

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

John King, BPA President



Happy Spring, Barron Park! Another wet winter season, but at least fewer trees fell over! Just a few short power outages, but it does seem like our neighborhood came out relatively unscathed.

Recent highlights: We had a robust in-person BPA Annual Meeting on Sunday, March 10, 2024, with speakers Greer Stone, the Honorable Mayor of Palo Alto, and Garrett Sauls, from the Palo Alto Planning Department. There was a great deal of discussion about the Housing Element the City of Palo Alto will soon resubmit to the State and also the numerous new building proposals along El Camino Real – including at the Creekside Inn property, where our beloved Driftwood Market is located. There were excellent questions from the audience present and Mayor Stone and City Planner Sauls handled them expertly. Stay posted for more information as these issues progress.

A description and sample pages from the new BPA website, under construction, were also presented at the Meeting. With a few more tweaks, it should be launched soon. Among other tools and features, it will allow you to check your membership status yourself.

Coming up: the Annual May Fête Celebration in Bol Park, scheduled for Sunday, May 19, 2024, 12-3 p.m. Come and meet up with family, neighbors, and friends! Enjoy the festivities: the Maypole Dance, Musicians and

Dancers, Community information tables, Arts and crafts, and Food vendors that will include the enormously popular snow cone truck!

Plus, watch out for a weekend date in June for our first Bol Park Ice Cream Social of the year!

We are always looking for new Board members and volunteers for the Barron Park Association, so please consider a role in the BPA! It's extremely important and rewarding to be involved in your community.

Please renew your BPA membership for 2024, that is, if you haven't already! We need the support of as many residents as we can to continue to provide the community with the advocacy work, newsletters, and neighborhood events that everyone enjoys!

Please consult page 4 for the contact list of useful BPA Emails and Web Links.

If you have questions or to get more involved, contact me at johnwadeking@gmail.com

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.



May Fête artwork by Susan Breitbard.

**JOIN US FOR
MAY FÊTE 2024!
Sunday, May 19
12 to 3 pm Bol Park**

Come one, come all, Barron Parkers, families, and friends, to join in on our 45-year-old tradition – the May Fête! This year it's on Sunday, May 19, starting at noon. Enjoy live music and dancers performing all afternoon, with a community Maypole Dance at 2:30. Invite everyone! Make a picnic of it! Bring folding chairs and/or a blanket. There'll be food, soft drink and snack vendors, active games and crafts, interesting history and community tables, visits from our beloved Barron Park donkeys, and more!

The May Fête is a volunteer effort. Please join us for the fun prep and set-up! To help out or if you have a display or an activity to add to the mix, please contact John King at: johnwadeking@gmail.com. See you there!

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Smart Meters Coming to Barron Park! Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI)

By David Coale

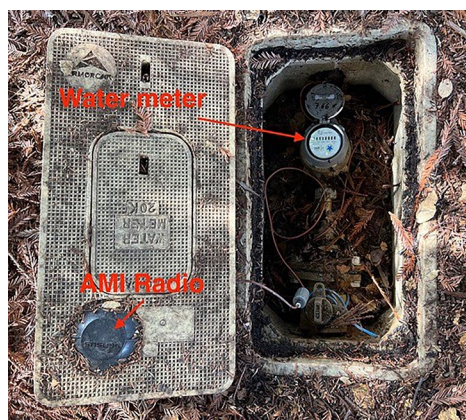
Here in Palo Alto, residences and businesses are getting new and updated meters for electricity, water, and gas. The new electric meters and the AMI radios added to existing water and gas meters will collect your usage information electronically and send it to the City.

The upgraded system has many advantages. It will provide us with closer to real-time usage data and better water leak detection, and will help pinpoint the location of electrical problems/outages. It will help the City avoid overload of the local distribution lines and help reduce the length of outages and the number of households affected. It will reduce the cost to the City in collecting this data, helping it to better manage the electrical grid. Note that this meter upgrade is separate from the Palo Alto grid upgrade, which starts later this year. However, it is part of the City's overall grid modernization to support electrification and our Sustainability and Climate Action Plan.

With the new Palo Alto utility meters and the online billing system (to come), you will be able to see your own hourly/daily usage information and better understand and make better choices about utility usage. You'll be able to look up your usage anytime, thereby avoiding surprises when your bill comes due.

How Does It Work?

A new electric meter will be installed in place of the old one (if it's not already there!). In addition, your current gas and water meters will be retrofitted with add-ons, AMI radios



Retrofit of water meter with AMI radio. All photos by David Coale.

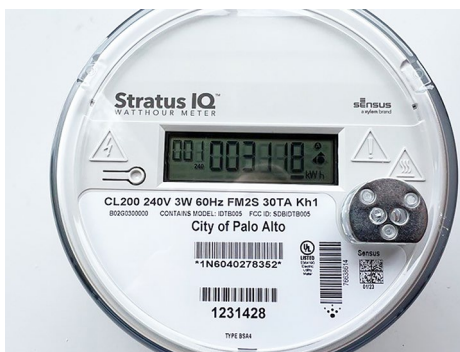
that send data back to the City. An outside Contractor, hired by the City, will do the work. You will be notified of the installation, and the Contractor will contact you with the date. You do not need to be at home. If you have questions about the installation of the meters and add-ons you may call the Contractor at (650) 331-2479, or consult the City website: cityofpaloalto.org/AMI

Your gas and water meters will look almost the same. You will see usage readings on the meters as you did before, but now both the gas and water meters will be equipped with a radio that sends information back to the City.



This unit includes a smart electric meter on the left; the main electric service panel is under the cover on the right.

The Smart Electric Meter



New smart electric meter installed in Palo Alto.

Your new smart electric meter is really four meters in one. As you watch it, it will cycle through four measurements, automatically and continuously.



Close up of display on new smart electric meter shows the number of total Kilowatt-hours of energy used by the customer.

The number in the upper left of the display refers to four different measurements provided by the meter.

001 (shown above) total Kilowatt-hours (kWh) in (i.e., used, bought) to date.

002: total kWh out (i.e., sold to the City from rooftop solar). (This reading will be zero if you don't have rooftop solar.)

003: Current flowing (in Amps, A)

004: Voltage at the meter (in Volts, V)

At the end of each cycle of the four measurements, the meter displays "all 8s" (eights); this indicates the display is working.

Fun Facts:

- The large six-digit display shows the meter readings (001 – 004 above).
- The lower right display names the Units: kWh (Kilowatt-hours bought or sold [with solar]); A (Current in Amps); or V (Volts at the meter).
- Note the "marching" bar below the main display: When the bar is moving to the right, you are buying electricity; when the bar is moving to the left, you are selling electricity to the City.
- The speed of the bar indicates the current (i.e., the rate at which you are buying or selling electricity).
- The small, left- and right-pointing triangles above the Units display also indicate the direction of current: Buying electricity = right arrow; Selling electricity (with solar) = left arrow. (In this image, ignore the arrow pointing up.)

Continued on bottom of page 3

Our Future Flies on the Wings of Pollinators! (U.S. Forest Service)

By Linda Elder

Do you dream of a garden alive with all kinds of birds, bees, and butterflies happily flitting around?

