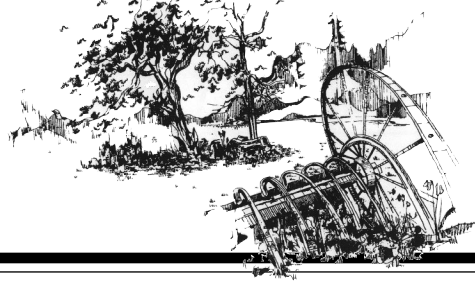


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BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

John King, BPA President



Dear Barron Park Neighbors:

As we move into the spring season, Barron Park continues to remind us why it remains one of Palo Alto's most special neighborhoods. Between community gatherings, volunteer efforts, and the everyday moments that make our streets feel like home, it has been another busy and rewarding quarter for the Barron Park Association.

Community Connections

One of the things that defines Barron Park is the strong sense of connection among neighbors. Over the past few months we've had a number of opportunities to come together, whether at neighborhood events, local meetings, or simply while walking the paths along Bol Park and visiting the donkeys.

Neighbors and visitors are enjoying the spring blooming season at the Bol Park Native Habitat Garden at Matadero and Laguna. It's now a regional gem, thanks to the tireless efforts of several generations of volunteer gardeners. (See p. 7 for the story of our Native Garden.) A little farther up the path, our beloved Barron Park donkeys, April and Buddy, are here to greet us. The Donkey Project, led by Jenny Kiratli (and several dozen other volunteers), cares for April and Buddy and maintains the pasture and facilities. The donkeys remain one of the most recognizable and cherished symbols of our neighborhood.

BPA Activities and Volunteers

Your Barron Park Association Board has continued working on several neighborhood priorities this quarter. These include monitoring City planning issues that affect Barron Park, coordinating with Palo Alto staff on local infrastructure concerns, and helping support community events that bring neighbors together.

I want to extend sincere thanks to our BPA Board members and volunteers who help keep things moving. From organizing meetings to maintaining communications, these efforts are entirely volunteer-driven and reflect the spirit of participation that makes Barron Park unique.

City and Neighborhood Updates

As always, we continue to stay engaged with issues that affect our community—from transportation and traffic concerns and development proposals, to broader planning discussions occurring at City Hall. The BPA works to ensure that Barron Park's voice is heard when decisions may affect our neighborhood. We encourage residents to stay informed and participate in community discussions, through our three Barron Park Email Lists (see p. 11) and also City-wide. When neighbors speak up and share perspectives, it helps create better outcomes for everyone.

Annual Meeting Held on March 29th

The Barron Park Association Annual Meeting was held on March 29th at



JOIN US FOR
MAY FÊTE 2026!
Sunday, May 17

Noon to 3 p.m., Bol Park

Artwork by Susan Breitbard.

Barron Park Elementary School. The invited presenter was Barron Park's own City Council Member, Julie Lythcott-Haims. She eloquently shared updates on the City's progress and addressed neighborhood concerns regarding the development proposals along El Camino, Matadero, and Kendall Avenues, specifically focusing on traffic and safety impacts in that corridor.

May Fête 2026 on Sunday, May 17th!

The annual Barron Park May Fête Celebration will be held in Bol Park on Sunday, May 17, from noon to 3 p.m. Come and enjoy this longtime annual tradition with the Maypole Dance, musicians and dancers, arts and crafts, games and contests, a raffle, and food trucks! See you there!

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Wildlife in Our Neighborhood: Gray Foxes and eDNA Update

By Milo Olavson



Two gray foxes dart past Toni and Richard Gooch's front porch on Ilima Way. Photo courtesy of Toni and Richard Gooch.



Maya Low and Milo Olavson collecting DNA samples from Matadero Creek in the Palo Alto Flood Basin. Photo courtesy of the Urban Wildlife Research Project.

My name is Milo. I'm 12 years old, and for the last couple of years, I've been tracking wildlife in our neighborhood by putting up trail cameras to see what the animals are doing while we are sleeping. Last year, I wrote an article for this Newsletter about the local wildlife, including a gray fox I named Barron.

Gray Fox Update

In November 2024, a gray fox first appeared on my trail camera. Bill Leikam, "the Fox Guy" and co-founder of the Urban Wildlife Research Group, thought Barron might be dispersing, which is when a fox leaves its parents to look for new territory and eventually a mate. After those early sightings, Barron vanished and didn't show up on any of my cameras for nearly a year.

Then, this past November, Barron finally reappeared! His return on my trail cameras was exciting, but it became even more amazing when a neighbor sent me a video from her Ring doorbell camera of two gray foxes running together. So this year's sighting suggests that Barron might have found a mate! This is great news because gray foxes are a keystone species, meaning that the environment depends on them to maintain balance. In Barron Park we need foxes for rodent control, especially as high rodent populations increase the risk of Lyme

disease-carrying ticks.

eDNA Testing in Matadero Creek

Trail cameras are a great way to observe and see what animals are doing throughout the day and night. On my cameras, I catch things like coyotes, raccoons, foxes, herons, and other birds and mammals, although you can never completely tell every single creature that lives there. But earlier this spring, instead of just watching them on my trail cameras, I got to collect eDNA samples from Matadero Creek and the Arastradero Reservoir. I did this as part of the Urban Wildlife Research Project with the help of Dr. Rick Lanman, a historical ecologist who studies our wildlife to aid in their recovery and re-wilding.

What Is eDNA Testing?

An eDNA (Environmental DNA) test is a method used to detect different types of organisms in the environment, like fish, mammals, amphibians, insects, and more. You can think of it as taking samples from water, soil, or even air, and filtering out DNA that is shed from the creatures' bodies. Some examples of eDNA you can pick up are from fur, skin cells, slime, or other free bits of DNA. You can then send it to a lab and they will test the samples to see which species left their DNA behind.

