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# Home *for the* Holidays

A LOS ALTOS TOWN CRIER PUBLICATION

WINTER 2022



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# Home *for the* Holidays

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## Los Altos Town Crier

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**ON THE COVER:**  
*PHOTO COURTESY OF LOS ALTOS FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS PARADE ASSOCIATION. The annual Festival of Lights parade comes to town Nov. 27.*





# SANTA'S HELPERS

## Hope's Corner Holiday Sharing Event *is 'like an explosion of toys'*

BY KAITLYN HUANG  
TOWN CRIER EDITORIAL INTERN

In the third week of December, the Trinity Church sanctuary transforms into a wonderland of holiday gifts.

The Hope's Corner Holiday Sharing Event, run by the Mountain View-based nonprofit Hope's Corner, is the organization's way to bring more joy to the holidays by collecting and giving gifts to families who may not be able to afford them.

According to Hope's Corner president Chris Ito, the sanctuary at 748 Mercy St. looks like "Santa's workshop" that week.

"It's like an explosion of toys," he said.

In addition to toys, items displayed on tables include warm clothing, socks, nonperishable food, books, stocking stuffers and gift cards. As the families file in, they are typically paired with a Hope's Corner volunteer; together, they choose three gifts for the family to bring home.

"Whether it's giving them a stuffed animal or a book or a stocking stuffer or a toy, we try to provide all of those things, and it gives the parents a chance to actually feel like they're shopping for their kids," Ito said.

Alice Cota, head of volunteers, added that the concept of letting parents shop for their kids suits the

intrinsic parental need to provide for their children.

"They did provide the gift for their child, because it was their time and effort in securing it," Cota said. "It is not from Hope's Corner; it's from their parents. Or Santa – if they want to say it's from Santa."

Last year, Ito said the organization served more than 200 families and gave away more than 2,000 toys to 700 youth.

"If there's a need, we do whatever we can to meet it," Ito said of the nonprofit's goal. "I think the holiday giving event is a prime example of that." ➤

**“It’s nice to see that people still **care**, and they do want to help each other – and we just see it from start to finish.”**

*~ Chris Ito ~*



PHOTO COURTESY OF HOPE'S CORNER. Volunteers help parents choose from an array of gifts at Hope's Corner.

Ito added that “parents walk out with sacks – literally sacks of toys and clothes. ... You just feel like: There’s going to be a child at the other end of that who’s going to have a nice Christmas.”

**Collective action bursts ‘bubble’**

Hope’s Corner board member Leslie Carmichael said her favorite aspect of the event is “people coming together to make something happen that really can’t be done by an individual.”

“It takes collective action – it takes collective effort to bring some joy to a lot of people’s holiday,” she said.

Ito echoed the sentiment.

“It’s nice to see that people still care, and they do want to help each other – and we just see it from start to finish,” he said.

Carmichael added that she not only noticed the gratitude from the families who came for gifts, but also saw the event positively impacting the volunteers who were part of the effort.

“It opens people’s eyes to (how) there is such a broad spectrum of economic situations in our area,” she said. “It helps people see beyond their bubble.”

Cota said, “Hopefully, it will stick with some of the volunteers that, ‘Hey, we shouldn’t just do this during the holidays; hey, maybe we should continue giving back.’”

Ito noted that Hope’s Corner stands out in letting young children engage in volunteering. The organization previously allowed children as young as age 5 to volunteer, but the pandemic halted that for safety purposes; the minimum age is now 16. Ito looks forward to the day when young children will once again be able to help out. ➤

PHOTO COURTESY OF HOPE'S CORNER. A volunteer begins to sort a bin filled with gifts donated to Hope's Corner for families in need.



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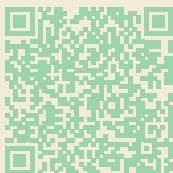
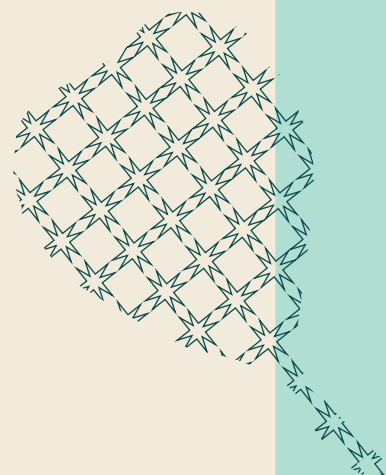


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“When (the kids) also start participating in events like the holiday giving event as volunteers and understand that there are kids even in our own community that don’t have a single toy, it starts building the empathy within them as well,” he said.

Outside of the holiday season, Hope’s Corner is known for its yearlong food, shower and laundry services. The organi-



PHOTO COURTESY OF HOPE’S CORNER. Dozens of bags of donated toys and other gifts are stored in the Trinity Church sanctuary, ready for sorting and display by Hope’s Corner volunteers.



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zation typically offers free breakfasts and bagged lunches Wednesday and Saturday mornings, and coffee and snacks Monday mornings. Its laundry and shower services are available Monday and Wednesday mornings, and 8:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. Saturdays.