Attracting pollinators involves incorporating plants that serve their needs at all life stages. Insects need places to lay eggs, food plants for their larvae, and nectar sources for adults, as well as places to hide and reproduce. Pollinators are themselves important food sources for other wildlife – birds, lizards, mammals. Baby birds eat protein and fat-rich eggs, larvae, or adult forms of pollinators. Thus, pollinators play a critical role in the food supply for wildlife and people too!

Insects are not the enemy in your garden. In fact, they are the foundation of the ecosystem. By planting native plants, you will attract populations of insects such as ladybugs, hoverflies, and wasps that eat harmful plant pests and keep balance in the garden.

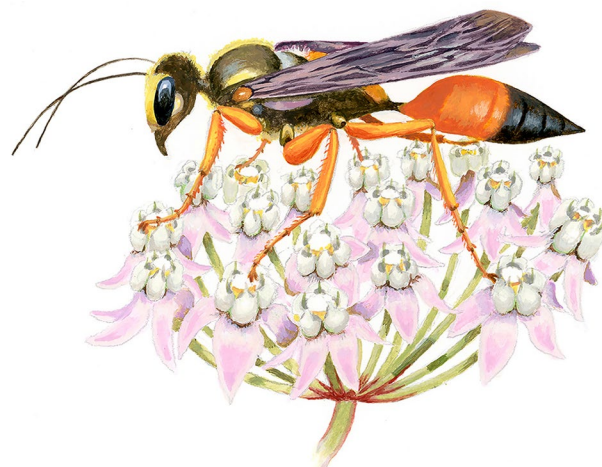
Pollinator populations have been declining in recent years. If this trend continues, it could be existential. Our private residential properties make up approximately one-third of the urban landscape, and studies show that the impact of wildlife gardening is substantial. Use the following concepts in your garden to attract and support a variety of pollinators, and please your eye too!

- **Use colors.** Different colored flowers

attract different kinds of pollinators. Plan your garden to include a wide variety of flowering plants that bloom at different times of year, all year round.

- **Go native.** Choose plants that are native to our region. They are adapted to local pollinators. Some pollinators are specialists, so offer at least one larval host plant, such as Narrow Leaf Milkweed (*Asclepias fascicularis*) for Monarch butterflies or Pearly Everlasting (*Anaphalis margaritacea*) for American Lady butterflies.
- **Create a big target.** Arrange pollinator-attracting plants in clumps, rather than single plants spaced out. You will get larger color and textural impact, and eye-catching patterns throughout the garden bed or landscape.
- **Eliminate chemicals.** Pesticides kill both good and bad bugs and disrupt the predator-prey cycle. Going chemical-free protects pollinators and yourself.

If you can dream it, you can do it. Life depends on it.



A great golden digger wasp, a solitary wasp, feeding on milkweed nectar. It looks fierce but is not aggressive. To feed its young, it also hunts insects that we consider garden pests. Look for and study the new pollinator information sign in the Bol Park Native Garden! Artwork by John Richards.

For further information, explore the website of the California Native Plant Society, which offers lectures, guided walks, garden tours, workshops, and articles such as this one:

cnps.org/gardening/bee-friendly-gardening-2892

The CNPS Growing Natives Garden Tour, Santa Clara Valley Chapter, takes place this year on Saturday and Sunday, April 13 and 14: ngt.org/GNGT/HomeRO.php

Meters -- continued from page 2

- To get your instantaneous kilowatt power usage, you will need to multiply the Amps (A, 003) by the Voltage (V, 004) readings; then divide by 1000 to get Kilowatts (kW).

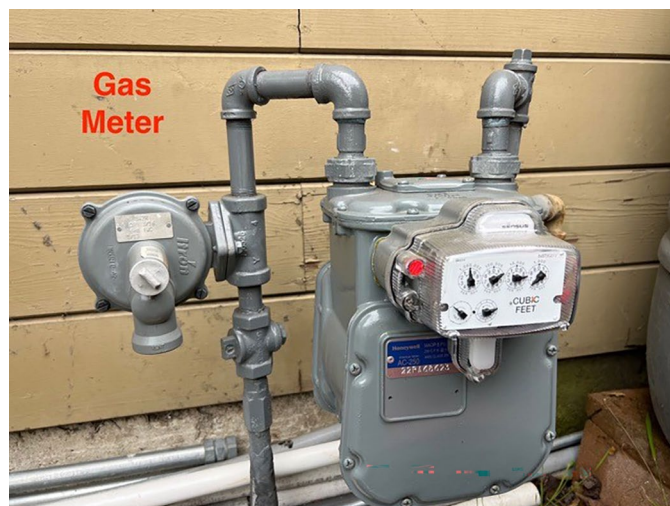
How Long Will It Take?

The AMI meter replacement program started in fall 2023 and should be completed by the end of 2024. Replacements and retrofits are taking place neighborhood by neighborhood, with Barron Park replacements/retrofits happening now. While the electric meter replacement can be done in a few minutes, some of the older water meters may take longer to retrofit and need an additional visit by the installing contractor. The updated, near

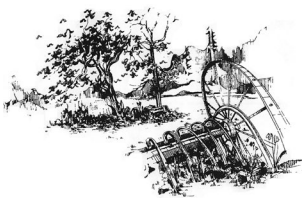
real-time billing and information system will likely be ready in the same or similar timeframe as the new meter completion date.

More Information

The City has a very good FAQ on this project which includes how the system works, additional benefits, accuracy, security, safety info, and more, at this website: cityofpaloalto.org/AMI



Retrofit of gas meter with AMI radio.



2024 Barron Park Association Membership

bpapaloalto.org

2024 Membership Renewals started 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>)	Phone:
<input type="checkbox"/> Email lists: I'd like to join the BPA Email lists.	

Fellow \$100

Member \$30

Business \$50

Patron \$50

Senior \$15

Additional Contribution: \$ _____ If sending a personal check, please pay to: Barron Park Association.

Total Contribution: \$ _____

BPA EMAILS AND WEB LINKS

SPRING 2024

- **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: mbrbpa@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@cbnorcal.com
- **Emergency Services Volunteer Program:** Maurice Green at: mauryg3@comcast.net
- **Barron Park Historian:** Douglas L. Graham at: dgrahampaca@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.

Around Town: Palo Alto Without a Car?

By Lisa Berkowitz Landers



Friendly Palo Alto Link driver. Photo by Sky Runser.

Palo Alto Link and Bike Love transportation programs are both in their second year of service in Palo Alto. Palo Alto Link is a rideshare service that can be used by anyone to travel within Palo Alto. The program is popular: Link's green and white electric vehicles can be seen throughout the City. Bike Love offers financial incentives for employees to use bicycles, scooters, or skateboards for work commutes to specific business districts in Palo Alto or to Caltrain stations.

Palo Alto Link

Palo Alto Link is the City's rideshare service for travel within Palo Alto. Link serves most of Palo Alto (except for Stanford Campus and north of the Bayshore [101] Freeway [= the Baylands] and south of the 280 Freeway [= Pearson-Arastradero Preserve, Foothills Nature Preserve]). Service is offered to Stanford Hospital, the Stanford Shopping Center, and the Stanford Research Park. You can book rides using your smart phone or call (650) 505-5772 to book.

