

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Lynnne Melena, BPA President

It's payback time. After benefiting from many years of living in a neighborhood with an active, committed and highly-regarded neighborhood association, it is now my time to pay it back. As of January, 2008, I have replaced Doug Moran as president of the Barron Park Association (BPA).

The neighborhood owes a huge debt of gratitude to Doug who has invested hours and hours of his personal time on issues of importance to the neighborhood and the larger Palo Alto community. Doug served six years as president and five years as vice president of the Barron Park Association. At various times over the past 11 years, he has also been the BPA's contact person for traffic issues, the flood control bypass and native plant re-vegetation in Bol Park after the bypass was completed.

Because of his commitment and knowledge of local issues, the name, Doug Moran, has practically become synonymous with Barron Park. In keeping with his interests, Doug will remain on the Board with a new title—Civic Affairs Liaison, meaning he will continue to track all kinds of City activities as he has in the past. He will also continue to co-chair Palo Alto Neighborhoods (PAN), the umbrella group of neighborhood associations in Palo Alto. One thing he is trying very hard not to do is to continue as co-webmaster of our Website and email list manager. (See notices on page 9.)

What are some of the special issues the Bar-

ron Park Association is focusing on?

Lydia Kou, the Board's Neighborhood Safety and Preparedness chairperson, has been working with PAN on a new city-wide emergency preparedness program. The key to the whole program is the concept of "Block Preparedness Coordinators." Lydia presented the full program at BPA's annual meeting on February 19th. Lydia is seeking recruits for the "coordinator" positions from every block in Barron Park. Contact Lydia at lkou@apr.com for more information.

Neighbors on Chimalus and Tippawingo have gotten some major concessions from CPI (located in former Varian buildings on Hansen Way) for improved management and control of the toxic materials they use in their operations. Responding to the neighbors' persistence, CPI has reduced the amount of toxics on site and committed to installing a gas monitoring system. The neighbors' activism has also caused the agencies monitoring CPI to be more vigilant: Santa Clara County has just completed its audit of CPI's Risk Management Plan (RMP) and is requiring CPI to remedy deficiencies. The Palo Alto Fire Department concurred with the County's conclusions. See CPIhazardwatch.org for more information.

The Board helped Brandy Faulkner, a Timlott Court resident, with a successful fundraiser for Niner and Perry, our very own donkeys. For the past few years, Brandy has

taken it upon herself to create calendars featuring the donkeys. This year, calendar sales generated about \$650 for the donkeys (but we are looking for someone else to do this next year).

The Board supported the efforts of the Friends of Strawberry Hill to get information from the school district about the devastating herbicide it used on the triangular area at the rear of Gunn High School last Spring. The Friends also organized work parties to remove various high-impact weeds.

Finally, the BPA has continued to sponsor a welcome party in September, a holiday party in December, an annual meeting in February and the May Fete last May. New this year is a plan for a "Green Tour," planned for June. (See related articles.)

If you, too, feel it's time too, to "pay back" your neighborhood association, please let me, or any Board member, know. We have lots to do.

EMAIL LISTS

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

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

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K I D ' S K O R N E R

From Juana Briones School

Dear Neighbors,

I have discovered that you can use water to clean your white boards. So why spend money for special chemical board spray when you can simply use water? Water is much better for our skin than chemical board spray and using it does not have a negative effect on our breathing.

The chemical board sprays have to be shipped. We read one label of a product that is manufactured in Illinois, packaged in Canada, and then shipped all the way here to California to be sold in stores. Do you know how much gas that must waste?

Every single time you buy a new bottle of chemical board spray, you have to use a brand new plastic bottle. With water, all you have to do is buy one spray bottle, fill it up with water, and when it runs out, walk to the sink and refill it. Board spray

has a disgusting after-smell, because of the kind of chemicals put into it to create it. So why even bother to buy a chemical board spray when you have water? Thank you for your time and consideration. We hope you'll try our idea at your office, school, or home.

Sincerely,
Rebecca from Room 13



water is cheaper and that's a fact. All these reasons lead up to one thing... try WATER! So try water soon and remember, only you can change your life. I would like to thank you for taking the time to listen to this new idea.

Sincerely,
Zach Chun

Dear Neighbors,

I think that everyone should use water instead of chemical board spray to clean white boards at the office or home. I think this because if you use water, it will save you a lot of money to spend on other things like books, computers, projectors, and more. Also, whenever you use the commercial spray, you put chemicals into the air and your lungs.

You may think that water leaves background marks and you shouldn't use it. However, we have been using water in our classroom to clean the boards, and it has been working fine. If you should happen to need your whiteboard right away then a good thing is to dry it off with a cloth or paper towels.

So just an empty spray bottle, cloth, water, and a little bit of time, you can save money, the environment, and yourself. Thank you for taking the time to consider using water.

Sincerely,
Emily Collins
Juana Briones School 5th grader

Join us for the 30th Anniversary of May Fete!

One of Barron Park's proudest traditions, the annual May Fete, is scheduled this year for Sunday, May 18th in Bol Park, from noon to 4 pm. Live musicians and dancers will perform all afternoon, with a Maypole dance at 2:30. This 30th year of the fete will also feature a community round dance, no experience necessary.

Bring the family and a blanket and make a picnic of it. Enjoy Driftwood Market sandwiches and bake-sale desserts. Hamburgers and hot dogs will also be for sale. Wear ribbons. There will also be jugglers, games and crafts for the children, donkeys and donkey art, and the history exhibit.

Activities will include face painting for children, donkey parade, history exhibit, fire truck and more. Suggestions for other activities from the Barron Park community are welcome.

The fete is a volunteer effort. If you'd like to help, or if you'd like to propose a display or activity, contact the event organizer John King at 650-483-2710.