“There’s a basic need when it comes to serving somebody food and providing showers and laundry that I think has to do with basic human needs and treating people with dignity,” Ito said. “But I would say that the holiday event is our opportunity – when we see the families that come in – that we have a feeling that we’re going beyond the basics, to something that’s so core to any parent: that they just want to do the best for their kids.” ❄

*For more information on how to donate gifts or sign up to pick out gifts at the Hope’s Corner Holiday Sharing Event, visit [hopes-corner.org](https://hopes-corner.org).*

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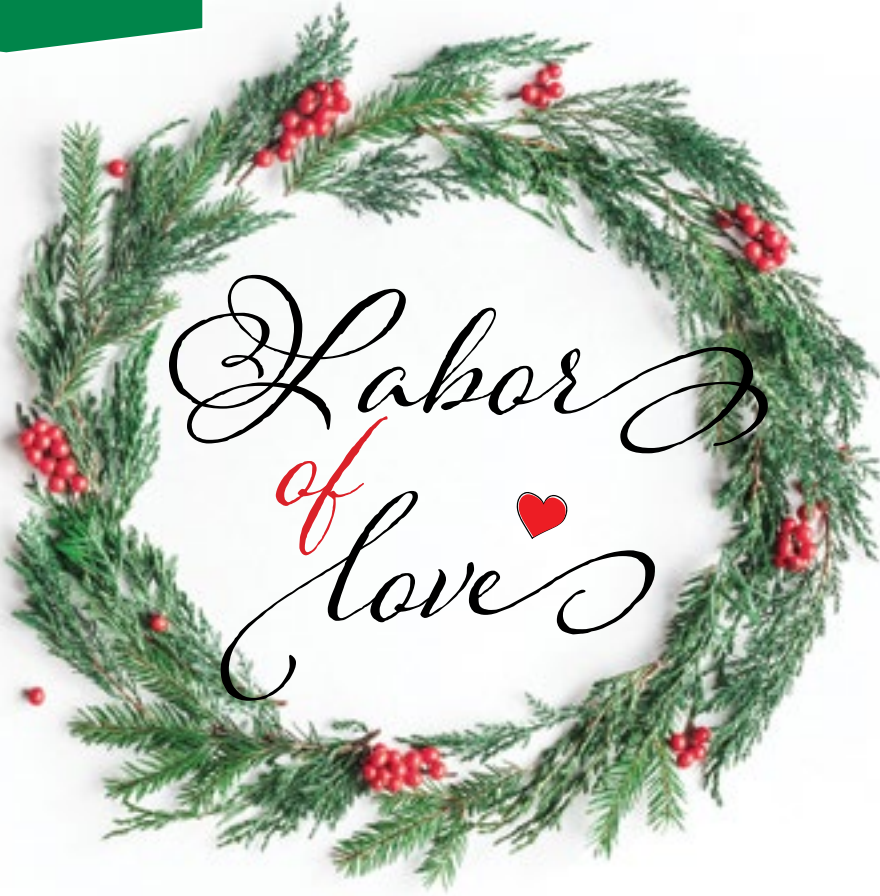


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## LOS ALTOS HILLS RESIDENT *crafts* HOLIDAY CENTERPIECES

BY MARY LARSEN  
STAFF WRITER | MARYL@LATC.COM

**L**os Altos Hills resident Karen Smith has been creating festive holiday centerpieces for the Kiwanis Club of Los Altos' Christmas tree lot for more than 20 years.

The lot is the Kiwanis Club's main fundraiser, and proceeds from sales of trees, wreaths and centerpieces enable the club to give back to the community in many ways. The club's activities include hosting the annual Los Altos Kiwanis Pet Parade and the Kiwanis Special Games, as well as providing a variety of grants and scholarships.

A Kiwanis Club member since 1990, Smith said the centerpiece idea was

born of leftover Christmas trees from the lot.

"Maybe 28 years ago, the Kiwanis Club was involved with Silicon Valley Bowl for local junior colleges, and they wanted arrangements on the tables," she recalled. "We had trees, so we took what wasn't used at the tree lot (and made centerpieces)."

They were a hit, and continue to be. Now, the group normally sells 50-75 of them each holiday season.

"Hopefully, it enhances what we do at the tree lot," Smith said.

For materials, Smith noted the "luxury of having the greens there," which usually becomes the basis for

the creations. Preferring a natural look, she often incorporates pine cones, as well as "Christmas-y balls and other things I've procured during the year."

The bases range from glass vases to baskets, lined to make them leak-proof.

In addition to selling them on the tree lot, Smith fills special orders, and customers often bring back baskets from previous years to have redone.

"One of our members brings me a couple of containers that are special to her, and quite old," she said.

She welcomes contributions of baskets and vases, noting that "it makes me more creative when I use something I haven't used before." ➤



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*"I enjoy working with my hands and creating. Usually it's going to add to the holiday decor of someone's home."*

*~ KAREN SMITH ~*

PHOTOS COURTESY OF KAREN SMITH. The sale of centerpieces and wreaths supports the Kiwanis Club's philanthropic activities.

The process is a labor of love for Smith, and she tries to keep her styles fresh by tracking current decorating trends.

"I enjoy working with my hands and creating," she said. "Usually it's going to add to the holiday decor of someone's home."

It's a lot of work for one person, and Smith said she'd welcome help.

"If a new member has some interest, I could use a hand," she said.

