

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Markus Fromherz, BPA President



My wife and I just came back from a fantastic BPA Movie in the Park evening ("Back to the Future"!), organized by Lydia Kou and friends. It was

great to see so many neighbors come out on that Friday evening, set up blankets and chairs, buy meals at the food truck, get some ice cream or popcorn, pet the donkeys, talk to mayor Karen Holman, and most importantly meet and chat with each other until the movie started. Several people commented to me how they loved being in a neighborhood with such community activity. It was great to experience that!

I've written in my last few columns (and I'm sure you've been reading it elsewhere as well) how neighborhood associations are at risk of disappearing if not enough residents step up and contribute to the community. As I also wrote last time, we have been fortunate this year to have several members actually come forward and volunteer their time and skills. Even better, we had three neighbors join the board this year, all of them full of ideas and expertise we need. Read about Maurice "Maury" Green, Jaya Pandey, and Jean Lythcott in this newsletter!

In addition, as you may have read, Nancy Hamilton has resigned as BPA newsletter editor after almost 23 years of service. We

are all immensely grateful and indebted to Nancy for her diligent and masterful effort to edit a high-quality newsletter quarter after quarter. (See an article on Nancy in the Spring 2014 newsletter.) We have been lucky to find at least a temporary replacement in Cindy Heyer, who is making her debut with this issue, assisted by Nancy. Read about her in this newsletter as well!

With these new board members and other volunteers, like Lydia and Catherine Hendricks (BPA Meet and Learns), we have a lot of events coming from the BPA this year. You know that events are a great way to build community, which in turn makes the neighborhood fun and resilient. But the BPA is not only about events. Maury is firming up our neighborhood safety and emergency preparedness efforts. Jaya will head up our environmental efforts. Lisa Landers, our membership chair, is also active in the Palo Alto Neighborhoods (PAN) group, and PAN is participating directly and indirectly in Palo Alto city planning efforts (such as Planned Community zoning reform). Lisa is also initiating a new push to reach out to our neighborhood businesses. Peter Mueller was active regarding the effort to put a hydrogen fueling station on El Camino Real (see his article). If you are a new resident, you likely got one of Gwen Luce's extensive welcoming packages. (Please let us know if you are new to the neighborhood and have slipped under the

radar.) And Steven Parkes, who manages BPA IT, just did an overhaul of our website.

If you are interested in any of these topics, or better some of our vacant committees related to traffic, zoning, schools, and others, send me an email. We on the BPA Board would be grateful for your help!

Lastly, don't forget to join us for our monthly BPA Community Happy Hour: every third Tuesday of the month at 5pm. It is always a lively and interesting group of neighbors, and the BPA is buying your first drink!

SENIOR LUNCHESES

By Julie Spengler

Barron Park Senior Lunches take place every other month (even numbered months) on the second Tuesday at 1:00; that is February, April, June, August, October and December.

June and August are catered picnic lunches at Bol Park, December has always been at Cibo's where we get a large private room and enjoy musical entertainment, either by neighborhood accordion players (Gary Breitbard and Jena Rauti) or a choral group. February, April and October are at a neighborhood restaurant with plenty of convenient parking.

Anyone interested in joining us please contact Julie Spengler at 493-9151 or email at juliespengler@sbcglobal.net to give me your phone number and/or email address so we can contact you.

INSIDE

2	2	3	3	4	5	6	7	15
BPA Welcomes New Board Members	Calendar of Events	Diwali in Barron Park	Jim Davis Automotive	Airplane Noise Over Barron Park	El Camino Business Update	Fueling Fuel Cell Electric Vehicles	Roble Ridge Stories	Art in the Park

BPA WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The BPA Board has been fortunate to welcome three new board members this year. They range from long-time residents to relatively new arrivals to Barron Park. In addition, we have been privileged to work with a new newsletter editor. Please read their stories here and introduce yourself when you meet them next time.

Jaya Pandey
Environmental Issues



We emigrated from India in 1999, leaving behind the prospect of living in Australia and our residency in Singapore to call California our new home. Within the first

week of my stay here I realized that my first name could be pronounced 'Haya', and I enjoyed that. Due to my husband's work assignment and to keep the family together, we moved to the Pasadena/San Marino area in Southern California in 2001 and ended up buying a house there with plans of settling down. However, soon we realized that for us the attraction of living in the Bay Area was bigger than being part of a pristine community and moved back to Northern California in 2005. Since then we have lived in Los Altos and Palo Alto. My family and I became part of the Barron Park community in 2011.

As a family we love to debate about anything and everything, and go on our annual road trips together. I love hiking, listening to music, eating out and gardening. If I had not done my PhD in Biochemistry, I would have liked to be a professional singer back in India.

Jean Lythcott
Social Events



My daughter, son-in-law and I bought a house together in Barron Park in the year 2000. I moved here, after my husband died, to be a participatory grandma for their

two children. We have lived the adventure of being together, under the same roof, since then.

I arrived here via Yorkshire, England, where I was born, Ghana, Nigeria, New York, Wisconsin, Washington DC, and

Martha's Vineyard, Mass. My work has been that of a science educator. I spent many years teaching in high and middle schools, several years professoring at Columbia University Teachers College (which included teaching summer seminars all over the world from the South Pacific to Swaziland), and the last 12 years as Instructor in Stanford's Master's degree Teacher Education Program (STEP), heading a program for chemistry teachers with a Stanford chemistry professor.

There were many BP affairs in which I was engaged in the beginning: the Saturday morning donkey shift, May Fete, and the December Carol Singing walk were especially fun. As the grandchildren grew older, I took on more work at Stanford that took all my time, with none left for neighborhood events.

Now retired, I am delighted to be with BPA again, and with Social Events in our community.

Maurice "Maury" Green
Neighborhood Safety and Emergency Preparedness



Maury worked as a medical laboratory director at hospitals in the U.S. and Israel. After retirement he returned to his interests in photography, video production and comput-

ers (leading the Stanford Palo Alto Users Group and teaching classes at Foothill College). He and his wife have lived in Barron Square for 24 years, where he is President of the HOA.

Cindy Heyer Carroll
BPA Newsletter



I moved to Barron Park in 2013 and married a long-time resident in 2015.

I enjoy cycling around the neighborhood with my 14-year-old 'puppy' Bette-Blue and my new

husband Walt, who is much younger than she is in dog years. I've worked as a tech writer for about 15 years and now have the great good fortune to have a work commute of only 1 mile, by bicycle unless it's raining. I was first bitten by the volunteering bug back in high school, giving puppet shows in our local library. Some of my

favorite volunteer jobs since then were assisting residents in Zen Hospice in San Francisco and teaching ESL in Poland. I also like to build and play percussives and hand drums out of clay, gourds, and recycled objects.

Barron Park Community CALENDAR OF EVENTS August 2015 – June 2016

By Jeannie Lythcott

August 28th

Movie in the Park

September 15th

Happy Hour at Cibo's, 5:00pm–6:00pm (Every 3rd Tuesday, and BPA buys the first drink)

September 16th

Meet and Learn: "Living & Working in a Global Economy"

October 20th

Happy Hour at Cibo's, 5:00pm–6:00pm

October 21st

Meet and Learn: With a Nutritionist (see bpa-news for time, place, and details)

October 24th

Make a Difference Day, Youth Community Service, 9:00am

November 11th

Meet and Learn: How to Wrap Holiday Presents in interesting ways (see bpa-news for time, place, and details)

November 15th

Diwali Celebration at Barron Park Elementary School, 12:00 – 4:00pm

November 17th

Happy Hour at Cibo's, 5:00pm–6:00pm

December TBD

Posada with Buena Vista Neighbors

January 19th

Happy Hour at Cibo's, 5:00pm–6:00pm

February TBD

Lunar New Year

March/April TBD

Holi celebration

May 22nd

May Fete in Bol Park

Diwali in Barron Park

By Jaya Pandey (on behalf of BP Diwali Committee)

This year in November, Barron Park is celebrating Diwali, one of the biggest, brightest Indian festivals.

Date, Time & Venue:
Sunday, 15th November,
2015; 2–5 pm @ Barron
Park School

Hosted by: Barron Park
Association

Sponsored by: City of Palo Alto and Barron
Park Association

Diwali's name has its origin in Sanskrit,
coming from Deepawali (deep+awali)
meaning rows of earthen oil lamps.

In different parts of India, with slight variations, Diwali is celebrated in the Hindu calendar's Kartik month (our late October to November) on Amavasya (the night of the new moon). In some parts of India, the following day marks the beginning of Hindu New Year. In various Hindu myths and legends, Diwali symbolizes victory of good over evil and prevalence of knowledge over ignorance.

On Diwali, Hindu families clean and decorate their homes, wear new clothes, place oil lamps all over the inside and outside of their homes, worship and make offerings



to God. It is believed that a clean, well-lit house on Diwali will have blessings of the Divines. Prayers are followed by lighting firecrackers, eating homemade sweets and special food. Both lighting the oil lamps and firecrackers symbolize

removal of obstacles for the attainment of health, wealth, knowledge, peace and prosperity (a 'plentiful state'). There is also a tradition of buying jewelry or precious metal household items two days before the Diwali.

