

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Will Beckett, BPA President

May Fete

We just concluded another great May Fete celebration. This one was of particular importance to me because it is a demonstration of how generations have enjoyed this event. There have been years when it has been difficult to find enough people, particularly children, for all the ribbons. This wasn't the case this year. Also, after having my own children enjoy this event for years, my oldest daughter was one of the performers for the first time. When Heather isn't a stage manager, she plays fiddle, sings and dances with a group called Crossroads. This is one of the first times I have taken the time to sit down and

just enjoy the music. Paul Edwards did a wonderful job pulling these groups together and I think everyone there was amazed at the variety and quality of the music this year. My youngest, Elaine, enjoyed playing in the creek and eating the great food. I'm really looking forward to seeing what changes there will be next year.

El Camino Grant

Many of you may be aware the City has been selected to receive \$240,000 in grant money for the El Camino Real demonstration project to develop streetscape guidelines. This along with a private effort to add more trees along El Camino Real in Palo Alto should mean some major

improvements are ahead for El Camino Real. If we add a market to this, things would really be looking up.

Energy Crisis

Anyone who has been following the energy situation will know that we in Palo Alto are in a very good position power-wise compared to most others in the state. Palo Alto has been working very hard to assure that we will not be subject to rolling blackouts this summer. Conservation efforts by local companies and residents coupled with new generators at the city utility yard should keep the power on all summer long. Conservation is the biggest reason for this and residents can help too. Use only florescent light bulbs and turn them off when you leave the room, set pool pumps to come on after 7pm instead of the middle of the day, and on hot days, open windows at night and close them during the day if your house is insulated so you don't need to use an air conditioner.

Street Work

Lots of street work will be going on over the next several months. Residents on the street affected, have already been given notice and will continue to receive notification about work schedules. This work will disrupt parking and cause the usual dust but public works will be trying to accommodate issues that come up and they have assured us that all the work will be completed before school begins in September. I hope everyone has a great summer!



May Pole dancers at the May Fete in Bol Park (see story on page 6). Photo by Don Anderson.

ZONING & LAND USE

by Maryanne Welton, committee chair

While the commercial real estate market is beginning to feel the impact of the economic downturn, there is a variety of activity in our neighborhood.

School Proposal for Clemo Street

The Children's International School has begun the process for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to build a new school on the 1.7-acre orchard on Clemo Street (across the street from Briones Park on the small street between Arastradero and Maybell). This private school for grades kindergarten through 8th grade, currently located at Cubberly, would have a maximum of 135 students.

The lot is zoned RM-30, which allows dense multi-family housing. If the school is unsuccessful in obtaining the CUP, a residential developer intends to construct a large housing project on the property. It has previously been suggested as a possible location for a public library or community center, but it is unlikely the City could afford the price either the school or developer has negotiated with the property owner.

The school intends to work closely with the neighborhood and City to prepare plans that address traffic, noise, and compatibility

with adjacent residential uses. They have begun work with an architectural firm, traffic engineer and arborist. A community meeting was held on May 8 to meet with neighbors. The major concerns they voiced were about the impact of traffic, parking, size and height of the buildings, and use of the park by the school. Watch for notices of future meetings on the BPA email list

South El Camino Real Design Study

The City's Comprehensive Plan calls for a multi-disciplinary planning study to look at transportation, urban design, land use and economic factors that affect development along El Camino. The City's Planning Department and an urban design firm have begun work, partially funded by a recent grant of more than \$300,000 from Caltrans. The goal is to craft a set of new design guidelines that help create a pedestrian-oriented, neighborhood-serving retail district. These guidelines will impact the look and feel of all new and renovated structures along El Camino as well as the public areas, sidewalks and plantings.

Old Blockbuster Site

A nine-unit condominium project is proposed for the site of the old Blockbuster Video store on the corner of El Camino and Vista. Preliminary review by the Planning Department and Architectural Review Board recommended design changes to encourage a more pedestrian-friendly street frontage. Zoned for residential use, the project would add another multi-family driveway to Vista. Parking requirements must be met as part of the City approval process to reduce the amount of potential on-street parking.

The Goodwill Trailer Site

The hotel proposal has been withdrawn for this site. Developer Jim Baer is looking at other options and hopes to propose a mixed-use project with neighborhood-serving retail space, possibly a market.

If you are interested in zoning and land use issues, any of the projects listed above, or want to participate on our committee, you can contact me at 493-3035 or quigleynor@aol.com.

2001 Survey Results

by Shirley Finrock

This year 8% of the Barron Park residents, 122, responded to the annual neighborhood survey.

The majority of the people who responded felt the #1 role of BPA was to inform the neighborhood of local news. Sponsorship of events, point of contact for neighborhood concerns, neighborhood improvement projects and collaboration with other neighborhoods were evenly divided in priorities.

