



ALTADENA HERITAGE NEWSLETTER

Parks and Rec: What Altadena Wants

By Michele Zack, meeting facilitator

Before asking voters to approve a new bond measure for parks (the previous Prop A funding mechanism is about to sunset), Los Angeles County leaders decided to survey all existing parks and recreation infrastructure and conditions, share this data with individual communities, and then ask residents what specific recreation-oriented projects they feel the county should pursue. This approach was decided upon after a hastily thrown-together proposition, Measure P, failed to gain approval in 2014. When asked to tax themselves to pay for ill-defined park benefits, voters answered with a firm “No, thank you.”

Altadena Heritage was pleased to be asked to conduct one of 150 public “Parks Assessment” meetings held in cities and unincorporated communities like Altadena all around the county. At the top of our agenda was sharing Altadena’s survey results and related demographic information. The survey quantifies what we have — parks, baseball diamonds, swimming pools, trails, playgrounds, etc. — and how we compare to county averages and other communities. Maps were generated to show where parks are most needed based on population density, proximity, and acres of parks already provided. The survey, including Altadena-specific information on topics from air quality to primary language used at home, is online at LACountyparkneeds.org and is very interesting.



Photos: Lori Paul

The second, more exciting task of the evening was to generate and prioritize a list of 10 projects Altadenans want. Citizen-generated priorities will be included in a report submitted to the Board of Supervisors May 3rd. It will guide planning and future funding measures on the ballot as soon as November 2016; the hope is that when projects come from within communities, voters will say yes.

We spread the word about the January 21st meeting: it was publicized in Altadena Heritage’s Newsletter (mailed to 500) and we printed 1,000 extras to distribute at parks, the library, Community Center, schools, and spots like the Coffee Gallery and El Patron. Stories appeared in digital media and we reached out to the Town Council, NAACP, Neighbors Building a Better Altadena, Chamber of



Commerce, Arroyos and Foothills Conservancy, and Altadena Historical Society so they could inform their members.

Our meeting at the Altadena Community Center was lively. Sixty-five residents with deep experience and strong feelings about Altadena’s recreational offerings engaged in the process, voicing opinions and stating

priorities. One park rec staff member arrived with a passel of teenagers who lobbied for a teen center. A couple of trail activists set up a table with educational materials. Moms with young children and other park users, equestrians, hikers, bikers, Little Leaguers, and dog owners all expressed themselves. Everyone remained civil, and everyone received 10 dots, each a vote, to place on project sheets we generated that evening and posted on walls.

It is impossible to come up with a completely thoughtful and comprehensive list of the most important priorities for Altadena parks based solely on a two-hour public meeting. And some ideas we came up with did not exactly fit into L.A. County’s definitions of allowable projects. Yet, overall, it was a valuable exercise with meaningful results.

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Upcoming Events



May 22 - Golden Poppy
Garden Awards and Celebration
3-6 pm, 562 E. Mendocino Street



June 4 - Public Hearing
Proposed changes to Altadena CSD.
Time and venue to be announced.



August 20 - AltaDitty
An evening of original Altadena songs
7 pm, location to be announced

Letter from the Chair

It's my great pleasure to assume the chair of Altadena Heritage's Board of Directors this year. I believe I'm the 11th person to do so since AH incorporated in 1988. My first order of business must be to thank those who came before me and, most especially, Michele Zack for all the work she's given this organization for many years, including the last two as chair and the current year as my mentor and co-chair of the Membership Committee with new board member Judy Rubin.

It's been a busy year already. At our first Third Thursday event, January 21, we led a program sponsored by Los Angeles County to assess current park needs and suggest capital improvements for future development. The County currently maintains three public parks in Altadena: Loma Alta, Farnsworth, and Charles White, as well as the Altadena golf course. This newsletter's focus on parks and recreation grew out of that event.

