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January 2010 Newsletter

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

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Monthly Community Meeting

The GreenTown Los Altos monthly community meeting will be on January 19 at 7:00 p.m. at the Hillview Community Center. We are still finalizing the guest speaker with hopes of getting someone from PG&E to come talk about the change over to smart utility meters. Plus updates on current activities and plans for 2010. Please watch our website for more information.

Redwood Grove Restoration Inaugural Planting

Sunday, January 10th, 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Redwood Grove Nature Preserve, 482 University Ave., Los Altos

Acterra is working with the City of Los Altos to launch a restoration project at Redwood Grove. This season volunteers will be working to remove invasive plants such as Algerian ivy and install native plants to increase biodiversity at the preserve.

Please join us on January 10th for a brief program and help jump-start the restoration project by planting a native plant from Acterra's nursery! Refreshments to follow.

Downtown Los Altos Vision

This month, the City of Los Altos will be promoting its Downtown Visioning Workshops. At this time the dates have not been set, but the first workshop will likely be in February. GreenTown encourages you and all citizens interested in re-vitalizing downtown to attend these workshops. The city council is hoping for a large turnout in order to get a broad and deep cross-section of viewpoints.

Also in January, GreenTown's Sustainable Land Use Group will continue to educate residents on its vision for downtown Los Altos. Forrest Linebarger, the chair of the group, is presenting to the Downtown Development Committee on January 5th as well as to several other citizens groups during the month. In addition, two public presentations are scheduled (see below). The Land Use group's presentation provides an overview of what downtown could look like and what needs to be considered as part of the long-term solution, which will be helpful information when attending the city's Visioning Workshops.

The two one-hour public presentations by Forrest will be:

- Wednesday, January 20th, 7:00 p.m., in the board room at the Mountain View- Los Altos High School District, 1299 Bryant Ave, Mountain View
- Sunday, January 31st, 3:00 p.m., Los Altos Library on San Antonio Road

Please attend and bring along your family, friends, and neighbors!

Green Schools Summit

Barry Groves, superintendent of MVLA schools, is calling a Green Schools Summit on January 21 at 3:30 p.m. in Eagle Auditorium at Los Altos High School. The summit encompasses all K-14 schools in Los Altos and Mountain View, including public, private, and charter elementary and high schools, plus Foothill College.

The objective is to encourage all classrooms and schools to share what they are doing to be greener, and thereby spread new ideas and encourage each other to do more. The event will be co-hosted by the Los Altos High School and Mountain View High School "Green Teams" - student clubs focused on environmental sustainability.

The public is encouraged to attend. We hope you will do so to learn more about what is happening in our school on this important subject. For more information, please contact Sybil Cramer at sybilcramer@mac.com.

Bullis Charter School Composting

The Bullis Charter School's (BCS) Green Team has been focusing their attention on encouraging the kindergarten students to compost. The Kindergarteners kicked off composting with their pumpkin, Pierre, and are going to use the results of their efforts in the spring to plant the pumpkin seeds that they saved. Along with volunteers from Egan, they also have set up bins by the lunch tables to collect fruit and vegetable compost, and then each week they add what they collect to the compost tumbler, water it, and turn it.

The Green Team decided to work with the Kindergarteners because they wanted to start a generation of composters that would be ecologically conscious as they progressed through the grades. The BCS Green Team will be expanding their composting program to include the upper grade students.

Congratulations to the BCS Green Team for what sounds like a great program!

Hungry? Sustainable Foods Class

Are you hungry for information about healthy eating? Would you like to know:

- The difference between "organic" and "natural" foods?
- How to eat a low-carbon diet?
- What it means to eat "sustainably"?

Join us at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 21, 2010, at Los Altos' beautifully designed 1939 [Neutra House](#) (see photo) at 181 Hillview Avenue for two delicious hours of information and hors d'oeuvres.



Locavore, environmentalist and communications professional Peg Champion dishes up nutritional information and delicious tidbits on the "State of the Plate." You'll learn how food choices affect the health of your family - and the planet - and how to eat well, for good. Eaters will receive a "Chew on This!" reading list of recommended books, informational websites and healthy recipes.

Registration fee for Los Altos residents is \$55, for all others \$69; the costs cover expenses and proceeds benefit GreenTown Los Altos. Sign up with the [Los Altos Recreation Center](#) online or by calling 650.947.2790.

Openings on Los Altos City Commissions

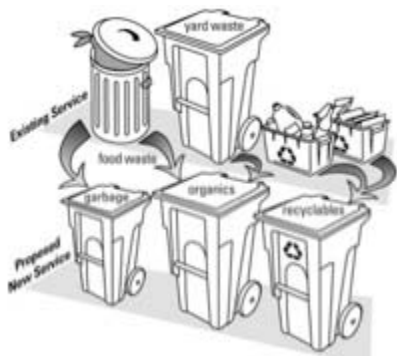
Did you know? The city of Los Altos has a number of open positions on the following committees and commissions:

- Planning
- Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory
- Parks, Art, and Recreation
- Traffic
- Financial

If you'd like to get involved in city government and encourage our city leaders to adopt environmentally sustainable practices, this could be your chance.

For more information, please go to our [Take Action](#) page and download the information sheet provided by the city that lists openings and includes the application form. For more information about what each committee and commission does, please go to the [Committees and Commissions page](#) of the City of Los Altos website.

Waste Contract Status - A New Decade, a New Contract



All over the world, we look forward to the promise of the New Year and a new decade. And, here in our community, we are anticipating a new waste contract to help ensure our town's sustainability.

Los Altos has received bids from three contractors - Green Waste, Mission Trails and Recology (formerly known as Los Altos Garbage Company). The city's evaluation committee is in the process of bid analysis and exploration. Because the bids are complex and the review process is arduous, they have recommended an extended timeline. They expect the City Council presentation will take place the second week of

February, followed by a two-week public comment period. The council will make a final contract selection in early March.

The new 10-year contract provides a unique opportunity to improve the quality of life in Los Altos, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. As the process moves along, GreenTown Los Altos will continue to work to make sure Los Altos residents get the comprehensive waste contract that we need.

[Click here](#) for more information about GreenTown's Waste Reduction Initiative and the waste contract.

Best wishes for a green, healthy and happy New Year!

Sincerely,

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