

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

President's Message: Embracing Summer in Barron Park

By John King, BPA President



Dear Neighbors: Happy summer, Barron Park! During the long days of summer in our beautiful

neighborhood, it is wonderful to see so many people out and about, enjoying the unique charm that makes our community so special. Whether you are walking along the paths of Bol Park, greeting our beloved resident donkeys, or cycling down our tree-lined streets, summer reminds us all why we love calling this place home.

We have a vibrant summer and fall season ahead, and our community spirit is as strong as ever. Reflecting on the past few months, I am incredibly proud of the wonderful gatherings and collaborative efforts that continue to bring us together.

Recent Highlights and Community Updates

- **A Festive May Fête:** On May 17th, Cornelius Bol Park came alive for our annual May Fête celebration – it's been 48 years! Neighbors and friends gathered to enjoy live entertainment by Gary Breitbard with the Broceliande Celtic Band, Folk Dancing by the Deer Creek Morris Team, and traditional Maypole dancing by young and old. It was a wonderful turnout for the local activities – crafts, active games, raffles, marble jar guessing (!), Donkey Project merch, local organization tables, and the Oaxacan Kitchen food truck.

Thanks to everyone who lent a hand before, during, and after the event, with a special shout-out to Carol Garsten for her time and organizational skills.

- **Neighborhood Town Hall Meeting:** On Tuesday, May 20th, Barron Park was host to a highly productive Neighborhood Town Hall Meeting with our Palo Alto officials. Thank you to everyone who attended and joined the discussion to voice your thoughts, share insights, and help shape our collective approach to ongoing neighborhood opportunities and challenges. Your active engagement drives our community forward.
- **Ice Cream Social:** On Sunday, May 31st, we held our summer Ice Cream Social at Bol Park, feeding a seemingly endless line of kids and adults who showed up to meet and beat the heat! Thank you to Karen and Amol Saxena for bringing the tubs of ice cream and to our sturdy volunteer scoopers!
- **Fall/Winter Events:** Stay tuned – on email messages and posters – for announcements of our Fall Barron Park events: Back-to-School Ice Cream Social, Annual Movie Night, Fall Festivals and Craft Fair. (Don't be shy to contact us with new ideas!)

Staying Connected and Involved

- **Join the Conversation:** A reminder that

you can stay updated on real-time neighborhood conversations and happenings, Town Hall follow-ups (the Town Hall video is posted at Neighborhood Town Hall - May 20, 2026 - YouTube), and safety notices by subscribing to our Google Groups email lists (*bpa-news*, *bpa-misc*, and *bpa-issues*). If you haven't joined yet, you can easily sign up at: [bpapaloalto.org/bpa-email-lists](https://bapaloalto.org/bpa-email-lists).

- **Share Your Stories:** Our quarterly newsletter is a true community effort! If you have local or historical anecdotes, informational material, photography of our native wildlife, or creative writing you'd like to share for future issues, please reach out to our communications team at: mbrbpa@sonic.net

Membership Matters

Our neighborhood advocacy and events are entirely powered by your household support. If you haven't yet renewed your membership for this cycle, or if you would like to join as a new member, please visit the Association website (bpapaloalto.org) to sign up and pay online. See also page 12 of this newsletter for a print/downloadable membership form. Your annual membership contributions directly fund community projects, social events, insurance (!), and this quarterly newsletter, distributed online

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Barron Park Neighbors and Friends: Patricia Steck

By Yvonne Boxerman

It's probably not news to anyone that Barron Park is home to many interesting people, some of whom have lived here for decades. We will be featuring some of those folks on occasion, starting with Pat Steck, our longtime Chimalus Drive neighbor.

If you know someone you'd like to profile currently living in Barron Park, please get in touch with the Editor (mbrbpa@sonic.net). We'll plan to interview him or her and feature their stories, as possible.

How many people can claim to have lived in the same home for more than 65 years? Pat Steck turned 94 in April 2026, and she is one person who can make that claim! Pat and her late husband Vincent Steck bought the last available lot on Chimalus Drive and built their home in 1959. It has been Pat's home all these years since. Their three children, Chris, Tim, and Linda, were born in local hospitals and raised in the family home. Today, Chris lives a few doors away from his Mom; Tim lives in Menlo Park; and Linda currently lives in Mexico.

