

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Lynn Melena, BPA President

From Tobacco Road to Country Lane: Neighbors Transform Alley Eyesore

Barron Park has many traditions such as the annual May Fete and the caroling party. But what is really thrilling is to see a group of neighbors band together to make a direct attack on a nagging problem, as the Cypress Lane neighbors did in late July. What's equally exciting is that residents from other parts of Barron Park stepped up to help, too. The following article by Bob Sikora describes the effort.

On the last Saturday morning in July, more than 30 neighbors rolled up their sleeves, put on their work gloves, and cleaned up a Barron Park eyesore. Cypress Lane separates El Camino businesses from the adjacent residences. Known as "The Alley" to locals, this two block strip been a haven for trash, vagrancy, and illicit activities for decades. The Alley's location behind two liquor stores does not help the situation. The unmaintained dirt surface is so badly potholed that it has become a favored amusement for teenagers bouncing along, "Indiana Jones" style, in their cars.

But this group of neighbors decided that the Alley would be less attractive to such problems if it looked like someone cared. Armed with wheelbarrows, pruning



equipment, rakes, and the power of many, they cleared weeds and trimmed overgrown trees and bushes. Their haul of trash included an abandoned leather couch, a mattress box spring and lots of construction debris including big chunks of concrete and stucco. The debris was piled in the center of the Alley where it was picked up the following Monday by a City Public Works crew. About a week later, Public Works returned to grade the dirt and gravel surface and make it passable again. The transformation from Tobacco Road to country lane was dramatic.

This neglected parcel of land is so chronically

troublesome because its ownership is not clearly documented. Public records show that neither the homeowners, nor the businesses, nor the City actually own it. Consequently, no one takes responsibility for its problems. But sparked by a hearing for late night liquor sales at the Ramen Club in 2008, a group of activists has continued to pursue Alley issues with the City. Led by Lisa Altieri, they have gotten support from City Council members Yoriko Kishimoto and Yiawey Yeh. This has led to a series of discussions with the City Manager's



office that has included other City departments such as Public Works and Planning. The participation of Public Works in this summer's cleanup demonstrates the City's willingness to help even though its legal obligation to do so is unclear.

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[PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE]

But this cleanup was only an interim step. In fact, similar stop-gap measures have been completed in the past few decades only to see conditions degenerate over time. And the issues include more than the physical condition of the Alley. One of the adjacent businesses uses the Alley for customer traffic 24 hours a day, resulting in disturbances throughout the night. The Alley activists plan to continue their collaboration with the City on more permanent solutions. But messy legal issues and a tight City budget make this a complex and long-term endeavor.

This did not dampen the sense of accomplishment for the neighborhood crew, however. After the cleanup was completed, the exhausted participants celebrated with beer, burgers, and ice cream sandwiches at John Benza's home which borders the Alley. It was a great opportunity to get to know one another. After all, the crew consisted of more than the Alley property owners. Nearby neighbors and far flung Barron Park Green Team members also pitched in to make this a successful community effort.

The following people pitched in with the Alley cleanup—Susan Carsen, John Benza, Jim Thalmann, Russ Lindgren, Lisa & Ben Altieri, Jon Klein, Alexandra Kline, Nanci & Darryl Thomander, Bob & Gloria Sikora, Terri & Louis, Mark Georgia, Alice & Bob Frost, David & Robbie King, Susie Borton, Huaiyu Mi, Monica Cappuccini & Abraham, Judy Larsen, Susanna Young, Tom & Pat Sanders, Siamak Pazirandeh, Wyatt Smith, David Coale and Carol & Natalie Barch.

Thanks again to everyone who worked on this project. —Lynnie Melena

Here is one of the follow-up emails from an Alley cleanup crew member:

I want to add my thanks to everybody too. It was fun. And I was also especially touched by the generosity of so many people who don't even live anywhere near the alley who were willing to join us in a dirty, sweaty adventure. I had quite the adjustment to make when I arrived home this evening and turned to enter my garage—instead of looking at Tobacco Road, I was heading down what looked more like just an old country lane. I'm wondering if I'm going to have to start dressing up once it gets graded! —Susan Carsen.

A Smorgasbord of Memories

By Doug Graham, Barron Park Historian

Readers' reactions to "The Heyday of Restaurant Row" published in the summer 2009 issue of this newsletter.

It is always gratifying to receive evidence that one's articles are being read and enjoyed, but usually this is by word-of-mouth from friends and close acquaintances. The "restaurant heyday" article, however, stimulated at least eleven readers to contact me, not just to say how much they liked it, but more usefully to offer substantive additional information or corrections. Many of the responses were so interesting that I decided to print them in this issue. I have selected excerpts from each communication, grouped them by sub-topic, done a little editing, and added some background where it seemed to be helpful. Here they are—a smorgasbord of tidbits about Restaurant Row, kind of like verbal tapas or dim sum. *My comments are italicized.*

L'Omelette/Chez Louis

John Allured (Coulombe Avenue) wrote: "Dear Mr. Graham: I have just finished reading the article you wrote for the BP Newsletter and wanted to thank you—I truly enjoyed it! I graduated from Stanford in 1975 and have lived in BP since 1980 – first in the Los Robles Townhouses (with 2 Stanford buddies) and since 1984 in my home on Coulombe. Articles such as yours remind us that

things weren't always as they appear right now. In 1973 or '74, my uncle and aunt, who lived in San Rafael and who had attended Oregon and Cal, respectively, made it a point to come down and treat me to dinner at L'Omelette—I remember their view that dinner at L'Ommie's was a sort of rite of passage for Stanford students—even ones (like me) with shoulder-length hair. I don't think I even owned a suit, but I got dressed up as best I could and still remember our nice evening. Little did I know that 35 years later I'd be living a stone's throw away! Thanks again and please continue writing such enjoyable and informative articles!"

