

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Jon Affeld, BPA President



Like an unfortunate game of Bingo, natural disasters seem to appear in our environment the way ping pong balls are pulled from a spinning cage.

In 2017, the numbers called out in California by our game master Mother Nature were astounding: 9,133 raging wildfires,¹ more than \$1.5 billion in property damage caused by roaring floods,² and over 7,000 rattling earthquakes of magnitude 1.5 or greater.³

Although we have been very fortunate in the Bay area, eventually the chips on our risk-filled playing cards will line up and our host will declare a local winner. We can't avoid playing in the game, but we can definitely improve our chances when tragedy eventually strikes.

Fortunately, in Barron Park and Palo Alto we have a wealth of resources, knowledge, and experienced people to help prepare for those disasters. Given recent natural occurrences and potential man-made threats, emergency preparedness is one of the top priorities for the Barron Park Association this year.

The Barron Park Association Emergency Preparedness and Safety subcommittee works with community experts and volunteers to develop an annual plan. Workshops are held throughout the year to share information, rehearse procedures,

and practice skills. Please see: "How Prepared Are We? The Palo Alto Emergency Service Volunteer Program" later in this newsletter.

At the BPA Annual Meeting on Sunday, March 18, 2018, at Barron Park Elementary, we hosted relevant City officials, including our new Police Chief Robert Jonsen. We hope you were able to attend.

It was a great opportunity to learn the latest information and have a chance to speak with other interested neighbors, volunteers, and equipment providers in an informal setting. To get you started in improving your preparations and planning for all kinds of emergency situations, here are a few useful City programs, contacts, and resources:

Programs (from City of Palo Alto website):⁴

Neighborhood and Block Preparedness Coordinator Program

The BPC Program trains volunteers to staff BPC positions for each block and Neighborhood Preparedness Coordinators (NPC) for each neighborhood (including businesses/districts or other groups). It is a comprehensive emergency preparedness program that relies on local volunteers and covers all types of disasters, not just earthquakes.

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JOIN US FOR MAY FÊTE 2018!

SUNDAY, MAY 20, 2018
BOL PARK, NOON TO 4 PM



This year Barron Park celebrates the 40th Anniversary of May Fête! Enjoy live music and dancers performing all afternoon, with a community Maypole Dance at 2:30. Wear ribbons! Bring family, friends, and a blanket, and make a picnic of it. Hamburgers, Hot Dogs, Soft Drinks, and Snacks for purchase. Active games and crafts for children, face painting, a three-legged race, our dear donkeys Perry and Jenny on parade, a Barron Park history exhibit, and more!

The May Fête is a volunteer effort. Come join us for the fun prep and set-up. To help out or if you have a display or activity to add to the mix, contact John King at: johnwadeking@gmail.com or (650) 483-2710. See you there!

I N S I D E

2	3	4	5	6	7	8	13	18	19
Our Own Social Media	Buena Vista Youth Scholars	Donkeys Enjoy Each Other	How Prepared Are We?	Great American Framing Company	El Camino Business Update	Mosquito Alert!	Two Railroads Ran Through Here	Our Wild Neighbors	Gunn Students Teach Computers

[PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONTINUED]

Palo Alto CERT Program

Using 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.

Palo Alto ARES/RACES

The Office of Emergency Services administers the auxiliary communications services for the City of Palo Alto. Auxiliary Communications includes ARES and RACES. If you live or work in Palo Alto and you are a communications professional, amateur radio operator, or simply interested in radio communications, we would welcome your involvement.

Contacts:

Barron Park Association Emergency Preparedness and Safety Subcommittee Chairs

Maurice Green: mauryg4@comcast.net

Lydia Kou: lydiakou@gmail.com

City of Palo Alto Office of Emergency Services

Director Kenneth Dueker:
kenneth.dueker@cityofpaloalto.org

City of Palo Alto Office of Emergency Services Volunteer Coordinator

Karen Pauls:
karen.pauls@cityofpaloalto.org

Resources:

https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/services/public_safety/get_involved/default.asp

https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/services/public_safety/emergency_preparedness/default.asp

We must remember that in nature the house always wins. So, don't play a catastrophic game of chance. Preparation is the best antidote to bad luck. Get involved, stay informed, be prepared, and reach out to your neighbors and to your local Barron Park neighborhood preparedness coordinator. Also, please consider helping others by joining the Barron Park Association today at <http://bpapaloalto.org/>

¹CA Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, http://cdffdata.fire.ca.gov/incidents/incidents_stats?year=2017

²Caltrans 2017, <http://www.dot.ca.gov/milemarker/docs/articles/2017/Q2/MM-2017-Q2-Winter-Storms.pdf>

³CA 2017, <https://earthquaketrack.com>

⁴City of Palo Alto Website, Emergency Services Program Descriptions, https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/services/public_safety/get_involved/default.asp

Our Own Social Media: The BPA Email Lists

By Richard Elder and Mircea Voskeranian, Co-Managers, BPA Email Lists

The Barron Park Association email lists were initiated in the early 1990s by Fred Lakin and Doug Moran. At the time there was nothing like them, a completely new way to communicate with neighbors and build community. Now, the advent of new communication tools such as Nextdoor (nextdoor.com) has people wondering which tool is best to use and even if the BPA email lists are worth maintaining.

We feel that while there is some overlap in their uses, both the BPA email lists and Nextdoor have their strengths, and we encourage people to use both. The goal of this article is to help you decide which is best for a particular use.

There are three BPA email lists: *bpa-news@googlegroups.com*, *bpa-misc@googlegroups.com*, and *bpa-issues@googlegroups.com*. Each has a different purpose and is managed differently. Subscribers are generally residents of Barron Park or Green Acres. The lists are managed by local volunteers, so they retain a connection to the Barron Park area. Nextdoor is a commercial website started in 2010 with the purpose of aiding neighborhood communication in many ways. It took several years to gain enough users in Barron Park to be useful, but now exceeds the BPA lists in scope. You can choose to send or receive messages just within Barron Park or to include surrounding neighborhoods. As a result, Nextdoor has more capability but can be more complicated to use.

A good example of this is our *bpa-news* list. Its purpose is to disseminate announcements about public events and alerts of interest to our residents. It is a moderated list, so for any message to go out, there are at least two people who have decided it is of general interest to the neighborhood. Since most people who send messages to *bpa-news* also send them through Nextdoor, you would also see them there, but often mixed in with a lot of announcements less specific to the Barron Park area.

If you have a personal item to give away or sell, want to borrow a ladder, or need a recommendation for a roofer, and you think your neighbors could help, both Nextdoor and *bpa-misc* are good options. On Nextdoor you can reach a larger audience, as it is not necessarily restricted to our neighborhood. But if you want to give something away more locally, or not announce to all of Palo Alto that your roof leaks, *bpa-misc* is for you. The list *bpa-misc* has about 450 subscribers, so you are still reaching a lot of your neighbors.

Nextdoor has nothing comparable to our *bpa-issues*. If you enjoy lively debate, or just want to know what your neighbors think about the issues facing Barron Park, *bpa-issues* is for you. It is meant for discussion of Barron Park-related issues and can get very active when controversial topics arise. Because participants know they are talking to their neighbors, discourse tends to be more civil than your usual online forum, and we monitor it to be sure it stays that way.

It is easy to subscribe to the BPA email lists. Go to the BPA website at bpapaloalto.org and click on "BPA Email Lists." There are simple forms on that page to subscribe to each of the lists. There is also other information about how to use the lists that we encourage you to read. The lists are hosted by Google Groups, so if you are familiar with Google Groups, you can subscribe that way. There is also a searchable archive on the Google Groups site, so if you remember that someone recommended an electrician a few months ago, and now you need one, that is a good place to look. Another advantage of the BPA email lists is that if you ever have a problem or question, you can reach us, your neighbors who manage the lists, by emailing to listmanager@bpapaloalto.org

If you want to learn more about the tools available on Nextdoor, just go to nextdoor.com

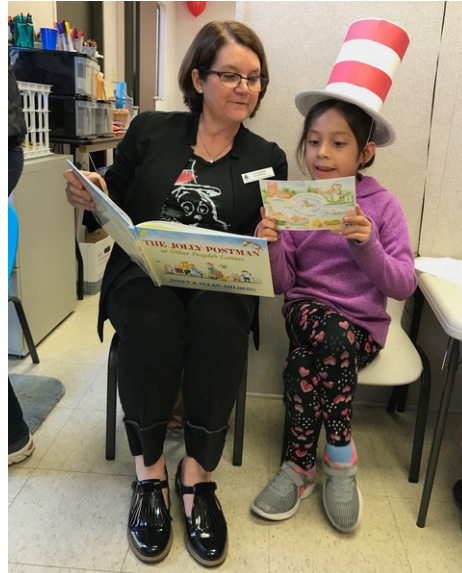
BUENA VISTA YOUTH SCHOLARS PROGRAM

By Deborah Farrington, Ed.D.

