

# BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

## SENIOR UPDATE

By Doug Moran

### Preparing for the Paramedics

This article was inspired by a recent experience calling the paramedics to help a neighbor and trying to give them the information they needed. In discussing the idea for this story, I found others that had similar experiences, and that convinced me that many of us have not thought about what we need to provide to the paramedics should we have an emergency. Remember, if it is enough of an emergency to call the paramedics, we are likely to be semi-conscious or worse, or so impaired by pain and stress that we won't be able to do much.

### Vial-of-Life

Vial-of-Life is a national program to put critical information in a place that paramedics can easily find it. The location chosen was the refrigerator (everyone has one and it is easy to find). The original version had you put the form containing this information in a prescription container (the "vial") inside the refrigerator. An alternative has emerged where you put the form in a plastic bag that you put on the door of the refrigerator. Either way, there is a bright red sticker to make it easier to find. This form gives information about your

medical conditions and medications, so that the paramedics and emergency room doctors know both what to focus on and what to avoid (for example, medication that interact badly with ones you are already taking).

It also gives contact information: your family and your doctors (for additional information on your condition).

See *Resources* for sources of this form. We will have a supply provided by Avenidas at the Barron Park Annual Meeting (Sunday January 28, 2pm)—this is the version that has the container for inside the refrigerator.

### Preventing Falls

In November, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that falling was the 14th leading cause of death among people older than 65, and those deaths had increased 55% over the last decade. They attributed much of this to people living longer.

However, they counted only deaths where a fall was specified as the direct cause. From experience with my extended family, I know of cases where falls weren't the medical cause-of-death, but were the true cause—the beginning of the end. Although

[ CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 ]

## BARRON PARK ANNUAL NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

Sunday, January 28th, 2–4pm  
Multipurpose Room  
Barron Park Elementary School

■  
Main Topic: Preparing for Pandemic Flu. Practical advice on caring for yourself, your family, and cooperating with your neighbors.

■  
Socializing and refreshments.

■  
Watch your mailbox and email for additional details.



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the broken bones healed, physical therapy was unable to adequately restore the muscle lost during recuperation. Decreased ability to exercise caused part of the physical decline, but decreased ability to get around caused a loss of the familiar lifestyle, which triggered a psychological decline which was the critical element of the downward spiral.

Our houses contain many unnecessary hazards that can trip us. Because we have lived with them for so long, we don't notice them, and even when we do, we tend to significantly underestimate the risk ("Haven't tripped yet.") Also, remember that as we get older, it is easier to trip, and those falls do more damage.

Because this is a common situation, Stanford has a program where an experienced clinical worker comes to your home and applies a fresh set of eye to your living situation and makes suggestions on reducing these hazards. For some surgeries, this is a standard part of the follow-up, and I know

of BP seniors who have had such visits. See the *Resources* box for contact information.

**Managing Medications**

Based upon other experiences of family and friends, a significant number of falls are the result of the number of medications they were taking, or rather the interactions between those medications. Be aware that most medications are tested alone; therefore the experience with interactions comes primarily after the medications have been approved for widespread use. Unfortunately, these problems with interactions are often poorly diagnosed and infrequently reported.

When the paramedics come to your house, one of the first things they ask is about what medications you are taking, and which ones you have taken today. However, they don't count on you giving them accurate information—viewers of the TV show "House" (Fox) know that the hero routinely chides the other doctors with a reminder that "Patients lie." Under the stress of the incident, it is very easy to forget some prescriptions, and it is very easy to mispronounce names—especially of generics—in a way that the paramedic hears it as a different one. And while the Vial-of-Life document is helpful, the paramedic cannot tell whether there have been any changes since it was last updated.

Your medications are critical information. They may be the cause of your emergency. They may clash with some of the treatments the doctors might try. They give information about your condition. Therefore, a paramedic, or one of the accompanying firefighters, may sweep through your house looking for prescription containers. People often have them in multiple locations: some in the bedroom (for ones they take before bed), some in the kitchen or dining room (for those they take with meals), some in the TV room (for those they take between meals or as needed), some in the bathroom,...

There are several things you can do to make it easier for the paramedics to collect this information (according to their coordinator): (1) Dispose of medicine that you are no longer taking (see *Resources* on how to properly do this). (2) For medicines that you take on an as-needed basis but aren't taking now, put them away. (3) If you are

taking multiple medications, consider getting—and using—a pill container that has compartments for the various times of the day. This way, the paramedics have evidence which pills you have and haven't taken. Drug stores (Walgreens, Longs, ...) carry a range of such containers: some that cover a single day, and some that you can stock for a full week. (4) The limitation on these pill containers is that they show which pills you have taken, but they don't show the names of the pills. For this, the paramedic needs to find the prescription bottle, so don't hide them.

**Let your neighbors know**

If you have health problems, strongly consider letting your neighbors know the basics. If you have an emergency, it may well occur when your family members are not there, and that your first help will come from a neighbor.

If the neighbors know key information, they can include that in the 911 call, and they can tell the paramedics immediately upon arrival, rather than having it delayed until the paramedics find your Vial-of-Life (you *have* decided to make one ASAP, haven't you?).

**BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**

Barron Park Association  
4028 Laguna Way  
Palo Alto, California 94306

Nancy "Jo" Hamilton  
**EDITOR**

Patrick Coyne  
**DESIGNER**

Mary Jane Leon  
Gwen Luce  
Doug Moran  
Patrick Muffler

**COPY EDITORS**

Jeff Dean  
Linda Elder  
Brandy Faulkner  
Doug Graham  
Art Liberman  
Suzanne McKenna  
Karen Michael  
Doug Moran  
Patrick Muffler  
Halimah Van Tuyl

**CONTRIBUTORS**

**Resources**

Vial of Life: Avenidas (Palo Alto Senior Center) or [www.vialoflife.com](http://www.vialoflife.com), some doctors, some drug stores. The Walgreens on Maybell does not provide this (as of November), but is looking into it.

Fall hazards in your home: Ellen Korman at Stanford, 724-9369 (recommended by Palo Alto Fire Department, Emergency Medical Services).

Disposal of old medications: Do not flush down sink or toilet—they have become a significant pollutant in the bay. Instead: (1) Household Hazardous Waste Disposal event—See the insert in your City of Palo Alto Utilities bill. Typically 9am–12noon on the first Saturday of each month at the Water Treatment plant (across from the golf course). (2) Some drug stores also handle disposal. Check with your pharmacist next time you get a prescription.

## Simplifying Your Medications

*Disclaimer:* I am not a doctor. The following is intended help you ask better questions of your doctor about the risks and benefits.

Many seniors find themselves taking a large number of medications, with different ones on different schedules. Doctors recognize that this is a problem:

(1) It is easy for patients to become confused and take wrong dosages, (2) There are more possible interactions to cause problems, and (3) When something goes wrong, there are more possible causes, making it harder to diagnose. However, they are also understandably hesitant to simplify medications: (1) "If it ain't broke, don't fix it", and (2) the process of simplifying can be complex and risky.

Two examples of these risks for seniors in my family: In one case, the doctor neglected the impact of the change on my Dad's blood-pressure and he had to go (briefly) into the hospital. Fortunately he fully recovered (but it was a very scary night). The other case was my

mother. Her doctor was worried about such possibilities so put her into the hospital for observation during the change. However, a nurse gave her the wrong pills, almost killing her. Although she recovered enough to get out of the hospital and the subsequent nursing home, she never really recovered, dying about eight months later.

My brother and I had been trying for some time to get her previous doctor to do the simplification, but my mother had been resistant, and he had deferred to her.

During and after this, I talked to various knowledgeable medical people and couldn't get a good answer on whether it was better to simplify early—as the number of medications accumulate—but often, or do it only when it became necessary (as with my mother). The advice seemed to be based upon informal, anecdotal evidence—the small numbers of cases they were personally familiar with—and hence of little predictive value.

## Advice Sought—The Emergency Room and HIPAA

In "the old days", if you had to go to the emergency room, and your family wasn't immediately available, it was OK for a friend or neighbor to accompany you. Such people served multiple valuable purposes. They were comforting presences in a situation where your stress could make the situation worse. They were able to be aggressive (and mobile) advocates for you at a time when you couldn't. They were full time monitors on your condition. They supplemented the nurses in ensuring that critical information passed between the various doctors (and shifts).

The federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 2003 include requirements to better protect the privacy of patient medical records (this is the "Accountability" portion of the title). Different medical organizations

have different notions of how to implement these requirements, and some have interpretations so strict that there have been complaints that the rules have impeded the timely transfer of critical patient information between medical personnel.

One of the casualties of HIPAA is that some medical personnel have denied patient requests to have a person other than a family members present. This may be a practitioner being over-cautious not to violate the rules, but I asked several people who I thought should have known, and they didn't know how to handle such requests consistent with HIPAA.

If you know, or know someone who knows, this would be valuable information for an article in a subsequent issue of the BPA Newsletter.

## BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION

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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](http://www.bpaonline.org)

# Emergency Preparedness in Palo Alto – 2006

By Patrick Muffler, Chair, BPA Neighborhood Safety and Preparedness Committee

Two thousand six has been a very busy year for emergency-preparedness activities in Palo Alto, in great part stimulated by the 2005 hurricane Katrina disaster in the Gulf Coast and by the resultant City Council designation of Emergency and Disaster Preparedness and Response as one of its top three priorities. EP activities have been carried out in a wide spectrum of city and neighborhood venues, confusing even to people like myself that devote lots of time to EP activities. Hence, I think it would be useful to step back and give you my perception of what has happened this year in Palo Alto emergency preparedness.

## City of Palo Alto

In January of 2006, the City Council designated Emergency and Disaster Preparedness and Response as one of its top three priorities. In response, on 07 August 2006, the City Staff presented to the Council an Emergency Preparedness Update (CMR 330:06) that listed actions taken to prepare City Staff for emergencies and disasters. Prominent among these actions was a plan to develop the City's response to a possible influenza pandemic. These documents can be viewed as appendices to City Manager's Report 330.06 at [www.cityofpaloalto.org/cityagenda/publish/cmrs/city-manager-reports.html](http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/cityagenda/publish/cmrs/city-manager-reports.html).

## Red Ribbon Task Force (RRTF)

On 26 September 2006, Mayor Judy Kleinberg established a Red Ribbon Task Force (RRTF) on Disaster Planning in the Palo Alto/Stanford area. The RRTF goals are to devise and implement a strategy for broad-based community mobilization around critical incident preparedness and to help create a resilient community that can withstand and recover from a major disaster. The RRTF is to determine what are the best things public and private sector partners can do to prepare our community to respond to critical incidents and to recover from them in the most efficient way. The RRTF is an attempt to move beyond networking to proactive, comprehensive, collaborative, strategic planning.

