

Annual Free Newsletter For All Residents!

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

John King, BPA President



Happy New Year to all our Barron Park neighbors and a special welcome to more than 200 new residents!

This is the annual free BPA Newsletter, mailed to all households in Barron Park. Not everyone is familiar with the Barron Park Association. Let me outline some of its activities and the reasons why you need to join your neighborhood volunteer organization!

Committed to supporting a diversity of opinions and perspectives, the BPA facilitates communication from the City to residents and among residents, with the quarterly BPA Newsletter and our three active Email Lists. The Committees – made up of Board members and others – work on traffic and safety concerns, emergency preparedness, environmental issues, welcoming new residents, Native Garden maintenance, and social/cultural events.

The BPA supports and organizes community-building and informative activities open to all: the Barron Park Annual Meeting, May Fête, Ice Cream Socials, Halloween Gathering, Movie Night, Diwali, Holiday Caroling, Lunar New Year, and Senior Lunches. This year we hosted the P. A. Police Department's National Night Out. Interested in volunteering? Contact me at: johnwadeking@gmail.com

The Barron Park Association publishes an impressive quarterly newsletter – online and in print – that covers neighborhood and school news, provides information and

tips, profiles local residents, and reviews the history of Barron Park. All BPA members are encouraged to contribute articles, stories, and creative works. Members and non-members alike receive the Winter Newsletter. Current members receive all four quarterly issues.

The BPA relies on membership dues and business memberships – voluntary, but essential! – to support our community activities, printing and postage costs, and required insurance. We donate funds to the Barron Park Donkey Project and the Bol Park Native Garden, alongside occasional contributions to organizations benefiting our residents – Buena Vista Summer Camp, Karat School Project, and Bike Palo Alto, for example. Annual household memberships are only \$30 – just \$15 if you are over 65. Join online at: bpapaloalto.org/join-the-barron-park-association/ or with the form on page 2.

The BPA maintains three Email Lists for

Barron Park residents. We encourage everyone, BPA member or not, to sign on to our Google Groups lists at: bpapaloalto.org/bpa-email-lists They are: (1) *bpa-news* for news, information, and announcements; (2) *bpa-misc* for neighbor requests, queries, recommendations, freebies, etc.; and (3) *bpa-issues* to express opinions or initiate discussion on topics of interest.

All residents may post on *bpa-issues* when matters impacting the neighborhood are being considered by the Palo Alto City Council, Palo Alto Unified School District, and City or District commissions and boards. Instructions on how individuals may contact relevant entities should be included in the post. Email List members are automatically opted in to use respectful and civil language in all communications. Guidelines are at: bpapaloalto.org/bpa-email-lists

If you have questions about what the BPA does and how it supports all the residents of Barron Park, or to get more involved, please contact me at johnwadeking@gmail.com

Also, see page 18 for the contact list of useful BPA Emails and Web Links.



Families gather at Bol Park for National Night Out on August 1, hosted by the BPA. Visit pages 10-12 for color photos of 2023 community events in Barron Park. Photo by Myrna Rochester.

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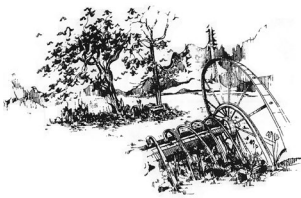
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2024 Barron Park Association Membership

bpapaloalto.org

The Barron Park Association is your volunteer neighborhood group that works for the benefit of our very special community. All residents of Barron Park and Green Acres II are encouraged to join. If you have questions about the BPA or need to check your membership status, please email barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com

Your BPA membership supports many Barron Park community events and interests including: May Fête, Movie Nights in Bol Park, Ice Cream Socials, Diwali Celebrations, Lunar New Year Events, Senior Connections, Emergency Preparedness, Quarterly Newsletters, and Email lists.

2024 Membership Renewals begin January 1, 2024.

(Memberships renewed after October 1, 2023, are valid through 2024.)

You may join or renew your membership online with a credit card or PayPal at:

bpapaloalto.org/join-the-barron-park-association/

To pay by personal check, mail this membership form and your check to:

BPA Treasurer, 724 Barron Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94306

Name(s):	Primary email address:
Address:	Secondary email address:
<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter: I'd like the online edition (<i>instead of a print copy for Spring, Summer, and Fall</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> Email lists: I'd like to join the BPA Email lists.	Phone:

- | | | |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Fellow \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Member \$30 | <input type="checkbox"/> Business \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior \$15 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Contribution: \$_____ If sending a personal check, please pay to: Barron Park Association. | | |
| Total Contribution: \$_____ | | |

BPA Neighborhood Committees: Please check your volunteer interests

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter: Contribute photos, articles, creative works; interview Barron Park neighbors/businesses for articles; proofread. <input type="checkbox"/> May Fête: Help with the annual Spring neighborhood event in Bol Park. <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Cultural Events: Organize volunteers, coordinate neighborhood events, assist with planning. <input type="checkbox"/> Welcoming: Greet new residents with an informational packet to introduce them to our caring community. <input type="checkbox"/> Parks and Creeks: Work with the City and neighborhood to review park and creek issues, maintenance and improvement projects. <input type="checkbox"/> Seniors: Join us for lunch and other activities, or serve as a volunteer to help other Barron Park Seniors. <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Safety and Emergency Preparedness: Work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> with the Emergency Preparedness Chairperson to prepare the neighborhood to handle major emergencies. <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic and Streets: Work with the City and neighborhood to review traffic issues, present plans for traffic calming and other safety-related changes within Barron Park and on adjacent streets. <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Issues: Work on a specific neighborhood environmental issue or identify, create, and implement sustainable environmental solutions in our neighborhood. <input type="checkbox"/> Zoning and Land Use: Be informed about urban design studies or multi-family, commercial, or mixed-use developments proposed in and near our neighborhood; attend meetings and provide input to project sponsors. <input type="checkbox"/> School Liaison: Coordinate BPA affairs and news with neighborhood school issues and activities. |
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Part 5 – The Bols of Roble Ridge 1936-1999

By Douglas L. Graham, Barron Park Historian

Part Five of the ongoing Bol Family Story will complete the series with the Bol family's experiences on Roble Ridge from 1936 through 1999. Throughout this article I refer to previous issues of the Barron Park Newsletter. You can find past issues of the newsletter at bpapaloalto.org/bpa-newsletter/

Parts One through Four

Spring 2023 – Part One: Originally intended to cover half the story, it dealt sketchily with Cornelis Bol's life prior to his emigration from Holland, then focused on his and his family's farm years on Roble Ridge.

Summer 2023 – Part Two: The discovery of the manuscript of Cornelis's autobiography in April 2023 added new parts to the story: Cornelis's early life in Holland, from birth in 1885 to maturity in 1906, including training as a *monteur*, "practical engineer." In the same issue, Part Three covers Cornelis's ten years in America, 1906 through 1916: including 1906-1908 in Boston; 1908-1913 at Princeton; 1913-1914 in Montana; and finally, 1914-1916 at Stanford, where he completed his Ph.D. in physics. Almost all the details are from the Bol autobiography and were previously unknown to us.

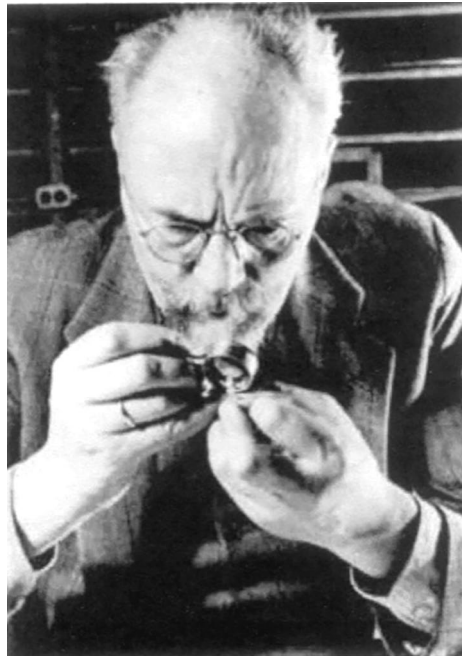
Fall 2023 – Part Four recounts Bol's career and family life in Holland from 1916 through 1936, including his marriage to Corrie Berentsen, his 20-year career as an electrical engineer at N.V. Phillips Company laboratories in Eindhoven, his widowhood, followed by marriage to his second wife Josina den Haan, the birth of their first four sons, the terrible loss of Cornelis's daughter Corrie in 1935, and their decision to emigrate to California. It concludes with Cornelis's and Josina's house-hunting trip to California and the birth of their fifth son.