Dear Neighbors,

We the kids of room thirteen at Juana Briones Elementary School would like to make you an offer. Instead of using a chemical board spray to clean your white boards, we want you to try a product that's so amazing you won't be able to live without it. This product has many uses, but one of them is as an amazing replacement for the chemical board spray. This product is cheaper than the spray, more environmentally friendly, and this product doesn't smell horrible. The new product we want you to use is called...water! Water may not seem like a great product but it cleans boards just as efficiently as Expo™ board spray!

If it works just as well as the chemical board spray, why should I switch to water? Reason 1: water is better for the environment. It wastes gas having to transport it from far away. Reason 2: water smells much better. This statement is mostly from opinion, but most would agree with this statement. Reason 3: Expo™ board spray is dangerous. On the bottle they typed they inform you that "may be harmful if swallowed" and it states, "eye irritant." So if you have children in the room and if by some chance the spray gets in someone's eye it will irritate, and the eye will have to be treated to stop the effects. Reason 4: not completely switching, instead of immediately throwing away your chemical board spray bottle, keep it. You can reuse the bottle, just refill! Reason 5: not buying board spray saves you money. No one likes having to spend pointless money and



Rebecca Goldgof and Emily Collins, 5th graders at Juana Briones Elementary School.

What's Happening at the Corner of Bol Park?

By Carla Bliss and Shirley Finfrock

You may have seen gardeners working at the Matadero and Laguna Avenue corner of Bol Park the past few months. The gardeners have been Barron Park residents, and in November and at the end of February, professional gardeners.

Volunteer residents who pruned and weeded this fall and winter are: Carla Bliss, Ann Burrell, Judith Content, Stephanie Enos, Shirley Finfrock, Alice Frost, Romola Georgia, Ann Knopf, Art Lieberman, Peter Mueller, Marilyn Smith and Chris Witzel.

Barron Park Association received a \$4,000 grant from the Garden Club of Palo Alto in May of 2007 to fund the beautification of the Laguna/Matadero corner of Bol Park. This is a continuation of the Bol Park Re-Vegetation Project initiated in the 1990's. The stipulation of the grant requires we complete Phase I by November 2008.

Barron Park residents Carla Bliss, Sabra Driscoll and Shirley Finfrock pass the corner on their fitness walks and lamented the demise of their efforts with the BPA Beautification Committee to beautify this corner. Carla and Shirley requested a grant from the Garden Club to continue these earlier efforts to improve the appearance of this focal point in Bol Park. The compacted soil in this area requires heavy-duty professional equipment for additional plantings. Funds raised from the Home & Garden Tours of 1996-97, 1998 & 2000 were insufficient to continue the improvement efforts, and the volunteers were unable to dig in the compacted soil or deter the invasive grasses that crowded out the native perennials, lupine and California poppies. Those funds were transferred by the BPA in 2007 to the grant fund account.

Each year, The Garden Club of Palo Alto Charitable Trust issues grants to Palo Alto organizations duly authorized to carry on charitable or education activities, for conservation of natural resources. It supports beautification of public areas, gardening, nature study and horticultural projects. These funds are derived from the Garden Club's every other year Holiday Affaire, a boutique of holiday decorations and gift items handcrafted by the members.

The grant funds to the BPA are being used for invasive grass abatement, to amend the soil, and to plant additional California native plants, that will enhance this natural area at

the corner of Bol Park. Agi Kehoe of Agnes Kehoe Landscaping, a designer specializing in California natives, has provided a plan that incorporates using the California native plants that originally thrived in our oak savannah in Palo Alto and follows the principles for Bay Friendly Landscaping. Benz's Landscaping & Tree Care is executing the plan. The Parks Department of Palo Alto is supporting this effort with irrigation resources. Lane Kilpatrick Tree Care Service donated five loads of mulch toward the project. The water requirements of CA natives decline each year until the plants are established and acclimated to the area, thus conserving water resources and will require minimal irrigation as needed in their maturity.

At the present time, three phases of the restoration are planned. Phase I incorporates the corner bounded by Laguna Avenue, Matadero Avenue, and the entrance to Roble Ridge Road, as well as, a ten foot strip in the rear of the lawn across from 3503-05-07 Laguna Avenue residences to the large existing dogwood plant. The Phase II area, behind the 10-foot strip back to Roble Ridge Road and parallel to the dogwood plant is to be planted, pending additional funding.

Phase III may be the lawn area that runs along Laguna to where the bike path heads to the north of the cultivated Bol Park. The City has informed us that moneys are available from the Water Efficient Landscape Rebate Program (WELRP) of Santa Clara Water District to convert the existing lawn to a low maintenance lawn that remains green, requires minimal cutting, and thrives in our environment. Before we pursue Phase III, we wish to poll the residents of Barron Park to determine if they are agreeable to our pursuing a water reduction lawn with the city's Parks Department in this area across from 3503-05-07 of Laguna Avenue.

Our modest \$4000 grant from the Garden Club of Palo Alto only covers the Phase I area of this section of Bol Park. Additional funds are required to expand to Phase II for plants, maintenance paths, benches, labor and supplies for additional irrigation and planting. We would like our Phase II to be an opportunity for Barron Park residents to help establish this section of Bol Park, Phase I, II and III, as our Barron Park Memorial Garden and a legacy for future generations of residents. Our hope is to have neighbors

help endow the expanding garden by contributing funds in memory of loved ones or wish to contribute to the California native restoration plot.

This project incorporates the seven principles of Bay Friendly Landscaping and Gardening: 1) Landscape Locally, 2) Landscape for Less to the Landfill, 3) Nurture the Soil, 4) Conserve Water, 5) Conserve Energy, 6) Protect Water & Air Quality, and especially 7) Create Wildlife Habitat by recognizing that biodiversity is crucial to the health of natural ecosystems and that by using native plants and increasing the diversity of plant palettes, our build landscape can provide food, water, shelter for birds, butterflies, beneficial insects and other creatures.

We are working closely with Wendy Hediger and Amanda Cox both of the City of Palo Alto to incorporate this portion of Bol Park with the Community Environmental Action Partnership. The inaugural meeting for residents of Palo Alto took place on March 5.

