

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

John King, BPA President



Welcome to Fall 2025, Barron Park! Hope you had an enjoyable summer! We kicked off the summer on **June 8** with our free **Ice Cream Social in Bol Park**, with its typical, seemingly endless, line of customers! Even though the ice cream was gone in about 30 minutes, everyone got a generous portion. And we repeated ourselves on **September 14**, starting off the fall with another successful Ice Cream Social, just as Gunn High alumni were celebrating their 50th high school reunion! Thanks again to Karen and Amol Saxena, who purchased, delivered, and scooped the ice cream, continuing a tradition we've happily come to expect.

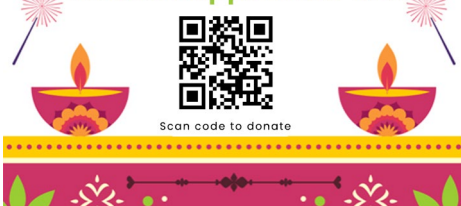


Barron Park Celebrates Diwali

Courtesy of The Barron Park Association & The City of Palo Alto

2-4:30 pm, Sunday Oct 12th
Barron Park Elementary School
Please bring a dish to share!

Please support the BPA



Upcoming neighborhood events include our **Diwali gathering** on **Sunday, October 12**, from **2:00 – 4:30 p.m.** in the Barron Park Elementary Multi-Purpose Room. Plan to be there for music and dancing, fabulous food, colorful attire, and the festival of lights! **Sunday, October 19**, brings us **Movie Night in Bol Park** where we'll gather at **6:00 p.m.** to feature *Shrek 2*! Enjoy a night under the stars, bring your blanket or folding chairs and a picnic dinner! Popcorn will be available for sale.

We are planning this year's **Barron Park Arts and Crafts Fair** for **Sunday, November 9** at Bol Park! Last year's event was very popular! Come support our local artists and crafters as they display their items, and purchase a couple of holiday gifts! Artists and crafters: Look out on the Barron Park email lists for instructions for signing up.

Finally, on **December 14**, we will have our annual **Holiday Caroling at Bol Park** at **3:00 p.m.** Come sing along with Gary Breitbard, Jena Rauti and friends, our Barron Park musicians, as we celebrate the Holiday Season with music, hot cocoa, cider, and treats! Plan to show up with your own cookie creations to share!

Looking forward to seeing everyone during our busy Fall season!

We are always looking out for committee members, Board members, and volunteers. If you can help with an event

or more generally, please reach out to me at johnwadeking@gmail.com or 650-483-2710.

MOVIE NIGHT

Bring a blanket and join your neighbors!

SUNDAY OCT 19TH

6:00 AT BOL PARK
bpapaloalto.org

View the BPA Newsletter in Full Color!

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

While you're there, check out our Archive of past Newsletters. You can easily review past activities in the 'hood and catch up on issues you may have missed.

Thanks! The Editors

2

[Faculty Cup](#)

3

[Seedheads](#)

4

[Aubrey's Fence](#)

5

[Referral List](#)

6

[Sabra Driscoll](#)

12

[Talking to Strangers](#)

14

[National Night Out 2025](#)

Excellence of Barron Park Student Recognized Awarded 2025 Gunn High Ron Cooper Faculty Cup

Since 1966, Gunn High School has presented the Ron Cooper Faculty Cup Award to two graduating seniors who “represent the highest ideals of the school community, epitomizing the traits and virtues we strive to instill in all our students.” Barron Park’s own Tuuta Fisiiahi (*too-oo-tah fiss-ee-ah-hee*) was found to embody the best qualities of the over-400-member Class of 2025. At the graduation he was lauded as a natural-born leader – a teaching assistant in Gunn’s study skills class, a member of the Gunn choir and the football team, and a volunteer at his church.

First in his family to attend university, teachers and students describe Tuuta as having a magnetic personality and playful sense of humor. He was a role model to other students, uplifting spirits and encouraging them to always give their best. Youngest of seven siblings, Tuuta successfully navigated the academic challenges of Gunn High. Teachers describe him as a young man who is bright, gregarious, compassionate, and empathetic, persevering in life like few others. The nomination reflects Tuuta’s commitment to these principles, particularly in areas of scholarship, leadership, service, and influence.

Interview with Tuuta Fisiiahi, June 20, 2025

By Winter Dellenbach

Winter: First, congratulations on being honored with the Faculty Cup at your Gunn High graduation. How did it feel to hear your name called?

Tuuta: Thank you. I had already gotten a letter telling me that I was a nominee, but it felt nerve-racking when announced at graduation ‘cause I’m kind of shy. I thought I was going to give a speech, so I was scared about that, but then didn’t have to.

What would you have said?

I was just going to thank everyone who got me to that moment.

Your dad, sister, and a brother were at your graduation. What was their reaction to your recognition?

They were surprised. I didn’t tell them

beforehand about being a nominee. My brother usually makes jokes, but instead he gave me a hug and congratulated me. It was really nice.

Does your local Tongan community know you were honored?

Yeah. We had a ceremony for all the graduates at my church, and people there came up to me and congratulated me.

