

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Doug Moran, BPA President

An overview of what I expect to be upcoming major issues.

Comprehensive Plan Update

The Comprehensive Plan is Palo Alto's basic long-range policy document. It establishes priorities in a variety of areas, but its most important application is in land use: It directs changes in zoning.

It is important that residents follow and participate in the development of the Comprehensive Plan, otherwise it will be dominated by special interests. A significant portion of the problems of retail on El Camino are the result of the first Comprehensive Plan—it encouraged replacing retail with housing. The second (current) Comp Plan tried to reverse some of this.

Participation in the debate over the next Comp Plan is an excellent method to learn about land use policy as it affects Palo Alto. My participation in the development of the current Comp Plan (in the early 1990s) was a major contributor to my knowledge in this area. We need citizens to participate so that we have a next generation of leaders.

Housing Growth

The economic interests that dominate California politics want the state's population to grow by 41% by 2030. Palo Alto has been assigned a target to grow by a third, from 60,000 to 80,000 residents. The translation of this into a target for housing units has not been finalized, but that target will

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Tribute to Paul Edwards Originator of the May Fetes

By Sue Luttner



Paul Edwards started holding the May Fetes in the early 1970s as small informal picnics, with Maypoles for his friends and acquaintances. Struck with the potential of the then brand-new Bol Park as a site for community celebrations, Paul recruited the BPA board to sponsor and organize the first community May Fete on May 7, 1978. Complete with three Maypoles, games, strolling musicians, Armenian shish-kabobs and face-painting, the Fete was a complete success with an attendance of about 300. Nearly every year since then, Paul's Maypole dance has been the centerpiece and main attraction of the Fete. The board surely speaks for the Barron Park community as it thanks Paul for creating and maintaining such a wonderful community tradition.

MAY FETE SCHEDULED FOR MAY 20



Mark your calendars: This year's May Fete, a 29-year Barron Park tradition, has been scheduled for Sunday, May 20. Please plan to join your neighbors around the maypole for music, dancing, exhibits, and childrens' activities. If you are interested in volunteering to help with the event, please contact co-chairs John St. Clair (jstclair@apr.com) or Karen Michael (ktmichael@gmail.com). Hope to see you there!

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Membership Time

be a major part of the Comprehensive Plan update (above).

There are politically powerful groups in Palo Alto that support this magnitude of growth, for a combination of financial and philosophical reasons, and these targets provide them with substantial ammunition. Various neighborhood association leaders, including me, are already discussing how to push back against this, but if we are to be successful, we will require substantial support from residents.

You may well ask how 20,000 residents could be added to Palo Alto. One of the methods advocated is to line El Camino with very high-density housing, including high-rise apartments and condos (10-20 stories).

Stanford Expansion

The State and regional agencies misapply planning principles that were meant to apply to larger regions to individual small cities. For example, the proposed expansion of Stanford Hospital, Medical School and Shopping Center will add jobs, and thus will cause the State to demand that Palo Alto add even more housing. The State ignores the fact that these facilities serve surrounding communities, and therefore the surrounding communities should bear a share of this burden.

Disaster Preparedness—Community Building

Disaster preparedness has been a major topic for the BPA, and has been extensively covered in recent newsletters. Because of improvements in a range of technologies and their uses we have becoming increasingly dependent upon ourselves and our neighbors. For example, improved use of information technology allows businesses to have smaller inventories on-site.

Similarly, mutual aid agreements between cities allow their public safety and utility departments to be smaller. Notice that newspaper reports of major crimes, such as the Palo Alto Bowl robbery, routinely mention participation by police from neighboring cities.

Technology and improved procedures have also reduced the frequency and magnitude of “routine” emergencies. For the Palo Alto Fire Department, putting out fires is now a minor part of their duties—most of their runs involve medical emergencies.

The consequence is that when large disaster strikes, the “surpluses” that use to be present as a result of “the inefficiencies in

the system” are no longer there. Consequently, we need to be able to make better uses of the resources available in the neighborhood—supplies, labor, and expertise. Patrick Muffler and Lydia Kou, co-chairs of the BPA Emergency Preparedness Committee, are leading a program in this area, called “Block Preparedness Coordinator” of which you will be hearing much in the near future.

Disaster Preparedness and the City

One of the persistent problems with Disaster Preparedness in Palo Alto has been the city government’s view that preparing “the City” for a disaster was limited to preparing just the government itself. One briefing on City preparedness focused on issues such as overtime and vacation time for City staff. Under former mayor Judy Kleinberg (2006), this began to shift to see residents as resources rather than simply as victims (to be evacuated or “warehoused”).

When we try to discuss how the City will “scale up,” we routinely get “push back” from members of City Staff, expressing concerns about “liability, regulations and union rules.” Vice Mayor Larry Klein has had to remind them several times that “The understanding is that in a disaster, all the rules go out the window.” However, it has been activity by the neighborhood associations to improve preparedness that has highlighted those attitudes.

Similarly, when the issue of handling what are called “spontaneous volunteers” during a disaster is raised, the government’s vision is *very* narrow. They routinely use “nurses and bulldozer operators” as examples and plan to have only a few volunteer centers widely dispersed throughout the county (Palo Alto is not slated to have one).

In the past six months, I have seen enough shift in attitudes in the City government that I have become hopeful that real progress will be made. However, this will require residents to keep pushing on these goals.

City Council Election

Although it may seem early to be talking about this fall’s election, a surprising amount happens before candidates can even file to run. This year, four Council seats will be up for election. Three of the incumbents cannot run again because of term limits, and the fourth has declared that she will not run (Cordell).

The last election was heavily influenced by issues that were highlighted the previous

spring and late summer—especially the issues of what were appropriate levels of development. Preparing events that highlight issues take a surprising amount of time—routinely months—as the volunteers research the underlying information and organize and prune it into a presentation that interested citizens can understand. I am interested in hearing what issues residents believe should be highlighted in the coming election.