The following is a breakdown of responses to "biggest problems in are neighborhood." Lack of retail-68; Auto Speeding-61; Lack of public transit stops-35; Pedestrian Safety-29; New high density housing developments-27; Lack of Sidewalks-16; Lack of Community Facilities-15; Inadequate park policing-11; and Traffic Congestion-7.

The following are responses to "Other" problems:

- Storm drainage, street maintenance, off-leash dogs, kids on scooters who don't pay attention.
- Wants parking policy for Barron Avenue from El Camino to Whitsell, suggest parking on one side only, dangerous for pedestrians.
- Blight on El Camino, neglected homes & yards, overbuilt homes, SKUNKS.
- Heavy traffic on Maybell, can't get out of driveway in a.m.
- Many streets look tacky especially Matadero from El Camino to bridge. Unsightly exposure of former Varian Building along Chimalus since removal of trees for Santa Clara Water District Flood Project.
- Destruction of perfectly habitable homes
- Pressure on open space
- Concerns of additional traffic on Arastradero after Terman School opens
- Lack of affordable housing, Threat to Buena Vista Trailer Park
- Monitor El Camino commercial development
- Wants nice signs at entrances to Barron Park
- On street auto parking
- Lack of closure for Flood Control Project
- Let's support Barron Park businesses on El Camino.



SEE THE DONKEYS

Every Sunday morning, weather permitting, the donkeys visit with people of all ages from 9:30 until 10:30 in Bol Park.

Bring your kids and dogs!

D O N K E Y N E W S

by Edith Smith — Donkey Volunteer

In addition to their appearance at the May Fete, the donkeys, Perry and Niner, have done much socializing and educating in recent weeks. They visited twice with Barron Park School Kindergarteners at Bol Park and with Christopher Witt's Birthday Party. I taught a session in how to paint donkeys to Joan Barksdale's and Kathy Clark's Kindergarten Class, Barron Park School.

On the international front, Perry has made news as the model for the non-stop talking donkey in the animated film "Shrek." PDI/Dreamworks of Palo Alto sent out teams of artists and video artists to chart Perry's configuration (short and plump) and movements (determined, when near alfalfa.) With the voice of Eddie Murphy, the donkey, called "Donkey" in "Shrek," talks non-stop. Perry himself is a very silent donkey, only hee-hawing when his pal Niner goes out of sight. Perry's full name is Pericles, after the great Roman orator. When he first came to his Barron Park pasture we wondered if he could speak at all: however, he did give us a nice concert at the May Fete. The movie "Shrek" set box office

records upon its release May 12. It also won a standing ovation at the Cannes Film Festival. Playing now at Peninsula Theaters, the film is great family entertainment and a must-see for Perry's many Barron Park fans.

We have a wonderful group of volunteers who feed and check the donkeys each morning and evening. During the summer months we often need short-term substitutes for volunteers on vacation. If you'd like to be a substitute vol-

unteer please phone schedule-coordinator Don Anderson at 494-8672. High School students who love animals and want neighborhood volunteer would be welcome.

Laurels to our donkey volunteers: Don Anderson; Inge Harding-Barlow; Jim Bronson; Barry Brewer; Susan Carsen; Eugene Coan; Norman Copperman; Zakhary Cribari; Stephanie Enos; Birgit Fisher; Mary Jane Leon; Doug Moran; Lealand and Edith Smith; and Eric Struck.

Below: Edith Smith, Zakhary Cribari, and Niner with tee-shirts

Below left: Perry and Inge Harding-Barlow, both in shades.



D O N K E Y D O N A T I O N S

Please send your tax-deductible contributions for Perry's and Niner's maintenance to:

*Palo Alto Donkey Project, Peninsula Conservation Center Foundation,
3931 E. Bayshore Rd, Palo Alto, CA
94303. Hee Haw! Thanks!*

SENIOR UPDATE

By Mary Jane Leon

Survey Results

Remember the membership/survey form that went out in the Spring newsletter? It included an offer of several services for seniors: errands, socializing, etc. The results are in, and we seem to have a social group of seniors here in Barron Park.

Of the people who registered themselves as seniors on the membership part of the form, about half expressed interest in one or more of the services. The volunteers and committee members telephoned every one who expressed an interest in any of the services offered, to get specific information about what each one wanted or needed.

Of those interested in having help with "odd jobs," none had an immediate problem, but most were happy to have the service offered. Only a few needed transportation or to have errands run.

Lunch, Anyone?

The majority were interested in social events. We asked these folks about several specific kinds of events. Among other possibilities—music, game parties, or lectures—most people expressed an interest in getting together for either lunch or coffee.

The seniors committee and volunteers will be meeting about the time this newsletter goes to press, so we can't say for sure what the next step will be. However, it is likely that we will try to schedule a get-acquainted lunch in July, if we can find a compatible local restaurant.