The Buena Vista Youth Scholars Program began on September 5, 2017, with no resources other than the good will of the residents, a few dedicated volunteers, and eager young students. The Youth Scholars Program quickly became a thriving community with an average of 16 students from TK-6th grade who gather twice weekly, logging to date 833 hours of student-learning time and 356 hours of volunteer time. Kids arrive at the Youth Scholars Program excited to see their friends and teachers, have a snack, and do their homework. It is obvious that the Youth Scholars Program is a place of support, care, happiness, and academic and personal growth. The parents are delighted that their children receive encouragement, instruction, and thoughtful attention from professional educators, Stanford students, local high school students and adults who model the importance of education and demonstrate the value of each and every child.



The Buena Vista Youth Scholars Program was established to support elementary school students living in the Buena Vista Mobile Home Park. After receiving eviction notices from their landlord in 2012, the Buena Vista community organized the Buena Vista Residents Association, contacted local friends and advocates who could support their cause, and undertook what turned out to be a five-year, community-driven legal battle to save their homes. In the end, the Santa Clara County Housing Authority purchased the land, thus preserving this vital affordable housing resource for at least 110 families. Within this community of 400 or more residents, there are about 40-45 children who attend nearby Barron Park Elementary School in



the Palo Alto Unified School District. To learn more about the Buena Vista community, visit: <https://ed.stanford.edu/news/scholar-activist-advocates-those-losing-out-silicon-valley-s-benefits>; and, to better understand the impact of a quality PAUSD education on the school-aged children living in Buena Vista, see: https://ed.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/buena_vista_research_report.pdf

While Barron Park Elementary School offers its students an excellent education and after-school resources, there remains a need to support the young children of Buena Vista (see: <https://www.paUSD.org/committees-task-forces/minority-achievement-talent-development-advisory-committee>).

Deborah Farrington, Ed.D., a local educator and supporter of the Buena Vista residents' activism to save their community, created the Buena Vista Youth Scholars Program to celebrate the new-found security felt within the community and to help fill the learning gap for Buena Vista's youngest residents. The Caritas Corporation, which manages the Buena Vista Mobile Home Park, offers enthusiastic support for the Youth Scholars Program, part of its mission to "create vibrant communities where quality of life, resident involvement, and caring are priorities." The Youth Scholars Program provides space to focus on learning, get homework help, read good books, get a snack, and create a community of friends. It is a vital community-based

resource that targets the academic achievement gap, strengthens the entire Barron Park community, and represents the very best of the City of Palo Alto and Stanford University values.

The Fall semester was an experiment. By October, it was obvious that the Buena Vista Youth Scholars Program had become an important hub of learning and community. Currently, the Youth Scholars Program has a volunteer team that consists of eight Stanford undergrads, a Graduate School of Education Ph.D. student, a Stanford MBA student, two students from Gunn High School, one from Sacred Heart Prep, and several Palo Alto residents. Since January, Deborah has been reaching out to PAUSD professionals, and we are delighted to have gained the support of Eric Goddard, the Principal at Barron Park Elementary School; administrators from Terman Middle School; the PAUSD Assistant Superintendent's office; and members of the PAUSD School Board. The Youth Scholars Program recently joined the national Read Across America Day celebration honoring reading—wishing our beloved Dr. Seuss a very Happy Birthday! The Youth Scholars Program has quickly become a little gem of positive energy for kids and adults building community.

The Buena Vista Youth Scholars Program kids would love to have more Palo Alto residents—high school students and adults—spend an afternoon with them! We meet every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon, 4:00 p.m.–5:30 p.m., at Space #22 (Buena Vista Mobile Home Park, 3980 El Camino). If you are interested in joining our wonderful community, please contact Deborah at deborah.bv.hmwk.club@gmail.com or (650) 575-5435.



Photos courtesy of Buena Vista Young Scholars Program.

DONKEYS ENJOY EACH OTHER

By Maria Castell-Greene

I have lived in Barron Park with my family since 1969, so the donkey generations have been part of our lives these many years.

Just the other day, it was cold and sunny, my friend and neighbor Sheila Raleigh and I were walking on the path behind Bol Park, and as usual we stopped to admire Jenny and Perry in their now-getting-nice-and-green pasture. We see Perry decide to lie down and roll and roll on his back, little legs up in the air. He lies quiet for a minute on the ground and just before getting to his feet briefly reaches up and touches Jenny's nose. It is pleasant to see, and only the beginning.

Perry stands up, appears to be grazing quietly next to his pasture partner, picks up a stick. With a frisky gait, tossing his head a bit, he seems to offer it to Jenny, keeps pushing it toward her face. They both have their ears back. She eventually gives in and takes the other end and they march together back and forth in a donkey tug of war. Imagine our amazement and pleasure.

When the stick drops and Jenny is spitting out bits of stick, Perry continues rather frisky, still swinging his head, and Jenny turns herself around and gently kicks him quick like donkeys do on the belly with two hind hoofs. A walker passing by on the path spoke out against donkeys abusing each other, as one would, seeing only that moment in the action!

Soon Perry turns and does the same with his little hoofs on her round belly, then picking up his stick again, teases her some more with it and the pulling and tugging in tandem back and forth starts again with legs tangling, hoofs scuffling every which way on the grass. When we decide to continue on our walk, they are still playing.

And so, I write this to thank the Barron Park-ers who care for the donkeys and all those who donate funds to give them a home here so we can have the fun of seeing what donkey pairs do when they are feeling playful.



Photo: Myrna Rochester

News from the Pasture

By Jenny Kiratli



Perry and Jenny are very happy with the Spring rains, especially as they bring a whole lot of yummy new grass shoots, which our donkeys can munch inside their pasture and on their walks around the neighborhood. But please remember: DO NOT FEED THEM ANYTHING. They get a balanced diet and are in excellent health.

Fundraising!

Barron Park Donkey Manure will be available beginning in April to enhance your compost as you prepare your Spring and Summer garden beds. Place your order for 25-lb bags of "Jen & Perry's Excellent Equine Manure" by writing to: barronparkdonkeys@gmail.com

Regular donations for Perry's and Jenny's care and feeding can be made at our dedicated, brand-new and improved website: www.barronparkdonkeys.org

Visit the website for donkey information, history, fun facts, and much more. Please send your suggestions for added features to barronparkdonkeys@gmail.com

Are you a Barron Park artist, photographer, artisan, craftsperson, sculptor, designer, musician, writer, poet...? Do you know one? You and your work can be featured an upcoming BPA Newsletter. Please send us your idea with a draft artist's statement and reproducible samples of your work to newsletter@bpapaloalto.org

HOW PREPARED ARE WE?

The Palo Alto Emergency Service Volunteer Program

By Maurice Green and Lydia Kou

2017 was a devastating year in terms of the number of disasters and the absolute devastation left behind: the destruction of entire islands, entire neighborhoods, and/or entire cities. The only takeaway from this can be . . . Learn from it! Start with the goal of reducing the harmful effects of any hazard, whether human-caused or by Mother Nature, through Preparedness, Response, and Recovery.

You can help your family and your neighbors/neighborhood/community by becoming an Emergency Services Volunteers (ESV). The City of Palo Alto, through its Office of Emergency Services, has a robust program that supports the volunteers in their role as ESVs, and it is free of charge.

The beauty of the ESV program is that there are different roles for participants, depending on how much they can and/or want to do. If you would like more information about each of the ESV roles, feel free to contact me (lydiakou@gmail.com), and I will be glad to provide a description of what the role requires. You can find basic information at: https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/services/public_safety/get_involved/

Palo Alto Training Sessions and Events, April-September 2018

The following training sessions and events have been scheduled to support ESVs. Note that they are available only to registered ESVs. To register, please contact: oes@cityofpaloalto.org

- Adult and Pediatric First Aid and CPR/AED Certification by American Red Cross:

April 14, 2018: 9:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m. at Cubberley Community Center, 4000 Middlefield Rd., Room H-1. To register: oes@cityofpaloalto.org

- Spring Drill!!!

