

## Birds ... Why We Care

Spring is on its way! The trees are turning, flowers are blooming, and birds are singing. No matter where you live, you will hear birds calling or singing and it is relaxing, almost therapeutic. However, birds are much more important than a lovely warble or a call from one to another.

Hawks and owls help rid neighborhoods of rodents. Smaller birds eat insects and wayward seeds. All birds provide wonder and a connection to nature for young and old alike. Over 48 million Americans consider themselves birdwatchers—"birders." These birders are often tourists and the revenue from this bird watching tourism exceeds that of golf. Bird watching is now the fastest growing "sport" in the country and in California, the number of birders exceeds the number of duck hunters. It seems that the younger generation would rather look at birds than shoot them!

The exhibition *Instinct Extinct: The Great Pacific Flyway* closing March 31,



Kelsey Frey and Ralph Schardt, Audubon guides at the Baylands Nature Preserve, Feb. 2018

has the work of four local photographers who "shoot" birds with their cameras. One, Peter LaTourrette, has been shooting birds since the 1980s and is photo editor of *Western Birds*. His backyard is a wild mix of native bushes, grasses, trees and even a pond, and not surprisingly it attracts a large variety of birds. Peter knows them all by sight and by their calls.

In the past 150 years, birds have become much more respected as a species, and with that a concern about the many species that are now extinct due to over-hunting and the loss of habitat by development. In our area, the loss of marsh land, so important to migrating birds, is addressed in *Instinct Extinct*. An early advocate for conservation of birds and protection of their habitats was James Audubon, a woodsman with a passion for drawing and creating water colors of birds. He traveled throughout the U.S. drawing and painting until his death in 1851, and his legacy is one of the largest bird conservation groups in the world, the National Audubon Society. Another early bird advocate was Roger Tory Peterson who published a book for identifying birds. Only 2000 were printed in 1933 due to the cost of printing text combined with artistic illustrations. Today, more than eight million



Peter LaTourrette in his backyard in Los Altos.

copies have been printed and over 50 field guides make up the Peterson Field Guide Series. Rachel Carson, author of *Silent Spring*, was also an early advocate and influenced by Peterson.

Many bird species continue to be threatened and in the Bay Area, for example, we have lost over 95 percent of the Burrowing Owls. The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society located at McClellan Ranch in Cupertino is working to save birds from extinction. The efforts include working with local groups, educating young students and providing field trips. Why do we care? We care because we find birds fascinating, delightful and we want to save and protect them, or as Roger Tory Peterson puts it with a bit of an edge:

"Birds are indicators of the environment. If they are in trouble, we know we'll soon be in trouble."

~ Ralph W. Schardt, Executive Director, Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, [scvas.org](http://scvas.org).

## Co-Presidents' Pen

Thank you for your support as a member of the Los Altos History Museum family. Your suggestions, volunteerism and financial gifts have enabled the museum to expand our role this past year as an educational and cultural center in our community.



Thanks to you, we have been able to move forward with major projects including innovative outdoor agricultural exhibits and architectural design and funding to restore our historic Tank House.

Our Main Gallery exhibits and thought provoking programming have attracted enthusiastic visitors from the entire Bay Area. We encourage you to view our thrilling exhibit, *Instinct Extinct: The Great Pacific Flyway*, now in its final days. The exhibit celebrates the beauty of birds of flight, their natural instinct in navigating the Western North American coastal flight path, as well as their challenges to adjust to loss of natural habitat.

We look forward to exciting changes at the Smith House. An on-going series of special exhibits and programs are planned to complement reinterpretation of a number of Smith House rooms. The creative concept is to transport visitors through five decades of the Smith family's lives from 1905 to 1955. Interactive children's activities will enhance the educational experience.

Finally, welcoming summer, the museum will present our first annual Apricot STEM Fair. The event will provide an opportunity for families and educators to come together to explore hands-on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math enrichment activities, as well as enjoy orchard games and an apricot treat tasting. It should be a fun day!

The Museum's growth, of course, would not have been possible without your participation and support. Thank you! We warmly welcome new volunteers and look forward to seeing you at our upcoming exhibits, programs, and activities

~ Linda Eckols and Eleanor Watanabe, Co-Presidents



Judy Suelzle retires after a long time helping the Museum as volunteer and docent. Thank you Judy! Photo credit Jane Reed, 2014.

## Spread Your Wings and Fly

Imagine you are a bird spreading your wings and flying over the community. What do you see? Imagine what you would like to see at your school, park, neighborhood or downtown.

