



# BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

John King, BPA President



**H**appy Spring 2021 Barron Park! Did you see that our neighborhood was in the news in early March, with Governor Gavin Newsom's visit and press conference at Barron Park Elementary School? He showcased our school's successful early opening for the lower grades, and answered general questions about school re-openings.

The Bol Park pathways and our donkeys Perry and Buddy – themselves the subject of a March 3 article in SFGate – certainly continue to be popular attractions! We all need a good walk outdoors and the chance to meet up with neighbors in this gorgeous spring weather.

The Barron Park Association continues to provide support, in the form of food and supplies, gift cards, and donations to needy residents at the Buena Vista Mobile Home Park, as well as to The Karat School Project (<https://theksp.org>) that provides "Edu-Kits" to students living at Palo Alto Safe Parking sites, toward occasional lunches (the most recent on March 13) for Barron Park Seniors, and toward the Bol Park Donkey and Native Habitat Garden projects. See later in this Newsletter for ways you can participate individually.

On March 28 we had a well-attended, virtual BPA Annual Meeting where Mayor Tom Dubois provided wonderful insights into

current City issues. Did you know that Mayor Tom was a Board member of the Barron Park Association when he was living here?

The Barron Park neighborhood celebrated its 100th year in 2020, but we missed having our planned celebration, due to the pandemic. The great news is that our own BP Historian Doug Graham will present the History of Barron Park at a Zoom meeting, Sunday, May 23 at 2:00 p.m. See below for details. I hope everyone will consider "going" to the presentation to learn about the unique history of our wonderful neighborhood.

Once again, we have been forced to cancel

### Neighbors & Local Businesses!

Hope you enjoy this free Newsletter! To support our special neighborhood, receive three additional quarterly Newsletters, and/or place an annual ad in the Newsletter, please join or renew your membership in the Barron Park Association: <http://bpapaloalto.org/membership-form>

our Annual May Fete celebration, but hopefully in May 2022 we can revive our longstanding tradition! Fortunately, COVID vaccines have been rolling out since late last year. Maybe you have already received your vaccine or are on target to be vaccinated soon. We can't wait to get back to what we didn't used to call "normal" life. Wishing you all good health!

Join the BPA or renew at: <http://bpapaloalto.org/join-the-barron-park-association/>. You can reach me at: [president@bpapaloalto.org](mailto:president@bpapaloalto.org)

## FROM HAYFIELDS TO HOMES: THE BARRON PARK CENTENNIAL Sunday, May 23, 2021, 2-3 p.m. via Zoom

On May 23, the Barron Park Association will present an interactive internet presentation of our 100 years as a neighborhood by our neighborhood Historian, Douglas L. Graham.

Doug's talk will cover the beginnings of the neighborhood with the subdivision of Mayfield Farm (the "Barron Estate") in 1919 to 1923, and the first suburban houses built in 1920. Our area acquired its name with the platting of the first suburban tract – Barron Park – in 1925, but was still an agricultural area until World War II.

Learn how the neighborhood grew and

developed in the Post-War period. Even more interesting is how and why the "Barron Park attitude" of creative independence and do-it-yourself government was born and still prevails.



The Barron Mansion, 1920s, from the Chatham Forbes family collection.

*(Continued on the bottom of page 11)*

### I N S I D E

<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
<a href="#">Civics Club</a>	<a href="#">BP Local Restaurant Guide</a>	<a href="#">Barron Park Traditions</a>	<a href="#">Breathe With Me Project</a>	<a href="#">Native Garden &amp; Paths</a>	<a href="#">Eucalyptus Tree Concerns</a>	<a href="#">Turmeric!</a>	<a href="#">Dragons in Barron Park</a>	<a href="#">Sustainability &amp; Carbon Action</a>

# League of Women Voters High School Civics Engagement Club

By Jenn Wagstaff Hinton (LWVPA) and Rachel Kaci (PAUSD)

“How many of us realize we have no ordained right to exist, that every generation has had to fight for freedom in this, what George Washington in his first inaugural called an experiment?”

*General Jim Mattis, retired US Marine Corps four-star general, 26th U.S. Secretary of Defense.*

These remarks were shared by Retired General Jim Mattis on January 28, following the chaotic events earlier in the month. While many of us yearned for an end to the many challenges of 2020, who among us would have imagined what transpired the first three Wednesdays of 2021: a violent insurrection at the National Capitol on January 6; the second impeachment of the 45th President of the United States on January 13; and the inauguration of the 46th President of the United States under the protection of 20,000 troops on January 20? Thankfully, democracy prevailed in the end, and the “experiment” continues.

Throughout the chaos of the events of 2020 and 2021, the National League of Women Voters soldiered on – celebrating its 101st anniversary on Valentine’s Day 2021 with over a century of work “empowering voters and defending democracy.” On a local level, in fall 2020, League of Women Voters of Palo Alto (LWVPA) President Nancy Shepherd envisioned a League-sponsored partnership with our PAUSD high schools to promote increased civic engagement in young citizens.

I (Jenn Hinton) was invited to serve as a Mentor from the League, chartered to partner with PAUSD teacher Rachael Kaci. Coincidentally, in September 2020, the Department of Education of the State of California approved the state’s first “Seal of Civic Engagement” for students to earn by demonstrating excellence in civic learning, participation in civics-related projects, contribution to their community, plus a working understanding of the United States and California Constitutions and of the American democratic system.

With LWVPA Board approval in hand, we kicked off a few introductory meetings with students in November to share the “Civic

Engagement Club” concept and to get their input.

By early January, students from both Gunn and Paly were invited to participate in the pursuit of the State Seal which involves:

- Practice academic excellence while pursuing Civic Engagement initiatives
- Demonstrate knowledge of democratic principles and processes at all levels of government
- Project execution, i.e., lead Civic Engagement projects that address real world problems
- Self-reflection, i.e., learn and grow from experiences such as poll working, panels, and projects
- Civic-mindedness, i.e., positively impact classrooms, schools, the community, and

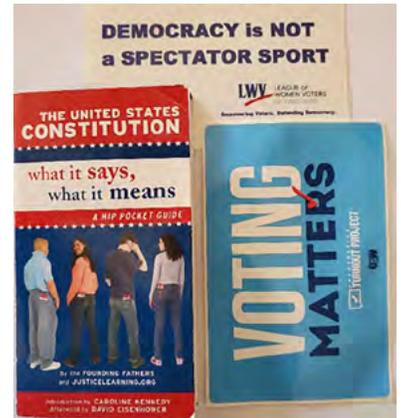


**Paly High Senior, Civic Engagement Club Member, and Panelist Sabrina Chan. Photo by Charlize Chu.**

society.

The Club’s first project with the LWVPA was a panel discussion hosted on February 16 about the documentary film “The Reunited States.” Club member and Paly senior Sabrina Chan joined five other LWVPA panelists to discuss key messages and takeaways from the film – which promotes “citizen bridge-building” to improve civil discourse in the country. The Club is brainstorming its next project: to create an awareness campaign about different pathways to elevate Civic Engagement through workshops, panels, and even school board governance. The Club

has been meeting virtually during lunch or tutorial periods. We’d like to see continued strong engagement from both Paly and Gunn students in this inspirational effort. Students, please contact Ms. Kaci at [rkaci@pausd.org](mailto:rkaci@pausd.org) to get involved today – we’d love to see you at the Club!



**Tools of Engagement: Stickers and Hip Pocket Guide to the U.S. Constitution. Photo by Jenn Wagstaff Hinton.**

Rachael Kaci is the PAUSD Advanced Authentic Research (AAR) & Work Experience (WEEP) Teacher for Paly and Gunn High Schools; Jenn Wagstaff Hinton is a Marine Mom and the LWVPA Mentor for High School Civics Engagement.

## Summer BPA Newsletter Deadline

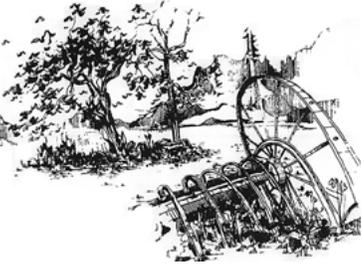
**Tuesday, June 1, 2021**

To All Our Past and Future Contributors:

Please submit articles (preferably in Microsoft Word) for the Summer issue of the Barron Park Association Newsletter, along with photos/illustrations (separate from text), by **Tuesday, June 1, 2021**, to Myrna Rochester at [mbrbpa@sonic.net](mailto:mbrbpa@sonic.net)

If your Summer idea is a query (for an article, story, report, update, interview, announcement, review, anecdote, or artist’s page...), please contact us in advance. The Summer issue will be available online and mailed (USPS) in early July 2021, to all subscribing members of the BPA.

Announcements should be for events scheduled *after* July 15, 2021. Please keep this in mind, especially – and hopefully! – for neighborhood activities. Thanks!



## 2021-2022 Barron Park Association Membership

Thanks to all the supporting members of the Barron Park Association! It's definitely time to join or renew for January 1, 2021-December 31, 2021. (If you joined or renewed after December 1, 2020, your membership is still current.) To check your membership status, email: [barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com](mailto:barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com)

Your annual dues go toward BPA-sponsored and Committee activities. They include all four quarterly Newsletters, the BPA Website, neighborhood and COVID financial support – and soon, hopefully – Happy Hours, May Fête, Movie Night, and other social events. Business members may place one print Newsletter ad each year and are listed on the BPA Website.

