



# BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

John King, BPA President



**A**s we pass 3 1/2 months since the beginning of the shelter-in-place order, I have been so inspired by the community spirit that has developed throughout our beautiful Barron Park neighborhood. In the midst of the pandemic, the Black Lives Matter Movement, with its nationwide and global protests, has gripped us all in discussions of social injustice and demand for reform in the use of police force.

Barron Park itself has a diverse population; one source of pride is the Buena Vista Mobile Home Park. Buena Vista has become a prime example of the support the community

gives toward those most in need within the neighborhood. Recently, a continuing call for support of Buena Vista residents – many of whom have lost jobs – has turned into an amazing amount of goods, Edu-Kits, and art supplies! Edu-Kits for the youngest residents came from the Karat School Project (<https://theksp.org/>) and art supplies were donated by the Palo Alto Art Center Foundation. An ongoing supply of groceries and other provisions, in kind and as gift cards, has been spearheaded by Karen Ratzlaff and projects at Palo Alto Vineyard Church. At Buena Vista, volunteers from the Residents Association sort and distribute these items. Last month, the BPA Board voted to provide

\$1,500 toward support for local residents as follows: \$500 in groceries for Buena Vista, purchased at Barron Park Market and \$500 toward this year's BPA Senior Lunches, catered by Driftwood Market. In addition, a total of \$500 in gift cards is being distributed to Barron Park residents who apply and are identified as in need of support.

These funds became available because several of our normal activities such as May Fête, the Annual Meeting, Movie Night, and the Ice Cream Social had to be canceled or postponed. PLUS, many of you, our generous BPA members, have renewed your memberships and increased your donations as well!

The BPA continues to meet as a Board via Zoom and has had very active and meaningful conversations as well as interesting guests and presentations. As you read this Newsletter, please consider joining or renewing (membership materials are inside), and think about what you might like to get involved in. Many thanks go around to all.

Stay healthy and safe and perhaps we will see each other on a walk! Get in touch anytime at: [president@bpapaloalto.org](mailto:president@bpapaloalto.org)



28 "Easter donkeys" appeared in Bol Park as a fun diversion for kids of all ages during the initial shelter in place order. Execution of the hunt and photos by Jenny Kiratli.

### View the Newsletter in Full Color!

Please go to <http://bpapaloalto.org/bpa-newsletter/> to read this Summer 2020 issue – and also our Archive of past BPA Newsletters – in full color and with clickable links. Your little screen is an easy way to review past activities in the 'hood and catch up on issues you may have missed.

Thanks!  
The Editors

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# Buena Vista Meets the Challenge

By Sky Runser

**T**he Buena Vista Mobile Home Park (BVMHP) in Barron Park is home to approximately 100 families – around 400 residents. Many households are three-generational, and the successful legal efforts by residents and supporters to remain in their homes has built a strong community.

When the COVID-19 shelter-in-place orders were issued, the impact upon families in BVMHP was immediate and enormous. “More than 50% of the families were out of a job within days if not hours,” recalls Maria Martinez, President of the BVMHP Residents Association. “But during the legal battle years we had learned a lot about being strong and being prepared.” Preparedness, relationships, and the positive aspects of viral communications became pivotal in responding successfully to the challenges posed by the pandemic.

Maria had gotten to know Malia Pires through community work in Mountain View and Sunnyvale. In one of the Zoom *Cafecitos* meetings, Malia and Maria discussed community goals, hopes, and concerns affecting their low-income communities. Through Malia, Maria met Pastor Ben Videtich of Palo Alto Vineyard Church. The church and the local nonprofit Reach Potential Movement had been gathering groceries and distributing supplies in those cities as part of “Operation Contagious Generosity.” Pastor Ben remembers that “in our spiritual narrative we could sense God drawing us to Buena Vista, so Malia gave me Maria’s number, and I cold-called her. Fortunately, she called back! We quickly confirmed there was an immediate and sizable need for essential items, especially staple foods.”

Maria, her sister Umbelina, her nieces Elissa and Jennifer, Catalina Toribio, Juana Lugo, and several other BVMHP volunteer leaders already had experience providing school lunches and doing numerous family grocery bag efforts in the past; logistics were quickly in place. But one thing had to happen first. “I needed to tell the young children why the Homework Club community room was going to be closed and be used for pantry distribution,” explained Maria. “I didn’t know exactly what to say to young children and didn’t want



**Volunteers Catalina Toribio, Juana Lugo, Resident Association President Maria Martinez and her sister Umbelina Martinez celebrate completing sanitizing and sorting donations to the BVMHP pantry. All photos courtesy of Maria Martinez.**

to confuse or alarm them. Then one of the kids looked at me in the eye and said, ‘Well, it’s the COVID, right?’ So that problem was solved. Right after that we started using the community room for children’s lunches and pantry distribution.”

The sorting, bagging, and distributing stations were set up. Now supply lines and communications needed to engage. Awareness began to spread via the Palo Alto Unified School District, the Palo Alto Vineyard Church, the Barron Park Association, the League of Women Voters Palo Alto, former and current members of the Gunn High Boys Basketball team and other local community members. Maria recalls being summoned by a call from the School District. “I don’t have any kids in school and didn’t understand why they were calling me. They said, ‘Here are 100 lunches for your kids.’ Every day those 100 lunches have come. On Fridays, Buena Vista volunteers usually serve about 500 lunches to cover the weekend. The School District has committed all the way through the end of June. I burst into tears of gratitude before we went door to door within the community to let the parents know we had lunches for the kids.”

Two more major efforts proved key. First, Vineyard Church member and Barron Park resident Karen Ratzlaff went to work. “With Karen, Jon Rodriguez and his son Emmett, and others, they were not only donating, but they were asking neighbors,” remembers Pastor Ben. “God wants to work through other people in our community. Karen humbly and quietly let people know there



**Karen Ratzlaff uses Nextdoor to organize Barron Park resident grocery donations that she delivers weekly to BVMHP. Each week Karen posts a list of needed items.**



**Youth volunteers Elissa Guzman, Jennifer Guzman and Angel Martinez regularly serve weekday lunches at Buena Vista.**

was a need and to ‘bring groceries to my porch,’ then faithfully took them to Buena Vista on Tuesday mornings. Jon and his son also canvassed their neighborhood.” As of late May, Karen estimated that Barron Park neighbors had donated more than \$3000 in groceries to the Buena Vista community.

The second effort involved Green Acres resident Jeannie Lythcott of the League of Women Voters Palo Alto. Jeannie had been in touch with Maria in March to help BV families understand and respond online to the 2020 U.S. Census. When Jeannie checked in with Maria to see how everyone was doing and learned “Not well,” she and others began spreading the word. People further outside of Buena Vista began to hear. The grocery list expanded to the wish list (e.g., baby wipes).



**Volunteers Emilio Jon Rodriguez, his son Emmett, Gunn High grad Alex Gil Fernandez and Pastor Ben Videtich of Palo Alto Vineyard Church assist with the weekly Tuesday grocery receiving and sorting.**

Liliana Williams initiated funding towards goods for families with babies. “Free Laundry Friends” provided over 100 laundry gift cards. Others spread the word and sponsored items such as the weekly fresh fruit and vegetable bags. Local Dentist Phillip T. Fletcher delivered toothpaste, brushes, and floss kits. And an anonymous community member, through their family foundation, made a

significant grant enabling residents to apply for emergency funding needs. Another foundation is working with Palo Alto Vineyard Church to offer another significant grant. As of June 5, the Church Rent Relief program had distributed \$58,825 to all Buena Vista applicants.