Holiday wreaths are another big seller at the Kiwanis lot, and as they arrive pre-made

and already attractive, all Smith needs to do is add a festive bow. Starting in early November, while her husband watches football games on TV, Smith makes up to 400 bows for the wreaths, as well as smaller ones for centerpieces.

### BLOSSOM BUDDIES

Blossom Buddies is another project to which Smith devotes her time and creativity. Donated flowers from stores, or leftover from weddings, funerals, bar mitzvahs and bat ➤



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mitzvahs, are artfully arranged and distributed to places where they will brighten someone's day, including Los Altos Sub-acute and Rehabilitation Center, the VA hospitals in Menlo Park and Palo Alto, and Palo Alto Commons.

"That's my Monday," she said. "We work at a gal's home here in the Hills. ... It feels good to be able to do that."

Smith said Blossom Buddies could use more flower donations, as well as small- to medium-sized vases. ❄️

PHOTOS COURTESY OF KAREN SMITH. Karen Smith's holiday centerpieces are popular items at the Kiwanis Club Christmas tree lot.



*To donate baskets for centerpieces or flowers and vases for Blossom Buddies, email Smith at [karen@smithkhes.com](mailto:karen@smithkhes.com).*

*For more information on the Kiwanis Club of Los Altos, visit [losaltoskiwanis.org](http://losaltoskiwanis.org).*

*This year's tree lot opens 9 a.m. Nov. 25 in Lucky Supermarket's parking lot, 2175 Grant Road, Los Altos.*

*Wishing you and your family  
the best of the holidays!*



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# HOLIDAYS MINUS ONE



## *Celebrating After a Loss*



ILLUSTRATION BY TIFFANY YU.

BY MARY LARSEN

STAFF WRITER | MARYL@LATC.COM

**W**e all go through it: a celebration of some sort – a holiday or special gathering. The decorating is done, the food cooked (or brought or delivered or picked up), the table set. But something's missing.

Someone is missing.

Whether that someone has died or is seriously ill and unable to be there, there is a void. Can it be filled? Should it be? Should a place setting be laid out in their usual spot? Or some memento placed there? Or should they be honored in some other way?

My mother died shortly after Thanksgiving last year – thankfully, she was able to make it to the table for one last gathering, even if she

only managed a few bites of some old favorites.

After her small memorial Mass in mid-December, we brought home the photos of her that we had displayed at the church and put them in the dining room. She looked beautiful – bundled up on a chilly day in Carmel; in summer attire in Newport Harbor; in an off-white dress and turquoise shawl at her son's wedding – and always a big smile.

The photos were still there on a side table in the dining room as I set the table for Christmas – I left them where they were. To be sure, Christmas wasn't a grand affair last year; it was a very quiet one. Christmas decor was

minimal – just a few Nativity scenes inside and some big colored balls hung from the redwood tree in the front yard.

But gather again as a family we did – for Chef Chu's takeout on Christmas Eve – minus Mom, but with her photos watching over us, as we know she is still.

This year, even though the house has been sold, we will still gather together – elsewhere. We will make sure there is a nice photo of Mom in the room. She's still very much with us, even as life goes on.

Conversations will surely turn, as they did last year, to how kind and generous and fun she was. ➤



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Remember how (in our adult years) she always had a mini-Christmas stocking at each place setting with a scratch-off ticket inside?

Remember the English trifles, the eggnog, the ice cream snowballs, the Yorkshire pudding?

Remember the Christmas crackers with the silly jokes and surprises inside, and how Mom and I would be the only ones wearing the paper hats?

Remember the Christmas trees, the stockings, the poinsettias, the gifts – always something warm and cozy like a robe or a sweater?

Yes.

Yes.

❄️



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# GRIEF & GRACE

## Making peace with the holidays when you are missing a loved one

BY LAURA HASTINGS  
SPECIAL TO THE TOWN CRIER

**T**he holidays certainly draw much of our attention this time of year. Holidays can be a time of gathering with friends and family, embracing traditions and making new memories. However, these customs can be the very same things that are difficult if you are grieving the loss of a loved one. Grief during the holidays can require a unique balance between joy and sadness.

Here are a few ideas to help navigate the holidays.

- **Try to give yourself and others grace.** Grief over a loved one, whether deceased, ill or absent, can be overwhelming, and isolating. Keep expectations of yourself and others realistic. Grief can look different for everyone. It can be messy and hard to articulate. There is also no right or wrong way to grieve.

- **Consider a pre-conversation before gatherings.** Talk with your family or friends before you attend a holiday event. Do you have requests, boundaries or needs that you can ask for ahead of time? Would you like to ask someone to accompany you or stay close by?

- **Listen to yourself.** We cannot plan, predict or control how we will feel in all situations. Maybe you had not planned on saying much about your loved one when you socialized during the holidays, but you find yourself wanting to talk about the person. Go ahead and honor your feelings in the moment and share a memory or two.

- **Write out your feelings.** Take the time to write down your feelings. Acknowledge even the ones you were not expecting. Fear, for example, might be unexpected, but it is just as legitimate. Allow and accept all the feelings. Get support from a friend, family member, spiritual mentor or professional if needed.