In February, we were part of a coalition that met with County Supervisor Mike Antonovich to discuss the Charles Company's plans for development on Lake Avenue, just south of Calaveras. The so-called White Paper Coalition (WPC) was spearheaded by Neighbors Building a Better Altadena (NBBA), which sponsors a Walkability Project to make our community more pedestrian friendly. NBBA drafted a white paper, "Historic Corner :: Historic Choices," delineating five ways in which the Charles Company's development plan violated both the letter and spirit of the Altadena Community Standards District (CSD) guidelines. We were signatories the white paper, along with the Altadena Chamber of Commerce, Altadena Historical Society, Eliot Arts Magnet Middle School PTA, and School Site Council. As a result of community pressure, the Charles Company made some changes to the original plan, but the WPC felt the changes still fell short of our CSD guidelines. We requested and were granted a meeting with the Supervisor, his field representative for Altadena, Sussy Nemer, and

representatives from the Planning Department. The Supervisor spent nearly an hour with us. The County planners maintained that the revised plan met CSD guidelines and that the development could proceed on a by-right basis.

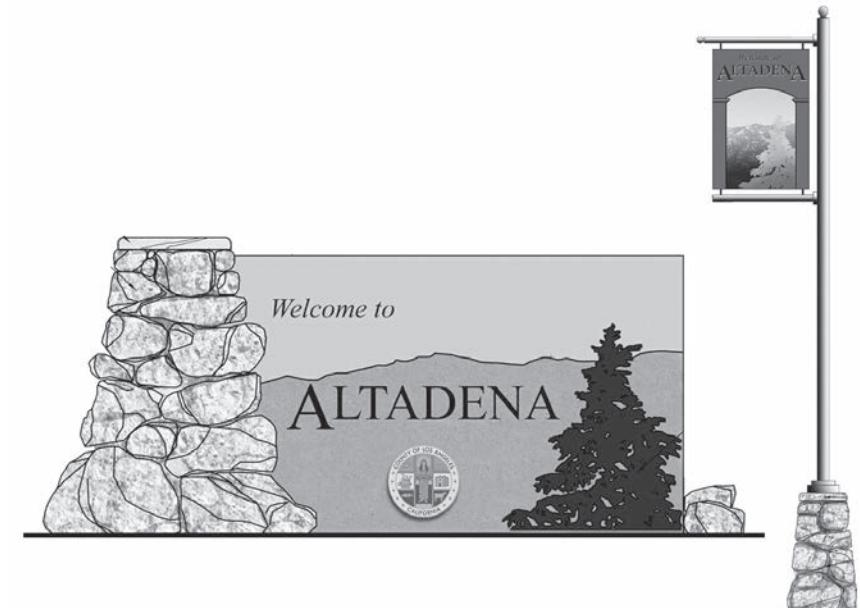
At the time of the meeting, construction was on hold due to violations in the permitting process. Although the improvements we have been able to effect so far fall far short of what we'd like to see across the street from the old Pacific Electric Railway substation and the architecturally stunning Eliot Middle School, the meeting was cordial and helped call attention to the current CSD revision, which was developed to define community standards more precisely. Aldi, a European-based bulk grocer, is still expected to assume occupancy of the building when it is completed.

On March 17, our Preservation Committee chair, Bill Ellinger, hosted three speakers to discuss the County's new Historic Preservation Ordinance, which was signed into law last October, and the Mills Act Program, which grants property tax reductions to certain qualified historical properties. Tim Gregory, AH's first chair, was one of the speakers, along with Phillip Estes, a Principal Regional Planner with the County, and Kevin Johnson, a Senior Planner for Pasadena's Design & Historic Preservation Department.

For April, our Sustainability Committee chair, Michiko Lynch, organized a workshop with two speakers on the topic of "Zero Waste." And May 22 will be our annual Garden Party at which we present the Golden Poppy Awards for gardens that present to the streets of our beautiful community here in the San Gabriel Mountains foothills. I hope to see all of you there!