Even though it sounds complicated, collecting

an eDNA sample is actually pretty simple if you have the right tools. We used a drill pump to push creek water through a filter, which catches little scraps of DNA. After filtering about a liter of water, we sealed the filter and kept it cold. We repeated this at 15 different locations along Matadero Creek, then sent the filters to Cramer Fish Sciences, a special lab with equipment that amplifies and sequences the DNA to identify which species were present.

What We Found (and What We Didn't)

The biggest surprise from our eDNA testing is actually what we didn't find. We were hoping to detect endangered species like steelhead trout or California red-legged frogs, but none showed up. We also didn't find beaver DNA, though that doesn't mean beavers aren't around. Since they're nocturnal, their DNA might have washed away from the currents before we took our samples that day. In our eDNA testing, it was troubling that we didn't find any signs of steelhead trout, a federally threatened species that used to live in our creeks. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Stanford professors caught and



Steelhead trout. Image courtesy of NOAA Fisheries.

recorded steelhead trout in Matadero Creek, so they have disappeared since then. We did find a lot of invasive species, especially American bullfrogs, which are eating the native California red-legged frogs. We also found non-native fish like largemouth bass and mosquitofish in Arastradero Reservoir, plus several other non-native species near the Palo Alto Baylands.

Although we didn't find some of the species we had hoped for, here are some of the good things we discovered:

- Lots of Pacific chorus frog DNA, which means the water is clean and healthy.
- Several native fish, like Sacramento sucker, California roach, inland riffle sculpin, and three-spined stickleback.
- Sacramento blackfish were found in Matadero Creek for the first time.

Why Steelhead Are Missing and Why They Matter

Steelhead and rainbow trout may seem different, however, rainbow and steelhead are actually the same species, they just live differently. Both of them spawn in fresh water (like creeks), but if the fish swims to the ocean it becomes a steelhead trout, and if it stays in



Rainbow trout. Image courtesy of NOAA Fisheries

fresh water it remains a rainbow trout.

When steelhead thrived, they would swim from the Bay upstream into Adobe and Matadero Creeks to raise their young. This was a productive life cycle, but now they can't do that because of two major human-made obstacles: concrete channels and the tidal gate in the Palo Alto Baylands.

Matadero Creek Turned Into a Concrete Channel

After the "Christmas Floods" in Palo Alto in 1955, the City and the County Water District began converting long sections of Matadero Creek from El Camino to Highway 101 into a concrete channel. This was done to reduce flooding, but it ended up blocking wildlife from traveling between the foothills and the Baylands. Steelhead trout cannot swim against a flat sheet of water

moving at high speed with no boulders or eddies to rest behind. Mammals like foxes, bobcats and beavers avoid concrete channels because, there, they are easily spotted by owls and hawks. When animals get isolated in small territories of land (in this case the concrete channels act like a border), they face problems like inbreeding and disease, which is what caused gray foxes in the Palo Alto Baylands to die out in recent years, causing the rodent population to skyrocket. The concrete channel from El Camino Real to Highway 101 is too challenging for fish to



The concrete channel from El Camino Real to Highway 101 is too challenging for fish to swim upstream and there's no natural gravel or plants to lay eggs on. Photo courtesy of the Urban Wildlife Research Project.



The Palo Alto Flood Basin Tide Gate blocks steelhead trout from returning to our creeks. Photo courtesy of the Urban Wildlife Research Project.

swim upstream and there's no natural gravel or plants to lay eggs on.

Palo Alto Tide Gate Blocks Fish

The Palo Alto Tide Gate is located at the edge of the Palo Alto Baylands, where Matadero Creek and Adobe Creek meet the Bay, so it is a very important area for habitats in the

Bay Area. It's meant for controlling flooding, but acts like a giant valve for water flowing between the creeks and the Bay. It blocks the water from the Bay from coming in when the tide is high, and then lets the creek water out when the tide is low. Small fish can get through it, but bigger fish like steelhead can't.



Adding a simple fish portal like this one next to the Palo Alto Tide Gate could help steelhead trout return and flourish in our city. Photo: S. Scott & Associates. <https://ssaenvironmental.com/fish-friendly-tide-gates/>

This means that steelhead can't get back to these creeks to spawn, even though the creeks are a great habitat for them.

The Solution: A Fish Portal

This is a huge problem, but the answer is very easy! A fish portal is a passage that fish like steelhead can travel through without having to remove the tide gate. It still controls flooding though, because it opens when it is high tide (to let the fish through), and closes at low tide. A tidal fish portal does not let enough water through to cause flooding, just enough for fish to move through.

Without this passage, the trout will never be able to come back. It is simple to add and still prevents flooding, so there is no reason not to add it if it will protect fish like steelhead. This is the first step to steelhead coming back.

What You Can Do

If you think restoring native wildlife is important, you can help. We need to show the City Council and other groups that can help that this is important to local wildlife.

Continued on bottom of page 5

Business Spotlight: Cal Preserving, a Longtime Barron Park Company

By Bruce Watkins

Bruce and Kasia Watkins have lived in Barron Park for more than two decades, raising four kids here. Their business, Cal Preserving, has served our community and the Bay Area for nearly 40 years.

The Watkins sons attended, and the youngest, Leo, still attends, our neighborhood schools. Bruce has been heavily involved with baseball for over 20 years, in Palo Alto Little League and Babe Ruth League, and helping out at Gunn High School. He's now coaching eight-year-old Leo in Little League. Bruce and Kasia love our neighborhood and support community as best they can with Cal Preserving sponsorships of events such as the Juana Briones Juana Run, the Barron Park Association, and the neighborhood May Fête, along with other school activities and events.

Cal Preserving is a fairly unique and complicated business focused on exterior natural wood restoration and maintenance. It's a true family business: Two of Bruce's sons, Nathan and Alessandro, have joined the company and are involved in both development and operations. While Lucas has a different career path in fiber optics, he, along with fellow Gunn grad Anton Lee, used their theater and film backgrounds to create the training videos for Cal Preserving. Additionally, Kasia's sister, Agata, who lives in Poland, also helps with customer service for the long-term maintenance aspects of the business. Kasia's father, Antek, creates logos and graphics for the company. With many customers in our neighborhood and Palo Alto, as well as thousands in the greater Bay Area, it requires a significant effort to manage their needs and maintain the highest standards on all fronts.