April 29, 2018: 1:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m. (details and locations will be announced). To sign up to participate in the drill, contact Lydia Kou: lydiakou@gmail.com

- Amateur Radio License Exam (consists of study session followed by exam):

May 5, 2018: 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. in the City of San Leandro (address will be provided after registration). To register or for more information: <http://www.baears.com/>

- ESV Communications Drill

May 13, 2018: 6:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m. at Cubberley Community Center, 4000 Middlefield Rd. To register: oes@cityofpaloalto.org

- PG&E Gas Safety Class (fills up quickly, sign up ASAP)

June 4, 2018: 6:30 p.m.–8:30 p.m. at Cubberley Community Center, 4000 Middlefield Rd., Room H-1. To register: oes@cityofpaloalto.org

- Event to assist OES and Fire—Fourth of July Safety Watch

July 4, 2018: 5:00 p.m.–10:00 p.m. at various city locations. To register: oes@cityofpaloalto.org

- ESV Communications Drill

July 29, 2018: 6:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m. at your own location. To register: lydiakou@gmail.com

- Block Preparedness Coordinator (BPC) Certification (consists of one session)

August 9, 2018: 6:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m. at Cubberley Community Center, 4000 Middlefield Rd., Room A-7. To register or for more information: oes@cityofpaloalto.org

- How to Use the FRS Radio

August 26, 2018: 6:30 p.m.–8:30 p.m. at Cubberley Community Center, 4000 Middlefield Rd., Room A-7. To register: oes@cityofpaloalto.org

- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Certification (consists of 7 sessions)

September 4, 6, 11, 13, 18, and 20, 2018, 6:30 p.m.–9:30 p.m., with a field day on **September 23, 2018:** Noon–5:00 p.m.

Classroom sessions are at Mitchell Park Community Center, 4000 Middlefield Rd.,

Adobe Room. Field Day location to be announced at class. To register or for more information:

https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/services/public_safety/get_involved/cert.asp

Classes dates, times, and locations are subject to change. It is advisable to register well in advance for the class, so that if there are any changes, you will be contacted.

Preparedness Tip! You can register to get emergency alerts from Santa Clara County by signing up for ALERTSCC: <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/alertsc/Pages/home.aspx>

Mark Your 2018 Calendars!

New Plan for Senior Lunches

Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m.

April 10, June 12, August 14,
October 9, December 11

Corner Bakery Café

3375 El Camino Real, Palo Alto

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

No reservations needed.

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

EMAIL LISTS

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

Business Spotlight: The Great American Framing Company

By James Brady and Jamil Khayrulin

A Brief History

Now in its third year of operation at 3866 El Camino Real in Barron Park, owners James Brady and Jamil Khayrulin have an interesting and unusual story of how they met and how their partnership in the framing business came to be.

The Great American Framing Company was established in 1974 in downtown Palo Alto. The future business partners met there as former employees in 2001. Two years later, former owner Jeff was ready to retire and become a gentleman farmer. This allowed James and Jamil the opportunity to make him an offer he could not refuse: sell them the business! James and Jamil officially became proud owners in 2003. The frame shop remained at the downtown location until it fell victim to the ever-rising rents and relocated to lovely Barron Park in 2015.

James and Jamil—a little bit about their story:

James was raised in nearby Los Altos, during the time before Silicon Valley got its name, where he attended local schools.



James Brady and Jamil Khayrulin of The Great American Framing Company

As a young man he moved to the Monterey Peninsula where he began a career in picture framing, working for well-known frame shops in Pacific Grove and Carmel, before opening James Brady Framing in downtown Pacific Grove in 1994. In 2001, he moved back to Los Altos to help care for his elderly mother who still resided in the original-owner family home. (She had sent him a job listing for a picture-framing position in Palo Alto. . .)

Jamil was born in Baku, Azerbaijan, and graduated from architectural school in 1984. He immigrated to the United States after the collapse of the Soviet Union to find a better career opportunity in Amer-

ica. He established his citizenship a short time later. Jamil perfected his picture-framing skills at the nationally known custom frame shop Louvre in the Pacific Heights neighborhood of San Francisco. There, he worked side by side with some of the most talented craftspeople in the industry. By 2001 he had been employed at the Great American Framing Company in Palo Alto for a few years.

Their partnership is now in its 15th year and is still going strong!

Barron Park has been a very welcoming and supportive community, and the Great American Framing Company shop owners are forever grateful! They thank you!

BPA ADDRESS REMINDERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

El Camino Business Update (February 2018)

By Bob Moss

Since my August 2017 report, there have been changes in occupancy and a decrease in vacancies on El Camino Real between Adobe Creek and Page Mill. Overall vacancy rates are still low.

Last year, after Mike's Bikes (3001 El Camino) moved to Middlefield near Charleston, there was a proposal to redevelop the site with 19,800 sq. ft. of ground floor retail and 50 total apartments. However, no work has been done at the site so far.

Omniscience Corporation has replaced Urban Sleep, Artillery (gaming software), and El Camino Animal Hospital at 2951, 2951A, and 2951B El Camino, respectively.

The office rentals at 3401 El Camino are now occupied by InnoSpring (co-working space).

The former SneakerPawn at 3489 is now Clout House (men's streetwear / Korean snacks).

The former Combes Auto lot at 3585 El Camino, vacant for ~45 years, now has a planned project for ground floor retail with housing above. Exact size and number of units not confirmed. It has not yet been formally reviewed by the Architectural Review Board (ARB).

Family Fashion Cuts moved to the "Barron Park side" at 3666 El Camino two years ago.

Instant Urgent Care now operates at 3737 El Camino.

The Compadres site at 3877, vacant since October 2010, has approval for a project consisting of 4,027 sq. ft. of retail and 17 condos, but there has been no activity on the site.

At 4131 El Camino next to Subway, units 102 and 103 (Think Tank Learning and Opus 1 Music Studio) seem to be active again.

4149B on El Camino Way is under construction. It was formerly the location of Christian Lee, DDS.

4157C El Camino Way (formerly Lee & Woo Orthodontics; doors bear names of several psychology practices) has been sealed by the City as "hazardous, unsafe to enter." This is unusual. I don't recall a health hazard posted in this area before. The rest of the mixed-use complex (The Hamlet) is in business and unaffected by the ban.

Percolata (business software) at 3630 El Camino has been replaced by the office of Councilman Greg Tanaka.

Papa Murphy's at 3850 was replaced by The Chickery, opening soon.

Jamba Juice at 3990C El Camino was recently replaced by Baron Barista, an independent coffee shop.

4200 El Camino is now occupied by American Tire.

The proposal to replace Su Hong at 4256 with a 5-story hotel is still in process. Residents of the Redwoods complex next door strongly objected to the plans, and the ARB was also very negative about them. They want it scaled down, with the addition of more parking, more landscaping, greater setbacks, and less size and bulk.

Vacancy rates under 5% are basically considered full occupancy. On El Camino vacancies have decreased since August 2017.

There are only four vacancies on the Barron Park side totaling 12,310 sq. ft. They are the former Jewish Study Network at 3626 and 3628, the office for rent at 3632, and the former CrossFit site at 4050. The lots at 3710 and 4146 have been vacant for decades. Each had several developments approved, but nothing was built.

There are six vacancies on the Ventura side. No occupants are shown for 3001, 3011, 3527, 3585 lot, 3877, and 4117. The former Curves site at 4117 also has been vacant for years with nothing proposed for it.

Updates? Questions? You can contact me (Bob Moss) at bmoss33@att.net

A Barron Park Reading Group

By Janice Dorizensky

Our Barron Park Reading Group meets the evening of the first Wednesday of each month.

Please go to our website www.barron-parkreadinggroup.org (that's Barron Park Reading Group .org), click on the box in the center to get to the menu page, then look at "Book Selections" and "Future Book Ideas" to see what kinds of books we read. We like to alternate between fiction and non-fiction.

Please phone Janice at (650) 521-2774 or email JaniceDorizensky@yahoo.com for more information. Everyone is welcome.

SUMMER 2018, BPA Newsletter Deadline—Monday, June 4, 2018!

To All Our Valued Contributors:

Please submit articles and drafts (preferably in a Word file), along with any images, by **Monday, June 4, 2018**, to Myrna Rochester, newsletter@bpapalto.org or mbrbpa@sonic.net

If your Summer idea is still a query (for an article/report/update, interview, announcement, review, anecdote, or artist's page...), please contact Myrna in advance. Our Summer 2018 issue will be mailed early July to current members of the Barron Park Association. Announcements, including back-to-school activities, should be for events scheduled **after July 15**.

Vacancy rates	Aug. '15	Feb. '16	Nov. '16	Aug. '17	Feb. '18
El Camino, Ventura Side	5.14%	5.51%	6.90%	6.73%	6.09%
El Camino, Barron Park Side	1.78%	2.05%	3.14%	3.62%	2.22%
El Camino Way	0.00%	2.28%	7.04%	9.32%	7.17%
Total Vacancy incl. El Camino Way	3.63%	2.99%	4.46%	5.04%	3.88%

MOSQUITO ALERT!

Keep on Dumping Standing Water!