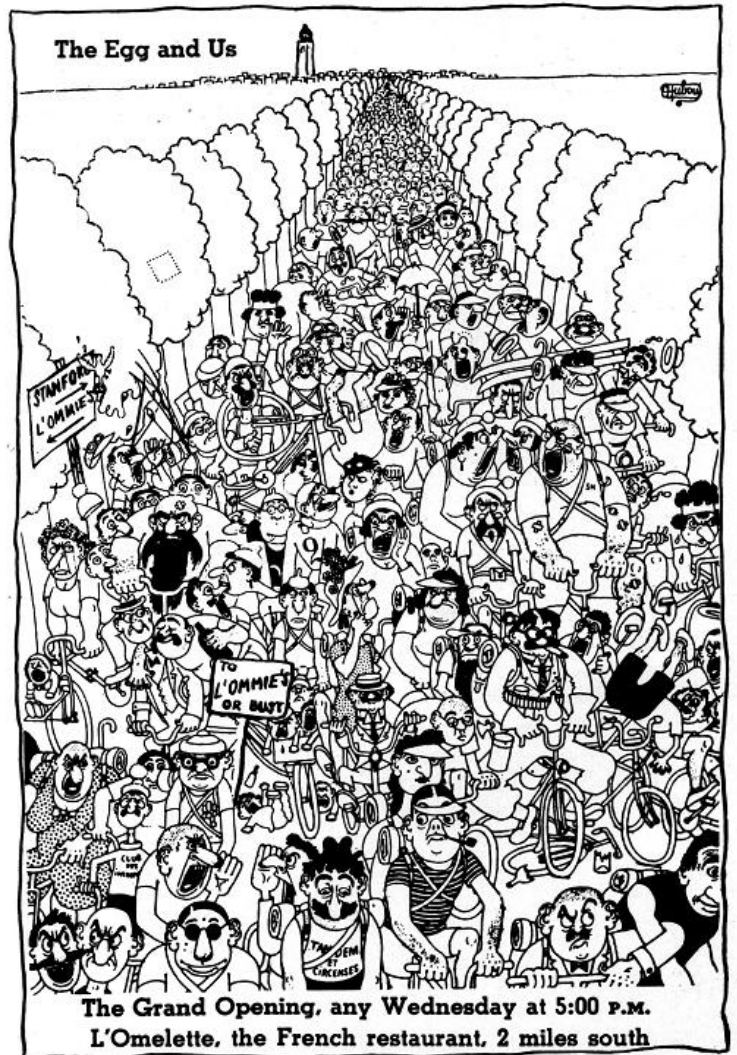


Illustration A: L'Omelette ad from the April, 1958 Stanford Chaparral.

See Illustration A, L'Ommie's ad from the April, 1958 Stanford *Chaparral*.

Steve Rosenberg wrote: "I've lived in my house in BP for 27 years, and remember several of the restaurants and establishments you mention. Chez Louis—in the later years, they would often have musical entertainment on some nights. I had a friend, a very serious amateur singer, who auditioned, and got to sing there as entertainment one Thursday night." (*Chez Louis was the last incarnation of L'Ommies. It was owned and managed by Louis Borel, and closed in June, 1995 to be demolished and replaced by Walgreen's drugstore.*)

Jerry Tinney (Monroe Drive) said (in an hour-long interview): In the 1960s, when I was living on Georgia Avenue, L'Omelette was the main "body exchange" in the area on Friday nights. The Maitre'D would kiss the ladies' hands as he greeted them. The food was excellent and priced reasonably." Jerry ate there frequently and remembers, especially, a stuffed mushroom dish that he liked. One of the jokes about the place was about Bibi, the part-time cook on the weekends, whose "day job" was running the crematorium at Alta Mesa Cemetery. (*Just how well done would you like your aunt?*)

L'Omelette and Rudolfo's

Carter Quinby wrote: "I commend you on the fine job you did in recalling the legendary El Camino watering holes. There was a lot of nostalgia in your five pages, and I enjoyed them immensely. I was born at the old Palo Alto Hospital in 1924 and lived in Palo Alto until moving to Barron Park in 1957. In the old days (pre and post World War II) those of us from Palo Alto weren't all that aware of or concerned with the Barron Park boundaries to which you limited your article. We viewed the restaurant scene as extending from Matadero Creek (*at today's Cibo restaurant and the Creekside Inn*) down to San Antonio Road, and thus including establishments beyond the scope of your research. Our personal favorites were Dinah's Shack and (somewhat later) Rickey's, in addition to L'Omelette and Long Barn. I agree with you that L'Ommie's was probably the most popular, but all four were good for a memorable night out. (*In retrospect, I agree with Carter that I was being a little too myopic in my coverage of Restaurant Row. In the future, I will include Rickey's, Dinah's and my*

favorite Friday night bar across the street, Tar and Feathers – where Hobee's is now.)

I have a few minor quibbles with and additions to what you wrote, some of which you might add to your database;

You say that Andre changed the name to L'Omelette in 1955, which surprised me. My memory ain't perfect but I suggest you recheck your sources on this one because L'Omelette is the only name I remember from the early forties on. (*technically, I said "by 1955". This was because that was the date of the earliest city directory in which I found the name. I'm still trying to find the time to check the directories between 1948 and 1955.*)

Rudolfo's had at least one predecessor. Shortly after the war I watched the construction of a brand-new restaurant on that corner, complete with sign proclaiming it "FRANK FERRANTE'S WORLD-FAMOUS RESTAURANT", which I thought hilariously presumptuous. I can't remember how long Frank lasted but I'll never forget his sign."

The Chef/Rudolfo's

Jerry Tinney told me: Before Rudolfo's was built, next door at 4022 El Camino Real (ECR), there was a restaurant called "The Chef." It was owned by the Lightner family. A dinner restaurant, it had a French menu but was not fancy and the meals were reasonably priced. The kids often helped wait tables.