That’s great. Such recognition gives a lift to everyone you know. Do folks here at Buena Vista know?

Yeah, a few. Some came to my graduation because they have known me and my six siblings since I was a kid. They came up to me to say Hi and congratulate me.

You are a Gunn Faculty Cup recipient and will attend UC Davis this fall. These are impressive achievements, Tuuta. What schools did you attend in Palo Alto?

Barron Park Elementary, Fletcher, and Gunn.

What was your favorite subject?

Math and P.E.

I understand you are the youngest and first in your family to attend a four-year university. Why did you choose UC Davis?

Mainly for my major. It has one of the top programs for it. I’m thinking of Food Science, with a minor in Culinology, which is the study of chemistry and biology of food, along with culinary arts. I don’t know if it will stay my major, but I will find out. I’m gonna try new things once I get to college and see what I like the most.

Good plan. College is a lot about discovery. Culinology is a new term for me. As a foodie, I love learning it. How did you get interested in this major?

I took chemistry at Gunn and liked it. It was fun, interesting, and hands-on which I liked. And I like to cook.



World Languages teacher Daissy Tabares celebrates graduation with Tuuta Fisiiahi, winner of the 2025 Faculty Cup at Gunn High School. Photo by Sky Runser.

What’s your favorite food? Name two.

Well, I like a good pasta. And then a good steak always hits the spot.

So, what are you looking forward to in college?

Making new, good relationships. Finding new communities that I can connect with. I want to share moments with other people, new people I can meet. Have fun. My roommate is a friend from Gunn, so that’s a big upside and benefit.

Where did you grow up?

Here, at Buena Vista. My family moved from our homeland in Tonga to Auckland, New Zealand, for a short time, then, when I was three months old, we came straight here to Buena Vista. We still have some family in Tonga.

Why did your parents move here to Palo Alto, to Buena Vista?

They had relatives here. My dad’s parents,

Continued on page 11

Beauty in a Summer Native Garden: Just Add Seedheads

By Linda Elder, Native Habitat Committee

We live in a summer-dry climate; there is essentially no rain here from June to October. By mid-summer, many California native plants have settled into summer dormancy. Shrubs, like coffeeberry, toyon, and manzanita stay green all year round and provide a structural backdrop. A few summer bloomers, like goldenrod and California fuchsia, add some color. Still, some people say a native garden looks too brown in the summer. They can't wait to cut back dried flowers, leaves, and seedheads, using a technique called deadheading. Deadheading is the process of removing dead or faded flower buds and seedheads from plants. But there are good reasons to hold off.



The arrangement is made up of seedheads of the following native California plants: California scorpionweed (*California Phacelia*), Cleveland Sage (*Salvia clevelandii*), Common Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), June Grass (*Koeleria macrantha*), Lacy Phacelia (*Phacelia tanacetifolia*), Leafy Reed Grass (*Calamagrostis foliosa*), Pearly Everlasting (*Anaphalis margaritacea*), Purple Needlegrass (*Stipa pulchra*), and Sulphur Buckwheat (*Eriogonum umbellatum*). Arrangement by Linda Elder. Photo by Richard Elder.

Yes, a native summer-dry garden is quite different from a lush, green summer garden. I appreciate and value a garden that reflects

our region's natural landscape and feels authentic to California. Unlike a verdant green garden in rainy areas, a California native garden, left with the seedheads of sages, sedges, and grasses intermingled with the rest of the garden, feels like it belongs here. Seedheads can add interest in the garden during fall and winter.



This informal grouping shows late summer and fall California Black Sage (*Salvia mellifera*) and Ithuriel's Spear (*Triteleia laxa*) - named for an angel in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Arrangement and photo by Aviva Rochester.

Here are five native plants with lovely seedheads. You can see many of them now at the Bol Park Native Habitat Garden. Many native seedheads can also be used in flower arrangements.

1. Cleveland Sage (*Salvia clevelandii*) has a very striking seedhead that retains a hint of purple and an earthy, herbaceous sage scent. It is also great in flower arrangements.
2. Buckwheats, such as Sulphur buckwheat (*Eriogonum umbellatum*). The flowers turn a gorgeous rust color.
3. Purple Needlegrass (*Stipa pulchra*). Our California State Grass. Airy and light seedheads wave in the breeze and are

especially lovely if planted in drifts. Great as a filler in flower arrangements.

4. Pearly Everlasting (*Anaphalis margaritacea*) dries to a cluster of button-like white flowers that work well in dried arrangements.
5. California Phacelia. The seeds are produced in coiled, one-sided clusters called "cymes" that resemble a scorpion's tail. So cool!

Seedheads drop seeds as they age. Most people know that birds eat seeds. Birds also use the cottony white fluff often produced by seedheads for nesting material. California fuchsia flowers attract hummingbirds in summer, and later in the fall they may use the fluff to line their nests.

Seedheads are not only interesting and beautiful but are also a resource for wildlife in the garden. So don't be in a rush to tidy up your late-summer garden. Let some seedheads remain until late fall and early winter, the best time for deadheading. I hope you can find the beauty in seedheads this time of year. If the goal is to create a beautiful, sustainable, low-water, and wildlife-friendly habitat that offers a sense of place, then leaving the seedheads is going in the right direction.



