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GreenTown Los Altos Newsletter – April 2010

Your source for news and updates about adopting environmentally sustainable practices in our homes, schools, businesses and governments.

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No Monthly Community Meeting in April

Instead of our regularly scheduled monthly meeting (normally on the 3rd Tuesday of the month), we encourage you to attend Robert Dunbar's talk on Wednesday, April 21.

Earth Day Presentation Reminder – April 21

To help celebrate Earth Day 2010, Stanford University Professor Robert Dunbar will present:

Global Climate Change in the Decades Ahead: Fact vs. Fiction

April 21, 2010, 7:30 p.m.

Los Altos Library, 13 South San Antonio Road

Professor Dunbar will discuss the current state of climate change and what we can expect in the future. This scientific perspective is based on his research in the Antarctic, the global ocean and the Americas, as well as his participation in the 2009 UN Copenhagen Climate Conference. For more information about this presentation, please go to the [Events tab](#) on our website.

Volunteer Opportunity. We need a few volunteers to help with the Q&A session after Robert Dunbar's presentation. You will hand out and collect index cards on which attendees write their questions, and help to organize the questions for Mr. Dunbar. If you're interested in helping, please contact Jana Schlansker via email at schlanskers@yahoo.com.

Earth Day at Redwood Grove

Please join us for an Earth Day celebration at Redwood Grove on Saturday, April 24, 10:00am-2:00pm. Learn about the Redwood Grove restoration project and many other local environmental programs. Hands-on activities, presentations, and volunteer opportunities for all ages!

Presentations

10:00am Gardening with Native Plants (Acterra)

11:00am & 1:00pm Wildlife presentation: Meet one of Youth Science Institute's live birds of prey.

Learn how these flying hunters find, catch, and eat their food.

Volunteer Opportunities – One-hour volunteer sessions start at 10:00am, 11:30am, & 1:00pm. Help with gardening and restoration projects at the park. To volunteer, please [register with Acterra](#).

Please bike or carpool. Bicycle valet service available courtesy of the Los Altos High School Green Team. Parking is available on Lincoln Ave.

Sponsored by the City of Los Altos, Acterra, and GreenTown Los Altos. Click for [more information](#).

Preparing for the Future of Los Altos and Mountain View High Schools

On Monday, March 8, the Mountain View Los Altos High School District's Board of Trustees voted to place a bond measure on the June 2010 ballot that would alleviate expected overcrowding and improve education for their growing student enrollment.

Over the next 10 years, enrollment in our local high schools is expected to grow by at least 25%. For LAHS alone, this translates into 900 additional students! Without planning, both schools will be overcrowded by the time today's elementary school students reach high school. This bond would fund science labs, classrooms, and equipment, update fire and earthquake safety systems, and improve classroom technology – all without increasing current tax rates. Additionally, the bond would save the district over \$400,000 per year through energy-efficient systems, such as efficient heating and cooling systems, insulation and solar power that would reduce energy costs by up to 75%.

For more information on the bond measure recently placed on the ballot, visit the [district website](#).

Los Altos City Council Awards New Waste Contract

On March 23, the Los Altos City Council won an environmental victory over waste and greenhouse gas pollution when they unanimously voted to award an expanded waste contract to Mission Trail Waste Systems. The vote was a culmination of a two-year effort by city staff, consultants, the City Council, the Los Altos Environmental Commission, and the GreenTown Los Altos Waste Management Committee.

The new contract calls for a 78% waste diversion from the landfill through expanded recycling, curbside organics collection (for composting), and curbside and on-call household hazardous waste collection. Organics, including yard and food waste, represent approximately 40% of Los Altos' waste stream. Composting these materials will produce a valuable soil amendment and reduce the amount of methane created when organic matter is landfilled.

Terms of the new service agreement, which goes into effect September 15, 2010, also include a robust public education plan. For more information, see the GreenTown Los Altos site or go to the Council Meetings & Agendas page on the Los Altos [City Council website](#).

