



BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

John King, BPA President



Happy 2022, Barron Park neighborhood! I hope your holiday celebrations were satisfying and enjoyable times, whether with family and friends or with your own thoughts and pursuits.

I'd hoped my message this New Year would be that the pandemic, the mask mandates, vaccine hesitancy, social distancing, and all the rest were behind us, and that we were getting back to normal. Sadly, circumstances

may not allow it as soon as we'd like. Let's stay positive and keep an eye out for the chance to resume our much-missed Barron Park events: May Fête, Movie Night, Ice Cream Socials, and our regular holiday celebrations. Stay tuned!

I am very pleased to report that this past year has been financially stable for the Barron Park Association. Membership remains strong and supportive. The Board voted to make use of a small surplus of funds to support a number of Barron Park and other

local organizations and efforts. Among these are support for the residents of Buena Vista Mobile Home Park, the Karat School Project supporting local RV dwellers, our beloved Barron Park Donkeys, the Native Garden in Bol Park, Palo Alto Canopy for Trees, and our Barron Park Senior Connections projects!

Please reach out to me at johnwadeking@gmail.com Join or renew your BPA membership at <https://bpapaloalto.org/join-the-barron-park-association/>

Rules and common sense permitting, we hope to have an in-person, all-neighborhood BPA Annual Meeting in March to enjoy face-to-face connections again. Happy New Year and see you soon!



Hundreds of neighbors took to the streets on October 31 for the Halloween Bray Parade. More photos and details inside. Photo by Sky Runner.

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News from the Pasture

By Perry and Buddy (as told to Jenny Kiratli)

It has been a very busy few months at our pasture! So many things going on and news to tell.

Halloween Bray Parade

This year, we decided to have a Halloween Bray Parade because we didn't know if kids were going to be able to go trick-or-treating, and it was a great success! We contacted the Barron Park Association for their help and they were happy to partner with us. We were dressed up as a Unicorn (Perry) and Pegasus (Buddy) and accompanied by Titania, Queen of the Fairies (Jenny Kiratli), and Zeus (Michael Holland). It was a beautiful, sunny Sunday as the parade started in Bol Park. We were so surprised when we got there and found the park was completely full of families and so many kids in costumes, all waiting for us! We headed out along Laguna Avenue, and everyone followed. We were actually a little flustered by all the people, so we walked pretty fast. We stopped at the corner of Paradise and Laguna to have a little graze, while parade-goers caught up. Then we set out again up Paradise and through the gate to the pathway. We stopped here, and families just kept pouring through the Paradise gate. All the kids were dressed up and we really enjoyed getting pets from everyone. We heard that there were more than 200 people!! It was so much fun that we plan to do it again, and we are already thinking about our costumes for next year.

New Donkey History Sign: Girl Scout Silver Award

Please come to the pasture to see the new sign posted on the shed that tells about our history. We worked with two Girl Scouts from Troop 60795: Allie Jackson and Nara Cammack. They are freshpersons at Gunn and Paly who spent a lot of time learning about us. They did extensive research in old newspaper articles at the Palo Alto Historical Society and delved into the BPA Newsletter archives. Allie and Nara came up with the idea and designed the sign because they wanted to contribute to the Palo Alto community in a lasting way. They also worked to update our website: <http://barronparkdonkeys.org>. If we could talk, we would tell you our stories ourselves, but as people don't understand Brayish, this is the next best thing. We are really grateful to

these girls for caring about us and helping us spread information about us and all the past donkeys who have lived in the pasture.

Is That a Horse in the Pasture?

You may be confused when you come by the pasture these days to see a very large (huge, to us!) white, not-donkey, sharing our pasture. Let us introduce you to Bella, a 30+-year old Arabian mare, who will be staying with us for a while. When she first arrived at the pasture, Bella was very scared and chased us – and we ran away as fast as we could (did we mention that she is BIG?). But then she began to settle in and became more curious about us, and we realized that she wasn't all that scary after all, and now we have become friends. She shares our shelter with us when it is raining, but she is extremely polite and never tries to eat our food. She also follows us around the pasture. We think she must have been lonely where she lived before because she didn't have any animal friends to keep her company. Plus, she has her loving owners and about a half dozen handlers just for her who feed her and take care of her. She is super sweet and very sociable. We are happy to have her as our new friend.

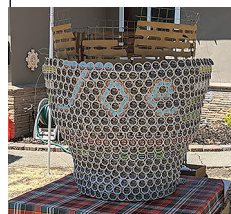
Transition of Fiscal Sponsor

Our biggest news of the season is that we became a fiduciary project under Palo Alto Humane Society (PAHS) in 2022, and we are very excited about this. That is, we have moved away from Acterra, and PAHS is our new fiscal sponsor. We are very grateful to Acterra-Action for a Healthy Planet (www.acterra.org) for being our fiscal sponsor for more than 20 years and supporting us as a tax-deductible organization, but they have been reviewing their mission related to climate change and environmental sustainability and decided that we weren't really a part of those priorities. This has given us the opportunity to forge a new partnership with PAHS (paloaltohumanesociety.org), an organization that focuses on animal welfare in Palo Alto – a Perfect Match for us! We have plans to work with PAHS on new community projects and community education in the future.

No Feeding – EVER!

Please never feed us at the gate – although

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. Tell us something about the art, but you don't need to include your street address.

we may try to convince you otherwise . . . We get a special diet prescribed by our vet and it can really be dangerous for us to eat anything else. This goes for Bella, too. We are all elderly equines, and Perry and Bella are missing a lot of teeth, so we can't chew very well. Hay and other roughage can choke us because we aren't able to chew it into pieces. Also, donkeys are prone to diabetes, so sugary foods like apples and carrots can be super harmful to us. (Each piece of apple or carrot is like a giant candy bar for us.) Donkeys are built to live in the desert where food is scarce and our bodies are designed to get all we need from low-nutrient foods. We have been told that we are already overweight (we think we are pleasantly plump), and so it is extremely important that we not get any more food and especially not sugary foods. If we get diabetes, this increases our risk for laminitis, which is a painful and very serious hoof disease that could cripple us and even lead to death. Please help to keep us healthy and safe so we can live a long time – and DON'T FEED US!

Donations and Fundraising

As you probably know, all of our handlers are volunteers and we are completely (100%!!!) supported by donations from the community. You can donate to our care by going to the Donate page on our website (barronparkdonkeys.org).

You can also support us by ordering donkey mugs, donkey tote bags, and donkey cards. To order or for any information about us, contact barronparkdonkeys@gmail.com



Mike Holland and Jenny Kiratli prepare to start the parade. Photo by Winter Dellenbach.



Children enjoy costumed fun in Bol Park. Photo by Leon Rochester.



Jena Rauti and Gary Breitbard entertain the kids. Photo by Leon Rochester.



A grass monster stops to listen to the music. Photo by Leon Rochester.



