



# BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

John King, BPA President



Welcome to Fall 2021, Barron Park! Back to masking up again as we deal with the delta variant. I hope you and your families are well and safe. The kids are back to in-person learning. Not easy to back out of my driveway on Barron Ave. at 8:00 a.m., but it's so welcome! Great to see kids in classrooms with friends and teachers and playing on the Barron Park and Juana Briones playgrounds.

On Sunday, August 22, the Barron Park and Ventura neighborhoods held a truly inspirational event to celebrate our neighborhoods' diversity. In response to a disturbing incident at the Fuki Sushi Restaurant in early August, the Barron Park Association and the Ventura Neighborhood Association brought together over 150 participants in Bol Park to support our mutual diverse, local businesses and residents. Each speaker's words were poignant and heartfelt. They included Erika Escalante, the current County of Santa Clara Human Relations Commissioner, who grew up at the Buena Vista Mobile Home Park; Lydia Kou, City of Palo Alto Councilmember and member of the Asian community; Jasmine Kapadia, a Paly High School student and Youth Poet Laureate; Lumi Gardner, owner of Fuki Sushi Restaurant; and Neera Narang, a Ventura neighborhood resident.

The message is clear: Our neighborhood has

a history of diversity going back more than 100 years. Today, at Barron Park Elementary, at least 13 heritage languages are represented. Thank you to Doug Graham, our Barron Park Historian, whose recent Centennial articles in the BPA Newsletters provided me with great talking points about BP history. I was so proud of how our neighborhood responded to this call for support and to the volunteer effort put forward by everyone involved.

The following Sunday afternoon, August 29, we relaxed at the super successful Ice Cream Social in Bol Park, devouring three five-gallon cartons of ice cream – more than 400 cones. We were graced with the beautiful accordion

music of Barron Park's own Gary Breitbard and Jena Rauti. Thank you to Karen Saxena and the volunteer scoopers for coordinating and handing out the cool treats!

The BPA is always looking for volunteers to handle events – May Fête, Fall Movie Night, our March Annual Meeting. Maybe you have a new activity in mind? Please consider getting involved, perhaps as a Board or Committee member. BPA Board meetings – the third Tuesday of most months on Zoom – are open to all. Please reach out to me at [johnwadeking@gmail.com](mailto:johnwadeking@gmail.com) Join or renew your BPA membership at <https://bpapaloalto.org/join-the-barron-park-association/>

We'd normally be planning for Movie Night in Bol Park now, but caution still prevails. Join with me in hoping for next year. See you soon!



Barron Park and Ventura residents gather at Bol Park on August 22 to celebrate our neighborhoods' diversity. More photos on page 4. Photos by Winter Dellenbach.

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# Consider the Trees

By Laurie Schofield and Mary Lou Hadley, Hadley Schofield Landscape Design



Western Bluebird. Photos by Jack Schofield



Scrub Jay.

Fall is a great time to put new trees and shrubs in the ground. As longtime Barron Park residents – and landscape designers – we have been asked to suggest some trees and screening shrubs for our neighborhood and to list a few that you should avoid.

Recently, the way we choose trees and large shrubs has been heavily influenced by the book, *Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard*, by Douglas W. Tallamy, an environmental scientist who studies the relationship between plants and insects and the animals that depend on them. Every Barron Park resident has an opportunity to provide habitat for wildlife and can contribute to the overall health of the Bay Area.

In the last few years, all of us have heard about the dramatic decline in pollinators. Indeed, the decline of all sorts of insects is of critical importance to birds. Consider this: It takes up to 800 caterpillars a day for eight days to raise a clutch of eggs, and adult songbirds raising chicks forage only over an area radiating about 160 feet from their nest. Native trees and shrubs that support a wide variety of butterflies and moths as well as pollinators function as well-stocked supermarkets for birds. Tallamy describes caterpillars as “soft bags filled with food.” Without them, birds simply cannot raise baby birds. Even hummingbirds feed insects to their young for the body-building proteins that nectar doesn't provide.

Here are some climate-appropriate trees and

screening shrubs, mostly California natives, that contribute to our Bay Area natural habitat.

Small trees:

- Western Redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*) – spring blooming; deciduous
- Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis* ‘Merlot’), hybrid between Eastern Redbud and Mexican Redbud – spring blooming; deciduous
- Mountain Mahogany (*Cercocarpus betuloides*) – evergreen

Medium trees that are O.K. near power lines:

- *Arbutus* ‘Marina’ – hybrid; related to the native Madrone; evergreen
- *Chitalpa x tashkentensis* ‘Pink Dawn’ – summer blooming; deciduous

Large trees that are **not** appropriate under power lines:

- Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) – evergreen (the best tree for native insects!)
- Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*) – deciduous
- Catalina Ironwood (*Lyonothamnus floribundus asplenifolius*) – evergreen
- Incense Cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens*) – evergreen

Screening shrubs for along fences and property lines:

- Catalina Cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia* var. *lyonii*)
- Hollyleaf Cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia*) – mature size smaller than Catalina Cherry
- Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*)

## View this Newsletter in Full Color!

You can read this issue in full color and with live web links at <https://bpapaloalto.org/bpa-newsletter/> as soon as it's posted. 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

- Silktassel (*Garrya elliptica*) – ‘James Roof’ is a nice variety.
- California Wild Lilac (*Ceanothus* sp.) – ‘Ray Hartman’ and ‘Snow Flurry’ are tall varieties.
- California Wax Myrtle (*Morella californica*, formerly *Myrica californica*)

Remember, healthy soil is the foundation for a healthy landscape. Never blow leaves off the soil! Many insects pupate in the leafy mulch under trees; removing dropped leaves eliminates habitat for the grubs and tasty bugs that birds eat. Dropped leaves also provide a healthy mulch layer for your plants, retaining much needed moisture.

Finally, please do not plant the following trees. They need too much water to thrive, and all have invasive roots:

- Southern Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*)
- Sweet Gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*)
- Birches (various species of *Betula*)
- Camphor (*Cinnomomum camphora*).



# Along the Garden Path

## (and Other Bol Park Native Garden Updates)

By Linda Elder, Native Habitat Committee



**Bol Park Native Garden Path meandering towards Matadero. Photos by Richard Elder.**



**Low-growing native plants along the path..**

The Bol Park Native Habitat Committee is continually upgrading the garden. We recently reconfigured some garden paths, in response to safety concerns, so that they do not open to Roble Ridge Road, except near Matadero where the road is wider. The new configuration keeps the paths within the garden and discourages walkers (and running children) from coming out suddenly to the road where drivers are not expecting them.

We notice that people enjoy walking in the garden with more paths connected to the expanded garden sections. Richard Elder has been busy this summer improving existing paths by leveling them and replacing border logs. He will also build three park benches, funded by a grant from the Garden Club of Palo Alto. The benches, sited with garden views and access in mind, will be placed along the garden paths. The benches are expected to be completed by the end of the year.

This fall, we will be receiving over two hundred plants from Grassroots Ecology, funded by Valley Water's grant for Bol Park. It will be a great assortment of locally sourced plants, with lots of grasses and low-growing groundcover, in keeping with the original vision of maintaining the open look of the

understory. Many of the plants will be used for in-fill of the existing garden. We also plan to add more grasses and perhaps some new shrubs to the hillside near the playground where we are also trying to restore the Purple needlegrass (*Stipa pulchra*) – the state grass of California – and Blue Wildrye (*Elymus glaucus*).

We will need volunteers to help plant all those plants! If you want to help, please let us know at [bpnativegarden@gmail.com](mailto:bpnativegarden@gmail.com) and

we will contact you when we are ready to schedule the planting.