(*Joe Weiler talked about this restaurant in his oral history, taken by Ann Knopf in 1977. He said: "...on our side of the highway (there was) a restaurant right on the corner (of Los Robles), where Rudolfo's Restaurant is right now, and the old home is still there...it was a Frenchman that had that. I can't think of the name of that now, but he was a chef formerly in San Francisco and*

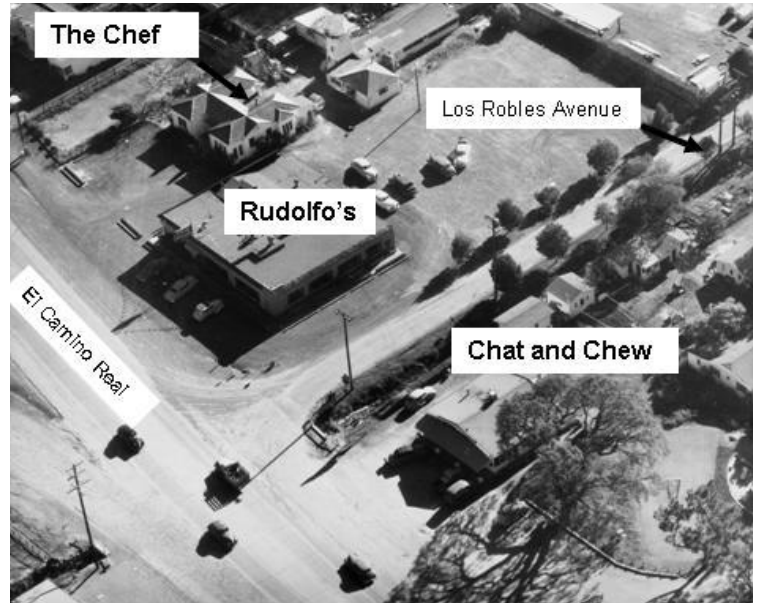


Photo B: The Chef, 1940s.

they served...frog legs, and very out of the ordinary dishes. This was in the early thirties. It was very (fancy) for that area...it was the only place, I guess, that served this type of food around there."

(*The Chef was in an H-shaped building with hip roofs, smaller than Rudolfo's and set back from the highway. It shows up very well in the 1940s oblique aerial photo, along with a hip-roofed cottage or garage behind it, a water tower, and other buildings that appear to be orchard- or farm- related.*)

See Photo B, 1940s aerial photo showing The Chef, Rudolfo's and the Chat and Chew.

Diane Jacobowski wrote in her e-mail: "I thoroughly enjoyed your article. As a new resident of Barron Park, it helps me to understand the eclectic nature of this stretch of El Camino. I think I have one minor correction to pass on to you. Last November, we purchased a townhome in the Villas de las Plazas development and learned that these were built in 1978. In Illustration G, (location) number 6, you note that Rudolfo's was closed in 1993 and replaced by the Villas. But because of the dates, and the fact that we do not border El Camino, this wouldn't make sense. It must have been the montage apartments that took the place of Rudolfo's." (*Here was my e-mail reply to Diane: "You are correct. The worst of it is – I knew that! I don't know why I wrote the Villas instead of the Montage. During the years between 1978 and 1993, not only Rudolfo's, but*

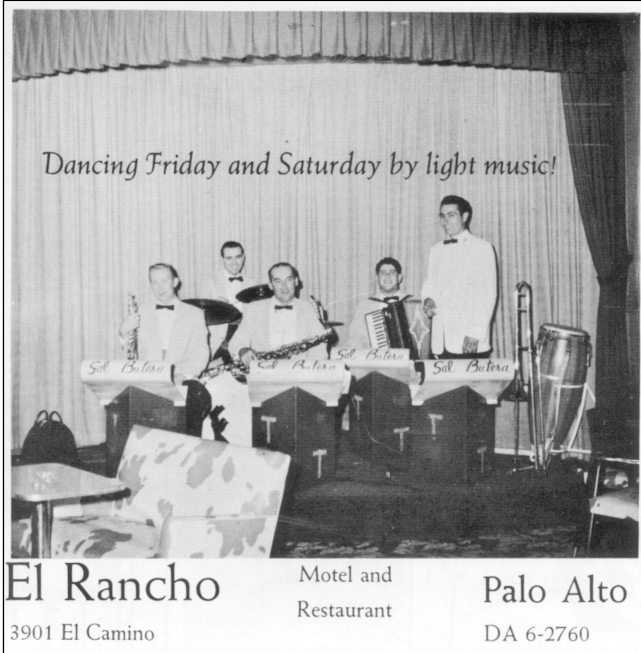


Illustration C: El Rancho ad from the November, 1957 Stanford Chaparral.

also a veterinary hospital continued to operate between Rudolfo's and the Lanai Florist. Thanks for bringing the error to my attention, and I'm glad that you enjoyed the article."

Rick's Swiss Chalet

Perky Perkins wrote: "I wanted to add something for Rick's Swiss Chalet. I never ate there, but would, from time to time, visit their wonderful piano bar. Folks loving to sing solos—from opera types, to pop, to whatever, would come in to sing. (There were also sing-a-longs.) The pianist, pretty sure her name was Marge, had a little notebook and would write the person's name, the songs they liked to sing, and the keys they sang in, so you could always feel welcome and could just remind her of your name (she remembered many of them without asking) and what you wanted to sing and she'd start right out with the intro in your key. I think Marge went to the Cabana when Rick's closed, but not sure. Was a lot of fun. I miss it! A friend and I took her grandmother, visiting from Southern California, there once—and every time she came to visit that was where she wanted to go."

Stickney's (at the Flamingo Lodge)

Leslie H., Fairmeadow resident, has written in the Palo Online Blog, that she remembered "...many dinners at Stickneys. My dad always requested the dining

room with walls covered in cowhide."

El Rancho/La Cumbre

Virginia Peterson (La Mata Way) told me that she lived for three or four months in the Rest-Well Motel on El Camino Real, which was located across Curtner Street from El Rancho Restaurant. She watched when it was being built. This was in 1946.

Jerry Tinney told me that this restaurant began as "Greenwich Village," in about 1950 or 1951. It was run by Frank Rolfo (*city directory listed him as owner or manager in 1955*). Jerry said he was a real "wheel-dealer." The food was pretty ordinary, but the

live music was often good. Jerry remembers, as a high school student, going there to hear a really good Dixieland band, probably the famous "Firehouse Five Plus Two." Jerry thinks the motel was added later on.