By BPA Newsletter Editors

Santa Clara County is home to at least 19 species of mosquitoes. Not only do they feed on us and on our pets—with varying degrees of allergic reaction—they also transmit diseases such as West Nile virus, Dengue Fever, Zika, Malaria, and Encephalitis. The Santa Clara County Vector Control District's battle against mosquitoes focuses primarily on the use of environmentally friendly approaches to eliminate mosquitoes before they begin biting people and animals.

This approach starts with identifying the source of problem mosquitoes. Many residents are unaware that they may be raising mosquitoes in their backyards. Backyard breeding sources such as stagnant water in plastic pools, buckets, old tires, etc., are identified and eliminated or removed by residents or District agents.

In the case of sources such as ponds and marshes, the District uses environmentally sensitive methods such as mosquito fish or bio-rational products that specifically target the mosquito larvae or pupae before they emerge as adults. For example, in mid-February the District applied naturally occurring microbes and a mosquito-specific hormone to the area east of Highway 101 and south of Embarcadero Road. According to the Vector district, the microbes and hormones, which have been used annually since 1992, don't stay in the environment for long and are not harmful to humans, wildlife, or other insects.

"The aerial operations historically result in a 90% reduction in mosquito numbers, and dramatically reduce the extreme nuisance caused by these mosquitoes well into the summer," said Vector Control District Manager Nayer Zahiri. The District also routinely conducts disease surveillance for mosquito-borne diseases such as encephalitis and West Nile virus.

To learn more about mosquitoes and what you can do to eliminate them, brochures can be downloaded from the Santa Clara Valley Vector Control website:

<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/vector/programs-and-services/mosquitoes/pages/home.aspx>

They may also be obtained through the mail by calling (408) 918-4770. Available in English and other languages, the brochures include "Are You Raising Mosquitoes in Your Backyard?"; "Fight the Bite"; and "Draining Your Pool and Spa."

Legal Abatement

Typical abatement procedures are used to gain access to properties to eliminate the source of a mosquito problem (e.g., a neglected swimming pool). Local Vector Control Districts prefer to work with landowners and will make every effort to provide help and assistance. However, if a landowner is unwilling or unable to eliminate a mosquito source (or other nuisance), local districts have the authority to access private property to inspect and abate the source of a problem. They also have the authority to charge the landowner a fee and place liens upon property (Sections 2053, 2060-2067, and 2855 of the California Health and Safety Code).

You may report any breeding sources personally or anonymously at the website listed above ("Service Request") or by calling (408) 918-4770.

Sources: *Palo Alto Daily Post*, February 13, 2018; and Santa Clara Valley Vector Control, website listed above.

PARCEL TAX EXEMPTION FOR SENIORS

By BPA Newsletter Editors

Palo Alto homeowners age 65 and older, as well as recipients of SSI/SSDI, may apply for an exemption or a refund (for 2017) of the general Parcel Tax added to Palo Alto property tax bills, passed in 2015. Information and an application for exemption or refund can be found on the following Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) web page:

pausd.org/business-services/parcel-tax

Here is a PDF of the application form, "Request for Exemption from the Parcel Tax":

pausd.org/sites/default/files/pdf-faqs/attachments/ParcelTaxExemptionForm_0.pdf

You may apply for a permanent exemption and/or a refund for your (already paid) 2017 Santa Clara County property tax bill. The refund for 2017 is available before May 31, 2018. You will likely be requested to present documentation in person at the PAUSD offices, 25 Churchill Ave., Palo Alto.

For further information and answers to your questions, call Betty Muñoz at PAUSD, 650-329-3980, or send email to bmunoz@pausd.org. We have found her to be extremely responsive.

BPA Neighborhood Services/Home Business List

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

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

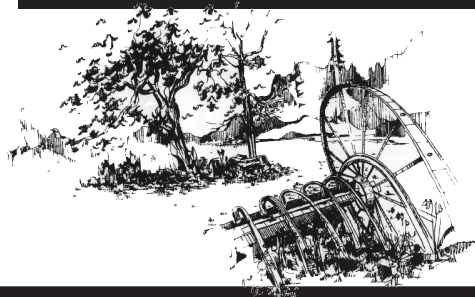
barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com

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

NEW! Neighbor Services

Neighbor Services

Various services offered by residents of Barron Park



The Barron Park Association (BPA) Needs Your Support Now!

Your membership supports many community events including:

Emergency Preparation ♦ Bol Park May Fête ♦ Movie Night ♦ Newsletters

Established in 1926, we are your volunteer neighbors serving the varied interests of our very special community.

Your membership is greatly appreciated!

Barron Park Association Membership April 2018-March 2019

Join online at <http://www.BPApaloalto.org>

OR

If using regular mail, send this completed form with your check to:

Barron Park Association

724 Barron Ave.

Palo Alto, CA 94306

Name(s): _____ / _____

Primary Email: _____ Alternate Email: _____

Address: _____

☐ Quarterly Newsletter—I want the online edition *instead* of a mailed copy. Phone: _____

Please select a Membership Category (per household, per year)

- | | | | |
|---|-------|--|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fellow | \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior (65+) | \$15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron | \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Business | \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Member | \$30 | <input type="checkbox"/> Total Enclosed: _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Contribution: _____ | | | |

If paying by check, payable to: **Barron Park Association**. (Memberships/contributions are not tax deductible.)

Note: For economic and environmental reasons a membership reminder mailer is not planned this year.

Please remember to join now!



Need a few more reasons to join the BPA?

The BPA welcomes volunteers and new ideas!

Volunteering is a great way to meet your neighbors and improve your community.

Please indicate if you are interested in getting involved. Another BPA member will happily contact you!

☐ Yes—I would like to get involved ☐ Interests _____

Name: _____ Telephone: _____ Email: _____

The BPA can help match babysitters/childcare providers, as well as home business services with members seeking their services:

Service List ** The services list is made up of Barron Park area small home businesses and is available at bpapaloalto.org

Babysitter List ** The babysitter list contains brief bios of sitters in the Barron Park area and is available at bpapaloalto.org
Access to the list requires membership and a password.

To request a password for the Sitter List, email barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com

To be included on either List send your information to barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com

If under 18, parent/guardian approval is needed.

**By signing up for these lists, residents, parents, babysitters, and their families acknowledge that the Barron Park Association is not responsible for, and will be held harmless against, any injury, loss, claim, lawsuit, or other damage arising from, or related in any manner to the parents' and babysitters' use of this resource list or the individuals appearing on it.

The BPA maintains email lists for neighborly advice, discussions, and local news

Sign up for *BPA-news*, *BPA-misc*, and/or *BPA-issues* at <http://www.BPApaloalto.org>

BPA supports the Barron Park Donkeys

The Barron Park donkeys and their care are supported by voluntary contributions.

Make your regular donations for Perry's and Jenny's care and feeding at our dedicated, brand-new and improved website!

www.barronparkdonkeys.org



Barron Park Emergency Preparedness Survey

All information kept strictly confidential and used only for emergency purposes. (Please be sure to fill out contact information.)

I agree that this information may be shared with the BPA Board and the Emergency Preparedness & Safety Committee.

Printed name(s): _____ / _____ Signature: _____

Address: _____ Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Someone in my household will need special help in an emergency owing to age, handicaps, critical medical devices, etc.

Name of Person with Special Need _____

Nature of Special Need: ☐ Physical Handicap ☐ Critical Medical Needs ☐ Age

Name of Emergency Contact: _____ Relationship: _____

Emergency Contact Telephone: _____ Email: _____

These skills are available in my household:

☐ Physician ☐ Nurse ☐ EMT ☐ Paramedic ☐ First Aid ☐ CPR

☐ Crisis counseling (psychologist, therapist, etc.) ☐ Interpreting of _____ language

☐ Police ☐ Fire ☐ BPC ☐ CERT ☐ HAZMAT training

☐ Ham radio (equipment and license) ☐ GMRS radio (equipment and skill) ☐ FRS radio (equipment and skill)

☐ Bicycle and willingness to carry messages in emergency ☐ Plumbing, electrical, or construction skills

Other emergency skills (specify) _____

I have the following supplies available for an emergency:

☐ Major first-aid supplies (more than band aids) ☐ Medical Equipment (AED, crutches, wheelchairs, etc.)

☐ Emergency water supply (specify well, swimming pool, hot tub, etc.) _____

☐ Electrical generator ☐ Hoist ☐ Winch (gasoline- or vehicle-powered)

☐ Gasoline chain saw ☐ Electrical chain saw ☐ Water pump (gasoline-powered)

☐ Other useful equipment _____

Emergency Services Volunteers

Block Preparedness Coordinator (BPC) - Prerequisite: Attend free BPC Certification training, 3 modules—approximately 3.5 hours (date, time and location TBA). Day-to-day activities involve helping neighbors mitigate and take preventive measures against emergencies, getting prepared, and keeping aware and informed of what to expect from the City and neighborhood for response and recovery. BPCs fulfill their Emergency and Safety duties remaining on their street and in their neighborhood and perform “eyes and ears” functions.

