

Annual Free Newsletter For All Residents!

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BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

John King, BPA President



Happy New Year, Barron Park! Barron Park residents had fun in the Fall with events that brought out our community spirit! We started off with an enjoyable Ice Cream Social in Bol Park on September 22. We'd invited candidates for local and state offices in the upcoming election, and most showed up for good one-on-one conversations. October 13 brought our well-attended annual Movie Night to the park, with our perennial favorite, *Shrek*, on the screen, and one of its stars, Perry the Donkey, close at hand. The weekend of October 26-27 was so colorful – with the Halloween Bray Parade on Saturday and then on Sunday, Diwali, the Celebration of Light, with beautiful dress, magnificent food, and (this year) Bollywood dancing!

Early in the election season, a Board committee sent out a questionnaire to candidates for Palo Alto City Council, giving them a chance to respond to concerns specific to Barron Park. We very much appreciated their detailed answers, compiled and shared with the neighborhood. Finally, on December 22, we held our annual Holiday Caroling event – which this year featured a local crafts display and fair, hopefully to become a new tradition! Warm thanks to Gary Breitbard and Jena Rauti who led us in seasonal music.

In late October we responded to an incident that occurred on October 17 at the Tesla site in the Stanford Research Park. First reported

by a resident, many gallons of sodium hydroxide (coolant for the Tesla AI Supercomputer) had been released from a storage area into a storm drain, the gutter, and Matadero Creek, threatening both Ventura and Barron Park. Even though the compound was described by Tesla and city officials as “harmless,” the city held a community meeting at the Ventura Community Center on November 1, where I, along with other Ventura and BP residents, expressed our concerns, most particularly about the unfortunate delay in communication. I was interviewed by ABC 7 News, quoted in *Palo Alto Online*, and in *The Campanile*, the Paly High newspaper. You can watch the ABC news story at abc7ne.ws/4j3J48n

For Spring 2025, planning for our annual May Fête begins in January! We always need volunteers for the fun preparations and the event – this year most likely on Sunday afternoon, May 18. More to come on that.

Time to join or renew your BPA membership – see membership form inside! Positions on the BPA Board and committees are available; please consider joining an interesting, creative group of folks! Come to a Tuesday evening Board meeting (on Zoom) to learn more; meeting invitations are sent out on our email lists: bpa-misc and bpa-news. My contact info is: johnwadeking@gmail.com. Please consult page 6 inside for handy BPA addresses and links.

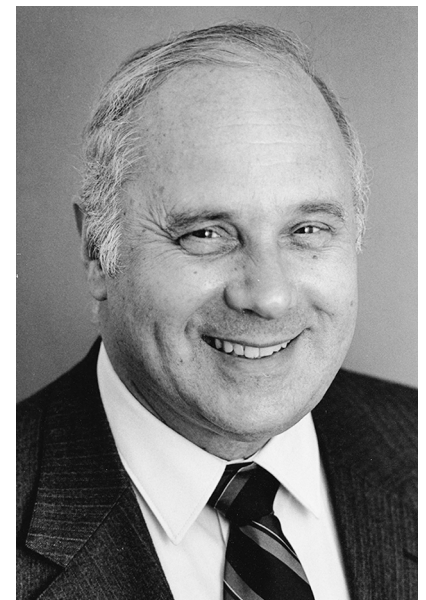
Have a great 2025, everyone!

Join or Renew Your BPA Membership Today!



Please take a moment to support the Barron Park Association. Your membership funds this quarterly newsletter, May Fête, Ice Cream Socials, Movie Nights, Senior Lunches and many other events, plus the Native Habitat Garden and the BPA Donkey Project.

Please visit: <https://bpapaloalto.org/join-the-barron-park-association/>



Richard C. Placone (1933-2024) led the Barron Park community starting in the 1960s, through the '70s creation of Bol Park and annexation to the City. See page 12. Photo by Jeff Weissman (1986).

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Wildlife in Our Neighborhood: The Gray Fox

By Milo Olavson



Me and Niner when I was one year old. Photos courtesy of the Olavson family.



Me in November 2024 when I caught a gray fox on my wildlife cameras. (Special thanks to my friend James Witt who lets me put up cameras at his house by Matadero Creek.)

Ever since I was young, I have loved the animals in our neighborhood. Even before I could walk, I was always mesmerized by the donkeys that live by Bol Park. As I got older, I discovered Matadero Creek. I'd go down into the creek and play, whether it was with my friends or by myself, I would love it. And now, in that same creek, I put up wildlife cameras and observe all of the many animals that live there. At first, I found opossums and raccoons, and then eventually skunks, egrets, and coyotes. And after a while, I started moving the cameras around. I caught

rats, ducks, bunnies, other birds, and other wildlife. But my most exciting discovery is the gray fox that I named "Barron."

I am part of the Urban Wildlife Research Project, led by Bill Leikam, also known as "the Fox Guy." He's been tracking wildlife at the Palo Alto Baylands for over fourteen years, observing and documenting the gray foxes, but last year they all died out from canine distemper. This is what makes my gray fox discovery so exciting.

Bill thinks that Barron the gray fox might be "dispersing" right now. That means it's left its parents in search of new territory and a mate. I hope that Barron decides to stay here in our neighborhood. If you've ever seen the fields behind Gunn High School, there are plenty of squirrels and meals for a fox family! Gray foxes are a keystone species,

which means they hold the ecosystem in balance and keep the rodent population under control.

We are so lucky to live in Barron Park, where Matadero Creek is still a natural creek and supports a diversity of wildlife. But from El Camino to the Baylands, Matadero Creek was turned into a concrete channel in the 1980s. This destroyed a major wildlife corridor between the Santa Cruz mountains and the Bay. Our goal is to remove the concrete and re-naturalize Matadero Creek so animals like Barron can continue to thrive in our neighborhoods. If you would like to support the Urban Wildlife Research Project, you can donate or volunteer at: urbanwildliferesearchproject.org

Fun Facts about Gray Foxes

- They can climb trees! Sometimes they sleep in trees, to keep away from coyotes.
- You can identify a Gray Fox by the black stripe down their tail.
- They are elusive and hard to spot because they are shy and mostly nocturnal.

Milo Olavson is 11 years old. He is a sixth grader at Keys School and participates in the Urban Wildlife Research Project. For more footage from Milo's wildlife cameras visit youtube.com/watch?v=1ovcwWLXesQ



Drawing of Barron the Gray Fox by Bay Area artist, Meagan Donegan.

We Can Sort Our Waste Better!

By Katrina Huang



My nearest trash, recycling, and compost bins, in that order: The contents are all pretty much the same! Photos by Katrina Huang.

When you're out and about, look into a couple of nearby trash containers. Is everything there supposed to be there? If the one you're looking at is anything like the ones I've seen, probably not.

I asked a local resident her opinion on how people separate their trash. "People just don't really know how . . . there's different ways to address unwillingness versus not knowing," she responded. So, how can we address this commonly overlooked topic?

Well, why is sorting our trash important?

Statistically, the average American throws out about 4.9 pounds of trash every day.¹ Expanding that to the American population, we generated about 292 million tons of solid waste in 2018 alone. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates² that 75 percent of our landfill waste can be recycled. Of all the waste we generate, however, we only recycle about less than a quarter.

It's important that we minimize the amount of waste left in landfills. For example, decomposing food scraps, yard trimmings, and soiled paper, when deposited in landfills, produce methane.³ Methane is a greenhouse gas at least 28 times more potent than carbon dioxide in trapping heat in our atmosphere, which means that it is a huge contributor to climate change. Landfills are the third-largest source of human-related methane emissions in the United States, which is why it's so important that apart from reducing and reusing our waste, we make sure it is sorted efficiently.

One of the most common misconceptions I see with regard to waste is the assumption that our trash facilities process and sort all of our waste for us, regardless of what bin we put our trash in. In truth, whatever we put into our trash (landfill) bin does not get sorted or processed whatsoever. When plastic waste or other items that can be reused or repurposed are dumped into landfill, plastic items will take up to 1000 years to decompose. To reduce your waste, donate edible food to our South Palo Alto Food Closet at 670 East Meadow, and offer items you no longer need

to be distributed for free on, for example, the Barron Park Buy Nothing Facebook group.⁴

A second common misconception is about the process of recycling. Recyclable materials must be clean, or something called recycling contamination⁵ occurs. In this process, non-recyclable or unclean substances mix with the recyclable materials, rendering the usable materials caught in the mix useless. In fact, just a bit of grease can ruin otherwise usable batches of material. Contaminated recycling must undergo further processing and is commonly disposed of.

So . . . what are some pointers for proper trash sorting?

Print out and hang a guide like this one over your household or building cans and bins! Resources like this are extremely helpful and are already on most community trash bins. Sparing them a glance whenever you're unsure of where to throw something goes a long way.

Sorting our waste well may seem like a trivial focus in the face of global warming and all of its effects, but it's also an incredibly easy thing to integrate as a norm in our daily lives.

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find us on social media
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for service information

greenwaste
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650.493.4894
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Image from GreenWaste of Palo Alto. ⁶ Visit GreenWaste of Palo Alto for more resources.

