

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Jon Affeld, BPA President



*Fair is foul, and foul is fair.
Hover through the fog and
filthy air.*

Macbeth is the well-known play by Shakespeare, titled after its main character, and is required reading in most U.S. high schools. In it, Macbeth is like many famous characters in the classics: He is at first heroic, then conflicted, and finally brought down by his own greed and hubris.

We are blessed to live in Silicon Valley. There is no other place in the world like it: with its combination of growth, opportunity, educational resources, and cultural diversity. But prosperity also brings problems.

Sometimes I wonder if our prosperity can be compared to Macbeth's trajectory. Shakespeare's warrior hero can save his people; but his unquenchable ambition turns murderous and destroys them. Macbeth is initially warned by the Three Witches who make prophecy about his future. In our case, that role is played by three byproducts of prosperity: increased development, leading to congestion and dangerous traffic. What do these factors predict about our quality of life?

Recently in Barron Park we have experienced these adverse effects first hand. There have been a number of traffic incidents in our neighborhood and on El

Camino Real involving vehicles striking pedestrians, bicyclists, and pets. Further, many residents have reported a dramatic increase in speeding, overflow parking, and cut-through traffic in certain Barron Park hot spots, including along Amaranta, La Donna, Los Robles, Matadero, and Maybell.

The Barron Park Association is working with the City Transportation Department, the Palo Alto Unified School District, Code Enforcement, and the Palo Alto Police Department to address these areas. Over a dozen items have been submitted from Barron Park to the City and County to help make our neighborhood streets and routes to school safer.

If you want to track the progress in resolving these problems or submit other items and requests, you may do so at the **Palo Alto 311** website (see below). Other helpful resources for educating students and drivers on road safety can be found at the **Safe Routes to School Program**. Lastly, you may find more information on future roadway development plans and remediation techniques by consulting the **Palo Alto Transportation Department** websites.

Useful resources include:

Palo Alto 311

https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/depts/pwd/street_maintenance/report_a_problem.asp

Safe Routes to School Program



August 25!

Bring the family and join your neighbors for the annual BPA-sponsored **Movie Night at Bol Park** on Saturday evening, August 25, 2018. Say goodbye to Summer 2018 with an evening of entertainment, food, and camaraderie in a wonderful outdoor setting. For final details and logistics, please check back at the bpa-paloalto.org website, expect email from bpa-news, look at *NextDoor*, and watch out for BPA street signs!

https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/depts/pln/transit/safe_routes_to_school/default.asp

Palo Alto Transportation Department

Future plans include:

Neighborhood Traffic Safety and Bicycle Boulevard Projects

https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/depts/pln/transit/transportation_projects/ntsbb2.asp

Design Guidelines and Remediation Techniques,

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[PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONTINUED]

2012 Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan,

Appendix A. Design Guidelines and Standards, Pages 197-234

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/31928>

One lesson we learn from Shakespeare is that prophecies are never certain. Individuals can influence the future if they can confront and overcome the negative aspects of human nature. Thus, it is up to us to decide how our success will affect our neighborhood and our community.

Our own Wayward Sisters have warned us about the potential negative effects of prosperity. Now we must choose whether what was once fair will become foul or if we can make what has become foul more fair.

Don't leave our destiny to the Fates. Get involved. Participate in the **Palo Alto 311** and the **Safe Routes to School Programs**. Join the Barron Park Association and support your local community organizations to let your voice be heard today.

WE NEED DONKEY HANDLERS!



The Barron Park Donkey Project is looking for Donkey Handlers. We are especially in need of people with time at midday and/or on Sundays late morning for walking. Information and an application form can be found on our website: barronparkdonkeys.org (Volunteer tab).

Please contact Jenny Kiratli at: barronparkdonkeys@gmail.com for more information or with any questions.

A day with donkeys is always a good day!!

News from Our Neighborhood Schools

By Greta Gize Olbrich

What is going on at Gunn High School?

Congratulations to the Gunn HS Band and Orchestra ensembles on receiving Unanimous Superior Ratings at the California Music Education Association (CMEA) Festival in April. The Freshman Concert Band, Symphonic Band, Wind Ensemble, F-Period Orchestra, G-Period Orchestra, and Chamber Orchestra all played beautifully and received the highest marks possible from the four-adjudicator panel. It is extremely rare that all groups from the same school all receive the highest possible marks.

The Central Building Project at Gunn is currently underway, with the hope of having portions of it completed by October 2018. The project includes an update and expansion of the Music and Choral program spaces, as well as renovations at Spangenberg Theater (improved lobby and restrooms, and the addition of air conditioning). The project also includes a new, two-story building in place of the former library in the campus center. This building will house five new classrooms for Media Arts and Social Science programs, new facilities for Student Activities, and a Wellness Center on the second floor. The Wellness Center will include a nurse's office, guidance and counseling offices, Counseling and Support Services for Youth (CASSY), and a psychologists' office surrounding a core of support spaces.

A new principal at Juana Briones

Hoover Elementary School Principal, Katy Bimpson will replace Principal Tom Jacobowsky as the principal at Juana Briones Elementary School. Tom is returning to teaching after two years at Briones.

Our middle school gets a new name

Terman Middle School will become Fletcher Middle School, after the late Palo Alto City Council Member and longtime bicycle advocate, Ellen Fletcher. The school's mascot remains the Tiger, and the school colors are still yellow and black. Terman Drive, Terman Apartments, and Terman Park will keep their names. And also, very exciting news: The Fletcher campus will get solar parking shades in the main (front) parking lot this summer.

Barron Park Elementary School says goodbye...

Sadly, Barron Park Elementary School lost one of its most beloved teachers this year. Larry Wong passed away in January after a sudden illness. Larry was a longtime PAUSD educator and a fifth-grade teacher in Room 18 at BPES for 20 years. On May 20, a few hundred friends and former students joined his family to share stories and memories at a Celebration of his life. A bench will soon be placed on the campus in his memory. So, when you come to visit the school, sit there a spell and appreciate our good life in Barron Park.

BPA Neighborhood Services / Home Business List

Look for this Link for Neighborhood Services at the BPA website: bpapaloalto.org

To list your service or home business, please send your information to:

barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com

The service provider or his/her household must be a current member of the BPA. If under 18, please include contact information for a parent or guardian.