Families turned out for the parade under pleasant Fall weather. Photo by Winter Dellenbach.



Girl Scout Nara Cammack poses with Perry before the parade. Nara and fellow Girl Scout Allie Jackson created a new sign documenting Barron Park donkey history. Photo by Karen Holman.

Winter 2021-22 in the Bol Park Native Garden

By Linda Elder, Native Habitat Committee



Linda Elder enjoys the new bench installed in the Bol Park Native Garden. Photo by Richard Elder.

January is usually our wettest month. As of this writing (at the end of November), we haven't had much rain. Hopefully, the rain is falling as you read this. If not, we will have to resort to watering sparingly from the spigot, to ensure that the perennials will fill in, that younger plants (less than two years old) will survive, and to bring on spring flowers. Yes, even natives need some water in dry winters.

On November 20, 38 volunteers recruited by Grassroots Ecology, along with several members of the Bol Park Native Garden group, made progress on an expansion of the garden. Volunteers spent the morning shoveling and spreading huge piles of mulch to a new area of the garden; the hillside next to the children's playground, where existing purple needlegrass and blue wildrye needed protection from the annual grasses competing for resources. The City of Palo Alto provided the mulch acquired from tree trimmings in our city.

Additionally, volunteers worked in December to cut back perennials and light-prune plants as well as planting several hundred locally sourced native plants. We are implementing a

practice, suggested by author Doug Tallamy, of cutting up the clippings and leaving them on the ground to add to the leaf litter. The insects use the stems, branches, and leaves to overwinter, and the litter eventually decays

and adds to the organic matter in the soil. This is sometimes called "messy gardening" and has also been described as "what grows in the garden stays in the garden."

For more on ecologist and native gardener Doug Tallamy, see

<https://homegrownnationalpark.org/tallamys-hub-1>

Richard Elder and Jeff Burch installed the first garden bench at the end of November! You may recall that we received a grant from the Garden Club of Palo Alto for three benches, an owl box, and two bluebird boxes. All remaining grant items will be installed this winter. A big THANK YOU to Shirley Finrock, who sponsored the grant. Shirley, along with other longtime Barron Park residents, initiated the native garden at Bol Park years ago. Please stop by and see all the changes!

It's not too late to help with regular garden maintenance: weeding, deadheading, cutting back perennials, and pruning shrubs as needed in our existing gardens. Melanie Cross, an experienced gardener, coordinates the workdays and can guide gardeners at every level. Please contact bpnativegarden@gmail.com if you want to help or have ideas, suggestions, or comments about the garden.



Volunteers expanded the garden to include the hillside between the path and the children's playground. Photo by Linda Elder.

Weston Anderson

March 28, 1928 – November 3, 2021

By the Friends and Family of Weston Anderson



Weston "Wes" Anderson. Photo by Paul Jacob.

Longtime neighbor, inventor, and home gardener Weston "Wes" Anderson passed away on November 3, 2021, at age 93.

Wes grew up in Kingsburg, California, and received his BA and PhD at Stanford. He worked at Varian and received 64 U.S. patents covering a wide range of subjects, including submarine detection, teaching computers to speak, low-cost seismographs, ultrasonic imaging, and improved X-ray tubes.

Most notably, Wes developed the theory of applying the Fourier transform to Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR). He asked Richard Ernst to test it out and they were awarded a patent for it. This led to Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) now widely used for medical diagnosis. Richard Ernst further refined the technology and was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1991 for this work. Wes was also recognized at the Nobel ceremonies.

Wes was also dedicated to pre-university science education. For many years he taught and created projects, first with Science Seminar and later with the Museum of American Heritage in Palo Alto. Many

of his students went on to make major contributions in science. He helped pay for students' college educations and sponsored a scholarship at Kingsburg High School in honor of his own science teacher, Gilbert Ewan.

"He was an incredibly complex, intelligent, humble, hardworking husband, father, friend, and mentor to many. His advancement of technology helped millions of people," said his son, Joel Anderson.

"Some of the innovations dad did around the house were having all the gates, mailbox, and lights on motion sensors or ringers," noted his daughter Lucy Jacob. "Of course, this was well before any of these things were available commercially. He taught his computer to talk, and made an acupuncture point finder, brain wave monitors, and seismographs."

"He accomplished so much in his 93 years: successful physicist, mentor, father, philanthropist, and grandfather," remembers grandson Paul Jacob. "In many ways I'd consider him the quintessence of Aristotle's example of a good life. To quote Nicomachean Ethics: He is happy who lives in accordance with complete virtue and is sufficiently equipped with external goods, not for some chance period but throughout a complete life."

Wes was predeceased by his wife Jeannette, and is survived by his son Joel and daughter Lucy, as well as three grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

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

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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

<https://bpapaloalto.org>

Ruth C. Satterthwaite

March 11, 1943 – July 19, 2021

By the Friends and Family of Ruth Satterthwaite



Ruth Satterthwaite at the Grand Canyon.
Photo by Ed Satterthwaite.

We are deeply saddened by the loss of our friend and neighbor Ruth Satterthwaite. Ruth was a loving, supportive, and encouraging wife and mother, extremely involved in her sons' pursuits

and inspiring in them a sense of confidence and community. Her many friends enjoyed her cheerful disposition, lilting speech, and pixie sense of humor.

Ruth was a professional writer and editor, a talented musician, and a part-time genealogist. Born in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, she grew up near there in both rural and small-town settings. She attended Ripon College in Wisconsin, graduating with degrees in English and music. She worked in Boston and later in Palo Alto for the publisher Houghton Mifflin.

In 1966, Ruth married Ed Satterthwaite, also from Doylestown. They moved to Palo Alto for Ed's graduate studies at Stanford. A post-doctoral stay in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK, cemented Ruth's interest in British history and in her own family roots. Ruth and Ed returned to Palo Alto in 1972 and have lived in Green Acres II since 1985. Raising their sons Rob and Will, Ruth became a consummate school volunteer and also substitute librarian – at Hoover Elementary, JLS, and Gunn. Active in the PTA and its Council, she received several special recognition awards.

Ruth later became very active in community service, emphasizing communications and emergency preparedness. She was a

leader in Palo Alto's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT, formerly PANDA) at both City and neighborhood levels, where many of her friends and fellow volunteers were Barron Parkers. Her CERT activities included helping to organize an amateur radio communications network, managing supply trailers, and participating in drills. Living in Green Acres II, she was a focal point for neighborhood affairs there and actively worked to bring Green Acres II and Barron Park together over common concerns. For her work, she received multiple awards including a Mick McDonald Volunteer of the Year award in 2007.

Devoted to both music and genealogy, Ruth belonged to several musical groups and choirs and for 50 years met weekly with close friends to read and enjoy early music. She was an expert amateur genealogist, active in the San Mateo County Genealogy Society and an affiliated writing group. She enjoyed travel and hiking, especially in the local foothills and Baylands.