Dr. Cornelis Bol - Scientist and Inventor

It is difficult for us to estimate the contribution Cornelis Bol made to the Stanford Physics Department's overall science program in the years he was a Research Associate there, from 1936 until his retirement around 1960. The research he participated in is still being pursued at Stanford. However, Bol's major contribution at Stanford was his design improvements to the mercury vapor lamp. He

took the design he had developed earlier at Phillips Laboratories and made it practical to manufacture and robust in use. The work was analogous to Thomas Edison's development of the tungsten filament light bulb. (See Part One of this story, Spring 2023; and earlier, in Winter 2012.)

Bol had a successful career at Phillips Electric in Holland. (See Part Four, Fall 2023.) There, he greatly improved the manufacturing techniques for electric light bulbs, experimented with sodium vapor lamps, and invented a working mercury vapor lamp (which turned out to be economically infeasible). He also developed practical radio receivers and more powerful radio transmitters. He was considered an important contributor to Phillips's profits and growth as the leading European electric and electronic products manufacturer. (See Illustration A, Cornelis Bol, scientist and inventor. The tiny white object he is staring at through a high-powered magnifying glass is his



A. Cornelis Bol – Scientist and Inventor. Life Magazine April 3, 1939.

mercury vapor lamp, about two centimeters long.)

The Bol Farm and Land Investments

Bol was already an experienced real estate investor in Holland in the 1930s. (See Part

Four.) In California, his initial real estate purchase was the three acres surrounding the "cottage" he and Josina bought from the Carruth family on Roble Ridge. But from the very beginning, they both apparently had their eyes on the three-acre pasture across the railroad tracks from their home, which they soon acquired: the plot that first became the "Bol donkey pasture" and ultimately Cornelis Bol Park. They also acquired farming machinery, including the hay rake which is still in the park. (See Part One, Spring 2023, for an account of the Bol family working "the Bol farm.")

Later, Cornelis purchased undeveloped portions of the Strain Ranch, also known as the Strain Dairy – part of which they sold in 1947 to the Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) for Barron Park Elementary School. The deal was arranged by then Barron Park resident, David Packard, who was at the time Chair of the PAUSD Board of Trustees. The remainder of the Strain Ranch was sold to Joseph Eichler in 1948 for a residential tract, "University Gardens." During the Bols' ownership of the Strain Dairy property, they most likely did not actively farm that land.

How the "Bol Barn" Got There

The origin of the barn is another interesting story. Josina recounted, ". . . my husband took a house that was free, in Barron Park where the Japanese had lived before they were sent to those camps. . . . Then the owners of that house wanted to get rid of it, so my husband . . . he bought that house, took it apart and put it up here to use as a stable, and a barn." (She presumably meant for a tack room and hay storage.) The "house" was a rudimentary structure with no finishing touches. It was on La Pera (now La Para) Avenue at the corner of Laguna Avenue across from Ernest and Lena Johnson's house at 3990 Laguna. (See Illustration B, the barn built by Cornelis; the old hay rake in the park is now the BPA logo; and Illustration C, the fences and gate to the old horse paddock.)

The Horses Came First

The oldest Bol boys (Klass, Kees, and Joor) had each been promised that they could have horses when they got to their new home



B. Bol barn, 1969. Photo by Sabra Driscoll.



C. The gate into the horse paddock, 1969. Photo by Sabra Driscoll.

in America. The farm started out with four horses. The deal was that the boys would care for them and grow their own hay on the new property (site of the park today). The “donkey pasture” included about an acre where the boys grew winter hay for the horses and donkeys, sowing and cutting it each year, and selling any excess. At first they worked the land using the horses. Later the Bols bought a tractor, and the boys expanded their business to cutting hay on other properties, including at least for one neighbor, Colonel Duggan, who lived at 3768 Laguna Avenue.

Before the Donkeys, There Were Cows, Goats, and Pigs

Josina said that during World War Two, one of the boys (Klass?) bought a cow after a neighbor had bought one. “Then one of the boys [Kees?] was interested, and he milked that cow and took care of her. And then of course, she was dry after that many months. We needed another one, so we ended up with three cows instead of one. Then we got too much milk, skim milk, for we had a centrifuge for separating the cream from the milk . . . we bought two pigs and fed them skim milk. They grow fast. We always sold one to friends who loved to have it. Then we [would] buy

two new little pigs.” Josina was asked what was done with calves that the cows had each year; she thought they were sold for slaughter. “I am pretty sure we did not eat them. The pigs we did.”

The extra milk was separated. Cornelis made cheese from the skim milk, and Josina made butter from the cream. Cornelis took a correspondence course at San Jose State. Josina said, “He made good cheese . . . the cheeses went so fast, especially the goat cheeses. He made a couple at a time and aged them in a cooler in the kitchen.” Josina churned the butter by hand, although later they got an electric churn. Even by hand, “. . . if you have the temperature and [everything else] just right it . . . is not too much trouble.” She would make butter every couple of days. We had a large family . . . so we drank a lot of milk, and then I sold the cream. People loved to have that cream in the war, you see . . .”

Origin of the Donkeys

Josina’s oral history, given to Anne Knopf in 1977, provides an authoritative source for the story of the beginnings of the Barron Park donkey tradition. A lot of incorrect information on this topic has been published locally – especially in newspaper stories. The biggest errors concern the dates. Many say the donkeys were present beginning in 1936 (the year the Bols arrived). The real date was not recorded, but it was probably 1962. (See Illustration E, the Bols’ 1964 Christmas card with a donkey “family tree” and photos of the original donkeys.)

The Real Story

In the late 1950s or early ‘60s, two of the Bol horses died of a sudden brain disease; the others were too old to work. The last

horse was lonely (by that time, nobody was riding the horses), and so the Bols got their first donkey, “old Jennifer.” The death of the last horse left Jennifer alone. When someone called wanting to place a male donkey, the family took on their second, Chris. But nothing happened with Jennifer until the Bols got another female, who promptly produced a foal (by Chris). That got Jennifer started, and according to Josina, “. . . before we knew it, we had I think about five young donkeys [foals] running around with the rest of them. Jennifer had one every year . . . but there were always children who loved to have the donkeys.”

Selling the Foals

Josina sold the foals soon after birth to local families with children. But the foals remained in the Bols’ pasture, and the Bol family fed them. A partition in the middle of the field separated the donkey pasture from the hay farm. The first donkey, Jennifer, died in 1975; her last offspring was Mickey. The Bols got a horse to keep Mickey company, but it did not work out – the horse kept Mickey from grazing – so Josina had to feed Mickey every day. (See Illustration F, 1984: Josina tending Mickey.)

“The Bol Water Company”

The Emway Water Company was started in the early 1920s by five Barron Park families with orchards or farm plots that needed a dependable irrigation supply. Bol invested in a share soon after moving in and finding the one-half inch line serving Roble Ridge inadequate for his family, much less any farming they wanted to do. Supported by his immediate neighbors, he pressured the directors into installing a larger-diameter water line to Roble



D. Cornelis Bol with horse, probably 1940s. Bol family photo.



E. 1964 Bol Christmas card: the original donkeys and their family relationships.

Ridge. He was granted a seat on the board and gradually took over, first by assuming leadership and later by purchasing the other shares and encouraging the original owners to retire from the company.

After obtaining complete control, Cornelis renamed it the "Barron Park Water Company," but it was generally known as the "Bol Water Company." He expanded the area covered and doubled the number of customers served. Daily management, including handling some of the smaller after-hours emergencies, was a family business, involving Josina and the older boys.