Smart Meters and Your Utility Account

By David Coale

Now that most Palo Alto households have smart meters (Advanced Metering Infrastructure [AMI]), and we know how to read them (see the BPA Newsletter, Spring 2024), bpapaloalto.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/BPASpring244C.pdf we'll explain how usage data appears online for your utility bill and what you can learn from it. Smart meters collect usage data every hour for natural gas and water, and every 15 minutes for electricity. The data is then sent to a central location where it is available for billing, utility usage, and utility operations. That means we consumers can also view our detailed usage data by the year, by the month, by the hour, and for electricity, every 15 minutes.

Let's take a look at water usage. Log into your utility account, or create one if you don't have one at: cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/Utilities/Customer-Service/MyCPAU-Account-Login



For an explanation of rates, click on the tiny "Rates" button on the lower left of the chart. Next to the "Rates" button is an "Export to Excel" button, if you wish to keep track of your data yourself.

high as a typical summer month. November must have been dry, and I had turned the irrigation back on.

At the upper right of the graph, three buttons represent the time interval: monthly, daily, and hourly. You can click on a month or day to get to the next level of usage, daily or hourly. You can also click on a bar in the graph to get to the next level. You might want to check that there is no water use in the middle of the night when everyone is asleep. If you see some usage, and it is the same across all the late night and early morning hours or 24/7, this could mean there's a water leak. You can see fairly small leaks, since the system will show as little as three-quarters of a gallon per hour of usage. Water usage at odd times can also mean that there are programmed items, such as an outdoor watering system. My system comes on at 5:00 a.m., so it's easy for me to figure out. Other usage might be a dishwasher set to wash later at night or toilet flushing. You will have to do some sleuthing to figure out your household usage.



Once you are logged in, click on the usage tab in the top (green) bar. From there, click on "water" on the left, and you will see a year's worth of your water usage in CCF, or 100 cubic feet. This is the unit of water you are billed for. One CCF equals 748 gallons.

Online, note that the bar graph is light blue on the bottom and darker blue on top. This shows the tiers used in the billing system.

At the upper left area of the graph you will see three buttons that show your water usage data in CCF, in gallons, or in dollars. Just above this, you'll see your monthly average and the highest month for the current year. Water usage is normally lower in the winter (due to less or no landscape watering) and higher in the summer. I was surprised to see that, for me, last November was almost as

Now let's look at your gas usage. This is similar to the water usage page in that you can see monthly, daily, and hourly usage data. The bars are also different colors depending on what tier you are in. Units for gas usage are *Therms*. One Therm is equal to 100 cubic feet of gas. Note that the usage data for gas does not show anything smaller than a therm, so you won't see the same level of detail as in

your water usage data.

Typically, you will see more natural gas usage in the winter if you have a gas furnace, and a smaller amount in the summer when gas is only used for heating water and cooking. You can see hourly usage, but since a therm is quite large, there is not much information to be gleaned from this. Cooking does not use much gas, so you might not see it in your daily or hourly data even though you had been cooking. For instance, boiling two cups of water uses about 12 cubic feet of gas. If you are starting to electrify your home appliances, you will see very little or even no gas use. If you require detailed gas usage data, you will have to read your gas meter manually. This method will show as little as one half cubic foot of gas usage.

Finally, we'll look at electricity usage. The electricity page provides the most detail and is the most complicated, since some households have solar photo-voltaic (PV) systems that have two different billing options! In addition, electricity is much less intuitive to understand. What is a kilowatt-hour (kWh) anyway? We can't see it or weigh it, and it has no volume. For most of us, this unit is simply a means of displaying our utility bill. One kWh is an electrical load of 1000 watts running for one hour. Think of ten 100-watt incandescent light bulbs left on for one hour, or a small microwave oven running for one hour, or a small space heater on for one hour.

The data for electricity usage is similar to that for water usage, but goes even further in detail, with 15-minute intervals. So, for you folks who love data, there's a lot to look at, plus the possibility of exporting your data to an Excel spreadsheet. The exported data will be the same as the online page. Units in the graphs are in kWh or in dollars.

Electricity usage data is more variable than water or gas depending on whether you have AC, a heat-pump water heater, a heat-pump furnace, a pool, a hot tub, an electric range/oven, an EV or two, or other large electrical loads. Even a small load left on for a long time adds up. While there are no "leaks" in electrical systems, you can check your loads at night to make sure your "idle" load, when most everything should be off, is not too high. To check this, pick an average month in the bar graph and click on that bar. Then click on the bar for an average day. Each click shows you greater detail for your usage. Now



click on the 15-minute icon on the upper right side of the page to see your 15-minute data. There is a scroll bar at the bottom to scroll through your usage data, since a single day contains a lot of 15-minute data points!

You will see that this "idle" data varies a bit. For example, your refrigerator cycles on and off. So what makes up the electrical load when everything is "off"? Well, it's the computers and printers left "on," and your router/modem. Anything that uses a remote is using some power waiting to sense the remote signal. Satellite dish controllers, game-boys, outside night-lights, security systems, that extra refrigerator in the garage, etc. It all adds up and is running 24/7. Some of these loads can be reduced; others you will want to leave on. But knowing what they are allows you to make better choices about your usage. A good idle load will be less than approximately 500 watts, but this is highly dependent on your home and appliances.

How to find out what your idle load is. Since the usage data is in kWh, we divide by hours, and then multiply by 1000 to get watts. This is pretty easy: Pick an average value from your 15-minute data and divide by .25 hours. This will give you kW. Now multiply this by 1000 to get watts. Do this anytime you want to see what power (watts) you are using from the utility. For instance, how much does it take to charge my EV? While the hourly data can give you a good first guess, it is really an average over the hour. So, to get peak usage, you will need to look at the 15-minute data.

A quick word about solar. If you have a solar PV system in Palo Alto, you will be importing

and exporting electricity from and to the utility. The graphs of your usage data will show positive (importing) values and negative (exporting) values for kWh. They will also show you what payback option you have selected – cash out or credit.

There might be some anomalies in your data. While all the monthly graphs will show a year's worth of data, the daily, hourly, and 15-minute data (for electricity usage) will only cover the past few months, that is, since your smart meters have been in operation. If you don't see a button for your daily usage for any one utility, you probably don't have a smart meter for that utility yet. Note also that the latest usage data available is a few days old, so you will have to wait a few days to see your detailed usage. There may also be gaps in your data, especially for gas usage, since a therm is such a large unit. For more detailed gas usage, we'd need even "smarter" meters.

As you've seen, usage data collected by the smart meters and your online account can help you understand your utility usage and make better choices. In the next few years, we expect electricity rates will go to "Time Of Use (TOU)," where you will be charged more for electricity during peak usage hours (4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.) and less for off-peak usage. This is where smart meter data can help you save on your electricity. So, let's all start taking advantage of our online accounts to optimize our utility usage.

Questions? You can reach me, David, at: david@evcl.com

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Utility Account, Continued from page 5

Useful links about smart meters and your billing:

AMI info:

cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/Utilities/Customer-Service/Meter-Reading-Info-Schedule/Advanced-Metering-Infrastructure-and-Smart-Grid

How to read your bill:

cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/Utilities/Customer-Service/Utilities-Rates/Residential-Rates/How-to-Read-Your-Bill

Energy Saving Tips:

mycpau.cityofpaloalto.org/Portal/Estimate-My-Savings.aspx

ARE YOU AN ARTIST OR WRITER?

Do you enjoy the creative work featured in the BPA Newsletter? Would you like to see your art, photography, crafts, music, published (or unpublished) writing, etc., in a future issue? Please send your idea with a draft Artist's Statement and reproducible samples or a description of your work to Myrna Rochester at: mbrbpa@sonic.net

Better Waste Sorting, Continued from page 3

Additionally, proper waste segregation is a commonly neglected yet crucial part of not only keeping Palo Alto green, but also maintaining the integrity of our community. Making sure we sort our trash properly means that we respect not only those working to process all of the waste we send to GreenWaste and Recology, but also the basic systems put in place for us to be able to live our lives comfortably. I'm not such a stickler for rules, but it's still important that we abide by these systems in order to optimize their efficiency. If not for the environment, try to sort trash properly in order to encourage others to do the same, and to respect those who have made a similar effort.

References

1. environmentamerica.org/center/resources/trash-in-america-2/
2. rts.com/blog/recycling-facts-statistics
3. epa.gov/lmop/basic-information-about-landfill-gas
4. facebook.com/groups/841772343403508/
5. thinkviably.com/resource-library/how-much-recyclable-waste-goes-into-landfills/

Barron Park Association Spring Newsletter Deadline:

Saturday March 1, 2025

Please submit articles (in Word if possible) for the Spring 2025 issue of the BPA Newsletter, with photos/images separate from text, by **Saturday, March 1, 2025** (i.e., during the first week of March ☺) to Myrna Rochester at: mbrbpa@sonic.net

Make sure your BPA membership is current at: barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com You may want to send a query in advance with your ideas – for an article, story, report, update, interview, profile, announcement, review, anecdote, or artist's page – to mbrbpa@sonic.net

Announcements for activities should be for events scheduled **after April 15, 2025**. The Spring issue will be available in April 2025 by U.S. mail and online.

