

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Markus Fromherz, BPA President



In this column, I want to tell you a bit about how the Barron Park Association functions and what topics we are currently working on for the community. The BPA

is governed by you. (The Board is not the BPA. *You* are the BPA. The Board just runs the BPA organization—an important difference.) The Board, which currently consists of eleven members, meets monthly. What happens at a Board meeting?

A meeting starts with the basics, such as financial stewardship (led by Treasurer John King) and membership affairs (led by Membership Chair Lisa Berkowitz Landers). The Treasurer prepares an annual budget, handles in- and outflows, and monitors the overall financial health of the organization. We are fortunate to have steady support from both members and businesses. A key topic for Membership this year is expanding our base (from currently about 25% of Barron Park residents). We are also cleaning up our address database and working to move the membership database online, so that members can perform some functions themselves (such as looking up their status and changing their data). As part of the expansion and address cleanup, we discovered that we had not been reaching several of the apartment buildings along El Camino Real and Arastradero Road, which in turn led to the question of what the "official" Barron Park

boundaries are. An ad-hoc committee is currently looking into that.

Then we survey the various committees for updates on current activities and outlook. A key topic at almost every meeting is Events. Events where neighbors come together are the best ways to build and strengthen community, and, as you know, the BPA organizes a lot of them! We discuss how recent events went, what events are coming up, and ideas for new events. What cultural event should come next? German, French, Russian, Greek, Mid-Eastern...? (While most events are organized by neighborhood members outside the Board, we're still looking for an Events Chair.)

Another recurring topic at Board meetings is Communications (primarily production of our quarterly newsletter, led by Editor Myrna Rochester). Early this year, we transitioned to our new editor, after a more-than-twenty year tenure by Nancy Hamilton. (Thanks again, Nancy!) We are lucky in having regular, interested contributors, but we're always looking for new authors and want to make sure we include timely and important topics for the neighborhood. We have also been looking into simplifying and expanding the blog infrastructure on our website in order to enable more authors to publish on the site. Look for exciting changes in this regard.

There is a lot happening in the other committees. The Environmental Issues com-

mittee (led by Jaya Pandey) now meets regularly. In recent years, we supported negotiations regarding the neighborhood's relationship with CPI and its plating shop, which came to a conclusion earlier this year (led in part by former Board member Art Liberman). Among other activities, we've approved a project proposed by a school-age member to study and help repopulate the native tree frogs in our creeks and neighborhood. The Parks and Creeks Committee (led by Christian Kalar) looks into related issues as they come up. Within this committee, a subcommittee led by former Board member Richard Placone has been working hard on issues regarding the Bol Park pedestrian and bike path and future City upgrades to Bol Park.

Christian Kalar is also our School Liaison. We try to stay in touch with our four neighborhood schools and occasionally invite a principal or staff member to join us at a Board meeting.

The Neighborhood Safety and Emergency Preparedness Committee (led by Maury Green) maintains relationships with the city's Office of Emergency Services and aims in part to expand emergency communications and preparedness by recruiting more emergency service volunteers. (If you can, please volunteer! See details in Maury's article later in this newsletter.)

Our Welcoming Committee (led by Gwen Luce) reaches out to new residents with a substantial information package. Peter Mueller is our liaison at regular meetings of the Barron Park Seniors group (not otherwise affiliated with the BPA). Paul

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BPA Annual Meeting, March 6, 2016, Review and Summary

By Heike Schmitz

For the Barron Park Association (BPA) Annual Meeting on March 6, Board member Maurice Green organized three well-received presentations, followed by a panel discussion, on the possible impacts of continuing climate change on our area. Discussion also featured what Palo Alto official leadership is doing to combat or mitigate these effects and prepare our community. The event started with Matt Brennan, Senior Coastal Engineer for Environmental Science Associates. His presentation, "Adapting San Francisco Bay's Shoreline to Sea-Level Rise," included a brief primer on causes and projections, and an overview of adaptive measures. Matt was followed by Chuck Anderson, principal engineer at Schaaf and Wheeler, who presented further information on "Adaptive Response to Rising Tides and the Palo Alto Flood Basin." The final speaker was Gil Friend, Chief Sustainability Officer for the City of Palo Alto, who talked about the city's emerging Sustainability and Climate Action Plan—and how Palo Alto can continue to lead on climate strategies. The three speakers then joined to answer audience questions. Here is a summary of what was presented.

Sea-level rise is one of the worrisome side effects of climate change on global, national, and local levels. It can potentially cause the loss of many low-lying land masses (such as the country of Denmark, big parts of Florida, southern Alabama, and lower-lying parts of Palo Alto) and severely change life in adjacent areas.

Sea-level rise is a direct consequence of global warming, due to increased concentrations of CO₂ in the atmosphere that cause more warmth to be trapped. Even though equivalent changes in atmospheric CO₂ have occurred in the past, the current situation is unprecedented because of the rate of progression—in the last 400,000 years the Earth has not seen such dramatic changes over such a short time. And as the atmosphere gets warmer, two temperature-related phenomena add to the rise: ice trapped at the poles in glaciers and other ice fields melts and is added to the ocean. At the same time, the ocean water that gets warmer expands in volume.

This is already happening, even in our area. Data taken regularly at Chrissy Field in San Francisco shows a steady increase over time. Extrapolating these findings, scientists predict that the rise will be at least one foot by 2050 and three feet by 2100. These are very conservative estimates, based on a range of values researchers have come up with due to uncertainty in several of the baseline assumptions of CO₂ increase. We don't know exactly how the rate of increase will progress, and we cannot exactly predict how the environment will react. For example, there is a mitigating effect to the melting of ice masses: Oregon's and Washington's landmasses have seen uplifting since the last ice age, countering sea-level rise to a certain extent.

So what does this mean for Palo Alto? The San Francisco Bay Area is especially vulnerable to sea-level rise because of our long stretches of shoreline. Taking the most conservative model and estimates into account, about seven million people and roughly 200 square miles of land will be affected by 2100. This is a very bleak picture, but the concept of flooding is not new to our area, and Palo Alto has a history of acting to mitigate it. Substantial parts of our city are at a 1% flood risk coming from two other sources: local creeks swollen from heavier than usual winter rains, as well as unusual Bay water levels due to higher than normal high tides.

Barron Park is not part of the flood-prone areas, but we are vulnerable because we depend on some of the infrastructure provided by our surrounding areas. For example, our most important delivery paths include the Palo Alto Airport and Highway 101, both of which are at least partially located in higher flood risk areas. Another example: Palo Alto's Water Control Plant lies in the flood plain. If it gets flooded, our water supply will be contaminated.

As an answer to recurring flooding, Palo Alto's (tidal) Flood Basin was created in 1956 as a 600-acre wetland preserve / natural flood protector and was improved over the years. A 31.1-square-mile large watershed empties into it (Adobe, Barron, and Matadero Creeks), giving floodwaters a safe place to drain at high tides. The Flood Basin includes a one-way valve system that

allows the water to spill into the Bay when tides are low. This system mitigates the impact of storm surges, but it only works when the Bay water level is low enough. A sea-level rise of three feet can potentially render the system useless, since it was constructed based on storm surge expectations and sea levels of the 1970s. Today it is approaching its limits, and confidence that it will hold during future flooding is decreasing.

Several ideas are currently being explored. They include increasing the discharge capacity of the whole basin by making it larger and adding pumps to evacuate more water into the Bay. But how big is big enough, and is it technically possible? Another strategy to deal with the rising sea level is to adapt to it. "Hold the line!" has so far been a successful approach in the Netherlands, where historically already two-thirds of the country has been vulnerable to flooding. But how tall, how long, and how strong would our levees have to be? Nature can also add to the solution. Natural shorelines with flat and wide marshes mitigate flooding and protect the land further in.

A general solution will most likely include aspects of all these ideas. We will need to realign our shores, combining levees with marshes behind them, forming so called "horizontal levees" that provide not only protection and mitigation of floods and higher sea levels, but also have the benefit of providing natural habitat and recreational areas and may result in substantial economic benefits.

We face the following issues here in Palo Alto due to rising seawater levels and climate change:

1. Less discharge into the Bay
2. More extreme weather and creek flooding
3. Levee feasibility issues: length and soft Bay mud make them hard to build
4. Creek management issues: floodwalls at our creeks presume 1970/80s levels
5. Regional management: adjacent communities need to collaborate and continue levees, otherwise the water will go around our levees

Who is working on these urgent projects? The Strategy to Advance Flood Protection, Ecosystems and Recreation along the Bay (SAFER Bay) project is a collaboration between Menlo Park, East Palo Alto, the San Mateo County Flood District, the Santa Clara Valley Water District, and Palo Alto. Their plan covers roughly nine miles of shoreline and bases its proposals on a 30-inch rise by 2100.