Looking back, I have fond childhood memories of Diwali, associating it with frequently visiting beautifully decorated shops full of brightly-colored clay toys, firecrackers and beautiful earthen lamps that you would not find any other time of the year; going to shops with parents to buy new clothes, preparing homemade sweets with family and decorating our home. I admired my mother wearing her special jewelry and bright silk sarees and it was a pleasure to assist her through all the rituals and traditions. The entire house smelled of fresh flowers, incense sticks and camphor that were used for prayers. Friends and family would come over during Diwali and the days following to share food, gifts and good times!

Holding on to those traditions, this year we invite you and family to celebrate Diwali with us and share part of our culture. Wear your traditional clothes (or any clothes you feel comfortable in), bring your community spirit and be part of the festivities.

BUSINESS PROFILE: Jim Davis Automotive

By Markus Fromherz

Q: Please tell us a bit about your business and its history.

A: Jim Davis Automotive, with the Valero gas station, is located at 3972 El Camino Real, near the corner of El Camino and Los Robles. Jim Davis, the owner, has been in business for 33 years this November at this location. There are seven staff members.

Q: What services do you offer?

A: We offer gasoline and auto services as well as the snack shop. Auto services include mechanical repair, smog, pre-purchase inspection, and more. We service all makes of cars. Appointments are available.

Q: Who are your clientele and what changes have you seen over the years?

A: Our clientele are Barron Park residents and local businesses, but customers come from all surrounding cities. We have many repeat customers; sometimes they move away and still come here to service their cars. Over the years, we have dealt with just about any issue in cars. Our staff have also kept up with the transition to more and more electronics and software in cars.

Q: What are some of your most interesting features or offers?

A: We are doing all types of work and repairs, from adding air to tires to major repairs such as timing belts, water pumps, and computer systems. It's noteworthy that we have had the same staff for the last 15–20 years. We'd like to mention in particular Michael Antrim (manager) and BJ Correia (lead mechanic).

Q: Do you have any special offers for the neighborhood?

A: Mention Yelp for a discount of up to 15%.

Q: What else do you want Barron Park to know about your business?

A: We have been a long-time friend and supporter of BPA events and enjoy meeting our neighbors.

Q: How can neighbors find out more about you?

A: Information about Jim Davis Automotive can be found on Yelp, with a clean five-star rating and many reviews.

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Barron Park Association
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EMAIL LISTS

The BPA has four email lists: bpa-news, bpa-issues, bpa-misc and bpa-jobpostings. They are hosted at Google Groups. To join, go to the BPA Website: BPAlpaloalto.org and click on the tab "BPA Email Lists." This provides an easy means to subscribe, and information about the lists.

A Brief Recap: Airplane Noise Over Barron Park

By Alison Raleigh

Big Picture

Most Barron Park residents are probably aware that community disturbances caused by aviation noise over the Peninsula and mountain regions to the west and south have increased significantly this year.

Complaints to SFO's Noise Abatement Office for the entire 12 months of 2014 totaled 14,726, but in just the first 6 months of 2015, the office logged 41,522 complaints. As of the middle of August 2015, SFO was still compiling July complaints with counts at mid-month over 32,000—totals yet to be published.

In June, the communities with the highest numbers of SFO complaints, in order, were Santa Cruz, Los Gatos, Palo Alto, Scotts Valley, and Soquel, reflecting the noise impacts created by the new flight path called SERFR ONE, a route that crosses directly over Barron Park.

Activist groups like Sky Posse Palo Alto, SOS Santa Cruz, Calm The Skies, and a group of Portola Valley residents who have filed a lawsuit challenging the FAA's environmental "Finding of No Significant Impact" ensuing from "NextGen" airspace modernization changes in our region, are all working to solve the current noise problems and reform the way the FAA measures and regulates aviation's noise pollution.

The City of Palo Alto and Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors have both unanimously adopted resolutions recommending action on the issue. Anna Eshoo (D-CA 18th District) and Sam Farr (D-CA 20th District), besieged by complaints from constituents across their districts, recently arranged meetings with the FAA and city and community leaders to discuss the problem and pressure the FAA for fixes. At a national level, the Congressional Quiet Skies caucus, of which Anna Eshoo is a member, has called on the FAA to make significant changes to the way in which it measures noise and assesses environmental impacts.

Historical impacts

While many of the current disturbances in our region are a result of changes in flight paths and procedures associated with the FAA's "NextGen" airspace modernization

program, Palo Alto and East Palo Alto have also experienced increases in low altitude air traffic that pre-date NextGen.

Dr. Lee Christel, a Sky Posse member and former Barron Park resident, has prepared an analysis of FAA data obtained by Sky Posse via a Freedom of Information Act request. Flight data analysis for East Palo Alto is close to Palo Alto's, but at even lower altitudes. The results looking at SFO arrivals show:

From July 2006 to July 2014:

- The total number of arrivals into SFO increased by 28%
- The total number of SFO arrivals over Palo Alto increased by 66%.

■ SFO arrivals over Palo Alto between 4000–5000 foot altitudes increased by 90%

■ SFO arrivals over Palo Alto between 3000–4000 foot altitudes increased by 131%

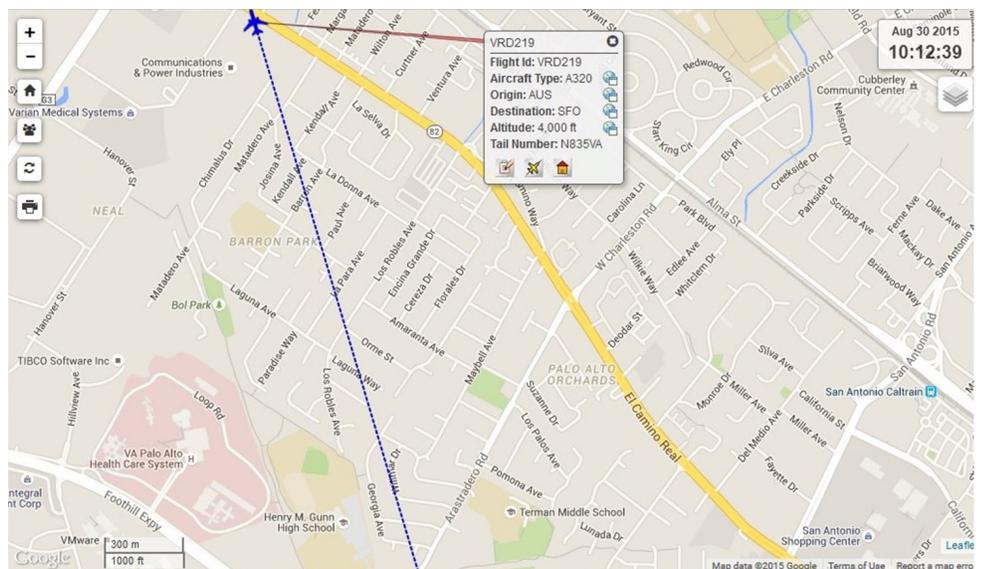
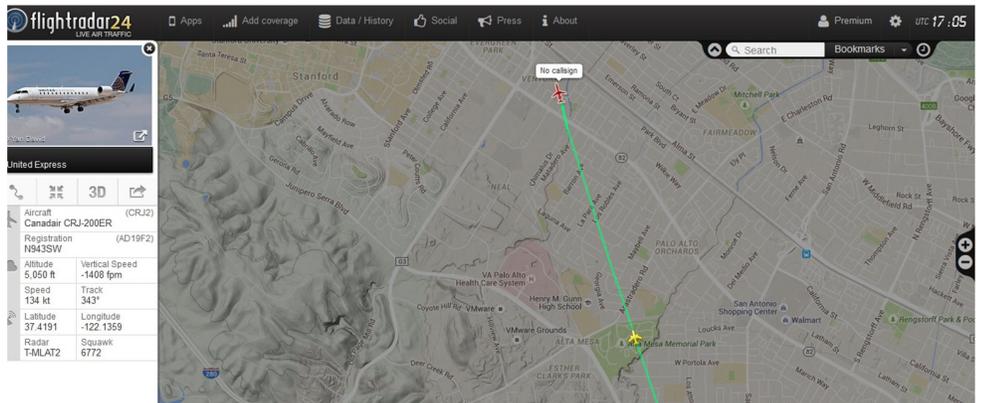
From May 2013 to May 2015:

■ SFO arrivals over Palo Alto at low altitudes of 3000–5000 ft. increased by 56% to a total of approximately 4,000 flights per month.