BARRON PARK CRAFT FAIR

FREE ADMISSION

CRAFTS, BAKED GOODS, JEWELRY,
HOME DECOR, AND SO MUCH MORE!

2 p.m. - 5 p.m., Nov 9th

Cornelis Bol Park

3590 Laguna Ave

HOSTED BY:
BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION

Scan code below to donate



epaparkinfo.org/donate/

Aubrey's Finished Fence!

By Greta Gize Olbrich



Some of Aubrey Fife's completed fence paintings at Barron Park Elementary School. Photos by Greta Gize Olbrich.

Aubrey Fife – Barron Park Elementary Class of 2014, Gunn High Class of 2021, and undergrad at UC Berkeley – began this fence upgrade painting project at Barron Park Elementary in summer 2024.

Aubrey studied abroad last year, and so split her project into two phases. Read the Fall 2024 edition of the BPA Newsletter, pp. 6-7 (<https://bpapaloalto.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/BPAFall244C.pdf>) for an

in-depth article detailing her inspiration and method for the fence refresh. Thank you, Aubrey! The Barron Park Community couldn't be happier with the results.

Bol Family Descendants Gather

By Douglas L. Graham, Barron Park Historian

Party at the Bol Family Home

About 25 or 30 people gathered at the historic Bol family home on Roble Ridge for a family gathering/reunion on July 13, 2025. At least 14 family members who attended carry the Bol family name. Spouses and a scattering of children and grandchildren accompanied them. The “children” at the party are great-grandchildren of Cornelis and Josina Bol. The grandchildren are the Bols’ great-great-grandchildren (fifth generation). They gathered from many places – one person from her home on Matadero Avenue in Barron Park, and quite a few from other Bay Area cities and towns. Gatherings have been held almost every year – many in Bol Park – since the first with 15 family members on August 28, 1998.

James Witt Was the Host

The 2025 party was hosted by James Witt who has owned the Bol property, which includes the current donkey pasture across Matadero Creek from the Bol cottage, since 1998. The party was held outdoors near the Bol cottage, on the side where the land starts to slope down to Matadero Creek. It was a warm Sunday afternoon with bright sunshine and an occasional light breeze. The program was simple: Nibble on snacks from a generous buffet, meet the cousins you don't get to see very often.



Cornelis and Josina Bol's descendants and their families begin to gather at the Bol cottage on July 13, 2025. Photo by James Witt.

Barron Park Referral List! Share Your Favorites!

By Lisa Berkowitz Landers, Membership Chair



Image from Freepix.com.

The BPA is organizing a referral list for members of the Barron Park Association.

If you have recently used a service and would like to share the referral, please email the information with a brief description to: barronpark.paloalto@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

In addition, if you are a babysitter/childcare provider and want to list your services, please email: Lisa Berkowitz Landers at barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com

For example:

- Handypersons
- Plumbers
- Electricians
- General Contractors/Designers
- House Cleaners
- Gardeners (mowing/cleanup)
- Gardeners (yard care/maintenance)
- Landscapers
- Tree Care/Arborist
- Fence Repair/Replacement
- Hardwood Floor Care/Replacement
- Caulking
- Painters (indoor/outdoor)
- Car Maintenance/Repair
- Pet Sitters/Dog Walkers
- Tutors
- Music Teachers
- Sports Coaches
- Home Care
- Family Assistants.



Image from Freepix.com.



Image from Freepix.com.

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Barron Park Association

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Prodigy Press

Sabra Kranzfelder Driscoll

(March 2, 1925 – July 19, 2025)

By Douglas L. Graham, Barron Park Historian



A – Sabra Driscoll. Undated photo. Courtesy of the Driscoll family.

Seventy-Five Years in Barron Park

Sabra Driscoll first moved to Barron Park in 1949 or 1950 when she and her husband John Driscoll bought a new Eichler home on Josina Avenue. In 1957, the family moved to 3691 Laguna Avenue, the place many of us know as “the Driscoll House,” where Sabra lived for 68 years until she died on July 19, 2025. A celebration of Sabra’s life was held at Grace Lutheran Church in Palo Alto on September 14. Two of her daughters, Barbara Larsen of Barron Park and Zoe Schirmer of Danville, prepared her obituary for the *Palo Alto Weekly*. We quote it in this story.

This article provides additional details of Sabra’s life in Barron Park, focusing on her family, her home and garden, her painting and her photography work. We include some of her photos of the original donkey pasture in 1969, before it was developed as Bol Park. Sabra’s nearly 50 views of the Bol pasture constitute the biggest and best collection of mid-twentieth-century Barron Park photographs in our history archive. Most have never been exhibited, and fewer than a half-dozen published in the BPA Newsletter.

Early Life and Education

Sabra Kranzfelder was born in 1925 in Annapolis, Maryland, to a young U.S. Naval

officer and his wife. (Note: Sabra’s given name is pronounced with a long “a,” as in the word *saber*.)

