

# BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

John W. King, BPA President



The community spirit of Barron Park is strong and alive! Our October Movie Night screening of Disney's (and Roald Dahl's) *The BFG* in Bol Park was another huge success. The free popcorn produced some very nice at-will donations for the BPA. At the end (and at the beginning!) of our fiscal year,

the BPA especially appreciates additional memberships and donations. We wrapped up the year with just over 300 members.

In 2020 we will be keeping up with some important issues, such as El Camino Real business and construction, Bol Park shared pathways, the proposed cell towers in Barron Park, and, of course, traffic issues. If you have any questions or ideas about these

and other matters, now is your chance to voice your concerns. Please write to me at [president@bpapaloalto.org](mailto:president@bpapaloalto.org)

Early this year we will be launching the new BPA website! This will be a wonderful upgrade where you can join or rejoin the Association and quickly check if your profile and your membership are up-to-date. There, you may select whether you want to receive the print or online version of the BPA Newsletter, get involved with Emergency Preparedness, and of course check upcoming neighborhood events, announcements, and news. The planned launch of the new website will coincide with our Annual Meeting in March.

We hope all our neighbors had a wonderful holiday season and New Year's celebration. Warm wishes for a happy, healthy 2020!



On Sunday afternoon, December 15, Barron Park neighbors gathered for a holiday sing-along and caroling, kicked off by Gary Breitbard and Jena Rauti. Spirits were high, and the potluck snacks fabulous! Photo: Jaya Pandey

## EMAIL LISTS

The Barron Park Association manages three email lists: *bpa-news*, *bpa-misc*, and *bpa-issues*. The email lists are hosted on Google Groups. To join a list, go to the BPA website [bpapaloalto.org](http://bpapaloalto.org) and click on the tab "BPA Email Lists" near the top of the home page under the logo. The link provides information about each list and an easy way to subscribe to one or more of them.

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# Movie Night in Barron Park!

By Silvia Griswold

An impromptu Movie Night October 20 in Bol Park was a perfect way to visit with neighbors and friends and bid farewell to summer. Both young and more mature moviegoers strolled in as the sun was setting, carrying blankets and snacks, some pushing strollers, to secure a perfect lawn spot at Bol Park. BPA Board members Gwen Luce and Markus Fromherz greeted folks as they arrived. Several families even joined the BPA on the spot; others re-upped their memberships.

First, a near disaster! Since the movie equipment required all the power from the only plug at Bol Park, we could not run the popcorn machine. Gwen Luce contacted neighbors Jerry Scharf and Cindy Goral who have a generator, and were willing to loan it for our good cause. Rich Elder and I made the trek to Jerry and Cindy's house to load it in my car and transport it to the park. After settling the generator into place and making a lot of noise, we finally had



The popcorn line never ended at Movie Night in Bol Park!  
Photo: Silvia Griswold

the popcorn machine working! A long line formed and everyone enjoyed freshly popped popcorn, thanks to Jerry and Cindy's generosity. Great teamwork! Plus, another shout out to Rich Elder who was kind enough to fill the water containers for access all evening.

The weather cooperated with perfect evening temperatures, adding to the comfort of an exceptional number of devoted movie lovers. Based on British novelist Roald Dahl's 1982 book, *The BFG* (The Big Friendly Giant) created a magical evening with a whimsical story of a gentle giant who gives children their fun-filled dreams after he collects them in Dream Country. Accompanied by ten-year-old, orphaned Sophie, who becomes his best friend, the BFG travels to Buckingham Palace to convince Queen Elizabeth II to do away with the cruel man- (and child-) eating giants in Giant Country. Roald Dahl's skill with words shows up in each giant's funny name — Fleshlumpeater, Bloodbottler — which the BFG has trouble pronouncing correctly. And let's not forget the Frobscottle, the green-colored fizzy drink that causes the Whizzpoppers...! A fable definitely worth watching! Movie Night was absolutely the Big Friendly way to reconnect with the neighbors and begin our festive fall and winter.

# Christmas Posada at Buena Vista!

By Winter Dellenbach, Friends of Buena Vista



The Sixth Annual Posada at Buena Vista! Saturday, December 7 was a nice Buena Vista Posada evening with good weather. The rain stopped just as the Posada began — as predicted. We all had fun. The kids were zipping around, excited, greeting visiting family. Great speechifying! Just the right words. The dancers were lovely and impressive, making it seem easy when in fact these regional Mexican dances are difficult and take serious commitment. We've watched some of these children grow up, dancing year after year at the Posada; now they are tall teens. And oh, the food! My goodness, once again the food was yummy. When the huge, long-handled cauldron of menudo came out, carried by two strong men, a new long line formed fast — with a bunch of neighbors getting in on the action. Well done, BV residents! Thank you for once again inviting your town to Posada.

Photos: Winter Dellenbach

# IT'S TIME TO GO GREEN!

Every year, 8 million tons of plastic enter the ocean. People use plastics for a great number of everyday items including bottled waters, bags, straws, and more. The main issue is that plastic doesn't ever break down, and can end up negatively impacting entire ecosystems. However, we can choose to either contribute to the problem or be a part of the solution. Here are some eco-friendly products you can use to replace the plastic in your life.

## ALLBIRDS FOOTWEAR

These shoes are made of naturally sustainable wool and plants, much better for the environment than synthetic shoes.

## REUSABLE GROCERY BAGS

Around one trillion plastic bags are used annually. In the ocean, plastic bags look just like the jellyfish that sea turtles eat. Save a turtle, and simultaneously save 10 cents when you switch to reusable cloth grocery bags!



## REUSABLE STRAWS

By now, you've surely heard of the metal straw fad. By taking a reusable metal or paper straw with you to restaurants, you can help limit the amount of plastic production. Or better yet, skip the straws altogether!

## BAMBOO TOOTHBRUSHES

Unlike plastic toothbrushes that will never break down, bamboo toothbrushes are biodegradable and sustainable, as bamboo is one of the fastest growing plants. Try Wowe Natural Organic toothbrushes!



## COMPOSTABLE GARBAGE BAGS

Why only switch your grocery bags? Plastic garbage bags are a problem too. Compostable bags are an eco-friendly alternative!

## REUSABLE WATER BOTTLES

Metal water bottles are reusable, unlike the single-use plastic water bottles that will never break down. Plus, they come in all sorts of fun styles - some with metal straws!



By Emily Cohen, Gunn H.S. Senior, Member, BPA Green Beans Environment Committee

# Why I Vote: On Politics, Elections, Citizenship

By Jeannie Lythcott

In 1962 I left my home in Yorkshire, England, to take a position as a science teacher in Accra, Ghana, four degrees north of the Equator. It was a few short years after Ghana had gained its independence from Great Britain. Within a few weeks of arriving there I met an African-American physician, George I. Lythcott, M.D., who was Deputy Director of an American USAID program helping Ghana to create its own National Institutes of Health. We fell in love and got married there. In 1966 he was asked to lead the USA's contribution to the World Health Organization's plan to eradicate smallpox in the 20 countries of West and Central Africa. That year we moved to Lagos, Nigeria, where the regional office for that program was located. Our baby girl, Julie, was born there in 1967. The eradication effort was highly successful, reaching its goals a year or so ahead of schedule. All along I had anticipated that when the time came to leave, we would be moving to the USA.

That would mean George would be returning home, and our baby and I would be newcomers to a strange land. Julie was an American citizen by virtue of being the child of an American parent. Though George assumed I would become an American citizen, it wasn't so clear in my head. Would I do all that was necessary to become an American or keep my British citizenship and identity?

On the one hand, while in West Africa, I had learned an awful lot that I abhorred about my country of origin. The forts where West African prisoners were kept until a British ship arrived to take them across the ocean to become slaves still stood in Ghana, evidence of Britain's role in the slave trade undeniable. Most English people I met there were prejudiced in every way possible against the Ghanaians, from a fundamental assumption that they were not, could not be, on a par with Europeans in any sense. I couldn't abide most other White folks I met in West Africa. They were overwhelmingly from the greater London and Oxbridge areas, places that treated northerners, Yorkshire folk like me, as if we were second-class humans.

