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MOTHER'S DAY
May 11th

Send Elaine a picture of your mom and a brief message, including who she is, and we will publish it on May 7th.

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Telling the truth about California natives

I am writing in defense of the following statement that was criticized in a letter to the editor April 16: "California natives are hard to keep alive and often look like a brown weedy mess by July." I believe it was simply telling the truth.

Native plants cannot be plunked into your garden with more than a 50-50 chance of success. For example, if you want to have California golden poppies, you have to scatter the seeds in the fall, giving them the winter rains to develop their characteristic long roots, which allow them to blossom in spring and summer. You can't just decide in spring that you want them.

Multigenerational California natives – plants or humans – tend to be independent-minded. They will not bow to your whims.

In my longtime organic garden, I am lazy and stingy with water. The plants that are still here are (a) able to survive drought, (b) distasteful to snails

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and (c) inclined to reproduce with abandon. Whether or not they are California natives is of no concern to me.

Pam Walatka

Los Altos Hills

Opinion your right, but get it right

Re the April 16 editorial on the proposed Shoup House remodel: Let's just say we agree to disagree. But I'll stack my years of experience as a Historical Commissioner and Planning Commissioner against your interpretation of what is historical and what is not, any day or time.

Disagreement aside, there is a factual error in your statement about what I wrote in my letter to council members regarding the remodeling plans for the landmark Shoup House.

It was not my "interpretation of the Mills Act, governing historical homes, as the basis for opposing the project" as you state. It was, quoting from my letter, "The structural expansion and addition of a non-historic architectural element to a historic home is not in sync with preservation practice and is discouraged by the Department of Interior Regulations Standards for Rehabilitation." Specifically, the Department of Interior Regulations – 36 CFR 67, Section 67.7 Standards for Rehabilitation.

Your opinion is your right, making accurate statements is your responsibility. You owe your readers accuracy when editorializing a point of view.

Randall Hull

Los Altos

Ranger Keith a community asset

I have been a third-grade teacher in the Los Altos School District for several years, and I am quite distressed to hear of Keith Gutierrez's situation.

Obviously, I do not know all the details and, honestly, I do not need to know them. The bottom

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line is that Keith is such a marvelous asset to our community on many different levels. The third-grade teachers use Redwood Grove to teach about the Ohlone Indians, and Keith brings that information alive to the students.



In Our Opinion

Editorials

It seems his difficulties with the city resurface every few years. If there is anything the Town Crier can do to reinstate Keith, please do it. It would be a sad day when Redwood Grove would not be the special place for Los Altos youth – and Keith would not be part of it.

Grant Park in Los Altos is becoming a playing area for the classic sand-versus-woodchips debate between residents and city officials.

Maureen Lane

The city's process is already well under way to install new playground equipment at Grant and Montclair parks this spring. As part of the renovations, the Los Altos City Council two weeks ago approved a staff plan to replace the current all-sand covering at the Grant Park playground with Fibar-brand engineered woodchips.

Santa Rita School

Stevens Creek Trail enhances quality of life

On April 12, I attended the opening of the new section of the Stevens Creek Trail that extends it from Yuba Drive to the south side of El Camino Real. The 1/3-mile segment has more than 400 native plantings and a beautiful skylit tunnel. The next segment will run parallel to Highway 85 and cross over the creek to Sleeper Avenue. It is scheduled to open in approximately nine months.

As a South Los Altos resident, I regularly use the trail to commute to work and am anxiously waiting for it to come to Los Altos. After attending the Los Altos Stevens Creek Trail community meetings and reviewing the feasibility study, I understand and support the opportunity Los Altos is presented.

I sincerely hope city leadership will recognize the potential to improve school access, bicycling, walking, running and the quality of life that this urban trail will provide.

Henry Pastorelli

Los Altos

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