See Illustration C, ad from Nov 1957 Stanford *Chaparral*.

Horky's/Prime Rib

Ed Walker (Ilima Way) and his sister Ann Walker told me how much they enjoyed dinners at the Prime Rib. They described how the waiter made a big deal about bringing the sizzling prime rib into the dining room on a silver cart equipped with an infra-red heat lamp. They would stop the cart at your table, whip off the cover and slice it to your order.

Jerry Tinney told me that Horky's was located on a small street, lane or driveway that ran east off of the south end of El Camino Way (ECW) and gave access to Palo Alto Lumber. Jerry said that Horky's was sort of "upscale Mexican—for those days." It was there for at least four or five years.

We (Jerry and I) tried to identify Horky's in the 1940s oblique aerial photograph of the lumberyard/ECW area, but could not figure out which building it was in. The trainer and Silver Building was in front of the lumberyard.

Jerry and Ed both told me that the Prime Rib later opened in the building that had housed Horky's. It had a piano bar with a really good piano player who also performed at L'Ommie's. Jerry remembered that Buddy Bear once sang there (he was the brother of Max Bear, the prizefighter). Andre Frelier, who started L'Omellette as Frelier's, was "the Maitre'D or something" at the Prime Rib, and then later took it over.

Chez Yvonne

Jerry Tinney also told me about another ownership complication in the larger Restaurant Row that occurred when Chez Yvonne, a French restaurant on ECR in Mountain View, was established by Andre Frelier's ex-wife Yvonne.

The Iron Works

Gee-Gee Lenhart (Magnolia Drive) phoned to tell me to be sure to mention the "German Oom-Pah-Pah Band" that played at the Iron Works on Sunday afternoons.

Kramer's

Jerry Tinney told me that Kramer's was located at 3636 ECR (*where the K&S Cleaners was in 1985 and J&S Tacqueria El Grullense is now*). It was a 24-hour "truck stop" sort of place. The owners had relocated the restaurant from Redwood City, where it had been very successful, but it didn't seem to catch on in Barron Park.

Kirk's

Jerry Tinney remembers this place for the "condiment bar" where you chose what to put on your burger (*this is still a feature at Kirk's where they are now, at Town and Country*). Jerry says they were the first place in the area to offer that, and he speculates that they got the idea from the Meek's Bay Resort at Lake Tahoe. Kirk's had picnic tables with awnings outside for seating—otherwise, it was strictly standup eating.

See Illustration D, ad from October 1957 Stanford *Chaparral*.

A gunfight at Armando's

Karl Konnerth wrote: "Armando's had a major gun fight in the late 1980s I think (I can still remember seeing the bullet holes in the stucco, circled in chalk by PAPD). Then I think it had severe structural damage from the 1989 (*Loma Prieta*) Earthquake and was condemned. Quizno's later put a lot of work into rebuilding the structure,

a gathering place for people of distinction



kirk's

Illustration D: Kirk's ad from the October, 1957 Stanford Chaparral.

then closed, and then it was Ramen House, and now Rice Thai."

The Cameo Club

Carter Quinby wrote: The Cameo Club started as a night club featuring strippers. The emphasis on poker came later, although they may have had a small game room at the beginning."

Big Al's

Jerry Tinney remembers this funky pizza joint, located on the east side of ECR somewhere near Arastradero Road, as the place with antiques hanging from the rafters. (It was one of my favorite places to go on Friday night when I was at the Stanford Biz School, 1969-71. At the time, neither my wife nor I had a business card to leave with the many thousands that were pinned to every wall and covering the ceiling—like Rossatti's on Alpine Road.)

Tar and Feathers

Jerry and I talked about this small bar, which was located in the building that Hobe's now occupies. Two San Francisco 49ers were partners and often would be seen in the place with a crowd of girlfriends. It was a popular Friday night place in the 1970s and early 1980s. (I used to go there for a beer and good conversation with people I worked with at Syntex—mostly chemists with a few outliers like me (a pro-

ject manager). It was a really nice, homey, friendly place.)

Chat and Chew

Jerry added an item to the lore surrounding the Chat and Chew, a very popular family-style donut shop and sandwich place located at 3990 ECR, on the Buena Vista property about where Blockbuster Video is today. He remembered often eating at the Chat and Chew with his mother, who took him there for meals after his father died in 1947. She would drive down ECR from the family home on Forest Avenue. It was a typical coffee-shop type café and she felt comfortable eating there. It had natural wood, varnished tables and was spotlessly clean.

Longbarn/Ming's Site

Karl Konnerth was one of the people who corrected me about the origins of the building on the corner of Vista Avenue presently occupied by Emek Baracha Congregation. He wrote: "The building at 4102 ECR (currently Emek Baracha Temple) was NOT built for Blockbuster (emphasis added by me). It was a furniture store (Scandinavian?) before Blockbuster moved in."

Steven Rosenberg wrote: "The Longbarn/Ming's—when I arrived in BP, this site was home to a locally owned Scandinavian Furniture store. Either the son or his wife grew up in the house I now live in in BP. The son was killed in a motorcycle accident, and at that point his wife shut down the store and moved to Grass Valley with their young children. At that point Blockbuster moved in."

(After being reminded, I dredged up some vague memories of having shopped in that store several times with my wife, Verna. This is a good illustration of what I call the "Here today, gone tomorrow, forgotten the next day" syndrome.)

Conclusion

On that note, I conclude this smorgasbord of reader reminiscences, which have added substantially to the recorded lore of Barron Park's Restaurant Row. I especially enjoyed hearing about FRANK FERRANTE'S WORLD-FAMOUS RESTAURANT, the Cremationist Cook at L'Ommie's and the gunfight at Armando's corral.

Doug Graham, Barron Park Historian, 984 Ilima Way, Palo Alto CA 94306, 650-493-0689, dgrahampaca@gmail.com. Please contact me with any corrections, additions or interesting stories on any Barron Park history topic.

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BPA meetings are held the 3rd

Tuesday of most months at 7:15 p.m.