As donations came in, Maria’s and her sister Umbelina’s logistics system got everything routed correctly. “We told in-person volunteers ‘you’re going to be the Sorter,’ or, ‘you’ll be the Runner.’ We have names for all the

positions.” At one point during the middle of the still ongoing struggle, Maria had a moment to catch up and read that day’s messages, one of which said “How can I help you?” and again she started crying. “I felt so very, very grateful for that. I didn’t feel like I was by myself. We are blessed; we have blessings around us.”

As Pastor Ben summarized what he has witnessed within and around Buena Vista, “I want to really underscore how people in our church have risen up to meet a need that exists. They have been activating other people which is what God invites us to do: new relationships, new connections. That’s what I’m personally seeing. Our neighbors have been generous; our church members have been active and working. The way I see it, God is greatly at work even if we don’t identify it as such. So much growth happens when people are open to considering – and loving – their neighbor.”

The BVMHP community remains hard hit by the economic crisis. To find out how you can help, contact Maria Martinez at 650-898-4985, Karen Ratzlaff at [karen\\_ratzlaff@hotmail.com](mailto:karen_ratzlaff@hotmail.com), or visit <https://www.pavineyard.org/covid-19-response/>. Gift cards to Cardenas Markets or Safeway are especially needed; they can be purchased on the stores’ websites.

## BPA EMAILS AND WEB LINKS

- **BPA Newsletter Archive:** <http://bpapaloalto.org/bpa-newsletter>
- **Join/Renew BPA Membership:** <http://bpapaloalto.org/join-the-barron-park-association/>
- **BPA President:** John W. King at [president@bpapaloalto.org](mailto:president@bpapaloalto.org)
- **BPA Treasurer:** John W. King at [johnwadeking@gmail.com](mailto:johnwadeking@gmail.com)
- **Membership Questions:** Lisa Berkowitz Landers at [barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com](mailto:barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com)
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- **BPA Senior Lunches:** Rakhi Singh at [rakhisingh.md@gmail.com](mailto:rakhisingh.md@gmail.com)
- **Emergency Services Volunteer Program:** Maurice Green at [mauryg3@comcast.net](mailto:mauryg3@comcast.net)
- or Lydia Kou at [lydiakou@gmail.com](mailto:lydiakou@gmail.com)
- **Welcoming Committee Chair:** Gwen Luce at [gluce@cbnorcal.com](mailto:gluce@cbnorcal.com)
- **Webmaster:** Maurice Green at [bpawebman@bpapaloalto.org](mailto:bpawebman@bpapaloalto.org)
- **Barron Park Donkeys:** For more info, to volunteer, donate, or to purchase merchandise visit <http://barronparkdonkeys.org/>
- **BPA Historian:** Douglas L. Graham at [dgrahampaca@gmail.com](mailto:dgrahampaca@gmail.com)
- **Bol Park Native Habitat Project Volunteers:** Rich Elder at [rich.e.elder@gmail.com](mailto:rich.e.elder@gmail.com)
- **Bol Park Native Habitat Financial Support:** Direct your gift by mail or phone, payable to “Friends of the Palo Alto Parks (FOPAP), for Bol Park Fund,” FOPAP, 425 Grant Ave., Suite 27, Palo Alto, CA 94306, (650) 327-7323. Or online to the “Bol Park Fund” at <https://friendsofpaparks.org/donations/>

# COVID-19 Advice for Barron Park from a Disaster Expert

By Molly Sullivan, interviewed by Chris Witzel



Molly Sullivan with Zulu and West, her canine search and rescue dogs. Photo courtesy of Molly Sullivan.

*"With worse than average hurricane and wildfire seasons expected this year, we are going to have to think differently about risk and how we plan, both as individuals and as a community."*

Molly Sullivan and West, a Wire-haired Pointing Griffon, are a canine search and rescue team for the California Rescue Dog Association (CARDA) and Yosemite National Park. Zulu, her Labrador Retriever, is now retired. Molly can often be spotted running in Barron Park with her family and West.

Inspired by a rescue when she worked fighting wildfires as a college student, Molly decided to combine her interest in search and rescue with her experience in training guide dogs for the blind. Professionally, Molly earned a Ph.D. in epidemiology and models the impact of catastrophic events such as infectious disease pandemics, natural catastrophes, and terrorism.

Most recently she published an article on "The Impact of Hurricane Evacuation on COVID-19 Transmission" which highlights the dangers of COVID-19 in crowded evacuation centers. Molly's article is available at: <https://medium.com/@oneconcerninc/the-impact-of-hurricane-evacuation-on-covid-19-transmission-6030022c30d>

While Molly cautions that almost every disaster is unique, the risk of COVID-19 in evacuation centers is no different for people taking refuge from fires, heat, and earthquakes as it is for hurricanes.

*"Many of us in the Barron Park community are fortunate to have the resources to be able to make advance preparations, and it is our responsibility to ensure we are prepared so that critical resources can be saved for the most vulnerable members of the population . . . we should plan on being self-sufficient for longer, evacuating farther, and being conscientious about what resources we consume."*

## Exercise

Get outside and exercise! It raises your spirits and promotes health (so long as air quality is good). But be smart and know your limits. While health care workers are busy with COVID-19, don't overdo exercise and add to the work of EMTs, or risk getting lost on long hikes and triggering up to hundreds of people to search for you.

*"If you are a 5k walker, this is probably not the year to attempt a 50-mile backpacking trip on the John Muir Trail."*

## Your Disaster Kit

Have a 10- (not 3-) day food and water supply and be prepared to go without utilities (electricity, gas, and water). Supplies should include masks, gloves, and cleaning supplies for social distancing. The City of Palo Alto offers detailed advice at: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/preparedness>

## Evacuation Plan

Make prior arrangements to stay with friends or relatives who live outside the Bay Area. You might make a reciprocal offer to host them if a disaster forces them out of their home. Private homes are much safer than public evacuation centers, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. You should also decide where your family plans to reassemble locally, such as a park, if your home becomes unsafe or inaccessible.

## Preparing Children

The disruption of our routines during "stay in place" affects all of us, but especially children. Molly emphasizes that giving kids some sense of control can make a huge difference in lowering their anxiety levels, just as for adults. She recommends having children participate in building preparedness kits or walking to the family meet-up place, and most importantly, practice getting out of the house in the dark. Everyone will feel less scared waking up during an earthquake, for example, if they know what to do.

## Elderly, Disabled, and Chronically Ill

Neighbors who don't drive or are injured will need transportation to safety or medical care.

*"In the time of COVID, our community is only as resilient as the weakest link, so be sure to connect with your neighbors and make sure they have the supplies and support they need."*

## Volunteer

Do you know first aid, CPR, or how to use a ham radio? In-person classes are currently suspended, however, there are excellent videos and online courses to refresh your skills. Consider becoming an Emergency Services Volunteer. When an earthquake or other disaster strikes, the Palo Alto Emergency Services department depends on volunteers to be their "eyes and ears," helping to identify critical

incidents where police, firefighters, and EMTs should be deployed most urgently. It requires very little of your time to be trained, and you don't need special skills to be a Block Preparedness Coordinator (BPC) or Neighborhood Preparedness Coordinator (NPC).

Several neighborhoods in Barron Park need more volunteers. To learn more, go to:

[https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/services/public\\_safety/get\\_involved/default.asp](https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/services/public_safety/get_involved/default.asp)

Remember, this is an opportunity to help the people you love most.

*"Keeping the risk in perspective is critical to maintain civility in our community, providing perspective to young children, and helping to create the new normal. The only risk-free community is one with no interaction between people, so let's stay prepared but maintain a healthy balance between mitigating risk and engaging in the interactions and activities that make us a community."*

### 2020 Senior Lunches!

1:00 p.m. Tuesdays every other month  
**August 11, October 13, December 8**

Meet – with physical distancing and masks  
– at Bol Park.

