pantry financially, you can donate at <https://skylandchurch.com/donations/>.





# community

## A Firewise USA® Community Aldercroft Heights

Marjorie Kline, Nicole Houts,  
Sarah Johnston, Scott Schreiman,  
and Theresa Brandt

The CZU fires prompted a group of residents in Aldercroft Heights to become a recognized Firewise USA® community. Our community has about 150 homes, with one winding road to enter and leave our community. One section is a single lane. With the support of the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council's managing director Eugenia Rendler, and Firewise leader Lynn Sestak, we held our first committee meeting.

We were lucky through the storms. Aldercroft Heights received lightning strikes on two separate PG&E poles that did not start any fires. It was a serious wake-up call. As we watched the devastation unfold just across Highway 17, we realized that our community faced a dangerous fire risk.

Many asked the same questions. How do fire trucks come in when we are trying to escape? Can we use a local private road? How do we get gates opened in an emergency? We wrote and called several agencies, including the Santa Clara County Fire Department, to plead that they open



the gates so we have more options. We voiced our frustrations.

When the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council got involved, we made progress. We held a virtual meeting with the relevant agencies. Special thanks to Santa Clara County Fire Chief, Tony Bowden, and his office for arranging it quickly, and to Battalion Chief Jonathan Black for his ongoing dedication.

Our immediate challenges were resolved. There is now a plan and process in place for opening the gates in future emergencies.

Early in the process, we had significant concerns about using a gated road. Is it accessible by all types of cars? Will we be able to find our way out in dark, smoky conditions using a little-traveled gravel road for the first time? What if residents or first responders from the other side try to enter?

Battalion Chiefs Jonathan Black and Dennis Lollie, Eugenia Rendler, and the corporate landowner's representative drove the road together.

After the drive, Chief Lollie shared that the dust was like driving through a smoky



## Kanady Team's Prop 19 Guide

Reach out to me today to get your C.A.R. Quick Guide about Prop 19!

### Proposition 19

has officially passed  
- what does that mean for you?



Prop 19 allows homeowners who are over 55, disabled, or wildfire/ disaster victims to transfer primary residence's tax base to replacement residence. Changes taxation of family-property transfers. Establishes fire protection services fund.

I'm happy to share the breakdown from the CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® of the changes on tax breakdown portability, the impact on intergenerational transfers to children or grandchildren, when the law goes into effect, and more!

Give me a call or send me an email so we can connect!



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fire. Work is now in progress to install emergency markers and signs to make a night-time evacuation safe and efficient. The corporate landowner is our partner in keeping Aldercroft Heights safe in the event of an emergency.

Our community was fragmented with several independent road associations, and several areas with no associations at all. There was no system for us to connect with each other. This, also, is changing. We've established "pods" across our entire community, with local leaders informing and educating their neighbors. We've set up an emergency WhatsApp group, and a monthly newsletter.

Our work resulted in Firewise USA recognition in early January 2021, only four months after our first steering committee meeting. The support of the FireSafe Council is invaluable. They liaison with local agencies to make things happen. Eugenia and Lynn guided us through the steps to gain Firewise USA recognition.

We are planning for the future. Projects include evacuation drills, community meetings, online education events, community cleanup days, applying for grants to clear larger areas, and taking part in the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council's free chipping program.

If you live in Aldercroft Heights and want to get involved or get more information, visit our website at [www.AHinfo.org](http://www.AHinfo.org).

With the devastation from fires that we've seen in recent years across California, we encourage every community in the Santa Cruz mountains to band together to support and protect each other in the event of wildfire or other emergency. Are you ready to learn about becoming a recognized Firewise USA community? Email Eugenia Rendler ([education@sccfiresafe.org](mailto:education@sccfiresafe.org)) or Lynn Sestak ([lsestak@sccfiresafe.org](mailto:lsestak@sccfiresafe.org)). You can also find resources from the NFPA Firewise USA program at <https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Firewise-USA>.

Learn more about the Firewise USA program from the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council: <https://sccfiresafe.org/learn/what-is-firewise-usa/>.

The best plan is to be ready, evacuate early, and be familiar with your evacuation route. We need alternatives, but experience driving evacuation routes is the best option.

Wildfire is coming. Are you ready? Visit CalFire's website at <https://www.readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/ready-set-go/>. If you have children, they may enjoy the activities and games on <http://www.sparky.org/>.

## South Skyline Association Board Openings Patti Begley

The South Skyline Association is looking for community-minded residents to serve on the board of directors. We have four open seats. We need to fill these seats to keep up with current projects and to tackle other issues that impact our mountain community. Serving on the board is a good way to meet neighbors and share ideas. All are welcome to attend a board meeting to see if this is a good fit.

Candidates must reside in the South Skyline area, which is defined as the area along Skyline Boulevard, or with access from Skyline Boulevard, which includes Skylonda to the north, to the southern terminus of Skyline Boulevard at Bear Creek Road. Also included are upper portions of Gist Road, Black Road, Highway 9 east, Page Mill Road, and Old La Honda Road; Highway 9 west to the Waterman Gap area; Alpine Road west to Rogers Gulch; and Portola Park Road, including the Middleton Tract. Refer to the map at [southskyline.org/about/](http://southskyline.org/about/).

If you are interested, email Evan Dellor at [president@southskyline.org](mailto:president@southskyline.org) or Dick Schwind at [skylinerschwind@gmail.com](mailto:skylinerschwind@gmail.com).





# people

## Obituary

### Linda Forbes Cynda Ben Hassen

Linda Forbes, 82, made her last pass through her beloved garden on February 17, 2021. She was born to Carl Bowman and Inez Logan on May 24, 1938, in Catawba County, North Carolina. The depression shaped Linda's formative years and resulted in a lifetime of frugality, hoarding of reading material, clip-on earrings, and cheap mischief. As the younger of two, she set out at an early age to forge her own path as a baton twirler, actress, and briefly, an English teacher, after graduating from Lenoir-Rhyne College in 1959. Her path eventually led her to leave the small town behind for the glitz, glamour, and fifth-floor walk-ups of New York City.

Her early experiences in New York included a stint working at the World's Fair and several dead-end secretarial gigs. She moved to Los Gatos in 1972, and then to the Santa Cruz Mountains in 1976, where she forged a long career as a housewife. She re-entered the workforce in 1988, working a few too many Christmas seasons at the



Emporium and later Macy's in Valley Fair, where she sold fine jewelry. She noted that the best part of the job was her co-workers, not security bag checks or rude customers.

