

# HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

LOS ALTOS TOWN CRIER PUBLICATION • WINTER 2025

## Holiday Treats

*Vanilla roll-out  
sugar cookie  
recipe*

## Daffy

*Make your  
year-end  
donations  
work harder:  
a tax-  
efficient  
giving  
strategy*

## Looking Back

*Peek into the  
holiday past*







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# Home *for the* Holidays

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Circulation: 15,500. Mailed directly to households in Los Altos, Los Altos Hills and select areas of Mountain View.

Hundreds of subscribers receive the Town Crier in neighboring communities as well as out of state. The Town Crier can be purchased at newsstands in Los Altos and Mountain View.

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## Da's Snickerdoodle Cookies

Mix together thoroughly:  
1 cup soft shortening  
1 ½ cups sugar  
2 eggs

Sift together and stir in:  
2 ¾ cup sifted flour  
2 tsp cream of tartar  
1 tsp soda  
½ tsp salt

Chill dough. Roll generously in cinnamon-sugar.  
Bake at 400 degrees for 8-10 minutes.

# Cherished Traditions

By Christine Moore

**H**oliday traditions matter because they bond us to the people we love. Personal traditions, both big and small, underscore what we value most – quality time spent with nearest and dearest.

My favorite childhood holiday memories aren't of gifts. Rather, they revolve around moments. For instance, the crowded gathering my grandparents hosted every Christmas Eve. It was all things extended family – chaotic, uproarious, laughter-fueled. At some point parents would engage in a heated political debate and then dessert would be served. Opposing opinions were never taken too seriously. The grownups all seemed to bear in mind that what we have in common is, and always will be, far greater than our differences. A wisdom that resonates deeply with me today.

My cousins and I would tear through the house until we finally found our way to the basement, leaving the adults to their adult things.

We lived about an hour from my grandparents. Key to these cherished memories: the drive home every year. The carols on the radio were periodically interrupted by Airforce updates on the whereabouts of an unusual flying object. We knew Santa's sleigh was moving through the skies as we kept eyes out for familiar

landmarks of homes aglow with twinkling lights and holiday decor.

These Christmas Eves of the past reside in my heart and inspire the traditions I've created for my own, new, and extended family. We don't travel on Christmas Eve. We play host instead and enjoy fondue Chinoise – Chinese hot pot – every Dec. 24. To add to the action around the table, anyone who loses a piece of food from a fondue stick in the broth must tell a joke or sing a verse of a carol.

In recent years, as my fledglings have become teens, some holiday traditions have been adapted, some have been added, and some are activities impossible to outgrow.

While I can't foretell which traditions will shine brightest in the minds of my kids once adults, I am convinced that time spent together in these activities is a conduit for memory making.



## BAKING COOKIES

One age-proof practice is the annual making of snickerdoodles. Beyond their universally adored taste and texture, these snickerdoodles are especially beloved because of the recipe source. ➤



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The creation of a childhood friend's father, Craig, known as "Da" by his grandchildren, these cookies are perfection. Craig was as enthusiastic a cookie baker as you'll ever meet. A man that curated joy year-round, Da found cookies an optimal way to spread holiday cheer. At Christmas time he baked at least 10 varieties. He delivered them to coworkers, neighbors, and served up fresh-from-the-oven trays to visitors. I appreciate being able to tell my family about this awesome man when we bake his cookies.

## DA'S SNICKERDOODLE COOKIES

- 1 cup soft shortening
- 1 1/2 cups sugar, plus 2 tablespoons
- 2 eggs
- 2 3/4 cup flour
- 2 teaspoons cream of tartar
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon cinnamon

Mix shortening and 1 1/2 cups sugar together until creamy. Add eggs and mix until fluffy. In a separate bowl, sift together dry ingredients. Add flour mixture to the wet ingredients and stir until combined. Chill dough for a few hours.

In a small bowl or plate, mix remaining 2 tablespoons of sugar and cinnamon.

Form dough into golf-ball size balls and roll in cinnamon sugar mixture. Bake for 8-10 minutes. Allow to cool for a few minutes on cookie sheet and then transfer to cooling rack to cool completely.



## DECKING THE HALLS

One newer holiday happening in my life is focused outside of my family. I recruit friends each year to join me in an evening of wreath making. Held annually at Blooms giving (blooms giving.com) in downtown Mountain View, wreath-making workshops are a great way to get festive.

We meet beforehand for cups of cheer or go out to dinner on Castro Street. Then, we arrive at Blooms giving ready to create. Long worktables in the florist and coffeeshop are festooned with all things holiday. Spruce and eucalyptus, ribbons and lights, instructions, inspiration, and tools ➤



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are all provided. Making the evening all the cozier, the workshop includes a complimentary warm drink. Check Bloomsgiving's website for dates and other details of this year's workshops.

**MAKING SPIRITS BRIGHT**

It really wouldn't be Christmas for me without at least one evening of driving around looking at Christmas lights. We dress in pajamas – of



course – and sip cups of hot cocoa. This year, I'm going to suggest that my now-driving kids get behind the wheel. Maybe even host an evening with their friends over to watch a movie post light-touring.

Our favorite hot cocoa is a riff on the Mexican-style hot chocolate from a now-closed café in San Francisco. Not overly sweet and with a nice spice, this cocoa is perfect for all your cold weather adventures. ❁

**SPICED HOT COCOA**

- 3 cups whole milk
- 6 ounces semisweet chocolate, finely chopped
- 3 tablespoons demerara or granulated sugar
- 3/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 2 star anise
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- Pinch of kosher salt
- Lightly sweetened whipped cream (for serving)

Bring milk and cinnamon to a simmer in a medium saucepan over medium-low heat, whisking occasionally and making sure milk is heated but not boiling, about 10 minutes.

Whisk in chocolate, sugar, vanilla, salt, star anise and nutmeg and cook, whisking frequently, until mixture is smooth and creamy and chocolate is melted, about 5 minutes.

Top with whipped cream.



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# 49<sup>th</sup> annual | Festival of Lights Parade to usher in Los Altos' holiday season

**L**os Altos families and neighbors lining downtown streets will soon see costumes, incredible floats with moving characters and local marching bands playing holiday music. They'll also catch a glimpse of the Big Elf himself, accompanied by a cadre of reindeer, all adorned with thousands of tiny lights.