By 1953, the Water Company was serving more than half the Barron Park area. The Bols modernized the system with additional wells, a more effective pumping plant, fire hydrants, and better water lines with greater delivery capacity. When the city took over the company from the Bols in 1953, there was relatively little to do other than to connect Barron Park to the existing city water system. (For the complete story, see "The Old Barron Park Water Company," Fall 2005.)

Fire Protection

In the late 1930s, Bol was already active in the attempts to form a fire protection district for the neighborhood. Shortly after the Bols settled here in 1936, the Barron Mansion burned to the ground while the Palo Alto

Fire Department watched from the other side of El Camino Real. That event, along with discovering the inadequate water pressure on their property, must have made a profound impression on new residents. However, Bol and others concerned about the fire risks could not overcome the obstacles thrown up by the various Barron Park residents' groups contending with each other in the turgid neighborhood politics. It was not until 1949 that a Fire Protection District was finally set up and a Volunteer Fire Department established, manned, equipped, trained, and activated. (The full fire protection story is told in the Summer 2012 Newsletter.)



F. Josina Bol with Mickey the donkey in 1984. Photographer unrecorded.

Josina's Social Events on the Ridge

While Cornelis dealt with the community affairs of the larger neighborhood, Josina was building social networks on Roble Ridge. She hosted a group of women that met frequently at the Bol house. Josina said that they would get together about one morning a month for coffee. "Everyone would bring their sewing, or whatever they wanted to work on. They brought their lunches with them. But later, when new families had moved in and some of the older women had died, we just did not do it anymore."

The Bol family continued to organize social events for the neighbors. Once the water supply system was improved, they installed a large swimming pool and invited neighbor kids to enjoy it. These parties were probably the largest Barron Park community gatherings during the 1940s and '50s. (See Photo G, Swimming pool party at the Bols'.)

"The Portuguese Farmer"

Whenever Josina talked about the view of the open land southeast of their house lot (present site of the VA Hospital), she often mentioned "that the Portuguese farmer lived there . . . He rented the land from Stanford. The Bol boys had permission to ride there, during the dry season only, when the ground was hard and there was no grazing. He had a big house, which burned down, and they sold out to the VA Hospital."

"We got our milk from them, raw milk" (the only milk that Gerald, the youngest son, could drink). Josina did not mention the name of the farmer. It was not until I did the research for "Dairy Farms of Barron Park" (for the Winter 2022-23 Newsletter) that I found out who he was. Far from being a simple "farmer," he was the local dairy magnate Manuel Piers,

with thousands of acres of land leased from Stanford, hundreds of dairy cows, and the largest dairy business in the Mid-Peninsula area. (For more about Piers, see the story "Dairy Farms of Barron Park," Winter 2022-23.)

"Hoboes" on the Tracks

Recounting Depression-era life on Roble Ridge before World War Two, Josina described itinerant homeless men ("hoboes") coming along

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Spring Wildflowers and Native Gardens

By Melanie Cross, Native Habitat Committee

It may seem as though our gardens and the surrounding hillsides will be in faded winter mode for a while, but the first signs of spring are already happening!

If you walk through the Bol Park Native Garden weekly, you can watch the season unfurl: Right now there are long, pink flower tassels on the Currant (*Ribes*) bushes, and the urn-shaped Manzanita flowers are opening up on hanging panicles. Maybe you'll spot a hummingbird finding nourishment at either flower. Swollen Buckeye leaf buds will soon unfurl into amazing bright green palmate leaves. Many tiny things are developing underground and in leaf litter. Look carefully, and you will begin to notice perennials pushing up through the mulch. Garden volunteers are planting the last new plants of the year, so their roots can grow in the rain-softened soil and while the moderate spring temperatures are still kind to new, delicate leaves.

For all of us California nature lovers, spring offers the excitement of new growth, colorful blooms of wildflowers . . . and hope. For insects, it is the beginning of life; for birds, it is nesting and chick-feeding time. Here are a few favorite local places you may visit to enjoy spring:

Eleanor Pardee Park (Palo Alto). The Demonstration Garden showcases several types of gardens. Located at 851 Center Drive, Palo Alto.

Primrose Way Pollinator Garden (Palo Alto) with several locations in Palo Alto. primrosewaypollinatorgarden.com/visit.html

Foothill Preserve (Palo Alto). Take the easy Fern Loop trail along a small creek, noisier after a good rain. For several months hikers are rewarded with a succession of unfurling fronds, leaves, and a variety of blooming plants. In late spring, the sunnier hillsides glow with color, it's worth looking closer to see the details.

Beyond Palo Alto, but still local:

Edgewood Park (Redwood City). Hike through the woodlands in February for the early perennials, then later in March, for the wildflower display in the grasslands. You will find beauty on all the trails.

Kite Hill Preserve (Woodside). The serpentine soil in this area has amazing floral displays from March through May.

Many trails in the **Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District** (Santa Cruz Mountains) have a variety of flowering plants:

openspace.org/where-to-go/nature/wildflowers

Farther afield, but not too far to drive from the Peninsula, there are spectacularly blooming spots such as **Coyote Valley Open Space Preserve:** openspaceauthority.org/preserves/coyotevalley.html

You can even visit local private gardens to see what gardeners are doing in their own space to expand natural habitat and express the California sense of place. Mark your calendars for the **Growing Natives Garden Tour 2024.** The California Native Plant Society, Silicon

Valley Chapter, offers free garden tours each spring at more than 50 homes with native plant gardens – this year in mid-April. You'll be able to ask questions of garden owners or knowledgeable volunteers and learn how you can modify your own garden.

Growing Natives Garden Tour 2024

- North Santa Clara and South San Mateo County: Saturday, April 13, 2024, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- South Santa Clara County: Sunday, April 14, 2024, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Find more info and register for the tour at: nggt.org/GNGT/HomeRO.php

The Bol Park Native Habitat project always needs funds for new plants, materials, equipment, and maintenance. See the list on page 18, BPA Emails and Web Links, for ways to donate.



California poppies and Douglas iris bloom happily in the Bol Park Native Habitat. Photo by Linda Elder.

The Bol Park Native Garden has volunteer workdays coming up:

Sunday, February 4, 2024,
2:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 30, 2024,
9:30 a.m. – 12 noon

If you are interested in learning more about native plants or helping in the garden, please join us!

Contact: bpnativegarden@gmail.com

ARE YOU AN ARTIST OR WRITER?

Do you enjoy the creative work featured in the BPA Newsletter? Would you like to see your art, photography, crafts, music, published (or unpublished) writing, etc., 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

Palo Alto City Council Honors Bob Moss

By The Editors



Honoree Bob Moss. Photo courtesy of Bob Moss.

At its regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, December 18, 2023, the Palo Alto City Council honored our longtime Barron Park resident Bob Moss. As a private citizen, Bob has worked tirelessly for more than 50 years on issues concerning the welfare of Palo Alto and particularly the Barron Park area. Bob's family was present in the City Council chamber when Mayor Lydia Kou read aloud the proclamation to the right.

Member of the former Palo Alto Library Advisory Commission, advocate for the Buena Vista Community, campaigner for the minimum width of private streets, creator of the graffiti management program, chronicler of business changes on El Camino, not to mention Board Member and Treasurer of the Barron Park Association for at least 15 years, Bob continues to provide input on local and City issues.

Douglas Graham, Barron Park historian, adds to the list: "Most people probably know nothing about Bob's work for more than 30 years on the Palo Alto creeks. Starting in the early '70s, Bob was founder and chair of the Barron Creek Committee to campaign for flood and erosion control; he ran creek cleanups for many years; and worked with me and others on the BPA Board Creek Committee covering Barron and Matadero Creeks.