Ruth is survived by her husband Ed, her brother Tom, her son Will, her son Rob, Rob's wife Liz, and grandchildren Ella and Conner.

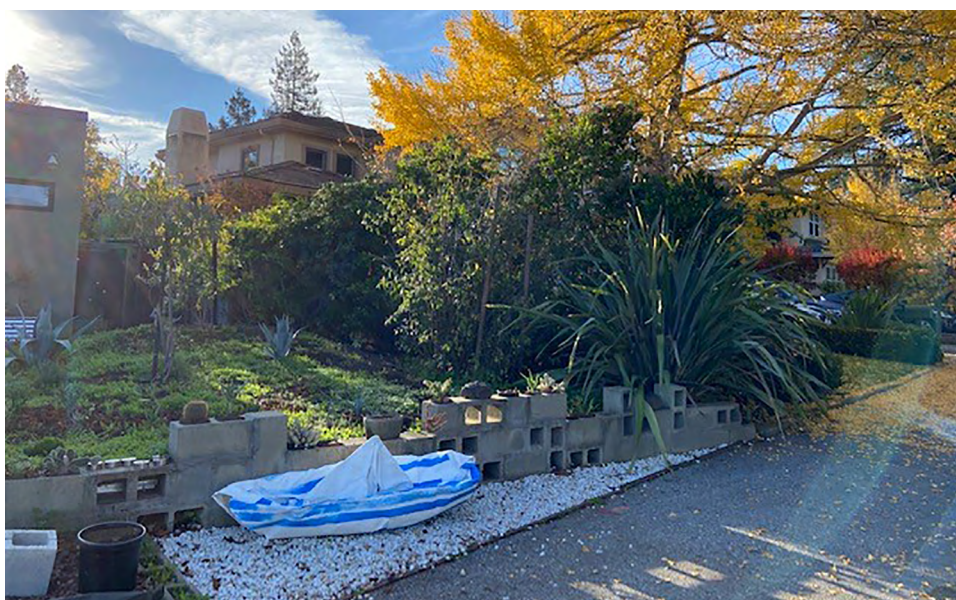
Spring BPA Newsletter Deadline

Tuesday, March 1, 2022

To All Our Past and Future Contributors: Please submit articles (Microsoft Word is best) for the Spring issue of the Barron Park Association Newsletter, along with photos/illustrations (separate from text), by **Tuesday, March 1, 2022** to Myrna Rochester at 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 Spring issue will be available in early April 2022, online to requesting members and print copies by U.S. mail.

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



Did you find a boat in your front yard? Students with the Origami Club at Gunn folded the summer "Breathe with Me" canvasses into many boats. Photo by Svetlana Gous.

Ramps Can Be Beautiful

By Chris Witzel



Stylish front door ramps complement drought tolerant landscaping. Photos by Chris Witzel.

So many Barron Park neighbors are converting their garden to be more drought tolerant. Some choose to replace the walkway to the front door, but few choose to build a ramp. What a missed opportunity! Ramps don't have to be ugly — what is ugly are the temporary aluminum rentals. Check these two out.

Ramps aren't just for wheelchair users and owners planning for "aging in place." Temporarily Injured athletes with knee scooters, travelers with heavy luggage and furniture movers all enjoy easy entry to your house. Plus, you can feel smug when contractors and physical therapists ask "so, where's the ramp?"

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2021

Barron Park Association

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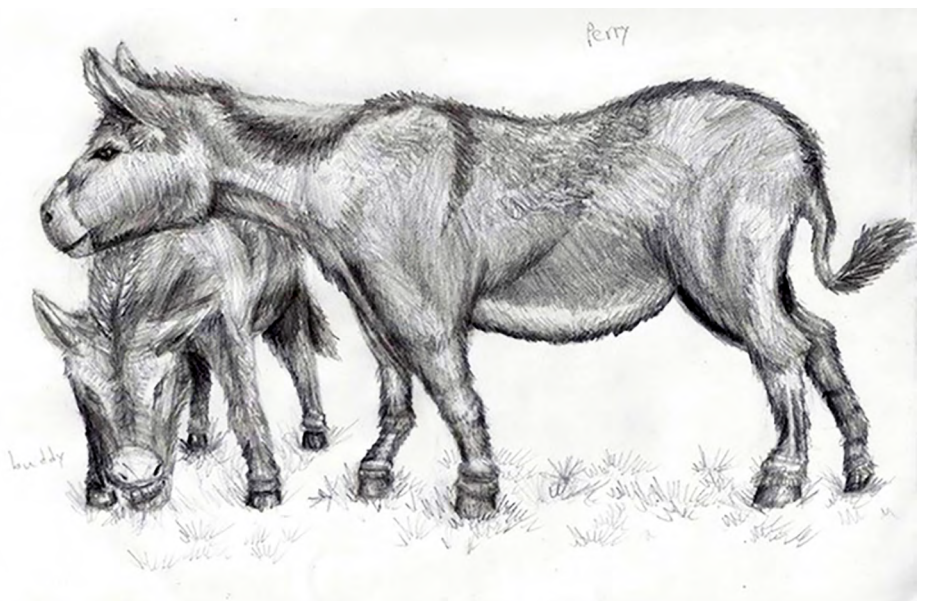
Do you enjoy the creative work in the BPA Newsletter? Would you like to see your art, photography, crafts, writing,