Linda was an expert maker of Halloween costumes, Thanksgiving feasts, high-calorie party platters, and holiday coffee cakes. She was self-taught in defending plants from gophers.

Growing up in Linda's household was never dull. Linda belonged to a women's craft group. She was an avid reader, who

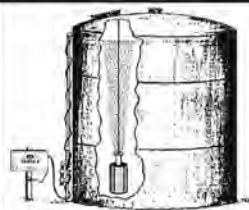
loved to attend book club with her friends. She lovingly selected and assembled toys while decorating her house for holidays.

During their formative years, Linda enriched the moral fiber of her children with copious time outside "lost in the forest" and in various educational activities. She was a den mother for Boy Scouts until her son abandoned the pursuit of Eagle Scout for motorbikes. She led a Brownie Troop until her daughter decided group sing-alongs and badges weren't that cool.

In recent years, she added to her longtime group of friends from her book club and craft group. She went to town to share weekly sandwiches with her husband, and enjoyed making experimental meals and gardening. She looked forward to visits from her children and grandchild, whom she loved to spoil rotten with adventures, painting pottery, visiting museums, eating sweets, and exploring random exhibitions such as the one that conducted static electricity and caused her granddaughter's hair to stand up for an hour.

Linda's beloved husband of fifty years, Jim, sister Pat, five nieces and nephews, daughter Cynda Ben Hassen (Tarek), granddaughter Mae, and son Jeff were left to squabble over her vast collection of holiday wreaths.

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Linda was pre-deceased by her parents, her cocker spaniel, Sand, and several cats, all of whom are buried in the backyard.

No flowers, please. What would have made her the happiest is for you to share coffee or box wine and food on toothpicks with a friend. Be sure to laugh.

If you feel compelled to use your hard-earned money to honor Linda's memory, donations may be sent to Doctors without Borders, Habitat for Humanity, or Mercy Ships. A celebration of Linda's life will be held in May in Redwood Estates, COVID-19 permitting.

**Obituary**  
**Roxana Kost**  
Angela Hedges

Roxana Kost, a devoted mother, passionate artist, mountain resident, loving wife, and friend, lost her long battle with metastatic breast cancer on March 3, 2021. She was 46.

Roxana was a light in the lives of those who knew her. Her soul sang through her artwork, which she used to process grief and celebrate the precious joys of this life. She volunteered with Art Docents of Los Gatos, sharing her deep love of artistic expression with young students. While battling cancer, she trained to become a certified yoga instructor, so she could bring her healing care to others. Above all else, she was fiercely dedicated to her family.

She lived off Hebard Road. For many of us it is just a sign on Highway 17, but for her it was a well-loved place under the redwoods. Throughout her illness, she maintained as normal a life as possible for her husband and daughters, ages twelve and fourteen. The girls attended Lexington School and are now at R.J. Fisher Middle and Los Gatos High schools. She rarely spoke of her suffering, choosing instead to engage the world with a smile, strength, and hope.



The Kost family has already endured much grief and tragedy. In 2011, they lost their oldest daughter, Michaela, who died of complications from a heart transplant just

before her seventh birthday. Just 23 days later, still deeply in mourning, the family was forced to leave their Vallejo home despite a strong community effort to grant them more time.

Within months, Roxana was diagnosed with cancer. In her decade-long battle against this rare triple-negative breast cancer, she underwent countless debilitating treatments and suffered many complications, facing each challenge bravely with a strength that welled from deep inside her. She will be deeply missed by all who knew her.

Roxana's brilliant spark touched the lives of so many and we want to give back to her family in their time of need. Her wish was for her family to be cared for and free from worry in their grief. A fund has been set up to help cover funeral expenses and to provide a buffer and comfort for them as they navigate this difficult time. To read more and offer support, visit [gofundme.com/f/love-for-roxana](https://gofundme.com/f/love-for-roxana).



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# gallery

## **The Amazing Jellyfish** **Bruce Sudweeks**

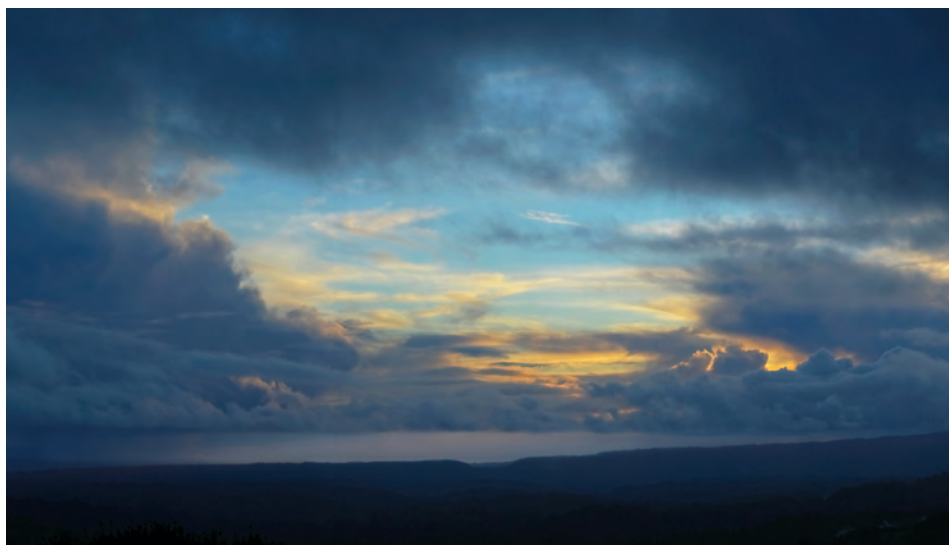
A group of jellyfish is called a smack, a swarm, or a bloom. Their bodies (bells) are simple, yet complex, made up of three layers: the inner layer (gastrodermis), a thick gelatinous middle layer (mesoglea), and the outer layer (epidermis).

Jellyfish range in size from a grain of sand to longer than a blue whale. One species possesses one of the deadliest venoms in the world.

This photo is of a Pacific sea nettle. It is similar to other jellies in that its body is mostly water, combined with a basic nervous system that responds to light and smell. They are mini, mobile ecosystems. Small fish and crustaceans often live within the safety of the bell and tentacles.

Sea nettles use jet propulsion by contracting their bells and pushing water behind them.

Jellyfish have a superpower that allows them to regenerate body parts. Perhaps that is why they have been on Earth for over 500 million years and are still going strong.