Its not too late for you to join us. If you are interested in a get-acquainted lunch, telephone us at the numbers given at the end of this column, and we will get back to you as soon as we have a firm date and location.

Book Club

We had four people express interest in forming a book club. Experience suggests that between six and ten is about the right number for a club—small enough that everyone gets a chance to contribute, and large enough to get some interesting differences of opinion.

If you would like to start a neighborhood book club, let us know (phone numbers below). All those who are in at the beginning can help determine the shape and focus of the club.

Housing Information

We still have copies of the comprehensive "Housing Guide" put together by Avenidas for those who are facing the prospect of having to leave their own homes. It covers the complete range of housing available, from retirement communities to skilled nursing facilities. The booklet used to cost \$5.00 when it was new, but since the prices printed in the booklet may have gotten a little out of date, it is now free. If you want the Housing Guide, give one of us a call.

Which Newspaper Do You Read?

On April 28, 2001, on an article about the ground water clean up under Barron Park, the *San Jose Mercury's* headline was "Report details success cleaning up groundwater." On April 30, 2001, a headline in the *Palo Alto Daily News* read "Barron Park cleanup falls short." Whaaat?

As it turns out, the *Daily* didn't bother to distinguish between groundwater cleanup under Barron Park and that under the current location of Fry's on Portage Avenue. The Merc was on the right track. Should make skeptics of us all, shouldn't it?

You can reach Julie Spengler at 493-9151 or Mary Jane Leon at 493-5248. Let us hear from you.

Trees for El Camino Receives Seed Funding

By Sue Luttner, Beautification Committee

After years of planning and cooperation between citizens with a vision and sympathetic city officials, the Trees for El Camino Project is taking root. The project has received a Federal grant through the state transportation agency CalTrans, and the city Finance Committee has approved a staff request for seed funding from the city.

The project could make a tremendous difference in south Palo Alto—the goal is to create a canopy of greenery along the city's 4.3 miles of El Camino by planting shade trees along the sidewalks and, where possible, in the center dividers. It's a design challenge, because El

Camino is a heavily used state highway and the planners must make visibility a priority. CalTrans is treating Palo Alto as a demonstration project for establishing alternative roadway standards for highways in towns.

Local architects and landscape architects have already donated hundreds of hours to the project. The city is expected to

pay for about half the cost of planting and maintaining the trees until they're established. The newly formed nonprofit organization Trees for El Camino plans to raise the other half over the next year from private



“THE PLOT” BOL PARK

by Shirley Finfrock, Beautification Committee

This is an update for the many Barron Park residents, who have contributed to the Beautification Committee activities in past two years, by purchasing plants, cards, or tickets. The funds have aided our attempts to improve the appearance at the corner of Laguna and Matadera Avenue of Bol Park. Due to the early news reports of possible winter drought conditions, we limited our planting of new plants. Then to our surprise, the rains came, the invasive weeds and the non-natives grew to four feet tall. On May 1, several committee members met at “The Plot” to pull and cut away the weeds surrounding the California natives planted in previous years. We hope this will delineate the good plants from bad weeds for the city park workers annual cutting. After observing the success and failure rate of plants installed in past years, we will be installing several more wild lilac ceanothus



in the fall. These plants are very showy in early spring and will provide a colorful background.

From left to right: Shirley Finfrock, Jean Olsen, Alison Collin, and Sue Lutner. Other volunteers for our weeding project were: Carla Bliss, Sabra Driscoll, Ann Knopf, and our youngest Beautification Committee members Neulyn Moss, Lydia Gonzales, and Jasmine Collins. We were rewarded on this hot afternoon with cool drinks by Kate Poulton. The Laguna Avenue neighbors: the Sendelbecks and the Eckstrands aided our efforts with a storage area, a holding area for compost pickup, a watchful eye and some manpower.

BPA BULLETIN BOARD

www.cyberstars.com/bpa/bulletin-board

We have a Bulletin Board, free to Barron Park residents! This is a community bulletin board and is not to be used as advertising for businesses.

We have a separate listing on the BPA Website for Barron Park businesses: www.cyberstars.com/bpa

Listings will be accepted only via email, as part of your email message (not as attachments) to: njh@cyberstars.com

HTML coding will be appreciated, but not necessary. What is necessary, is a date on your ad. Phone numbers and email addresses are OK, and you must include your Barron Park address. **Your address will not be published!**

Ads will be added, and automatically deleted about every two weeks, or whenever we have time to do it. You can resubmit your listing up to three times.