Proclamation

Commending Bob Moss

WHEREAS, Robert Moss, fondly known as Bob Moss, served on the Palo Alto Library Advisory Commission and helped to shepherd our treasured library system through critical junctures, ensuring all five library branches would thrive; and

WHEREAS, Bob Moss possesses deep institutional memory regarding neighborhood and citywide political issues, and his service is a community resource in providing meaningful context to those advocating current issues; and

WHEREAS, Bob Moss is a long-time supporter of Buena Vista Mobile Home Park residents; he fought for rent restrictions prohibiting a severe increase by the owner that would have resulted in the forced displacement of many households in 2000 and spoke at many City hearings from 2012 to 2017 in support of saving the mobile home park; and

WHEREAS, in 2009, Bob Moss initiated a successful grassroots movement to create an ordinance requiring private streets within new local developments to maintain at least a 32-foot width for safety reasons, in addition to excluding these streets from the city's density calculations; and

WHEREAS, Bob Moss continues to keep tabs on businesses along El Camino Real near the Barron Park and Ventura area, periodically reporting to the Barron Park Association Board of Directors on the opening and closing of businesses; and

WHEREAS, Bob Moss has personally set out to eliminate graffiti in Palo Alto, effectively serving as a one-man graffiti clean-up crew; and

WHEREAS, Bob Moss has been a longtime leader in the Barron Park neighborhood, formerly serving as a Board member and continuing to represent the concerns of the Barron Park neighborhood to the City of Palo Alto as a valiant watchdog for Barron Park.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Lydia Kou, Mayor of the City of Palo Alto, on behalf of the City Council commend and honor Bob Moss's many decades of devotion, institutional knowledge, and service to the City of Palo Alto.

Presented: December 18, 2023

Lydia Kou
Mayor

"Bob has attended countless City Council and City commission meetings, representing our area on land use and environmental issues, including toxic plumes, groundwater contamination, and building standards. You could write a small book about what he has done for Barron Park without any compensation and only a modicum of applause."

To watch the City's proclamation honoring Bob Moss, visit:

youtube.com/live/1iRU-RDDqMg?si=UBVk4h5asE4oMaPv&t=893

ART IN MY YARD

We know 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 a street address.

Breathing Easier This Winter

By Hilary Glann

Recent wildfires have taught us a lot about air quality. Turns out the air quality in our homes and neighborhoods is often not so great, especially during the winter. Here's why and what you can do about it.

Wood-Burning Fireplaces

Smoke from wood-burning stoves and fireplaces is the biggest contributor to winter air pollution. Wood smoke particles (PM 2.5) are so tiny that they seep into our houses – even through closed doors and windows. Wood smoke contains probable or known carcinogens: benzene, formaldehyde, acrolein, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons. Gas-powered fireplaces also emit PM 2.5, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, and formaldehyde.

What You Can Do

- Reduce how often you burn wood in your home. If you do, use processed wood such as a Duraflame log, which burns 80% cleaner than regular firewood. Note: Since November 2019, wood burning is banned in California whenever a "Spare the Air" alert is in effect.
- If you have a gas fireplace, use it less.
- Install an electric fireplace insert or an electric log set for a cleaner, healthier home.



This 5200 BTU standalone Duraflame Electric Fireplace can provide supplemental heating for a room up to 1000 square feet or primary heat for a smaller room. Photo by Amazon.

Gas Kitchen Stoves

Based on recent studies at UCLA, Stanford, and Harvard, we've learned that gas stoves – previously believed to be safe and clean

– emit dangerous gases inside the kitchen. A UCLA study showed that 90% of homes will have unhealthy levels of nitrogen oxide pollution after just one hour of cooking with gas. A Stanford-led analysis found that a single gas cooktop burner on high or a gas oven set to 350 degrees Fahrenheit can raise indoor benzene levels above those in secondhand tobacco smoke. Another Stanford study showed that children in homes with gas stoves have a 42% greater risk of having asthma.

What You Can Do If You Cook with Gas

- Confirm that the exhaust fan for your gas stove works and vents outside.
- Run the fan on high when you cook.
- Use your gas stove less frequently: Buy an inexpensive, free-standing electric induction burner, and use an electric tea kettle, toaster oven, multi-cooker pot, and/or a slow cooker.
- Install an electric induction stove. Induction is safer, healthier, more efficient, and preferred for control, safety, and health by both amateur and professional cooks.

Gas Water Heaters and Furnaces

Gas appliances in California homes and buildings emit about four times more pollu-



Take advantage of Palo Alto's turnkey heat pump water heater program or generous rebate to upgrade your water heating system. Call 650-713-3411 to get started. Photo by Debbie Mytels.

tion than our electric power plants, and nearly two-thirds the emissions from light-duty vehicles statewide. Fortunately, there are now highly efficient electric appliances available, and rebates are available from the city, state and Federal governments to make them even more affordable. Call the Palo Alto Home Efficiency Genie at 650-713-3411 and/or contact Quitcarbon.com to get started.

Palo Alto's grid update begins this year. Areas with overhead wires will likely be finished by 2027, with the entire grid upgraded by 2030. If you have concerns about powering your house during a potential power outage, please read pages 5-6 of the Spring 2023 Barron Park Newsletter at bpapaloalto.org/bpa-newsletter/. Please send me any other questions about home electrification at hglann@gmail.com

Sources:

Wood Smoke Health

- ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/documents/woodburning-handbook

Natural Gas Burning Impacts

- UCLA Study: bit.ly/UCLA-gas-impact
- Stanford Study: news.stanford.edu/2023/06/16/cooking-gas-stoves-emits-benzene-2/

- theguardian.com/environment/2023/jan/29/why-electric-stoves-are-better-chefs

Resources:

Test drive induction with a loaner unit from acterra.org/induction

Home electrification resources: 350siliconvalley.org/switch2electric

Make a plan to electrify: Quitcarbon.com

Palo Alto grid update plans: bit.ly/CPAU-grid-plans

The Trees of Barron Park

By David Coale



Redwood trees in Bol Park. Photo by Myrna Rochester

Palo Alto – ‘Tall Tree’ in Spanish – is known for its trees, and Barron Park is certainly a fine example of the beautiful tree cover, with its many redwoods, oaks, and other trees. Trees are truly amazing. William McDonough, a famous architect, said: “Imagine this design assignment: Design something that makes oxygen, sequesters carbon, fixes nitrogen, distills water, makes complex sugars and foods, changes colors with the seasons and self-replicates.” This sounds like a miracle device, and he is correct: Trees are truly magical, and this does not even address the beauty, habitat creation, shade, and increase in property value that trees also provide.

But sometimes trees are taken for granted and can become a problem. This past winter many came down in the storms, causing quite a bit of damage. So, like many other things, trees do have their minuses. However, it is for their beneficial qualities that trees are protected in Palo Alto and in many other communities. They can’t simply be removed

at the whim of a homeowner. To protect our urban forest, our City has a tree ordinance that outlines just how we should address any issues that might come up with trees in our neighborhoods.

Recently I observed that a number of trees in Barron Park have been cut down. While some of these trees had problems, many looked perfectly fine, and there was no notice of removal, which is required by the City. I am not an arborist, so I called the City Arborist to find out more about these trees. While some property owners had permits for tree removal, some did not and could be subject to fines.

The City Tree Ordinance lists protected trees, mature trees, heritage trees, and more, and also describes how to apply for permits

and what kinds of work require a permit. There are also listed exceptions in the case of damage or interference with power lines and a listing of trees that are exempted from protection, such as invasive trees or water-hungry trees. Complete information on the City Tree Ordinance can be found on the City website (cityofpaloalto.org/treeordinance). In addition, the City Arborist is happy to answer any questions and/or come out and look at your situation. I spoke with Uriel Hernandez with the City; he was generous in helping me understand the City Ordinance. He can be reached at (650) 329-2450 or at uriel.hernandez@cityofpaloalto.org to answer any questions regarding our urban forest and the City’s tree ordinance.

Canopy, a local nonprofit organization that supports the growth of our urban forests, is also a good source of information on the selection, planting, and care of trees in our neighborhood: canopy.org One of the keys to good tree planting is to plant the right tree in the right place. Don’t plant tall trees under power lines and don’t use tall trees to screen the view from your neighbors when a shorter tree would do. This ensures good screening and good daylight for both parties. In the case of solar panel shading, whichever

was installed or planted first has first rights to sunshine.

It is up to all of us to protect and steward our urban forests, which supply many services most of us just take for granted. Before you consider any tree work, make sure you have looked at the City Tree Ordinance and are familiar with the requirements for the work to be done.