According to Gil Friend of the City of Palo Alto, participating in this strategy and doing our part to face climate change offers us the opportunity to evolve into a healthier, safer, more sustainable, prosperous, and resilient community that will inspire by example. Climate change is a global challenge and cities like ours, in the best possible position to make a difference, need to take the lead not just because we have the best odds to conquer these challenges, but also because it is the biggest innovation and renovation opportunity in our lifetime!

We don't know exactly what is going to happen long-term, but the term "Global Weirding" has been suggested as weather events become more extreme. Perhaps Earth's climate has been changing constantly over time. Our current "normal" cycles might just be temporary and evolve into something completely different, possibly getting hotter, drier, and riskier. For example, our last drought might pale next to the multi-decadal superdroughts in future generations.

The State of California is a leader in the Green movement, and within it Palo Alto has always led the way. This should also be true for our climate change fight and mitigation. For example, we were already a national leader in cutting emissions by 35% in 1990. We want to get rid of the fossil fuels in our portfolios, but we need to coordinate with our wider neighbors. We need to rethink much of what we take for granted—e.g., if you need a new car, buy electric or—even better—rethink if you even need a car. Ridesharing, using Uber or Lyft, might even save you money!

The City of Palo Alto would like to become carbon neutral or even net-positive, drive radical resource efficiency, make it more convenient not to drive, accelerate building stock upgrades, shift from natural gas vehicles to electric systems where feasible, embed sustainability in everything we do, build resilience into what we build, reduce

subsidies, price carbon, and channel local and external investments. An administrative draft describing this will be available in a few weeks. It also includes more details on mobility, electrifying the city, and a zero-waste strategy with an overall goal of reducing our greenhouse gas budget dramatically and with the guiding principle of "Reduce + Shift + Transform."

To be successful, the City is creating zones of control and influence, starting with city operation, followed by city code mandates, ordinances, and policy as well as local incentives, education and outreach, and finally by being part of regional and state-wide policymaking. We should try to move powerfully in times of uncertainty by setting strong directional goals for ourselves, use clear principles and criteria, flexible platforms, and do rapid, agile prototyping combined with timely, transparent performance tracking.

Gil ended his talk with a motivational quote by Tim O'Reilly: "Pursue something so important that even if you fail the world is better off with you having tried."

Following is a summary of the Q&A session:

Question 1 (to the consultants): Do you take into account customers' individual needs and include them in the green options?

Answer: We try to consider individual needs as a design criteria, not make individual exceptions. We want to work with needs, not around them, not treat them as constraints but as requirements.

Question 2: How are sea-level concerns related to the drought?

Answer: Ocean and the hydrosphere are directly connected to weather events such as droughts and torrential rains. One impacts the other.

Question 3 (to the city representative): Where does the city get the figures and numbers for CO2 measurements?

Answer: From models—these are not exact measurements but several predictions and projections combined. They are neither completely accurate nor precise but the best we can do.

Question 4: How will you do the tracking of the city?

Answer: As best as we can.

Question 5: We have a strong concern for nature—How will the natural world help us in return? Also, to what extent are we considering our impact on nature in these projects?

Answer: Green infrastructure takes into account ecological knowledge based on how nature works and does things. It is most resilient when we make space for the Bay to be healthy. We should go by the motto "Green by Default"—we don't geek out on the technology, disregarding nature, but use it to protect our green infrastructure because we need it! For example, we are building fewer roads and more green areas. This is a challenge because everything interacts.

Question 6: Are we making it more desirable to be green? That is the only way we will be successful. The ever-growing trend for bigger and more massive houses for example is worrisome. Is there anything the government can do to make it greener?

Answer: We see this trend already and do the best we can. But voters are at the strongest position here—they decide what can be done and what cannot. If you can make your voice heard, than be heard! Be educated, be engaged!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Yang recently revived our Business Liaison Committee and is working to strengthen our relationship with Barron Park businesses. We have long-time supporters in the business community, but many others are new. Far too many are not yet familiar with the BPA.

But wait, there's more! Some of the Board's work happens behind the scenes. A good example is maintenance of the mailing lists (by Richard Elder) and of the website (by non-Board member Steven Parkes). Other work is done ad-hoc, as the need arises, focusing on development, land use, traffic, and other important topics with impact on the neighborhood. As a member, you are always welcome to bring issues to the Board.

BPA Board meetings are open, and you are welcome to attend any monthly meeting (on the third Tuesday of the month). Please join us!

M A Y F Ê T E 2 0 1 6



Photo: Cherrill Spencer



Photo: Cherrill Spencer



Photo: Jim Colton



Photo: Jim Colton

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR!

By John King, Volunteer Coordinator

Photo: Jim Colton



This thank you goes out to all the volunteers and sponsors who helped make May Fête 2016 a huge success! We had impressive attendance, the weather cooperated, the music was lively and authentic, the BBQ was busy, and the raffle had some great prizes and new contributors! The bounce house, water balloon toss, sack race, and hula hoop activities were a hit with the kids. The Maypole dance provided great memories for family, friends, and neighbors.

We extend warm thanks to the following people for their wonderful efforts:

Sarah Van Zanten, Event Coordinator, who, with her family and friends, obtained and organized the crafts and games, the food and soft drinks, the tickets and the raffle,

Larry Breed and his crew, who bought the ribbons, cut and re-spooled them, assembled the Maypole, attached the ribbons and the floral basket, directed the pole setup, raised the floral basket, and disassembled the Maypole, long after most people were gone,

Gary Breitbard and his musicians and dancers, who organized the music and the Morris dancers, and who played all afternoon,

John King, the BBQ master,
Rich Elder, for stage construction,
Alan Winston, our dance caller,
Hassan Bordbari of Barron Park Florist & Market, who provided the flowers and assembled the flower basket,
Paul Yang and Peter Mueller, who arranged sponsorships,
Doug Graham, Barron Park Historian, who provided the Barron Park History Display,
Lisa Berkowitz Landers, Membership Chair, who welcomed new members to the Barron Park Association,
Gwen Luce, BPA Board member, who welcomed attendees and distributed May Fête programs during the event,
... and of course the Barron Park donkeys—Perry and Niner—and their handlers.

Thanks to this year's ad sponsors:

John W. King, Keller Williams Realty
Gwen Luce, Coldwell Banker Real Estate
Ernie's Wines and Liquors
Jim Davis Automotive
Family Fashion Cuts
Celia's Restaurant

Nancy Bee Salon & Spa
Driftwood Deli & Market

Classic Pet Grooming

In-kind donations provided by:

Copy Factory—programs and postcards
Barron Park Florist—flower basket

Raffle prizes provided by:

Creekside Inn
Great American Framing Company
Ace of Sandwiches

Dinah's Grill

Olive Garden

Buca di Beppo

Chipotle

Hope to see everyone again next year!

Photo: Jim Colton



Photo: Jim Colton



Reading Your Water Meter and Water Saving Tips

By David Coale and Lynnie Melena, Barron Park Green Team

Is the drought over? Do we still need to conserve water? Some say the drought will be the new normal. Either way you look at it, water usage will almost always be an issue in California. This article has many tips and ways to conserve and reduce your water use. But before that, let's learn how to read your water meter. This will give you a good feel for the big water uses in your home and where the best opportunities are for saving water.

Reading your water meter

The first thing to do is to find your meter. Once you find it, you will need some kind of tool to help remove the cover. A flat blade screwdriver will work for this. Now that you have it open, how do you read the meter? Let's take a look:



Photo #1

There are three elements to your water meter. The first is the white and black numbers near the top of your meter. Note that your meter reads cubic feet, not gallons. The white and black rolling numbers at the top in this photo (Photo #1) reads 120,437 cubic feet. The four white digits to the left are how many hundred cubic feet (CCF) of water the meter has registered. This is the unit of measurement that shows up in your water bill.

Now let's look at the pointer and the numbers around the outside of the meter. The first number listed on the outside is 0.1, and this goes to 0.9, so once around the

dial is 1 cubic foot. Each 0.1 on the dial is broken down into 1/10th, so the complete reading of this meter is 120,437.79 cubic feet—and if you wanted to guess at the 1/100th place, you might say 120,437.793, but we probably don't need to go that far.

The third element of your meter is the triangle just to the left of the center of the meter. This goes around to indicate water flow and will show very low water flows. Now here is the fun part: Go to your meter with a hose in hand that has a squeeze trigger nozzle where you can control the flow. Point the nozzle at a tree or bush that needs watering, and watch the meter as you play with water flow. Isn't that fun!

Here is another photo (#2) to look at. What number is shown on the meter?



Photo #2

This one is a little tricky, but let's take a look. I see 120,439.90. This looks like it might be 120,440.90, but notice the 39 black digits about to roll out of sight. So this is just rolling over to 120,440.00.

