

Día De Los Muertos festivities held

by Ruth Murai

Web Editor-in-Chief

Día de Los Muertos: the Day of the Dead. This holiday can be traced back to the Aztecs but has important cultural significance even today. The Day of the Dead seeks to celebrate and pay respect to family members or friends who have died. The beauty of this holiday lies in its celebration of human life, rather than mourning the loss of it. Often in these celebrations, friends and family members of the deceased try to remember the funniest and most joyous times spent with their loved ones. Stunning decorations of flowers and brightly painted skeletons, as well as elaborate costumes and dances are usually associated with this holiday. Although most popularly celebrated in Mexico, Día de Los Muertos is observed in many different celebrations all around the Bay Area.

Perhaps the most popular way to celebrate Día de Los Muertos in the Bay Area is by attending the annual parade in San Francisco. This year, the parade was held on Nov. 2, and many gathered to participate, which, as put by Day of the Dead SF's press release, serves as an



VIBRANT SKULLS: Vivid skulls are a major part of the decorations.



THE FESTIVITIES: Remembrances tend to be bright and colorful.

opportunity to, "help us contemplate our existence and mortality -- a moment to remember deceased friends and family, and our connections beyond our immediate concerns."

In a more low-key observation of the holiday, The Exploratorium offered showings of short films that highlighted the folk celebrations of Day of the Dead on Nov. 1. Another family celebration took place at Davies Symphony Hall, where Latino music accompanied fun activities such as face-painting and viewing traditional altars.

For the past 15 years, the SOMArts Cultural Center in San Francisco has featured an exhibit called Visions at Twilight: Día de Los Muertos. The event runs until Nov. 8 and features Bay Area artists from many different cultural backgrounds and has them acknowledge the life cycles of life and death through their art.

Although this special holiday originated elsewhere, like much of the United States' culture, it has been brought to this country and adopted by a diverse community that also seeks to celebrate and appreciate the lives of the deceased. So this time next year make your sugar skull.

Bay Area has the most expensive land

by Madeline Hagar

Sports/Student Life Editor

Some of the most expensive places to live in the entire world are within driving distance of LGHS. Cities like San Francisco and San Jose are exponentially more expensive than other regions of the country. In San Francisco, food, transportation, and housing create an environment so expensive that major cities around the world cannot compete. A three-course meal for two at a mid-range restaurant is approximately \$90.90. An apartment in the city of San Francisco is \$3,141.26 per month, whereas an apartment in Sydney, Australia, costs about \$2,255.59 per month. That makes the cost of living in a one-bedroom San Francisco apartment 39.29% higher than in Sydney. Hong Kong and Milan are two other cities that have a much cheaper standard of living than the Bay Area.

In the Bay Area and Silicon Valley only 26% of homes are

affordable to families with a median income of \$101,300. Cynthia Kroll, chief economist for the Bay Area Association of Governments, declares, "In areas in California where salaries are high, demand is high, and where building activity is restricted, prices are high." The high demand for land raises the area's value. Technology giants like Google and Apple have increased the number of highly-paid individuals in the area. A three bedroom and two bathroom house in Los Gatos costs at least one million dollars. In San Diego, the same house sells for \$425,000. This is evidence of the inflated prices in our area.

In Los Gatos, Atherton, and Palo Alto, consumers pay millions for their homes. The median cost of a home in Los Gatos is approximately \$1,459,700. Los Gatos home values increased by 8.2% over the past year and Zillow predicts they will rise another 4.2% within the next year. In Atherton's 94027 ZIP code, the median home value is \$4.59 million. This is 26 times greater than the value of the average \$172,300 home located in the United States. Moreover, Palo Alto, a part of the San Jose metro area, is the fourth most costly area, for the median home value is \$3.3 million.

The Silicon Valley Business Journal discusses the difficulty for middle class Americans to own a home in the Bay Area. Of the 59 ZIP codes in the San Jose metro area, there are only seven zip codes that entertain median home values that are less than \$500,000. All of the other ZIP codes possess homes that cost anywhere from one million to over two million. "In the Bay Area, housing has become so expensive that much of the middle class has been effectively priced out of home ownership," stated Richard Florida in the new CityLab report. "As prices escalate at the top, there is more and more separation between the super rich and the rest." This region is experiencing rapid growth in high-paying tech jobs. This gives those individuals more wealth and buying power, which drives up the cost of real estate in the area for others.

Although the Bay Area possesses many luxuries that Los Gatos residents enjoy, it comes at a high price. The demand for homes in this area, the number of highly-paid employees, and prime location and weather make Los Gatos and the Bay Area an expensive place to live.

(Sources: www.biggestuscities.com, Forbes, numbeo.com, Zillow)



courtesy wikimedia commons

EXPENSIVE LAND: Homes in the Bay Area are considered the most expensive nationally.

App assists drivers

by Hyuntae Byun

World Editor

In the near future, finding an unoccupied parking space in Los Gatos may be as simple as opening a smartphone app. The Town of Los Gatos is currently in early negotiations with a company called Streetline which specializes in embedded parking sensors and parking application technology. If a final resolution is reached, availability of instantaneous parking statistics could be made public within the next couple of months.