See cityofpaloalto.org/treeordinance for complete information on our City’s urban forest.



Small live oak tree along the Bol Park pathway. Photo by Hilary Glann.

A Big Year of Community Events!

Barron Parkers enjoyed fun and informative activities in 2023



This Spring, Nathan Lee and 22 other Boy Scouts restored three planter boxes originally built in memory of Tim McGarr, a Scout in Troop 52. The completed boxes were enriched with Bol Park donkey compost. Photo by Roger Lee.



John King chats with Fire Chief Geo Blackshire at Palo Alto Police Department's National Night Out on August 1. Police, fire, and animal control personnel joined volunteers from 350SV Palo Alto, Students Demand Action, and the Barron Park Association to offer information and demonstrations. Photo by Myrna Rochester.



Karen and Amol Saxena, plus John King, scoop out ice cream at one of the two Ice Cream Socials held in Bol Park this year. Photo by Myrna Rochester.



Alan Winston leads the Maypole Dance. Photo by Myrna Rochester.



Canopy hosted nature art projects at the May Fête. Photo by Jaya Pandey.



Musicians at the May Fête. Photo by Leon Rochester.



Cyclists prepare for the annual Bike Palo Alto community ride. Bike Palo Alto was started in 2009 by Barron Park's Green Team and its counterpart in College Terrace. Membership fees from the Barron Park Association have funded the event over the years.



Cedric de La Beaujardiere discusses his heat pump water heater and ground source heat pump with neighbors during the October 14 Peninsula Electric Home Tour. Cedric and Susan Stansbury's home was among four Barron Park homes open to the public during the tour. Photo by Susan Stansbury.



Mike Holland and Jenny Kiratli with the donkeys lead the Bray Parade on October 29. Photo by Winter Dellenbach.



Families turned out for a screening of "The Secret Life of Pets" on October 8 in Bol Park. Photo by Myrna Rochester.



Maria Martinez, Catalina Toribio, and Jon Rodriguez arrange presents for the children at the Buena Vista Community Posada. The Buena Vista Residents' Association and Buena Vista Partners, with some funds from the BPA, support children's activities in the BV Community. Photo courtesy of the BV Community.



Buena Vista Community residents enjoy the food and other festivities. Photo courtesy of Buena Vista Community.

Barron Park Celebrates Diwali 2.0!

By Jaya Pandey



Paul Yang helps out as neighbors enjoy the amazing food shared at this year's Diwali Festival at Barron Park Elementary. Photos courtesy of Diwali volunteers.

Barron Park held its community Diwali celebration on Saturday, November 4, 2023, with a crowd – and it was a big one! – of Barron Park residents, along with friends from the wider community. We hosted Diwali in Barron Park for the first time in 2015, and since then – except for a break during the pandemic – neighbors and friends look forward to coming together to celebrate the Fall Festival of Light and enjoy the locally grown festivities. As in earlier years, Diwali attendees were from many age groups and ethnicities, which always makes the event very special.

Many volunteers came together to offer their help in setting up the event as well as contributing sweets, chai, and savories. Participants in beautiful, traditional garb danced the circle dances alongside neighbors in street dress. Warm thanks to Jaron, our “live” DJ; Hiren Shah, our skilled dance leader; and our essential volunteers, Poonam Agarwal, Sati Banerjee, Disha Chopra, Prasanthi Govindarajan, and Anima Mathur.

Members of the BPA Board – Gwen Luce, Myrna Rochester, and Paul Yang



Neighbor and Councilmember Julie Lythcott-Haims joins other neighbors in a Garba dance, led by Hirem Shah.

– offered their help wherever needed. BPA President John King, Palo Alto Mayor Lydia Kou, and City Council member Julie Lythcott-Haims gave warm words of welcome. The event was also graced by the presence of some key

organizations with volunteers providing essential information. They included the Barron Park Association, Bay Area Cancer Connections, Allcove (mental health services for youth), and 350SV Palo Alto Climate Action. It was a great opportunity for the community to connect with these service groups and learn about their work.

The Diwali celebration was made possible due to the generous financial support of the Barron Park Association and the City of Palo Alto. If you were not able to attend Barron Park Diwali in 2023, please promise to join us this Fall 2024 with your friends and family!



The Diwali organizing committee L. to r.: Anima Mathur, Rakhi Singh, Jaya Pandey, and Meenakshi Ranjan are ready to greet the guests!



Jena Rauti has her hand decorated with henna by Naheed, while Disha Chopra looks on.

Around Town: Tips for Navigating City Services

By Lisa Berkowitz Landers



City Hall. Photo by City of Palo Alto.

information and to sign up, visit: cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/Fire/Palo-Alto-FireMed or phone 650-838-2808.

How to View Palo Alto City Council Meetings

Are you curious about how Palo Alto's local government works? Learn about your City government and get involved by viewing Palo Alto City Council meetings, usually held on Mondays beginning at 5:30 p.m. Our

seven Council members discuss and vote on issues such as railroad crossing design, street closures, land use and zoning, protected tree removal, and much more. You can access meeting agendas in advance at:

cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/City-Clerk/Citys-Meeting-Agendas

Meetings provide time for public comments in person or by Zoom. Comments from residents can also be sent to the Council before scheduled meetings by email or regular mail. To send a public comment or letter, visit: cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/City-Clerk/City-Council/Public-Letters-to-City-Council

It's easy to view Council sessions online, on local television, recorded, or in person:

- youtube.com/c/cityofpaloalto
- midpenmedia.org/local-tv/watch-now/
- midpenmedia.org/category/government/city-of-palo-alto/
- Attend in person at City Hall, 250 Hamilton Ave., Palo Alto.

PaloAlto311

PaloAlto311 provides an easy way to report items or situations in Palo Alto that need maintenance. You can report items such as: graffiti, debris on the road, broken street lights, clogged storm drains, building code issues, fallen tree limbs, public right of way obstruction, or vehicle parking code enforce-

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION

WINTER 2023-24 NEWSLETTER

Barron Park Association

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Palo Alto, California 94306

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Prodigy Press

Did you know that the City of Palo Alto offers many opportunities for residents to receive local news and learn about City agencies? A great way to receive this information is by subscribing to Palo Alto's weekly newsletter, "Uplift Local," or joining specialized email lists on housing, business, sustainability, transportation, utilities, Palo Alto Fiber, and more! Information and sign-ups are at:

- cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/City-Manager/Latest-News
- cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/City-Manager/Latest-News/Sign-Up-for-City-Newsletters

Here are a few important Palo Alto services:

Palo Alto FireMed

The Palo Alto FireMed program began in 2022 to ensure that residents of Palo Alto have access to outstanding ambulance service at minimal cost. FireMed also helps fund operations of the Palo Alto Fire Department, the only fire agency in Santa Clara County to provide ambulance services.

A FireMed subscription provides all household members with ambulance transport from within Palo Alto to a regional hospital without additional fees or copayments. A subscription can be added to your City of Palo Alto Utilities bill for \$8 per month. Business plans are also available. For more

ment.

Palo Alto311 offers an app for iPhone and Android users. Issues can also be reported online.

For more information: cityofpaloalto.org/Residents/Services/Report-an-Issue

Note that **PaloAlto311** is for non-emergencies only. For Emergencies, always phone **911**.

The Journey: A Californian and a Refugee Foster Child

By Kellie Stafford

Call it a momentary lapse of sanity or the sanest thing I've ever done, but when the news broadcasted a bomb going off at the Kabul International Airport in 2021, when we pulled our troops out of Afghanistan, I started to think about how I could help. All those beautiful families scrambling for their lives, in pure terror of what just happened. And then the kids who were now parentless, in tears, on TV. Then, there were the Afghans trying to climb the fences, so desperate to get on a plane to anywhere. And of course, who can forget the baby who was handed to our military troops for safety (what an image that was).