6. greenwaste.com/palo-alto/support/what-goes-where/

Katrina Huang, a junior at Castilleja High School, is a Barron Park resident and an active member of 350 Silicon Valley.

BPA EMAILS AND WEB LINKS WINTER 2024-25

- **BPA Website:** bpapaloalto.org/
- **BPA Newsletter Archive:** bpapaloalto.org/bpa-newsletter/
- **BPA Membership (Join/Renew):** bpapaloalto.org/join-the-barron-park-association/
- **Membership Questions:** Lisa Berkowitz Landers at: barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com
- **BPA Email Lists:** Join at: bpapaloalto.org/bpa-email-lists/ or write to: listmanager@bpapaloalto.org
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- **BPA Newsletter Editor:** Myrna

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- **Support for Buena Vista Neighbors:** Karen Ratzlaff at: karen.ratzlaff@hotmail.com
Buena Vista Partners (non-profit) at: buenavistapartners.org
- **Welcoming Committee Chair:** Gwen Luce at: gluce@cbnocal.com
- **Emergency Services Volunteer Program:** Maurice Green at: mauryg3@comcast.net
- **Barron Park Historian:** Douglas L. Graham at: dgrahampaca@gmail.com
- **Senior Connections:** Pooja Punn at: barronparkseniorconnections@gmail.com

- **BPA Webmaster:** Maurice Green at: bpawebman@bpapaloalto.org
- **Barron Park Donkeys:** To volunteer, donate, or purchase merchandise, go to: barronparkdonkeys.org or contact Jenny Kiratli at: barronparkdonkeys@gmail.com
- **Bol Park Native Habitat:** To volunteer, contact Rich Elder at: rich.e.elder@gmail.com
Donate to the Native Garden through the "Bol Park Fund" at: friendsofpaparks.org/donations2
By mail or phone: Friends of the Palo Alto Parks (FOPAP), Bol Park Fund, 425 Grant Ave., Suite 27, Palo Alto, CA 94306; 650-327-7323.

Thomas Gale Moore (1930-2024)

By the Moore Family



Cassandra and Tom Moore. Photo courtesy of the Moore family.

Thomas Gale Moore, a 50-year resident of Barron Park, passed away peacefully on August 23, 2024, at the age of 93.

His daughter, Antonia Moore, was beside him, holding his hand.

Born in Washington, D.C., on November 6, 1930, Tommy (Tom) was the second of four children of Naval officer Charles Godwin Moore and Olive Beatrice Hill-McLean Moore. Sent very young to boarding schools by his aloof parents, Tommy had a lonely childhood.

This treatment, along with his father's sudden death from a stroke when Tom was 18, likely played a role in his college behavior: At MIT he joined a fraternity and went to parties but didn't attend classes or take his exams. Not surprisingly, he was expelled. Worried about being drafted into the Army and sent to Korea, Tom instead joined the Navy, serving as a sonarman on a destroyer. Though in later years he recalled this as a miserable period, he later used military financial assistance to pay for college at George Washington University, not wanting to ask his family for money.

Tom met his future wife, Cassandra Chrones, on a ship crossing the Atlantic in July 1958. They married just four months later in New

York City. Tom described his luck in this union as "finding a Greek goddess." In 1960, their son, Charles, was born, followed in June 1964 by their daughter, Antonia (Tonia). Despite his own upbringing, Tom was an engaged, fun-loving father, comfortable showing affection. He never gave his children a moment's doubt about how much he loved them.

In 1961, Tom earned his PhD in economics from the University of Chicago. He taught economics at Carnegie Tech (now Carnegie Mellon) in Pittsburgh before serving as a staff member for the Council of Economic Advisers under President Lyndon Johnson, years in which he and his family lived at his childhood home

in Chevy Chase, Maryland. The family then moved to East Lansing, Michigan, where Tom taught at Michigan State University. In 1973, he took a sabbatical leave, and the family of four spent an unforgettable year traveling around Europe. They arrived in Palo Alto in 1974, when Tom was offered a position as a fellow at Stanford's Hoover Institution. He and Cassandra purchased one of the last-built Eichlers in Barron Park. It was their dream house, where they created a welcoming atmosphere that had Charles's and Tonia's friends stopping by almost daily and usually staying for dinner.

During the Carter administration, Tom played a key role in deregulating the airline and trucking industries. Later, during the Reagan administration, he was appointed a member of the White House Council of Economic Advisers and served as the specialist in microeconomics. With their children out of the nest, Tom and Cassandra enjoyed Washington, D.C., city life, renting an apartment in the Dupont Circle neighborhood. They resettled in Palo Alto after Reagan's second term.

Tom's wife and best friend, Cassandra, died unexpectedly in 2019 after they had relished 60-plus years of marriage. He was not the

same after her death but learned to carry on.

Tom loved travel, wine, martinis, opera, news of the world, and his red BMW Z4. But far and away, he loved his family. He is survived by his children, Charles and Tonia; daughter-in-law, Kathleen; grandchildren, Thomas and Charlotte; and sister- and brother-in-law, Olive and Dan Mullet. They all miss him like crazy.

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2024-25

Barron Park Association

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Gardening for Pollinators: Beyond Flowers to Stems

By Linda Elder, Native Habitat Committee

One of the main ways to attract pollinators to the garden is to have a diverse mixture of flowers all year round for pollen and nectar. However, we have also learned it's important to think beyond flowers when developing pollinator habitat. Insects need shelter for nesting and overwintering. About 30% of our native bee species, such as small carpenter bees (*Ceratina spp.*), mask bees (*Hylaeus spp.*), and leafcutter bees (*Megachile spp.*) nest in cavities of wood and pithy (soft) or hollow dead plant stems. (The other 70% of our native bees are ground-nesters.) In the Bol Park Native Plant Garden, our goal is to manage the stems to provide natural nesting sites for bees, in addition to our two bee hotels.

The timing of cutting back and leaving stems needs to allow for the general life cycle of nesting bees. In the early spring, a female bee will wake from winter hibernation and start to look for vacant stem cavities to begin a new nest, collecting pollen as the flowers begin to bloom. She packs pollen mixed with nectar into the abandoned plant stems and lays her eggs there, creating separate chambers within the stem, divided by partitions of mud or chewed plant material. Throughout the spring and summer, larvae hatch from the eggs, consuming the collected pollen and growing. They then transform into adult bees and await to emerge the following spring. As autumn approaches, mated female bees will look for a hollow stem to hibernate in, awaiting the warm spring days for the cycle to begin anew.

In our efforts to create a biodiverse habitat garden, we are trying out a new gardening practice. Each year we'll cut spent flower stems and flowers as usual, but instead of cutting back all stems to the ground, we'll leave some 8- to 24-inch stem stubs to provide nesting sites, creating a variety of diameters for different bee body sizes so every species may find the perfect home.

Plants with hollow or pithy stems will be prioritized for pruning to provide nest sites. We are starting out with two plants that we have in abundance and regularly prune every year. Nude Buckwheat (*Eriogonum nudum*), because it has hollow stems, and California



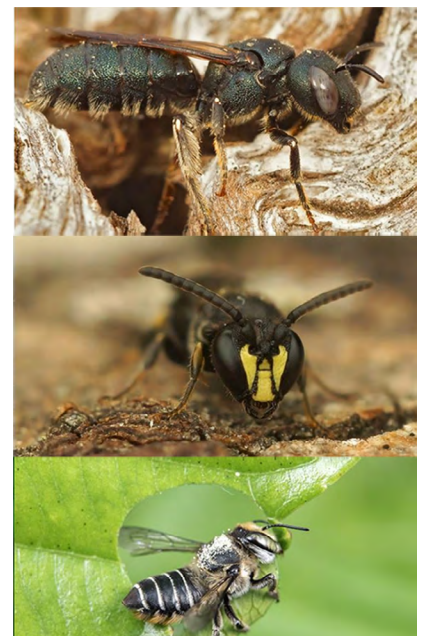
Hollow plant stems after pruning, as potential homes for native bees. Photo by Linda Elder.

Goldenrod (*Solidago velutina ssp. Californica*), because it has a pithy stem. This year, we cut back the Buckwheat stems in November, but we left the Goldenrod flower stalks and seed heads intact for birds, planning to cut them in early spring. New growth in the spring will cover these stubs.

It will be fun to look for evidence of bee nests in the Bol Park Native Garden. Please let us know if you see any bee nesting activity next spring or summer! Just write to us at bpnativegarden@gmail.com

For more information about stem

management, go to: xerces.org/blog/moving-beyond-flowers-natural-nesting-habitat-for-bees-and-other-insects



Small carpenter bees, mask bees, and leafcutter bees nest and overwinter in wood cavities or dead plant stalks. Photos from birdwatchinghq.com/

View the BPA Newsletter in Full Color!

