

# BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Jon Affeld, Outgoing BPA President



2018 was a wonderful year, and I was proud to serve as the president of the Barron Park Association. I have really enjoyed representing our residents and working with the City, community organizations, and our local businesses. Some of the more memorable highlights include the following:

- The annual BPA Meeting in March with Palo Alto Police Chief Robert Jonsen
- A refresh of our emergency preparedness plan for Barron Park and a visit by the police, fire, and mobile emergency command center
- Engagement with the City Transportation Department to address over 25 traffic safety issues inside the Barron Park neighborhood
- Feedback discussions with the City Public Works Department and Parks Department on ideas for Bol Park and the bike/pedestrian pathway
- The 40th Anniversary May Fête celebration in Bol Park
- Our August Movie night in Bol Park featuring *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* and silent shorts with Buster Keaton
- Local cultural events including the Garba/Dandiya and Posada celebrations

- Our regular social events such as Happy Hour at Celia's and Senior Lunches at the Corner Bakery
- Kickoff of the Semi-Centenarian Society to recognize our unique heritage and those who have helped make Barron Park what it is today

Throughout many fun times and difficult challenges, it was wonderful to see the community come together. As great as this year was, my prediction is that next year will be even better. The year 2019 will be the Barron Park Centennial. So stay tuned and get involved. There is something for everyone. Let's get started creating our new set of traditions for the next 100 years as we celebrate our memories of the past.

Contact: [president@bpapaloalto.org](mailto:president@bpapaloalto.org)

## INCOMING PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

John W. King, Incoming BPA President



As a resident of Barron Park since 2003 and a citizen of Palo Alto since 1984, I am excited to take on the role of president of the Barron Park Association for this coming year. This is a wonderfully active neighborhood group with tremendous community spirit. The volunteers who have organized and worked at events such as our May Fête, Movie Night, Foodie Festival, Garba Night, and Senior Lunches are examples of the true spirit of Barron Park. The community forums and hot-button issues which are reviewed and discussed in a respectful manner are a source of pride as well. I also appreciate the continued presence of our beloved Barron Park donkeys and the support of the volunteers who care for them.

I have been honored to serve as the treasurer of the Barron Park Association for over 10 years and am happy to report that the BPA is strong financially and continues to have a stable and giving membership which the Board will endeavor to foster in the future.

As we move forward into 2019, it is imperative that we gain new Board members and volunteers for the events that keep our community bond strong. Spread the word to your neighbors and local businesses, and please join or renew your BPA membership by going to: <http://bpapaloalto.org/join-the-barron-park-association/>

I look forward to seeing you during the year in the neighborhood!

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## SAVE THESE DATES!

Learn about neighborhood issues and make your voice heard!

### Community Meeting with Palo Alto Public Works

When? Sunday, January 27, 2019, 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Where? Multipurpose Room, Barron Park Elementary School, 800 Barron Avenue

1. Update on Bioswale ideas for Bol Park
2. Update on Bol Park pathway planning and traffic study
3. Open Q&A

This will be a great opportunity to interact directly with key members of the City's Public Works Department.

### Barron Park Association Annual Meeting and Potluck

When? Sunday, March 17, 2019, 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Where? Multipurpose Room at Barron Park Elementary School, 800 Barron Avenue

Agenda and speakers to be announced.

## BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Barron Park Association  
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### PRINTER

Prodigy Press

## CALL FOR ARTISTS!

Are you a Barron Park artist, photographer, artisan, craftsperson, sculptor, designer, musician, writer, poet...? Do you know one? Artists who are current members of the BPA can be featured in a future BPA Newsletter. Please send us your idea with a draft artist's statement and reproducible samples or a description of your work to [mbrbpa@sonic.net](mailto:mbrbpa@sonic.net) or [newsletter@bpapaloalto.org](mailto:newsletter@bpapaloalto.org)

## EMAIL LISTS

The Barron Park Association maintains 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](http://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.

# Congratulations to Our Semi-Centenarians!

By the BPA Board

Many thanks to everyone who helped identify our initial list of Barron Park Semi-Centenarians. These wonderful people have lived in our community for at least 50 years and have helped to make our neighborhood so special.

Imagine the changes that have occurred since 1968. Barron Park was unincorporated and not a part of the Palo Alto municipality. Bol Park and its pathway did not yet exist. Humans had not visited the moon. The internet had not been invented, and there weren't even any Kardashian siblings!

Below is our initial honor roll. The BPA will be updating it as we go forward, so if you know of anybody we missed or have new additions, please let us know. Plans for outreach and get-togethers are in the works. In the meantime, let's give them all a special thank you and work together to make the next 50 years as good as the last.

### Our Barron Park Semi-Centenarians

Jon R. Aderhold	Chan Crisman	Nancy Kramer	Chris Prior	Tisa and Ed Walker
Inge Harding-Barlow	Hedy and Edward De Moor	Nancy D. McKenna	Sheila Raleigh	Karen Walters
Carol and James Bechtold	Sabra Driscoll	Patrick McKenna	Pat and Tom Sanders	James Witt
Donald Briglia	Alice and Fred Fujikawa	Lilian Miller	Chris O'Connor Stafford	Marilyn and Irv Yalom
Mary Catherine Carroll	Shirley and Ed Gaines	Ursula Moore	Larry Stafford	Fumiko and Seiji Yanari
Iris Chen	Joyce Hoppa	Pat and Patrick Muffler	Chris Steck	James Yanari
Chris Cowger	Ann and Peter Knopf	Agnes Paccagnini	Patricia Steck	



# NEWS FROM THE BOL PARK NATIVE GARDEN!

By Richard Elder and Melanie Cross

Photos: Adi Kehoe



**November 2018 work day: Barron Park volunteers planted approximately 150 new plants in the Native Garden extension.**

The Bol Park Nature Nurturers have been busy this year! We have two projects underway to beautify Bol Park and increase native habitat. The first has been planning—and now planting—a new garden, an extension of our existing native plantings that offer important habitat to our insects and birds. The new plot is adjacent to the established Bol Park California Native Garden at Laguna and Matadero. Last July local volunteers installed sheet mulching over a 100-foot stretch to prepare the soil for planting in the Fall. Irrigation was installed in October to get the new plantings through the first few years. Once they are established, the native plantings require very little water.