Now I don't make a lot of money, I'm not "blessed" with a trust fund, I don't own a home in Palo Alto. I'm a single, working woman. I have a simple job. In fact, I work two plus jobs, and somehow also make time to sit on the BPA Board and to manage a current political campaign. That said, I lived in Austin, Texas, for 14 years. During some of that time, I used to investigate child abuse. I know firsthand what a HUGE need there is for foster parents. I have a clean background, nice house, great parents, friends, and family, so I thought I could step up to the plate and go through the process to foster a kiddo. (Please know, I've never been married, have no kids, and to be totally truthful, never wanted them, but that never stopped me from wanting to help them.)

I don't know where I saw an advertisement recruiting for foster parents for refugee children. It may have been in the news, at a church, or on social media. Anyway, I signed up. Now here I am, five months into fostering a teenage Afghan boy. Let me tell you: I'm proud of myself for stepping up to the plate, I'm frustrated with myself for not being able to juggle all things, and, like most of you parents out there, I'm tired and wonder what I got myself into. BUT then I look this sweet boy in the eyes every day and see the sadness he feels and am so, so glad he's safe, in my home.

It would probably take me about 10 more

pages to go through the ins and outs of fostering and, thankfully, I can write more for the next newsletter. However, I want to give you a glimpse of why I chose to work with Catholic Charities.

Catholic Charities operates a unique Refugee Foster Care Program. As a federally funded licensed foster family agency, its exclusive focus is on serving unaccompanied refugee youth. These resilient children undergo a thorough screening process, gaining refugee status that qualifies them for entry into the program. Once in, they receive dedicated support from trained staff and professionals.

The program primarily serves adolescent youth from refugee camps abroad, urban settings, and shelters at the US/Mexico border. What sets this program apart is the robust support system the agency has built. Their commitment to assisting both the youth and foster families throughout the entire fostering journey really shines through. The program goes beyond just providing homes: it's about creating a supportive community for these exceptional youth and guiding them through this difficult transition. They say, "it takes a village," and let me tell you, Catholic Charities has created just that. At times, to be honest, to a person who has never been a parent, it is a bit overwhelming, but at the end of the day, I had a small part in protecting a child.

My personal journey fostering an Afghan youth will continue in the Spring newsletter, but until then . . . For more information about the Refugee Foster Care Program, see the URL and the QR code on this page. Please feel free to reach out to me as well, if you have any questions. I don't have all the answers, but I'm happy to offer up what I do know. And besides, wouldn't fostering a kiddo be such a great way to start 2024?!

Happy New Year! Stay safe, stay kind.

Kellie

KellieinBarronPark@gmail.com

Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County
ccsc.org/refugee-foster-care?locale=en



View BPA Newsletters in Full Color!

You can read this issue in full color and with live Web links at

bpapaloalto.org/bpa-newsletter/

While you're there, check out our Archive of past Newsletters. Your small screen is an easy way to review past activities in the 'hood and catch up on issues you may have missed.

Thanks! The Editors

Barron Park Association Newsletter, Spring Deadline:

Friday, March 1, 2024

Please submit articles (in Word if possible) for the Spring 2024 issue of the BPA Newsletter, with photos/images separate from text, by **Friday, March 1, 2024**, to Myrna Rochester at: mbrbpa@sonic.net

Make sure your BPA membership is current at: barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com. Please contact us in advance with your ideas (mbrbpa@sonic.net).

Announcements for neighborhood and school activities should be for events scheduled **after April 15, 2024**. The Spring issue will be available in early April 2024, online to requesting members and print copies by U.S. mail.

Bols Part 5 – Continued from page 5

the railroad tracks and asking the Bols for help. She and Cornelis didn't say no: They tried to find odd jobs for them in exchange for food and modest pay. Several became temporary workers on the farm; another baby-sat for the Bols' sons.

Cornelis Died in 1965

Cornelis Bol died in late July 1965, at the age of 80, in his home on Roble Ridge, after living 29 years next to "the donkey pasture" that became Cornelis Bol Park. His passing was commemorated by a 12-paragraph obituary in the New York Times, making him one of the few Barron Park residents ever so honored. (See obituary insert on right.)

Cornelis Never Saw His Legacy to the Neighborhood

Cornelis never saw the developed park, which opened in 1974, but there is no doubt that he would have heartily approved of what his widow and the neighborhood accomplished: to save the family's favorite place and to honor his life.

Josina was the quiet one (of the Bol couple) and was usually in the background as the mother and the caretaker of the farm, the boys, the donkeys, and the water company while Cornelis was at work at Stanford. In the end, from the neighborhood standpoint, she was the key partner, because it was her initiative as his widow and heir that made the donkey pasture available to the neighborhood at a far-below-market price to become Bol Park.

But Josina Made Sure That Cornelis's Legacy Was Realized

No one would have criticized Josina if, after Cornelis's death, she had not pursued his dream of turning the donkey pasture into a park. But she shared his intentions and was determined to go ahead with it. She was not a woman to give up when the job fell into her lap.

Soon after Cornelis's death in 1965, Josina heard that there were people in the Barron Park community who would work to create the park, and they began sounding her out. As executor of the estate, she was willing to consider a sale of the land to the community at a discounted below-market price.

However, the Barron Park Association was busy dealing with other problems: the alarm-

(New York Times Obituary. A true copy, made by hand because the website printed version was too small to scan.)

New York Times

August 1, 1965 (page 78)

Cornelis Bol, 80

Inventor of Lamp

Perfected Mercury Vapor

Lamp While at Stanford

Palo Alto, Calif., July 21

(AP) Cornelis Bol, inventor of the mercury vapor lamp, died at his home here yesterday at the age of 80.

Dr. Bol, a former research associate at Stanford University, perfected the lamp – one of the most powerful light sources in existence – in 1939.

He is survived by his widow, Josina, and six sons.

Early "Miniaturizer"

His rumpled tweed suits and unruly white hair made Dr. Bol seem the typical absent-minded scientist in the late nineteen-thirties, when his most productive work was done.

Oblivious to his laboratory surroundings, he would peer through a thick magnifying lens at the tiny lamps – small and fragile-looking as lilies of the valley – that his research had created.

Dr. Bol was one of the first of the "miniaturizers" – the technologists who made complex instruments more powerful and cheaper while making them smaller.

For three years Dr. Bol labored to decrease the size of the mercury vapor lamp while making it brighter. By early 1939 he had perfected a "midget sun" three inches long and slender as a kitchen match.

Cooled by water sealed in a glass jacket, the lamp could cast a spotlight beam that could light up the details of an automobile grill 500 feet away.

Dr. Bol's lamps glowed because mercury vapor gives off light when an electric current is passed through it. He vastly increased the mercury content of his lamps – and hence their brilliance – by packing them with vapor under pressures up to 200,000 pounds per square inch.

Dr. Bol's researches were already so far advanced in 1937 that his lamps were brighter than the rays of the sun striking the earth.

By 1938 it was said that a man could hold in one hand enough of Dr. Bol's lamps to illuminate all the airports in the United States. Two of his lamps were installed at Amsterdam airport, in his native Holland, in that year.

Dr. Bol began work on his lamps at Eindhoven, Holland. In 1936 he transferred his research to Stanford.

(End of true copy)

ing trend of R-1 properties near El Camino Real being replaced by garden-apartment complexes; the state and county governments pressuring Barron Park to annex to Palo Alto; and small, neighborhood-oriented businesses on El Camino being replaced by unsuitable concerns such as adult book stores, massage parlors, noisy bars with potentially violent customers, and regional services such as muffler shops. The BPA was lobbying both the city and the county to support neighborhood-oriented zoning and enforcement.

In this context, the BPA was delighted to take on a positive task such as park creation. A robust park committee was formed with Sam Elster as Chair, that included then BPA President Dick Placone and landscape architect

Ken Arutunian (who was working on a draft concept of the park). They were in close contact with the County Board of Supervisors to establish a special district to supervise purchase of the land, the design of the park, and the awarding of construction and maintenance contracts.

But the key person in this effort was Josina Bol. Without her willingness to sell at a significantly discounted price, the park would never have come to be. (See "How the Neighborhood Created Bol Park," Spring 2016.)

Living Next Door to Bol Park

When it had been next door to her for three years, the topic of "hoboes" led the oral history interviewer to ask Josina how she felt

about the park. (The park opened in 1974; Josina’s interview took place in 1977.) This was highly relevant at the time: Many Barron Parkers had worried that the park might become a nuisance and a crime hazard.