You can read this issue in full color and with live Web links, as soon as it's posted at: bpapaloalto.org/bpa-newsletter/

While you're there, check out our Archive of past Newsletters. You can easily review past activities in the 'hood and catch up on issues you may have missed.

Thanks! The Editors

Barron Park Fall Events!



Dr. Anima Mathur, Meenakshi Ranjan, and Vishai Saxena organize the amazing array of food and sweets at the Diwali celebration at Barron Park Elementary on October 27, 2024. Visit page 18 for more on Diwali. Photo by Jaya Pandey.



Mayor Greer Stone joins with other guests to follow a Bollywood fitness instructor at the Diwali celebration. Photo by Myrna Rochester.



Volunteer donkey handlers, including team leader Jenny Kiratli, get Buddy and April ready to lead the third annual Bray Parade on Saturday, October 26. Photo by Myrna Rochester.



Neighbors of all ages enjoy the annual Bray Parade on Saturday, October 26. Photo by Myrna Rochester.



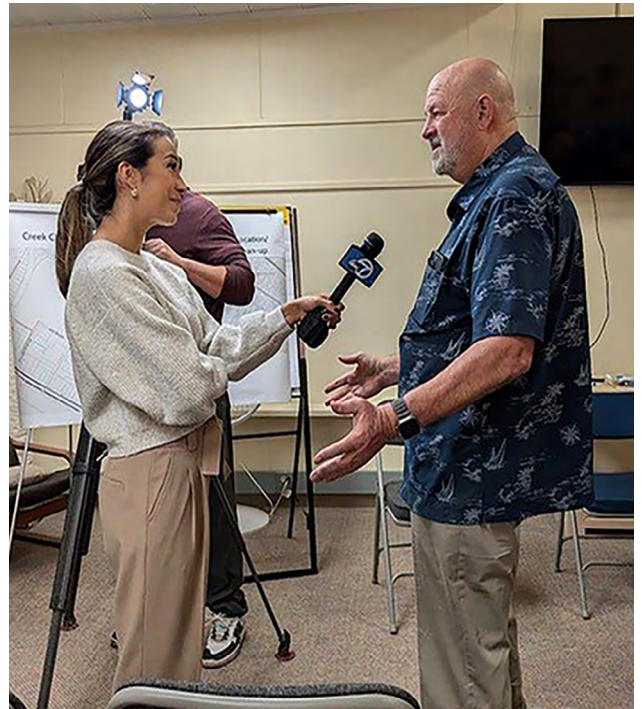
Residents enjoy *Shrek* at the October 17, 2024, Bol Park Movie night, especially since the character *Donkey* is modeled after Perry. Photo by Myrna Rochester.



A young resident of the Buena Vista Community enjoys her *Posada* holiday gifts. Photos courtesy of Buena Vista Partners.



Greer Stone, Erika Escalante, Joe Simitian, Maria Martinez, Esmeralda Aristeo, and Julie Young at the Buena Vista community Posada.



ABC 7 Bay Area Reporter Lauren Martinez interviews BPA President John King about the Tesla spill on November 1, 2024. Photo by Myrna Rochester.



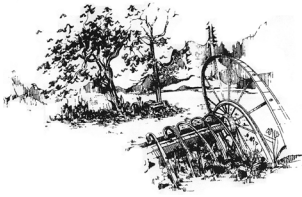
The Barron Park Association hosted its annual caroling event on Sunday, December 22, which included a neighborhood crafts fair for the first time. Photo by Jaya Pandey.



Even the dogs enjoyed the caroling and the new crafts fair! Photo by Sky Runser.



Rich Elder posts City Council candidate responses to questions posed by Barron Park residents while Leon Rochester supervises. The BPA solicited resident questions and then consolidated their responses for distribution to residents via email and the community bulletin board. Photo by Myrna Rochester.



2025 Barron Park Association Membership

bpapaloalto.org

Thanks to all our members!

[2025 Membership Renewals begin January 1, 2025.](#)

You may join or renew your membership online with a credit card or PayPal at:
bpapaloalto.org/join-the-barron-park-association/

To pay by personal check, mail this membership form and your check to:
BPA Treasurer, 724 Barron Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94306

Memberships renewed October 2024 to December 2024 are valid through 2025

Name(s):	Primary email address:
Address:	Secondary email address:
☐ Newsletter: I'd like the full color online edition (instead of a print copy for Spring, Summer, and Fall) ☐ Email lists: I'd like to join the free BPA Email lists.	Phone:

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If sending a personal check, please pay to: **Barron Park Association.**

The Barron Park Association is your volunteer neighborhood group that serves the interests of our very special community. All residents of Barron Park and Green Acres are encouraged to join. If you have questions about the BPA or need to check your membership status, please email: barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com

Your BPA membership supports many Barron Park community events and interests including: May Fête, Movie Night in Bol Park, Ice Cream Socials, holiday celebrations to mark the year, Senior Connections, Emergency Preparedness, Quarterly Newsletters, and Email lists.

Calling Local Business Owners!

Do you have a business in Barron Park? Are you a business owner living in Barron Park? A Barron Park Association Basic Business Membership (\$50/year) gives you one free ad in the Spring, Summer, or Fall edition of the BPA Newsletter. You may also place a full-length "Spotlight" article about you and your business during your first year as a member. Plus, you'll be listed on the home page of the BPA Website.

At another level, Business Sponsors (\$350/year) may place an ad in each of our quarterly Newsletters. For more information, contact our BPA Business Liaison, Paul Yang at: pabloyang@yahoo.com

Remembering Dick Placone

By Douglas L. Graham

Dick Placone and the Creation of Today's Barron Park

Dick Placone was in many ways the creator of our modern Barron Park. The neighborhood has had many devoted residents who made huge contributions, but Dick stands out among them for four significant achievements as a neighborhood organizer.

- In the mid-1960s before annexation, Dick led the group that wrote the Barron Park General Plan and convinced the Santa Clara Board of Supervisors to implement it.
- In the early 1970s, with Sam Elster and other leaders, he led the movement to create and then expand Bol Park.
- He led the neighborhood into a welcome annexation to the City of Palo Alto in 1975, effectively ending the 30-year "Cold War on the Peninsula" between Barron Park and the city.
- Most importantly, through a decade of patient work, he changed the Barron Park Association (BPA) from a reactive, negatively oriented citizens' protest group into a well-organized proactive organization with positive goals and political influence.

In Memoriam, Richard Carl Placone, 1933-2024

In sadness, we celebrate Richard Placone's achievements in improving our neighborhood. Dick died on October 9, 2024. The community might not have known except for a brief notice in the *Palo Alto Daily Post*.

Author's note: These recollections are not an obituary; I know little about Dick Placone's professional life, family, or other experiences. But perhaps there is no one still living in Barron Park who knew Dick better than I. From 1978 until 2022, I often consulted with him on neighborhood issues and history. His contributions to our community need to be showcased. Much of what I say here comes from my earlier Newsletter articles (indicated with quote marks) which can be found at bpapaloalto.org/bpa-newsletter/

How Dick Got Involved

In 1962 Richard C. Placone moved into the house on Chimalus where he lived the rest of his life. He soon started paying



Community leaders BPA President Richard Placone (r.) and Paul Wolff (l.) in the Bol donkey pasture near Laguna Avenue in 1969. Photo: *Palo Alto Times*, September 18, 1969.

attention to neighborhood politics and in about 1963 began to get involved with the "long-established" Barron Park-Maybelle [sic] Improvement Association, headed by Mrs. Russell Riley (*Palo Alto Times*, May 24, 1965). By 1965, according to Bill Klink, the association was undergoing major changes. New and younger residents began to make their progressive ideas known. The name was changed to the Barron Park Association, and a new group of leaders coalesced around Dick Placone, who became the BPA President in 1967.

Renovating the Neighborhood Association

Dick was already guiding the association which by 1965 had decided to "take an indirect approach to annexation by studying it objectively. Annexation would be looked at only by comparison to two alternatives, which were defined as (1) continuation of the existing, unincorporated status, or (2) incorporation as a town. The underlying assumption was that the citizens of Barron Park would make the correct decision if a strong factual basis could be developed and the emotional level of the political atmosphere could be lowered."

BPA meetings included representatives from each area of the neighborhood, and each major opinion group conducted open and balanced deliberations. This was difficult, given the super-charged emotions engendered by 20 years of controversy and six major political battles on the annexation issue. Dick led many or most of the discussions with a quiet, but firm and friendly

approach. It blows my mind to think of the steadiness and patience that it took to do this for ten years!

Consensus Emerges on a General Plan

During 1965 and 1966, Placone and the other leaders concentrated on working with the community to establish a consensus on what Barron Parkers wanted their area to be like in the future. The most immediate threat was possible apartment developments along the streets opening off the El Camino

commercial strip – Matadero, Kendall, Los Robles, and Maybell Avenues. The other major threat was Palo Alto's plan to upgrade our streets after annexation – an enormously expensive undertaking that would have led to the removal of most of our street trees, completely changing the appearance of the neighborhood. (For more on the 1966 General Plan, visit BPA Newsletters, Fall 2000, "Annexation Battles, Part Three" and Summer 2019, "BPA History Part One.")