- **Make time for yourself.** Even under normal circumstances, holidays can be overstimulating. When you are grieving, it can be even harder to process. Allow yourself more time than usual to do daily tasks, plan an outing or get ready to see others. Also, consider giving yourself ➤



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• *Prioritize self-care.* When we miss a loved one, it can take a toll on our mind and body. Be sure to preserve time for exercise, healthful nutrition, hobbies, good sleep, fresh air and any spiritual practices if that is relevant for you.



• *Stay open to memories while you go about your day.* As you stop into stores to shop or purchase necessities, it can be overwhelming with all of the stimuli. Encourage yourself to notice one item that evokes a fond memory. For example, perhaps you recall how they always were the first one to buy the eggnog as soon as it was in the stores.

Hopefully, the holidays can be a time when you honor the feelings of missing your loved one while engaging in those opportunities that feel right and allow for positive experiences to fill your cup. ✨

*Laura Hastings is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in the Bay Area. She has a private practice in which she supports people with grief, depression, anxiety, relationship issues, work-life balance and transitions.*

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## FEAST IN THE MIDDLE EAST



### LOVING THE LEFTOVERS:

## *Transform day-after turkey into a hearty chili*

BY BLANCHE SHAHEEN

**W**hile people love feasting on the traditional dishes of Thanksgiving, mounds of leftover turkey can end up in solitary confinement in the corner of the refrigerator. Many find leftover turkey breast in particular to be painfully dry, like insulation foam, certainly not enticing to the palate. While leftovers may not be the most glamorous of foods, repurposing higher-priced protein like turkey is worth the effort.

With just a little bit of creativity, you can transform leftover turkey into delicious meals that can also save you time and money during this busy season.

There are several tricks and tools you can use to add both moisture and flavor to invigorate leftovers.

For one, salt, pepper, herbs and spices are essential. Regardless of whether the turkey was salted before, oftentimes the flavor has faded by day two or three. A shake of oregano, a dash of cumin or a sprinkle of fresh cilantro can go a long way in adding smoky, earthy and fresh flavors. In addition to salt, pepper and spice, aromatics such as garlic and onions add depth of flavor and moisture.

Other ways to add moisture to dry meats include using meat or vegetable broths, lime or lemon juice, salsa or even



marinara sauce. More intense sauces such as tabasco, soy sauce or teriyaki also come in handy, depending on the cultural theme of your dish.

A topping of dairy can go a long way in adding some sorely needed richness to leftovers. A dollop of sour cream or crème fraîche, a grating of parmesan or a sprinkle of cheddar or gouda can add that needed creaminess often lacking in lower-fat proteins like turkey breast.

Adding crunchy toppings to your renovated dishes can enhance your post-Thanksgiving dining experience. Think crushed tortilla chips, nuts and seeds, fried onions or shallots, croutons or wonton strips to excite your taste buds.

The following turkey chili recipe applies many of these tools to create a dish you can enjoy all week long. The chili is loaded with sweet peppers and onions, smoky fire-roasted tomatoes and paprika, then rounded out with earthy cumin and chili powder. The turkey becomes soft and makes a fine replacement for ground meat when chopped and simmered in an aromatic

broth accented with garlic and onions. While the recipe calls for pinto beans, you can use whatever beans you wish.

This dish is an economical way to feed a lot of people. To feed even more people using the same amount of protein, simply use two cans of tomatoes instead of one, and double the amount of spices.

You can create a chili bar by lining up toppings such as grated cheddar, lime juice, chopped cilantro and scallions, sour cream, pepitas, Tapatio sauce and avocado so that everyone can customize their own bowl. >



PHOTO COURTESY OF BLANCHE SHAHEEN. A hot bowl of turkey chili is a seasonal delight.

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# Turkey Chili

- 1 red pepper, chopped
- 1 jalapeno, chopped
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 can chopped tomatoes (*fire roasted even better*)
- 1 can pinto beans (or black beans)
- 1-2 teaspoons cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon oregano
- 1 teaspoon chile powder (*more if you like it spicy*)
- 1 teaspoon allulose or sugar
- Salt to taste
- Dash lemon pepper
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 1/2 cups cooked turkey meat, chopped

Saute red pepper, jalapeno, onion and garlic in olive oil until soft.

Add rest of ingredients (tomatoes through turkey) and bring to boil, then reduce heat and simmer one hour.

Add toppings as desired.



Screenshots from Blanche Shaheen's YouTube video tutorial ([tinyurl.com/BlancheTurkeyChili](https://tinyurl.com/BlancheTurkeyChili)) show her turkey chili in progress.

*Blanche Shaheen is a journalist, host of the YouTube cooking show "Feast in the Middle East" and cookbook author.*

*For more recipes, purchase her cookbook "Feast in the Middle East: A Personal Journey of Family and Cuisine" at [FeastInTheMiddleEast.com](http://FeastInTheMiddleEast.com). To view her cooking video tutorials, follow her on YouTube at [youtube.com/user/BlancheTV](https://youtube.com/user/BlancheTV).*



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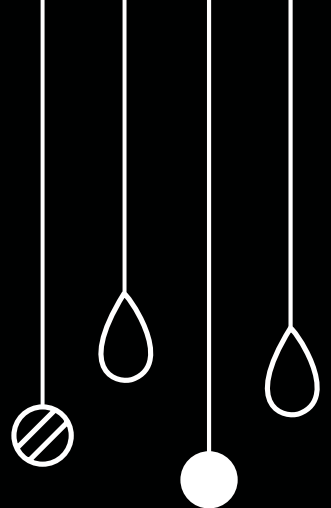
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# Holiday happenings

A host of **EVENTS** are on the horizon

The holidays are near, and so are the many related celebrations coming to the Los Altos area. A list of local holiday activities, performances and events follows.