■ During the same period, total SFO arrivals show almost no growth:

May 2013: 16654 / May 2015: 16441

And these are just SFO arrivals. Barron Park is subject to noise impacts from airplane and helicopters from all the airports



Taking a look at SERFR ONE over Barron Park

in our region. We experience noise from SFO arrivals from west, north, south, and even east, as well as SJC departures to the west. Surf Air, a California company operating a “private air-travel membership club,” has been rapidly expanding its operations at San Carlos airport, adding a new and growing layer of turboprop noise to the jet and general aviation soundscape overhead. We get overflights from Palo Alto airport, Moffett, SAC, and various private operators and local government agencies.

It is a rare moment during the day that you can't hear the sound of a plane or helicopter over Barron Park. Late at night and throughout the early morning hours, cargo jets travel low over Barron Park and other neighborhoods even though competition for airspace at these hours is almost nonexistent.

NextGen Impacts

In addition to being subject to the historical concentration of air traffic over Palo Alto,

Barron Park is also host to a portion of the new, highly-concentrated, high-capacity SFO approach path called SERFR ONE.

SERFR ONE is part of the NextGen implementation in Northern California and although it follows a general trajectory similar to the old, more variable route up from the south called BIG SUR TWO, SERFR ONE follows a consistent track, is loaded with planes, and crosses directly over Barron Park on its way to the Bay. Spend a few minutes watching the flight trackers and you'll see it in action—a conveyor belt of jets.

SERFR ONE planes enter Barron Park after flying over Alta Mesa Cemetery and crossing Arastradero slightly east of Gunn High School. They continue onward to bisect our neighborhood diagonally in a straight line over Georgia, Laguna, Los Robles, La Para, El Centro, Barron, Kendall, Matadero, and the very end of Chimalus before exiting over El Camino.

In her excellent cover article in the *Palo*

Alto Weekly, “Unfriendly Skies” last October, Sue Dremann wrote that, according to FAA consultants at ATAC Corp., the greatest increases in NextGen noise over Palo Alto would be experienced by “residents under the flight path over Esther Clark, Green Acres, Barron Park, then heading north along Jordan Middle School, Walter Hays Elementary School and Eleanor Pardee Park.”

For anyone who's interested in more information, please visit skypossepalalto.org, search Palo Alto Online and the Almanac Online for articles and editorials about airplane noise, sign up for updates at the City of Palo Alto's Airplane Noise page, and take a look around the web for aviation noise information.

Aviation noise is a problem with no easy answers, but change is possible if we make it so.

Writing to you from under SERFR ONE and wishing my neighbors peace, Alison Raleigh.

El Camino Business Update, August 2015

By Bob Moss

There continue to be changes in occupancy on El Camino between Adobe Creek and Page Mill since my last report in February, but not very many.

The short-lived Chaletaco at 3850 was replaced by Papa Murphy's Pizza early this summer. They prepare the basic pizza and you then take it home and cook it.

Most of the former Ernie's Liquor site at 3866 was taken over by Great American Framing.

We Fix Macs expanded to 3239 replacing King Hand Acupuncture.

Happy Feet Foot Spa moved into 3731 in addition to the corner store at 3783.

Palo Alto Dental Care left 3737 and the space is vacant now.

Midas Muffler at 4000 El Camino closed in 2014, and the site is still vacant. Although two tenants indicated interest in leasing the site, it is still unoccupied.

The 3-story building at 4073 was completed early this year; Vision Care for Animals occupies the ground floor retail space with condos above.

Silicon Valley Fit replaced Enterprise Car Rental at 4193.

Vacancy rates under 5% are considered basically full occupancy. On El Camino they continue dropping.

There are only two vacancies on the Barron Park side totaling 9,890 sq. ft. They are the former Midas site at 4200, and a small space at 3866. The lots at 3710 and 4146 (Thain) have been vacant for decades. Each has had several developments approved, but they never built anything.

There are six vacancies on the Ventura Side. No occupants are shown for 2951,

3457 and 3527. The Combes site at 3585 has been vacant for more than 40 years. The former Compadres site at 3877 was approved for redevelopment as a mixed use site with ground floor retail and housing above. No work is being done at the site. The former Curves site at 4117 has been vacant for years.

The 29,750 sq. ft. PC project proposed for 2755 El Camino at the VTA parking lot was pulled back and replaced with a 32,550 sq. ft. building that requires rezoning the site to CC not PC. Initial discussion of the project is planned in September.

Vacancy rates	Aug. 2014	Feb. 2015	Aug. 2015
El Camino on Ventura Side	10.0%	5.14%	5.14%
El Camino on Barron Park Side	0.97%	2.88%	1.78%
El Camino Way	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Total Vacancy including El Camino Way	5.58%	3.63%	2.90%

Fueling Fuel Cell Electric Vehicles at the Barron Park Shell Station

by Peter K. Mueller

At the February BPA Board of Directors meeting this year, it was mentioned that a hydrogen refueling facility is to be added at the Barron Park Shell station. When Bob Moss then contacted Jodie Gerhardt at the Palo Alto City planning department, she informed the project proponent, Bob Desautels, representing the hydrogen supplier Air Liquide, about our interest in learning more. Subsequently, three outreach meetings between early March and mid-May, hosted at Barron Square with several community, expert and vendor participants, established detailed information and understanding.

Based on leadership from our current Governor's office and funded by revenues from the Cap-and-Trade Program, the California Energy Commission (CEC) and Air Resources Board work on converting the California fleet of cars to Zero Emission Vehicles. An alternative to Battery Electric Vehicles [BEV] is Fuel Cell Electric Vehicles [FCEV] powered by compressed hydrogen carried on board in pressurized tanks. Though the current refueling range for most BEVs is less than 100 miles, refueling range for FCEVs is 300 to 400 miles. Selling FCEVs requires a refueling infrastructure. To establish this, the CEC co-funds hydrogen suppliers and gas station vendors.

Several car makers will begin marketing FCEVs in 2015. One factor influencing their sales is access to fuel. Estimating a growth of California FCEVs from a few hundred now to 20,000 by 2020, our agencies are participating with the opening of 52 facilities. About 14 of these will be located in the greater SF Bay Area. Among these there will be one each in Palo Alto, Los Altos, Mountain View and Redwood City. [See the California Fuel Cell Partnership [CaFCP] web site www.cafcp.org/]. Most will be established at an existing gas station by Linde or First Element Fuel. Air Liquide will provide only one, at the Palo Alto Barron Park Shell station. Most of the other stations will be in the greater Los Angeles area. Except for one in Coalinga and one in Truckee, none are yet planned for northern, eastern and central California.

The decision to locate a hydrogen refueling station at the Barron Park Shell was the result of a multi-step process that first

identified a certain number of areas in California where it would be likely that first users of hydrogen fuel cell cars would live and need to have regular access to refuel their cars (based on household income, population density, vehicles per household, etc.). Within Palo Alto, Los Altos and the Los Altos region, Air Liquide determined that only the Barron Park Shell station had sufficient space and was agreeable to the installation and hosting of their hydrogen fuel storage and dispensing system on its property.

Our group meetings with the vendor concerned mainly the nature and management of potential malfunctions and emergency response. Depending on the source of the hydrogen, the CO2 emission benefit may be marginal initially, but the particulate and nitrogen oxide pollution—which is still emitted by all combustion-powered vehicles and hybrid electric vehicles—will be eliminated. Because several of us had done considerable literature research and thinking on our own, Air Liquide brought really professionally experienced people to our last meeting with them in mid-May.

At that time, substantive responses were provided by attendees brought in from Air

Liquide's Houston technical staff, expert faculty from UC Berkeley, a multi-year operational hydrogen refueling expert from AC Transit, staff from the CaFCP, and a well informed representative of the Palo Alto Fire Marshall. Members of the group also brought hydrogen fuel cell cars to demonstrate and test drive.

Test results of collisions with pumps or the above-ground compressed hydrogen tanks show they would be less destructive than collisions with existing gas pumps. Following the discussion, it was my sense that most of our community participants, including two from the Ventura community, felt that various kinds and levels of potential fueling station malfunctions would likely be managed adequately. An interview with the owner of the gas station indicated strong support for adding a hydrogen "pump."

The next step is for Air Liquide to file for a conditional use permit with the City of Palo Alto. This has not yet happened.

The participation of the following residents from Barron Park, the Ventura Community and others was very helpful:

David Coale, Claire Elliott, Frank Ingle, Ken Joye, Art Liberman, and Bob Moss.



Simulated view of BP Shell station from El Camino showing H2 pump and location of line to above ground pressurized supply tanks secured above ground behind the simulated gated stone wall.

THE ROBLE RIDGE STORIES

By Douglas L. Graham, Barron Park Historian

Introduction to Part One

This is Part One of the story of Roble Ridge, covering the years from 1920 through 1970. Nine former residents of the Ridge have told stories about their lives and those of their neighbors, included in this article. Many of these stories tell what it was like to grow up on the Ridge before it was surrounded by development. The stories are "Donkey Escape" by Sue Madrigal, "If You Forget to Hit the Brakes, just Drive into an Orchard" by Jackie den Boer, "The Matadero Swim and Tennis Club" by Bob Spears, "Nothing Short of Idyllic" by Mike Morrison, "The Bol Farm" by Robert Reynolds, "Death for Trespassing" by Steven Preminger, "The Mafia Moll" as told by Merijeane Kelley to Bob Spears, "Sunset Hill" by Steve Steers, and the charming poem "Ridgelines" by Susan Davis Frank.