Call Lynnie Melena for location: 493-2135

www.bpaonline.org

ANNUAL WELCOMING GATHERING

Bouquets of thanks to all who made the BPA Gathering happen - no exact count on attendees, but they included nearly all the candidates for City Council, enthusiastically scooping ice-cream, thanks to Doug Moran's invitation, and enough of our Barron Park community to go through 18 gallons of 6 flavors of Driftwood Deli ice-cream, 400 cones and 480 cups of ice-cream, and ice-water!

The August 30th event from 2-4pm couldn't have happened without the indispensable Julie Williams, lending her own tables, and co-ordinating with Juana Briones' chairs, large thermoses for fresh water, and table clothes, Bud Rubin's equally indispensable time and effort transporting them in his trusty truck, the incomparable Karen Kessler and Stephen Luce supervising set-up, pick up of ice-cream, cones, cups, ice, dry ice and supplies, Gary Breitbard and Jena Rauti for their wonderful music, Inge Harding Barlow, Bob and Alice Frost for bringing the donkeys, and manning the donkey shirt table, Doug Graham's history exhibit, Mircea Voskerician, Kim Perlmutter, Perky Perkins, Richard and Linda Elder, Art Liberman, and Susana Young for all their help, John King for lending the all-important canopes (and Eric Struck for helping putting them up), coolers and ice-cream scoopers, ditto Anne Anderson, Tina James, Joyce Hoppa and Sharon Erickson for lending coolers/ice-cream scoopers, and thanks to the Balloon Lady for the colorful balloons, and to Louis Lehot for organizing the soccer finale!

Gratefully,

Gwen Luce

BPA Welcoming Chair



Music instructor Gary Breitbard plays and organizes musicians for both the May Fete and our Welcoming Gathering. <http://www.teachstreet.com/teacher/gary-breitbard-music>



From left: Hannah Giovannotto, Gwen Luce, Inge Harding-Barlow (hiding under her hat), Perry the donkey, Nicolas Lang, and mom Francoise Lang.

photos courtesy of Kim Perlmutter



Although it wasn't hot, some folks chose the shade to listen to Gary Breitbard's trio of folk singers.



Perry gets a hug from Gail Price.



Stephen Luce, Tim Gray and other volunteers scooped eventually ALL of the ice cream!



Kim Perlmutter promoting her gardening service: Inviting Spaces by Kim—650.776.6123. Creating Inviting Spaces For Anytime of Day.

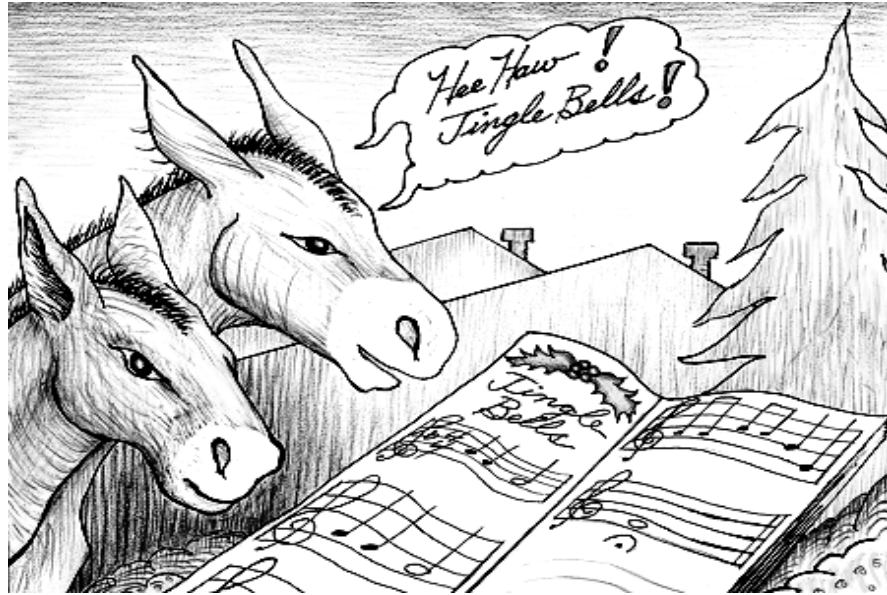


From left: Emily Collins, Annabelle Macrae, Francesca Macrae

* TENTH ANNUAL *

Barron Park Neighborhood Holiday Party and Donkey Parade

Featuring the Gunn High School Chamber Singers



Pericles (Perry) and Miner 49er (Niner), the Barron Park community donkeys

Say hello to Perry and 'Niner—Stroll through our neighborhood!
Sing seasonal favorites! Bring your kids and animals!

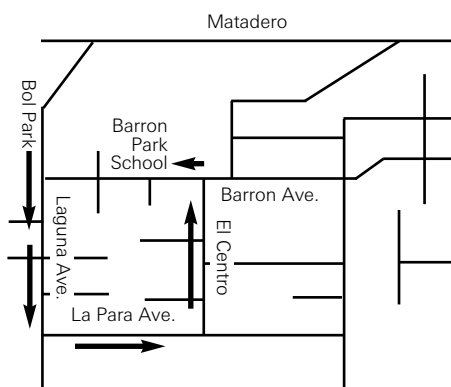
Sunday, December 20th

Parade: 2:30 pm Bol Park – Rain or Shine!

Party: 3:15 pm (Approx.) Barron Park Elementary School

Parade Route:

Meet at Bol Park 2:30 pm
Leave Bol Park 2:45 pm
Laguna to La Para
La Para to El Centro
El Centro to Barron
Barron to Barron Park School



Refreshments and singing at
Barron Park Elementary School
Multi Purpose Room 3:15 pm
(If you can bring goodies for the
party, please call Alice Frost
at 493-8272)

BABYSITTING IN BARRON PARK

By Art Liberman, membership chair



<http://www.videojug.com/film/how-to-find-a-good-babysitter>

The Barron Park Association brings members of our community together through our well known social events and our advocacy on common neighborhood concerns. Others members are brought together through our Babysitting List. We connect parents seeking babysitters for their young children with other members of the association, mostly young people but some seniors as well, who are offering their babysitting services.