On the other hand, thinking about giving up my citizenship felt as if I were turning my back on Britain and the powerful allegiance I felt for Queen and Country. I needed a clear reason to work toward an American citizen-



**Jeannie Lythcott giving a talk on the voting process to high school students. Photo: Angelina Wang. Courtesy PalyVoice. <https://palyvoice.com>**

ship much stronger and more powerful than that I was married to an American, that my baby was American, or that I was probably going to live the rest of my life in America. In contemplating leaving Britain in this way, I felt disloyal, dishonorable even, and completely lacking in a proper appreciation of what my country had done for me.

Growing up, one of five children, in a tiny, coal-mining village called Ryhill in the West Riding of Yorkshire with Mam and Dad, I didn't know that we were poor. We were all the same in the village. I recall Mam at the end of the month eating lots of boiled cabbage while we kids had thin porridge, bread, and maybe the scrapings from a jam jar. My birthday is January 30th, and while they always sang the 'Happy Birthday' song on that day and everyone made a card for me, the birthday cake had to wait until the paycheck arrived on January 31st.

Along with that reality, there were all the astonishing things that Queen and Country did for me and all the other working-class northerners. As the British could begin to imagine the end of World War II, the government made decisions to help England's poor and working classes to become strong, healthy, and fully appreciated citizens.

In my last year at the academic secondary school in 1956-57, a teacher spoke to me about going on to higher education. I applied and won a place at the University of Manchester. I believe I was only the second

person from our village to go to a university. Had even the smallest amount of money been required for me to accept this, since three growing siblings were coming up behind me, I would not have been able to go. The government awarded me a scholarship, a university bursary, which gave me all the money I needed to leave my house as an 18-year-old, to get myself to school across the country each year, to buy books and school materials, pay for food, lodging, and clothes. The bursary paid for everything I needed for the three years it took for me to get back home with my degree in hand. Best of all, I did not have to pay the money back. That's what my country did for me and so very many like me.

There's more. Just after the war was over, the government passed the National Health Service Act. It said that the Minister of Health had the duty to establish a health service to secure improvement both in the physical and mental health of the people and in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of illness. This happened. Courtesy of the 1944 Education Act, all needy kids from 5 to 18 years of age had a two-course, hot, meat-and-potatoes meal at school lunchtime, every day, free of charge. More, we got a third of a pint of milk daily, also completely free, until the age of 18. Small amounts of cod liver oil — vitamins D and A — and orange juice — vitamin C — were also given to us free of charge, until about age 8. My country helped me and all needy children grow to be strong and healthy.

Then the National Health Service was born to make sure that everybody, regardless of means, would get the medical treatment they needed with no payment required. People went to doctors and hospitals for whatever ailed them without question and no money was required at the point of delivery. A little bit was taken out of everybody's paycheck to provide this care. Mam delivered five babies; no money down. The youngest, my baby sister, Pat, was born with a cleft, top lip. She had five surgeries to keep it closed as she grew, the last one was mostly a cosmetic plastic surgery at age 16; no money down ever. My two brothers and I were each confined in a contagious disease hospital for three weeks until we got better from scarlet fever; no money down. My other sister, Carol, far away from home competing in a huge outdoor

survival contest fell off her bike and broke her leg. The first we knew about it was when an ambulance pulled up outside our house with Carol inside, her leg already in a cast; no money down. That I needed a really good reason to think about becoming an American was obvious.

Becoming an American citizen would require me to recite the following oath renouncing all allegiance to Britain, Queen, and Parliament: *"I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state or sovereignty, of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen; that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies foreign and domestic; that I will*

*bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform work of national importance under civilian direction when required by the law; and that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; so help me God."*

However, when I thought about becoming an American, I was deeply touched by the very idea of a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. As an immigrant it seemed that this statement of governance was a clear invitation for me to bring my all to the United States of America, to work hard to help make it its best self. I had some idea of what good things a government could do for its people and in America my inputs would

be encouraged and welcomed. I took the invitation and became a citizen in 1968.

I have written to every President who has been in office since I became a citizen, as well as my senators and representatives. I still get Christmas cards from Presidents Carter and Obama and their wives. I cherish and honor my duty to vote. I do my best to understand what is on the ballot so I know what and for whom I am voting. These days as a member of the League of Women Voters, I am actively helping others to wield the power of the vote, for the League has no interest in for whom others vote, it is *that* they vote that counts. We vote because it is our obligation as citizens to participate in the governance of these United States, and we vote for our own selves as honorable, adult members of the citizenry.

## Donkeys a Favorite Stop at Tenth Annual Bike Palo Alto

By Lynn Melena

It was a "bicycle jam" at Perry and Jenny's corral for a few hours on Sunday, September 29, when 333 bicyclists stopped by for a visit. The bicyclists were among the 900 riders participating in the Tenth Annual Bike Palo Alto. The donkey corral was the most popular of the nine treat stops for the event, according to organizer counts. All Bike Palo Alto riders sign in at Fairmeadow School and then choose one of three routes to ride: north to Downtown Palo Alto and Menlo Park, east to the Baylands, or south to Bol Park and Los Altos. Each route is 9-10 miles and has three treat stops.



**Bike Palo Alto cyclists of all ages enjoy the Bol Park Treat Stop, staffed every year by Flora Chu and Paul Risman, who live across from Bol Park. Photo: Jack Owiki, Pro Bono Photo**



**This year, Perry and Jenny were the most popular Bike Palo Alto stop. Photo: Jack Owiki, Pro Bono Photo**

Many families participate, and the kids can't resist riding their bikes to see the donkeys. Many people met the donkeys for the first time as they enjoyed biking on our shared pathway.

Bike Palo Alto attendance just keeps growing! It was started by Green Teams committees in Barron Park and College Terrace, with the Barron Park Association providing early seed money. Barron Park continues to supply many volunteers, including three of the eight-member steering committee — David Coale, Patrick Devine, and Lynn Melena.

The goal of Bike Palo Alto is to get more people to bike more places more often by showing them the many easy and safe ways

to get around Palo Alto by bike. Here are some other great statistics from the event:

- 5744 miles were ridden by participants
- 3.1 tons of CO2 were avoided by riding bikes
- 14 paths, 13 bridges, and 3 under/over passes exclusively for bikes and pedestrians were included on routes
- About 75 volunteers helped, posting 110 street signs, working at the registration site, and staffing treat stops
- 325 bike blender smoothies were served to riders!

Watch for Bike Palo Alto signs next September! For more Bike Palo Alto photos, go to Page 11.

# Stop Ivy from Killing More Oaks!

By Chris Witzel

All around Barron Park, especially by the creeks, you see ivy growing up the trunks of old native oaks and other trees. The first photo shows a dead Valley Oak tree completely covered with ivy at the corner of Matadero and Josina. Algerian ivy (*Hedera canariensis*, the kind we mostly have around here) may look



Corner of Matadero and Josina, a dead oak covered in ivy. Photo: Chris Witzel

picturesque, but it strangles the trees it covers.

In the second photo you can see the ivy vine's aerial or stem root (the long, hairy root) that digs itself into the bark of the tree. It takes decades for native oaks to mature — let's save them from rampant ivy for the next generation.



Algerian ivy showing the aerial or stem root that attaches to tree bark. Photo: Chris Witzel

Any time is a great time to stop ivy. A good way is to cut the vines near the ground (carefully, don't stab the tree), make second cuts in the vines a foot or two above, remove the vines between the cuts, and wait for the ivy above the cut to die. When dry, it's easier to pull off and less likely to tear bark off the tree. Another option is hiring goats! They eat everything within reach, including poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*, a different plant altogether), and seem to enjoy walking on steep banks. To kill the ivy permanently, however, you will need to pull out the roots or dig them out of the ground. *Please don't use Roundup™* — it is highly toxic and especially dangerous near creeks.

The ivy infestation was recently brought to the attention of the Barron Park Association Board. The Board agreed to support an educational campaign for residents about the ivy problem and ways to address it. Stay tuned for more details and how you might be able to help. Please contact us at [bpnativegarden@gmail.com](mailto:bpnativegarden@gmail.com) if you have ideas or questions, or would like to help with this project.

## Two Important Volunteers Leave Their BPA Posts

By The Editors

It is with great reluctance that the BPA Board has recently accepted the resignations of **Patrick Coyne** and **Markus Fromherz**, two longtime, important neighborhood volunteers. For more than ten years each contributed unusual skill and creativity in his area of expertise.