NEW! Neighbor Services

Neighbor Services

Various services offered by residents of Barron Park

Barron Park Association Annual Meeting, March 18, 2018

By Markus Fromherz

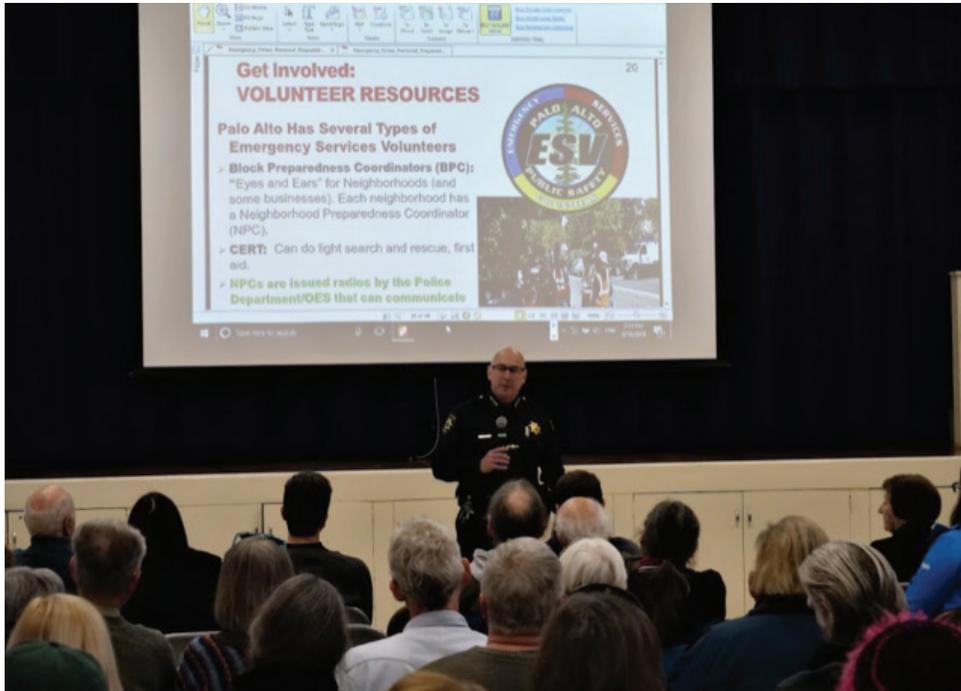


Photo by Jon Affeld

Annual Meeting, March 18: Police Chief Ron Jonsen presents an overview of Palo Alto Emergency Services.

The BPA held its Annual Meeting on Sunday afternoon, March 18, at Barron Park Elementary School. The meeting hosted presentations by Palo Alto's new Police Chief Ron Jonsen and our own City Council Member Lydia Kou, but this year we expanded the program after the main events by inviting neighborhood organizations to set up tables and present their projects. About 70 people attended the meeting. It was by all measures a great success.

BPA President Jon Affeld started the meeting off by giving an overview of the Barron Park Association. The BPA can be proud of its many events, regular communication channels (including this Newsletter), advocacy efforts, and sponsorships. Events planned for this year include our iconic May Fête, Movie Night in August, a Fall Festival, and more. He also emphasized that our May Fête is entirely a volunteer effort, requiring weeks of advance planning. Please consider joining us for May Fête 2019. Also, if traffic issues in Barron Park are becoming increasingly important to you, please consider joining the BPA Board, along with its Traffic and

Streets Committee. (Write to Jon Affeld at: president@bpapaloalto.org)

Barron Park resident and Palo Alto City Council Member Lydia Kou started the main presentations with a thorough overview of emergency preparedness and safety. She reminded us of the need to be self-sufficient after a major emergency, such as an earthquake, and talked about the emergency preparedness programs sponsored by the City of Palo Alto. You can learn a lot about how to prepare and how to react at this site: www.cityofpaloalto.org/THIRA. Lydia encouraged neighbors to volunteer as Block Preparedness Coordinators, Community Emergency Response Team volunteers, or in another capacity. If the big earthquake happens, this can make a huge difference to families individually and to the community. Lydia is also planning to revive her outreach service this year, providing tips and alerts on a regular basis, as she has done so effectively in the past.

Next, Palo Alto Police Chief Robert Jonsen talked about his past experience and first two months on the job in Palo Alto. Jonsen

has local roots, but worked for many years in Southern California, before he came back to the Bay Area, first in Menlo Park and now Palo Alto. He complimented the community on its high level of participation in City affairs and then talked about three priorities: school safety (where they are working on new safety plans), traffic (bringing back more strategic enforcement based on data and neighborhood input), and crime (in particular car and commercial burglaries). He provided some concrete tips, especially on the latter (e.g., how to address package theft). Jonsen gave an interesting, engaging, and at times funny speech. I think we're lucky to have him as Palo Alto's new police chief.

To round out the main presentations, Dick Placone provided an update on the Bol Park Pathway Committee's recent work and plans, and Darrell Gentry, CEO of Nextlevel Networks, gave an overview of new options for high-speed internet access in the neighborhood.

Finally, more than a dozen local organizations and businesses presented their projects at tables around the room. These included Emergency Preparedness, Cool Block, Bol Park Donkeys, Blossom Birth, Canopy, Sky Posse, Save Palo Alto Groundwater, and United Neighbors. Many attendees stayed around for at least a half hour after the close of the meeting and had engaging discussions around the room. We had ample opportunity for socializing and sampling the potluck food, another winning element of this year's annual meeting!

Mark Your 2018 Calendars!

Barron Park Senior Lunches

Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m.

August 14, October 9, December 11

Corner Bakery Café
3375 El Camino Real, Palo Alto

All are welcome to join & enjoy these community get-togethers.

No reservations needed.

?: Peter Mueller (650) 856-1255 or
pklausm@mac.com

BOL PARK MAY FÊTE 2018—A GRAND DAY



Except where noted, all photos by Douglas Kreitz, Palo Alto History Museum.



Photo: Myrna Rochester



FOR THE 40TH ANNUAL MAYPOLE DANCE!

By John W. King, Volunteer Coordinator

A BIG thank you goes out to all the volunteers and sponsors who helped make the 40th Annual May Fête 2018 a huge success! We had impressive attendance, the weather cooperated, the music was authentic, the BBQ and the food truck from our own Taquería El Grullense were busy, and the raffle had great prizes and new contributors! The Bounce House, Hula Hoop, Sack Race, Face Painting, and especially the Water Balloon Toss activities were a hit with the kids. The Maypole Dance went very smoothly and provided great memories for family, friends, and neighbors. This year's musical performers included Celtic Rose, Fête Musette Ensemble, and Broceliande. The Molly Dancers were back with traditional folk dance.

Community volunteers came from local Boy Scouts—Pack 52 and Troop 52—, from Gunn High School, the Board of the Barron Park Association, and included a host of local volunteers. They lent a hand with setup, selling food and raffle tickets, preparing food, taking BPA memberships, monitoring the Bounce House and other kids' activities, and protecting the Maypole ribbons! Community informational tables included Barron Park History, Cool Block, Emergency Prep, Emergency Services, the new Palo Alto History Museum, Zero Waste, and Cub Scout Pack 52.