Sadly, Pat's husband died way too young, when their children were young adults. Being the "no-nonsense, can-do" person that Pat is and always has been, she had gone back to school and completed a teaching credential while raising her family. With the help of her mother who lived locally, and who Pat says "was a really good person," Pat had completed her teaching degree at San Jose State and lined up a job right away. Eventually, she went into Special Ed and worked well into her 70s before retiring. Over the years, Pat has kept up with some of her students and speaks fondly of them to this day. Some have gone on to become successful teachers and counselors themselves.

Most people know Pat because of her truly amazing love of animals and her need to connect with them. Regulars walking past her house with their dog (or dogs) are inevitably pulled into Pat's driveway by their four-legged creatures for a treat. One friend even drives her pets over from Los Robles Avenue! How did this tradition get started, you may

wonder? As Pat tells it, many years ago, before she moved to Barron Park, she had a beloved "animal shelter mutt" named MacArthur. Sadly, he was killed by a hit-and-run driver. Her next dog was Toby; she adored him too, but he got sick and died young. Then and there Pat decided she wasn't going to be saddened by the loss of another dog. Instead she would get to know all the neighborhood dogs by having treats available in her garage on a daily basis. (Those treats were of course to be given out only with the permission of the owners.)

When asked what prompts her to keep entertaining and giving treats to so many dogs who come by, she unhesitatingly answered: "It is a wonderful way for people to meet each other – in my driveway while their dogs get treats. And it helps that I love dogs too." Even without a dog at the end of a leash, many people will stop to talk to Pat and all her visitors (both human and animal!) anytime they're walking by her open garage. Pat says even people who have moved away will frequently come back for a chat and a visit!

But that's not to say Pat hasn't always tried to give "equal time" to cats in the neighborhood. Our beloved Maine Coon cat Chester died of cancer a few years ago. Pat loved it when Chester came for a personal visit. Many days she'd call to say, "Time to come get Chester, he doesn't want to leave!" No wonder. Animals are wonderful weathervanes when it comes to assessing humans, and Chester knew this was a human who loved him! For the last eleven (!) years or so Pat has been feeding a feral cat she originally named "Little Kitty," who apparently has no other owner. Pat strongly believes that because she keeps this cat happy and well fed, it leaves the native bird population alone!



Pat Steck, welcoming some of her favorite visitors at her open garage door. Photo by John Sack.

Pat also speaks fondly of the Barron Park donkeys. And we mean all the donkeys, as she has known them all, one way or another, over the many years they've been in Bol Park, starting with the Bol family's herd in the 1960s.

In addition to all the "loves" Pat has, most people also know that she has always loved plants and has created her own beautiful garden. However, it is probably not widely known that in 1974-75, when the Bol family's donkey pasture became Bol Park, Pat was instrumental in getting new trees planted there by the City. Next time you walk in the park, imagine those 200-foot-tall trees as very small saplings.

Pat is also famous for being the "founder" of the Chimalus/Tippawingo Summer Block Party for the 75 households residing on those streets. For about 20 years she organized and ran the event, greeting everyone, with occasional help from member households. When Pat hit 92 two years ago, she handed over the reins to others on the block so the tradition

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The Bo Crane Memorial Award

By Douglas L. Graham, Barron Park Historian

On May 3, 2026, I was pleased and honored to be granted a “lifetime-type” award for historical research and writing by two Palo Alto historical associations. During this year’s awards meeting of PAST (Palo Alto–Stanford Heritage) and PAHA (Palo Alto Historical Association), held at the Palo Alto Art Center, I was named the recipient of the recently created Bo Crane Award.

Robert L. (“Bo”) Crane, Jr. was a prolific author of books and journal articles on astonishingly varied topics covering Palo Alto, Menlo Park, and area local history, ranging from sports and entertainment to politics and land development. The December 2024 issue of PAHA’s *Tall Tree* newsletter recounts his life and his passing after a long battle with ocular melanoma. Barron Park was his “favorite” Palo Alto neighborhood, second only to his own Charleston Meadows. Bo frequently walked in Barron Park and even led Barron Park history walks for PAST. As *The Tall Tree*’s tribute said, “Bo was not just a member of these many organizations . . . he was an active participant in the groups’ management and activities.”

In the early 2020s, Bo and I got to know each other. Our burgeoning friendship developed

into a partnership in my project of writing an exhaustive history of Barron Park, planned to include about 90 short chapters, with up to 100 illustrations: historical photos, locator maps, and charts. Bo’s enthusiasm and excellent newspaper research really fired up my interest in pursuing publication. His death was a totally unexpected blow.