That's the topic for the 34th annual Margaret Thompson Essay Contest, selected by the Museum's Education Committee and the Los Altos Historical Commission to go with with the exhibition, *Instinct Extinct: The Great Pacific Flyway*. Entries are judged by the Education Committee and typically 300-500 essays are entered by students in grades 3-6.

In May, the winning recipients are awarded certificates at an ice cream social at the Museum. The school with the most winners receives the Margaret Thompson trophy to display for one year and the students receive checks presented by the Mayor at a City Council meeting immediately following the social.

In addition, the Education Committee offer tours to 3rd graders from both public and private schools in April, and to 4th grade students in May. We welcome over 1,000 students annually. The members of the committee always look forward to our student tours!

~ Anne Roberts, Chair,  
Education Committee



Anne Roberts at the Crab Feed in February.



Pat Densmore carved and painted the amazingly detailed birds on display with *Instinct Extinct*. Don't miss seeing them!

### LOS ALTOS HISTORY MUSEUM "UNDER THE OAKS"

Gary Hedden, Editor  
Judi Eichler, Graphic Design

A publication of interest to citizens of Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, and neighboring communities, produced by the Association of the Los Altos Historical Museum. A special thanks to the newsletter mailing team!

# Tell Us Your Stories

In the recent exhibition *I Want the Wide American Earth: An Asian Pacific American Story*, we asked our visitors, young and old: Did you or someone you know experience a relocation center? How would you feel if your family was forced to move because of your ethnic heritage? Here are some of the heartfelt answers we received.

...the Japanese internment was a terrible, dark chapter of American history.

My cousin's late husband... was interned at Manzanar. An injustice; he came through... and became a caring social worker. Bless him.

Arkansas was a far away place but I was there for 4 years. Came back to nothing, but here I am back to civilization.

I was at Tule Lake.

The Furuichi family is grateful for the Los Altos people who protected our property... We had a home to come back to... - Jimmy Furuichi

Sadly, we don't honor the past experience and shameful treatment of Japanese-Americans. Modoc County is planning to build a fence for the airport that will cut off access to the Tule Lake internment camp.

Forced relocation for American citizens? Shocking! But it remains clearly possible still.

A local Japanese family needed a place to stay when they returned from the Internment Center. They were welcomed into the home on Old Adobe Rd which had once belonged to Juana Briones!

I would feel scared and unknowing of what to do.

To my grandparents and uncles who fought in the war... You survived and were resilient. Thank you...

My best friend in Junior High School was Japanese - but I didn't know her family had been interned. I didn't know it existed. I was shocked to learn of it.

I would be sad because I love my home.

I was at Heart Mt.

I worked with a friend whose parents lived in an internment camp. I was so shocked.

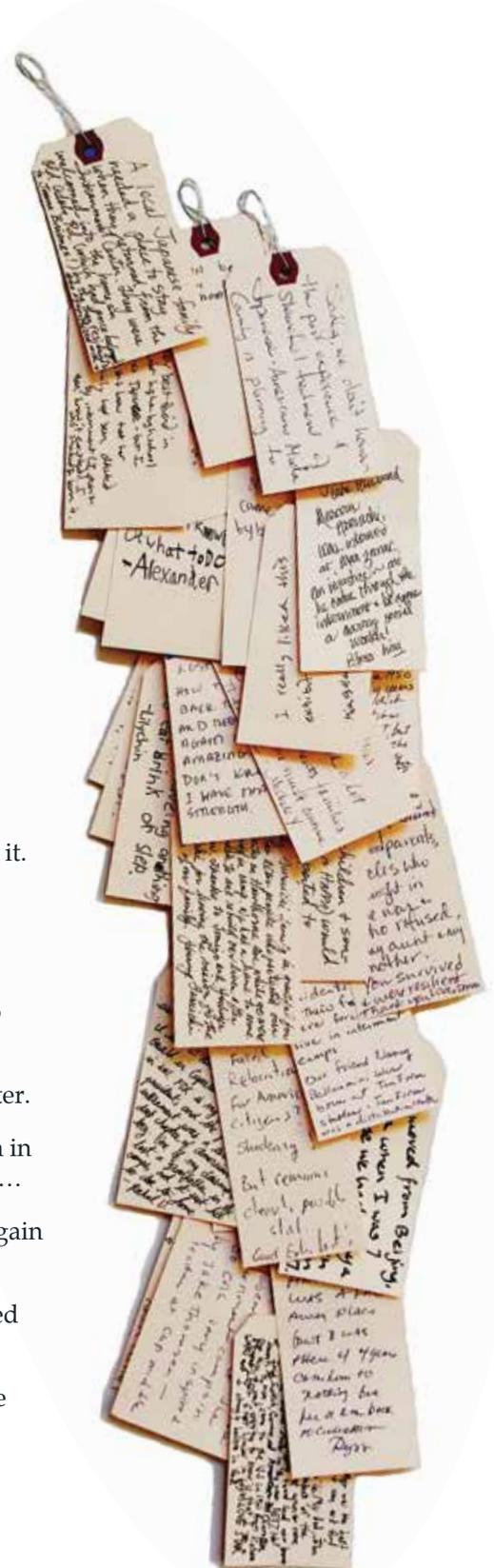
Our friend... was born at Tanforan stables. Tanforan was a distribution center.