Additionally, we are planning to hold our usual clean-up days in January and February 2022. We can divide up the work in several ways so people can have the option to work independently or together. Volunteers can choose to work on a specific plant or plot, and of course there is always weeding! Melanie Cross, an experienced gardener, coordinates the clean-ups and can guide gardeners at every level.

We value all comments about the garden. They help us shape our garden plans and design. To share your ideas, suggestions, or comments about the garden, please contact: [bpnativegarden@gmail.com](mailto:bpnativegarden@gmail.com)

### CALL FOR ARTISTS!

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



Easel icon by Nate Driscoll, Noun Project

### 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: <https://bpapalo-alto.org/bpa-email-lists/> The link provides information about each list and an easy way to subscribe to one or more of them.



# More Celebration of Diversity Photos

*Continued from page 1. All photos by Winter Dellenbach*



Lumi Gardner, owner of Fuki Sushi Restaurant, and Lydia Kou, P.A. City Council member, speak at the August 22 Diversity Rally in Bol Park. All photos by Winter Dellenbach.



Residents Mary Sylvester and Nelson Ng.



Jasmine Kapadia, Palo Alto H.S. student and Youth Poet Laureate, reads to the attentive group.



Attendees at the August 22 Neighborhood Diversity Celebration, including Jane Zimmerman and Mitchell Zimmerman, made signs to highlight important messages.



# Art in My Yard

## *Cup of Joe: A Community Art Recycling Project in Ventura*



**Giant cup made from recycled Keurig K-Cup pods includes wire cage infrastructure for additional support. Photos by Amber Smith.**

A Barron Park Elementary School family in Ventura has gained community support collecting and recycling Keurig K-Cup pods to build a coffee cup sculpture. The constructed coffee cup will be between four and five feet tall when completed. Amber Smith, a local artist, is building the large-scale coffee cup completely out of recycled materials, and has used over 800 K-cup pods to date. She expects to use over 1400 K-cups to complete the project.

The project began early in the pandemic when Amber and her family got tired of taking the K-cup pods apart to recycle them. She decided to repurpose them for an art project; her children were happy for an excuse not to take the filters apart anymore. After collecting them for a year, Amber realized she was going to need many more K-cup pods, so she invited the help of the neighborhood. The community support has been outstanding! At least a bagful has been delivered each week.

Construction began in May, and the cup was assembled in Amber's front yard.

### ART IN YOUR YARD

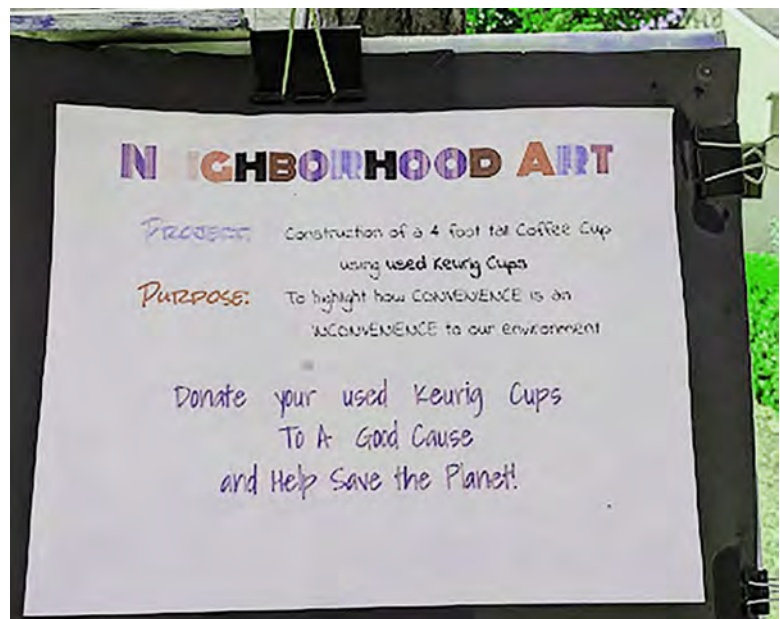


We know that Barron Park has many examples of outdoor or "yard" art, either made by you or other artists. We'd love to

see photos of them in upcoming newsletters. Please send reproducible photos to Myrna Rochester at: [mbrbpa@sonic.net](mailto:mbrbpa@sonic.net) Tell us something about the art, but you don't need to include your street address.

A few months in, she hit a snag; the sculpture began leaning to one side. Amber's husband, along with several neighbors, got involved in the discussion as to how best to engineer a retrofit. The consensus was to replace the interior metal supports with a wire cage. Update: The retrofit has been successful, and construction of the giant coffee cup was completed in late September.

If you would like to see the completed "Cup of Joe" sculpture, please walk, drive, or ride your bike to 320 Maclane Street!



**Sign requesting donations of K-Cup pods includes an environmental message.**

# Barron Park Children's Center at Barron Park Elementary School

By Sonya Moreno, Development Coordinator



Photos courtesy of Barron Park Children's Center

**B**arron Park Children's Center (BPCC) is a preschool program of Palo Alto Community Child Care (PACCC). Our community-centered program offers welcoming environments, nutritious meals, and highly qualified teachers. BPCC is a play-based program that uses emergent curriculum to guide the children's education and develop a life-long love of learning. Teachers observe the children's interests and plan educational lessons rooted in play.

BPCC has been a long-standing member of the Barron Park community; we take pride in our connection to the Barron Park Elementary School campus and surrounding neighborhood. Our pre-K students participate weekly in Barron Park Elementary's Maker's Studio, a STEAM lab, while our younger children are introduced to the STEAM curriculum in our own Mini-Maker's Studio at BPCC. STEAM education is a project-based approach to teaching and learning that integrates science, technology, engineering, the arts, and math as pathways to guide student inquiry, discussions, and critical thinking. BPCC also participates in weekly library days, where the BPES school librarian reads to the children and gives them the opportunity to check out and return books. Literacy is a large focus at BPCC and Barron Park Elementary, and we are very lucky to be able to partner with the school in this way. Our teachers and children also love to get out into the neighborhood by visiting local shops and taking walking field trips to Bol Park.

Our families love being a part of the BPCC family! Current parents and Barron Park neighborhood residents, Helene and Lars share, "We've had the pleasure of having our son at BPCC for the past 1.5 years. While this has been a very challenging time, we have



loved every minute with the great staff and friends there. They have navigated very well during the pandemic, but more importantly, the kids are happy, exploring at the school, as well as around and about our fantastic local community. They are having a ton of fun in a very safe environment."

Learn more and enroll now by visiting <http://paccc.org/> or call 650-856-7559.

## BPA EMAILS AND WEB LINKS FALL 2021

- **BPA Website:** <https://bpapaloalto.org>
- **BPA Newsletter Archive:** <https://bpapaloalto.org/bpa-newsletter>
- **BPA Membership (Join/Renew):** <https://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: <https://bpapaloalto.org/bpa-email-lists> or write to: [listmanager@bpapaloalto.org](mailto:listmanager@bpapaloalto.org)
- **BPA President:** John W. King at: [president@bpapaloalto.org](mailto:president@bpapaloalto.org)
- **BPA Treasurer:** John W. King at: [johnwadeking@gmail.com](mailto:johnwadeking@gmail.com)
- **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@cbtnorcal.com](mailto:gluce@cbtnorcal.com)
- **Emergency Services Volunteer Program:** Maurice Green at: [mauryg3@comcast.net](mailto:mauryg3@comcast.net)
- **Barron Park Historian:** Douglas L. Graham at: [dgrahampaca@gmail.com](mailto:dgrahampaca@gmail.com)
- **BPA Webmaster:** Maurice Green at: [bpawebman@bpapaloalto.org](mailto:bpawebman@bpapaloalto.org)
- **Barron Park Donkeys:** To volunteer, donate, or purchase merchandise, go to: <http://barronparkdonkeys.org> or contact Jenny Kiratli at: [barronparkdonkeys@gmail.com](mailto:barronparkdonkeys@gmail.com)
- **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)
- **Cool Block:** To learn more or join the list of interested Cool Block residents contact [hglann@gmail.com](mailto:hglann@gmail.com)