This year's event was purely a volunteer effort. I would like to extend special thanks to BPA Board members and the following volunteers for stepping up to help:

Larry Breed coordinated and prepared the Maypole ribbons,

Rich Elder, with help from **myself**, **Darren Ashworth**, **Tom DuBois**, **Sam King**, and several anonymous attendees, constructed the stage, directed the pole setup, raised the floral basket, and later disassembled the Maypole, long after most people were gone,

Gary Breitbard organized the music and the audience folk dancing,

Alan Winston returned as he has for many years to call the dances,

Hassan Bordbari of Barron Park Florist donated and assembled the flower basket,

Copy Factory donated printing services,

Doug Graham, Barron Park Historian, provided the Barron Park History display,

Lisa Berkowitz Landers, Membership Chair, sold tickets and collected funds during the event,

Tom DuBois handled the BBQ stand,

Gwen Luce, BPA Board member, distributed May Fête programs during the event and sold a record number of raffle tickets!

Myrna Rochester and **Gwen Luce** canvassed for sponsorships and raffle prizes,

Peter Mueller, Board Member, shopped for the food and drink supplies,

Jon Affeld and **Jaya Pandey** organized volunteer help,

Our **Barron Park donkeys**—**Perry** and **Jenny**—and their handlers greeted all the attendees, especially the kids.

Thanks to this year's ad sponsors:

Gwen Luce, Coldwell Banker Real Estate

John W. King, Keller Williams Realty

Cal Preserving Wood Care Restoration

Ernie's Wines and Liquors

Jim Davis Valero Automotive

Chili Chase 5k Run—Karen Saxena

Family Fashion Cuts

Creekside Inn

Celia's Restaurant

Taquería El Grullense

Raffle prizes provided by:

Creekside Inn—2-Night weekend stay

Driftwood Deli—Gift Certificate

Taquería El Grullense—Gift Certificate

Fish Market Restaurant—Gift Certificate

Great American Framing Company—two Gift Certificates

Celia's Restaurant—two Gift Certificates

Blossom Birth—one Lifetime Membership and a Gift Certificate

Wilby Optical—Gift Certificate





BPA ADDRESS REMINDERS

■ For the **BPA Home Page**, the **BPA Newsletter Archive**, and to Join or Renew your **BPA Membership**, go to:
bpapaloalto.org

■ To confirm your **BPA Membership Status**, write to: Lisa Berkowitz Landers:
barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com

■ Contact the **BPA President**, Jon Affeld, at: president@bpapaloalto.org

■ Contact the **BPA Treasurer**, John W. King, at: johnwadeking@gmail.com

■ Write to our **BPA Newsletter Editor**, Myrna Rochester, at: mrbpa@sonic.net or newsletter@bpapaloalto.org

■ Contact our **BPA Business Liaison**, Paul Yang, at: pabloyang@yahoo.com

■ Reach our **Welcoming Committee Chair**, Gwen Luce, at: gluce@cbtnorcal.com

■ For information on our **Emergency Services Volunteer Program**, write to Maurice Green: mauryg3@comcast.net or Lydia Kou: lydiakou@gmail.com

■ To contact the **BPA Babysitter List**, as a provider or if you need childcare: barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com

■ To join the **BPA Services/Home Business List**, or to look for a service, write to:

barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com

You will also find a link to the **BPA Services/Home Business List** on our BPA Website at bpapaloalto.org/2017/09/01/barronpark-area-service-list-september-2017

■ Contact the **BPA "Meet and Learn" Activities Chair**, Catherine Hendricks, at: frenchrealtor@gmail.com

■ Reach our **BPA Historian**, Douglas L. Graham, at: dgrahampaca@gmail.com

■ Contact the chair of the **Bol Park Future Plan Committee**, Richard Placone, at: rcplacone@sbcglobal.net

■ To donate for the care of **Bol Park's donkeys, Perry and Jenny**, visit the new, dedicated Barron Park Donkey webpage at: barronparkdonkeys.org and follow the instructions!

■ To donate to the **Bol Park Native Plant Restoration Project**: Write a check payable to "Friends of the Palo Alto Parks (FOPAP), for the Bol Park Corner Restoration Project," and mail to: FOPAP, 425 Grant Ave., Suite 27, Palo Alto, CA 94306

Please consider volunteering time or expertise to the **Bol Park Native Plant Restoration Project**. Contact Rich Elder at rich.e.elder@gmail.com

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jon Affeld, President
John W. King, Vice President
Markus Fromherz, Secretary
John W. King, Treasurer
Todd Collins
Richard Elder
Maurice Green
Christian Kalar
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Jaya Pandey
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■
Committee / Activity Chairs

Business Liaison: Paul Yang

Communications: Myrna Rochester

Email Lists: Richard Elder

Environment: Jaya Pandey

Events: Vacant

History: Douglas L. Graham

May Fête: John W. King

Membership: Lisa Berkowitz Landers

Neighborhood Safety & Emergency Preparedness: Maurice Green, Lydia Kou

Parks & Creeks: Christian Kalar

Bol Park Future Plan Committee:
Richard Placone

Bol Park California Native Plot:
Richard Elder

Schools Liaison: Todd Collins

Seniors Liaison: Peter K. Mueller

Traffic & Streets: Vacant

Zoning & Land Use: Lydia Kou

Welcoming: Gwen Luce

■
BPA Board meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday of most months at 7:15 P.M. Neighbors are welcome.

BPA Community Happy Hours are held the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 5:30 P.M.

For Meeting and Happy Hour locations write to president@bpapaloalto.org
www.bpapaloalto.org

Collaborative Efforts to Restore Habitat Along Bol Park

By Melanie Cross and Richard Elder



Photo by Leon Rochester

Sages and California Fuschia: a section of Bol Park's California Native Plantings, at Laguna and Matadero Avenues.

Most of us living in Barron Park walk, jog, or bike in Bol Park and along the bike path past Strawberry Hill. Many of us look at the weeds and wish the landscape were different. But in fact for decades, efforts have been made to reintroduce native plants in this area. There is a history and enthusiasm that just keeps going!

A number of wonderful trees and shrubs grow along the bike path, put in when it was first designed and built. In addition, twenty years ago, neighbors joined together and found community funds to install a plot of California native plants at Matadero and Laguna. A small group has continued to maintain the garden, helped by modest grants and individual donations. (You may donate through Friends of the Palo Alto Parks; send a check to FOPAP, 425 Grant Ave., Suite 27, Palo Alto, CA 94306.)