Join online at: <http://bpapaloalto.org/membership-form> using PayPal, or mail this completed form with your check to:

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

Name(s):	Primary email address:
	Secondary email address:
Address:	Phone:

- Newsletter:** I want the online edition instead of a mailed copy
- |   |          |  |      |
|---|----------|--|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Fellow</b>            | \$100    | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Senior</b>   | \$15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Patron</b>            | \$50     | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Business</b> | \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Member</b>            | \$30     |  |      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Contribution: | \$ _____ |  |      |
| Total Contribution:                               | \$ _____ |  |      |

Check payable to: Barron Park Association.

Note: Membership and contributions are not tax deductible.

## Need any more reasons to support the BPA?

The Barron Park Association is open to all residents and businesses in the Barron Park/Green Acres 2 area (<http://bpapaloalto.org>). The volunteer Board and BPA committees work to make our area more livable, safe, sustainable, and supportive. The BPA continues to support vulnerable neighbors during the pandemic, including residents of the Buena Vista Mobile Home Park and residents living in RVs in Palo Alto. We need each other's ideas and involvement! Send email to: [barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com](mailto:barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com) to connect with a Committee Chair on the following community interests:

- Shared bicycle/pedestrian pathways

- Safety and emergency services
- Social events
- Environmental programs
- Senior connections
- Welcoming committee
- Zoning and land use
- Traffic and streets
- Newsletter contributions.

The BPA supports other local efforts. Interested? Please contact these groups directly:

- Support Buena Vista neighbors during COVID: Karen Ratzlaff at: [karen\\_ratzlaff@hotmail.com](mailto:karen_ratzlaff@hotmail.com)

- Support local pandemic relief: Palo Alto Community Fund: <https://paloaltocommfund.org/>
- Support "edu-kits" for children living in RVs via The Karat School Project: <https://theksp.org/edukits>
- Care for donkeys: Jenny Kiratli at: [barronparkdonkeys@gmail.com](mailto:barronparkdonkeys@gmail.com)
- Volunteer for Bol Park Native Habitat support or for Ivy removal: Rich Elder at: [bpnativegarden@gmail.com](mailto:bpnativegarden@gmail.com)
- Lead or join a Cool Block Palo Alto team: Hilary Glann at: [hglann@gmail.com](mailto:hglann@gmail.com)



# CREEKSIDE INN

*Your home away from home*

(650) 493-2411



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

Complimentary amenities included in our rates:

## Room Amenities

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

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

## Reception Services

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

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

# Supporting Our Local Restaurants

By The Editors

We've all noticed that several local restaurants—including Celia's and Fish Market—are temporarily closed. Supporting our restaurants now can help them stay in business! Here's a guide to hours and ordering options for our local eateries; there's a star next to BPA business members. Note that pickup orders are far more profitable for restaurants than orders delivered by a service. Also, please consider adding a tip to your pickup order to support the restaurant and its employees. You can also call to place orders. All information subject to change.

	HOURS	OUTDOOR DINING	ORDERING INSTRUCTIONS
<b>Da Sichuan Bistro</b> 3781 El Camino Real (650) 849-2000	Daily 11 a.m.–2:30 p.m. and 4:30–9:30 p.m)	NO	For pickup, go to <a href="http://www.dasichuanrestaurant.com/">http://www.dasichuanrestaurant.com/</a> and click <b>ONLINE ORDER</b>
<b>Dinah's Poolside Restaurant</b> 4261 El Camino Real (650) 493-2844	Daily 9 a.m.–8 p.m.; 9 a.m.–7 p.m. for delivery.	YES	For delivery and pickup, visit: <a href="https://www.toast-tab.com/dinahs-poolside-4261-el-camino-real/v3/?mode=fulfillment">https://www.toast-tab.com/dinahs-poolside-4261-el-camino-real/v3/?mode=fulfillment</a>
★ <b>Driftwood Deli and Market</b> 3450 El Camino Real, (650) 493-4162	Hours: Monday–Friday 8 a.m.–7 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m.–6 p.m.	NO	For pickup call (650) 493-4162 or go to <a href="https://driftwood-deliandmarket.com/">https://driftwood-deliandmarket.com/</a> and click on <b>ORDER FOR PICKUP</b> . Call deli for contactless pickup when you arrive.
<b>Dumpling City</b> 3487 El Camino Real 650-272-6715	Tuesday–Sunday 11 a.m.–8 p.m. Closed Mondays.	NO	For pickup, go to <a href="https://www.dumplingcityca.com/">https://www.dumplingcityca.com/</a> and click on <b>ORDER ONLINE</b> .
<b>Fuki Sushi</b> 4119 El Camino Real (650) 494-9383	Tuesday–Sunday 4:30 p.m.–8:15 p.m.	NO	Go to <a href="http://www.fukisushi.com/">http://www.fukisushi.com/</a> and click on <b>ORDER ONLINE</b> or <b>DELIVERY</b> .
<b>Happy Donuts</b> 3916 El Camino Real (650) 272-6571	Daily 5 a.m. - 10 p.m.	NO	Call (650) 272-6571 for takeout.
<b>Hobee's Palo Alto</b> 4224 El Camino Real (650) 856-6124	Daily 8:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.	YES	For curbside (contactless) pickup or delivery, go to <a href="https://hobees.com/order-take-delivery-landing-page/">https://hobees.com/order-take-delivery-landing-page/</a>
<b>Hong Kong Restaurant</b> 3691 El Camino Real (650) 251-9062	Daily 11 a.m.–2:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m.–8:30 p.m.	NO	For menu go to <a href="https://www.zmenu.com/hong-kong-restaurant-palo-alto-online-menu/">https://www.zmenu.com/hong-kong-restaurant-palo-alto-online-menu/</a> then call restaurant at (650) 251-9062 to order.
<b>Indo Restaurant</b> 3295 El Camino Real (650) 494-7168	Tuesday–Sunday 11 a.m.–2 p.m. and 5 p.m.–9 p.m.	YES	Go to <a href="https://indorestaurant.square.site/">https://indorestaurant.square.site/</a> and select <b>PICKUP</b> or <b>DELIVERY</b>
<b>Mandarin Roots</b> 3345 El Camino Real (650) 565-8868	Tuesday–Sunday 11 a.m.–1:30 p.m. and 4:45 p.m.–7:30 p.m.	NO	Go to DoorDash and select <b>PICKUP</b> or <b>DELIVERY</b> : <a href="https://www.doordash.com/store/mandarin-roots-palo-alto-85/en-US">https://www.doordash.com/store/mandarin-roots-palo-alto-85/en-US</a>
★ <b>The Sandwich Bug</b> 3866 El Camino Real (650) 407- 9933.	Daily takeout hours 10 a.m.–2:30 p.m; business hours 10 a.m.–3 p.m.	NO	For pickup or delivery, go to <a href="https://www.thesandwich-bugpaloalto.com/#/">https://www.thesandwich-bugpaloalto.com/#/</a> . Ask for contactless pickup when you call or place order online.
<b>Siam Fine Thai Cuisine</b> 3924 El Camino Real (650) 812-0139	Monday–Friday 11 a.m.–2 p.m. and 5–9 p.m. Saturday and Sunday 11 a.m.–9 p.m.	NO	Go to: <a href="http://www.siamfinethaicuisine.com/">http://www.siamfinethaicuisine.com/</a> and click on <b>OUR MENU</b> . Then call (650) 812-0139 to place pickup order.
<b>So Gong Dong Tofu House</b> 4127 El Camino Real (650) 424-8805	Monday–Friday 11:30 a.m.–2 p.m., and 4:30 p.m.–8:15 p.m. Saturday and Sunday 11:30 a.m.–8:15 p.m.	YES	To order pickup, go to <a href="https://paloaltotofuhouse.wordpress.com/">https://paloaltotofuhouse.wordpress.com/</a> and click on <b>ORDER NOW!</b> Select “request curbside pickup” for contactless pickup.
★ <b>State of Mind Slice House</b> 3850 El Camino Real (650) 384-6369	Daily 11:30 a.m.–9 p.m.	YES	To order pickup or delivery, go to <a href="https://www.stateof-mindslicehouse.com/">https://www.stateof-mindslicehouse.com/</a> and click on <b>ORDER ONLINE</b> . You can select “bring my order to my car” when you order.
<b>Su Zhe Eatery</b> 4256 El Camino Real (650) 384-6889	Wednesday–Monday 11 a.m.–2:30 p.m., 4:30 p.m.–9 p.m.	NO	For pickup go to: <a href="https://www.suzhepaloalto.com/location.aspx">https://www.suzhepaloalto.com/location.aspx</a> and click on <b>ORDER ONLINE</b> . Restaurant prefers pickup, but customers can order via any delivery service.
★ <b>Taqueria El Grullense</b> 3636 El Camino Real (650) 251-9317	Daily 8 a.m.–11:30 p.m.	NO	To order pickup, call (650) 251-9317.