*A scenic sky*  
*Photography by Bruce Fournier*



**Scenes from the Water**

*A whale tail,  
an egret,  
and a seal.*

*Photography by Mercury Freedom*



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# 21860 Bear Creek Way



4 Beds | 3.5 Baths | 2,052 SF Home | 3.6 +/- Acres

Beautiful property with usable land. Lush gardens, fruit trees, chicken coop. Country charm, this home has an updated kitchen, rustic formal dining room, wine cellar, master suite, and guest suite. Decks/hot tub access from the master suite and family room.

**Offered at \$1,489,000**



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## 294 Burrell Court



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1.1 Acres

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## 24210 Summit Woods Dr



4 Beds | 3 Baths | 2,964 SF Home  
1.13 Acres

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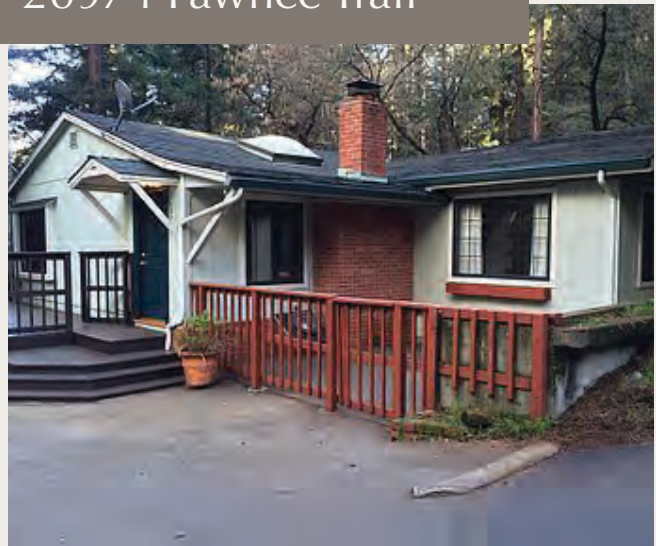
## 18510 Skyline Blvd



4 Beds | 3 Baths | 3,160 SF Home  
20.57 Acres

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## 20974 Pawnee Trail



4 Beds | 2 Baths | 2,700 +/- SF Home  
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# calendar

## ON-GOING CLASSES AND MEETINGS

*Class and meeting schedules are valid as COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.*

*Call or email to confirm dates and times.*

### Sundays

Dog agility, 24900 Highland Way, 9 to 11 a.m. Call 408-506-8670, or email in8runner@aol.com to confirm dates.

### Mondays

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

### Tuesdays

Qi-gong classes, 8:45 to 10 a.m. at Skyland Church. Call 831-247-5617.

Pilates in the mountains, 8:30 to 9:45 a.m. at Loma Prieta Elementary School. Call 408-354-8700.

Mid-life fitness (adults), Redwood Estates Pavilion, 9 to 10 a.m. LGS Recreation. Call 408-354-8700.

### Wednesdays

Tai chi for beginners is held from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Los Gatos Recreation Center.

Downtown Santa Cruz Farmer's Market, Cedar and Lincoln streets, from 1 to 5 p.m.

### Thursdays

Yoga at the Redwood Estates Pavilion. We meet on Zoom and (weather permitting) on the Pavilion lawn. Call 408-354-8700.

Pilates in the mountains, 8:30 a.m., at Loma Prieta Elementary School. Call 408-354-8700.

Yoga at Skyland Church, 7 p.m. \$10 per class

Yoga at Lakeside School, 6:30 to 8 p.m. Call 408-354-8700.

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

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

Narcotics Anonymous meetings, 7 p.m. at Mountain Bible Church, 23946 Summit Road. Call 408-353-2302.

### Fridays

Mid-life fitness (adults), Redwood Estates Pavilion, 9 to 10 a.m. LGS Recreation. Call 408-354-8700.

### Saturdays

Summit Toastmasters 95033, 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. at Mountain Bible Church, 23946 Summit Road. Call 408-634-3493 for more information.

Westside Santa Cruz Farmer's Market, Mission Street extension and Western Drive, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

### Sundays

Los Gatos Farmer's Market, Town Park Plaza, Main Street and N. Santa Cruz Avenue, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Live Oak Farmer's Market, 15th and East Cliff Drive in Santa Cruz, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.



*Redwood Estates honors the late Alice Hoagland, a longtime Redwood Estates resident. Her son, Mark Bingham, was killed September 11, 2001, when his United Airlines Flight 93 was hijacked by Al Qaeda terrorists. Mark, along with three other passengers, stormed into the plane's cockpit to regain control of the aircraft before it crashed in an open field in Pennsylvania.*

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## SPECIAL EVENTS

### Thursday, April 8

Santa Clara County Bookmobile is at Loma Prieta Playfield/Building Blocks, 1 to 4 p.m. Order items for pickup at [www.sccld.org](http://www.sccld.org), or call 408-273-2326, ext. 3060.

### Monday, April 12

Deadline to submit free chipping applications for Summit Road, Melody Lane, Mountain Charlie Road, Montevina Road, Brush Road, and Hillside Drive. See pages 6-7 for more information.

### Saturday, April 17

Drive-up chipping at Redwood Estates Pavilion. See pages 6-7 for more information.

### Saturday, April 17, through Tuesday, April 20

Join the 2021 Sudden Oak Death Blitz. See [www.sodblitz.org](http://www.sodblitz.org). Pick-up a packet at Saratoga Summit CalFire (self-serve), register, then complete online training in order to collect leaf samples in the mountain area.



### Sunday, April 18

Deadline to submit free chipping applications for Beardsley/Black/Thompson/Gist Roads. See pages 6-7 for more information.

### Monday, April 19, through Saturday, April 24

Bid on exciting silent auction items at the Lakeside School Community Foundation's virtual fundraising event. See <https://lscf2021.ggo.bid>.

### Wednesday, April 21

Santa Cruz County Supervisor Manu Koenig hosts a Summit town-hall meeting on Zoom, from 6 to 7 p.m. Register at [www.santa-cruz.ca.us](http://www.santa-cruz.ca.us) (select District 1).

### Thursday, April 22

Santa Clara County Bookmobile is at Redwood Estates Pavilion, 2 to 4 p.m. Order items for pickup at [www.sccld.org](http://www.sccld.org), or call 408-273-2326, ext. 3060.

### Saturday, April 24

The Lakeside School Community foundation's online live auction features music, a cocktail demonstration, and other surprises. To find out more, visit <https://lscf2021.ggo.bid>.

### Tuesday, April 27

Santa Clara County Bookmobile is at Lakeside School, 2 to 4 p.m. Order items for pickup at [www.sccld.org](http://www.sccld.org), or call 408-273-2326, ext. 3060.