NOV.  
**19**  
(Giving Thanks)

DEC.  
**10**  
(Winter Wonderland)



## Family Fun Days

Los Altos Community Center  
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Los Altos Parks and Recreation division partners with the Los Altos Library to host holiday-themed games, crafts, movies and read-alouds for local families. Admission is free.

For more information, visit [tinyurl.com/yc4393dt](https://tinyurl.com/yc4393dt).

NOV.  
**25-27**  
—  
DEC.  
**9-11**



## 'The Nutcracker'

Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts

For their annual holiday production, local ballet schools Pacific Ballet Academy and Western Ballet both perform "The Nutcracker."

### Pacific Ballet Academy:

Nov. 25, 6 p.m.  
Nov. 26, 1 & 6 p.m.  
Nov. 27, noon (act one children's show)  
Nov. 27, 2 p.m. (act two sensory-friendly show)

### Western Ballet:

Dec. 9, 7 p.m.  
Dec. 10, 1 & 7 p.m.  
Dec. 11, 1 p.m.

Tickets are \$30-\$43.

For more information, visit [pacificballet.org](https://pacificballet.org) or [westernballet.org](https://westernballet.org).

NOV.  
—  
27



### Festival of Lights Parade

Downtown Los Altos  
6-8 p.m.

A long-standing tradition, the Festival of Lights Parade features seasonal floats, decorations, live music and costumed characters. Staged for children and adults alike, the parade draws large crowds to downtown Los Altos. Admission is free.

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

NOV.  
—  
30  
through  
DEC.  
—  
24



### ‘Little Shop of Horrors’

Lucie Stern Theatre,  
Palo Alto

TheatreWorks brings horror to the holidays with its production of “Little Shop of Horrors.” The show will be available to watch with audio descriptions, open captioning, ASL interpretation and assistive listening devices; sensory-friendly performances are planned.

For tickets, times and more information, visit [tinyurl.com/bde9aub2](http://tinyurl.com/bde9aub2).

DEC.  
—  
01



### Holiday Tree Lighting

Veterans Community Plaza, Los Altos  
6-8 p.m.

The annual Los Altos Holiday Tree Lighting ceremony starts the festivities, then come performances of holiday classics from local choral groups, followed by a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus at 6:30 p.m. Admission is free.

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

DEC.  
—  
1, 2,  
3, 5



### ‘The Christmas Ballet’

Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts  
Dec. 1, 7:30 p.m.; Dec. 2, 7:30 p.m.; Dec 3, 2 and 7:30 p.m.;  
Dec. 5, 2 p.m.

Smuin Contemporary Ballet stages its two-act performance of “The Christmas Ballet,” featuring classical and contemporary dances set to holiday music. Tickets start at \$59, with discounts available for students.

For tickets, times and more information, visit [tinyurl.com/36befzs](http://tinyurl.com/36befzs).

DEC.  
—  
04



### Holiday Barn Lighting

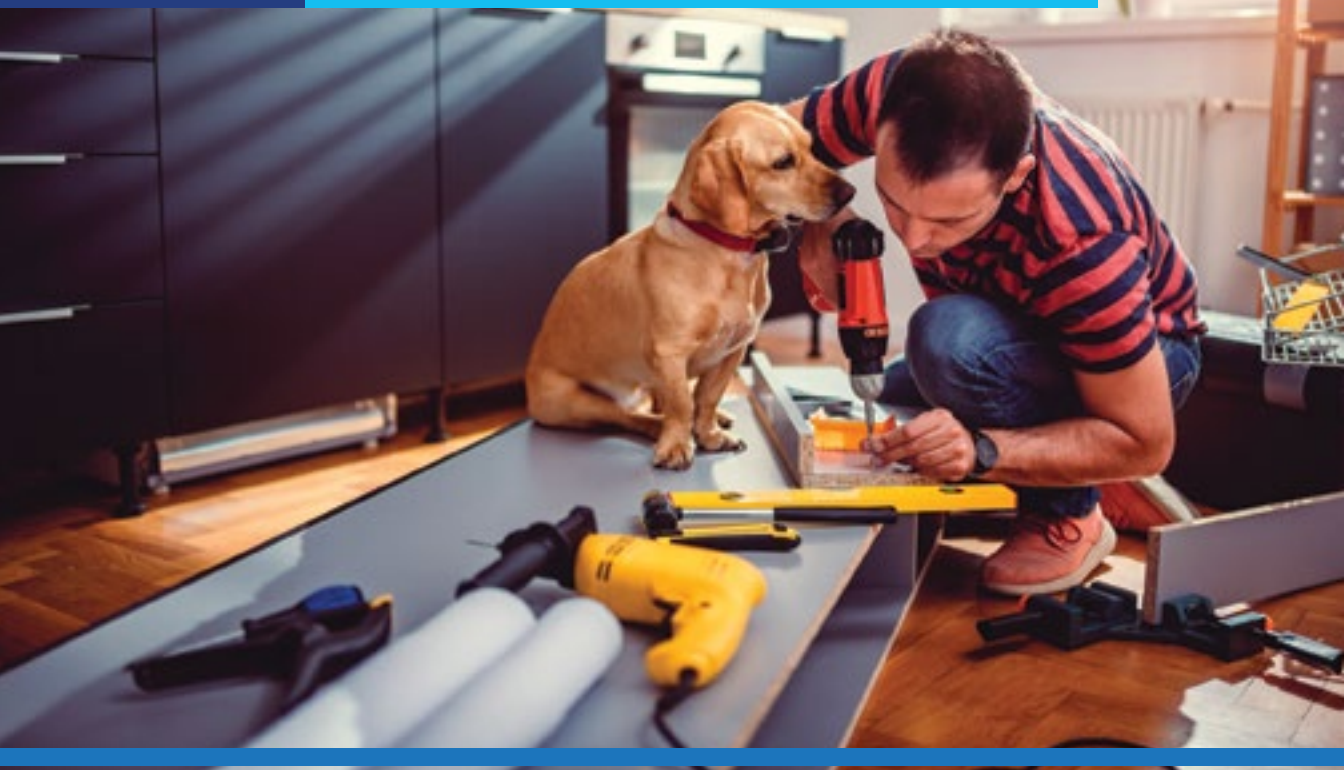
Westwind Community Barn, Los Altos Hills  
2-5 p.m.