Now that you can read your meter, here is what you can do. The first thing is to make sure all the water in the house and yard is turned off. Now look at the triangle. Is it moving at all? If so, you have a leak, or not everything in the house/yard is turned off. It is estimated that on average, leaks account for up to 7% of the water use in the house, so make sure you check this out. An even better way to check for leaks is to

read your meter several hours apart and make sure the readings are the same. This will catch an intermittent leak like a leaky toilet.

Now that you have confirmed that you don't have any leaks, let's measure some water use in the house. The two photos in this article are before-and-after photos of me doing laundry. So how many gallons did I use? $120,439.90 - 120,437.79 = 2.11$ cubic feet. To get gallons we multiply by 7.48 gallons/cubic foot of water. This gives us 15.78 gallons, which is what newer front-loading washers use.

Now that you know how to measure the water use of any appliances or fixtures, you can explore how much water is used in your house and yard. I was very surprised to find that just ten minutes of watering my lawn took 50 gallons of water! Wow! Now I know why they say lawns take a lot of water. Seeing is believing. With this method you can measure any water use. Just look at "before" and "after" water readings, take the difference, and multiply by 7.48. Just make sure you have only one water use happening when you do this. Hmm, I wonder how much I use when I take a shower?

Water Saving Tips Compiled by the Barron Park Green Team Updated 5/26/16

Try Something Easy

- Check for leaks at your street-side water meter (to be demonstrated).
- Wash full loads of laundry and full dishwasher (saves water over hand washing)
- Take shorter showers (5 to 7 minutes).
- Don't let water run while brushing your teeth, shaving, or washing your face.
- Put a pail in your shower to collect warm-up water and use it to flush the toilet or water plants outside.
- Keep a pitcher nearby to collect warm-up

water at your sink.

- Flush the toilet sparingly.
- Calculate each water use, convert cubic feet (water meter reading) to gallons: 1 cf = 7.48 gallons.
- Calculate how many gallons of water you use per year. Multiply CCFs (100 cubic feet) by 748 to convert to gallons of water.
- Calculate how much water you use outside by comparing your December to March (in a typical non-drought year) to your June to September bills. The difference between these amounts is how much water you use outside the house. This is where you can make your most substantial savings.

Step It Up

- Install low-flow shower heads and aerators (available free from the City).
- Fix inside leaks as soon as possible. Know the locations of shut-off valves for the toilet, sink, and washing machine. Turn them off while waiting for repairs.
- Fix leaks in the irrigation system as soon as possible. Turn off the system while waiting for repairs.
- Water your lawn efficiently. Change the nozzles in your spray irrigation system to rotator nozzles (\$5-\$6 each). They apply water at one-third the rate of spray, allowing our clay soil to absorb the water. They will need to run longer to apply the same amount of water.
- Adjust your irrigation seasonally for correct water use.
- Use compost and mulch to retain water and improve soil in the garden and yard.

Challenge Yourself

- Install a graywater system.*
- Replace your older model toilet with a new high-efficiency toilet that uses 70 percent less water.*
- Retrofit your toilet to a dual flush toilet.
- Replace your older top-loading washing machine with a new high-efficiency model that saves 40% on water use. Rebates available for approved top- and front-loading models.
- Install an on-demand recirculation pump to save warm-up water.

- Replace your dishwasher with a new high-efficiency model.
- Install a drip system for non-lawn areas in your yard.
- Install a "smart" controller (rebates available).
- Convert your lawn to drought-tolerant landscaping (rebates available). Start this year by not watering your lawn, and plant when the rains return.
- Install a rain barrel or cistern catchment system.*
- Replace hardscape with permeable pavers.*
- Install a green roof system to reduce runoff.*
- Eat less meat. It takes 2,500 gallons of water to produce one pound of beef.
- Reduce driving. Millions of gallons of water are used each day for fracking for oil in California.

* Rebates are available for these items

Web Resources for Saving Water

City of Palo Alto water page:

<http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/water>

Palo Alto Residential programs:

<http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/depts/util/residents/resrebate/resiwater/default.asp>

Water Wise House Call Request Page:

<http://www.valleywater.org/Programs/Water-WiseHouseCallRequest.aspx>

Here is what they will do (scroll down to see video):

<http://www.valleywater.org/programs/water-conservation.aspx>

Palo Alto-sponsored workshops for home improvement including graywater and more:

<http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/workshops>

Santa Clara Valley Water District Conservation at Home:

<http://www.valleywater.org/programs/ConservationAtHome.aspx>

Household water calculator (very complete):

<http://www.wecalc.org/>

Urban Farmer Store, guide to rainwater and graywater harvesting:

<http://www.urbanfarmerstore.com/pdflibrary/rainwater-harvesting/>

(The above page also has a link to a great graywater manual, scroll down a ways.)

Good video on graywater laundry-to-landscape system installation:

<http://www.urbanfarmerstore.com/category/video-library/drainage/graywater/>

Another source for graywater info in the East Bay:

<http://greywateraction.org>

Get parts for your graywater system online:

<http://greywaterparts.com/node>

Water reuse information website:

<http://www.whollyh2o.org/>

How should we water our trees effectively?

<http://www.canopy.org/pages/caring-for-trees/trees-and-water/watering-guidelines.php>

Watering your fruit trees, how much water do you need?

http://homeorchard.ucanr.edu/The_Big_Picture/Irrigation

Watering schedule for watering your plants:

<http://www.sanjose.watersavingplants.com/Watering-Guide>

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Barron Park Association
724 Barron Avenue
Palo Alto, California 94306

EDITOR

Myrna Rochester

DESIGNER

Patrick Coyne

PROOFREADER

Gwen Luce

CONTRIBUTORS

Jordan Affeld, David Coale,
Shirley Finfrock, Markus Fromherz,
Romola Georgia, Douglas L. Graham,
Maurice Green, John King,
Lisa Berkowitz Landers, Art Liberman,
Lynnie Melena, Bob Moss,
Myrna Rochester, Heike Schmitz,
Marc Vincenti

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Jon Affeld, Erin Castelan, David Coale,
Jim Colton, Bob Moss, Cherrill Spencer,
James Witt

PRINTER

Prodigy Press

ART IN THE PARK—ERIN TAJIME CASTELAN

I came to wall mural painting from my experience with Italian chalk street painting. Street painting is far faster, but also far less permanent! Unlike framed paintings, permanent wall art is easy to store, it never gets crumpled or lost. When you want to show it to someone, you know exactly where it is.

Visual art enhances people's lives by inspiring them with beauty. Large wall murals in particular, and especially walls embellished with artistic scenes of nature, improve our mental outlook, efficiency, and well-being by introducing a sense of serenity into an otherwise visually limited place.

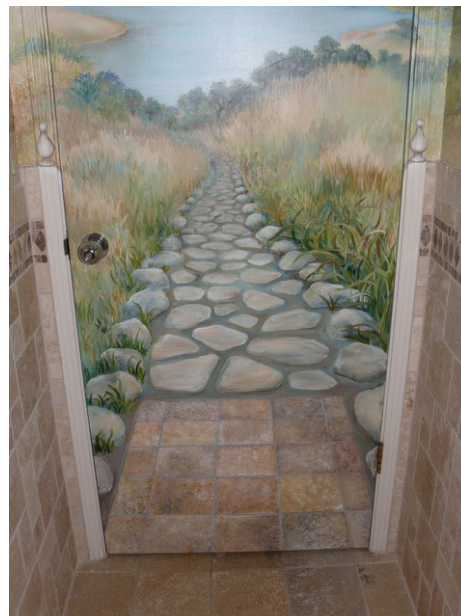
Having your walls illuminated with beautiful images of nature is like relocating your office, bedroom, bathroom, or hallway into rolling hills or an expansive coastline that makes the walls disappear, and lets your mind breathe into the space it perceives—which frees up your imagination and settles your nervous system.

Unlike building walls, mural images can use perspective to indicate distance to the eye, by allowing our view to go on for a great distance. The "close" foreground is often foliage; the mid-ground is less detailed, perhaps rolling hills with smaller trees; finally, the background is far less

detailed, often less colorful, perhaps mountains that fade into fog. These images make us feel we are not contained in a building, but somewhere out in the limitless natural world.

The peaceful beauty of a wall mural

reduces stress and supports enjoyable and creative productivity. Dream into your walls, awaken your own visions of what you imagine... a peaceful beach in a hallway or office or a Tuscan wine country scene in a corporate meeting room; a macro



view of tulips growing out of rich sienna-colored earth in a dining area; or daffodils, roses, and irises—flowers that never need watering, on a fence or wall outside the kitchen window; or even colorful tropical fish on all the walls of a small bathroom—infinitely suspended in calm turquoise water.

Taking a moment to see beauty refreshes the mind and rejuvenates the spirit.

Adorning walls with artistic depictions of nature in a wall mural ensures we will experience beauty every day, which helps us be more relaxed and more productive by mimicking the comfort and ease of being outdoors in the fresh air.