So, when I received PAST’s notification of the Bo Crane award, I was astonished but happy. The award’s wording is: “With deepest appreciation for your dedication and outstanding contributions as Barron Park’s historian, writer, and educator for more than four decades.” At the awards ceremony, I spoke briefly to thank and honor several people in attendance who have over the years assisted me in researching, writing, and editing these articles. I estimate that at least 45 people, mostly present, former, or late Barron Park residents, have provided me with essential help and support during the four



May 3, 2026: Kristen Harrison, Bo Crane’s wife, presents the first Bo Crane Memorial Award to Douglas L. Graham, Barron Park Historian, for his extensive contributions to local history. Photo by Myrna Rochester.

decades of my still ongoing history project. Allow me to thank them here, one more time.

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could continue without interruption. When asked why she loved this event so much, once again she referred to all the people she’d met and interacted with. In Pat’s words: “It’s hard to be ‘un-nice’ to nice people!”

We all know how kind Pat is to everyone. Someone passed her house on a bicycle while we were talking. That reminded her of a story. She said she once had a three-wheeler trike someone gave her years ago. Even though she never could get used to the trike, she took it out for a ride one day. While out she met an elderly man on the street. As it was usual for Pat to start talking to strangers, she learned that he couldn’t get around anymore on his own two-wheeler. So she offered him her trike, and he gladly took it. She said he needed it far more than she did!

Pat has some wonderful aphorisms on the meaning of life and old age. To end this article about this amazing lady, she will speak for herself and give us all adages to remember and live by. We can learn a lot from Pat Steck and her remarkable life . . . so far!

“I hate numbers so let’s not talk about age.”

“Dying doesn’t worry me.”

“Be mindful; think before you speak.”

“The bad stuff is all around. You have to go look for the good stuff!”

“You should never be rude to people you’re speaking to.”

“Be kind; it would help everyone in the world if we were all kind.”

“I feel so lucky to have my neighbors as my friends.”

President’s Message -- Continued from Page 1

and in print.

I wish you all a healthy, safe, and joyful summer season filled with backyard gatherings, block parties, and peaceful evening walks. Your thoughts, ideas, questions, and especially your participation are crucial. The BPA welcomes new committee and Board members. As always, please feel free to reach out to me directly at johnwadeking@gmail.com

Warmly,

John W. King President,
Barron Park Association

Business Spotlight: From Small Town Chef to Culinary Innovator

By Monica Foutz



Monica Foutz of FoutzHouse Kitchen. (Photo courtesy of Monica Foutz.)

I'm Monica Foutz, the heart and soul behind FoutzHouse Kitchen, where my culinary passion meets community spirit. Based in Barron Park, I've transformed my love for food into a thriving business that offers nutritious, ready-made meals to busy professionals and families.

My culinary journey began at just 14 years old, thanks to my stepfather, who owned a local food establishment. Working alongside him, I discovered my passion for cooking, laying the foundation for my future in the culinary arts. By the time I graduated high school, I had already accumulated four years of experience as a sous-chef and line cook. However, my ascent in the industry was gradual, partly because I started out young.

At 19, I became a mother for the first time, and by 25, I was a single mom of two, navigating life in the largely retirement community of Paradise, California. While bartending my way through college, I earned six degrees, including a BS in Business with a minor in Spanish. My commitment to family and education has always been a guiding force in my life.

In November 2018, I faced a life-altering challenge when wildfires devastated my

hometown. I was forced to evacuate with my three children and two foster children. That time of adversity turned out to be an opportunity for growth. Embracing a philosophy of resilience, I taught my children to make empowered choices amidst chaos. This journey ultimately led us to the Bay Area, where I found love and a renewed sense of purpose.

Now, at FoutzHouse Kitchen, I craft a weekly menu of nutritious meals, ensuring that each dish is macro-focused and portion-controlled, made from the freshest ingredients. Every Friday, I release a new menu, with free delivery available in Palo Alto every Tuesday. I aim to make my services accessible to everyone, with no obligation to order.

In addition to meal prep, I try to facilitate community connection with my Saturday pop-up breakfast stand, fostering engagement and a sense of belonging here in Barron Park. I hope my commitment to supporting our community is evident in everything I do, from sourcing the best ingredients to offering nutritional coaching.