# Traditions of Barron Park

*20 interesting (or not-so-interesting) facts or myths about Barron Park*

By Douglas L. Graham, Barron Park Historian

**1** The original “Barron Park” was a 1925 subdivision of 62 small lots along El Camino Real, La Selva Drive, Military Way, and Barron Avenue. It was designed to provide a cheap way for anyone to set up a roadside business along “The State Highway” (later El Camino Real and U.S. Highway 101). It also provided cheap summer homes for San Franciscans who otherwise might have frozen to death in the fog during July and August.

**2** The subdivision was laid out by Colonel Sebastian Jones, who moved here from upstate New York in 1923 and founded a military academy for boys on the old “Barron Estate.” The academy operated until 1929 and was succeeded by two more schools until the mansion burned to the ground in 1936. Hence the name of Military Way, which does not necessarily reflect any militaristic trends in the modern neighborhood.



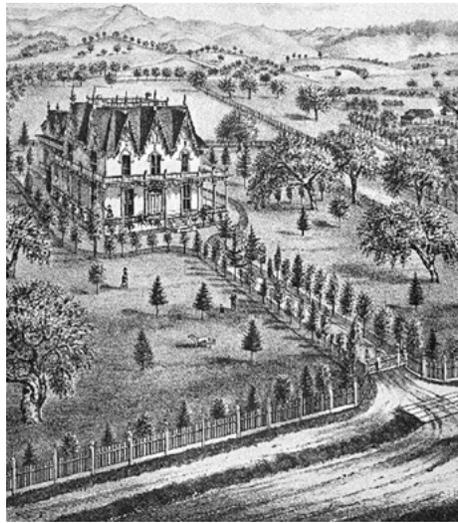
**Col. Sebastian Jones, 1920s, from Family collection of Chatham Forbes.**

**3** Colonel Jones’s tiny lots still give us trouble – they are one of the reasons it has proven so difficult to get owners to renovate or replace the business buildings on our El Camino strip. It may eventually force an Urban Removal project to get it cleaned up.

**4** Barron Park really should have been named “Wallis Park,” after Sarah Wallis, who was an important historical personage.

Sarah was the builder of the beautiful three-story gingerbread Victorian mansion that Edward Barron later bought and that Colonel Jones used for his academy.

**5** Sarah Wallis was also the first President of the California Woman Suffrage Educational Association, the first such organization on the West Coast. She hosted Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony in 1871, and President Ulysses S. Grant in 1877, in her gingerbread mansion (honest!). Presidents since Grant have been more careful about whose party invitations they accept. Sarah, to give her due credit, was locally renowned for her parties as much as for her politics.



**Wallis Mansion, 1876, Lithograph in *Illustrated Atlas of Santa Clara County*.**

**6** Sarah had also been a member of the first overland emigrant party to bring wagons all the way across the Sierra Nevada. This means she walked all the way from Independence, Missouri, to Sacramento, California. Since this was in 1844, she did this without fanny packs, Nikes, or trail mix. She also did this five years before the Gold Rush, so didn’t even get a gold nugget for her troubles.

**7** Sarah Wallis was married three times; her first two husbands deserted her. The first one went off to Honolulu and was never spotted again. The second one was in the process of being elected Mayor of San

Francisco when he was exposed as a bank embezzler and bigamist who had absconded from Philadelphia. He absconded again, claiming he was going back East to clear his name. Sarah got the State Legislature to grant her a divorce, even though her marriage was clearly non-existent – and, for that matter, no one knew if her first husband was dead or might be alive somewhere. It is possible that they were both bigamists (unintentional on her part).

**8** Edward Barron bought Sarah’s mansion and 250-acre farm after Sarah lost most of her fortune in the 1873 Depression. Barron had made his first fortune as a butcher and later as a wholesale meat packer in gold rush San Francisco. He then made some lucky gold mine investments in the Comstock Lode of Nevada. His obituaries claimed he was president of the biggest mine in Virginia City, but there is almost no mention of him in the historical record. It is interesting that our neighborhood was named after a one-time butcher, considering that one of the oldest place names is Matadero Creek (Matadero is Spanish for “slaughtering-place”).

**9** In contrast to Sarah Wallis, Edward Barron was only married twice. He ditched the first wife who helped him build the butchering business, then married a thirty-year younger trophy wife from Ireland. He obliged his second wife by becoming senile, dying, and leaving her his fortune and a gorgeous estate that eventually became our neighborhood.

**10** Following a related train of thought, I should mention Secundino Robles, the second owner of the Mexican rancho that included our land. Robles was only married once, but he fathered 29 babies with his one poor wife. Luckily for his female descendants, and for the Palo Alto Unified School District, that example did not become a neighborhood tradition.

**11** Our neighborhood might have become known as Stanford Park. According to one neighborhood tradition, Leland Stanford tried to buy the place from

Edward Barron to round out his Palo Alto Farm, but Barron resisted, unlike the many other neighbors who caved in to Leland’s persuasions. This sort of resistance did become a tradition of sorts. One day when Colonel Jones and his family were living in the mansion, an imposing passerby drove his fancy car into the stately, tree-lined winding drive and offered to buy the elaborate weathervane off the roof. This personage loftily announced that he was “a Vanderbilt,” and apparently assumed that fact gave him rights. Colonel Jones told him what he could do with his limousine and that was that.

**12** About this same time, this attitude hardened. The State decided to widen “The State Highway” (El Camino Real) and took the front 50 feet or so off of Colonel Jones’s lots. They also planned to remove the giant eucalyptus trees next to the highway that had been planted about 50 years earlier by Edward Barron. Colonel Jones objected to both plans. When the state road crew arrived with lumberjacks and saws, Jones’s son-in-law and second-in-command, Major Forbes, arrived with a horse pistol and stood the crew off. Not being armed, they obeyed but called in the sheriff. Eventually, peace was made, but Jones never did get paid for the land, which was why he refused to deed the “alley” behind his highway-frontage lots (now Cypress Lane) to the County. The sins of the father lie heavily on the descendants.

**13** Later on, this tradition became useful again when Barron Park voters spurned Palo Alto’s annexation attempts five times in a row.

**14** Before we spurned them, they spurned us. Two earlier requests by Barron Park voters to be annexed had been turned down by the City of Palo Alto because we had liquor stores and bars along our El Camino strip. This was all the fault of Leland and Jane Lathrop Stanford – they had forced the original developer of Palo Alto to include an anti-liquor clause in all the deeds. This clause bound not only the original lot purchasers but also their heirs and assigns in perpetuity. Leland (and Jane) backed this up with a state law that prohibited the sale of alcoholic beverages within a mile and a half of the boundaries of Stanford University. This effectively kept Palo Alto dry, but not Barron Park – which lay beyond the mile-and-a-half limit. So, when

Barron Park wanted to join the City in 1947, the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) threw a fit before the City Council, and that was that.

**15** However, Palo Alto imbibers had to drink somewhere. This led to the tradition of a string of bars and liquor stores along each of the three main exits from town – El Camino in Menlo Park and Barron Park, and University Avenue at “Whiskey Gulch” in East Palo Alto (now the site of high-rises full of law offices). Barron Park also got a string of classy restaurants, which started as roadhouses but grew fat on Palo Alto dollars. They are mostly gone – one of the last was L’Ommies, where Walgreen’s is now.

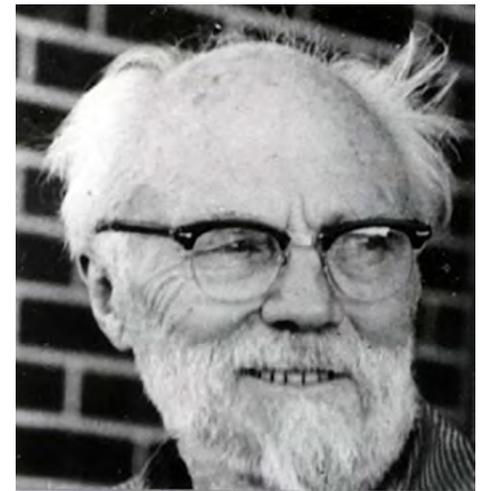
**16** L’Ommies (originally L’Omelette) was the scene of Barron Park’s other Presidential Connection. It is a little-known fact that, when John Fitzgerald Kennedy graduated from Harvard, old Joe Kennedy sent him to the Stanford Graduate School of Business to get an MBA. John was supposed to be the businessman of the family – his older brother Joe, Jr. was supposed to grow up to be President. Anyway, JFK came here for the fall semester of 1940 or 41 – I’m not sure which – and L’Omelette tradition held that he had a favorite bar stool where he could be found almost every night with a different floozie draped all over him. (Marilyn Monroe was not his first conquest!) I don’t know whether John flunked out, quit, or was ordered home by old Joe, but, in any case, that was the extent of his business career. L’Omelette probably made a good profit that year, and the Biz School never knew what it had missed.



**L’Omelette Bar and Dining Room, undated postcard, probably 1960s.**

**17** Another interesting fact about L’Ommie’s was the “day job” held by a highly regarded chef there. He was also in charge of the crematorium at Alta Mesa Cemetery.