☐ **I am interested in becoming a Block Preparedness Coordinator (BPC) for my street**

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) - Prerequisite: Attend CERT Basic Training, 6 classes, 20+ hours (date, time, and location TBA). Day-to-day activities are same as BPCs. During emergencies CERTs perform light first responder search and rescue duties as trained.

☐ **I am interested in becoming a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) member**

☐ **I would like information on upcoming CPR/First Aid classes**

Return this form to: Barron Park Association, 724 Barron Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94306



CREEKSIDE INN

Your home away from home

(650) 493-2411



The Creekside Inn welcomes Barron Park residents and their guests! Perfect for visiting relatives. Preparing to renovate your home? Reserve the Creekside Inn's Renovation Package (call us). Stay in the neighborhood until renovations are complete—your home away from home!

Complimentary amenities included in our rates:

Room Amenities

- Complimentary Wireless (Wi-Fi) high-speed internet access throughout the property
- All 136 rooms offer a patio or balcony
- Refrigerators in all rooms
- Complimentary bottled water
- Complimentary local and toll-free calls
- Complimentary in-room safes for the largest of laptop computers (17-inch size)

- In-room coffee & tea
- Hair dryer
- Make-up mirror
- 50+ television stations including HBO, CNN, and ESPN
- Voicemail
- Bathrobes in room
- Iron & ironing board
- Air-conditioned rooms

Reception Services

- Complimentary Wall Street Journal & USA Today available weekdays at reception
- Complimentary morning pastries, coffee & tea served daily in lobby
- Guests are invited to join complimentary evening wine hour at Cibo's Lounge Sunday through Thursday 5 pm to 7pm

The Barron Park Association thanks the Creekside Inn for graciously providing rooms for our monthly meetings.

TWO RAILROADS RAN THROUGH HERE

A Story in Two Parts

By Doug Graham, Barron Park Historian

PART ONE: Why Were There Two Railroads through Barron Park?

"Next Stop . . . Barron Park"

These words were never heard in any railroad car. But they might be heard today if it weren't for the abandonment and removal of the two railroads that used to run through our neighborhood. The Southern Pacific Railroad (SPRR) ran steam and diesel trains from 1908 through 1962, and the Peninsular Railway Company of California (PRCC) ran electric interurban trolleys from 1910 through 1934).

They ran side-by-side on tracks where the regional bike path through Bol Park now runs.

Where the Tracks Ran—Past Today's Fry's to McDonald's

The tracks started at the "wye" on the main San Francisco–San Jose line, in the town of Mayfield, which is now the California Avenue business district and surrounding neighborhoods of Palo Alto. (See Illustration A, aerial photo of Barron Park and

Vicinity –1948.) The wye is circled.

If you visit Park Boulevard today, the wye was about a half-block north of the large old building on Park Boulevard where Fry's Electronics and other businesses are located. On the aerial photo, the building is partly within the circle enclosing the wye. That building was constructed for the Sutter Cannery in 1918 and had a railroad siding with a loading dock for shipping locally produced fruit and other produce to San Francisco and eastern cities. From

the wye, the tracks ran west, crossing El Camino Real approximately where McDonald's restaurant is today (you can still see a slight "hump" in the road where it crosses the old railroad right-of-way).

After crossing El Camino, the tracks curved and ran south through the cow pasture now occupied by buildings of the Stanford Industrial Park. Until sometime in the 1970s or 1980s, you could still walk along the tracks in this section, past the parking lots for the Varian Corporation.

Two Railroads Side-by-Side

There were two railroads on this line—not just two tracks. The original SPRR track was on the "eastern" side (once the tracks turned south). It carried the steam locomotives and full-sized freight and passenger cars and tested safe up to 80 miles per hour, just like the main San Francisco–San Jose line. The PRCC was built several years later and was electrified. It was on the "western" side. It carried small "trolley" cars and later, large, heavy "interurban" cars. These cars all ran under their own power; there were no locomotives involved.

Across the Barron Estate

After crossing the Stanford property, the tracks entered the Barron Estate where the regional bike path now enters our neighborhood between the houses on Chimalus Drive and those on Matadero Avenue. From the Stanford-Barron property line, the tracks ran south (slightly southeast) through the Barron property and

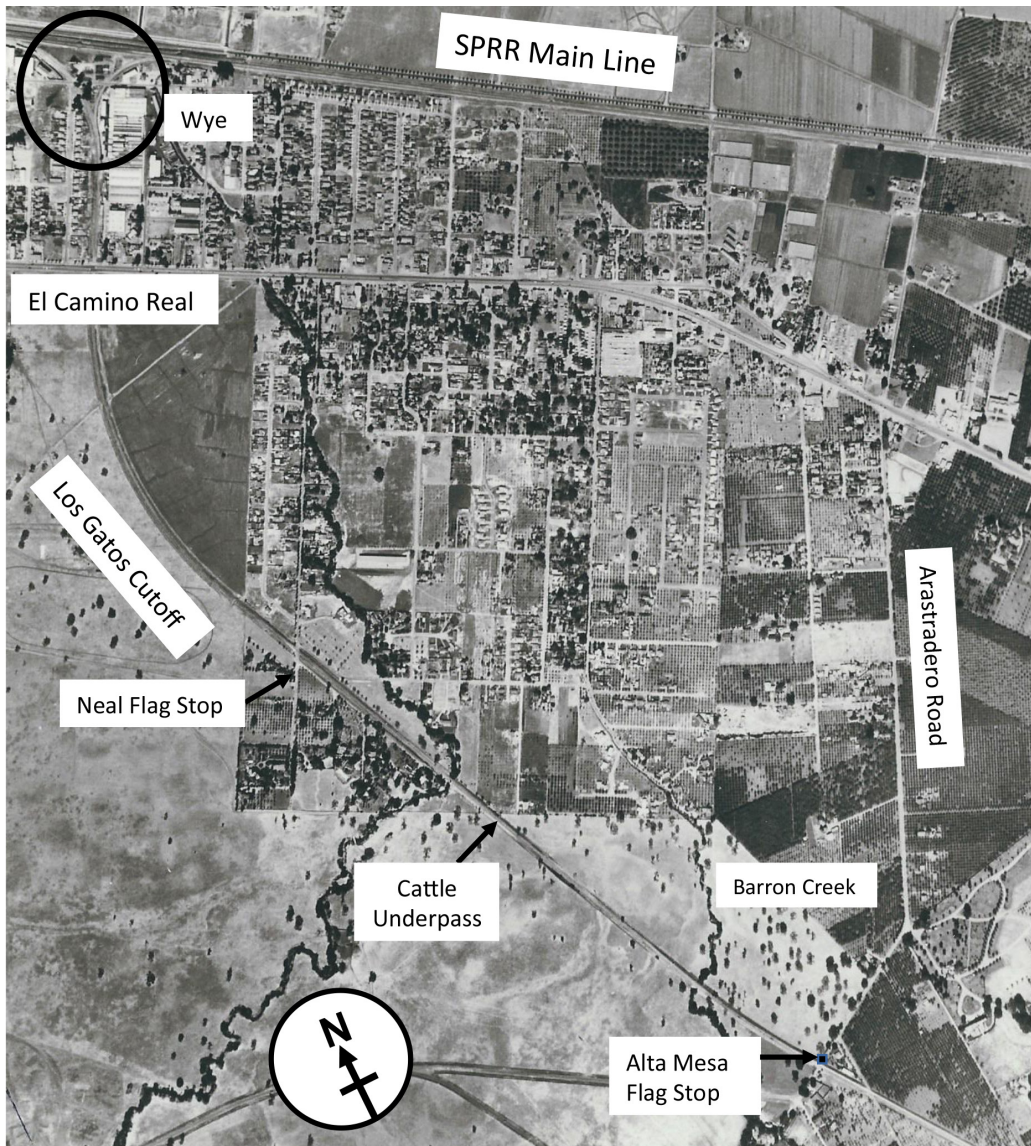


Illustration A: Barron Park and vicinity in 1948. Photo annotation copyright Douglas L. Graham 2018.



Illustration B: Paul Shoup. Photo from family archives taken prior to 1923. Archives now in Los Altos History Museum.

crossed Matadero Creek where the bike path bridge is now, at the donkey pasture.