The RRTF held three meetings in October and November 2006 and tentatively divided its task into 5 committees: (1) business continuity and recovery, (2) communica-

tions, (3) community preparedness, (4) medical issues and pandemic flu, (5) resources and asset mapping.

## Citizens Corps Council

The Palo Alto Citizens Corps Council continues to meet quarterly under the chairmanship of Chris Mogensen (City Manager's Office). These meetings have proved to be useful venues for coordination and sharing information among the various entities involved in emergency preparedness and response. There has been some discussion as to whether the Citizens Corps Council should become more of an action-oriented body, and presumably the RRTF will have some recommendations on this matter and the future of the Palo Alto Citizens Corps Council. Note that the Palo Alto Citizens Corps Council is part of a national network of such councils, sponsored by the US Department of Homeland Security (see [www.citizencorps.gov/councils/](http://www.citizencorps.gov/councils/) and click on "A Guide for Local Officials").

## Coordinator for Homeland Security and Public Outreach

The City of Palo Alto has appointed Ken Dueker as its Coordinator for Homeland Security and Public Outreach. This is a special assignment to work with PAN and other groups to build a resilient community by improving and forging partnerships in disaster education, planning, response and recovery. Ken brings to this position an impressive background in emergency planning and response, in both private industry and public service. He is a reserve officer in the Palo Alto Police Department, a leader in Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES/RACES) and a lawyer with background in intellectual property and business management. In the short time since his appointment, Ken has become an active leader in the RRTF, the PAN Emergency Preparedness Committee, and the City of Palo Alto. Ken will be a featured speaker at the Annual BPA Neighborhood meeting 2:00 PM Sunday 28 January 2007.

## Community Notification

Community notification continues to be a subject of concern. The city has plans to replace its current "teleminder" system with a new community alerting and warning system that is intended to greatly speed

up notification of hazards. A request for proposals for this new system was scheduled to be released the second week of December. A citizens committee including Doug Moran and me is to be involved with the city in reviewing request for proposals and the resultant proposals. The city's target date for implementation is January 2007, although that seems to me to be optimistic.

Independently, the Palo Alto Police Department has developed a partnership with *Backfence.com* Palo Alto, a free community Web site that launched a few months ago. Beginning 26 November 2006, all communications from the police department including press releases, news items and emergency notices will be posted on *Backfence.com*. To become part of the *Backfence.com* e-mail distribution list, go to [www.backfence.com](http://www.backfence.com), click on "Palo Alto" and then click on the "Join" button. For questions or additional information, contact Sandra Brown, the Community Relations Sergeant for the Palo Alto Police Department, at [sandra.brown@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:sandra.brown@cityofpaloalto.org)

## PANDA

Palo Alto Neighborhood Disaster Activities (PANDA) is a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training activity offered by the Palo Alto Office of Emergency Services (OES). To date, over 500 Palo Alto residents have been trained in disaster preparedness, disaster medical response, light search and rescue, fire suppression, disaster psychology, and team organization. Training classes in 2007 will be offered on Wednesday mornings and evenings January 10 to February 8, April 11 to May 10, August 01 to August 30, and October 10 to November 8. An intensive, 3-day (24-hour) class will be offered June 26 to June 28. Details can be found at [www.cityofpaloalto.org/oes/panda/pandaclass.html](http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/oes/panda/pandaclass.html)

Barron Park residents contribute significantly to PANDA District 5, a district that has become very active in continuing training and practice in communications, damage assessment, and medical response. Notable have been several practice sessions on the use of FRS radios for communication within the district, as well as training by the Red Cross in shelter operations. Dis-

district 5 PANDAs meet nominally once a month at the Tan Plaza Apartments on Arastradero Road, near the District 5 Fire Station (where the District 5 PANDA trailer is located). Barron Park PANDAs please note that the next District 5 PANDA meetings will be at 7:00 PM 18 January and 15 February 2007.

### **Palo Alto Neighborhoods (PAN)**

PAN ([www.paneighborhoods.org](http://www.paneighborhoods.org)) is an independent umbrella group whose purpose is to enhance communications and mutual support among Palo Alto neighborhoods.

In February 2006, PAN formed a committee to address Emergency and Disaster Preparation. The committee has active participation from over 29 stakeholder groups, including Lytton Gardens and Channing House. The stated committee objectives are:

- Prepare neighbor-to-neighbor, block-to-block, community-to-community by developing plans for each neighborhood.
- Get neighbors to know their neighbors.
- Get Neighborhood Associations to work together to share ideas.
- Get neighborhoods to work together, apart from, but in sync with PANDAs.
- Develop standards (best practices) across the city for neighborhoods including standard forms, data capture, data bases and mapping.
- Determine individuals who have special needs—elderly, disabled, children etc.
- Decide how to communicate up the line as well as receiving information down the line.

■ Strengthen ties between the neighborhoods and the city.

The primary product of this PAN EP committee has been the preparation of a position description for a Block Preparedness Coordinator, a position designed to lead block residents in organizing themselves for emergency preparedness and public safety. For this purpose, a “block” is considered to be a restricted geographical area defined by street, apartment house or other logical feature. A Block Preparedness Coordinator is expected to (1) interact with residents of her/his Block, (2) serve as a communication node for her/his Block, and (3) interact with the Neighborhood on questions of emergency preparedness and public safety. The full position description can be found under Emergency Preparedness at [www.bpaonline.org](http://www.bpaonline.org). On 06 October 2006, PAN transmitted this position description to the City of Palo Alto, where it has received positive response from the Fire Chief, the Police Chief and the Assistant City Manager. As yet, however, the City has not formally adopted it.