As her family says, “She moved often as a ‘navy brat’ until attending and graduating from Sequoia High School in Redwood City. Sabra then attended Stanford University (class of 1947) where she met John Driscoll (class of 1948) when they worked together as ‘hashers’ at Lagunita (Dining) Hall. The two were married in Stanford’s Memorial Church after Sabra’s graduation.” After their wedding John and Sabra traveled extensively in Europe. “Sabra then attended graduate school at San Jose State but was stopped just shy of obtaining her teaching credential by the birth of their first child (Mike) on May 1, 1950.”

Matriarch of the Driscoll Family

Her family points out, “Thus, the focus of Sabra’s teaching shifted to the five Driscoll children.” After Mike, there was Zoe (1951), Will (1955), Barbara (1957), and Mia (1959). With five babies in nine years, the switch from academic and career goals to family-raising mode was only realistic. “Sabra’s energy and exceptional work ethic resulted in a most blessed family. Healthy, home-cooked meals were regularly served in the home which Sabra made beautiful by her paintings, photography, and flower arrangements.” (See Illustration A: Sabra Driscoll in an undated photo.)

John Driscoll

John had been a U.S. Army Air Force officer – a bombardier/navigator in the European Theater in World War Two. He was shot down once in a mission over Italy and landed in Sardinia but was released when Italy surrendered in 1943.

After graduating from Stanford in 1948, John worked as a contract negotiator at Lockheed in the Stanford Research Park. He and Sabra lived together for 43 years, beginning in 1947. Their first house was,

according to Sabra, “a chicken coop.” It was in an apricot orchard, probably in Los Altos. With John’s job at Lockheed, they soon moved to their new Eichler at 741 Josina Avenue in Barron Park, living there until 1957, when they needed a bigger place, or at least one that could be enlarged. They found what they wanted at 3691 Laguna. Sabra and John separated in 1990, but never divorced; Sabra remained in the house on Laguna. The children were grown; the separation was amicable, lasting almost 20 years until John’s death in 2009.

John Driscoll’s Family

Contrary to common belief in the neighborhood, John Driscoll’s family had no known connection to the Driscoll family of Watsonville, founders of the Driscoll Berry Company, a family berry patch that became today’s large packing and marketing firm. The Driscoll Company is now a major landowner in Santa Cruz County and a major importer of berries from Mexico, Chile, and several other Latin American countries. The Watsonville Driscolls owned all of Barron Park for a short while in the 1920s. But R.F. Driscoll and B.I. Driscoll, whose names appear on all our Barron Park deeds as purchasers of the Barron Estate in 1919, were not related to John.

3691 Laguna Avenue

The 1926 plat map of Barron Park shows a 4.61-acre block of land owned by James H. Neal and Bee Neal, for whom the Southern Pacific Railroad’s “Neal Station” was eventually named. It was a “flag stop” at the corner of Matadero and Laguna Avenues, where the Bol Park Native Garden is now located. The block extended west from the Strain Dairy land – the part of the Strain land that later became Barron Park Elementary School – to Laguna Avenue, and from Matadero Creek south to the line along which Barron Avenue was eventually connected to Laguna Avenue (probably in 1935 or 1936). After being purchased by the Neals, the block was later subdivided into two large lots facing west onto Laguna Avenue. The southernmost of the two included the future 3691

Laguna, where an interesting concrete block house was built.

The “Driscoll House”

The concrete house we now know as “the Driscoll house” was built by its first owner, Dorothy S. Rufier, probably in 1935-36. There were three owners or occupants after Rufier and before the Driscolls. I assembled this list based on Sabra’s fragmentary records and partly on her daughter Zoe Schirmer’s memory.

1. 1937 – Dorothy S. Rufier moved in.
2. 1947 – Mrs. Rowley bought (or lived in) the house.
3. 1947-1951 – Don and Gladys Granthau were occupants or owners.
4. 1951 – Kempers bought the property.
5. 1957 – Sabra and John Driscoll bought the property and moved in.

Unique Architecture and Construction

One’s first impression of this single-story house, from either the main collector street, Laguna Avenue, or the side street, Barron Avenue, is that its architecture and construction is fundamentally different from any other house in Barron Park or in the wider Palo Alto area, as far as I know. The roof is Spanish-style terracotta tiles. The walls are concrete block with mortar that was allowed to harden in the shape it took as it was squeezed out by the weight of the blocks above it. This combination yields a visual effect that is different from the usual, boring concrete block construction. Barbara Larsen told me that the family refers to it as “adobe style.” I find it attractive as well as unique.

The formal entry is on Laguna Avenue. A curved brick walk leads from the street to a large U-shaped, garden-like entry patio, enclosed by the two wings of the house. At the front door you come under the shelter of an exposed-beam roof, a feature repeated throughout the house.

The Main Room

A tiny entryway cut out of the wing on the right (south) side of the patio opens on the left to the main room, which occupies the entire area between the two wings. It is large – impressively so for a house that is not really a mansion, or anywhere near it. The room is about 31 feet long, north to south, and about 13-14 feet wide, east to west. The exposed-beam ceiling is high and dramatic,



B – Sabra’s watercolor painting of her house on Laguna Avenue. Photo by Richard Elder, 2025.

sloping from the west (front) to the east (back), the highest point at the front of the house. An east-west steel rod stiffening the structure was probably added as a minor retrofit for earthquake safety.