Patrick Coyne, with his finely-honed professional skills in publishing and production, took over the design and layout of this BPA quarterly Newsletter in 2009. He was unfailingly ready to accept materials, in any order, whenever we were ready with them, returning a set of beauti-

ful proofs, it seemed, within hours. He is especially wise in choosing and manipulating photos and other images; we particularly trusted him to know what would not work. Patrick moved away from Palo Alto in the fall, but graciously produced a final Fall issue for us.

In his ten years on the BPA Board, Markus Fromherz made unusual contributions to Barron Park. President for three terms between 2014 and 2016, he conducted efficient, productive meetings. He also served off and on as Recording Secretary, at times stepping into the role unofficially,

giving us timely, accurate minutes of meetings. Our monthly BPA Happy Hours were initiated under Markus's watch. He contributed a number of responsible, informative Newsletter articles and reports. Using the Survey Monkey platform, Markus spearheaded, created, and did the analysis of important neighborhood surveys, such as on our usage of the shared pathway.

The Board and the community extend warm thanks and wishes to Patrick and Markus for a healthy and successful future. We know they won't be idle!

# Gunn Foundation Gears Up for Seniors

By Sky Runser, Board Member, Gunn Foundation

One of Gunn High School's most valuable — and surprisingly little-known organizations is the Gunn Foundation. Since 1968, it has helped make college a reality for many lower-income and first-generation college students graduating from Gunn High School. Gunn Foundation need-based scholarships target needs *unmet by aid packages*. In particular, they have covered college expenses such as tuition deposits, housing deposits, books and supplies, and transportation — expenses which often must be paid for up front.

More than 550 students, many living in or near Barron Park, have benefited from the generosity of the extended Gunn community. Last year, Gunn Foundation scholarships helped put 30 Gunn seniors on their path to a bright future. One Gunn Foundation Scholar from Barron Park who is going strong is Alex Gil-Fernandez, now pursuing his Bachelor's degree at Cal State University San Marcos.

The fundraising push to make college happen for the Class of 2020 is underway. This year, on Saturday night, January 18, 2020, the Gunn-Paly Boys and Girls Basketball games

will benefit both the Gunn Foundation and Palo Alto High School's Rise Together Education nonprofit. Every year, the amount that can be given to students depends on the generosity of the Gunn community. You can support students in the Gunn community with a donation to the Gunn Foundation.

To join us, please make a tax-deductible donation in any amount via check or online. For details, visit the Gunn Foundation website: <http://gunnfound.org/donate/> or <https://www.facebook.com/GunnFoundation> Your support truly makes a difference.



The Gunn Foundation proudly awarded scholarships to 30 graduating seniors from the Class of 2019. Photo courtesy of the Gunn Foundation: <http://gunnfound.org/about/>

## BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2019

Barron Park Association  
724 Barron Avenue  
Palo Alto, California 94306

### EDITOR

Myrna Rochester

### LAYOUT

Hilary Glann

### PROOFREADER

Gwen Luce

### CONTRIBUTORS

Emily Cohen, Winter Dellenbach, Claire Elliott, Hilary Glann, Douglas L. Graham, Silvia Griswold, John W. King, Sung Kresie, Jeannie Lythcott, Lynn Melena, Jeralyn Moran, Bob Moss, Myrna Rochester, Sky Runser, Christine Witzel

### PHOTO/ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

Dakota Corbin (Unsplash), Winter Dellenbach, Nathan Driscoll (Noun Project), Claire Elliott, Flatart (Noun Project), Silvia Griswold, Gunn Foundation, Sung Kresie, Jack Owiki (Pro Bono Photo), Jaya Pandey, Kizil Omuzlu Sahin, Hugh Vandervoort, Ethan Winning, Angelina Wang (PalyVoice), Christine Witzel

### PRINTER

Prodigy Press

## CALL FOR ARTISTS!



Created by Nathan Driscoll from Noun Project

Are you a Barron Park artist, photographer, artisan, craftsman, sculptor, designer, musician, composer, writer, poet ... ? Do you know one? You and your work can be featured — with samples or as an interview — in a future BPA Newsletter. Please send us your idea with a draft artist's statement and reproducible samples or a description of your work to: [mrbpa@sonic.net](mailto:mrbpa@sonic.net) or [newsletter@bpapaloalto.org](mailto:newsletter@bpapaloalto.org)

## ARE YOU ELECTRIFYING?

To meet our climate goals, Palo Alto must move away from fossil fuels. If you are a Barron Park resident who has recently installed solar panels, converted an appliance or heating/cooling/water heater system from gas to electric, we'd like to hear about your motivations and experiences so we can share them in upcoming BPA Newsletters.

Please send an email to Hilary Glann at [hglann@gmail.com](mailto:hglann@gmail.com)



Created by Flatart from Noun Project

# Bol Park Native Garden Ready for Fall Planting!

By Claire Elliott, Grassroots Ecology

The landscape of Bol Park includes many non-native trees, shrubs, and groundcover that, though they provide oxygen, sequester carbon, and provide shade and beauty, do not provide food that is required by local wildlife. That is because the primary source of protein required by most birds, amphibians, reptiles, and even small mammals is insects (most notably caterpillars that are soft and easy to eat and feed to babies). Our local insects have not adapted to the chemical compounds produced by non-native plants.

At a recent California Native Plant Society symposium, entomologist and author of *Bringing Nature Home* Doug Tallamy shared a fascinating story of the plant/caterpillar/bird connections he has observed as he converted his home landscape to primarily native species. Doug shared many photos of bird parents stuffing caterpillars into waiting babies' mouths. His research has shown that some pairs of chickadees bring over 500 caterpillars to their babies daily! Caterpillars can be generalists, but most are specialists, like the Monarch caterpillars that only eat milkweed. The more species of native plants, the more caterpillars, and the more caterpillars, the more birds, frogs, etc.



Black-capped chickadee carries multiple caterpillars home to its babies. Courtesy of Doug Tallamy, <http://www.bringingnaturehome.net>

This plant/wildlife connection is one of the many reasons that the BPA Native Habitat Committee and the nonprofit I work with, Grassroots Ecology, use native plants for the landscapes we install. This common goal has created a wonderful partnership.

Grassroots Ecology provides locally-grown native plants from our nursery and recruits volunteers to help with weeding, sheet mulching, and planting. The BPA Native Habitat Committee members bring their talent and energy and lots of volunteers from the community to help. We are all thankful to our funders for this project: the Committee has received a Palo Alto Garden Club grant for plants and irrigation supplies; and Grassroots Ecology has funding from the Santa Clara Valley Water District for staff time and plants.

The BPA Native Habitat Committee's amazing team — Melanie Cross, Rich and Linda Elder, and Jeff Burch — has put in countless hours of manual labor and, in addition, each has brought uncommon talent and passion to the project. With her plant knowledge, Melanie drew up a detailed design for Phase 3.

Rich brought his chainsaw to cut up branches and worked with Melanie and Linda to place the branches that mark the edge of the garden and paths. Rich and Jeff also installed irrigation lines to each new extension. Jeff has, for quite some time, been propagating and tending milkweed patches for the Monarchs.

The Committee's most recent effort was preparing the installation of Phase 3. Fall is the best time to plant Natives in order to take advantage of the winter rains to help them establish. To prepare for a fall planting, we organized a "sheet mulching" workday in August. Sheet mulching involves laying cardboard and covering it with mulch. It helps control weeds, keeps the soil moist after planting, and adds carbon to the soil.



Two volunteers place a coyote mint in Phase 3 of the Bol Park Native Garden. Photo: Claire Elliott

Since Grassroots Ecology received an offer by a group of more than forty 20-somethings from a local church to help with a project on November 16, we asked them to come to Bol Park to help with planting.

After six months of almost no rain, the ground under the cardboard was hard and dry. To remedy that, we cut holes in the cardboard for each planting spot and soaked the ground a couple of times. Rich even designed his own tool that cut perfect 12-inch circles in the cardboard. To soak the soil, we also used "holey buckets" designed and created by my co-workers at Grassroots Ecology. Holey buckets are five-gallon plastic buckets with a few holes drilled on one side up a few inches from the bottom. They act as drip irrigators and are perfect for soaking each planting spot. Melanie placed flags marking the location for each plant, and the night before the planting we laid out the plants.

The results were fabulous! We installed almost 300 plants, 42 different species, in under three hours. A small group also worked with Jeff to continue the sheet mulching work up the Bol Park shared pathway.