My mother, father, brother and many relatives lived at Heart Mt. I was born in 1950 and for many years my parents did not even mention their internment...

My ancestors lost everything. How they came back to nothing and rebuilt again is amazing. I don't know if I would have that strength.

My grandchildren and son-in-law (who is HAPA) would have been deported to Internment Centers.

Thank you for this exhibit! I learned a lot and both my parents families were interned. We must continue to educate.



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## Traveling Stitches

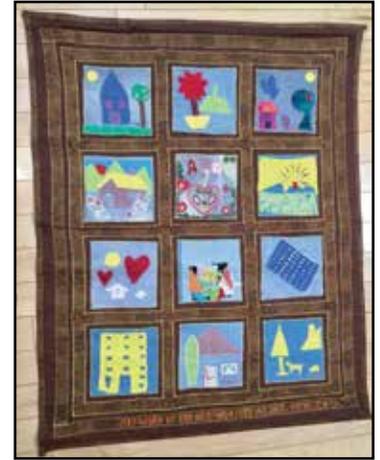
A new exhibition, *Traveling Stitches: Quilts Made At The Day Worker Center of Mountain View*, is at the J. Gilbert Smith House. The workers at the Center have been creating quilt blocks since 2010 to help them with their English. Each block expresses personal experiences or thoughts and was presented to the group in their English language class.

Curator Naomi Zamir transformed the blocks into seven quilts after witnessing the transformative effect sharing these vignettes had on the participants. For her, “the format of a quilt was the best choice for representing the images and describing the workers’ experience. The squares depict the stories, memories, dreams, ideas and hopes of the day workers.”

Dr. Elisabeth Ward noted that the quilts highlight “the long history of migratory workers in this area, stretching back to the earliest agricultural orchards. We are honored and excited by this partnership that brings attention to the many hands that make our community thrive.”

~ Heather Farquhar, Deputy Director and Head of Collections

*The Day Workers Center is a non-profit organization connecting workers with employers for over 17 years. The exhibition closes April 29.*



One of the quilts on display at the Smith House.

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## History in the News

In a close 3-2 vote, the Los Altos City Council took steps January 23 to save the Halsey House located in Redwood Grove Nature Preserve. This little gem is one of only 22 Historic Landmark properties in Los Altos and well worth saving. Just as important, it’s the story of the house and the redwoods that must be saved.

Emma Wright married Theodore Halsey in 1915 and the property we now call Redwood Grove was a wedding gift from her father. He had asked her to find a spot on a creek with redwood trees and she found a nice spot on the banks of Adobe Creek. The Halsey House was built in 1923, and dozens of redwood trees were transplanted from family property in the Santa Cruz Mountains. One family’s love of redwoods has given us the trees we enjoy today.

The property was purchased by the City in 1974 as a nature preserve and in 1981 it was designated both a “historic resource” and a “historic landmark” and with that the legal obligation to maintain the property. The Halsey House served as a Nature Center for summer camps, school tours, and interpretive programs. Keith Gutierrez managed these programs for 15 years, and put his experience at Hidden Villa and Deer Hollow to good use. The programs were very popular and attendance was growing; however the house was not well maintained and it was closed to public use in 2008. Keith left the program at that time. Contacted recently, he can still see a use for the house—for Ohlone cultural programs, arts and crafts and as a nature center.



Keith Gutierrez by the Halsey House, January, 2018.

The City uses the grounds near the house according to Manny Hernandez, Director of the Los Altos Recreation & Community Services Department, “We offer archery classes, archery birthday party packages for youth, and our very popular youth summer camps in that area.”

In 2015, a feasibility study compared renovation to demolition and construction of a new facility. At \$3-4 million, either option was expensive and momentum stalled, but we are trying again. The City Council approved \$25,000 to immediately

protect the house from further deterioration and authorized the Historical Commission to plan the next steps to restore the Halsey House.

Exciting news and the History Museum will be pleased to help.