After the VA removed the oak trees for their current construction projects, we realized those trees had provided that stretch of open space with a bit of nature, calming our jangled nervous systems and offering food and shelter for the small creatures that make up a part of the diversity of life here. In response to that loss, residents

and Acterra Stewardship (now Grassroots Ecology) planted a number of trees in that area. Grassroots Ecology has also planted several small plots of native shrubs and smaller plants near the creek, between the bridge and the grass at Bol Park, giving sustenance for native insects and birds.

Native habitat is also of interest to people and students. Some of us find we are really interested in having that bit of nature right here in the neighborhood! Residents dream of creating butterfly habitat and of replacing the nonnative annual grasses (that must be mowed several times seasonally to prevent fires), and of seeing plants growing that might have been on this land before it became Palo Alto. You may have already noticed the recent native milkweed plantings along the bike path from the bridge to Matadero. We can't have Monarch butterflies without them! Other neighbors have taken on the job of removing invasive pests such as stinkwort and thistles before those take over large portions of the land.

Other plantings have been dreamed of and sweated over, but unfortunately not everything has lasted. Even drought-tolerant trees and plants need to be watered the first few dry seasons before their roots are estab-

lished; smaller plants can be destroyed by untimely mowing or smothered by weeds. Some plantings fall victim to other projects meant to improve our park and pathways. Only by combining our efforts can we be effective stewards of this land.

Eleven of us met this spring to figure out how we can work toward common goals: to effectively plan, plant, and maintain these projects in order to create lasting change in our local environment. We shared a lot of ideas, knowledge, great enthusiasm, and hope that even more Barron Park residents will be interested in joining forces with us. This new BPA committee will mostly communicate by email, with occasional meetings as needed. Richard Elder has volunteered to chair and has created a Google Group for our use.

If you are interested in joining us, please contact Richard Elder at rich.e.elder@gmail.com or Melanie Cross at melanie@pcross.com

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Barron Park Association
724 Barron Avenue
Palo Alto, California 94306

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A CELEBRATION OF LIFE FOR LARRY WONG

By Maryanne Welton



Barron Park Elementary School's fifth-grade teacher, Larry Wong (1961-2018). Photo courtesy of Barron Park Elementary School

Hundreds of former and current students, families, and staff gathered in the Reading Garden on Saturday, May 20, 2018, to honor the memory of Barron Park Elementary School's fifth-grade teacher, Larry Wong. Larry, who passed away after a brief illness last January, worked as a teacher in the Palo Alto Unified School District for over 20 years. He was one of the first teachers hired when BPES reopened as a neighborhood school in 1998.

As the only fifth-grade teacher at that time, he was instrumental in developing many of the school's norms and practices that continue to this day. He helped create Constellation Groups and team-teaching for groups of students from every grade level to nurture relationships with every student in the school. He took the time to greet each student personally every morning when they arrived in class. All of Larry's students followed a list of the "Essential 44" to help develop personal interactions that were kind, respectful, and supportive. Current fifth-grade students opened the ceremony by performing the song "Seasons

of Love" and telling stories of their favorite times with Larry. As former students, principals, parents, staff, and family members shared their memories, one theme stood out: Larry balanced his love of teaching with a deep devotion to his family. Many spoke of the multidisciplinary projects he created for his students, remembered many years later—from raising and releasing steelhead trout to building archaeological digs, creating crime scenes, and sending stuffed animals around the world with travelers so students could track their progress on a world map.

One of the lasting memories each student shared was receiving a letter upon graduation from high school that they had written to themselves in Larry's class. Larry saved the letters for seven years and mailed them to each student at that important step in their lives so they could reflect on who they had been then and what their dreams were now. All that Larry did as an educator attests to his thoughtfulness, passion, nurturing, and insightful teaching style. He was a lifelong learner, constantly striving to improve how he imparted knowledge to his students and how to connect with

them. Many described him as funny, open, curious, and respectful.

The ceremony closed with touching tributes from Larry's daughter, his brother, and his mother. Larry's BPES community united with his family for a true celebration of his life by honoring his memory. We will all remember Larry as an inspirational teacher who touched the lives of many in Barron Park.

FALL 2018, BPA Newsletter Deadline—Tuesday, September 4, 2018!

To All Our Valued Contributors:

Please submit articles and drafts (preferably in a Word file), along with any photos or illustrations (separate from text), by **Tuesday, September 4, 2018**, to Myrna Rochester, newsletter@bpapalato.org or mbrbpa@sonic.net

If your Fall idea is still a query (for an article, report, update, interview, announcement, review, anecdote, or artist's page...), please contact Myrna in advance. Our Fall 2018 issue will be mailed late September to current members of the Barron Park Association. Announcements, including back-to-school activities, should be for events scheduled **after the third week of September.**

EMAIL LISTS

The BPA has four email listservs: *bpa-news*, *bpa-issues*, *bpa-misc* and *bpa-jobpostings*. They are hosted at Google Groups. To join the lists, go to the BPA Website: bpapalato.org and click on the tab near the top of the web page (under the logo): "BPA Email Lists." This link provides information about each list and an easy way to subscribe to one or more of them.

THE NEW PALO ALTO HISTORY MUSEUM

By Laura Bajuk, representing PAHM

Palo Alto's impact is global and historic; it's time for us to have a museum to share it. In 2019, Palo Alto will be celebrating its 125th anniversary; there couldn't be a more meaningful way to commemorate this date than to inaugurate the new Palo Alto History Museum.

More than a traditional museum, the Palo Alto History Museum (PAHM) will focus on our stories of innovation, creativity, and community. It will bring to life Palo Alto's long legacy of social, political, cultural, educational, environmental, and technological advances. A community museum dedicated to valuing and sharing the City's history, it will establish a much-needed sense of relevance, connection, and continuity.

With Stanford University as the backdrop, generations have taken Palo Alto's "magic carpet" and created global thinking, products, and corporations that continue to impact lives worldwide. Palo Altans have made the impossible, possible. Modern-day innovation was born of elements as diverse as the founding of Hewlett Packard in the 1930s and the countercultures of the '60s and '70s.

The world is changing rapidly, and we are more connected to each other than we've ever been. Possibilities that were the stuff of science fiction only a decade ago are now at our fingertips. How will we continue to learn and lead? PAHM has the extraordinary opportunity to teach the lessons of our past, embrace our responsibility and passion for the present, and drive a future that has social impact and creates thoughtful and meaningful innovation. PAHM will connect, engage, and inspire. Together we can create a museum that will:

- be a vibrant center of culture and community to explore and share experiences that shaped our city as a place of compassion, creativity, enjoyment, forward thinking, and inspiration

- serve as a vital platform connecting people from around the world
- be accessible and relevant—a place dedicated to enjoyment and fun for all visitors exploring the past and imagining the future
- support a stronger and more connected community

The PAHM is built on the foundations that have made our city a global reference: our values, dreams, vision, collaboration, sustainability, diversity, and innovation.