THE PRESENT DAY:

Neighborhoods of Barron Park

One of the nice things about Barron Park is its heterogeneity. It was developed slowly in comparison to almost all other Palo Alto neighborhoods. There were a few tracts that were built by one developer with a limited set of house plans, but most blocks are completely made up of individually designed and built homes. Some blocks took as long as three decades to fill up, resulting in heterogeneity of architectural

styles within the block. Nested within the larger neighborhood there are also "mini-neighborhoods," especially in cul-de-sacs along the creeks.

What is Roble Ridge?

The largest of these is the mini-neighborhood we commonly call "Roble Ridge," which, like Gaul, has three parts: (1) Eleven properties on Roble Ridge Road, (2) sixteen on Matadero Avenue, and (3) four on Matadero Court. Some people refer to the area south ("west") of 922 and 935 Matadero as "Matadero Hill." Geologically and topographically, both Roble Ridge and Matadero Hill are parts of the same ridge. In this story, for simplicity, I call the entire 33-property area "Roble Ridge."

Exactly where is Roble Ridge?

Roble Ridge is in the southwest corner of Barron Park, bordering the Stanford Research Park on both the west ("north") and south ("west") sides. See the Locator map, Map A. If you approach from El Camino Real, proceeding south ("west") on Matadero Avenue to the stop sign at Laguna Avenue, cross the bike path and keep going straight, you see a hill ahead. About 2/10 of a mile takes you to the top near the end of the road. Or, after crossing the bike path, make a half-left turn on the narrow lane (this is Roble Ridge Road) for a little more than 1/10 mile,

then turn with the road, which makes a half-right turn and heads straight for a hill. Both of these are parts of the same ridge.

Both of these streets are private roads, without shoulders, and have only a few parking spaces for guests, so please do not drive up there unless you are an invited guest of a resident. If walking, please respect the property owners' privacy (and do not trespass). Matadero Court is a Palo Alto City Street.

Topographical Description

The Ridge is the easternmost ("southernmost") extension of a two-mile-long ridge on which are the Stanford University Faculty Housing, Frenchman's Hill, H-P World HQ, and Lockheed labs areas. The part we call "Roble Ridge" reaches about 110 feet above mean sea level (MSL) at the corner fence line of 980 Matadero with the Stanford property. Compare this height to that of several local foothills: Frenchman's Hill topping at about 145 feet, the faculty housing area with two hilltops reaching about 225 feet, Coyote Hill in the Stanford Research Park topping at 371 feet, and the "Dish Hill" at 530 feet.

Matadero Avenue Drops Forty Feet

Roble Ridge starts at about 55 feet above MSL where Matadero Avenue crosses the bike path and hits about 75 feet at the top of the creek bank on 925 Roble Ridge Road (across from the donkey pasture). The "top of the hill" on Matadero Avenue is about 100 feet above MSL and the "bottom" where it flattens out at the driveway of 935 Matadero is at 60 feet. This forty-foot drop in one-tenth mile approximates an 8% grade. The kids of Roble Ridge had the best bicycle downhill raceway in Barron Park.

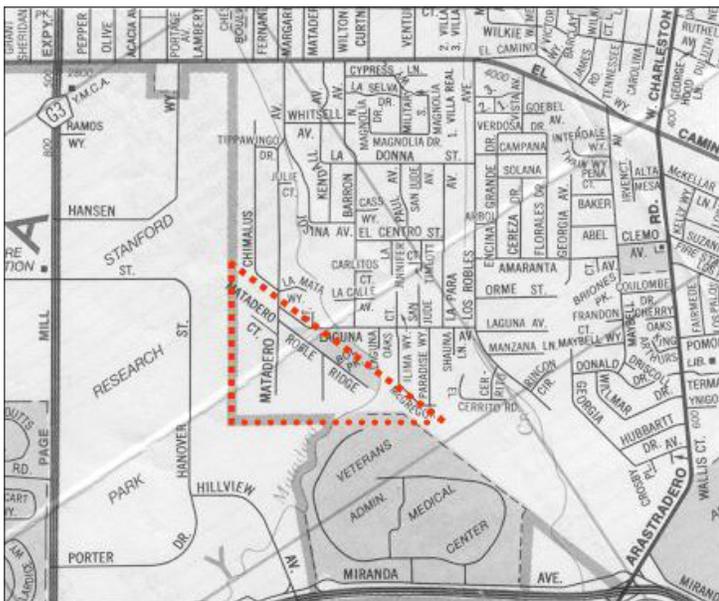
BACK TO THE PAST:

Pre-History: The "Original" Roble Ridge

Long ago, the Ridge was covered by grassy open woodland. As the Ice Age waned about 12,000 years ago, the continental glaciers melted and the rising sea filled the south end of San Francisco Bay again. The land began to look as it did when the Spanish explorers "discovered" it. A substantial population of hunter-gatherer people had already settled the land in scattered winter villages near the shore and summer camps near where the creeks came out of the mountains. One of these summer camps, of the Puichon people, was located along Matadero Creek, directly across from the Ridge, where the donkey pasture and the VA laundry plant are now located. Artifacts have been located at the site and are stored in an archive at Stanford.

A Savanna-like Woodland

The Ridge was the first swelling up of the land that the Puichon encountered as they walked along the creek from the Bay Shore



Map A: Roble Ridge in Barron Park.

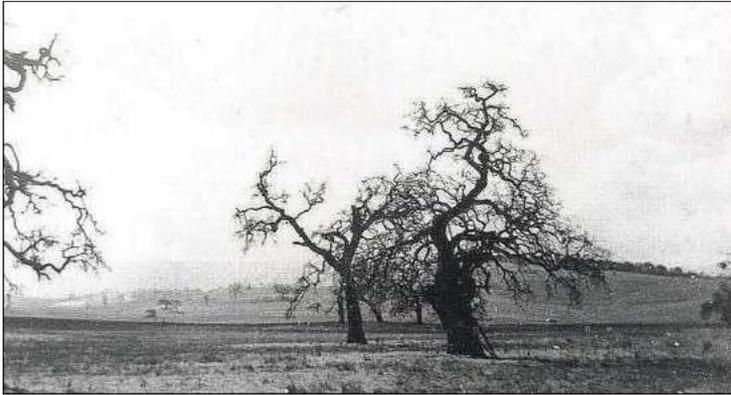


Photo A: Roble Ridge, 1926.

wetlands to the mountains. Widely spaced tall, graceful valley oaks grew in savanna-like woodland on the grassy ridge, with coast live oaks, buckeye, toyon and poison oak tightly clustered along the creek. The grassy savanna was maintained by the Puichon, who regularly set ground fires that kept down shrubbery and fertilized the oaks, thus insuring abundant crops of acorns, one of their principal foods.

In 1906 the Railroad took a Right-of-Way

Because the Ridge is the first significant rise of land on the bay side of the mountains—the first foothill, if you will—the Southern Pacific Railroad (SPRR) ran their line right up against it. Using the authority granted them by the state to take private land by eminent domain for their right-of-way (ROW) they laid out the steam train line right across the southwest corner of Mayfield Farm, which, in 1906, was still owned by the Barron Estate Company. This probably made little impact on the farming operations, since the Estate Company had used the Ridge area only for grazing and perhaps a little haying.

The railroad line construction continued south from early 1906 through 1908, edging as closely as possible to the first foothills, then tunneling through the Santa Cruz Mountains and finally connecting again

with the main line at Watsonville. The modern bike path was laid out on its former ROW from the Stanford Property to Arastradero Road. Foothill Expressway was laid out on the ROW from Arastradero Road to Los Altos and on to Cupertino.

Operations began from Mayfield to Los Gatos in 1907.

An Electric Railroad Used the Same ROW

In 1910 the Peninsular Railway, an electric interurban line began operations on a second track (along the west side of the SPRR) from Mayfield to Los Gatos. The Peninsular had tracks to Campbell and San Jose, and eventually a network through most of Santa Clara County. The Peninsular was financially an arm of the SP, and service from Mayfield through Los Altos to Saratoga and Los Gatos varied over the years as the two sometimes competed and sometimes ran joint passenger operations. I believe there might have been a period in the early 1930s when both lines stopped at Neal Station on Matadero Avenue. However, the main passenger service at Neal occurred after the Peninsular folded in 1934, a victim of the Great Depression and the automobile age. Neal was a “flag stop;” the train stopped there only when someone waved a little red flag at the station, or when someone wanted to get off there. The SPRR ran steam passenger trains until the line was abandoned in 1964.