Based on your destination, you are given nearby pickup and drop-off locations. Palo Alto Link attempts to assign additional riders to your trip for efficiency and sustainability. Not all rides are shared.

Hours are 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

- Regular one-way fare rides: \$3.50. Discounted youth, senior, low-income, and

disabled fare rides: \$1.00

- Wheelchair-accessible vehicles are available, as are closer curb-side drop-offs
- Free rides for teens, 13-18 years old, to specific Palo Alto locations (teen wellness centers, Teen Center, parks, and libraries). Learn more at [Palo Alto Link Teen Service](#)
- Free rides to/from the Stanford Research Park
- Additional passengers traveling with you pay

50% of the fare, \$1.75 or \$0.50, depending on eligibility)

- Fares are billed to the credit card on file or paid in (exact) cash. Weekly or monthly multiple-ride Link Passes are available

For more information:

- city.ridewithvia.com/palo-alto-link
- cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/Transportation/Palo-Alto-Link
- cityofpaloalto.org/Residents/Getting-Around
- cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/Community-Services/Teen-Services/Palo-Alto-Link-Teen-Service

PALO ALTO TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (PATMA)

Bike Love

Do you commute to work in Downtown Palo Alto or the California Avenue District, or drive to a Caltrain station? Bike Love is PATMA's commuter program that promotes bike/scooter/skateboard use in those business districts. Participants who use a bike/scooter/skateboard receive \$5 per day (up to \$600 a year). These incentive dollars may be redeemed at local merchants. An app confirms eligible trips to Downtown Palo Alto, the California Avenue District, or to Caltrain stations.

For more information:

- himotion.co/bike-love-guide
- paloaltotma.org/bikelove

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER SPRING 2024

Barron Park Association

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BPA EMAIL LISTS

The Barron Park Association offers three Email Lists for any resident to post: (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. 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.

The Wild Turkey

By Jeralyn Moran



Young male California Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*). Source: iStock Photo.

I was surprised and delighted to view three young male Turkeys appear outside my bedroom window in the past few days, coming up from the Matadero Creek corridor near the back of Barron Park Elementary School. Large and active, they made their way through the backyard to Josina Avenue, then later were seen traveling along Paradise Way.

Turkeys existed 11 million years ago on this continent. They were here 15,000 to 13,000 years ago when the first Native Americans arrived from further north. Fossilized remains in the Los Angeles La Brea Tar Pits show that the California (or Californian) Turkey (*Meleagris californica*) was common at that time. This story is a brief look at our local, present-day Turkeys (which are likely *Meleagris gallopavo*). Not counting Alaska, there are five recognized Turkey species in the U.S.

Early Native Americans hunted the Wild Turkey, causing the overall population to shrink. As the population of European settlers increased, Wild Turkey populations were further severely impacted. Settlers cleared forests to create farmland and harvest lumber, all the while hunting these large birds absent any thought of sustainability. The supply seemed endless – until it wasn't. Turkeys were being hunted to the brink of extinction by short-sighted humans. Less and less habitat remained for foraging and nesting. In the 1930s, only two percent of the original population remained. Wild Turkeys were

going extinct.

However, beginning in the mid-twentieth century, repopulation efforts by U.S. wildlife agencies have restored habitat and reintroduced Turkeys to depopulated areas, in part to provide hunting stock. Today, some regulated hunting is allowed in California. This is one of the reasons we now see Turkeys in our yards.

California Turkeys have excellent hearing and vision, which helps them stay out of harm's way. They can also see in color, and their eyesight covers 270 degrees! In a more urban environment, there are only a few predators that can overtake them. In fact, with a variety of outcomes, Turkeys have adapted to U.S. city and suburban environments . . . and particularly favor college campuses. Turkeys roost in trees at night. In the city, at night they seek out roofs and decks.

Our Wild Turkeys are an introduced species. Their effects on the native plant and animal ecosystem are not yet well understood. Please do not feed them. If you want them to visit you, do establish California native plants in your yard. The plants will bring with them pollinator insects, which are also an important source of protein, beneficial to Turkeys as well as to local songbirds and hummingbirds.

Many people who are cutting out red meat are turning to turkey: In 2020, U.S. commercial turkey consumption was nearly 16 pounds per capita. But these beautiful animals, even commercially grown, are highly intelligent, have distinct and playful personalities, and should not endure lives of suffering in the cruel factory farming industry. By choosing to eat less meat and more plant-based protein, we can transform our food system, improve our health, safeguard our planet, and minimize the number of farm-raised animals.

Sources:

- colorado.edu/asmagazine/2018/11/24/we-nearly-ate-turkeys-extinction-second-time
- Turkey range: <https://www.google.com/search?q=range%20of%20the%20turkey>
- worldanimalprotection.us/latest/blogs/10-turkey-facts/

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS SPRING 2024

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Communications: Myrna Rochester

Email Lists: Richard Elder

Environment: Jaya Pandey

Events: Vacant

Barron Park History: Douglas L. Graham

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Shared Pathway: Doug Burns

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Senior Connections: Pooja Punn

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

- portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/wildlife/pdf_files/outreach/fact_sheets/wldturkypdf.pdf

Creating a New Landscape

By Melanie Cross, Native Habitat Committee



Laying down newspaper layers over an old lawn, as part of the sheet mulching process. All images courtesy of Stephanie Morris.

Spring is the best time to start planning a new garden or the changes that you want to make to an existing one. It will take observation, research, and preparation before you take the final plunge: installing your new plants this fall.

For several reasons, I encourage you to landscape with native plants. See the National Wildlife Federation’s arguments here: nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife/About/Impact. A garden of California natives can be more than decorative. Beautiful, yes, but also full of all kinds of life; it will conserve water and can be low maintenance.

Here is a series of steps – and many resources – to create a native (or any type of) garden:

Begin:

- Consider your goals: What uses do you see for your garden? What do you want? What do you need?
- Check out other gardens, parks, and natural areas near you to see possibilities, noting what you like and what you don’t like. On the weekend of April 13-14, with the Going Natives Garden Tour 2024, you can take free garden tours, choosing among 50 or more local native gardens. See what others have done and ask questions of homeowners or knowledgeable docents: gngt.org/GNGT/HomeRO.php. Pre-registration required.
- Observe your own garden, the existing trees or shrubs you want to keep, as well as the sun/shade patterns, the space available, soil conditions (drainage), patios, pathways, screening, etc., to imagine what could work in your garden.

- Think about the scope of the project, your budget, the amount of time and interest you have in doing it yourself, or if it makes sense to hire professional help: cnps-scv.org/gardening/gardening-with-natives/68-native-plant-professionals-68



Installing new plants in a mulched area.