The Creation of Bol Park

Discussion of a General Plan naturally led to a proposal for a community park. The BPA was "taking on a project that would culminate in its crowning achievement, the acquisition and development of Bol Park. Unlike the General Plan effort, the park project was not even indirectly related to annexation. However, it helped build the BPA's reputation as a group of achievers and establish its credibility as a group that welcomed diverse points of view and then moved slowly but surely towards community consensus before acting." It is probably accurate to say that without Dick's calm, firm guiding hand, Bol Park would never have been established. (See the BPA Newsletter, Fall 2024, pp. 13-19, "How the Neighborhood Created Bol Park.")

Placone Leads Barron Park Into the City

Dick's efforts, along with those of allies such as Sam Elster, Paul Wolff, and Ken Arutunian, converted the BPA into a solid, positively oriented general neighborhood association and came to fruition in November 1975 when Barron Park residents voted 2-to-1 to

annex to Palo Alto. The annexation and Bol Park could appropriately serve as Dick's legacy. After eleven years of hard work as the BPA's volunteer president, our friend Dick Placone laid down the gavel and retired from the Board in 1976.

The Matadero Well Site

However, in 1975-76, another issue was slowly bubbling to the surface. Barron Park residents who lived near or frequently passed the 600 block of Matadero Avenue were having thoughts about improving the appearance of the Matadero well site at the creek. At a major entrance to the neighborhood, on one of our busiest "collector" streets, a small parcel of city-owned land was trash-strewn and often used for open storage of city and water district construction equipment and materials. It had become an embarrassing eyesore and an issue between residents and city government. We felt strongly that such a situation would not be tolerated in North Palo Alto. (See the BPA Newsletter, Fall 2013, pp. 4-12.)

Immediately after annexation in 1975, the Utilities Department, which managed the land on behalf of the city, took some steps to improve the appearance of the property east (toward El Camino) of the well and pump station, next to the Matadero Avenue bridge over Matadero Creek. "The city cleared brush and weeds and installed two park-style benches, making a fairly pleasant place for people to stop and rest. Dick Placone remembered that this was done as a means of showing goodwill to Barron Park residents . . . there were also community discussions about converting the area to a mini-park, but nothing came of it." For more than 30 years, until 2008, the area suffered from neglect and unintentional (but real) abuse by public employees and their contractors.

Doug Moran, our eighth BPA President (2002-2008), was one of the first people to raise the issue, lining up a powerful supporter - newly elected City Council Member Pat Burt. Claire Elliott of Acterra joined the effort, and well-site neighbor Chris Stafford began complaining about the trash buildup. Lynnne Melena, our ninth BPA President (2008-2013), took up the issue of the missing benches and requested native plantings to screen the "visually obtrusive well facilities." Art Liberman, our tenth BPA President (2013-2014) was involved as early as 2010, picked up the baton during his term, and continued

his support later on. Still, the effort was getting nowhere.

Dick Placone Returns to Activism

Many residents were asking why the BPA effort was bogged down. There was little visible progress at the site, and what was happening did not appear to be an improvement. Doug Moran wrote: ". . . the City was not giving us information, and . . . [there were] repeated indefinite delays in the construction . . . before the landscaping could be done."

Meanwhile, Dick Placone, a close neighbor of the site, had become disgusted with its appearance and dismayed at the lack of progress. The well-site project resonated strongly with Dick, echoing his experience with Bol Park. So Dick returned to the "good fight" in 2012, recharged after 36 years in "retirement" from Barron Park battles. He contacted other neighbors, including Susan Stansbury who also had Acterra connections. Dick first met with the Utilities Department and learned "the land belonged to Utilities, and they didn't do parks. There was no budget."

It would be easy to overstate Dick's contribution to the well-site project, but the fact remains that once he became involved, things happened fast. The park quickly began to take shape, due to the efforts of the people mentioned above and others. Just knowing that Dick was behind it was enough to energize the group.

Residents gathered at the mini-park for its dedication on August 25, 2013, with Dick Placone presiding. Lynnne Melena, BPA President, and city staff member Peter Jensen cut the ribbon symbolizing the park's opening. Doug Graham spoke last, recapping the long history of the well site. (See the BPA Newsletter, Fall 2013, pp. 4-12.)

"A Bucolic Environment Became a Glaring Scar"

The next issue to attract Dick's attention was an esthetic and natural disaster that occurred on the western edge of Barron Park, on the shared pathway south of the donkey pasture (between the open space dubbed "Strawberry Hill" and the VA Hospital). On a sunny morning in October 2015, the VA Hospital bulldozed all the trees along their border with the Bol Park shared pathway, including many mature native California Live Oaks and



Dick Placone with Josina Bol at the dedication of Bol Park on April 28, 1974. Photo by Bob England.

other trees and shrubbery, leaving vast areas of the regional path open for the first time to views of the VA campus. As Dick wrote in the Winter 2015 BPA Newsletter, "Within a few hours, what was once an idyllic and bucolic environment surrounding the pathway became a glaring scar."

Placone Moves to Fix It

Within hours, Chimalus Drive neighbors Art Liberman, David Boxerman, and Richard Placone formed a committee to see what could be done. "David and Richard set out for the VA campus, and once there, met with the staff directing the construction project." The trees were being removed in order to relocate the loop road encircling the property closer to the east side of the VA property line, which parallels the Bol Park pathway.

This anecdote is a good illustration of Dick's approach to identifying and solving community problems. Don't dither and waste time - pitch right in, and be polite but firm with the people involved. (To learn how this problem was mitigated, go to Dick Placone's Newsletter articles, Winter 2015 and Fall 2018, and also a Winter 2018 article by Jon Affeld, our thirteenth BPA president.)

Eventually the BPA Moved On

As I noted in the Winter 2019 Newsletter, "History of the BPA, Part Three": "When the Bol Park shared pathway renovation became a subject of intense controversy [within the neighborhood]," Jon Affeld conducted a civil meeting of the interested parties that gave all stakeholders a chance to present their sides. In the end, the BPA Board took over the pathway renovation project and retired Dick Placone's subcommittee (with a special thank-you to Dick for chairing it) and started developing a new plan.

Part One: How Did Our Street Get Its Name?

By Douglas L. Graham, Barron Park Historian

Since Barron Park has about 84 streets, we'll tell their story in parts. For this reason, we divided the neighborhood into quarters, two along the line of Los Robles Avenue (north of, south of) and the other two along the line of El Centro and Amaranta Avenues (east of, west of).

Part One will cover the 40 streets in the north and west quarters. The entire neighborhood has two boulevards, six major collector streets, about 35 through-residential streets, about 12 dead-end streets, about 36 cul-de-sacs, two private roads, and one officially named alley. In addition, there are an uncounted number of multiple-house drive-ways that look like short streets, especially on Google maps or on any other satellite-photo-derived map.

The official types of streets (i.e., avenue, street, road, drive, way, lane, place, court, etc.) were assigned haphazardly over the years, although there appear to have been occasional incomplete attempts at developing an overall logical system.

Conventional North-South Directions. Direction descriptions follow locally conventional simplifications: "North" means "in the direction of San Francisco," and "south" means "in the direction of San Jose." Precise compass directions, such as west-by-northwest, etc., will be gently ignored.

Where Do the Names Come from? There is a public process for deciding the name of a new street. The City Council makes the official decision after advice from the U.S. Post Office, the Palo Alto Historical Association, and any interested parties, such as the developer, a neighborhood association, or any resident. It can (but usually doesn't) include a public hearing. However, most Barron Park streets were named before this process was instituted and were usually named by the developer or the landowner. A few had traditional names.

What Are They Named for? Groups of streets in Barron Park have been named for people (historical figures, developers, or landowners and their relatives), plants (trees, shrubs, flowers, and general vegetation types), geographical features (creeks and hills), or common

usage (the King's road, the haul road, etc.).

What Will Not Be Included Here. We could have included other historical details about each street: why each street was laid out, who planned and built each one, why it was needed, when it got paved (many were dirt roads), and controversies about some of them. However, this article confines itself to a brief outline of the naming and key points of the streets' histories.

Grouped by Geography. We cover the "greater Barron Park area," bounded on the "north" by the Stanford Research Park, on the "west" by Gunn High School and the VA Hospital, on the "east" by El Camino Real (ECR), and on the "south" by Arastradero Road. To help readers (especially those who haven't lived here very long), streets are grouped geographically in quarter-segments of the neighborhood, starting with the northern quarter near the Creekside Inn on ECR and proceeding southwest to end on Arastradero Road near Gunn High School.

The North Quarter (19 Streets)

El Camino Real (ECR). We all know this well-traveled boulevard that provides the main entrances to Barron Park and is the boundary between us and our neighbors to the east in Ventura. (For a short history of ECR, see the BPA Newsletter, Fall 2018, "Our Oldest Roads." The BPA Newsletter archive can be found at bpapaloalto.org/bpa-newsletter/.)

The modern street name translates as "The King's Road," and many have assumed that it has been known as El Camino Real since the days when it was nothing more than a foot-path used by the Franciscan fathers walking from mission to mission from the late 1770s through the 1820s. However, El Camino Real has had many names since then.