But when asked, Josina said, “Oh, I feel it is wonderful.” She was then asked if noise or anything troubled her. She said, “Well, it doesn’t bother me. That kind of noise does not bother me. I love to have it [the park] now, and it is wonderful that how they did all the work for that . . . the Barron Park Association, and especially the ones that were running it. They [did] a lot of work.” The interviewer continued to probe: “So, if you can’t have your donkey field out there, the park is a good alternative . . .” Josina’s answer: “Oh . . . Oh, yes. It is really wonderful. I know that my husband would have done what I did, too. Taxes were getting high, and we hated to sell it for development. . . . Some people say ‘Well, you could have made so much money.’ Except, that was not a problem. The problem was to get it to keep the open space, so we would still have the country feeling here instead of houses. We didn’t want houses.” The interviewer: “It’s like when you bought it in the beginning, isn’t it?” Josina: “That is right.” (End of interview).

Preserving the Donkey Tradition

In the minds of many Barron Parkers and Palo Altans, preserving the tradition of the Barron Park donkeys was nearly as important as preserving the park for the people’s enjoyment. Josina’s role was even more critical in this effort. Nurturing the donkeys in the beginning, encouraging Cornelis to allow neighborhood children to interact with them, selling foals to Barron Park families, saving Mickey from being moved away when the park and bike path were built, establishing the infrastructure (especially piped water) that serves the current donkey pasture, protecting Mickey once more when the bike path was torn up for the underground flood control channel – Josina’s insistence on preserving the donkeys and their pasture encouraged everyone else to pitch in and help. The donkeys would not be in Barron Park today without her efforts.

Josina’s Obituary

Josina Bol died at the age of 94 on February 16, 1996, 31 years after Cornelis’s death. She was survived by four of her six sons, along with 23 grandchildren and 24 great-grandchildren.

The San Jose Mercury reporter wrote: “It was

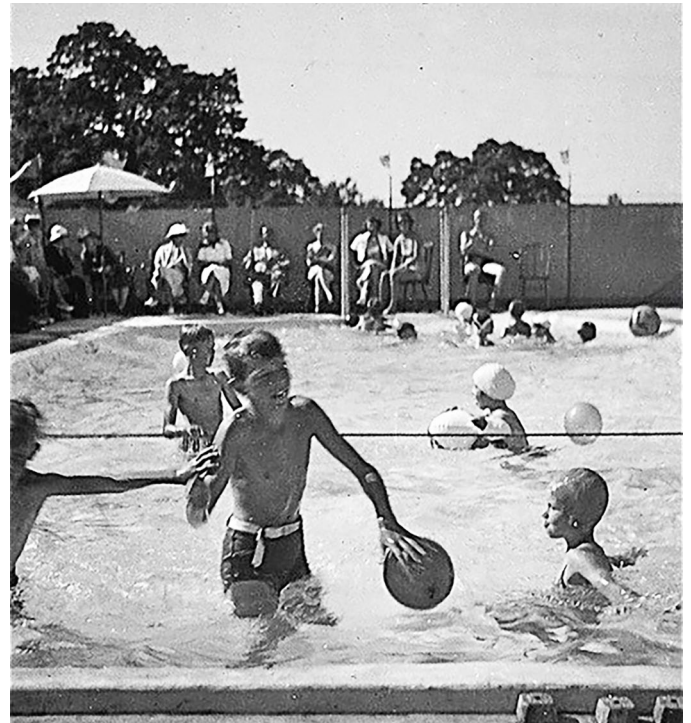
love at first sight back in 1936 when Josina Bol first spotted the Barron Park home she occupied for almost six decades. She and her husband Cornelis were amid a whirlwind tour of the United States looking for a place to call home. They stopped in Palo Alto to visit friends – and never, ever left.” (Careful readers will see major errors of fact in the previous two sentences.) “This was the first place she saw that really turned her on. She really loved the place,” said her son, Morris.

The Mercury’s obituary concluded with more words by family members: Dana Marie Bol remembers her grandmother as a stable, loving force, who encouraged all her grandchildren to be creative. She was also a “stellar baker,” whose angel food cake, filled with cream and black raspberry jam, always brought smiles to kids’ faces. Her son Morris said, “Most of all, Mrs. Bol treasured her family . . . it was the focus of her life.”

Josina’s story is told in more detail in Part One (Spring 2023) and especially Part Four (Fall 2023) of this article.

The Visible Heritage of the Bols

Although the Bols are gone, signs of their life here can still be seen around the neighborhood. Of course, the most obvious: Cornelis Bol Park on the site of the original donkey pasture. From the pathway you can see the Bol “cottage,” where Cornelis and Josina lived out their lives, and where their sons grew to maturity. Cornelis’s studio on the creek, where he painted, still remains. The Bol farm is memorialized in several other ways: The old, broken-down wood fences and remnants of the cattle-loading chute on the railroad line date back to the Barron Estate days and were still in fair condition when they were part of the Bol farm. The “Bol barn” is gone, burnt to the ground in an accidental fire on February 22, 1974. However, the farm lives on in various pieces of farm machinery, preserved by James Witt and located on his property along



G. Neighborhood pool party at the Bols’ swimming pool, 1940s or ‘50s. Bol family photo.

with the cottage and studio.

One piece of machinery has been left in the park proper: the old hay rake, a photo of which inspired the drawing that became the logo of the Barron Park Association. You can still see the hay rake, sometimes partly obscured by brush. The final tangible heritage is the “mini-park” on Matadero Avenue (near El Camino) at the Matadero Well Site. In the day, the well, owned and run by the Bol family, was the main source of water for the Barron Park Water Company.

Corrections of Factual Information in Part One (Spring 2023)

Some of my previous articles contain errors I can now correct with information from Cornelis’s recently discovered autobiography. They include errors in Part One of this article (Spring 2023). References to those errors are given below with the page (P), column (C), and “section” (paragraph with a heading) (S). Here are corrections to the errors that I found.

- P9, C1, S2 – Cornelis Bol was a research physicist at Stanford, not a chemist.
- P9, C2, S1 – Corrected birthdates are: Kees, 16 June 1925; Klass, 22 March 1927; Pieter Johannes, 2 May 1928; Joor, 22 November 1930; Morris, 24 June 1936; Gerald, 2 April 1940. All were born in Eindhoven, Holland, except Gerald, who was

born in Palo Alto.

- P9, C2, S2 – The heading “Cornelis Was a Student at Princeton” is misleading because it focuses on only one segment of a decade-long experience. When this was written, I knew nothing about Cornelis’s ten years in America (1906-16), because I was depending entirely on Josina’s oral history and other conversations. I presume she did not know much about that period in Cornelis’s life – or at least was not interested in talking about it.
- P9, C2, S2 – The fourth sentence concludes that Bol “visited” in Montana. He actually went there for his health, but almost immediately agreed to manage the orchard for Professor Croll’s brother. He did that for a year, then attended the University of Montana in Missoula where he completed his Bachelor of Science degree in Physics.
- P9, C2, S3 – This paragraph is true, but out of place in the overall story. This refers to the offer of lab space and a position as a Research Associate which was made in 1936. The 1914 offer was admission to the Stanford Ph.D. program and an assistantship in the Physics Department.
- P9, C3, S1 – The second paragraph begins: “On an earlier visit to Stanford . . .” As we now know, it should have said, “When he lived there as a graduate student in 1914-16 . . .”
- P9, C3, S1&2 – These paragraphs contain reference to “Mrs. Gough,” in four places. Either Josina or her interviewer got confused at this point – the references should have been to “Mrs. Carruth.” Cornelis’s autobiography makes this clear, and it makes more sense.
- P9, C3, S2 – The final sentence in this section reads “Everything about the sale was arranged in Holland . . .” This is false: The autobiography says that most of the sale arrangements were made on the spot in Palo Alto, with some follow-up details settled while they were back in Holland.
- P9, C3, S3 – There is a better description of the Bols’ immigration in Part Four, taken from the autobiography.
- P10, C1, S2 – “A Man of Many Facets” The first sentence is the most embarrassing mistake I made: It is partly false. Cornelis did earn a Ph.D. degree and thus ought

to have been addressed as “Dr. Bol.” I will be using the title in all future writings. My apologies to his spirit!