With half of the \$20 million campaign in place, the Museum board's next goal is meeting a challenge from the Palo Alto City Council to raise \$1.75 million by November 30, 2018. If this goal is met, the Council will release existing historic preservation funding towards construc-

tion. Community members are invited to join in to help create a museum that presents our diverse stories, so that we may better influence our future. Learn more at paloaltohistorymuseum.org

A community effort, the Palo Alto History Museum is supported and endorsed by:

- The City of Palo Alto
- The Stanford Historical Society
- The Stanford University Libraries
- The Woman's Club of Palo Alto
- The Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce
- The Palo Alto Housing Corporation
- The Palo Alto Historical Association
- The Museum of American Heritage
- Canopy



In the heart of Palo Alto's historic downtown in Heritage Park at 300 Homer Avenue, the City-owned Roth Building is on the National Register of Historic Places and is part of the Homer Avenue Historic District. Named for one of the founding members of the Palo Alto Medical Clinic Foundation, for which it was built in 1932, the Birge Clark-designed structure will be sustainably rehabilitated into a first-rate museum while preserving its historic features. Photo courtesy of Palo Alto History Museum.

TWO RAILROADS RAN THROUGH HERE

A Story in Two Parts

By Doug Graham, Barron Park Historian

PART II—Commuting and Excursion Trips

What Did Part I Cover?

Part I of this story, published here in Spring 2018, described where the train tracks ran, the reasons for the railroads being laid out through the old Barron Estate, and the tie-in with the founding of the town of Los Altos by Paul Shoup.

Operations of the Peninsular Railway

By 1919, the Peninsular Railway Company of California (PRCC) had increased the number of trips, including 34 one-way trips on the section that ran through the Barron Estate. That was the year the Barron Estate was sold to Driscoll and Reiter, who began subdividing it for small berry farms. After the red spider mites ruined the Barron Park strawberry fields in the 1920s, the small farms were generally replanted to fruit trees, mostly apricots and pears.

On October 1, 1921, a new daily schedule called for hourly runs northbound from San Jose, from 6:40 a.m. to 7:25 p.m., with additional cars at 9:25 and 11:25 p.m. Southbound from Palo Alto the hourly service went from 7:45 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., with added cars at 10:20 p.m. and 12:20 a.m., plus a 6:55 a.m. run on Sundays and holidays. Most PRCC cars connected with steam trains at Palo Alto. At the peak of its expansion in 1924, the Peninsula Railway had 80 miles of lines and its companion, the San Jose Railroads, operated another 46 miles, for a total of 126 miles of interurban tracks in the Santa Clara Valley.

During the 1920s Barron Park became home to about 100 families. Probably half were engaged, at least to some extent, in small-scale intensive agriculture. Most families, however, had a wage earner or salaried person who commuted to work in Mayfield, Palo Alto, Stanford, or elsewhere, a few even to downtown San Francisco. Obviously, there was a growing potential market for a new railroad stop somewhere between Alta Mesa (at Arastradero Road) and Mayfield (now the California Avenue district).

Passengers traveling through our neighborhood would have seen berry patches, tomato

fields, and apricot and prune orchards being laid out. They would have observed the construction of tidy cottages along Laguna Avenue and on Roble Ridge. In the late 1930s, they would have watched the activities of the burgeoning Cornelis Bol family, which had acquired property on both sides of the line west of Matadero Creek.

Barron Park Strawberries Shipped by Railroad

In his oral history, George Fitzgerald remembers that when his family arrived in the 1920s, most of the land in Barron Park between Military Way and the railroad tracks was planted to strawberries. Mr. Strain of Strain's Dairy owned much of the land, leasing it out to Japanese-American tenant farmers. He said that the Southern Pacific (SPRR) had a spur track "at the Palo Alto Railroad Station" where they loaded strawberries into express refrigerator cars for shipment to the East Coast. He is probably referring to the spur at the Sutter Packing Company on Park Boulevard in Mayfield (the building now occupied by Fry's Electronics). In any case, many, if not most, of those strawberries came from Barron Park growers operating under the guidance of Driscoll and Reiter, whose Watsonville-based company continues in business today as the well-known Driscoll's Inc. Today Driscoll's packs Santa Cruz County berries and imports others from Mexico and South America.

George Fitzgerald believed that there were six commuter trains per day to and from San Francisco in the 1920s and '30s. He says the club car was "exclusively for the use of executives who got on at Los Altos"; it was discontinued during World War II.

Flag Stops

In the early twentieth century, "flag stops" were routinely established between regular stations on commuter railroads for the convenience of residents of thinly populated areas where the expected traffic was inadequate to justify building a station. There would usually be a small shelter with a bench seat

for passengers waiting for the train. A stick with a small flag was stored on a shelf. When the train approached, the would-be passenger stood by the track and waved the flag to stop the train.

"Neal Station" for Barron Park Commuters

Barron Park became a flag stop on the railroad around 1933. Neal Station is shown on one of the older USGS topographic maps. That was the year the local "improvement association" (a forerunner of the Barron Park Association) succeeded in getting the County to build a bridge across Matadero Creek at Laguna Avenue, eliminating the previous path along the creek bank and ford where La Calle Court stands opposite Laguna Court today. Ernest Johnson remembered that when they laid out the new stretch of Laguna Avenue through the Gough property (later the Bol family "donkey pasture," and now Bol Park), the railroad put in a flag stop where Laguna Avenue ends at Matadero Avenue. The flag stop was usually called a "station" by Barron Parkers and by 1957 by the SPRR itself. The station was named for James H. and Bee Neal, who owned about 11 acres in two parcels on both sides of the creek below (northeast of) the previous winding course of Laguna and Matadero Avenues. Josina Bol described the station as very small, just a shelter with a built-in bench, painted yellow. (See Illustration G, an unidentified woman standing across the street from the Neal Station shelter.) It was very close to the tracks, at the south corner of the railroad-Matadero Avenue crossing, where our volunteer-tended native plant



Illustration G: "Neal Station" flag stop passenger shelter. Probably taken in the 1930s. Woman is unidentified.



Illustration H: A Stanford-University of California Big Game Special waits until the game is over on November 23, 1951, before pulling back onto the main line to load fans. Photo from *Prune Country Railroadng*, by Norman W. Holmes.

garden is today. If this station was in fact created as late as 1933, it had a short life as a PRCC stop; the days of the electric cars ended in 1934. However, it continued as a SPRR commuter stop until the Los Gatos cutoff was abandoned in 1964. The shelter was removed when the SPRR removed the tracks, leaving behind the “Railroad Crossing” (big X) sign from Matadero Avenue. The sign was later rescued and is now preserved in the yard of Marilyn and Irv Yalom on Matadero Hill.