Westwind Community Barn hosts a family-friendly afternoon featuring holiday games, crafts, face painting, pony rides and a petting zoo. Following an appearance by Santa, the countdown to light up the barn begins at 5 p.m. Admission is free.

For more information, visit [tinyurl.com/mrx72dzw](http://tinyurl.com/mrx72dzw).



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DEC.  
08  
—  
DEC.  
15



**Holiday Market**

Downtown Los Altos  
4-8 p.m.

The Los Altos Village Association hosts a holiday-themed shopping event in downtown Los Altos with live music and seasonal decor. Food and drinks will be provided by local farmers’ market vendors. Admission is free.

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

DEC.  
10



**Pictures with Santa**

Enchanté Boutique Hotel, Los Altos  
2-4 p.m.

Santa stops in downtown Los Altos to take selfies with kids of all ages at an event organized by the Los Altos Village Association. Admission is free.

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

DEC.  
15



**‘Chanticleer Christmas’**

Memorial Church, Stanford University  
7:30 p.m.

San Francisco men’s chorus Chanticleer presents its annual “Chanticleer Christmas,” featuring classical, jazz and popular holiday carols. Tickets start at \$72, with discounts available for children and Stanford students and employees.

For tickets and more information, visit [live.stanford.edu/calendar](http://live.stanford.edu/calendar).

DEC.  
16  
17  
18



**‘Snow Queen’**

Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts  
Dec. 16, 7 p.m.; Dec. 17, 6:30 p.m.; Dec. 18, 3 p.m.

Local dance academy Bayer Ballet stages its annual production of “The Snow Queen.” The ballet is a two-hour performance about Gerda’s journey to save her brother. The production is appropriate for all ages. Tickets start at \$38.

For tickets and more information, visit [bayerballet.com](http://bayerballet.com).

DEC.  
20



**Caroling in the Hills**

Los Altos Hills Town Hall Council Chambers  
7:30-9 p.m.

Bringing the holiday spirit to Los Altos Hills neighborhoods, carolers will meet at town hall before setting out for caroling on the nearby pathways. Food and drinks will be served; warm clothes are recommended. Participation is free.

For more information, call Scott Vanderlip at (650) 793-0475 or email [scott@inet-sciences.com](mailto:scott@inet-sciences.com).





New Year’s Hike/Walk

Los Altos Hills  
1 p.m.

The Los Altos Hills Pathways Committee hosts its annual New Year’s Hike/Walk, exploring off-road routes through the Los Altos Hills area. While paths of varied length and difficulty are offered, strollers are not recommended due to the steep terrain. Participation is free and open to all ages. For more information, visit [losaltoshills.ca.gov](http://losaltoshills.ca.gov).

COMPILED BY ANNABELLE EATON

Holiday happenings

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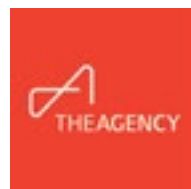
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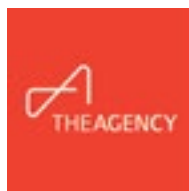
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# WINE TIME

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BRANDPOINT

**T**he idea – and reality – of choosing organic has come a long way since the movement's early days in the U.S. Decades on, a dizzying array of organic products line grocery shelves across the country. But what about organics beyond the ubiquity of the produce aisle?

Today, eco-conscious consumers are considering the ingredients and environmental impacts behind just about everything added to the proverbial cart. From clothing and beauty products to home decor and wine, organic practices deliver a one-

two punch of health benefits (skip the pesticides, please) and earth advocacy (combat climate change while you're at it).

A change in seasons can be the ideal time to assess your organic game and make small swaps that can have a big impact. Choosing organic doesn't mean overhauling every corner of your life. It means taking simple steps that matter to you.