Many Barron Park residents have natural wood decks, or natural wood siding such as cedar shingles, redwood, or other hardwoods. It turns out that all wood is a resource from dead trees. The wood weathers relatively quickly when exposed to the elements. Protecting the wood and keeping it looking good requires ongoing maintenance. Some homeowners do this work themselves; this can be frustrating and sometimes lead to disappointing outcomes. Those who get

it right know that it takes quite a bit of labor and knowledge to yield great, sustainable results.

The process typically requires power washing and possibly sanding, followed by the application of a wood brightener, and finally, stain. Each step requires physical capability and precision. In the worst case, you can actually set yourself back rather than achieve the result you're looking for. But when done correctly the process can extend the life of your deck or any other exterior natural wood surface, indefinitely.

Rather than letting this forest resource deteriorate and then need to be replaced, Cal Preserving supports our ability to maintain that resource and reduce the need to harvest trees as a construction resource. We are proud to support the sustainability of this resource and always have environmentalism and green business habits at the top of our priorities.

Most importantly we love being part of our



A Cal Preserving crew works on restoration of this wood exterior. Photo courtesy of Cal Preserving.

community, creating happy employees, happy customers, and a happy life.

If you want to do it yourself – or not – you may want to reach out to Cal Preserving (calpreserving.com). The Watkins family will be happy to assist community members, and all others, with pointers to make sure your project turns out as well as possible.

President's Message continued from page 1

Barron Park Strong!

You are reading the annual Membership 'push' edition of the BPA Newsletter. If you and your household have not yet joined the BPA, if your yearly membership has expired, or if you can make a donation toward our activities and expenses (rent for events! insurance! printing and postage!), please go to pages 5, 6, or 13 for a QR Code and link to our membership sign-up page, or go to the paper membership form on p. 12. Join your neighbors in supporting the BPA!

If you are interested in getting involved with the Barron Park Association—by joining the

Board, volunteering, attending meetings, or helping with events—we would love to hear from you! Community participation is what keeps Barron Park strong.

Thank you to everyone who contributes time, energy, and enthusiasm to our neighborhood. Barron Park continues to thrive because of the people who call it home.

Please reach out to me at johnwadeking@gmail.com or 650-483-2710.

Warm regards,

John W. King
President, Barron Park Association

Business Spotlight: Blue Oak Window Washing

By Matthew, Daniel, and David Keehn



(L to r.) David, Matthew, and Daniel Keehn of Blue Oak Window Washing. Courtesy of Blue Oak Window Washing.

A Brief History

Blue Oak Window Washing (blueoakwash.com) is a family-owned business that began in October 2025, shortly after our family returned home to

Barron Park. We're a father-and-sons team – Matthew, Daniel, and David – and we're grateful to reintroduce ourselves to the neighborhood we consider home.

Our return to Barron Park came in

September 2025, after 17 years living in Lithuania and Poland. During those years abroad, our family operated a furniture distribution warehouse business, working across the Baltic States, Poland, and Belarus. That chapter gave us a deep appreciation for steady work, reliability, and the kind of long-term relationships that communities and businesses are built on – values we're bringing back here with us.

Matthew, Daniel, and David

All three owners – Matthew, Daniel, and David – are graduates of Gunn High School, and Barron Park has long been home for our family. Returning after many years overseas has been both a homecoming and a fresh start.

Matthew spent many years leading the family's operations abroad, managing the day-to-day realities of running a warehouse business across multiple countries – coordination, logistics, and the kind of problem-solving that comes with serving customers across a wide region. Daniel grew up with that same hands-on, family-business rhythm – learning what it means to show up, follow through, and take pride in work that people count on. David shares that same foundation: practical responsibility, teamwork, and a strong connection to the place we've returned to and the wider Palo Alto community.

A Note of Thanks

Barron Park has always been more than a neighborhood to us – it's a community. We're thankful to be back, and we appreciate the warm welcome as we reconnect with neighbors and contribute to the local fabric again.

steelhead to return to their complete life cycle and the creeks, like they used to. And if we restore a healthy environment, we could see even more wildlife thrive—and maybe baby gray foxes soon!



California Gray Fox. Photo by Tim Teske, taken in a Midpeninsula Open Space Preserve openspace.org/where-to-go/nature/gray-fox

Gray Foxes, continued from page 3

Share this article. Help spread the word to neighbors, friends, and anyone else!

Tell your City Council members. You can write or email your City Council members about the steelhead. Tell them we need a solution.

Support local conservation groups. Volunteer or donate to groups like the Urban Wildlife Research Project (urbanwildliferesearchproject.org) that are working to protect local wildlife.

Next Steps and Goals

Our long-term goal is to naturalize the concrete channels to help the environment and reduce disease risks for all wildlife, whether this means making them animal friendly or just removing them completely. But, right now, the first step is opening a fish portal to let steelhead through.

Both of these would allow the threatened



Do you want Movie Night in Bol Park this year? Join the BPA to support this Fall community event!



bpapaloalto.org/#join

On Velcro Burr, Catchweed, Bedstraw, Cleavers . . .

By Doug Moran

This small burr is called the Velcro of the plant world because it is covered with hooks that grab tightly and can be extremely difficult, even painful, to remove from fabric, hair, and fur. Even if one of them looks like it's just floating on my cat's fur, I know not to try to lift it off! Catchweed is the worst burr I encounter in this area.

The burrs latch onto passersby – human or animal – and disperse along the paths they travel.

The next generation grows where the previous one drops, well positioned in its turn to catch onto passersby. As I write this (late February), I see immature plants in many of the places I walk, both in established and new locations. I'm making mental notes on where to be alert for it.