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

Easel icon by Nate Driscoll, Noun Project

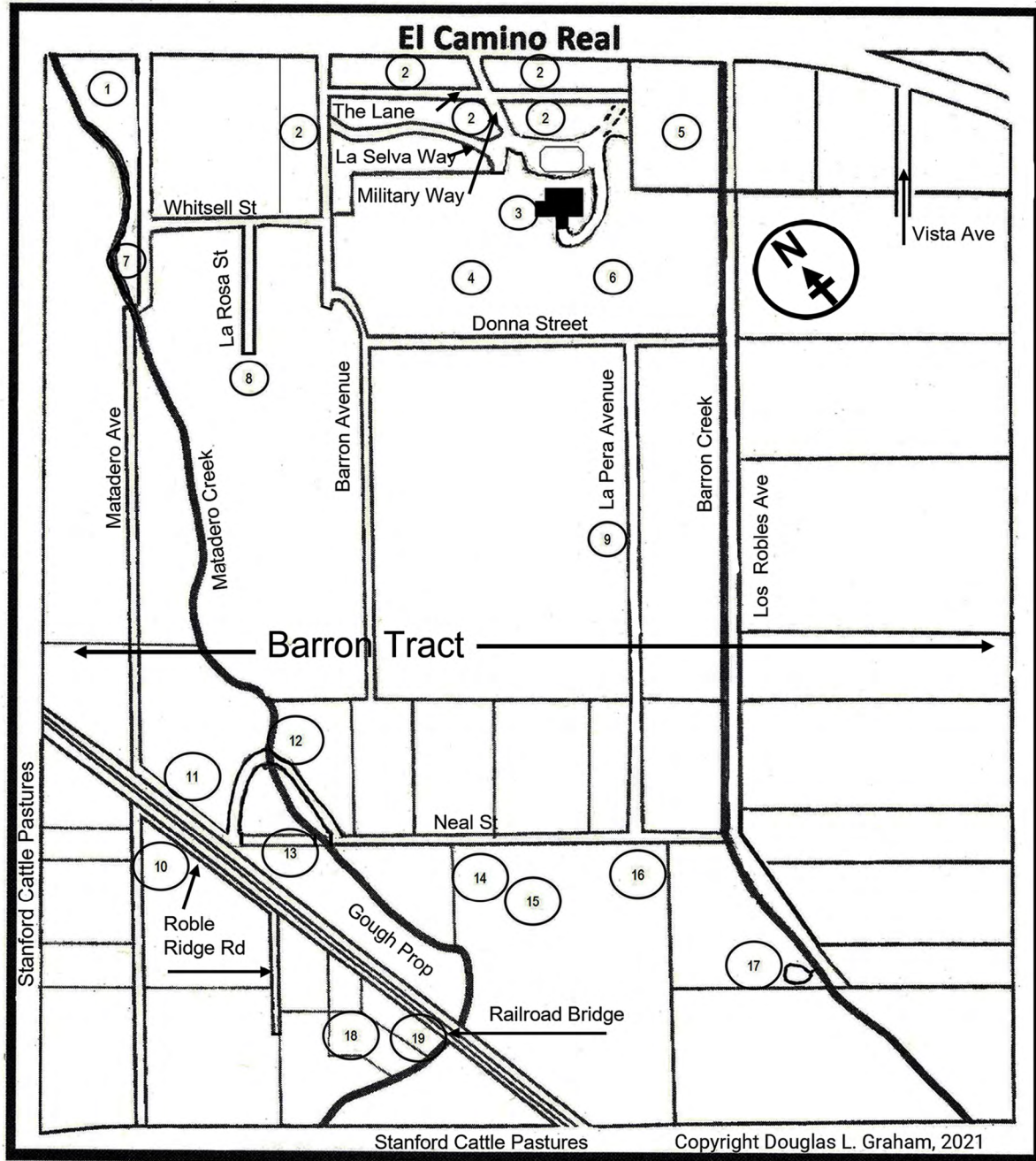


Buddy and Perry. A sketch by James Kim, Gunn High art student.

The End of the Depression

By Douglas L. Graham, Barron Park Historian

North End of Barron Park 1930-1936



A - Locator Map, north end of Barron Park, 1930-1936, by Douglas L. Graham, © 2021. Based on street outlines from Santa Clara County map of 1932.

LEGEND:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Grove Auto Court (now Creekside Inn) | 7. EMWAY Water Co. deep wells and tank | 14. PG&E high-voltage pole at 3716 Laguna (1926) |
| 2. Original Barron Park Subdivision (1925) | 8. Strain Ranch (later La Encina Dairy) | 15. Pear orchard in Illustration B |
| 3. Wallis-Barron Mansion (1853-1936) | 9. Los Robles Water Co. deep well #2 | 16. Ann and Ernest Johnson's house |
| 4. California Military Academy Grounds (1924-29) | 10. Neal Station (1922?-1963?) | 17. Laguna (Los Robles Co. irrigation reservoir) |
| 5. Ashley's Auto Camp (later Buena Vista) | 11. Neal Property (1920?-1940?) | 18. Bol (1936-96) |
| 6. Los Robles Water Co. deep well and pump | 12. Laguna Avenue Bridge (1933) | 19. Karruth (1921- ?) |
| | 13. Neal Avenue ford across Creek (1920?-1933) | |

Summary of the Four-Part Centennial Story

The Centennial Story covers the birth, growth, and development of Barron Park from a “great estate” in the country into a suburban community. The story has four parts, appearing in successive BPA Newsletter issues and covering four distinct phases of development from the 1919 sale of the Barron Estate through the outbreak of World War II in 1941-42.

Part 1 - Summer 2021 Issue: “Birth of the Neighborhood in 1921.” This story covered the first houses built from 1921 through 1929, the years when Barron Park was indisputably a rural neighborhood, starting with strawberry patches and converting to fruit orchards. It included the very first development along our part of El Camino Real, with glimpses ahead into the Depression years.

Part 2 - Fall 2021 Issue: “Barron Park Becomes a Community.” Subtitled “The Great Depression,” the Fall story covered the Depression years, 1929 through 1937. Community feeling grew while more houses were built, including some early “tract housing,” presaging the post-war 1940s and ‘50s. California’s overall Depression experience was summarized to provide background. In Barron Park, agriculture began to give way to suburban development. The railroad service reached its peak years in the 1920s and slumped in the ‘30s. In 1936 the economy recovered to 1929 levels, but 1937 saw a resurgence of the Depression. The Barron Mansion burned in 1936. As the story grew beyond the space available in the Fall issue, it was retitled “Part 1” (of “Barron Park Becomes a Community”).

Part 3 - Winter 2021-22 Issue: “The End of the Depression.” In the present issue, the story continues and covers aspects of neighborhood development in the 1930s that were touched upon but not completely dealt with in the Fall story – especially the introduction of urban utilities and infrastructure and the development of the El Camino Real strip. The focus is on street dedications and paving, electric and gas supply, telephone service, domestic and irrigation water supply, and sewer systems.

Part 4 - To appear in Spring 2022 - “Transition into Wartime.” This story will cover the new prosperity beginning in 1938, another housing spurt, continuation of infrastructure and El Camino developments, and growth in community cooperation and feeling. It culmi-

nates in the California experience of Pearl Harbor and fear of Japanese bombing, invasion, and sabotage leading to the “relocation” of our Japanese immigrants and our native-born Japanese-American citizens to remote U.S. camps in 1941 and early 1942.

The Depression Brought Migration to California

The Great Depression brought a wave of internal migration from the Midwest and Southern Great Plains to California’s farms. Many of these migrants were from Dust-Bowl Oklahoma and severely depressed Arkansas. Eventually all the displaced Midwest and Southern farmers who came to California destitute were labeled “Okies and Arkies” and discriminated against in every way possible. They were mostly white. On the California farms, they displaced many earlier Mexican immigrants, forcing many to return to Mexico, which itself was very depressed with almost no jobs available. There is a growing amount of written history documenting the Okies’ and Arkies’ stories, augmented by a substantial body of fiction that includes Steinbeck’s *Grapes of Wrath* and in 2021, an excellent new novel: *The Four Winds* by Kristin Hannah (Macmillan).

A few of the immigrants to California came as refugees from Europe, as first Central and Western, and later Eastern European countries were taken over by fascist and militaristic régimes, backed by overt and covert threats by Nazi Germany. Some European immigrants were destitute, but many were middle-class and had managed to escape with significant financial assets. They were also white; many were Jewish or had Jewish forebears and would have been classified as such by the Nazis.