In these previous elections, I have been deeply dissatisfied with the information available to voters about the various candidates. For example, most normal voters don’t understand the code words used to describe candidates. For example, someone who is “pro-business” favors developers, primarily developers of high-density housing, and not the established local businesses. Similarly, different people labeled as “environmentalists” vote in profoundly different ways on critical City issues. One faction of environmentalists favors building high-density housing all along El Camino, including the high-rises (mentioned above) without regard to retail, traffic, school crowding, or city and school district finances.

Because I have to work with the winners, I have decided it was best for me not to publicize my assessment of the candidates. Instead, I worked on questionnaires and forums for candidates to push the candidates to reveal this information. Unfortunately, the forums have limited attendance (typically 100 at each of two) and were poorly covered by the press—significant statements by candidates went unreported.

As I write this (March 1), I am already involved in organizing forums. As with issues, I would appreciate hearing suggestions about what you as a voter would want to help make your decisions for Council members. My diagnosis is that most people are so overloaded that they have little time to work through much information.

A dirty little “secret” in local races is that endorsements are incredibly unreliable. There have been spectacularly unqualified candidates who have had extensive lists of blue-ribbon endorsements. When I have queried people about their endorsements of particular candidates, I often have been told that the endorser has encountered the candidate in various civic settings and that s/he seems to be intelligent, hard-working and well-intentioned. When I ask about knowledge of, or even interest in, the key issues that Council has to deal with, I get non-responsive answers.

SENIOR UPDATE, SPRING 2007

By Mary Jane Leon

Join us for Lunch

Barron Park's Seniors Lunches continue to be popular events. The second Tuesday of every other month, we meet in a neighborhood restaurant, or in Bol Park when the weather is good. The next lunch will be June 12.

We will talk a little about the "Vial of Life" concept, and will have available enough Vials for everyone to take one home. We will also have available copies of a little yellow folder called a Personal Medication Card, put out by Stanford Hospital. Both my husband and I now carry one, with all of our meds listed. Have you ever been in the embarrassing position of having an MD ask you what meds you take, and you can't remember? Maybe your memory is better than mine.

If you would like to come to the next lunch, and are not already on our e-mail or phone list to be notified, call Rosemary Jacobsen, 493-9152.

The Winter Newsletter

I want to thank Doug Moran for covering for me with a wonderful column in the Winter Newsletter. He gave us so much good information. If you were not a member of BPA then, and did not get that newsletter, you can check it out at <http://www.cyberstars.com/bpa/>. We even had a request for permission to reprint the article from a member in Southern California.

Stroke

Has stroke been in the news a lot lately, or am I just super-sensitive right now? My husband Ralph had several small strokes in the Fall, and that was a learning experience I would not wish on anyone. He did not have the standard symptoms—he had some balance problems, and vision "like he was looking through cracked glass"—but no paralysis. Even the first MD we saw missed the diagnosis. It was ten days after the first one occurred, during which time he had at least one more, before he was diagnosed. Initially the MD's treated him with blood thinner, but he got worse. They went to stronger blood thinners, and he got worse. Finally, emergency entrance to hos-

pital, risky surgery on blocked vertebral arteries (at the back of the neck), then recovery in a skilled nursing center, and finally home, with outpatient therapy for a very short while.

I don't fault the doctors for the mis-diagnoses. We Americans expect miracles of our medical community, wanting them to always have the right answer the first time and, of course, to be able to cure whatever it is that we have. They are only human beings, facing a bewildering panorama of new discoveries, new treatments, new drugs, and demanding patients. By the time they are 10 years out of med school, some of their knowledge is obsolete, and how do they have time to keep up with all the new stuff?

On the other hand, I was surprised at the lack of information about support or treatment that we got from medical people. Referral to nursing center, which the insurance company (!) decided we didn't need anymore after three weeks. Then referral for a few home visits by a physical therapist. Then four 15-minute visits to a physical therapy place—four 15-minute visits! That's it. You're not well yet? Tough. We think you are well enough. Don't bother us anymore.

Up against a wall of indifference, I pushed very hard at one neurologist, asking what other options we had. He vaguely remembered that there was something like a support group at the VA hospital that we might look into, but, no, he didn't have any definite information about it.

As angry as I was, I should be very grateful to him. He accidentally opened the door to a wealth of resources that we badly needed. When I called the VA hospital, after wandering through the phone tree and various humans, I finally found what we needed.

Resources

First and foremost, the Peninsula Stroke Association. Phone 650 565-8485. Web site www.psastroke.org. They have a wonderful 60-page Resource Booklet that covers every possible resource in the area for stroke survivors and caregivers.

Through that Resource Booklet, we found REACH, phone 650 949-6960. Web site www.foothill.edu/al/reach.html. This is a fantastic program run by Foothill College, offering group therapy sessions on a quarterly basis, like college classes. Ralph goes to therapy classes for five hours twice a week, and he can sign up for continuing therapy in future quarters. One thing we have learned for sure—Recovery from stroke is a very long-term process.

Here is a resource not limited to stroke survivors. Stanford Hospital has a new program called "Checking In," which provides routine phone calls to older adults. Phone 650 725-9212. Web site <http://geriatric.stanfordhospital.com/>. El Camino Hospital has had such a service for years, and it is nice to see Stanford Hospital reaching out to the community with a similar program.

SALA (Senior Adults Legal Assistance) offers free legal consultation to seniors in Santa Clara County. SALA has offices in San Jose, but there lawyers meet with people from north county at Stevenson House on East Charleston. Phone 408 295-5991. Web site www.sala.org/.