The BPA membership form has a section on it for the two groups to indicate their desire to participate and their interest, either as babysitters or recipients of the list, and we do the rest!

Each year, a new list of babysitters is compiled from the information on the BPA membership forms and updated as the

forms are received and the information is collected. The Babysitting List is sent out from time to time (by email only) to those who have requested it on their BPA membership form. If you have overlooked this, or if you know of other members of the Barron Park Association who would like to receive a copy or have individuals in their homes who would like to be added as babysitters, kindly ask them to send an email to babysittinglist@bpaonline.org.

During the year, members of the Association can add their name or names of their children to the babysitter list (send us an email), or ask that names be removed, and from time to time, a revised list will be sent out. This year's list has 28 names and has been sent out to over 60 members.

To protect the privacy and assure the confidentiality of the persons who have offered

their services as babysitters, most of whom are young people, the Babysitting List is sent ONLY to current members of the Barron Park Association. We ask those who receive it to use it for their personal use only, and not to forward it or otherwise distribute it.

EMAIL LISTS

The BPA has three email lists: bpa-news, bpa-issues, and bpa-misc. They are hosted at Google Groups (moved January 2008). To join bpa-news, go to <http://groups.google.com/group/bpa-news> and click on "Join this group." Similarly for the other lists.

For more information on these email lists, go to the BPA home page—<http://www.bpaonline.org> and click on the button "BPA Email Lists."

Growing up in Barron Park—Bob Henschel's Story

By Douglas L. Graham, Barron Park Historian



Robert H. Henschel, 1926-2009

The First Article

This is the first installment in a long-planned series to be called Growing up in Barron Park, based on oral history interviews of people who spent all or a major part of their memorable childhood years (age 6 through 18) living in Barron Park. I plan to interview and write up the stories of at least one boy or girl to represent each decade from the 1920s through the 2000s. We will begin with the story of Robert H. (Bob) Henschel, whose family moved to Woodland Drive (later renamed La Selva Drive) in 1938. Since then, Bob lived in Barron Park all his life except for the years 1944–1948, when he was in the U.S. Army.

The 1930s and Early 1940s

Bob was born in Martinez, California on September 6, 1926. His earliest memories of home were of living in the Twin Peaks neighborhood of San Francisco, where his parents Clarence and Mary McNeil Henschel moved in 1932. He remembered watching a WPA parade down Market Street (The WPA was the Works Projects Administration, a federal government agency that provided public jobs for the unemployed during the Great Depression).

Moving Around

The family moved to Eureka in 1935 where

one of his friend's dads—a Mr. Paleski—was a cook at the famous Samoa Cook House. In 1937 they lived briefly in Fresno, but visited regularly in Barron Park. Returning to the Bay Area, they lived in a motel on El Camino Real between Ventura and Curtner for about two months. They then moved to the house at 3775 Woodland Drive in 1938. Woodland Drive was later re-named La Selva Drive (“woodland” in Spanish), because there was another Woodland Drive along San Francisco Creek in Menlo Park and East Palo Alto. Bob's mother Mary continued living in the house at 3775 until she died in 2000, at the age of 99.

The 1939 World's Fair in San Francisco

Bob remembers going to the 1939 Exposition on Treasure Island in San Francisco. It was a fun place—he went several times. You could get a big cup of hot soup for five cents. His father worked at the Exposition. Pan American clippers (“flying boats”) flew in and landed on the Bay next to Treasure Island. There was an amusement park—the rides were good. He remembers “Sally Rands' Dude Ranch,” which he says was probably more like a “nude ranch,” because kids weren't welcome.

Grandparents Slinger

When the Henschel family moved to Barron Park, Bob was twelve years old and he already knew the neighborhood well from visiting his grandparents, who lived on the 500 block of Barron Avenue. While he was

growing up he spent a lot of time with his grandparents, who were a prominent family in the growing neighborhood. This was the Slinger family, and they had moved into Barron Park in 1926–27. Chester F. Slinger was Bob's grandfather. He ran a business on El Camino Real, Slinger's Boat Works. Chester E. (Chet) Slinger, Bob's uncle, was Barron Park's first Fire Chief. During the late 1940s and the 1950s, Slinger's Boat Works on El Camino Real was the unofficial political headquarters and official voting place for Barron Park. See the photo of the Boat Works.

Bob's grandfather Slinger bought lots, contracted houses, built and sold them. He built about 20 houses in Barron Park. Bob helped him build a tiny real estate office for Bob's parents, on the corner of Barron (now a tailor shop). There was a “carport for boats” between there and the boat shop. Bob's mother, Mary Henschel, was a real estate agent in Barron Park for about 40 or 50 years. She was the first woman real estate agent in this area, and sold and re-sold many Barron Park homes, probably more than anyone else. About 1970 she moved into a new office in the small building on El Camino Real that sits in front of the Driftwood Market. She was still working in real estate in her early 90s.

La Encina Dairy

In the 1930s and early 1940s, there was nothing but open fields and orchards west of La Donna Avenue. There was an old Dairy—it was wonderful country for kids.



Slinger's Boat Works, late 1940s.

La Encina Dairy (formerly the Strain Dairy) was located where Kendall now runs between La Donna and Josina. When it went out of business in 1938 (encouraged to leave by local realtors and residents who objected to the smells) the land was split—part was bought by the Palo Alto Unified School District and became Barron Park School in 1948 and the other part (“the Bol Tract”) was bought by Cornelis and Josina Bol and became one of the first Eichler developments with the initial homes being built in 1949.

The kids played in the old dairy property, which had a small building with “jillions of small bottle caps”—the pasteboard ones that dairies used to insert in the mouths of glass milk bottles. Bob and his friends used these for poker chips and thought they were wonderful. There were Japanese-American people living on the dairy property (they may have grown tomatoes there for several years). Uncle Chet was good friends with a Japanese teenaged boy—they were good buddies.