**18** Speaking of Democrats (i.e., JFK), this brings us around to the donkey tradition. It is quite possible, if not likely, that Barron Park is the only neighborhood in the country – or at least, the only urban neighborhood – with donkeys as mascots. You might ask, how did this come about? Or, on the other hand, you might not ask. Or you might say “don’t ask.” I’ll tell you anyway. It has to do with Cornelis and Josina Bol. They owned what is now Bol Park and had played at farming it in the 1930s after emigrating from the Netherlands to get away from the Nazi menace in a neighboring country. Stanford University had hired Cornelis to join the Physics Department as a research associate, and he, in gratitude, invented the Mercury Vapor Lamp which was, until very recently, the brightest form of steady electric light ever developed. Cornelis and Josina raised a large crop of vigorous boys at their home on Roble Ridge. They augmented the tribe of boys with horses and other animals. After giving up on raising crops on their land, in the 1960s they settled for donkeys, which amused the neighborhood kids no end. Cornelis invited the kids into the pasture (our future park) for donkey petting and donkey rides (this was before liability lawyers had been invented). This got to be a new Barron Park tradition.



**Cornelis Bol, probably early 1960s, from Bol Family collection.**

**19** The donkey herd dwindled down to a single one named Mickey in the late 1960s. Mickey was the braying-est donkey this side of the Holy Land, but he became the neighborhood pet anyway. When Bol Park was developed in 1973, he was ensconced in the current donkey home (“Mickey’s

[\*\(Continued on the bottom of page 9\)\*](#)

# Global Art Project “Breathe with Me” Coming to Barron Park!

By Jen Schultz



*Breathe with Me* - Zuos, Switzerland. All photos courtesy of the *Breathe with Me* project.

Painting watercolors while breathing consciously has become a personal practice for Danish artist and designer Jeppe Hein. In 2019 he partnered with the nonprofit organization Art 2030 and launched *Breathe with Me* as a “climate art action,” to share with others the peace and hope he has found through his breathing practice. Today, as we look back on the US and worldwide events of 2020, and that continue today, the phrase “breathe with me” has acquired a new and profound significance. Installations of *Breathe with Me* have been hosted in communities around the world: New York City’s Central Park, in Switzerland, Denmark, Greenland, Latvia, China, and . . . next stop, Barron Park! The *Breathe with Me* global art project is coming to Gunn High School **April 22-25**, and the Barron Park and Green Acres communities are invited to participate.

*Breathe with Me* was launched at UN Headquarters in NYC during the Youth Climate Action Summit in September 2019. At the first installation in Central Park, people from around the world came together to paint linear brushstrokes in ultramarine blue, representing the exhalation of their breath, along a 600-foot undulating canvas. The result was an artistically diverse set of blue lines that worked together powerfully as a whole. Since then, each community taking part has adapted the public, participatory project to its own location. We look forward



*Breathe with Me* - Beijing, China.

to adapting *Breathe with Me* to Barron Park. Painting by Gunn students and their families, and also the Barron Park and Green Acres communities, will start on **Earth Day, Thursday, April 22**, and continue through **Sunday, April 25**.

Barron Park resident Svetlana Gous was inspired to create *Breathe with Me* through her affiliation with the Baltic-American community and her support of the Tukku Magi Museum and Cultural Center in Latvia, <https://tukkumagi.org/> which hosted a local installation of the project. Svetlana has been a public art enthusiast for many years; she used to volunteer for PAUSD noon art, teach PAPP classes, and lead the making of May Fête parade floats at Juana Briones Elementary when her children were students there.

As the parent of an alum and two current Gunn High School students, Svetlana became concerned last spring when COVID-19 caused schools to go virtual, cases to spike, businesses to shut down, and borders to close. She wanted to lessen the sense of isolation that she knew many students and community members must be experiencing. She began reaching out to local artist and educator friends, and together they wondered if, during this uncertain

time, there might be a creative and safe way to bring the Gunn and Barron Park communities together. When she learned about *Breathe with Me* she was instantly drawn to the project: What better way to celebrate our common humanity than through the simple universal act of breathing? Students and neighbors could arrive masked at the park, take a quiet moment, stand in front of a giant white canvas, inhale deeply, and then exhale while painting their line. That line could be filled with hope, or appreciation for life, no matter what challenges each individual might be facing during the pandemic. Svetlana and her friends agreed that *Breathe with Me* could serve as a reminder that we are all connected to one another – as a school, citywide, and worldwide community.

Once the idea for a local installation of *Breathe with Me* was proposed, the details quickly took shape. The 350-foot-long fence surrounding the Gunn High School soccer field provided a perfect backdrop for a temporary canvas painted in ultramarine blue, which would be viewable by many passersby along the Bol Park pathways. Svetlana received a grant from the Palo Alto Public Art Commission and supported Gunn teachers Liz Matchett (Head of



*Breathe with Me - Central Park, New York City.*

World Languages) and Claudia Schroepel (German teacher) in applying for a Gunn PTSA teacher grant. Several Gunn staff members, including counselors and teachers in the Wellness, Visual and Performing Arts, PE/Yoga, and World Languages departments, have enthusiastically joined the project, as have student leaders in several Gunn student organizations: Student Executive Council (SEC), Youth Community Service (YCS), Dream Volunteers, Street Art Club, language clubs, and Green Team. Artist Jeppe Hein addressed the Gunn Community

virtually at a Gunn Together kickoff assembly on March 10.

The *Breathe with Me* team needs volunteers to help the project go smoothly! If you're interested in helping, please complete and submit this brief, non-binding Volunteer Form <https://tinyurl.com/BreathewithMeForm> and we will contact you. For more information about the project and to sign up for a time to come and paint, visit the *Breathe with Me* website:

<https://gunnsec.org/breathe-with-me.html>

The *Breathe with Me* organizers and volun-

### BPA EMAIL LISTS

The Barron Park Association offers three community email lists, hosted on Google Groups, for any resident to post: *bpa-news*, *bpa-misc*, and *bpa-issues*.

To join a list, go to: <http://bpapaloalto.org/bpa-email-lists/>. The link provides information about each list and an easy way to subscribe to one or more of them.

teers will follow strict procedures for sanitizing brushes and surfaces and maintaining social distancing, in accordance with County health and safety guidelines.

The installation will stay up through the end of the school year, after which the canvas will be disassembled and repurposed by Gunn and Paly art students as backgrounds for other artworks.

We are thrilled to be taking part in this global art initiative, and we look forward to seeing as many of you as can join us to paint on **April 22-25**, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., at the Gunn Soccer Field behind Gunn High School, along the Bol Park pathway!

To view the world installations, go to: <https://breathewithme.world/worldwide/>

Gunn *Breathe with Me* Project website: <https://gunnsec.org/breathe-with-me.html>

### *(Traditions of Barron Park — continued from page 7)*

Pasture"), and donkeys have been there ever since.

**20** The world would not have Shrek's donkey (as it looks in the movie, anyway), if it were not for this tradition. The animators used Perry and Niner as their collective model.

There are other notable Barron Park traditions too, some even more outrageous or titillating.

I hope you have enjoyed this somewhat irreverent rendition of Barron Park history. Journalistic candor requires me to inform you that this is an updated version of the story by the same title which appeared in the Fall 2004 edition of this august journal.

You can write to me at [dgrahampaca@gmail.com](mailto:dgrahampaca@gmail.com) with any feedback.



Josina Bol with Mickey, probably early 1980s, source unrecorded.

# Bol Park Native Garden Update!

By Linda Elder and Claire Elliot

The Bol Park Native Garden features locally native plants and provides pollinator insects with year-round flowers. With a backdrop of Native Oaks, Buckeye, and Toyon struggling under the non-native and controversial Eucalyptus trees (more on that elsewhere in this Newsletter), the Native Garden now includes plants that bloom all year. In winter, there are Manzanitas; in spring/early summer, blooming small shrubs like Pink-Flowering Currant, Ceanothus, Golden Yarrow, and various Sages; in summer, Hairy Gumweed, several species of Buckwheat, and Milkweed; and in fall, California Fuchsia, Aster, Goldenrod, and Sunflower.

## Extensions and New Plantings

On December 31, a small group of socially distanced volunteers planted many new plants; perennials and shrubs were added to the existing beds to fill in plants gone missing. The garden was also extended to the small area behind the playground with drought-tolerant native grasses and shrubs. This area is not irrigated and will require hand watering for the next three years. After that, we hope the plants will naturalize and not need additional irrigation beyond normal rainfall. Our group and other volunteers will weed the area and prune plants as needed.

In February, another bed, the sunny triangle area by the bike path on the other side of Matadero, was sheet-mulched and is now planted with low-growing, wide-spreading Ceanothus for a good evergreen ground cover to keep weeds down. Their blue spring flowers will be beautiful with a sprinkling of poppies in bloom in summer and in fall. In addition, Buckwheat and California Fuchsia will provide food for insects and birds.

Additional plantings were installed further along the bike path toward Hanover Street by Grassroots Ecology staff and AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards members. Barron Park neighbor Chris Steck noticed that bubblers installed years ago for plantings by the City were watering 16 spots that no longer had plants, so four species of shade-tolerant shrubs were planted there, including Toyon



Our Bol Park Native Garden with a mock-up of one of the newly planned park benches. Photo by Richard Elder.

that will provide red berries for color in December, and Fuchsia-Flowering Gooseberries and Pink-Flowering Currants that should add pretty red and pink flowers each February.