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*Will Beckett, President

*Doug Moran, Vice President

*Christian Kalar, Secretary

*Ken Tani, Treasurer

*Shirley Finfrock

Douglas Graham (on leave)

Nancy Hamilton

Mark Kriss

Mary Jane Leon

Gwen Luce

Clara Sharpless

Maryanne Welton

*Members of the Executive Committee



Committee/ Activity Chairs

Beautification: Shirley Finfrock

Neighborhood Businesses:

Will Beckett

Creeks/ Flood Control: Christian Kalar

Emergency Preparedness: Vacant

May Fete: Ken Tani

History: Doug Graham

Membership: Vacant

Natural Habitat & Environment:

Jill Beckett & Doug Moran

Neighborhood Safety:

Art Bayce & Gwen Luce

Newsletter: Nancy Hamilton

Parks: Doug Graham (on leave)

School Liaison: Will Beckett, acting

Seniors: Mary Jane Leon

Traffic & Streets: Will Beckett

Zoning & Land Use: Maryanne Welton

BPA meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday every other month at 7:15 p.m.

Call Will Beckett for location and to announce your plan to come: 494-6922

BARRON PARK MAY FETE IS A BIG HIT!

By Paul Edwards

This May Fete was among the best that the Barron Park Association has ever mounted. The weather was just right, there were six artists showing their works, there were five bands to entertain the crowd (nearly the largest ever), and the May Pole was packed with dancers.

I would like to especially thank the musicians: Gary Breitbard and the Friends of French Country Music, who played a set and then played for the May Pole Dance, Crossroads, which includes Will Beckett's daughter, Heather, Broceliande (Margaret, Karl and Kristof), and the piper, Alan Keith, all of whom added so much to the event. Gary and Alan and others of his group can be heard in various combinations from time to time. Crossroads and Broceliande play regularly around the Bay Area and are worth looking for.

Broceliande formed just over a year ago and one of its first performances was at last years May Fete. The group blends Celtic and Renaissance music and produces some of the tastiest a capella treats that I've heard in some time.

Crossroads is also a new band that combines traditional Celtic music with some very interesting international sounds. The group features an Irish dancer as part of the percussion.

Gary Breitbard is a Barron Park gem. He was a major part of In Toto, a world music venue of the 80's and 90's. He plays fiddle and accordian and sings. He and his collections of musicians have been playing for our May Fete for decades.

I want to thank my dear wife, Patty, and her merry band, Stewart Armstrong, Liz Atwood, Sheena Brown and Jennie Szalata for providing the wonderful environment called the Face Painting Tent, which was mobbed all day. And I want to thank my great sisters, Carol Atwood and Susan Ogle, for the best ever May Pole Floral Basket and the preparation of the May Pole.

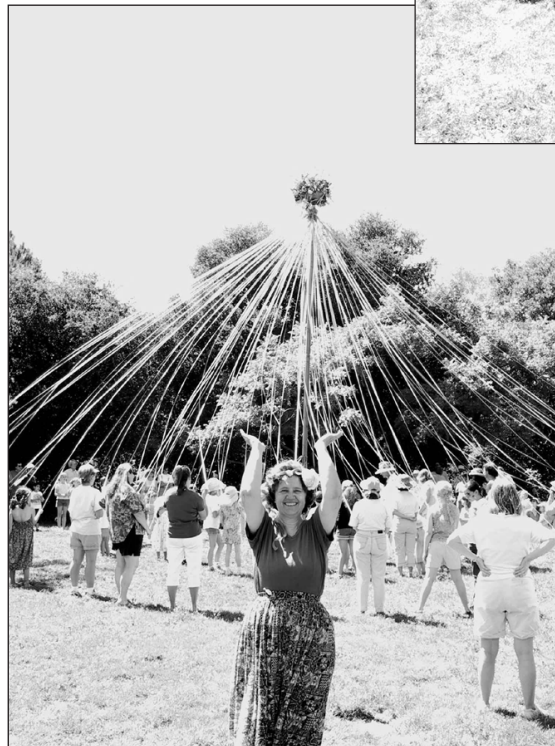
I would also like to mention the tireless Will Beckett, who puts up and takes down the stage every year, and all of the community volunteers who give their time and energy to make this a grand neighborhood event each year.



Paul Edward's sister Carol Atwood and her daughter Liz, with another sister, Susan Ogle, and part of the May Pole flower basket that Carol and Susan put together—they've been doing this for 20 years! (Photo by Patty Edwards)



Start of the May Pole procession, from the prep area to the dance. Not shown: leader Alan Keith, the bagpiper, and Gary Brietbard on accordian. (Photo by Patty Edwards)



Start of the dance—ribbon weave in progress. (Photo by Don Anderson)



The Seniors Booth at the May Fete had plenty of shade! (Photo by Don Anderson)



Paul Edwards on stage doing setup for the next band. (Photo by Patty Edwards)



Jennie Szalata wielding the brush, is a friend of Joey Edwards and a student at Gunn High School. (Photo by Patty Edwards)



Laura Ogle, Paul Edward's niece, and his sister Carol getting bound to the pole—a tradition started by Joey Edwards about 10 years ago. (Photo by Patty Edwards)