It sounds magical. It sounds like the Los Altos Festival of Lights Parade.

Scheduled to begin at 6 p.m. Nov. 30, community members will gather in downtown Los Altos to usher in the holiday season with the 49th annual Festival of Lights Parade. They will be continuing a beloved tradition: Each year, more than 15,000 people watch the one-hour parade and its approximately 60 entries of floats, bands and costumed characters in what has turned into one of the most popular Los Altos events of the year.

"There's nothing like parade night," said Festival of Lights Parade spokesperson Nancy Schneider, who has been a parade volunteer for more than 30 years. "You

can see it in the spectators' faces. They are seeing family members, neighbors, friends – or even a favorite downtown merchant – in the parade or the crowd. You know the holidays are starting when the parade winds its way through downtown Los Altos."

The parade has changed since its humble beginnings.

"The parade really was the brainchild of three community-minded downtown merchants: Hope Higbee, Marion Jackston and Jack Huston," Schneider said. "After a trip to Disneyland, they were inspired to create a light parade in Los Altos. Partnering with the Los Altos Village Association, they staged a parade on Thanksgiving evening with the idea of promoting good will and holiday spirit. That first parade had a few lighted costume characters and wound its way through downtown before just disappearing into the crowd!"

The following year, several other members of the community – Bob Grimm, Ed Hilton and Ted Johnston – created the nonprofit, all-volunteer Festival of Lights ➤







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Parade Association. They added their talents and enthusiasm, recruited community volunteers and helped the parade become the beloved Los Altos holiday tradition that it is today. The theme remains the same as it was that first year, “A child’s holiday fantasy.”

The parade comes together each year with the assistance of over 75 behind-the-scenes volunteers, as well as the city of Los Altos, which has designated the parade a Heritage Event (and as such provides the services of Los Altos

Police Department and Public Works Department). But the driving force is the all-volunteer, 20-person board.

“Many people don’t realize that the parade is produced by a private charitable foundation that purchases, maintains, and upgrades the floats and costumes,” Schneider said. “As a result, it relies on individual donations from the public and community grants to raise the necessary funds to produce the parade and maintain its floats and costumes.”

They also heavily depend on volunteers from Los Altos and the surrounding area.

Schneider added that event organizers are always looking for new volunteers, each volunteer helping in a way that utilizes their biggest strength.

“We have a fun mixture of residents and professionals who work together to ‘bring the magic.’ It’s a friendly group with all levels of expertise. It doesn’t matter what your skill level is, we’ll find the right place for you to volunteer,” she said.

One particular set of volunteers that works throughout the year are high school interns. Board members match the students’ areas of interest to parade needs, such as float mechanics, music and lighting improvements or maintenance of the floats themselves. Each student receives written credit for volunteer hours worked.

For residents not able to make it to the parade in person, the parade is broadcast live at Comcast Channel 15, as well as streamed in real time on YouTube at [youtube.com/kmvt](https://youtube.com/kmvt), courtesy of KMVT Mountain View Community Television.

“The parade is 60 minutes of a holiday glow,” Schneider said. “If you are here for that one hour, want to join us at any time throughout the year as a volunteer, or simply make a financial donation, your support is key as we continue to bring “A Child’s Holiday Fantasy” to life for our community to enjoy each year.” ☆

*For questions about volunteering or to donate to the organization, visit [LosAltosParade.org](https://LosAltosParade.org).*



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# Vanilla roll-out sugar cookies

The Los Altos Town Crier has a delicious secret: Our sales rep, Danielle Amaral, is one of the greatest bakers around. So great, in fact, she was on The Food Network and was told by Ree Drummond, the Pioneer Woman herself, that she was “really good at making super delicious cookies.”

With the holidays coming up, what better way to celebrate with friends and family than to make some buttery, Pioneer Woman-approved sugar cookies concocted by a member of the Town Crier?

Read on to learn how to make some sugary-good vanilla roll-out sugar cookies. The recipe makes 15 3-inch, 1/4-inch thick cookies. ➤



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- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 2 sticks (1 cup) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 large egg
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract, or vanilla bean paste



**Instructions:**

- Sift together the flour, cornstarch, and salt. Set aside.
- In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream together the sugar and butter until the mixture is light, fluffy, and well incorporated.
- In a small bowl, whisk the egg and vanilla extract together until combined. Gradually add this to the butter and sugar mixture, mixing on low speed until fully incorporated.
- With the mixer on low, slowly add the flour mixture. Scrape down the sides of the bowl as needed. Mix until just combined – be careful not to overmix.
- Roll the dough between two sheets of plastic wrap to about 1/4-inch thickness. Refrigerate for at least one hour to firm up.
- Preheat your oven to 375 F. Line a light-colored baking sheet with parchment paper.
- Remove the dough from the refrigerator and cut out cookies using cookie cutters. Make sure there is at least an inch of space between the cookies. Re-roll scraps and repeat until all dough is used.
- Chill the cut-out cookies on the baking sheet in the refrigerator for at least 10 minutes before baking.
- Bake for 10-12 minutes, or until the edges are lightly golden.
- Allow the cookies to cool completely on a wire rack before decorating with royal icing or buttercream as desired. 🍪



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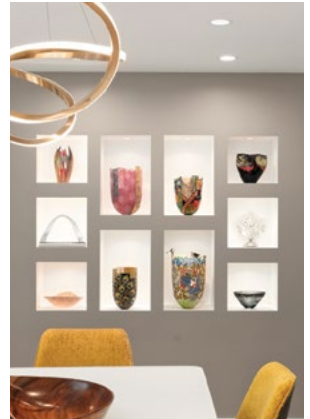
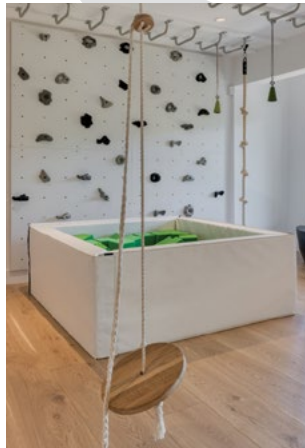


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# REMEMBERING THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE

BY MARY LARSEN | STAFF WRITER | NEWSROOM@LATC.COM

As I get older, I think more often, and more deeply, about my deceased loved ones, and even about the ones who came before them – all the generations I never knew. It's not just a question of a growing awareness of my mortality; it's more about curiosity and respect, and gratitude.