Selected mural locations open to the public:

- Bamboo mural, Avalon Yoga Center, 370 California Ave., Palo Alto.
- Peaceful Dreamer, outdoor mural, Aaron Brothers Art and Framing, Ellsworth and 3rd Ave., San Mateo.
- Six murals in pediatric waiting rooms, Family Health Center, Kaiser Santa Teresa, Cottle Road and Hwy 85, South San Jose.
- Six murals, Pacific Bay Pediatric Dentistry, 38024 Martha Ave., Fremont, <http://pacbaykids.com/see-our-office/>

Other examples are in private residences.

Erin Tajime Castelan

Artist • Muralist

650 424-9363 studio

650 303-4265 cell/text

P.O. Box 60005

Palo Alto, CA 94906

www.magnificentmurals.com

erin@tajime.com

F A L L 2 0 1 6 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE S E P T E M B E R 1

To all our contributors:

Please send articles, drafts and images by September 1 to Myrna Rochester, newsletter@bpapalto.org

If your Fall idea is still a query, please contact Myrna well in advance to talk about developing it.

Business Beat: Goodbye to Rice Thai

By Shirley Finfrock and Myrna Rochester

On recent visits to Rice Thai, we had lengthy (separate) conversations with Ricky Sudchaitham, owner of Rice Thai Restaurant, 3924 El Camino. Ricky wished to express his appreciation to his patrons since he opened his restaurant in Barron Park in October 2008.

Ricky closed Rice Thai in late May after selling it, through a restaurant broker, to Siam Thai. Siam Thai currently has three restaurants in the West Bay: in Cupertino, San Jose, and Morgan Hill. They generally receive good reviews on Yelp. Siam Thai is now open at this location.

Ricky is returning to Thailand to maintain his property there and take time to determine his future path. His mother, who lives in the Bay Area, plans to join him

there. He worked seven days a week for almost eight years to build his business and hopefully will enjoy a well-deserved break. He explained something about the remoteness of his home—a fishing village: it has no phone or Internet service; villagers communicate with each other by means of a (paper) bulletin board. He is sorry he can't maintain contact with old friends and patrons.

He was pleased that his many friends in Barron Park stopped in for a personal thank you for supporting him. With his early announcement, he didn't want folks to show up after he closed only to be disappointed.

We will miss Ricky's wonderful personality, caring service, and very good Thai food.

WE LOVE PERRY AND NINER!



Our beloved Barron Park donkeys are cared for by volunteer donkey handlers. Perry and Niner live in a pasture generously loaned by a neighbor. But they need food and regular vet check-ups; their quarters need maintenance. If we love them, we all need to donate funds for their care. Any amount will help. Contributions (a check is best) may be sent to: The Palo Alto Donkey Project, ACTERRA (Action for a Sustainable Earth), 3921 East

Bayshore Road, Palo Alto, CA 94303-4303. The check must be made out to: "ACTERRA-Palo Alto Donkey Fund." (The "pay to" line must include the entire phrase.)

For further information about contributing, or if you would like information about how to become a donkey handler, please call Steven Parkes (650) 918-6768 or email at smparkes@smparkes.net, or go to BarronParkDonkeys.org.

Profile: Astrid (Rita) Varney of Maybell Way

By Douglas L. Graham, Barron Park Historian

When you meet Rita Varney you are impressed by her vibrant personality, outgoing, friendly manner and confident, almost military bearing. When you get to know her life story you realize that she is sort of a “naval person”: she grew up on a naval station, went to school there, and worked there for years. She is a bacteriologist by education and experience and a physicist by work and family experience. She is a nonagenarian, turning 96 in October. Rita is the oldest person on Maybell Way and surely one of the oldest in the broader Barron Park area. Her ancestry may also make her locally unique: her parents were Swedish by nationality, but her maternal grandparents were ethnic Lapps from the far north. Her father was from Stockholm, or, as her Lapp mother would say, from “down south.”

Where is Maybell Way?

Maybell Way is one of the cul-de-sacs off Maybell Avenue, west of Juana Briones School. Most of its 12 houses were built in 1959 or 1960 (Rita’s in 1959), and the final two in 1963 and 1964. The tract was named McLaughlin Glen #2, and the houses were built by developer Doug Couch. He also built another tract (McLaughlin Glen) simultaneously, with eight houses on the cul-de-sac formed where Georgia Avenue ends at Juana Briones School.

Built Where “The Pit” Was

Both housing tracts were built where the State “Borrow Pit” had been. It was 760 feet long, 280 feet wide, and up to 20 feet deep (probably averaging about ten feet deep). It covered nearly five acres, now occupied by two streets and 20 houses. It was dug in about 1933 to provide fill for the new “Bayshore Highway,” a bypass to avoid the traffic on El Camino Real which was U.S. Highway 101 at the time. The plan to dig the pit was protested vigorously by the residents of the Maybell tract in 1932, but the state went ahead anyway. This intrusion was a factor in the later

formation of the Barron Park Association to prevent such abuses.

Settling and Drainage Problems

The pit was filled in by someone (perhaps Doug Couch?) in about 1955. The fill was imperfect and has led to some settling and drainage problems in both subdivisions in recent years. Rita’s property has not escaped the problems. Water drains from the back of the lot towards the street; the second owners had a dehumidifying system set up in the crawl space under the house. The system has become very noisy and needs frequent adjustments.

Fifty-two Years on the Cul-de-Sac

When Rita and her husband Robert Varney moved into the house at 4156 Maybell Way in 1964, there were still many fruit trees in the area and several small orchards nearby. Rita has greatly enjoyed living in the cul-de-sac, because of the sense of community and the lack of traffic. When she and Robert arrived, there were many children, but during the 52 years she has lived there, the population has aged. For a while there were almost no kids, and at one time in recent years there were six widows in the 12 houses.

Rita’s Early Life

Rita was born Astrid Riffolt in Massachusetts in 1920, where her father Nils was a student at Clark University in Worcester. He studied under physicist Robert Goddard, who later became the famous U.S. rocket pioneer. After Nils’s graduation in 1922, he moved with his family to Virginia, where he went to work at the Dahlgren Navy Proving Ground (now the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Dahlgren Division). Dr. Goddard visited the Riffolt family in Virginia and continued to consult with Nils. He was a lifelong friend and Rita remembers him well.

The Best Part

Rita remembers Dahlgren as a bleak place. She said “When we first came, it was all

sand and oyster shells with no greenery and no amenities, though it became a very nice community.” The best part of living in Virginia, as far as Rita was concerned, was canoeing on the Potomac River. She would push off from Dahlgren in her canoe with “packages of chewing gum to patch leaks.” She spent as much time as she could on the water. There was a buoy where she would tie up to eat sandwiches and read a book—one of her greatest pleasures.

A School Problem

The Naval Station had a public school, which Rita attended. It was, of course, segregated, and a separate school was provided for black children which was supposed to be “separate but equal.” Rita expected to go to the County High School, located in a somewhat larger community nearby. The year she was to go to high school, the County School Board was presented with a problem. The “equal” part of the law was challenged by a brilliant black girl who wished to attend a nursing school in Richmond that required chemistry, not available in her school. The board decided the best thing to do was to eliminate the chemistry course in the white school (better that no one take chemistry than encourage a black student). She was unable to achieve her dream. Such was life in rural Virginia in those days. This action infuriated Rita’s father Nils; he sent Rita to a private boarding school which had a “junior college,” enabling her to apply and be accepted at good colleges.

College and University

Rita attended and graduated from William and Mary College in Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia. There, she studied under an excellent professor of bacteriology and chose to specialize in that field. Rita was accepted into the graduate program in bacteriology at the University of Wisconsin. She met her future husband Robert Varney in Virginia when she was home from Wisconsin. He was ten years older, a professor

on leave to do war work in Virginia. They got to know each other when he drove her to the train station in Washington, D.C., for her return to Wisconsin. Soon after, the U.S. was attacked at Pearl Harbor and entered World War Two, affecting everything and everybody.

Producing Penicillin

The Scottish biologist and pharmacologist Alexander Fleming had discovered penicillin in 1928. With the outbreak of World War Two, the production of the antibiotic had suddenly become an important objective for the U.S. government. Rita's professor, a post-doctoral fellow, Rita, and another graduate student were dispatched to Princeton, New Jersey, to develop the production of penicillin from mold. It was a whole new field; all the pharmaceutical companies wanted to get on the bandwagon. The process was very complicated; no one quite knew what they were doing. It was all hurry-up-and-work-around-the-clock. It was exciting for Rita to be a part of this, treated as an adult and recognized as a scientist. She remembers warming up pizza in the autoclave. She was the team member assigned to determine the moment when the penicillin was ready to harvest. After her team succeeded in solving that problem, Rita left Princeton, taking her expertise to Washington, D.C., to join the FDA in developing standards and testing methods. All the pharmaceutical companies sent their new penicillin to the FDA to be tested, another new challenge in this rapidly growing field. Pfizer was the first to produce penicillin successfully and to FDA standards.