But much of our success was due to the team's prep work. The precut cardboard and moistened soil made it much easier to dig, and as an added benefit, helped the plants transition to their new home. Now that the rains have finally arrived, it will be fun to watch this garden grow as the butterflies, bees, birds, and other wildlife make their home and foraging grounds in the Bol Park Native Garden.

To donate to the Bol Park Native Habitat Project, choose the "Bol Park Fund" at [friendsofpaparks.org/donations](http://friendsofpaparks.org/donations). By snail mail or phone: payable to "Friends of the Palo Alto Parks (FOPAP), for Bol Park Fund," at FOPAP, 425 Grant Ave., Suite 27, Palo Alto, CA 94306. Phone: (650) 327-7323.



Our fabulous group of young volunteers from a local church gathered with neighbor volunteers and Grassroots Ecology staff after installing nearly 300 plants.

Photo: Claire Elliott

# Catherine Patricia (Patty) Eldridge

By Sung Kresie

Our dear friend and neighbor Pat Eldridge passed away on October 19, 2019, at 101 years old. We join her many close friends, family, and neighbors who miss her very much; it's hard to believe she is gone.

My husband Knute and I lived next door to Pat for more than 33 years. When our son Scott was born in 1994, she became Scott's neighborhood grandmother and remained so the rest of her life. Pat delighted in doing needlepoint. The walls of her home were lined with her beautiful work. In this photo Scott is holding a piece treasured by our family: It's a little boy holding a kite, with Scott's full name and date of birth. At the bottom, it is signed "CPE 1994." Scott always spent time with Pat. She has said she was happiest when they got together for Scott's piano playing, even after he left for college and grad school.



Scott Kresie with Pat Eldridge. Photo: Sung Kresie

Our family wishes to pay tribute to Pat and her long and happy life.

- Julie Spengler: "One cute thing you might want to know about Pat is that they always put dried corn out on the patio, and she would sit in her living room and look out the window to watch the squirrels eat the corn. She really enjoyed that."
- Mark Allen: "She had a beautiful heart – she was beautiful inside and out."
- Pat Brandse: "Pat was always interested in what happened in our street. Her mind was sharp 'til the end."

# Our Wild Neighbors: The Red Shouldered Hawk

By Jeralyn Moran



Adult Red-shouldered hawk. Courtesy of Hugh Vandervoort, [hughvandervoort.com](http://hughvandervoort.com)

Is that a Red-tailed hawk? No, wait ... No red tail ... A youngster that has yet to attain its adult plumage? Hmmmm ...

We are blessed to have several types of hawks in or near Barron Park, some staying year-round, some migrating through the area. All are considered to be in the "birds-of-prey" group. You may have caught a glimpse of an adult Red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), which is relatively common here, more easily identified by its (yes) red tail feathers.



An adult Red-shouldered hawk. Courtesy of Ethan Winning, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/thanwinning/page17>

The Red-shouldered hawks (*Buteo lineatus*) we see locally are indeed local for the most part, in that they do not migrate. This also holds true for our local Red-tailed hawks. Smaller than the Red-tailed hawk, but bigger

than a crow, the Red-shouldered adults have beautiful, rich orange coloring on their shoulders, breast, head, and inner wings, with black and white banding on the tail and "checkerboarding" (of black and white) on the outer wing feathers. When you see them flying, look for translucent crescents near the wingtips to help you identify this species. Keep an eye out for their stick nests, often built in a main crotch of a large tree.

These birds typically hunt by intently observing the ground below from a high perch, but will hunt while in flight as well. They are considered 'forest hawks,' who will prey on mice, young squirrels, snakes, and even frogs. As you would agree, excellent eyesight is an important tool for most birds of prey!

As with all our wild neighbors, always be very careful about using poisons of any type around your home; the 'secondary injury/death' of a predator (like a Red-shouldered hawk) through eating a poisoned rodent is tragic.

**Fun Facts** (offered by our bird-loving friends at [www.allaboutbirds.org](http://www.allaboutbirds.org)):

- Although the American crow often mobs the Red-shouldered hawk, sometimes the relationship is not so one-sided. They may chase each other and try to steal food from each other. They may also both attack a Great horned owl and join forces to chase the owl out of the hawk's territory.
- The Great horned owl often takes nesting Red-shouldered hawks, but the hawk occasionally turns the tables. While a Red-shouldered hawk was observed



A young (immature) Red-shouldered hawk. Courtesy of Kizil Omuzlu Sahin through <https://ebird.org>

chasing a Great horned owl, its mate took a young owl out of its nest and ate it.

- Red-shouldered hawks return to the same nesting territory year after year. One Red-shouldered hawk occupied a territory in Southern California for 16 consecutive years.
- By the time they are five days old, nesting Red-shouldered Hawks can shoot their feces over the edge of their nest. Bird poop on the ground is a sign of an active nest.
- The Red-shouldered hawk is divided into five subspecies. The four Eastern forms contact each other, but the West Coast form is separated from the Eastern forms by 1600 km (1000 mi). The Northern form is the largest. The form in very southern Florida is the palest, having a gray head and very faint barring on the chest.
- The oldest-known Red-shouldered hawk was a female, and at least 25 years, 10 months old, when she was recaptured and re-released during banding operations in California in 2000. She had been banded in the same state in 1974.

## Spring BPA Newsletter Deadline – Monday, March 2, 2020

To Our Valued 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 2, 2020, 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 us in advance. The Spring issue will be mailed in early April 2020, to all households in Barron Park – to encourage paid memberships.

Announcements should be for events scheduled after April 15, 2020. Please keep this in mind, especially for school activities. Thanks!

# Why I Bike: Confessions of a Reluctant Cyclist

By Hilary Glann

Although I was an avid road cyclist in my teens and twenties, I rarely biked around Palo Alto. When one day a friend asked why I wasn't riding my bike to a meeting in town, I really didn't have an answer. I couldn't use the weather or the terrain as an excuse – the truth was that I was fearful. Riding a bike around town seemed more dangerous than driving, and besides, I was always in a hurry or running late.

But really, I had no excuse. I decided to take a deep breath and try an experiment: I'd bike all over town for two weeks and see how it went. I got a tune up for my bike, found a pannier for my stuff, and took off.

It was a lot easier to bike than I thought. Bryant Street is fast, safe, and beautiful; the Cal Avenue tunnel is convenient and well lit; and the bike lanes on East Meadow and Charleston are well marked. Google Maps happily serves up safe cycling routes. I don't worry about finding a parking space downtown, and I get 15-45 minutes of cardio every time I run an errand!



Photo Courtesy of Dakota Corbin on Unsplash.

Yes, safety is still a concern, but I obey stop signs, signal, watch out for parked cars, and make sure cars acknowledge me before I make a move. I use my "outside voice" to get attention. And, I hope drivers remember that cyclists reduce traffic congestion and parking woes so please, watch out for cyclists!

I have now made the commitment permanent. I bought a ton of bike lights and am lit up like a Christmas tree when I bike at night.

Sure, if it's late, raining, or cold, if I'm exhausted, or if I have a big trip to the grocery store, I drive. But biking around town has given me a new appreciation for this City and its wonderful neighborhoods, plus my aerobic fitness is better too.

Start small with your bike trips and be a safe cyclist. For example, use your bike for trips of 1 mile each way or less. You might find you like it, and the planet will like it too!

## More Bike Palo Alto Photos!

Photos by Jack Owiki, Pro Bono Photo



Volunteers inform and introduce Bike Palo Alto participants to donkeys Perry and Jenny.



Larry Reeves answers questions under the watchful eye of Jenny the donkey.



Youths enjoy rolling down Strawberry Hill.

# History of the Barron Park Association—Part Three

By Douglas L. Graham, Barron Park Historian

## Recap of Parts One and Two

Part One of this article covered the beginnings of community action in Barron Park, including the protest made in 1932 against the enormous state “borrow pit” dug in the Maybelle [sic] area to provide fill to build the Bayshore Highway (predecessor to the Freeway). We also covered the 30-year “cold war” with Palo Alto over annexation, the fire protection problem, “do-it-yourself” government, annexations that split the neighborhood, and, in 1964, the birth of the “new” Barron Park Association with a group of young leaders headed by Richard Placone. Finally, we described the BPA’s two greatest achievements: the creation of Bol Park in 1973 and a smooth annexation to the City in 1975.