The veneration of ancestors is a tradition of many cultures around the globe, from Native Americans and Mexicans to East Asians and Indians and beyond.

Although Native American traditions – just like the languages – vary widely from tribe to tribe and region to region, the custom of honoring one's ancestors is a common thread.

Delwin Fiddler, Jr. writes on NativeHope.org that the words “keeping the spirit alive” have become his mantra: “They call me to walk in the ways of my ancestors, who lived in peace, beauty, and knowledge with all of Creation. The Spirit connects us to all who came before us.”

In Mexico and other parts of Latin America, el Día de los Muertos or the Day of the Dead (Nov. 1-2) is a time to visit and decorate graves, bring food and drink offerings, create altars, burn candles and pray for the deceased. Rather than a morbid observance, it tends to be a festive occasion, and a way to connect with the departed.

In many parts of Asia, traditional ways of honoring ancestors involve “tomb sweeping” (gravesite maintenance and decoration), making offerings of food or drink at gravesites or ancestral altars, burning incense, and sometimes offering “spirit money” to take care of the ancestors in the afterlife.

In India, “Pitru Paksha” is a 16-day Hindu holiday where families pay homage to ancestors, mainly through food offerings, expressing gratitude, prayer and charitable gifts in the name of one's ancestors.

I don't know much about those relatives from way back – my great-grandparents and great-greats, great-great-greats, etc. But I have heard stories about some of them, and even if most are complete mysteries, I know they are part of me. I am grateful for their lives and everything they went through, some even leaving behind the Old World for the New.

I have a box full of old photos from a desk in my grandmother's house and I believe the oldest ones, though they have nothing written on the back, are some of those greats and great-greats. I need to take them out of the box. I need to look at them – and thank them.

And looking back to the not-too-distant past, I remember and honor my parents and grandparents and my favorite aunt – for their integrity and honesty, their hard work and sacrifice, their intelligence and wisdom, their sense of selflessness and duty, for the opportunities they gave me and their undying love and care.

With the demise of cemeteries in favor of cremation and scattering of ashes – and sometimes it's a question of distance – it can be difficult or impossible to visit a loved one's or an ancestor's grave to pay our respects.

But even if we can't physically be there, we can still feel close – by writing about them, donating to their favorite charity, asking “What would Mom do?” when in need of advice, or laughing aloud at the memory of a shared joke.

It's possible to “keep the spirit alive.” 🌸



The author's great-great-great-grandfather's house, the John Pike House from 1841, in Newport, Rhode Island (unfortunately no longer in the family). Born in 1789, Captain John Pike was a harbor pilot on Narragansett Bay. PHOTO BY MARY LARSEN





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# Some families bake cookies, but we make *donuts* for the holidays

BY OLIVIA LEVESQUE OUELLETTE  
TOWN CRIER EDITORIAL INTERN

**A**s I wake up on Christmas Eve and walk into the warm kitchen, the smell of sweet dough and the crackle of the oil immediately transport me to a sentimental state.

Ever since I can remember, my family has been making donuts for Christmas. But not just a typical glazed donut. Specifically, old-fashioned donuts made with my great-

grandmother's pin roll for the dough, my grandmother's donut-cutter and my mom's pots for frying.

The tradition began multiple generations ago with the women on my mother's side of the family. My mom explained to me that her grandmother had 12 children, and making food during the holidays could get expensive with so many people to feed.

As a solution, my great-grandmother used left-over dough from other baked goods, which she would fry to create the donuts. Whether they were donuts or donut holes, there was enough to go around and fill everyone up.

Who knew my great-grandmother's convenience would become a heartfelt tradition?

My first memory of making donuts was when I was 7 years old. I had to stand on a stepping stool just to see my mom pour the ingredients into the mixer. My mom has always been the baker, while my sister and I help shape and cut the donuts.

Not only have the donuts tightened my relationship with the women in my family but also the people in my day to day life.

A few years ago, I brought my best friend to Canada with me as I was visiting my family for the holidays. My entire family had breakfast at my aunt's house, and then we began making donuts. It was a special moment in our friendship as I showed my friend how to make the donuts, passing a family tradition down to someone outside the family.

Additionally, I'm reminded of the tradition all year long. Every time I open the freezer door, I find containers of frozen donuts from last Christmas. Or I eat a shop donut and think, "These do not even compare to the ones from Christmas." I'm constantly reminded of the shared memories my family has and how they all tie back to the donuts.

Baking the donuts with my mom and sister has allowed me to further deepen our bond and sustain a long-standing tradition to honor the women in our family. 🌟

## Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups white sugar
- 2 tablespoons melted grease (Crisco)
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup milk
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 teaspoon baking powder per cup of flour
- 4 1/2 cups of flour

## Directions:

- Combine all ingredients
- Use flour to roll out donuts
- Fry in a pot of vegetable oil





# NICHOLAS FRENCH

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# Make your year-end donations work harder: A TAX-EFFICIENT GIVING STRATEGY

## 2025 is the year to donate stock, not cash

By Adam Nash

Charitable giving has long been a hallmark of our community. Every November and December, many Los Altos families open their hearts and wallets to make donations to worthy charities. Local schools, places of worship and national organizations all depend on this generosity.

The Los Altos Town Crier's Holiday Fundraiser is raising money for 13 local charities, including organizations like Child Advocates of Silicon Valley, which supports foster youth, and Community Services Agency, which helps local low-income seniors stay housed.

2025 has been an incredible year for financial markets, and most investors have seen significant gains. If you are looking for a way to make your charitable dollars go further while also saving at tax time, here is a simple tip: Donate stock, mutual funds or ETFs instead of cash this holiday season.

### WHY DONATING STOCK IS SO TAX-EFFICIENT

Whether you give cash or stock to a qualified charity, the IRS allows you to deduct the full market value of your donation. But when you donate an investment held for more than a year, there's an added bonus: You'll never have to pay the capital gains tax on the appreciation.

This is true whether you donate a hot stock like

Nvidia (NVDA) or a prudent index fund like Vanguard Total Stock Market (VTI). Chances are your investments have grown in value over time, so selling those shares can trigger significant federal and state taxes.

However, if you donate those shares directly, it means you can give more to charity and avoid the taxes you'd owe if you sold them first. It's one of the most powerful, yet under-utilized, ways to give.