It has large windows on both the east and west sides, with views of both patios. The Driscoll family has used the room as both a living room and formal dining room. Barbara told me that Sabra’s family, the Kranzfelders, usually had 20-25 people at family gatherings. In her entry for her Stanford class 50th reunion, Sabra wrote that 25-35 former “hasher” friends gathered there every year from all over the country for “hasher get-togethers.”

On a portion of the east wall, the concrete blocks were laid on their sides, allowing light to pass through the large holes in the blocks. Each aperture was fitted with a colored glass “window” about four inches square. During the day this creates a uniquely lighted part of the east wall, which glows with color.

The Kitchen Wing

We exit the main room to the kitchen, which occupies the south wing of the house. The kitchen, remodeled and greatly enlarged in 1994, is even more impressive than the main room, beginning with its stunning size, about 22 by 21 feet (approximately 460 square feet). It is flooded with light from large windows on three sides, and airy, with the high, exposed-beam ceiling, the wing forming a dormer-shaped profile toward Laguna Avenue. The floor is tiled, like most rooms in the house. Many oak cabinets, some floor-to-ceiling, provide a great deal of

kitchen storage. One piece of art on the walls caught my eye: a fabric hanging, a “friendship” quilt of small blocks, each block submitted by a friend with a message written and signed.

The “TV Room”

From the kitchen we enter the room south of the main room. It was the original primary bedroom, with a tiny but full bath

(shower/sink/toilet), and a closet with sliding doors. During the Driscolls’ time, it was first used as a shared bedroom for four of the children. It had been divided into two rooms with a separating wall, one side for Barbara and Mia, and the other for Mike and Will. Later, this became the TV room and gallery with about a half-dozen of Sabra’s watercolors on two walls; one of the best is a painting of the Laguna Avenue house. (See Illustration B – Sabra’s watercolor of her house.)

The North Wing

We exit the TV room into the south end of the main room. At the far end, in the north wing, is Sabra’s primary bedroom and bath, a second bedroom, and another bath. Each room and the connecting hallway have the same general architecture: exposed-beam ceilings with a thin stiffening rod in each of the bedrooms. The hall and all the floors are tiled with contemporary materials, except for the unusual tiles on the bathroom floor. Barbara thinks they must be old, perhaps Italian or Mexican.

The Garden

Sabra was a dedicated gardener who designed the hardscapes herself. The house is entirely surrounded by her artistically planned gardens. The large area behind the house, comprising about 2,400 square feet, is exquisite, with neat, well-laid brick, winding walks, flowers, shrubs, small trees, and many succulents, which she favored. As a member of several different garden clubs, Sabra cultivated dozens of different succulent species and varieties. The house

has a detached two-car garage of the same adobe-style design, with a short driveway opening out to Barron Avenue. A small ADU behind the garage is in the same design as the main house and garage.

Author's note: I saw the Driscoll house in 1972 on my very first drive through Barron Park when my wife and I were house-hunting. I was struck by it as a good example of the diverse architecture and feel of Barron Park residences.

Sabra Driscoll's Photography

About five years ago, I learned that Sabra Driscoll had taken photographs of the Bol "donkey pasture" in 1969, before it was landscaped and developed as Bol Park. I contacted Sabra, and she showed me the prints she had made. There seemed to be more than 50 black-and-white shots, ranging in quality from that of amateur snapshots to others of a professional fine art level. Some were stunning. Sabra had made multiple prints of at least several photos; I have identified 46 separate images. I started cataloguing them and plan to cross-check with the negatives. You'll see three of them as illustrations here. Others, equally valuable, have never been published. We hope to post others on the BPA website in the future.

Sabra's passing on July 19, 2025, stimulated my research and preparation of this article. Sabra did not tell me when and why she took the photos, except to say that she was practicing techniques she had learned in her photography classes. She may have taken all 46 during a single session, while walking along the fences.

The Selected Photos

Sabra took seven photographs of the donkeys in the pasture; you'll see one here. Illustration C shows four donkeys in the pasture. At first I saw only three, but enlarging the screen image let me spot a fourth, a light-colored animal that almost blends in with the fence posts and is partly hidden by the third one. When you look at it online (bpapaloalto.org/bpa-newsletter/), enlarging the photo if needed, you'll see the fourth!

Illustration D is the best of the six images Sabra took of the "Bol barn," a curious structure originally the home of a Japanese-American truck-gardening family on La Pera [sic] Avenue until their "removal" to detention in 1942. Cornelis Bol took it apart and reassembled it on his pasture to serve



C - Four donkeys in the Bol pasture. Photo by Sabra Driscoll, 1969. Courtesy of the Barron Park History Archive.



D - The Bol "barn" in the pasture. Photo by Sabra Driscoll, 1969. Courtesy of the Barron Park History Archive.

as a tack room, workshop, tool storage, and winter hay storage. It was also used as shelter during bad weather by a homeless person who lived on the creek bank. After Bol Park was created, the barn was intended to be a meeting place for 4-H Club members, but it burnt down in an accidental fire in 1973.