Part Two covered the growth and development of the BPA as it was transformed from a small group of leaders focused on a short list of critical tasks into a fully mature, widely based citizens’ group dealing with all the issues of interest to the neighborhood. We dealt with “Phase 2” of Bol Park development: the addition of the regional bikepath (today’s multi-use “shared pathway”); the initiation of the May Fêtes; creek issues of flooding, bank erosion, and pollution; the Barron Park history project; the growth of the Association that became the largest and politically most active neighborhood group in Palo Alto; the sponsorship and monitoring of the enormous flood control project that effectively ended floods on both creeks; and finally, the emergence of watchdogs and activists concerned with underground water pollution, air pollution, evacuation, and earthquake safety.

## Will Beckett

In 1993 Will Beckett was elected the seventh President of the BPA after the resignation of Dave Chalton (See Illustration A, Will Beckett). Will was one of our “activist” presidents, serving from 1993 until 2002. He brought harmony and consensus decisions back to the Board and improved the committee structure that was started by Doug Graham (1983-86) and expanded during the long presidency of John Joynnt (1986-92).



**Illustration A: Will Beckett, BPA President 1993-2002. Date and photographer unrecorded.**

## Traffic, Streets, and Curbside Recycling

Will Beckett founded the BPA Streets Committee shortly after joining the Board in 1976. He worked with City staff on traffic and streets issues for years, gaining invaluable experience and knowledge. This made it possible for him to lead the neighborhood in resolving a long-standing problem: how to keep our “rural-looking” streets from appearing run down and trashy — by installing the valley gutters that now define the edges of many of our older streets such as Matadero, Los Robles, and parts of Laguna. This solution avoided violating the long-standing neighborhood feeling against curbs and gutters. The valley gutters have been generally well accepted by the neighbors. Also, as President, Will led the BPA into volunteering to be the test case for curbside recycling in Palo Alto. The program was successful in Barron Park and was subsequently instituted City-wide.

In general, Will refocused the BPA away from reactive “anti” programs aimed to counter threats to our lifestyle or property values onto proactive, neighborhood-building activities (“parties are as important as issues”). In this effort, Will was strongly supported by Vice President Paul Edwards, the founder of the Barron Park May Fêtes. Other Board members and committee chairs, including Clara Sharpless and Don Anderson, started the Home and Garden Tours and the long-running Winter Holiday

Parades and Songfests. During that time, the BPA also facilitated donkey maintenance and activities.

## Professionalization of the BPA Newsletter

Nancy Hamilton became the BPA Newsletter Editor in 1993 and began a slow process of professionalizing the publication.



**Illustration B: Nancy Hamilton, BPA Newsletter Editor 1993-2015. Date and photographer unrecorded.**

In her first year as Editor, she began to feature a message from the BPA President on page one. She also arranged the sale of advertising space to Barron Park businesses. Nancy expanded the newsletter coverage to more committees, topics, and neighborhood writers. The first 12-page issue appeared in 1994 and the first May Fête photos in 1995. Photos appeared more and more frequently throughout the 1990s. The first profiles of Barron Park artists and artisans appeared in 1995. Detailed illustrations, such as maps and tables proliferated in the early 2000s. Color photos are costly in print, but Nancy used them judiciously and beautifully starting in 2010 — especially in reports on the May Fête. All in all, by the time Nancy laid down her pencil as Editor in 2015, our BPA Newsletter had been totally transformed.

## Modernization of BPA Communications

Doug Moran was elected the eighth BPA President in 2002 (See Illustration C, Doug Moran). As a Board member, Doug already had an illustrious history as a member of the committee handling liaison with the Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water)

during the detailed planning and construction phases in 1977-78 of anti-erosion structures on about a dozen properties on Ilima Way and Matadero Avenue. A longtime donkey handler and an IT expert introducing new aspects of BPA communications, Doug was the co-webmaster (along with Nancy Hamilton) of the original BPA website. He created and then managed the BPA mailing lists for 15 years.



**Illustration C: Doug Moran BPA President 2002-2008. Date and photographer unrecorded.**

As President, Doug Moran was a good organizer, shortening Board meetings and making them more effective. One of his key accomplishments was to encourage greatly increased use of email communication and the email lists by Board and committee members.

Doug monitored the improvements on the Barron Diversion-Matadero Bypass project that had to be made on Matadero Creek below Barron Park in the late 1990s and early 2000s before the project could be fully implemented in Barron Park. The original plan by Valley Water required dirt-haul trucks to haul thousands of loads of dirt out of the neighborhood on Barron Park streets and later to haul much of the dirt back in, to be used for back-fill. The BPA effort, led by Doug, convinced Valley Water to massively reduce this traffic by having half of it go through the VA Hospital grounds instead of Barron Park, and by storing the dirt to be re-used on-site or spreading it on the shoulder of Strawberry Hill. It was a classic “win-win” solution.

Doug represented the BPA on Palo Alto’s Comprehensive Plan (along with Will Beckett and Bob Moss) and revised the BPA email lists and website to give better access to City staff. He participated in many city-wide advisory committees regarding neighborhoods, El Camino Real, Emergency Preparedness, and the preservation of retail establishments in the neighborhoods. In these activities he carried the banner of Barron Park before the eyes of other Palo Alto residents more than any other Barron Park leaders during those

years (except perhaps for John Joynt and Bob Moss!).

### **Evac-Safe Redux**

Several small accidental releases of toxic gases and chemical vapors by Stanford Research Park companies on Barron Park’s immediate northern border raised another point of concern, bringing thoughts of Bhopal to the fore. (In 1984, Bhopal, an industrial city in central India, was the site of what is still the greatest industrial disaster in world history – the release of 30 tons of highly toxic gas and the exposure of 600,000 people to its consequences, including a death toll of about 15,000.) Soon after Bhopal, a trial evacuation of parts of northern Barron Park, in cooperation with the City, was organized by Dr. Inge Harding-Barlow, Art Bayce, and their Evac-Safe committee. It was quite successful and a valuable learning experience for all involved. It was the first trial evacuation run by Palo Alto and would not have taken place without Inge’s expertise, drive, and perseverance.

### **Emergency Preparedness**

Barron Park’s emphasis on Emergency Preparedness increased following the Loma Prieta earthquake in October 1989, as discussed in Part 2 of this story (See the section on the BPA committee, “Quake-Safe”). This was enhanced in the early 2000s by the City’s growing interest in convincing residents to prepare to be on their own for three days after any major emergency. Gradually, robust E-Prep teams of residents, including several in Barron Park, were recruited and trained, and continue to be active throughout Palo Alto today.

### **Neighborhood “Beautification”**

Clara Sharpless was a BPA Board member for many years. She edited the newsletter from 1991 until 1993 when Nancy Hamilton took it over. Clara’s main interest, however, was in what we called at the time the “beautification” of Barron Park. There had been many attempts made over the years to improve the appearance of our streets and yards, especially in sporadic efforts to plant more street trees to replace dying species or fill in bare areas that had never had them. Clara was involved in many of the street tree planting projects, often along with Will Beckett and others.

### **Death of the Black Acacias**

A notable example of citizen-led street tree planting followed the deaths, in the 1990s and early 2000s, of most of the black acacia trees that had originally been planted along

Matadero and Los Robles Avenues. By the 1970s they had formed arches over the streets and gave them the appearance of tunnels of greenery. They were one of the charming features of Barron Park in the 1970s, but by 2000, most of them were dead or dying. During this period, the Barron Park Garden Club (not a BPA committee) was also very involved in spreading information on how to beautify our yards.

### **Renovation of Juana Briones Park and Bol Park**

In the mid-1990s, the City began to renovate some Palo Alto parks. Juana Briones Park, built in 1968, was renovated in 1995 beginning in May with the removal of the “train” and “giraffe” in the playground. The turf was restored, and some shrubs and trees replaced. Unsafe trees were removed or trimmed. BPA members were consulted, especially Will Beckett and Doug Graham. The new playground was finished in early 1996 and a City-sponsored celebration held on June 25, 1996.