Streetline is a fairly new startup that creates and installs ground-level sensors into parking spaces. These sensors are then linked together in order to create a network. As Matt Morley, the director of the Los Gatos Department of Parks and Public Works explains, "an aggregate of sensor networks helps to create a large, real-time database... Users can log on to a mobile app and be directed towards open parking lots."

The town is in very early discussions with Streetline. Currently, the town's goal is to implement the parking technologies in partnership with Streetline and a third party which would help pay for the cost of installation for the sensors. Installation would occur primarily in the Los Gatos downtown area.

The push for a mobile parking application follows a recent rollout by the Town of new camera-based parking technology. The Los Gatos Police Department had previously chalked the wheels of cars in order to keep track of parking time violations, recent installations of security cameras have allowed the police to utilize license plate reading technology in lieu of the archaic chalk system.

According to Morley, these changes are part of an ongoing effort to "be more accurate in catching vehicles that overstay their welcome... and track parked vehicles without having to manually drive through." As the town's population steadily increases, the strain placed on its roads and limited supply of available public parking has increased commensurately, leading to problems.

As Morley notes, "traffic in Los Gatos varies, generally with peak activity in the mornings and afternoons around the schools. During summer and weekends, especially if there's been an accident, there's a lot of spillover into the town." In addition to its mobile parking app program, the town is conducting meetings with other transportation organizations like CalTrans and the LGHS administrative body in order to make transit around the town easier.

Nevertheless, expansion within Los Gatos poses future problems with parking and congestion. For example, the creation of a new Netflix campus and the development of the North 40 Area are expected to increase traffic along Winchester and Los Gatos Boulevard. The town has ordered traffic studies to be conducted prior to approval of the construction projects. After the approval of Netflix's construction project, the town is working towards drafting policies that will mitigate the impact of the new traffic.



H. Byun

BE INFORMED: The Los Gatos parking application will allow drivers to find spots easily.

The Los Gatos Town vs. City conversation continues

by Rachel Salisbury

Editor-in-Chief

Overpopulation in Los Gatos, and the issues surrounding it, have lately been a topic of conversation among both townspeople and town leaders. To promote town-wide discussion about the implications of Los Gatos's growth, "Town, not City" has come out in support of measures that will hopefully reduce or maintain the Los Gatos population by preventing further development.

"These developments are affecting the very quality of life that those before us fought so hard to preserve, and we are now fighting to do the same," said one of the "Town, not City" founders Tony Alarcon. The group aims to stop developments that do not adhere to the Town General Plan.

"Projects get proposed and approved without the average Los Gatos citizen even knowing what is going on," continued Alarcon. He cites the newly built development on Los Gatos Boulevard and Blossom Hill Road as his example: "Many citizens of Los Gatos do not know how many students housing projects truly generate, what is the assumed student generation rates, how those rates are calculated, and many other key components

that affect our town."

The North Forty Specific Plan, which will allow for the construction of up to 364 homes and additional commercial developments in Los Gatos, is the most recent offender against the "Town, not City" goal. According to Diana G. Abbatti, LGUSD Superintendent, in a letter detailing her concerns with the North Forty Specific Plan as they concern LG schools, it is projected that the North Forty developments would add 180 new students to the Los Gatos public school system.

Some argue that this, in addition to the 100 new students added to LGHS just this year, would be a burden LG is not prepared to handle. Not only would the growth affect schools, it would also increase already chaotic traffic and strain public services that would not be adequate for a larger town population.

Town Council is currently deliberating whether the developments will go through given so much push back from the community. Abbatti urged Town Council to "keep our concerns in mind as [they] consider the impact of this new project, so that we all can continue to maintain the strong sense of pride in the educational opportunities our children have in the public education systems that serve the Town of LG."

Many in town fear that this will not be the case. According to Alarcon, "Joe Pirzyski and Diane McNutt," former town council members, "wanted 750 homes there versus the 364 being proposed. They fully support the developers; it smells of

conflict of interest."

Alarcon has similar suspicions surrounding the recent development at Shannon Road and Los Gatos Boulevard, which developers claimed was an affordable housing project. The project was high-density and included 22 units, each selling for above 1.8 million dollars at normal market value. "It was not an affordable project," said Alarcon, "That was simply a marketing twist to get the project approved."

Since the North Forty Specific Plan, there have been suggestions to develop 350 residential units at the Los Gatos Lodge site. "Wouldn't that site be a natural extension for [LGHS]?" asked Alarcon, "When 500 plus students come from the various developments, what school will they go to? Does LGHS have room for 500 more students?"

Townspeople are becoming more and more educated about the impact of developments on the town and the way that many of these developments conflict with the Los Gatos Town General Plan, largely due to "Town, not City" efforts. Alarcon warns, "Once projects are approved and built we will live with the consequences."

To give your feedback and make your opinion heard, fill out the survey on "Town, not City"'s Facebook page or answer El Gato's survey about the effects of growing LG population on the school with the QR code. To learn more also refer to the El Gato website.



SCAN HERE: Take the Los Gatos population survey online.



SCAN HERE: Learn more with the online article.