As a passionate home chef specializing in grilling, braising, and smoking meats, I prioritize crafting marinades, sauces, and dressings from scratch, using fresh herbs from my garden to elevate each dish. I also find joy in baking a variety of desserts and making sourdough bread from a homemade starter, all while focusing on healthier alternatives without compromising flavor.

I believe in the power of resilience, love, and adaptability. Through FoutzHouse Kitchen, my goals are happiness and success, not simply in career or business, but in all that I can share with the community.

If you're interested in exploring meal services or seeking nutritional coaching, feel free to reach out to FoutzHouse Kitchen at 530-828-4617 or via email at: Monica3@comcast.net

A Few Local Testimonials

- "Monica provides about five meals a week plus breakfast bread for my wife and me – very high quality and taste. Some of my favorites this month have been her Korean braised beef; Summer salads (with grilled chicken, strawberries, goat cheese, and

toasted almonds on a bed of greens with Raspberry vinaigrette); and Miso Salmon with rice and cabbage." *Doug.*

- "We've been ordering meals from Monica for way over a year. I can cook but I don't like to. Her meals are restaurant quality, tasty, healthy, and easy to share as our appetite varies. I can easily supplement what I want or go out to eat still knowing that I have a core of great meals in the fridge. The cost to me means she shops, she prepares, and she delivers in Palo Alto for free. It's a deal." *Deborah.*
- "I really lucked out when I found Monica. She consistently offers quality home-cooked meals and snacks on a weekly basis and has always been accommodating, answering questions or hearing feedback about new recipes or menu options. Whether you are super busy or just don't know how to cook, Monica provides food options that will make things easier for you!" *David.*

Barron Park Association Newsletter, Fall Deadline!

Tuesday, September 1, 2026

Please submit articles (in Word if possible) for the Fall 2026 issue of the BPA Newsletter, with photos/images separate from text, by **Tuesday, September 1, 2026** (i.e., during the first week of September ☺)

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 October 15, 2026**. The Fall issue will be available in early October to members of the BPA, online and by U.S. mail.

Business Spotlight: ZombieRunner Coffee

By Gillian Robinson and Don Lundell



ZombieRunner Coffee, 3990 El Camino Real, Unit C (in the "Valero mall"). Photos by Don Lundell.



Opening for the morning at 7:30 a.m. Mon. thru Fri., and 8 a.m. on Sat. at ZombieRunner Coffee, Barron Park.

"What do you think of the name Zombie-Runner?" Don asked Gillian at about 3:00 a.m. during a 100-mile ultramarathon.

"Sounds catchy." That was the beginning of our online store in 2003, selling sports nutrition products, running shoes, and other accessories. After five years in online sales, Don and Gillian decided that a physical store location would be a good idea, and we opened on California Avenue, adding in-house coffee to the mix of products. Our coffee took off as a cool, secret café in the back of a running store. By 2019, the coffee business outpaced the running business, leading to the 2020 change in our California Avenue location (just across the street to 344) and the switch to an all-coffee business.

In 2024 we opened our Barron Park location (at 3990 El Camino Real, Unit C) to serve the local community. Fun fact: Don actually lived in Barron Park years ago. Both ZombieRunner locations offer traditional coffee drinks, cold brew, chai, matcha, and an assortment of pastries and sandwiches. The Zombie name remains an important part of our

business identity, included in some of the specialty drink names: the popular Golden Zombie, made with cold brew coffee and turmeric, and a seasonal drink, currently the Chocolate Banana Zombie – cold brew, oat milk, chocolate, and banana! You can find us, Don and Gillian, at our Barron Park location, except when Don is out flying his plane or Gillian is out running around the neighborhood.

ZombieRunner Coffee (zombierunner.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

is located at 3990 El Camino Real, Unit C, Palo Alto. Open 6 days a week: Mon. thru Fri.: 7:30 a.m.–3:00 p.m., and Sat.: 8:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. Our other ZombieRunner Coffee location is at 344 California Avenue, Palo Alto. Open 7 days a week: Mon. thru Sat.: 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m., and Sun.: 8:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

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

Neighbors Turn Out for May Fête 2026!



Deer Creek Morris dancers take a break after performing traditional Cotswold country dances, accompanied by live music. Photo by Carol Garsten.



Barbara Holland encourages May Fête visitors to support the donkeys through donations or fun donkey swag. Photo by Marilyn Sode Smith.

Thanks to Everyone Who Made the 2026 May Fête Possible!