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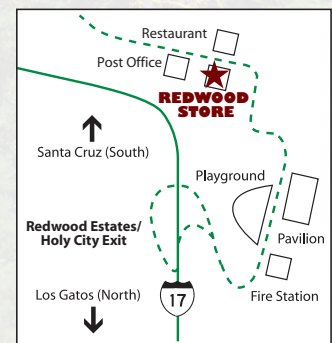
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# exploring

## Foothills Nature Preserve

### Los Trancos Trail

Neil Wiley

In our March issue, I wrote about the opening of a new-to-the-public park. It was too successful. On some weekends, more than 750 people showed up. Declaring an emergency, the Palo Alto City Council renamed the park a nature preserve, imposed an entrance fee of \$6 per vehicle, and restricted capacity by closing the gates when attendance reached 650 visitors or more than 250 vehicles.

This nature preserve is still worth a visit. Just bring a little money, get there early, and visit during the week when other people are working. I did.

On a sunny Tuesday morning at 9 a.m., I drove by several, mostly empty, parking areas. I parked in a small lot next to the closed Interpretive Center, across the road from the only direct entrance to the one-way Los Trancos Trail.

Although I had walked several Foothills' trails, I saved this one because I knew that walking 7.7 miles and climbing up some long hills could require an all-day effort. I gained confidence when my fitness trainer said that she had enjoyed her hike. (I conveniently forgot that she was a certified trainer who had worked for Open Space and Fire and Rescue.)

I walked over bridge 21, the first of 21 small bridges, and began my trek. The first



mile was all uphill, but the grades were moderate, and the single-track trail was smooth and shady. I passed the Sunrise and Steep Hollow trails to the intersection with Trappers Fire Road.

What a beautiful location. It looked like a park, complete with lots of green grass, big oak trees, and a comfortable bench. A short walk up and to the right on Trappers Fire Road revealed a nice scenic view.

I considered turning left on Trappers. The road is a shortcut to the east branch of the Los Trancos Trail loop, but I wanted to follow the trail along Los Trancos Creek.

It was a nice walk down to the creek with some beautiful views, but as I neared the bottom of the canyon, I knew that I would have to pay going back up. What I didn't expect was that the narrow trail followed a ledge high above the creek. At times, it was a bit sketchy, with small slides and unsure footing. The trail was also going up, too, as it took me upstream.

It wasn't all bad. I could see and hear water tumbling over big rocks. It would be more interesting when more rain makes bigger waterfalls. I also met a fellow hiker who was sitting in the road. We talked for a few minutes, rested enough, and traveled on in solitude.

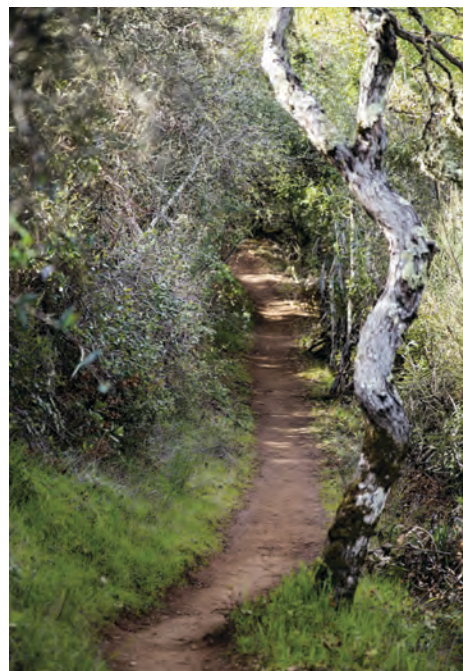
Just before the trail left the creek, I found a bench near the water. It was a pleasant place to dine on a peanut butter sandwich and a bottle of Pellegrino.

The climb continued, but trail conditions improved as I passed Pony Tracks Fire Road, Shotgun Fire Road, and Trappers Fire Road. Here at the top of the ridge I saw beautiful views to the east and north while enjoying

the comfort of a nice bench. I could see the San Francisco skyline, Stanford's Hoover Tower and radio telescope, the San Francisco Bay, and the entire San Francisco Peninsula. Just eight more bridges to go.

While enjoying the view, I met a young couple from San Francisco. They were bartenders who had been out of work for more than a year. They fill their time by hiking. They enjoyed the hike, but their little dog was too tired to walk.

The rest of the trail was an easy downhill stroll with occasional views and good footing that allowed me to take longer, faster strides. I went by Costanoan Trail and over a few bridges to the end of the trail in Wildhorse Valley.