If you would like to participate in memorial garden funding and/or if you are agreeable or have concerns in pursuing Phase III for a water reduction type lawn across from 3503-05-07 Laguna Avenue. please call Carla Bliss @ 650-493-8194 or email Shirley Finfrock, safinfrock@comcast.net for more information.

Barron Park Garden Network

The Barron Park Garden Network is an informal group of food gardeners who have been meeting monthly since 2001 to discuss pics related to growing vegetables, herbs, and fruits. Meetings are held in members' homes and include a walk through the host's garden, weather and daylight hours permitting; informal conversation; and discussion of a pre-determined gardening topic. Plant and seed exchanges and tastings occur seasonally. This is a lively and enthusiastic group with a wide range of gardening experience, expertise, and philosophies represented. Members of the group would like to help new groups form. If you are interested in joining a neighborhood gardening group similar to this one, focused on either edibles or ornamentals, contact Candace Simpson, cjs1008@pacbell.net or 493-1257, for more information.

EL CAMINO BUSINESSES

By Bob Moss

[Editor's note: the BPA is not responsible for any mistaken data reported below]

A recent proposal by the Silicon Valley Community Group to redevelop El Camino with high density housing, and clusters of office and retail [seemed to be based] on the assumption that existing strip shopping failed. The reality is rather different, especially along the part of El Camino that fronts on Barron Park.

I have been watching the health and variety of commercial uses on El Camino for almost 35 years, and for the past few years it has been relatively healthy and diverse, although we have lost some valued operations such as Hyatt Rickey's Hotel. I have taken informal inventories of retail uses for years, trying to track vacancy rates and shifts in uses. In late January, I took a detailed survey of uses on El Camino and El Camino Way from Page Mill to Adobe Creek. Here are the results of my personal analysis.

There are a total of 170 ground floor commercial and office businesses and housing developments along El Camino and El Camino Way. Of these spaces, 22, or 12.9% are vacant. That includes four vacant lots owned by absentee landlords that have been vacant for more than 35 years. Subtract them and the percentage of vacant spaces is 10.6%. In my opinion, that is not bad considering the slump in the economy over the past year. The vacant or semi-vacant sites include the corner of El Camino and Barron, which is owned by an octogenarian in Texas who reportedly wants \$2.3 million. A couple of developers looked at it and said the asking price was excessive. The vacant lot just north of Maybell with Palo Alto's last billboard is owned by a woman from Hong Kong. She had two plans for townhouses on the site approved years ago, but never built them. Her son said he would act to make sure housing was built there, but after two years, nothing has happened at all.

In late 2006, several of the now-vacant stores in the 3700 block were occupied, as were a couple of the currently vacant

shops on El Camino Way, resulting in an estimated vacancy rate of 8 % of stores. In January 1992, the rate was 7 %. A vacancy rate of 5 % is considered fully occupied, since there are always some empty spaces as one business replaces another, or as businesses are forced to move due to rent increases, new lease conditions, restrictions on use of the property, etc. The ground floor vacancy rate downtown was 2.3% in October 2005 in comparison. (It should be noted that the downtown vacancy rate is calculated on the basis of square feet, not the number of vacant stores as was done for El Camino.)

All of these vacancy rates are trivial compared to the mid 1970s when 43 % of ground floor property on El Camino was vacant. That drew in over a dozen "massage parlors" and eventually resulted in a 1976 law to limit and control massage parlors, followed by raids that ran all of them out of town by 1978. Those problems are long gone.

The following table shows the distribution of uses in January 2008.

Existing Uses on El Camino and El Camino Way, January, 2008											
Sector	Retail	Service	Restaurant	Food	Office	Auto	Vacant	Motel	In Transition	Housing	Total
Number	22	42	28	4	9	16	22	14	5	8	170
Percent	12.9%	24.7%	16.5%	2.4%	5.3%	9.4%	12.9%	8.2%	2.9%	4.7%	100%

If the office uses on El Camino Way are removed from the calculations, the percentage of offices decreases from 5.3% to 4.8%. Vacancies drop from 12.9% to 12.3% if El Camino Way is excluded from the totals.

"In Transition" means that although the space is vacant, a tenant is identified and plans to move in soon. These five are not counted as vacant properties since they should be filled soon.

Several things are interesting in the distribution of occupants. Automotive is one of the lowest uses. Automotive plus motel uses is less than 20%. This is consistent with efforts almost 30 years ago to create a Neighborhood Commercial zone that excluded automotive uses, and eventually replaced some of the them with retail. The idea was to open up spaces for neighborhood-serving retail and reduce uses that

drew automotive traffic. For example Happy Donuts occupies the site of an auto repair shop. There are few office uses, matching the intent to strongly support ground floor for retail, not offices. Downtown Palo Alto attributes some of its retail vitality to restrictions on ground floor office uses and strong efforts to retain the ground floor for retail. El Camino has a similar preference for retail rather than offices on the ground floor but the controls are not as strict as they are Downtown.

The variety of businesses is reasonably balanced, with service the highest, and a fair numbers of retail and restaurants. There are not a large number of the less desired types of business such as automotive or offices. Some of the vacancies are due to market forces, not the ambiance on El Camino. For example Caboodle ink and toner refill, previously at 3775, quietly vacated in the fall shortly after Walgreens started offering a very similar service at lower cost. In my opinion, Access Computer formerly at 3789 closed because of general pressure on computer retail stores and the competition from Fry's.

Housing refers to the number of properties with current housing developments, not the total number of housing units. There are currently about 375 housing units existing or under construction, not including the housing planned for the Elks Club site which could add 45 more.

An interesting feature of businesses on El Camino is that many of them are long-time occupants. While I have occupancy data going back to 1986, it is not complete for the entire street. There is good detailed occupancy data for 1992, so I did comparisons using that data.