The City, in collaboration with the BPA Board, planned a renovation of Bol Park in 2001. It was carried out in the Winter and Spring of 2002 by the Project Manager, a Barron Park native, Kate Rooney, who had grown up petting the donkeys at the original Bol family donkey pasture. The walkways and turf area were redone; the original resident-built play structure and train were removed (30 years of aging had made them unsafe) and replaced by a new climbing structure, swings, and the immediately popular spring-mounted riding donkeys. The renovated park was reopened June 20, 2002, with a very well-attended ice-cream social.

### **Matadero Well Site Mini-Park**

Lynn Melena became the ninth BPA President and served for five years, 2008-13 (See Illustration D, Lynn Melena). She brought to the BPA a special focus on environmental and ecological issues; her tireless efforts and relentless work on the Matadero Well Site got the City to transform it from a crumbling eyesore to the lovely, welcoming “parklet” with benches and attractive plantings. She was greatly assisted by Richard Placone in closing the deal with the Utilities Department and the City Manager in late 2012. Doug Moran had actively promoted the concept since 2007. Activist Susan Stansbury also

deserves credit for her effort to get the park created. Dedication of the parklet occurred on August 25, 2013.

Lynnie led the Barron Park Green Team and the 2008 and 2010 Green Tours of Barron Park. The Green Team also sponsored the Green Tour, the mini-can challenge (promoting smaller black waste bins), a Low Carbon Diet workshop, plantings in Bol Park, tree planting with the Canopy organization, and workshops on water conservation and less toxic cleaning products.



**Illustration D: Lynnie Melena BPA President 2008-2013. Date and photographer unrecorded.**

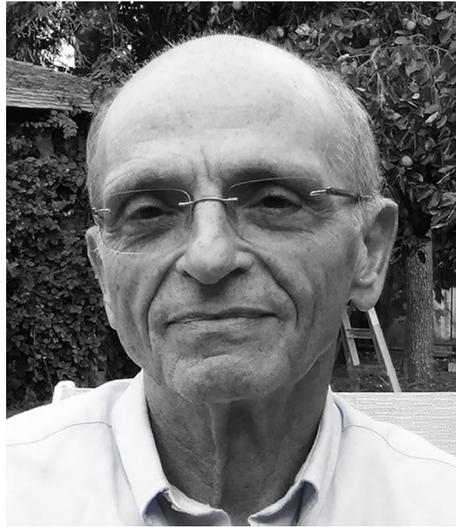
Lynnie represented Barron Park on the Arastradero Road redesign project. She led an effort to clarify the purpose and use of three Barron Park Association email lists, and initiated the BPA co-sponsorship of the annual Bike Palo Alto event with a monetary contribution. Bike Palo Alto is now in its tenth year and is successfully operating independently from the BPA.

**Stanford Research Park - Noise, Danger, and Air Pollution**

Art Liberman was our tenth President. Prior to his election, the Board passed a one-year term limit bylaw for the presidency. Although Art served for only eight months (2013-14) his impact had already been well-established through many years of monitoring the Stanford Research Park companies that back up against Chimalus Drive residences for noise pollution, air pollution, and hazardous substance risks.

His major achievements included persuading the City Council to set a deadline for removal

of the Communications & Power Industries (CPI) Plating Shop.



**Illustration E: Art Liberman, BPA President 2013-2014. Date and photographer unrecorded.**

Unfortunately for Art and the Board, his term coincided with an intense political struggle within Barron Park on issues surrounding the city-wide Measure D. Measure D canceled plans for a senior apartment complex and single-family homes on Maybell and Clemo Avenues (the 2013 proposal was not the version later approved and currently under construction at that site). As Art wrote in 2019, "The Measure D issue was exceptionally challenging for Barron Park because the neighborhood was split and ... because feelings were so strong on both sides." He characterized the controversy as "(removing) most of the oxygen from the air in Barron Park for (the next) six months." The Board made a limited donation (about \$200) to the Measure D proponents, after taking an email and postcard poll of the entire neighborhood, which voted about two to one in favor of the funding.

In other actions, the Board voted to sever the long-standing sponsorship of local Boy Scout Troop #72 because of the then-current national BSA discriminatory policies banning adult volunteers who were gay — another divisively sensitive issue. All in all, the BPA under Art's leadership made astonishing achievements for such a short presidency in what Art referred to as a "tumultuous" year (also see below paragraphs on diversity and donkeys).

**Twenty-first Century Diversity in Barron Park**

In the past 10 years, the BPA has evolved along with the growing ethnic diversity of

the neighborhood. Barron Park has seen great demographic changes since the 1970s. First, there was a major change in the socio-economic level of the average residents. In the 1970s, the typical residents were a mix of blue-collar workers — such as small construction contractors, skilled technicians, retail and postal employees — alongside school-teachers, white-collar workers, middle-level managers, scientists, and Stanford employees and faculty. By 2010, the blue-collar workers were almost entirely gone, replaced by high-tech engineers and biotech scientists, other professionals, and a sprinkling of higher-level managers (including company CEOs) and entrepreneurs.

The second big demographic change was a shift to a more diverse mix of residents — Israelis, other Middle Easterners, Eastern Europeans, and neighbors from East and South Asia. Activities introduced by various nationalities included French families' Sunday soccer in Bol Park. The BPA responded to the burgeoning diversity by encouraging new residents to become involved in the committees and the Board and promoting cultural celebrations and festivals that welcome the entire community.

Another recognition of diversity and move toward solidarity by the neighborhood has been the help given by Barron Parkers, especially by Winter Dellenbach and the Friends of Buena Vista, to our neighbors in the Buena Vista Mobile Home Park, who were narrowly saved from eviction through a long and concerted effort by private and public entities. For the past few Decembers, all of Barron Park has been invited to celebrate the colorful Posada hosted by Buena Vista.

Social events organized or supported by Palo Alto City Council Member and BPA Board member Lydia Kou included two Chinese New Year's celebrations with Lion Dancers, and several late summer Movie Nights in Bol Park. Board member Jaya Pandey added to the international mix by organizing our first Holi celebration in 2016, followed by the first Diwali celebration, including Indian dancers, in 2017. They were all well attended by Barron Park residents and people from other neighborhoods and nearby cities.

**Donkey Business Assures the Future**

During Art Liberman's year the near-term future of the Barron Park donkeys was secured. The donkey trust had enjoyed free use of the pasture ever since the Bol family

sold their land to James Witt in 1991. The BPA Board helped facilitate an agreement between the Acterra/Barron Park Donkey group and James Witt over rental payments for the use of his property. 2013 ended very well indeed.

**Happy Hours and Improved Annual Meetings**

In 2014, the Board elected Markus Fromherz to be our eleventh President. Markus served three terms (2014-2016).



**Illustration F: Markus Fromherz, BPA President 2014-2016. Date and photographer unrecorded.**

Following an original idea proposed by Lisa Landers, our longtime Membership Chair, Markus initiated the Community Happy Hours, monthly get-togethers in local restaurants open to all residents to meet each other and Board members. The first series was held at Cibo's and proved very successful. Happy Hour subsequently moved to Celia's on El Camino. Also, during Markus's presidency, Vice President Maryanne Welton took on the job of improving the BPA March Annual Meetings, with considerable success. At the request of several community members, the Board took a stand on residents' complaints of increased airplane noise from the major route changes approved by the Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) for landings at SFO.

**New Editor for the BPA Newsletter**

In 2015, Nancy Hamilton retired from the job after 22 years (!) of organizing and producing the BPA Newsletter. Nancy was a hard act to follow, but the new Editor, Myrna Rochester, has been very well received by the Board and article contributors.



**Illustration G: Myrna Rochester, BPA Newsletter Editor 2015-present. Photo courtesy of Rochester family.**

She has taken Nancy's excellent publication and pushed it to an even higher standard of excellence in content and editing. Newsletter layout and production was seamlessly carried out by Patrick Coyne from 2009 to 2019.

**Shared Pathway and Bol Park Issues**

During Markus Fromherz's terms as President, Bol Park and the adjacent bike and pedestrian pathway encountered numerous problems — as well as drastic proposals for their solution. In October 2014, the Veterans Administration (VA) Hospital started removing all the vegetation — including mature live oak trees — along the fence line on their property and next to the Bol Park pathway property. As Richard Placone wrote, "trees and shrubbery that bordered the pathway ... were being bulldozed and ripped out, leaving vast areas along the bike path open for the first time to vistas of the VA campus. Within a few hours, what was once an idyllic and bucolic environment (along) ... the pathway became a glaring scar." Chimalus Drive neighbors Art Liberman, David Boxerman, and Richard Placone contacted the VA staff but found little flexibility in the VA's approach. The neighbors called for volunteers to form a standing BPA committee to develop plans to restore the environment. The BPA appointed a Pathway Committee in October 2015. Both the City and the VA assigned staff to work with the BPA on this issue.