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ZONING & LAND USE SPRING 2007

By Lynn Malena, based on a long report by Art Liberman (see article at www.bpaonline.org)

Hazardous Materials at CPI

A more comprehensive discussion of the CPI issue, including maps and graphs, can be found at <http://PaloAltoDangerZone.org> Also, a community meeting on the issue was to be held on March 22, after newsletter publication.

An intensive campaign by Chimalus Drive residents to increase City vigilance over toxics at Communications and Power Industries (CPI) resulted in the City Council adopting new zoning regulations on January 22. The new regulations restrict the amounts of *extremely hazardous materials*¹ that can be used and stored near residential areas and require a buffer zone for future projects. Over 100 people attended the January 22nd Council meeting and many wrote letters and e-mails.

The event that triggered neighborhood action and, ultimately, Council response occurred on February 2, 2006. An accident involving hazardous materials caused a release of toxic nitric acid vapors from CPI which is located in a former Varian building at 811 Hansen Way. Several residents and construction workers reported smelling an irritating, acrid, choking odor, and a worker on the roof at 728 Chimalus said afterwards that the fumes nearly caused him to faint and fall from his perch.² Fortunately, this accident did not cause any long-term serious injuries. But because this facility is so close to residences and handles such large amounts of extremely hazardous materials, a natural disaster or another industrial accident in the future could have much more serious repercussions.

CPI Plating Operation. Two years ago, CPI closed its plating facility in San Carlos and consolidated it with its facility at the very back of its site on Hansen Way. The plating shop is on the 2nd floor, on the side of the building facing the houses, and the hazardous chemical storage area is against the back wall of the CPI site that abuts the residential zone. There were no special City of Palo Alto rules on hazardous materials use near residences, so the permits for expansion were issued without notification to

neighbors. Many current residents were not aware of the level of risk to them and their families before or after the expansion.

The types and amounts of hazardous materials used at CPI (nitric acid and potassium cyanide) are especially dangerous and are therefore regulated by the County under State of California Title 19 rules. There are only 25 Title 19 sites in all of Santa Clara County of which two are in Palo Alto (CPI and the Regional Water Quality Control Plant). Although CPI filed a required Risk Management Plan (RMP) with the County after it increased the amounts of chemicals on the site, the only public notice was buried in the *San Jose Mercury*. The RMP found that an area within a 1000-foot radius (extending as far south as parts of Barron Avenue) could be affected by a serious accident that sent nitric acid vapor or hydrogen cyanide vapor fumes into the air. Those closest to the accident center would be very severely affected and may not survive; those at the edges, depending upon the wind and weather, hopefully would not suffer permanent injury.

Zoning Ordinance Update. In 2006 the Planning and Transportation Commission was revising the section of the zoning ordinance on Performance Standards which addresses the interface between residential and industrial/commercial zones. With pressure from very well-prepared Barron Park and College Terrace residents, a new section dealing with hazardous materials was included. While these meetings and hearings were in progress last fall, efforts got underway to inform and communicate the issues to the neighborhood. A new web site was set up.

What is in the New Ordinance? The new ordinance, passed unanimously by the Council, makes a strong statement: Large amounts of extremely hazardous materials don't belong near residences, and they may not belong in Palo Alto at all. It includes a new 300 foot buffer zone for construction, reconstruction or conversion of any building intended to be used for hazardous materials. This says that CPI will not be allowed to rebuild its plating

facilities again in the same place unless it reduces all of its hazardous materials to below the Title 19 thresholds.

It goes on to prohibit CPI, or any other site using hazardous material in Palo Alto, from increasing the amounts of any hazardous material above Title 19 threshold levels if the quantity was previously below, unless the hazardous materials are further than 300 feet from a residentially zoned property. Even then, they must receive approval for a Conditional Use Permit from the City Council. Finally, it limits the amount that CPI can increase its extremely hazardous materials to no more than 10 percent over what it had on November 1, 2006. Chimalus Drive residents pressed for an outright cap on the amount of Title 19 hazardous materials, but the Council, with advice from the City Attorney, allowed the 10 percent increase to provide flexibility for delivery and business variability.

In addition to the ordinance, the Council passed a motion that directed the City staff to work with CPI to lower its hazardous materials to below Title 19 thresholds as soon as possible. This will be a challenge for CPI, but they are going to have to meet it if, in the long term, they intend to remain where they are in Palo Alto.

The motion doesn't have any measurable components or timeline. Residents will be watching closely what develops while giving CPI and the City some time to come up with plans. But the direction is clear. In some reasonable time, say five years, no one in our neighborhood should have to worry about another toxic gas release.

Contacts—Residents who led the campaign to bring more control to the use of hazardous materials near residential areas are Art Liberman, Jeff Dean, Romie Georgia and Bill Kelly.

Trees

Are you planning to remove a major tree from your yard? Be sure to check with the City arborist on any required permits (coast live oaks, valley oaks and coast redwoods over a certain size are protected). Information on tree protection can be found at the city's Website.³ Equally important, notify

¹ Extremely hazardous materials are specifically defined by Title 19, discussed further below.

² Don Kazak, Palo Alto Weekly, February 8, 2006

³ www.cityofpaloalto.org/planning-community/tree-private-trees.html

your neighbors so they are not surprised and can be sure the trees are being removed legally.

The cell phone tower masquerading as an evergreen tree next to Blockbuster was highlighted on KTVU news on January 31. The program segment which included many views of the tree next to Blockbuster can be seen on www.ktvu.com/video/10847138/index.html?taf=fran The focus of the newscast was the use of faux tree design to disguise cellular phone poles and antennas.

Alma Plaza

Revised plans were resubmitted to the City for Alma Plaza in December. The plans included 24,000 square feet of commercial space, 39 single-family houses and 14 Below Market Rate apartments. The project was to be reviewed by the Planning and Transportation Commission on March 8 (after the newsletter deadline). The Commission was to consider whether project should proceed as a Planned Community Permit development. The Commission's review would be followed by Architectural Review Board review of detailed plans and ultimately, consideration by the City Council.