- If you want to know more about creating a native plant garden, here is an excellent guide: calscape.org/planting-guide.php

Find out:

- If you might be eligible for a rebate from the Water District, say, if you are removing a lawn or installing water-saving infrastructure: valleywater.dropletportal.com/
- If a playing surface is desired, learn about your options, including low-water-use turf: ccuh.ucdavis.edu/resources/projects/smartlandscape-at-uc-davis/smartlawn
- Which plants will be best for your particular needs, and will offer the most benefit to our local ecology: cnps.org/gardening and bayarea.calscape.org. Research plants to see their characteristics and needs, as well as their blooming times and companion plants. For example: [calscape.org/Heteromeles-arbutifolia-\(Toyon\)?srchcr=sc65e2778d6788b](http://calscape.org/Heteromeles-arbutifolia-(Toyon)?srchcr=sc65e2778d6788b)
- The size, shape, drainage, water, and maintenance needs, etc., of the plants you’re considering.
- Which plants offer nectar, pollen, berries, etc., throughout the year. (Look up individual plants on the Calscape site.)
- If you need to install an irrigation system for your new landscaping. For very drought-tolerant plants, if you can hand water them until their roots are

established, no irrigation system is needed – simply your time, attention, and a hose.

Prepare:

- Create a bird’s eye landscaping plan of the garden, to scale. Take into account the mature sizes of plants and potential shading. (Give them enough space!) Group plants with similar requirements for sun, shade, and water together, and create “drifts and swaths” of like plants rather than a collection of different plants (easier on our eyes and better for insects and birds). Use evergreen (non-deciduous) shrubs for a year-round backdrop, and a few larger shrubs or a tree as a focal point. Consider the view from where you will see it: cnps.org/gardening/choosing-your-plants/native-planting-guides
- Remove unwanted and invasive plants, and if possible, their roots. (Most existing ground covers will grow back from their roots.) Summer, before fall planting, is a good time to lay down sheet mulch: cnps.org/gardening/sheet-mulching-5875
- Install any hardscape, such as walkways, driveways, patios, etc.
- Find out where the plants you need are sold. To make sure you have in hand plants that are critical to your design or hard-to-source, consider buying plants and taking care of them in pots until planting time, after the summer heat has subsided.

Planting Time (Ideally in Fall):

Think like a plant, and consider the conditions where it evolved. Many California plants, evolving in conditions where soil is dry when it is hot, are susceptible to root rot in hot, wet soil. So, planting them after the heat of summer is over gives them the best chance of getting their roots established.

Yes, now is the time to start dreaming, planning, and preparing to maximize success in your new or updated garden. Using a thoughtful, stepwise approach, you can take time to explore and learn what you like, and what the plants you choose will like. A well-planned garden will give you years of enjoyment and can also offer support to the local ecology.

Strawberry Farming in Barron Park

By Douglas L. Graham, Barron Park Historian, and David P. Salinero, Local Historian in Mountain View

New Findings in Barron Park History

- One hundred years ago, the Barron Tract was called “Driscoll Ranch.”
- Driscoll arranged for new immigrants from Spain to grow strawberries for the company on small farms on this “ranch.”
- Descendants of those first Spanish berry farmers now live locally.
- They have researched and written a fascinating family history and genealogy account to tell the story of their grandparents’ immigration and first years in Barron Park.
- The family history includes a treasure trove of photographs taken at the Barron Park strawberry farm in the early 1920s.

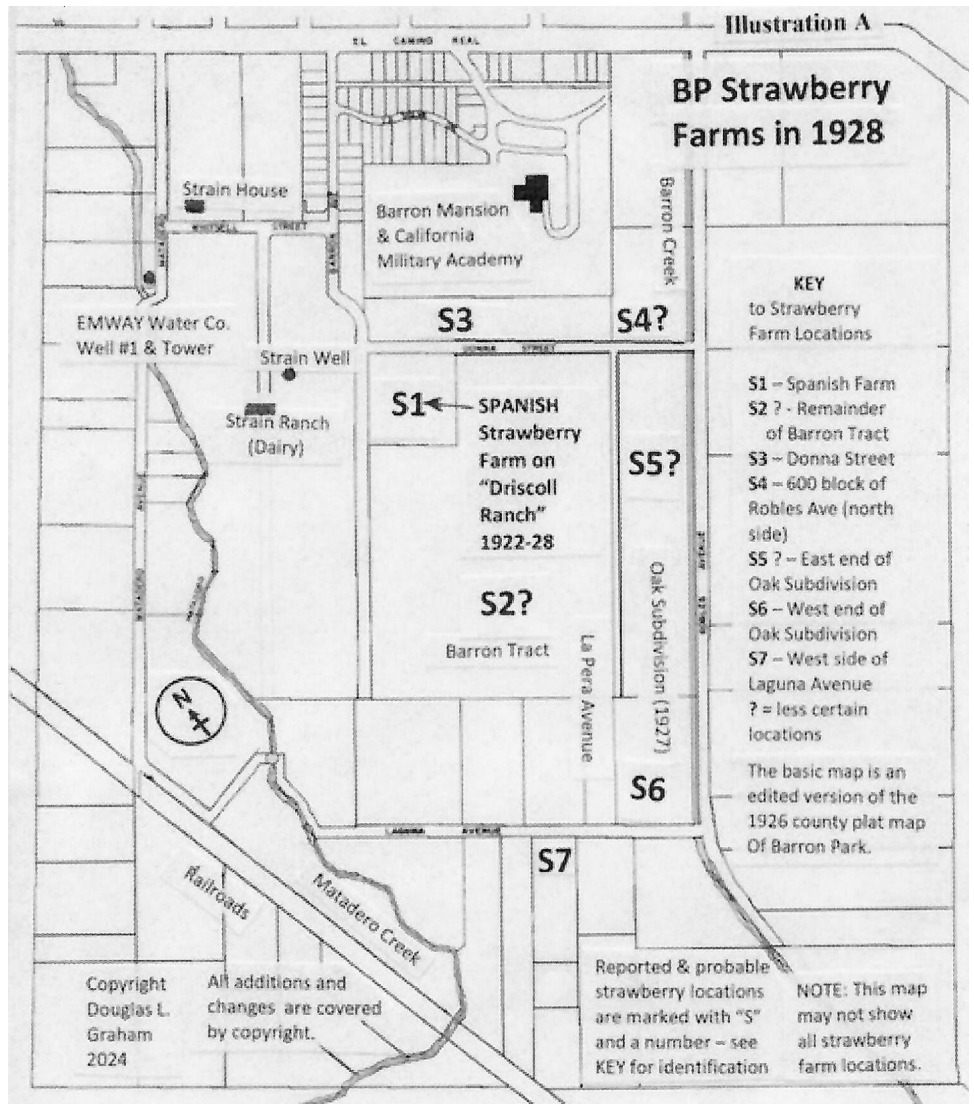
NAMES, NAMES, AND MORE NAMES

What Was the Driscoll Ranch?

The short answer is that it comprised the parts of the Barron Estate that were deemed suitable by the Driscoll Strawberry Group for berry farming or other intensive agriculture. Driscoll had purchased the 350-acre estate in December 1919, to increase the company’s strawberry production, sales, and profits. Non-suitable lands were to be sold off as fast as possible in order to offset the purchase price and other investment necessary to get the new land into crop production. (Note: In this article I will call it the “Driscoll Strawberry Group” because we do not know what the business name was in the 1920s.)