The scientific name of this plant is *Galium aparine* (or similar member of the *Galium* genus).

Here, we'll call it *Catchweed*. Other everyday names include: *bedstraw*, *cleavers*, and many words that start with *sticky-*, like *sticky-willy*, *-weed*, *-bob*, *-back*, *-molly*, *-willow*, *-jack*, *-grass*.

By the time this story is published, the *Catchweed* vines will have extended horizontally and vertically into nearby plants, both in open space and in our gardens. They become inconspicuous by intertwining tightly within those plants, enabled by hooks on the *Catchweed* stems. Their vines can be several feet long and have multiple branches. The branches are fragile and break off when pulled; the remainder of the plant is more strongly attached to its surroundings. You may not even realize that much of the vine is still there.

Catchweed burrs themselves are very small, all but inconspicuous, and practically indistinguishable from their background. In my yard, I find more *Catchweed* while pulling other weeds than I do when I intentionally look for it. I will often think I have cleaned it all out, only to have burrs appear on my pant legs. Unable to spot the ones I missed, I slowly retrace my steps, watching for a burr to appear on my pants. Spotting the surviving plant can be difficult, even when you know

where it is within a few inches.

Note: Whenever you anticipate being caught by these burrs, consider your clothing choices carefully. For example, burrs appear to only weakly attach to denim and are easily removed from your jeans. You have only to compare this to what they do to typical (knit) socks.

Regarding *dogs*: There is substantial variability in how susceptible the range of dogs' coats are to these burrs.

Advice for (future) weeding: *Catchweed* is most easily spotted early in the season when the surrounding vegetation hasn't grown in enough to provide good concealment. The elongated shape of the leaves in the round array and their loose separation within whorls are distinctive.



Later on, the small white flowers can be distinctive enough to locate the vines, but it turns out to be too easy to pull only a vine or two, leaving the rest behind.

Does *Catchweed* have practical uses? Various cultures and herbalists have used it in herbal preparations. Used fresh, it is edible and medicinal: *Catchweed* teas are said to be diuretic and anti-inflammatory.



Catchweed (*Galium aparine*). Taken early March 2026 along the Bol Park shared pathway, near Matadero Creek. Photo by Myrna Rochester.

The common name *bedstraw* comes from its use as bedding and mattress stuffing in Europe (Britain, Ireland, Scandinavia) and in the Americas (by Native Americans and early pioneers). The hooks on the stems turn out to be an advantage: They keep the stuffing from matting and becoming compacted. This time of year I'm sure I can pick up enough, say, to put together a mattress for my guest bed . . .


Enjoy our Ice Cream Socials? This popular Bol Park event is funded by memberships from neighbors like you! Please join the BPA or donate!


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



bpapaloalto.org/#join

The Bol Park Native Garden: A Timeline

By Shirley Finrock and Carla Bliss



Native Douglas Irises thrive near native ferns in the Native Habitat Garden. Photos by Myrna Rochester.

Most of us, walking, biking, or scooting along the Bol Park shared pathway, or driving by, give just a quick glance at the extensive California Native Habitat Garden at the corner of Matadero and Laguna Avenues. In spring, the garden is at its most spectacular, with many plants in bloom, since the majority of California Native plants and shrubs are dormant in late summer and autumn. We're fairly sure that many Barron Parkers and most passersby are unaware of the approximately 30-year history of the garden.

In the mid-1990s, Erna Glanville, who lived on Encina Grande, was chair of the Beautification Committee of the Barron Park Association. From 1996 to 2000, we held tours in May of recently remodeled homes in Barron Park, highlighting gardens and front yard landscaping. We also sponsored separate fundraisers for which Friends of Palo Alto Parks, a Charitable Trust, provided matching funds. We used them to improve the appearance of the open space area at the Laguna and Matadero corner of Bol Park.

The open space of Bol Park was in poor condition after the lengthy construction of the flood control culvert under the bike path, completed in summer 1996. Advised by BP residents Inge Harding-Barlow and Doug Moran, the

Santa Clara Water District (now Valley Water) provided the first California Native plants for revegetation, to go along with a significant number purchased by the Barron Park Association. The BPA also bought a hose cart – stored under a large citrus tree at a nearby home – which energetic volunteers rolled over to the park to water the young plants. For the Water District plants, Parks and Open Space personnel provided a coupler key to access the park irrigation system already in place.

Ten years later, in 2007, Carla Bliss, Agi Kehoe (a local native garden designer), and Shirley Finrock met with the Palo Alto Director of Parks and Open Space to propose the community's plan to focus on the area at Matadero and Laguna, today's Bol Park Native Habitat Garden. Sabra Driscoll encouraged us to apply to the Garden Club of Palo Alto for a grant. Irrigation lines and a solar-powered controller were installed. (This equipment has recently been replaced and irrigation lines installed, expanded, and repaired by Richard Elder and Jeff Burch of the BPA Native Habitat Committee.)

Melanie Cross, who lived three houses behind the Bol Park Native Habitat Garden, was a skilled gardener and a lifelong proponent of native plants. Agi Kehoe initially encouraged Melanie to join the Bol Park effort. Starting in 2018, under Melanie's watch, the size of the Native Habitat Garden tripled. Her husband Peter Cross created plant markers, and now each of the hundreds of plants can be identified with both its botanical and its common name. Melanie lobbied property owners along Roble Ridge Road to remove a huge eucalyptus tree that shaded the area. It was hampering the growth of plants beneath it and was a clear safety hazard. Our dear Melanie passed away last year. Barron Park residents lost a wonderful member of our community.

Both Linda Elder and Richard Elder are key to the existence of the Native Habitat Garden. They applied for grants from sources such as



"Melanie's Bench," honoring the Native Habitat Garden's most dedicated and productive gardener, Melanie Cross, offers a peaceful spot for lunch or a chat.