BARRON PARK HISTORY

by Doug Graham, Barron Park Historian

Barron Park vs. Palo Alto**Annexation Battles**

(FINAL PART OF A FIVE-PART ARTICLE)

A Three Decade Saga Finally Ends

This is part five—the final part—of the three-decade-long story of Barron Park's attempts to be annexed to Palo Alto. Part One told of the early movements in 1947-48 that were defeated by Palo Alto's anti-liquor groups led by the Women's Christian Temperance Union. It went on the cover the abortive 1951 attempt, the battles within the neighborhood during the 1954-55 annexation movement, and the successful Ventura annexation of 1954. Part Two told of the "Foothills Number Two" annexation in 1959 that brought inter-city maneuvering between Los Altos Hills and Palo Alto. The annexation was approved in a controversial election in spite of Barron Park leader John Silvey's "Declaration of War." It divided the neighborhood and left the core of Barron Park an island surrounded by Palo Alto. Part Three told of the 6th attempt in 1965 and its divisive aftermath. Also in 1965, the Barron Park Association began what became a ten-year study of the issue while newer, younger residents replaced many of the old-timers whose attitudes had hardened in the annexation battles. Opinion in the neighborhood began to inch towards a consensus that annexation was inevitable, so we might as well try to get it on the best terms possible. The BPA worked with the County and City to develop a General Plan for the area and neighborhood-friendly zoning along El Camino. The BPA took a straw poll in 1968, which found the neighborhood still too closely divided to make a decision. Part Four told of the period 1971-75. The County started pushing hard for annexation in 1972, and in 1973 the City ran an opinion survey. The survey results disappointed annexation advocates, with Barron Park voting 5-4 against. Finally, in 1974, the BPA under the leadership of Dick Placone came out openly and vigorously for annexation. The City began the formal

annexation process, the petition was accepted, and the election set for November 4, 1975. In the final public meeting, Barron Park residents were shocked to learn that the Volunteer Fire Department's equipment was falling apart and the replacement costs would multiply their tax bills several times over.

**Placone Challenges the Community**

On October 29, the *San Jose Mercury* reviewed the situation under the headline "Barron Park to Join Palo Alto? Voters Decide Tuesday." BPA President Dick Placone was quoted as saying "The attitude is changing. There is recognition that local government can probably be more effective in maintaining the character that has made Barron Park what it is." He believed that people were "favorably inclined" towards annexation, although he said he didn't know how big the majority would be.

The *Mercury* noted that opponents were saying that proponents could be surprised when a lot of people who haven't turned out for meetings show up at the polls to vote "No." "Many people feel taxes and expenses will go up", said Roger Cowger, one of those who drafted the opposition statement for the ballot. "They feel the city undoubtedly will make some changes in

the appearance and rural atmosphere."

Placone raised the fire protection issue. "The tax to bring the Barron Park volunteer department up (to standard) would be higher than the entire Palo Alto city tax rate", he said. If the annexation move fails, Placone warned that Barron Park residents are going to have to find some new people to look after their problems. He and other officials of the Barron Park Association will resign, he said. "Some of these people have been doing this for 10 to 15 years", he said. "They realize the only way that a group can be effective is to have a government that can be approached and will respond." Placone said he wasn't being critical of the Board of Supervisors for not paying more attention to Barron Park, but believes they are better equipped to deal with county-wide problems like transit instead of focusing on repairing holes in the street in Barron Park."

The "Antis" State Their Concerns

Also that same week, the *Palo Alto Times* published a similar article, but gave more coverage to the views of annexation opponents. The *Times* said there was opposition, but it appeared to be scattered. Mrs. D. Reed Erickson said of people opposing annexation, "I think we all feel guilty we haven't organized more or done more work." She went on to say, "There is nothing active going on here" in terms of opposition activities. "We don't even see each other," she said of other opponents. She said she had "bad feelings" about the outcome of the election—meaning it may go for annexation. "I think we missed our chance" in getting information out about drawbacks and dangers of annexation, she said. She said opponents to annexation have a broad range of viewpoints, and include both very conservative and liberal people. But they have in common a concern about preservation of the rural feeling of many Barron Park streets, a lack of confidence in the durability of the city's pledges as councils and city officials change, and a concern about loss of some individual freedoms. "The council has said over and over they don't want to change

the rural character of this area. I'll give them six months," she said.

The Last Blasts in the Annexation War

Be that statement as it may, someone was seeing someone. Shortly before the election, opponents distributed an anonymous 8-page brochure entitled "Annexation Facts." The "facts" were 15 in number and all appeared on page two. Several were completely false and others misleading when out of context—probably deliberately so. Others were just plain ignorant. One almost unbelievably unrealistic "fact" said; "Our volunteer fire department has been adequate for 30 years, but our equipment needs updating so let's get county (sic) to replace it or as alternative; there are 240 county firemen—let's get some stationed here in Barron Park or close by." (as if it were just that simple!). The rest of the brochure contained reprints of letters to the newspapers by opponents of various local annexation movements, the ballot opposition argument, another page of argument and an anti-tax cartoon.