Most of the new plants were obtained from the California Native Plant Society nursery or the Grassroots Ecology nursery which grow a diversity of locally native species. Grassroots Ecology specializes in propagating plants from local watersheds and employs best management practices to ensure extra-clean nursery stock, free from phytophthora, a genus of plant pathogen that causes Sudden Oak Death and other plant diseases. All this means that our local insects and birds will thrive! Valley Water (Santa Clara Valley Water District) provided a grant to pay for plants for the Bol Park Rain Garden as well as plants put in recently.

## Rain Garden

Irrigation has recently been added to the Rain Garden, along the pathway at the Matadero end, to supplement rainwater and keep it looking good year-round. About 60 new perennial plants were added to the Rain Garden, including new Blue-eyed Grass which, despite its name, is a species of native Iris with small purple-blue flowers with yellow eyes. Bicolor Lupine seeds were planted and are starting to germinate. You can recognize them by their new little "palmate" leaves with lots of narrow leaves radiating out from the middle. Lupines were named for Lupus the Wolf, in the mistaken belief that they robbed the soil of nutrients like wolves robbed farmers of their livestock. Lupines grow in poor soil, not because they

[\(Continued on page 11\)](#)

# Neighbors Make a Clean Sweep!

By Doug Burns

One of the best features of our Barron Park community is of course Bol Park and its connecting pathways. The “high” pathway has its origins in the Southern Pacific Railway tracks that ran through this region, with both freight and commuter service. Its last run was in 1964. (See this Newsletter, Spring and Summer 2018, for Doug Graham’s account of our colorful train history.) In my own travels along the Bol Park pathways I see residents and others cleaning up (occasional) trash, raking leaves, planting and maintaining our Native Garden, caring for the donkeys, and generally helping to maintain the crown jewel of our neighborhood.

One such effort was recently organized by Josina Avenue resident David Coale. For Sunday, February 7, David put together a cleanup day crew to work, masked and distanced, on the pathway area from the “Y” at the old phone booth to the Gunn High



**Our cleanup crew, distanced along the lower “Gunn” path. Photos by David Coale.**

tennis courts. The crew swept debris and scraped mud off the path. The group got a lot of thanks and “Next time let me know so I can help!” from passersby. One member of the team, Jeff Smith, joked with people, warning them to wipe their feet before going on the path.

When we were finished, the path was much



**A single day’s efforts – with simple tools – made an enormous difference!**

improved, if I say so myself. When conditions are less restrictive and the pathways need attention, we plan to publicize the events though the BPA email lists.

Questions? Interested in joining us or organizing your own project? Please contact David Coale at: [david@evcl.com](mailto:david@evcl.com)

## *(Native Garden, continued from page 10)*

make it so, but because, like other legumes, they have a symbiotic relationship with nitrogen-fixing bacteria in the nodules on their roots that fix nitrogen from the air and improve the quality of soil over time.

### **Benches Planned!**

We have received approval from the City and immediate neighbors to build and install three park benches in the Native Garden. We are currently seeking funding for the benches. Richard Elder has agreed to build the benches which are similar to (but smaller than) the existing benches in the rest of the park. We are also considering adding bird boxes for owls and bluebirds and also educational signage.

### **Volunteers**

You can often find neighborhood volunteers in the garden. They are weeding, pruning, clearing paths, and making other improvements. Melanie and Peter Cross made hundreds of labels that identify nearly all the plants in the garden. Everyone, especially kids, seems to love wandering the paths (some of which are new!), learning the scien-

tific or common names of native plants and being able to recognize them. Thanks to the many dedicated gardeners who volunteer their time and effort!

Due to COVID restrictions, we have not been able to hold our usual cleanup days. And so, we divided up the work in several ways so people can work independently. Volunteers can choose a specific plant or plot, and, of course, there is always weeding. Melanie Cross, an experienced gardener, coordinates the cleanups and can guide gardeners at every level. She has also created a cheat sheet for identifying weeds in their early stages. If you have suggestions, comments, or would like to volunteer, please email us at [bpnativegarden@gmail.com](mailto:bpnativegarden@gmail.com)

## *(BPA History Presentation, continued from page 1)*

Hear about some of the interesting challenges of our first 100 years, such as the “Cold War” with Palo Alto and the cleanup of pornography, prostitution, and bar brawls along El Camino Real.

Improve your understanding of the positive changes brought about by the progressive new Barron Park Association (BPA) starting in the 1960s, with the neighborhood taking the lead in the development of a general plan and new types of commercial zoning for the El Camino strip, the creation of Bol Park, and finally our 1975 annexation to Palo Alto. Doug will quickly review the growth of the BPA, as it took City leadership in disaster planning and environmental cleanup and welcomed the spread of ethnic and racial diversity in the area.

Doug will take questions from the virtual audience during the presentation, and there will be a 20-minute Q&A period at the end. A brief, printed packet with maps and other material will be mailed (USPS) to those who register for the presentation in advance. The total time will be limited to one hour, starting at 2 p.m., Sunday afternoon, May 23. Registration will open May 1. Look out for further announcements on the BPA email lists, Next-Door, street signage, and other postings.

[\(Return to page 1\)](#)

# The Cedar Waxwings

By Jeralyn Moran

It's mid-February . . . How can these handsome birds that seem so exotic be hanging out here in Barron Park? Binoculars needed for confirmation. Indeed, this is a flock of Cedar Waxwings! It turns out that there are two species of Waxwing in North America. (The "other one" is the Bohemian Waxwing, not commonly seen this far south.) Our part of California happens to be an overlap area between the winter and summer habitats of the Cedar Waxwing, so it's hard to know if they are resident or on the move north at this point.

This bird – *Bombycilla cedrorum* – was originally named "Cedar" + "Waxwing" because it was first seen frequently in Cedar trees, and it sports bright red "waxy-looking droplets" on its wings. The noticeable yellow tips on the tail feathers, buffy yellow breast, and distinctive black "mask" lined with white, plus a topknot on its head that sweeps back, are all helpful identifiers. Adult females and males look similar; the youngsters are more mottled brown before their mature feathers emerge.



A mature Cedar Waxwing: Females and males look very similar. Source: <https://celebrateurbanbirds.org>

These birds are quite social with each other, so you can expect to see them in groups; despite their beautiful coloring, they blend into the foliage quite effectively – in my case, a Magnolia tree. Berries are a favorite food any time of the year (pyracantha, raspberries, strawberries, mistletoe, madrone, juniper,



A glimpse of a group of these birds is like a "holiday" card any time of the year! Source: <https://allaboutbirds.org>

etc.), which they pluck from the plants and swallow whole. Due to the planting of so many ornamental berry trees in urban landscaping, catching sight of Cedar Waxwings has become more common to those of us living in cities. Surprisingly to me, they also feed on flower petals and sap. Like that of many birds, high-protein insects are essential to the Cedar Waxwing's diet during the summer breeding/nesting season.

Look for these feathered neighbors near our creek corridors and/or parked as a flock high in a tree (or two). As mentioned, Cedar Waxwings are quite gregarious, so where you catch sight of one, there are likely more nearby. Their call is a high, thin whistle. The females take on most of the work to craft a five-inch-wide by three-inch-deep nest (approximate size) using twigs, grasses, animal hair, fine roots, pine needles, etc. I can only hope to be lucky enough at some point to witness these birds in early courtship, sweetly described as follows by scientists at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology:

During courtship, males and females hop towards each other, alternating back and

forth and sometimes touching their bills together. Males often pass a small item like a fruit, insect, or flower petal, to the female. After taking the fruit, the female usually hops away and then returns giving back the item to the male. They repeat this a few times until, typically, the female eats the gift.

**Sources:**

- <https://celebrateurbanbirds.org/learn/birds/focal-species/cedar-waxwing/>
- [https://allaboutbirds.org/guide/Cedar\\_Waxwing](https://allaboutbirds.org/guide/Cedar_Waxwing)
- <https://ebird.org/species/cedwax>

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You can read this issue in full color and with live web links at <http://bpapaloalto.org/bpa-newsletter/> While you're there, check out our Archive of past Newsletters. Your small screen is an easy way to review past activities in the 'hood and catch up on issues you may have missed.  
Thanks! The Editors

# Hey Hey, Ho Ho, the “Eucs” in Bol Park Have Got to Go!

By Jeff Burch

It's a nice sunny morning back in the 1920s, and a small child jumps off the train platform (at the corner of today's Matadero and Laguna Avenues) to inspect a newly planted tree. She breaks off a branch and runs back to her parents as the steam train crests the hill (near today's water fountain by the donkey pasture). Once on the train heading north to Palo Alto, she passes the branch around. Everyone is delighted and amazed by this exotic find. Who would believe that a leaf could smell so strong? Everyone is charmed by her inquisitiveness and encourages her to study hard to someday become a scientist! And what must Australia be like with forests of these strange trees?

It's now the 1950s, and the property owners along the train track have had it! Although they have lived with the quaint steam engine for decades, the switch to diesel was horrible! These new “modern” engines are huge, noisy, and belch acrid smoke! Something has to be done and fast! That fast-growing eucalyptus tree on the corner is now “middle-aged” and shows the way: Plant more and create a vegetative barrier! Twenty-four baby trees are procured, and the local Boy Scout troop volunteers to plant them as a service project. The eucalyptus love their new home and grow rapidly.