The “Cow Underpass”

Next, the tracks ran into Stanford property, again at the point where the public access gate is now located. This is between McGregor Way and the Gunn High School property. The railroad crossed the Stanford cow pastures to Arastradero Road and continued southeast along the right-of-way now occupied by Foothill Expressway to Los Altos and Cupertino. The cows belonged to the “Portuguese farmer” who milked them daily in a large barn visible then from many of the properties on Roble Ridge. It was near the current VA Hospital laundry plant behind the donkey pasture. The cows had free access to the pastures now occupied by the VA Hospital and Stanford Industrial Park, but once the railroad was built, they could not get to the pasture now occupied by Gunn High School. However, before the railroad was put through, the SPRR constructed a “cow underpass” with thick poured-concrete walls. It was located near the Barron Estate property line behind today’s house at 1040 McGregor Way (see Illustration A).

When the tracks were ultimately removed, the underpass was left open and constituted a barrier to those of us who used to walk on the old right-of-way. One winter day in the 1970s a resident found a man’s body there in the underpass, apparently a victim of exposure and hypothermia. The concrete walls were buried with fill when

Phase II of the bike path construction was landscaped in 1977 or 1978 (see part II of this article for the story of Bol Park and the bike path construction).

That was not the end of the underpass story, however. In 1993, when the Santa Clara Valley Water District was constructing the Barron Creek Diversion and Matadero Creek Bypass flood control project to protect our neighborhood from the “100-year flood,” they had to dig up the bike path from the Barron Creek sedimentation basin at Gunn High School to the Stanford property line behind the houses on Chimalus Drive to build a 12’ x 12’ underground flood culvert on the old railroad right-of-way. The cow underpass had to be completely removed since it would have blocked the culvert.

The Mayfield-Los Gatos “Cutoff”

Let’s back up and consider why the railroad was there. The reasons why the SP decided to build the railroad from Mayfield to Los Gatos, Santa Cruz, and Watsonville are difficult to understand. The SP had taken over the original San Francisco and San Jose Railroad, which had reached Mayfield on October 18, 1863, and San Jose on January 16, 1864. Much later, the SP system was extended all the way down the coast to Los Angeles. Shortly after 1900, the management of the SP decided that they needed a new high-speed double-track “cutoff” directly across the mountains to Santa Cruz, that would bypass the San Jose-Gilroy-Watsonville route and shorten the distance and travel time to Southern California. It seems they did not properly evaluate the difficulties of building and operating a fast railroad route across a rugged mountain range. The proposal may seem weak today, and one should understand that skeptics even then smelled something fishy underneath the company’s optimism. It has been alleged that the route selection had everything to do with land speculation in the future town of Los Altos by SPRR employees, especially Paul Shoup.

The Shoup Story

Wikipedia’s current article on Paul Shoup (1874–1946) summarizes his career as “an American businessman, president and later vice-chairman of the Southern Pacific Railroad in the 1920s and 1930s, a founding board member of the Stanford University School of Business, and founder of the community of Los Altos, California.” (See Illustration B.)

After a short stint with the Santa Fe

Railroad, Shoup began his Southern Pacific career in 1891 as a ticket clerk in San Bernardino. In his youth, he had been a contributing writer for several periodicals, including *Sunset* magazine. The Wikipedia article says that he was transferred to San Francisco and created “promotional materials for local fruit and agricultural products that were distributed by Southern Pacific on the East coast. On April 11, 1906, just one week before the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, (a promotion) was to put him at the forefront of the rebuilding of the Southern Pacific’s northern California interests in the aftermath of the earthquake and fire.”

The Local Angle

From the Barron Park angle, the interesting thing about Shoup is his role as a land speculator and founder of the town of Los Altos. When the SPRR was acquiring land for the right-of-way for its “Los Gatos Cutoff,” they encountered a resistant obstacle—the Winchester Ranch—which lay exactly across the line they wanted for the railroad. The famous heiress Sarah Winchester owned the land that now forms the “triangle” occupied by downtown Los Altos. According to Wikipedia, “Sarah realized that the section the railroad wanted would cut her property in two, separating her cattle barn from her grazing lands. It would render her ranch ineffective, therefore she demanded that the railroad purchase the entire property. This left the railroad with an excessive amount of land.” One wonders—did they offer to build a cattle underpass for Sarah, like the one on the Stanford property?

Paul Shoup then “gathered his business associates and purchased the excess property from Southern Pacific. They incorporated as the Altos Land Company for the purposes of developing the area (the Winchester and Merriman Ranches) as a residential community (to be) marketed to executives and businessmen working in San Francisco.” The town was apparently named Los Altos because it would be the highest point (above sea level) on the cutoff between Mayfield and Los Gatos.

Did Shoup Manipulate the SPRR for His Own Gain?

An interesting question remains: Was Shoup involved in manipulating the SPRR to create the “Los Gatos Cutoff” in order to obtain the ranches and build an upscale commuting community to his profit? It seems to me that he was then in job posi-



Illustration C: SPRR Steam Train approaching Barron Park. Judging by the number of cars, this must have been a special excursion, not a commute train. Possibly a "Big Game" train? Photo from Jon Christman.

tions at too low a level in the company hierarchy to carry off a plan like that. It seems much more likely that he simply was a shrewd investor with foresight, positioned to do some highly profitable but completely legal dealing that would however be considered "insider trading" today.

The Peninsular Railway

In the case of the Peninsular Railway (PRCC), created by Southern Pacific on December 21, 1895, the reasons for its construction were more complex but perhaps more aboveboard. The PRCC was created to link San Francisco and San Jose with electric interurban service. It was a key piece in numerous schemes to extend interurban trolley service throughout Santa Clara County and beyond. It was constantly jockeying with rival concerns to obtain franchises on favorable terms from the county's municipalities, including Mayfield and Palo Alto (until 1925, Mayfield was still independent of Palo Alto). The cutoff from Mayfield to Los Gatos would connect nicely with other lines of the PRCC from San Jose to Los Gatos, Saratoga, and to the orchard area that later became Cupertino. The PRCC could anticipate

picking up commute traffic if the promoters of Los Altos were successful in creating a new town at the site of the area's prune and apricot orchards.

Construction Problems

So, the stage was set, and the railroads laid out their right-of-way diagonally across the bucolic 320-acre Barron Estate. Soon, however, the project ran into difficulties in the mountains. Construction began on the SP at Congress Junction near Saratoga, but then had to be halted in June 1905 because the stockpile of rails was needed 500 miles away in the fight against Colorado River flooding in the Imperial Valley of Southern California. Then came the San Francisco Earthquake in April 1906.

EASTWARD					WESTWARD				
Stations	FIRST CLASS		Mile Post Location	Timetable No. 174		Station Number	Distance from Vasona Jct.	FIRST CLASS	
	132			September 29, 1957				129	
	Passenger (e)	Leave Daily Ex. Sat., Sun. and Holidays		Los Altos Branch				Passenger (e)	Arrive Daily Ex. Sat., Sun. and Holidays
	STATIONS								
WYP	PM	6.01	31.8	CALIFORNIA AVE.	32	16.3	AM	7.24	
	s	6.13	35.7	LOS ALTOS	504	12.4	s	7.12	
	s		37.5	SPRINGER ROAD	506	10.6	f		
	s	6.19	38.2	LOYOLA	507	9.9	f		
	f		39.7	SIMLA	508	8.4	f		
	s	6.26	41.0	MONTA VISTA	509	7.1	f	6.58	
	f		43.8	AZULE	512	4.3	f		
	s	6.34	45.2	CONGRESS JCT.	513	2.9	f	6.49	
			46.9	POLLARD ROAD	515	1.2			
YP	s	6.41 PM	48.1	VASONA JCT.	606	0.0	AM	6.44	
	Arrive Daily Ex. Sat., Sun. and Holidays		51.8	(16.3)			Leave Daily Ex. Sat., Sun. and Holidays		
	132							129	

RULE S-72. Exceptions: No. 192 superior to No. 129.			
ADDITIONAL STATIONS			
Capacity and Direction of entry into Spurs	Mile Post	NAME	Station Number
.. ..	33.0	Los Altos Branch	
.. ..	34.0	Neal	501
.. W ..	42.1	Alta Mesa	502
		Permanent (On spur 2.42 miles from Simla)	510
1E ..	10.0	San Bruno Branch	
		Carroll (Spur)	403

Illustration D: SPRR Timetable for the "Los Gatos Cutoff," dated September 29, 1957. Note that Neal and Alta Mesa are shown as "Additional Stations." Source not recorded.

Although this temporarily closed one of the tunnels in the Santa Cruz Mountains, it also had a positive aspect. In the cleanup, San Francisco had to get rid of thousands of tons of debris. The new railroad line needed fill material, and some of the earthquake debris was used as fill in the Barron Park area. San Francisco artifacts were turned up in excavations during the bike path construction (phase II of Bol Park) in 1977–78, and again during construction of the flood control project under the bike path in 1992–94. Actual construction on the “Mayfield Cutoff” began in April 1907, with track laying beginning in August. The work through the Barron Estate was probably finished in September 1907.