Barron Avenue Parcel Map

Despite an appeal by neighbors, the City Council on February 27 upheld a decision by the Palo Alto Planning Director to approve a parcel map dividing the lot at 897 Barron Avenue into two approximately 8000-square-foot lots. This lot is located at the southeast corner of Barron Avenue and Laguna Street. The owners are proposing to move the existing house at 897 Barron so that it faces Laguna, leaving space for another house fronting on Barron. In their appeal, neighbors stated that the lot split should not be approved because the resulting new development would not be in compliance with several policies in the Comprehensive Plan and would be incompatible with neighborhood character. The new lots would be much smaller than the adjacent lots. Relocating the house could also endanger two large cedars, one of which has been identified by the City Arborist as having "high retention value." In upholding the Planning Director's approval of the lots split, the City Council added two conditions: (1) the existing one-story house must be preserved on the property and (2) the applicant must work with staff to preserve the mature cedar tree at the corner of Barron and Laguna Avenues.

BARRON PARK BUSINESS PROFILE :
James Witt, General Contractor

By Karen Michael, Community Business Liaison



Awalk up the long driveway to the historic Bol house, where James Witt lives and works, shows that he does not take himself too seriously. On a large vacant parcel of land he has placed antique farm equipment, a long diagonal line of rusty wheelbarrows, a sign that proclaims NO HANG GLIDING, and a very large old dog house with two signs displayed over the door: HIGH VOLTAGE and JAMES WITT, GENERAL CONTRACTOR.

James explains, as we tour the 80-year-old white farmhouse where Josina Bol raised five sons, that for the last 27 years he has been taking his truck to the dump to pick up discarded items. "One man's trash is another man's art," he says, as we look around at his creations: oil paintings, sculptures made from discarded items, and photographs (including James hang gliding). The 1500-sq-ft Craftsman house is beautifully restored, but living in a historic building clearly has its limitations. The kitchen, for example, is the smallest I've ever seen. "There are only two drawers," James points out, "and they're both full."

The property, which James purchased seven years ago from the Bols, includes the one-acre donkey pasture currently occupied by Perry and Niner. It was Mrs. Bol's wish that the donkeys remain, and James is happy to keep the donkeys there for the neighborhood children. When he moved in the donkeys had no shelter, so he built the manger and shed for their comfort.

James was raised in Barron Park—his dad

still lives on Ilima Court—and attended Barron Park School, Terman, and Gunn. He has been building since 1971, having started his business with nothing but a hammer after graduating from carpentry college. He has built 40 houses in Barron Park to date and is very proud of his homes, the people who have purchased them ("most of them are great people who could afford

to live anywhere, and they choose Barron Park because of the community," he says), and his reputation as a builder who takes good care of his buyers and sellers. His volunteer interest is the community schools; he built the Reading Garden at Barron Park School and also rebuilt the Triangle at Terman, where he says proudly that his 12-year-old son Christopher is getting A's.

James is keenly aware of what he calls the tension between change and conservation, so he maintains a very strong focus on conservation in his building. For example: he recycles all of the wood, cement, and steel from the houses he tears down; he has planted 150 trees to date in Barron Park; he tries to make sure that his houses blend with the neighborhood and their surroundings; he was the first developer in the area to use photovoltaic solar cells on roofs; and he is currently building what he believes to be Barron Park's first LEED-certified "green" home, on Maybell Avenue. And he feels that the best conservation is putting up homes that are engineered and built to last.

James makes sure that he maintains a balance in his life that includes lots of travel, skiing trips with his son, daily meditation, and yoga. He clearly enjoys life and says emphatically that he is "in it for the long haul"—he intends to live to at least 100, never retire, and build at least 100 homes. And he leaves no doubt that he will achieve his goals.

E D W A R D B A R R O N

By Doug Graham, Barron Park Historian

Barron Park Named for Him

Our neighborhood was named by Colonel Sebastian Jones, the owner and founder of the California Military Academy. The Academy was located on the land currently occupied by residences on Magnolia Drive and Military Way, plus several lots on La Selva Drive. Colonel Jones had bought about 50 acres of "The Barron Estate" in 1923. After developing the school in the old "Barron Mansion" and surrounding land, he split off about 5 acres along "The State Highway" (as El Camino Real was then known) and divided it into tiny commercial lots. Another portion, about ten acres of landscaped park along a winding driveway which he dubbed "Woodland Drive" and along a lane leading back from El Camino, which he named Barron Avenue, he split into small residential lots. He named the subdivision "Barron Park," and over the next two decades the usage gradually spread to encompass all the land between El Camino, Arastradero Road and the Stanford Lands—and even portions of today's Ventura Neighborhood on the other side of El Camino.

"Barron Park" a Misnomer

Thus, our neighborhood was named for a man who lived here for 15 years, from 1878 to 1893. Although apparently a fairly prominent businessman in San Francisco, he is not a prominent figure in California history, nor did he even build the beautiful mansion that his name became attached to. The mansion was built by Sarah Wallis, who occupies a secure place in our state's history. She was the first leader of the woman suffrage movement on the West Coast, and a prominent civic leader in the town of Mayfield. She built the gorgeous gingerbread Victorian mansion later known by Barron's name, and lived on the property for 21 years, from 1857 to 1878. She has been honored by a state historical monument located on La Selva Drive. In all justice, our neighborhood would be more appropriately named "Wallis Park."