Hewlett-Packard and have devoted countless volunteer hours to the plantings and infrastructure, including park benches built by Richard Elder and Jeff Burch. Volunteer work crews, made up of students and community members from the BPA's Native Habitat Committee and from our local treasure, Grassroots Ecology (grassrootsecology.org) – until quite recently guided by ecologist Claire Elliott – are regularly working hard to create and maintain the garden.

The Bol Park Native Habitat Garden has become an important destination. Annually featured on the Growing Natives Garden Tour of the California Native Plant Society (in 2026, on April 18-19), the garden is an excellent educational site: to see the many species appropriate for our area, to take ideas home to our own gardens, and to learn that environmental change can be mitigated, with beauty, starting in our own neighborhood.

Grants and contributions to the Bol Park Native Habitat Garden are administered through the Charitable Trust of FOPAP, Friends of the Palo Alto Parks:

friendsofpaparks.org/donations/p/bol-park-native-plant-garden All funds go toward equipment, new plants, and maintenance.

If you have questions and to volunteer with the Bol Park Native Habitat Committee, please contact Rich Elder at:

bpnativegarden@gmail.com

Change of Plans for the Buena Vista Community

by Winter Dellenbach



Buena Vista residents enjoying a sunny morning. Photo by Winter Dellenbach.

Much has changed in the plans for Buena Vista (BV) since its owner, Housing Authority of Santa Clara County (HA), paused a planned redevelopment of the site in October 2024. In August 2025, HA decided to move forward with a different concept. The new plans will not only affect BV residents, but also some nearby neighbors.

A dramatic change will happen this spring when all but the 12 BV households located west of the Los Robles Avenue entrance will be temporarily relocated off the property for about eight months. This will allow replacement of the site's sewer, water, and gas lines, an upgrade of the electrical grid, and repaving.

Residents will move out in stages, staying in Palo Alto and Mountain View during the upgrades. Families with students attending Palo Alto schools will be given priority to remain in town and continue in their current schools. Relocated households are expected to move back to BV toward the end of this year (2026).

HA is required by law to make all relocation arrangements for housing. It will pay moving costs for each household as well as any

difference in rent. During the upgrade work, BV will be fenced to protect residents' homes in their absence. Residents will not be able to access the site or their homes until they return. There will be onsite security, and the property manager will continue onsite Monday through Friday.

After their return to BV, resident owners may choose to replace their current homes with new or used homes they purchase on the private market that conform to HA's specifications. In the original plan, ongoing renters at BV were going to occupy a newly constructed apartment building that promised community rooms,

landscaped open spaces, and a dog run for use by all BV residents. This building will now not be built, and renters will return to their mobile homes. Thus, neighbors adjacent to the site will not be facing construction activity at this time.



The Housing Authority of Santa Clara County will be replacing Buena Vista's sewer, water, and gas lines, as well as upgrading its electrical grid and repaving. Photo by Myrna Rochester.

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER SPRING 2026

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Prodigy Press

In the original plan, Buena Vista was to go all-electric. This plan has also been revised: Residents will return to their current homes that mostly rely on natural gas. However, new laundry, maintenance, and trash facilities will be built just west of the Los Robles entrance. This may allow for added parking spaces within BV. Otherwise, vehicle parking won't change much, on or off the property.

HA has stated that the change in plans was determined by finances and funding concerns.

Letters Home: A Jewish Chaplain's Vietnam Memoir

By Sheldon Lewis

Dear Neighbors,

Long ago, from mid-1970 to mid-1971, more than half a century, I served as a Jewish chaplain in Vietnam. Just a few years ago, I finally published a memoir based on daily letters and audiotapes that I sent to my newlywed wife, Lorri. Why did it take me so long? Vietnam vets were not warmly welcomed home, and no one seemed eager to listen to our experiences of misery and trauma caught up in a morally fraught war.

Over time, attitudes changed vis-à-vis Vietnam veterans, even as the judgment of that conflict remained essentially the same. Meanwhile, on the fiftieth anniversary to the day of a catastrophic explosion that took the lives of two soldiers and gravely wounded a very good friend with whom I stayed while he hovered between life and death, I realized that some memories were worth preserving. I set about writing this memoir. An excerpt appears below.

Just a word about context. Much of this passage was written soon after I returned home. My use of gender reflects common usage at that time. In addition, in that era, women did not serve in combat, and women ordained as rabbis were just beginning to appear. Times have changed for the better!

Our family arrived in Barron Park 53 years ago as I began to serve as rabbi of Congregation Kol Emeth in Palo Alto. Lorri and I are now retired with four grown sons, our daughters-in-law, and 12 grandchildren to keep us busy.

Sheldon Lewis

CHAPTER 4 Arrival in Vietnam



In front of interfaith chapel, Nha Trang

It was excruciating to leave my wife so soon after our marriage. While I missed her terribly every day of our separation, she provided a lifeline for me, knowing that someone so special awaited my return. Practically her presence in my life enabled me to write this account fifty years later. Our letters and audio tapes provided a careful record of my daily journeys and encounters.

Another source of great comfort during this war was the blessing of telephone connections from time to time. A network of volunteer amateur radio operators in the States provided inexpensive though awkward opportunities to be in touch with loved ones in real time. Our cost was the rate of the telephone connection from the operator's home to our loved ones.

24

Sheldon Lewis in Nha Trang, Vietnam. This photo is on page 24 of his book, *Letters Home: A Jewish Chaplain's Vietnam Memoir*.