Enjoy take-out lunch from Driftwood!  
Details to follow.

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

Interested? Contact: Rakhi Singh at:  
[rakhisingh.md@gmail.com](mailto:rakhisingh.md@gmail.com)

# Reine Flexer, January 21, 1940 – May 14, 2020

By Reine's Family and Friends



Our friend and neighbor, Reine Flexer. Photo courtesy of the Flexer family.

**R**eine Paule Flexer left this world on May 14, 2020, after battling pancreatic cancer for almost six months. She passed away peacefully and with dignity in her bedroom with both her son and daughter at her side. Reine lived in Barron Park for nearly 50 years.

We remember her fondly as a fiercely independent, generous, caring, and intel-

ligent woman. She leaves behind countless friends and connections with her numerous professions and activities. Her professional work spanned from being a French professor at UC Berkeley in the 1960s to a computer programmer for several firms in the Silicon Valley. Born in France, she kept in touch with her French college friends and her relatives, plus local Francophiles

through her French book club. While notorious for her utmost devotion to cat rescue for many years, her other interests ranged from avidly playing the recorder, folk dancing, and attending an annual storytelling festival in the Sierras. At one time she was a keen gardener and more recently was recognized for her talent at Ikebana floral arrangement. Above all, she took enormous pleasure and pride in her children's and grandchildren's musical accomplishments.

She was put to rest at the Gate of Heaven Cemetery, 22555 Cristo Rey Drive in Los Altos. Due to current physical distancing restrictions, only immediate family could attend, but if you ever have the chance to visit her at the cemetery, please honor her sweet and humble request for brightly colored flowers.

She leaves behind a son (Michael), a daughter (Marie) and four grandchildren. The family is planning a celebration of life for her friends when gatherings become possible.

In honor of Reine's generous nature, please consider donating in her memory to any of the following types of charities or causes: animal rescue, child or humanitarian relief, the environment, or your favorite local musical performance organization. Acknowledgments should be directed c/o Marie Flexer-Parker and Michael Flexer, 595 Matadero Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94306.

# The Chestnut-backed Chickadee

By Jeralyn Moran

## Fun and Random Facts about the Chestnut-backed Chickadee

- The Chestnut-backed Chickadee (*Poecile rufescens*) – from the Titmouse family – ranges along the coasts of California, the Pacific Northwest, and Canada, and so lives year-round here in our own Barron Park. In areas of the country where habitats overlap (for example, with the Black-capped Chickadee), it is distinguished by the deep rufous-chestnut color on its back, sides, and rump, contrasting with the white of their underparts. Their cap is brownish-black over a white cheek patch.
- Maine has named the Chickadee as the official state bird.
- The Chickadee was named in the mid-19th century: a name that is imitative of its call (“chick-a-dee-dee-dee-dee”). During the spring nesting period, the male adds a two-syllable clear whistle (the first note a bit higher). He uses this sound mainly to defend the territory around the nest. Interestingly, he varies his alarm calls depending on the size and proximity of the predator.
- Both the female and male Chestnut-backed Chickadees share similar coloring, as do the young once they are out of the nest (that is, their “adult” feathers have grown in).
- Chickadees are small, 4 to 5 inches long – an adult weighs only the same as three or four pennies! Size-wise, the male is almost always bigger than the female. But this is hard to see, unless they are side by side.
- In flight, the acrobatic Chestnut-backed Chickadee flaps its wings at about 27 beats/second. Compare this with the hummingbird, which averages about 80 beats/second.
- Don’t like bugs or spiders in your yard? Invite the Chickadees over! Bugs are by far their favorite, but seeds and sometimes berries are eaten.
- The female Chickadees choose a mate the spring after the year they hatched. A pair will stay together (be monogamous) for several years; this translates to “a lifetime,” unless one bird tragically dies. Then the other will take a mate from one of the



**Chestnut-backed Chickadee.** Photo courtesy of Tom Grey. <http://tgreybirds.com/Pages/ChestnutbackedChickadee.html>

“floaters,” or single birds within a flock.

- The female chooses a nesting site – typically a rotted part of a live or dead tree, to excavate a hole. An existing (abandoned) tree cavity will also do. Have a nesting box? A Chestnut-backed Chickadee pair is more likely to move in if there is already some sawdust or wood chips inside it (i.e., it’s not completely empty). The female focuses on collecting moss or other materials to form the base of the nest, and later lines it with animal fur if she can find some. Suggestion: Next time you brush your dog (or cat), ball up the fur and scatter it outside for her!
- Only the female incubates the eggs (5-8 is a typical number, although just one or up to 12 eggs have been documented in a nest). Why? Only the female develops a “brood patch” (an area on the underside that is bare skin). The male works to keep intruders away, and finds food to bring back to his mate at the nest.
- Once the baby birds have hatched, both Mom and Dad go foraging for food to bring back to the family (so many mouths to feed!).
- The babies fledge (leave the nest) after about 12 days – but their parents help them for another month by finding food for them and doing what they can to scare

off predators. They are very busy, devoted parents – as we all are, if we have kids.

## Palo Alto Nonprofit Grassroots Ecology Shares a New Blog



Check out Senior Ecologist Claire Elliott’s new blog on plants and shrubs that are locally invasive and how to go about replacing them with beautiful alternatives in your own yard. <https://www.grassrootsecology.org/eco-roots-blog/2020/6/4/privets-and-other-pet-peeves>

Claire and her volunteer crews from Grassroots Ecology provide tireless support to our Bol Park Native Garden and the BPA Native Habitat Committee.

Grassroots Ecology is at: <https://www.grassrootsecology.org/>



## 2020-2021 Barron Park Association Membership

Thanks to all the supporting members of the Barron Park Association! It's time to take out a new membership or renew for April 2020 - March 2021. (If you joined or renewed after December 1, 2019, your membership is current.) If you need to check your membership status, just email: [barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com](mailto:barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com)

Your annual dues support BPA-sponsored community events and Committee activities, including our quarterly Newsletters, monthly Community Happy Hours, May Fête, Movie Night, the BPA Annual Meeting, and neighborhood project support.

Your support is greatly appreciated! Use PayPal to join the BPA online at: <http://bpapaloalto.org/membership-form> or mail this completed form with your check to:

**Barron Park Association**  
**724 Barron Ave.**  
**Palo Alto, CA 94306**

Name(s):	Email Address(es):
Address:	Phone:

- Newsletter:** I want the online edition instead of a mailed copy
- |  |       |  |      |
|--|-------|--|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Fellow</b> | \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Senior</b>   | \$15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Patron</b> | \$50  | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Business</b> | \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Member</b> | \$30  |  |      |



**Additional Contribution:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Contribution:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to: Barron Park Association. Note: Membership and contributions are not tax deductible.

## Need any more reasons to support the BPA?

The BPA (<http://bpapaloalto.org>) is a volunteer organization open to all residents and businesses in the Barron Park/ Green Acres 2 neighborhood. The BPA supports committees that work to make Barron Park more livable, safe, and sustainable. Send email to [barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com](mailto:barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com) to connect with a Committee Chair on the following community interests:

- Shared bicycle/pedestrian pathways

- Safety and emergency services
- Social events
- Environmental programs
- Senior lunches
- Welcoming committee
- Zoning and Land Use
- Traffic and Streets

The BPA supports several other Barron Park volunteer and community projects.