On November 17, 2018, our volunteers planted most of the new garden. The 150 or so new plants are small and fragile now. Hopefully they will establish well with winter rains and no hungry critters. Thanks to all who contributed their time and donated to this effort in Summer and Fall 2018: Neighbors and friends of Bol Park – Jeff Burch, Melanie Cross, Peter Cross, Richard Elder, Claire Elliott, Svetlana Gous, Agnes Kehoe, Anne Marie Macrae, Joe Macrae, Jeralyn Moran, Leon Rochester, and Myrna Rochester; as well as our student volunteers: Kiersten Kataoka, Natalie Kataoka, Charlotte Kim, Paul Orsulak, Adi Resina, and Oren Seligman.

Our second project, already well underway, is a collaboration with Grassroots Ecology to construct and plant a Rain Gar-

den, replacing the dried-up grass between the current Native Garden and the bike/pedestrian pathway. The Palo Alto Parks Department stopped watering this area during the last drought and has no plans to re-establish grass there, so it is a perfect place for such a project. Rain gardens are native plantings created in small depressions, designed to allow rainwater runoff that would otherwise enter storm drains to percolate into the soil, recharging our groundwater. Grassroots Ecology has already installed several of these around

Palo Alto. To learn about them and see others, start by visiting the one at Gamble Garden. Grassroots Ecology is providing us with the design, materials, and some volunteers for installation. The City of Palo Alto is pitching in with the grading work necessary to direct runoff water into the Rain Garden. We expect the project to be completed shortly after the first of the year.

The existing garden is doing well, and we plan a work day to do winter maintenance on January 19, 2019. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Richard Elder at [rich.e.elder@gmail.com](mailto:rich.e.elder@gmail.com) or Melanie Cross at [melanie@pcross.com](mailto:melanie@pcross.com)

We welcome donations to help pay for plants and irrigation parts for the Native Garden extension. They can be made at [www.friendsofpaparks.org](http://www.friendsofpaparks.org) Note that the FOPAP donation page offers two choices:

Mail/Phone or Online. With a check or by phone, make sure to indicate that your donation is for the "Bol Park Native Garden." Online, choose the option "Bol Park Fund." Please come by and see the new plantings!

Photo: Myrna Rochester



**December 2018: Our new Rain Garden—with its dry creek river rock bed—is a working collaboration between Grassroots Ecology, the City, and our volunteers.**

Photo: Leon Rochester





# THE VALLEY OAK

By Jeralyn Moran



**This Valley Oak is behind the tennis courts at Gunn High School – it graced this open area long before the school (or surrounding houses) were here! Photo by Jeralyn Moran.**

## Description and History

The stately Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*) is a true California oak, native to nowhere else. It is the largest of all North American Oaks. As its name implies, it does best in fertile soils found in bottomlands and in valley floors. You'll see them in two types of areas: the open Valley Oak woodland or in a Valley Oak riparian zone (the interface between land and a river or creek). At maturity, they have a large spreading canopy and often twisted, gnarled branches—it has been said they look like heads of broccoli from afar! A young (10- to 40-year old) Valley Oak's taproot can reach 60 feet down in search of groundwater. With this ability, they have evaded competition with other tree species for vital resources. This Oak is the fastest growing of any native California Oak and can reach over 70 feet in height, and more than 10 feet in diameter. The most mature specimens may attain an age of up to 600 years!

Tannins occur naturally in the roots, wood, bark, leaves, seeds, nuts, and fruit of many plants, particularly in the bark—and

acorns—of oak species. Tannins play a role in protecting the plant from being eaten and in repelling insects; they also may help in regulating growth. Astringency from tannins causes the dry and puckery feeling we get when we taste unripe fruit, red wine, or certain teas. The Valley Oak is in the White Oak family; it contains less tannin than the Red Oaks. Valley Oak wood is also quite impermeable to water (or other liquids). These qualities contribute to its being a good choice for constructing wine barrels. Tannin was and is still used in the tanning of leather.

## What about all those acorns?

Trees growing in full sun produce the greatest number of acorns.

Historically, Native Americans prized acorns for food. They could store acorns in different styles of “granaries,” depending on local conditions, for months, even years. Acorns had to be protected from moisture, rodents, birds, and deer. Of the different acorns available, Valley Oak acorns are the highest in moisture. Thus they required the most effort to dry—a necessary step before storing any type of acorn.

When it came time to prepare food with these “nuts” (botanically, acorns are considered nuts, since they have a hard outer shell, with the “fruit flesh” and a “seed” inside), Valley Oak acorns had to be shelled first, unlike other acorns. Soaking them in water also helped remove some of the bitter-tasting tannin. The Native Americans then ground the acorn “meat” into a flour, mainly using rounded stones. This flour was added to water to form a “mush,” then shaped into cakes or breads for frying, or even cooked with more water to make a tea-like drink.

## Threats

Many noble Valley Oaks have been cut down to make room for humans (agriculture, cities, freeways, etc.). The remaining areas where these trees persist are critical habitat for wildlife. Valley Oak riparian



**Notice the lobed leaves. Predictably, when the acorn is young it is green, then it matures to a brown color. This cycle takes one year. Source: [www.kaweahoaks.com](http://www.kaweahoaks.com)**

forests support 67 nesting bird species, more than any other California habitat for which data has been collected. The State-threatened Swainson's hawk relies heavily on large Valley Oaks for nesting.

These trees are resistant to short-term drought, but many have died due to over-pumping of groundwater and saline irrigation runoff. Mature trees are sensitive to overwatering, pruning, grade changes, and blankets of asphalt covering their root system. Unfortunately, most young saplings die before reaching sexual maturity – this is a big problem in any effort to bring back and maintain this important tree species.

So, if you are lucky enough to have a Valley Oak on your property or near where you live ... enjoy it, protect it!

## FUN FACTS

- Valley Oak leaves are the principal food of *Chionodes petalumensis* caterpillars—first described in Petaluma, California.
- There was a Valley Oak in Chico, California, that fell in 1977. Before that sad day, it was considered to be the largest of its kind known, at over 100 feet tall and 29 feet in circumference (measured 8 feet above the ground)!
- In 1792, the British explorer George Vancouver, traveling along Alta California, saw the Santa Clara Valley and wrote about these trees as “the stately lords of the forest.”
- The Valley Oak was specifically used to build the steamboats that once ran along the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers during World War II. Interestingly, the crooked branches (not so desirable for regular lumber) were found to be useful for odd-shaped joints during the shipbuilding process.
- Mistletoe (*Phoradendron villosum*) is a common Valley Oak parasite.
- Native American families in the Sierra Nevada foothills are thought to have eaten around five hundred pounds of acorns per family member per year! (This would include several other species of oak acorns, depending on which were available.) As many as 75% of these early Californians relied on acorns in their daily diet.

## BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: Afficient Academy

### *An EdTech Startup in Barron Park*

By Sandra Oh, Afficient Academy

**A**fficient Academy, Inc., an EdTech startup, was born in August 2014 in Silicon Valley. Founder and CEO, Dr. Jiayuan Fang, conceived the idea of an education company that incorporates new technology to enhance learning. The company offers after-school programs in math and English to students with varied skill levels, whether they're behind or ahead.

*Why do we need another after-school program when there are tons of programs available?*

Dr. Fang, founder and CEO of Afficient Academy, is an educator. He taught electrical engineering for more than 12 years at the university level, and founded and sold a successful tech company. With three children of his own, he was heavily involved in his kids' education and began to study both school and after-school programs. This led him to create a new learning system incorporating modern technologies to enhance student efficiency and quality of learning. After developing and releasing original materials for elementary- and middle-school level math in an intelligent web-based platform, Afficient Academy opened its first on-site Learning Center in July 2016 in San Jose.

Afficient Math, the flagship product of the company, promotes individualized and self-paced learning. Our program helps

the student build a solid foundation by automatically identifying and filling in individual gaps from earlier school grades. When the student is ready, the program enables him or her to self-learn more advanced topics, all with supervision and coaching by advisors at Afficient Academy's Learning Centers or online. Results have demonstrated that students can build a solid foundation on previously learned materials typically in one to three months and, when ready, may advance one new grade in two to four months.

In August 2018, Dr. Fang opened his sixth Learning Center in Barron Park, at 3775 El Camino. “Even with good schools, many students come to Afficient Academy because traditional schools cannot individualize,” he said. “Some students are behind and need to rebuild their foundation, while others are advanced and need to be able to accelerate. At Afficient Academy, we're able to address both spectrums to help students reach their fullest potential.”

For more information, visit [www.afficienta.com](http://www.afficienta.com)

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Photo courtesy of Afficient Academy.



Dr. Jiayuan Fang works with students at the Afficient Learning Center.





Photo: Gwen Luce

Longtime volunteer Doug Moran feeds Jenny (left) and Perry—and hosts interested visitors—at one of the donkeys' regular Monday evening 'dinner' meetings.

## BPA ADDRESS REMINDERS

■ For the **BPA Home Page**, the **BPA Newsletter Archive**, and to Join or Renew your **BPA Membership**, go to our website: [bpapaloalto.org](http://bpapaloalto.org)

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

■ Contact the **BPA President**, John W. King, at: [president@bpapaloalto.org](mailto:president@bpapaloalto.org)

■ Contact the **BPA Treasurer**, John W. King, at: [johnwadeking@gmail.com](mailto:johnwadeking@gmail.com)

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

■ Contact our **BPA Business Liaison**, Paul Yang, at: [pabloyang@yahoo.com](mailto:pabloyang@yahoo.com)

■ Reach our **Welcoming Committee Chair**, Gwen Luce, at: [gluce@cbnocal.com](mailto:gluce@cbnocal.com)

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

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

■ To join the **BPA Services/Home Business List**, or to look for a service, write to: [barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://bpapaloalto.org/2017/09/01/barron-park-area-service-list-september-2017)

■ Write to our **BPA Historian**, Douglas L. Graham, at: [dgrahampaca@gmail.com](mailto:dgrahampaca@gmail.com)

■ Reach our **Cool Block spokesperson**, Hilary Glann at: [hglann@gmail.com](mailto:hglann@gmail.com)

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

■ To donate to the **Bol Park Native Plant Restoration Project**: Donate online at [friendsofpaparks.org/donations](http://friendsofpaparks.org/donations) (Bol Park Fund) or write a check payable to "Friends of the Palo Alto Parks (FOPAP), for the Bol Park Fund," 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](mailto:rich.e.elder@gmail.com)

## BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS WINTER 2018-2019

Jon Affeld, President  
John W. King, Incoming President  
Markus Fromherz, Secretary  
John W. King, Treasurer  
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Maurice Green  
Christian Kalar  
Lydia Kou  
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*Communications:* Myrna Rochester

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*Environment:* Jaya Pandey

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*Neighborhood Safety & Emergency Preparedness:* Maurice Green, Lydia Kou

*Parks & Creeks:* Christian Kalar

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Richard Elder

*Schools Liaison:* Todd Collins

*Seniors Liaison:* Peter K. Mueller

*Traffic & Streets:* Vacant

*Zoning & Land Use:* Lydia Kou

*Welcoming:* Gwen Luce

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

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

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

# Palo Alto History Museum Announces a Flurry of New Support

By Lindsey Ragatz, Palo Alto Museum



Boy Scout parade in Santa Cruz, 1913. Photo courtesy of Palo Alto Historical Association.

The Palo Alto Museum (which will be located in the Roth Building at 300 Homer Avenue) is pleased to announce two new grants from local foundations, a new matching grant, and new support from the Palo Alto Chinese Community. The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation have each committed \$250,000 to the project, moving the Museum past the \$1 million mark toward the goal set by the Palo Alto City Council just about a year ago.

"With hundreds of recent individual donations, the Museum's fundraising total is now over \$12 million," states Executive Director Laura Bajuk. This is the first gift from the Hewlett Foundation, and the third such gift from the Packard Foundation. The foundations both want their contribution to encourage more individual gifts, and it's working. Over 650 Palo Alto households, foundations, and business have donated so far—with a 20 % increase in the past 18 months.

"We're thrilled to share this momentum with our community. When we met with the Packard Foundation, it felt as if Bill Hewlett and David Packard were still working together to enhance this commu-

nity," Bajuk adds. "And if this keeps up, we're on track to meet the City challenge." A second exciting development is a new matching grant from Marcella and Stuart Bernstein. The Bernsteins will match new donations up to \$350,000. Individuals and families have already started to take advantage of this opportunity to double their impact.

"Palo Altans are excited to see the Roth Building become a world-class museum,

accessible from downtown and drawing visitors from around the world to share what makes this community special," adds Museum president Rich Green. "They want to find out about our 'special sauce.'" The Palo Alto Museum is also announcing a new endorsement from Stanford history professor Gordon H. Chang. This follows a flurry of recent donations from members of the Chinese community in Palo Alto, some of whom are new to town, others third- and fourth-generation residents.