Of the 146 locations on El Camino, 45, or 30.5% have had the same occupant since January 1992. A number of other sites have changed occupant but provide the same service or products. For example, Straits, Taqueria el Grullense, Celia, and Hunan

Garden have been restaurants for more than 20 years, but the name and, in most cases, the owner changed. Including business sites that offer the same goods or services as they did 20 years ago, but under different ownership or name, over half of the sites along El Camino have provided the same goods or services for at least 20 years. That shows a very stable business environment.

In 1978, there was a major revision to the Comprehensive Plan and zoning with the goal of changing El Camino. Besides rezoning some parcels to Neighborhood Commercial as mentioned above, the City also rezoned some parcels to residential. As a result, housing has replaced commercial in several locations along El Camino in the past 25 years, including the developments between Vista and Los Robles and the corner of El Camino and Los Robles. More recently, housing has become more lucrative for developers than retail or commercial, even with the current problems in the housing market. That results in pressure to replace businesses along El Camino that presently offer some useful product or service for the community. Last year the Council decided that too many more such conversions were undesirable for a number of reasons, and they indicated interest in retaining current businesses rather than replacing them with housing.

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Barron Park Association
724 Barron Avenue
Palo Alto, California 94306

Nancy "Jo" Hamilton
EDITOR

Patrick Coyne
DESIGNER

Lynnie Melena, Gwen Luce,
Doug Moran
COPY EDITORS

Carla Bliss, Shirley Finrock,
Douglas Graham, Nancy Hamilton,
Sue Luttner, Lynnie Melena, Bob Moss
CONTRIBUTORS

SENIOR UPDATE

By Nancy Hamilton

We're still lacking a Seniors Chair. Someone to report services for seniors. Someone to organize senior's lunches, and keep seniors connected to the community. Maybe carry news and services back from Avendidas (Palo Alto City Senior's Center)?

For instance, Avendidas provides advice for seniors who are thinking about reverse mortgages or some of the newer REX Experience future equity loans. It helps to be knowledgeable about these matters before you commit your home equity.

I know it will be hard to step into the shoes of the late Katie Edwards, or our current

past chairwoman Mary Jane Leon, but we just need someone who cares. You don't need journalism experience, we have plenty of copy editors and proofreaders.

You may actually find it fun and challenging. Join the BPA Board. It's not necessary that you join, but it will get you involved in our community. We meet on almost every 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7:15pm, usually at Barron School. Come join us. Or volunteer even if you don't want to join the board.

Looking forward to meeting you or discussing this further, Nancy Hamilton (650) 494-2941.

RSVP: Free Home Services for Senior & the Homebound

RSVP is an annual week-long community outreach program that takes place in May. The program provides free assistance to qualified seniors who cannot otherwise perform certain household task due to physical or financial constraints. Some common services performed are washing windows, changing furnace filters, turning mattresses, vacuuming, changing light bulbs, replacing smoke detectors batteries and other similar household tasks. These are just a few chores that keep a home in good order. Unfortunately, these jobs may seem simple to some people, but they can be taxing and insurmountable to many seniors and disabled adults.

The REALTOR Service Volunteer Program (RSVP), which operates through your local Association of Realtors, promotes safety in the home and assistance to the elderly. The program is one way Realtors and Affiliates can give back to their communities and perhaps help seniors and the homebound maintain their independence and stay in their homes longer.

This year the program runs from May 5th to May 10th. For more information on the program or to get an application contact John St. Clair III, (650) 740-8363.

Application Deadline is March 31, 2008.

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 PDF directory address will change each year, and is published on the "thank you" page when you join online, and in the summer newsletter paper edition. The files may take awhile to download (sizes given in advance).

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

The California Military Academy and the Barron Mansion

By Douglas Graham, Barron Park Historian

The Military Academy

Colonel Sebastian Jones opened the California Military Academy in the Barron Mansion in 1925. The school was located in the present-day Woodland Park tract, on La Selva Drive, Magnolia Drive, and Military Way (see map).

Colonel Jones had previously operated a successful military academy at Geneseo, south of Rochester, NY. He emigrated to California with the intent of starting a new academy. He found a good property that he liked, south of Mayfield. Driscoll and Reiter had bought the Barron Estate in 1919 for subdivision and development into small strawberry farms. They were offering, through Hare Brewer and Clarke, Palo Alto realtors, the old, but gorgeous Barron Mansion and its 50 acres of surrounding ornamental park for a reasonable price. Doubtless it was a "white elephant" as far as the Driscoll interests were concerned.

According to Col Jones' grandson Chatham Forbes, he really liked the Palo Alto-Mayfield area. He bought the mansion and park property in 1923, and immediately wrote Major Forbes (Chatham's father), who had married his eldest daughter, and asked him to come out from the east and teach at the school. He built the military academy buildings in 1924 and early 1925. He also decided to split off the northwest portion and the strip along the state highway (El



Colonel Sebastian Jones

California Military Academy 1925



Roads and property lines existing in 1925 are shown in black; the grey lines show current streets and lots.

The actual locations of some of the plantings and buildings have been corroborated by physical evidence still in existence in the 1980s; the remainder have been located as close as is possible by memory and limited map evidence. The exact location of the mansion was determined to within ten feet when one of the twin palms was removed about 1995.

Please see the key to the numbers below

Map copyright by Douglas L. Graham 2008. Based on information in an oral history given by Chatham Forbes to Ann Knopf in 1977. Details have been augmented by an interview and an on-site walk-through by Graham and Forbes November 2, 1985.