### A LOS ALTOS EXAMPLE

Imagine a Los Altos couple who regularly donates \$20,000 a year to their children's school and a few nonprofits. They could use cash, or sell some of their investments to make these donations.

If they sold \$20,000 of appreciated stock first, they'd owe capital gains taxes – as much as 37.1% when combining federal and California rates – leaving less money for charity. In fact, they might have to sell more than \$30,000 in investments just to donate \$20,000!

Fortunately, there's a better way.

If they donate those shares directly, they can deduct the full \$20,000 and avoid taxes on the gains. Charities are tax-exempt, so when they sell the shares they receive the full market value of the donation. It's a win for the couple's finances and the organizations they care about.

What if the couple doesn't want to part with their investment? It turns out there is no "wash sale" rule for donations. They could still donate the shares, getting the full tax deduction, and then use their \$20,000 in cash to repurchase new ones. Their portfolio stays the same, but with their cost basis reset, reducing future capital gains. ➤







# Los Altos Town Crier

## *Holiday Fund 2025*

The Los Altos Town Crier Holiday Fund was launched in 2000 to raise funds for hands-on nonprofits throughout Silicon Valley, particularly those serving families and children. Most recipient Organizations rely on many volunteers and maintain low overhead in their efforts to touch the lives of those in need.

The Holiday Fund has raised more than four million dollars since its inception. The money has been distributed to local charities that tirelessly make a difference for families in our community, addressing education, literacy, social issues, food insecurity, housing, mental health, drug abuse, and general well being.

### **DONATE NOW!**

Each year, more than 400 local donors support the Fund. All contributions are tax-deductible through our fiscal partner, the Daffy Charitable Fund.

The best way to contribute is by donating securely with a credit or debit card, or through ACH, at [www.daffy.org/latc2025](http://www.daffy.org/latc2025). To donate stock or cryptocurrency, visit <https://www.daffy.org/latc-faqs> or email [support@daffy.org](mailto:support@daffy.org) for assistance. To donate by mail, please send a check payable to Daffy Charitable Fund, 221 Main Street, P.O. Box 2061, Los Altos, CA 94023, and be sure to indicate "TCHF 2025" in the memo line.



Contributions are 100% tax deductible and every dollar helps bring a smile to someone in our community.

*Scan the QR code to donate.*

### **HOLIDAY FUND RECIPIENTS**

Child Advocates of Silicon Valley

Community School of Music and Arts/  
Artistic Intelligence Program

Community Services Agency/  
Keep Low Income Seniors Housed

Day Worker Center of Mountain View

Help One Child

Hidden Villa

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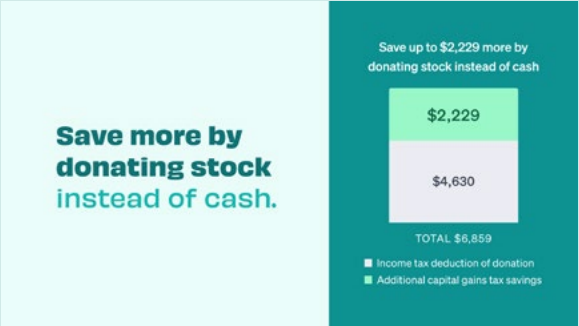
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## HOW DONOR-ADVISED FUNDS SIMPLIFY THE PROCESS

The challenge is that most charities don’t have brokerage accounts to accept stock. Even the few that do can find these transactions cumbersome and expensive to handle manually. That’s where a donor-advised fund (DAF) really helps.

With a DAF, you can donate appreciated stock, claim your deduction immediately, and then recommend donations over time. The money stays invested tax-free and is available whenever you’re inspired to give. You can even automate recurring donations.

Historically, DAFs were available only to wealthy clients and came with high minimums and fees – often 0.6% or more. But today, modern platforms like Daffy.org (the company I co-founded), make it simple for anyone to open an account in minutes with low fees and no minimums. ➤




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# SAFER HOLIDAYS, SAFER HOMES



At Los Altos Hills County Fire District, safety is at the heart of everything we do. From wildfire preparation, defensible space, and home hardening programs to emergency preparedness classes and programs, we aim to help the community be safer from wildfires, more prepared for emergency or disaster, and more resilient. This work extends to the holiday season.

## Here are some simple steps to keep your home safer during the holidays:

- Check smoke alarms
- Keep decorations away from heat sources and out of potential emergency escape paths
- Safely store flammable items
- Inspect and discard damaged light sets
- Install fire extinguishers where they are easily accessible
- Only use extension cords with a built-in circuit breaker
- Always unplug lights and decorations before you go to bed or leave the house

*Happy Holidays from the Los Altos Hills County Fire District*



LOS ALTOS HILLS  
COUNTY FIRE  
DISTRICT

For local District events and programs, fire safety and emergency preparedness information, visit Los Altos Hills County Fire District at [www.lahcfd.org](http://www.lahcfd.org) or call (650) 949-1044.



A donor-advised fund gives you the flexibility to donate stock when it makes sense financially while ensuring cash support reaches charities whenever you choose.

**MAKE YOUR YEAR-END GIVING COUNT**

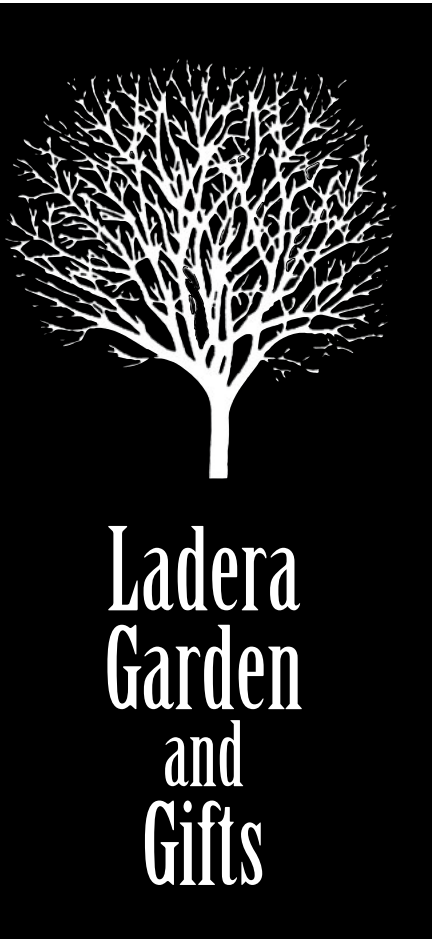
Los Altos has long been known for its generous spirit – from supporting schools to helping families across the Bay Area. By donating stock instead of cash, you can make those gifts go further.