# Barron Park Becomes a Community

## Part 1 – The Great Depression

By Douglas L. Graham, Barron Park Historian

### Continuing the Centennial Story

This is our neighborhood's Centennial Year. Born in 1921, by 1929 Barron Park was still a rural area of strawberry patches, fruit orchards, and small vegetable farms, interspersed with pastures and hayfields, and sprinkled with several small clusters of "suburban"-type housing. There were a few businesses along El Camino Real, mostly "cabin camps," other forms of early motels, and a scattering of small roadside restaurants. El Camino had been designated U.S. Highway 101, and was carrying a lot of traffic, including the first small waves of interstate truck and tourist traffic. Barron Park commuters were served by buses and interurban streetcars, as well as steam trains for cargo. Two railroads had a stop at "Neal Station," a tiny shelter at the corner of Matadero and Laguna Avenues. Elementary school-aged children attended Mayfield School on the west side of El Camino across from Sheridan Avenue in Palo Alto, and older children attended Palo Alto High School.

### Community Feeling Begins

The 1930s saw significant changes in Barron Park, covered in this article. They included more growth (although this was greatly slowed by the national Depression), continuing development of streets, bridges, and utility infrastructure, and a significant reduction in the dominance of agriculture, which would soon be replaced by burgeoning suburbia (in the late 1940s). The strawberry boom had come and gone, done in by the red spider mites, and with it, the Driscoll Company's ownership of Barron Park land. It was mostly replaced by individually owned fruit orchards. But perhaps the most significant change was the beginning of real community feeling and the citizen activism that was part of it. Neighborhood residents, represented collectively by small groups, began to demand more say in the local government bodies that served us. There was no Barron Park Association as we know it, but the first stirrings could be seen from Matadero Avenue south to Arastradero Road. Barron Parkers were beginning to feel, as Wallace Stegner would have called it, "a

sense of place."

### A Sense of Place

Wallace Stegner (1909-93) was a noted American novelist, short story writer, environmentalist, and historian, often called the "Dean of Western Writers." He won the Pulitzer Prize in 1972 and the National Book Award in 1977. He taught at the University of Wisconsin and Harvard. He finished his career at Stanford, where he founded the Creative Writing Program. His students included Sandra Day O'Connor, Ken Kesey, and Larry McMurtry, as well as many other well-known authors. I quote Stegner here on local history:

*Local history is the last history, the history with more of ourselves in it than other kinds . . . It is the record of human living in its daily complexity, and the sense of place is strong in it. Its actors are our neighbors, our families, ourselves. It is a history of a hard-made land, homely and familiar, human lives on their way into memory and tradition.*

### The Military Academy Closes

One of the first manifestations of the Great Depression in our neighborhood was the closure of the California Military Academy. It had been located in the old "Barron Mansion" and on the property surrounding it. You can find the site in the southernmost block of La Selva Drive (between Military Way and Magnolia Drive) at State Historical Monument #969, located between 3891 and 3899 La Selva. In Fall 2021, a new pamphlet will guide you on a self-guided tour of historic sites near El Camino Real, including the Mansion site.

The Academy was founded by Colonel Sebastian C. Jones, who bought about 53 acres of the old Barron Estate from the Driscoll Company in 1923. Driscoll considered the land unsuitable for strawberry farming, as it was mostly the beautifully landscaped grounds surrounding the Barron Mansion. Col. Jones previously ran several military academies in upstate New York and was looking for a warmer place to live. He

built barracks and a swimming pool with a pool house. He and his extended family moved into the Mansion, which had "at least 38 rooms" on three floors and a two-story attic. The cadets ate their meals in the large dining room of the west wing.

The Academy was operated, apparently successfully, by Col. Jones from 1925 until his untimely sudden death in 1929. Nearly simultaneously came the staggering stock market crash, initiating the Great Depression. Jones's son-in-law, Major Francis H. Forbes, inherited the school property, along with his wife and her two sisters. For a year, Forbes acted as Superintendent. After the crash, many students were withdrawn by their families who had lost investments, life savings, and maybe their jobs in the expanding economic disaster. The Forbes family decided to relocate the school to Marin County, but investors backed out, and they ended up selling out to a Mrs. Hurley, who unsuccessfully ran a boarding school in the old Mansion for several years. With the closure of the Academy came the closure of the swimming pool to neighbors in Barron Park – a great loss considering how few public amenities existed in the area.

### The Great Crash Starts the Great Depression

The great stock market crash started on October 24, 1929 ("Black Thursday"), with falling prices causing panic selling. It was followed by "Black Tuesday" (October 29) when share prices lost \$14 billion in one day. More than \$30 billion was lost that week, more than ten times the entire federal budget at the time and more than all the U.S. had spent on World War I. It has been likened to a truck hitting a stone wall, but I think a better analogy might be a modern one-quarter-mile-long oil tanker taking out the South Tower of the Golden Gate Bridge . . . The Great Depression it started lasted, in the opinion of most economists, until 1939.

After the stock market crash came a massive banking crisis, because so many banks had invested their clients' savings in the stock market. Withdrawals and loan failures led

to the closure of five thousand banks in the years 1930-33. Without deposit insurance, many people lost their life savings and investments. People from all classes stopped purchasing and consuming. Although the Great Depression began in the U.S., it quickly spread worldwide; international trade fell more than 50 percent.

Although the Hoover administration (1929-33) tried to stop the runaway deflation, unemployment, and banking system collapse, in the end its efforts had little effect. Although Hoover had ideas that were subsequently carried out in Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, he did not have the people behind him, nor solid support from his Republican party. Citizens began to turn against Hoover and the Republicans, and FDR came into office with a solid majority and a Democratic Congress.

### California Takes a Dizzying Plunge Downward

"In California, farm income in 1932 sank to less than half its 1929 level. Unemployment in the Golden State reached a staggering 28 percent in 1932. By 1933, building permits had fallen to one-ninth of their peak in 1925." By 1934, one fifth of Californians were living on public relief. Makeshift homeless encampments, widely known in the East as "Hoover-villes," sprang up in all the cities. *California Perspectives on American History* (Oakland Museum of California, <http://picturethis.museumca.org>) comments: "Californians who lived through the 1920s and 1930s must have felt as if they were on a roller coaster. In a dizzying cycle of boom and bust, a decade of spectacular prosperity was followed by the worst economic collapse in the state's history. Ramshackle encampments, such as Pipe City in Oakland filled with forlorn unemployed workers and their dispossessed families." (*The Great Depression: California in the Thirties*: Cal State, Northridge, [www.csun.edu](http://www.csun.edu))

### Oakland's "Pipe City"

This camp near downtown Oakland filled with jobless residents who lived in huge sewer pipes being stored above ground. Each six-foot section of concrete pipe became a "homeless shelter" for one of the nearly 200 people who lived there. Residents covered the ends of their pipes with burlap or cardboard and survived on "Mulligan Stew" made from discarded vegetables scavenged from nearby grocery wholesalers. The *Oakland Post-Inquirer* wrote on December 3, 1932:

"To qualify for citizenship in Pipe City, you must be jobless, homeless, hungry, and preferably shoeless, coatless, and hatless. If one is also discouraged, lonely, filled with a terrible feeling of hopelessness and helplessness, one's qualifications are that much stronger."

### Barron Park's "Hobo Jungle"

In Barron Park, a "hobo jungle" existed along Matadero Creek in the pasture that a few years later would become the home of the Bol family's horses and donkeys. Some homeless people still lived there as late as the early 1970s. Now this site is in Bol Park. Allegedly, during the Depression there were also homeless people living in brush along the railroad tracks near what is now called Strawberry Hill.