Butcher and Businessman

Who was Edward Barron? He was born in Ireland June 24, 1831 and immigrated to New York City in 1847. There he worked for his uncle, a cattle dealer and butcher. He immigrated to San Francisco via Pana-



Photograph (or lithograph?) of Edward Barron, probably done in the 1870s or early 1880s.

ma with his wife Maria in 1852, arriving with ten cents in his pocket. He tried gold mining in the Sierra Nevada, but was not successful. Returning to the city and opening a butcher shop, he and Maria soon made a fortune in wholesale and retail meat, and Edward retired in 1860. At this point, he was worth one hundred thousand dollars—probably roughly equivalent to 1.5 million today (and far more than that in comparative ability to purchase real estate). It is interesting to note that, during the lawsuit over Barron's will after his death, testimony was given to the effect that Maria was the real strength in the family and that Edward owed most of his success to her business sense and hard work

Mining Company Investor and Executive

After a trip to New York City in 1861, where he was appalled by the martial preparations for Civil War, Barron relocated to Virginia City, Nevada Territory, site of the famous Comstock Lode. He bought into a quartz-mill and a ledge owned by A. E. Davis, which thenceforth operated under the firm name of Barron and Davis from 1861 through 1865.

Returning again to San Francisco, he became a mining stock investor. When the "Bonanza Kings" Flood, O'Brien, Mackay and Fair obtained control of the Consolidated Virginia, California, Hale and Nor-

cross, and Gould and Curry Mining Companies, they made Barron President of the companies. These were four of the Comstock Lode's biggest mines, yielding two to three million dollars per month in dividends to the owners. The Bonanza Kings bought the Consolidated Virginia and California mines for \$70,000 and saw their value reach \$150 million. It is not known how much stock Barron may have owned. One prominent local historian, Dorothy Regnery, told me that "Barron's wife" (she didn't say which one) was a cousin of Flood's wife and this gave him an "in" with the Bonanza Kings.

Marital Problems

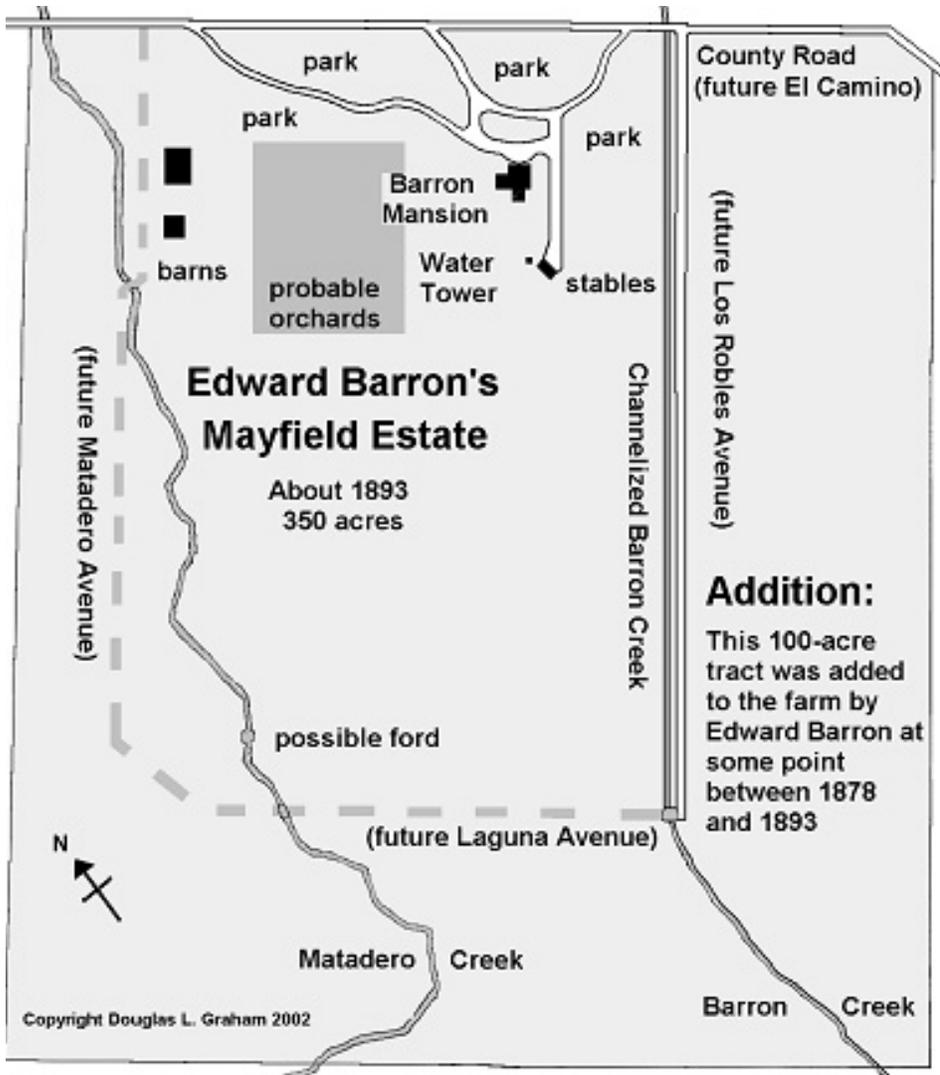
According to one account, Edward and Maria separated in 1870, and he "bought her a home in Santa Clara." She died in 1876 and Barron later remarried. His second wife's name was Annie Crooks. The marriage was brief and I have no information about her.

Railroad Investor

During the mid-seventies, Barron was involved with Davis, Flood and O'Brien in starting the South Pacific Coast Railroad, which ran from Alameda through Newark to San Jose and Santa Cruz. They started a San Francisco-to-Alameda ferry boat line to feed the railroad. They sold out to the burgeoning Southern Pacific, owned by Stanford, Hopkins and Crocker.