Meanwhile, you can keep up with us on Facebook and our website at www.altadenaheritage.org.

— Linda World



Welcome to Altadena

Here are artist renderings of new "placemaking" signage created for Altadena by L.A. County with advisory committee direction from Altadena Heritage, the Altadena Town Council and the Altadena Chamber of Commerce.

The larger monuments will be placed on New York Drive just east of Altadena Drive, on Woodbury Road west of Windsor, and in the soon-to-be-redesigned Altadena Triangle Park on the corner of Lake Avenue and Altadena Drive. Pole signs will designate entry points from the south, including Lincoln, Fair Oaks, Lake and Allen Avenues, and Altadena Drive.

Altadena Triangle Park

A few years back, redesigning the little park behind El Patron Restaurant at the corner of Lake Avenue and Altadena Drive came up as a possible Altadena Heritage project. The idea is to make the park's sloping site a more usable and friendly public space, and to help create a "core" for Altadena around our Community Center, Sheriff's Station, and Fire Station.

This idea sat until last year, when we approached Amigos de los Rios, a nonprofit with experience working with Los Angeles County in building parks, about partnering on it. The Amigos office is across the street from the park, yet the group had never done a project in Altadena.

Amigos' primary focus has been on underserved areas of Southern California via a long-term project known as the Emerald Necklace, a regional park network of new or restored little parks from the San Gabriels all the way out to Catalina Island. Most of Amigos' projects have been in blighted urban river spaces that, with love and attention, have become oases of native planting, water retention, recreation, and community. Altadena's location at the top of the necklace could make it the clasp! (For more information, visit amigosdelosrios.org.)

Amigos and Altadena Heritage entered an agreement, and, encouraged by Supervisor Antonovich's Chief Field Deputy Sussy Nemer, Amigos obtained a Proposition A (Safe Neighborhood Parks Act) grant to make improvements. These

include creating some flat terraced areas, pathways, and arroyo stone water retention swales, landscaping with drought-tolerant plants, and adding seating and handicap access. The large Torrey Island pines will be retained, as will the park's existing monuments. Signage (including one of Altadena's new monument signs; see page 2 story) and interpretive markers will focus on Altadena's history and location at the foot of the San Gabriel Mountains and add a new "placemaking" dimension to the site.

About \$50,000 of the project's total budget is donated in-kind work from our two organizations. Amigos' Executive Director (and Altadenan) Claire Robinson is project manager; Amigos is also contributing administrative and design work. Former Altadena Heritage chair Mark Goldschmidt is providing design expertise, and Michele Zack, AH Board member, is consulting pro bono on the public history aspect of the park, now known as Altadena Triangle Park (it didn't have an official name before). Altadena Heritage will also be responsible for public outreach as construction begins this summer. Both organizations will form a Friends-of-the-Park group and contribute volunteers to help with planting.

Look for more information on the park in our next newsletter, and please contact altadenaheritage.org if you would like to help.

ACTRWG: Trail Advocates

Hiking the trails of the San Gabriels above Altadena was hugely popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Until the 1970s it was possible to hike or ride from the Arroyo Seco to Eaton Canyon – a distance of about 13 miles – on the Altadena Crest Trail (ACT) established way back in the day.

However, hiking fell out of favor after the Depression and World War II when residential development began stretching uphill and many trails were abandoned and built over. It is no longer possible to make the trek without resorting to paved streets in several places.

Well, hiking has made a comeback, and in a big way, along with horseback riding and, now, mountain biking. The trails are in use every day for exercise, nature worship, and general enjoyment. Some use segments of the ACT commuting to work.

Back in 2000, a group of hikers and equestrians — most of them members of the Altadena Foothills Conservancy (AFC, since renamed the Arroyos and Foothills Conservancy) — got together to work on realizing their dream to make the trail above Altadena whole again. In 2003, they formed a separate organization they christened the Altadena Crest Trails Restoration Working Group (generally referred to as ACTRWG, pronounced acer-wig), and were chartered by the County to investigate how the Crest Trail could be reconnected. After all, there were only a few gaps. But members had a vision beyond just reopening the one trail; they saw an opportunity to connect a whole network of trails: the Gabrieleno, Flintridge, Arroyo Seco, and Altadena Crest trails all come together in Hahamongna, just south of JPL.