### The 1932 Olympics

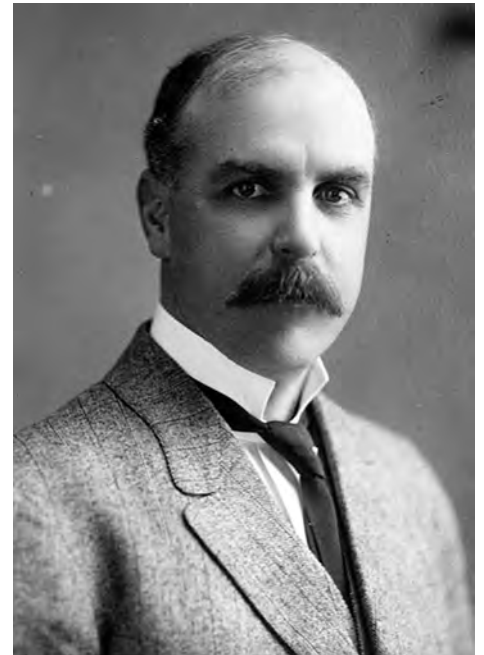
It is important to remember that not everyone was miserable in the Depression years. If you were fortunate enough not to have lost your wealth in the crash, you could almost pretend that life continued as usual. One uplifting factor for many Californians was the debut of the 1932 Olympics in Los Angeles. The first Olympics to be held in the U.S., the games were a terrific success. The Memorial Coliseum had been built in the 1920s in expectation of them. An Olympic Village was built, including "... Mexican-style haciendas, dining complexes, a theater, hospital, and fire department. Never before had a city provided such an extensive facility for its visiting athletes." (*California Perspectives*) Fifteen hundred competitors represented forty nations. The opening ceremonies in the Coliseum were witnessed by a capacity crowd of more than 100,000 and set a new standard for artistry and pageantry. New records were set in every event but the broad jump.

### "Sunny Jim" Rolph

*California Perspectives* writes: "Republican James Rolph, Jr. served as mayor of San Francisco for nineteen years (1912-30). His buoyant personality and ready smile won him the nickname 'Sunny Jim.'" In 1930 Rolph was elected governor. but it was soon apparent that he was out of his depth in dealing with the massive economic and political problems of the Depression. He did not complete his term as Governor, dying suddenly on June 2, 1934. (See Illustration A, James Rolph, Jr.)

### "The Pit"

During these trying years, a new and entirely different kind of threat arose to raise the ire



**Illustration A: James Rolph, Jr. Governor of California, 1930-1934. Photo credit: Wikipedia Creative Commons**

of Maybelle (sic) Tract residents. This was the infamous "borrow pit" the state wanted to create on land in the tract: an enormous excavation to provide fill material for construction of the Bayshore Highway, Route 101 (predecessor to the freeway). This led to red-hot concern and opposition among the residents of the tract. It is a long and complicated (but fascinating) story on how the state can manipulate local politics to overcome citizen opposition. (See the full story in the [Barron Park Association Newsletter, Winter 2014](#)).

### Sunny Jim Lobbied by Maybelle Tract Residents

In October 1932, local political discussions had reached apparent agreement that the proposed state action must be stopped. A delegation was formed to challenge the governor in his office at the State Capitol. It was composed of two members of the Palo Alto Planning Commission to represent the city, two members of the County Planning Commission, and three residents of the Maybelle Tract. They met Governor Rolph on October 24, 1932, and were soon satisfied that he agreed with them and would require the State Department of Highways (now CalTrans) to find another site. Apparently, the Governor was careful to "cover his bets" by seeming to support the citizens' request while actually promising nothing. Rolph then told his Director of Public Works to promise only to notify the local group if the State



decided to go ahead at Maybelle in enough time for them to file an injunction. Instead, the local group was not informed in time to file, and the project went ahead as originally planned. The next actions by the State, City, and County remain unrecorded, but it seems that secret negotiations may have proceeded “over the heads of the neighbors.” In any case, the pit was dug, existed for 25 years, and problems from it still beset the neighborhood in the third decade of the twenty-first century.

### The Birth of Community Activism in Barron Park

The protests by the Maybelle orchardist community about the proposed pit was the first documented instance in the Barron Park area of an organized community reaction to a perceived threat to property values and quality of life from the actions of a government agency. Although in the short run the protests were unsuccessful, they did plant the seeds for the later formation of the Maybelle Improvement Association, which morphed into the Barron Park Maybelle Improvement Association and then in 1953 into the Barron Park Association (BPA). As I wrote in 2014, “. . . one of the unintended consequences of this atrocious invasion (by the State) was stimulation of the community activism that ever since has been the hallmark of our neighborhood.”

### Agriculture in Mid-1930s Barron Park

My article in the [Summer 2021 issue of this Newsletter](#) included generalized comments on the conversion from the hayfields, dairy pastures, and strawberry patches of the 1920s to the fruit orchards and truck-garden crops of the 1930s. By the mid-1930s more than half of the neighborhood was planted in fruit trees.

### Two Dairy Farms

In the 1920s and early '30s two dairy farms and their supporting hayfields were a major part of Barron Park agriculture. The most important one was the Strain Dairy that was located on the land that later became Barron Park Elementary School and University Gardens (the large Eichler development on Josina, Kendall, and Barron Avenues). It operated from 1920 as Strain Ranch (later Strain Dairy) and from 1937 until 1948 under different names, until complaints about its being a nuisance to the new and planned housing tracts adjacent to it forced its closure. (See Illustration B, La Encina Dairy and John



Illustration B, La Encina Dairy and John Freund. Source: Freund family photo, 1930s.

Freund.) The dairy also purchased and used hay grown in several areas west of Laguna Avenue. (See Illustration C, the Preminger hayfield.)

The other dairy also changed ownership and names during its existence from early in the twentieth century (when Barron Parkers knew it as “the Portuguese Farmer’s barn”) until some later time when it was Peers Dairy, serving Palo Alto and the surrounding area. It was located on the Stanford land where the VA Hospital is now; the cattle also grazed where Gunn High School and Strawberry Hill are now, so it was on two sides of Roble Ridge and Matadero Hill. (See Illustration D,

“The Portuguese Farmer’s barn,” later Peers Dairy.)

### Barron Park Fruit Orchards

Apricots were the dominant crop, especially in the Maybelle Tract. Some of the east end of the tract north of Maybell Avenue was devoted to flower culture in fields and greenhouses – both cut flowers and flower seed crops.

In the “Barron” addition to Mayfield Farm, south of Los Robles Avenue, the largest orchards were in the area now occupied by Encina Grande Park and were all prune plums. In the west end of the addition were



Illustration C, the Preminger hayfield. Source: Preminger family photos, 1926.



**Illustration D, "The Portuguese Farmer's barn," later Peers Dairy. Source: Preminger family photos, 1926.**

more apricots, which lopped over to the north over Barron Creek to occupy much of the area between Los Robles Avenue (a mere farm lane at the time) and the future Shauna Lane and El Cerrito Road.

North of Los Robles, the first block was increasingly devoted to suburban housing, but also included some truck farming of vegetables. Most of the rest of the area between Barron Avenue and La Para Avenue (properly spelled La Pera) was planted to pear trees, as was much of the land west of Laguna Avenue. North of Barron Avenue where the VA Hospital is now, the livestock area and what is now the line of Ilima Way, were in pasture, except for the blocks closest to El Camino Real which were occupied by businesses and housing. There was also scattered housing along Matadero Creek, Laguna Avenue, and the east end of Chimalus Drive.