The Barron Estate was sold in 1919

The history of Mayfield Farm ends in 1919 and the history of the neighborhood begins then, although the area did not become known as Barron Park until after 1925 when the original Barron Park subdivision was platted. The purchasers of the 350-acre Barron Estate were J. E. Reiter, R. F. Driscoll and B. L. Driscoll, Watsonville capitalists and strawberry growers, who paid nearly \$200,000 (roughly the equivalent of \$5 million today). Driscoll and Reiter subdivided most of the land into one to two-acre parcels, which would be about right for a married couple wanting a strawberry patch as a second income. Some of the parcels, perhaps intended for orchardists, were substantially larger. The

Driscoll Strawberry Company has since expanded and become a major grower and importer today, but is still based in Watsonville (check the label the next time you buy berries).

Roble Ridge was (and is) Different

Right from the beginning in 1920, Roble Ridge seemed distinct from the rest of Barron Park. For one thing, it wasn’t “level.” Many if not all of the original lots had “viewscapes.” For instance, in 1926, the view over the Stanford lands to the west from 940 Matadero (where the Premingers lived later on) included a sight of the Bay. From the lots on the east (“south”) side of Roble Ridge (925, 941, 953, 955 and 973) the view of the property now occupied by Gunn High School was sweeping (see Photo A). All the lots that bordered the Stanford lands on the south (“west”) side of the hill (928, 940, 950, 960 and 980) had grand views of the Santa Cruz Mountains, Coyote Hill, and the other foothills.

Cut off from the Rest

Secondly, the entire area was cut off from the rest of the larger neighborhood by the railroads. The only entrance was (and still is) via Matadero Avenue. I think this may have made a psychological barrier that hampered communication, and somewhat discouraged the growth of neighborhood feeling.

Larger Lot Sizes

Thirdly, the average lot size was markedly larger, and this was later codified into law. When Barron Park was zoned, most of the area was zoned R-1 (minimum lot size 6,000 square feet), except for about 50 acres zoned R-1(929), where the minimum lot size was specified to be one-third acre (about 14,000 square feet). In 1950, when a lot split created a small lot at 957 Matadero Avenue, the reaction of the neighbors led the County to zone all of the Roble Ridge Area RE (Residential Estate) with a one-acre minimum lot size. One of the features of RE zoning is that it permits farm animals to be kept on the property. Palo Alto permits one large farm animal (horse, cow) per property.

Higher Average Income

Fourthly, of course, the much larger lot size worked to ensure a much higher average income (and greater wealth) among Roble Ridge residents as compared to the Barron Park average. Thus there was considerable socio-economic class sorting between the two areas. It is probably true that this difference has been greatly amplified during the tremendous run-up in land prices that

Local Direction Conventions

Throughout this article, when I refer to the cardinal directions (North, East, South, West) I will use the one closest to the geographical truth. However, I will also bow to our local convention which pretends that these are shifted 90 degrees to right; I will give the “conventional” directions within parentheses with quote marks to indicate that I am quoting the local common wisdom which says we travel South on El Camino Real even when we are driving nearly due East. I apologize in advance to any geographically challenged readers for whom this explanation may seem to be obfuscation instead.

the entire area has enjoyed during the past four decades. Since Barron Park land values in general are running about \$5 million per acre in 2015, current lot prices on Roble Ridge would have seemed astronomical just a few years ago. The first residents of Roble Ridge, should they be able to return today, would doubtless be astonished at what has happened to their bucolic retreat. The recent set of attractive new mansions on both Matadero Avenue and Roble Ridge Road would be impressive almost anywhere.

Roble Ridge had some of the Earliest Homes

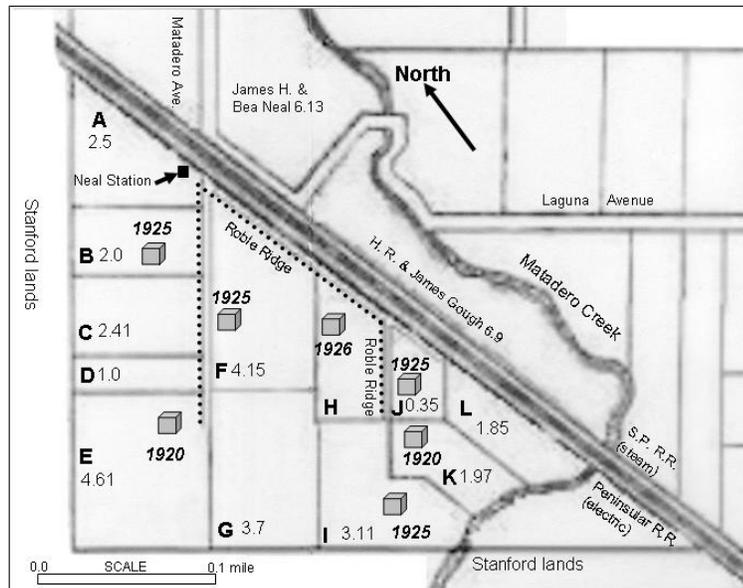
Two homes were apparently built in Roble Ridge in 1920, Professor Carruth’s at present-day 953 Roble Ridge and A.M. Bach’s at present-day 980 Matadero, although the County records this at 970 because of later lot-splitting and renumbering. This is the house that sits in “the corner,” with Stanford pasture lands on two sides (now the Stanford Industrial Park). In 1920 there were only six homes in the rest of Barron Park.

After the first two, there were no more built in the Roble Ridge area until 1925, when two each went up on Matadero and Roble Ridge Roads. Elsewhere in Barron Park, including the Maybelle Tract, there were fifteen houses built by the end of 1925 to add to the thirteen built earlier. So, it is fair to say that the suburban era in Barron Park really began in 1925 with a small building boom. The subdivision situation at this time is recorded in a plat map dated 1926. I have created a new map which duplicates the 1926 information, including the parcel owners names as recorded by the County. Complete accuracy is not guaranteed (see Map B).

Professor Carruth Discovers Roble Ridge

It appears that the first resident on the Ridge was almost certainly Professor William H. Carruth of Stanford (see Photo B). Carruth was a distinguished scholar and experienced administrator who took his Ph.D. degree at Harvard. He was appointed Professor of German Language and Literature at the University of Kansas and also served later as Vice Chancellor. He came to Stanford in 1913 and was Professor of Comparative Literature and Executive Head of the English Department.

About 1920, Carruth became aware of the subdivision of the Barron Estate and toured the back corner west of the railroad lines. He was deeply impressed by the expansive views and the lush grassland of the oak-studded ridge, and decided that



Key to property owners:

- A - Unknown
- B - Unknown
- C - Unknown
- D - Unknown
- E - A. M. Bach
- F - Theo W. Todd
- G - Unknown
- H - J. Morton
- I - Unknown
- J - Copley
- K - W.C. Carruth
- L - Unknown

Parcel letters are used for identification; Street numbers didn't exist.

Acresages, where known, are shown on each lot.

“First Built” dates are per County files.

Map copyright by Douglas L. Graham, 2015 (adapted from a county plat map of the Barron Park area)

Map B: Roble Ridge Area in 1926.

a piece of it would make a fine home site for himself, his wife Katherine, and their daughter, also named Katherine.

A Stanford “Colony” on the Ridge?

It is widely believed among “old-timers” on the Ridge that Professor Carruth had a dream of encouraging and developing a “colony” of Stanford academics on the Ridge. Carruth evidently was involved in the building of several houses on Roble Ridge. The very first one may have been built in 1920 on the parcel currently known as 955 Roble Ridge. Or it may have been built in 1922 or 1927—the City records say 1920 and the county 1927. The current owners, Frank and Peggy Wiley believe it was built in 1922. Take your pick. The Wileys also believe that the Carruths were the first to buy land on the Ridge (I’ve always heard this too, from everyone who has talked with me about the history of Roble Ridge).

It is known that several members of Carruth’s wife’s family came from Kansas to buy Roble Ridge properties in the early 1920s. They included the Todds and Mortons. The Professor also recruited local friends, including Roger Sherman and two sisters of Mrs. Sherman.