Robert Varney

After her time at the FDA, Rita went back home to work at the Naval Proving Ground at Dahlgren, where her father Nils Riffolt continued to work as a physicist. At Dahlgren, Rita worked for her future husband, Robert Varney, a physics professor at Washington University in St. Louis. He was in the Naval Reserve and had been called up before the U.S. entered the war, assigned to set up a laboratory at Dahlgren for research on armor and projectiles. He stayed there throughout the war before

returning to Washington University. At Dahlgren he assigned Rita to measure the velocity of projectiles fired from the big guns that were aimed down the river toward several test impact areas. One of Rita's fond memories of Robert was of the time she accidentally broke the lab's glass coffeepot while making coffee for the team. She was surprised—and charmed—when Robert (who had learned glassblowing as a student) was able to blow a new coffeepot.

After the War

Robert was released from the Navy at the end of the war and returned to his professorship at Washington University. Rita and Robert were married and moved to St. Louis where they lived until 1964.

The Russian Connection

The Varneys traveled extensively after the war—three years to Austria, one year to Stockholm. In 1958, at the height of the Cold War with the U.S.S.R., Robert decided to visit two "physics friends" in Russia. Amazingly, he managed to get approval from the Russians. Perhaps they decided he wasn't a spy because he brought Rita and their two children along. Although they had an interesting visit, after two weeks of being under constant surveillance, they decided enough was enough and departed through Finland.

On one of their trips to Europe, they got stranded in bad weather on New Year's Eve in Iceland. The hotel had a restaurant but it was closed for the holiday so workers' families could be together. Everything else was closed too; there was nowhere to get a meal in Reykjavik. Rita remembers they made do with a bottle of sherry and a fruitcake for supper and went up to the top floor to watch the fireworks. They set off an alarm as they went, so got to meet the Reykjavik fire department.

The Move to California

After 26 years as a physics professor at Washington University, Robert wanted to return to California (a native of San Francisco, his B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. were from U.C. Berkeley). By this time, he had become an expert on the behavior of electricity in gases, or as Rita says, "gaseous

electronics." He accepted a physics position at Lockheed in Palo Alto.

The Family Settles Into Palo Alto

This brings us back to 1964. Rita and her family settled into Maybell Way. The Varneys' two children entered Palo Alto schools. Their son Nils was lucky enough to be in the first group entering the brand-new Gunn High School. "His class was so proud of the new school..." Rita says. Natalie was a few years younger but also liked Gunn when her turn came. Robert enjoyed his job at Lockheed and spent ten years there until he retired in 1975.

Married for 62 Years

Robert Varney died in 2011, five months after his 100th birthday. The *Palo Alto Weekly* ran a well-written death notice on May 27, 2011. Turning to necessary family business, Rita found that all the paperwork had already been taken care of by Robert. Their taxes were ready for the accountant, and so on.

The Writers of Maybell Way

A neighbor across the cul-de-sac from Rita, Julie Lythcott-Haims, recently founded a writing group made up of Maybell Way and Maybell Avenue area neighbors. Julie is an accomplished writer, with a best-selling non-fiction book published in 2015: *How to Raise an Adult: Break Free of the Overparenting Trap and Prepare Your Kid for Success* (Henry Holt). Rita and her daughter Natalie are members of the group, as are Julie and her mom, Jeannie Lythcott, along with six or seven others. The group is thriving and serves as an example of a creative way to get neighbors together and help energize a neighborhood.

I hope you have enjoyed this brief glimpse into the life of a very interesting person who has lived long and meaningfully. I must acknowledge the help of Jeannie Lythcott in arranging the interview with Rita, preparing her for it, and assisting with Rita's editing of my initial draft.

If you have questions you may contact me, and I will try to answer them. You can reach me at: *dgrahampaca at gmail dot com*, 650-493-0689 or snail mail to 984 Ilima Way, Palo Alto, CA, 94306.

Our Barron Park Yards—OBPY

By Romola Georgia

Yards in Transition—Summer 2016

A stroll through Barron Park streets yields abundant evidence of the dramatic shift in the way we view our yards. Realizing that water is a precious and limited resource, many neighbors are choosing to “lose the lawn.” For too many generations, the standard and ingrained vision of the yard has been dictated by an English countryside aesthetic—the lush lawn surrounded by colorful border plants. We somehow failed to recognize that the Bay Area has a summer-dry climate; we may go as many as six months without a single drop of rain! And thus we’ve been struggling against nature—irrigating, fertilizing, applying pesticides, fungicides and herbicides (which contaminate the soil and flow to the creeks and the Bay), and then cutting and discarding the unwanted “crop” of grass clippings. What folly!

In this series, which will in the future include my blog at www.bpapaloalto.org, I hope to explore some fresh approaches to the Barron Park Yard that can help conserve water, save money, and protect the environment without sacrificing the beauty and enjoyment that our yards can provide. An expanded sense of purpose might include:

- Planting something good for you and your family to eat (i.e., a citrus tree or some herbs)
 - Creating a safe and healthy place for wildlife, including the pollinators and beneficial insects that are essential to our ecosystem
 - Celebrating each season by enjoying both the flowering and the dormancy of plants
 - Building a sense of place by including some plants native to our part of California
- Freed from the tyranny of magazine-perfect landscaping, we can look to other Mediterranean-climate parts of the world for inspiration. Traditional gardens have included vegetables and fruits as well as plants that are both water-thrifty and low maintenance. And if we jettison perfection as a goal, we can grow to accept some nibbles on the leaves. We love butterflies, but go ballistic when we see a caterpillar. It’s impossible to have one without the other. A knee jerk, generic use of pesticides destroys the great number of beneficial and pollinating insects that we actually need.
- In the garden, success is strongly tied to timing. Since Fall, with its cooler weather and hope of rain, is the best time for planting perennials and trees, now is a good

time to do a little research and planning. Some questions to ask:

- What fruit does my family like to eat? Do I have a sunny spot for a tree? Of the five citrus trees in my own yard, my family has gotten endless pleasure from the navel orange. Yes, you can buy them at the market, but the taste difference is astonishing. A lemon tree is also a kitchen must-have. Choose either a Meyer or Eureka. The citrus is a perennial with lovely glossy leaves year round.
- Are you ready to try growing a vegetable or two? Cool season crops are more trouble-free than the typical summer veggies. Get started right by attending the Master Gardener Workshop, Less Work, More Food: Starting a Cool Season Vegetable Garden, on August 6, 2016, at 10:00 A.M., at Eleanor Pardee Park, Center Drive and Channing, Palo Alto.
- Are you planning to replace your lawn? Check out possible rebates from the Santa Clara Valley Water District <http://www.valleywater.org/programs/rebates.aspx>. They have a good list of replacement plants on the website. The City of Palo Alto may also have resources for lawn replacement projects.

BRINGING YOUR HOUSE WITH YOU

By Douglas L. Graham, Barron Park Historian

Ken Arutunian, Architect

Ken Arutunian moved to Barron Park in 1968 and lived here for 32 years. During that period, he was a practicing architect, raised four children who attended Palo Alto schools, and was very active in Barron Park community affairs. Along with landscape architect Jack Buktenica, Ken designed Bol Park. He was on the Board of Directors of the Barron Park Association for many years and was President for several years in the late 1970s.

Ken Brings a House to Barron Park

In 1967, Ken bought the flag lot at 922 Matadero Avenue, behind Jack Buktenica’s

house at 918. (See the map accompanying this story.) There was no house on the flag lot, so Ken was considering designing one to be built. Then he discovered an attractive old house for sale in College Terrace, on Stanford Avenue at Bowdoin Street. Ken described it as a “classic midwestern” farmhouse, “not fancy.” Built in 1908, it had about 4,000 square feet on two stories. It had a great big front porch. There were four bedrooms on the second floor—perfect for his then three-child family. It had (and still has) a large living room and two fireplaces. The house was to be torn down, and Ken was able to buy it for \$300 and a commitment to move it off the lot imme-

diately. He knew that it would have to be entirely re-plumbed and that other renovations would be needed.

Moving the house required a county permit, and Ken had to draw a route plan. The house was cut in half so it could negotiate Palo Alto’s streets. Each half was mounted on airplane wheels (an “airplane dolly”). There were going to be big problems moving it up Matadero Avenue from El Camino Real. In those days, Matadero was densely lined with large black acacia trees that overhung the street, making it like a tunnel. There would have been almost constant tree-house collisions, but Ken figured out a clever shortcut.

Ken Rode on Top

The house, in two sections, left Bowdoin Avenue at 11:00 P.M. on a Sunday, rolled up Stanford Avenue to Junipero Serra Boulevard, then left at the traffic light at Page Mill Expressway. Ken was riding on top of the first section, making sure that the house could clear all wires, signals, signs, etc. He had a manual bow saw to remove troublesome tree limbs. At one point he had to use the saw to cut an oak limb six inches in diameter.