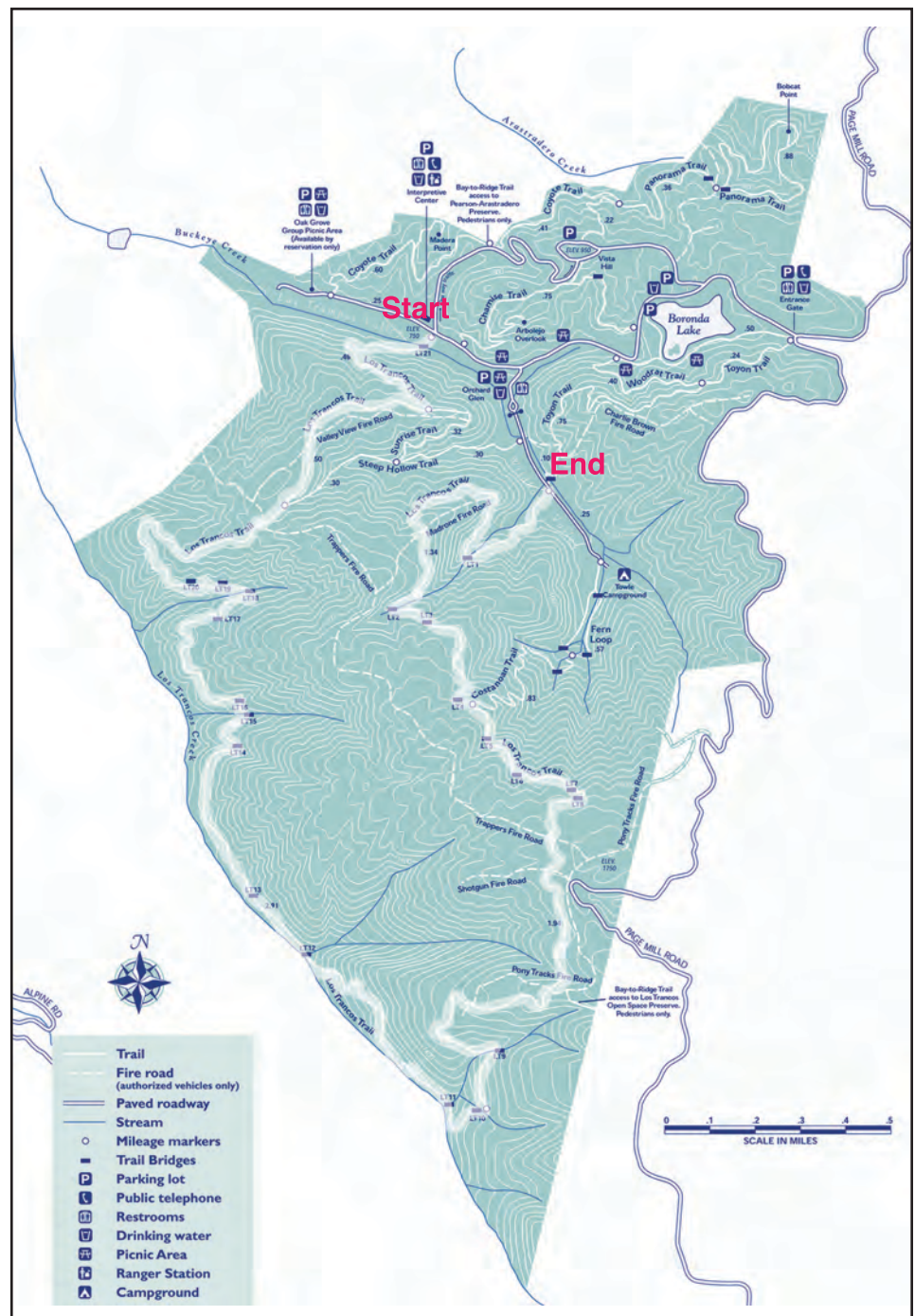


A left turn took me by the Orchard Glen parking area and public bathrooms. I walked on through this beautiful valley to the Interpretive Center. From there, I drove up to the highest loop at Vista Point for the best panoramic views in the preserve, then back down to Boronda Lake to see people—mostly young families—enjoying walking, boating, fishing, and watching ducks and geese.

Speaking of children, the Los Trancos Trail is not recommended for them or for those unaccustomed to long walks and climbs up dirt trails, but people of every age or condition can enjoy Foothills Nature Preserve. For more general information, see our March issue, visit one of our websites, or go to [cityofpaloalto.org](http://cityofpaloalto.org).

For GPS, you can use the address 11799 Page Mill Road, Los Altos Hills. My GPS and Google directions agreed on a route that takes you off 280 north at El Monte Road (Exit 16), past Foothill College to El Monte, left on Moody, right on Altamont, and left on Page Mill. Watch for the park entrance gate on the right.

Enjoy.





# history

## *Remembering the Forgotten Laurel*

Neil Wiley

**The people of Laurel remember being forgotten.**

When the Loma Prieta Joint Union School District was formed, students living in the Laurel area were not included. Some children were allowed to attend through inter-district transfers, but the Laurel area was not officially included in the district.

The people of Laurel were forgotten by Santa Cruz County. They have been badly served by three so-called roads: Laurel, Redwood Lodge, and Schulties (county spelling of the original pioneer family name of Schultheis). They are county roads in name only. None meet the county's own road standards. Although the 2020 fires were on the other side of Highway 17, the long-time closure of Redwood Lodge and Schulties limited evacuation routes to only one narrow Laurel Road.

Although Redwood Lodge has been closed for months at a time, it is now open. In addition to several improvements, Redwood Lodge has two new beautiful bridges. Will these fixes prove to be temporary? The test will be a wet winter.

Also, what about creating a fire break and defensible space on Redwood Lodge Road? This would make the road safer for evacuation, fire personnel, and fire trucks. A fire break could also protect Villa del Monte, Summit Woods, and the Summit area from fires climbing up from the south.

Schulties is barely more than a trail. Built by the John Schulthesis family in the 1850s, it has seen few improvements since. Can the county do more to protect the road from slides?

Laurel's peace is occasionally disturbed when Highway 17 is blocked from Scotts Valley to Summit. GPS systems and Waze software may direct drivers to take Laurel and Schulties to Summit Road. One such driver showed up at my house two hours late.

The people of Laurel were forgotten by the State of California. When a driver was killed on Highway 17's Laurel Curve, Caltrans permanently blocked the left turn from the north. To get home from Los Gatos, Laurel residents must drive down to Glenwood or the safer Granite Creek overpass, make a U-turn, and drive back



*The town of Laurel in 1901*

north to Laurel Road.

The people of Laurel were even been forgotten by well-meaning environmental groups. Mountain lions and deer will be able to walk under Highway 17 through a multi-million dollar tunnel, but it won't be open to the folks in Laurel.

### **We can't change history, but we can reveal something of Laurel's past.**

In 1863, Frederick Hihn was awarded 15,000 acres in the Rancho Soquel Augmentation. Part of that property included 4,123 acres called Tract 16, the Laurel District. It was valued at less than fifty dollars an acre.

Hihn owned lots of timberland. He knew that it was too valuable for just logging. He made a deal with Edward Davis, president of the South Pacific Coast Railroad, to build the train route in the Laurel district between two major tunnels. South Pacific Coast got a convenient source of timber to build their railroad, and Hihn got a railroad next to his mill to take his timber to market.

The payoff was fast. The Laurel Sawmill opened in 1900. It could cut 25,000 feet of lumber per day, using a

bandsaw that could cut 54-foot-long logs.

Demand was strong. The Laurel Sawmill supplied board stock, poles, firewood, and other timber products to other Hihn mills, local lumber yards, and dealers in San Jose and San Francisco.

The new mill made Hihn a little richer, but it also made Laurel a successful town. Most employees lived in a company bunkhouse or in the town of Laurel. Road hands were paid about \$50 per month. The superintendent made \$120 a month, plus received free rent and meals at the cook house.

During the years that the mill was active, Hihn and his company owned about three-fourths of the property in Laurel District. They built Laurel School, a bunk house for



*This private home was once a mill building and general store in Laurel.*





single men, and a building that served as post office and company store. They even offered lumber for a church that was never built.