Chapter 14: The Aftermath

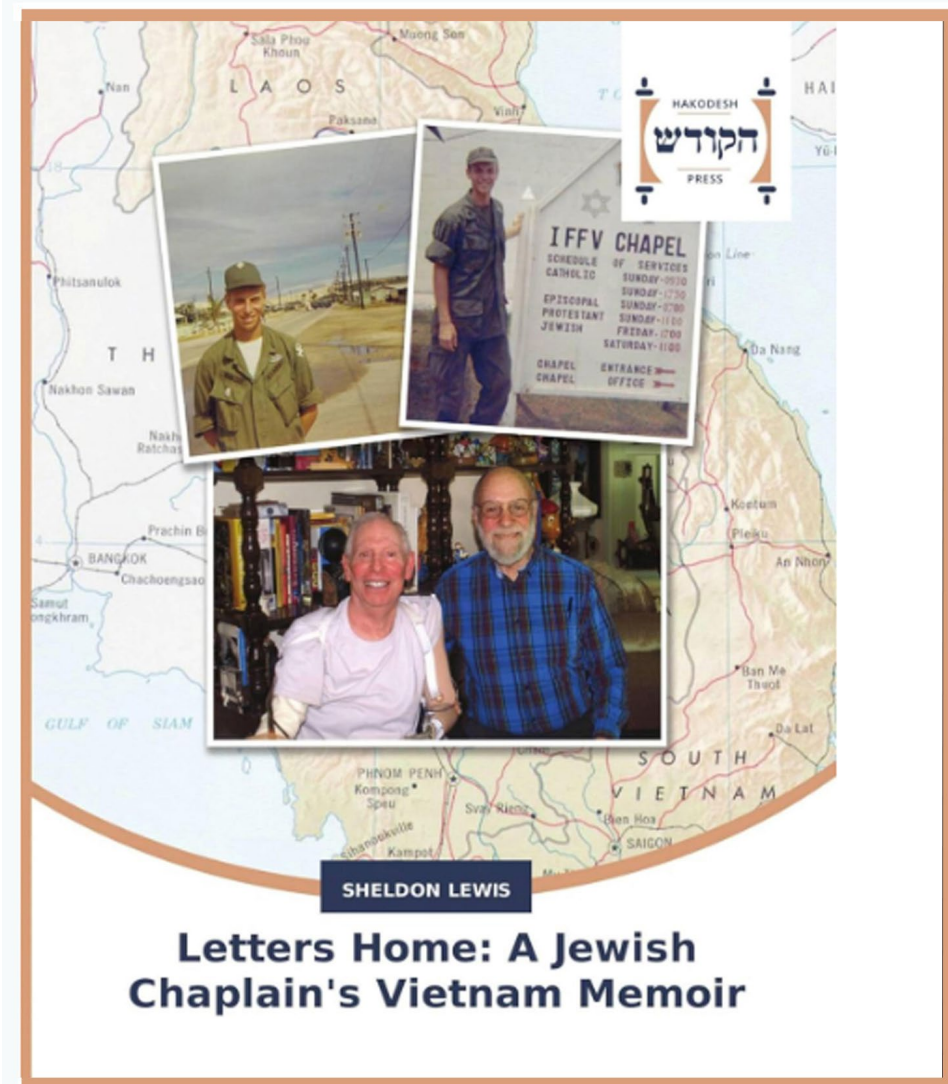
On the long flight home [in 1971] from Cam Ranh Bay to McChord Air Force Base near Tacoma, I struggled to make sense of the year. [The] editor of *Sh'ma* [an independent Jewish journal] had asked for my reflections on the chaplaincy in Vietnam, my expectations and my experiences. Before sitting down to write, I had shared my thoughts with my wife:

"I have felt a reluctance to write up to now – somehow being a little too bewildered to sort out my feelings and especially the moral issues. But while I feel so much ambivalence toward the chaplaincy now, still I want to help and to talk to others, and I do feel its importance. I have to admit that much of my bewilderment is as much the personal hurts of being away and isolated as it is the moral

and spiritual limitations and concessions in being in the army."

Finally, I wrote for *Sh'ma* [article published January 28, 1972]:

"Sitting in the full but almost silent flight which was to bring me home from Vietnam, I was troubled by thoughts of how to respond to questions that were certain



Cover of Sheldon's memoir published in 2021 by Hakodesh Press.

to come. 'How do you feel now about the war?' 'How has the experience changed your point of view?' 'What is the truth about Vietnam?' I found it was more difficult for me to talk about the war than it had been two years earlier before entering the chaplaincy. Even in anticipation, I was stammering. The words and thoughts and judgments simply had to be forced.

"Now I realize that my grasping for words about war is perhaps one of the consequences of serving as a chaplain. The two years were a time of silence, of distance from the protest movement, of being unable to voice publicly my revulsion for Vietnam. My writing and teaching avoided moral issues which otherwise would have been central. Now it was so difficult to find the words, to pick up a train of thought long neglected. It was as if a certain area of my ability to judge had atrophied and now had

to be nurtured anew. Yet if I were to face the same choice which I had made two years ago, I would not hesitate to go the same route.

"If anything, this period in uniform has made the issue of the chaplaincy more complex for me than it had been before. I would insist now that one really does give up some of his ethical autonomy and that one learns about the meaning of compromise firsthand. When I entered the army, I came into a context with a pre-programmed moral valence. The direction of the military became mine. Regardless of how I would see my role as a rabbi, I always knew that I was contributing to the Army's goals. If I were to do my job at all, I would be helping my men to be better soldiers and to be a little more at peace within themselves.

"While I never picked up a weapon or had to rally men into battle, I was furthering the

aims of a military enterprise to which I could not subscribe at all. Even the presence of a rabbi has that effect. My personal intent to serve the needs of Jews in a more limited sense could only be separated cerebrally from the larger picture.

"Yet today it is just that principle of moral autonomy whose value I question. For a rabbi, it almost seems itself immoral. The role of rabbi implies for me an interconnectedness with fellow Jews, the sharing of the crises which face the Jews of this generation. That role necessarily contains a certain limitation on our personal freedom if insistence on our being untainted severs contact with our brethren. Today rabbinical students and young rabbis are really the only group who can live their lives without ever facing the issue of military service. The dilemma which plagues the formative years of most young men, the often-excruciating delays and redirection of lifetime plans caused by the imminence of the draft is unknown to the man who decides to enter the rabbinate. Unless he steps forward by volunteering or by actively joining in draft and war protest, he passes unscathed. This inequity which places Vietnam and military service at such a comfortable, theoretical distance from the rabbinate, makes me uncomfortable. There is a need to respond to this imbalance although I know that my response is by no means the only one. It seems to me indisputable that some response is even an obligation.