The Palo Alto Historical Association booklet *Streets of Palo Alto* (SOPA) says ECR "was first known as the San Francisco-San Jose Road." In the BPA Newsletter, Fall 2018, the article "Our Oldest Roads" lists other names used for the route: the Stage Road, the County Road, San Francisco Road, the first State Highway, U.S. 101, 101 Business, State Route 82, and (off and on since 1906) "El Camino Real." In the 1920s, roadside "mission bells" were

installed as mile markers. Note that there's one in our stretch, on the Ventura side of ECR.

Whitsell Avenue

According to SOPA, Mr. and Mrs. Everett Strain (Mrs. Strain was the daughter of John Whitsell) owned the property along Whitsell Avenue and may have used her family name for the street. Alternatively, the name may honor John Whitsell himself.

La Selva Drive. SOPA says the street was originally named Woodland Drive. The Post Office requested a name change because of confusion with Woodland Drive in Menlo Park. (That "Menlo Park" street along San Francisquito Creek is now in East Palo Alto.) *La selva* is Spanish for woodland or forest. Before becoming a street, La Selva was part of the curving driveway system serving the mansion built by Sarah Wallis and later owned by Edward Barron. It curved through the extensive grove of ornamental trees and shrubs planted by those early landowners. A few of those trees still stand today.

Military Way. Today's Military Way was also part of the extensive driveway system leading to the Barron Mansion. When the mansion and grounds were sold to Colonel Sebastian C. Jones for his California Military Academy, this part of the driveway system, leading from ECR to the mansion, was named for the boys' school.

Magnolia Drive. Part of today's Magnolia Drive was the formal entryway to the Wallis-Barron mansion. SOPA says that "Some of the stately magnolias still standing were a part of the arboretum," i.e., the ornamental landscaping around the mansion. (See "California Military Academy and the Barron Mansion," in the BPA Newsletter, Spring 2008.)

Matadero Avenue. Matadero Avenue and Matadero Court take their names from Matadero Creek. SOPA says, "The creek served as the border between Rancho La Purisima Concepcion and Rancho del Corte de Madera." But this was only true for a short stretch in the foothills.

There had been a summer village site of Indigenous people on the creek just above Barron Park. It is probably that site, with easy access

to the creek, where the *matadero* was – a slaughtering site for cattle when the main use was the hides for the “Boston leather trade.” *Matadero* means place of slaughter or killing in Spanish.

Josina Avenue. *SOPA* says, “Josina Avenue was named for Josina Bol, wife of [Stanford researcher] Cornelis Bol, inventor of the mercury vapor light. The Bol family owned the large tract of land where Josina Avenue was laid out. It is safe to assume that Cornelis named the street.”

In 1967 the Bol family sold the land comprising the major portion of today’s Bol Park to the County – at well below market value – in effect a partial gift to create the park. For many years, the Bol family owned and ran a private water company that supplied the northern part of Barron Park. Josina led the family after Cornelis’s death and assured the creation of the park. One of Cornelis’s and Josina’s sons wrote to us suggesting the park be renamed for both his parents. Josina also preserved the donkey pasture and maintained the now more than 65-year tradition of the Barron Park donkeys. She is considered Barron Park’s most notable neighborhood benefactor.

Kendall Avenue. *SOPA* says Kendall Avenue “honors the family of Kendall Bower, real estate developer. His family were property owners in Barron Park.”

Barron Avenue. The person who named Barron Avenue was most likely Colonel Jones, owner of the California Military Academy located in the “Barron Mansion.” In 1925 Jones laid out the original Barron Park subdivision, which included the improved farm lane leading off ECR he named “Barron Avenue.”

Edward Barron had immigrated to the U.S. from Ireland. In San Francisco he began work as a butcher and soon started his own shop. His first wife helped him establish a wholesale meat business where he made his fortune, eventually owning large herds of cattle in California and Nevada. Barron dabbled in the silver-mining industry in Virginia City’s “Comstock Lode” and may have made a second fortune there.

Barron retired after the 1857 financial crash and acquired the Wallis mansion on the cheap from bankrupt society matron and influential West Coast suffragist Sarah Wallis. He added a cupola onto her Victorian-style mansion some people called a “wedding cake.” He

also added a large wing to house his in-laws. (See the Spring 2008 BPA Newsletter, “The California Military Academy and the Barron Mansion.”)

Cypress Lane. This alley serves the back of commercial establishments along ECR. It was named Cypress Lane by the city following the policy of naming alleys after trees, shrubs, or flowers. *SOPA* says, “The choice also acknowledges a cypress hedge that, according to the late Miss Janet Thain, a longtime resident of Barron Park, once bordered ECR near this site.”

Cypress Lane is most notable for having no owner, since the land it covers was never dedicated to the County. Thus, Palo Alto takes no responsibility for maintaining it, nor do the business owners, even though it is the sole exit from the parking areas of several businesses. The alley has developed car-wrecking, spectacularly large potholes and is a constant site of trash.

La Donna Avenue. La Donna Avenue is a north-south street (parallel to ECR) and was laid out in 1941 as part of La Rosa Gardens (county tract #143). It was originally named “Donna Street,” maybe for a relative of the unidentified developer – or for a relative of the Strain family who owned a large property surrounding the north end of the new street. (See the Winter 2022-23 BPA Newsletter, “Dairies in Barron Park.”)

SOPA has the tract name and date wrong for La Donna. But other details are quite interesting: “Starting in the 1930s, many street names in Barron Park were changed to harmonize with a Spanish theme.” This one was clumsily done, a kind of “Spanglish,” (unless we’re also seeing an Italian flair). La Donna was likely named after an actual person, but our “Hispanicized” version looks like *La Dona*, a title used before a woman’s given name. The English word “lady” would be *dama*. *SOPA* also states that the street was the site of Edward Barron’s “arboretum nursery.” I have seen no other reference to a “nursery” on the Barron Estate.

Cass Way. Cass Way was named for a former property owner, Ruby Cass, whose husband, Louis Cass, was a local attorney. It is a cul-de-sac running south off Barron Avenue in the 700 block and serving two tracts. The first one was filed in May 1955 as Geddings Park Unit One (county tract #1537), with six lots near Barron Avenue. Four years later,

Geddings Park Unit Two (county tract #2098) was filed, with seven more lots at the end of Cass Way.

Paul Avenue. This is a long one-block street (in the 700 block) running between La Donna Avenue and El Centro Street. The street was laid out in two tracts, first, El Centro Gardens, county tract #413, in November 1947, with 16 lots of Eichler homes on Paul Avenue, a dead-end street leading east from El Centro Street. *SOPA* says Paul Avenue was named for Paul Boldt, owner of several acres in this area. The street appears as El Centro Place on the 1949 map.

The first tract was followed in February 1949 by the Boldt subdivision, county tract #595, which had 14 lots on Paul Avenue, with a new section connecting to La Donna.

San Jude Avenue. The eastern segment of San Jude Avenue is a cul-de-sac running west from La Donna Avenue. Its 14 lots are part of the Boldt subdivision. San Jude Avenue’s disjunct segments are separated by about a half mile. (See the entry for the western segment of San Jude Avenue in the West Quarter, below.)

La Para Avenue. The *SOPA* reference is wrong – and I take full responsibility for the mistake, based entirely on speculation. Today’s spelling of the street name is the basic error, and dates back to an unidentified person in the 1950s who changed the original, correct spelling, La Pera (Pear) to La Para.

The street was laid out as La Pera in the 1927 tract, filed as the Oak Subdivision, and included about 60 lots on Los Robles and La Pera Avenues. La Pera was named for the extensive pear orchards from there to Barron Avenue to the south. La Para Avenue is one long block between La Donna and Laguna Avenues. Its correct pronunciation is “Lah PEHR ah,” and not “Lah PAHR ah,” and the spelling ought to be changed back to the original. Documentary evidence of the original spelling was recently found in the Polk’s City Directories for Palo Alto published in 1941 and 1942 showing the street as “La Pera.”

Tippawingo Drive. According to *SOPA*, Tippawingo Drive “was named by Vera Young Colby, property owner, in honor of her husband who was part Iroquois. The word means ‘House of Happiness.’ Mrs. Colby had the name ‘Tippawingo’ carved on the lintel of her house.” The house at 3475, the first on the street, was built in 1934. It was probably named “Drive” to fit in with other streets in

Barron Park at the time. It consists of only one short block, running between Matadero Avenue and Chimalus Drive, with four lots.



Photo by Myrna Rochester.

Chimalus Drive. *SOPA* says that “The street cuts through a section of land once labeled ‘Chimiles’ on early maps. *Chimiles* is an Indigenous people’s term meaning a tangled growth or chapparal.” We don’t know who named Chimalus or when. Its tract history has not been researched; the street did not appear on maps of Barron Park until 1942. However, houses were built at 601 Chimalus in 1940; then in 1941, at 706, 710, 748, and 760. There was one built at 729 in 1925 that must have originally had a Matadero Avenue address. (Early lots on Matadero ran all the way north to the Stanford University boundary. Quite a few houses were built there in the 1920s.)