It's now 1964, and the commuter train makes its last run through Barron Park on the way to Los Altos and beyond. Everyone celebrates a few years later when the train tracks are removed, and the bike and pedestrian pathway created. The eucalyptus have surprised everyone's expectations and are now starting to shade Roble Ridge. Who'd have thought they could grow so fast?

It's now 2005, and a group of Barron Park neighbors pool their volunteer efforts to create the new Native Garden at Matadero and Laguna, adjacent to the first, now giant, eucalyptus tree. Although they sometimes fall behind in weeding chores, most of the neighbors love the new garden and are encouraging and supportive. By this time, it becomes clear that eucalyptus trees are a problem. They just grow way too fast and are shading everything else out . . .

A decade later, the Native Garden is being expanded. Neighbors and volunteers pool their donations to prune some of the most offensive eucalyptus that are leaning over the garden area. This allows sunlight to reach the ground and the baby natives to thrive. A milkweed patch is created with help from the City's watering system; native Monarch Butterflies return to Bol Park and successfully reproduce.

It's now summer 2020. Who could have predicted that the record-breaking oppressive heat would collide with the weakening Tropical Storm Fausto and cause August 16's lightning storms? With thousands of strikes that night, the Santa Cruz Mountains catch fire. We live in fear as the CZU Fire Complex rages out of control just over the hill for weeks. People on our side of the hill living closer to Skyline are packed and ready to evacuate. We in Barron Park wear our masks religiously for smoke as well as COVID and chat constantly about the latest air quality measurements. For the most part, we continue to believe that we are at minimal fire risk and that such urban/wildland fire disasters only happen elsewhere.

It's now 2021, and I'm writing this article to raise people's awareness about the risks these trees present. Through lively email and in-person conversations with neighbors, it comes down to three issues: 1) safety, 2)



**The oldest eucalyptus tree on the corner of Matadero and Roble Ridge. This tree is probably 100 years old and is likely the first one planted in the “row of 24.” Note the two massive “water sprouts” that branch off near ground level. These “sprouts” are as big as some of the other trees. Their protrusion from the main trunk makes them particularly vulnerable to breakage. Photos by Jeff Burch.**

fire prevention, and 3) invasive species. (I'll have more on these issues in Part 2 in next quarter's Newsletter.) These conversations were enough for one property owner (James Witt) to step up and take care of his tree, one of the most dangerous, as it overhung the pathway at the corner of his property and was at risk for breakage. Now is the time for the remaining property owners to follow his lead. As the trees are on private property, other than raise awareness, there is little the City or the rest of us can do to address the problems these trees create.

It's now 2050, and the Gunn High School students have organized a protest around

[\*\(Continued on the bottom of page 14\)\*](#)

# Palo Alto Humane Society: Reine Flexer Memorial Fund

By Leonor Delgado, Palo Alto Humane Society



Reine Flexer (1940-2020). Courtesy of the Flexer family.

Palo Alto Humane Society is pleased to announce the Reine Flexer Memorial Fund for the Spaying and Neutering of Homeless Cats. Dedicated to the memory of Reine Flexer, a tireless advocate for homeless and abandoned cats, the fund was established by friends and family who understood Reine’s never-ending commitment to cats and kittens across our region.

Reine Flexer was a longtime resident of Barron Park. Her career spanned teaching French at UC Berkeley to software programming. She enjoyed many interests, instilling a love of music in her children, and growing

and arranging flowers. Her passion was to ensure the spaying/neutering of unowned cats, placing kittens and tame strays in homes when possible, and caring for other cats without homes. Reine inspired a group of dedicated volunteers who continue to devote time and resources to the cause.

Donations to the Reine Flexer Fund at Palo Alto Humane Society are welcome. Please earmark donations “Reine Flexer Fund.” Thank you!

Donate online at: [www.paloaltohumane.org](http://www.paloaltohumane.org) or mail a check to: Palo Alto Humane Society, P.O. Box 60715, Palo Alto, CA 94306.

*(Eucalyptus trees, continued from page 13)*

the recent tree incident. Luckily, no one was killed, but many were traumatized when that massive limb came crashing down on top of the wooden bench in the Native Garden. Students were working in the area on their butterfly research and restoration project. Just moments earlier, they were eating lunch on that bench! Gosh, that was close . . .

All 24 eucalyptus trees are now around 100 years old. They are now massive and tower above the garden. Limbs have fallen before but nothing like this . . .

Some pruning has been done over the years, mainly to protect the internet cables running to the homes on Roble Ridge Road. However, for the most part, the trees have been left alone, and boy, did they grow!

The rag-tag group of students comes down the hill from the donkey pasture with their



**This tree is opposite the swing set. It is cantilevered: other limbs and trees are occupying the more vertical space, so this limb leaned out to the right to capture more sunlight. This tree needs immediate pruning as it hangs over the bike path and is at risk for breakage.**

hand-painted cardboard signs. Fully embracing the activism of their great-grandparents who said “Think globally, act locally,” they chant “Hey Hey, Ho Ho, the Eucs in Bol

Park have got to go!” They parade past the mature Native Garden and loop past the now monster tree on the corner and head up shady Roble Ridge Road. Their protest finally gets the property owners to act. The dangerous limbs will finally be addressed. Some of the oldest trees have to be totally removed. Others will be seriously pruned to minimize the safety and fire concerns . . .

In Part 2, I’ll address in more detail the main issues these eucalyptus trees have created. The immediate and highest priority concern is safety. The Bol Park pathway is enjoyed by all. Now’s the time to prune the most dangerous limbs before they break.

The second problem is fire prevention. Pruning is needed to remove the low-hanging limbs to decrease the chances of a catastrophic crown fire. Such pruning will help, but is no guarantee. Eucalyptus trees with their volatile oils are ready to explode with the slightest spark . . .

The third and lowest priority problem is invasive species: Eucalyptus, Black Acacia, and Privet are three invasive tree species that are encroaching on Bol Park. Although it will be difficult to eliminate them, we certainly can limit their impact. Stay tuned for Part 2 in the next BPA Newsletter!

Please write to [jefferson.burch@gmail.com](mailto:jefferson.burch@gmail.com) with any questions or comments.

# Nature's Wonderful Ingredients: Turmeric

By Jaya Pandey, BPA Green Beans Committee

**T**urmeric (*Curcuma longa*) is a plant product of the ginger family. Almost every Indian kitchen and many in the West have it in their pantries. In Indian cooking it is as common as the use of salt. Since ancient times in India, turmeric has a strong connection with auspicious events like marriages, festivals, and worship services, and is used in many different ways outside traditional cooking. The Bhandara Festival, or Festival of Turmeric, takes place in many towns whenever the new moon coincides with a Monday.

Turmeric is known for its anti-inflammatory properties due to an active ingredient called *curcumin*. Recently, we've seen it being consumed in many fancy ways such as in "Golden Turmeric Latte," turmeric capsules, etc. But my own familiarity with this product is very different, and I'd like to share some very basic ways of using it to reap its benefits. Here are some simple ways to use turmeric on a daily basis:

- 1. Khichadi, a comfort food** – Mix together 1 cup basmati rice (or any rice of your choice, but the best taste comes with white) and 1/2 cup yellow toor dal. Rinse the rice and dal thoroughly. Pre-soak the mixture for about 10-15 minutes in warm water. Bring 4-1/2 cups of water to a boil. Add the pre-soaked mixture of rice and dal to the boiling water. Add salt to taste and approximately 1 teaspoon turmeric. Cook until rice and dal are cooked together and much of the water is absorbed, about 15 minutes. (A liquid consistency is preferred and more comforting . . . ) Heat 1-2 tablespoons olive oil in a deep pot and sauté 1/2 tablespoon cumin seeds, red chili powder to taste, and a scant teaspoon of asafoetida for 1-2 minutes. Mix sautéed ingredients into cooked rice-dal mixture and enjoy! A dollop of unsalted butter on top is divine. Serves 3 to 4. Recipe can be expanded!
- 2. Spicy okra (shown above)** – Wash and carefully dry approx. 2 cups fresh okra. (This helps avoid the sometimes-viscous consistency.) Slice okra into 1-inch rounds. Heat 2-3 tablespoons oil in a medium, heavy-bottomed pan. Add approx. 1 tablespoon prepared garlic paste.



A simple, flavorful preparation of fresh okra, with turmeric, chili powder, and five Indian spices. See recipe #2, below. Photo by Jaya Pandey.

Then add and lightly sauté a mixture of cumin seeds, fennel seeds, mustard seeds, fenugreek seeds, and black onion seeds – about 1-1/2 teaspoons in all. Add 1

teaspoon turmeric powder and red chili powder to taste. Add the sliced okra. Cook, covered, on medium/medium-low heat, until the okra is soft. Uncover occasionally to stir. Add salt and lemon juice to taste toward the end.