For more sustainable fashion, think organic fabrics, natural dyes and brands that reduce their water use. Redesigning an interior space? Opt

for furniture made from reclaimed wood and organic textiles. And when it's time to pick your Tuesday night wine, reach for a bottle made from organically grown grapes.

### ORGANICALLY FARMED WINE

The modern foil to any eco-minded meal is a bottle of organically farmed wine. Producers of organic wine now span the globe, growing grapes in a way that nourishes the soil and keeps pesticides out of the swirl-and-sip ritual. From the rolling hills of California to the edge-of-the-earth ➤

*Organic wines are growing in popularity and can be an eco-friendly option for the holiday table.*





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terrain of Chile, here are two organic labels that deliver on crafting exceptional flavor and restoring delicate ecosystems.

- *Bonterra Organic Estates*. It's been 35 years since Bonterra began farming organically in Mendocino County, and today the winery is on the leading edge of the regenerative organic farming movement. By nurturing biodiversity and soil health throughout its Regenerative Organic Certified estate vineyards, Bonterra is combating climate change one vine at a time.



With notes of bright citrus and green-apple leaping from the glass, Bonterra's 2021 Chardonnay is framed by heady aromas of flower blossom, pear and spice. This well-balanced, organically farmed Chardonnay lingers with a hint of toasted vanilla on the rich and creamy finish.

The delightfully fizzy Bonterra Bubbles Rosé comes in a recyclable can, has no artificial additives and is made from 100% organic grapes. Crisp and effervescent, the wine ➤

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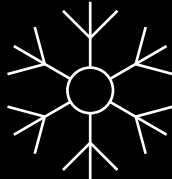
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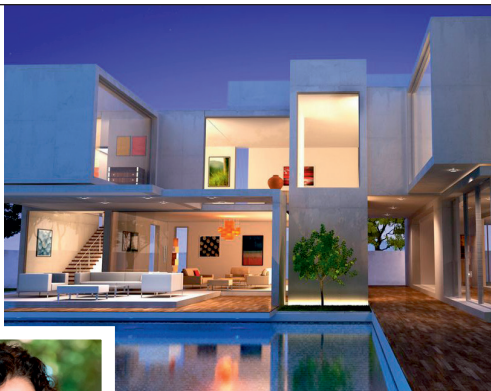


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sings with lively aromas of raspberry, strawberry and watermelon, layered over a palate of refreshing rosewater and lime zest.

• **Cono Sur Vineyards & Winery.** A winery with deep roots in organic farming, Cono Sur has 12 certified sustainable vineyards throughout Chile, including organically farmed sites in the San Antonio and Colchagua valleys. The winery's Organico collection epitomizes organic practices with certified vegan and organic wine, wrapped in a label made from recycled paper.

The Cono Sur Organico 2021 Sauvignon Blanc is an aromatic burst of grapefruit, lime and white flowers, setting the stage for a zesty wine with bright acidity and clean minerality. The organically farmed wine was aged in stainless-steel tanks to amplify its inherently fresh character.

Cono Sur Organico's bright and lively 2021 Pinot Noir features organically grown grapes harvested by hand to preserve the varietal's delicate fruit flavors. An intensely aromatic nose delivers rich notes of cherry and raspberry, underscored by a subtle suggestion of toasted oak.

When it comes to choosing organic, no step is too small – and no glass of organically farmed wine should go unsipped. ✨

*For more information, visit  
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# CHRISTMAS CREATIVITY

## Make Homemade Wrap For Holiday & Hostess Gifts

BY MARY LARSEN

STAFF WRITER | MARYL@LATC.COM

While one can wrap a gift using a store-bought roll of decorative paper or a gift bag, it's more personal and eco-friendly to go the homemade route.

A simple but beautiful custom presentation using a few items found around the house – or neighborhood – makes the occasion even more fun and festive.

### BRINGING THE OUTDOORS IN

For the natural look, start scouting out materials during walks. Gather a nice assortment of greenery (for example, evergreens, colorful dried leaves or pine cones) to choose from.

Create a paper band (tape or staple it closed on the back) and top it with selected pieces from your collection.

Tie twine or raffia around the top of a bottle of wine and tuck in a few

sprigs of redwood or other local evergreen – you might even tie on a pine cone or two.

### COLLAGE

Many people receive packets of holiday cards from various charities, or have leftovers from previous years – these can become beautiful decorations on gifts. Simply cut out designs from unused or recycled holiday cards and paste on a plain bag or box with glue-stick or other adhesive. ➤

*A creative (and generous) friend wrapped a gift of homegrown potatoes, rosemary and chrysanthemums in a box decorated with a fall-themed napkin and a scrap of rope.*