"That, as a rabbi, I must be with Jews wherever they are and in whatever activity they are engaged seems to me untenable. But those who are today in the service have a special claim upon us. Most are not moral giants, neither are they criminals. They reject radical action and enter the service because the law requires them to serve. Yet they bring with them all their feelings of ambivalence and doubt about Vietnam and the military which most young men harbor. They do not choose to be where they are, and therefore all the normal problems of adjustment of a human being in a war zone are complicated and intensified.

"Such men deserve special attention. I found that I had to reorient some of my most precious goals as a rabbi. I had to get used to a constantly transient congregation, widely scattered, and I found I could not develop an ongoing program of learning and

observance over any substantial period. The faces were ever-changing: the contacts were fleeting. Not uncommon was a whole day's journey to see two or three men or Shabbat spent with half a minyan [that is, five adults, where ten are needed for a service]. Yet being with those few men seemed to me to be important. Even if we shared no religious concerns, we did have many common bonds, and dialogue was almost always possible. At least we could share our misery. Often there was no one else to whom a Jewish man could talk, and certainly there was no other religious influence. Not once during the year did one of the men ask me why it was I had come. They seem to know.

"For some, the pressures of each day sometimes exploded into a crisis. I particularly remember those times, being with a man who just a few hours before had lost all his limbs when a booby trap was triggered, spending time with a group of guys in shock at the death of a buddy just days before he was to go home, sitting with a man who had killed five or six human beings and now could no longer stomach the war or maybe himself, trying to comfort a man who just heard that his wife had become pregnant back home, 9,000 miles away. I cannot

imagine how terrifying it could be to have to face these tragedies all by oneself.

"God willing, Vietnam and the compulsory draft will soon be past. Until that day however, the chaplaincy must receive a high priority in our commitments. It is not even desirable that every man volunteer, but I feel it is the responsibility of all to see that our chaplaincy quotas are met. However we feel about the war, regardless of how we might abhor the military's direction, the men in uniform cannot be abandoned."

Excerpted from Rabbi Sheldon Lewis's Letters Home: A Jewish Chaplain's Vietnam Memoir, published by Hakodesh Press/Dodo Books Indian Ocean Ltd. (Chisinau, Moldova), 2021.

**Barron Park Association
Newsletter,
Summer Deadline!
Monday, June 1, 2026**

Please submit articles (in Word if possible) for the Summer 2026 issue of the BPA Newsletter, with photos/images separate from text, by **Monday, June 1, 2026** (i.e., during the first week of June ☺) to Myrna Rochester at: mbrbpa@sonic.net

Find out if your BPA membership is up-to-date at bpapaloalto.org or write to barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com Also, you may wish to send a query in advance with your idea – 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 July 15, 2026*. The Summer issue will be available in early July to members of the BPA, online and by U.S. mail.

BPA EMAIL LISTS

The Barron Park Association offers three Email Lists for any Barron Park or Green Acres resident to post and read: (1) *bpa-news* for news, information, and announcements; *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 one or more lists, go to: bpapaloalto.org/bpa-email-lists/ for sign-ups and information, or write to: listmanager@bpapaloalto.org

Need a Local Babysitter?

New BPA Babysitter listings are located on the **members-only** "BPA Referral List" page of our website: bpapaloalto.org/bpa-referral-list/



Babysitter image licensed from Adobe Stock Photos.

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION

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Spring 2026**

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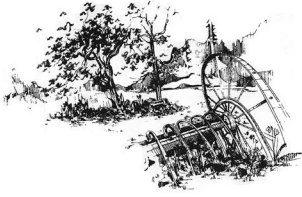
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- Email Lists:* Richard Elder
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- Events:* Vacant
- Barron Park History:* Douglas L. Graham
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- Native Habitat:* Richard Elder
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- Traffic & Streets:* Doug Burns
- Webmaster:* Maurice Green
- Welcoming:* Star Teachout
- 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



The BPA needs your support! Join or renew for 2026!

Check your membership status on our new website: bpapaloalto.org

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

Personal check? Complete this form; mail your check payable to: **Barron Park Association**

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

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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 cannot confirm your membership through the website, 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 and Household Service Listings, Neighbor Support Networks, 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 complimentary ad in a quarterly BPA Newsletter. You may also place a "Spotlight" article about 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

Silicon Valley Open Studios

“Hundreds of artists, thousands of ideas, unlimited imagination”

By Rona Foster

The 40th annual Silicon Valley Open Studios is an opportunity to connect with artists of all kinds. The two-week-end adventure features artists throughout San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. This is a free event, with over 300 artists showing their work during the first three weekends in May 2026, Saturday and Sunday, from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Silicon Valley Open Studios encourages artists and enthusiasts to meet, view original creations, watch demonstrations, and purchase fine art and crafts from the source.

You may visit artists in their own studios or at group sites where a number of artists will exhibit. Discover new artists showing for the first time, or seek out your favorite artists. Spend quality time getting to know the artists, and learn about their inspiration and techniques. Find the perfect work of art for your home or office, or commission your own masterpiece.