Housing Built During the Depression

The Depression resulted in seven years of slow growth in Barron Park, with a total of just 44 houses being completed from 1931 through 1937 (an average of a little more than six per year). No new tracts were needed, and none were laid out. At the end of 1937, there was a total of 167 single-family houses in Barron Park. In 1938 housing started booming again, with 29 houses completed that year, a new record for the neighborhood.

The “Barron Park Improvement Club”

Ernest and Ann Johnson’s oral history, given to Ann Knopf in 1977, is our only source mentioning the existence of a neighborhood

improvement club in the 1930s. However, it may have started in the late 1920s. The club worked toward the development of infrastructure, which hardly existed in the neighborhood in 1921. Some of the earliest efforts were to obtain street dedications and utility lines. Ann Johnson said that the club had a social angle as well – they had “get-togethers.”

Urban Utilities Provided to Barron Park

When did urban-type utilities become available for Barron Parkers? We looked into water supply, sewage disposal, trash collection, electricity, gas, telephone, street lighting, flood control and storm drain development.

Domestic and Irrigation Water Supply

In the 1930s, Barron Park was served by at least two private water systems, plus an unrecorded number of private wells, each serving one or several households. The north end of the neighborhood was served by the Emway Mutual Water Company, founded in 1928. The name was an acronym based on the founders’ family names (Eastus, Meyn, Watt, Alsgood and Young). In the 1940s, Cornelis Bol gained control of the company and renamed it the Barron Park Water Company, but it was usually referred to thereafter as “the Bol Water Company.” There were three deep wells, each more than 500 feet deep, supplying the system. The two principal wells were near El Camino at Matadero Creek, just downstream from the Matadero Avenue bridge, where the Palo Alto Emergency Well is now located (adjacent to an unofficial “mini-park” developed between 2007 and 2013 by the City in cooperation with a neighborhood committee, loosely supervised by the BPA Board).

That location also had a storage tank on a tower (later replaced by a compressed-air pumping system). An additional deep well was located on Whitsell Avenue. By the time the Bol family sold out to the City in 1953, the water company served the northwest half of Barron Park. I am not certain which company served the original Barron Park subdivision on El Camino Real (ECR) – Barron Avenue from ECR to Whitsell Avenue, La Selva Drive, and Military Way – in 1930. I do know that the Bol Company served Matadero Avenue, Barron Avenue west of Whitsell Avenue, La Rosa Street (later Kendall Avenue), Whitsell, the part of La Donna Street closest to Barron, Neal Street (later Laguna Avenue) from Matadero Avenue to

Matadero Creek, and Roble Ridge Road. (See Illustration A: Locator Map of Barron Park, on page 8).

During the 1930s, the central part of Barron Park was served by the Los Robles Water Company, owned and operated by Ernest Johnson who lived at 3890 Laguna Avenue. I believe it served Laguna Avenue from Barron to Los Robles Avenues, La Pera Avenue (spelling later mistakenly changed to La Para), El Centro Street, La Donna from San Jude to Los Robles, Los Robles Avenue from the Buena Vista property to the end of the street near a Stanford cow pasture (now Gunn High School), and Vista Avenue. The Bol Company may have also covered El Camino Way from Los Robles Avenue to its southern intersection across from Maybell Avenue. (See again, Illustration A: Locator map.)

Also see Illustration B: pear orchard on Laguna Avenue, supplied by the Bol Company. We don't currently have any more information on the exact coverage boundary between the two companies.



B - Pear orchard on Laguna Avenue, 1930s. From Johnson family collection. The irrigation was supplied by the Los Robles Water Company.

The Los Robles Company developed a "deep well . . . near the trailer court" (Buena Vista) at the corner of ECR and Los Robles that provided "domestic water," until it went dry. I believe the Los Robles Water Company took over that property sometime in the 1920s or '30s. They installed meters when the company was incorporated. Problems included not providing enough water to meet demand on weekends. Ultimately (in the 1950s) the company was taken over by Palo Alto. (Quotes are from Ernest Johnson's oral history.)

For irrigation, there were two wells on the line of La Para Avenue about half-way between La Donna Avenue and El Centro Street. Johnson ran a line up to the small irrigation storage

pond ("the laguna") about where 920 or 930 Los Robles is now. From there, a second line pumped it up a few feet into a storage tank, where a third line took it approximately 500 feet southwest to about where 1072 Los Robles is now, and finally released it into an "open flume" (irrigation ditch) that ran along the edge of the cow pasture, allowing landowners below it (to the east toward Laguna Avenue) to draw from it to irrigate their orchards and berry plots.

Local Sewage Disposal Systems

Unfortunately, our archives have even less information on the various sewer systems that served Barron Park before annexation to Palo Alto in 1975. A newspaper clipping in the files of the Palo Alto Historical Association (PAHA) describes the Las Encinas Sanitary District (which was not set up until 1947).

During the 1930s, we assume that cesspools (backyard pits) or small septic systems with underground storage tanks for solids (removed by periodic pumping), and leach fields (in yards) for absorbing liquids were common. Creekbank houses, if served by a septic system, may have polluted Matadero and Barron Creeks by slow seepage through the adjoining soil layers.

Our soil, being at least part adobe everywhere in the neighborhood, does not provide good leach field conditions, so the neighborhood may have been tied into a sewer system (or systems) from early on.

Ernest Johnson said in his 1975 oral history that "the records of the new sanitary district" in 1947 (likely referring to the Las Encinas Sanitary District) that "sewer pipes originally installed in many homes (including the Johnsons') were of wood wrapped with tar paper, called "orange bark." In 1985, I found an unrelated PAHA file that included the names of five neighbors who were board members of this Sanitary District, headed by its president, Jerome Peck. The other members were Julius Rapp, Robert Phillips, Donald Brooks, and William Faulkerson (who also was, or had been, president of the Maybell-Barron Park Improvement Association).

There is an unattributed note in the Barron Park archive saying that the new Barron Park

Elementary School, which opened in 1948, "tied in to the Las Alamos Sanitary District." The language makes this sound like a sewer district. In any case, I find no record that it operated in the 1930s – and no indication of its founding date.

The "modern age" in Barron Park sewage disposal began on October 29, 1940, when the Palo Alto Board of Public Works approved a plan for "a new sewer system for Barron Park," replacing the antiquated BP system and tying it into the City system at Wilton Avenue in the Ventura neighborhood across El Camino. It would cover "Barron to La Donna, La Rosa (now Kendall) to Whitsell to Barron, and La Rosa to El Camino to Wilton."

Trash Collection

The 1967 BPA pamphlet "Which Way BP?" notes that there was then a "sanitation services" special District that operated a quarterly trash collection in Barron Park. "In 1967 there was no charge for the service since the Sanitation District had a two-year surplus." I think this referred to the Las Encinas Sanitation District.