At Page Mill, the moving company had to unbolt one of the traffic signals from its footings. At 2:30 A.M., it was a left turn again onto Page Mill, then down the hill very cautiously (almost burning out the brakes). It was about 4:00 A.M. by the time they reached Hanover Street. Right on Hanover up to the curve where the street crossed the old railroad right-of-way (the tracks had been removed about two or three years previously).

Riding the Railroad

Instead of proceeding down Hanover to El Camino, Ken wanted to take the house directly onto the railroad right-of-way, through the Varian parking lot and straight up to Matadero Avenue. However, the air-plane dolly couldn't make the sharp turn, and they had to jack each section off and reposition its dolly, then jack it back on.

Once they were straight on the railroad bed, they made good time up to Matadero.

A newspaper reporter showed up and took photos—there was a story in the *Palo Alto Times* the next day. It must have been an astonishing sight, especially for Barron Park residents who might not have had any warning (if there was anybody up and around at the time).

The house moving tale ends well: the house arrived and was placed on its new foundation, tacked back together, renovated, and happily lived in by the Arutunian family for 32 years. When Ken moved from Barron Park in 2000, he sold it for \$1 million—not a bad return on a \$300 investment (plus land and moving costs, etc.). Ken believes the new owner put about \$60–70,000 into the yard in 2000—which would be roughly the equivalent of \$90,000 in 2016 dollars.

Ken wasn't the only one who moved a house onto Matadero Avenue. He said that just the year before (in 1967), Chuck Kinney and a man named Wolferts moved a house from Palo Alto to the then-empty lot at 935.

Farm Animals Were a Draw

One of the reasons the Arutunians chose to live in the Roble Ridge area of Barron Park was that zoning allowed a limited number of large farm animals, because of the large lot sizes. Ken's wife Elise wanted horses and a cow. Ken fenced the property, installed an old bathtub as a watering trough, built a barn with three stalls (for the cow and two

horses), and eventually a chicken coop. Elise rode the horses frequently, and found that she could ride along the abandoned railroad right-of-way all the way to Arastradero Road, where there were connections to horse trails in the foothills.

Maggie the Milk Cow

Maggie, a Jersey milk cow, lived at the Arutunians' for 15 years and gave birth to four or five calves over the years. She also gave two gallons of milk a day, and the family sold the extra raw milk. She was the only milk cow in Palo Alto during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Maggie was a major feature of the 4H Club which met at the Arutunians' place and also put on events at Barron Park Elementary School. The school was only four blocks away, and the Arutunian farm animals were the main attraction for many field trips.

Raising Chickens in Raccoon Country

Chickens were actually the first farm animals acquired by the family. At first they had no coop, and the raccoons, skunks, and opossums soon learned where they lived. The chickens flew into the trees at night to roost. Even after the coop was built, there were occasional attacks: Ken remembers one night when he accidentally left one chicken out. He heard cackling and went out to the watering trough area where he spotted a raccoon with two yellow eyes and a chicken in its mouth. He threatened the raccoon with a hoe, and the animal promptly dropped the chicken and ran.

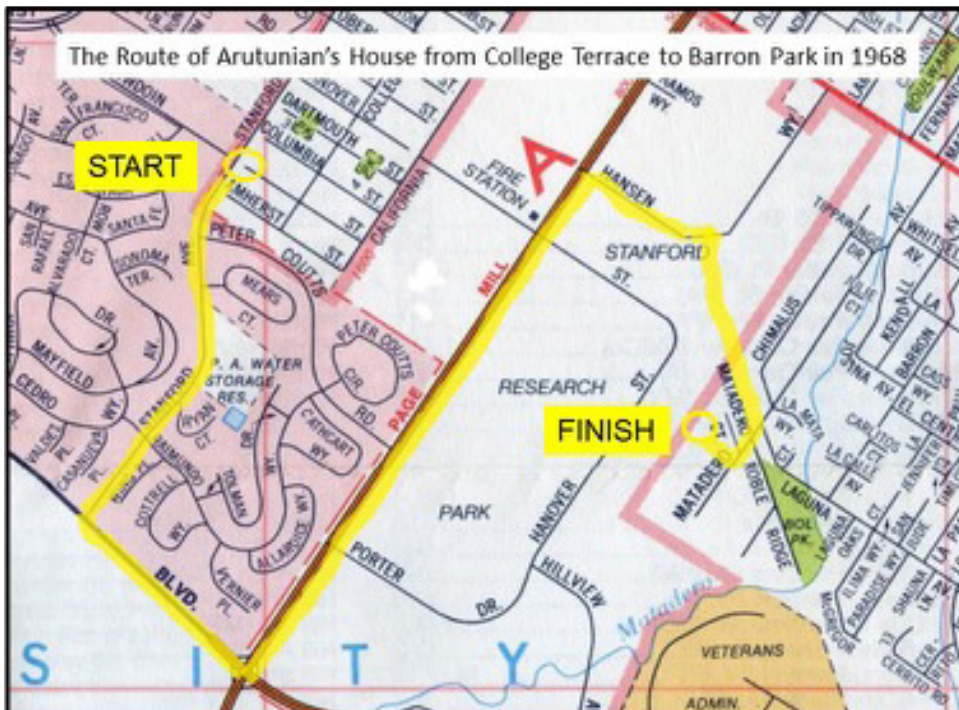
Community Feeling

I asked Ken about Roble Ridge events, but he didn't have much to add to the stories I wrote up for the Fall 2015 issue of this newsletter. On Matadero Hill, Ken Preminger was a friend. He remembered how the neighbors used the tennis court at the Shermans'. Ken said he always felt a part of the larger Barron Park community, but not particularly a part of the life "up on the hill" (i.e., Roble Ridge and Matadero Hill).

Almost immediately after moving in and renovating the old house, Ken became quite involved in the community effort to establish Bol Park. He was one of the key players, along with Dick Placone on Chimalus Drive and Sam Elster on Laguna Oaks Court.

If you have any comments or questions, please contact me:

Douglas L. Graham, Barron Park Historian, 984 Ilima Way, Palo Alto, CA, 94306, phone 650-493-0689, or email me at dgrahampaca@gmail.com.



GETTING TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS

By Jordan Affeld

Mentorship provided by Jeralyn Moran and Jon Affeld

Barron Park is a great place to live. We are blessed with an ideal climate, a unique natural landscape, and a diverse and caring community. When strolling or biking along the streets or trails, it is common to see people from all walks of life and backgrounds enjoying the pleasant weather and the beautiful natural scenery.

But in addition to people, we have another important group of residents. Perhaps more than any other neighborhood in Palo Alto, we also have an abundance of animal wildlife. They share our parks, our yards, and occasionally our homes. To many, they are an invaluable part of our community and help to make Barron Park unique and special.

In honor of our animal friends, the Barron Park Association Environmental Committee will be including a series of profiles about our local wildlife in the BPA newsletter. These summaries will provide a little bit of information to introduce you to the amazing variety of animals that share our neighborhood and hopefully help you get to know them a little better. Our first animal neighbor is the Pacific Tree Frog.



The Pacific Tree Frog

Pacific Tree Frog (*Pseudacris Regilla*)

Image Source: <http://www.thammophis.com/forum/garter-snake-lounge/6314-garter-staple-amazing-pacific-chorus-frog.html>

Name: Pacific Tree Frog or Pacific Chorus Frog. The scientific name is *Pseudacris Regilla*.

Description: Individual frogs can grow up



Meeting a Pacific Tree Frog in Barron Park

Image Source: Jon Affeld, May 2016

to two inches long. For coloration, they can be green or brown and have white bellies with many spots or dots. Males are typically smaller than females.

Habitat: The normal range is from northern California to British Columbia. Their preferred habitat is in upland ponds, streams, lakes, and sometimes even farther away from water in pastures and woodlands.

Behavior: The frogs are very nice and friendly. Much of their diet consists of spi-

ders, beetles, flies, ants, and other insects and arthropods.

Threats: As small amphibians, they are vulnerable to pollution, humans, pets, other animals, and loss of habitat. Their primary predators include snakes, raccoons, herons, egrets, cats, dogs, other small mammals, and reptiles.

Fun Facts: Pacific Tree Frogs can eat bugs as big as themselves. They can also change colors.

If you have not done so already, please consider reaching out to your human neighbors to introduce yourself, hold a block party, or come to a Barron Park community event. Also, don't forget to take the time to watch for our other local animal friends. They live here too and need your support, appreciation, and protection. Just like with people, the more you get to know them, the richer and more fulfilling your experience will be living in Barron Park.

Additional Resources

For more information about local Barron Park wildlife, please visit the BPA website: www.bpapaloalto.org Click on "Wildlife" (in the left margin under "Community Interests").