A historical marker at Laurel reads:

*Once thriving railroad and sawmill town, known as Highland, when the first through train ran in 1880. Name Laurel adopted about 1885. F.A. Hihn built sawmill here in 1899. The Laurel Mill supplied much of the lumber to rebuild San Francisco in 1906. Little remains today except tunnel portals and memories. This historical marker placed by the County of Santa Cruz and the Santa Cruz County Bicentennial Commission October 1969.*

The marker is wrong. There are more than memories. Just a few feet to the left of the marker is a house that was a mill building, a general store, and then a private home. I met the owner who confirmed this bit of history.

A short distance down Redwood Lodge is the Laurel Mill Lodge. According to the Mill's website, the creek was dammed to make a mill pond where logs were floated to the steam-powered bandsaw. Since the mill needed to be located in a deep canyon to use the creek, a flat area was built with "rip-rap," formed by crisscrossing layers of redwood trunks with rock and dirt fill to support buildings and lumber drying and stacking.

In 1913, a year after Hihn's death, the mill was closed. The next owner removed the mill dam. He used the rough slabs of wood to build two small cabins. He planted a pear orchard, but it was too small for commercial use.

In 1943, Alan Medlen purchased the land. He used the two cabins and the old mill office/mess hall building as a group

foster home. The boys in the foster home dug the swimming pool.

The foster home eventually was expanded into a children's camp. Medlen built additions to the two older cabins, added nine A-frame cabins, and doubled the size of what had been the mess hall/mill office. He had the building raised up and placed on a perimeter foundation.

In the 1960s and '70s, the property was home to a retreat center and massage school called *Getting In Touch*. Some of the A-frame cabins were modernized. A hot tub and a second swimming pool were added.

When the bridge on Redwood Lodge

Road washed out one winter in the early '80s, damage to the upper part of Redwood Lodge Road isolated the property and closed the program.

The facility was leased to Nancy Penny. She used the site as a nudist recreation center. Members had to park on the road above and scramble down ropes and ladders to get to the lodge and other facilities. It was financially untenable, and the organization filed for bankruptcy.

The land stood empty for several years, but Esther Seehof and Bob Kundus rebuilt the main house and cabins. For many years, they hosted weddings and special events. My wife and I enjoyed many happy days there, especially the ones featuring wonderful brunches. When Esther moved to a care facility, they sold the property.

I haven't met the new owner, but the caretakers showed me some of the property. They also shared a picture of the long gone and forgotten circa-1900-bridge built across Laurel Creek. The original picture is credited to the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History.

Fronted by a new bridge, Laurel Mill Lodge is being renovated. From what I saw. I don't think the lodge will be forgotten.

The people who live in Laurel value their privacy, the deep quiet forest, and a special sense of community. They will remember Laurel.



*The bridge at Laurel Mill, 1900*



# **schools**

## **Lakeside School Virtual Mad Hatter Auction** Hila Propp

The Lakeside School Community Foundation is preparing to host its annual auction. Even if you don't have children who attend our school, you won't want to be late for this fundraising event. This year, it will be a virtual event with a Mad Hatter theme. It will feature a silent auction that runs from **Monday, April 19, through**

**Saturday, April 24**, and will culminate in an exciting online live auction with music, a cocktail demonstration, and other surprises, on the evening of **Saturday, April 24**, beginning at 6:30 p.m. To find out more, visit <https://lscf2021.ggo.bid>.

Live auction highlights include a one-week stay at homes in North Lake Tahoe and Montana (near Yellowstone Park), and a weekday getaway in Santa Cruz, including a deluxe room at the Dream Inn, a charter sail on Monterey Bay, and dinner at Shadowbrook Restaurant. Perhaps you'll want to bid on a whiskey and barbecue

pairing and tasting dinner for ten under the redwoods or, if you have a child at Lakeside, the cherished opportunity for them to be "principal for a day."

Our annual auction is one of our primary fundraising events to support enrichment curriculum for our students. Last year's in-person auction was cancelled due to COVID-19. Your participation will provide substantial support for science and art, physical education, learning technology (including online programs and laptops), counseling services for students, teacher training and supplies, community events, and family fun nights.

According to Elizabeth Greer, art and science teacher, "We take thermometers and rain gauges outside to study weather, use flashlights to study light and make shadow puppet plays, and mix substances together to explore chemical reactions. None of that would be possible without the Foundation supplying students—whether at home or at school—with thermometers, flashlights, chemicals, and other supplies.

We are looking for volunteers, donations, and sponsorships. If you have a donation to give or to learn more, email [foundation@lakesidelosgatos.org](mailto:foundation@lakesidelosgatos.org).

We thank our diamond-level sponsors for their support: Rebecca Smith, Karen Izzo, and Barbara and John Harriman of Sereno Group; our silver-level sponsor, David Warter of Bay Area Mortgages; and our supporter-level sponsors, Jill Cole and Michael Riese of Cole and Riese Real Estate Group.

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### Lakeside School Community Foundation

#### Read-a-thon

Holly Stewart

In March, our students participated in a read-a-thon. Students collected pledges from friends, family, and neighbors, and then tracked how many minutes they read in one week. Combined, our students read a total of 16,152 minutes. They raised more than \$18,000 for our school.

Top readers were Lemon Cisler (1,411 minutes), Shannon Daly (1,300 minutes), and Dash Rogers (1,155 minutes).

The money our students raised supports the Lakeside School Community Foundation, which helps fund science, art, physical education, counselors, technology, and teacher supplies. Find out more at <http://tiny.cc/lakesideschool>.



### Lakeside School Update

Sean Joyce

We are excited to return to in-person teaching and learning on April 15. For those students who are on-site, Lakeside School will deliver a full five-day program that includes enrichment (science, physical education, and art) during a normal 8:20 a.m. to 2:40 p.m. instructional day. Wednesday will continue as a minimum day, where in-person instruction is provided 8:20 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., followed by asynchronous instruction from 1 to 1:20 p.m.

In addition to on-site teaching and learning, Lakeside School will continue to deliver a remote/distance-learning program for students unable to return to campus. Lakeside School's remote/distance-learning program will be designed and delivered by Cheyenne Sharkey. We look forward to a smooth transition into these two new and exciting programs.

Lakeside had 100-percent employee commitment to return to the on-campus instructional program. The board of trustees voted unanimously to approve our instructional team's recommendation for a five-day in-person program, in lieu of a partial day/week hybrid model.

We will continue a social-emotional learning-support program and enrichment classes to all students, whether they participate through in-person or remote-learning programs. Lakeside School is also offering an after-school childcare program.