- If you're interested, please contact these groups directly:
- Donkey care and handling: Jenny Kiratli at: [barronparkdonkeys@gmail.com](mailto:barronparkdonkeys@gmail.com)
  - Volunteer for Bol Park Native Habitat support or for Ivy removal: Rich Elder at [bpnativegarden@gmail.com](mailto:bpnativegarden@gmail.com)
  - Lead or support a Cool Block Palo Alto team: Hilary Glann at [hglann@gmail.com](mailto:hglann@gmail.com)

# Family Helps Neighbors Adopt Healthy Plant-Based Diets

By Hilary Glann

Concerns about how the typical American diet negatively impacts both human and planetary health have caused many people to reduce or eliminate animal proteins from their diets. Vegans and vegetarians have been joined by “reducetarians” — people who decrease their meat consumption to improve their health and reduce their carbon footprints. Food production creates 26% of carbon emissions.<sup>1</sup>

Barron Park residents Katy and Erin Mast decided to bring neighbors together to promote plant-based diets. “After our family switched to plant-based foods, I felt isolated, and I wanted to build a community of people who eat plant-based diets,” Katy recounted. The family hosted potlucks that attracted both people who were already eating plant-based diets and those who wanted to learn more about them. Katy offered support



The entire Mast family has embraced a whole-food plant-based diet and a vegan philosophy. Left to right: Brennan, Ryan, Katy, Phil, and Erin Mast. Photos courtesy of the Mast family.

and encouragement as potluck attendees experienced the diversity and tastiness of plant-based dining. “People think vegans eat lettuce all the time. But no one ever brought a tossed salad to one of our potlucks! The food is always amazing. Vegan food has to be tasty, because you don’t have meat to carry the dish,” observed Katy.

Katy has found the science behind plant-based diets — as well as her own experiences — to be compelling. In the two months after she became a vegan, Katy’s arthritis and other body pains dropped significantly<sup>2</sup> Katy highlighted that vegan or vegetarian diets lower the risk of diseases including cancers, Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, obesity, and heart disease.<sup>3</sup> Katy also lost 70 pounds over the course of three years.

For those who want a gradual or a partial approach to plant-based diets, Katy advises that they pick one meal of the day and eliminate meat and dairy from it. Breakfast is often the easiest meal to change. Katy noted that current dietary recommendations are that protein should represent around 10% of our calories,<sup>4</sup> and that protein is available in all foods, so vegans and vegetarians have no problem getting enough protein, and they typically get plenty of dietary fiber.<sup>5</sup>

Here are some suggested resources to get started with a plant-based diet:

- The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine offers a free evidence-based

21-Day Kickstart program including meal plans, recipes, grocery lists, videos, tips, and cooking demonstrations at <https://kickstart.pcrm.org/en>

- Forks Over Knives offers a free 14-day trial for their plant-based meal planner: <https://www.forksoverknives.com/meal-planner/>
- The investigative documentary “What the Health” explores the benefits of organic diets: <https://youtu.be/OR-KiucNHBA>
- This site provides the latest science behind food and nutrition: <https://nutritionfacts.org/>

Additionally, Katy invites you to send her your questions at [katy.mast@gmail.com](mailto:katy.mast@gmail.com)

#### Footnotes:

1. <https://ourworldindata.org/environmental-impacts-of-food>
2. Cambridge Health article on vegetarian diet and inflammatory biomarkers: <https://bit.ly/2Ba6s49>
3. <https://www.cedars-sinai.org/blog/best-protein.html>
4. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/how-much-protein-do-you-need-every-day-201506188096>
5. <https://nutritionfacts.org/video/do-vegetarians-get-enough-protein/>



A typical dinner: a simple but flavorful cauliflower curry on rice, pineapple spears, and a tomato-cucumber salad. Combining any legume with rice provides a complete protein with all needed amino acids.

## CALL FOR ARTISTS!



Are you a Barron Park artist, photographer, artisan, craftsperson, sculptor, designer, musician, composer, writer, poet ... ? Do you know one? You

and your work can be featured — with samples or as an interview — in a future BPA Newsletter. Please send us your idea with a draft artist’s statement and reproducible samples or a description of your work to: [mbrbpa@sonic.net](mailto:mbrbpa@sonic.net) or [newsletter@bpapaloalto.org](mailto:newsletter@bpapaloalto.org)



# Nature's Wonderful Ingredients: Saffron

By Jaya Pandey, Barron Park Green Beans Committee



**Saffron crocus.** Photo: Eden Brothers Seeds, Arden, NC <https://www.edenbrothers.com/store/crocus-bulbs-saffron.html>

**S**affron is a must have in my kitchen. It is a flavorful, fine ingredient that nature has created for us, derived from the tiny, bright red stigmas of a flowering plant named *Crocus sativus* or "saffron crocus," which has always been under human cultivation.

It is grown in Iran, India, Afghanistan, Italy, France, New Zealand, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Morocco, Turkey, and parts of China. There are even producers in Vermont, Pennsylvania, and the state of Washington. Fact: It takes about 4,000 flowers to make one ounce of usable saffron, which explains the labor involved – and the price!

Saffron strings can be used for coloring



**Saffron, pistachios, cardamom seeds in Greek yogurt.** Photo: Jaya Pandey

and to give a distinct delicate flavor. It gives a pale-yellow color to the food. Saffron is considered an antioxidant and mood enhancer, mainly due to the presence of crocin, crocetin, safranal, and kaempferol.

I am sharing two simple recipes to include Saffron in your food:

- Add a pinch of saffron strings, finely chopped unsalted pistachios, cardamom seeds, and honey to your taste in one cup of Fage non-fat Greek yogurt. Mix it well and refrigerate. You could use it as a healthy between-meal snack or as a dessert after your meal.
- Sauté a few cloves (the whole spice) and 2-3 bay leaves in 2 teaspoons olive oil. Add frozen green peas (1/2 cup) and stir together for 3-4 minutes. Add one cup of pre-soaked Basmati rice and two cups of water. Add a pinch of saffron strings, coarsely ground black pepper, and salt to taste; then cook the rice. This could be served as a side dish. Enjoy!

## Bol Park Donkeys Introduce *Touchy-Feely Talks*: Palo Alto Humane Society's Newest Educational Video Series

By Leonor Delgado, Education Manager, Palo Alto Humane Society

During this time of shelter-in-place, Palo Alto Humane Society's (PAHS) education team has actively pursued avenues for virtual learning, of which *Touchy-Feely Talks: Mini Lessons About Fur, Feathers, Scales & Scutes* is our latest. This video series introduces families with kids of all ages to a variety of pets and neighborhood wildlife.

Participants include rescuers, entertainers, and educators, and their two- and four-legged companions. To date, we have presented information about having chickens, rabbits, and rats as pets; training older and younger dogs; and exploring a wooded area to identify local wildlife. More is coming soon!

We began working on our introduction by filming partially in Bol Park, while all the



**Jenny addresses her public during the filming of a PAHS Touchy-Feely Talk.** Photo courtesy of Palo Alto Humane Society.

time practicing social distancing. We actively encouraged Perry and Jenny to join us.

They were quite eager participants! Jenny appeared first and with loud brays invited Perry to take part in the action. We hope you'll enjoy seeing them as you watch the introductory video.

Do take the time to browse through our series at <https://www.paloaltohumane.org/ewe-tube/>. *Touchy-Feely Talks* is the top set of videos on the site. Take some time as well to explore our other educational videos. Hint: Young students will love learning about a dog's life from the dog's point of view in *Advice from Minnie*, about halfway down the page.

Send PAHS an email at [pahs@paloaltohumane.org](mailto:pahs@paloaltohumane.org) to let us know about your experience with our videos. We also welcome suggestions for future productions.