Building Boom in the late 1920s

After 1920 there were no more homes built on Roble Ridge until 1925, when four more went up. But the “Roaring Twenties” were in full swing, and by the time the 1926 plat map was produced, the Ridge had been subdivided into 12 lots ranging in size from 0.85 to 4.61 acres (see Map B again). There were five more houses by 1926; 918

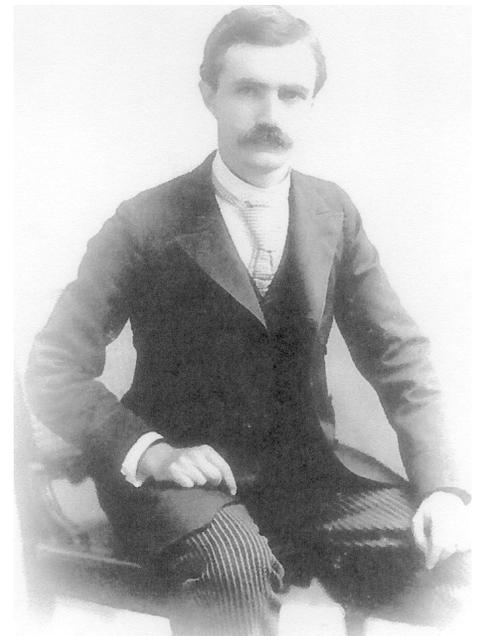


Photo B: William H. Carruth.

and 945 Matadero and 912, 941, and 973 Roble Ridge. Theodore W. Todd’s house was at present-day 945 Matadero. There were no street addresses in the 1920s; everyone was on Palo Alto’s Rural Route #1, and they had 3-digit box numbers that in no way correspond to present-day street addresses. At 941 Roble Ridge was Jessie Morton. I don’t know for sure who lived at 973 in 1925, but it was probably the elder Roger M. Sherman, who lived there into the 1950s. Other original occupants included Alvin Olins, Miss Anita Hodgkins, and the Stanford Botanist J. F. Wright at 930

Roble Ridge. The 1925–26 mini boom was followed by more lot subdivisions, and a total of 16 houses were recorded on the Ridge by 1930.

What the Ridge was like in the fall of 1948

There were orchards along Matadero Avenue, and empty lots served as hayfields for the Bols. The landscape was still dominated by the original soaring valley oaks and massive coast live oaks, and by the sweeping views to the west. The railroad was still there and Matadero Creek ran undisturbed and very little changed since the days of the Puichon Village.

The Ridge was a much smaller community than it is today; there had been very little building during the Great Depression years of 1931 through 1937 (three houses built) and a 12-year gap in construction from 1938 through the World War Two years (1941-45) and for another five years until 1950. So the housing stock in the fall of 1948, when the Shermans and den Boers arrived, was comprised of houses from ten to nearly 30 years of age. Many of the newer residents were not connected with Stanford, so Professor Carruth’s dream of an academic colony was fading fast. See Photo C, aerial view of Roble Ridge in 1952.

A Converted Barn with Views and Loose Horses

Jacqueline den Boer has fond and vivid memories of growing up on Roble Ridge. She wrote: “Our family moved to the Ridge in the fall of 1948 after Daddy [Benjamin Marinus den Boer] had graduated from UC Dental School.” Her parents “chose Palo Alto as the town where he would practice dentistry, [and] they looked for a house to rent. Mom [Katherine Forsythe den Boer] said rentals were scarce because Palo Alto had a moratorium on building due to the war. The Shermans had converted their barn at 973 Roble Ridge into a house for their daughter. The house became available when the daughter and her husband moved away and Mom jumped on it. My parents loved the neighborhood’s openness. The house had views of the hills and truck gardens of flowers and vegetables [on the land] which is now the Veteran’s Hospital. You could see horses grazing across Matadero Creek and these horses would sometimes get free and run across our lawn.”

Horses and Kids Roamed Free

Jackie wrote: “As small children we had dogs and cats that could roam freely, as we kids did. The only requirement was to be home for dinner and the signal was

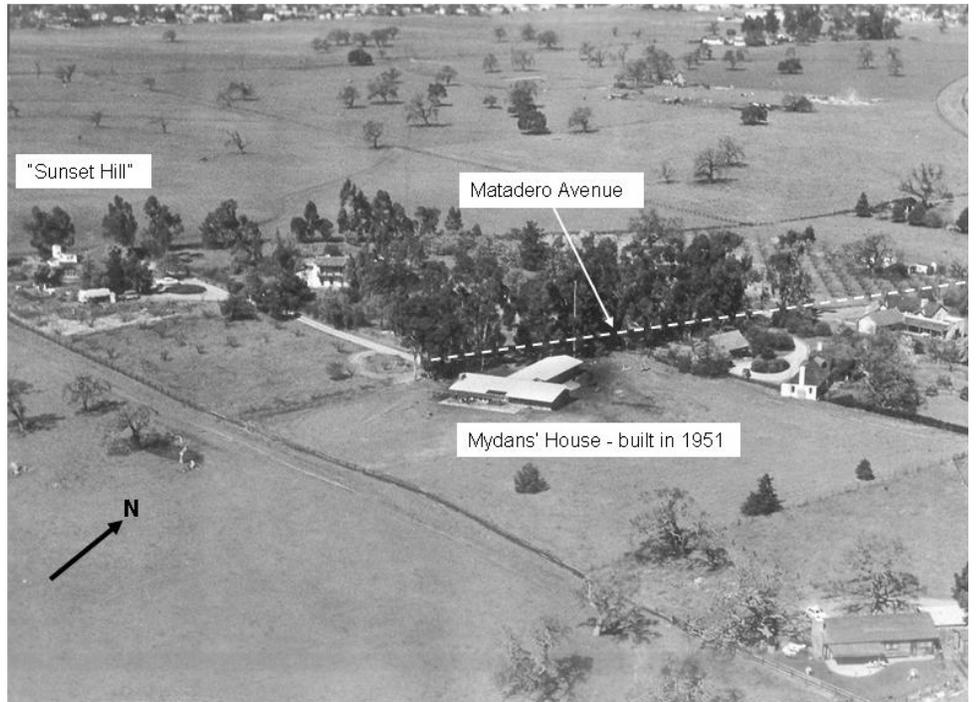


Photo credited to John D. Steers

Annotation by Douglas L. Graham, 2015

Photo C: Matadero Hill and Stanford Pastures, 1951 or 1952.

the 6pm commuter train that came along the [railroad] track...I remember many times putting pennies on the train tracks; the train would run over the pennies and we would collect smashed pennies. We would climb trees, [and] we had a special tree, a large pepper tree [that we] called the Monkey Tree...[We would] ride bikes, eat apricots, peaches, berries and avocados from the numerous trees and bushes.”

“Growing up on the Ridge was wonderful. There were lots of kids our age, we had tree forts, and played baseball in the open fields. I remember hiking to Round Top, what we called one of the Stanford Hills, and roaming the land that is now [the] Stanford Industrial Park.”

Death for Trespassing!

Steve Preminger wrote: “I have memories of wandering through the pastures on Stanford lands in the 1950s where Lockheed was later to be built. Of course being so young and innocent we took the open space for granted. During the years of construction my siblings and other neighbor kids enjoyed playing on the huge earth mounds as the property was manipulated into its final shape. We regularly went through the buildings as the walls went up, looking for interesting items of no value. [We enjoyed this]...until we were forbidden by imposing ‘No Trespassing under penalty of Death’ (as I recall) signs unambiguously posted.”

Halloween on the Ridge

Jackie also wrote: “Halloween was a big deal on the Ridge and at Barron Park [School]. Every year a parent would host a Halloween Party for the Ridge Kids and we would trick-or-treat around the neighborhood.” At the school there was a Halloween parade on the playground [see Photo D]. “The picture of the girl in the white satin is my sister, Judy den Boer.”

Memories of the Bol Family

Like many Roble Ridge kids, Jackie remembers: “...swimming in the Bol’s pool as well as taking lessons in that pool [see Photo E]. The Bols owned the Barron Park Water Company at this time, and sometimes I would get to ride with Gerald in the Bols’ old Willys Jeep when Gerald or Joor would have to go fix a broken water main or some other water issue.” Jackie also remembers “Cornelis and his...laboratory in a separate building on Matadero Creek near the railroad track at the back of their property. I would go to the lab to watch Dr. Bol, and frequently he would blow some glass object for me on his Bunsen burner. He was always kind and welcoming to a small Dutch girl. It was so sad to see the lab burn down years later.”

954 Roble Ridge

Robert Reynolds lived at 954 Roble Ridge from 1941 until 1955. He wrote, “I was told that my grandfather, Roger Sherman...

bought land from Professor Carruth, to whom he was related, in the early thirties and they were all 1½ acre parcels, one of which he gave to my parents after their marriage.”

The Bol Farm

Robert went on to say, “My closest friend was Gerald Bol, son of Cornelis Bol, a Stanford research scientist and the inventor of the Mercury vapor lamp. Today’s Bol Park was then...the pasture for his horses and dairy cows. He, his wife (Josina) and their boys grew and raised almost all their own food. He also planted and harvested hay for his stock on most of the unused parts of the... [large]...lots on the Ridge.” The Bols also harvested hay on the Duggan and Babick properties that were later developed along Ilima Way.

Beginnings of the Donkeys

Jackie den Boer wrote: “Before Jennifer, the Bols had horses and donkeys. They had a couple of sheds used as barns for the animals, who used the fields that are now Bol Park. We would ride bicycles to school and stop and feed the horses and donkeys on the way to and from school. I would bike home for lunch almost every day. I think I was riding to school in second grade—I know I had a two wheeler by six.”

A New House at 930 Roble Ridge

Jackie continues, “Our parents bought the property at 930 Roble Ridge in the early 1950s and built our new home [in 1953]. The land was originally owned by a Stanford botanist who...experimented with different fruit trees and grafts. It had and still has a beautiful huge oak tree, original



Photo D: Halloween Parade.