Sabra was evidently fascinated by the old wooden fences and gates in and around the pasture; she took about 20 photos of them. The one I selected as Illustration E, is the most dramatic. It shows the main gate, between the railroad and the pasture, which was located about where the old farm machinery piece (part of the hay rake) is now. It was right next to an interesting wood structure that I believe was a chute to facilitate loading cattle on railroad cars. Long

rotted and gone now, it doubtless dated back to the Barron Estate days and probably served the cattle ranches to the west that later became part of the Piers Dairy "empire." My speculation is that the gate was built so high and visible in order to make it easy for the train engineers to see where to stop to line up a cattle car exactly where the chute was. Anyway, the gate still existed in 1969, and Sabra recorded it for posterity.

When the park was created, the BPA got the County to agree to leave the wooden fences, the gates, and the barn intact in the "undeveloped" back end of the park. Unfortunately, weathering, rotting, and fire do not recognize human esthetic decisions. We have Sabra to thank for showing us the little pieces of history that were once there.



E - The railroad gate to the pasture. Photo by Sabra Driscoll, 1969. Courtesy of the Barron Park History Archive.

Here is a link to the Palo Alto Online "Lasting Memories" story about Sabra Driscoll:

obituaries.paloaltoonline.com/obituaries/memorials/sabra-driscoll?o=9096

How to Contact the Historian

You are always welcome to contact me with corrections, comments, or questions.

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no texts)
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BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION

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Zoning & Land Use: Vacant

P.A. Neighborhood (PAN) Liaison:

Doug Burns

BPA Board Meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of most months at 7:00 p.m. All neighbors are welcome.

For schedule and location write to:

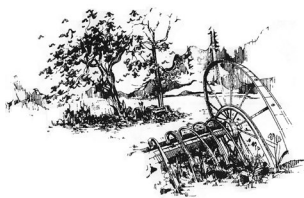
johnwadeking@gmail.com



bpapaloalto.org



Neighbors enjoy ice cream at the September 14, 2025, Ice Cream Social. Stalwart scoopers Karen Saxena, Linda Liu, Amol Saxena, and John King kept up with the crowds. Photos by Nancy Soliz.



2025 Barron Park Association Membership

bpapaloalto.org

Thanks to our members! 2025 Renewals began on 01/01/2025

Join or renew your membership online with PayPal at:
bpapaloalto.org/#join

BPA Memberships are on a 12-month cycle, but it's fine to renew early for 2026!

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:
Street Address:	Secondary email address:
<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter: I'd like the full color online edition (<i>instead</i> of a print copy for Spring, Summer, and Fall) <input type="checkbox"/> NEW! Babysitter Listings: I want to list a babysitter or request the list. BPA will email you for information.	Phone:

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☐ **Business** \$50

Total Contribution: \$ _____

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

The Barron Park Association is your volunteer neighborhood group serving the interests of our very special community. All residents of Barron Park and Green Acres 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 Night in Bol Park, Ice Cream Socials, Babysitter Listings, Senior Connections, Emergency Preparedness, Quarterly Newsletters, and Email lists.

Calling Local Business Owners!

Do you have a business in Barron Park? Are you a business owner living in Barron Park? A BPA Basic Business Membership (\$50/year) gives you one free ad in the Spring, Summer, or Fall 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 an ad in each of our quarterly Newsletters. For more information, contact our BPA Business Liaison, Paul Yang at: pabloyang@yahoo.com

Tuuta Fisiiahi. Continued from page 2

Mary and John, were living at Buena Vista, and some cousins. They had “staked it out.” I also have cousins in Stockton and Livermore and an aunt in Santa Rosa.

So you have lived all your life at Buena Vista but for three months? How’s life been for you and your family at Buena Vista?

Overall, I feel like everyone is welcoming and friendly. They realize we’re all in the same community here, though we have a mix of people and languages. We used to have more events before COVID, such as the Posada, which I really liked.

Did you know that BV residents started hosting Posadas as a way to encourage other Palo Altans and Stanford students and faculty to come here and meet Buena Vistans? To meet their neighbors, and see that it’s a friendly place?

No, I didn’t know.

In 2012, BV residents were told by the owner that they had six months to leave. They would lose everything – their homes, jobs, schools, and community. You were five years old when the effort began to save Buena Vista, and successfully ended when you were ten. What do you remember from that time?

My family was pretty stressed, because we didn’t really know where we could move. And it was out of nowhere for my family. They were busy with work and didn’t have much free time to figure things out.

Did you go to any of the City Council meetings about BV?

I went to a big event in front of City Hall before a Council meeting. I didn’t entirely know then what it was all about. I couldn’t get into the meeting room ‘cause it was full, but a friend of mine, Giovanni Lopez, got in and spoke. I remember the pizza!

That was the “pizza rally” that former Supervisor Joe Simitian organized. You were just eight years old. Hundreds of supporters and BV residents showed up to urge Council members’ approval of \$14.5 million toward the purchase of Buena Vista. Council did, and it was a key victory toward saving BV.

Does the local Tongan community play a role in your life?