In the area west of the railroad tracks, there were orchards along both sides of Matadero Avenue (probably apricot) and some pasture at the west end. Roble Ridge Road had suburban housing on one-acre and two-acre lots. (See Illustration E, Preminger orchard and hayfield, and Illustration F, a pear orchard with a woman and child.) To summarize, agriculture was still the central focus of Barron Park. Replacement by suburban housing continued, but at a slower rate than in the 1920s, due to the Depression.

### The Railroads

The Depression hit U.S. railroads hard. There had been much wasteful overbuilding in the 1890s, and small railroads and uneconomical branch lines had been failing ever since the turn of the century. The two railroads in Barron Park were built in 1906-07 when the Southern Pacific (SPRR or SP) was flush with money and in political control of California. They built two lines from Mayfield (now the California Avenue business district) to Los Gatos. The eastern track was the SP steam-train branch line, and the western track was the Peninsular Railway Company of California (PRCC), an electrified interurban trolley line

(similar to today's light rail lines). The PRCC was a subsidiary of the SP and by 1924 had 80 miles of interurban line in the Santa Clara Valley. It connected with another interurban line that had 46 miles. You could get on the cars in Palo Alto, switch to bigger, faster cars at Mayfield, transfer at Los Gatos, and ride on to San Jose and beyond, ending up at Alum Rock Park in the foothills east of San Jose.

In the Barron Park area, the railroads established two "flag stops" with shelters for passengers to wait for the trains. Our main one was at Neal, where Laguna Avenue ends at Matadero Avenue. The other was on Arastradero Road at Alta Mesa (between Miranda Avenue and Foothill Expressway, built in the 1960s on the old railroad right-of-way). These flag stops were often called "stations." They were not built when the railroad lines were; there was little or no demand for commuting from Barron Park until late in the 1920s. As nearly as we can determine, Neal Station was established in 1933, or shortly before. (See Illustration G, Neal Station and a "Big Game" train parked blocking Matadero Avenue.)

### Failure of the PRCC

Unfortunately, Neal Station served the interurban trolley (PRCC) only briefly. The PRCC had been uneconomical (i.e., losing money for the SP) throughout the Twenties. Service cutbacks began as early as 1921, followed by fare increases and, consequently, ridership declines. The SP pulled the plug in 1934 in the depths of the Depression, and the railroad commission allowed them to abandon the electric line and pull up the western track in 1935. However, the parent SP established



**Illustration E, Preminger orchard and hayfield, likely a view west toward Coyote Hill (center background), taken from near Matadero Avenue. (Can someone explain the large building in right background?) Preminger family photos, 1926.**





**Illustration F, a pear orchard with a woman and child. Pears were a popular crop in Barron Park during this period. Source: Johnson family photos.**

a daily steam commuter train from Los Gatos to San Francisco in the morning with a return in the evening. It always stopped at Neal Station if there were passengers to embark or disembark.

#### **U.S. Economic Recovery: First Stage**

In 1936 the first solid signs of economic recovery could be seen. The Federal Government under Roosevelt's New Deal had been creating government jobs under the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA). This poured a lot of money into the economy to stimulate business recovery and creation of private-sector jobs. Locally, early manifestations of the high-tech economy were stirring. Construction was up, especially for those involved in infrastructure mega-projects. In the Bay Area, construction of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge had begun in 1933 and was completed in 1936. Eight miles long, it was then the world's longest steel bridge, with twin suspension spans west of Yerba Buena Island, a tunnel through the rocky island, and a cantilevered span and several truss bridges east of the island. *California Perspectives* tells us:

*Its completion celebration in November 1936 was hailed by a gala celebration. Deck guns on fourteen naval ships boomed out a thunderous salute, fifteen hundred pigeons burst into flight, and a skywriter scrawled out the fateful words: THE BRIDGE IS OPEN. The Golden Gate*

*Bridge also began in 1933. Its central span was 4,200 feet long and its 746-foot towers were the largest ever built. The most difficult part of the project was the south tower, built a thousand feet from shore on a rocky ledge sixty-five feet below the (water) surface. When the bridge opened on May 27, 1937, a poet said it was "a curve of soaring steel, graceful and confident."*

#### **Not Everyone Was Confident: the 1937 Recession**

The U.S. economy unexpectedly fell again in 1937-38. Production declined sharply, as did profits and employment. Unemployment rolls jumped from 14 percent in 1937 to 19 percent in 1938. The pessimists decided

that the Depression was with us permanently. However, the Federal government reacted quickly with a spending program to pump money into the economy. Even more effective in stopping the downside was the sudden growth in demand for armaments and food and clothing for soldiers in European countries gearing up for war in the face of belligerent aggression by the Fascist and Nazi dictators of Italy and Germany. The 1937-38 recession was scary, but short-lived.

#### **The Excitement of the Decade in Barron Park**

One event of the 1930s loomed larger than any other in the collective memories of Barron Parkers and in the stories that circulated about our past: A fire destroyed the Barron Mansion. It occurred before we set up our own volunteer fire department. This was long before we joined Palo Alto when fire protection for our unincorporated area was provided by the California Forestry Department, which operated fire stations in the Santa Cruz Mountains, including one that served Barron Park and other nearby areas. Unfortunately, response time was very slow (up to 45 minutes, depending upon the situation, according to the personal memories of some Barron Park residents interviewed formally and informally in the 1970s). This resulted in very high insurance rates and sometimes difficulties in obtaining insurance coverage. This bird came home to roost on November 29, 1936, when the Mansion caught fire.

#### **A Spectacular Holocaust**

The fire came on Thanksgiving weekend, a blessing as it turned out, since it meant that



**Illustration G, Neal Station, with "Big Game" train parked, blocking Matadero Avenue at Laguna Avenue, 1930s (?). Source unrecorded.**



**Illustration H, Barron Mansion burning in an accidental fire on November 29, 1936, that poisoned relationships between Barron Park and the City of Palo Alto for 40 years. Source unrecorded.**

the Interdale School for Boys in the Mansion was closed for the holiday, and the students were absent. Only a caretaker was present. The fire began in one of the towers, and the firefighters concluded that arson was not involved. The wooden house, part of it 80 years old, went up like tinder. The flames shot about 50 feet high and could be seen from a great distance. Hundreds of sightseers came from miles around to see the fire, and their parked cars threatened to block El Camino Real (U.S. Highway 101). (See Illustration H, Barron Mansion burning.)

The caretaker and a passerby had called three fire departments: Palo Alto, Menlo Park, and Redwood City. The latter two showed up, along with the U.S. Navy fire department from Moffett Field, which had been alerted unofficially. The Palo Alto Fire Department, however, parked its truck at the city line across El Camino Real, 100 feet south of Wilton Avenue, and watched. They said the City Council had warned them not to respond to fires in Barron Park because their insurance didn't allow it. Whatever the reason or the truth of the story, it became a central myth of Barron Park that the PAFD had stood

by and let the old house burn and were only interested in keeping the fire from spreading into Palo Alto.