- P12, C1, S3 – The prediction that the story would be concluded in the Summer 2023 issue was overtaken by the discovery of the autobiography.

Conclusion

This concludes the story of the Bols. If you are not familiar with Bol Park, why not take the self-guided historical tour, using my pamphlet “Barron Park Centennial History Walk #2 – Bol Park – Neal Station to the Donkey Pasture.” It is an easy walk of approximately three-quarters of a mile, almost entirely on paved or fine-crushed stone paths. There are 13 stops with detailed history, covering many aspects of the Bol donkey pasture and farm, with a stop at the current pasture to meet the locally famous Barron Park donkeys, including our newest resident, a miniature white donkey named April. I can provide a copy of the pamphlet upon request.

To Reach the Historian

If you have questions, comments, or corrections to the story, or wish to obtain a copy of the self-guided pamphlet, please contact me at dgrahampaca@gmail.com, landline: 650-493-0689; street address: 984 Ilima Way, Palo Alto CA 94306. I am not reachable by texting.

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 Spring, Summer, or Fall edition of the BPA Newsletter. You may also 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.

At another level, **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

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

WINTER 2023-24

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- Business Liaison:* Paul Yang
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- Barron Park History:* Douglas L. Graham
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- Traffic & Streets:* Doug Burns
- Webmaster:* Maurice Green
- Welcoming:* Gwen Luce
- Zoning & Land Use:* Vacant
- P.A. Neighborhood (PAN) Liaison:* Doug Burns

BPA Board Meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of most months at 7:15 p.m. Neighbors are welcome.

For schedule and location write to: johnwadeking@gmail.com

bpapaloalto.org

Please Support the Barron Park Donkeys!

By Jenny Kiratli, BP Donkey Project



April, Perry, and Niner reflect on 2023 as they enjoy some sunshine in the pasture. Photo by Jenny Kiratli.

2023 was a busy but expensive year for our little herd!! April joined us in March and has been a wonderful addition, but her medical care has been costly (approximately \$9K). We also had unplanned-for medical bills for Perry's

emergency stay at UC Davis veterinary hospital from which he recovered completely, and he is going strong into 2024 - Thanks to support from our wonderful donors!!

Perry, Buddy, and April were active in the community throughout the year participat-

ing in BPA events including the Ice Cream Social and the Halloween Bray Parade. And they continue to be available every Sunday for "Meet & Greet" at Bol Park (10-11 a.m.) as well as Dinner at the Gate (4 p.m.). Be sure to visit us!!

The Barron Park Donkey Project also partnered with local Girl Scouts for a Day of Service in November and contributed to several Boy Scouts Eagle Scout projects.

We still have Donkey Tote Bags available and Donkey Compost all year round. Donkey Mugs coming soon!! Send us an email at barronparkdonkeys@gmail.com

The donkeys' food, veterinary care, and all other expenses are completely paid for by your tax-deductible donations:

barronparkdonkeys.org/

Please consider corporate matching if available through your company.

Questions? Contact us at: barronparkdonkeys@gmail.com

Thank you so much for your generous support; we are so lucky to be part of this community!!!

BPA EMAILS AND WEB LINKS WINTER 2022-23

- **BPA Website:** bpapaloalto.org/
- **BPA Newsletter Archive:** bpapaloalto.org/bpa-newsletter/
- **BPA Membership (Join/Renew):** bpapaloalto.org/join-the-barron-park-association/
- **Membership Questions:** Lisa Berkowitz Landers at: barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com
- **BPA Email Lists:** Join at: bpapaloalto.org/bpa-email-lists/ or write to: listmanager@bpapaloalto.org
- **BPA President:** John W. King at: johnwadeking@gmail.com
- **BPA Treasurer:** John W. King at: johnwadeking@gmail.com
- **BPA Newsletter Editor:** Myrna Rochester at: mrbpa@sonic.net
- **BPA Business Liaison:** Paul Yang at: pabloyang@yahoo.com
- **Support for Buena Vista Neighbors:** Karen Ratzlaff at: karen.ratzlaff@hotmail.com
Buena Vista Partners (non-profit) at: buenavistapartners.org
- **Welcoming Committee Chair:** Gwen Luce at: gluce@cbnocal.com
- **Emergency Services Volunteer Program:** Maurice Green at: mauryg3@comcast.net
- **Barron Park Historian:** Douglas L. Graham at: dgrahampaca@gmail.com
- **Social Events/Safety Corner:** Kellie Stafford at: kellieinbarronpark@gmail.com
- **Senior Connections:** Pooja Punn at: barronparkseniorconnections@gmail.com
- **BPA Webmaster:** Maurice Green at: bpawebman@bpapaloalto.org
- **Barron Park Donkeys:** To volunteer, donate, or purchase merchandise, go to: barronparkdonkeys.org or contact Jenny Kiratli at: barronparkdonkeys@gmail.com
- **Bol Park Native Habitat:** To volunteer, contact Rich Elder at: rich.e.elder@gmail.com Donate to the Bol Park Garden through the "Bol Park Fund" at: friendsofpaparks.org/donations2
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.

A Sobering Surprise: Local Home Value up Nearly 2,000%

By Douglas L. Graham, Barron Park Historian

Recent research by local historian Robert (Bo) Crane has located a real estate ad from 1943 (more than 80 years ago) offering a house on the north side of the 800 block of Los Robles Avenue for \$7,850 (equivalent to \$138,515 in 2023 dollars). Today, the valuation of this house is nearly \$2.7 million, that is, up 1,923%, or nearly 20 times greater. As Crane wrote, "That's not surprising to us Palo Alto homeowners, still, it is rather shocking."

According to the real estate site Redfin, the current house at this address has three bedrooms and two bathrooms, with 1,272 square feet (SF) of living space, on a 7,272 SF lot. Crane reported that the house "is currently off market – it last sold on July 15, 1994, for \$360,000. Based on Redfin's Palo

Alto data, we estimate the home's value on October 6, 2023, was \$2,663,658."

The 1943 ad, which ran in the Peninsula Times Tribune on October 1, 1943, described the house as being an "early California three-bedroom home located in the Palo Alto School District." I took a street-level look at the housefront on October 31, 2023, and it appeared to be a 1938 Craftsman-style home. I could see no major additions, but there may have been a bathroom added or other renovation(s) made since 1943 that might not show from the street.

Existing aerial photos of Barron Park from 1941, 1948, and 1955 show extensive development on the lot and its immediate

neighbors on both sides, but they are too blurry to show details of what was there before. In the late 1980s, I used County records as the source for the "year first built" database that covers all of Barron Park. The database reveals that four houses in a row were built in 1938 on the north side of the 800 block of Los Robles, including on this lot. They were part of the piecemeal development of the Oak Tract which was laid out in 1927, but not completely built out until 1967. The tract includes all the lots between Los Robles on the south and La Pera (today, La Para) on the north, from La Donna Avenue on the east to Laguna Avenue on the west. As its name suggests, it contained many large oak trees along the main original channel of Barron Creek.

BPA EMAIL LISTS



The Barron Park Association offers three Email Lists for **any** resident to post: *bpa-news*, *bpa-misc*, and *bpa-issues*. They are hosted on Google Groups.

To join a list, go to:

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 Seniors!

Family and Friends of BP Seniors!

Join together for scheduled events, lunches, and gatherings. Reach out socially and for mutual interests and assistance. Get details by joining the BP Senior Connections mailing list. Write to Pooja Punn at: barronparkseniorconnections@gmail.com



Photo by Myrna Rochester.

Buddy here, reminding you that we donkeys do our part to make Barron Park a fun place to live. As the most popular residents at Barron Park, we always show up for community events! Before you go, please consider a donation to the Barron Park donkeys. Perry and April had some big vet bills this year, so we could use a boost. Please donate at barronparkdonkeys.org/donate/

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