"Our community is blessed with a long and rich history to which many diverse people from around the world have contributed and continue to contribute," Chang said. "Chinese-Americans have long formed an important and proud part of our community and today, because of recent immigration, Chinese is the second most spoken language in Palo Alto. I offer my support of the Palo Alto Museum and applaud the effort to remember the past so as to better inform the future."

On Monday, December 17, the City Council voted unanimously to transfer an additional \$667,000—earmarked only for renovation of historic buildings—to the Museum project, given that it had exceeded its fundraising goal of \$1.75 million. Learn more at [paloaltomuseum.org](http://paloaltomuseum.org)

## BPA Neighborhood Services/Home Business List

Look for this Link for Neighborhood Services at the BPA website:  
[bpapaloalto.org](http://bpapaloalto.org)

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

[barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com](mailto:barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com)

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

### NEW! Neighbor Services

#### Neighbor Services

Various services offered by residents of Barron Park







the farm and mansion to Edward Barron, who held it until his death in 1893. Barron added 100 acres to the farm which was owned and managed by his estate until 1919, when it was sold to Driscoll and Reiter, “capitalists” and berry growers from Watsonville.

### The Maybelle Area

The Maybelle Tract (spelled originally with a final *e*) lay south of Mayfield Farm. (See Illustration A, Maybell Avenue area in 2001, which can serve as a general locator for places mentioned below. The dashed line encloses the area that was the Maybelle Tract until about 1910.)

### The Earliest Map

The earliest map I have shows all the land on the west side of today’s El Camino Real (ECR) as belonging to “Clarke & Beckh 53,” and undivided, indicating that the Maybelle Tract did not yet exist. No streets were shown except for the “Stage Road.” The map is undated, but, judging from internal references, I would guess it was drawn in about 1859.

### The Maybelle Tract

The tract that later became known as the Maybelle Tract appears first on a County map dating from about 1880 which shows the land belonging to “Mrs. C. Clark.” The Stanford land survey, carried out between 1883 and 1892, repeats the same information exactly – in fact, it could almost be a photographic copy. It is interesting to note that Clark also owned the land now occupied by the Ventura neighborhood, as well as the entire area between today’s East Meadow Drive and Colorado Avenue.

The 1890 County map shows the bulk of the tract (100 acres) still belonging to Mrs. C. Clark, but it had been further divided, with the western end split off to owners J. Distel (20 acres) and to J. L’Hermite (10 acres). There are still no streets shown, except for ECR and Arastradero Road. The first USGS topographic map of our area, published in 1895, shows a short spur road west from ECR approximately where Maybell Avenue is today, running more nearly west rather than southwest. It is probably a farm driveway, as is another spur off Arastradero Road into the Distel property.

A new private survey of the Stanford lands was drawn up in 1908. It included the Bar-

ron Estate and the Maybelle area, showing the former Clark property as belonging to “M. Debret & L. Vercoters.” The Distel tract was still shown, but J. Distel had apparently transferred the land to L. Distel. The J. L’Hermite Tract was also shown, but no streets were shown.

### Subdivision of the Tract

The initial subdivision of the tract evidently happened sometime between 1900 and 1910, as shown on a County map from about 1910. This is the oldest map showing today’s Maybell Avenue, which was laid

out straight through the Maybelle Tract and the adjacent Distel Subdivision. It did not penetrate the former L’Hermite land, which was shown as “10 acres A.W.” (See Illustration B, a Map of the Maybelle Tract in 1926.)

The Maybelle tract included six lots fronting on ECR, numbered north to south as numbers one through six. Lot 1 is now the northern part of the Barron Square condominium development built in 1977-78.

Lot 2 is the present-day “billboard” vacant lot on ECR, with the central part of Barron Square at the rear. Lot 3 has today’s Zen Motel on ECR, the eight-unit Interdale Way condominium development, the entrance to Thain Way, and the southeast corner of Barron Square. The greater part of Lots 1 and 2 was owned by the Thains during the post-World War II period, occupied by greenhouses and commercial flower fields. The Thain family farmhouse was a prominent landmark on ECR in Lot 2 until sometime in the 1980s.

### L’Ommie’s, Cars, and Steakburgers

Lots 4 through 6 fronted on ECR between Maybell Avenue and Arastradero Road. Lot 4 is now occupied by Walgreens and the parking lot of one of the newer car dealers. For many years it was the site of one of Barron Park’s classiest restaurants, L’Omelette. Popularly known as “L’Ommie’s,” it was a French-style “California roadhouse,” catering to discerning diners from San Mateo to Santa Clara. It was frequented by celebrities of the day and later: the young John F. Kennedy ate there during his brief 1940 sojourn at the Stanford Graduate School of Business.

Lot 5 was, for many years, Carlsen’s Ford Dealership until it moved to East Embarcadero Road. Lot 6, at the corner of Arastradero Road, is today occupied by the Volvo, Tesla, and McLaren car dealerships. Lot 6 was the initial site of Kirk’s Steakburgers, which relocated many years ago to California Avenue, and later to Town and Country Village shopping center at Embarcadero and ECR.

### Lots of Lots

From the rear of Lots 4 through 6, Lots 7 through 10 ran up the south side of Maybell Avenue to Park Avenue, which later became Clemo, with Lots 11 through 15

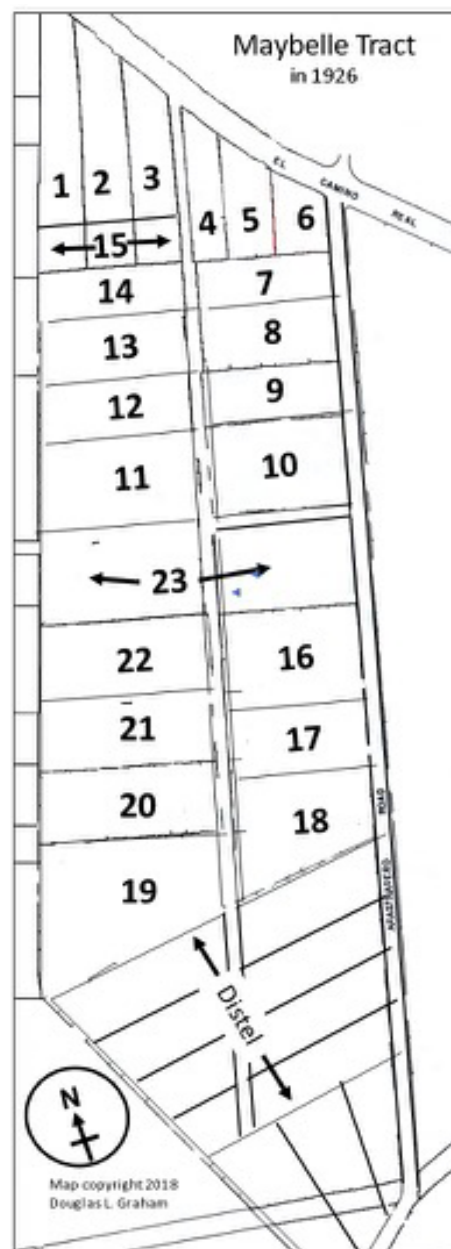


Illustration B: Map of the Maybelle Tract in 1926.