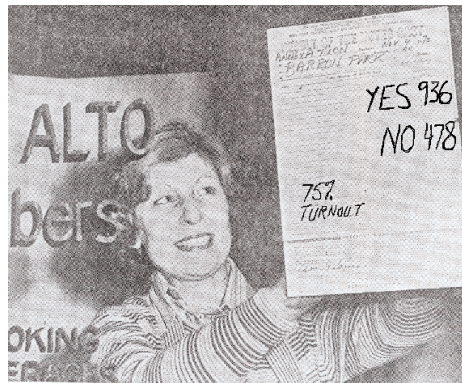
The BPA responded instantly with their own "Annexation Facts", using the same type font for the main heading as the opponents' brochure did. Their two-page rebuttal focused on the fire protection issue, on mis-statements about street widening that were being circulated in the neighborhood, and on what the BPA had accomplished for the community. It attacked the anonymity of the anti-annexation brochure's authors, at one point insinuating that they might be working for developers. The rebuttal ended on a shrill note, saying "What has the opposition done? Who are they? Are they all Barron Park Voters?" It was signed on behalf of all 13 BPA Board members. On this low note, the two-year campaign ended and the voters went to the polls.

There was a last flurry of letters to the editor in the newspapers on October 28 and 29, 1975. Annexation advocates Mr. and Mrs. George Millar on Matadero Avenue stressed the high quality of city services, especially fire and police protection compared to the county equivalents. Betty and Don Walker of Chimalus Avenue asserted that "We will still be able to maintain our rural atmosphere—but we will have responsive police and fire protection" and reasonable fire insurance rates. Others

urged a "No" vote. George Leacher of Matadero Avenue wrote "Why kill a good thing? We know what we have now, and we like what we have. We don't know what we might have under city rule." Barbara Whittemore of El Centro Street spoke for those who feared losing their homes to high assessments for street improvements. She pleaded; "What will become of us?"

At Long Last, the Voters Decide

On Tuesday, November 4, 1975, Barron Park voters went to the polls to finally decide whether or not Barron Park was to become part of Palo Alto. There was a 75% turnout of the 1,879 registered voters, and the vote was 936-478, or 2-1 in favor. Thus ended nearly 30 years of controversy and political fighting between Barron Park and the city. On many occasions dur-



ing the long drawn out conflict it seemed as if the real fight was between groups within the neighborhood.

The Times reported on the November 5 that the Palo Alto Fire Department immediately assumed responsibility for the area "this morning", and in fact "had been responding to fires in the area for several months." The volunteer fire department was to be disbanded and other city services phased in. The annexation would "not become official until after the City Council approves an annexation ordinance, on next Monday night's meeting agenda, and the California Secretary of State's office certifies the annexation." City Manager George Sipel welcomed the annexation with a promise that the fears of some residents that Palo Alto would widen Barron Park streets "...are unnecessary. We don't have any plans to do any kind of work of that type."

A certain die-hard attitude was expressed

in a banner attached to the fence of the abandoned McElroy Lumber Yard on El Camino between Rudolf's (the Axe House) at the corner of Los Robles, and the Barron Park Fire House behind the Lanai Florist. The banner read "Barron Park Forever!", and a photograph appeared in the Times on November 5. Many annexation advocates felt in complete agreement with the slogan but saw a different implication. To them, annexation did not necessarily mean the disappearance of Barron Park as a distinctive, identifiable and politically active neighborhood. They felt that it was up to Barron Parkers to keep the Barron Park spirit alive.

At least one attempt was made immediately to patch up the differences. Gary Breitbard of Chimalus Avenue organized a "Barron Park Solidarity and Reunification Square Dance and Hoedown" for both proponents and opponents. It was planned "in the spirit of community", for Saturday night, November 22 at Barron Park School.

Annexation Becomes Effective

On November 12, Mayor Stanley Norton sent a welcome letter to all Barron Park residents. In it, he said "We recognize that Barron Park is a unique area and that you have fought long and hard to retain its special, rural-like character. We interpret your vote to annex to the city as a vote of confidence...and expression of faith in the City's willingness to help preserve that character while providing a higher level of service than the County was able to offer."

The effective date of annexation was December 8, 1975 when the city clerk officially recorded it with Santa Clara County. Barron Park residents then legally became residents of Palo Alto. Delays in the vote certification by the state had postponed this formality about two weeks. All City departments assumed responsibility for provision of services to the area on that date, and resident rates for utilities, classes and use of the dump applied. The special districts were to dissolved over an ensuing seven-month period.

Post-Annexation Plans

A city staff report on December 11 discussed the planned phase-in of services and shutdown of special districts. The City Police would be issuing warnings rather than citations for violations (of the leash law, for example) for the first six months.