Bol Park Restoration Project Update

By Shirley Finrock

The rain really aided our efforts at the Bol Park California Native Plot this past season. A donation from a Barron Park resident paid for our Winter/Spring maintenance of pruning and weeding to spiff up our mature plot. In June 2015 a grant from The Garden Club of Palo Alto paid for the removal of the huge dead limb on the overhanging eucalyptus tree. The same grant allowed for the purchase and installation of 20 additional plants and the dividing and transplanting of existing species in early 2016.

Our mature plants are now on a once-every-30-day watering schedule. The new plantings are receiving supplemental hand watering by a Barron Park resident who

lives nearby. The watering manager for the Palo Alto Parks stopped by in late May to check out our drip system and found we are in need of two new solenoid valves in the system. The replacement parts will cost a few hundred dollars. The City originally provided the solar-powered irrigation controller and pays for ongoing water fees. However, we are responsible for the irrigation system. Our funds with the Friends of the Palo Alto Parks, a 401c non-profit organization, are nearly depleted. We need donations to purchase the needed solenoid valves to keep the plants alive over this year's dry season.

Please direct your tax-deductible donation as follows:

Payee: Friends of the Palo Alto Parks
Designate: Bol Park Corner Restoration Project

Mail to: FOPAP, 425 Grant Avenue, Suite 27, Palo Alto, CA 94306

For our own gardens, a reminder that natives are best planted in the Fall, as the weather cools and the rains start. If we don't get rain, young plants need hand watering until they are established. If you are rethinking your lawn or garden to replant in natives this fall, this is the perfect time of year to research, make up a plan, and prepare the ground.

The California Native Plant Society Fall Sale will be held Saturday, October 15, 2016, 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. at the CNPS SCV Nursery at Hidden Villa, 26870 Moody Road, Los Altos Hills, west of Foothill College. Resources: <http://www.cnps-scv.org/> and <http://www.cnps.org/>



Graffiti Abatement in Barron Park

By Bob Moss

Back in in September 1992, there was a major outbreak of graffiti throughout Palo Alto, particularly in and near Barron Park. That was my cue to begin cleaning and removing the graffiti from hundreds of locations—signs, lampposts, trash cans, walls, walks, etc. Almost two years later, in January 1994, the Palo Alto City Council passed a formal resolution recognizing me for my efforts at graffiti removal. My removal efforts have also been described and recognized by the *San Jose Mercury News*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and KCBS.

In the past fifteen years, I have removed over 19,000 tags all over Palo Alto. Since 2014 the incidence of graffiti has begun

to lessen, and it is far less of a problem now. Very few tags appear in neighborhoods, and the major site, El Camino Real, has also seen a big reduction in graffiti. Currently most tagging is on news racks, with a few tags occurring on storm drains, fireplugs, and lampposts. Since tags are removed promptly, usually within a few days after they appear, taggers seem to lose interest, and many have stopped tagging here. So far this year the incidence of graffiti is down significantly. For example, in late April and early May there were no tags on El Camino Real from Adobe Creek to Oregon Expressway. In contrast, San Jose is having an outburst of tagging, forcing the city to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars for its removal.



El Camino business wall "before" and "after." Photos: Bob Moss

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BPA meetings are held the 3rd

Tuesday of most months at 7:15 p.m.

Neighbors are welcome.

BPA Community Happy Hours are held

the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 5 pm

E-mail *President* at BPAPaloalto.org
for location

www.BPAPaloalto.org

RESOLUTION OF OUR CPI ISSUES

By Art Liberman

Dear Neighbors,

The i's have been dotted, the t's crossed and signatures affixed. The arrangement between the City of Palo Alto and CPI about the future of CPI's hazardous materials has been settled!

The article in the Spring 2016 BPA Newsletter ("Finale Coming to the CPI Plating Shop") described a proposal for the amortization of the CPI Plating Shop that was drafted by the City Staff and approved by the City Council. When that article was written, it was unclear whether CPI would agree to the settlement or decide to litigate. They have now signed on to the agreement.

The legal documents include a Background—stating the positions of the City and CPI on the issue, including CPI's objections—and an Agreement—with a statement by CPI that they accept the negotiated settlement, will not be filing a lawsuit challenging the arrangement, and

affirming that this agreement is binding on the company and its successors. It also includes the Settlement Terms—a summary of the basic overall agreement between the City and CPI. This outlines the option provided to CPI of deciding in five years (by December 31, 2021) whether they intend to terminate their plating shop operation in 2026 and remove the toxic and highly toxic materials in Building #2, or continue it for another ten years until 2031, but would then not be able to rebuild it elsewhere on its Palo Alto site.

CPI's hazardous material operation will continue to be monitored and supervised by the Palo Alto Fire Department's Hazardous Material Section, including unannounced annual inspections. Since the new Hazardous Materials ordinance forbids any site in Palo Alto to have more than the Title 19 threshold amounts of hazardous materials, CPI can never increase its nitric acid or potassium cyanide inventories and

revert to its pre-2012 status. CPI also agrees to continue reasonable 'good neighbor practices,' including providing its emergency phone number, and not to schedule non-emergency large truck deliveries earlier than 8:00 A.M. or later than 6:00 P.M.

This is good news to the neighborhood and those of us who are the immediate neighbors of CPI in Barron Park. We need to maintain our vigilance and concern. Should you or anyone in your family sense any unexpected or unpleasant odor, call 911 immediately. In the meantime, let us all hope that CPI strengthens its internal hazardous material safety culture, and that its vendors and employees exercise great care to avoid any leak, release, or venting of toxic materials.

If you have questions, please contact Art Liberman, Samir Tuma, Jeff Dean, or Romola Georgia; or contact City Planning Director Hillary Gitelman or City Attorney Molly Stump.

BPA MEET AND LEARN EVENTS

By Markus Fromherz

A Barron Park resident who joined us at the very first BPA Community Happy Hour in early 2015 was Catherine Hendricks, and she came with an idea. The residents of our community have a lot of interesting knowledge and skills to offer. How could we help them share those with the community? One person may be a fantastic cook of an exotic cuisine, another may have timely financial expertise, and a third may know all the best practices of conserving water. Why not facilitate a new type of BPA event where they can share their passions with interested neighbors? From that idea the BPA Meet and Learn series was born.

The idea from the beginning was to organize relatively low-key events with little overhead for just ten to twenty people on topics of interest to some Barron Park residents. While it was desired that the speak-

ers or seminar leads would be residents, Catherine felt that at least at the beginning it would be even more important to ensure expert knowledge. Thus some of the early speakers were friends of Barron Park with usually a professional background in the topic. But not all. Some were passionate residents with long-developed expertise, such as David Coale, who shared his extensive knowledge around water conservation in a very popular workshop last year, and Prerana Vaidya, who cooked a delicious Indian lunch with an at-capacity group earlier this year. Other evenings have focused on housing options for seniors and financial planning.

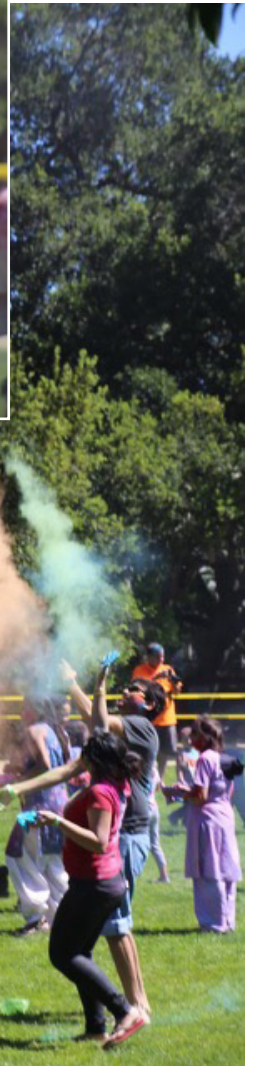
As with some other regular BPA events, we aim for a low-overhead activity. All it takes is a topic, an expert, a room, and sometimes a few materials. We use Eventbrite to announce the events and manage RSVPs,

which requires relatively little effort. We want to continue organizing perhaps one every other month, although they could be more frequent if we can enlist more interested "experts." Speaking of experts, it's not necessary to be a professional in a given field, nor is it necessary to create a polished presentation. In fact, attendees seemed to appreciate the interactive, informal nature of several of our Meet and Learns. We have had suggestions for sessions on ethnic cooking, travel planning, living single... Jim Colton's photo presentation on Cuba was held on June 23, 2016 (jimcolton.zenfolio.com). We hope you'll join us in planning and learning.

Look out for more Meet and Learns to come. If you have an idea, if you are interested in leading one yourself or helping with the organization of Meet and Learns, please send Catherine Hendricks an email at frenchrealtor@gmail.com

Festival of Colors: Barron Park's Own Holi Celebration, March 25, 2016

Our hardworking Barron Park Holi Committee was headed by BPA Vice-President, Jaya Pandey.