In 1919 the land was generally known as the Barron Estate. It was made up of two major parcels, the larger one being Elisha Crosby’s 250-acre Mayfield Farm founded in 1853. Edward Barron had added 100 acres along the south boundary of the farm, probably around 1880.

Sales of “unsuitable” land likely began within a year of the Driscoll purchase. A 41-acre parcel went to Everett R. Strain for a home site and pasture adequate for a dairy herd. It was dubbed “The Strain Ranch,” and included the land where the apartment buildings on Matadero Avenue are now, as well as the land along the south side of Matadero Creek all the way upstream to today’s Barron Park



A - Locator Map of Northeast Sector, Barron Park, about 1928. Illustration by Douglas L. Graham.

Elementary School.

In 1923 another major parcel of 38 acres was sold to Sebastian C. Jones. It included the Barron Mansion, its surrounding ornamental park, and a strip of highway frontage on El Camino Real. Jones planned to establish a boys’ military academy in the mansion and park. Construction of academic and athletic facilities began immediately. In 1925, Jones followed Driscoll’s lead and split off about 10 acres along the highway for a subdivision he named “Barron Park,” thereby inadvertently coining the name that now describes a large area of southwest Palo Alto from Greenacres on the south to the Stanford Research Park on the north – nearly 500 acres! However, the

name Barron Park was not generally used until around 1930. Before 1930 our area apparently was known as “Driscoll Ranch.” This name was definitely applied to the strawberry fields since it was quickly adopted by the U.S. Post Office and later by the Census Bureau. (Please refer to Illustration A, above, Locator Map, for Barron Park about 1928.)

West of Jones’s 38-acre parcel was another big chunk of land of about 50.7 acres that the county labeled “Barron Tract” on the 1928 parcel map. This was a nearly square parcel extending west from Jones’s parcel to a line about 500 feet east of Laguna Avenue. This line, extended north to Laguna Avenue, is the western boundary of the Barron Park School

property. (See Locator Map, for help in understanding the location descriptions.)

The Barron Tract may have been considered the best land for strawberries. In 1920 it was almost free of trees – except for a 350-foot-wide strip with large, old oak trees along the original course of Barron Creek. That 11.5-acre segment was split off to be sold for residential use. “La Pera” (Pear) Avenue was laid out, and the strip between La Pera and Los Robles became the Oak Subdivision in 1927. One oral source (uncorroborated) said that the entire Oak Subdivision had been planted to strawberries, despite shading by the oak trees. This seems unlikely, but at least one farmer found enough sunny space to plant berries in the west end of the Oak Subdivision – from the corner of Laguna Avenue south 315 feet from La Pera to Los Robles Avenues and east 500 feet from Laguna Avenue. If in fact the entire west end of the tract was in strawberries, it would have been a 3.6-acre plot (less some space for the household). This is probably the plot that was later occupied by a Japanese-American family who planted tomatoes and other “truck” crops. (See Locator Map.)

Parallel to this activity, the land immediately north of La Pera Avenue had been planted to pear trees. Maybe all of the large area from La Donna Avenue west to the lots that faced Laguna Avenue, and from Barron Avenue south to La Pera Avenue, was originally planted to strawberries? That would have been a 30-acre strawberry farm – truly very large! Another possibility is that this had been the Driscoll plan, until the company later gave up because



B – 1925 or 1926 photo of Juanita Bautista (the toddler) with one of her older Blásquez twin cousins. They are at the farm on Driscoll Ranch. In the background of this photo (and others), we see the Water Tower at the Matadero well site. This one shows it most clearly. All photos courtesy of Bautista-Salinero families.

of the spider mite infestation.

What Was the Town of Mayfield?

In one sense, Mayfield was the oldest part of Palo Alto, since it began as a U.S. Post Office location on the San Francisco-San Jose road (now El Camino Real) in 1853. It was already a thriving village in 1893 when Palo Alto first came into existence. At Mayfield’s peak in 1925, the town decided to accept Palo Alto’s offer to annex it. Mayfield then included all of the current neighborhoods of Southgate, Evergreen Park, and College Terrace, as well the northern two-thirds of Ventura. The closest it



C – 1925 or 1926 photo of Juanita on her trike at the farm. We believe the building in the distant background is the old Strain house on Whitsell Avenue. This was an important clue that enabled our identification of the farm’s exact location.

came to Barron Park was the corner of Wilton Avenue and El Camino Real, opposite the Barron Park block that goes from Kendall Avenue to Barron Avenue. Mayfield’s downtown was on Lincoln Avenue (now California Avenue) and still remains (in 2024) as Palo Alto’s “second downtown.”

DRISCOLL RANCH BERRY FARMS

The Last Berry Farm

We do not know exactly which parcels in the large Barron Tract were planted to strawberries, except for a few that have been specifically identified. Most significant for this story, there is an early oral record of strawberries being farmed on the 3.3-acre square parcel located on the southwest corner of “Donna” (now La Donna) Street and Barron Avenue. The street addresses of the small parcels this land was eventually subdivided into are in the 700 block of Barron and the 3700 block of La Donna. This 3.3-acre plot is mentioned in a second oral report as being the last remaining strawberry patch after the spider mites had rendered all the others unprofitable. (Check the Locator Map again to see where this key property was.)

The exact location of the Spanish strawberry farmers’ “Driscoll Ranch” remained a mystery until historical snapshots taken on the farm were exhaustively analyzed for background geographic clues. Most importantly, the old Strain House (see Illustration C) and the water



D – Photo of Emiliano Bautista at the farm, with young orchard trees in the background. They are likely pear trees planted along La Pera (today, La Para) Avenue. The street was the northern boundary of the 1927 Oak Subdivision.



E - 1924 group photo of farmworkers from Spain at the farm on Driscoll Ranch.

tower at Matadero Well #1 (see Illustration B) were identified. Also helpful were views of young orchard trees (see Illustration D), and tree lines along the creek. (See Illustrations B and C with their captions.)

The Last Was Also First

We now know that this area may also have been the first strawberry farm in Barron Park! The new finding is a result of research done by the descendants of the original farmers. Using what they have learned and carefully studying the photographs they took, the research group, aided by the author of this article, has concluded that this location was farmed by the Spanish immigrants in the 1920s.

There was at least one other strawberry farm in Barron Park outside the Barron Tract – a two-acre plot west of Laguna and north of today's Paradise Way. As far as we know, there were no strawberries planted north of Matadero Creek or south of Los Robles Avenue.

The Peak Years

We don't have production records for the strawberry crops, but the best years were probably 1924 through 1927. We do not know what the Driscoll group's long-range vision for their Barron Tract property was, but it surely did not include the production crash caused by the spider mites. When the mites started to bite in 1926 or 1927, no one could predict their impact. Berry production was probably increasing rapidly just as the infestation hit. According to George Fitzgerald's brief oral history, Barron Park strawberries were being shipped in refrigerator ("reefer") cars to San Francisco and eastern U.S. cities. But it seems clear that, by 1928, fields were being abandoned or converted to other crops.