As the year comes to a close, take a moment to look through your portfolio. There’s likely appreciated stock that could make a meaningful difference for a cause you love and on your next tax return.

2025 has been good to many families with stock, but there are many others who need support. If you have the means, consider sharing some of those gains with the organizations and causes that you find most meaningful. This is a good year to donate stock. ❄️

*Adam Nash is a Los Altos resident and the co-founder and CEO of Daffy.org, a modern, fast-growing donor-advised fund helping people be more generous, more often. This year, Daffy is proud to host the Los Altos Town Crier’s 2025 Holiday Fundraiser, supporting 13 local charities.*

*Note that this information is for educational purposes only and should not be considered tax advice. Any calculations are intended to be illustrative and do not reflect all of the potential complexities of individual tax returns. To assess your specific tax situation, please consult with a tax professional.*



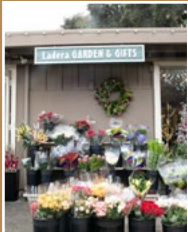
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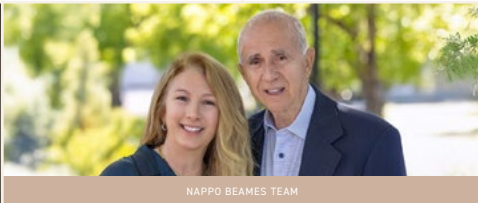
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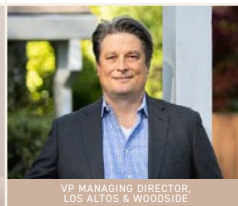
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Los Altos St. Paddy's Beer Stroll

Los Altos Valentines Choco Stroll

Los Altos Whiskey and Bites Stroll

Los Altos Witches and Warlocks Wine Stroll

Mountain View Art & Wine Festival

Peninsula Humane Society

*Bark 'n Brew Fest*

Woodside Day of the Horse

2025 Woodside/Portola Valley Foundation Chili Cookoff



# Peek into the Holiday Past

## 1964 CHRISTMAS CONCERT REHEARSAL

The Foothill Youth Symphony and the choral Royalaries of the Mountain View Seventh Day Adventist Academy rehearse for a Christmas concert. The Foothill Youth Symphony is conducted by Warren Bohn (not seen in the photograph).



## 1984 FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

A float works its way up State Street during the Festival of Lights Parade in Los Altos.

## 1987 HIDDEN VILLA HARVEST FESTIVAL

This photograph by Edward Ledesma shows the first exhibit near the entrance to the Hidden Villa Harvest Festival. The festival was held at Hidden Villa, located on Moody Road in Los Altos. Hidden Villa Hostel co-manager Diny van der Velden (left) and Jan Spiro sit in a booth, exhibiting Hidden Villa T-shirts and some produce from the fall harvests. The photograph is dated on the back as Sept. 27, 1987.





1989 ST. NICHOLAS  
DURING FESTIVAL OF  
LIGHTS

A man dressed as St. Nicholas or Santa Claus, and a few others, drive through downtown Los Altos during the Festival of Lights parade. He is waving and surrounded by a Christmas tree, lights and an artificial deer.



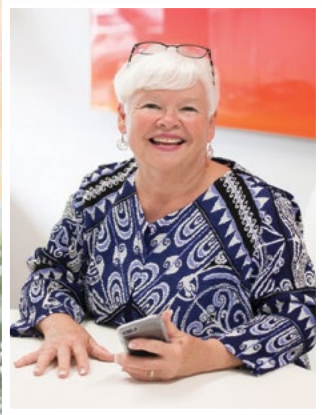
NOVEMBER 30, 2015

A Festival of Lights float passes  
Reitmeir's Werkstatt on First Street.



PICTURES COURTESY OF LOS ALTOS HISTORY MUSEUM

*Wishing you and your family  
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# Local stores gear up for holidays after traversing tariffs

BY ANDRES BAISCH  
TOWN CRIER EDITORIAL INTERN

Shopping local during the festive season not only helps support business owners in Los Altos but also can offer gift options not found in big-box stores.

However, several of these local businesses, like many throughout the country, have had to navigate the higher prices of foreign products due to tariffs.

That includes Paperwhirl, a Los Altos shop at 165 Main St., a stationery and gift boutique that sells many holiday ornaments around the holidays.

Paperwhirl owner Christine Chang said all of their products are made overseas. A majority of the Nutcrackers and ornaments Paperwhirl sells are made in China.

However, Chang said the rising tariffs stabilized by the end of the summer.

“I believe we are getting a 15%

surcharge on everything,” Chang said. “The tariffs in themselves are bad enough, but somewhat manageable if it’s a set amount.”

Chang said one of the highest upcharges on a product line was the embroidered pins made in India. She noted that Paperwhirl’s supplier could not determine the price of the line until the shipment was ready.

Belinda Chung has owned BK Collections at 342 State St. since 1978. The shop specializes in jewelry, utilizing a wide





inventory of metals to personalize each customer's request.

BK collections makes some jewelry in-store and orders externally for the holidays early in the new year.

"We buy things from Europe, but it depends," said Chung, who had just received a shipment from Australia. "That's why our items are so unique, because we source from a lot of different places."

Chung said BK Collections' handmade and hand-painted glass ornaments are especially popular with her customers during the holiday season.

"Most of the time when people buy gifts for their loved ones, our return rate is less than 2%," Chung said.

Chung added that in recent years, ornamental picture frames have also been a hit with customers, who often buy them as gifts or use them to decorate their own homes around the holidays.

Cheeky Monkey Toys, located at 173 Main St., is stocked full of interactive games and toys.

Like most stores, Cheeky Monkey also had to negotiate higher ordering prices from manufacturers, according to general manager Holley Anver.

In addition, Anver said the store ordered products much earlier than usual this year. Orders that are typically sent in September were requested in March and April.

Anver said LEGO is particularly popular this season, noting that the brand has branched out and is garnering the attention of kids and adults alike.

Family games are another hot category, according to Anver.