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| <p>1. The "Barron Mansion," actually built by Sarah Wallis in 1857.</p> <p>2. West wing, added by Edward Barron in 1891 to house his son's family—contained the cadet dining room in the academy times.</p> <p>3. Original farmhouse, built by Elisha Crosby in 1853. Also called the south wing.</p> <p>4. Rose garden.</p> <p>5. Twin yew trees, which were later dug up and transported to be part of the landscaping for the World's Fair in San Francisco in 1939.</p> <p>6. The "Class Bench."</p> <p>7. Royal Palm tree.</p> <p>8. Date Palm tree.</p> <p>9. Broom tree.</p> <p>10. Heating plant.</p> <p>11. Path from west wing cadet dining room to the cadet barracks.</p> <p>12. Rose arbor and path to Mrs. Willem's House.</p> | <p>13. Garage.</p> <p>14. Lilac bushes.</p> <p>15. "The meadow."</p> <p>16. Hedge.</p> <p>17. Cesspool (approximate location).</p> <p>18. Mrs. Willem's House.</p> <p>19. Mr. Brother's House.</p> <p>20. Large Oak tree (still there in 2008).</p> <p>21. Roses along The Lane (now the 3800 block of La Selva Drive).</p> <p>22. The twin palms—visible in photographs of the front of the mansion. The westernmost one was removed in 1995 and from its stump we were able to determine almost exactly where the mansion had been located.</p> <p>23. Large Cedar tree.</p> <p>24. Two Magnolia trees.</p> <p>25. Raspberry patch.</p> <p>26. Tennis Courts.</p> <p>27. "The jungle."</p> | <p>28. Showers and a pump house for the pool.</p> <p>29. Swimming Pool (known then as the swimming tank).</p> <p>30. The Cadet Store.</p> <p>31. Flagpole.</p> <p>32. The Parade Ground, as located by Forbes.</p> <p>33. Probable parade ground extension (extrapolated from the photograph showing a very extensive field).</p> <p>34. The Junior Barracks.</p> <p>35. The Main Barracks.</p> <p>36. "Walking the Track" area where cadets marched to work off demerits.</p> <p>37. Two large heritage Oak trees.</p> <p>38. Water Tower.</p> <p>39. Basketball courts.</p> <p>40. Main well and pump station.</p> <p>41. Barbeque area.</p> |
|--|---|--|

Camino Real) and subdivide it into small roadside commercial lots and small residential lots. This he did in 1925, naming the tract "Barron Park."

The Academy Buildings and grounds

During the Military Academy time, the old Barron Mansion was the Jones' family residence. The cadets (4th through 12th grades) did not normally enter it except to take their meals in the "West" wing. The older cadets lived in the main barracks (see map, at #35), built where Barron had his stables, and the younger ones in the Junior Barracks (at #34). They took their classes on the ground floor, with dormitory rooms above.

Besides the buildings, Jones provided athletic facilities for the cadets. The swimming pool was a popular feature, and it was open to the general public during the summer vacations (see photograph and map, the pool is at #28). Some Barron Park old-timers still remembered, in the 1980s, swimming in the academy pool during the 1920s and 30s. The pool later served as the foundation for the modern house built at 3878 Magnolia. Tennis courts were built (# 26), and basketball courts (#39). A parade ground was laid out (#32 and #33) with a flagpole for ceremonies (#31) near the east end.

A water tower was located where the house at 3870 now is (see photograph). Forbes says it... "was the tallest thing in the entire area. It was like a four-sided building, very ornamental. We always had a lot of trouble with boys trying to climb it; as a matter of fact I climbed it myself." It was built by Barron, with a "Victorian" design. The water table in Palo Alto was falling, due to over-pumping for orchards, which took "huge quantities of water." Colonel Jones had to drill a new well, very deep, "I remember constantly having to go farther and farther. I remember my mother and father saying 'Oh my goodness, we have to go down farther.' We kept drilling deeper and deeper. We had a pump house, just to pump water for the school: we didn't irrigate anything except for the gardens and lawns" (see map, the water tower was at #38 and the well at #40).

The grounds were very extensively landscaped. The twin palms facing the front steps could be seen from the State Highway (El Camino Real). On the left as you faced the house was a rose garden. Sarah Wallis had planted an orchard and many ornamental trees in the 1850s, 60s and 70s. When Barron took over in 1878 he laid out curving driveways from the County Road (El Camino Real) to replace Sarah's straight-in entrance. He also planted more ornamen-



Barron Mansion, mid-1920s.

tals. On the south side of the property there was a large raspberry patch (#25) and an untamed area the cadets called "the jungle" (#27). On the northwest side was a row of lilac bushes (#14) and a "meadow" (#15). Here and there were large "heritage oaks" such as the two standing where Magnolia Drive now bends around (#37), and the large one at the corner of Military Way and La Selva Drive, which still stands in 2008.

The old "Barron Mansion"

Although in the 1920s the property was known as the Barron Estate and the house as the Barron Mansion, it had actually been built in 1857 by Sarah Wallis, the first women's suffrage leader on the west coast. The property was purchased and held by Sarah, not by her husband, Judge Joseph Wallis. She entertained suffrage leaders, including Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, as well as former U.S. President Ulysses Grant.

The mansion was later expanded twice by Edward Barron, who added the fourth-floor cupola in 1879 and the west wing to house his son's family in 1891. If it still existed today it would rate among the finest examples of Victorian architecture in the Bay Area.

Envisioning the Mansion Built by Sarah Wallis

If you stand today on the edge of La Selva Drive, facing the State Historical Monument marking Sarah Wallis' home site, and if you look southwest, right along the lot line between 525 Military Way and 3899 Magnolia Drive, you can envision the front steps of the mansion about 150 feet in front of you.

In the 1920s and 30s there were a pair of tall palm trees between the mansion's driveway (which no longer exists) and "The Lane" (now the 3800 block of La Selva). In 1923, you would have seen, looming among the mature palms, magnolias and cedars, a magnificent 3-story mansion with an octagonal fourth floor cupola (see photograph). There were at least 26 rooms. Chatham Forbes, lived there as a boy during the time of the military academy from 1923 to 1930. He states that there were about 40, and he listed them and drew rough plans of each floor in an interview with me in 1986. Mr. Forbes is a local historian, lives in Saratoga and teaches California and local history at DeAnza College in Cupertino. The following descriptions are based on the interview with Mr. Forbes on October 18, 1986, and on his oral history given to Ann Knopf in the Fall of 1977.