Country Gentleman at "Mayfield Park"

In 1876, Barron resigned the presidency of the mining companies and retired again. After the obligatory "Grand Tour" in Europe, he bought Mayfield Farm from bankrupt Sarah Wallis in 1878, renamed it "Mayfield Park," and settled down to a quiet, private life, neither engaging in society, community affairs or politics. He added a fourth floor cupola to Sarah's Wedding Cake house, as well as a west wing for his son's family (see photo of the mansion in 1890). He also added extensive landscaping and curving drives, extending Sarah's park to encompass about 15 acres surrounding the mansion. At this time the farm also included a ten acre orchard previously planted by Sarah Wallis, including pears, apricots, peaches, French prunes, and apples (see map of the estate in about 1893).



estate worth more than \$1 million.

Historical Problems

The historical record of Edward Barron consists mostly of newspaper obituaries and “who’s who”-type puff pieces. The will exists, along with at least half of two bound volumes of depositions taken in preparation for the lawsuit over the will. There are brief references in San Francisco City Directories and Comstock Lode mining company annual reports. However, considering the prominence that is alleged for Barron in the puff pieces, there is remarkably little in the public record to back it up. I could find no record of his name in extensive research done in the Nevada State archives in Carson City and the Historical Society archives in Reno—both of which are depositories for Comstock Lode records.

I believe that the Barron Estate records were lost in the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire—the office was in one of the burned-out blocks. However, there was still an estate company office after the fire, from at least 1909 through 1919, so there remains a remote possibility of estate records being held by a descendant and becoming public some time in the future. The local descendants, with whom we are in touch, do not know of any such records, nor do they have photos of Barron’s wives or children.

If anyone reading this can add to our knowledge of Edward Barron, I urge that person to get in touch with me by e-mail at dgrahampaca@sbcglobal.net, write to me at 984 Ilima Way, Palo Alto CA 94306, or call me at 650-493-0689.

I hope you have enjoyed this brief biographical sketch of the man for whom our neighborhood is a namesake.

Third Marriage

Barron visited Ireland in 1881. While in Dublin, he married Eva O’Leary, described in the San Francisco press as the daughter of one of Ireland’s most prominent bankers. He returned to California with his new bride and brought her to Mayfield Park. They lived there quietly for the next twelve years and three children were born to them.

Barron’s Death

Edward Barron died in 1893 at the age of 62, survived by Eva and his five children, his two sons by Maria and the son and two daughters by Eva. His estate was estimated at nearly \$2 million. After his death, the family lived mostly in their San Francisco house, which may have been the one described in 1890 as “an elegant city residence on Sutter Street.”

Barron’s death set in motion a lengthy suit contesting the will, between Maria’s children and Eva and her children. Some of

the testimony alleged that Barron was senile when the will was drawn in favor of Eva and her family.

The situation became further complicated by the injection of a suit by an illegitimate son, Edward A. Barron, who was described in the common language of the day as a “mulatto” (part black, part white), and whom Barron may have legally adopted. This scandal certainly must have titillated San Francisco Society during the course of the trial in 1895 and 1896.

The Barron Estate

Mayfield Park became an asset of the Barron Estate Company, with Eva Barron the President. The farm was in the hands of managers and caretakers when Eva wasn’t living there. It was eventually sold for development in 1919, for nearly \$200,000, to Watsonville berry packers Driscoll and Reiter. Eva died at her Hillsborough home in 1925, reputedly being “one of the wealthiest women in California,” with an



Barron Mansion on June 20, 1890.

K I D ' S K O R N E R

By Janice Brethauer and Halimah Van Tuyl

Learning From Insects and Snails

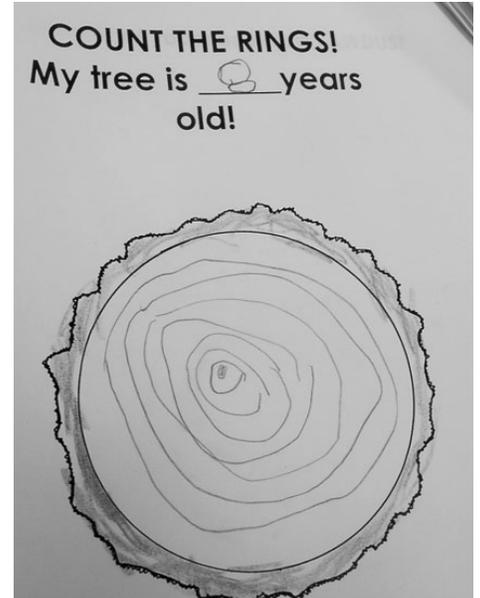
You've no doubt noticed the slime trails left behind by snails, but have you measured them? The kindergarten scientists at Juana Briones Elementary School, with meter sticks in hand, can be heard exclaiming, "Wow, this one is the longest yet!" They are excitedly observing, discussing, and graphing the results of the fascinating trails they notice on the sidewalks and dirt garden paths. Taught by K-5th science teacher Karen Kessler, their learning extends beyond the doors of their classrooms to the playyard and beyond, as they eagerly explore the wonders of the natural world.



Briones Kindergartner, Julia Stoneburner, checks the progress of the worm bin (her parents give their permission).

The year-long "Life Lab" study begins with wood. Since five-year olds are among the best question-askers on the planet, teachers have no trouble getting their students to think about any topic. The youngsters study tree stumps, compare branches and milled boards, talk about the uses of wood around their classroom, and get up close and personal with many trees. One special tree is a Japanese plum tree in the Briones garden, which gets examined with hand lenses by small groups. The tree is often surrounded by talkative scientists asking, "What is bark?" and "Why are these ants going in two directions on the trunk?" They study this tree all year, drawing it in various seasons to document changes.

After eating their snacks each day, kindergartners don't just throw handfuls of scraps into the garbage. They sort their discards into those "treasures" that are important for their worm bins. Vegetable peels and apple cores get tossed into this ongoing dirt factory, where the wriggling earthworms turn the organic matter into rich compost for the school garden. Teachers Jill Dinneen, Anna Rempel, and Janice Brethauer teach children about the earthworm body parts and how digestion works. The little scientists measure and compare various worms in the bin over time to document changes.