Lakeside School's fifth-grade students have a choice for their middle-school instructional program next school year. Our board of trustees approved agreements with Loma Prieta Joint Union School District (C.T. English Middle School), Saratoga Union School District (Redwood Middle School), and Union School District (Dartmouth Middle School). We are hosting middle-school orientation nights where parents can learn more about each of these programs. Based on the agreement between Lakeside and Loma Prieta, enrollment for C.T. English closes by **Monday, April 26**. We are excited to maintain a strong mountain-community connection through our agreement with Loma Prieta, while also offering parents the choice of three different middle-school programs.



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# schools



## Lexington School Deanna Wilk

A beautiful silver water catchment tank now graces Lexington School's campus. The tank was installed in our LifeLab in early March, just in time for several days of wet weather. The tank holds an impressive three thousand gallons of water.

A downspout diverts rainwater from our large multipurpose building roof into the tank. Hoses below the tank allow the harvested water to soak our classroom gardens when needed.

Students are learning about how the tank modifies the water cycle, reduces groundwater use, and becomes a valuable resource during California's dry season. Many thanks to parent donations and to Eric Johnson, the husband of second-grade teacher Kristin. Eric and his crew assembled and installed the tank.

The water catchment tank is the beginning of many initiatives our LifeLab plans to undertake over the spring. It should be available to students in August or sooner. Current parents, alumni, and members of our mountain community are invited to lend a helping hand to LifeLab chair, Adrienne Cox. You can email her at [lifelab@lexhsc.org](mailto:lifelab@lexhsc.org).



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The ground is being leveled for two large composting bins, but further help and equipment are needed. We are looking for a posthole digger and other installation equipment to get our critter cams and a bat box up and working.

We could also use some help building a large redwood weatherproof cabinet underneath the arbor area for our outdoor classroom. We have already purchased the building materials.

Families are helping with weeding. (Thank you, Towler family.) We could use more helping hands in the school gardens. The classroom garden beds are being planted with a revitalizing ground cover of seeds to restore nutrients in the soil before students begin planting.

Even as more students are coming on campus as Roomers—our latest on-ramp date was March 15—many school events are being conducted online. During the first week of March, students conducted their student-led parent conferences over Zoom.

Students prepared slides of their learning. They attached links to work they were especially proud of. They reflected on how they wanted to improve as learners. Their hard work was appreciated and enjoyed by parents, who got a snapshot of their student's learning during this remarkable



year.

School-wide Zoom assemblies are also allowing the student and parent body to continue connecting. Second-graders Ariana and Hannah read from their original poetry. Our Global Citizens recipients were recognized. Students enjoyed a virtual math night, complete with breakout rooms, thanks to Mathnasium of Campbell-Los Gatos and our Home and School Club.

Our next on-ramp date for Roomers returning to school is April 19.

New student registration for the 2021-2022 school year is underway. Visit [lgusd.org](http://lgusd.org) to find out more and complete your child's registration.

*Photos by*

*Adrienne Cox*

*and Jason Deppong*

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# **schools**

## **Mountain School in the Forest**

Leslie Bergh

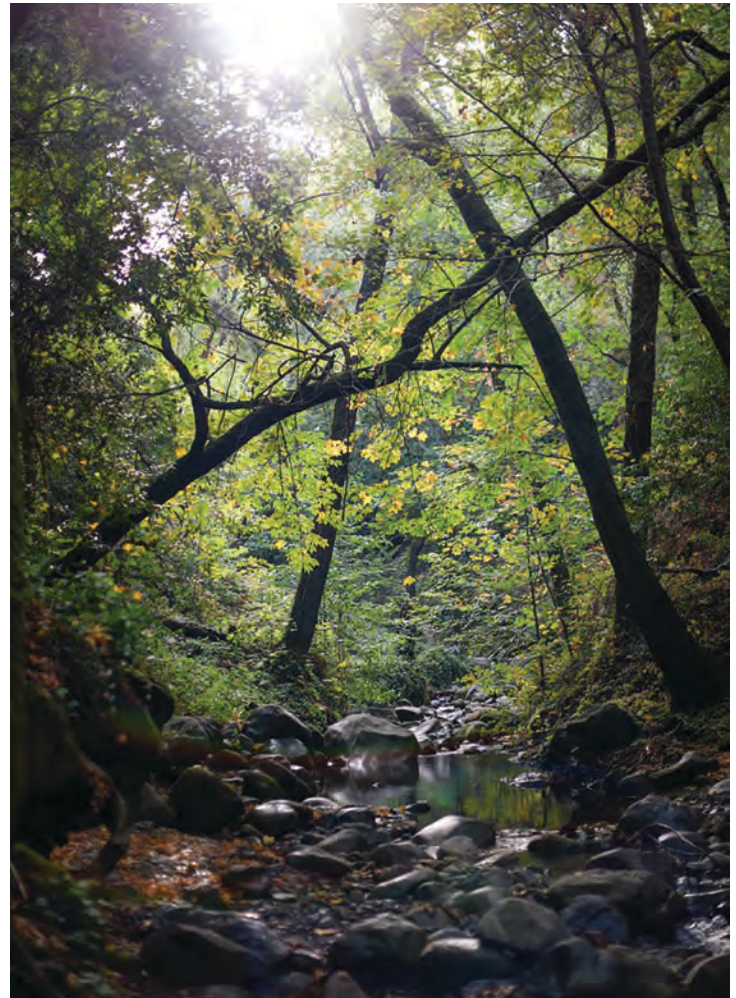
Administrative Director

After being closed since March 14, 2020, Los Gatos-Saratoga Observation Nursery School (you may know us as Mountain School) is in the process of reopening. We have launched two forest classes for our four- and five-year-olds that meet the county's mandates, while staying true to our philosophy. Children learn best in a hands-on environment that lets them bump up against each other and trusted adults, grow in confidence by taking risks and mastering challenges, and feel their connection to all living things by caring for each other and the earth.

We are following all county and state regulations. We staggered the start/end times so the groups are not exposed to each other. We introduced a mobile check-in process that allows parents to complete the county's health check form and sign-in from home ahead of time. It also tracks attendance for us in case of COVID-19 exposure or a positive test result.

We have set up hand-washing stations and carry hand sanitizer. Teachers and children are wearing masks. We spread out on mats for snack time and circle time.

The classes (each has nine children and two teachers) meet three afternoons a week on private property off Black Road that is home to towering redwoods, bays, and oaks. The children are free to explore this magical landscape. They can hike hills, build forts under redwoods, and walk in the creek. Most importantly, they are together again. Their joy is contagious.