Barron Park Commuters

Most of the Barron Park commuters in the 1930s and ‘40s were men, but Josina Bol recalled that Miss Calderwood of Roble Ridge who worked in San Francisco took the train from Barron Park. Mr. Sherman, a lawyer, also took the train. There were others whom Josina did not know. According to Michael Morrison, Mr. Sherman’s son Roger M. Sherman II, a mechanical engineer, also worked in San Francisco and took the train from Neal Station.

“Alta Mesa Station”

Alta Mesa, another flag stop near the cemetery on Arastradero Road, was likely established before Neal Station. Conveniently located on one of the main roads in the area, it may have served more passengers. It would have served residents of the neighborhoods along Arastradero Road now known as Green Acres I and II,

Greater Miranda, Esther Clark Park, and Palo Alto Hills. According to oral information provided to me by rail fan Eric Struck, the Alta Mesa Station had a more substantial shelter than Neal. It still exists and has apparently been incorporated into the rear (facing Foothill Expressway) of the large house at the intersection of Miranda Avenue and Arastradero Road.

Special-Excursion Trains

The railroad did more than haul passengers and freight. There were numerous special-excursion trains for a variety of purposes. During the warmer months many groups arranged picnic trains to private or public parks such as Congress Springs, Alum Rock, and Big Basin. There were convention trains for the Shriners and other groups. When the Republican Party nominated Herbert Hoover for president in 1928, special trains brought the SRO audience to Stanford Stadium to hear his acceptance speech.

The “Big Game” Trains

The excursion trains of greatest interest to Barron Park, however, were those bringing football fans to the stadium in odd-numbered years when Stanford hosted

the annual Big Game against the University of California. The first of these was on November 13, 1909, when the PRCC was able to roll interurban cars right up to the stadium on the “Toonerville Trolley” branch spur. As Charles S. McCaleb says in *Tracks, Tires and Wires*:

For the next two decades, every Fall afternoon saw city and interurban cars rolling up to the bleachers jammed with fans from Palo Alto, San Jose, Los Gatos and intermediate points. At game’s end the cars stood ready to whisk them home. For the fans these were days of great merriment. For the Peninsular, which pressed into duty all its available equipment, they were a headache but also a great moneymaker.

Later the Big Game trains would begin to make a bigger impression on Barron Park residents. The SP ran trains from San



Illustration I: This SPRR passenger train stopped at “Neal Station” must be a commuter train (not a parked “Big Game” train), because it is blocking Matadero Avenue.

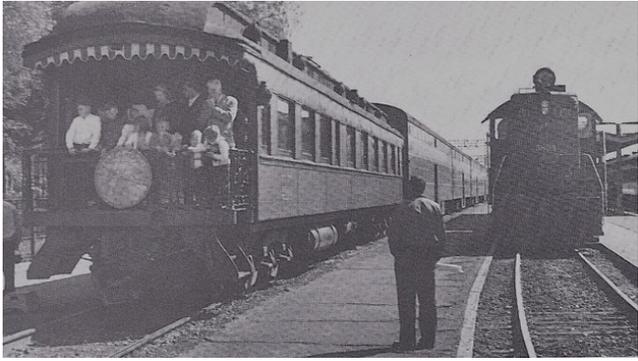


Illustration J: This is the “Ferroequinologist” observation car on the Blossom Valley Tour, March 24, 1963. Note the double-deck gallery cars behind it in the photo. Over 800 passengers paid \$2 for a round-trip train ride and a look at the dwindling orchards, plums and apricots in bloom. This was the last-ever Blossom ride. Photo from *Prune Country Railroading*, by Norman W. Holmes.

Francisco and Berkeley for the game. After depositing their fans at the Embarcadero Road crossing close to the stadium, each empty train proceeded to the ‘wye’ at Park Boulevard where Fry’s Electronics is today, and then backed down the little-used Los Gatos cutoff to make room for the next one. Trains were “stacked” on the Barron Park stretch of the line until it was time to pick up fans after the game. As many as 16,000 fans rode to the game this way. For instance, on November 21, 1953, there were ten trains in all, eight from San Francisco with 16-18 cars each and two from Berkeley with 17 cars each. Several longtime Barron Park residents who made oral history tapes in the 1970s and ‘80s spoke of seeing the trains lined up along Roble Ridge in the 1930s, ‘40s, and ‘50s. Josina Bol on Roble Ridge remembered that the neighborhood kids would find ways to climb aboard and amuse themselves by racing through the cars. (See Illustration H, SPRR Big Game Train stacked on the cutoff.)

The Blossom Trolley Trips

In Spring 1910 the PRCC instituted the famous “Blossom Trolley Trip,” a \$1 tour of the Valley when the orchards were in full bloom and the wildflowers most spectacular. Views of the Valley in bloom with Mount Hamilton in the distance were renowned. Thousands of riders enjoyed the Blossom trips and stop-offs at the Blossom Festival in Saratoga. The trip began in San Jose, passing through Campbell, Los Gatos, Saratoga, Congress Springs, Monte Vista Station, Los Altos, Mayfield, Palo Alto, and Stanford, where at the end of the day riders were treated to an hour-long tour of the campus. In 1924, the special “Blossom” trains were discontinued, and the tours

converted to a discount ticket book covering the same trip on the regularly scheduled cars. In 1962 and 1963 rail fans organized nostalgic \$2 “Blossom Valley” excursion trains on the SP, but the rapid suburbanization of the Valley meant that the days of the orchards were almost over, and those excursions were the last. The final Blossom run was the rail fan special on March 24, 1963. (See Illustration J, showing an observation car on the excursion train.)

The “Sun-Tan Specials”

Starting July 3–4, 1927, the SPRR began running a special summer excursion train from San Jose through Los Gatos to Santa Cruz. In 1929 it was dubbed the “Sun-Tan Special,” and in 1932 the point of origin was changed to San Francisco. This is when the trains began coming through the rapidly developing Barron Park neighborhood. They became so popular that several sections were added, including Oakland as an alternate starting point. On holiday weekends as many as seven sections would be run. At the height of

the Sun-Tan Special’s popularity, the wet winter of 1939–40 washed out sections of the line across the Santa Cruz Mountains, and the line was abandoned. For two more years the Sun-Tan operated via San Jose, Gilroy, and Watsonville, but World War II shortages ended them after 1941. The Santa Cruz Chamber of Commerce got the SP to start them up again in 1947, and they were highly successful through 1960. However, after 1939 they didn’t pass through Barron Park. (See Illustration K, ad and promotional photo for the Sun-Tan Specials.) Also see Illustration L, whose caption described the SPRR’s “Sun-Tan Special stopped between the Hotel Casa del Rey and the Casino and Bath House on its first journey to the Santa Cruz Boardwalk since before World War II. It is July 4, 1947, as the loaded train arrives behind double-headed SP Consolidations. A second section will bring more beachgoers.”