A Wisteria-Covered Veranda

On the first floor, there was a veranda clear around the front and sides. By the 1920s the wisteria vine had become "wonderfully established;" it had thick trunks and it was just beautiful around the entire veranda. It was almost obscured by the luxuriant foliage of the vine, loaded with heavy purple blossoms. Above, the second and third floor façade was dominated by great, two-story high gables fringed with Victorian gingerbread woodwork.

Eighteen Rooms on the Ground Floor

There was a Victorian-style entrance, wide front steps with lamp posts on either side. Inside, on the ground floor there were 18



Water Tower with Pool in Background.



Pool with Main Barracks in Background.

rooms, including the main hall which extended from the front entrance back about three-quarters of the depth of the main building. Just inside the front door, there was a large vestibule with gilded-framed mirrors from Paris. The hall also contained a large staircase that went up the center of the house to the octagonal fourth-floor tower playroom. As you faced into the house, to the right was a large drawing room or reception room, while to the left was an equally large living room/library, both rooms having wonderful Italian marble fireplaces. Behind the library was the billiards room and behind it was the "front pantry" with many cabinets full of preserves. Chatham told that "...the floors were parquet floors, typical of the California gold rush opulent era. Right after the gold rush was the silver boom and so on...the walls were all wallpapered with some paneling in the billiard room, which was very well lit. There were lots of pantries and cabinetry and glass and it was very well done. The carpentry was Victorian gothic: Eastlake." On the right side, behind the reception room was a passageway to the west wing, then a family dining room. In the center, alongside the staircase was the "back hall," with dark paneling, where the telephone was installed.

Sarah Wallis had spent a small fortune furnishing the house, and Edward Barron didn't stint either. According to Forbes, there were many "very typical 'California Nabob' pieces around the house, still there. There was no point in moving them out; they had been bought for the house. There were the mirrors from Paris...very typical of the period. You can go to the Ralston House, any of those, and see those mirrors from Paris, with gold leaf, very tall. They used them above mantelpieces, at the end of hallways, and so on."

The Ground Floor West Wing

The west wing had been added by Edward Barron about 1891 to house his son's family. In the west wing ground floor were four

rooms. First, adjacent to the main house was a large dining room where the cadets ate, which extended the full width of the wing. Beyond it was, toward the front, a second large dining room which extended clear to the end of the wing. Toward the rear, there was an entrance hall inside the steps that led up from the back lawn, off which was a small toilet and lavatory.

The Ground Floor South Wing

The back wing apparently was the original Mayfield Farm house built by Elisha Crosby in 1853 or 1854. This wing included the kitchen and various utility rooms, with servants' quarters upstairs. As you entered the south wing from the front pantry, the back hall or the family dining room, you found yourself in the large kitchen, which, like the other three ground-floor rooms, extended the full width of the wing. Next was the main pantry, with ice cream making and other kitchen-related operations. Then there was a narrow icebox room. Along the east side of this wing ran a wide porch like the verandas around the main section of the mansion. The last ground-floor room at the rear of the south wing was a large laundry room with access from the porch only. Underneath the main pantry was the cadet laundry, and underneath the kitchen were two rooms, a basement workshop and a wine cellar.

The Second Floor

The staircase opened into a second-floor hall, which led into two very large bedrooms that, together with the staircase, spanned the width of the building. Colonel Jones' bedroom was above the reception room, and Forbes' grandmother's room directly to the rear from it. His parents' room was across the staircase, above the library. Chatham's bedroom was shared with his brother, was above the billiard room and front pantry, and had an adjacent sleeping porch above the veranda. The main bathroom opened off the hall, and was above the back hall. Between it and the west wing there was a small ladies' sitting room for Chatham's Aunts that may have served as a private parlor for Barron's son

and his wife. Chatham said that he believed his grandfather had done some refurbishment, because "...they modernized things a bit. Every room had a little half-bath."

In the west wing, there was a bedroom adjacent to the main house, and his cousin's bedroom and playroom at the west end. In the south wing there was a long hall to the right, with rooms opening onto it from the left. Going towards the rear, first there was a servant's bathroom, then two bedrooms, and finally the cook, Gee Wing's bedroom which stretched the width of the house (this was probably the master bedroom of Elisha Crosby's farmhouse).

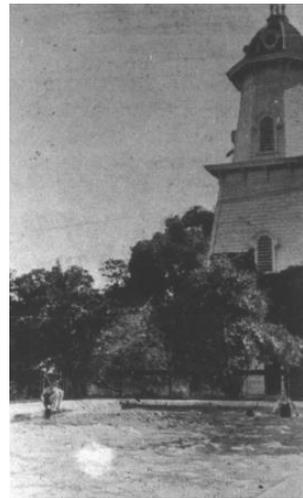
The Third Floor

Third floor had two bedrooms in the front corners and a "top hall" in the center where the staircase came up.

The rest of the space was various attics. There were two levels of attics, and Chatham said that "...we were up there all the time. You know kids can't resist creeping around in attics. There were all sorts of things and most of them were from our own family."

Colonel Jones' Extended Family

"We were larger than Barron's family: there were twelve of us in that house. There was my grandfather and grandmother on my mother's side: My Grandfather



Water Tower.

was Sebastian Chatham Jones and my grandmother was Mary Hale Jones." There was "...my mother and my father...Major Francis Henry Forbes Senior and Eleanor Forbes. Then there were her two sisters, Isabel and Ethel...and their two children."

The Fourth Floor Cupola

Chatham Forbes related that "The Jones family referred to the cupola room as The playroom, because the children of the family used that eight-sided tower room as a playroom. I used to climb every one of those roofs [the gables on the third floor]: my parents would have gone stiff [if they had known]. We used to watch the Big Game bonfire from there. It's only four miles and we could easily see it."