The PAN EP Committee currently is focusing on the training necessary for households, Block Preparedness Coordinators, and Neighborhood Preparedness Coordinators.

The PAN EP Committee also carried out a survey to determine the nature of emergency notification desired by citizens. 625 people responded to the survey, the results of which were transmitted to the City.

### **Potential Flu Pandemic**

It is widely recognized that the world may

be facing a flu pandemic similar to the 1918 influenza pandemic that killed 20-40 million people worldwide, including 675,000 in the United States (see my article in the summer 2006 issue of the BPA Newsletter, archived at [www.bpaonline.org/eprep-articles/summer06.html](http://www.bpaonline.org/eprep-articles/summer06.html)). In response to this threat, there has been extensive activity at the county and city level. The Santa Clara County Public Health Department has prepared an excellent pamphlet entitled Pandemic Flu, which can be downloaded from [www.sccphd.org](http://www.sccphd.org). Palo Alto held three outreach meetings on this subject in October and November of 2006, and PAN has scheduled a community meeting for 7:00 PM on Thursday 01 February 2007 at the Mitchell Park Community Center. Individual and household response to a flu pandemic will be a major topic at the Annual Neighborhood meeting of the Barron Park Association, to be held at Barron Park School at 2:00 PM on Sunday 28 January 2007.

### **Toxic emissions and noise**

A group of Barron Park residents in the vicinity of Chimalus Drive has been very active this year in addressing questions of toxic emissions and noise from the adjacent facility of Communication and Power Industries (CPI). Under the leadership of Art Liberman and Jeff Dean, these residents organized themselves and took decisive actions. Persistent research, analysis and initiative has led to effective communication with both CPI and the City of Palo Alto, and indeed some substantive response and remediation. For details, please see the following article.

# NOISE ON CHIMALUS DRIVE

by Art Liberman and Jeff Dean

The reconstruction of the CPI facility on Hansen Way in 2005 created several problems for residents on Chimalus Drive. Newly installed motors and fans on the exterior raised the ambient noise levels to where nearby residents could not use their backyards nor keep their windows open in the evenings, and in February of this year, a toxic gas plume caused by a chemical accident at CPI spread over the neighborhood, causing some respiratory distress but fortunately

no serious injury. These were wakeup calls to the neighborhood and a group of Barron Park residents on Chimalus Drive and the Tippawingo/Matadero area, led by Art Liberman and Jeff Dean, have organized themselves and taken action.

The first step was to understand the existing city codes governing noise levels and hazardous materials in the Research Park sites that are in the immediate proximity of residences. The second step has been to work with the city staff to help draft new sections

of the zoning code. The new sections were approved by the Planning Commission on November 1 and will come before the City Council at the end of January.

Regarding noise, it turns out that the existing noise ordinance is very weak. Currently, building sites can install machinery essentially as they see fit, and only afterward, when the noise is apparent and a nuisance to nearby residents, can residents lodge a complaint. And then violations are [ CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 ]

poorly enforced; police readily admit that it is at the bottom of their priority list. The new zoning ordinance will change this in several important ways. First, it will require acoustic analysis by the site owner before permits are issued and then noise measurement validation afterward before occupancy permits will be issued, and also require better setbacks for noise generating equipment and controls over deliveries and truck idling.

While the current noise ordinance is weak, there were no regulations at all that specifically addressed hazardous materials for sites in close proximity of residences. The buildings at CPI where the hazardous materials are used and stored are about as close to residences as they could possibly be, and the area in the CPI building #2 where the tanks of liquid hazardous materials are used in an electroplating shop and from where the toxic gas plume in February emanated, is on the side of the building directly facing the residents, and is less than 75' from their property line. Storage buildings for toxic chemicals are actually against the wall that borders the greenbelt which separates the CPI property from residences on Chimalus Drive.

The Fire Department, under Fire Marshal Dan Firth, has the authority to review and approve plans for any building project where hazardous materials would be used or stored. The Fire Department has taken the position over the years, which is common in planning practice in California, that building permits must be issued regardless of the amount or the toxicity of hazardous materials and their proximity to residences provided that the building plans satisfy the Building Codes and the Uniform Fire Codes and if hazardous materials are allowed in that zone and that they are both stored and used according to safety standards mandated and regulated by the Fire Department.

The Chimalus group pushed for a new direction in meetings we had with the city staff starting in May and continued with presentations to the Planning Commission after the summer. Very simply, we argued that toxic gas emissions from accidental releases do not respect zoning boundaries and the existing policy permitted situations with hazardous materials to develop that presented serious risks to nearby residents. We based our argument on legislation passed in California several years ago

that embodies and strengthens the provisions of the federal Clean Air Act, namely the California Accidental Release Program or CalARP, also called Title 19. This program in Palo Alto is administered by Santa Clara County. The regulations of Title 19 identifies threshold amounts for specific hazardous materials, which if accidentally released could cause harm to the individuals in the surrounding area. CPI uses two chemicals that exceed the Title 19 thresholds, nitric acid and potassium cyanide (and the chemical reaction of the two creates the toxic gas hydrogen cyanide). If released in a very serious accident, the toxic vapor plume could affect individuals as far away as 1000' from the accidental release site.