The Working Group has been meeting regularly ever since, and not only on the connectivity problem, which is stymied in a few places by landowners who are not interested in allowing the free passage of the past. ACTRWG also advocates for trails, and trail users; interfaces with the L.A. County Parks department, the U.S. Forest Service, and other stakeholders such as bicycling clubs and equestrians; lobbies for Altadena's trails; and keeps a vigilant eye out for encroachment attempts.

Still, it is dispiriting that after 13 years the Altadena Crest Trail remains fragmented, although current chairman Robert Staehle sees hopeful signs: a couple of gaps may soon be bridged, the County is taking a more active interest, trail use is up, and volunteer groups have taken on much of the burden of maintaining the trails.

Asked what he sees for the future, Staehle says he thinks a possible breakthrough is on the horizon, particularly with such great support from Altadenans in making restoration of the trail the community's top recreation priority. What the organization needs most is an infusion of new blood, energy and ideas for a determined push to make a fully connected Altadena Crest Trail a reality once again. Staehle suggests re-forming ACTRWG into a more active entity, preferably as a registered nonprofit corporation patterned after the La Cañada Flintridge Trails Council. Then the Altadena Crest Trail can resume its prior status as the backbone of a trail system linking such places as Owen Brown's grave site, the Dawn Mine, and the Mount Lowe Railway in Rubio Canyon, all interconnected by segments with sun and shade, diverse flora and fauna, and panoramic views of city and ocean.

Meeting announcements and the Working Group's activities can be viewed at www.altadenatrails.org.

Mountain and Town Trails Both Lead to a Healthy Community

By Michele Zack

A compelling theme emerged from the January 21st community Parks and Rec meeting: Altadenans like trails! As its facilitator, I found the most surprising aspect of the evening to be the broad support for such projects — even among those who came primarily to promote baseball diamonds, heated pools, a teen center, or a dog sports field. (*See front page story.*)

Three of the top six vote-getting projects had to do with trails for hiking and walking — possibly with your dog! — as well as running, biking, and horse-riding. Trails are linear parks that take us outdoors, sometimes into the mountains. They create space for inexpensive, convenient exercise that doesn't demand a strict schedule, special outfit, gym or team membership.

Since the Great Era of Hiking (1890-1940), trails are a natural fit with Altadena — on everyone's list of what they love most about this place is its setting beneath the beautiful San Gabriels. While simply gazing at these mountains satisfies many, lots of us make use of nearby mountain trails for recreation and exercise.

Mountain trails take a little getting to and not everyone deals well with their grade and uneven surfaces. Perhaps it is time to make it more convenient for more people to keep fit simply by walking, running, or riding around town.

As someone who regularly hikes in the mountains and walks in central Altadena, I have observed that both activities are more popular than ever. The number of neighborhood walkers has doubled in the past 10 years, and it's become a more diverse group of mostly middle-aged and older people. I noticed this even before MonteCedro residents began taking to nearby streets for exercise. This is a healthy trend to be encouraged!

Unlike the two trail projects that made our "Top 10" priority list (*See page 5 story.*), one trail project, our number-three vote-getter, failed to make the cut although it has potential to benefit the most Altadenans of all. An urban trail system/in-town exercise loop that connects local parks to regional ones such as Eaton Canyon Nature Center and Hahamongna



N Lake Ave has room for a trail to Farnsworth Park & Cobb estate.

Watershed Park was bumped by Parks Department staff to number 11 in their final report to the County. This was not due to an evil conspiracy, but because the project seemed too big, too out of the box, and too ill-defined. Prioritizing in this exercise stressed feasibility: the County is looking for projects with clear parameters to which hard numbers may be attached.