# Barron Park's Signs of the Times

By Stephanie Shaw

The arrival of COVID-19 to the San Francisco Bay Area has disrupted many aspects of our normal lives, including our traditional ways to connect with family and friends. This makes it particularly difficult, as friendships and social connections reduce stress during life's challenges and provide a sense of belonging. However, leave it to our creative neighbors in Barron Park to find the silver linings buried within sheltering-in-place requirements. Many of our residents have found ways to safely connect and spread good will during this time which could otherwise be lonely and frightening.

We've always been blessed to see many neighbors out walking for exercise for themselves and their pets, and our beautiful paths, parks, and creeks certainly encourage this. However, the sheer number of neighbors out for exercise has skyrocketed over the past two months as this is one of the few allowed reasons for most residents to be outside. Contrary to what might be expected during a time of physical avoidance of others, we have found nothing but friendliness, cheer, and attempts to give others a reason to smile from our Barron Park neighbors. This prevalent positive attitude of "we are all in this together" has really helped our family, including our three young daughters, stay positive

in turn, and know we can turn to our neighbors for support if needed.

We have met the lovely Route family on Kendall Avenue who created an amazing Lego Mini-Figure Toy Swap center in their front yard. They engineered and built beautiful boxes and signs out of Lego bricks and character figures – along with a convenient hand sanitizer dispenser. Kids can bring a toy and swap it for another, as many times as they want. Apparently, some visitors even come more than once a day to look for new treasures! The Swap cabinet evolves daily to show the creativity of kids and grownups alike. There are even Lego-themed contests being planned. For

kids whose world has been upended, this is a cheerful reminder of how we can find creative ways to connect, and is something exciting to look forward to visiting. Seeing this family's creativity (they filled an entire knothole in their tree with a Lego sculpture!) has been inspiring.

I've seen beautiful chalk drawings on the sidewalks, both games for kids and messages of hope for the community. And many signs, some homemade, celebrate and thank our essential workers for their efforts to keep things running during the pandemic. While out on a walk the other day, we observed people dancing with abandon in



Miniature Lego home in a knothole. The Routes, Kendall Avenue.

the streets to music (while carefully observing social distancing and wearing masks) at the intersection of Kendall and Josina Avenues.

At our home on El Centro Street we've been posting a joke-of-the-day on a sign. We started reading jokes at home with our kids to pass the time. I looked out the window to see multiple families walking by and realized we could share some cheer. Our family selects the jokes together, I write them up, and we encourage our three daughters to illustrate the posters. We've seen so many people stop and get a chuckle. Some people have mentioned they've changed their walking route so they can see the new joke. Others have told us they take photos to share with their family and friends outside Barron Park.

David Brigham of Timlott Lane and his jazz quartet, Zephyr, performed an outdoor socially distanced concert on Memorial Day weekend. Families were instructed to stay well more than six feet apart (some in their own driveways); use their own chair, water,



The Route family's Lego Swap cabinet, Kendall Avenue. Photos by Stephanie Shaw and Romie Georgia.

and masks; and sanitizer was provided. Attendees were treated to beautifully played themed standards such as “Don’t Get Around Much Anymore” and “Summer Samba” by pianist Terrigal Burn, drummer John Anning, with Chris Davis on bass and David on trumpet. Several neighbors from further afield walking by were also caught up in the music and wandered down the road to listen. The al fresco concert left everyone in great spirits and bouncing their way back home.



Message of thanks for essential workers

I’m sure there are other examples my family hasn’t yet seen. We thank all of you for taking the time to share your joy with others. With all our anxiety these days, I can happily say that I don’t feel that way out in our neighborhood. The fresh air and kind neighbors make Barron Park a very special place.



An example of the “joke of the day” signs posted outside Stephanie’s home on El Centro.

## More Signs of the Times

Photos by Hilary Glann



The Essential Heroes Campaign is a local youth-led initiative. For more information contact [essentialheroescampaign@gmail.com](mailto:essentialheroescampaign@gmail.com)



A number of signs and posters around Barron Park encourage residents to engage in the fight for racial justice in America.



A shout out — and an affirmation — of the value of community, posted on Laguna Avenue.

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**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 6:00 p.m.

For Meeting and Happy Hour schedules write to: [president@bpapaloalto.org](mailto:president@bpapaloalto.org)

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# Adventures in Distance Teaching

By Liliana Williams, Speech-Language Pathologist



Barron Park resident and licensed Speech-Language Pathologist Liliana Williams

***"I can teach you in your pool***

***You don't need to be at school!***

***I can teach you in a tree***

***You will like it, wait and see!***

***I can teach you here or there***

***I can teach you anywhere!"***

I am a speech therapist for kids with special needs, and yes, I have taught students as they lounge in a pool with their iPads or perch precariously on a branch of a backyard oak. Other novel academic scenarios include teaching social skills to a boy with autism as he hangs upside down from his bunk bed, or turning away from my screen for a moment, then turning back to see a poodle looking at me instead of little Jenny. The fun never stops.

Distance Learning has not been an easy adjustment for teachers, students, or their parents/guardians. Parents are often too busy to sit with their child during lessons. They have their own work to do or other children to care for. We tell them not to worry and to just do their best. That's all we can do now.

While it is always a challenge to capture a student's attention in the classroom, it takes some major creativity to engage with them virtually. But there are times of levity!

For schoolchildren, seeing their teacher on screen is a strange and often entertaining experience. My colleagues and I have noticed that even when we try our best to create academically themed virtual backgrounds (inspirational mottos, world maps, etc.) our students tend to focus on what is not on the lesson plan: "Look, teacher, your cat is on the couch, licking his butt!" or "Haha! Teacher, your hair is sticking up all over like a hedgehog!"

Whereas it took me days to master the distance-learning virtual platform, my students mastered it immediately – and then quickly developed a sassy sense of power. Some students yawn noisily and mute me when I'm in the middle of a lesson or song. Others simply walk away from the screen and don't return, leaving me to watch the family cat napping under the piano. My personal favorite was watching a student chew wetly on bites of banana while I attempted to teach him to articulate the "L" sound.

Never have I felt so ignored.

Precious teaching moments can be lost due to technological glitches. The worst glitch of all is faulty internet connectivity. This often leads to pixilation and hilarity ("Teacher, your face just broke into a million pieces!") Once I have lost a student's attention, I have approximately 1:04 minutes to regain it before they switch from my lesson to enjoying a SpongeBob SquarePants video, as I watch helplessly from the great beyond.

When a student does have adult supervision, some of these master-manipulators have learned how easy it is to send Mom out of the room on a bogus errand. (Fetching something healthy like a juice box or an apple is a favorite ploy.) While she's gone,



Liliana's cat Django enthusiastically supports teaching children about prepositions in this video from Liliana's Speech Therapy YouTube channel.

they quickly turn on a different device, play a few vigorous rounds of Super Mario Odyssey, then switch back to me as Mom returns.

I think I know how students feel. Home should be home and school should be school! Their world is all muddled up now. What am I doing in their living room?

In order to help parents/guardians stay more involved, I have created a YouTube channel featuring my Speech Therapy lessons, songs, and dances: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCU-dWIPPyKpDiO0aGfgcVQ/videos>

Parents can now sit with their children and access my lessons at their convenience. What's great for me is that I can film as many retakes as I need to ensure my cat is not sitting on the couch behind me "bathing" or that my face hasn't broken into a million pieces!

Let's hope that teachers and students will soon be back together in the classroom.

I know that's my favorite place to teach!