Students draw the rings they see on cut-tree rounds in order to figure out the age of the tree.

Whether it's learning about the 20,000 teeth on the radula mouth inside snails or about the 8 legs and body parts of spiders, these young scholars are at work every day, wondering about our world, pursuing questions and hypotheses, and celebrating the fascinating world of science.

Juana Run?

IT'S SERIOUS FUN

The 11th Annual Juana Run to benefit our neighborhood schools Juana Briones and Barron Park elementary was another successful event! There were over 1,000 runners participating in events from the 8 kilometer race to the 50 yard dash for the kindergartner ages. Tons of sponsors, food vendors and police and fire departments were on hand as well as the local Palo Alto Kiwanis club to help with signup. If you want to know more about this event go to www.juanarun.org



Farewell and Thank You, Maryanne



Maryanne Welton is retiring from the BPA Board after more than a decade of valuable service. She served for four-and-a-half years as Vice President.

Early in her tenure on the Board, she revived the Annual Membership meeting and was its primary organizer. For 10 years she was critical to the success of May Fete, both as an key organizer and for the energy and effort contributed (especially for refreshments).

When Bob Moss left the BPA Board, Maryanne took over leadership of the Zoning and Land Use (ZALU) Committee. In that role, she monitored development in the neighborhood and put together community meetings so neighbors could provide input on proposed projects. Her active advocacy regarding the redevelopment of the El Camino island (triangle) resulted in a vastly improved project with retail space on the first floor (most notably the coffee shop). Maryanne's 28 years of experience in architecture and urban design were invaluable for understanding zoning codes and the tradeoffs of individual projects.

She served as a liaison to the local schools,

city staff and elected officials. As a moderator of public meetings on neighborhood issues, she was widely praised by all sides for keeping the meetings amicable and productive.

Then there were her contributions to a wide range of other BPA activities: everything from setting up tables and chairs for meetings, to preparing agendas and putting stamps on postcards, to making sure the sprinklers were turned off in the park during May Fete, to inviting elected officials to BPA events, and to attending numerous meetings to make sure the neighborhood's input was heard and considered.

During her tenure with the BPA, she stayed active with the local schools, became a docent at Stanford's Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve, and was involved in various civic and environmental committees and organizations.

Maryanne also built a new house with her family, ran and biked through the neighborhood as she trained for triathlons and marathons, held annual block parties, and watched her kids grow from toddlers to teenagers. She and her family recently experienced the strength of the neighborhood's appreciation for her volunteer efforts, after her oldest son was seriously injured in a motorcycle accident and suffered a below-the-knee amputation. Upon returning from the hospital, friends and neighbors put together a schedule so that dinner was delivered to her door every night for a month. A large crowd of supporters took part in the "Baloney Mile—5,280 Feet for Eric," celebrating Eric's achievement in walking with his new prosthetic leg. She and her family would like to thank all who helped support and encourage them during the last several months.

Thank you, Maryanne. Your contributions will be sorely missed.

Welcoming New Residents

The Barron Park Association Welcoming Committee welcomes new residents to Barron Park with a thick packet of information brought by one of our 76 volunteers! If you would like to be greeted or would enjoy greeting new neighbors to our community, please contact Welcoming Committee Chair Gwen Luce at 650-224-3670 or gluce@cbtnorcal.com.

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Doug Moran, President

Christian Kalar, Vice President

Karen Michael, Secretary

Mary Jane Leon, Treasurer

Linda Elder

Nancy Hamilton

John King

Lydia Kou

Gwen Luce

Lynnie Melena

Patrick Muffler

John St. Clair



Committee / Activity Chairs

Beautification: Vacant

Neighborhood Businesses Liaison:

Karen Michael

Creeks/Flood Control: Christian Kalar

Neighborhood Safety & Preparedness:

Patrick Muffler / Lydia Kou

May Fete:

Karen Michael / John St. Clair

History: Doug Graham

Membership: Linda Elder

Natural Habitat & Environment: Vacant

Newsletter: Nancy Hamilton

Parks: Vacant

School Liaison: Christian Kalar

Seniors: Mary Jane Leon

Traffic & Streets: John King

Welcoming: Gwen Luce

Zoning & Land Use: Lynnie Melena



BPA meetings are held the 3rd

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

Call Doug Moran for location: 856-3302

www.bpaonline.org

IRENE BEARDSLEY a Special Volunteer



Irene Beardsley with German Shepherd "Mingma"

During a period of transition from one membership chair to the next, Irene made a substantial contribution by taking on data entry. That was during the 2005 membership drive. When it became clear that we needed to upgrade our database software, Irene researched available database applications and made the selection. She took on the design and development of the new database, then trained the new membership chair in its use and maintenance. The transition was smooth, seamless, and successful—all thanks to Irene!

She also developed and implemented the database for Emergency Prep information and did all the data entry for 2006. A valuable and huge undertaking!

Irene has been a resident of Barron Park since 1975. She has been an active rock and mountain climber and maintains a summer home in the Grand Tetons, where she continues to hike and climb a little. She is active in the District 5 PANDAs.

Thank you, Irene!

Free Home Services for Barron Park Seniors and Adults with Disabilities

By John St. Clair III, RSVP Palo Alto District Chair

RSVP (a realtor volunteer service organization which provides free home maintenance and safety related services to seniors and adults with disabilities) is having their annual service week in May. Some of the frequently requested services we perform are: turning mattresses, replacing light bulbs, cleaning gutters, washing windows, yard work, installing smoke detectors and/or replacing their batteries, etc. Our service week is from May 7th to May 12th.