#### **This Poisoned Relations for 40 Years**

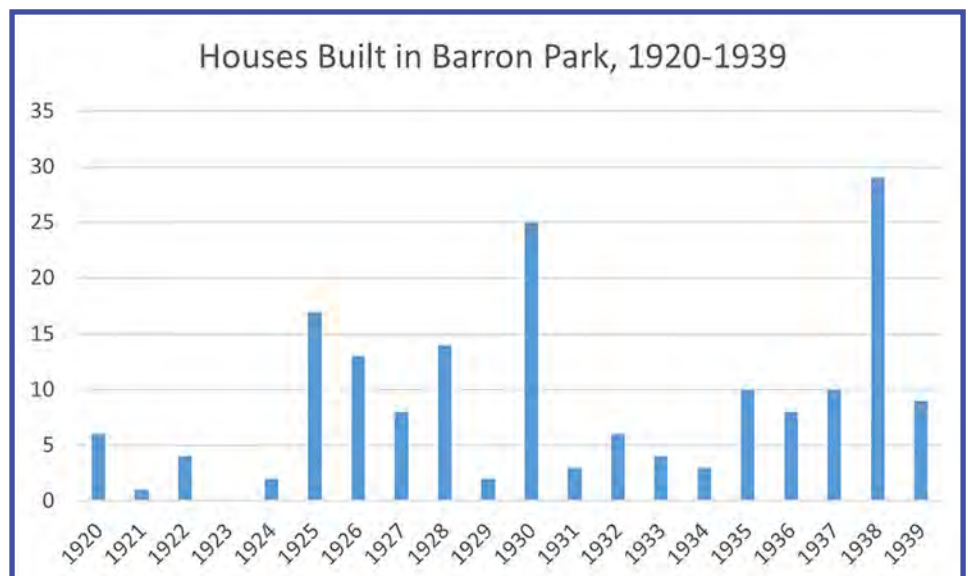
This event rankled in the minds of Barron Park residents and was brought up again

and again whenever disputes arose over water and sewer connections, street lighting, and similar issues. It was used as a prime argument against joining the City during the annexation battles of 1947-48, 1951, 1954-55, 1958-59, 1965, and 1973-75. Even in the late 1980s some old-time residents who remained "anti-City" would bring it up in conversation.

#### **One New Tract and Tepid Construction Activity**

Returning to the economic situation, only one new housing tract was opened in the neighborhood during the 1930s: the upscale Woodland Park, filed in 1937. It occupied the site of the Barron Mansion and grounds. My Centennial article, "Birth of the Neighborhood," in the [Summer 2021 issue of this Newsletter](#) included a bar chart showing the number of houses built in Barron Park each year during the 1920s, with those built in the 1930s for comparison. The chart is worth repeating. (See Illustration I ["eye"].) Note the record number of houses completed in 1930, followed by more than a 90 percent reduction in 1931 and very few each year until 1935, then a low level (compared to the 1920s) until a new record was set in 1938, reflecting houses contracted for before the 1937-38 recession. That recession shows up in a 66 percent reduction in completions during 1939. To complete the prewar picture, there were 25 houses finished in 1940 and 45 in 1941 (a new record), before World War II

*BPA History, continued on bottom of page 13*



**Illustration I, houses built in Barron Park 1920 - 1943. Douglas L. Graham, August 2021.**



# Helping Our Buena Vista Neighbors

By Karen Ratzlaff

Many thanks to those of you who have given to our neighbors at Buena Vista Mobile Home Park during this long pandemic. I have felt honored to meet so many of you at my house as you dropped off donations. Food insecurity is still an issue for some at the Park, so we are continuing our collection efforts into the Fall. If you would like to help, here are four easy donation options:

- Tax-deductible donations can be made to Buena Vista Partners <https://buenavistapartners.org/>. We are now registered with TechSoup and soon GuideStar, so we are eligible for company matching. Additionally, you can support us when you place personal orders through Amazon <https://smile.amazon.com> Select "Buena Vista Partners of Palo Alto"

as your charity.

- I am still collecting gift cards (Sprouts, Safeway, Target, Grocery Outlet) at my house (760 Chimalus Drive). Write to me at [karen\\_ratzlaff@hotmail.com](mailto:karen_ratzlaff@hotmail.com) to arrange drop-offs.
- Food and supplies are being collected by my friend Maria in Midtown Palo Alto. Please email me for her address. Here are the items she's collecting: toilet paper, dried pinto beans, white rice, tuna, canned chicken, canned corn, canned jalapeños, baby wipes, and diapers size 6.
- You can also order items using the Amazon Wish List in the following link. Items are shipped directly to Maria Martinez at Buena Vista. ([https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/32V7WRGEBZ5Z4?ref=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/32V7WRGEBZ5Z4?ref=wl_share))



Resident Association President Maria Martinez sorts donations of food and other essentials for Buena Vista Mobile Home Park residents of who have been hit hard by the pandemic. Image from <https://buenavistapartners.org>

## BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

FALL 2021

### Barron Park Association

724 Barron Avenue  
Palo Alto, California 94306

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### BPA History, continued from page 12

priorities brought civilian construction to a very low level until 1945. The bar chart has been extended to 1943 and revised as a line chart for better readability.

### Note: Continuation of This Article Planned for Winter 2021-22

Because of the major changes in our neighborhood and the number of important events that occurred in the 1930s, this story became too long for one article, so I have

split it in two. Part Two is called "The End of the Depression and Transition into Wartime" and covers the years 1937-42. It is scheduled for the Winter 2021-22 issue (published in January 2022). However, it is always possible that a timelier story might need the space, in which case I may defer Part Two to a later issue.

### How to Reach the Historian

As always, I stand by to answer questions,

respond to comments, and make corrections if necessary. I greatly enjoy the feedback I receive from you, my neighbors. You can write me at [dgrahampaca@gmail.com](mailto:dgrahampaca@gmail.com), via snail mail at 984 Ilima Way, P.A., 94306, or phone at 650-493-0689 (address and phone unchanged since 1972). Let me know what you think – and what you want to know about our history.

# Tribute to Longtime Barron Park Resident, Bob Frost

By Bob's family and friends



Robert Daniel Frost, 2/15/34 - 12/6/20. Photo by Bernard André.

Bob was born in Portland, Oregon, and spent his early life on his parents' five-acre peach orchard. He went to public schools in Portland, attended Portland State and Oregon State, graduating in electrical engineering in 1956, the same year he and Alice (Knutson) were married.

Bob did his master's in engineering at the University of Washington, in Seattle, and the family, including newborn Mark, relocated to Palo Alto in 1960, where Bob joined Watkins Johnson as its thirteenth engineer, specializing in microwave technology. With master's

degrees in both applied mathematics and computer science, Alice also went into tech; her career was with small computer companies. Their children, Mark, Curtis, Robin, and Stephen, all grew up in Palo Alto. Robin preceded her dad in death in 2017.

Bob loved the outdoors. He and Alice hiked, skied, bicycled locally, in the U.S., and in Europe, and enjoyed whitewater kayaking. He rode his bike to work for 40 years. Bob sailed on San Francisco Bay in a 34' Columbia sailboat shared with three sailor friends. With friends and family, he organized longer

sailing trips in the San Juan Islands and in the Caribbean.

Bob's neighborhood volunteerism is legendary. Active in scouting, along with his sons, he led Scout Troop #54 for a dozen years. For another dozen years (some overlapping), Bob was the Barron Park "Donkeymeister," scheduling Niner and Perry's feeding and walking and being responsible for their maintenance. He and Alice tutored students in STEM subjects at Alta Vista High School. Bob organized the BP Seniors' lunches for years. With Alice, he was devoted to the work of the Barron Park Green Team environmental group; the Frosts hosted the Green Team's holiday get-togethers every year.

Bob and Alice lived in Barron Park for 54 years, watching Silicon Valley grow from apricot and pear orchards to today's powerful industries. In 2014, they moved back to Portland, to the adult community Terwilliger Plaza (where Alice is now), she says, where they "lived happily ever after," and today with her "heart and memory full and very grateful!"

If you wish to get in touch with Alice, please write to: [momfrost2003@gmail.com](mailto:momfrost2003@gmail.com)



Alice and Bob Frost. Courtesy of the Frost family.

## Winter BPA Newsletter Deadline

**Wednesday, December 1, 2021**

To All Our Past and Future Contributors:

Please submit articles (Microsoft Word is best) for the Winter issue of the BPA Newsletter, with photos/illustrations separate from text, by **Wednesday, December 1, 2021**, to Myrna Rochester at:

[mbrbpa@sonic.net](mailto:mbrbpa@sonic.net)

Make sure your BPA membership is current. If your idea is a query (for an article, story, report, update, interview, announcement, review, anecdote, or artist's page . . .), contact us in advance. The Winter issue will be available in early January 2022, online to requesting members and print copies by U.S. mail.