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Here are a few comments we received from parents after the first day:

*My son jumped into the car saying, "That was so much fun! Don't leave yet. I need to say goodbye to everyone." He could not stop talking the entire way down the hill until he said, "I'm exhausted."*

*Thank you for a great day. Our daughter was very happy. She told me all about her adventures. She kept asking me why she could not go to school every day. What a lovely and wholesome experience for the children.*

We have been amazed at the spirit of helpfulness and cooperation of the children. Being without their parents has been another step toward independence for them. They are ready to hop out of the car with their gear. They know what resources are in their packs, and are responsible for changing their clothes if they get wet, or adding another layer if they are cold.

As we get to know each other and our mountain location, we are settling into new rhythms.


**LGSONS is now accepting applications for fall 2021 enrollment. See our website for more information: [www.lgsons.org](http://www.lgsons.org).**



**Building Blocks Preschool  
Tentative Reopening Plans**  
Alexandra Hughmanick

Building Blocks plans to reopen the preschool in mid-April. The program will look very different from our "normal" program, but we're hopeful that the required accommodations to keep everyone safe will be worth the experience for our children and families.

For more information on reopening plans, visit [www.buildingblockscoop.org](http://www.buildingblockscoop.org).



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# schools

## Loma Prieta Joint Union School District Save our Schools with KEEP Ruth Gantly

The harsh reality of lack of funding has hit home. Layoffs will change the lives of teachers, administrators, and students at Loma and CTE when they return to school in the fall. We need the help of our community to KEEP teachers, KEEP programs, and KEEP enrichment opportunities available for all students.

Losing teachers and staff, and offering fewer support services and programs would be a major loss for our students. Every donation made to the Loma Prieta Education Fund will make a difference for our children and how they experience school.

Long-time mountain resident and retired Los Gatos High School administrator Patti Hughes writes, "There's an old saying that charity begins at home. Our schools are a big part of what makes our mountains such a special place. Right now, Loma Prieta and C.T. English need support as our district recovers from the pandemic and moves forward from the loss of our parcel tax.

"Our KEEP! program provides the financial support to rebuild and strengthen our excellent education programs. Why am I giving to the KEEP! campaign? I'm giving to support the eight wonderful Loma students who live in my neighborhood. I'm hoping that everyone who has a child or knows a child will join me."

For those who are new to the mountain, the Loma Public Education Fund is the sole non-profit educational foundation supporting the Loma Prieta school district's elementary and middle schools.

LPEF provides annual funding for educational programs such as music and band, STEAM, library, student counseling and support, education technology, developmental P.E., middle-school electives, and art. Each spring, we run the KEEP! direct-donation campaign to help raise funds to KEEP teachers and essential programs available for students at both schools.

The Loma Prieta Joint Union School District is faced with an estimated \$650,000 shortfall this year. The LPEF spring KEEP! campaign starts **April 19**. Our goal is to close the gap in funding. Each year, LPEF contributes around \$350,000, but we are facing a shortfall because COVID-19 forced cancellation of our major fundraising events.

This nine-percent district-budget shortfall

means an eleven-percent reduction in staff hours at our schools. It will impact our students with larger class sizes, combination classes, loss of middle-school electives, a move to a self-contained model for sixth grade, loss of library support, science, and art, and a reduction in technology support during a time when the demand is high.

Our public schools are vital to the health and success of our mountain community. Our community has worked hard for more than fifty years to build excellent schools.

Your gift will be used in the fall (2021/22) when our children return to school. They will need to feel extra safe, supported, and more prepared than ever to enter high school. LPEF will continually work with the district to prioritize our funds to best serve teacher and student needs.

Please consider a financial donation to the KEEP! campaign. Every donation in any amount will help.

Thank you for your generosity. You can make the difference.

Your donation is 100 percent tax-deductible. Loma Public Education Fund (LPEF) is a 501(c)3 corporation. Our tax ID number is 03-0440872.

To Learn more, visit [LPEF.org](http://LPEF.org) and follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/lomaeducation/>.

## Community Wide S.O.S. – Save Our Schools

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**Call:** 408-657-0109 **Email:** [KEEP@lpef.org](mailto:KEEP@lpef.org)

Due to the impact of COVID, loss of \$164 per parcel tax and inability to hold in-person fundraising events, the district is facing an estimated \$650K shortfall in operating budget for 21/22. We are relying on your KEEP! donations to fund essential programs.

**Your donation of any amount is greatly appreciated**



Loma Public Education Fund (LPEF) is a nonprofit organization created in 2001 to raise funds for the Loma Prieta Joint Union School District (LPJUSD).



Keep Excellent Education Programs (KEEP!) is our primary direct giving campaign which raises over half of the LPEF annual budget.





**Loma Prieta Joint Union School District**  
**On-Campus Learning is Back**  
 Lisa Fraser, Superintendent

The collective excitement of reopening Loma Prieta Elementary School to on-campus learning on March 8 was beyond palpable. Opening day represented the culmination of many months of waiting, wondering, planning, replanning, hoping, and in many instances, praying for the opportunity to safely return to school.

There was justifiable excitement, with a lump in the throat or tear in the eye, as students jumped out of their vehicles to find their respective class, lining up spaced six feet apart, of course. With the advent of the COVID-19 and Re-opening In-Person Instruction Framework and Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools in California, 2020-2021 School Year, released in mid-January, we were allowed to re-open our kindergarten through fifth-grade elementary school, and sixth grade at C.T. English Middle School to hybrid in-person learning.

With adjusted case rates continuing to decline and Santa Clara County moving to the red tier of the Blueprint for a Safer Economy, we anticipate being able to extend on-campus learning to grades seven and eight in the near future. As some families have chosen to continue to learn remotely, we refer to our students as either Roomers (those attending in-person) or Zoomers (those learning remotely but connected to their classroom peers). Our teachers have done an outstanding job of making both options work for our families.

Employee/teacher access to vaccinations has been another critical element of our COVID-19 risk-mitigation efforts. All teachers and staff have now had access to vaccinations. One of our Loma parents, Jay Haskin, store manager at Walgreens in Santa Cruz, expedited our employee access. I also applaud our teachers and staff for their willingness and courage to return in person while waiting to complete the vaccination process. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to our Loma families for their support and patience throughout this COVID-19 pandemic. I received the following message during the first few days of re-opening: *Thank you so much for re-opening our school. We really appreciate all of your work. Hurrah for the school on the hill. ~ Li Sullivan, Loma Student*

To continue to make progress toward expanded on-campus learning, we must comply with all recommended COVID-19 preventive measures, including wearing face coverings in public, maintaining physical distancing, and abiding by recommended travel/quarantine restrictions. Thank you for following health and safety guidance so that we can keep our schools open.

Make a difference  
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