RSVP has been helping seniors and adults

with disabilities since 2001. We service areas from South San Francisco to Gilroy and the East Bay. Last year the Palo Alto district helped approximately 90 homes. This year we would like to make your home one of the ones we help. You just need to call or email me, John St. Clair III, (650) 493-8449 or email: jstclair@apr.com. I will send you an application and once I receive it back we can schedule your home. However, time is of the essence. The deadline to apply is April 20, 2007. So contact me today.

E-mail List Membership Confirmation

It is easy to lose track of what e-mail lists you are subscribed to, and under what address. It is not uncommon to inadvertently drop off a list because you subscribed under a former address and messages are no longer being forwarded from there to your new address. As list maintainer, I try to identify the resident associated with a dead e-mail account and notify them, but it is often hard to do because the login names are too disconnected from real names.

To deal with this problem, it is a common practice to send out periodic reminders. The BPA does this annually in conjunction with this issue of the newsletter. Shortly before this issue is expected to arrive in your mail box, a message is sent to each

member of each mailing list confirming their membership on that list. For example, if you are subscribed to each of *bpa-news*, *bpa* and *bpa-misc*, you will receive three messages, one for each list. If you have not received a message for a list that you thought that you were subscribed to, please re-subscribe.

Barron Park Residents in Major Civic Positions

(as of 01 March 2007)

Gail Price

Board, Palo Alto Unified School District
(PAUSD) (5 members)

Nick Marinaro

Chief, Palo Alto Fire Department

Sharon Erickson

City Auditor,

Council Appointed Officers (four)

Genevieve Gerard

Library Advisory Commission

(seven members)

David Charleson, Jeannette Marquess

Parks and Recreation Commission

(seven members)

Samir Tuma

Planning and Transportation

Commission (seven members)

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION ONLINE

Want to help? Need help in an emergency? Visit www.bpaonline.org—click on "Emergency Preparedness."

Want to see past BPA newsletters? See www.bpaonline.org—click on "Newsletter Archives."

Have a business in Barron Park? See www.bpaonline.org—click on "Barron Park Businesses."

Want information about the BP Donkeys? See www.bpaonline.org—click on "Barron Park Donkeys."

Want to contact Committee Chairs? Visit www.bpaonline.org—click on "Organization."

Help Support the Barron Park Donkeys!



Photo credit: James Witt

Leland Smith, one of Perry (shown) & Niner's handlers.

Support for Perry and Niner comes completely from the generosity of their neighbors and the community. The donkeys receive no tax dollars, no government funds, no funds from the City of Palo Alto, no grants from any animal welfare or humane organization. They are a part of the neighborhood simply because people who live here care about them and care about continuing this unique opportunity. In return, Perry and Niner provide warmth and joy to those who walk by their pasture; a rural equine experience for suburban children and adults who visit them on Sundays in Bol Park; an opportunity for humane education for children in Barron Park Schools; and a general reaffirmation for all of us of our connection to the natural world.

General farrier and veterinary expenses for the donkeys total about \$1,000 a year. Food costs about \$600 a year. Funds for the donkeys are managed by Acterra (formerly the Peninsula Conservation Center Foundation), which acts as fiscal agent for the Donkey Project, providing insurance and handling donations and financial affairs. Fees for these administrative ser-

vices totaled about \$200 this past year. All of these expenses are funded solely through donations.

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 donkey's 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," "ACTERRA" 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.

FOR MEMBERS ONLY!

We have created PDF files of past newsletters. See the complete newsletters, including full-color photos! These files are available **ONLY** to current BPA members.

The directory address will change each year. The new address will be published in the Summer edition. The files may take awhile to download (file sizes given).

We will furnish the yearly directory address change on our Online Membership Form receipt, as well as in the Summer edition of our newsletter.

You need to be a member of the Barron Park Association to receive the Summer edition, as well as the Fall and Winter editions. The Spring edition is mailed to all households in Barron Park. That's when we ask for new and renewed membership.

BPA Website: <http://www.bpaonline.org>

Membership Time

By Linda Elder, membership chair

Whether you are a new or renewing member, it's time to join the BPA. We had 450 household or business memberships last year and we hope to have even more members this year. Please use the enclosed membership form or sign up online.

Your membership dues support our many BPA events, such as the May Fete, the Welcome Gathering, the Holiday Parade and Party and the Annual Membership Meeting. We always need volunteer help with these events, so if you can help, even a little, please let us know on the membership form.

Members are also eligible to participate in the babysitting list (either as a babysitter or recipient of the list). A new member recently remarked, "We found a wonderful person to take care of our sons." Remember sitters or recipients must sign up every year, as the list is constantly updated.

When you join the Barron Park Association, you will automatically be added to the BPA-news Email List, as long as you provide us with your email address. This will occur within a few months of joining, so you may want to subscribe yourself, today.

When you join you will also receive the Barron Park Association Newsletter, a community favorite. Please join by April 30, so you won't miss out on the summer newsletter.

As one member put it, "Having a neighborhood association is a wonderful benefit of living in Barron Park." I couldn't have said it better myself.

Did you know?

When you walk on a country road, it is safest to walk facing traffic.

So when you are tooling around Barron Park's picturesque country-style roads on your feet, it's best to walk on the left side of the road, not the right. Ask any old country boy.

Curves

4117 El Camino Real Palo Alto

650-320-8364

12 TO 83? That is our age range at your local Curves!

Join now and receive a Month free!

expires Mar 31, 2007

Driftwood Deli & Market

- Sandwiches - Fresh bread -
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3450 El Camino Real

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NEW HOMES FOR SALE

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Advertising is limited to Barron Park Businesses. The BPA is not responsible for false or misleading advertising.

Please see our listing of Barron Park Businesses at www.cyberstars.com/bpa/business. To be listed free of charge, your main office must be in Barron Park. For advertising rates in our newsletter, please contact Nancy Hamilton at 494-2941.

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER
SPRING 2007



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