THE FARMERS CAME FROM SPAIN

Salamanca Province

Our Spanish strawberry farmers came from Salamanca province. The city of Salamanca is the major city in the province, part of the medieval kingdoms of Castile and Leon, and famous for its history, architecture, and culture. It is located 140 miles west of Madrid – about three quarters of the way to the Portuguese border. This part of the Iberian Peninsula could be described as "high and dry." Elevations of the land range from about 1,000 to over 5,000 feet above mean sea level (MSL), and most of the cities and towns are at approximately 2,000-3,000 MSL. The terrain is varied, with well-forested mountain ranges, sizeable plains, and deep river valleys. Several large rivers arise here, including the Duoro, the principal river of central Portugal. Rainfall is typically between 16" and 20" annually, and the province is considered to be "semi-arid." Like California, it has a Mediterranean-type climate with warm, dry summers and cool, wet winters. The average elevation above MSL is higher than in the heavily populated parts of California, and the annual rainfall is less. It is, however, distributed more evenly throughout the year, with significant rainfall every month except June and July.

The Immigrants

Gabriel Bautista Cosmes, Paula Hernández Jiménez, his wife of seven years, and their two young sons were an established family. They lived in Macotera, a village of around 1,000 people (in 2023), about 30 miles southwest of Salamanca. Their ancestors and extended family members had lived for generations in the village or nearby. Like most people in Salamanca province, they were farmers, or at least had farming experience.

In 1921, Gabriel and Paula Bautista were considering leaving their home and emigrating to Latin America or the United States or its territories. The Spanish economy in the 1920s was less industrialized and less prosperous than other European economies and was not improving. Gabriel's grandson David Salinero wrote (in 2023) that his grandfather "... needed to leave Macotera to find work and a better life. Macotera had already lost many citizens over the last decades (1900-1920) due to lack of work. Gabriel was a barber and Paula, a housewife, according to their travel records. Neither had much money."

The Bautistas were not alone: More than 150 people had left Macotera between 1911 and 1913, taking ships from Gibraltar to Honolulu, Hawaii, to work on sugar plantations. Other popular destinations from which to ultimately reach the U.S. included Cuba and other Latin American countries. Gabriel Bautista had heard from Spaniards in California that it was a good place to make a new start.

Ten Months en route to Watsonville

When Gabriel and his family set out from Spain in August 1920, they did not know that it would take them 10 months to reach California, which would include seven months of waiting in Cuba while both the Spanish and American Consulate Generals completed their immigration paperwork. Early in May they entered the U.S. at New Orleans. When they finally arrived in Watsonville, Gabriel was focused on providing food, shelter, and necessities for his family. As David Salinero wrote, "... Would there be work here? How much farther would his family need to go from here? Already they had traveled 7,000 miles by foot, ship, and railroad to arrive in this foreign land where none of them knew the language." During this voyage, they had their two young sons with them: Emiliano (4½) and Mariano (22 months). Paula became pregnant during their stay in Cuba, giving birth to their third son Antonio in September 1921.

Although their problems were not all solved immediately upon arrival in California, they must have been glad to see Paula's first cousin, Maria-Reyes Hernández Rubio, who was the American sponsor for this young family. David Salinero wrote, "After leaving Macotera, Reyes and her family ended up in Watsonville where they worked processing lettuce. It so happened that the Driscoll strawberry farming company was in

Watsonville. Sometime later, the opportunity arose for the family to move to a Driscoll-owned strawberry farm (near) Mayfield . . . ” This was the Driscoll Ranch described above.

Parallel to these events, Paula Bautista’s sister, Emilia Sánchez, and her family back in Spain had found the same tough conditions in Macotera. “Emilia, her husband Antonio Sánchez Bueno, and their daughter Juana Sánchez traveled to Le Havre (in France) to board a ship for Ellis Island, New York.” They arrived there in March 1921. Then they boarded a train for San Leandro, California. By May, both the Bautista and Sánchez families were in California.

The Immigrants Converge at Driscoll Ranch

In this family story, the important year for Barron Park neighborhood history is 1922. Salinero wrote, “Sometime in 1922 the families met up with other Spanish immigrants like the Blásquez and Esteban families at the Driscoll Ranch (near) Mayfield.” Their farm was identified as the 3.3-acre parcel described above, under “Driscoll Ranch Berry Farms.”

As David Salinero points out, their “neighbors included some farmers who could afford to buy land from the Driscoll company and become part-time farmers who grew strawberries on parcels of three to five acres. The Spanish and other ethnic groups such as the Japanese (including Japanese-Americans) did not have the ability (either due to laws or funds) to purchase the land. The Spanish most likely leased or sharecropped the plots and sold the strawberries to Driscoll.”

The Spanish Strawberry Farmers

The Bautista, Sánchez, and Blásquez families have been identified as working and living on the Driscoll Ranch strawberry farm. (See Illustration E, a group photo of about 25 Spanish farmworkers at the Driscoll Ranch strawberry farm. It may include a few visitors from San Leandro or other locations.)

Professional Portraits

David Salinero wrote: “In June 1925, the Bautista and Sánchez families went to a professional photographer to get family portraits taken. These portraits captured a ‘Hallmark moment’ for both families. Most likely the photographs were shared with families back in Spain.” (See Illustration F, the Bautista family.)

Our story mainly focuses on the Bautista family. Gabriel and Paula Bautista were David



F – 1926 – The Bautista Family. L. to r: Emiliano, Antonio, Paula, Juanita (lap baby), Gabriela, and Mariano. All the people pictured are related to author David Salinero and his cousins, who researched their family and the Driscoll Ranch story.

Salinero’s grandparents on his mother’s side. The couple had their fourth and only daughter, Juanita, in 1925 when they were living on the farm. Juanita Salinero has lived in Mountain View most of her life and is 99 years old at the present time (March 2024). She is David Salinero’s mother and was instrumental in providing information to the researchers. It amazes the principal author of this story that someone who was living on the farm is alive today and could tell us, from family stories and tradition, what their life was like nearly 100 years ago in the then nascent Barron Park.

Look again at Illustration F. The four people who researched and collaborated on this story are all grandchildren of Paula and Gabriel and are first cousins to each other. Paul A. Bautista is a child of Emiliano, Jeffrey Bautista is the son of Mariano, Anthony H. Bautista is the son of Antonio, and David P. Salinero is Juanita’s son.

The other closely related family was that of Antonio and Emilia Sánchez (Paula Bautista’s sister). They had their third child, Gabriela, while living on the farm in 1926. David Salinero wrote, “These two baby girls (Juanita and Gabriela), first cousins, became best

friends throughout their lives, and married two boys from Spanish families who settled in San Leandro.”

Both girls were born on the Driscoll Ranch property. The attending physician was Dr. Edith Johnson of Palo Alto. She was Palo Alto’s first woman doctor and delivered more than 3,500 babies in this area, charging low-income patients little or nothing. A park near downtown Palo Alto is named after her. Antonio and Maria Blásquez were also from Macotera, but not related to David Salinero or his cousins. They added son Tini to their exist-

ing six children while living on the farm.