May Fête Coordinators

- Carol Garsten
- John W. King

Local Sponsors/Supporters

- Barron Park Association
- Barron Park Market, Florist and Nursery
- Blue Oak Window Washing
- Bol Park Native Habitat Garden
- Cal Preserving
- Celia's Restaurant
- Copy Factory
- The Donkey Project
- Driftwood Market
- Ernie's Liquors
- Friends of the Palo Alto Parks
- The Great American Framing Company
- John W. King, Realtor
- Palo Alto Grocery Outlet
- State of Mind Slice House
- ZombieRunner Coffee
- 350 Silicon Valley

Musicians and Performers

- Gary Breitbard, instruments and dance caller
- Broceliande Celtic Band
- Deer Creek Morris Team Dancers
- Ernest Kinsolving
- Julianne Stafford
- Kristoph Klover
- Margaret Davis
- Michael Robinson
- Ronan Keryell
- Sarah Kirton
- Susan Keith
- Vicki Parrish

Food Truck

- Oaxacan Kitchen Mobile



Patient parents and happy children work together to wrap the ribbons correctly around the Maypole. Photo by Myrna Rochester.

Volunteers

- Scout Troop #52
- 5th Grade Barron Park Elementary
- Skyla & Gunn High Friends
- Doug Burns
- Lisa Landers
- Myrna Rochester
- Rich Elder
- Star Teachout
- Stephanie Enos

and everyone else who pitched in!



This child demonstrates how to make a credible estimate of the number of marbles in the jar. Photo by Myrna Rochester.



The May Fête musicians join with Gary Breitbard to deliver a delightful soundtrack for the event. Photo by Carol Garsten.



May Fête musicians Margaret Davis, Kristoph Klover, and Ernest Kinsolving provided traditional music. Photo by Myrna Rochester.

Barron Park Association Reminders!

By Lisa Berkowitz Landers, BPA Membership Chair

Babysitter/Household Services Referrals

Babysitter/household services referrals listings are located under the Businesses tab on the BPA homepage (bpapaloalto.org) our use the direct link: bpapaloalto.org/bpa-referral-list/

If you have a babysitter or household services referral to share, please email information to: barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com

Membership Renewal Reminders

The new system is set to send you an email reminder when your 12-month membership is about to expire.

Unfortunately, the system sent duplicate renewal notices even after some members had renewed. *The Web Administrator is*

working on this issue, and the BPA appreciates your patience while the issue gets corrected. Thanks!

May Fête in Bol Park 2026

Special thanks to Carol Garsten for making 2026 May Fête so very successful! The May Fête organization involves a great deal of work, and Carol's energy and creativity were greatly appreciated.

General Information

If you have questions about membership, the BPA email lists (hosted on Google Groups), or volunteering for a committee or the BPA Board, please write to: barronpark.paloalto@gmail.com



Image by magnific.com/app

Tech Help in Bol Park

By Shiv Gangaramani, Gunn High School Student

I'm continuing to hold free, community-driven sessions on Sunday afternoons in Bol Park to help anyone, especially older residents, with technology. I can help with basic navigation of tools, as well as new features, so that my "students" can accomplish what

they want and need to do. My goal is to help folks who may be struggling with changing technologies. I was inspired through teaching my grandmom who can now operate her smartphone with ease and confidence beyond simple calls or texts. My grandmom's

success led me to offer my skills to the community I live in.

To contact me and for scheduling, please consult my web link: bit.ly/patechhelp

We Produce Excellent Compost for Your Yard

April and Buddy here to remind you that we make high quality, local, and sustainable compost for your garden.

Our loyal customers know that our compost works wonderfully for both flower and vegetable gardens.

Dedicated human volunteers take our manure and let it "cook" for 5-6 months, then hand sift it so it is ready to use in your garden.

The volunteers will deliver your order within Palo Alto and Los Altos.

Your donation of \$20 per bag for 40-45 pounds of manure helps pay for our food and medical costs.

Support a good cause and make your garden more fertile – it's a win-win! Order your compost at barronparkdonkeys@gmail.com



April and Buddy in the Donkey Pasture. Photo by Jenny Kiratli.

World Donkey Day



Buddy, April, and local donkey fans enjoyed World Donkey Day in Bol Park on May 9, 2026. World Donkey Day raises awareness, sparks action, and supports sustainable solutions to protect donkeys' welfare and dignity. Historical evidence points to donkeys working alongside humanity since 4000 BCE, so this recognition is long past due! daysoftheyear.com/days/world-donkey-day/ Photos by Myrna Rochester.