Announcements should be for events scheduled **after January 15, 2022**. Please keep this in mind, especially for neighborhood and school activities. Thanks!



# Climate Action Begins at Home

By Hilary Glann

Based on the August 2021 International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report, climate scientists have identified that reducing human-caused methane emissions is one of the most cost-effective strategies to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit). Although methane gas emits less carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) than coal or petroleum, unburned methane has a much greater impact on climate change than CO<sub>2</sub>. Additionally, “fugitive methane emissions” leak into the atmosphere during the production, storage, transmission, and combustion of methane. However, because methane breaks down more quickly in the atmosphere than CO<sub>2</sub>, reducing methane emissions in our homes and businesses over the next decade buys us time to decrease our reliance on all fossil fuels.

Palo Alto is developing programs to help residents and businesses transition to electric appliances as their gas-powered appliances reach end of life. Here’s more information on this transition.

## Why are we focusing on replacing methane gas-powered appliances?

Methane produces 43% of Palo Alto emissions; methane emissions are split evenly between residential and commercial/industrial buildings. Additionally, methane gas represents 70% of the annual energy consumption in an average single-family Palo Alto home.

## How much will it cost me to replace my appliances?

Electric appliances are currently more expensive to purchase and install than gas appliances. Costs for the appliances and installation are expected to decrease over the next few years as manufacturers and contractors scale up operations.

## I’m on a fixed income. How am I going to pay for this?

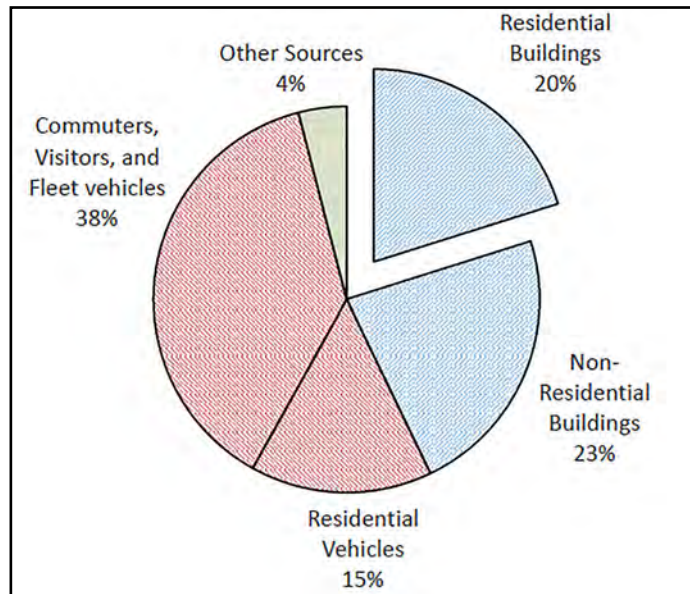
Palo Alto is investigating a number of financial programs to help residents replace end of life gas appliances with electric alternatives. These programs include on-bill financing, low-cost loans, rebates, and direct installation. Palo Alto is also exploring contractor training and certification.

## Electricity is more expensive than methane

### Comparative Impact of Methane Versus Carbon Dioxide on Climate Change

Impact over a 20 Year Period	Impact Over a 100 Year Period	Lasts in Atmosphere
84 times greater than CO <sub>2</sub>	24 times greater than CO <sub>2</sub>	9 versus 100 years for CO <sub>2</sub>

Comparison of climate impact from methane versus CO<sub>2</sub>.



Including “fugitive emissions,” methane gas burned in residential and non-residential buildings represents 43% of Palo Alto greenhouse gas emissions. Source: City of Palo Alto.

## gas. Won’t switching to electric make my utilities bill go up?

One therm of methane gas, which costs \$1.50/therm (ballpark figures in Palo Alto), has the same energy as 29 kWh of electricity, which costs \$0.15/kWh, making electricity about 3x more expensive than gas. However, electric appliances are typically 2-5x more efficient than their gas equivalents, effectively equalizing the operational costs.

## Doesn’t Palo Alto generate electricity using fossil fuels?

Palo Alto’s electricity is 100% carbon neutral, generated primarily by hydroelectric, solar, and wind power.

## How do electric appliances compare to what I have now?

- Electric appliances significantly improve indoor air quality. Gas appliances emit

pollutants such as carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, particulate matter, and formaldehyde that can enter living spaces due to poor exhaust fans and/or backdrafts. These pollutants are linked to respiratory illness, cardiovascular disease, and premature death. Methane also contributes to ground level ozone, a dangerous outdoor air pollutant.

- Heat pump water heaters can be programmed to super-heat water during the day, when there is

excess renewable energy, then shut down and store hot water for use in the evening when electricity demand spikes.

- Air source heat pumps deliver both air conditioning and heating in one solution, saving money and taking up less space.
- A recent study showed that residences with an air source heat pump enjoy a 4.3–7.1% price premium on average when sold.

## My gas appliances are relatively new. What can I do now to reduce my emissions?

- Use attic insulation to keep heat in during the winter and attic fans to pull heat out during the summer.
- Lower your energy bills and improve your air quality by repairing leaky air ducts.
- If you have an electric vehicle, charge it during the middle of the day, when solar power is most abundant.

*Continued on bottom of page 16*

# Nature's Wonderful Ingredients: Asafoetida (aka 'Hing')

By Jaya Pandey

**A**safoetida is a staple spice in Indian kitchens. Asafoetida – also known as **Hing** – is the dried latex (gum oleo-resin) extracted from the tap root of several species of *Ferula*, perennial herbs of the celery family (*Umbelliferae*). The species are native to the deserts of Iran and mountains of Afghanistan where substantial amounts are still grown.

Asafoetida has a unique, strong smell and is usually used in cooking that avoids onion and garlic. The odor dissipates upon cooking; in cooked dishes, the flavor resembles leeks or other onion relatives. It has historically been used for digestive health and for preventing topical infections. There are many ways to utilize Hing routinely. Indian groceries often carry tasty small snacks made with Hing and a few other ingredients that are chewed after meals (for example, Hajmola!).

One of our favorite recipes using Asafoetida is **Masala Aloo (Spicy Potatoes)**. You can

find several good versions online. It is usually eaten with the flatbread paratha poori.



*Hajmola – digestive tablets containing Hing – are often chewed after meals.*

## Climate Action, continued from page 15

- Contact Palo Alto's Home Efficiency Genie for other efficiency ideas.

### How reliable is the electric grid as compared to methane gas pipelines?

Wildfires and earthquakes can shut down both the electric grid and gas lines. Most gas-powered appliances require electricity to power their starters and pumps. California is tied with West Virginia for the oldest methane gas distribution system in the United States.

### What is Palo Alto Utilities doing to make our electric grid more reliable?

Palo Alto is assessing opportunities for local distributed energy resources, energy storage, smart meters, and microgrids.

### Can the grid accommodate the increased demand from all-electric buildings?

Yes. California's grid is designed with enough capacity to deliver electricity during peak demand – which is currently during hot summer afternoons when air conditioning drives up demand. Electrification of buildings

will add demand primarily during the winter when natural gas heating will be replaced with electric heating from heat pumps.

### What about permitting?

City staff from several departments are collaborating to streamline and shorten permitting processes for a variety of energy technologies, including electrification.