~ Gary Hedden

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## Staff

Elisabeth Ida Ward, *Executive Director*

Heather Farquhar, *Deputy Director and Head of Collections*

Mary Flynn, *Outreach Coordinator*

Deepti Devanagondi, *Bookkeeper*

Luis Ambriz, *Exhibition Coordinator*

Mark Perry, *Facility & Rentals Manager*

Faustino Carrillo, *Gardener*

## The Eagle Scout Tradition

There are a number of different ranks a Boy Scout can attain. The highest and most distinguished is that of Eagle Scout. To achieve this rank, the scout must earn at least 21 Merit Badges and demonstrate Scout Spirit, leadership and service. The Gold Award is the equivalent for Girl Scouts.

Nationwide, less than 2% of scouts become Eagle Scouts. There are many notable examples: Neil Armstrong (first man on the Moon), Steven Spielberg (movie producer), Wallace Stegner (Pulitzer price in literature) and William Westmoreland (Army general), to name a few.

To attain the rank of Eagle Scout, the Scout has to plan, organize and lead an Eagle Project. This project benefits the community, a school, church or other organization, but not the Boy Scouts of America, and represents a significant effort. Some past local projects have been building a water fountain, storage bins for a school, or constructing Native American huts.



Kyle Moreno and Antonio Martinez with the newly restored tables and benches. Photo credit, John Moreno.

Kyle Marino, a scout in Troop 37 in Los Altos, recently finished work for his Eagle Project for the Los Altos History Museum. Troop 37 has a long history in the area and is celebrating its 100th anniversary! Kyle's project involved refurbishing tables and benches in the inner courtyard of the museum, open to the public and heavily used by the community. After many years of use, they were in need of repair.

Kyle drew up a plan and got approval from the Museum as well as the Troop 37 Scout Master, troop committee and Boy Scout district. He then purchased the necessary materials, and led efforts by Scouts, friends and family for his project. They had to clean, dismantle, sand, re-assemble and stain tables and benches. Some were beyond repair, and were replaced with new ones. After a few months of weekend and mid-week efforts, his project was completed.

Kyle commented, "It was fun working on the project and it is nice that it will have an impact on the community."

By all accounts, the Museum is very pleased with the high quality of workmanship and final results. You might want to check them out!

~ Antonio Martinez, Troop 37 Scout Leader

## Director's Corner

### "My One Year Anniversary"

It is hard to believe I have only been at the museum for a year. I am so happy to be back in California and back in the Bay Area that to me it feels like a homecoming, and so many museum members already feel like old friends.

I recently got initiated into one of the longest running traditions at the museum, our 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Crab Feed. I thoroughly enjoyed it! The generosity of everyone who participated in the auction was amazing and truly unforgettable. I've never experienced anything like it in my life, and I'm so grateful to be a small part of it. Plus the crab was delicious! Thank you again to everyone who volunteered, donated and attended; it was quite the undertaking.

Another museum-mainstay has been receiving my attention of late: the 1915 Tank House, moved here in 1993 from Pine Lane. I am pleased to announce that our grant application to restore the Tank House to its original condition was approved by the Santa Clara County Historical Commission for up to \$100,000! This spring and summer it will be completely refurbished. We will also be putting up new signage that will cover the history of water use in this area.

We aren't just looking back, as you'll note in the Co-Presidents' Pen. I like to keep a lot of projects going, and I really appreciate working in a dynamic, creative, energetic institution that makes things happen. It is exciting.

We're even reviewing our mission statement. This requires distilling down everything we do and want to do into one sentence! The new statement will be the foundation of our strategic plan, taking us to 2020 and beyond. As always, I welcome feedback and comments from our membership.

It has been a great year for me, and for the museum. Thank you all!

~ Dr. Elisabeth I. Ward, Executive Director



### New Members

Welcome to our new members:

Katy and David Orr	Donna Anderson
Bill and Maria Lonergan	Gun Wastholm McCuen
Catherine Nunes	Nancy Scarff
Elia and Halimah Van Tuyll	Edwin Aiken
Karen Lemes	Ronald Bader and
Liqian Li and Yan Zhang	Meryl Wilsker
Carol Petty	Dennis Young—Young,
Jane Packard	Craig and Co., LLP CPAs