running down the north side back to the rear of Lots 1 through 3. Then the sequence picked up again at Park Avenue, with Lot 23, site of today's Juana Briones Park, then Lots 16 through 18 running up the south side of Maybell Avenue to the Distel Tract (approximately where Donald Drive is today), and doubling back with Lots 19 through 23 on the north side of Maybell. *(Got that? There will be a quiz at the end of the story.)* Mapping new developments for the County was apparently a pretty casual occupation in those days.

### The Maybell Apricots

All these new lots in the Maybell Tract were of a size, typically three to five acres, convenient for a couple to plant and manage a fruit orchard. The husband typically had a full-time wage job in a nearby town, while the wife probably spent as much of her time and labor managing the orchard as she did as a housewife and mother. The orchard income would be a vital addition to the husband's wages, but inadequate by itself to support a family. Most (if not all) of these lots were planted to apricots in the 1920s and '30s.

At or near the lot that later became Juana Briones Park, there was an area where the apricots were dried and packed for shipment. There was probably a fruit-packing company that helped these "weekend farmers" with their orchards and handled their marketing, as the Driscoll Company did for Barron Park strawberries. This may have been a function of the Sutter Cannery on Portage Drive (today the site of Fry's Electronics). Also, several small houses were built on Maybell Avenue for orchard workers. I don't know if they were migrants for occasional employment, or year-round people.

### Suburban Development in the Maybell Tract

Development in the tract started early, but proceeded slowly. The Maybell Tract as laid out in the original configuration of 23 large lots stayed the same, with no further subdivision until 1926, when the Irven Subdivision of 35 lots was laid out with two streets: Alta Mesa Avenue and Irven Court. Irven Court had the first house on record: Number 531 had been built in 1915. Another house was built at 548 Arastradero in 1920, but was renumbered

4185 Alta Mesa Avenue when Barron Park was annexed to the City in 1975. The next house was built at 4174 Alta Mesa in 1925, but no more houses were built until 540 Arastradero in 1935.

### After World War II

When the war ended in 1945, construction took off all over the country. Returning veterans married their sweethearts, and the baby boom was picking up speed. In April 1948, the County approved the George Reed Tract of 43 lots between Maybell and Georgia Avenues. The two cross streets were named Abel and Baker, the first two letters in the standard military radio alphabet spoken during the war, in an obvious appeal to veterans. The next tract was the biggest one in the Maybell area: Green Acres II in 1952, which followed the successful marketing of the 89-lot Green Acres I tract on the south side of Arastradero Road in 1950. Also, by this time, sales were picking up in the 162-lot Encina Grande Park which adjoined the George Reed Tract on the north. Green Acres II was laid out with the curving streets that were becoming popular in the 1950s; thus the straight line of Maybell Avenue was obliterated west of Donald. The tract contained four new streets: Donald, Wilmar, and Hubbart Drives, and a detached section of Georgia Avenue.

### "Filling In" During the 1950s

In the 1950s, six smaller tracts filled in the "holes" left earlier among the big ones. In 1952, 30 lots were laid out in Maybell Gardens (an Eichler development) on Amaranta Avenue and Amaranta Court, as well as the other, detached portion of Georgia Avenue that led to the "back entrance" of Loma Vista (now Juana Briones) Elementary School. Also, in 1952 (a banner year for developers) a 19-lot development was laid out on each side of Coulombe Drive, a "collector" street between Maybell and Arastradero. Next came the six-lot development, Frandon Oaks on Frandon Court, and the 15-lot tract Camelot Gardens on the whimsically named King Arthur Court, a cul-de-sac off Arastradero Road. Both were approved in 1955. The fifties ended appropriately with two developments built on the filled-in "state borrow pit" (see later) of the 1930s: Doug Couch's McLaughlin Glen in 1958 (eight lots on the cul-de-sac at

the end of "upper" Georgia Avenue) and his McLaughlin Glen #2 in 1959 (14 lots on another cul-de-sac, Maybell Way).

### Completing the In-Filling

After the borrow-pit hole was filled, development slowed because there were very few orchard remnants left to build on. In 1966 seven lots were made available on the end and north side of a new cul-de-sac off Arastradero, Cherry Oaks Place. There was nothing else until 1972, when the last sizeable orchard in Palo Alto fell to the bulldozers to be replaced by the 26-lot L'Hermite Subdivision on the westernmost stretch of Georgia Avenue, along with two attached cul-de-sacs, Crosby and Wallis Courts. In 1974, five more lots became available on the south side of Cherry Oaks Place.

Much later, in 1991, Pena Court was developed on a large lot on Maybell Avenue between Thain Way in Barron Square and Baker Avenue in the George Reed Tract. It is a cul-de-sac with eight large two-story houses.

Almost three decades later, the final significant in-filling is occurring now in 2018-19 with the development on Maybell and Clemo in the former orchard across from Juana Briones Park. This will almost certainly be the last in-filling except for possible flag lots—there are no more orchards or empty lots.