Liliana Williams is a Speech-Language Pathologist who works with children on the autism spectrum and other special needs. She lives in Barron Park with her family. Feel free to contact her to discuss the topic at [liliana@modernthings.net](mailto:liliana@modernthings.net)

# News from the Pasture: Donkeys in the Time of Coronavirus

By Jenny Kiratli and Michael Holland

**D**onkeys are well known for having a calming influence. They are often used to calm herd animals such as goats, sheep, cows, and even thoroughbred horses, and recently have been known to serve as therapy animals. To us humans, there is something about their big beautiful eyes and placid expressions that is soothing and relaxing. Clearly many people agree, as the donkey pasture has become a very popular destination while we are all sheltering near home due to the pandemic. We donkey handlers often share the history and stories with newcomers as well as welcome familiar faces daily. The donkeys have an ever-growing base of fans that crosses zip codes and generations. Every day, dozens of people, many families, and others use the pasture as a stopping point on their bike rides and walks along the Bol Park pathway. And despite the crowds, social distancing is mostly observed as groups take turns at the gate.

The City of Palo Alto has posted signage cautioning against petting the donkeys and touching the gate as these are possible modes of exposure to the Coronavirus, but we do urge everyone to keep visiting! Perry and Jenny have definitely noticed the decrease in petting, although meeting new visitors has likely somewhat offset this loss in attention. We continue to take them to Bol Park every Sunday between 10 and 11 a.m., but we enforce social distancing and no petting at this time. Please join us for some serious stress reduction.

One of the draws of the pasture seems to be (re)connecting with a rural past. We have met so many neighbors and visitors who, themselves or their families, are from other countries. It is so charming and interesting when people come to the gate (or the park) with children and grandchildren in tow and start with "When I was a child..." They comment how visiting the donkeys reminds them of their childhood or visits to their distant family homes in Spain, Portugal, England, Ireland, Germany, Israel, Turkey, Greece, Egypt,



**Jenny and Perry enjoy visitors, but please maintain social distance with other humans and no petting the donkeys at this time.**

Albania, Guatemala, Mexico, China, and many other places. It seems donkeys are a universal emblem of peace, tranquility, and a simpler life. We are fortunate to have this curious neighborhood tradition that touches the hearts of so many.

With so many new visitors, we would like to ask regulars to help guide everyone on proper behavior at the pasture. Please **DO** step up and say something if you see something wrong! Here are a few reminders when you visit the pasture:

**Don't feed them anything!** We feed the donkeys a balanced veterinarian-approved diet, and other foods may be dangerous, including especially apples or carrots, as Perry is missing teeth and may choke on food offered at the gate. Dozens of people come by every day, and if we allow random feeding, we would have no idea of what or how much

the donkeys are eating. This was a problem for both Mickey and Niner in the past.

**Do not pet and do not taunt them or throw stones to get their attention.** This is their home. They will come and say hello if they wish but please respect their preference to stay away from the gate. You can see them "up close" on Sunday mornings, 10 to 11 a.m. at Bol Park.

**Contact us if you see anything concerning** (phone numbers posted in the pasture kiosk). We count on neighbors and passersby to alert us to any problems at the pasture as well as any injuries that you may notice.

Thank you for the love and caring and helping to keep the donkeys healthy and safe.

Interested in donkey gear? [Visit page 14](#) for our full list of products.

Keep Calm and Bray On!

# BARRON PARK DONKEY PRODUCTS



## BP Donkey Tote Bag – \$20

High quality canvas, with 4-inch gussets and 22-inch handles. Plenty of room for all your shopping needs; buy 2 to be sure! Also- a great and unique gift.



## BP Donkey Note Cards (5-pack) - \$12 per pack; \$20 for 2 packs

Each pack contains five notecards and envelopes, blank inside. Two different sets, all images of Jenny and Perry, one pack landscape images and one pack of portraits.



## BP Donkey Compost - \$20 per bag (~ 40 lbs)

Donkey manure is dried, mixed with leaves and other organic material, turned and composted for about 6 months to form excellent garden compost, then sifted into feed bags to close the cycle. No hormones or antibiotics; only dried equine grass pellet and grass intake.



*Delivered to your house within Palo Alto city limits and nearby.*

**100% of the proceeds go directly to the care and feeding of Jenny and Perry.**

Contact [barronparkdonkeys@gmail.com](mailto:barronparkdonkeys@gmail.com) to order.

**Support the Barron Park Donkeys !!**



# Encina Grande Park

By Douglas L. Graham, Barron Park Historian

## A Unique Tract in an Eclectic Neighborhood

**B**arron Park is known in Palo Alto as being one of the most eclectic neighborhoods in the city. The neighborhood has housing that was built in nearly every year from 1920 to 2019. A complex mix of age, size, design styles, and landscaping makes every block different and interesting. However, included in this mix is a large tract that started out as a typical post-World War II middle-class housing project with five or six standard floor plans and similar landscaping on almost every lot: Encina Grande Park.

### 1946: The First Post-War Year

First, some general background: 1946 was an interesting and eventful year in the U.S. and the rest of the world. Although the big war was over, civil wars continued, particularly in China and Greece. Colonial conflict broke out in French Indochina, especially in the northern parts of Viet Nam and Laos. Hindu-Muslim communal rioting was widespread in British India. Europe was full of displaced persons trying to get back to their home countries or being involuntarily moved to new countries by the U.N. occupying powers (mainly the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.). In the U.S., the last of the German P.O.W.s were released and shipped home.

### Labor Strife and Politics

Domestically, the U.S. was troubled with labor strikes. In May, a national railroad strike shut down transport and travel throughout the nation. President Truman used his emergency powers to seize control of the railroads and put soldiers in the locomotives to make sure that his orders were carried out. A worrisome national coal strike ended when the United Mine Workers' leader John L. Lewis settled with the Federal Government, thus ensuring that lights would stay on and homes would be heated in the coming winter. The economy was still converting from wartime arms production to peacetime domestic manufacturing. Signs of a potential post-war recession were making everyone nervous, and rampant inflation was threatening at the same time. An Equal Rights Amendment (originally proposed in 1923) failed to pass

the U.S. Senate 38-35 (a 2/3 "yes" vote was needed). On July 25, 1946, a tragedy known as "the last mass lynching in the U.S." ended the lives of two African-American couples in Georgia. President Truman ordered a federal investigation; the case is said to have been a critical catalyst for the Civil Rights movement.

### "Good News" Events

The Space Age was born when Project Diana bounced radar signals off the moon, measuring the exact distance from the Earth to the moon for the first time, and also confirming that communication was possible between Earth and "outer space" (honestly, some people had not been sure). Dr. Benjamin Spock published *The Common Sense of Baby and Child Care* and became famous as a result. On July 6, future President "W" was born to future First Couple George H. and Barbara Bush. The CDC (Centers for Disease Control) was born in Atlanta. On July 4, the Republic of the Philippines was born after 48 years as a U.S. Territory.

### The Big Bangs

In some ways, the biggest news stories of the year were the "successful" detonation of the fourth and fifth nuclear bombs in the lagoon of Bikini Atoll in the Pacific: "Able" on July 1, and "Baker" on July 25. About 73 war-damaged or obsolete U.S. and Japanese naval vessels were used in the experiments, many being sunk. In a surprising sequel, on July 5, the first woman's two-piece skimpy bathing suit was unveiled at a Paris fashion show and immediately dubbed "The Bikini."

### Popular Culture

Some memorable movies were released in 1946. Frederic March, Myrna Loy, and Rosalind Russell starred in the *Best Years of Our Lives*. *It's a Wonderful Life*, with Jimmy Stewart and Lionel Barrymore, opened in New York City. Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall starred in *The Big Sleep*, and Walt Disney produced the combination live and animated musical film, *Song of the South*. The hit theatrical musical of the year was *Annie Get Your Gun*. Major record albums were released by Frank Sinatra, Guy Lombardo, Perry Como, Bing Crosby, Nat King Cole, and Spike Jones.