Photos: James Witt

The Emergency Services Volunteer Program in Barron Park

By Maurice Green

In Barron Park, we have a network of volunteers known as Block Preparedness Coordinators (BPC) and Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) who can help out in the event of a major emergency, such as a flood or earthquake. These volunteers are organized into four areas under the direction of a Neighborhood Preparedness Coordinator (NPC).

It is critical to understand that on any given day in our city of over 60,000 residents in 26 square miles there are only 24 firefighters and as few as eight police officers on active duty. In the event of an emergency the neighborhood volunteers serve as the "eyes and ears" for initial damage assessment.

Volunteers who are willing and able to invest more time can join a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). The CERT Program trains community members in basic disaster response skills, such as small fire suppression, light search and rescue, and disaster medical operations. Using the training learned in the classroom and during exercises, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event, when professional responders are not immediately available to help. By looking out for each other, we in Barron Park can be more resilient.

The City of Palo Alto offers training to residents through the Office of Emergency Services. We are currently looking for residents of Barron Park to go through training to become BPCs and CERTs.

The next Block Preparedness Coordinator (BPC) training is scheduled for Tuesday, August 9, 2016, 6:30 P.M.–9:30 P.M., at Lucie Stern Community Center, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto.

Additional future training opportunities include:

August 13, 2016: 9:00 A.M.–3:30 P.M., American Red Cross: Adult First Aid / CPR / AED, Room H-1, Cubberley Community Center, 4000 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto.

September 12, 2016: 6:30 P.M.–9:30 P.M., CERT Basic Training Begins, 679 Pampas Lane, Stanford University. Seven sessions.

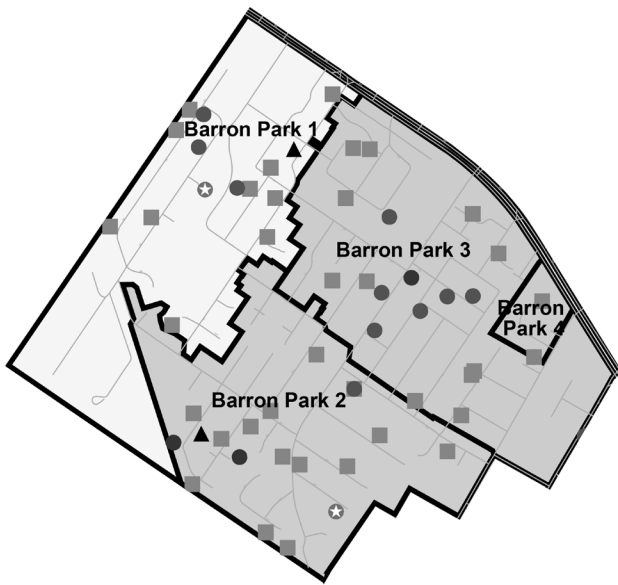
October 9, 2016: 2:00 P.M.–3:00 P.M., Emergency Services Volunteers (ESV), Citywide Communications Drill.

October 23, 2016: 2:00 P.M.–4:00 P.M., Winter Storm Training, TBD.

October 29, 2016: 1:00 P.M.–4:00 P.M., BPC Certification, Lucie Stern Community Room, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto.

Can you step forward to become a BPC or CERT? The first step is to fill out the Barron Park Emergency Preparedness Survey, available on our website at <http://bpapaloalto.org/esv-survey>

If you have any questions about this program, please contact: Maurice Green, Barron Park Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, (650) 493-5914



Our current NPCs are:

Marianne Strickfaden, Area 1,
Daniel Lilienstein, Area 2,
and Maurice Green, Areas 3 and 4

The role of a BPC is simple: BPCs contact their neighbors, providing them with information on how to prepare an emergency plan and determining if any household members have special needs. Following a disaster, BPCs check on those who live nearby and report problems to the NPC who then relays the information to the City of Palo Alto responders. Training for BPCs includes identification of various types of damage and emergency situations as well as radio communications skills using FRS (Family Radio Service) handi-talkies. Ideally we would have one or two BPCs on every street in our neighborhood.

Barron Park Association Membership / Babysitter List

By Lisa Berkowitz Landers, Membership Chair

Membership

Thanks for your recent membership renewals for April 2016-March 2017. Over 200 Barron Park residents have joined or renewed their BPA membership during the past two months. Membership is about halfway to our goal, so please remind and encourage your neighbors to join!

BPA Babysitter List

The BPA babysitter list changed format in June. Sitters may now share background information that will help families fulfill their childcare needs. If you are interested in joining the list as a sitter or want to receive the babysitter list, please send an email to barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com

FOR OUR NEIGHBORHOOD'S HIGH-SCHOOLERS

By Marc Vincenti

The tragic youth suicides our community has suffered since 2009 and our profound concern for all our adolescents' and young adults' health and well-being has led to discussion, research, and changes in the student culture, prompted by students, their families, teachers, counselors, and health providers. Project Safety Net, City of Palo Alto and We Can Do Better Palo Alto, are two initiatives now working to understand and help students' lives. In addition, Palo Alto Adolescent Counseling Services, the Stanford psychiatry department, and Stanford programs such as CAPS and the Bridge Peer Counseling Center have lent counseling and expertise.

Started more than two years ago by Martha Cabot (then a Gunn sophomore) and Marc Vincenti (formerly of the Gunn English Department), "Save the 2,008" is another movement, rooted in the Gunn and Barron Park communities. Marc briefly explains his campaign here; you may wish to consult the website, as well as the web pages of the projects mentioned above, to see how you can get involved.

BPA Editors

How rare and lucky to have a "neighborhood" high school! That's Gunn for us—only a stroll, a woodsy ramble, an easy bike ride away. I feel lucky to live here, lucky to have a newsletter through which to communicate, and lucky to have a Los Robles Avenue landlord who cut the rent when he found out I was a schoolteacher, giving me fourteen affordable years here—one of the best gifts of my career.

I get to run into former students at Starbucks, Happy Donuts, El Grullense and other local haunts. I can get caught up on their lives, ask about their retrospective views on high school. Just today, at the Juana Briones School polling place, I crossed paths with two Gunn grads and got their reports on an MBA, new jobs, marriage.

In 2014, though I'd already retired from the English Department, I still felt so joined in spirit to Gunn that when we lost two more

students that autumn, I teamed up with a sophomore to propose some simple, stress-reducing reforms to high-school life. Save the 2,008—named for the number of students and faculty then at Gunn—has since blossomed into a coalition of 482 people, drawing the interest of *ABC News Nightline*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall St. Journal*, *The Atlantic*, even *Le Monde*.

While the proposals of Save the 2,008 are supported by parents, Stanford professors, PAMF physicians, dozens of LMFTs and psychiatrists, rabbis and ministers, venture capitalists, and an Academy Award winner (Gunn, '84), it's no accident that the initiative was founded by a student and a teacher—because at the heart of Save the 2,008 is a desire to strengthen and enrich those working classroom ties that can sometimes become lifelines. Most grown-ups can still remember a high-school teacher who took a special interest in us, saw us not just as targets for lectures and tests but as developing human beings with individual worries and hopes and family backgrounds—and it helped us "survive" adolescence.

But in recent years, through no one's particular fault, and in a trend occurring nationwide, connections between students and teachers have been increasingly stifled, thanks to half a dozen oppressive school conditions. "Student stress" has become a terrible norm, seeping in elusively from seemingly everywhere and nowhere.

But it can be undone, and that is what Save the 2,008 would accomplish—through six common sense changes to high-school life:

- 1) Shrink class sizes—now routinely at more than 30 teenagers per room—so that kids won't feel lost in the crowd. (At Gunn and Paly last Fall there were 407 classes with 30 or more students).
- 2) Give students a voice in nightly homework amounts through a confidential app that crunches the numbers on minutes-assigned and minutes-worked, giving teachers easily-obtained data to let them know not only how their students are do-

ing, but how they are doing in comparison to colleagues.

3) Require guidance counseling before enrollment in multiple APs. Not a red light, just a flashing yellow light that could help to preserve hours of family time, friendship time, and—above all—sleep.

4) Ending students' all-day dependence on social media by requiring that their phones be turned off, first bell to last (just as in our middle schools) and by making campus more companionable.

5) Curbing the relentless grade-reporting (which gives teenagers no recovery time from the normal setbacks and hurts of adolescence).

6) Ending the anxiety-inducing cheating (committed by at least 80% of our overburdened students, and a danger to mental health).

To be sure, high schools don't create teenage despair, nor can they cure it. But there is much they can do to make it more bearable, more survivable—and that's what Save the 2,008 will do.

To help secure the future for kids across Palo Alto (this plan is for Paly too), please visit savethe2008.com and consider joining with just the keystrokes of your name.

During the fifteen years I was in the classroom at Gunn, the parents of Barron Park entrusted their children to me—which I felt as an honor and a responsibility. I still feel the same, and hope you'll join me in this cause.

EMAIL LISTS

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

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER
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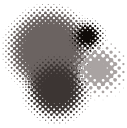
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