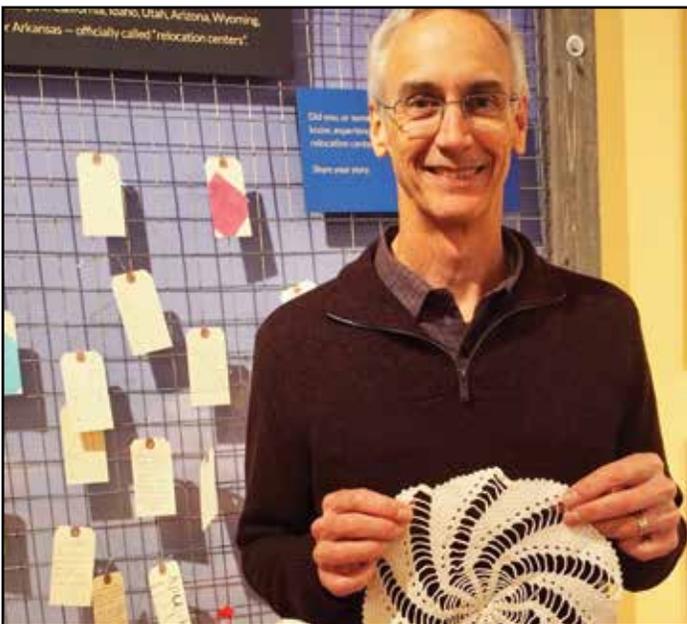
# Photo Gallery



Dee Gibson and Janet Tornow with our very own Linda Eckols, three of the eight recipients of the Joint Community Volunteer Service Awards, December, 2017.



John Beman with son Mike and Mike's family - baby Sydney, Mandy and 4-year old Rivers—getting ready to plant tulips in fond remembrance of Ginger Beman.



Mike Miller with the doily that was a thank you gift to his grandmother for being welcoming and providing a room, in Omaha, Nebraska, to an internment camp detainee in 1945.



Dinner with Chef Lawrence Chu, January, 2018, great food and even better stories.



Phil Doetsch and Dan Eakes planted 100 new Blenheim apricot trees in the historic orchard. Phil adds a handful of alfalfa pellets to provide a little nitrogen.



John Flynn with the Palo Alto Junior Museum and Zoo, holding Sequoia at the opening reception for Instinct Extinct. John has been this eagle's handler for 27 years!

## Crab Feed Photos



Table 8, everyone is wearing a crab hat, and they're all smiling!



Chef Louis Borel of L'Omelette fame, under a poster with his picture from 1978, with John Reed. Photo credit Sam Harding.



Judy William and Marcia Adams, two of our oral history volunteers.



Our more than capable servers—thank you!



Dick Henning and Braden Beck, friends since the 60s. Now that's historic!



The crab handlers—Brian Boggs, Gary Cooper, Doug Duffy and Bill Fanning. Nice work guys.

## Museum and Store Hours

Thursday to Sunday, Noon–4 pm

We are closed New Year's Day, Easter,  
Fourth of July, Thanksgiving Day,  
Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day.

## General Inquiries

(650) 948-9427 x14 or  
hello@losaltoshistory.org

## Collections/Research

(650) 948-9427 x11  
research@losaltoshistory.org

## Event Rentals

(650) 948-9427 x12  
mperry@losaltoshistory.org

## Mission Statement

History inspires imagination, stimulates thought and transforms society.  
The Los Altos History Museum preserves and shares our local history to  
enrich our community and to shape a more informed future.

## Address Correction Requested

## On The Calendar

**Bird Sketch Art Classes**, by John Muir Laws, at the Museum, free, in support of *Instinct Extinct*. March 8 and March 29, 10-11:30 am.

**Immigration in California**, a panel discussion in support of *Traveling Stitches*, Los Altos Youth Center, Thursday, March 22, 7-8:30 pm.

**School Tours**, Grades 3-4, weekdays, 9-noon, April & May.

**U.S. Involvement in World War I**, Mark Lindberg lecture, Los Altos Library, April 10, 7 pm.

**Over Here: Americans at Home in World War I**, opening reception April 12, 4 pm.

**World War I: Lessons Learned?**, Panel Discussion, Bus Barn Theatre, May 1, 7 pm.

**Essay Contest Winners Ice Cream Social**, Tuesday, May 8, Museum Courtyard, 6 pm.

**Memorial Day events**, May 25 & 26, special family crafts, 10 am-3 pm.

**Training for War in the Los Altos Hills: The Camp Fremont Experience**, Barbara Wilcox lecture, Los Altos Library, June 5, 7 pm.

**Echoes of the Past**, capturing our history with works of art by local artists, opens June 21, artist reception July 1.

**Apricot STEM Fair**, Museum, Sunday, June 24, 10 am–3 pm.



Trevor Thiessen, our esteemed dynamo from Winnipeg, replacing the obsolescent touch-screen displays with iPads loaded with updated content. Trevor, you're welcome back any time!

**Board Meetings**, First Wednesday each month, 4 pm, everyone welcome

**Smith House Tours**, Every Sunday, 2 pm

More events are in the works – watch for your monthly member email updates!