I feel like some of my main values are Tongan. We value family a lot, and the community together. Family is super important to the



Tuuta plans to major in Food Science with a minor in Culinary, which is the study of chemistry and biology of food. Photo by Winter Dellenbach.

Tongan community. No matter what, we still all come together as a family at the end of the day. I want to be a good husband and father, showing up when needed.

We have a lot of reunions and celebrations so we’re able to see how we’ve been or how we’ve grown. Music is important, including Common Kings, and Reggae, especially Bob Marley. My parents tried to teach us Tongan by talking to each other in our language, but I didn’t pick up a lot. My parents kinda ran out of steam by the time they tried with me, the youngest.

What do you think had the greatest impact on your thinking, of who you are today?

I saw how hard my father and brother had to work for our family’s food and shelter. They work hard because they care for us. That had an impact on me. I realized I don’t want my family to have to work that hard. I want us to have a good life. I’m pretty sure there’s things I could do to help make life easier for them. Growing up, there were seven kids and our dad. It wasn’t the best situation, but we made it work. We were expected to contribute. Our dad worked endless nights, you know. I

feel like that motivated us all to care for each other so that our dad wouldn’t have to worry about us. Just taking care of us, making time to teach us life lessons. He was inspiring to our family.

What more would you like your Barron Park neighbors to know about you?

I like sports, cooking, and singing. And really enjoyed playing football at Gunn and making friends on the team.

What kind of music do you like singing?

R&B (rhythm and blues) and pop music.

I loved R&B as a teenager. Great singers and harmony. Anything else you want to add?

I like my church community. This week I’ve been volunteering for a kids’ church camp. I like to surround myself with different communities and try new things.

All good things, Tuuta. Thank you for taking your time for this interview. I understand my grandson is a good friend of yours, so this chance to get to know you is personally special for me. Now your Barron Park neighbors will know you too. You make us all proud, Tuuta.

Talking to Strangers

By Yvonne Boxerman



Image courtesy of Freepix.com

I love to talk to strangers when I can. I was born in Ireland, a country where everyone seems to have something to say about anything and everything . . . to anyone who will listen! So it's easy for me to see how engaging with all kinds of people is a rewarding way to live. If someone appears responsive, I find they are usually glad to talk and sometimes even want to prolong the discussion. It's as if some of us, especially those already in the grandparent generation, are starved for normal, friendly conversations, even with people we don't know.

A pattern developed during the pandemic that is still hanging on to some degree, where it obviously became so much more difficult to talk to people in our acute isolation. Five years on, most of us can never forget how we routinely steered away from others when we had to be out and about for essentials. For creatures who need the connections other humans provide, this type of behavior was painful for most of us.

It's nothing new, but people are always in a rush or otherwise engaged – with their hand-held device – to the exclusion of anything and anyone. Haven't we all seen groups at a restaurant having dinner, each in their own world? Heads down and thumbs flying, holding a device, finding what they're reading or texting to be so much more interesting than the people they're with. That seems to be true whether it's a family or a group of co-workers.

However, it's usually very different when we are on a trip. The conversations my husband and I have had when traveling, which is of course an optimal time to meet new people, have been truly memorable. Over the years we've had discussions about topics ranging from our political situation here, to what's special about the museum we're about to enter. Giving and receiving travel tips makes for a wonderful connection with people, especially when away from home.

A few years ago, while we were having dinner at a hotel somewhere in Europe, we noticed the young woman at the next table was alone. Turned out she had a couple of days off from her job working year round on an international cruise ship. After we talked for a while across two empty tables she laughingly said it would be easier if she joined us at our table for the rest of the meal. Of course we were delighted, and for the next hour she graciously shared some of her experiences traveling the world on a floating hotel!

While international connections are wonderful, one obviously doesn't get the same sense of community-building that a local conversation can engender. Recently, I had already reached the cashier at a local grocery store when I realized I'd forgotten to pick up milk. "No problem," said the helpful fellow. "I'll call someone and he'll bring it up to us." Sure enough, just a few minutes later a clerk brought a carton of milk to the checkout counter. "You're a scholar and a gentleman,"

commented the cashier in thanks. I was really taken aback because I hadn't heard that phrase since my father passed away, many years before. It was a favorite of his, and one he repeated to many people (well, yes, usually to men!) in appreciation of something or other.

I turned to the person behind me in line and asked her if she'd ever heard that expression. "Sounds pretty sexist, don't you think?" she said. To which the fellow behind her said, "Nah. I like it. Does anyone know where it comes from?" He, of course, whipped out his phone to ask Google. Though I was already checked out, we prolonged the conversation while he shared with those of us listening what Google had to say. (If you're interested, you can read about its purported derivation at the end of this story.)

For many years I had regularly walked along the Bol Park shared pathway at about the same time each morning. Some years ago, I noticed on many days that the same woman would pass me going in the opposite direction. We would always say hello to each other but never really stopped to talk. One day, after probably a year of greeting each other this way, I happened to see her up ahead of me, this time going in the same direction. I hurriedly caught up with her and introduced myself, and she did the same.