As a result of this strong Chimalus group community pressure, and with a strong echo of support from individuals in the College Terrace neighborhood, the Planning Commission made several recommendations for changes to the zoning code. If implemented, both new and recon-

structed buildings that would handle amounts of hazardous materials above Title 19 threshold limits must be setback at least 300' from residential properties. Additional restrictions would apply to existing buildings closer than 300' to residences on the amounts of hazardous materials above Title 19 threshold limits that could be used or stored there.

Anyone who would like to review the Planning Commission proposal can access it at [www.cityofpaloalto.org/planning-community/documents/Ord\\_Chapter\\_18\\_Perf\\_Stds\\_clean11-7-06.pdf](http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/planning-community/documents/Ord_Chapter_18_Perf_Stds_clean11-7-06.pdf)

While these are groundbreaking zoning proposals providing protection to residents from hazardous materials, the Chimalus group is presently considering whether to ask the City Council to strengthen them further. We would like to hear opinions from Barron Park residents. Send your comments to Art Liberman ([Art\\_Liberman@yahoo.com](mailto:Art_Liberman@yahoo.com)) or Jeff Dean ([chimalus@gmail.com](mailto:chimalus@gmail.com)).

## WELCOME NEW ZALU CHAIR

Lynn Melena has replaced Mary Ann Welton as the Zoning and Land Use (ZALU) liaison on the Board. Lynn has just retired from an almost 35-year career as a city planner, first for Palo Alto (17 years) and then for Mountain View (16 years) with a brief private consulting stint in between. She has a master's degree in urban planning from San Jose State and has managed many major planning projects. Lynn has worked with neighborhood groups throughout her career, but working on the side of this neighborhood will be new and challenging. Fortunately, Lynn has kept up with planning and politics in Palo Alto, as well as development activities in Barron Park and along El Camino Real.



In joining the Board, Lynn is returning to a familiar place. In the early 1970s as a Palo Alto planner and resident, she worked with the Barron Park Association on a new general plan for the neighborhood while it was still a part of the County. In 1975, she managed the annexation of Barron Park to

Palo Alto and the dissolution of several of the special districts that had served the neighborhood. She remembers the hard work and dedication of those 1970s neighborhood leaders who not only brought Barron Park into the City of Palo Alto, but also made possible Bol Park and the bike path.

Lynn and her husband Joe, a retired photographer for the Peninsula Times Tribune and Palo Alto Weekly, have lived on Magnolia Drive since 1971. They have two daughters, Sara and Katie, who attended Hoover (starting the first year Hoover opened in the present Barron Park School), JLS and Gunn. Now empty-nesters, Lynn likes to read, garden and hike—which she no longer has to squeeze into the weekends. And Joe has returned to golfing and is the fix-it man at home. Reaching even further back, Lynn's very first job in California was as a reporter for a Menlo Park newspaper—which is where she met her husband, as well as fellow Board member Nancy Hamilton with whom she will be working again.

# KID'S KORNERS

By Suzanne McKenna and Halimah Van Tuyl



**A family Bible and multigenerational photo have been passed down in Jessica Dinneen's family, along with the oil can that her great grandfather used to keep his machines running smoothly. Jessica's mother, Jill Dinneen, has been a teacher at Briones for 19 years.**

## Jumping Off The Pages Of The History Textbook

A hard hat from a crew member who built the Transamerica Pyramid in San Francisco, a box camera and an oil can brought by a farmer from Colorado, and a locket with a photo of great great grandparents who came by ship in the 1880's from Germany...These are just some of the family treasures pulled from fourth graders' suitcases at Juana Briones Elementary School. The occasion was the culminating celebration of the Passport To California unit, a month-long unit in which students in all three of the fourth grade classes researched the first person in their families to come to California. Students interviewed family members to learn the basic story of who came, when, for what reason, and from where.

As they did this research, students gained experience in interviewing, asking follow up questions, and sniffing out lively family stories that pass on traditions and culture. Immersed in geography and history with a personal perspective, they learned each others' stories from the written passport booklets as well as the oral suitcase presentations.

Arrivals during recent decades include parents who have come to study at Stan-

ford University or conduct research at Stanford Hospital, and international businesswomen and men, and many in tech jobs in Silicon Valley. Some students discovered the story of relatives who came to California from other states to get jobs during World War II or who were stationed here in the Armed Services.

A common thread among all the students' stories is that California is seen as a land of golden opportunity; this

theme was echoed as they talked to family members about why people leave one place to journey to a new home. For example, Zach Chun worked hard to uncover information about his great grandfather who came to California from Japan in the 1890's. Zach found out a few facts from interviewing his grandfather about his memories of his dad from so long ago. Zach then supplemented those facts with reading about the time period in such books as Allan Say's Grandfather's Journey.

Parents' comments were glowing. Natalie Toennis said, "I really enjoyed the enthusiasm the kids showed doing their passport



**Irene Jeong, at Briones since kindergarten, shares her parents' wedding photo and family traditions.**

presentations. We are especially thrilled about being part of our Juana Briones School community, with teachers who build a connection between kids and include the parents in so many activities. I just wish we had the time to hear all the 4th grader's stories!"

In addition to hearing the oral presentations and seeing the rich variety of artifacts pulled out of steamer trunks, woven baskets, plaid valises, and suitcases on wheels, everyone enjoyed the sampling of foods shared. From Boston baked beans to Kansas City barbeque, from Korean noodles to New York bagels, from Oklahoma homemade biscuits to Dutch chocolate and more, the foods complimented the student presentations of this celebration, bringing history and geography alive.