# Gretchen Swall

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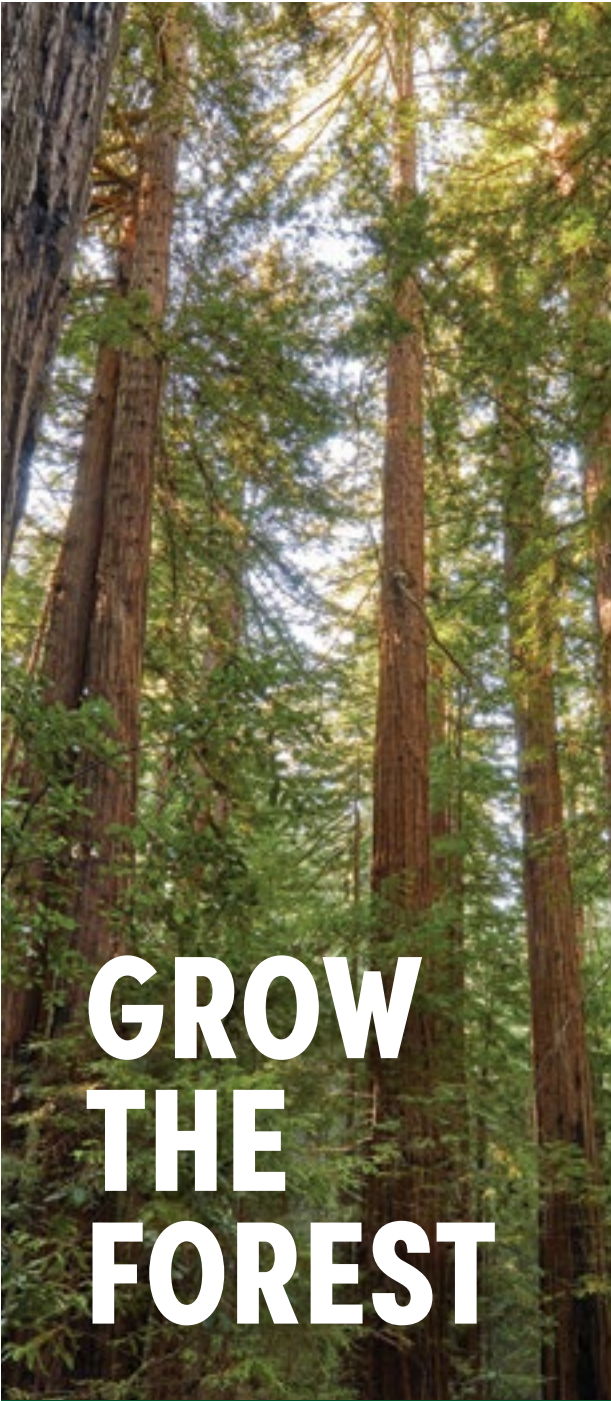
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## STAMPING AND PAINTING

Remember those childhood potato-stamping projects? Why not try them again?

“Easy-carve” rubber-stamping material is also readily available (if short on vegetables).

Cut a potato in half or into thick slices. Free-carve with a knife (be careful!), or press a small cookie cutter into the cut potato and cut around it. Paint onto the design and stamp away on kraft paper, paper grocery bags or plain boxes.

For the artistic types, paint whatever pleases – holiday designs or abstract – directly on your package.



*Creating simple stamps from potatoes is a fun project for all ages.*

## BRIGHT AND SHINY

Tie a shiny ornament or two onto your bow.

Is there a box of old, tangled Christmas lights in your garage? If they're beyond repair, cut off a piece of them to circle around your gift box. Tape together on the bottom of the box. ❄️







# Los Altos Town Crier

## *Holiday Fund 2022*

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 \$3.8 million since its inception. The money has been distributed to local charities that tirelessly make a difference for families in our community with special needs, addressing education, literacy, social issues, drug abuse and general well-being.

### **DONATE NOW!**

Each year about 400 local donors support the Fund. All contributions are tax deductible through our fiscal partner, the LAMV Community Foundation. Contribute by phone with a credit card at (650) 949-5908, online at [www.losaltoscf.org/latc-holiday-fund](http://www.losaltoscf.org/latc-holiday-fund) or by mailing a check made out to LAMV Community Foundation, with "LATCHF" on the memo line. Mail to LAMV Community Foundation, 183 Hillview Ave. Los Altos, CA 94022.

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

### **HOLIDAY FUND RECIPIENTS**

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CHAC (Community Health  
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Community School of Music and  
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Help One Child

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MVLA Scholars

Sky's The Limit Fund

Veterans Resource Center  
at Foothill College

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# Illuminating the town

*The light is back on:  
Downtown holiday parade set for Nov. 27*

BY BRUCE BARTON  
STAFF WRITER | [bruceb@latc.com](mailto:bruceb@latc.com)

**T**he Los Altos Festival of Lights Parade is scheduled to return 6 p.m. Nov. 27.

The parade, a holiday tradition since 1977, features the theme “A child’s holiday fantasy.”

Organized by a small group of volunteers, the 45th event will feature a promenade of 24 illuminated floats, eight marching bands and assorted costumed characters moving down State Street, up Main Street and onto First Street and part of Whitney Street, all in under an hour.

Approximately 1,200 people participated in the 2021 parade, according to members of the Festival of Lights Parade Association.

Some new elements are incorporated in this year’s parade, including a “Wizard of Oz Emerald City” float.

The parade will be televised live on Comcast station channel 15.

Association members urge parade-goers to adhere to viewing guidelines that appear on the Los Altos Festival of Lights Parade Association website at [losaltosparade.org/viewing-guidelines](http://losaltosparade.org/viewing-guidelines). Specifically, police caution against setting up chairs and blankets in crosswalks before streets are closed. The city’s maintenance department discourages use of tape to mark spaces.

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







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Here's to a wonderful 2023!

*The Town Crier Staff*

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