Electricity, Gas, Telephone, and Street Lighting



C - Ernest Johnson, owner and operator of the Los Robles Water Company, in 1977. Photo by Ann Knopf, oral history interviewer.

Again, information is skimpy. The best is Ernest Johnson's oral history. (See Illustration C, above). Johnson remembered that in 1926, to serve his new house at 3890 Laguna Avenue, then known as Neal Street (he probably had a different house number then), power was brought from a "high-tension" (he may have meant high-voltage) line ending at a pole near present-day 3716 Laguna (opposite Barron Avenue). PG&E had to erect

five poles to bring it to the Johnsons' house. PG&E wouldn't do this unless he bought an electric range and water heater from the company. There was no gas service. Their house was heated by coal. The Improvement Club worked to get gas service installed. Johnson said there was no telephone service, but he didn't mind, as he was "accustomed to not having a telephone." Telephone service came in about "1935 or so." As near as I can tell, there was no street lighting anywhere in Barron Park until after World War II. (See Illustration D: Ann and Ernest Johnson's first house, probably in the 1930s.)

Creek Flooding and Lack of Flood Control



D – Ann and Ernest Johnson's first house on Laguna Avenue, built in 1926. Probably photographed in the early 1930s. From Johnson family collection.

Barron Park has probably experienced flooding from both Matadero Creek and Barron Creek since the recorded history of Mayfield Farm began in 1853. Elisha Crosby certainly knew where to best place his farmhouse: on a slight rise near El Camino Real that apparently had never flooded. Even so, he built his house on a foundation that raised it six feet above the local ground level. Sarah Wallis followed suit when she built her gingerbread Victorian mansion onto the front of Crosby's farmhouse, and Edward Barron did the same when he added "the west wing." The house never flooded in its 75-year history, nor have the modern houses built there starting 84 years ago, after the mansion burned. See my story in the Fall 2008 issue of this newsletter, "The Creeks of Barron Park, Part Two."

I have not found any written records of floods from the days of Mayfield Farm and the Barron Estate. This may be partly because in those days, flooding was usually considered a private problem; governments did not get involved. In the Water District and City files later in the 1920s and '30s, there were still no written reports of the creeks overbanking. There are only a few vague mentions of flooding in the oral histories taken by Ann Knopf in 1977. Newspaper articles reported

flooding in 1931, 1932, and 1937, but it would not be surprising to discover no floods at all in the 1920s. Northern California would not be as dry again until the record drought of 1977-78 (and, of course our present record drought).

Storm Drain Development

The Barron Estate had no storm drains when it was sold to Driscoll and Reiter in 1919. Extra rain runoff simply followed the shallow, ordinarily dry, natural channels. Wise builders like Elisha Crosby avoided those when they chose building sites and crop plantings. But by the 1930s, there was enough development in Barron Park that urban-type undergrounded storm drains became necessary. The first record I have of storm drain planning is a *Palo Alto Times* clipping dated March 16, 1940, when "fifty residents of Barron Park heard (County) Supervisor C.P. Cooley outline proposed improvements in their district . . . and considered forming an improvement club." The meeting was held at Slinger's Boat Shop where Supervisor Cooley laid out Santa Clara County's plans for a drainage system to be installed at an estimated cost of \$1,000. "Twelve hundred feet of 15- and 18-inch pipe will be laid, and several catch basins (will be) put in," he said. The most interesting thing in this report is the cost: \$1,000 for 1,200 feet of pipe!

Highway and Street Development: U.S. and State Highways

Highway and street development progressed during the 1920s and '30s, especially El Camino Real and our neighborhood main "collector" streets.

The WPA (the Federal Works Progress Administration) funded the development of the U.S. highway system to connect all U.S. cities with modern, two-lane paved highways (most often concrete), along with route numbers and safety signage. They were laid out and designed to high engineering and safety standards (by the criteria of the times).

El Camino Real was the first road to be designated U.S. Highway 101 and was the first U.S. Highway on the West coast to run all the way from Canada to Mexico. Simultaneously, California expanded and improved its State highway system, linking all sizeable California towns with paved, or at least graded gravel roads. The County built many roads and paved some streets in unincorporated areas like Barron Park. Palo Alto set a goal to eventually pave all its streets.

A "Suicide" Lane on El Camino Real

Sometime in the late 1920s, ECR was widened to three lanes south of Mayfield, providing a "suicide" two-way passing lane in the center, which proved to be dangerous as well as scary. This idea was initially popular nationwide – one of the terribly bad ideas to come out of the 1930s. Remnants of these lanes persisted until the general upgrading of highways after World War II. The idea was also unpopular in Barron Park because of land seizures: They occurred mostly on our side of El Camino Real and resulted in the removal of the much-prized, towering eucalyptus trees on the Military Academy property and the removal of parts of the parking areas for several local businesses. At the time, the widespread eucalyptus plantings in California had become famous and were considered by many to be the tree that represented California more than even the redwoods or oaks.

Other El Camino Problems

El Camino Real was the subject of a Peninsula-wide political uproar in 1936 that continued, in one form or another, for the next twenty years. The Federal Government, when establishing the route for U.S. Highway 101 in the early 1920s, had chosen El Camino Real to be the highway on the stretch from South San Francisco to the city of Santa Clara. With the establishment of the national highway system, long-distance automobile travel became feasible for many people, and highway-oriented businesses sprang up all along the new routes, including on the Peninsula. Most of the highway-oriented businesses in Barron Park date from the first ten years of the existence of Highway 101. Traffic burgeoned and soon ECR had become a slower business route. The State then planned and started building a "bypass" route along the Bay frontage, naming it the "Bayshore Highway." As soon as a significant stretch was opened, the Federal Government switched the designation "U.S. 101" to the Bayshore Highway, taking it away from ECR. Businesses along ECR organized to protest the government's move. In early 1938, the ECR association succeeded in getting the 101 route signs returned.

In the meantime, significant clumps of highway-oriented businesses had grown up along the Bayshore (which soon earned its local nickname of the "Bloody Bayshore"). The Bayshore businesses organized to overturn

the ECR victory and to resist any subsequent route change proposals. The State intervened to convert the Bloody Bayshore into the new, wide, "safe" Bayshore Freeway. Battles such as this were going on all across the country, and in the 1950s and early '60s, many states had "Bypass U.S." highways and "Business U.S." routes. For a while this compromise was in effect here, but the Bayshore Freeway trumped the game. Eventually ECR was redesignated State Highway 82 and remains so today.

Another El Camino problem was also in the news that year: Thefts of the "Mission Bells" (one per mile) along the highway had resulted in the loss of about half of them. By November 1938, a public campaign to replace them was begun.

