



**Los Altos Historical Commission and Los Altos History Museum  
29<sup>th</sup> Annual Margaret Thompson Historical Essay Contest  
For 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Graders**

## **2013 Theme - Bear in Mind: The Story of the California Grizzly**

### **Required 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. Essays should be no more than 300 words and given to your teacher by March 8.**

### **Background:**

The exhibit at the Los Altos History Museum is about the California grizzly bear. Scientists think that about 10,000 grizzlies once lived in California. Whether out of fear, thrill, or simple competition for space on the land, California settlers killed grizzly bears until the 1920s when the species became extinct. But grizzly bears live on in our imaginations and in stories and advertisements symbolizing things desired and things lost.

The exhibit BIG IDEAS are:

- Grizzlies no longer live in California.
- Growth in human population, loss of habitat, and hunting led to the extinction of grizzlies in California.
- Bears and other wild animals are important to the food chain and our ecosystem.
- An image of a grizzly bear is on the California flag and symbolized the West.

### **Writing Prompt: Choose one topic only:**

1. Take a journey back in time to the 1800's in California when grizzlies roamed freely. Describe grizzlies and how they lived: habitat, food, predators, and interesting facts. Think about and describe what caused grizzlies to become extinct. Give your ideas of ways we can protect endangered species in California.

**OR**

2. Take a journey into your mind and imagine a day with your favorite bear character or your personal teddy bear. Favorite characters such as Smokey Bear, Paddington Bear, Winnie the Pooh, and Yogi Bear are on display or discussed in the Bear in Mind exhibit. Include how you would feed your bear, protect your bear, and describe the activities that you and your bear would share.

### **Win Cash Prizes**

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