By Autumn 2016, the project was well underway. The City's landscape architect Peter Jensen prepared a landscape plan, and October 24, 2016, was designated as the planting day. Canopy staff and 60 volun-

teers from Canopy, Barron Park, and other neighborhoods turned out to do the hands-on planting. The VA provided initial irrigation for two years at no cost to the community. Peter Jensen and the City Manager's assistant Khashayar ("Cash") Alaei persuaded the VA to modify its landscaping plan to complement the City's work. Richard Placone wrote "As a result, in time the landscape environment along the pathway will not only be restored but improved over what was there before the construction project began."

In 2016, Bol Park was threatened by a sweeping proposal by a consulting firm hired by the City to redesign all of Palo Alto's parks to better match "what the residents really want in the twenty-first century." The consultants did no consulting with residents, and apparently almost no field work, basing their decisions largely on Google Earth satellite photos. For Bol Park they had in mind a soccer field where the irrigated turf is now, a road bicycle course with curves and mounds to challenge dirt bike riders in the "undeveloped" south end of the park, a picnic area, public restrooms, and even more. The community reacted with alarm, as this appeared to be a desecration that would totally ignore the intent of the community about what Bol Park was intended to be. Richard Placone organized a committee that took a poll of the neighborhood; it found intense opposition to almost all the proposed "improvements." Opposition arose in other neighborhoods to similar plans for other Palo Alto parks, and eventually most of the consultants' recommendations were quietly shelved.

**The "Reincarnation" of Dick Placone**

This is a good spot in this article to take a note of Richard ("Dick") Placone's re-involvement in the BPA and Barron Park issues. When he retired as BPA President in 1976, after about 12 years of service, he expected his withdrawal from Barron Park affairs to be permanent. But in 2012, after 36 years, Dick was moved by the struggles of the BPA to get the Utilities Department to create a parklet at the Matadero Well Site. After that success came the VA vegetation disaster — massive removal of trees and foliage along the perimeter of the ongoing VA construction project — and the threats to Bol Park, and Dick was ready to "kick butt and take names," as they say in the military. Even if he had not been responsible for the creation of today's BPA, of Bol Park, and of

Barron Park’s final peaceful annexation to the City, Dick would be a significant person in our history for his efforts in this decade alone.

**Richard Elder**

In 2017, Richard Elder was elected our twelfth President. Richard had been managing the email lists and continued to do so. It was an eventful year.



**Illustration H: Richard Elder, BPA President 2017-2018. Date and photographer unrecorded.**

The Bol Park Native Habitat Committee, originally headed by Shirley Finrock, was reorganized by Richard Elder, Melanie Cross, Jeff Burch, and Claire Elliott (of Grassroots Ecology). The group has embarked on a renovation and expansion of the Bol Park California Native plant garden.

Other events in 2017 included the acquisition by the donkey handlers, headed by Jenny Kiratli, of “Jenny,” a new donkey to replace our much loved Niner. Three Barron Park blocks became beta test groups for Cool Block, the City’s new community-building and anti-global-warming effort. They were Josina Avenue, Ilima Way, and Los Robles Avenue from El Cerrito Way to the end. Six other blocks and composite “blocks” have established Cool Block chapters since then.

**Buena Vista is “Saved”**

The big news of that year in Barron Park was the agreement made to “save” the Buena Vista Mobile Home Park. After five years of community effort, an agreement, largely brokered by County Supervisor Joe Simitian, was announced on May 18, 2017. Consolidating funding from several sources, the Housing Authority of Santa Clara County

purchased the park and committed to keeping it affordable in perpetuity. This allowed the nearly 400 residents to remain there until eventual development by the Authority.

**The Green Beans**

The Environmental Committee (once known as the Natural Habitat Restoration/Preservation Committee) was founded by Inge Harding-Barlow and Doug Moran and reactivated under Linnie Melena as the Green Team. It was revived again in late 2015 by Jaya Pandey and re-named the Barron Park Green Beans. Jaya’s Green Beans developed a Youth Environmental Service Project Grant, providing local middle or high school students opportunities to participate in environmental service projects serving the Barron Park community. In 2015-16, the Green Beans focused on maintaining the Pacific tree frogs in Matadero Creek. Jaya Pandey wrote that the Green Beans also “rolled out a community-based Carpool Club to facilitate ride-sharing on a regular basis.”

**E-Prep Redux, Cool Block**

Jon Affeld was the BPA’s thirteenth President in 2018. He had been on the Board for three years, working especially on our late summer Movie Nights in Bol Park. He organized the exciting Fall Foodie Festival in 2017. As President, Jon smoothly guided the Board through our monthly and Annual Community meetings.



**Illustration I: Jon Affeld. BPA President 2018. Date and photographer unrecorded.**

When the Bol Park shared pathway renovation became a subject of intense controversy, Jon conducted a civil meeting of the interested parties that gave all stakeholders a chance to present their sides — a discussion

that continues today. In the end, the BPA Board took over the pathway renovation project, retired Dick Placone’s committee, and is developing a new draft plan.

During Jon’s presidency, the BPA started the recognition of longtime neighborhood residents (50 years or more in Barron Park) — the Semi-Centenarians List. Jaya Pandey organized the first Garba/Dandiya dance festival that included traditional Gujarati dress and dances.

**The Fourteenth President**

In late 2018, John King was elected the fourteenth (and, as of January 2020, still current) President of the BPA. John has been BPA Treasurer for ten years — he continues in that role — and a key May Fête volunteer since shortly after moving here in 2003. He chaired our 2019 Annual Community Meeting that focused on plans for multiple cell towers in Barron Park, a controversial topic.



**Illustration J: John King, BPA President 2018-present. Courtesy of John King.**

In Fall 2019, the Bol Park Native Habitat Committee completed a new garden, an extension of the existing plantings that offer important habitat to insects and birds. Thanking the founding committee, Linda Elder wrote recently, “Our Native Garden is a precious jewel that enhances and graces our neighborhood. We are so fortunate that you (Shirley Finrock, Carla Bliss, and Agi Kehoe) had the vision to create it and the endurance to nurture it and make it grow.”

**A Rain Garden at Bol Park**

In late 2018 a new collaboration was started with Grassroots Ecology (spun off from Acterra) and the City to construct and plant a Rain garden in the area along Laguna Avenue between the current Native Garden and the

## 2020 Senior Lunches!

1:00 p.m. Tuesdays every other month

February 11, April 14, June 9,  
August 11, October 13, December 8

### Corner Bakery Café

3375 El Camino Real, Palo Alto

All are welcome to join and enjoy  
these community get-togethers.  
No reservations needed.

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

shared pathway. It collects rainwater runoff, allowing it to percolate into the soil. Both the City and Valley Water are encouraging Rain gardens to reduce pollution of the Bay by runoff from streets, parks, and private property. This is Barron Park's first such and, although a new idea, it fits very well into the historic purpose and style of Bol Park.

### Barron Park Centennial - 2020

An article in the Spring 2019 Newsletter by Barron Park Historian Doug Graham announced plans to celebrate the Centennial of Barron Park's existence as a suburban neighborhood. In late 1919, the Barron Estate was sold to Watsonville strawberry growers and land developers, Driscoll and Reiter. The article gave a brief summary of the early years of suburban development, beginning in 1920. The BPA Board has agreed to devote the 2020 Annual Community Meeting to celebrating our 100 years as a community. As I wrote last Spring, "Now that a hundred years have passed, and Barron Park is well integrated into Palo Alto and is still a very nice place to live, it is time for us to celebrate and also to honor those who came before us and who managed the problems, fought off the threats, saw better ways to do things, and built the neighborhood that we know and love."