GreenTown Co-op Encouraging Local Restaurants to Drop Styrofoam

The GreenTown Co-op program was organized about one year ago with the goal of eliminating Styrofoam and non-recycleable plastics as take-out containers in Los Altos restaurants.

After months of research and discussions with potential suppliers of compostable containers, the GreenTown Co-op has signed an agreement with [World Centric](#) of Palo Alto to supply compostable containers to Los Altos restaurants at a deep discount from retail or street pricing.

A GreenTown team of volunteers attended a training session at World Centric on March 25 and is now starting to call on local restaurants to discuss the problems with Styrofoam and plastics in the environment and ask the restaurants to switch to environmentally preferable and equally

functional compostable options.

For more information or to offer your help with contacting local restaurants, please contact GreenTown Co-op co-chair Mike Barnes at (650) 714-9660, or mike@barnestime.com.

Sierra Club Events for the Environmentally Minded

The Sierra Club hosts frequent environmentally oriented activities and events that we thought you might like to follow. The best way to be alerted of upcoming talks, walks and other events is to request their newsletter. Or you can check the home page of their website for a list of [upcoming events](#).

Some examples include:

- April 17: Grassroots Organizing for Climate-Friendly Communities. A workshop on how to reshape communities around walking, biking, and public transit with a mix of homes, jobs, shops, and parks.
- April 24: Summit for the Planet Walk-a-thon.

Reducing Your Exposure to Toxic Household and Environmental Chemicals

On Tuesday, March 16, GreenTown Los Altos hosted guest speaker Laurel Standley, PhD, of Clear Current. Dr. Standley described the kinds of chemicals we are exposed to and the connections between these exposures and various health impacts such as reproductive problems, birth defects, cancer, heart disease, stroke and asthma.

She reviewed her list of the “Top 12 Things You Can Do To Reduce Toxic Exposure in Your Daily Life.” You’re invited to download [12 Tips for Reducing Toxic Exposure](#) here.

Slow the Flow: Water Wise Landscaping Conference

Foothill College is offering a one-day landscaping conference – April 24, 9:00am-3:00pm. In this hands-on workshop you will learn ways to reduce and reuse water in your landscape. The conference is delivered by Green Industry Professionals and features lectures, demonstrations, and hands-on workshops.

While you’re there, be sure to visit the all-day Horticulture Department Plant Sale to purchase drought-tolerant and native plants.

For more information and registration, visit the Foothill College [community education page](#). Cost is \$55; get a box lunch if you register by April 20.

Volunteer Opportunities!

GreenTown has many opportunities for you to get involved. Please contact Jana Schlansker, schlanskers@yahoo.com, to volunteer for any of the following activities.

Publicity

Any time prior to and including the weekend of April 10-11.

We need volunteers to post event flyers around town. You can choose when over the weekend to do it and the area you wish to cover (e.g. Loyola Corners, Rancho, Main St.).

Earth Day Presentation by Robert Dunbar (see *earlier article*)

Wednesday, April 21, 7:30-9:00pm at the Los Altos Library.

We need help with the Q&A session after the speaker’s presentation. You will hand out and collect index cards on which attendees write their questions, and help to organize the questions for Mr. Dunbar.

Earth Day Event at Redwood Grove

Saturday, April 24, 10:00am-2:00pm

This event, co-sponsored by Acterra, the City of Los Altos, and GreenTown Los Altos, will feature demonstrations, tours, and information and activity tables. We need volunteers to help with:

- Set Up – 9:00-10:00am: help arrange tables and signage
- Meet and Greet – 10:00am-2:00pm: direct visitors to the various activities; choose a one-hour or two-hour shift of your choice
- Clean Up – 2:00-3:00pm: help take down the signage and tables

GreenTown Los Altos Information Table – 10:00am-12:00 noon, or 12:00-2:00pm: staff the GTLA information table

Sincerely,

Kacey Fitzpatrick
Executive Director

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