The Savor of Stolen Fruit

Bob and his friends climbed trees and built forts. His best friend was his cousin, Jack Hansen. Bob had an old dog, named Spike, which he would take with him and Spike would run through the grass having a great time. The Military Academy was still here then. Stealing fruit was an occasional thrill—he says stolen fruit tastes best. There were prune plum trees on Kendall Avenue. There were prune and apricot orchards and lots of orange trees. They used to steal oranges from Mrs. Kendall, who lived in the house the street was curved around. The Kendall family went to Canada after World War II started. The kids spent a lot of time in the creeks. They would find things that people threw in there, and they also hunted frogs and polliwogs. Bob doesn't remember seeing fish or crawdads.

Bicycle Riding

His friends all had bikes. They rode to Arastradero Road along the old railroad tracks. He remembers Bud and Martha Cady across the street—Martha was a year younger than Bob. He also did lots of things with Charlie Birdsall, who lived on Barron. They would ride up Matadero Hill, which was unpaved, rocky and rutted, and come swooping down and over the “hump” at the railroad tracks. He has scars to prove that you couldn't do much of that without falling. They also went to Stanford Airport on their bikes—this was the airstrip

that then existed on Stanford Avenue where Escondido Village is now located.

Schools and Gas Rationing

Bob started school in San Francisco. When his family moved to Barron Park in 1938, he went to Mayfield School for about one week, and then transferred to Sherman School. He went to Junior High at Jordan. He took the school bus when attending Palo Alto High School. During his final two years in high school, World War II was being fought and gas was rationed, so only one or two kids had cars. Frank Herst who lived on Whitsell drove some, and Bob would contribute toward a gallon of gas on Frank's “C” ration card. There were ways to get gas—for instance, you could get all the gas you wanted if it was for a boat.

After School in the 1940s

After school at Paly, he and his friends would sometimes walk to the Creamery in old Mayfield and get “Whale Bars.” Sometimes the stick was imprinted “free” and you got another one when you turned it in. Another kids' hangout was at Chick's Drive-In on El Camino at Sherman Avenue. There also was a great bike shop on California Avenue, run by Mr. Nealy. He would sell kids bike parts on credit, and was in general a wonderful guy.

Downtown, on Hamilton next door to the Feed and Fuel Store, there was a burger joint with a pool table. Bob would go there if he had money—they made the best burgers in town. He would buy the “party-size” Pepsi Cola for 15 cents, at the SOS Market on Homer. That and a sourdough French roll made a good lunch.

Another favorite place was the Stanford Indian Drive-In across from the Paly campus on Embarcadero where the Town and Country Shopping Center was later built. He went there when he was home on leave from the service. But “Number One” was the Peninsula Creamery. It was owned by the parents of one of Bob's classmates in the Paly Class of '44. There was also the University Creamery just south of the Stanford Theater on University Avenue.

Youth Activities

Paly had school dances, of course, and Bob attended. There was a youth center on Emerson across from Max's Smoke House. The YMCA had a place on University Avenue, with pool and ping-pong tables. For movies, the favorite spot was Mayfield's Fine Arts Theater, which was five cents cheaper than the downtown Palo

Alto theaters. Patti (Bob's first wife) worked there and would sometimes let kids in free.

The cops knew all the kids, because they talked with them. It was personal—not like today, and Bob wished it were still that way.

Businesses on El Camino Real

The Henschel's bought their food at Paul's Grocery, which was located about where the Taco Bell is now. Slinger's Boat Works was almost at the corner of Barron. Grandpa Slinger lived above the shop in “the penthouse.” This was behind where the warehouse yard is for the Maytag place. Peggy's Pantry was north of Barron. There was a gas station and cleaners on the corner of Barron. The gas station was Grandpa Slinger's. Sometimes during the depression he would accept watches from people who couldn't pay cash for gas. At the corner of Kendall was a garage where someone kept a gorgeous antique car.

World War II and Post-War Service

After graduating from High School in 1944, Bob volunteered for the draft. He chose the Navy but got put in the Infantry anyway because that's where they most needed men right then. He trained at Camp Roberts near Paso Robles, and then shipped out via Seattle and Hawaii to Saipan in the Mariana Islands as a post-battle replacement. His outfit then fought in Okinawa, the last battle of World War II. There he was in battle about 6–8 weeks during the push south down the middle of the island towards Shuri Castle. His unit was slated for the invasion of Japan and he was on R&R (rest and recreation) on Cebu Island in the Philippines when the war ended. He participated in the V-J Day Parade (Victory over Japan) in Cebu City. The outfit then was sent to Sayagawa in the mountains on Hokkaido (the northernmost big island of Japan) for 2–3 months, as part of the occupation forces.

Bob re-enlisted for the Air Corps to get a 60-day home leave. He was on orders for duty in Europe and was in Greensboro, North Carolina when he was offered a billet at Hamilton Field in Novato instead. He spent three years there. When he left the service in 1949, he returned to Barron Park and built a house at 627 Barron Avenue. The house that had been at 627 was moved to 611, on the corner of Whitsell.

Later life

Bob was a fireman in Los Altos for about 30 years. He loved flying, and for the last

ten years he volunteered and flew for Angel Flight, which provides free flight services for low-income patients to reach regional hospitals or medical specialists.

Gale Henschel, Bob's widow, noted that there were many references to food in Bob's reminiscences, and she confirmed that Bob really, really enjoyed food! However, in spite of this predisposition, he managed to stay slender. See the recent photograph of Bob.

Bob was married twice, first to Patti, who grew up on Pepper Street in Palo Alto. Patti and Bob married in March 1947 and the marriage lasted 53 years until Patti's death in 2000. They had four daughters and three grandsons. He married Gale later that same year. In 2004 they moved to a new house Bob had custom-built on Amaranta. Bob died April 6, 2009 after a short illness.

The Interview and Aftermath

I interviewed Bob for the bulk of this story on June 11, 2003, and wrote up a document for the record that I entitled "Oral History Notes" including most of the above information and some additional biographical data. I sent the document to Bob for corrections and additions. Then transpired a confusion of missed phone calls over a period of several months and I finally got frustrated and set the project aside "temporarily." It was with a shock that I learned in July, third-hand, of Bob's death on April 6, 2009. He died at the age of 82. I contacted Gale, who kindly read the "Notes" and thought that Bob would have liked to see them made into a story, as was our original intention.