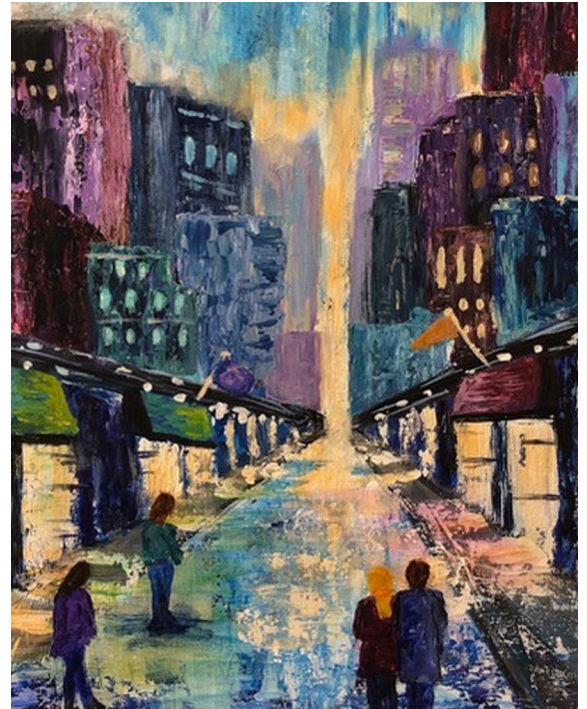
The studio of Rona Foster, Barron Park resident of over 30 years, will be open for Silicon

Valley Open Studios the second and third weekends of May. May 9–10 and 16–17, from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Rona is a painter, mixed media, and clay artist. She is hosting a variety of artists from the surrounding area. She invites you to explore the art of creative living with artists ranging in media from painting, mixed media, pottery, greeting cards, photography, collage, and jewelry, to fused glass, handmade sewn textiles, colored pencil, and graphite. This is Rona’s 17th year participating in Silicon Valley Open Studios.

The address is: 3858 Timlott Court, Palo Alto, landline phone: (650) 858-0589

Web addresses: RonaFoster.com
svos.org/artist/rona-foster

For more information about Silicon Valley Open Studios, go to: SVOS.org



“City Street” Painting by Rona Foster.

Douglas Graham Wins PAST Award

By the Editors

Barron Park Historian Douglas Graham has been chosen to receive this year's *PAST Heritage Bo Crane Award* which recognizes an outstanding citizen who has contributed to historic preservation in Palo Alto and Stanford.

The Palo Alto Stanford Heritage (PAST) Board of Directors will present the award to Doug at their Annual Awards Ceremony on Sunday, May 3, 2026, at the Palo Alto Art Center Auditorium, 1313 Newell Rd, Palo Alto, CA 94303. Event time is TBD.

Doug will be presented with a framed award certificate from the PAST Board in recognition of his impressive, decades-long accomplishments and contributions to preserving the history of our community.

Congratulations, Doug!



Doug Graham brings history to life at last year's May Fête in Bol Park. Photo by Myrna Rochester.



Image by pch.vector on [Freepik.com](https://www.freepik.com)

Enjoying the Spring BPA Newsletter? You can receive the newsletter every quarter in the mail or online by becoming a Barron Park Association member!



bpapaloalto.org/#join

April Turns 17!

Buddy's Buddy Thrives in Barron Park

By Hilary Glann

April, our little donkey neighbor, turned 17 on Thursday, April 2, 2026, and enjoyed a birthday celebration at Bol Park on Saturday, April 4.

April has come a long way since her arrival in Spring 2023. April suffered insulin resistance – most likely from her obesity – and chronic White Line Disease in her front right hoof. Losing 80 pounds and getting great care from the UC Davis Veterinary Hospital enabled April to recover and to feel better.

As her health issues receded, April became more comfortable and affectionate with both Buddy and the donkey handlers. April and Buddy are now a great team that hangs out together in the pasture. They show up for a myriad of events in Bol Park, and they staff the "visitor hours" at the pasture. They also produce the key ingredient in *Jen and Perry's Barron Park Gold*, premium donkey manure which is gathered, aged, and packaged in

Barron Park by dedicated volunteers.

Barron Park Gold is sought after by gardeners in Palo Alto and beyond, particularly for garden vegetables.

As you wish April a Happy Birthday, please remember that funding for the donkeys' food, vet care, and all other expenses come from donations from individuals like you. Please donate at barronparkdonkeys.org/



April poses for her birthday picture with Jenny Kiratli, lead handler of the Barron Park Donkey Project. Photo by Hilary Glann.

BPA EMAILS AND WEB LINKS

SPRING 2026

- **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:** To join, go to: bpapaloalto.org/bpa-email-lists/ for sign-ups and information, 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 and Star Teachout at: teachout@sonic.net
- **Barron Park Historian:** Douglas L. Graham at: dgrahampaca@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 N2N (Neighbor to Neighbor):** Jaya Pandey at: bpa-n2n@googlegroups.com
- **Barron Park Donkeys:** To donate or volunteer, go to: barronparkdonkeys.org or contact Jenny Kiratli at: barronparkdonkeys@gmail.com To purchase donkey merchandise: barronparkdonkeys@gmail.com
- **Bol Park Native Habitat Garden:** To volunteer, contact Rich Elder at: bpnativegarden@gmail.com Donate to the Native Habitat Garden through the "Bol Park Fund" at: friendsofpaparks.org/donations/p/bol-park-native-plant-garden 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.

BPA Annual Meeting

By Myrna Rochester



At our well-attended BPA Annual Meeting on Sunday, March 29, Palo Alto City Council Member and local resident Julie Lythcott-Haims gave an engaging, wide-ranging talk covering her experience, her work with the Council, and the issues we face in the run-up to major construction planned for our area. She answered the transportation and safety concerns voiced by attendees thoughtfully and with a promise to keep them in mind, as Council discussion proceeds.

In the foreground are elevations of the proposed projects at 3606 El Camino and the Creekside Inn site, showing Matadero Avenue running between them. Elevations and photo reproductions contributed by Baldwin Cheng. Photos by Myrna Rochester.



BPA President John King provides an overview of past activities in Barron Park, and plans for the year ahead.

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



A close up of the proposed housing projects at 3606 El Camino and at the Creekside Inn site by Baldwin Cheng.



One last chance to feel good about April the Donkey, shown here happily eating her donkey kibble and hanging out with one of her youngest admirers at the donkey pasture. Photo by Serena Martin.

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Contact Home Chef Monica Foutz at
530-828-4617 or Monica3@comcast.net



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