"Board games, card games, anything that gets families off of screens are popular," Anver said. "We definitely lean into the screen-free, kind of open-ended play version." ★



## MAKE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON FEEL LIKE HOME- WITHOUT THE STRESS

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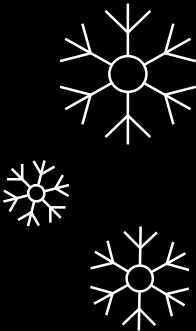


# Seasons Greetings & Happy Holidays

From all of us in the  
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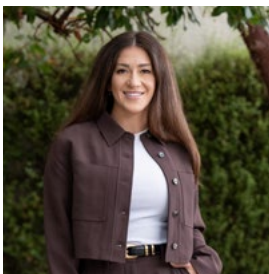
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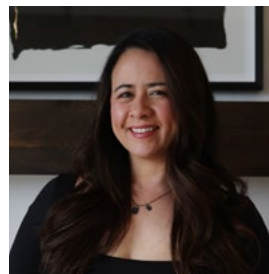
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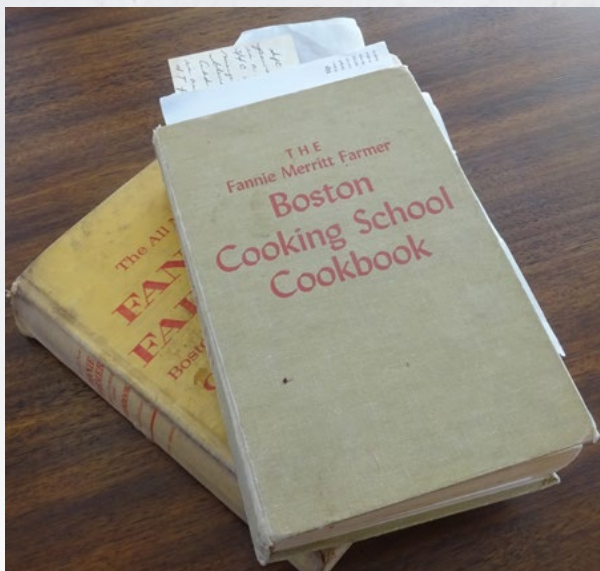


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# On Heirloom Cookbooks and Apple Pie

BY MARY LARSEN  
STAFF WRITER/NEWSROOM@LATC.COM



Two of my most cherished possessions are cookbooks: my grandmother's 1959 Fannie Farmer cookbook ("The All New Fannie Farmer Boston Cooking School Cookbook") and my mother's ("The Fannie Merritt Farmer Boston Cooking School Cookbook"; same book, different printing) from my birth year, 1962 – surely a gift from her mother. First published in 1896, the various editions of these books were staples in New England for everything from peanut butter cookies and pound cake to "Harvard" beets, scalloped potatoes and roast pork. My grandmother and mother both hailed from Newport, Rhode Island; my other grandmother, born in Connecticut, also relied on Fannie Farmer.

I use (and have memorized) some of the recipes, but what I most love about these weathered tomes are the notes and the handwritten recipes on the extra pages in the back or tucked in on index or recipe cards. I especially enjoy the ones from various family members ("Julie's Chocolate Cake," "Gwen's Applesauce Cake," "Uncle Phil's Cake," etc.). Even the stains on oft-used pages tell stories.

When I grew up in Los Altos, a beautiful apple tree adorned our backyard. It was great for climbing, but it also taught me to bake apple pie. It was a very prolific tree – my mother made apple sauce by the gallon, we shared bags of apples with our neighbor who returned the next day with apple crisp, and I made pies. Relying on my mother's Fannie Farmer cookbook, I learned how to make crust ("plain pastry") and what to fill it with.

Our apples were huge, and – on my honor – two apples would make a well-filled pie. My father chose not to spray for bugs, so sometimes I'd let out a scream as an earwig scurried out as I was chopping an apple. ➤



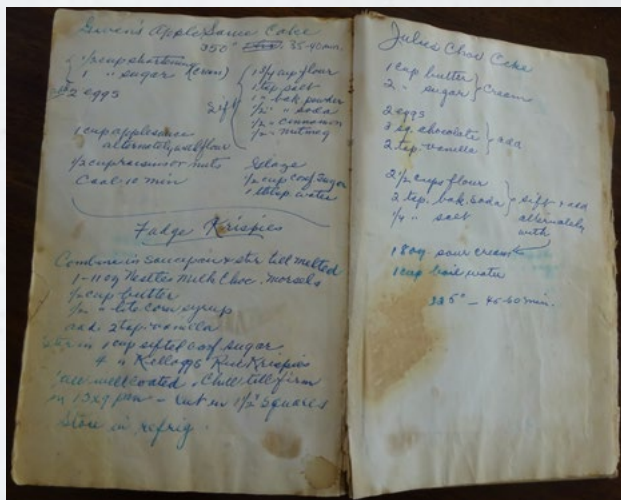


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Most people love apple pie – an “all-American” dessert that actually has its official origins in medieval England. It’s welcome at any time, but especially during the fall and early winter months. The apples are in season, and the scent of cinnamon wafting through the air adds a spicy and comforting warmth to the baker’s home.

The muffin-tin pies featured here are traditional (made with brown sugar because that’s my preference), but in single-serving portions for a rustic yet elegant dessert. They can be “easy as pie” or more labor-intensive with the

addition of a braided crust around the edge. These recipes are very similar to the Fannie Farmer apple pie recipe I grew up with and love, updated with a few of my preferences along the way. Feel free to modify with your own preferences, for example, store-bought dough or butter pastry rather than vegetable shortening (but Crisco does make for a flaky crust); white vs. brown sugar; the addition or omission of nutmeg, etc.

This recipe makes eight mini-pies.

## Festive apple mini-pies

### Crust

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2/3 cup vegetable shortening
- 1/3 cup ice water

Sift together flour and salt. Add shortening; cut in with pastry blender or two knives (one in each hand) until the mixture is crumbly (as Fannie Farmer wrote, “in even bits about the size of peas”). Gradually sprinkle the ice water over the mixture, quickly mixing with a fork. Use just enough water that the dough can be lightly patted into a ball (you may need slightly more or less than 1/3 cup). Divide into two portions, wrap in waxed paper or foil and chill approximately two hours.