Street Dedications and Paving

In Barron Park, one of the first street dedications was made by the landowners Driscoll and Reiter in 1926 when they deeded Los Robles Avenue to the County. There were no paved streets in the Barron Park area then. Los Robles was an unpaved farm lane originally laid out by Sarah Wallis or Edward Barron in the mid-nineteenth century. It's likely that both Los Robles and Matadero Avenues were paved from El Camino Real to Laguna Avenue around when the concrete Matadero Avenue bridge over Matadero Creek was built in 1929. The Improvement Club also worked to get bridges built on Laguna Avenue. Laguna was paved by the time its bridges over Barron and Matadero Avenues were completed in 1933. Thus, the basic framework of major "collector" streets in the core of the northern part of Barron Park appear to have been completed by that year. (See Illustration E: Photo of Laguna Avenue bridge over Matadero Creek.)

On February 22, 1936, the County announced plans for paving streets in rural districts, mostly in "the South Palo Alto - Los Altos - Mountain View area this spring and summer." Plans for paving included 2500 feet of Maybell Avenue. Assuming the paving started at El Camino Real, it would have extended to the location of the state "borrow pit," at the property line between lots on today's Frandon Court and those on today's Maybell Way. These lots are west of the present-day Juana Briones Elementary School. In 1936 they were all orchards, all or mostly all apricot trees.

We don't know much about when the



E - Laguna Avenue Bridge over Matadero Creek in 1946, looking south towards Los Robles Avenue. Babick family collection. The scene probably looked about the same in the early 1930s.

lesser streets were paved. Streets in 1930-36 included - north to south and east to west - Matadero Avenue (ECR to west of the railroad), Neal Street (later Laguna Avenue), Roble Ridge, Barron Avenue (ECR to Laguna), Whitsell Avenue, Kendall (then called La Rosa; it ran only from Whitsell to the Strain Ranch), La Selva Way, Military Way (ECR to La Selva only), La Donna (then known as Donna Street), La Para Avenue, Los Robles Avenue (ECR to Laguna only). In the south end of Barron Park, only Vista Avenue existed, along with Maybell Avenue, which ran from ECR to an indefinite point west of where Coulombe Drive is today. There was no connection either to Arastradero or Los Robles. None of today's cul-de-sac streets existed yet. (See the Locator map on page 8.)

El Camino Strip Business Development

During the 1930s, development of businesses on our El Camino strip really began to take off. The most significant development in the early '30s was on the 5.4-acre parcel fronting on El Camino Real between the California Military Academy and the farm lane that became Los Robles Avenue. The parcel was sold in 1926 by Colonel Jones, owner of the Academy, to R.E. Ashley. Sometime between 1926 and 1929, Ashley built an "auto camp" on his parcel. During the same era, the Grove Auto Camp was established where the Creekside Inn is now. Auto camps were the forerunners of motels.

Most of the land in the Buena Vista auto camp was shaded by six gigantic oaks and was advertised as being in a "beautiful oak grove." Later in the 1930s its café was renamed Chat and Chew and became a social center for the burgeoning Barron Park neighborhood. The Buena Vista auto

camp was replaced by a mobile home park after World War II, along with a "modern" strip motel with private bathrooms. There was also a Rich-field service station on the Buena

Vista property. According to Joe Weiler, a later owner, Buena Vista was the first place on U.S. 101 between Palo Alto and Mountain View where you could pull off the highway and have a sandwich.

We have much less information on other 1930s ECR developments. We do have a menu from L'Omelette, the French-style, white-tablecloth lunch and dinner restaurant that opened in 1932 at the corner of Maybell Avenue (where Walgreens is today). The menu gives interesting insights into pre-World War II prices. For example, the special Saddle of Lamb cost \$1.80 (this included soup, salad, a fresh vegetable, and potatoes). Stuffed Roast Squab served with wild rice (and all of the above) was \$2.50. The most expensive dinner was Filet Mignon, charcoal-broiled, with all the extras, at \$2.90. This restaurant operated under various names (and of course updated prices) until Walgreens replaced Chez Louis (still popularly called "L'Ommie's") in 1996. (See Illustration F: Photo of L'Ommie's dining room.)

The Liquor Clause and the Mile-and-a-Half Law

Besides L'Ommie's, other "fine-dining" restaurants started up on the Barron Park ECR strip in the 1930s. The attraction was alcohol. It seems strange now, but Palo Alto remained "dry" even after the repeal of national prohibition on January 1, 1933. There were two reasons: (1) Palo Alto was founded "dry." By direction of Leland Stanford and his teetotaling wife Jane Lathrop Stanford, all properties in Palo Alto had deed restrictions on the sale of alcohol. This was the infamous "liquor clause," and it prevailed for more than 80 years from the 1890s until it was finally invalidated by the courts in



F – Postcard of L'Ommie's Dining Room. Date unknown. From Barron Park archives.

the mid-1970s. (2) To back this up, Leland Stanford also had a State law passed banning sales of alcoholic beverages even outside Palo Alto, if within 1.5 miles of the Stanford University campus (the equally infamous “mile-and-a-half law,” repealed by the State Legislature in the 1970s).

Because of these two legal restraints, Palo Alto residents in search of alcohol had to go to “Whiskey Gulch” in East Palo Alto, to west Menlo Park, or to Barron Park’s “sin strip.” Thus, BP acquired liquor stores, bars, less expensive restaurants, and fast-food establishments as well as “fine dining.” By 1950 the Barron Park strip was the principal “restaurant row” destination in Santa Clara County.

Community Development – Summary of Progress 1929-1941

To summarize the development of a “sense of community” in Barron Park during the 1920s and ‘30s, I would point to these events: (1) The founding of the Barron Park Improvement Club in the 1920s. Starting with the goal of obtaining street dedications by Driscoll and Reiter (notably the 1926 dedication of Los Robles Avenue), it (and similarly named successor organizations) also worked during the 1930s to get streets paved and bridges built on the main collector streets over Barron and Matadero Creeks. It lobbied PG&E to obtain gas service for home heating and cooking and to extend electric service.

In the wake of those successes, it also became a social club, which helped build a

sense of community. (2) The private water companies (the Bol Company and the Los Robles Company) helped people work together and get to know one another, since neighbors ran them. (3) Opposition in the Maybell Tract section to the State “borrow pit,” dug to provide fill for highway projects. This is the earliest documented organized community action in the Barron Park area. Although the political lobbying failed to stop the project, the organization of the protests ultimately led to the founding of the Barron Park-Maybell Improvement Association, the immediate predecessor to the current Barron Park Association.

(4) The outrage against the City of Palo Alto for failing to join other local fire departments in the attempt to save the burning Barron Mansion in November 1936 was useless in changing City policy, but was ultimately a factor in the 1949 founding of the Barron Park Fire Protection District and our volunteer fire department.

How to Reach the Historian

As always, I stand by to answer questions, respond to comments, and make corrections if necessary. I enjoy the feedback I receive from my neighbors, the readers. You can write to me at dgrahampaca@gmail.com, or via snail mail at 984 Ilima Way, or phone me 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.