Photo E: Kids in Bols pool.

pump house, and many fruit trees. Daddy designed the original house. I understand that it has been remodeled over the years.” [A wing was added on the side toward Bol Park.] “He worked in the orchard tirelessly: it was tilled yearly, and he landscaped the property himself. We owned the house until 1973.”

Different Schools

Roble Ridge kids attended different schools over the years as Palo Alto expanded to the south. From 1920 through June, 1948 they attended Mayfield Elementary School (on El Camino Real near Page Mill Road) and Palo Alto High School. About 1940, Jordan Junior High School was opened. Barron Park Elementary opened in 1948 and Jackie started in Kindergarten there in 1950. She wrote, “After Barron Park, I was one of the 100 kids that attended Cubberly High School as a 7th grader because Terman [Junior High School] had not been completed yet.” Terman was later renamed Jane Lathrop Stanford, or JLS. “After Terman we went to Cubberly because Gunn had not been built yet.” Jackie graduated from Cubberly with the class of 1963.

If You Forget to Hit the Brakes, just Drive into an Orchard!

Jackie learned to drive in 1961, “I remember learning to drive on Roble Ridge; it was safe, only neighborhood cars, and when I forgot to hit the brakes I would just drive into an orchard and start again.”

The Snowstorm of 1962

The winter of 1962 brought a rare weather event to Roble Ridge: a snowstorm with ac-

cumulation on the ground. There is a photo of Jackie den Boer and friend in the snow near her house [see Photo F].

Growing up on Roble Ridge

Michael Morrison wrote, “We moved from Los Gatos to the large Spanish style house at 960 Matadero in 1948 when I was five years old. The house is still there but the lot has recently been split twice. My parents sold another portion to the Spears family back in [1952] and we shared the long driveway with them. Eventually John Steers built a home next door and the Mydans built across the street. The Reynolds family was connected to the Shermans.

“My stepfather who raised me was Roger M. Sherman II, a mechanical engineer who worked in San Francisco. He and I made several trips walking up and down Matadero Hill to Neal Station where he caught the commuter train to the city. The elder Roger M. Sherman lived at 973 Roble Ridge and was a direct descendant of the famous Roger Sherman, a signer of the Declaration of Independence in 1776.”

Mike wrote, “All of these families knew each other either from school or family. It was a pretty tight-knit group. I had three cousins across the field, the four Steers brothers, and my older brother (by five years) to protect me, and the Bol brothers who were much older than I. But the ultimate fun machine was the bike which gave me the freedom to go anywhere in Barron Park...What more can a boy ask for?”

“Nothing Short of Idyllic”

Michael Morrison went on to write about “the wonderful lifestyle in this part of California” in the 1950s and ‘60s. “My early years of growing up on the Ridge were nothing short of idyllic. Most of my memories revolve around Barron Park Elementary School and all my friends there. I still have all my class pictures.”

Mike sent me a photo of his third grade class in 1952 [see Photo G]. He wrote, “I’m the boy in the checkered shirt with a big crush on his teacher. The girl in the last row far right is Nancy Packard, David’s daughter.” From 1939 through 1949, David and Lucille Packard and their four children lived in Barron Park at 724 Matadero Avenue.

“Round Top”

Mike wrote more, “Life was full of adventures, including camping trips up on Round Top, Cub Scout kite competitions on Sunset Hill, and mucking around Matadero Creek following a heavy rain storm.” Additional correspondence with



Photo F: The snow storm of 1962.

Mike revealed that “Round Top” is known today as Coyote Hill, and “Sunset Hill” is the rise occupied partly by Lockheed and mostly by Hewlett-Packard headquarters. On Round Top, Mike wrote, “There was a small “cave” (more like the overhang in an outcrop of rocks) at the top on the west side.” Bob Spears and Jackie den Boer also talked about hiking to Round Top and finding the cave.

“Sunset Hill”

Steve Steers found an aerial photo from about 1950, featuring the Stanford lands to the north of Roble Ridge, and sent it to me the day before the deadline for this

article. It is by far the best picture of “Sunset Hill” that I know of [see Photo H]. Steve wrote, “When this was taken, a farmer was running dairy cattle out on the Stanford lands. The cattle would trudge past the corner of the Taulbee lot on the way to their barn across the creek where the VA Hospital is today. We called the hill above the Taulbee House Sunset Hill, as the sun set over it every night.” This was 980 Matadero Avenue, the house that is in the corner of the “L” of Roble Ridge, with Stanford property on two sides.

Mike described Sunset Hill as “...golden grass all the way to Page Mill Road and [it] had one lone oak tree right at the top of the hill.” He wrote, “I wish I had a picture.” Fortunately, Elsa Preminger [940 Matadero Avenue] allowed me to copy a photo, back in 1991, that partly answers Mike’s wish, but it doesn’t show the top of the hill, nor does Steve Steers’ aerial shot.

Open Fields as Far as You Could See

Mike Morrison wrote more, “Our dogs roamed freely with us and cattle grazed to the west, across the fence near the large barn where we built forts with the bales of hay stacked to the rafters.” Bob Spears also mentioned playing with the bales of hay there. “It was very rural up there—nothing but open fields of dry grass and rolling hills as far as you could see, with a few orchards down the hill towards Barron Park. This was before Hewlett-Packard and Varian Associates built on top of Sunset Hill. It was before the Veteran’s Administration Hospital was built where the farmer’s barn had been located.” In a later e-mail, Mike wrote, “We really began to feel closed in when they built the Veteran’s Hospital, Varian Associates, and Hewlett-Packard.”

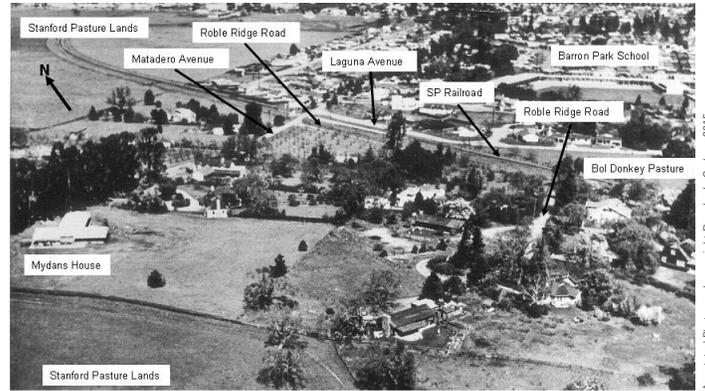


Photo H: Low altitude, low-angle oblique shot looking roughly north, showing 80% of the Roble Ridge neighborhood in 1952—photographer unknown (maybe Carl Mydans).

The Preminger Family

Sue Preminger Madrigal wrote about Roble Ridge, “Our parents, Ralph and Elsa Preminger, built an adobe house [at 940 Matadero] in 1950 on an acre given to them by Elsa’s father James “Mac” McMurry, botany professor at Stanford [who purchased it] in 1924.” As mentioned previously, Elsa Preminger allowed me to copy ten snapshots of Roble Ridge from her family collection, as well as the 1952 low-level oblique aerial photograph reproduced in this article [Photo C].

The Most Interesting Couple

Sue Madrigal goes on to say, “Perhaps the most interesting people to live on the Ridge (all hearsay, I wasn’t around yet) were the Mydanses. Carl Mydans was a photographer and his wife Shelley was a journalist, both for Life Magazine. Per Wikipedia, they were captured in the Philippines and spent the next two years as POWs. I remember my mother saying of their year on Roble Ridge that they were a bit older and more worldly, but fun at cocktail parties.” (I chose not to write about the Mydanses in this article as I have already published A Journalistic Team in War and Peace—Shelley and Carl Mydans—a 5-page article in the spring, 2010 BPA Newsletter, with 8 illustrations).

Donkey Escape!

Sue Madrigal wrote, “A very important family, of course, was the Bols; their history is well-known, but a few times the donkeys (at that time there were at least four), escaped and came to visit us on Matadero Hill.”

Toothbrushes for Trick-or-Treaters

Like Jackie, Sue remembers Halloweens, “Every Halloween the moms would arrange for all the kids of Roble Ridge to get together for a party, bobbing for apples,



Photo G: Third Grade, Barron Park School 1952.

Annotated Photograph copyright Douglas L. Graham 2015

etc., before we would go around our neighborhood trick-or-treating. Dr. den Boer, DDS would always give out toothbrushes. And we were happy!"

Snow Men at the Golf Club

"When there was snow in 1962 we [all the neighborhood kids] went to Sue Davis' house on Roble Ridge Road to play in the snow and then our parents drove us up to the Palo Alto Golf and Country Club where there was a lot of snow to make snow men."

Bob Spears' Memories

Bob Spears wrote five brief stories of his memories from growing up at 950 Matadero, which are printed below. Several more will appear in Part Two because they cover happenings after 1970. Bob still lives part-time on the Ridge: he rents an apartment across the street at 959. He has maintained a listing of Ridge residents for "the past thirty years," and has been of invaluable help to me in reaching out to former residents for their stories.