The End Comes for the Big Red Electric Cars

The end of the railroads came piecemeal. The spread of the automobile-based culture and economy, better roads, and finally, the Great Depression of the 1930s spelled the end of the Peninsular Railway. The PRCC was uneconomical even in the 1920s; profits were inadequate to repay the startup debts assumed by its parent company, the Southern Pacific. Service cutbacks were

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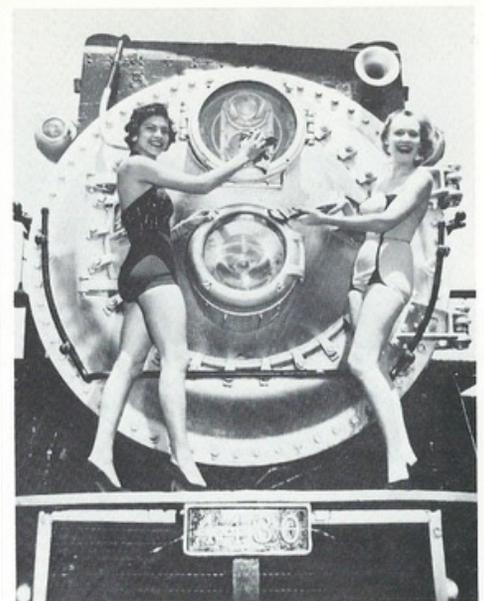
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Two bathing beauties adorn the front of 4-8-4 #4430 in a SP publicity stunt promoting the Suntan train. Let's hope the young lady on the right does not use that monkey wrench on the headlight lens. GS class engines never had it so good! (San Jose Historical Museum)

Illustration K: Photo from *Prune Country Railroading*, by Norman W. Holmes.

made on some lines as early as 1921, and conversion of routes to bus service began with Palo Alto in 1924. Fare increases helped temporarily, but the cutbacks and fare hikes led to more loss of ridership in a classic downward cycle. More and more people were buying automobiles and using them for commutes, errands, and pleasure travel. Corporate restructuring in the mid-1920s made the balance sheet look a little better for a while, but the end was clearly in sight. In 1930, as the nation slid into the Great Depression, the PRCC chose to retire its best and biggest interurban cars—those serving Barron Park. They were replaced by older, smaller, less comfortable cars, which only helped accelerate the downward trend in ridership. Chatham Forbes, in his oral history, remembered how uncomfortable the replacement cars were.

By 1933 the Peninsular was ready to call it quits. Service ended on the Mayfield-Los Altos line at midnight on October 1,

1934. Two cars, numbers 52 and 61, were preserved and could be seen through the 1980s at the California Railway Museum (Rio Vista Junction east of Fairfield in Solano County). On June 12, 1935, the PRCC was legally disincorporated and its assets, including the 17-mile long Los Gatos cutoff, reverted to the SP. The westerly track was soon taken up, and from then on our railroad was a single track served by the SPRR, which reinstated one commuter run per day to Los Gatos. A few Barron Park commuters continued to be served via the Neal Station for nearly 30 more years.

From 1934 on, the story of railroading in Barron Park is restricted to the SP's single track and its steam trains. An interesting footnote in the annals of local rail fans happened on December 21, 1958, when the Pacific Coast Daylight, northbound from Los Angeles, had to detour via the Los Gatos line to avoid a fire on the main line north of San Jose. But the steam trains were

disappearing too; they were replaced with diesels in January 1957. No more would the mournful hoot of a steam engine grace the hearing of Barron Park residents.

Living by the Tracks: Josina Bol's Memories

According to the oral history Josina Bol gave in 1977, only one commuter train per day ran in the last years of service: to San Francisco in the morning, with an evening return about 6:00 p.m. It was used mainly by commuters to San Francisco, and it always stopped at Neal Station. Heavy, noisy freights also used the line, hauling cement from the Kaiser Permanente Cement Plant in Cupertino. Excursion trains to Santa Cruz still ran on occasional Sundays.

The younger Bol children and their friends would wait for the trains to go by, and the engineers always recognized them. The trains always went slowly past the Bols' house because the stop at Neal Station was



Illustration L: Southern Pacific "Sun-Tan Special" stopped at the Hotel Casa del Rey in Santa Cruz, July 4, 1947.

so close. One time the train stopped, and Josina ran to find her children, fearing the worst, but the engineer had stopped because two of the Bols' small goats were on the track, and one of them had gone under the train (but emerged unhurt). Once, the dairy cattle found a break in the fence near their underpass, and the whole herd came out along the railroad tracks. The farmer arrived on horseback and herded them back to their pasture.

Going to School on the Steam Train

In another oral history interview, Laguna Avenue residents Lena and Ernest Johnson remembered sending their children to Sherman School in Mayfield on the electric cars. Sherman School was near the SPRR Mayfield Station, the present-day California Avenue Station. Their daughter took the train to school rather than walk because it was more fun. The "Japanese" farmer's children who lived across the street walked to school. In the primary grades, children got home around 2:30 p.m. For fourth through sixth grades, a school bus picked them up at their door to take the El Camino route to Mayfield School. When the Johnsons' children attended Jordan Junior High and Palo Alto High Schools, they walked or rode their bikes to El Camino to catch the school bus.

Ernie Johnson commuted to San Francisco during some of his early years in the neighborhood, usually driving to Mayfield Station to board the steam train in the morning. Sometimes he returned on the

5:18 p.m. train that switched to the Los Altos branch, letting him off at Neal Station. That run had a members-only club car.

The End of the Railroad

The end of rail service was anticlimactic. On March 21, 1962, the SP asked the Interstate Commerce Commission for permission to abandon six miles of Southern Pacific track from Alta Mesa south to Simla Junction in Cupertino, so that Santa Clara County could build Foothill Expressway on the right-of-way. Permission was granted, and the SP shut down service despite last-minute pleas from 170 dedicated commuters. The last commuter run was on January 27, 1964, with rail fans riding in a private observation car. The following summer, the track was removed from the Stanford Industrial Park boundary near Chimalus Drive, and south through Los Altos to the junction in Cupertino with the side track to the Kaiser Permanente limestone quarry.