Specific officers were assigned so that the neighborhood could get to know them.

The City was not to take possession of Bol Park until May or June, 1976. Until then, the County Special District that the BPA helped establish would continue to maintain the park through its contract with a private landscaping company. The BPA's Park Advisory Committee would continue as an advisory committee to the city.

Street tree trimming would begin immediately, and plans were made in conjunction with the BPA for planting new street trees to fill in where previous trees had been lost, or where there never had been any. Slurry sealing of 19 streets was proposed, and reconstruction of 350 feet of Paradise Way (as of the Spring of 2001, Paradise Way still hasn't been touched).

As for building inspections, it was noted that the records that the city was in the process of obtaining from the county were very incomplete (for instance, permits issued before 1972 were not available).

Purchase of the Electrical and gas systems from PG&E would take place three years after the annexation, so enjoyment of the city's lower rates would be deferred until then. The County Lighting Service Area (street lights) excluded the Barron Park area as of the effective annexation date. The city would pick up the street lighting bill until the system was acquired as part of the PG&E purchase. The Las Encinas Sanitary District, which owned Barron Park's sewer system, would be phased out in about 4 months. The Barron Park Fire Protection District was dissolved as of December 30, 1975. The District Board held their final meeting and paid a few bills on December 15.

Results of the Annexation

The *San Jose Mercury* published an article on March 31, 1976 about Bol Park, entitled "Palo Alto Gains Park Through Annexation." It began, "When Barron Park residents voted to annex to Palo Alto last year they were prepared to present the city with more than some extra tax dollars and a few hundred votes." The story was a recap of how Barron Park citizens worked together to establish, pay for and develop Bol Park, which was now being presented as a free gift to the city.

The *Palo Alto Times*, on August 26, 1976 reported on the tax changes affecting Bar-

ron Park as a result of the annexation. First, the special district tax of \$0.41 per \$100 assessed valuation was eliminated. This covered Bol Park (\$0.27) and the Barron Park Fire Protection District (\$0.137). Termination of the Las Encinas Sanitary District had not resulted in tax savings since the district had levied no taxes since 1957 when the original bond was paid off.

Post-annexation changes

The big news was that there was no news. Like Sherlock Holmes' famous dog that did not bark in the night, there were no real or perceived problems following annexation. The entire controversy collapsed into a vacuum of non-eventfulness. On November 15, 1979, the Palo Alto Weekly headlined a story "Barron Park keeps its identity four years after annexation." The article stated that "Four years later, Barron Park appears to be the same semi-rural community as before, but it's had to learn how to be a part of the bigger city of Palo Alto." George Leacher was quoted as the person who proclaimed back in 1975, "We know what we have now, and we like what we have..." Now, in 1979, Leacher was saying "It hasn't been as bad as I thought it would be; in fact, it's been better. I haven't noticed much change." Betty Walker, who had been a proponent, said "...we have been very happy with the annexation." Richard Placone, who had recently retired from the BPA Board said, "My own assessment is that the city annexation is good. The city has lived up to its promises and has been very responsive." Placone reminded the readers that, had annexation not gone through, the cost of modernizing the fire department would have been thousands of dollars per family.

The only citizen complaints that the *Weekly* could surface concerned the lenient attitude of Palo Alto Police towards people sleeping or riding motorbikes in the park. Vandalism had become a problem in the park, as well as perceived overuse by lunch-time crowds from the Stanford Research Park.

Concerning neighborhood-city relationships, Naphthali Knox, city planner mentioned the Barron Square condominium project on Maybell Avenue as an example. "The residents saw Barron Square as a ruination of the area; we saw it as the city meeting its housing goal." BPA President Ken Arutunian said the Barron Square con-

troversy left some bitter feeling. "The community has felt that a majority of housing projects were being dumped on this side of town." The massage parlor business along the Barron Park side of El Camino was a more positive example of resident input, according to the *Weekly*. The once-busy strip has been cleared out, again because of community involvement. Arutunian said "The City and County attorneys combined forces. It was a combination of pressure by neighbors and effective team operation. They did a beautiful job of handling it."

In assessing Barron Park's effectiveness in representing its interests to the city, Arutunian said, "I think we're pretty much the same as any other part of the city now. We were concerned about keeping the quality and character of the neighborhood, and a lot of city officials couldn't quite understand that. It was an educational process. I think we're pretty effective, and I don't think we're treated any less than any other community." Knox said he thought that Barron Park has had measurable influences in city planning. "Now that they are part of the city we are definitely paying attention to them."

The *Weekly* found some residents who didn't agree. One said "The City of Palo Alto doesn't really care. If we really want something done we have to scream and yell." In particular, residents living near Lockheed, Watkins-Johnson and Varian facilities were voicing many complaints in 1979 about noise from those plants.