BPA EMAILS AND WEB LINKS SUMMER 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: pbloyang@yahoo.com
- **Support for Buena Vista Neighbors:** Karen Ratzlaff at: karen.ratzlaff@hotmail.com; Buena Vista Partners (non-profit) at: buenavistapartners.org
- **Foster Plants for Buena Vista Residents:** Chris Witzel at: cnwitzel@sbcglobal.net
- **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 US 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.

Anybody Home?

Bee Hotels in the Bol Park Native Garden

By Dan Lysko



***Anthidium maculosum*, July 22, 2023. Forage: Flowering mint (*Monarda pectinata*, *Monarda austromontana*, *Salvia*). This carder bee uses fuzzy plant fibers to make walls and line its nest. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthidium_maculosum**
All photos by Dan Lysko.

This has been a busy spring for the solitary bees in Barron Park! You may have noticed two bee “hotels” amongst all the wonderful plants in the Bol Park Native Garden. These hotels provide additional habitat for solitary bees, small non-aggressive bees that are excellent pollinators. Because they do not have pollen sacs like honeybees, they drop more pollen off their hairs, making them much more efficient pollinators. Some solitary bees are specialist pollinators, meaning they have “grown up” around California plants, are active at the right time of spring, and have a preference for specific native plants.

The solitary bees in the family *Megachilidae* live in tubular cavities like stems of plants or even cracks in bricks. Here in the Bol Park hotels they are living in holes drilled into wood blocks. Every spring, young solitary bees emerge from cocoons, have a pollen snack, and burst out of their holes to fly, pollinate, and mate. Female bees will lay an egg in the back of a hole, leave food for the next spring, and build a wall to keep the tiny fertilized egg safe. They will keep filling up the hole with as many cocoon chambers as they can; if they fill up the entire hole, you will see a final wall capping the hole.

The wall construction gives us clues as to

what kind of bees we have in Barron Park. Different types of bees will use mud (mason bees), leaves (leafcutter bees), flowers, or even pebbles, to wall off the chambers with their cocoons. You can see brown mud walls, green leaf walls, purple flower walls, as well as some tiny rock walls capping some of the holes in the hotels.

Solitary bee species range in size from very tiny to a bit smaller than honeybees. Because different types prefer different hole sizes, I have been trying to figure out the right range of hole sizes for our local bee population. The first hotels were installed in February 2022 with a mix of hole diameters. I started with

many 3/8 inch (9.5 mm) holes that mason bees like, 1/4 inch (6.3 mm) holes that some leafcutter bees like, and some tiny 3/16 inch (4.7 mm) and 5/32 inch (4 mm) holes. Over the first two springs I noticed that the tiny holes were the most popular in early spring, while the 3/8” holes were partially occupied, and no one wanted to live in the 1/4” holes. I changed out some of the blocks to provide more tiny holes in 2024, and this year I changed out all the blocks with adjusted hole sizes.



***Trachusa perdita*, April 25, 2023. Forage: *Brodiaea*, *Lupinus*, and *Calochortus*. A leafcutter bee that uses buckthorn (*Rhamnaceae*) leaves to make cells. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trachusa_perdita**

It’s good practice to change out the blocks yearly, as solitary bees can be attacked by pollen mites or pathogenic fungus, and new, clean holes help keep the bees healthy. But how to change out their home while still letting them emerge in the spring? This March, I moved the old blocks into emergence boxes placed on top of the hotel roof. These boxes had an escape hole for the bees to exit from, but once out and about, solitary bees prefer holes in full sun that face south/



***Osmia lignaria*. May 24, 2026. Forage: fruit trees, *Echium candicans*. These mason bees are extremely efficient pollinators; also called blue orchard bees. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osmia_lignaria**



Native solitary bees have filled up and capped many of these holes with eggs that will hatch next spring. You can see green walls made by leafcutter bees and mud walls made by mason bees. Some bees in Bol Park are even using flowers and pebbles to build their walls.

southeast. Thus, they have now occupied the new blocks.

Solitary bees have an annual life cycle and are typically flying for several weeks in

Continued on Bottom of Page 11

Can You Foster Plants for Buena Vista Residents?