From Trains to Bicycles

This was not, however, the end of the SPRR influence on our neighborhood. Around the time the tracks were removed, the Barron Park Association and the Bol family began to make plans for a park at the donkey pasture on Laguna Avenue. Phase I of Bol Park was finally dedicated in 1974, and the Association immediately began negotiations with the SP to acquire their right-of-way from Arastradero Road to the Stanford Industrial Park for a region-

ally successful, the land was granted for a nominal fee, and construction on Phase II began in 1977. The bike path design called for restoring as nearly as possible the pre-railroad contours of the land. This was most significant at "Strawberry Hill" on the Gunn High School playing fields, where 1907 fill material was scraped up to fill the cut through the hill. At this time, the cattle underpass behind 1060 McGregor Way was covered over (the underpass was later demolished and removed in 1992 to allow construction of the underground box culvert for the flood control diversion project). The bike path construction was finished and dedicated in early 1978.

Gone Forever

Today the railroads exist only in historic documents and in the fading memories of a few longtime Barron Park residents. Of course, they also live on in their legacy—the wonderful right-of-way that was preserved and used for our regional bike path.

This story originally ran in the Fall 1999 issue of the BPA Newsletter and reprinted virtually unchanged in Spring 2006. The present version (Parts I and II) has about 30% new text and additional illustrations. If you have information to add to this account of our railroads, please contact Doug Graham at (650) 493-0689, by snail mail at 984 Ilima Way, Palo Alto, CA, 94306, or by email at dgrahampaca@gmail.com

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR WILD NEIGHBORS

Is That an Alligator Lizard or a Fence Lizard?

By Jeralyn Moran

Ask your cat. For better or for worse, both lizards are worthy targets for our domestic felines.

Lizards are reptiles, a group of animals that have dry, scaly skin and typically lay soft-shelled (leathery) eggs on land. You might know the names of other reptiles like crocodiles, turtles, tortoises, and snakes. Reptiles have been here on Earth for over 300 million years! They evolved with no 'internal heater' like we humans have, so these fascinating animals have developed the capacity to vary their me-

tabolism as needed, slowing down at night or in colder times to conserve energy. They physically move their location to adjust their body temperature as needed.

There are approximately twice as many reptile species alive today as there are mammal species. Why do you suppose that is? Part of this is our craving to categorize our world: We humans love putting things into definable boxes and those boxes into other boxes. There is even an official name for this field of biological research, *taxonomy*. The natural world did not ask for all

these categories and names, but we did.

There was a large extinction on Earth about 66 million years ago (termed the close of the Cretaceous Period), when large reptiles (we label these as dinosaurs) died out, leaving mainly sea turtles and what we now call birds. Humans showed up on Earth after this time. We are currently in what is called 'the Sixth Extinction,' where very biodiverse habitats of plants and animals (coral reefs, rainforests) are in the midst of rapid degradation due to human overpopulation and consequent overconsumption.



This is a typical Western Fence Lizard. Source: <https://berkeleynature.wordpress.com/tag/western-fence-lizard/>

Let's get acquainted with two of our reptile neighbors:

Description, Behavior, and Diet

Western Fence Lizard

An adult Western Fence Lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*), informally called the blue-belly lizard, has a body that is about 3 to 3 1/2 inches long, with a tail of equal length. S/he is fairly cryptic in color on top, but has beautiful blue coloring on the belly, with a fringe of yellow near the blue patches. You might see one sunning on a rock, up on a fence post, or along a path. This exposure makes him/her vulnerable to predators, but s/he has very quick reflexes and can run away and/or bite in defense. This lizard is most active during the daytime (termed "diurnal"). S/he eats spiders and other insects, mainly beetles, grasshoppers, and mosquitoes. California is the Western Fence Lizard's main home, but it can be found up into Oregon, south-western Idaho, out as far as Utah, even on some of the islands off the coast of both California and Baja California.

These lizards will also freeze to blend in with their environment. I have memories of fashioning a slip knot at the thinnest end of a long piece of bendable grass, using it to sneak up on a "blue belly." I would capture it around the neck. If you are lucky enough to catch one, enjoy a short visit... then let your captive go.

Alligator Lizard

An Alligator Lizard (*Elgaria multicarinata*) can be up to 7 inches in length, with a tail of about 5 inches. This lizard has a more slender body and varies quite a bit in color; it can be brown, gray, green, or yellow-

ish on top, often with red patches on the middle of the back.

The Alligator Lizard has a longer snout and relatively shorter legs compared to the Fence Lizard. Usually there are dark cross-bands on the back, sides, and tail, lined with white spots. A band of smaller scales separates the larger scales on the back and stomach, which creates a fold along each side; these folds allow the lizard's body to expand to hold food or eggs.

In Barron Park you will most likely see the "Southern" subspecies, found from Baja all the way up to the state of Washington. Especially in dry weather, this lizard hangs out in moist areas.

S/he eats spiders and insects like the Fence Lizard, but also eats other—usually smaller—lizards. In this, success involves hunting at sunrise/sundown when the unsuspecting 'prey' lizards are resting.

The common name "Alligator Lizard" is a reference to the head which looks alligator-like, but mainly because the back and belly scales of these lizards are reinforced by bone, just as in alligators.

Threats to Native Lizards

- Habitat loss due to human encroachment: roadways, urban development
- Predators like snakes, Loggerhead shrikes, Red-tailed hawks and domestic cats
- Fire, increasing incidence due to climate change



The underside of the Western Fence Lizard with blue and gold coloring. Source: http://web.sonoma.edu/cei/prairie/prairie_desc/animals.shtml



An example of the Southern Alligator Lizard; their coloring varies. Source: http://library.sandiegozoo.org/factsheets/alligator_lizard/alligatorlizard.htm

FUN FACTS

- Lizards are known for growing their tail back if it is lost (usually due to a predator trying to catch them). The wriggling tail left behind distracts predators. Special muscle tissue stops excessive blood loss, and the lost vertebrae are eventually replaced with cartilage. Once in a while, an incomplete break grows back to form a forked tail.
- The Fence Lizard can change color from light gray or tan to nearly jet black; this is probably for thermo-regulating (adjusting their body temperature) as they bask in the sun or move to a shady spot—not always for camouflaging themselves.
- Male lizards sometimes do "push-ups" to look "tough" when defending their territory or showing off to attract a mate.
- The Fence Lizard has been found at 10,000 ft. above sea level.
- Have you ever seen a tick on a lizard? Scientists have found that the incidence of Lyme disease is lower where Western Fence Lizards live. When the ticks that carry Lyme disease feed on the lizard's blood (which is common, especially around the ear holes/neck area), a protein in the lizard's blood kills the bacterium that causes Lyme disease—and the infection in the tick's gut is eliminated!
- An Alligator Lizard lives from 10 to 15 years.

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