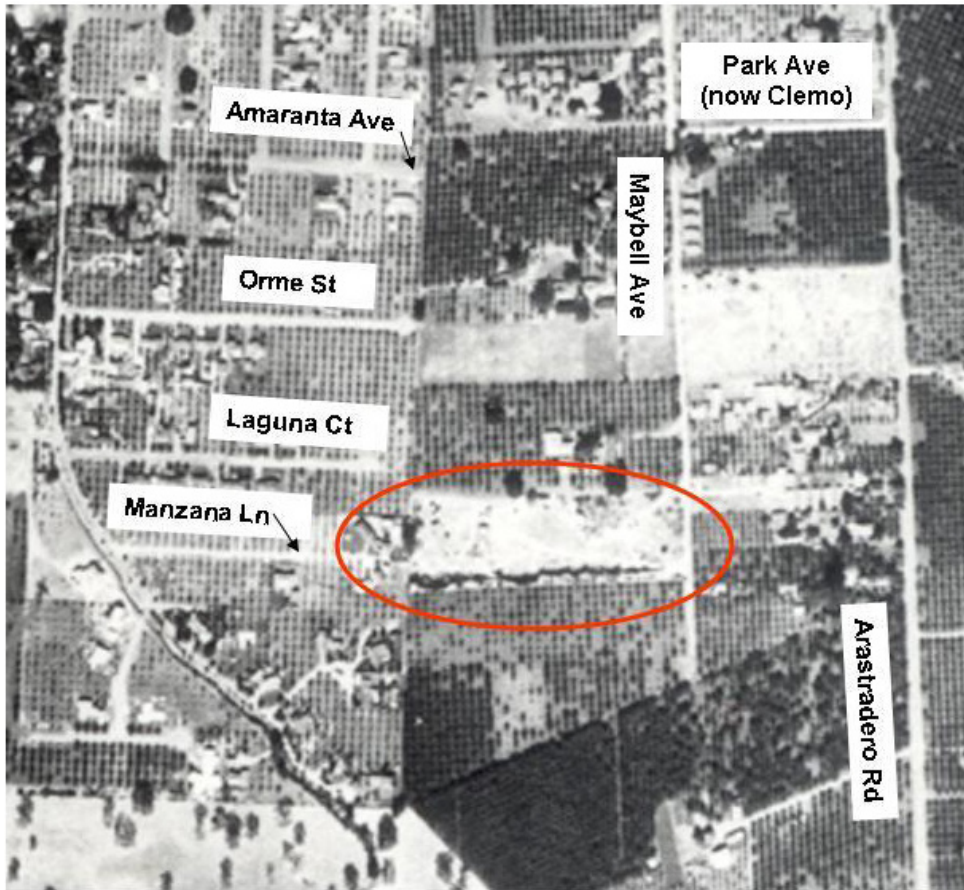
### The Condominiums Arrive

In 1978, after much (sometimes acrimonious) negotiation between the City and the Barron Park Association, a 78-unit condominium development, Barron Square, was built on the last sizeable piece of open land in the Maybell Tract. Most of the land had been the property of Alexander and Janet Thain, who had a large old farmhouse on El Camino Real (see "Subdivision of the Maybell Tract," earlier in this article). In addition, an eight-unit condo development was built in 1981 on Interdale Way, a short cul-de-sac off Maybell across from Walgreens.

### The Infamous Borrow Pit

The first organized community protest action in our neighborhood took place in the Maybell Tract in 1932. It was triggered by a project initiated by the State Department of Highways (now Caltrans) to provide





**Illustration C: Aerial photo showing the borrow pit in 1948.**

road fill for various highway projects, most notably construction of the "Bayshore Highway" (a bypass to avoid the traffic on El Camino Real, which was U.S. Highway 101 at the time). State contractors dug an enormous "borrow pit" in the middle of the tract, at Maybell Way and the cul-de-sac at the east end of upper Georgia Avenue. "The pit," as it became known, was up to 20 feet deep and covered nearly five acres. The details of this atrocious project are covered in my story entitled "The State Borrow Pit and the Origins of the BPA," published in the Winter 2014 issue of this Newsletter. (See Illustration C, aerial photo showing the borrow pit in 1948.)

A delegation was organized to protest the borrow pit to then California Governor James Rolph in Sacramento, but the attempt was unsuccessful. Nevertheless, the community spirit stirred up led eventually to the formation of the Maybell Improvement Association, the earliest known predecessor of the Barron Park Association.

### **The Maybell Improvement Association**

Jack Silvey organized the Maybell Improvement Association in 1950-51. He was a Maybell Avenue resident, with a large lot in the 500 block where Pena Court and its eight large houses are today. Silvey's land was adjacent to the Thain property,

and Alexander Thain helped organize the Maybell Improvement Association, serving as Vice President. Jack Silvey was the Association's first and only president, serving from its founding through its eventual dissolution in the early 1960s. The Association's purpose was to obtain infrastructure improvements from the County, especially streetlights, flood control projects, and sewers. Silvey was somewhat successful in obtaining street lighting. However, other improvements proved more difficult to obtain, especially after the State began pressuring cities to annex built-up unincorporated county areas on their boundaries, particularly if the city lapped around the area concerned.

### **Green Acres II Wants Faster Progress**

The residents of Green Acres II and other new developments were unhappy with the slow progress being made by the Maybell Improvement Association working with Santa Clara County. They began listening to the aggressive sales pitches being made by Palo Alto's young City Manager, Jerry Keithley. He recently had had great success in persuading South Palo Alto residents to annex to the City, and he had his eye on Green Acres, the rest of the Maybell Tract, and all of Barron Park. The so-called "core" of Barron Park was under increasing pressure to annex, having already survived six annexation attempts.

### **"Foothills Number Two" Annexation**



**Illustration D: Aerial Photo taken in 1965 just prior to construction of the park, which includes all the land inside the dashed white line**

In 1959, annexation of the entire Barron Park area (including the Maybell Tract) was voted down by a large majority of residents in the “core” area of Barron Park. However, a dissident minority in the Maybell Tract, the area around Loma Vista Elementary School, and the streets feeding into upper Los Robles Avenue were approached by the City with a new proposal that did not include the “core” majority. Residents went for it. The “Foothills Number Two” annexation took place, splitting the Barron Park community in two. The split lasted 16 years, until the remainder of Barron Park annexed voluntarily in 1975 (by a 2-to-1 vote). If you are interested in the details of the seven annexation attempts from 1947 through 1975, you can read my five-part series in this Newsletter, which ran in every issue from Spring 2000 through Summer 2001. (See the archive at: <http://bpaonline.org/bp-news/index.html>)

### **Neighborhood Associations Adjust to Changed Environment**

After the bitterly contested “Foothills Number Two” annexation by the City in 1959 absorbed the seven-year-old Green Acres II Tract, the small cul-de-sacs opening onto Arastradero and Maybell, and a large chunk of the older parts of Barron Park, the remainder of the Maybell Improvement Association joined the Barron Park Association and was renamed the Barron Park-Maybell Improvement Association. Residents of the newly annexed area created the Loma Vista Association (LVA), named for the then new elementary school. The LVA was active for a time, but never achieved the critical mass or staying power of the BPA. When the Barron Park “core” finally joined the City in 1975, remaining members of the LVA quickly joined the BPA, although some residents of Green Acres II prefer not to be considered part of Barron Park even today. To serve their interests, a Green Acres Citizens’ Association was organized in 1965 and was sporadically active for quite a few years.