By Chris Witzel

In the Spring 2026 issue of this Newsletter, Winter Dellenbach explained that Buena Vista will be having its aging infrastructure replaced – water, electricity, and natural gas. About 40 households will have to move out for several months into apartments provided by the City of Palo Alto. The move will be hard for these families, especially people who love their plants!

Most people have just a few pots or containers...



And a few residents a great many.



Management is providing a small area outside the construction zone for each household to care for their plants.

Plants that don't fit must be removed or go to the dump. Each plant space is small, about the size of a typical bathtub alcove. It's not going to be enough.

Solitary Bees --Continued from Page 10

spring. The rest of the year, new embryos are developing, are dormant in the winter, and emerge in spring to visit flowers, mate, and start the cycle again. If you are inspired to help solitary bees, plant some native species in a flower garden, leave some plant stems up year round, or keep an undisturbed patch of



Spaces at Buena Vista designated for residents' plants. (All photos by Chris Witzel.)

We are working with the management company and one of the residents, Sabrina Ramirez, an expert gardener, to design a plant fostering program.

What We Know at This Time

Several Barron Park neighbors have already expressed interest. We want to match residents to neighbors with suitable garden space. The management company will provide a sample best effort/no fault agreement for both parties to sign.

This is your opportunity to be a good neighbor. Would you consider fostering some plants in your yard or garden? For more information, please contact Chris Witzel at: cnwitzel@sbcglobal.net

bare earth for bumblebees.

If you have questions or comments, please contact me, Dan Lysko at: solitarybees@proton.me

References:

helpabee.org/seasonal-bee-gardening.html
beelab.umn.edu/create-nesting-habitat

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION

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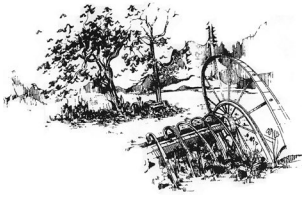
P.A. Neighborhood (PAN) Liaison:

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

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The BPA needs your support! Join, renew, or donate today!

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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. 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

Learning to Garden by Trial and Error

By Chris Witzel

Neighbors, I'm writing to share some of my gardening experiments. Along the way I discovered a useful insight: Think of adding new plants as a *pilot project*: no failures, just learning opportunities!



I love these delicate white bells with green dots on the tips. Called Summer Snowflake (*Leucojum aestivum*), they spread slowly from bulbs shaped like daffodils. Native to Europe, they have naturalized on the East Coast. Enjoy their blooms in the early spring. All photos by Chris Witzel.



These looked cute, so I experimented. Whoops! It is a type of wild garlic (an *Allium* but not the invasive Garlic Mustard) that spreads like crazy! Unlike most garlics, the bulb is a "corm" and reproduces from small "cormels" at the base of the corm. The cormels fall off very easily! Just one tiny survivor can become a new plant, so it's nearly impossible to eradicate these non-native plants. (I've been pulling these for more than 20 years in my Barron Park yard. Nearly gone, but not quite! Ed.)



A single packet of native California Poppy seeds (*Eschscholzia californica*) produced many poppies! They are beautiful and spread like crazy. Without water in the summer season, they dry out but will return after the rains. Since yellow-to-orange poppies are the California State Flower, legally you may only remove them on your own property!



I found Bear's Breeches (*Acanthus*) to be beautiful, and it thrived - until I had to cut it back, and my hand brushed against the flower stem. Ow! It stung for days. *Acanthus* is native to tropical and warm temperate regions. Wear thick gloves before pruning *Acanthus*!

Another lesson: Plants and shrubs native to California, which have evolved in this climate, will do well in your yard! Check out the plants in our own Bol Park Native Habitat Garden that extends from the corner of Matadero and Laguna Avenues to Bol Park - planned, tended, and expanded by volunteers over nearly 30 years. If you have questions, or to volunteer with the Bol Park Native Habitat Committee, please contact Rich Elder at: bpnativegarden@gmail.com

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2026

Barron Park Association
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Town Hall, Neighborhood Social, and New Mural

By The Editors

May Town Hall

The City of Palo Alto invited neighbors from Barron Park, Palo Alto Orchards, Green Acres I and II, and Monroe Park to an evening Town Hall and Social on Wednesday, May 20, 2026, at Fire Station 5 in Juana Briones Park. Councilmembers Julie Lythcott-Haims and Keith Reckdahl hosted the event, with our own John King as moderator, and included presentations by city officials and Q&A with the attendees.