### Where can I learn more?

Visit the City's electrification page: <https://cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/Utilities/Sustainability/Electrification>

Or visit <https://www.switchison.org/>

Consult the Product Guide to Electric Retrofits for Single Family Homes: <https://redwoodenergy.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Pocket-Guide-to-All-Electric-Retrofits-of-Single-Family-Homes.pdf>

Note: to read a version of this article that includes all the supporting data and references, please contact me at [hglann@gmail.com](mailto:hglann@gmail.com)

## BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS FALL 2021

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Secretary, Jaya Pandey  
Treasurer, John W. King

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Richard Elder  
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*Communications:* Myrna Rochester

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*Environment:* Jaya Pandey

*Events:* Vacant

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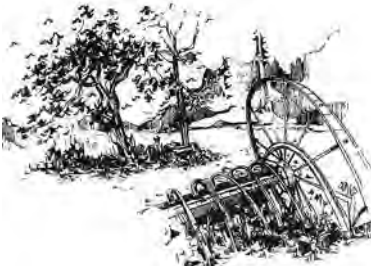
*P.A. Neighborhood (PAN) Liaison:* Doug Burns

**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)

<https://bpapaloalto.org>





## 2021 Barron Park Association Membership

Thanks to the many BPA members who have already joined or renewed for 2021!

If you have not yet joined for 2021, it's easy to join online with PayPal at <https://bpapaloalto.org/join-the-barron-park-association/> or mail this form and your check to: **BPA Treasurer, 724 Barron Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94306**

To check your membership status, email: [barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com](mailto:barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com)

Name(s):	Primary email address:
Address:	Secondary email address:
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Newsletter:</b> please send me the online edition instead of a mailed copy	Phone:

☐ **Fellow** \$100

☐ **Patron** \$50

☐ Additional Contribution: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Total Contribution: \$\_\_\_\_\_

☐ **Member** \$30

☐ **Senior** \$15

☐ **Business** \$50

If sending a personal check, pay to: Barron Park Association.

Note: Membership and contributions are not tax deductible.

## BPA Membership Updates

A special welcome to over 60 new Barron Park residents! The Barron Park Association looks forward to meeting you at future events, and we hope you enjoy our BPA quarterly Newsletters.

Great thanks to all those who already joined the BPA for 2021! You can join or renew at <https://bpapaloalto.org/join-the-barron-park-association/> or with the form in this Newsletter. Although many of our traditional neighborhood events are still postponed or virtual, your membership dues contribute to the BPA quarterly Newsletters and community programs that include: Bol Park Native Garden, Welcoming New Residents, Senior Lunches, Bol Park Donkey support, and Emergency Preparedness efforts.

Questions? Write to:

Welcoming: [gluce@cbnorcal.com](mailto:gluce@cbnorcal.com)

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



## CALLING LOCAL BUSINESS OWNERS!

Do you have a business in Barron Park? Are you a business owner living in Barron Park?

A Barron Park Association **Basic Business Membership** (\$50/year) gives you one free ad in the Summer, Fall, or Winter edition of the BPA Newsletter. You'll also have the opportunity to place a full-length "Spotlight" article about you and your business during your first year as a member. Plus, you'll be listed on the home page of the BPA website.

**Business Sponsors** (\$350/year) may place four ads per year in the Newsletter.

For more information, contact our BPA Business Liaison, Paul Yang at [pabloyang@yahoo.com](mailto:pabloyang@yahoo.com)

# Bol Park Ice Cream Social!

A beautiful Sunday evening in August; over 400 ice cream cones served! Gary and Jena of Gary Breitbard Music brought accordion and banjo tunes; friends and families enjoyed. All photos by Todd Collins.



## MEET-UP? THIRD PLACE? PUBBOLETTO?

Call it what you wish! Everyone is welcome to join Barron Park neighbors (and friends) for a weekly, unofficial gathering at Bol Park, Sundays at 6:00 p.m.

An informal place for adults to hang outdoors, meet, and enjoy conversation. Bring your own chair, whatever you want to drink or eat, and an open mind. We maintain Covid-safe practices.

Find us at the grassy patch where Bol Park meets Laguna and Matadero.

Questions? Write to: [dlilienstein@gmail.com](mailto:dlilienstein@gmail.com)

Hope to see you soon!



Park icon by Andrew Nolte, Noun Project



# Donkeys as Cultural Ambassadors

By Jenny Kirtli, BP Donkey Project

"I am so glad to find donkeys; my family had donkeys." "There were donkeys on my grandfather's farm when I was growing up." These are such common refrains heard at the donkey pasture from neighbors and visitors representing a populace from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Some remember their own experiences as children; others recount visits to their country of origin or stories told by older generations. There are always donkeys. Their stories come from India, China, Algeria, Mexico, Germany, Turkey, Iran, Egypt, Greece, Israel. Some people make special trips to Bol Park because they have heard about our donkeys, and others stop in their tracks during a run, in happy surprise as they did not know about Perry and Buddy. Donkeys remind them of home. Donkeys serve as cultural ambassadors as their presence provides a shared experience and warm memories for visitors with different backgrounds and histories and from many countries. Especially during the pandemic, the donkey pasture has provided a

break from stress and a place of calm. People come to visit the donkeys for connection to their past, sharing memories from around the world, and to enjoy the tranquility of our little corner of Palo Alto.

Depending on their mood and the time of day, Perry and Buddy may come to the gate to greet you, allowing pets and scratches, or they may prefer to graze and meander throughout their range so you will have to experience them at a distance. A great time to visit is on Sundays between 10:00 and 11:00 a.m. when they are taken to Bol Park and handlers tell their stories, listen to yours, and answer questions.

It is important to **never feed the donkeys** as this compromises their health. They eat a



Donkey art provided by local artists of all ages, courtesy of Sarah Vue.

special soft, grass diet and are at risk of choking if fed apples or carrots; they are also prone to diabetes. Please help keep our donkeys safe by not feeding and telling others not to feed.

Thank you for your love.

## Dare to Dream

By Rani Jayakumar

Imagine waking up to birdsong. You wander the garden, plucking herbs for tea, gathering fruit for breakfast. A neighbor stops by with bread, and you share the meal. On the street, children and adults are riding their bikes and scooters to school and work, and others are walking in the middle of the road, carrying shopping bags or ferrying items to one another. Every house has a front garden and so little trash that only tiny bins are put out to be picked up, if at all. Trees line the streets, and many of the people wave to you and your friend, several stopping to chat. You, too, make your way on the road for your daily tasks and work, leaving ample time to do some hobbies you enjoy, take a quiet walk in the clear air, and gather with friends and family for a meal in the evening.

Does the above sound like an ideal life to you? What is your vision of a beautiful, sustainable future? Take a moment to close your eyes and picture a future that is beneficial to all. Breathe in the sights, the sounds,

the smells, the tastes, the feel of this ideal life. Creating a vision of what we want our world to be like can help us begin to live the life we really want. What we dream can become real, starting with small actions. As Howard Zinn said, "we don't have to wait for some grand utopian future. The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory."

But how can we live now as we think we should live? It might begin by imagining wanting to have local food available, so you begin visiting the farmer's market and starting your own garden. It might mean you want the air to be clean, so you donate supplies and money to wildfire relief and stop driving a car that produces air pollution. It could mean learning how to make your own things, so you take a class or get to know that neighbor who knits. You might start writing to city

council members and Congress members or joining a local or national organization, finding ways to make your vision a reality.

These may seem like tiny steps, but together, as we all do them, they make a community and a world we want to live in. Even though everyone's vision may be different, they will intersect, and as all our neighbors join in their visions with us, we will slowly but surely have a more beautiful world that aligns with our values.

What kind of world will you dare to dream up?

**Editor's Note:** this essay originally appeared in the September edition of the Green Beans newsletter, edited by BPA Board Member Jaya Pandey. To read the entire September issue, please visit <https://bpapaloalto.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/green-beans-Sep2021.pdf>

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