However, that doesn't decrease the appeal of having a safe and pleasant in-town trail, with at least some separation from traffic for pedestrians, bikers, and equestrians. Such a trail would also make driving around Altadena less nerve-wracking, as it would decrease the need to avoid people recreating in the streets.

Not making it into the "Top 10" is not a good reason to give up on this great idea. The main purpose of this community meeting was to brainstorm about what Altadena wants in its recreation future — and indeed an aspiration revealed itself that evening, something a majority actually agreed upon! Perhaps we can work together to make it happen.

A drive around town reveals many existing possibilities that might form the nuclei of a system that eventually connects to parks and, possibly, mountain trailheads. Imagine if 10 years from now a completed Altadena Crest Trail were mirrored by an Altadena Town Trail!

Ideally, it would enjoy some separation from the street and be made of permeable material such as decomposed granite. Hard and fast rules and too much expensive infrastructure might not be the way to go, though. We might do better following the "Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper" model to graft onto and connect existing town trails into a single more comprehensive multi-use one in phases over a few years.

We'd like to encourage people to begin thinking about routes that could work. While it can be difficult to imagine something that doesn't exist, it is equally important to realize that many communities have already created just such amenities for themselves. Why not Altadena?



The most popular nearby urban trail circles the Rose Bowl.

For inspiration, you don't have to go far to see what is probably the most popular and sociable urban trail around: the one at the Rose Bowl used by walkers, runners, and bikers. It doesn't have a barrier from traffic other than a fat painted line and is paved with asphalt, yet its intense use makes the strongest argument for how determined people are to find and adapt in-town places to exercise. Those who attended our "Trails of Two Cities Program" a few years ago will remember that neighboring La Canada Flintridge Trails Council worked



Mariposa Street from El Molino to Marengo Avenue offers an existing urban trail.

Continued from Front Page - Parks & Rec.

The top 10 projects, each followed by number of votes it received, follows:

1. Restore the Altadena Crest Trail from Hahamonga to Eaton Canyon. (66)
2. Add a teen center to Charles White or Farnsworth Park. (55)
3. Establish an urban trail system/loop for exercise and to connect local to regional parks. (39) (see story page 4)
4. Create a dog sports field for obedience and agility training and as a place to hold dog shows. (36)
5. Add heating to Loma Alta pool for year-round swimming. (32)
6. Establish a multi-community trail hub through "place-making" signage at Hahamonga to connect Altadena trails to those further up the Arroyo Seco, in La Cañada Flintridge, and in Pasadena. (31)
7. Create a free-play dog park. (27)
8. Upgrade the rec building at Charles White Park to include a kitchen, dog drinking fountain and art room. (23)
9. Make improvements and repairs at Farnsworth Park. (19)
10. Add batting cages at to baseball diamonds at Farnsworth and Loma Alta Parks. (19)

For the complete report submitted to the county (including projects that didn't make the Top 10, visit altadenaheritage.org.)

long and hard to complete its Cross Town trail through backyards and across washes.

Existing Altadena features like views of the mountains, open space, interesting buildings, and pleasant neighborhoods may create the most feasible place of all for us to stretch our legs.

If you are interested in forming a committee to look into how to create an urban trail system in Altadena, please contact us at altadenaheritage@earthlink.net.



Santa Rosa between Mariposa Street and Altadena Drive has existing footpath separated from the street.

County staff further rationalized our list into 10 feasible projects that fit within the definitions provided. These are listed on the LACountyparkneeds.org website as part of a final report Board of Supervisors. We hope planners will not dismiss projects out of hand because they do not exactly fit the boxes created for us. It is significant that half of the top six vote-getting projects supported by Altadenans were not parks (unless trails are considered linear parks) for walking, running, biking, and riding. These projects are about creating pleasant, informal, safe places for healthy exercise. They connect us with nature and our adjacent mountains and received a total of 136 votes!