### **Juana Briones Park**

In 1965, the City initiated an effort to preserve open space by providing a local park for the residents of its latest important acquisition. The City Council unanimously selected a site for the proposed new park, to be known as “Arastradero Road Park.” It was a 4.4-acre undivided parcel owned

by Giacomo Sambuceto, consisting of about three acres of apricot orchard and somewhat over an acre occupied by six houses fronting on Maybell. Anecdotal information provided by longtime Barron Park residents in 2004 suggested that these were either cottages for hired farm workers, like those on Abel Street, or perhaps weekend summer cottages built by San Franciscans escaping the fog season, like those in the original Barron Park subdivision on Barron and La Selva Avenues. (See Illustration D, 1965 aerial photo showing the Sambuceto property that became Juana Briones Park.) The park was completed and opened to the public in 1968.

### **A Lack of North-South Roads in the Neighborhood**

As the Barron Estate and the Maybell Tract subdivisions were being laid out in the early twentieth century, residents were already concerned about the lack of north-south roads between Los Robles Avenue and Arastradero Road. Early in the development of the Maybell area, there was a lane between Lots 10 and 23, briefly named Park Avenue. (Did someone see into the future and know that there would be a park built in the southern part of Lot 23?) This served as the southern access route to the George Reed Tract and orchard houses along Maybell Avenue. It eventually became today’s Clemo Avenue, running alongside Juana Briones Park.

### **A New Traffic Connection**

Coulombe Drive was put through from Arastradero to Maybell in 1951. The intent was partly to make a convenient connection with Amaranta that would provide a more direct route from Arastradero to Los Robles than was provided by Park Avenue. The Coulombe Tract was then laid out in 1952 (and from the beginning was recognized as part of Barron Park).

### **Traffic Becomes an Issue**

A contentious political issue developed in the 1960s about the amount of traffic generated by the new Coulombe-Maybell-Amaranta route. The volume of traffic greatly disturbed some residents, particularly on the northern section of Amaranta that had previously served only the Encina Grande neighborhood (with no connection through to Maybell). The issue was brought to the City Council in January 1970. Accord-

ing to an article in the *Palo Alto Times* on January 14, 1970, a City staff report stated that Amaranta carried 2,000-3,000 cars per day, while Los Robles carried about 5,000. A Council committee had voted to recognize the Coulombe-to-Amaranta route as a “neighborhood collector street route” (rather than as a group of “local residential streets”). Exactly what legal or procedural impact this might have had remained unreported by the *Times*.

### **A Bumpy Question**

At the time, Amaranta residents were apparently pleading for speed bumps to slow the traffic down. Ross Staley, chairman of the Loma Vista Homeowners Association (LVHA) claimed that the City staff “refuse(s) to recognize that we have a problem.” He estimated that the traffic on Amaranta would reach 4,000 vehicles per day by 1980. Palo Alto Councilman (and future mayor) Kirk Comstock proposed two or three traffic control bumps in the area. Apparently the three “homeowners’ groups” in the area (the LVHA, the BPA, and the Maybell Improvement Association) could not agree on what should be done. Tempers had flared. Councilman Stanley Norton (also a future mayor) advised the audience to “go home and make up.” The Council decided to “bypass action” on Comstock’s proposed speed bumps.

### **No Extensions of Streets to the West**

At the same time the Palo Alto City Council’s Committee and Staff agreed that there “should be no extensions of Los Robles Avenue, Paradise Way, or Matadero Avenue” that would connect with City streets to the west of Barron Park, thereby laying to rest that bugaboo and avoiding a controversy that would have made the Amaranta dispute look insignificant by comparison.

### **Questions, Anyone?**

I hope you have found this brief history of the Maybell Tract, Maybell Avenue, and the rest of the streets in the tract interesting. Additional topics could have been included, especially about the orchard years, but I think this is enough for now. Please address questions, corrections, and comments to Doug Graham, 984 Ilima Way, Palo Alto, CA 94306, or email to [dgrahampaca@gmail.com](mailto:dgrahampaca@gmail.com) or call me at (650) 493-0689.



# JIM DAVIS AUTOMOTIVE: Thirty-Six Years of Friendship and Service

By BPA Newsletter Editors



Photo: Myrna Rochester

**Jim Davis (left) with his friend Harald Sinzig, of Palo Alto German Car, at Jim's anniversary party, November 8, 2018.**

On Thursday, November 8, 2018, in honor of 36 years in business at the corner of El Camino and Los Robles, Jim Davis of Jim Davis Automotive hosted a daylong, warm and welcoming "anniversary" party for all his local customers and Barron Park friends. BPA Newsletter editors had a chance to chat with Jim and to ask him a few questions.

**BPA:** *Where did you grow up? Were you always interested in the automotive business?*

**Jim Davis:** I grew up on a small farm in Central Illinois that had no electricity or indoor plumbing. The first school I attended had one room, one teacher for Grades 1-8. Needless to say, the older students were expected to be part of the teaching corps. Made a big and positive impression on me. Later with electricity and indoor plumbing, I attended the University of Illinois in

Champaign-Urbana. To help pay for my education, I worked at a service station in Urbana, Illinois, and got a taste of auto repair, never thinking it would be my future.

**BPA:** *How did you get involved in the business at Los Robles and El Camino?*

**JD:** While attending De Anza in the early 70s, trying to learn computer systems, I worked at Matadero Shell on El Camino. Starting a family at that time, I found I couldn't continue college and raise a family on my income, and therefore I started working as a mechanic full time. After more than 10 years there, I found the Chevron [now Valero] station at Los Robles and El Camino was for sale and jumped at the opportunity.

**BPA:** *Are there particular events or anecdotes you'd like to tell us about? Something that stands out in your memory?*

**JD:** As far as memories go, my employees are the best. I have had many who stuck with me for a long time, up to 25 years for some. I'm most proud of an employee I was forced to fire some 30 years ago, I was his enabler at that time; that is, I was supplying him with an income that he was using to destroy his life. Firing him was the hardest thing I ever had to do, but the best. Every year since, he has called me on his anniversary of being sober, to thank me. I'm so proud of him; he now runs his own service station, and is doing great.

**BPA:** *From your point of view, what has been your relationship with local residents/customers?*

**JD:** I have tried to support local business, schools, and religious groups as well as everyone in my favorite neighborhood of Barron Park.

**BPA:** *What is the secret of your success?*

**JD:** As far as a secret to success, I have tried to be consistent, treating every customer and employee as an individual with respect.