A Vanderbilt Wanted the Weathervane

Forbes also told about the beautiful weathervane mounted on the top of the tower room. "One day, somebody arrived and

very grandly drew up in front of the house in a chauffeur-driven car. A man got out and came to the door. My father (Major Forbes) was working in the library and so he came to the door and this man announced himself as somebody named Vanderbilt. Just like in a W.C. Fields comedy. That didn't impress my father: as a matter of fact my grandfather's family was related to the Vanderbilts. This man thought my father would be greatly impressed. My father said 'May I help you?' and the man said, 'Well, I really admire your weathervane' My father (who was an army officer...voice of command and all that) said 'Thank you.' The man then said 'Would you like to sell it?' and my father said 'Would you please go...' It was incredible. My father was very much annoyed with him, for suggesting he buy the weathervane right off the top of the house. It was very funny."

Major Forbes Confronts the Road Gang

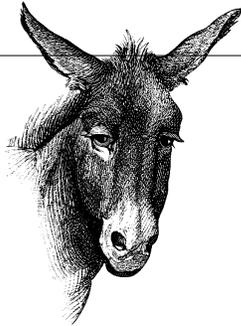
I'm going to end this article with a little story Chatham Forbes tells about his father. It was shortly after the original Barron Park

subdivision was laid out along the State Highway. In order to widen El Camino Real to help carry the U.S. Highway 101 traffic it was carrying, the state determined it would have to take 20 feet off the front of all the lots. For some reason, they did this without paying for it. Forbes told that "...I can remember my father down there with a 45 caliber pistol holding it on a gang of men that had been sent by the highway people. They were knocking down trees that were 60 years old. [The Eucalyptus trees that ran between the alley—now Cypress Lane—and El Camino]. They accepted the dedication (for the Barron Park subdivision in 1925) but they didn't pay us for it."

Colonel Jones' Untimely Death

Unfortunately, Colonel Jones died suddenly in 1929. Simultaneously, the Great depression hit. For a year, Major Forbes acted as superintendent and owned the school along with his wife and her two sisters. They decided to relocate the school to Marin County, but investors backed out and they ended up selling out to a Mrs Hurley, who unsuccessfully ran a boarding school for several years.

Help Support the Barron Park Donkeys!



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 services 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 donkeys' care may be sent to: The Palo Alto Donkey Project, ACTERRA (Action for a Sustainable Earth), 3921 East Bayshore Road, Palo Alto, CA 94303-4303. The check *must* be made out to "ACTERRA—Palo Alto Donkey Fund." **All of the above *must* be included.**

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

Help Wanted: BPA Website

We need someone to help with the BPA website, both to do immediate maintenance and to help update the content and keep it fresh.

The BPA website was created in the mid-1990s by Nancy Hamilton who hosts the primary web pages. As the number of web pages grew, Doug Moran became the co-webmaster and hosted the lesser-used web pages on his own server. Moving these web pages off Doug's computer onto a commercial service provider is long overdue (Doug has an injury from too many years of too much use of computers and is being forced to reduce his usage).

If you would like to help with the BPA website, please contact: Nancy Hamilton (650) 494-2941, or email: <http://www2.bpaonline.org/411/njh.html>

Help Wanted: BPA E-mail Lists

We need someone to take on the role of "Communications Director" of the BPA email lists (via Google Groups). This job has two basic parts. The primary part is "traffic cop" : you determine what does and does not get posted to the BPA-news email list, determining what is relevant and appropriate, and keeping the volume down to a suitable level. The secondary part is editor. Some messages that should go to the list first need quick edits, and others need to be rewritten by the submitter—some people just don't understand that stream-of-consciousness messages are not appropriate—or effective—for a large email list.

This is a very interesting job because you not only hear about many activities from many groups, but become known to the various leaders of those groups. And as the person distributing messages to the neighborhood, you become well-known to many of your neighbors.

This function has been handled by Doug Moran who must significantly reduce his computer usage.

If you would like to help, please contact Nancy Hamilton (650) 494-2941 or email: <http://www2.bpaonline.org/411/njh.html>.

Light Brown Apple Moth Update: No Spraying Planned in Barron Park

by Sue Luttner

Although our neighborhood remains under quarantine against spread of the Light Brown Apple Moth (LBAM), the state's 2008 LBAM eradication plan does not propose any spraying in either Santa Clara or San Mateo Counties.

Local treatment so far has meant only hand-deployment in focused areas of twist-ties infused with pheromones, which confuse male moths and disrupt the mating cycle. The ties are supposed to be installed on telephone poles and in trees, out of reach of people and pets.

Baited traps continue to collect one or two LBAM specimens a month in our area—at the end of February, the total for Santa Clara County was up to 20 individuals since tracking began in the spring of 2007. Unfortunately, a handful of those trappings occurred in Palo Alto.

Still, our numbers are tiny relative to the larger infestation. State records show a total of approximately 16,000 LBAM trappings, 11,000 of them in Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties, where aerial spraying of pheromones in the fall triggered complaints from some residents. Spraying there is scheduled to resume this spring.

A second focus of infestation is north of us at the mouth of the bay, covering parts of San Francisco, Contra Costa, and Alameda Counties, with about 4,000 positive IDs among them.

Because the state's eradication

program focuses heavily on the use of pheromones—which disrupt reproduction but do not kill individual moths—the plan is expected to take several years. In the long run, the report says, the state is likely to deploy “treatment tools...currently under development.”