Another significant interest is for places to recreate with dogs; two projects of this type received a combined 63 votes. A total of 75 votes targeted the use of county-owned land adjacent to Farnsworth Park for this or another purpose.

Park metrics and community profile maps clearly indicate that of our three main parks, Charles White has the greatest surrounding population density, and people living nearby make up our most underserved population. Participants recognized this by casting 130 votes for improvements that would benefit this park. Although some of these (including a teen center, lighting, ADA compliance, splash pads) weren't specified exclusively for Charles White, this is Altadena's neediest park by every measure, and we hope planners will take this into account in prioritizing projects, budgets, and schedules.

Altadena Heritage Presents “Historic Preservation 101”

By Bill Ellinger, Preservation Committee Chair

What was a faint dream and distant hope for Altadena Heritage founders in 1985 recently came to fruition. Consequently, our March 17 “Third Thursday” event was something of a celebration of the Los Angeles County Historic Preservation Ordinance and the Mills Act programs, both recently adopted to benefit unincorporated areas like Altadena.

A robust audience full of questions signified great interest in the subjects covered by panelists, which included both Altadena Heritage’s origins and the new preservation mechanisms available in unincorporated areas of the County.

Tim Gregory, founding AH Board member and first Chairman, spoke of the destruction of many historic buildings — and threats to more — that spurred the formation of Altadena Heritage 30 years ago. The new organization initiated a communitywide historic resources survey, which identified our town’s unusual concentration of significant structures. This became the basis of Altadena Heritage’s Architectural Database. Long a valuable source of information for homeowners and realtors visiting our office, the database has been upgraded to a new Web-based platform, and a new user interface will eventually make the data broadly accessible to all.



Altadena’s Woodbury house, built in 1883.

Phillip Estes of the L.A. County Department of Regional Planning is leading implementation of the Historic Preservation Ordinance and the Mills Act program. The latter was enacted in California in 1972, but not available to residents of L.A.’s unincorporated areas until 2014. Together, the two provide tools to recognize and designate both individual historic resources and landmark districts, plus incentives to preserve qualified

structures that typically reduce property tax by 50 percent for 10 years.

Kevin Johnson with the City of Pasadena’s Design and Historic Preservation staff is manager of preservation and Mills Act programs there, now in their 13th year. He described historic rehabilitation work considered appropriate to a Mills Act contract — roofs, foundations, plumbing and windows are generally the first tasks homeowners are

encouraged to tackle.

The application period for Los Angeles County 2016 Mills Act contracts is open until June 30. The process is complicated and our expert advice is to begin your inquiry soon to determine if your property qualifies as a candidate for the Mills Act. For more about this and the Historic Preservation Ordinance, visit <http://planning.lacounty.gov>.



Old Marengo Park has had three clean-up days since November and it's looking good! Altadena Heritage, Arroyos and Foothills Conservancy, and Arroyo Seco Foundation have all pitched in to maintain our pocket park on the southwest corner of Marengo Avenue and Woodbury Road maintained. Please contact us if you'd like to help; we have fun and get a lot done in a couple of hours.

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In Memoriam

Jane Kellogg Baggott - 1926-2016

Jane Baggott, known to most people in Altadena as Desdy Kellogg, died on March 31. Tall, elegant, and with perfect posture, Desdy was an artist and horsewoman. She owned the Altadena Stable on Ridgeview Drive that is at the center of the Altadena Heritage Area (AHA!) Equestrian Block. Her stable was the site of the AHA! dedication celebrated in 2013 with dressage, cholo riders, and other equestrian entertainments.

Desdy's Altadena roots, including involvement with our organization, go deep. It was at a meeting Desdy hosted in her beautiful craftsman art studio off Mariposa Street in 1985 that the first inkling of Altadena Heritage was born. The meeting had been called to initiate a campaign to save Scripps Hall, next door, from the wrecking ball. The group was successful (see Fall 2015 AH newsletter), Altadena Heritage grew out of it, and the historic Scripps estate has been the home of the Waldorf School ever since.