- 3. A facial** – Add 1 teaspoon of turmeric to 4-5 tablespoons of besan (= gram dal powder), a few drops of rose water, and 1 tablespoon of almond oil. Stir well to make a refreshing, approx. 10-minute facial pack!
- 4. A warm drink** – Add a dash of turmeric, honey, crushed cardamom, and finely chopped almonds to a cup of warm milk to make a soothing drink, especially during the winter or if you have a cold or the flu. You can call it Golden Turmeric Latte!
- 5. A versatile spice** – You can add a dash of turmeric to any marinade, salad dressing, soup, fried rice, or curry anytime or on a regular basis. Make sure to add turmeric at the beginning of the cooking process, while you're heating the oil. You want to avoid the taste of uncooked turmeric.

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- **BPA Website:** <http://bpapaloalto.org>
- **BPA Newsletter Archive:** <http://bpapaloalto.org/bpa-newsletter/>
- **BPA Membership (Join/Renew):** <http://bpapaloalto.org/join-the-barron-park-association>
- **Membership Questions:** Lisa Berkowitz Landers at [barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com](mailto:barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com)
- **BPA Email Lists:** Join at <http://bpapaloalto.org/bpa-email-lists> or write to: [listmanager@bpapaloalto.org](mailto:listmanager@bpapaloalto.org)
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- **BPA Newsletter Editor:** Myrna Rochester at [mbrbpa@sonic.net](mailto:mbrbpa@sonic.net)
- **BPA Business Liaison:** Paul Yang at [pabloyang@yahoo.com](mailto:pabloyang@yahoo.com)
- **Support for Buena Vista neighbors during Covid-19:** Karen Ratzlaff at [karen\\_ratzlaff@hotmail.com](mailto:karen_ratzlaff@hotmail.com)
- **Welcoming Committee Chair:** Gwen Luce at [gluce@cbnorcal.com](mailto:gluce@cbnorcal.com)
- **Emergency Services Volunteer Program:** Maurice Green at [mauryg3@comcast.net](mailto:mauryg3@comcast.net)
- **BPA Historian:** Douglas L. Graham at [dgrahampaca@gmail.com](mailto:dgrahampaca@gmail.com)
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- **Bol Park Native Habitat:** Donate to the Bol Park Fund at <https://friendsofpaparks.org/donations2> Or by mail or phone: Friends of the Palo Alto Parks (FOPAP), Bol Park Fund, 425 Grant Ave., Suite 27, Palo Alto, CA 94306; 650-327-7323. To volunteer contact Rich Elder at [rich.e.elder@gmail.com](mailto:rich.e.elder@gmail.com)

# ART IN THE PARK

*Artist: Anonymous*

**Here be dragons!** This solid, but ultimately ephemeral, dragon appeared at the Hanover bike path, at the start of the Lunar New Year on February 12, then it slowly melted back into the landscape. The dragon was made out of palm bark. Photos courtesy of the artist, who prefers to remain anonymous.



## CALL FOR ARTISTS!

Do you enjoy the creative work in the BPA Newsletter? Would you like to see



Created by Nathan Driscol, Noun Project

your art, photography, crafts, writing, published (or unpublished) book, etc., featured in a future issue? Please send your idea with a draft Artist's Statement and reproducible samples or a

description of your work to Myrna Rochester at: [mbrbpa@sonic.net](mailto:mbrbpa@sonic.net)

## BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2021

**Barron Park Association**  
724 Barron Avenue  
Palo Alto, California 94306

### EDITOR

Myrna Rochester

### LAYOUT

Hilary Glann

### PROOFREADERS

Christina Luce, Gwen Luce

### CONTRIBUTORS

Jeff Burch, Doug Burns,  
Leonor Delgado, Linda Elder,  
Claire Elliott, Hilary Glann,  
Douglas L. Graham, Jenn Wagstaff Hinton,  
Rachael Kaci, John W. King,  
Jeralyn Moran, Robert Moss,  
Jaya Pandey, Jen Schultz

### PHOTO/ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

Anonymous, Bol Family collection,  
Breathe with Me Project,  
Jeff Burch, Charlize Chu, City of Palo Alto,  
David Coale, Cornell Lab of Ornithology,  
Richard Elder, Flexer Family,  
C. Forbes Family collection, Jenn Wagstaff  
Hinton, Jenny Kiratli, *Illustrated Atlas of  
Santa Clara County*,  
Jaya Pandey, Nathan Driscol (Noun Project)

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# What Is the Palo Alto S/CAP and Why Is It Important?

By Hilary Glann

Palo Alto has a history of environmental stewardship, starting in 2007 with the Climate Protection Plan, which committed the City to reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) by 15% by 2020. In 2013 Palo Alto was the first U.S. city to offer 100% carbon neutral electricity.<sup>1</sup> Then in 2016, Palo Alto adopted a Sustainability and Climate Action Plan (S/CAP) that pledged to reduce City emissions by 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2030, to meet the City’s obligations as outlined in the landmark Paris Agreement.

## Current S/CAP Review

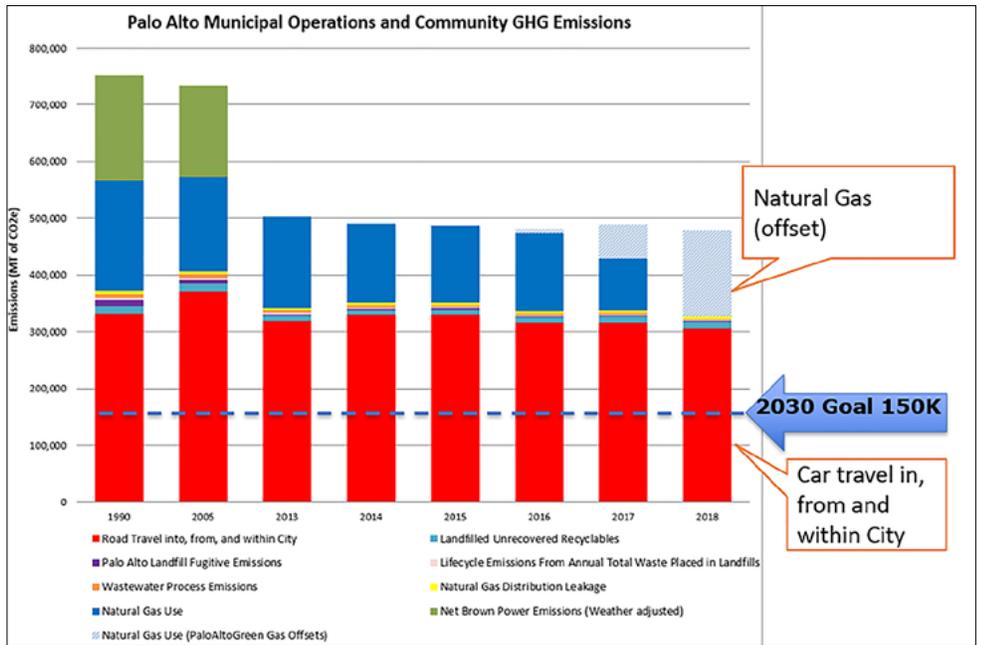
By law, the S/CAP must be reviewed every five years, and thus the City Council will review and recommit to our goal this year. Additionally, the City Council will adopt specific ordinances, activities, and programs that the City, the City of Palo Alto Utilities (CPAU), and residents will need to undertake to meet our goal. The focus needs to be on areas where we can achieve the greatest emission reductions in the most rapid and cost-effective manner. While some personal actions – such as reducing air travel, food waste, and meat consumption – have a big impact on climate change, the City can’t mandate these changes.

The chart on the right shows the sources and magnitude of carbon emissions in Palo Alto. The goal is to reach 150,000 megatons of emissions by 2030. Palo Alto saw a sharp decline in carbon emissions after the adoption of carbon neutral electricity in 2013, but emissions have since plateaued. We have not reduced methane (aka “natural”) gas use significantly since 2013, but have instead increased our reliance on carbon offsets. Carbon offsets pay someone else to reduce emissions on our behalf. While offsets help us recognize the cost of GHGs and transition off fossil fuel, they are not a long-term carbon reduction solution.

The chart also shows that Palo Alto GHGs primarily come from gas-powered cars and methane gas combustion.

## Opportunities to Reduce Vehicle Emissions

About a third of all newly registered cars in Palo Alto are electric vehicles (EVs). With most auto manufacturers starting to offer more EV models, and the used EV market



Composition of GHG emissions in Palo Alto. Chart from City of Palo Alto Sustainability and Carbon Action Plan (S/CAP) Overview: <https://youtu.be/h2ZLefhU7Tg>

increasing, EVs are becoming a viable alternative for more residents. Additionally, lower fueling, maintenance, and repair costs can result in EV overall cost savings versus a comparable gas-powered car.<sup>2</sup>

Investments in electric charging infrastructure – particularly at multi-resident housing – will be critical to EV adoption. Palo Alto can offer support and incentives for the construction of more local private charging infrastructure.

## Transitioning off Methane Gas – Opportunities and Challenges

Methane is a powerful greenhouse gas that traps heat 89 times more effectively than carbon dioxide over a 20-year timescale.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, methane leaks at every step along the way – extraction, processing, storage, and transmission – before it arrives at our homes. These leaks add to methane’s carbon footprint, as well as creating safety concerns.