### Filling

- 5 Granny Smith apples (other varieties can be used)
- 2/3 cup firmly packed brown sugar (substitute white if preferred); sugar can be increased or decreased depending on the tartness of the apples
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 nutmeg (optional)
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon flour
- 1 tablespoon butter (optional)

Peel and chop apples smaller than for a standard-sized pie – each slice should be cut in thirds horizontally. Add to bowl. Mix sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt and 1 tablespoon flour and sprinkle over the top of the apples. Stir and set aside.

Pull off a lump of chilled dough, approximately 3–4 tablespoons’ worth, and roll into a 6-inch circle, 1/8-inch thick. (The circles needn’t be perfect as they will be trimmed once in the muffin tin.) Press into muffin tin cavity; trim edges so that there’s about a half-inch of extra crust hanging over the edge. Repeat for the other seven tarts.

Stir apple mixture again and spoon into pie crusts – don’t skimp, as apples cook down in the oven.

For the easy version, simply fold the overhanging crust inward toward the center of the apples. ➤

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# More labor-intensive versions:

## 1) Swirl:

Roll out scraps of dough into an 8- to 10-inch strip, about a half-inch wide. Fold dough over as above, and moisten slightly with water. Twist the long strand of dough as you place it around the edge of the mini-pie, pressing slightly to adhere. Optional: sprinkle swirl with cinnamon.

## 2) Wreath:

Same as #1 above, but cut the long strand lengthwise into three strips, leaving a half-inch intact at the top. Braid the strips (they may break occasionally; simply press back together, moistening slightly if necessary) and place the braid over the moistened edge of the mini-pie. Place about a quarter-teaspoon of butter on the top of each tart (optional).

Bake at 450 F for approximately 30 minutes (check after 20; if edges are browning too quickly, place a piece of foil loosely over the top of the pan), until edges are nicely browned. Allow to cool a bit before removing from pan, but not entirely – any sugary apple juice that leaked out will make them difficult to remove when hardened.



Tip: In case of leakage, a cookie sheet on the rack below will make for easier clean-up.

Makes eight mini-pies.

Top with vanilla ice cream or whipped cream if desired. Enjoy! 🌿



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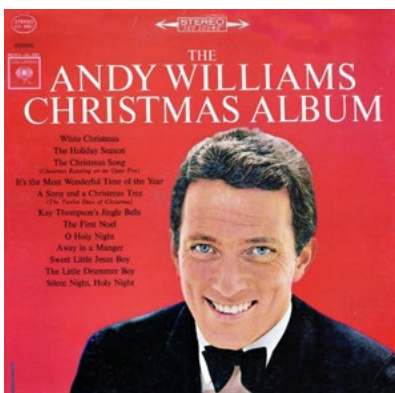
# TRAVEL HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS WITH THESE *Christmas tracks*

BY ANDRES BAISCH

TOWN CRIER EDITORIAL INTERN



**W**ith the holiday season approaching, shopping malls and radio stations alike will be getting into the spirit of the season by playing tracks from Michael Bublé to classics from the 1970s. If you're traveling home for the holidays, these songs are bound to get you into the spirit of the season.



## Andy Williams

*"It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year,"* 1963

Starting with a classic heard across movies and TV episodes during the holiday season, Williams celebrates the season by describing getting together with friends and family. A Christmas classic heard for decades, Williams captures the excitement of hosting holiday gatherings. To me, this song captures the feeling of attending a holiday party with friends on the weekends leading up to Christmas day.



## The Jackson Five

*"Santa Claus is Coming to Town,"* 1970

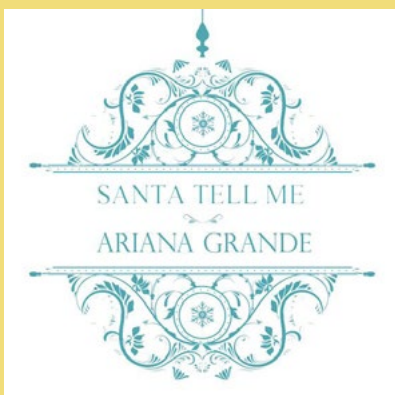
In my mind, I always associate the Jackson Five with music that is fun to listen to while running errands. Young Michael Jackson's spirited spin on a Christmas tune reminds me of rushing to purchase all of my holiday gifts in one trip at the last minute. The song's upbeat pace also captures the chaos of a bustling airport around the holidays, which I would listen to if I were late to my gate at SFO.



## Wham!

*"Last Christmas,"* 1984

While the lyrics of the song are about a heartbreak that ended around the holiday season, I like to imagine the bittersweet tune as a search for new love in the coming year. This song is different from Williams' celebration of camaraderie, bringing feelings of introspection as I reflect on feelings of connection. For the song itself, the upbeat background to the words about love and loss always evokes a feeling of hope for the next year. ❄️



## Ariana Grande

*"Santa Tell Me,"* 2014

Rounding out my picks for songs I enjoy queueing on Spotify when traveling in December is Grande's lighthearted "Santa Tell Me." Of course, the classics from Mariah Carey and Kelly Clarkson are always a good sign of the season. Nevertheless, Grande's pitch gets me in the mood for the season ahead, creating a buzzing anticipation for holiday parties with friends and ugly Christmas sweaters.





*happy holidays*

RG

Ryan  
Gowdy

REALTOR®

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@ryangowdy  
The Agency Los Altos

Hi there, my name is Ryan Gowdy. I am a second-generation Los Altos realtor who lives, breathes, and loves everything Los Altos. My children attend our local schools and I am a proud sponsor of LAEF. I still live in the wonderful community where I was raised. I take great pride in providing exceptional service to my clients who trust me for guidance in all things real estate. If there is ever anything that I can do to support you with your real estate needs, please don't hesitate to reach out.

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# Holiday events abound in and around Los Altos

Festive activities and performances are just around the corner as the holiday season approaches. A lineup of local events follows.



NOV.  
28

THROUGH  
DEC.  
21



## “A Christmas Carol: A Ghost Story of Christmas”

Wednesday through Sunday at Bus Barn Theater, 97 Hillview Ave.

Los Altos Stage Company stages “A Christmas Carol: A Ghost Story of Christmas,” a rendition of Charles Dickens’s “A Christmas Carol.” The production may contain adult-themed material. Tickets are \$28-\$51.

For more information, visit [losaltosstage.org/a-christmas-carol](http://losaltosstage.org/a-christmas-carol).