Juana Briones is a neighborhood school where the connections between families made in kindergarten continue to grow as children move up through the grades, and these bonds are enriched by new families that join the community.

For more information, contact Principal Gary Dalton, [gdalton@pausd.org](mailto:gdalton@pausd.org)

## 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: [www.bpaonline.org](http://www.bpaonline.org)

# THE "DONKEY PASTURE" BECOMES A PARK

By Doug Graham, Barron Park Historian



**Abandoned car in the Bol "Donkey Pasture" prior to the development of Bol Park. Photo by Joe Melena.**

*[Editor's note: this article is a reprint from the Spring 1997 Edition]*

Thirty years ago Bol Park was a donkey pasture. The owner, Dr. Cornelis Bol, was a kind and gentle man who enjoyed having the neighborhood children come in and play with the donkeys. He even allowed some to board their own donkeys. "Mickey," who still lives in his smaller pasture near the bikepath bridge, is the last of that herd. [Mickey died July 1998]

## Dr. Bol's Idea of a Park

In the early 1960's, the idea of a park first came up in a conversation between Dr. Bol and Barron Park resident Sam Elster, while they were watching the neighborhood kids playing in the Bol family pool. Dr. Bol wanted very much to preserve the area as a park for the children.

Elster, Dick Placone and other leaders of the Barron Park Improvement Association, as it was then known, were involved in the early 1960s in developing a general plan for the community. The purpose was to resist undesirable developments, particularly large apartment blocks along El Camino. When they produced the first general plan in cooperation with the County Board of Supervisors in 1966, it contained provisions for all the vacant lands along the just-abandoned Southern Pacific RR right of way to become a 30-acre neighborhood park. The biggest and most valuable piece was the donkey pasture.

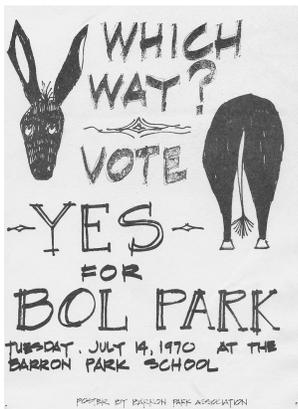
In the meantime, Dr. Bol died in July 1965.

The family indicated that decisions must be made soon, or rising tax pressures would force sale to a developer. Theirs was then the last remaining undeveloped parcel of its size in Barron Park. The Barron Park Association, led by Dick Placone, worked with the County government to develop a way to fund a park. Negotiations led to a very generous offer by the Bol family in November, 1967, to sell approximately 5 acres at half of the market value if its status as a park land

could be guaranteed in perpetuity.

## Barron Park Taxes Itself

The BPA set out to raise money within the community, and over \$11,000 was pledged. Additional funding came from the water



## Which Way?

district, to perform necessary erosion control and landscaping work on Matadero Creek. A federal government matching grant was approved. But the major funding was to come from a local tax source. In the spring of 1968, the BPA and the County agreed to set up a "County Special Service Area #1" to acquire land, develop, and maintain a neighborhood park for Barron Park. An election was held in July, 1970 to approve a \$0.32 tax rate, which passed 2-1. In May, 1971 the County acquired the land for \$68,750, and detailed planning began.

## The Barn Burns Down

The Bol family had a small "barn" at the upper end of the pasture. Initially there



**The Bol's "barn", located in the undeveloped portion of the park near the bikepath bridge over Matadero Creek.**

were plans to incorporate this into the park as a 4-H club demonstration project and domestic animal "petting zoo." However, the barn burned on Washington's Birthday weekend in 1973. The Barron Park Volunteer Fire Department made a spectacularly inept attempt to put out the flames, but the barn burned to the ground. (A future history note will tell the story of the BPVFD, which had a proud history.)

## Construction begins

Construction began in the fall of 1973. This was Phase I of the park and included only the creekbank, the irrigated turf, the play structure, and the pedestrian walk. The upper end of the park where the barn had been was to remain, and still is, undeveloped in order to retain a little of the rural feeling of the donkey pasture. Long-term BP resident Ken Arutunian did the landscape design. native northern California plants were used, and existing vegetation was disturbed as little as possible.



**Josina Bol, Dick Placone and an unidentified girl at the Bol Park Dedication Ceremony, April 1974.**



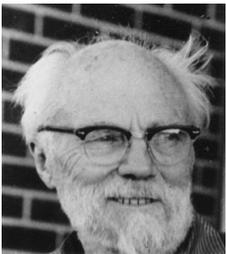
**Bol Park from Laguna Avenue, April, 1974.**

**Community Picnic and Park Dedication**

Hundreds of people turned out for a community picnic and dedication of Cornelis Bol Park on April 28, 1974. Mrs. Josina Bol was present to accept the thanks and congratulations of the grateful citizens.

**Cornelis Bol, The Inventor**

Cornelis Bol deserves a memorial in his own right. He was the inventor of the mercury vapor light, still the brightest artificial



**Cornelis Bol**

light source. A Stanford professor for many years, he also founded and operated the Bol Water Company that supplied water to much of Barron Park in the 1920s, '30s and '40s. The Bol family lived on Roble

Ridge for sixty years, from 1936 until Josina Bol's death in 1996. Josina Bol's reminiscences of the life in BP in the 1930s and '40s were recorded in an oral history interview by Ann Knopf in 1977. Material from that interview has appeared in the BP newsletter and on exhibits at May Fetes.