Living at Driscoll Ranch

The Spanish families lived and worked at Driscoll Ranch from approximately 1922 to 1928. Housing at the Driscoll Ranch was primitive. David Salinero wrote, “The houses were not more than shacks. They did not have much [in money or possessions], but there were happy times when old friends or extended family members would visit and discuss their common hometown [in Spain]. They might hold an informal fiesta by dancing the *jota*.”

Dancing the Jota

The *jota* “is a genre of folk songs that precedes and accompanies the dance or is sung only. The dancing couple hold their arms high and click castanets as they execute lively, bouncing steps to guitar music and singing. Originally hailing from the region of Aragón, the *jota* has spread to practically every corner of Spain. Each region, however, has fine-tuned and adapted the *jota* by incorporating their own local styles and tastes. In Salamanca province the Castilla-León regional version of the *jota* has a uniquely slower tempo.” (Wikipedia).



G - Dancing the jota at the farm on Driscoll Ranch. L. to r: Antonio Blásquez, Antonio Sánchez, María Sánchez Bueno (wife of A. Blásquez) and Gabriela Jiménez (wife of Gallego, who does not figure in this account).

Our Spanish immigrants may well have been singing in a similar fashion when photographed. (See Illustration G, a 1924 snapshot of Blásquez, Sánchez, and Jiménez family members dancing at the Driscoll Ranch.) With their arms curled and held at waist level or higher they look like some of the groups shown in today's videos from Salamanca. (Author's judgment, and information from Google/YouTube search, 1/30/2024.)

Why Are We Only Learning This Now?

Until David Salinero and his cousins conducted the research to write their family story, no one in Barron Park knew that Spanish immigrants were a major factor in establishing the strawberry farms in our neighborhood. Why? There was almost certainly little social contact between the unilingual Spanish immigrants and their unilingual English-speaking neighbors. When the Spaniards left the neighborhood in 1928, their stories left with them, and there was no one who knew them to pass the knowledge along in oral or written histories when interest in neighborhood history started to grow in the 1960s and 1970s.

THE MOVE TO MOUNTAIN VIEW

The Spider Mites Drove Them Out

By 1928, The red spider mites had attacked the strawberry plants and were lowering the

yields. In some fields near the Spanish-run farm, pear trees were replacing the berries. This was especially true in the fields just south of the farm and north of the new Oak Tract along La Pera Avenue. (See Illustration D, Young pear trees in the background of the photo of Emeliano Bautista standing in front of the strawberry field.)

Gathering at the "Frog Pond"

About 1928, the Spanish strawberry farmers left the Driscoll Ranch farm and moved to Mountain View. They joined the existing Spanish immigrants in the Washington Street neighborhood of Mountain View that had become predominantly Spanish. As David Salinero wrote, "It became known as *La Charca de la Rana* (The Frog Pond), named for its muddy streets in rainstorms." This neighborhood largely consisted of immigrant Spaniards until the mid-twentieth century, when Spanish speakers from Mexico and other Latin American countries began to arrive.

ABOUT RAISING STRAWBERRIES

Climate, Soil, and Water Requirements

Strawberries are thirsty plants. They evolved in cool, temperate, humid climates, like many areas in the eastern United States. They do not tolerate extended periods of drought, but do withstand both hot and cold tempera-

tures and prevailing winds, provided there is adequate moisture. Strawberries do best in full sun in deep, fertile, well-drained, but moisture-retentive, soil that is slightly acidic. Barron Park has sections of dense adobe soils with alkaline pH. However, due to our creeks, there is a lot of variation, with lenses of different soils that have been brought down from the hills during storms over the years.

The key requirements: Raising successful crops of strawberries in Northern California absolutely requires dependable irrigation during the primary growing and harvest seasons and constant detailed tending of the plants (i.e., endless hours of stoop labor). In California, strawberries are planted in the fall. We do not have much information on how the Spanish farmers planted and cared for their crops, but it had to have been extremely labor-intensive. We know they planted young plants in raised beds, probably mounded up at least six inches, with irrigation trenches on both sides.

Personal Experience

The primary author (Doug) has some experience helping his parents tend our quarter-acre strawberry patch in upstate New York from 1944 to 1947. He remembers the unending battle against weeds, the constant clipping of the "runners" to encourage larger berries, and the frantic picking during each harvest season that lasted about six weeks in early to mid-summer. We sold them by the roadside three days a week in small boxes holding about a pint each: ten cents a box for dime-sized berries and 25 cents for nickel-to-quarter-sized. All this was fitted in around the late spring thunderstorms that could ruin the current crop. Many aspects of this experience became life lessons to the author.

The Water Source

The large irrigation requirements for the strawberry farms on the Driscoll Ranch were met with the help of the Barron Park Water Company (BPWC), owned and operated by the Bol family. The water was probably supplied from Matadero Well #1, located on Matadero Creek about 970 feet north and slightly west of the nearest point of the farm.

The water tank tower can be seen in the distant background in several of the snapshots taken at the strawberry farm, especially in Illustration B, the 1925 photograph of Juanita Bautista (the younger child shown) with one of the Blásquez twins, and again in Illustration C, with Juanita on her trike. The

water tower was a wooden structure built on a concrete pad (still there in 2024), approximately 40 feet above MSL. The pad is easy to find: As you proceed east on Matadero towards El Camino and cross the bridge over the creek, the well site is inside the chain-link fence immediately beyond the bridge. The pad is within several feet east of the fence. It is octagonal in shape, and large – about 30 feet in diameter. It made a very solid base for the water tower. The tower was tall enough to deliver a feeble flow of water by gravity feed to the Bol House at approximately 80 feet above MSL. On a platform at the top was a 60,000-gallon steel water storage tank, oriented vertically. The elevations suggest that the tower, plus the tank height, had to be at least 40 feet tall.

One night (date not recorded, but probably in the early 1930s) there was a shocking accident. The big tank tipped over, fell off its platform, hit the ground about 30 feet below with a tremendous crash, and was partially crushed. If the tank were full at the time, the water alone weighed 250 tons, and according to neighbors, the tank rupture flooded the nearby streets.

Water deliveries were suspended in most of Barron Park until a temporary pumping system could be jury-rigged. The tower was not replaced. The tank was actually salvaged (believe it or not!), reinstalled, and oriented horizontally on the concrete pad at ground level. A new permanent electric pumping and pressurized delivery system was quickly installed. Henceforth, the system was pressurized with compressed air, rather than depending on gravity to provide adequate water pressure. This was the biggest disaster experienced in the approximately 30-year life of the water company, which operated from approximately 1923 to 1953.

Research and Writing Credits

Doug and David, the authors, acknowledge that this article could not have been written without the research and collaboration of others. All the information about the Spanish strawberry farmers in this article was the result of research by a team of four of the farmers’ descendants who currently live in Mountain View or nearby: David P. Salinero and his cousins Anthony H. Bautista Jr., Paul A. Bautista, and Jeffrey Bautista. Their collaborative research has made the Barron Park strawberry years come alive after the passage of nearly a century.

David wrote it all up in a 14-page family history paper with about 25 illustrations – a stunning achievement and tremendous addition to the Mountain View, Palo Alto, and Barron Park history archives. From the Barron Park standpoint, this is one of the biggest “breakthroughs” that anyone has made in our neighborhood history. Thank you, David!