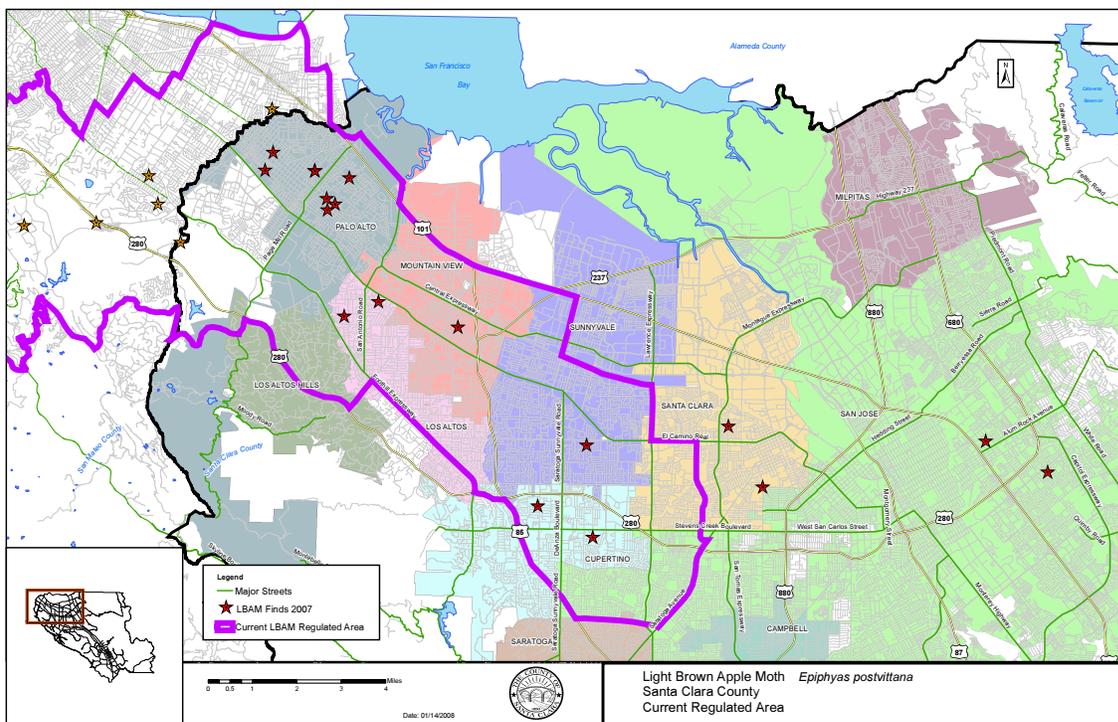
Meanwhile, we remain in the quarantine zone, which means we're asked not to move plants off our properties, even to a neighbor's yard. The city treats all curbside yard waste as potentially infested. Composting kills all stages of the life cycle.

Local nurseries are cooperating with state inspectors to keep their stock clean, so buying commercial flowers and plants should be safe.



A rose leaf illustrates the rolling damage characteristic of the moth's pupa stage. Fine silken threads hold the curl in place.

For more information see the California Department of Food and Agriculture LBAM site at <http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/phpps/PDEP/lbam/>



GREEN TOUR PLANNED FOR BARRON PARK

The Barron Park Association is planning a Green Tour for June of this year. The tour will be similar to the BPA's Garden Tours of years' past, but this year the focus will have a distinct environmental bent. We plan to feature houses and

gardens that have installed solar systems (photovoltaic and hot water) and other energy efficient features and designs, as well as homes with organic gardens and drought tolerant landscaping. While still in the early planning stages, it is clear that

there are many fine candidates in Barron Park. Watch for notices announcing the specific date and starting point for the tour in late May or early June. For more information, contact Linnie Melena at Linnie.Melena@gmail.com

Z A L U

Request a Parcel Report from the City of Palo Alto

Did you know you could request a report about your parcel of land from the Palo Alto Planning Department? The City's Development Center has a new on-line service that allows you to obtain planning and zoning information. After filling out and submitting the "Request a Parcel Report" on-line form, you will be e-mailed a PDF Parcel Report with basic information on the property, additional information requested and contact information for the Planner on Duty. The Parcel Report provides information specific to the subject property, including a map, the Assessor's Parcel Number, Address, Net Lot Size, Zone District, Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designation, Flood Zone Designation, Historic Status, Maximum Floor Area, Maximum Lot Coverage, Maximum Height and Setback Information. Parcel Reports provide a snapshot of key data and also clarify development potential for homeowners and potential homeowners who may be less familiar with the specifics of zoning.

Palo Alto's Parcel Report service is unique. The service won the City the 2007 "Award for Innovative Use of Technology" from the California Chapter of the American Planning Association.

Visit <http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/forms/pln/pln-parcel-report.lasso> to try this service.

It's Membership Time

Whether you are a new or renewing member, it's time to join the Barron Park Association. Yes, you need sign up every year.

Please return your form by April 30. Why?

- On time sign up ensures that you will receive all four newsletters, and any other membership materials, like the babysitter list. Remember sitters or recipients must sign up every year, as the list is constantly updated.
- On time sign up saves us money. Second reminder mailings cost us money and time. Printing and mailing costs are a big expense.
- On time sign up means less confusion for you. No more wondering, Am I a member? Why didn't I get the newsletter? Why haven't I received a babysitting list?

So hey, grab a pen and sign up right now. Just use the enclosed membership form or sign up online at <http://www.bpaonline.org/bpa-membership-form.html>.

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 volunteers to help with these events, so if you can help, even a little, please check off a committee or activity box on the membership form.

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Welcoming: Gwen Luce

Zoning & Land Use: Lynnne Melena

BPA meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday of most months at 7:15 p.m.

Call Lynnne Melena for location: 493-2123

www.bpaonline.org

BARRON PARK GARAGE BAND

Barron Park has its own unofficial "garage band," the "Plaid Fish." They have had a few gigs and consist of four band members, Jordan King (Lead Singer & Guitar), Danny Luskin (drummer), Brent Paulson (lead guitar) and Eric Schmidt (bass guitar). All students at Gunn High School, three live in Barron Park. Rehearsals are in the garage of the King



Family on Barron Avenue.

"Plaid Fish" have some original songs posted at www.myspace.com/bandplaidfish. They are the quintessential garage band since they have to compete with the camping equip-

ment for space for their equipment. They practice once a week now and hope to perform at some upcoming events and at Gunn's Battle of the Bands this spring.

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