DEC.  
3

THROUGH  
DEC.  
28



## “Georgiana and Kitty: Christmas at Pemberley”

Wednesday through Sunday at Lucie Stern Theatre, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

Theatreworks Silicon Valley presents “Georgiana and Kitty: Christmas at Pemberley,” a holiday romance from Jane Austen. Opening night is Dec. 6. It is appropriate for children. Tickets are \$34-\$115.

For more information, visit [theatreworks.org](http://theatreworks.org).

NOV.  
30



## Festival of Lights Parade

6-8 p.m. in downtown Los Altos

Starting on First and State streets, the Festival of Lights Parade is an annual tradition in Los Altos that features marching bands, a visit from Santa Claus and illuminated floats. The parade is appropriate for all ages. Admission is free.

For more information, visit [losaltosparade.org](http://losaltosparade.org).

DEC.  
4

AND  
DEC.  
11



## Holiday Market

4-8 p.m. on State Street in downtown Los Altos

The annual Holiday Market features live music, holiday decoration and warm seasonal drinks for shoppers. The market includes baked goods from Los Altos Farmers’ Market vendors. Admission is free.

For more information, visit [tinyurl.com/HolMkt](http://tinyurl.com/HolMkt).





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DEC.  
5



### Holiday Tree Celebration

**6-8 p.m. at Veterans Community Plaza, corner of  
State and Main streets**

*The Los Altos Village Association hosts the Holiday Tree Celebration, featuring performances by local students, trolley car rides around downtown and pictures with Santa Claus (cameras not provided). Admission is free.*

*For more information, visit [tinyurl.com/TreeLite](http://tinyurl.com/TreeLite).*

DEC.  
6



### Pictures with Santa

**2-4 p.m. at Enchante Boutique Hotel, 1 Main St.,  
Los Altos**

*The Los Altos Village Association has made special arrangements for Santa Claus to visit downtown Los Altos for a photo-taking session. Admission is free.*

*For more information, visit [tinyurl.com/PicSanta](http://tinyurl.com/PicSanta).*

DEC.  
7



### Barn Lighting

**2-5 p.m. at Westwind Community Barn, 27210  
Altamont Road, Los Altos Hills**

*A tradition in Los Altos Hills, the holiday Barn Lighting features drinks, baked goods and Mister Softee's ice cream. The event also includes children's activities, such as seasonal games, face painting, pony rides, a petting zoo and photos with Santa. The barn lighting countdown starts at 5 p.m. Admission is free.*

*For more information, visit [tinyurl.com/BarnLite](http://tinyurl.com/BarnLite).*





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DEC.  
8



**Community Tree Lighting Celebration**

**5:30-8 p.m. at downtown Mountain View**

*The Community Tree Lighting Celebration features local performances, free refreshments and tributes to multicultural traditions. Children’s activities include arts and crafts, train rides and a visit from Santa. Admission is free.*

*For more information, visit [tinyurl.com/MtnTree](http://tinyurl.com/MtnTree).*

DEC.  
11

THROUGH

DEC.  
14



**Smuin’s “The Christmas Ballet”**

**7:30 p.m. Dec. 11**

**7:30 p.m. Dec 12**

**2 and 7:30 p.m. Dec 13**

**2 p.m. Dec 14**

**At the Mountain View Center for Performing Arts, MainStage, 500 Castro St.**

*The Smuin Contemporary Ballet stages its annual run of “The Christmas Ballet,” featuring choreography by Michael Smuin. The two-hour performance has one intermission and is appropriate for children. Tickets are \$31-\$117.*

*For more information, visit [tinyurl.com/smuin](http://tinyurl.com/smuin).*

DEC.  
13



**Santa’s Workshop**

**9 a.m. to noon at Mountain View Community Center, Redwood Hall, 201 S. Rengstorff Ave.**

*Santa’s elves invite children ages 6-11 to create holiday-themed crafts, including ornaments, stockings and snow globes. Registration is \$47. Material fees are built into the price.*

*For more information, visit [tinyurl.com/SantaCrafts](http://tinyurl.com/SantaCrafts).*

DEC.  
13



**Winter Holiday Robotics Workshop**

**9 a.m. to noon at Mountain View Community Center, Willow Room**

*The Winter Holiday Robotics Workshop welcomes children 6-11 to learn the basics of robotics through several holiday builds: Santa in Chimney, Rudolph, the Polar Express, Kwanzaa DrummerBot and more. Registration is \$78-\$97.*

*For more information, visit [tinyurl.com/HollyRobot](http://tinyurl.com/HollyRobot).*

DEC.  
22

THROUGH

DEC.  
23



**Winter Wonderland Workshop Using LEGO Materials**

**9 a.m. to noon at Mountain View Community Center, Oak Room**

*Children ages 5-9 can apply engineering, architecture and creativity to build a LEGO Winter Wonderland. The event features motorized contraptions such as snowmobiles and gondolas, along with a LEGO hilltop village. Registration is \$111, which includes materials.*

*For more information, visit [tinyurl.com/HollyLego](http://tinyurl.com/HollyLego).*

COMPILED BY  
Keara Morrow  
Town Crier  
Editorial Intern







*May this holiday season fill your heart with warmth, your home with laughter, and your days with hope. Wishing you moments of joy, peace, and love to carry with you into the New Year.*

*Happy Holidays!*



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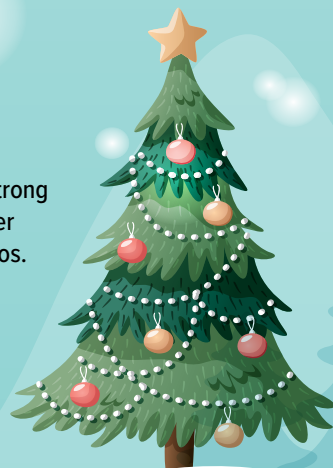
Thank you for 78 years of partnership, trust, and community.

With your continued support, the Town Crier will continue to ring strong  
for many years to come. Let's continue to support the Town Crier  
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May your holidays be filled with joy,  
kindness, and a spirit of community.



*Hear ye, hear ye —  
Happy Holidays to all!*



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December 4th  
Holiday Market  
4:00 PM - 8:00 PM

December 5th  
Holiday Tree Celebration  
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

December 6th  
Pictures with Santa  
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

December 11th  
Holiday Market  
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

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