**The Job Wasn't Done Yet**

The Bol Park Advisory Committee had already been working on Phase II — the acquisition and development of the old Southern Pacific Railroad right of way, where the regional bikepath runs today. This was a more complicated task because the railroad owned only the part of the land that had originally been part of the old Barron Estate; from the Varian Plant to the VA Hospital at Mickey's Pasture. The

remainder, from that point past Gunn High School to Arastradero Road, belonged to Stanford with a long-term lease to the railroad. (The story of our railroad has also been the subject of history notes in the BP Newsletter)

**The SPRR Deeds Land for Phase II**

However, negotiations were successful and Dick Placone was able to announce the railroad company's gift, in April, 1974, of approxi-

mately three acres of land in an 80-foot wide strip. Shortly thereafter, the University was persuaded to re-lease their portion to the County and plans for Phase II were in full swing.

**The People Approve**

At a community meeting in November, 1974 attended by 3000 residents, overwhelming approval was voiced for a tax period extension to pay for development of Phase II. The long-awaited federal funds became available then and provided up-front funding. The following March, Santa Clara County approved the Phase II expansion.

The park advisory committee held many meetings to solicit and weigh community input. Design was done by another Barron Park landscape architect, Jack Buktenica. Money was forthcoming from the city because the bikepath was needed to complete the overall Palo Alto plan. Then on November 4, 1975, the citizens of Barron Park voted 936-478 to join Palo Alto, ending nearly 40 years of political antagonism. On November 25, the formal transfer of responsibility for the park, including the development of Phase II, took place. Bol Park of Barron Park became Palo Alto's newest city park.

**Phase II Reaches Completion**

Meanwhile, Phase II planning continued and construction began in 1979. Finally, in May, 1980, Phase II was dedicated at a ceremony in the park. Thus was added the regional bikepath running from Arastradero Road to the Varian plant, 9 acres, bringing the total acreage to 13.8.

**The Bicentennial Celebration**

During the late 1970s, a new community tradition was born: fetes in the park. The

BPA organized a bicentennial celebration and community picnic on July 4, 1976. Many people who turned out were enjoying the park for their first time. Jeff and Janet Rulifson assembled a Barron Park History Exhibit that became the inspiration for the later development of the BPA portable displays.

**The May Fetes**

Paul and Patty Edwards began the May Fetes in the mid-1970s on a small scale, but the first large fete sponsored by the BPA was held in May, 1978. There were three may poles, various musical groups, and Paul arranged for the Los Trancos Woods Community Marching Band to put on a show. There were craft displays and face-painting, and Ken Arutunian began a ten-year tradition of Armenian-style barbecued shish kebabs. There were very successful May Fetes both of the next two years.

**The Fourth Fetes**

After the rainy 1981 May Fete, the BPA decided to try an old-fashioned Fourth of July picnic, like the Bicentennial. It was a rousing success. Will Beckett built a gazebo that could be assembled and disassembled in two hours' time, and which has been used for all the fetes since. There was a program of political speeches, concluding with Congressman Tom Lantos. The Fourth Fetes were repeated in 1983, with Mayor Betsy Bechtel, and 1984 with State Assemblyman Byron Sher. Also in 1984, BPA Chairman Doug Graham organized a Bol Park Tenth Anniversary presentation including and honoring Josina Bol, Dick Placone and others who had made the park possible. After 1984, it was decided to bring back the May Fetes and may pole dancing, which has been the main focus since 1985. As of this writing, the tradition seems likely to continue for many years to come.

**Memorial Redwoods**

The newest tradition in the park was inaugurated in 1985 and 1986 by the new BPA President John Joynt, with the planting of redwood trees in memory of the loved ones of several Barron Park residents.

**The Future of Bol Park**

The future of the park lies in the same hands as its past; the capable hands of the self-motivated citizens of Barron Park. The original plan for Bol Park is not yet complete. There were three additional parcels originally planned to be added to the park. One has been lost to development. One still remains as a possibility.

# Barron Park Business Profile: Driftwood Deli & Market

by Karen Michael, Community Business Liaison



from San Francisco State with a degree in electrical engineering but couldn't find an engineering job, he started working part-time at the store and soon took over the business. Under his ownership, the Driftwood Deli & Market is thriving; it provides catering for parties and company lunch meetings as well as handling a large lunch crowd that enjoys choosing from over 40 sandwiches at reason-

able prices. (Although the wait at lunchtime can be up to 15 minutes, Steve takes phone-in orders and has a separate register so the phone-in customers don't have to wait in the deli line.) And he is adding an espresso bar selling Tully's coffee by the end of the year.

Driftwood maintains close ties to the Barron Park community, where Steve lived when he was first married to Bahar 11 years ago. (The couple have a son, Romtin, 5, who loves to visit the store to hang out with the employees and use the price gun.) A regular advertiser in this newsletter for over 10 years (he does no other advertising, relying on repeat business and word of mouth), he provides food at a special price for the Barron Park Seniors' lunches

in Bol Park and last year participated in the May Fete by selling sandwiches and donating to the event. Steve feels that Barron Park is one of the safest neighborhoods to do business in—and he clearly likes it here. "I've been here 20 years—that's half my life!" he laughs. "I like the interaction with people. When I go out with friends, about 99% of the time I run into people I know from here—even once in Las Vegas!" And he plans to stay. His lease will be up in eight years, and if the Creekside Inn chooses not to renew his lease he will find another location on El Camino in Barron Park where we will still be able to get the "Best Sandwiches in Town."