Neighbors listened to updates on crime rates, traffic, bike safety, e-bike and pedestrian safety, plus planned infrastructure upgrades to Buena Vista over a 10-month period. (See page 11 for how you can support the Buena Vista community by caring for the plants of residents who will need to move out during the construction work.)

Speakers included BPA President John King, Councilmember Julie Lythcott-Haims, Assistant Director of Planning and Development Services Jennifer Armer, Chief Transportation Official Ria Lo, Palo Alto Police Chief James Reifschneider, Palo Alto Fire Chief Stephen Lindsey, City Manager Ed Shikada, Palo Alto Orchards Association President Ron Chun, and Councilmember Keith Reckdahl.

If you missed the meeting, you can watch the full recording at [youtube.com/watch?v=UIZJuZuj0OE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UIZJuZuj0OE). (Note that you can increase the playback speed on YouTube by clicking on the gear icon.) Or you can read a summary of the meeting by the City of Palo Alto at: myemail.constantcontact.com/May-20-Neighborhood-Town-Hall-Meeting-Follow-Up.html?oid=1138677838929&aid=9_PdFGvEI08

The New Firehouse Mural

Fire Station 5 is also the home of a beautiful new mural by California-based artist Bodeck Luna, which was commissioned last year by the City. The mural, titled *Waking Up Under the Redwoods*, lives on the giant roll up garage door of the Fire Station and



New Fire Chief Stephen Lindsey engages with neighbors alongside BPA President John King, Councilmember Julie Lythcott Haims, and Councilmember Keith Reckdahl. Photos by Carol Garsten.



Barron Park resident and BPA Board Member Star Teachout asks a question of Councilmember Reckdahl, Councilmember Lythcott-Haims, and Assistant Director of Planning and Development Services, Jennifer Armer.

was installed in March 2026. Here's the description from the City website: paloalto.gov/Departments/Community-Services/Arts-Sciences/Public-Art-Program/Murals/On-View-Now

"California-based artist Bodeck Luna created a site-specific mural for the roll-up door at Fire Station 5 the Barron Park neighborhood of southwest Palo Alto, adjacent to Juana Briones Park. Visible to pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers passing through the busy

intersection, the mural celebrates Palo Alto's landscape, history, and community spirit.

Rolling hills, redwoods, golden sunsets, and locally chosen flowers form the backdrop, while symbols of neighborhood pride appear throughout, including the Gunn Titans and Fletcher Tigers. Local references such as the Fire Station 5 bell, the firefighters' homegrown chilis, Perry the Bol Park donkey, the city's earliest fire truck, and the computer cursor, an invention born in Palo Alto, are woven into the design. An apricot sun references the Valley of Heart's Delight as the spirit of Juana Briones looks over Barron Creek. Fire engine trim details frame the mural in tribute to Palo Alto's firefighters."

Visit Fire Station 5 to see the outdoor mural and say hello to our local firefighters!



Waking up under the Redwoods was commissioned by the City of Palo Alto for the front garage of Firehouse #5 in Barron Park from artist Bodeck Luna. Photo courtesy of the City of Palo Alto Public Art Program.

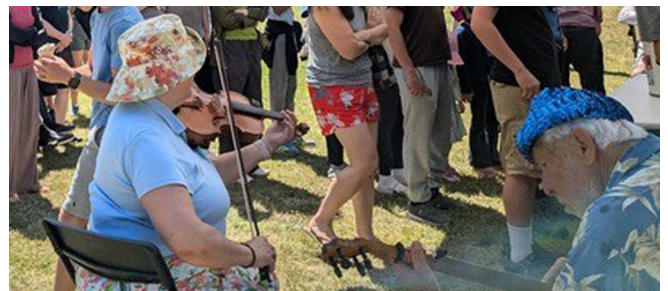
May 31 Ice Cream Social Draws Crowds



Neighbors formed two lines to enjoy the first Ice Cream Social of the summer in Bol Park. Photos by Myrna Rochester.



Karen and Amol Saxena, with other volunteer scoopers, worked quickly to meet the demand for cones.



Gary Breitbard and friends provided a pleasant soundtrack for the rapid consumption of 3 giant tubs of ice cream.



Ice cream cone image by Adobe Stock Images.

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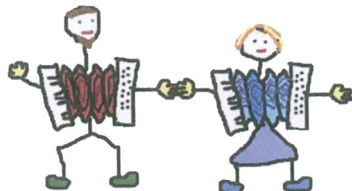
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