



**Los Altos Historical Commission and Los Altos History Museum
31st Annual Margaret Thompson Historical Essay Contest
3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th Graders**

2015 Theme – Inventors and Risk-Takers Help Make Our Community a Better Place

Essay Instructions:

Please print your full name, address, phone number, school name, grade, and teacher's name on the top left side of the first page. PLEASE NOTE: Essays NOT containing this information will NOT be judged. Essays should be no more than 300 words and given to your teacher by March 6. (Private/home-schooled students deliver your essays to the Museum.)

Background:

The Los Altos History Museum's current exhibit, "Silicon Valley: The Lure and the Legends," explores the transition of the Valley of Heart's Delight from orchards to oscillators and reveals the inventors and risk-takers behind the changes in our community. Risk-takers are people who take a chance and have perseverance. They often try many times before they are successful. Visitors who enter the exhibit will "meet" several dozen local legends from Hewlett-Packard Co., Adobe Systems, Intel, Google, and Apple. These inventors and risk-takers have had an impact on each of our lives both domestically and globally.

While the focus of the exhibit is on technological advances, many other inventors and risk-takers in our community are exploring ideas in art, medicine, music, science, engineering, math, ecology, and communications. For example, risk-takers have developed inventions to address hunger, poverty, and health issues in developing countries. Some examples of these innovations are water purification systems and solar-powered ovens.

Writing Prompt:

Consider yourself an inventor and risk-taker. What could you design that would make your community and/or the world a better place? Within your essay, describe your invention, tell how it should be used, and how it will make a difference for others. Complete your essay by describing a day that your invention was actually used. Think about developing an organized flow of ideas. As you write, use interesting vocabulary and creative ideas.

Win Cash Prizes

**1st Place - \$50 2nd Place - \$30 3rd Place - \$20
3 winners per grade level!**