By the time we had reached Gunn High School, where she needed to go one way and I another, we had talked about books and literature, our families, and so much more. At that time I was in the process of starting a new book group and invited her to come to the initial planning meeting. She did join our group, but it was so terribly sad for all of us in that book club when she succumbed to cancer just a few years later. To this day I am so glad I caught up with this total stranger on the path and made that connection with someone equally willing to engage.

So how does one strike up a conversation with a stranger? It goes without saying that one has to be mindful of not being too intrusive. When there is reticence, then obviously that's the time to hold back on questions and comments. It would not be unusual, though, for example, in the checkout line, to

turn to the person behind and ask “Why do I always manage to pick the slowest line?” At a park it is almost always very easy to start a conversation with a pet owner about their dog. I recently spent more than an hour at Bol Park with a young woman I’d never met before, playing with her two collies and chatting. Though we’re generations apart in age, the topics we found to talk about seemed endless.

I learned a lot from my parents (yes, those Irish folks) who just loved to talk to everyone, even those not so easily classified as being either scholars or gentlemen! I hope that more of us, especially in these times of diminishing civil discourse, will be inspired to step out of our comfort zone and engage a stranger in a friendly conversation. The results may be both pleasant and surprising.

From Google: “The phrase ‘a scholar and a gentleman’ or the form ‘gentleman scholar’ emerged in the late 16th century, with its earliest known use in the writing of John Lyly in 1578, reflecting a societal ideal in late 19th-century Britain where advanced education and refinement were considered the most important personal qualities for a man. The expression emphasizes the connection

between deep intellectual pursuits (scholarship) and refined, genteel behavior and manners, rather than just wealth or social standing.”

Yvonne Boxerman was head of HR for several local biotech and pharmaceutical companies before her retirement. She and her husband are longtime Barron Park residents, raising their three children here. She is the author of two fairly recent books of short stories. A version of this article appeared in the Palo Alto Weekly.

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.

Barron Park Association Winter Newsletter Deadline!

Monday, December 1, 2025

Please submit articles (in Word if possible) for the Winter 2025 issue of the BPA Newsletter, with photos/images separate from text, by **Monday, December 1, 2025** (i.e., during the first week of December ☺) to Myrna Rochester at: mbrbpa@sonic.net

Find out if your BPA membership is current at bpapaloalto.org or write to barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com. Also, you may wish to send a query in advance with your ideas – for an article, story, report, update, interview, profile, announcement, review, anecdote, or artist’s page – to mbrbpa@sonic.net

Announcements for activities should be for events scheduled **after January 15, 2026**.

The Winter issue will be available to all Barron Park residents in January 2026 by U.S. mail and online.

BPA EMAILS AND WEB LINKS FALL 2025

- **BPA Website:** bpapaloalto.org/
- **BPA Newsletter Archive:** bpapaloalto.org/bpa-newsletter/
- **BPA Membership (Join/Renew):** bpapaloalto.org/#join
- **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:** Star Teachout at teachout@sonic.net
- **Emergency Services Volunteer Program:** Maurice Green at: mauryg3@comcast.net
- **Barron Park Historian:** Douglas L. Graham at: dgrahampaca@gmail.com
- **Senior Connections:** Jaya Pandey at: jaya.jpandey@gmail.com
- **BPA Webmaster:** Maurice Green at: bpawebman@bpapaloalto.org
- **BPA Activity Interest and Survey:** Star Teachout at: bit.ly/BP-Survey25 or Contact teachout@sonic.net
- **Barron Park Neighborhood Referrals:** Lisa Berkowitz Landers at: barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com
- **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 Garden:** To volunteer, contact Rich Elder at: rich.e.elder@gmail.com. Donate to the Native Habitat 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.

Barron Park Gathers for National Night Out 2025

The Palo Alto Police Department hosted the third National Night Out (NNO) in Barron Park on Tuesday, August 5, 2025. In addition to police, fire, and other city services trucks, this year's event featured the Mitchell Park Band and the Oaxacan Kitchen Food Truck. There were things to do for just about everybody.



A Palo Alto park ranger shares Animal Control's pet snake with eager residents. Photo by Serena Martin.



Two boys at the 350 Silicon Valley table play a game while learning ways that they can reduce their impact on the planet. Photo by Myrna Rochester.



The Mitchell Park Band took a road trip across town to perform at NNO. The band played classic rock for three hours straight, much to the delight of young children who wanted to dance, and residents who decided to sing along. Band members *left to right* are Matt Schlegel, Bill Norton, and Dan Morris. Photo by Serena Martin.

More photos on page 15



A young boy and his father learn more about fire trucks and firefighting. Photo by Myrna Rochester.



Police officers gather at Bol Park to have conversations with residents. Photo by Myrna Rochester.



Youth and adult volunteers from 350 Silicon Valley talk about the benefits of electric cars and homes while children enjoy "Climate Carnival" games. Photo by Sky Runner.



Children enjoy playing on the grass and dancing to the music at National Night Out. Photo by Serena Martin.



Oaxacan Kitchen provided tasty burritos and drinks. Photo by Serena Martin.



Sea Scouts of Nor-Cal teach knot-tying and other mariner skills. Scout troops and ships are open to both boys and girls. Photo by Serena Martin.



The pathways and nearby lawn were packed with people. Photo by Serena Martin.

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