Regular Steam Train Service Begins

Finally, construction was completed, and the first SP steam trains ran through to Los Altos on April 12, 1908, bringing 16 carloads of prospective buyers to a land sale and barbeque in Los Altos.

The first regular scheduled service began April 19, 1908, with two trips per day each way starting at Palo Alto and going to Los Gatos. Soon, service from San

Francisco through Los Altos and Los Gatos to Santa Cruz was established, with the “cutoff” tying back into the main line at Watsonville Junction. By 1911 there were 12 steam trains a day using the line through the Barron Estate beside the Peninsular interurban trolleys. (See Illustration C, SPRR steam passenger train approaching Barron Park.) The photo is a copy supplied by Jon Christman and is undated, but was probably taken sometime in the 1940s, when rail fans began taking a lot of photographs of U.S. railways.

I don’t have a timetable from an earlier period, but Eric Struck provided one from September 29, 1957. (See Illustration D, SPRR timetable.) Note the small chart at the bottom that lists the “Additional Stations,” Neal and Alta Mesa. Since all the track mileages are given, you can extrapolate the train arrival times at Neal with a high degree of precision.

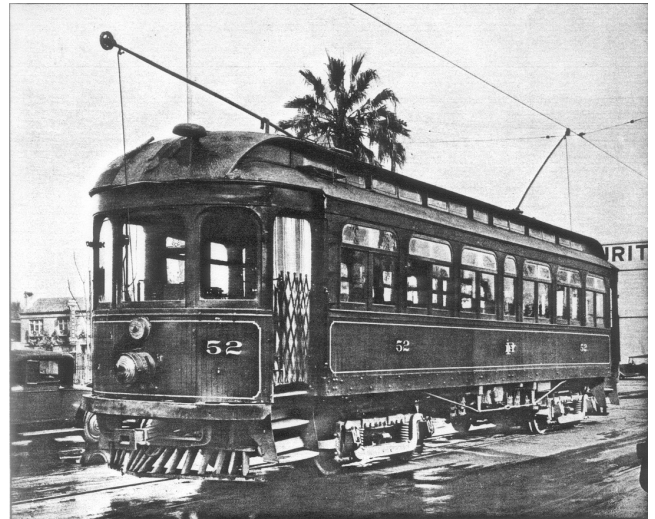


Illustration E: Car 52, about 1929. This was either used on the “Los Gatos Cutoff” or one from the same series was. The car is preserved in the Rio Vista Railroad Museum. Photo from “Tracks, Tires and Wires,” by Charles S. McCaleb.

PRCC Service Begins, in the Hey-day of the Interurbans

In October 1909, work began on electrifying the westerly track to accommodate the interurban cars of the Peninsular Railway.

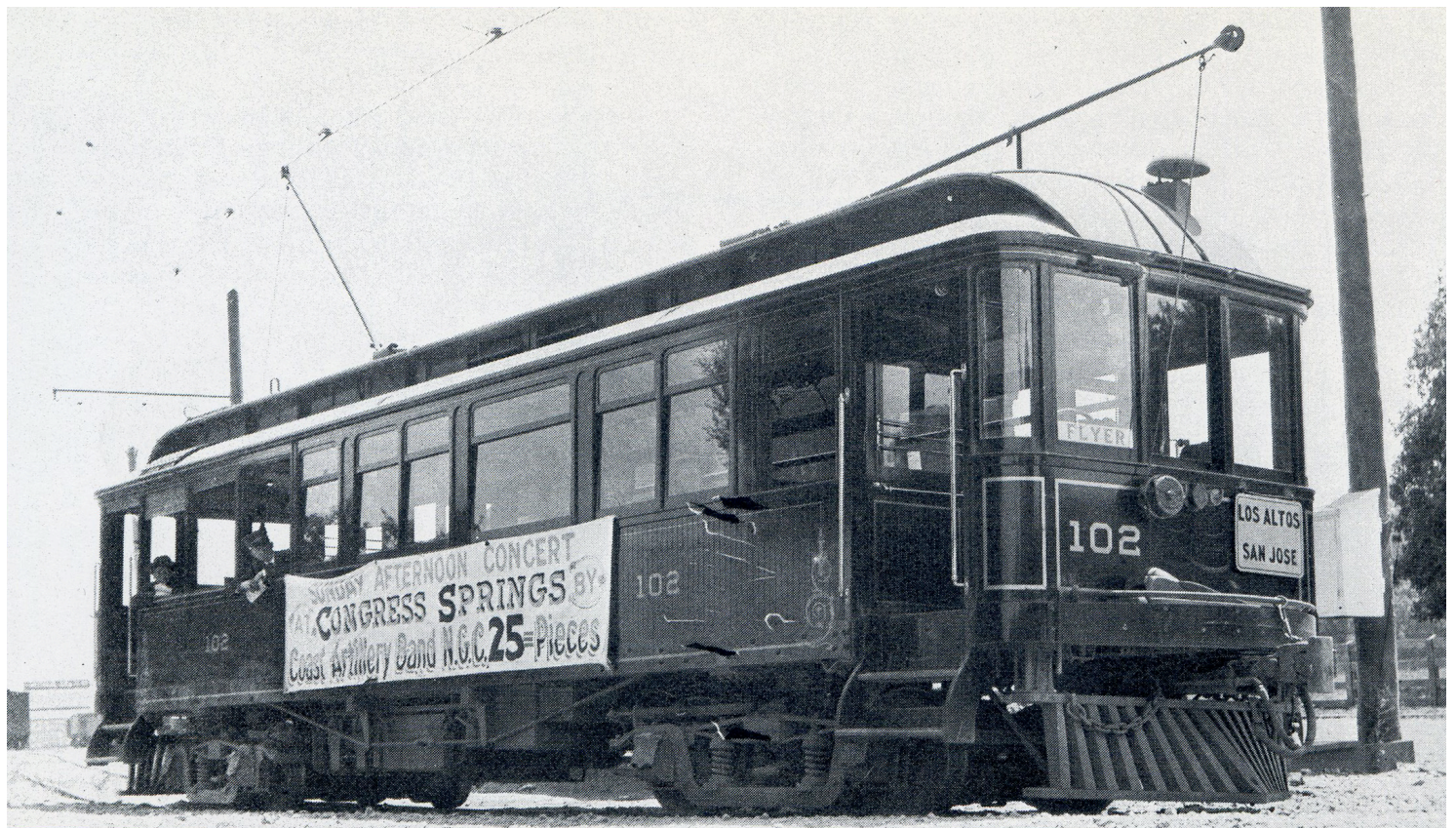


Illustration F: Car 102—Probably about 1915. This car was used on the “Los Gatos Cutoff.” Note the banner, indicating that it was probably a special excursion car that day. Photo from “Tracks, Tires and Wires,” by Charles S. McCaleb.

Regular service began March 5, 1910, with gala celebrations in each town along the way as a gaily decorated five-car train of brand-new interurban cars progressed north from San Jose, bearing railroad representatives and city dignitaries. The cars were two-thirds closed and one-third open (for smokers) with rain curtains. The closed section had red plush seats, while the open section had seats with slatted backs and bottoms. The following year, the cars were equipped with electric heaters, a much-welcomed improvement. The cars ran every hour between Palo Alto and San Jose, with fares ranging from ten cents between adjacent stations up to 55 cents for the entire distance, with lower rates for weekends and holidays. Monthly commuter tickets were available; Palo Alto to Alta Mesa cost \$3. After the PRCC line was completed to Los Gatos, the SPRR discontinued local stops between Palo Alto and Los Gatos. Beginning January 4, 1914, Los Altos was served exclusively by the electric railway.

One PRCC Car Has Been Preserved

See Illustration E, PRCC Car #52, which is preserved at the Rio Vista Railroad Museum. The photograph was taken about 1929. Also see Illustration F, PRCC Car #102, which is known to have run on the Mayfield-Los Gatos line. The photograph may date from about 1915, before the 100-series cars were sent to the Pacific Electric in Los Angeles.

About 1914, the PRCC bought newer, heavier 64-passenger cars painted red that became known as "the Big Palys." Twenty-five runs per day in each direction were made on the Los Altos branch. For a while, the Peninsular did a modest freight business, hauling oil, fruit, gravel, and other cargo, and transferring to the SPRR at Mayfield.