I added some factual information about Strain's Dairy and what happened to that land that Bob so enjoyed playing on. I also corroborated the location of Paul's Grocery and added some general historical and geographical explanations to provide background for Bob's recollections of the 1930s and 1940s. However, 90% or more of the above is in Bob's own wording or lightly paraphrased.

I hope you enjoyed this. I have candidates for other "growing up" stories and intend to make this a regular feature in the Barron Park Newsletter. If you have comments or questions, please feel free to contact me at dgrahampaca@gmail.com, at 650-493-0689, or 984 Ilima Way, Palo Alto CA 94306. Doug Graham, Barron Park Historian.

Light Brown Apple Moth Report

By Sue Luttner

Good news for neighborhood gardeners, and just in time for persimmon and pomegranate season: The county has relaxed the quarantine guidelines on home-grown fruits and vegetables.

Thanks to Master Gardener Candace Simpson for passing along the announcement from Deputy Agricultural Commissioner Kevin O'Day: Although our neighborhood remains in the quarantine area, we are now free to move produce, including leafy vegetables, from our yards to our neighbors' houses and to food banks.

"That said," the message notes, "home-owners are urged not to move damaged or suspect produce." The quarantine is against the Light Brown Apple Moth (LBAM), which is a leaf-roller: The mature larva prepares for pupation by wrapping itself in a leaf, holding the curl in place with fine white threads. If you find the tell-tale tents on your trees or vegetables, please do not move those plant materials off your property, except through the city compost service.

Note that fresh flowers and plant cuttings remain under quarantine on the property where they're grown. Seeds and dried flowers may be transported freely.



after a peak of 80 individuals trapped this past April. Rates have slowed in other counties with the summer weather, but not as dramatically.

Still, two new counties have been added to the quarantine area: Long Beach and San Luis Obispo. The LBAM was first detected in California in the East Bay in 2007, and the state immediately began a trapping and eradication program. Nearly 30,000 pheromone-baited traps deployed in infested counties across the state have so far collected 150,000 individuals.

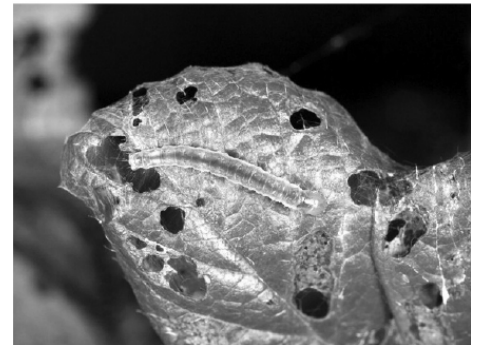


Photo: Jack K. Clark

Although final summer numbers were not yet in at the end of August, the rate of LBAM spread in Santa Clara County seems to have slowed, with only a few dozen insects captured in June and 28 in July,

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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Enjoy a Lovely and Edible Native Plant!

By Nancy Lewis



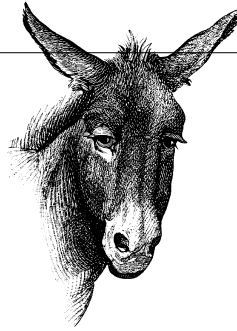
Miner's Lettuce (*Claytonia perfoliata*) is an abundant cool-weather, shade-tolerant annual rich in Vitamins A and C, and is easy to grow. The tender stems, leaves and flowers are edible and taste like spinach. It can be eaten raw or cooked. In the same family as nasturtiums, it is easy to identify by its round leaves with center stems bearing tiny white, five-petaled flowers.

Perfectly suited to Barron Park since it is native to this area, seeds can be scattered shortly before the first rains. Watch your crop appear sometimes as early as December. An attractive but seasonal fill plant which produces seed abundantly, it is not invasive but multiplies rapidly from year to year. It is easy to pull out if you find it has invited itself into too many spots in your yard, and will not reappear if you remove it before it sets seed. If they don't have it already, Common Ground can refer you to a seed source. Miner's Lettuce is becoming more popular as a garden plant, so seed should not be hard to find.

For more information on California gardening, please visit:

NEW URBAN GARDENS
www.new-urban-gardens.com
650.743.6715

Help Support the Barron Park Donkeys!



All those who care about Perry and Niner seek to guarantee their proper on-going care and shelter, as well as to ensure that assets will be available for health concerns as the donkeys age. The handlers hope that those generous neighbors who have contributed in the past will consider increasing their support this year. Contributions for the donkeys' care may be sent to: The Palo Alto Donkey Project, ACTERRA (Action

for a Sustainable Earth), 3921 East Bayshore Road, Palo Alto, CA 94303-4303. The check must be made out to "ACTERRA-Palo Alto Donkey Fund." All of the above must be included.

For further information about making a contribution on behalf of the donkeys, or if you would like information about how to become one of the volunteer donkey handlers, please call Bob Frost, 493-8272 or email at bobfrost34@yahoo.com.

IN THE NOOKS OF BARRON PARK

By Sue Luttner

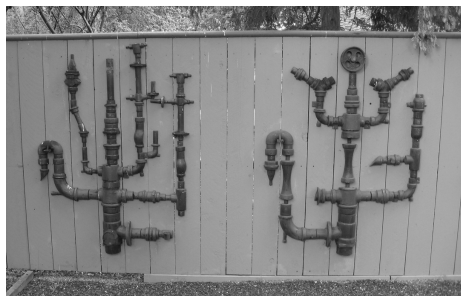
One of the features of our neighborhood is the art and craftwork, like these examples that caught our reporter's eye.



Artist Christine Heegaard immortalized this tree while renting here, knowing she'd have to leave it behind when she moved back to her native Europe. See her web site at www.mamosaic.com.



Dan and Janice Harrison have decorated their front porch with this hand-crafted house.



Artist Lars Speyer, who moved to Barron Park in 1955, decorated his fence with pipe sculpture.

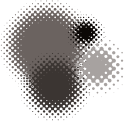


Stan Baldwin built this mailbox for his family and the Gherdroms next door about 20 years ago.

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