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Thanks! The Editors

How the Locator Map Was Made

The map of the north end of Barron Park 1930-1936 was made by Douglas L. Graham with major assistance from Hilary Glann and the Copy Factory.

It is not, strictly speaking, a historical map, but the elements are verified by the historical 1928 and 1942 county plat maps, historical maps of the Stanford lands, and several oral histories given at different times by longtime Barron Park residents. Plat maps display how a large area of land – such as the Barron Park neighborhood – is separated into lots, and shows nearby streets, rights of way and creeks. A few details of exact locations were estimated by Doug using combinations of these sources.

We began with the 1932 plat map, which Copy Factory “cleaned up” for us by removing the shadowed areas created by a bad photocopy job in the early 1980s. This was a great help, giving us a clean, sharp image to begin with. Doug provided the historical knowledge at each stage.

We corrected some gross errors the 1932 County Clerk’s office had made (such as placing Barron Creek on the south side of Los Robles Avenue, rather than the north side). There was also a very poor rendition of the curves in Matadero Creek. There was one major street shown that was not laid out until 1940 and others that were shown as completed when only parts of them had been laid out before 1936.

Work on the map began in early October 2021. Doug completed it on December 2. The map fills a hole in our collective understanding of Barron Park during the 1930s. We plan a similar map for the final article in this Centennial series, “Transition Into Wartime, 1937-1942,” now in preparation for the Spring 2022 issue of this newsletter.

El Camino Business Update, Winter 2021

By Bob Moss

Since my last report in March 2021, there continue to be changes in occupancy and an increase in vacancies on El Camino Real between Adobe Creek and Page Mill Road. The Covid lockdown and stay-at-home orders had a negative impact, but it wasn't as bad as expected. Some businesses that were closed have reopened – with continuing County and State masking mandates – and they seem to have strong customer support. Several large construction projects are underway on El Camino Real.

Almost all the restaurants on El Camino Real are open or have reopened: Hobe's (4224), Celia's (3740), and Dinah's Poolside (4261) offer patio dining. State of Mind Slice House at 3850 (that replaced Roadside Chicken) has tables in front and offers outside dining.

On the East (Ventura) side of El Camino, at 2875, Flagstar Bank has closed, and the site is vacant. At 3001, a proposal to redevelop the former Mike's Bikes site with 19,800 sq. ft. of ground floor retail and 30 apartments, plus 20 apartments behind the retail, was approved several years ago. The site is now fenced, but there is as yet no construction activity.

At 3159, We Fix Macs (in the three-story office building) has closed. The building has an Available sign. The former Foot Locker site at 3225 (at Portage) is under construction for a mixed-use project with a four-story building of 6,513 sq. ft. of ground-floor retail and six housing units, plus a two-story building with 2,061 sq. ft. of ground-floor retail and 1,826 sq. ft. of second-floor offices.

The following addresses have For Lease and/or For Sale signs: 3239 (the original We Fix Macs "cube"); 3337; 3401 (the former Innospring); 3457 (former Restaurant Supplies); and 3505 (former Sandbox Suites). Businesses at 3527 (Monsoon Dance), 3533 (Reweaving Studio), and 3535 (Lovely Hair) are closed. Both storefronts at 3567 have For Lease signs.

At 3703-09, the nearly completed Wilton Court development, a project of Alta Housing, is a four-story, 61-unit rental apartment building for special-needs adults, with services on the ground floor. The 3773 (former Palo Alto Martial Arts) storefront shows renovations in progress. At 3877 (the former Compadres site), new construction

is underway. It will have 4,027 sq. ft. of retail and 17 condos.

Star Credit Union at 3903 has closed and moved to San Antonio Road in Los Altos. The former Pizza Chicago site at 4115 will be occupied by a three-story mixed-used building with seven apartments, ground-floor retail, and offices. Construction has begun with a deep excavation. The project has a For Sale sign.

On the West (Barron Park) side, Crossfit at 3516 has closed, and the site is vacant. At 3626-28, the former Jewish Study Network offices are still vacant. In the storefronts at 3666D and 3666B, the former Family Fashion Cuts and the former Marines' recruitment offices are vacant. Nancy Bee Salon and Spa (3666C) is in operation. The former Needles sewing studio (3666A) is under renovation as Home Remodel, Inc., which promises opening soon.

The building at 3700 (former Palo Alto Tailoring), corner of Barron, is still vacant. The lot next to it at 3710 contains construction equipment and signage, but no work has started. The Sandwich Bug sandwich shop at 3864 is open for take-out with its usual (delicious) menu. A new business has opened at 3960 (next to Jim Davis Valero): French Cabinetry Kitchen Design.

At 4256 (site of the former Su Hong restaurant), the building has been removed. Construction has not yet started on a five-story ArtX Hotel; the developer is HXH Property. The small office building with underground parking at 4260 has a For Sale sign.

Vacancy rates under five percent are basically considered full occupancy; so, we can consider El Camino Way fully occupied. The

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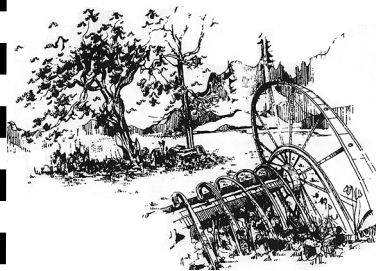
number of vacancies on El Camino Real has increased, but less than anticipated. The Palo Alto citywide vacancy rate is 17% (the state-wide rate is 15%–18%). That figure takes into account office vacancies, which are fewer at our (south) end of town.

There are seven vacancies on the Barron Park side, 3516, 3626, 3628, 3632, 3666B, 3666D, and 3990C. The lots at 3710 and 4146 are still vacant. Each had several developments approved, but nothing was built. The Thain lot at 4160 has been vacant for more than 45 years; although several townhouse projects were approved, they have not been built.

There are eleven vacancies on the Ventura Side; 2875, 2905, 3001, 3011, 3127, 3159, 3401, 3457, 3877, 3903, and 4117. The lots at 3585 and 4117 have been vacant for more than 40 years.

ECR Vacancy rates	Aug. '18	Feb. '19	Nov. '19	Feb. '21	Dec. '21
Ventura (East) Side	5.2%	5.3%	5.5%	10.8%	13.0%
Barron Park (West) Side:	2.2%	2.8%	3.0%	4.4%	5.3%
El Camino Way	3.5%	4.8%	4.6%	2.4%	0%
Total Vacancy:	5.0%	3.2%	3.8%	6.7%	7.6%

(The above rates are a snapshot in time, and may not reflect the exact current rates.)



2022 Barron Park Association Membership

Thanks to the many BPA members who keep their memberships current!

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- **Barron Park Donkeys:** To volunteer, donate, or purchase merchandise, go to: <http://barronparkdonkeys.org> or contact Jenny Kiratli at: 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
- **Cool Block:** To learn more or join the list of interested Cool Block residents, contact hglann@gmail.com

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