### People Who Have Made a Difference

*Barron Park People Are Good People.* This slogan was used on a T-shirt in 1978 by the Barron Park Neighborhood School Committee,

an ad hoc group of parents and citizens who joined to keep the school from being closed after an arson fire destroyed or damaged nearly half of it. The slogan may sound ethnocentric, but it captured the essence of the Barron Park neighborhood culture — the feeling that the people of the neighborhood are what make it a nice place to live. The drive and enthusiasm of that school group expressed something else — the belief that our neighborhood became a desirable one, and would stay desirable, only through our unceasing joint efforts to preserve and improve it. Over the years, many citizens have worked to save or better some aspect of the neighborhood that was important to them. Their legacy to us is the neighborhood we know today. We all owe them debts of gratitude for their volunteer efforts.

### Unsung Heroes

In closing, I would like to praise the many, many Barron Parkers who helped (and in some cases, led) the various committees and informal groups who worked to make our neighborhood a better place to live. Although space did not permit mentioning all of them, many have already been honored in Newsletter articles since 1986. If I have inadvertently left out some key individuals, please let me know.

### Fact-Checkers

Also, I want to thank the nine "fact-checkers" who reviewed relevant parts of this article and corrected many of my omissions and errors. They have all been deeply involved in the BPA at one time or another over the sixty years of its existence. They included seven former BPA Presidents. Any remaining errors may be safely attributed to me.

### Conclusion

I hope you have enjoyed this three-part summary of the history of the BPA — as distinct from the history of Barron Park from its inception in 1964 through today — 55 years of community service and activism. Part One also summarized the 31 years of the not-so-well-organized neighborhood activism (1932 through 1963) that preceded the founding of the modern Barron Park Association. If you have comments or questions, please contact me.

Douglas L. Graham, Barron Park Historian,  
[dgrahampaca@gmail.com](mailto:dgrahampaca@gmail.com) 650-493-0689,  
984 Ilima Way, Palo Alto CA 94306.

## BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION

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**BPA Board Meetings** are held the 3rd Tuesday of most months at 7:15 p.m. Neighbors are welcome.

**BPA Community Happy Hours** are held the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 6:00 p.m.

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

[bpapaloalto.org](http://bpapaloalto.org)

# El Camino Business Update, Winter 2019

By Bob Moss

Since my last report in February 2019 there continue to be changes in occupancy on El Camino Real between Adobe Creek and Page Mill Road, plus an increase in vacancies, but overall vacancy rates are still low. Retail vacancy rates are increasing almost everywhere due in part to Internet competition.

The former Jewish Study Network offices at 3626 and 3628 El Camino have been vacant for several years. Marine Recruiting left 3666B last year and has formally closed the site.

The status of Palo Alto Tailoring at 3700 El Camino, at the corner of Barron Avenue, is puzzling. There is equipment in the store and clothes on racks and benches, but it has been unoccupied every time I've gone by all year. (A customer, "Wendy," left several notes on the door asking them to open or to contact her so she could retrieve her clothes.) Owners and managers of this property have addresses in Los Altos.

Ace of Sandwiches at 3864 El Camino closed late last year and has been replaced by The Sandwich Bug, now a business member of the Barron Park Association. Baron Barista coffee shop at 3990C El Camino has closed, and the storefront is vacant.

The proposal to replace the Su Hong Restaurant building at 4256 El Camino with a five-story hotel is still pending. However, there is currently a restaurant open and serving meals at that site under the name Su Zhe Eatery.

Mike's Bikes at 3001 El Camino moved to Middlefield near San Antonio several years ago. A proposal to redevelop the site with 19,800 sq. ft. of ground floor retail and 30 apartments plus 20 apartments in a building behind the retail was approved more than a year ago, but construction has not started.

We Fix Macs moved from 3159 to 3229 El Camino, mainly on the second floor. CleverTech now occupies 3159.

The Foot Locker site at 3225 El Camino at Portage was demolished last summer, and a mixed-use project with a four-story building that will have 6513 sq. ft. of ground floor retail and six housing units, plus a two-story rear building with 2061 sq. ft. of ground floor retail and 1826 sq. ft. of second floor offices is under construction.

Redevelopment of 3703-3709 El Camino at Wilton to a four-story 61-unit apartment project with a small amount of ground floor

retail was approved by the ARB almost two years ago. Treasure Island Stamps and Coins at 3703, Nouvelle Bridal Boutique at 3705, and Euromart grocer at 3707 will be replaced by affordable housing.

Compadres Restaurant at 3877 closed in October 2010. A project for 4027 sq. ft. of retail and 17 condos was approved for the site. Demolition of the old building is now complete.

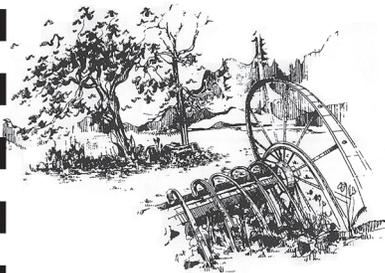
The former Chicago Pizza building at 4115 El Camino was demolished and will be replaced by a three-story mixed-use building with seven apartments, ground floor retail, and offices. Chicago Pizza has relocated to College Terrace, at El Camino and Cambridge Avenue.

4153A El Camino Way is still vacant. The Integrated Healing Arts site at 4157C El Camino Way has been replaced by Lee and Woo Orthodontics.

Vacancy rates	Nov. '16	Aug. '17	Aug. '18	Feb. '19	Nov. '19
El Camino, Ventura Side	6.9%	6.7%	5.2%	5.2%	5.5%
El Camino, Barron Park Side	3.1%	3.6%	2.2%	2.8%	3.0%
El Camino Way	7.0%	9.3%	3.5%	4.8%	4.6%
Total Vacancy incl. El Camino Way	4.4%	5.0%	3.2%	3.9%	3.9%

## BPA ADDRESS REMINDERS

- For the **BPA Website Home Page**, go to: [bpapaloalto.org](http://bpapaloalto.org)
- To access the **BPA Newsletter Archive**, visit: [bpapaloalto.org/bpa-newsletter](http://bpapaloalto.org/bpa-newsletter)
- To Join or Renew your **BPA Membership**, go to: [bpapaloalto.org/join-the-barron-park-association](http://bpapaloalto.org/join-the-barron-park-association)
- For **Membership Questions**, write to Lisa Berkowitz Landers: [barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com](mailto:barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com)
- For information about the three **BPA email lists** go to: [bpapaloalto.org/bpa-email-lists/](http://bpapaloalto.org/bpa-email-lists/) or write to: [listmanager@bpapaloalto.org](mailto:listmanager@bpapaloalto.org)
- 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@cbtnorcal.com](mailto:gluce@cbtnorcal.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 download or be listed on the **BPA Sitter/Childcare List**, go to: [bpapaloalto.org/babysitting-list](http://bpapaloalto.org/babysitting-list)
- Write to our **BPA Historian**, Douglas L. Graham, at: [dgrahampaca@gmail.com](mailto:dgrahampaca@gmail.com)
- Reach our **Cool Block Liaison**, Hilary Glann at: [hglann@gmail.com](mailto:hglann@gmail.com)
- To contact our **Web Manager**, write to Maurice Green: [bpawebman@bpapaloalto.org](mailto:bpawebman@bpapaloalto.org)
- Donate to the care of the **Barron Park donkeys, Perry and Jenny**, and purchase merchandise at: [barronparkdonkeys.org](http://barronparkdonkeys.org)
- For information about the **Barron Park donkeys** or to volunteer, contact Jenny Kiratli at: [barronparkdonkeys@gmail.com](mailto:barronparkdonkeys@gmail.com)
- Donate to the **Bol Park Native Plant Restoration Project**. Direct your donation to the "Bol Park Fund" by mail or phone, payable to "Friends of the Palo Alto Parks (FOPAP), for Bol Park Fund," FOPAP, 425 Grant Ave., Suite 27, Palo Alto, CA 94306. Phone: (650) 327-7323. Or visit [friendsofpaparks.org/donations](http://friendsofpaparks.org/donations)
- 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)



## 2020-2021 Barron Park Association Membership

*www.bpapaloalto.org*

Thanks and Happy New Year to all members and supporters of the Barron Park Association. Our membership cycle begins April 2020. It's fine to renew early! Or take out a new membership at any time. Memberships submitted after December 1, 2019, will extend through March 2021.

Renewals and new memberships support BPA-sponsored community events, include our quarterly Newsletter, and give access to the BPA Babysitting List. Your support is greatly appreciated! Join online at: <http://bpapaloalto.org/join-the-barron-park-association/> using PayPal. Or mail this completed form with your check to:

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

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