Steve Rezvani, owner of the popular Driftwood Deli & Market, is clearly focused on his purpose: to keep his customers happy and make the "Best Sandwiches in Town," as it says on his menu. When asked why the Driftwood is not open on Sundays, he was quick to answer, "Because there is no fresh bread on Sundays. When you serve day-old bread it really takes away from your sandwich. After all, what is the first thing you taste when you bite into a sandwich?"

Driftwood Market has existed in its current location (3450 El Camino Real, at the corner of Matadero) for many years. Originally a grocery store, the deli focus started after the previous owner sold to Steve's brother-in-law. When Steve graduated

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## TRAFFIC REPORT

by John King, Committee Chair

I attended the Arastradero Stakeholders meeting and it was announced that the trial for Arastradero would be delayed until the summer of 2008. They did receive some good news about the utilities along El Camino Real being able to be worked around for the improvements to the intersection of Arastradero Road and El Camino. Contact Gayle Likens at the City of Palo Alto for more details.

The project for Valley gutters along Military Way is beginning this month and hopefully will be completed in January.

# Volunteers Needed to Keep Barron Park Tradition Alive

by Karen Michael

Are you a good organizer? Do you have skills or talents that you would like to share with your community (or know someone you could recruit)? Would you like to get to know more of your Barron Park neighbors? If so, a great opportunity awaits.

Volunteers are needed, including a chair or co-chairs, for the 2007 Barron Park spring

event. A 28-year Barron Park tradition, the May Fete needs your help to survive, whether in its current form or with changes. And changes may be required: possibly even pushing the date to early June because of scheduling conflicts with Mothers' Day, Memorial Day weekend, the Bay to Breakers race, and the Palo Alto May Fete. (Then, of course, it would no longer be a May Fete.) In addition, most of

the original organizers and long-time volunteers are no longer available to participate. So, if you want the event to continue, you like a challenge, and you want to help influence the direction of this neighborhood celebration, your help is needed!

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Karen Michael, BPA Board Secretary, at [ktmichael@gmail.com](mailto:ktmichael@gmail.com). Thank you.

# BP Donkey Calendar, Handlers, Support

By Brandy Faulkner

## Second Annual Donkey Calendar Available

Ring in the new year with a 2007 Barron Park Donkeys calendar and help support our neighborhood donkeys! 100% of proceeds will be donated to the Palo Alto Donkey Project to help keep Perry and Niner, a happy and healthy part of Barron Park. [Note: Perry was used as the model for the donkey in the Shrek movies]

These handmade calendars are \$15 each (tax deductible) and feature photos of Mickey, Perry and Niner as well as original watercolors by neighborhood artist Edith Smith. Quantities are limited, though. **To purchase a calendar, please contact Brandy Faulkner at: [brandyfaulkner@hotmail.com](mailto:brandyfaulkner@hotmail.com)**

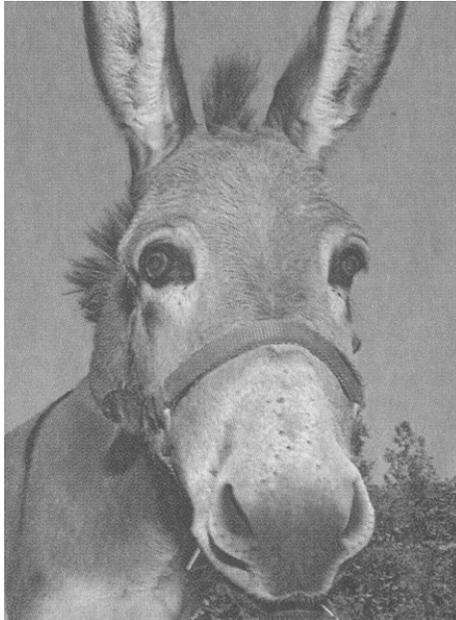
## Donkey Handlers

Our neighborhood's trademark donkeys are cared for entirely by volunteers from Barron Park and the surrounding community. In addition to feeding the boys twice a day, keeping their corral and shed clean and orderly, taking them for occasional walks, and bringing them out to meet the neighbors in Bol Park every Sunday morning, these volunteers also pick up and deliver loads of hay, make sure the donkeys receive regular attention from the vet and the farrier (horse shoe-er), and keep them clean and well curried.

If you want to become a donkey handler, please contact: Bob Frost at: [bobfrost34@yahoo.com](mailto:bobfrost34@yahoo.com). No experience necessary.

## MEMBERSHIP

Happy Holidays and best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year! Thanks to every household for your support! Wondering when it's time to renew? We recently added an expiration date to your mailing label. If your label shows the date 3/07, it indicates that your membership expires at the end of March 2007. Watch for the renewal form in the Spring newsletter.



## Support the 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.

If you would like to help provide food, shelter and vet care for the donkeys, your tax deductible donation must be made out to "ACTERRA—Palo Alto Donkey Fund" (both components MUST be included—"Acterra" so that they can cash the checks and "PA Donkey Fund" so it goes into the intended account, not Acterra's general fund—do not abbreviate please).

Send to:

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3921 E. Bayshore Rd.  
Palo Alto, CA 94303  
Phone: (650) 962-9876  
[www.Acterra.org](http://www.Acterra.org)

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*Have a business in Barron Park? See [www.bpaonline.org](http://www.bpaonline.org)—click on "Barron Park Businesses."*

*Want information about the BP Donkeys? See [www.bpaonline.org](http://www.bpaonline.org)—click on "Barron Park Donkeys."*

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