I would also like to express my appreciation to our longtime Palo Alto City Historian, Steve Staiger, for alerting me last spring after Anthony Bautista walked into the Palo Alto Historical Association’s archive at Cubberley Community Center and told him about the “Spanish strawberry farmers in Barron Park.” This is how local historians can work together to enrich the stories of our cities’ heritage.

To Reach the Historian

If you have questions, comments, or corrections to the story, 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.

References

- *The Mountain ReView*, Official Newsletter of the Mountain View Historical Association, Vol. XII, Issue III, Summer 2022, Spanish Immigration to Mtn. View, by David P. Salinero. mountainviewhistorical.org/newsletters/
- *Barron Park Association Newsletter*, various history articles by Douglas L. Graham. bpapaloalto.org/bpa-newsletter/
- Barron Park Water Company – Fall 2013 and Winter 2017
- Matadero Well #1 site and water tower – Fall 2013
- Red Spider Mites – Summer 2015.

**Barron Park Association
Newsletter, Summer Deadline:
Saturday, June 1, 2024**

Please submit articles (in Word if possible) for the Summer 2024 issue of the BPA Newsletter, with photos/images separate from text, by **Saturday, June 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 July 15, 2024**. The Summer issue will be available in early July 2024, online to requesting members and print copies by U.S. mail.

**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

**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

**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

Donkey Art Lives!

By The Barron Park Donkey Project

Maybe you've seen it, but haven't quite registered why there's a weathered, old-fashioned mailbox on the left of the donkey pasture gate. For years visitors, well-wishers, and donkey fans have been filling the mailbox with donkey-themed letters, poetry, and artwork of all kinds. Now Perry, Buddy, and April have their own Instagram account! Go to your browser, search on [art_of_the_barronparkdonkeys](#)



The D-Mail box at Perry, Buddy, and April's pasture gate. Artist visitors of all ages are encouraged to deposit Donkey Art in any medium here. Art will be collected and most likely posted on our Instagram account: [art_of_the_barronparkdonkeys](#). Photos courtesy of The Donkey Project.

(with underscores as shown), click on "Perry and Buddy and now April," where the art is posted for your enjoyment.

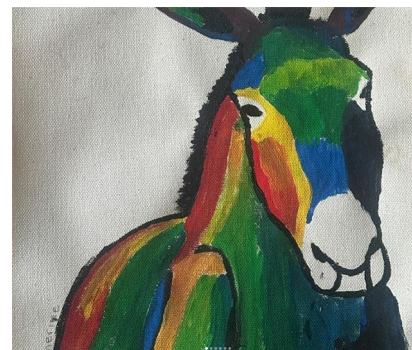
Please leave your own donkey art in the D-Mail box, the next time you visit the BP donkeys! If you've created electronic art or photos, you can send them directly to: barronparkdonkeys.org/art-submission/ or to bit.ly/DonkeyArtwork



April, Buddy, and Perry looking southward in their pasture. Electronically enhanced photograph, 2023.



Additional donkey artwork above and on the right.



The Mapmaker Writes

By Douglas L. Graham, Barron Park Historian

Why Read (or Write) Local History?

As a famous historian once said: "All history is local history." If you google "local history," it tells you that "Learning about local history turns the grand patterns of historical change into concrete stories that tell of the lives of individuals." (No attribution given.)

I like Michael Crichton's statement: "If you don't know history, then you don't know anything. You are a leaf that doesn't know it is part of a tree." I think this applies to neighborhood history as much as world and national history.

A Sense of "Place"

Isn't history about people, not places? Yes,

it is "his Story" (and "her Story," too). But "place" has enormous impact on people, whether or not they are conscious of it, and must be a part of the story for it to be complete.

But - Why Include Maps?

The readers of Barron Park history articles in the BPA Newsletter may well question - why use valuable newsletter space for maps of the neighborhood? A few might say, "maps just confuse me and make it difficult for me to relate to the history."

I look at it like one of my favorite authors, Jacqueline Winspear, does. She writes best-selling mysteries set in 1930s England. Her

fictional heroine, private investigator Maisie Dobbs, solves cases with the help of self-created "case maps" wherein she "lays out all her facts, clues, ideas, and suspicions and then she looks for patterns." "In this way, you can see everything before you, rather than simply a notebook filled with scribble. It's the difference between seeing the land laid out on paper like a picture, and someone describing it in words."

How Does the Mapmaker Help the Reader?

Winspear writes that the cartographer is the one who "looks at the land around him and interprets it for the rest of us, who gives us

Continued on bottom of page 15

March 10, 2024 – BPA Annual Meeting!

By The Editors



John King, BPA Board President, opened the meeting, introduced Board members present, reviewed recent and future neighborhood events, and reminded neighbors to join and renew memberships, and get involved! Photos by Doug Burns.



Palo Alto Mayor Greer Stone outlined current goals for Palo Alto, where, as he put it, the economics are pretty good, approval of our housing element (for the State) is urgent, and concerns relating to climate change and youth health and wellness are of major importance. He answered many questions tactfully and honestly.



Garrett Sauls, Planner in the City Planning Department, gave a Power Point talk on the areas for development envisioned for the El Camino Real corridor – all part of the city's "Adequate Sites" inventory. He did mention that traffic and parking issues are inevitable, and will likely lead to a Residential Parking program here, as we see elsewhere in the city.

You can still attend or review the BPA Annual Meeting held on March 10 by watching the Zoom recording as well as the Planning Department's Power Point

talk, at these links:

- Zoom Recording of the March 10 Meeting: bit.ly/BPA24meeting Use the following Passcode: Mvj2V8\$9

- Power Point Presentation by Garrett Sauls, Palo Alto Planning Department: bit.ly/PAhousingelement

Mapmaker Writes, continued from page 14

the path to our own adventure." She writes about "the sense of wonder that comes with maps, for each one tells a story and the cartographer is the story teller, the translator, the guide to lead the reader to understanding of truths that might otherwise be missed. A good cartographer has a knack for finding a story's buried treasures" (Jacqueline Winspear's exact words have been changed somewhat to apply her meaning to local history).

The Concepts Applied to Barron Park History

Take a look at the map BP Strawberry Farms in 1928, in the article accompanying this one. This map (which took an enormous amount of effort to produce) was carefully edited to include all the places referred to in the article (which, unfortunately, is often not done in history books) and to eliminate

most places not referred to (except those, such as creeks, major roads, and key boundary lines, that are needed so that the reader can compare the historic landscape to the current one).

One of the main points of the Strawberry Farms story was to pinpoint the most probable location of the first farm, which was planted and tended by the Spanish immigrant farm workers featured in the story. The map also locates the other probable strawberry patch locations – including some speculative ones.

Finding the "Buried Treasure"

Like the fictional detective Maisie Dobbs, the group of researchers included facts, clues, ideas, and suspicions in the effort to uncover the truth. I think we succeeded, and my co-author David Salinero and his cousins deserve the lion's share of the credit for finding the "buried treasure."

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: mrbpa@sonic.net Tell us something about the art, but you don't need to include a street address.



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