## Post-war Housing Boom Reaches Barron Park in 1946

Getting back to the main topic, little housing had been built in the U.S. during the Great Depression (which lasted roughly from 1929 to 1939) or the U.S. involvement in World War II (1941-1945). As a result, there was a severe housing shortage in 1946, exacerbated by the demobilization of nearly 16 million men and women from the military. The Palo Alto area was already a minor job center with Stanford University, the Bayside-Sutter Cannery (in the building recently occupied by Fry's Electronics), the beginnings of an electronics industry center that later grew into Silicon Valley, and good commuting connections with San Francisco via the Southern Pacific Railroad (now Caltrain).

Squeezing into overcrowded and inadequate apartments or living with parents or in-laws were the only housing alternatives for many people. The overall population had grown substantially, and family savings had been accumulated during the war due to rationing, shortages of consumer goods, and forced investment in government bonds to pay for the war. The result of all these factors was a tremendous housing boom. During the 16 years of depression and war, only about 300,000 housing units had been built annually in the U.S. After the war ended, this jumped to nearly 1,500,000 units each year from 1946 through 1955, mostly in the suburbs of major cities.

### "G.I.s"

The Federal Government (under Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman) was acutely aware of the housing problem, and Congress passed measures, even before the end of the war, designed to avoid a severe post-war recession and the kind of political turmoil experienced after World War I ended in 1918. The "G.I. Bill," passed in 1944 and amended nearly annually thereafter, included provisions for federal government-backed mortgages for veterans and war widows.

"G.I." was slang for a U.S. soldier (the soldiers referred to themselves as "general issue," like ammunition, rations, or toilet paper).

**“G.I. Homes”**

“G.I. Homes” referred to homes authorized for low-interest, zero-down-payment home loans for veterans (with more favorable terms for new construction than for existing housing). These easy terms encouraged millions of families to move from urban apartments into suburban single-family houses. In 1947 alone, 540,000 veterans bought houses, most of them newly built. Many veterans cashed in some of their wartime savings to make the down payment. The average home price was \$7,300 (general buying power equivalent to \$84,200 in 2019). The new homes were often located in large development tracts, the most famous one being Levittown, N.Y., where a three-bedroom home could be had by veterans for \$1,000 down and \$70 a month. However, the benefits were unevenly distributed. The Federal Housing Authority required developers seeking its financing to include restrictive covenants in their homeowner deeds, prohibiting sales or re-sales to African Americans. The programs were directed by local officials who seldom approved loans for non-white veterans. Banks and mortgage agencies also frequently refused loans to non-white veterans.

**Our Biggest Tract**

Encina Grande Park is the largest housing development in Barron Park, with nearly



A - Excerpt from 1948 Barron Park aerial photo, showing County Tract #357, Encina Grande Park. It is oriented with northeast approximately at the top. El Camino Real curves across the top, with Amaranta Avenue straight across the bottom and Los Robles Avenue runs down the left side.

38 acres and house lots on ten streets. Designated County Tract #357, it included 171 properties on Amaranta, Los Robles, and Vista Avenues and, in addition, Arbol, Campana, Cereza, Encina Grande, Florales, Solano, and Verdosa Drives. The tract was filed in July 1946. It was the third “post-war” tract filing in Barron Park, preceded by El Cerrito Unit #1 (20 lots on El Cerrito Road, in November 1945) and the La Mata tract (15 lots on La Mata Way, Barron Avenue, and Laguna Avenue in May 1946). See Illustration A, a portion of a 1948 aerial photo, and Illustration B, a similar portion of the 1949 street map with street names shown.

**Prior History of the Tract**

The Encina Grande Park tract was compiled from three separate subdivisions sold by Driscoll and Reiter (the original purchasers of the Barron Estate) sometime between early 1920 and 1926. The three lots were (1) the easternmost 12.21 acres, sold to R. and H. F. Swarton, (2) the middle 10.45 acres sold to John Windsor, and (3) the westernmost 14.93 acres sold to L. B. Bingley. The three lots were



B - Excerpt from a 1949 City of Palo Alto map and surroundings, including Barron Park (then an unincorporated part of the County). Refer to this to identify the streets on the aerial photo, which covers almost exactly the same area and is oriented identically. Annotations: Doug Graham.

all planted with prune plums (according to non-attributed information given me over the years), suggesting cooperation between the three sets of owners. However, the 1941 aerial photo shows differences in the land usage, as indicated by relative darkness and lightness. Only the Swarton property shows an “orchard house” (including a cluster of outbuildings). Many of the original oak trees were left in place on the Swarton property, and the orchard tree rows are hard to see.

The 1948 aerial photo makes it look like no farming was underway there. It may be that only the middle and westernmost lots were planted with prune plums. This totaled 25.38 acres and may have been intended to be farmed as one unit with the fruit crops contracted to a specific packing company.

**Did the Orchards Ever Produce Commercially?**

The 1941 and 1948 aerial photos show that the prune plum trees were still young without large crowns at the time they were ripped out for the housing development. They probably had not yet borne a full commercial crop, and if so, that fact was probably reflected in the purchase price negotiated between the developer and the orchardists.

**Source of the Name**

Both the 1941 and 1948 aerial photos make one thing clear: There was a gigantic coast live oak (*encina grande*) located right at the present-day intersection of Encina Grande and Arbol Drives. Arbol is Spanish for “tree.” Check Illustration A again to spot the tree – it is a big black blob – the crown spread over about one quarter acre of land. This was undoubtedly one of the largest (and probably one of the oldest) oaks on the Barron Estate. It survived the experience of being included in the housing tract named for it, but only by a few years.

**“The Strip” Was Close By**

The Encina Grande Tract was located less than one quarter mile from El Camino Real on Los Robles Avenue and accessible from six entrances. It was close to the “El Camino Strip” that offered consumer retail and repair services. Especially important, it included Barron Park’s locally famous “Restaurant Row” which was, during the 1940s and ‘50s, the most notable concentration of “fine dining” in Santa Clara County. Palo Alto was still “dry,” with alcohol sales completely



banned. Some of the most renowned dinner restaurants included L'Omelette, Rudolfo's (later the Axe House), Stickney's, Rick's Swiss Chalet, Longbarn Restaurant, and Ming's (then probably the best Chinese restaurant in the county). At a more plebeian level was El Rancho, The Iron Works, Kirk's Drive-In, and Pard's Barbeque. The only current survivor of these restaurants is Kirk's, which relocated first to California Avenue and is now located between Books Inc. and Peet's Coffee in the Town and Country Shopping Center. (I recommend that you try Kirk's for their famous "Steak Burger," redolent of mid-twentieth century suburban life.) Encina Grande Park was also conveniently close to at least five notable bars, including two (La Cumbre and Armando's) that gained bad reputations with the Palo Alto police and the Santa Clara County sheriff's deputies.

**Schools and Parks**

The Encina Grande Park tract was not so convenient, at first, for schoolchildren. In 1946 the closest elementary school was Mayfield, on the west side of El Camino, north of Page Mill Road. However, Barron Park Elementary opened in 1948, and then, very close to the tract, Loma Vista Elementary opened in 1952 (named Juana Briones since the 1970s). Later, Terman Middle School, now Fletcher Middle School, opened on Arastradero Road. High school students initially attended Palo Alto High School, but Cubberley High School opened in 1956 (closing in 1979), and Gunn High School opened in 1965. There were no parks in the larger Barron Park area until the City developed Juana Briones Park in 1968. Then in 1974 the neighborhood and county Board of Supervisors teamed together to create Bol Park, under the leadership of the Barron Park Association.