Both Arutunian and Placone agreed that Barron Park had retained its sense of cohesiveness and shown this by continued community participation. "I've never felt a stronger sense of neighborhood", said Arutunian. He believed that the neighborhood's struggles with the annexation issue through the years pulled people together. Sam Elster of Laguna Oaks Court, a BPA Board and Park Advisory Committee Member, summed it up by saying firmly, "If there had been any bitterness we wouldn't have annexed. The time had come."

Twenty-Five Years Later—Reflections and Conclusions

Bill Klink, in his excellent 1967 study "Cold War on the Peninsula" summed up the story from his perspective in 1967 by postulating that; "The situation is quite

unique, in that in any other large metropolitan area, Barron Park would have been enveloped without a second thought, but Palo Alto shows concern for Barron Park by not forcing annexation upon them (sic), as anti-annexationists have argued they have."

From our current viewpoint in the year 2001, the entire annexation war seems almost like something that happened long ago, in a different neighborhood to different people. Students of history are forever tempted to draw conclusions and assign causes to historical events and outcomes. The story of Barron Park's war with Palo Alto and with itself is full of opportunities to pontificate on why it all happened the way it did. I prefer to let the readers come to their own conclusions.

However, I would like to briefly discuss the overriding theme that runs through the entire story, waxing and waning in importance from year to year. The theme, of course is conflict. First, conflict between the neighborhood and the city. Second, conflicts within the neighborhood. There were conflicts between groups espousing different solutions to commonly-defined problems, and battles even more bitter between groups that defined the problems differently. And, after a time, there was conflict between sub-neighborhoods, particularly between a pro-annexation majority in the Loma Vista area and an anti-annexation majority in the area later

referred to as "the core."

Finally, at the intellectual level, there was an ongoing conflict between "values" and "facts." Much of the conflict during each annexation movement was occasioned by the presentation of sloppily-researched or possibly deliberately distorted "facts", often rebutted not by superior facts but instead by appeals to over-arching values such as retaining the rural nature of the neighborhood. The genius of the Barron Park Association's leadership during the seventh and eighth movements was in finding ways to reconcile these conflicts by publicly researching and detailing the "facts" while bringing the neighborhood together in agreement over our commonly-held "values."

It is difficult, from our perspective more than forty years later, to fully appreciate the fervent emotions of the people involved in the earlier annexation fights. They seem to be extreme examples of a "tempest in a teapot." This is partly because we don't know enough of the detailed history of the times to appreciate the reality of the perceived threats. For an example, I failed to understand that there was a factual basis for the anti-annexationists' concerns about street improvement assessment districts in 1954-55 until I learned a little bit about the City's underhanded methods of overcoming local opposition during those years. What the city government got away with then,

against people in South Palo Alto, seems incredible today.

On a broader level, we could look at this history of "cold war" between our neighborhood and our city as partly resulting from the general stress of the times. The Santa Clara Valley was being overwhelmed by a tidal wave of suburbanization. Orchards were giving way to housing tracts, shopping centers and industry everywhere. To the people who had moved to an earlier Barron Park, one of scattered houses, quiet streets, orchards and fields, it must have felt like everything that they held dear about their neighborhood was being threatened. They saw the "rural" features of their home environment slipping away.

On the other hand, newcomers to Barron Park must have felt intense frustration over the attitudes of the long-term residents. The newcomers were mostly concerned to obtain what they saw as their right—adequate city services, including fire and police protection.

At one point, one of the annexation opponents said, in effect, "They say we are against progress. But what is progress to me? I want what I have and I want to keep it."

Twenty-five years after the fact of annexation, I think most of the neighborhood would agree that we have kept what we had—and we still want to keep it.

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New Project Pairs Families for Mutual Enrichment

By Mary Jane Leon

Moving toward Community

It is way too easy in modern America to live in splendid isolation from our neighbors. From the house to the car, and off to work, to run errands, to exercise, to recreation. Back home in the car, into the house, and who ever sees the neighbors?

When Mike Alexander's mother became ill, regular trips from his home in Barron Park to her home in the Santa Cruz Mountains became a draining necessity. That period brought home to Mike the importance of a sense of community, of people who live near one another developing a level of car-

ing and involvement with one another.

NEST: Neighborhood Elders Service Team

The result is NEST, a network of seniors paired with younger families for mutual support. Within the program, seniors who can no longer handle certain daily tasks know that they can call on their paired family when a need arises. Because the pairs are part of a network, there will be backup when families are away or when special skills are needed.

The younger families who invest their time

and interest gain knowledge of their community, as well as a sense of belonging to that community.

NEST has no sponsorship. It is the dream of one person who wants to build community spirit and enrich peoples' lives by getting them involved with the people who live around them.

There are currently four pairs of elder/younger families in the network. Mike expects to widen the network by scheduling another meeting soon. If you are interested, call Mike Alexander at 494-1012 or email him at malemike@juno.com.

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER

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