Julie Court. Julie Court was named for the daughter of Frank Meagher, one of the area’s developers (and later a resident on Ilima Way). It is a cul-de-sac running south from Matadero Avenue in the 700 block. The street was laid out in the 1960 Palo Creek Park tract (county #2754), with seven lots, four of which border Matadero Creek.

Emma Court. Emma Court is a cul-de-sac running south off Matadero Avenue near the west end of the 700 block (opposite number 792). Named for the developer’s mother, it was developed in the 1990s with four houses, two of which border Matadero Creek.

The West Quarter (21 Streets)

El Centro Street. This street has one of the simplest and shortest naming stories. It is an Eichler development, originally laid out as part of the 1947 El Centro Garden Tract as county tract #413. (This date corrects the one given in *SOPA*.) *El centro* means center in Spanish; the street is very close to the geographic center of the original Barron Tract.

La Mata Way. La Mata Way is located in the 1946 La Mata Tract (county tract #269). *SOPA* notes that the name is a Spanish noun meaning a group of trees (also, a shrub or brush).

However, the 1941 aerial photo of Barron Park shows no significant trees or brush in the area, and *SOPA* also mentions that Eleanor Price, who lived on Los Robles in the 1940s, remembered the naming of La Mata as combining syllables of Laguna and Matadero. The tract is at the corner of those two streets, and I believe the syllable combination is the correct origin.

Laguna Avenue, Laguna Court, and Laguna Oaks Place. These street names (as well as Laguna Way in the South Quarter) all derive from the error of naming the street after the Spanish word for “lake.” The so-called “lake” was just a small irrigation basin in a low spot between Barron Creek and the future Shauna Lane, about where 970 Los Robles is now. It was probably 20 to 30 feet across.

Carlitos Court. Charles and Agnes Weddes built one of the first houses on Barron Avenue west of El Centro. The property was large and may have been planted with pear trees. It appeared to run south all the way to La Pera Avenue, in which case it could have totaled 15 acres. In May 1955, a tract named “Don Carlitos,” with eight residential lots, was laid out along a cul-de-sac named Carlitos Court, leading south off Barron Avenue next to the Weddes house at 829 Barron. *SOPA* gives a short account of the naming: “The Weddes family sold land for development in 1955 with the stipulation that the 8-house cul-de-sac be named after their grandson Charles, known as “Chuckie,” who died in 1951 at the age of two. The name was Hispanicized to match many other streets in Barron Park at that time.” In the 1970s, the Weddeses’ great-grandchildren lived at 829, opposite the entrance to Barron Park Elementary School.

La Calle Court. La Calle Court was named by a realtor, William Wasson, who chose *la calle*, Spanish for street. So, the name is effectively “Street Court” – another example of silly Hispanicization, although not as bad as the one following.

La Jennifer Way. La Jennifer Way was named for Jennifer Hill, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Hill, property owners. The street was laid out in January 1950 to serve the El Centro Gardens #2 (county tract #714), with 16 lots, all the houses to be built by Eichler.

Timlott Lane and Timlott Court. *SOPA* reports that these two streets “were named for Clarence Timlott, property owner, according to Clarence Henshel, a longtime realtor

in the Barron Park area.” Timlott Lane was laid out in November 1965, with 14 lots, as county tract #3989 (no name). It is a one-block-long, dead-end street, that runs west from El Centro Street between La Jennifer Way and La Para Avenue. It has its own tiny cul-de-sac (Timlott Court) that opens off the north side. Apparently, there is also a tract called Chiotti Estates (county #4738), but it may be the same tract refiled (#3989), with eight lots on Timlott Court and El Centro Street. The records I have are confused on the Timlott tract or tracts.

San Jude Avenue. As we’ve mentioned, San Jude Avenue is in two unconnected segments; the shortest route between the two is about a half mile. See the “North Quarter” for discussion of the east segment in the 1949 Boldt Subdivision.

The west segment discussed here is a one-block-long, dead-end street running east off Laguna Avenue. Of the two San Jude segments, the west was laid out first, in the 1941 Los Robles Tract (county tract #186), which included 13 lots on San Jude Avenue, nine on La Pera (La Para) Avenue, and two on Laguna Avenue. The historical Saint Jude is the “Saint of the Impossible.” Prayers to him request intercession in a hopeless or impossible situation. One can imagine visitors trying to locate a house on “San Jude Avenue” on a dark, rainy night would end up praying to him in desperation.

Ilima Court and Ilima Way. *SOPA* tells us that these streets took their names from the tract name, Ilima Gardens (county tract #1491, 1955). The yellow ilima flower, small and sweet-smelling, is the lei flower of Oahu that led to the traditional Hawaiian song, “Sweet Lady of Ilima.” The Ilima tracts (and at least four others in Barron Park) were developed by Doug Couch, who liked to give his tracts Hawaiian names. Ilima Way was laid out in the May 1960 tract called McGregor Glen (county tract #2727) which included 26 lots – 21 lots on Ilima Way and five on McGregor.

McGregor Way. In one of Doug Couch’s earlier developments, a Scots-Irish theme was so successful that he chose another Scots name for this connector street between Ilima Way and Paradise Way. McGregor Way was not named for a particular person. Until recently, the cul-de-sac of this street was separately named McGregor Court, but this has since been dropped by the city and the USPS.

Paradise Way. Paradise Way was laid out in county tract #3528, with 21 residential lots on McGregor Way and Paradise Way. Paradise Way was likely named by Doug Couch, again after a Hawaiian song. The street has two small cul-de-sacs opposite each other, but they have never been recognized as separate streets, and the Paradise Way street numbers run continuously in and out of them.

Paradise Way has an interesting peculiarity: Part of the street near Laguna Avenue was never dedicated by the adjacent property owners to the County, and for a long time the city refused to do any street work there. Paradise residents don't let this bother them – they gather in the street every September for a block party dubbed “Labor Day in Paradise.”

Shauna Lane. According to *SOPA*, Shauna Lane was named for the daughter of Patty and Don Humphrey. The street is located in the July 1951 Laguna Gardens tract (county tract #814). The houses were built in 1951, 1952, and 1953, so the “1957” date in *SOPA* for the tract must be an error.

Shauna Lane is peculiar in another way: In 1959, when the “Foothills Number Two” annexation to Palo Alto split Barron Park in two, it also split the Laguna Gardens tract in two. Three lots on Laguna Avenue were left in Barron Park, while one Laguna Avenue address and eight lots on Shauna Lane were annexed. Although this was a logical division, it makes a peculiar-looking squiggle on the map. The Shauna Lane houses were newer, larger, and more expensive than the ones left to the neighborhood, so the local division epitomized the larger one.

Cerrito Way. Cerrito Way is a short, one-block-long street running west from the 1000 block of Los Robles Avenue. It crosses Barron Creek on a bridge and connects to El Cerrito Road. It was laid out in November 1945 as part of El Cerrito unit #1, county tract #242, with four lots on Cerrito Way, nine on Los Robles Avenue, and seven on El Cerrito Road. This tract was the second tract in Barron Park to offer homesites with large lots on one of our creeks – definitely a vision of the future. The person who named the tract is not identified.

SOPA reminds us that *cerrito* is Spanish for little hill or high land. A better translation might be *knoll*, a small hill or mound. In the Fall 2002 BPA Newsletter, the story “The History of Our Land is Hidden in the Street

Names,” includes a section on Cerrito Way and El Cerrito Road, “A Little Hill That Isn’t There Anymore.” It explains the missing knoll: Flattened for the football stadium when Gunn High School was built in 1963, the soil was used as fill around the underground pipe laid to carry the water of Barron Creek across the athletic fields behind the academic buildings.

El Cerrito Road. See the discussion above. El Cerrito Road was laid out in July 1948 as El Cerrito unit #2, county tract #522, with 13 lots on El Cerrito Road and two on Los Robles Avenue.

Matadero Hill Area

The area known to residents as “Matadero Hill” lies on both sides of Matadero Avenue as it runs west from Laguna Avenue, crosses the regional shared pathway (where the railroads used to run) and continues west uphill. In Barron Park it describes the triangular-shaped western corner of the neighborhood, touching on the Stanford Research Park on both the north and west sides.

The ridge that begins near the donkey pasture at Matadero Creek is known there as Roble Ridge; as it continues north to Matadero Avenue, it is more commonly known as Matadero Hill. Further north in the Stanford Research Park, it eventually merges into sizeable foothills north of Page Mill Road.

Matadero Avenue 900 block (a private road).

The private road (900 block) of Matadero Hill begins at the Laguna Avenue intersection and continues uphill along the line of the 700 and 800 blocks, west until it reaches the lots that back onto the Stanford Research Park. (See our discussion of “Matadero Avenue” in the North Quarter, above.) Lots range up to an acre or more, and imposing, modern homes built in the last 20 to 30 years have replaced much smaller houses from the 1920s and ‘30s, such as 970 Matadero, where the earliest house in the 900 block was built in 1920.