**Infrastructure**

All streets in Encina Grande Park were paved by 1949. All others in Barron Park were paved no later than 1956. After that time, streets were usually paved before developments were approved for occupancy. Amaranta Avenue was pushed through to Maybell in 1951, providing the only north-south connection through Barron Park west of El Camino Real. Water, sewer, gas, electricity, and telephone service was available in Encina Grande Park from the beginning. Streetlights were provided in the area after a major

political fuss was raised by the infant Barron Park-Maybelle Improvement Association in the early 1960s. The "flood of the century" in December 1955 flooded a substantial portion of Encina Grande Park and resulted in the "undergrounding" of Barron Creek in 1958 in a five-foot buried culvert along the north side of Los Robles Avenue from Laguna Avenue to El Camino Real.

**Pattern of Construction Progress**

Detailed analysis of construction of homes in the new tract reveals a highly unusual pattern for a large tract in the late 1940s or early 1950s. It was a boom time and lots of investment money was pouring into the residential construction industry. As already mentioned in this story, the depression and war had resulted in tremendous pent-up demand for

suitable new housing for the returning G.I.s and their wives, with "Baby Boom" children arriving rapidly on the scene. The new "normal" pattern for tract development was very fast. A tract could be considered a partial failure if it wasn't sold out with most or all the houses finished by the end of six months. The record of Encina Grande Park is startlingly different. Encina Grande Park houses seemed to be built upon demand – not "on spec" like most big tracts built later were.

**The Biggest Tract in Barron Park**

The tract had been filed on July 13, 1946. By that time, very large tracts (up to one thousand or more houses in a tract) were being laid out in Los Angeles County, on Long Island in New York, and in other post-war boom areas. However, the market was not so hot locally. Encina Grande Park with 171 properties was by far the largest tract ever filed in the Barron Park area (it was nearly double the size of Green Acres in 1950 and one-third larger than Green Acres #2 in 1952).

**House Construction**

Construction was slow to get going. The U.S. was experiencing a "mild" recession in 1947, combined with significant inflation, and banks were slow to approve mortgage applications, even with the government backing the loans to G.I.s. Despite this, 1947 saw more houses built than in any subsequent year. For some insights into the owners' sales approach, see Illustration C, a *San Mateo Times* ad from 1948. What struck me was the line "These homes are really built and deserve your inspection." What do you think was meant by that?

**THREE BEDROOMS**  
**\$12,450**

One block west of highway in Palo Alto. If you are a veteran three properties qualify GI financing. Available for purchase by non-vets. These homes are really built and deserve your inspection. There are only 4 left of the first 24 built. Price includes lawn and fence, street work, etc. Salesman on premises after one o'clock daily. Drive to the 4000 block on El Camino in South Palo Alto, turn west at Los Robles Road 1 block. The Chat and Chew Restaurant and Chef Restaurant are on the corner of Los Robles Road and El Camino, or turn west 1 block at Longbarn Restaurant. George P. Gorham, Sales Agent. Phone Fireside 5-2456.

**C - True copy of a real estate ad, *San Mateo Times*, July 24, 1948, p. 7, for four new houses just built in the Encina Grande Park tract. Format: Doug Graham.**



**D - 1949 photo of 771 Encina Grande, built in 1949, looking south toward Amaranta Avenue.**

**The Detailed Record**

The first year of actual construction was 1947, and the total number of houses built was, appropriately, 49 (see below, Houses Built By Year, 1947-1956). The number fit well with the approaching Gold Rush Centennial, planned for 1948-1949. As the years went on, sales went up and down with the economy.

In 1948, there were 30 houses built. In 1949, the number was back up to 45. Then in 1950 the 33 houses built during that California Statehood Centennial year used up most of the remaining house lots. There were 11 built in 1951, none in 1952, two in 1953 and one remaining lot, at 763 Cereza Drive, was not finished until 1956.

Houses Built by Year 1947-1956	
1947	49
1948	30
1949	45
1950	33
1951	11
1952	0
1953	2
1954	0
1955	0
1956	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>

You could truthfully say that the tract was essentially finished by the end of 1950, four years after the start of construction. You



**F - Carolyn Vogt, age 4. Photo by her father in front of their house at 4161 Verdosa Drive.**

might wonder how it felt to the first people who moved in, to live with the noise and dust of active building going on around them for up to four years.

**How Things Looked During and After Construction**

We are fortunate to have a few snapshots of the houses during or shortly after construction. See Illustration D, a photo of 771 Encina

Grande in 1949. The lot to the left (north) was vacant, but a house was built there later in 1949. The house beyond the fence in back (in the direction the car is aimed) is 772 Cereza Drive, built two years before. If the ad was honest, where is the lawn that was promised?

**Shots of the Neighborhood: Verdosa Drive**

Illustration E shows 4161 Verdosa Drive about 1947, according to Carolyn Vogt, who supplied the photo. Illustration F is a photo of Carolyn, probably age 4, in front of her family's house at 4161, probably taken the same day in 1947. The next two illustrations are also from Carolyn and may also have been taken in 1947 - or perhaps a little later. Illustration G is a snapshot of Flores Drive to the west from 4161 Verdosa, and Illustration H shows Verdosa Drive to the north from Carolyn's home.

**Blending Into the Neighborhood**

Today, as late-1940s single-story houses are replaced by twenty-first-century-style two-story houses of different designs (including our share of faux-Mediterranean "McMansions"), the overall look of the tract is shifting and becoming more like the bulk of Barron Park. As Encina Grande properties now sell in the millions of dollars, the G.I. buyers of 1947



**E - 1947 photo of home built in 1947 at 4161 Verdosa Drive, looking northeast from the intersection with Flores Drive. Photo courtesy of Carolyn Vogt, taken by her father.**



**G - 1947 view southwest from 4161 Verdosa Drive along Florales Drive toward Amaranta Avenue. Photo courtesy of Carolyn Vogt, taken by her father.**



**H - 1947 view northwest along Verdosa Drive from 4161 Verdosa. Photo courtesy of Carolyn Vogt, taken by her father.**

would be astonished by the price as well as by the size and luxury of some of the replacement houses recently built. See Illustration I (“eye”), 4161 Verdosa in 2009.

I hope you enjoyed this article as much as I enjoyed researching and writing it. You may have noticed that much of the information came from current and former neighbors. Without these sources, I could not write half of what I have written over the past 34 years (about 110 articles to date, not counting public presentation Power Points and the physical “bulletin board” style History Exhibit that I erect for May Fêtes and other Barron Park events). Literally hundreds of people have provided me with information and I heartily thank them all. Please keep it coming!

Contact me at [dgrahampaca@gmail.com](mailto:dgrahampaca@gmail.com) 650-493-0689, or 984 Ilima Way, Palo Alto 94306. Sorry, I don’t do Facebook or Instagram. But I am a friendly dinosaur...



**I - 2009 photo of 4161 Verdosa Drive, by Carolyn Vogt. This house is either a replacement for the one Carolyn lived in, or it is a very extensive rebuild.**

## EMAIL LISTS

The Barron Park Association supports three email lists: *bpa-news*, *bpa-misc*, and *bpa-issues*. The email lists are hosted on Google Groups. To join a list, go to

<http://bpapaloalto.org/bpa-email-lists/>

The link provides information about each list and an easy way to subscribe to one or more of them.

## BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2020

**Barron Park Association**  
724 Barron Avenue  
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