Jim Davis can be contacted at: [jimdavisautomotive@att.net](mailto:jimdavisautomotive@att.net)

His phone number is (650) 303-3390.

## Mark Your 2019 Calendars!

### Barron Park Senior Lunches

Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m.

February 12, April 9, June 11, August 13, October 8, and December 10

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](mailto:pklausm@mac.com)

# BARRON PARK'S FALL AND WINTER FESTIVALS

## Buena Vista Hosts the 7th Annual Posada Festival!

On Saturday evening, December 1, 2018, the Buena Vista community once again invited its residents and all of Barron Park to enjoy the company and the beautiful lights, to process, dance, sing, and eat heartily at the Seventh

Annual Posada holiday celebration. Our speakers—which included County Supervisor Joe Simitian—were inspiring, and the young dancers from the Cubberley-based Raíces de México dance studio ([smc-connect.org/locations/raices-de-mexico-](http://smc-connect.org/locations/raices-de-mexico)

*ballet-folklorico*) lifted everyone's spirits.

Barron Park thanks Buena Vista for your warm welcome and the chance to open the holiday season together!

—BPA Newsletter editors



Photos: Maurice Green

## Our Garba-Dandiya Festival

Garba is a folk dance originating in the Indian state of Gujarat and traditionally part of the nine-night (ten-day) Hindu celebration of Navratri, which marks the triumph of Good—represented by the Warrior Goddess Durga—over Evil.

The Barron Park community, along with

families and friends from other Palo Alto neighborhoods, celebrated Garba-Dandiya on October 20, 2018. The event was well received and attended by almost 250 people, many in colorful dress, who danced to Garba folk songs as well as Bollywood songs with our live DJ! Everyone enjoyed the activities and the food. This was, in fact, the very first Garba event organized

in Palo Alto. Celebrants especially enjoyed not having to commute to a distant location this time of year. The cheerful photos say it all.

The Barron Park Indian community thanks the Barron Park Association for their support and especially all the volunteers who worked very hard to make Garba-Dandiya happen! —Jaya Pandey



Photos: Madar Borkar



# BOL PARK PATHWAY COMMITTEE UPDATE

By Jon Affeld

Over the last three years, the Bol Park Pathway Subcommittee has worked successfully to help address the landscaping issues near the Palo Alto VA compound, identify and correct safety concerns, and research traffic patterns and pathway requirements. A special thank you goes out to Dick Placone for chairing the Subcommittee, and to David Boxerman, Frank Crossman, Cédric de La Beaujardière, Jenny Kiratli, Peter Knopf, Art Liberman, Anne Marie Macrae, Peter

Mueller, and Tram Tran, for all their hard work on the Bol Park pathway issues.

Since the Bol Park Pathway Subcommittee (a temporary work group) has completed its initial objectives, it is being decommissioned, and its tasks will be assumed by the Parks and Creeks Committee. In the long term, a Board-level Committee is better suited for strategic planning, interaction with the City, and broader outreach to the community.

Moving forward there is still much work to be done. Another round of landscaping at the VA is being planned, and the pathway is due for maintenance in the next few years. Stay tuned for more information in upcoming newsletter issues. In the meantime, if you have special expertise—as, for example, a member of the Subcommittee—or if you are interested in participating in or providing input to the BPA Parks and Creeks Committee, please contact the Barron Park Association at: <http://bpapaloalto.org/contact-us/>

## Barron Park Gets Even Cooler in Palo Alto Community Program

By Hilary Glann, Cool Block Leader, Ilima Way

Barron Park residents are standing up for the planet and for our community by signing up as Block Leaders for the latest phase of the Cool Block program. Cool Block Palo Alto, in collaboration with the City of Palo Alto, is currently recruiting residents to organize their neighbors to reduce their carbon footprints, get better prepared for disasters, and build strong, collaborative relationships with each other.

Leaders from four Barron Park blocks and buildings have signed up for the Cool Block training taking place in January 2019. They will be inviting their neighbors to form teams in February. These new teams will join five blocks in Barron Park that have already completed the program.

Many of us simply do not reach out for help from or offer help to our neighbors; consequently we are living more difficult and isolated lives. One of the greatest benefits many participants say they experience from Cool Block is the feeling that they can now rely on their neighbors during big and small emergencies.

The City of Palo Alto and Cool Block will hold a final Information Meeting before closing registration for the present cohort of Cool Blocks. Please join City and Cool Block reps at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 16, 2019, in the Midtown Room at

Mitchell Park Library to learn more. Sign up on Eventbrite to save your spot: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/cool-block-palo-alto-info-meeting-tickets-53365676174?aff=BPA>

You can contact me (Hilary) at: [hglann@gmail.com](mailto:hglann@gmail.com)

### Spring BPA Newsletter Deadline—Monday, March 4, 2019!

To All Our Past & Future Contributors:

Please submit articles and drafts (preferably in Word) for the Spring issue of the Barron Park Association Newsletter, along with photos/illustrations (separate from text), by **Monday, March 4, 2019**, to Myrna Rochester, [newsletter@bpapaloalto.org](mailto:newsletter@bpapaloalto.org) or [mbrbpa@sonic.net](mailto:mbrbpa@sonic.net)

If your Spring idea is a query (for an article, story, report, update, interview, announcement, review, anecdote, or artist's page...), please contact Myrna in advance. The Spring issue will be mailed around April 1, 2019, to all residents of Barron Park. Announcements should be for events scheduled after **April 15, 2019**.

### Seeking New May Fête Coordinator!



The Barron Park Association's annual star event, the May Fête celebration in Bol Park, is in search of a new coordinator for 2019. The event will be held on Sunday, May 19, 2019.

This will be the 41st Annual May Fête in Bol Park. It draws the entire community to enjoy the Maypole dance, music, kids' activities, donkeys' visit, information and display tables, festival, BBQ, and more.

Numerous friendly, cheerful volunteers always show up to help out on the day. I will continue to be a resource for the new coordinator to help guide this year's event and handle the BBQ duties.

Please let me know if you are interested or know someone who would love to guide this great event this Spring!

Thank you!

John W. King  
Incoming President and  
Treasurer BPA Board  
May Fête Volunteer Coordinator  
(650) 483-2710  
[bpmayfete@gmail.com](mailto:bpmayfete@gmail.com)

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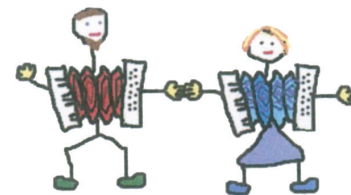
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