Matadero Court. Matadero Court runs north off the 900 block of Matadero Avenue and serves four large properties between Matadero and the Stanford Research Park property north of Barron Park. The street addresses are 904 to 914.

Roble Ridge Area

Roble Ridge (a private road). *El roble* is the Spanish name for the California Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*) a member of the White

Continued on bottom half of page 18

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION

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BPA Board Meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of most months at 7:00 p.m. All neighbors are welcome.

For schedule and location write to:
johnwadeking@gmail.com



bpapaloalto.org

Around Palo Alto

By Lisa Landers, BPA Membership Chair

Are you interested in issues that concern the Barron Park area? Past Barron Park Board members worked diligently on specific issues to improve the quality of life in our community. These improvements included the Matadero Well Site and Pocket Park, safety-related hazardous exposures from CPI/Stanford Research Park, Matadero Creek preservation, and flood control.

View current neighborhood issues the BPA shared with the 2024 City Council Candidates bpapaloalto.org/2024/10/07/bpa-city-council-candidate-questionnaire/

Please consider joining the BPA Board if you are interested in working on issues related to the Barron Park community!

Palo Alto Link Update: New Fees/School Routes

city.ridewithvia.com/palo-alto-link

New Fees:

- Adults and teens: \$4 per ride
- Disabled riders, low-income riders, seniors and children/youth: \$2
- FREE rides to/from the Stanford Research Park.

- FREE rides for teens to/from locations that support youth mental health, such as libraries and community centers.

Palo Alto Link Service Hours

Monday to Friday 7 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Note Restricted School Access Hours:

- Palo Alto HS and Gunn HS: No service from 7:30-9 a.m. and 3:30-5 p.m.
- Fletcher MS, Greene MS, and JLS MS: No service from 7:30-8:30 a.m. and 2:30-4 p.m.

BPA EMAIL LISTS

The Barron Park Association offers three Email Lists for any resident to post: (1) *bpa-news* for news, information, and announcements; *bpa-misc* for neighbor requests, queries, recommendations, freebies, etc.; and (3) *bpa-issues* to express opinions or initiate discussion on topics of interest. They are hosted on Google Groups. To join a list, go to: 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 Diwali 2.0!

By Jaya Pandey

Residents of Barron Park and nearby Palo Alto neighborhoods came together to celebrate Diwali (the Indian Festival of Lights) the afternoon of October 27 in the multi-purpose room at Barron Park Elementary School. We started the tradition almost ten years ago. Since then, neighborhood volunteers come together each year to set up and participate in the festivities. What makes this event so special is that people from all walks of life gather to enjoy this event, scheduled sometime between mid-October and mid-November. Volunteers and guests become interchangeable. This year we invited a Bollywood fitness dance lead, and everyone got into it – an enjoyable workout before partaking of the buffet! Plenty of traditional sweets, savories, and steaming chai were enjoyed by all who attended.

A special mention and thanks to the continuing support of the Barron Park Association and the City of Palo Alto for their generosity in making this day happen. We look forward to seeing you next year!



Visit page 9 to see photos from the Diwali celebration!

Street Names Continued from page 17

Oak group. A Valley Oak woodland originally covered Roble Ridge and its slightly higher extension, Matadero Hill, and still exists as scattered individuals throughout Barron Park.

Roble Ridge is the name of both a street and the southern section of the ridge that dips down from Matadero Hill. The street Roble Ridge is a private road which began as a private driveway and was later lengthened to serve ten large properties (zoned R-1, minimum lot size one acre). It dates back to 1920 when Driscoll and Reiter (of strawberry fame) were beginning to subdivide the Barron Estate. They immediately decided that the hilly triangle of land west of the railroad track and covered with oak woodland

would never be suitable for strawberry growing, so they were willing to sell large chunks to individuals for homesites.

The first house on Roble Ridge was built in 1920. It was a small structure on a very large lot, later given the street address 925 Roble Ridge Road. This is the property later purchased by Cornelis and Josina Bol, now owned by James Witt, that includes the current donkey pasture on the south side of Matadero Creek. Six other houses were built on lots along Roble Ridge in the 1920s, when most of Barron Park west of Donna Street (today's La Donna Avenue) was still devoid of houses. They have also largely been replaced or rebuilt.

How to contact the historian:

I hope you have enjoyed this story, and that readers who live in the north and west quarters have found their street. The next part will appear in the Spring 2025 BPA Newsletter and will cover 44 streets in the east and south quarters of Barron Park.

My email is: dgrahampaca@gmail.com landline phone: 650-493-0689, and snail mail: 984 Ilima Way, Palo Alto CA 94306. (I don't receive texts.) I would especially like to hear from anyone who sees an error of fact or interpretation in this article, or anyone who has information to add, or (best of all) a photograph to add to the Barron Park Historical Archive.

Stay Safe and Warm Inside this Winter

By Hilary Glann

You can save money and burn less natural gas this winter by following these tips, which work for both homeowners and renters, except where noted.

Outsmart the Weather Outside

- Close your blinds and curtains when the sun goes down to keep the warmth in your home.
- Open your blinds and curtains in the morning when the sun hits your windows, particularly on the south/southwest side of your home.
- Consider purchasing thermal curtains or asking your landlord to install them for any uncovered windows. Thermal curtains not only keep the warmth in during the winter, but also keep the heat out during the summer. Or, try a window insulation kit. bobvila.com/articles/best-window-insulation-kit/

Stay Comfortable During the Day

- If you're feeling cold, use a small space heater to make your room more comfortable instead of turning up the thermostat for the whole house. There are many efficient electric space heaters available, or you can purchase a "portable" heat pump heater/air conditioner that installs in a window to keep your favorite room very comfortable in either the summer or the winter. bit.ly/3YxweYi



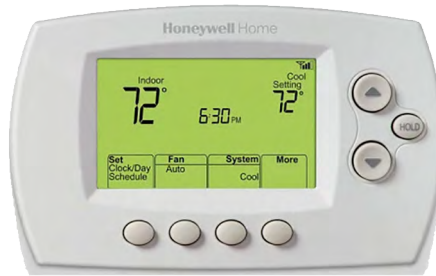
Portable infrared heater. Image from drheaterusa.com/

- If you have ceiling fans, run them on low in reverse/clockwise to bring the heat that builds up near the ceiling down to where you can benefit from it.

- Change your furnace air filters every three to four months. Clogged filters cause your furnace or AC to work harder, increasing your energy usage by up to 15% and decreasing the system's ability to heat or cool your home. bit.ly/air-filter-change

Sleep Comfortably and Save Energy

- Set your thermostat at a lower temperature while you are asleep or away from home. Consider installing, or ask your landlord to install a programmable thermostat that makes it easy to manage your home temperature proactively.



Programmable thermostat from Honeywell. georgiapowermarketplace.com/thermostats-and-temperature/P-HON7DYPGR.html

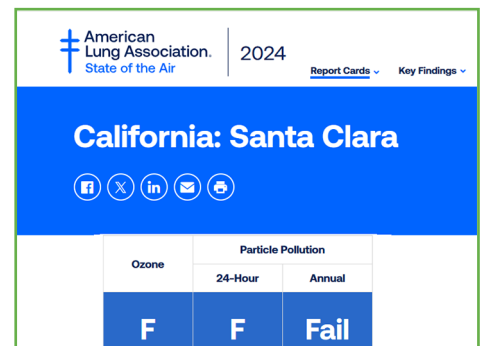
- If you feel cold in your bed at night, consider purchasing a heated mattress pad which uses significantly less energy than heating your entire house. bit.ly/warmerbed

Save Money and Clean Up Our Local Air

- If your house is drafty and your utility bills are high, contact the Palo Alto Home Efficiency Genie at 650-713-3411 for a free consultation on how to save money and live more comfortably. For example, sealing air leaks around doors and windows is both inexpensive and effective.
- Homeowners: If your furnace is more than 15 years old, plan to replace it soon with a heat pump heater/cooler/air filtration system. Generous installation rebates are available from both the state of California and the City of Palo Alto. Because heat pump air heaters are three times more efficient than gas furnaces, and natural gas prices are expected to increase faster than electricity rates in the next two decades, many homeowners will save money on their utility bills by installing a heat pump.

Get three contractor bids for your certified heat pump installers from Quitcarbon.com and the nonprofit The Switch is On: bit.ly/PAheatpumps

The American Lung Association gives Santa Clara County a "F" for our air quality in 2024. bit.ly/Grade-F-air Reducing the amount of natural gas we burn will make a big difference to the air we breathe in Palo Alto.



Annual ranking of air quality in Santa Clara County by the American Lung Association. bit.ly/Grade-F-air



Perry, our senior donkey. Photo courtesy of the Donkey Project.

Perry, our beloved 30-year-old veteran, died on January 2, 2025. Perry's memorial will be held on Sunday, February 2, 2025 at 2 pm in Bol Park. The Barron Park Association will distribute a special issue newsletter dedicated to Perry in late February. Please join or renew your membership in the Barron Park Association to receive this commemorative newsletter: bpapaloalto.org/join-the-barron-park-association

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