



DATE: January 22, 2018

AGENDA ITEM #6

**TO:** Historical Commission  
**FROM:** Sean K. Gallegos, Associate Planner  
**SUBJECT:** Margaret Thompson Essay Contest

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Receive an update on the Margaret Thompson Essay Contest

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**BACKGROUND**

**Margaret Thompson Historical Essay Contest**

Children from grades three through six are invited to participate in the Margaret Thompson Essay contest through their schools. Essays are written covering a specific theme. Each year hundreds of essays are judged by community members. Prizes are awarded by the City Council at an ice-cream social in the garden of the Los Altos History Museum.

Winners at each grade level receive \$50 for first place, \$30 for second place and \$20 for third place. All entrants receive a certificate of participation. In addition to individual prizes, the school with the most winners will be awarded a trophy.

**2018 Essay Contest Theme**

The current exhibit at The Los Altos History Museum is “Instinct Extinct: The Great Pacific Flyway.” This exhibit is a multi-disciplinary art installation that explores and celebrates the biology, beauty, and bounty of the Pacific Flyway. The Pacific Flyway is a major north-south path for migratory birds in America, extending from Alaska to South America. Every year, migratory birds travel some or all of this distance both in spring and in fall, following food sources, heading to breeding grounds, or traveling to places where they can spend the winter. These migratory birds have the ability to soar and swoop through the sky and with their keen eyesight are able to locate food, locate places for their nests, and protect themselves from danger.

The students are to write, describe their journey using interesting vocabulary and communicate their ideas in a creative manner. Students are to take a journey in their mind and imagine that they have wings and can fly like a bird. The essay should convey the students imagining the spreading of their wings and soaring over their community and describing what each student sees below them. The essay should consider additions or changes in the community, which each student would like to see within your community (school, park, neighborhood, or downtown) to make life better or more enjoyable for their family or friends.

## **DISCUSSION**

The goal of the item is for the Commission to receive the report on the status of the Margaret Essay contest.

Attachments:

- A. 2018 Cover Sheet
- B. 2018 Essay Prompt
- C. 2018 General Instructions for Teachers and Principals
- D. Rubric for Essay Contest