Passenger Views of the Barron Estate

Between 1907 and 1919, a PRCC or SPRR passenger would not have had much of an impression of the Barron Estate as he or she rode through it. The Stanford lands on either side were cattle pastures. The Roble Ridge area was studded with valley oak and coast live oak; it probably was used for grazing by the caretaker-manager of the Barron Estate (by 1909 the family was no longer in residence). I speculate that the cattle-loading ramp (the decayed remains of which could still be seen in Bol Park

as recently as 2006) was probably built to serve the Barron Estate shortly after the tracks were laid down. Railcar passengers might have been able to catch an occasional glimpse, between the stately oaks, of the imposing, three-story Barron Mansion three-quarters of a mile away near the San Francisco-San Jose Road (El Camino).

This completes Part I of the story. I hope you have enjoyed it. Part II will appear in the Summer 2018 issue of this newsletter. I will include details of how the PRCC operated and will cover the special excursion trains that so many people enjoyed, some of which were continued by the SPRR after the PRCC was closed down. Seven illustrations enliven the story. If you haven't yet joined the BPA with your annual dues, you should do so; this will ensure that you will get a copy of the Summer issue with Part II.

If you have any questions, please contact me by snail mail at 984 Ilima Way, Palo Alto, CA, 94306; call me at 650-493-0689; or email me at dgrahampaca@gmail.com

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Barron Park Association
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Palo Alto, California 94306

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Jon Affeld, Buena Vista Youth Scholars Program, Jon Christman, Great American Framing Company, Los Altos History Museum, Charles S. McCaleb, Palo Alto Historical Association, Myrna Rochester

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

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

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

Our Wild Neighbors: A Tale of Two Towhees

By Jeralyn Moran

In our own Barron Park yards, the medium-sized brown bird we often ignore is the California Towhee. A less common cousin, also in our neighborhood, is the Spotted Towhee—worthy of a real double-take. Both are basically (biologically) large sparrows.

California Towhee—Description and Behavior

Taxonomists used to lump the *California Towhee* and the almost identical *Canyon Towhee* in the same species category: the ‘Brown Towhee.’ Not anymore. It has been decided these two populations are geographically separate—the California Towhee lives on the Coastal side of



A California Towhee (adult males and females look the same). Source: http://biology.csusb.edu/birds/species/Melozone_crissalis.php

southern Oregon down to Baja, California. The Canyon Towhee prefers desert areas farther south (Arizona, Texas) and northern Mexico. The California Towhee sports a uniformly brown-gray body with a faintly streaked breast and a long tail with cinnamon-brown colored feathers on the underside of the base. California Towhees are originally from the classic open chaparral and other hot scrublands of California and Oregon (before people showed up). They have adapted to our invasion, so you are likely to hear them calling right nearby.

They hang out mainly in dense, low habitat, but will perch higher when a better look-around is needed. Listen for a loud, sharp, metallic ‘chip’ call, then look around at shrubs, the ground below them, or on fence tops or the eaves of your house. They prefer to feed on the ground, so watch for the classic Towhee foraging maneuver, the ‘double-scratch’—they use both feet in a backward hop-scratch, then they pounce on anything they’ve uncovered. Although seeds are its main diet, insects (mainly beetles and grasshoppers, but also spiders, millipedes, and snails) are good for extra protein during the breeding season. This practical bird will also eat various berries, even garden fruits or vegetables like peas, plums, and apri-

cots. You might be lucky enough to see one hold a grass stem and strip the seeds off all at once with its beak. Scattered seed on the ground below your birdfeeder will get this bird’s attention.

California Towhees often live out their lives in one area and mate for life as they raise two or three broods (of 3–4 eggs) each year. They build a bulky nest, typically in a low bush with twigs, grass, and strips of bark, lined with finer grass, thin roots, and /or animal hair. The finished nest is about 8 inches across and 1.5 inches deep. Both parents feed the nestlings, who might leave the nest after only eight days when they still haven’t learned to fly very well. However, they’ll stay with Mom and Dad for several more weeks.

Spotted Towhee—Description and Behavior

Taxonomists also used to lump the *Spotted Towhee* and the very similar *Eastern Towhee* together, calling it the ‘Rufous-sided Towhee.’ But no longer. Like its cousin in this discussion, it was decided these two populations are geographically separate. It turns out this is a common evolutionary pattern in North American birds—left over from when the great ice sheets split the continent down the middle, isolating birds into Eastern and Western populations that over time became new species. The Spotted Towhee is in the Western U.S., the Eastern Towhee (of course) in the Eastern U.S. Interbreeding happens



A male Spotted Towhee. Source: https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Spotted_Towhee/id

FUN FACTS

- Many towhees build their nests in poison oak and feast on the plant’s pale white berries.
- Check out the red eyes of the Spotted Towhee!
- Towhees like millet, which is not very popular with many other backyard birds.
- The female builds the nest while the male watches. Didn’t they get the memo on shared building benefits?
- During a fight between two Towhees, you might see one bird pick up a piece of twig, bark, or leaf and carry it around. Bird watchers consider this an act of submission.
- You may have experienced a California Towhee repeatedly pecking at your window or car mirror: the males fiercely defend their home territory and will mistakenly attack their own reflections.
- The oldest known California Towhee was male, and over 12 years old when he was re-captured and re-released during California banding efforts—first in 1973, later in 1986.

sometimes in the middle, in the Great Plains area.

A very sharp dresser, the Spotted Towhee will catch your eye if you're lucky enough to see one. The male shows off with his black head, wings, back and tail, dark orange sides ('rufous' in color), and white belly and chest. Contrasting white 'spots' on the dark black feathers are striking. The female has similarly beautiful plumage, but dark gray on the head, wings, back, and tail. Since these birds frequently hang out on/under low bushes, their bright coloring can help them hide in the sun-dappled light. The youngsters are more mottled brown until they molt and grow "adult" plumage. Remember that replacing feathers is energetically and ecologically costly for any bird, at any stage of their lives.

Similar to the California Towhee, the Spotted Towhees gravitate to brushy scrubland, forest edges, old fields, shrubby backyards, chaparral, and canyon bottoms—places with dense shrub cover and plenty of leaf litter for them to 'double-scratch' around in (the same notable habit as described above for the California Towhee). Spotted Towhee habitat tends to be dryer than the Eastern Towhee's home turf. Seeds like buckwheat, thistle, raspberry, blackberry, poison oak, sumac, nightshade, chickweed, and farmed crops such as oats, wheat, corn, and cherries are on their menu. Again, like the California Towhee, insects are prioritized for meals as needed. Although some of these birds will migrate to warmer areas seasonally, the Spotted Towhees you see in Barron Park and similar areas are permanent residents. Our agreeable weather leaves little reason to leave.

Breeding season is in the spring, and a happy couple may have more than one brood of 2–6 eggs each. These birds choose to nest on the ground or in a low bush, somewhat exposed (likely for access as Mom and Dad come and go feeding the kids), but often tucked near a bush's base or a log to hide it. Ground nests are built into shallow holes so that the top of the nest is at or just above the soil's surface. The finished nest is about 4.5 inches across and about 2.5 inches deep (smaller and deeper than that of its California-based cousin).

Gunn Students Teach Computers to Learn

By Jon Affeld

At Gunn High School, students are not the only individuals that can learn. In fact, during a recent seminar series held on campus over three sessions in February, they practiced how to make computers learn too.

Machine Learning is a sub-field of Artificial Intelligence that enables the system to optimize decisions or generate better outcomes by improving from experience, without being programmed. It is ideally suited for computing tasks that are too large in scale for people to do or too fuzzy for basic algorithms to solve.

It uses a wide variety of mathematical, probability, and statistical approaches to interpret data and make predictions. The models learn from their results after completing specified tasks and get better over time.

Machine Learning is a rapidly growing field and is already used commercially in economics, finance, marketing, medicine, transportation, and entertainment. The seminar series was hosted by Mr. Joshua Paley from the Gunn Computer Science department, taught by Mr. Yu-Han Liu of Google, supported by local parents, and sponsored by a local non-profit called InnoVantre.

The seminar series was a big success. More than 85 students attended, and everybody had a great time getting real hands-on experience. First, they created actual Machine Learning models using Python and Java on



Photos: Jon Affeld

Google's cloud-based environment called Collaboratory: <https://colab.research.google.com/notebook#fileId=/v2/external/notebooks/welcome.ipynb>

Next, they trained their models with sample data, and finally they used the models to solve specific problems for classification and regression analysis. Many attendees thought the exercise that was the most fun was watching the machines learn how to create freelance drawings based on the work of a certain artist. It was amazing to see the process of trial and error and then how well the machines reproduced the original style.

Teaching machines to learn was hard work, and the students built up a big appetite. Refreshments—cookies, fruit, and drinks—were provided during breaks to feed the bodies as well as nourish the minds. Based on how quickly the food disappeared, it is a good thing that machines don't eat yet.



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