Desdy's studio was the former abode of artist Elena Kellogg, an aunt by marriage who left her this architectural jewel; it is all that remains of the gracious Highlawn estate built by publisher William Kellogg in 1908. The main house was demolished for residential development in the late 1950s.

Desdy was born in 1926 and had a long, adventuresome, and athletic life; after her marriage to Will Kellogg in 1950, most of it unfolded in Altadena. Here we mention just a few things to give an idea of why she will be so missed in our community. Desdy and Will raised three sons and a daughter in a big house on Las Flores Street with room to spare for horses, dogs, birds, and a monkey. After Will's death, Desdy sold this charming property to her friend Sally Fisher, and many Altadena Heritage members will remember it as the location of our 2014 Golden Poppy Awards and Garden Party.

In the 1990s, she married Charles Baggott and moved to La Cañada, but remained as much a presence in Altadena as ever. In her 80s she took up tennis and became a good player at the Altadena Town and Country Club, where she and Charlie frequently dined.

Besides helping to preserve Scripps Hall and serving for years on the board of Scripps Home for the Aged (founded by her husband's family in 1911 and today the site of the MonteCedro Retirement Community), Desdy was full of fun. She always said "yes!" when asked to host social, cultural, or artistic events in her craftsman gem of a studio, which she lovingly maintained and where she painted and sculpted for many years.



Desdy Kellogg, artist and horsewoman.

When historian Michele Zack's *Altadena: Between Wilderness and City* was published in 2004, Desdy welcomed 50 Altadena Heritage members to her studio for a book signing. The great architectural photographer Julius Shulman, who'd donated several images for the book, was in attendance. Desdy herself had also been an important contributor, sharing family stories and rare photographs that added wonderful content and color to this history.

She opened her studio again in 2007 for Altadena Heritage's "Altadena Artists: The First 100 Years" and showed her own, Aunt Elena's, and other artists' work. When Altadena Heritage led the charge for our community's 125th birthday party in 2012, Altadena Stable contributed a large exhibition board documenting its almost 100-year history.

Desdy was laid to rest under an oak tree in Altadena's Mountain View Cemetery on a warm Wednesday afternoon in early April. In spite of her cancer, which she treated as an annoyance, she'd been planning a dinner party at the time of her death. She lived well until she died, and will be remembered as Altadena Heritage's longest and most beloved Patron member.



AltaDitty! Altadena in Song Coming Saturday, August 20th

Following up on last summer's marvelous AltaDangerous story-telling slam, Altadena Heritage will host AltaDitty, an evening of original songs about Altadena, written and performed by talented friends and neighbors. AH member Bill Burnett, a local songwriter and television producer of some renown, will curate this free summer event. Look for an email announcement with more details in early August, but be sure to put the evening of Saturday, August 20, on your calendar now. We are definitely looking for talent! If you have an Altadena song to share, or would like to participate in planning AltaDitty, contact Bill at bilbur@earthlink.net.



Altadena Heritage
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Altadena, CA 91001-2351

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Hold the Date! Sunday, May 22: Golden Poppy Awards Celebration



This year's annual celebration of Altadena's gardens and gardeners will be held at the lovely home of long-time member Robin Williams at 562 East Mendocino Street. An added attraction will be tours of biodynamic and preschool gardens at the new high school campus of the Waldorf School next door. Look for your invitation in the mail, and get ready to affirm the beauty of Altadena's neighborhoods while enjoying an afternoon of festive food and refreshing libations. Member price is \$10; non-member tickets are \$20. (Memberships are available at the door or online at altadenaheritage.org.) Don't miss this great opportunity to join or renew, and to introduce friends to an Altadena Heritage tradition!



BECOME A MEMBER

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- \$25: Individual \$35: Household \$15: Full-time student
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Are you interested in volunteering?

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