The "Matadero Swim and Tennis Club"

Bob wrote, "[The parcel at] 970 Matadero was subdivided from 960 sometime prior to 1960...It had a tennis court circa 1930, asphalt with a chicken wire fence 15 ft high, and a pool circa 1953, with no house. The owners, Dick & Kay Sears lived at 729 Florales in Barron Park. Several immediate neighbors had keys to the pool. We each contributed to the property tax & maintained the pool. Mothers came in the afternoon to watch their children swim & chat among themselves. Later Bob was designated as the adult & watched the kids swim. A lot of kids learned to swim in that pool. The lot was sold after Dick & Kay died about 2010. The pool & tennis court are gone and a new house has been built."

Bob went on to write, "My father, Andy Spears, Irv Yalom, John Sherwood, & Norm Moss all from "the Hill" and Gene Peterson [from La Mata Way] and several other men and their sons played a "round robin tennis game" every Saturday afternoon and later on Wednesday afternoons without sons. The first four to show up played four doubles games. If the score was 2-2 then we played a sudden death game. Those sitting on the bench plus the winner or winners would play the next round, a social game. This continued for better than 20 years until my father could no longer play and the court was beyond repair."

Steve Steers wrote an interesting footnote about the swim club, "Before the pool was built there had been an underground water tank of some sort. I remember it had some flat doors or a low cover or something over the hole below." (Does anyone else remember this? I wonder if it might have been an irrigation reservoir built by the Barron Estate Company before 1919.)

"The Mafia Moll"

Bob Spears spoke with Merijeane Kelley on August 20, 2015. He wrote that Merijeane told him, "The Kelleys bought the house at 959 Matadero [that had originally been built for] Florence Calderwood in 1928. The...owner [the Kelley's bought from]... was Sara Roberts. Bob Kelley was told stories on many occasions about Sara. (Allegedly) she was a "Mafia moll." "[It was said that] she had threatened Bill Arbogast at 969 Matadero with the Mafia if he wouldn't control his four teenaged sons. It seems to have gotten Bill Arbogast's attention because he spoke about it frequently."

Water-Gushing Oaks

"A valley oak in the Yalom yard at 940 Roble Ridge dropped a two-foot-diameter limb [about 1/3 of the tree] on the patio where Marilyn was setting the table for dinner. The noise was explosive at 950 Matadero. Bob ran over to the Yalom's & found a large stream of water coming out of the hole in the tree and found the metal dining table flattened on the concrete patio."

Spears told of another occasion, "In the Preminger orchard at 928 Matadero there were two large valley oaks, more than 300 years old. [My memory is that]...Elsa and her daughter Jean were talking in Elsa's study which looks out onto one of those trees on a blistering hot day. They saw a limb [again about 1/3 of the tree] collapse right in front of them and again a large stream of water drained out of the tree."

So, Who Owns Those Trees?

Bob Spears wrote, "Along the back of 980, 960, 950 and 940 Matadero is a line of eucalyptus trees which must have been planted about 1930. We topped the lot of them as a group project in 1953. The Stanford land was a cattle pasture. I don't know if we contacted Stanford or not. We may have just done it. Some of us have topped our own trees since. The Spears [topped them] three times at 950 Matadero. Each time we have contacted Stanford, and Lockheed [who leases the land] to find out who owns the trees. We don't know, but each time we get permission from Stanford and Lockheed to top them. The last time was in 2012."

Ridgelines

I grew up on a ridge.
digging its soil,
climbing its trees,
inventing an endless
succession of games
to explore its hidden spaces.

As the ridge grew on me
I slowly became aware
Of its vantage point...
Providing views in all directions,
Yet remaining a distinct part of the
landscape.

When I moved from the ridge
I looked for places like it,
Some for solitude,
Others for recreation,
Always for the sense of freedom
That laced my childhood days
together.

I am still partial to ridges
As a place to spend
A few hours
Between the deadlines
And the germination of new ideas.

Only now they provide a new view,
As I stand on top
At a point where two paths converge
And watch the ridgelines stretch for
miles in either direction.

Susan Frank
Marin Headlands
September 3, 1988

The Principal's Cow Comes to School

"When I was in the 4th grade at Barron Park School, Bob Anderson was my teacher. Dr. Lyman was the principal. Fourth grade is when we learned about California history. We had a farm day or rodeo on a weekend at school. Dr. Lyman (we were not on a first name basis)...had a cow, some sheep, goats & chickens. He brought the animals to school and we had an all-day event. In preparation we made scrapbooks with a plywood cover & back. We made branding irons, and branded and shellacked the covers and backs of the scrapbooks."

The Stanford Industrial Park Changed Roble Ridge

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the environment surrounding Roble Ridge changed radically. In 1950, the Ridge had

hardly been affected by suburbanization and industrialization. Then, in rapid sequence, the east edge beyond the tracks was built up, as housing filled the open space along Chimalus Avenue, Laguna Avenue and Ilima Way on the east side of the creek. The VA Hospital and the Watkins-Johnson plant were built on the southwest side, and in the 1960s Lockheed Laboratories and Varian Associates filled up the pastures along the northwest fence. Suddenly Roble Ridge was completely surrounded by development. Internally, there were only seven more houses built from 1950 through 1953, then a 14-year gap in construction until one new house in 1967 and three in the 1970s. By 1953 the area was fairly well built up and new houses since then have been replacements.

Jackie's Conclusion

Jacqueline de Boer concluded her brief memoir by giving us her take on the changes she experienced: "I think the main thing that changed for me on the Ridge was the coming of the Stanford Industrial

Park. That curtailed our wandering, along with more homework and the longer travel times to Cubberly and Terman. Also the train stopped coming [the line was abandoned in 1964] and some of the families moved away in the late 1950s [and] early 1960s."

This Concludes Part One

I hope that you have enjoyed this collection of facts and stories about "the old days" on Roble Ridge. Part Two of this story is planned for the winter 2015-16 issue of this newsletter and will cover the years 1970-2015. There are already at least six contributors to Part Two. Also, information on the earlier years is still coming in to me, and I'm sure there will be reactions and responses to this story, so those will be included also.

Please direct your questions, comments and stories to me: Douglas L. Graham, Barron Park Historian, 984 Ilima Way, Palo Alto Ca, 94306, phone 650-493-0689 or email me at *dgrahampaca at gmail dot com*.

Help Support the Barron Park Donkeys!



Photo by Bernard Andre

All those who care about Perry and Niner seek to guarantee their proper on-going care and shelter, as well as to ensure that funds will be available for health concerns as the donkeys age. The handlers hope that those generous neighbors who have contributed in the past will consider increasing their support this year. Contributions for the donkeys' care may be sent to: The Palo Alto Donkey Project, ACTERRA (Action for a Sustainable Earth),

3921 East Bayshore Road, Palo Alto, CA 94303-4303. The check *must* be made out to "ACTERRA-Palo Alto Donkey Fund." All of the above must be included.

For further information about making a contribution on behalf of the donkeys, or if you would like information about how to become one of the volunteer donkey handlers, please call Steven Parkes (650) 918-6768 or email at *smparkes at smparkes dot net*, or go to *BarronParkDonkeys.org*.

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BPA meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday of most months at 7:15 p.m.

E-mail *President@BPAlpaloalto.org* for location

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ART IN THE PARK—MAGGIE PLATT

I started making collars a little over a year ago. I searched high and low for a collar for a friend’s dog that had apples on it as it is her pup’s favorite snack. Unfortunately, I didn’t find one but -fortunately it inspired me to make it myself. Since then I have been making collars and leashes for our wonderful neighborhood dog owners who, in turn, have been sending them throughout the country. There are even a few in India!

I named our little project PAWS and PLAY. I loved the idea of sewing a “PLAY” button label on each collar. During one of our beautiful days at the dog park I was asked if we had a “STOP” button for a friend’s rambunctious 5 month old puppy. This evolved from a “PAUSE” button (so the owner could at least catch a breather :) to PAWS... to “PAWS and PLAY -fun and unique accessories for your furry friend.”

The first picture is of a leash made from repurposed jeans. I love to use recycled materials as much as possible.

The other pictures show the sturdy metal hardware used in each collar. I make all sizes from teeny tiny to extra-large and love working with pup owners to create unique custom collars. I make bow-ties and flowers that attach to the collars as well as leashes. At this time, I’m working on a few other ideas such as bedding and reusable treat bags.

The e-mail I have been using for the collars: *pawsandplayletsplay at gmail dot com*. People contact me, and we work together to create a custom collar and/or leash based on their favorite color, theme, etc. This adventure has been such a positive experience and I have had the opportunity to meet some amazing folks! I love our neighborhood!

Maggie can be reached at *pawsandplayletsplay at gmail dot com*.



BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER
FALL 2015

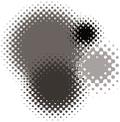
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