To meet our climate goals, we must reduce residential methane gas over the next decade by switching to electric appliances as our gas appliances reach end of life. Space and water heating represent 80% of gas use in the average Palo Alto home, so they are the top priority.<sup>4</sup> One bonus: our health will improve as we switch to electric since burning methane indoors creates carbon monoxide and

nitrogen oxides that can exacerbate respiratory and other health issues.

It will take resources and education to transition away from methane gas. CPAU needs to offer rebates and low-cost financing to help residents make needed changes to their homes. The building department needs to update and streamline the permitting processes for ‘fuel-switching’ residences from gas to electricity. Contractors need training on electrification retrofits. The community needs an education campaign to understand the who, what, why, where, and how of home electrification. Residents can encourage the City to make the investments needed to thoughtfully phase out the use of fossil fuels in Palo Alto, and to propose sensible ways to finance these activities.

## Sea-Level Rise Threatens Palo Alto Utilities and Homes

The third area of concern is sea-level rise. The City is currently identifying hazards and risks from sea-level rise and rising shallow groundwater. While Barron Park is unlikely to experience sea-level rise directly, the impacts on our utilities, wastewater processing, and the homes of our neighbors on the Bayside of Middlefield will be devastating. Battling sea-

*(Continued on page 18)*

(Palo Alto S/CAP -- continued from page 17)

level rise will be both critical and costly.

**What Can You Do?**

As we experience another drought year, with the promise of heat waves, lightning strikes, fires, and smoke ahead, it's clear that climate change is already here. We need to take action now to avoid even more devastating consequences down the road.

Starting in mid-April, look to the City Council agendas for S/CAP topics: [https://cityofpaloalto.org/gov/depts/cou/council\\_agendas.asp](https://cityofpaloalto.org/gov/depts/cou/council_agendas.asp)

As the City reviews the S/CAP, the community is encouraged to give feedback on the plan. The City offers a series of S/CAP webinars to bring residents up to speed on the issues and proposed solutions. Recordings of past presentations and notice of upcoming events are here: [https://cityofpaloalto.org/services/sustainability/sustainability\\_and\\_climate\\_action\\_plan/community\\_engagement/default.asp](https://cityofpaloalto.org/services/sustainability/sustainability_and_climate_action_plan/community_engagement/default.asp)

You can attend Council meetings via Zoom and/or send emails to the City Council at: [city.council@cityofpaloalto.com](mailto:city.council@cityofpaloalto.com)

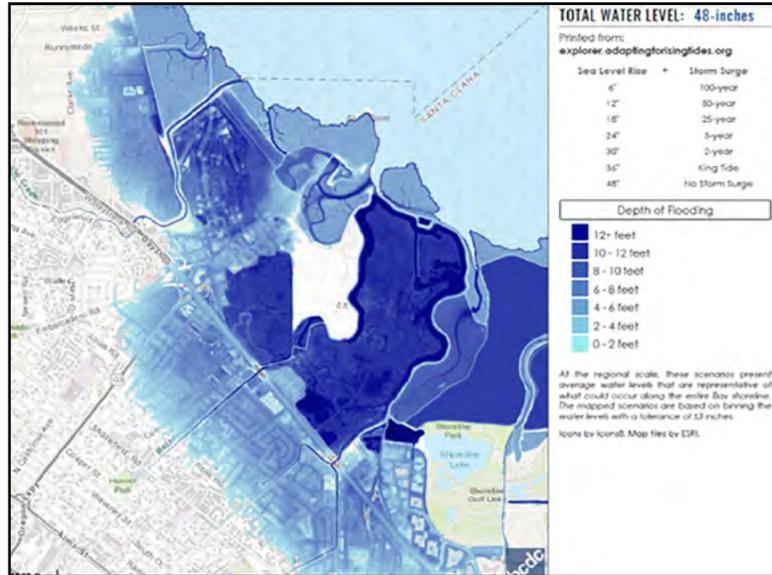
Finally, but equally important, strongly consider buying electric cars and appliances when these items need replacement.

While the devastation and disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is rightfully consuming our attention, the climate crisis has not gone away. There is no 'vaccine' to address climate change. The sooner we start to take serious action, the better for the climate *and* for our pocketbooks. The more carbon we release into the environment, the more expensive it will be to reverse it. Let's not let this opportunity pass to keep the Earth habitable for ourselves, our children, and our grandchildren.

Please contact me at [hglann@gmail.com](mailto:hglann@gmail.com) if you have questions about the S/CAP, EVs, switching to electric, or other activities to combat climate change.

**Footnotes:**

1. <https://slate.com/business/2014/09/palo-alto-power-supply-how-the-home-of-stanford-became-carbon-neutral.html>
2. <https://www.consumerreports.org/car-repair-maintenance/pay-less-for-vehicle-maintenance-with-an-ev/>



Estimates of flooding in Palo Alto due to a sea-level rise of 4 feet. Image from City of Palo Alto Sea Level Rise webinar <https://youtu.be/gfjCJR8XH2o>

3. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/super-potent-methane-in-atmosphere-oil-gas-drilling-ice-cores>
4. CPAU All Electric Homes 101 webinar: <https://youtu.be/yfn9UODfo04>

**Resources:**

Acterra GoEV Program: <https://www.acterra.org/goev>

Electrification resources from the Decarbonization Coalition: <https://www.switchison.org/>



Love the donkeys? Support Perry and Buddy with a donation! Food, veterinary care, supplies, and pasture maintenance are ongoing costs. Go to: <http://barronparkdonkeys.org> to make a donation. Photo by Jenny Kiratli.

# El Camino Business Update, March 2021

By Bob Moss

Since my last report there continue to be changes in occupancy on El Camino between Adobe Creek and Page Mill, plus an increase in vacancies, but overall vacancy rates are still relatively low. Several substantial construction projects are underway. The lockdown and stay-at-home orders due to the coronavirus have of course had a real negative impact, but it hasn't been as bad as anticipated on our "strip."

Almost all the restaurants are open, largely for take-out, delivery, or curbside pickup. Hobe's (4224) and Dinah's Poolside (4261) are offering patio dining. McDonald's (3128) and the newly opened State of Mind Slice House at 3850 (replacing Fowl Play) have tables in front, as does Baja Fresh (3990B). Celia's Mexican Restaurant (3694) and The Fish Market (3150) are currently closed, but offer takeout at their other locations. **See page 3 for more local restaurant info.**

The Flagstar Bank replaced Opus Advisors at 2875. A proposal to redevelop the former Mike's Bikes location at 3001 with 19,800 sq. ft. of ground floor retail and 30 apartments, plus 20 apartments in a building behind the retail, was approved almost four years ago but is still not under construction.

The former Foot Locker site at 3225 (at Portage) is currently under construction for a mixed-use project with a four-story building that will have 6,513 sq. ft. of ground floor retail and six housing units, plus a two-story rear building with 2,061 sq. ft. of ground floor retail and 1,826 sq. ft. of second-floor offices.

Co-working space provider Sandbox Suites at 3505 is permanently closed.

The former Jewish Study Network offices at 3626 and 3628 are still vacant after several years. Family Fashion Cuts at 3666D has closed. Palo Alto Tailoring at 3700, corner of Barron Avenue, is closed, and the site is vacant, although some equipment is still in the shop. The lot next to the shop (3710) was cleaned up after warnings by City officials and is now fenced. A construction project is underway at the site.

Redevelopment of 3703-3709 to Wilton Court, a four-story 65-unit affordable housing project with support functions for residents

on the ground floor, was approved by the Architectural Review Board three years ago and is now under construction.

Ernie's Wines and Liquors at 3790 is currently closed. Two new spas are operating in the 3800 block, Barron Park side: Tranquil Spa at 3866 and Eden Spa at 3886.

The former Compadres site at 3877, vacant since October 2010, gained final approval in 2019 and is now under construction for 4,676 sq. ft. of commercial space, six residential units, and 11 townhouses, with an underground parking lot.

The building at 3960 is being newly outfitted as a cabinet sales business.

The former Pizza Chicago building at 4115 was demolished and is being replaced by a three-story mixed-used building with seven apartments, ground floor retail, and offices. Construction has begun.

Te'Amo Boba Tea x Mochi Donut has opened at 4131, Unit 101.

A five-story hotel is still planned for the former Su Hong Restaurant site at 4256. The Su Zhe Eatery (with takeout only) currently occupies the restaurant space.

The overall vacancy rate for El Camino and El Camino Way is 6.6% (where 5% is basically considered fully occupied). On El Camino Real, vacancies increased, but fewer than predicted. The downtown Palo Alto vacancy rate is 15%. There are far more offices downtown than on El Camino Real, which may account for some of the difference.

Vacancies on the Barron Park side include: 3516, 3626, 3628, 3632, 3666B, 3666D, and 3990C. The lot at 4146 has been vacant for decades with several developments approved, but nothing built. The Thain lot at 4160 has been vacant for more than 45 years; several townhouse projects were approved for the site, but no construction has started.

Vacancies on the Ventura Side include: 2905, 3001, 3011, 3127, 3505, 3159, 3567, 3585, and 4117. The Combes lot (3585) has plans for a three-story mixed-use building, but is still undeveloped; the former Curves building at 4117 continues to be vacant.

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

For Board Meeting Schedule write to: [president@bpapaloalto.org](mailto:president@bpapaloalto.org)

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

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION  
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